

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP – AN EXAMINATION OF CONSUMER AND PRACTITIONER

PERSPECTIVES

LOUISE RUTH WILLIAMS

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For Grandma and Grandad

Always in my heart

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no-one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40, 28-31.

ABSTRACT

The study examines the impact of sports sponsorship from a consumer and practitioner perspective. This adds to the current literature due to its focus on general rather than sports consumers which is an under-researched area that requires greater examination. Brand recognition, attitude and purchase intention are key components of the consumer phases, whilst planning, monitoring and evaluation are the focus of the practitioner aspect of the study.

A pragmatic approach was taken with a multi-method design that consisted of four phases of data collection that used postal questionnaires (n=157 for consumers and n=55 for sponsorship executives and practitioners) and semi structured interviews (n= 6 for consumers and n=8 for sponsorship executive and practitioners). The consumer postal questionnaires were obtained through multistage cluster sampling within the North West of England. The sample for the practitioner postal questionnaires was generated through purposive sampling of industries within the sports business sector. The data analysis process adopted a sequential mixed-analysis approach. This included using descriptive and inferential analysis of the questionnaire data through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) (Version 14.0 for Windows) and protocol analysis for the interview data.

The results showed that there are opportunities for brands to engage with consumers through using sports sponsorship. Consumers showed encouraging levels of brand recall for sports events (32%) and sports leagues (37%). Although consumers recognise the sponsoring brands, the conversion of this to purchase was low (62% would not purchase). The results provided information to fill a gap in literature relating to exploring the key stimuli that connect sports sponsorship with a consumer in a meaningful way. The study found that the key mechanism to foster goodwill to the brand was through adopting community approaches to the sponsorship programme. This included 'healthy-brand' links, charitable connections and grassroots sponsorship. The practitioner results showed that the extent to which sponsorship programmes are evaluated was somewhat irregular across the industry. Practitioners further recognised that planning and evaluation is an important aspect for justifying the promotional spend. However, the complexity and variation of the commercial objectives desired, means that standardising measurement tools across the industry is extremely problematic.

This study recommends that brands should use sports sponsorship to engage with their consumers and as a vehicle to understand them more. This can be translated to purchase activities; however, brands need to carry out in-depth research to understand what these triggers are. Practitioners need to carry out thorough and consistent evaluation of sponsorship programmes to ensure that brands get a return on investment, but also so they get a return on their commercial objectives. Further research needs to be carried out to explore the brands perspective on how effective sports sponsorship is to their overall marketing strategy. In addition their involvement in sponsorship planning needs to be examined in order to gain a complete picture of the whole sponsorship arrangement.

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List of Abbreviations

BBC interactive	BBCi
Chartered Institute of Marketing	CIM
Corporate Social Responsibility	CSR
Customer Relationship Management	CRM
English Premier League	EPL
European Sponsorship Association	ESA
Football League	FL
Fourth generation	4G
High Definition Television	HDTV
Integrated Marketing Communications	IMC
Interactive television	iTV
Key Performance Indicators	KPI
Light Emitting Diode	L.E.D
London Organising Committee of the Games	LOCOG
Mobile marketing	M-Marketing
Public Relations	PR
Relationship Management	RM
Return on Investment	ROI
Return on Objectives	ROO
Royal Mail Address Finder	RMAF
Superfluous Pieces of Additional Mail	SPAM
Third generation	3G
Wireless application protocol	WAP
United Kingdom	U.K.

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CHAPTER ONE

Contextualising Marketing and the progressing field of Marketing Communications

“Marketing takes days to learn. Unfortunately it takes a life time to master”.

Philip Kotler

1.0 Rationale for the study

Globally, sponsorship expenditure has rapidly increased since 1984, from £3.6billion to £33.8billion in 2006. The one exception to this continual rise occurred in 2001, when due to a global recession, all marketing expenditure was affected (Kolah 2006). With the United Kingdom (UK) having the most sophisticated market in the world and also the highest share of expertise in Europe (Kolah 2006), the popularity of sports sponsorship as a brand communication platform is unsurprising. However, whilst investment in sponsorship continues to rise, the amount of literature dedicated to studying it in its generic form is still relatively minimal (Meenaghan 2001a; Walliser 2003). This was a key factor in determining the sample groups for this study. Previous studies have focussed on sports-specific demographics (Bennett 1997; Tripodi 2001; Gwinner 2005). However this, study aims to explore the impact of sports sponsorship on general consumers.

Research within sponsorship to date has focused primarily on two themes, firstly, profiling of management practices and secondly examining sponsorship as a communication option through studies examining recall and recognition (Meenaghan and O’Sullivan 2001). Moreover, research into consumer perceptions of commercial sponsorship in its generic form is yet to be explored (Meenaghan 2001a). Recent research has focused on incorporating different theories in examining sponsorship effects on consumer behaviour (Roy and Cornwell 2004). In contrast, Meenaghan (2001a) argues that advertising is the focus of

research attention, whilst understanding the phenomenon of sponsorship is poorly outlined. Therefore, this research is two-fold in nature, in that it sets out to examine both consumer and practitioner perspectives. The rationale for this is based on recommendations from the literature which have identified gaps throughout the sponsorship literature, with sports sponsorship research failing to explore consumer behaviour beyond the typical sports- fan demographic. This study will therefore contribute to current literature by providing empirical findings supported by self-reported opinions and perceptions through a mixed methodology approach. The study will also contribute to providing an understanding of consumer behaviour in evaluating the effectiveness of sports sponsorship on brand recognition. Further, and in line with calls in literature to explore the influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour (Meenaghan 2001a; Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) 2004), the study will explore whether sports sponsorship programmes influence purchase intentions. This will utilise key factors such as involvement, brand loyalty and receptiveness to marketing stimuli as areas of exploration.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of relevant areas within marketing and aims to outline the concepts within these from a consumer perspective. The chapter will also critique developments within marketing communications, with a particular focus on integrated marketing communications (IMC), cause-related marketing, relationship marketing (RM) and customer relationship management (CRM). The chapter will also detail key models of communication and will explore consumer behaviour, linking in sponsorship and the impact of sports sponsorship and sports marketing on the marketing fraternity as a whole.

To suitably explore this through the overarching question of *How effective is sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in impacting on general consumer buying behaviour?* five research objectives (RO) have been defined. These are:

RO1: *To examine the impact of brand promotion through sports sponsorship programmes on consumer brand attitude, purchase preference, intention to purchase and exploration of demographic differentials in brand recognition.*

RO2: *To investigate the use of sport as a medium for sponsorship in relation to achievability of pre-determined commercial objectives.*

RO3: *To explore how the concept of sponsorship is integrated within corporate marketing communications and justified as a promotional spend.*

RO4: *To investigate how strategy implementation and leverage of sports sponsorship programmes are affected by changes in the sponsorship market and budgetary considerations.*

RO5: *To investigate the extent to which sports sponsorship programmes are planned, monitored and evaluated from inception to end of deal term.*

In order to address the main question and the five objectives, the first three chapters form a critique of existing literature and are shown in Figure 1.1.

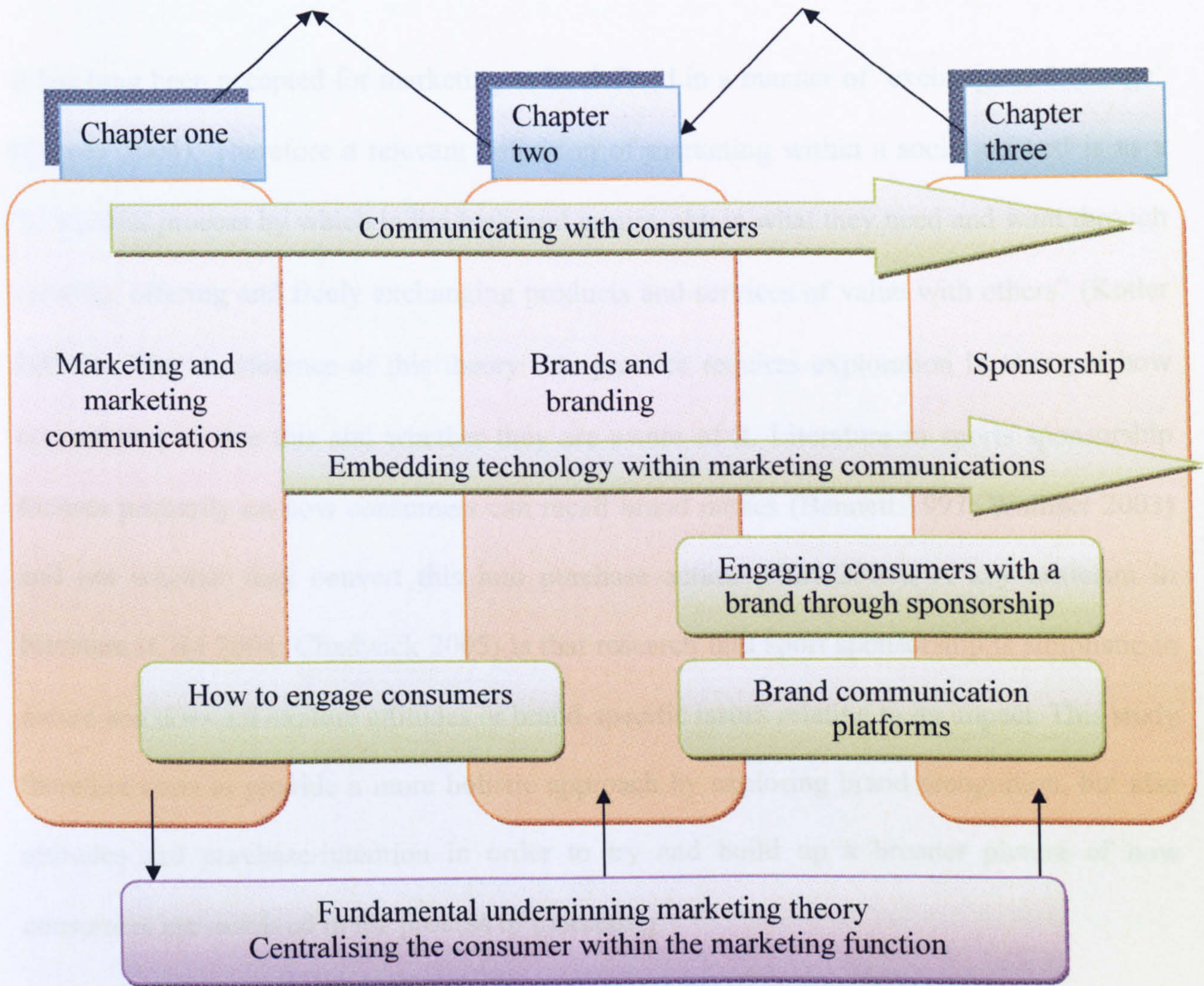


Figure 1.1: Literature overview

1.1 Exchange and value as core marketing concepts

The existence of marketing is based upon the core concept of exchange and the facilitation of the exchange process (Houston and Gassenheimer 1987; Kotler 2003; Fill 2005; Jobber 2007; Santala and Parvinen 2007). Consumers have specific expectations which influence this process (Milner and McDonald 1999) and these include; decision-making, emotional issues

and empowerment, which all question the underlying concepts of exchange and value within the current environment (Santala and Parvinen 2007).

It has long been accepted for marketing to be defined in a manner of 'exchange and change' (Copley 2004). Therefore a relevant definition of marketing within a social context is as a "...societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others" (Kotler 2003:9). The transference of this theory into practice requires exploration in terms of how consumers perceive this and whether they are aware of it. Literature in sports sponsorship focuses primarily on how consumers can recall brand names (Bennett 1997; Walliser 2003) and not whether they convert this into purchase action (CIM 2004). A key criticism in literature (CIM 2004; Chadwick 2005) is that research into sport sponsorship is simplistic in nature and does not explore attitudes or brand-specific issues relating to its impact. This study therefore aims to provide a more holistic approach by exploring brand recognition, but also attitudes and purchase-intention in order to try and build up a broader picture of how consumers are involved in the process of marketing.

Whilst exchange is a core concept within marketing, it is relational exchanges which are becoming more evident within current marketing practices (Fill 2005; Richards and Jones 2006), requiring marketing to adopt a holistic approach to customers as individuals, rather than mass audiences (Zwick and Dieterle 2005). Further, there is more desire in current marketing culture to move away from mass production. The shift has moved from this towards embedding communication strategies into organisations which can strengthen customer relationships (Martin, Payne and Ballantyne 1994; Duncan and Moriarty 1998; Kotler 2005). In adopting marketing practices in this context, the emphasis is on the creation

of value through effective relationship-building, termed relationship marketing (Ravald and Gronroos 1996; Mitussis, O'Malley and Patterson 2006). This moves away from competition and customer manipulation towards operating in cooperative environments to achieve customer involvement (Mitussis *et al* 2006) and mutual benefits (Copley 2004; Fullerton 2006). A gap in the literature emerges when looking at how consumers connect with sport sponsorship in longer-term relationships and in particular what key drivers (i.e. sponsorship type) contribute to this. This provided a rationale for this study to look at specific aspects in the sponsorship programmes (such as being aligned with a "healthy brand") and to examine whether this impacts on a deeper understanding and acceptance of the brand. Kolah (2006) notes how sponsors have to look more to community-based sponsorships to create positive brand associations with consumers. Therefore it was important to look at both strategies currently being used by sponsors and to also to explore the impact which these strategies have on consumers.

From both a theoretical and practical perspective, Relationship Marketing (RM) has been regarded as one of the most significant developments in marketing over the past two decades (Brennan, Baines and Garneau 2003). This is an approach which is developing within the field of sports marketing and sponsorship with a shift to engaging and interacting with consumers (Malhotra 2008). However, whilst the practical use of this approach is developing, the extent to which this impacts on consumers is somewhat limited in sports sponsorship research (Kolah 2006; Ayre 2008). Whilst RM sport sponsorship programmes can be implemented, a lack of evaluation on their consumer impact is limiting the overall understanding of practitioners (Redmandarin 2004). The issue as to whether consumers react more positively to approaches that are RM-based where they actually try to engage consumers with the brand beyond an advertisement banner, remain widely unresearched

(CIM 2004). This study aims to provide information that will fill this gap, given that it is combining both consumer and practitioner perspectives. The questions asked at the consumer phases will be directly related to engagement with brands and the stimuli to which they best react. This, coupled with brand recognition, will allow for reasonable assumptions to be made regarding how brands can best connect with their audience to achieve their own commercial objectives.

RM evolved initially from the business-to-business (B2B) marketer in the latter half of the 1970s (Kotler 2005; Mitussis *et al* 2006) and was commonly recognised as being suited more to B2B marketing than consumer markets. The reason for this being due to the reduced direct contact consumer marketers have with their customers (Kotler 2005). Throughout this time (post 1970s-1980s) customer satisfaction was viewed as "...an at arm's length manipulation of the elements of the marketing mix" (Lancaster and Massingham 1998: 22). However, within the current climate, marketers are actively seeking more than a one-time transaction with customers (Belch and Belch 2004). They are aiming to create long-term relationships with customers (Martin *et al* 1994; Kotler 2003) and foster customer loyalty (Fullerton 2006; Jobber 2007), which is arguably more cost-effective (Duncan and Moriarty 1998; Belch and Belch 2004). Therefore, RM is a highly desirable option from a strategic perspective (Brannan 1998; Parvatiyar and Sheth 2000). Additionally, the essence of RM considers the life-time value of customers (Belch and Belch 2004) with their loyalty being a determining factor. They are viewed as "...lifetime profit centres" (Blythe 1997: 7), rather than customers who make single, one-off transactions (Blythe 1997; Brennan *et al* 2003).

However, it is recognised that RM is not a marketing approach that will work, or be effective, for every organisation (Kotler 2003). The organisation must firstly be willing to embrace RM

as a practice and must look to identify which specific customers and segments are more likely to respond positively to such practices (Kotler 2003). This is mirrored within a customer relationship management (CRM) perspective which suggests that if a CRM approach is to be implemented, it must be adopted by the whole organisation, rather than focused within solitary departments which may be just implementing the technology (Ayre 2008).

RM can also offer benefits to a broader range of management practices within an organisation, whereby the use of CRM strategies have been enriched by the process-orientation that RM provides (CRM will be discussed later in section 1.3). Although it is agreed that mass marketers fundamentally bought into the process outcomes of RM, they failed however, to somewhat embrace the ideology of the exchange process required to achieve them (Mitussis *et al* 2006). This is where CRM strategies are being used to track consumer data in order to provide a more accurate picture of consumer buying patterns which can then be used to tailor marketing communications.

1.2 The marketing mix

In marketing, the processes of exchange and engagement are pivotal to the development and sustaining of relationships (Houston and Gassenheimer 1987; Kotler 2005; Fill 2005; Jobber 2007; Santala and Parvinen 2007). Further, it is through the exchange process that promotional programmes are formed in order to provide communication with the target audiences, consequently forming the marketing mix.

The marketing mix was originally conceived as the four Ps by McCarthy (1960) consisting of the characteristics of product, place, price and promotion. This followed from Borden (Cowell 1984) in the 1950s who originally listed twelve elements; produce planning, pricing,

branding, channels of distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling and fact finding and analysis. The four Ps proposed by McCarthy were considered within marketing as the accepted and unchallenged basic model for marketing, surpassing previous ideologies including the organic functionalist approach; the systems-orientated approach and influences of the parameter theory (Gronroos 1994). However, the specific constitution of the marketing mix is argued to have no set parameters or components and has been considered by some to be too simplistic (Rafiq and Ahmed 1995). Whilst the simplistic nature of the marketing mix in terms of individual tools is well documented, their strategic implementation within a broader corporate marketing strategy requires further investigation to bring this theory up-to-date. For example, in combining elements of the mix, what are the implications on budget and how does this vary depending upon the type of sports property being used? This will be explored within the research objectives relating to sponsorship strategy and aims to provide more contemporary answers to traditional theoretical aspects.

Boone and Kurtz (1999:25) in defining the marketing mix suggest that it involves, “Blending the four-strategy elements of marketing decision-making, product, price, distribution and promotion to satisfy chosen consumer segments”. Whilst this refers more to the fundamentals of creating a marketing programme (Fill 2005) as opposed to the ideology of the marketing mix, Smith and Taylor (2002:6) provide a more theoretical understanding. They suggest that “The marketing mix is essentially a conceptual framework which helps to structure the approach to each marketing challenge”. Furthermore, Hakansson and Waluszewski (2005:111) make links to economic theory, in which they suggest that from its origins, the marketing mix:

...was a resource allocation model resting on the assumption that the relevant resources involved in the exchange process, including the products, are homogenous, i.e. the economic value is independent of how they are combined.

In contemporary marketing, the ideology of the four Ps has remained and is now considered to be a fundamental theory of marketing (Gronroos 1994) with definitive terms for marketing, taking general guidance from the marketing mix (Pickton and Broderick 2001). Consequently, the traditional four Ps have been extended through discussion and analysis to the seven Ps, additionally including the characteristics of people, processes and physical evidence which are associated with service-marketing (Smith and Taylor 2002). Further, it has been argued that a principle element of any marketing mix is the delivery of a message which is accessible and convenient (Doyle 2002). Despite this, it is recognised that there is a need for a generic marketing mix (Rafiq and Ahmed 1995) which would intersect goods, services and industrial marketing. More recently, Crittenden (2005) has suggested that marketing needs to be reconceptualised as being more than the 4Ps, thus allowing for market orientation to be positioned as a precursor to strategic thought.

The role of marketing communications in its simplest form is concerned with promotion (Fill 2005). However, in theory, this requires fully-integrated strategies of communicating messages from the organisation to the target audience (Holm 2006). Therefore, not to be confused with McCarthy's four Ps marketing mix is the marketing communications mix (or promotions mix) which refers to the tools which are utilised by marketers to communicate their messages with target audiences (Fill 2005). Pickton and Broderick (2001) argue that the marketing communications mix is a four-way classification consisting of public relations, advertising, sales promotion and personal selling. However, it is more common within academic theory (Armstrong and Kotler 2000; Doyle 2002; Smith and Taylor 2002; Jobber 2004; Fill 2005) to identify five key marketing communications tools, with direct marketing

being added to the other components. Moreover, Smith and Taylor (2002) suggest that in addition to the five principle disciplines; sponsorship, exhibitions, packaging, point –of – sale and merchandising, word of mouth, E-marketing and corporate identify are also available. Furthermore, Smith and Taylor (2002) consider the addition of exhibitions to public relations as an integral component of publicity. It is evident (Boone and Kurtz 1999; Kotler 2000; Fill 2005) that communication is considered as the fundamental purpose and aim of marketing communications and a pivotal element of any marketing strategy or plan, hence the need to justify communication theory in conjunction with marketing communications. Research in sports sponsorship has focussed on advertising (Meenaghan 2001b), in relation to how consumers view advertising banners and how they can recall the brand name (Walliser 2003). What this research fails to address is how each element of a marketing communications mix is designed to connect with and engage the consumer in the brand. This is a vital aspect of research which requires attention, primarily due to the financial sums which are invested in these activities (Masterman 2007). The need for this guided the research questions to focus on strategy from a practitioner’s perspective and also to explore consumer behaviour and intention to purchase. This was related to whether consumers actually enter into brand relationships based on a sport sponsorship programme.

1.3 Customer relationship management

CRM systems have been founded on database technologies which companies are utilising in order to “...improve communications and relationships with consumers” (Jobber 2007:97). Described as a “...form of relationship strategy” (Richards and Jones 2006:122), CRM has emerged through increased industry focus to retain customers rather than to continually acquire new ones, due mainly to cost effectiveness (Kotler 2005). The aim of this approach is to focus more on the longer-term relationships which can be developed rather than a single

immediate transactional sale (Kotler 2005; Jobber 2007). Within the sports sponsorship industry, new technology to operate such systems is not in short supply (Ayre 2008). The technology is currently ready and available. However, the issue here is not only how these systems are integrated into the marketing function, but also what their value is to the brand. This study will aim to bridge this gap by exploring these issues within the practitioner phases. This will contribute to bringing the theory up-to-date and examine what is actually occurring within the sports sponsorship industry.

According to Jobber (2007: 600) “CRM is a term for the methodologies, technologies and e-commerce capabilities used by firms to manage customer relationships”. In order to achieve this, the sales departments within organisations need to be closely integrated into the marketing strategy (Jobber 2007; Ayre 2008) in order to form cross-department synthesis. Moreover, CRM is closely related to both relationship and database marketing (Zwick and Dieterle 2005) whereby the provision of more personalised and individual products and services is considered a priority (Kolah 2006; Wakefield 2007). However, in conceptualising both RM and CRM within the broader marketing function, CRM is seen more of a tactic to give a company an “...informational edge” (Zwick and Dieterle 2005;130), whereas RM is more of an overarching marketing philosophy (Payne 2000).

The idea of building communities is something which CRM can achieve (Wakefield 2007) and is built through gaining a single viewpoint of each customer (Jobber 2007; Wakefield 2007; Ayre 2008). The benefits of gaining greater customer intelligence, particularly within sports-related contexts is essential, whereby individuals form identity groups with which sponsoring brands can integrate with (Wakefield 2007). However, a true reflection of customer intelligence is lacking for brands using sports sponsorship. This is because they

consistently rely on data which does not explore their attitudes, preferences or intent to purchase beyond their ability to recall a brand name (CIM 2004; Chadwick and Thwaites 2006). For example, RM and CRM strategies allow for the opportunity of longevity in the customer and brand relationship. Therefore, when brands associate with particular sports events, does this already developed relationship provide the brand with the opportunity to gain sales at the time of the event due to loyalty? Does sports sponsorship have the capability to acquire customers from their habitually-purchased brands in order to start the process of developing a relationship with this customer base? Key areas of enquiry such as these will be explored in this study to evaluate how such strategies (RM and CRM) can impact on the consumer and in fact whether they have any impact at all.

CRM systems and practices can provide greater integrated inbound and outbound marketing campaigns, whereby a key factor is that it centralises customer contact (Ayre 2008). For example, from a database systems point of view, there will be a single number by which each individual is recognised. This is regardless of the channel with which they interact, thus allowing a more effective way of dealing with an individual customer (Ayre 2008). Further to this, in terms of communications CRM systems provide a mechanism in which to transmit a unified message to customers (Jobber 2007) which allow all communication efforts to be coordinated more effectively (Kotler 2003; Fill 2005).

The value of gaining greater customer intelligence and better quality customer information is imperative if organisations are going to shift more to precision-based marketing strategies, (Wakefield 2007) whereby they provide a competitive advantage (Ko, Kim, Kim and Woo 2007) rather than a traditional mass-marketing approach. Sheth and Sharma (2001) acknowledge that the move from mass-marketing to one-on-one marketing messages has

created a shift both functionally and organisationally for marketing departments, which in itself has caused problems. According to Richards and Jones (2006:127), “.....they (firms) find themselves in a battle to meet the escalating demands of each customer individually”.

Relating this to marketing communications, Zwick and Dieterle (2005:131) suggest that:

Traditional vehicles of a company's integrated marketing communication strategy such as sponsorship programs will need to find ways to deliver on the promises of the interactive communication paradigm. In other words, only if the sponsorship activity becomes an interactive customer touch point that generates incoming flows of customer data will it be able to position itself as a valuable promotional tool for the sponsor.

The success of CRM is dependent upon numerous factors from the point of view of the organisation. These include; needing to take a single view of customers across departments, having customer orientation and organising CRM systems and activities around customers and being able to manage cultural change in terms of CRM system development and technological advancements (Jobber 2007). If organisations can become more focussed in this manner they can gain financial benefit as CRM technology aids the allocation of costs to individual customers and reduces the need to average costs across larger groups (Richards and Jones 2006).

However, CRM is much more than database technology (Fill 2005; Richards and Jones 2006). It is part of a broader philosophy of developing longer-term relationships with customers (Kotler 2005; Kolah 2006; Wakefield 2007). The move within the industry appears to be more aligned with an E-business approach to CRM, given that those more traditional methods such as mass-media advertising present disadvantages, for example, the inability to perform highly targeted interactive direct marketing campaigns (Zwick and Dieterle 2005).

This will require organisations to be open-minded about the use of technology across all

sectors of their function, particularly marketing, as this industry becomes technologically driven over the next twenty five years (Kolah 2006).

1.4 Beyond linear communication models with advancing marketing communications

In conceptualising marketing communications, Fill (2005) argues that there are three areas which are central to understanding this concept: engagement, audiences and cognitive responses. This is reflected in Fill's (2005:7) definition, which suggests that:

Marketing Communications is a management process through which an organisation engages within its various audiences....organisations seek to develop and present messages for their identified stakeholder groups.....by conveying messages that are of significant value, audiences are encouraged to offer attitudinal and behavioural responses.

Consequently, Fill (2005) implies that engagement between organisation and the consumer is considered to be the pivotal essence of marketing communications, thus the mode of communication is of core importance within any marketing design strategies. In relation to strategies, sales promotion, public relations (commonly categorised as sponsorship and cause-related marketing), direct marketing, personal selling, publicity and advertising are all commonly identified as platforms for communication or types of promotion (Boone and Kurtz 1999; Kotler 2000; Smith and Taylor 2002; Doyle 2002). In addition, Fill (2005:9) refers to the aforementioned strategies as a "...*system*" in relation to the associated decisions of delivering marketing communications which can be interpreted as "...a series of communication episodes", for which Fill (2005) includes resources, research and evaluation, context analysis, promotional objectives and positioning. This led to the study needing to explore to what extent these communication episodes are designed, implemented and evaluated in relation to not only consumer response but also from a practitioner point of view. This presented a clear gap in the sports sponsorship literature in relation to whether these systems and processes are in existence and also whether they are standardised across the

industry (Kolah 2006). The reason this was felt to be important related to the broader issue of monitoring and evaluation in sponsorship which is not well-performed (CIM 2004; Kolah 2007; Masterman 2007). Analysis of literature would suggest that it is done on an ad-hoc basis (Chadwick and Thwaites 2006) and that this needs to be explored from a practitioner point of view to establish whether the communication is indeed evaluated with reference to any benchmarks.

Communication between the organisation and the consumer is a vital part of any marketing programme (Brannan 1998; Fill 2005; Sims 2005; Jobber 2007) as it can determine the success or otherwise of a promotional campaign (Kolah 2006). According to Fill (2005), whilst communication can offer exchange itself, there are four main roles of communication within marketing, those being to: inform and make potential customers aware of what is being offered; persuade customers of how desirable it is to enter into an exchange relationship; reinforce experiences and provide reassurance both prior to, and post purchase and finally to act as a differentiator, particularly in markets in which there is little to separate the competition. This is comprehensively studied from an advertising perspective (Meenaghan 2001b; Walliser 2003). However, actually exploring how sport sponsorship is used as a communication tool to cover these roles is not well-researched (Masterman 2007). If sports sponsorship is to act as a differentiator as suggested by Fill (2005) there needs to be some understanding of whether it engages consumers beyond recall of a brand name. Are sponsors wasting their investment if the sponsorship does not reach consumers beyond a simplistic recognition? Current literature provides no evidence to suggest that it does or does not, therefore this study aims to provide a much deeper understanding of how consumers react to and engage with a sport sponsorship programme.

Fill (2005:36) argues that it is:

Only by sharing meaning with members of the target audience and reducing levels of ambiguity can it be hoped to create a dialogue through which marketing goals can be accomplished.

This is similar in context to early discussion in this chapter whereby an organisation aims to communicate or promote messages to target audiences. However, Kitchen (1994:23) looks to elicit a deeper understanding of the role of communication in relation to marketing communications as a corporate function, by commenting that, "In order for marketing communications to have an effect on consumer minds, they have to reach the sense organs of the person(s) to be affected". Kitchen's (1994) argument is valuable in direct relation to the process and subsequent models of communication. Smith and Taylor (2002:73) propose a simplistic model of communication consisting of sender and message and receiver, based on the sender being considered as "...active", the receiver as "...passive", enabling the message to be "...comprehended properly". Subsequently, effective messages within a promotional strategy have been recognised to meet three requirements, namely that; the receiver's attention is gained, both the sender and the receiver have understanding and the receiver's needs are stimulated and there is a suitable method to meet them (Boone and Kurtz 1999). It has been accepted that the basic model of mass communications was developed by Schramm in 1955 (Fill 2005) which has seven components, an adapted version of which is shown in Figure 1.2.

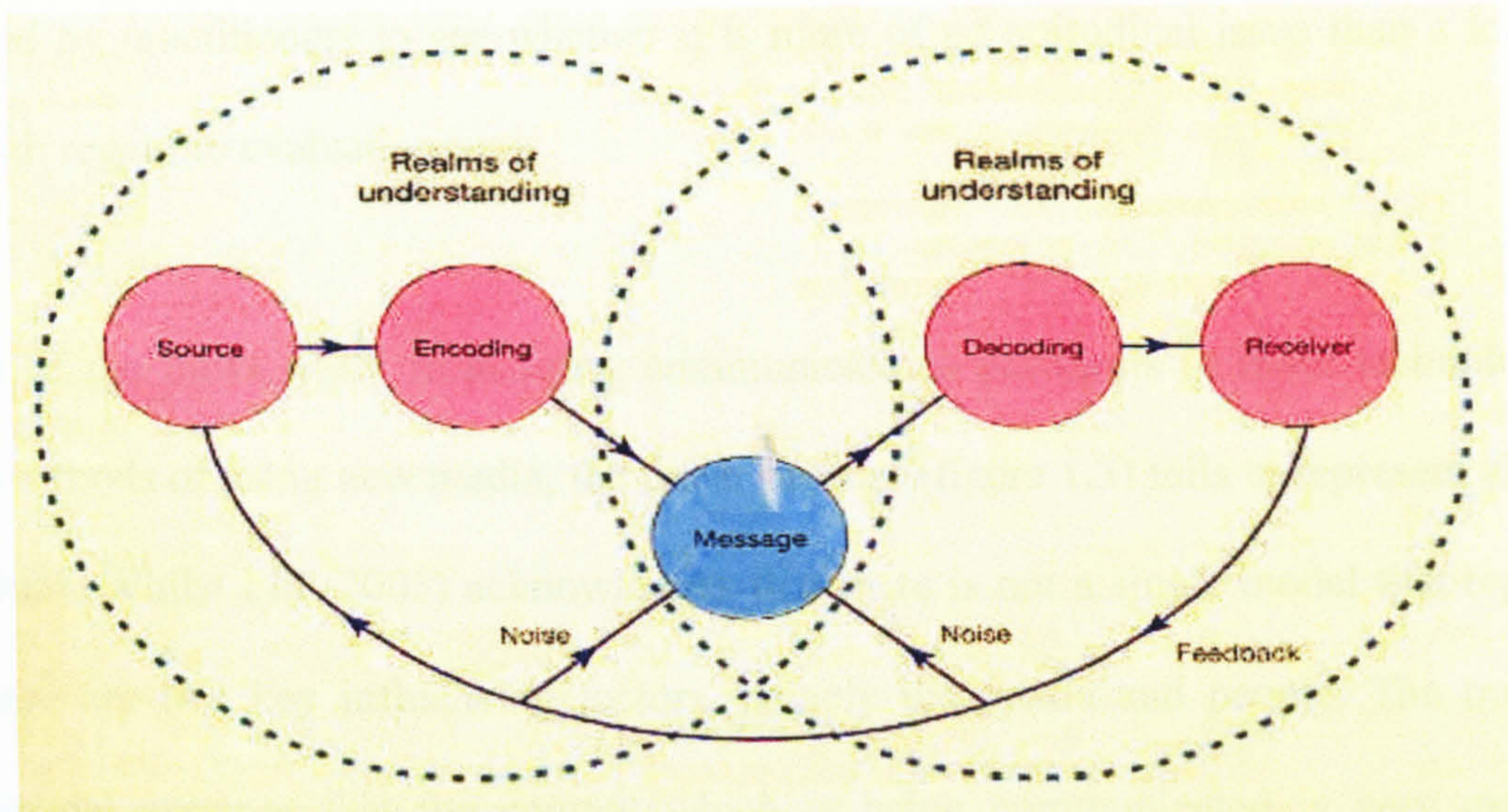


Figure 1.2: A linear model of communication

Source: Fill (2005:37).

In essence the model includes two elements which represent the parties involved in the communication (sender and receiver) ; two which are the communication tools (media and message); four which represent major communication functions (encoding, decoding, response and feedback) and finally the element of noise which refers to competing messages which may potentially interfere with the communication (Kotler 2003). Whilst the model as a composite process may appear simplistic, the success of the process comes in the links between the different elements and the quality with which these elements are joined together (Fill 2005). Further to this, Jobber (2007:504) recognises the need for marketers to understand how sophisticated receivers are, in terms of appreciating “...what people do with communication (e.g. advertising) as what communication does to them”. This provides a major opportunity to contribute to the current literature by focussing on sponsorship evaluation within the practitioner phases of this study. Given the sums of money that are invested in sports sponsorship, the current literature suggests a need for more evaluation of effectiveness but few studies and sponsors do this. This study will ask how evaluation is

perceived by practitioners to see whether it is more of an attitudinal issue than a logistical issue with regard to evaluation tools.

In light of the move away from using communications platforms to more technologically driven methods of using new media, the linear process (figure 1.3) fails to represent all forms (Fill 2005). Whilst Fill (2005) acknowledges that there is not a single model that represents this, there are two key influencing factors, namely the media and people. The traditional linear model assumes that the content which is being communicated is very much one dimensional (Fill 2005) and is transmitted through one medium. However, as communication platforms emerge through technology, new media allows for multi-platform communication strategy to be implemented (Kolah 2006; 2007), for example through broadband streaming, video advertising, portable media devices, mobile technology and broadcast technology (Kolah 2006). This exposes a gap in research and literature in exploring how consumers react to new technologies and whether they find new methods of promoting a sponsorship more or less acceptable than traditional ones. With traditional sponsorship being viewed as overly commercial in sport (Meenaghan 2001a), the emergence of new technology in sponsorship needs to be explored in terms of consumer impact. Further to this, from a practitioner point of view, the way in which technology is used in sponsorship should be examined in order to evaluate whether what occurs in practice has an impact on consumers. There has been criticism over recent years that brand promoters do not spend time understanding their consumers (Kolah 2007; Taylor; 2008). Therefore, this study will aim to contribute to gaining a better understanding of how consumers react to brands through sports sponsorship programmes.

1.5 Consumer buying behaviour and the influence of sport

Many consumer purchases are made on an individual basis (Jobber 2007) and are influenced by a number of factors, including, cultural, social, personal and psychological (Armstrong and Kotler 2000; Kotler 2003; Fill 2005). Culture is viewed as being the fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behaviours and this process starts when consumers are children (Kotler 2003). In order for brands to become cultural commodities and ingrained within the consumer society, the manner in which they are promoted is vital if a consumers decision-making process is to be impacted upon (Crompton 1996; Fill 2005). However, whilst some view consumers as individuals who wish to enjoy life through the choices that they make others "...lament consumerism as the final stage of commodification, where all relations between people are finally reduced to usage and exploitation" (Gabriel and Lang 1995:2).

It is important that marketers understand the motives which are key drivers for consumers, as these are what define a choice criteria (Jobber 2007). This relates to the emotional nature of sport (Wakefield 2007), given that consumers may be driven by esteem and status associated with a preferred sports team or individual (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001; McGrath *et al* 2005). In putting this into a process, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) identifies five different groups of needs, in which Maslow believed human needs are ordered hierarchically and whereby humans have a need to satisfy the most important need first (Kotler 2003; Jobber 2007) (see Figure 1.3).

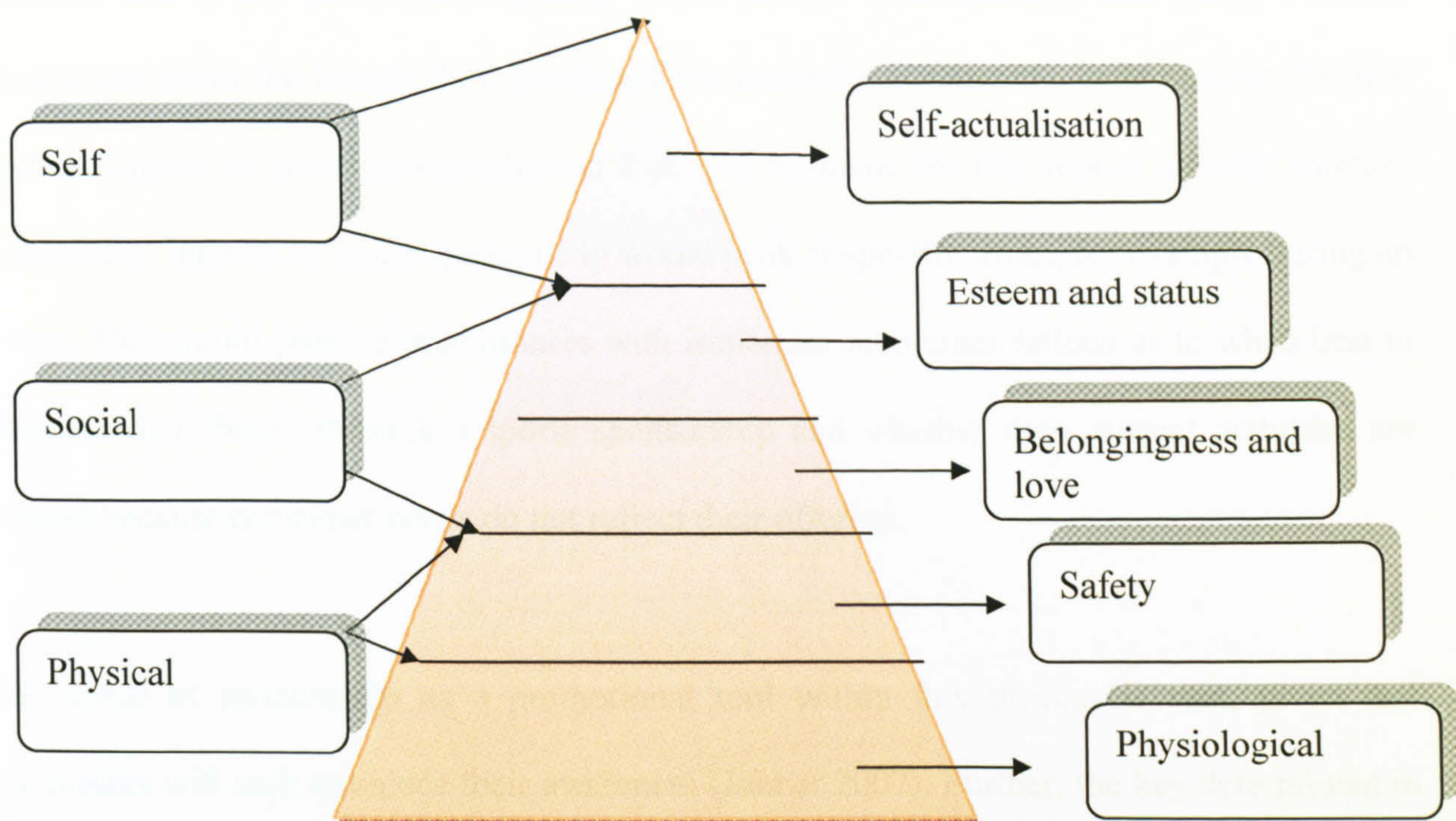


Figure 1.3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Jobber (2007:135).

The motives a consumer has to purchase a product will form a key link between needs, drives and goals (Jobber 2007) and the process into which they enter is commonly accepted as a five-stage process (Kotler 2003; Fill 2005; Jobber 2007). This consists of; need recognition/problem awareness (stage one), information search (stage two), evaluation of alternatives (stage three), purchase (stage four) and post-purchase evaluation (stage five) of the need. Initially, at stage one, marketing managers must be aware of the needs of the consumers and the problems they face, as “By being more attuned to customer’s needs, companies have the opportunity to create a competitive advantage” (Jobber 2007:120). The key within this is therefore to gather data and track consumption which will provide marketers with more granular data from which to provide consumers with what they need (Johnson 2008). Whilst it is recommended that data regarding consumption is collected in

practice this is not performed regularly (Ayre 2008). Consequently, this study will ask consumers about the brands they purchased (or normally purchased), their motives for this and the impact of sports sponsorship on that. The rationale for this was to identify whether consumers' interest in sports sponsorship would peak at specific times, for example during an event. This would provide practitioners with important recommendations as to when best to promote their brand through a sports sponsorship and whether their current activities are wasted because consumer needs do not reflect their offering.

The value of sponsorship as a promotional tool within this process is vast, given that consumers will seek to reduce their awareness (Jobber 2007). Further, the key determinant in the evaluation stage of the process is the level of involvement which a consumer has with a product. For example, high involvement incurs high expenditure and personal risk whereas low involvement is more about simple evaluations regarding purchases (Smith and Taylor 2002; Kotler 2003; Jobber 2007). Whilst sponsorship may operate more successfully with low involvement situations (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001), sponsorship has the ability to create brand meaning at all levels. Therefore with careful planning and alignment with the consumer decision making processes, marketers can look to impact upon how a consumer processes buying decisions (Crompton 1996). Differing involvement situations will evoke different consumer evaluations (Armstrong and Kotler 1999) with beliefs and attitudes being important factors to consider. This is particularly relevant for high involvement situations (Jobber 2007) whilst for low involvement, the process can be as simple as awareness, product trial and repeat purchase (Ehrenberg and Goodhart 1980).

Taking this further, the five-stage process identified in Figure 1.4 has been put into a three-stage stimulus-response model of buying behaviour (Armstrong and Kotler 2000; Kotler

2003) which integrates key personal, psychological, social and cultural buyer characteristics. These can influence consumers in a significant manner particularly within societal groups, of which sport is becoming a key cultural influencer (Wakefield 2007) (Figure 1.4).

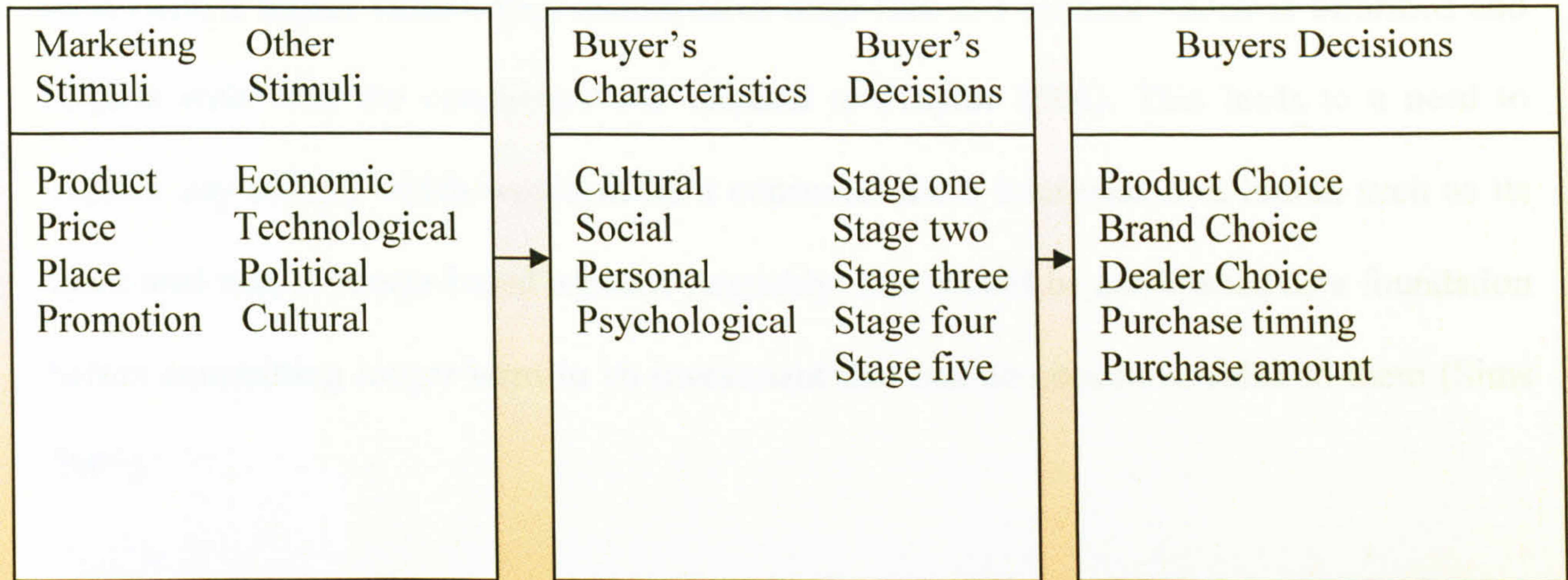


Figure 1.4: Model of buyer behaviour

Source: Adapted from Kotler (2003:184)

The basic concept of this model is that the marketing and environmental stimuli enter into the consumer's consciousness; here sponsorship can make an impact on trying to engage and communicate with consumers. This is preferably done on an integrated basis with other promotional tools (Fill 2005).

At this stage, and within buyer characteristics, it is accepted that cultural factors have the deepest influence in the conversion to buying decisions (Kotler 2003). From a sponsorship perspective, consumer brands can become deeply rooted within society and become embedded within cultural norms (Silk and Andrews; Sims 2005), if they can mirror the exposure that consumers receive to particular cultural values. In order to do this, sponsors

would need to invest in long-term deals rather than short one-off sponsorships resulting in consumers not being able to recognise a brand, let alone accept them within their lifestyles (Sport Business 2005). This is where current research fails significantly because it does not look beyond brand recognition as a measure of success (CIM 2004). If sponsors invest long-term (with a higher value), they should have done this in a manner which is informed and aligned with what the consumers will respond to (Taylor 2008). This leads to a need to explore key stimuli which would make a consumer more interested in a brand, such as its functional use, or image-based aspects. Arguably, this should be established as a foundation before committing longer term in an investment that has no consumer value to them (Sims 2005).

From this model, a key aspect to pick up on is the influence which reference groups (social characteristic) have on buyer decisions and behaviour, given both the direct and indirect nature of their influence on a consumer's attitude and behaviour (Kotler 2003). Aligning this with sport, reference groups exist in the form of fan networks and sport-related interest groups (Wakefield 2007). For example, this could be a fan group associated with a sports team which will meet regularly with the common interest of the sports team that they support, or it may be in the form of a social group which shares a common interest in a sport in a less fanatical manner (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Wakefield 2007). Moreover, other personal factors which are central for marketers to consider include the age of the buyer, their stage in the lifecycle, occupation, economic circumstance, personality and their self concept (Kotler 2003). In the context of this study, age is a key factor for sponsors to consider, given the brand culture within society with which young consumers (particularly Gen-Y) appear more involved (Stevens, Lathrop and Bradish 2005). From a spending point of view, this sector is expected to grow to approximately \$300 billion over the next ten years (Bronson 2000),

therefore the importance of understanding how age impacts on buying decisions is important, given the financial rewards possible from particular sectors. For example, the mobile industry has recognised the level of consumption of Gen-Y, with mobile technologies and the music and sport industries, subsequently investing heavily in sponsorship programmes combining these disciplines (Kolah 2006).

Linking to sports sponsorship, Crompton (1996) outlines a five-stage process whereby the potential benefits of sponsorship are linked to a product adoption process. Crompton's model (shown in Figure 1.5) suggests that sponsorship can increase people's knowledge and "...change people's attitudes, and as a consequence is capable of persuading people who had not previously bought a brand to buy it" (Jobber 2007:505).

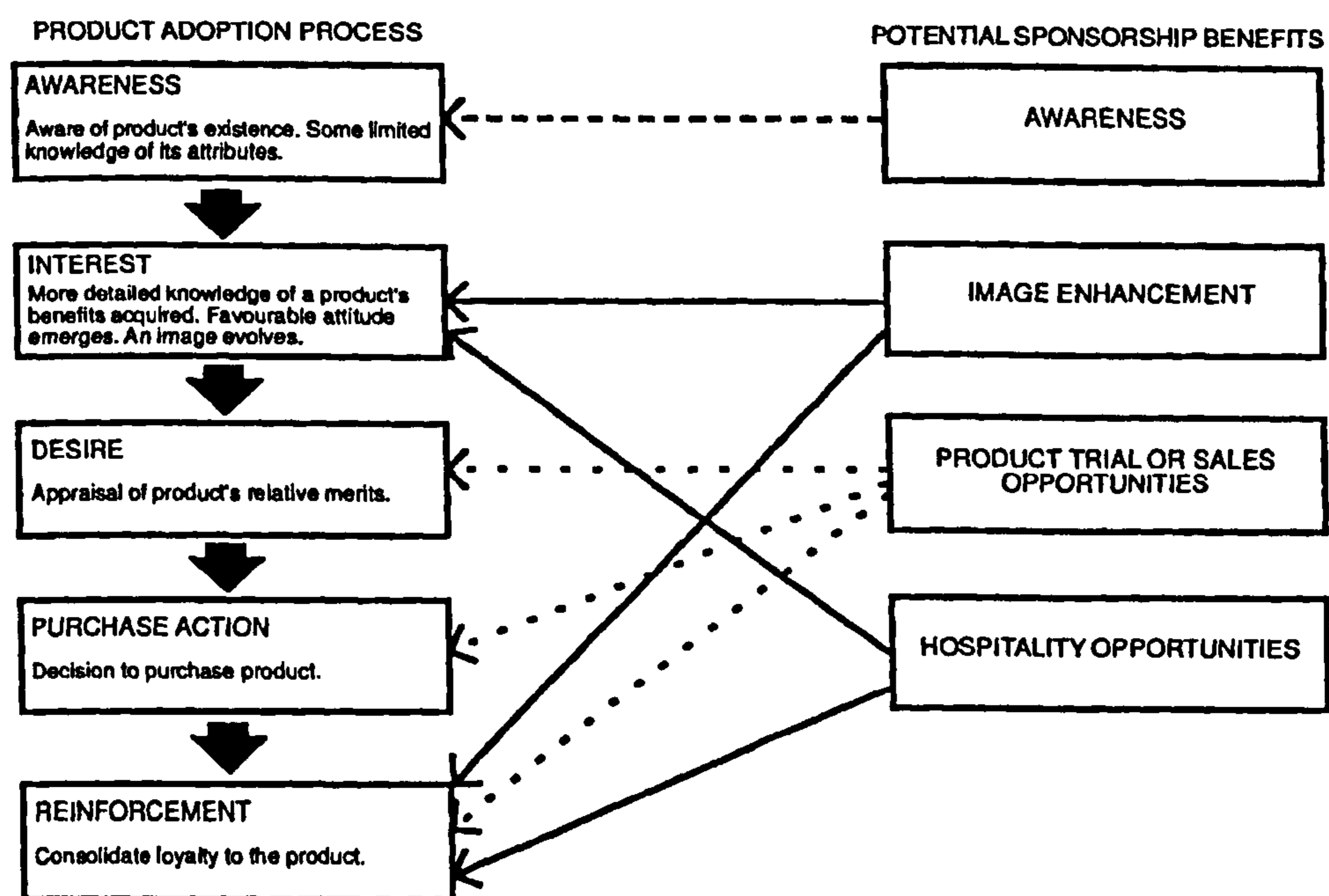


Figure 1.5: The potential roles of sponsorship in impacting the product adoption process

Source: Crompton (1996:201)

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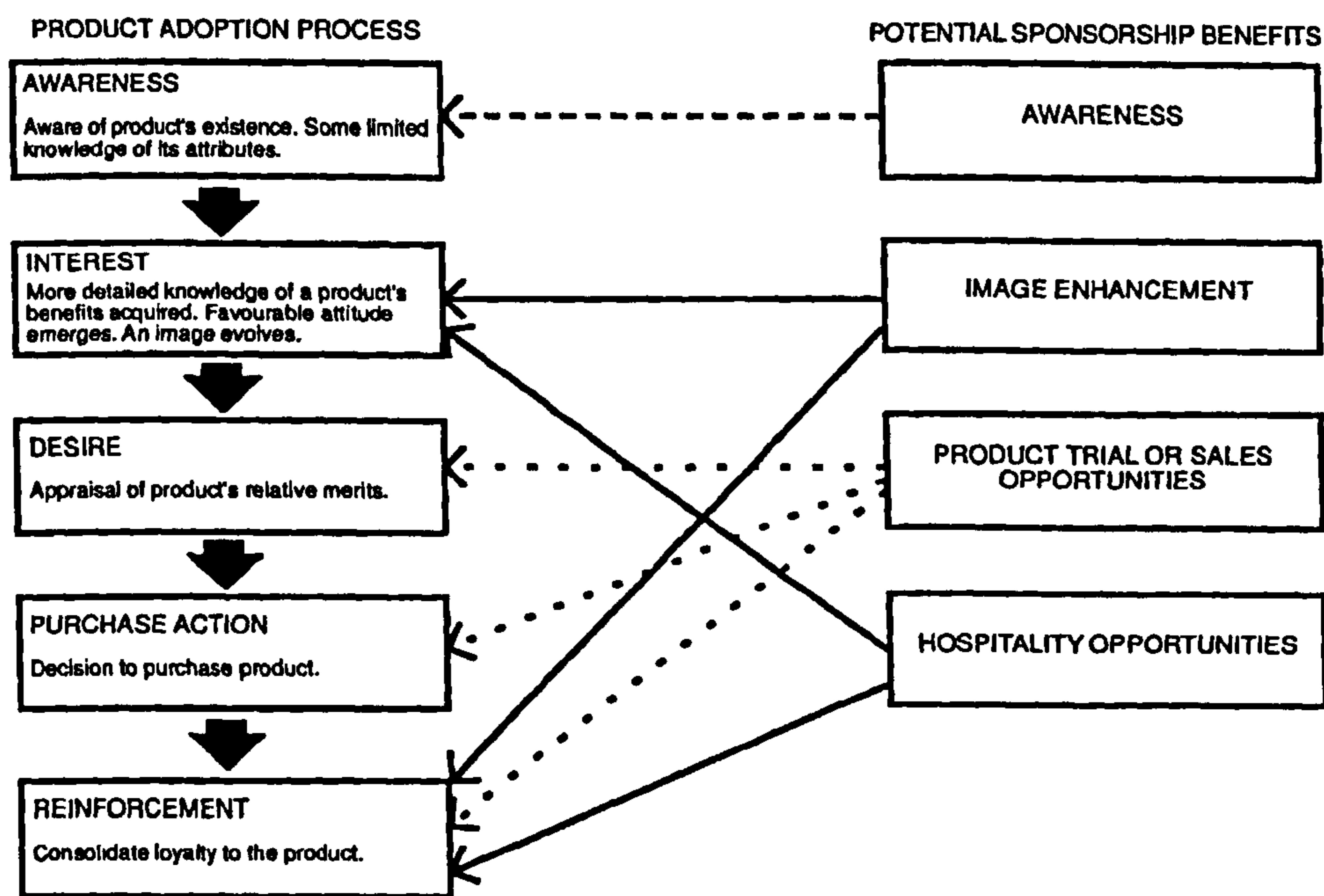


Figure 1.5: The potential roles of sponsorship in impacting the product adoption process

Source: Crompton (1996:201)

The significance of this proposed model and the link to consumer evaluations of sponsorship programmes is noteworthy. If a consumer is positive towards a sponsorship programme (for example through the community-based sponsorship of O2 and England Rugby (Kolah 2006) or the Flora sponsorship of the London Marathon) they are more likely to become involved within a product adoption process (Sims 2005). Furthermore, it is suggested that companies need to ensure that their sponsorship will create benefits which will guide potential customers from their current position in the product adoption process through the stages until they reach a level of loyalty (Crompton 1996). For example, the use of sales promotions at sports venues or hospitality at prestige events (Clarke 2003) should encourage customers to progress through this process. In discussing the relevance of sponsorship to both consumer evaluations and the product adoption process, it is reported that high-profile large sponsor companies who already have a substantial presence amongst consumer markets will utilise sponsorship to impact upon other stages of the process (Crompton 1996). However Crompton (1996) argues that sponsorship is a fixed variable within the product adoption process, due to the notion that the sponsorship is not finished when a consumer buys the product, but needs to be a permanent characteristic of the process to both maintain current consumers and attract potential new consumers. Therefore, sports sponsorship as a brand communication platform has the potential to impact at each stage of the process, with marketing stimuli having prominence at both the interest and desire stages (Fullerton 2006). This potential is under-researched in the literature, particularly in terms of how practitioners design their programmes to make an impact on consumers. Without any meaningful consumer data to work from, practitioners may be devising sponsorship programmes from the wrong angle and may not hit appropriate consumer triggers in relation to purchase intention. This study will examine both issues to see whether there is congruency between what consumers react best to and what practitioners are actually doing.

1.6 Sponsorship within the context of marketing communications and the emerging shift to IMC

Commercial sponsorship is an important and increasingly popular activity for marketing communications (D'Astous and Bitz 1995; Erdogan and Kitchen 1998; Bennett 1999; Meenaghan 2001a; Fahy, Farrelly and Quester 2004), along with other elements including advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. Despite being a recent development (Meenaghan 2001a) growth in this area is more substantial than investment in any other form of marketing communications highlighted by the fact that expenditure in the United Kingdom has increased from £220 million in 1987 (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998) to an estimated £1 billion in 2008 (Kolah 2006). Research into sponsorship demonstrates that the rapid growth in sponsorship is attributable to its "...novelty relative to traditional mass media advertising and the stronger 'cut-through' it arguably achieves" (Hoek 2005: 209). 'Cut-through' refers to the way in which brands can use marketing strategies such as sponsorship to get their brand to stand out within cluttered markets. For example, if a sponsor was a technology company that chose to sponsor in Premier League football they would need to create an innovative programme to stand out from other technology brands that also sponsor in this same market. Although Hoek (2005) suggests a stronger 'cut-through', this is not demonstrated in the literature (Tripodi *et al* 2003; CIM 2004). There is a need to explore consumer opinions in more depth to actually understand whether sponsorship has this impact on them in relation to the objectives of the sponsor. This would provide valuable insight for practitioners in designing more effective sponsorship programmes for a general consumer-base rather than for purely just sports fans.

An increasingly popular medium of sponsorship is sports sponsorship, as opposed to arts, broadcast or community (Bennett 1999; Kolah 2006; Jobber 2007). Sports sponsorship is

widely recognised as the most popular form of sponsorship with over two thirds of worldwide spending being invested in this area (Thwaites 1995; Bennett 1999; Crompton 2004). Growth in sports sponsorship in the UK has been substantial, increasing from £164 million in 1988 to £547 million in 2008 (estimated) (Kolah 2006). Given the high investment status that sports sponsorship has, further critical appraisal and observation of the associated sponsorship outcomes should be undertaken which extend beyond metric analysis (CIM 2004). This should extend to evaluating how successful sponsorship is shaping consumer behaviour beyond recognition. This study aims to do this through initially creating a picture of how consumers engage with sports sponsorship. The study will also use this data to examine whether practitioners incorporate this into their planning and whether the evaluative mechanisms they have in place reflect what actually occurs.

Sponsorship provides a central theme of the literature review for this study, given that the research is examining the impact of sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool on consumers and marketing practitioners. The increasingly important role that sponsorship plays within marketing communication has generated unified recognition (Meenaghan 2001a; Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005) whereby it is argued that marketers now view sponsorship as providing: a competitive advantage (Fahy *et al* 2004); an effective alternative to other marketing communication activities in terms of promotion (Tripodi 2001); a method of overcoming communication barriers (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998) and also the most apparent form of commercialisation in sport (Mason and Cochetel 2006).

However, it has been argued that it's exact placement (i.e. as a part of advertising, sales promotion or public relations) within marketing communications is subject to debate (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998; Fill 2005) with Fill (2005) opting to align sponsorship with

advertising. Erdogan and Kitchen (1998:369) suggest that such misinterpretation can be attributed to the exposure through broadcast coverage that sponsored events receive which leads to sponsorship being considered "...another form of advertising – not promotion – as if advertising is not a form of promotion". Further, it is commonly recognised that sponsorship alone cannot be effective in a "...stand alone capacity" (Fill 2005: 716), hence the realisation by academics and practitioners (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998; Smith and Taylor 2002; Fill 2005) that a fully-integrated communications programme is needed in order to examine its potential within the promotional mix (Fill 2005).

In relation to communication within marketing, integrated marketing communications is recognised as being the major development within the last decade of the twentieth century (Belch and Belch 2004), which can facilitate business movements to marketing communications with a customer-related justification (Kitchen, Brignell, Li and Spickett-Jones 2004). As a research field, IMC is relatively new and is therefore accepted as being an "...emerging concept" (Kitchen *et al* 2004: 32) which does not have a widely-accepted theoretical framework (Kim, Han and Schultz 2004; Swain 2004; Fill 2005; McGrath 2005), nor is it grounded in relation to its rationale or meaning (Kitchen *et al* 2004). Consequently it is argued that the underpinning literature for IMC is based around three areas; the continuing discourse between marketers and consumers, the message consistency and that every aspect of brand and consumer communication should be considered rather than a concentrated focus upon the traditional elements (McGrath 2005). Sports sponsorship literature does not demonstrate acceptance as to which media are most effective (Kolah 2006), which may be attributed to the varied nature of the sponsor objectives and types of sponsorship. This said, there is a need to explore in more detail how successful traditional and non-traditional brand communication media are connecting with consumers. Much attention has been paid to how

traditional in-stadia advertisement affects consumer brand recall (Bennett 1997). However, with the advent of new media for sponsorship, further research is required into the way that consumers' attitudes are influenced by more inventive sponsorship programmes.

However, whilst there is an increase in the acceptance of IMC and its potential as a communications strategy (Swain 2004), the conceptual understanding amongst practitioners and academics appears to be somewhat fragmented (Kitchen *et al* 2004). This questions practitioner embracement within this developing field (McGrath 2005) and the proposition that IMC has emerged as merely fashionable as opposed to a paradigmatic shift (Cornelissen and Lock 2000).

Although conceptually vague, it appears that the core outcome of IMC as a process is to influence consumer behaviour (Copley 2004; Kitchen *et al* 2004 Kliatchko 2005) through enhancing the development and subsequent management of customers' relationships (Parvatiyar and Sheth 2000), the practical application of this being the strategic coordination of promotional tools in a unified manner to create synergistic communications (Parvatiyar and Sheth 2000; Semenik 2002; Belch and Belch 2004; Kliatchko 2005; Jobber 2007). In terms of actually leveraging the integrated strategy, this is an under-researched aspect of IMC (Smith, Gopalakrishna and Chatterjee 2006). This research will address the question of how sports sponsorship fits into the broader marketing plan of a brand and how this is developed from an idea to an implemented programme. Further, there will be a consideration of how budgets impact this and whether rights fees undermine this process.

In defining IMC, there appears to be no unified concept or scope that has been determined within the literature. IMC is considered both a process (Semenik 2002) and a concept, which resembles the differences within literature as to definitive terms. From a process perspective,

Schultz and Kitchen (2000) identified four stages of IMC, these being: the tactical coordination of promotional elements; the redefinition of the scope for marketing communications; the application of information technology and financial and strategic integration. As a staged process, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) explain that practitioner embracement of the first two stages is the position most companies adopt. However, the transition to stages three and four is less forthcoming, which Holm (2006) argues could relate to barriers in the development of IMC from the tactical to the strategic.

Further, Smith *et al* (1999) have defined IMC through three definitive areas; the management and control of marketing communications, the synergistic delivery and the utilisation of all elements of marketing communications. This would appear to view a change in marketing communications through IMC as having moved from being a marketing planning process, to a strategic business process. Kitchen *et al* (2004:1419) notes that IMC is:

...a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.

Conversely, misinterpretation has led to fragmentation and the proposition of IMC as an expansion of brand communication (Schultz and Schultz 1998), measurability, multiple discipline communication, customer prospects and stakeholders inclusion (Kliatchko 2005). To this end, Kliatchko (2005) proposed a three-pillar model of IMC which emphasises audience centrality. This also outlines the shift in definition from relational loyalty to the suggestion that IMC is audience focused, channel centred and results-driven around all the relevant individuals in an organisation, not just based upon customers (see Figure 1.6).

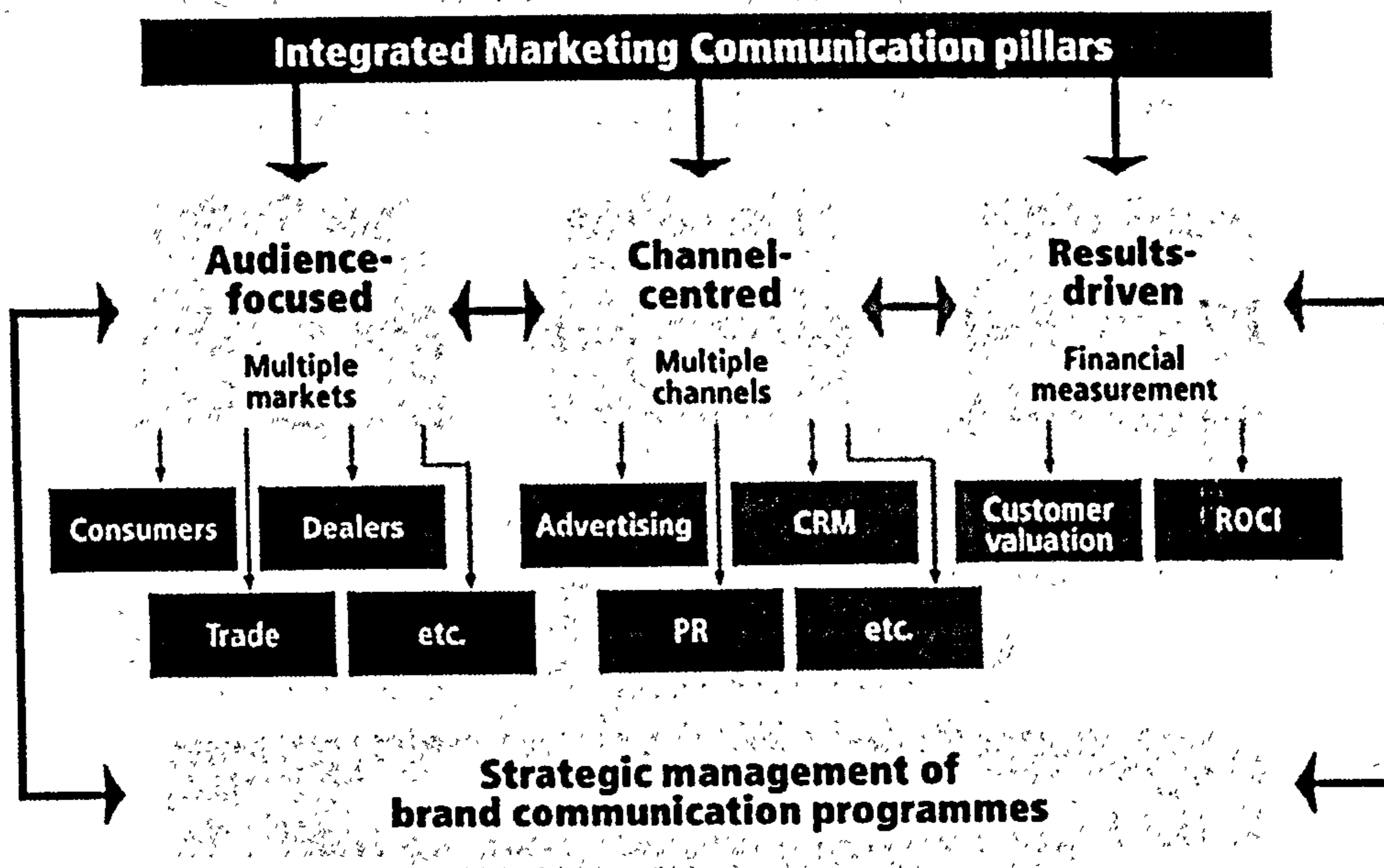


Figure 1.6: Three Pillars of the IMC Model

Source: Kliatchko (2005:26).

Kliatchko's model would appear timely in recognising the difference between previous and new definitions and clearly reflects the generic composition of IMC terms proposed in previous literature, including as a primary communication role (Belch and Belch 2004), moving away from mass communications (Copley 2004; Fill 2005) and the holistic management of marketing communications (Gould 2004). However, the suggestion should be made that the robustness of the model cannot be theoretically tested in light of the variety of thoughts in defining IMC (Gould 2004). This includes the notion that it is defined by those who actually implement it (Kitchen *et al* 2004), the apparent difficulty marketers have in translating its concept into actuality (Eagle and Kitchen 2000) and the recognition that the effectiveness of differing communications tool are subject to change over periods of time (Kotler 2005). Further, the actual changing nature of what needs to be integrated is not exclusive (Fill 2005) which, within the current climate, is more important. In addition, there is an increasing empowerment of the modern consumer (Santala and Parvinen 2007) which is

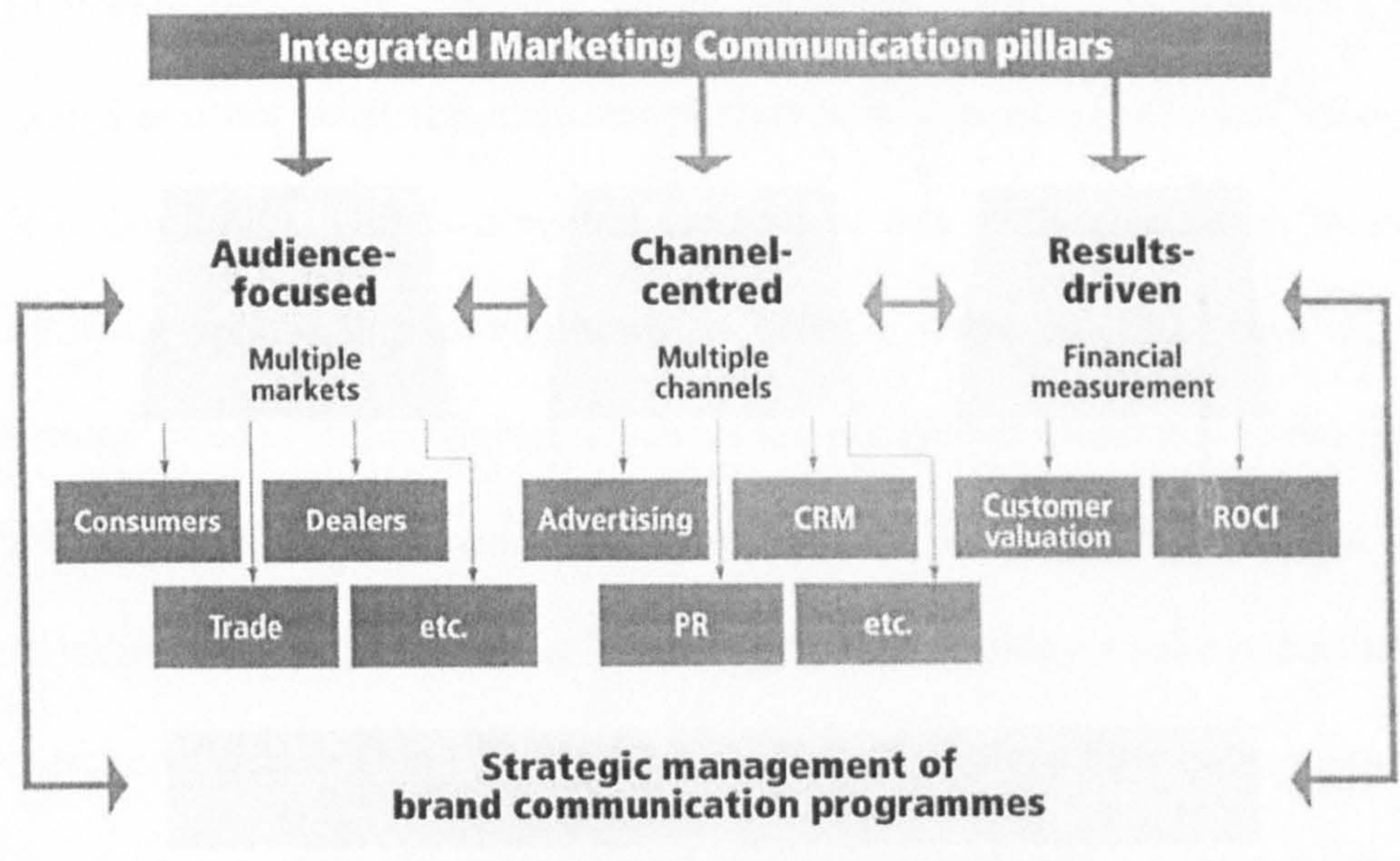


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forcing marketers to developing strategies which are creative, unique and aligned with what a consumer wants and not what the marketer perceives will work (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Sims 2005; Kolah 2006). This is a central element in this study in relation to technology which is allowing sponsorship programmes to become more enhanced and aligned with current consumer trends. Technological advances are not well-documented in the literature in terms of how they impact on consumers (Taylor 2008). This has led to criticism within the sponsorship industry about brands using technology for technology's sake rather than for any meaningful reason (Wilson-Dunn 2008). This study will explore how consumers react to a variety of sports sponsorships from traditional shirt sponsorships to more innovative models. This is explored from a purchase-intention point of view given the sales-orientated approach sponsor brands are currently adopting (Kolah 2006).

In discussing IMC from the management aspect of the promotion (Semenik 2002) one issue that is recognised as important in the implementation of IMC is measurement (Eagle and Kitchen 2000; Shultz and Kitchen 2000; Copley 2004). This is consistent across other marketing communications activities (Shultz and Kitchen 2000). To exemplify this, Swain (2004) conducted a study to establish whether, in measuring the success of IMC, there was a general consensus, or whether differences were common. The findings revealed that there was a high level of misunderstanding among academics who preferred a more communication-based outcome as success, whereas corporate executives indicated that revenue and repeat sales were their desired outcomes, whilst agency executives did not view these as imperative. This adds to the notion that a cohesive theoretical or practical paradigm for IMC is not yet completely established and advances Cornelissen and Lock's (2000) scepticism within the current climate. With this study having access to the industry, the aim is to provide not only theoretical contributions, but practice-based recommendations to assist

practitioners who do not yet understand the full potential of sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004).

Sponsorship does not sit alone (Masterman 2007) nor is it a single exchange (Farrelly and Quester 2003b), but moreover delivers marketing and corporate messages through a combination of communications tools as aforementioned. Previous to this, Tripodi (2001) outlined a basic placement map of sponsorship in terms of leveraging through an IMC programme (Figure 1.7) in order to achieve a more synergistically effective consumer impact. This reflects current research that deems sponsorship to be less effective as an isolated communication tool as opposed to a fully-integrated dynamic IMC programme (Tripodi 2001).

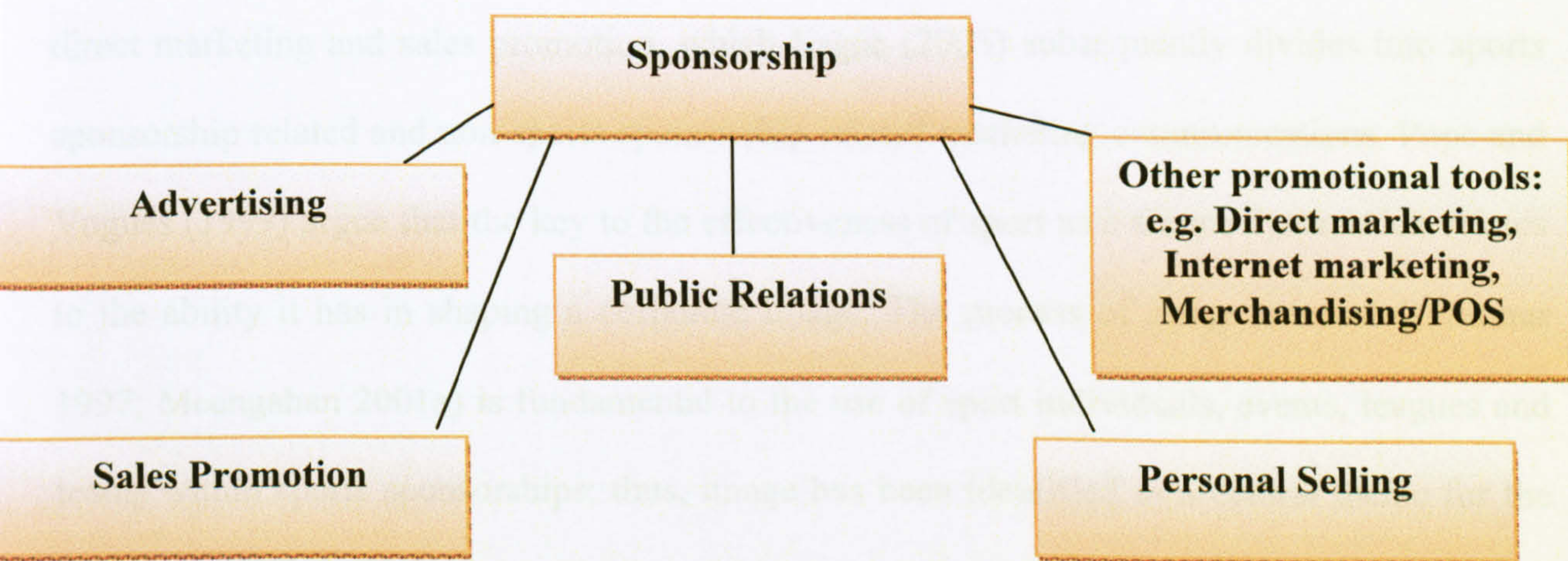


Figure 1.7: Leveraging sponsorship through IMC

Source: Tripodi (2001:10).

Additionally, the placement of sponsorship within other communications tools is regarded as complex and can be outlined in three distinct categories; within its own communications mix, as a public relations tool and as a marketing communications or marketing promotion tool

(Masterman 2007). Indeed, this study looks at the way sponsorship is considered the core brand communication platform available to sports sponsors and also whether the unified publicity it receives is justified through a return on investment for the brand.

The apparent sophistication of sponsorship relates to the manner in which sponsorship is viewed as delivering on both marketing and corporate communications strategies which may reflect the lack of understanding which has been shown by marketing communications practitioners as to the benefits that sponsorship can achieve (Redmandarin 2004). As previously identified, the marketing communications mix consists of five core tools (Armstrong and Kotler 2000; Doyle 2002; Smith and Taylor 2002; Jobber 2004; Fill 2005) However, in relation to the marketing of sport, Lagae (2005) suggests that the sports marketing communications mix is four-fold. This comprises advertising; public relations; direct marketing and sales promotion, which Lagae (2005) subsequently divides into sports sponsorship related and non-sports sponsorship related marketing communications. Pope and Vogues (1999) argue that the key to the effectiveness of sport as a form of promotion relates to the ability it has in shaping a corporate image. The process of image transfer (Gwinner 1997; Meengahan 2001a) is fundamental to the use of sport individuals, events, leagues and teams within sports sponsorships; thus, image has been identified as a central theme for the literature review, examining both image objectives and the stages at which sport impacts on image transfer within a sponsorship programme.

From a research point of view, evidence concerning how sponsorship programmes work in terms of their relationship and impact upon consumers is lacking in current research (Meenaghan 2001a), hence the need for this study to make the bridge between consumers and practitioners. In addition, the role that sponsorship plays within approaches such as RM and

CRM (Farrelly and Quester 2003b) requires greater understanding. As previously stated, research in sponsorship to-date has focused on the profiling of management practices and examining sponsorship as a communication option through recall and recognition studies (Meenaghan and O'Sullivan 2001). Moreover, research into consumer perceptions of commercial sponsorship in its generic form is yet to be explored (Meenaghan 2001a). The focus of research within marketing communications has been on advertising, whilst understanding the phenomenon of sponsorship is poorly developed (Meenaghan 2001a). This increases the need for this study to examine both consumer and practitioner perspectives, in order to create understanding, and comparisons between theoretical assumptions and practical realities.

Furthermore, Olkkonen, Tikkanen and Alajoutsijarvi (2000) criticise current enquiry into sponsorship for the prominent management focus that it adopts. Research attention has been placed on the views of the sponsoring companies and the portrayal of sponsorship as merely a marketing communications tool. Olkkonen *et al* (2000) suggest that the interpretation and connection with marketing-mix management has resulted in current sponsorship research being 'superficial' and 'normative'. Consequently, it has been suggested that current sponsorship research uses Stimulus – Organism – Response (S-O-R) thinking through which the company's marketing activities (S) influences the response of the consumer (R). This is dependent upon the characteristics of that consumer (O) whereby the role of sponsorship within this process is argued to be as a mass communications tool (Olkkonen *et al* 2000).

1.7 Connecting marketing and sports marketing

Sports marketing as a practitioner field and as an academic area of interest is growing both in the UK and globally and its origins can be traced back to ancient Rome in the form of

sponsored gladiatorial games (Shannon 1999). The development of sports marketing has been recognised as one of the fastest growing areas of marketing communications (Bush, Martin and Bush 2004; Kahle and Riley 2004), in addition to that of commercial sponsorship (Bennett 1999; Meenaghan 2001a; Fahy *et al* 2004).

The sports business is currently estimated to be worth in excess of \$213 billion which is twice the size of the automotive industry and seven times the size of the movie industry, with a further \$897 million being spent on athlete endorsements (Bush, Bush, Clark and Bush 2005). Given this, Bush *et al* (2005) note that sports marketing is indeed a vital component of our economy which offers ripe opportunities for consumer marketers. However, while the literature frequently details the number of opportunities for sports sponsorship the lack of research into consumer evaluations does not explore the full extent of these opportunities. Current literature is limited in how it explores consumer opinions. For example it does not consider how sports sponsorship impacts on purchase in terms of the stimuli that may advance consumers to the purchase stages. Taking this into consideration, the study will provide a consumer perspective to couple with practitioner data and provide a more holistic overview as to how sports sponsorship impacts on consumers.

As an industry, sports marketing can provide an alternative consumer communications vehicle which does not necessarily conform to other marketing communication's traditional practices or rules (Burnett, Menon and Smart 1993). This could be ascribed to the differences between customers and fans (Wakefield 2007) and also the manner in which the meaning of sports marketing differs among individuals (Kahle and Riley 2004). This is partly reflected by Copley (2004), who argues that sports marketing refers to three different marketing objectives, marketing intended to sell sports as entertainment, building sports participation through motivating people to take part in sports activities and using sport to sell non-sport

products or services. Further to this, Lagae (2005) contextualises sports marketing within sports management and marketing communications (see Figure 1.8).



Figure 1.8: Sports marketing communication within sports management

Source: Lagae (2005: 11).

In relation to the sports marketing aspect of Lagae’s model (Figure 1.8) the differences between general goods and services marketing and sports marketing need to be explored. This would contribute to justifying whether the accurate depiction is that sports marketing “...better explains and predicts effective marketing” (Wakefield 2007:1) or whether sports marketing is a “...special case” of marketing (Wakefield 2007:1).

While there is undoubtedly a cross-over in the concepts of marketing such as exchange, value and relationships through to specific processes such as positioning, segmentation, marketing mix elements, customer attraction and customer retention (Kotler 2005), the differences lie within dimension functionality. There is a need for sports marketers to use more dynamic CRM strategies and systems given the changing nature of customer behaviours (Wakefield

2007). Table 1 outlines the top ten differences between goods/services marketing and sports marketing.

Table 1: Top ten differences between goods/services marketing and sports marketing.

Top 10	Dimension	Goods/Services	Sports Teams/Events
1	Purchasers	Customers	Fans
2	Adoption	Loyalty – repeat purchasers of same brand	Psychological identification with individuals and teams that goes beyond loyalty
3	Promotion and Media	Owner pays media for promotion	Fans, sponsors and media pay to promote team/event
4	Distribution Channel	Static: more site-limited	Mobile, more flexible
5	Product	Adapted	Global
6	Price	Customer pays a given price for good/service	Two-party: Fans frequently pay for <i>right</i> to pay for ticket
7	Facilities	Corporate owner buys/builds own facilities	Government (taxpayer) typically pays for facilities
8	Competition	Individual branding in competitive markets	Cooperative contractual relationships, monopoly power and antitrust exemption
9	Exchange	Principally economic	Principally social
10	Employees	Contractual power favours owners	Contractual power favours employees (players)

Source: Adapted Wakefield (2007:4)

In analysing the dimensions in Table 1, the area that makes sports marketing unique broadly links to consumption and the variety of communication communities evident within the multi-levelled platforms, whether this is marketing through or marketing of sports (Fullerton

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2006). For example, Shoham and Kahle (1996) performed a narrow segmentation of the sports fan market and propose that engagement in sport can occur on three levels; competitive, fitness and nature-related sports, with Sun, Youn and Wells (2004) adding paid fitness sports. Communication occurs through three communities; attending as live spectators (spectators), watching sport on television (viewers) and reading sports related magazines. In their study, findings revealed a level of shared consumption and also associated media behaviour of different consumption communities (Shoham and Kahle 1996), reflecting the value that sport has as a social institution (Sun *et al* 2004) which is integral to fan consumption behaviour and associated activities (Holt 1995; Kelley and Tian 2004). The implications for sports marketers are based around moving away from simple sports participation and sports spectators to a more detailed planning of media strategies in order to attain more participant and spectator segments (Sun *et al* 2004). However, this has not been explored from a general consumer point of view (Meenaghan 2001). It is argued that this would benefit brands that need to re-engage in consumer marketing (Taylor 2008). This study will explore whether such social factors are valid outside of sports-based communities and if these can be replicated within general consumer markets then it could be argued that the power of sports sponsorship is significant (Taylor 2008).

The social (facilitation) aspect of sports participation and sport spectatorship is one of the unique aspects of sport that Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2000) identify, along with providing real time drama, being intangible and subjective, uncontrollable core product, price structures which are determined by the marketer's perception of consumer wants, inconsistent and unpredictable products and personal identification with the sport. The latter of these, identification, is important to marketers and sports organisations moving into the twenty first century, in recognising the value of fans, and in particular fans with high levels of

identification (Dalakas, Madrigal and Anderson 2004; Wakefield 2007). In building identification, Wakefield (2007) proposes a model of identification (Figure 1.9) incorporating five factors.

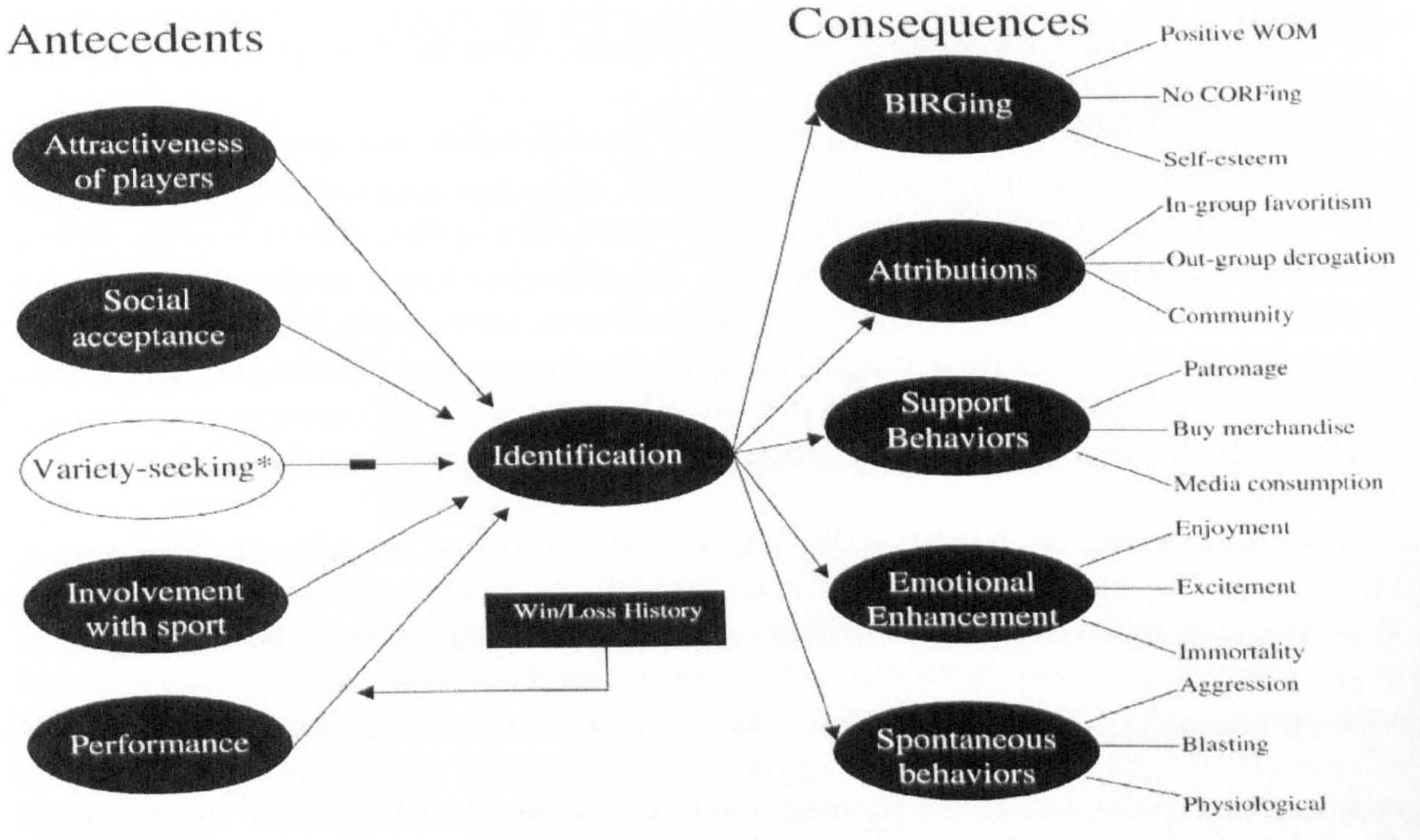


Figure 1.9: Model of Identification

Source: Wakefield (2007:16)

The model is comprehensive in its approach outlining the building of fan identification whilst also identifying a negative influence on identity (consumers who are variety seeking). The value of the model leads to the promotion of precision marketing in being able to target consumers and fans at different levels of the model, who will all require specific one-to-one communications rather than a mass media approach from sports organisations and marketers. This reflects the shift in sports marketing from static marketing plans to dynamic CRM as an informational tactic in order to tailor marketing mixes to meet the multitude of target markets they service, thus creating profitable results (Wakefield 2007).

The building of identity links to the associations that individuals make with successful sports teams which is phrased *basking in reflected glory*, (BIRG) was originally proposed in 1976 by Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman and Sloan (Dalakas *et al* 2004). The basic notion of BIRG suggests that individuals attempt to associate themselves with individuals and/or groups who are deemed to be successful (Cialdini *et al* 1976). A key factor within this is self-esteem and the manner in which highly identified fans in particular will seek ways in which to develop this in order to reinforce their own image (Wakefield 2007).

This is commonly recognised as a key attribute to sports marketing and something which sports organisations and marketers should look to develop in order to build fan and team identification (Dalakas *et al* 2004). The more highly identified a fan is with their sports team, the increased likelihood of a sports organisation gaining more support from increased ticket sales; increased financial input into team; higher level of broadcast viewing and increased augmented merchandise sales (Wakefield 2007). Arguably, sports enthusiasts and sports fans are the groups which are more likely to engage with sports marketing efforts, due to the psychological responses and connections which are elicited through motivating individuals to develop attitudinal and behavioural responses associated with sports objects (Funk and James 2004).

1.8 Summary

This chapter has provided a background to the broad practice of marketing, looking to outline current industry approaches such as RM and IMC and subsequent tactics used, such as CRM. While the current literature has explored how sport sponsorship can impact on consumer brand recognition, it fails to address how sponsorship programmes can impact on purchase intention and also attitudes towards the brand. Further to this, current sports sponsorship

research has been, on the whole, linked to sports fans and not general consumers. Recommendations in the literature have suggested that this requires exploration, particularly given the sums of money invested in sports sponsorship.

Research has focused on advertising rather than sponsorship, therefore the study will explore how consumers connect and engage with a brand and also how brands do this strategically. With sponsors having numerous commercial objectives, which have moved more to generating profit, it is important that the impact on consumers is studied beyond brand recognition. This is a key criticism within the literature and is something which will be explored in the consumer phases of this study. Further, with brand promoters indicating how they need greater consumer intelligence regarding their products, this study aims to provide an in- depth account of *how* consumers engage with brands through sports sponsorship.

From a practitioner perspective, the use of technology to promote sport sponsorship programmes is increasing. However, the effectiveness of this has not been evaluated. This requires exploration from both a practitioner and consumer perspective to match strategy to whether consumers embrace new media or whether they favour traditional media. This is important given that literature suggests that sports sponsorship provides a more effective way to make a brand visible in the market than other promotional media. However, with the complex nature of commercial objectives that sponsors are now seeking, the effectiveness of sports sponsorship in a generic context needs investigating.

With considerable movement in the sports sponsorship industry towards the use of sports sponsorship as the main brand communication platform, the manner in which sponsorship programmes are designed and implemented to meet objectives requires examination. The

rationale for this is that whilst idea generation in sports sponsorship does not appear to be in short demand, the conversion of this into sponsorship programmes which achieve brand objectives requires research. If sponsoring brands are investing heavily in sports sponsorship programmes which are based on little or no consumer research, the cost effectiveness of the use of sponsorship over other media is questionable.

A key area for investigation that emerged from the literature is the distinct lack of effort by practitioners to evaluate their sponsorship programmes. However, whilst this is repeatedly noted in literature, little research has been done to address this key issue of evaluation. This study will ask why evaluation is not regularly carried out. Further, the study will explore how budget impacts on this process and also how it impacts on strategic planning for the whole sponsorship programme.

Chapter two will now focus on the brand, to explore how sports sponsorship is integrated into broader corporate plans. This will include an examination of how sponsorship can lead to benefits such as greater brand equity. As sponsorship is becoming recognised as the most effective brand communication platform (Kolah 2006) the importance of branding through sponsorship will be explored, as this is investigated within the practitioner phases of this study. This develops the consumer phases of data which will explore the role which brands play for consumers in purchase decisions, particularly looking at how brand personality is translated through marketing efforts. Brand loyalty will also be explored given that this relates to tolerance of brand promotion through sports sponsorship and is investigated in the consumer phases. Finally, the chapter will examine the contention that technology is becoming the integral part of brand-building through sports sponsorship programmes. Technology is allowing brands to be creative in the media that are available to them.

However the impact that this has on consumers is unknown as literature does not examine the affect that technology has on a consumer's attitude towards a sponsoring brand. If consumers do not react positively to new technological advances in sports sponsorship then brands may be wasting opportunities to connect with them. This again will ask the question of whether practitioners plan or evaluate sports sponsorship programmes beyond brand recognition and also whether this is limiting the full capacity that sports sponsorship has.

CHAPTER TWO

Brands and Branding

"A brand that captures your mind gains behaviour. A brand that captures your heart gains commitment".

Scott Talgo

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two develops chapter one, which focussed on establishing core marketing theory in connection with the definition of the research objectives. This chapter will initially outline the role of brands and branding for organisations. Further, it will explore key components such as brand knowledge and personality. The chapter will then explore customer-based brand equity and how this can be increased and the role that sponsorship (particularly sports sponsorship) plays in this process.

The chapter will also explore online branding, as a future direction that branding can take with technological advances. As part of this, the chapter will examine the need to gain competitive advantage in a society where brands are increasingly important. A key gap in research relating on this concerns brands use of sponsorship programmes to connect with and engage the consumers with the brand (Taylor 2008). How brands are currently doing this is a focus for the practitioner phases of the research. This develops the consumer phases which explore how sponsorship programmes are viewed by consumers and whether there is a need for a new approach to be taken in sponsorship planning.

There is growing concern in the literature that brands need to engage in consumer sponsorship more than purely business-related activities (CIM 2004; Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008) as the manner in which brands construct their image and personality needs to be explored. If brands are constructing their image without suitable consumer evaluations, how does the brand know if the sponsorship is delivering what they intended? While the literature reports how well consumers can recall brand names, it does not look beyond this to how they engage with a brand image and message (CIM 2004). General consumer attitudes and opinions towards sports sponsorship are not usually examined (Meenaghan 2001a), therefore the approach adopted in this study will provide consumer-based responses for industry to match to their current practice.

2.1 Branding within the corporate function

The recognition of branding as a strategy tool for organisations is not a recent phenomenon (Rooney 1995; Leone, Rao, Keller, Luo, McAlister and Srivastava 2006), in which brands play an integral part in current marketing strategy (Grace and O’Cass 2002). The important role that sponsorship can play is how it can bring a brand alive through association (Church-Sanders 2008). The literature, to date, does not explore beyond metric analysis how well a sponsorship programme can perform as a brand communication platform (Kolah 2006). A key area that is missing from research are the in-depth consumer evaluations which would act as a solid base for practitioners to plan and design more effective programmes.

According to Holt (2004:3), brands emerge as a result of authors’ “...telling stories”. There are four primary types of authors: companies; culture industries; intermediaries and customers:

Brand stories have plots and characters, and they rely heavily on metaphor to communicate and to spur our imaginations. As these stories collide in everyday social

life, conventions eventually form. Sometimes a single common story emerges as a consensus view...most often though, several different stories circulate widely in society (Holt 2004:3).

In defining a brand, Richard, Foster and Morgan (1998:47) recognise that brands are part of lives, in which, "...its personality represents a promise and a set of values that are supported by benefits, features and functions that deliver that promise". The complexity of a brand from a symbolic point of view is recognised within literature (Kolter 2003; Rajagopal 2006). Kotler (2003) believes a brand has the capability to deliver up to six levels of meaning, those being: attributes; benefits; values; culture; personality and user level. Further, the need for organisations to research where the consumer holds the brand in their mindset is recognised as imperative to building strong brands (Kotler 2003) and is something which brands using sports sponsorship are starting to recognise. However, there is still progress to be made from an industry point of view (Sims 2005). For example, for London 2012, the London Organising Committee for the Games (LOCOG) has a sponsorship deal with Adidas for which they are creating the Adidas Urban Culture Campaign in which young people can upload videos of urban sport onto *You Tube* (Balfour 2008). Similarly, the O2 English Rugby community campaigns engage the whole community in rugby-related fun activities. The emphasis here is how the brands mould their campaigns around consumer needs to foster positive responses. Whilst these are examples of current practice in sports sponsorship, practitioners would benefit from research which identifies how consumers perceive sponsorship as a promotional activity. In order to do this, robust evaluation mechanisms need to be in place. However, this is an area where research is under-developed (Tripodi *et al* 2003; CIM 2004; Masterman 2007). It is, therefore, important to explore how practitioners view the role of monitoring and evaluation within the design of their programmes. If there are currently mechanisms in place which are not being utilised, this presents a different issue from finding evaluation tools that suit the complex industry of sponsorship.

The values of the brand which are transferred from organisation to consumer are core to how they attract and keep customers through promoting not only product/service value, but also image, prestige or lifestyle (Rooney 1995). The key for marketers, with this in mind, is how to integrate this in a manner which is consistent, coherent and meaningfully attractive to consumers. This is where the current literature is lacking. There is little evidence to determine how consumers react to sports sponsorship programmes and also whether they engage beyond the brand name.

An increasingly popular way of doing this for organisations, is to link a brand with an event via sponsorship which, according to Roy and Cornwell (2003:377) “...enables firms to gain consumers’ attention with interest by associating with events which are important to them”. This is currently heightened through CSR strategies with sponsorship (Kolah 2006), as brand promotion through sports sponsorship in commercial sports needs to minimise the financial exploitation tag it currently holds (Meenaghan 2001b).

Developing credible brand associations is key to this, from both a marketing and consumer point of view, whereby marketers can use them to “...differentiate, position and extend brands to create positive attitudes and feelings towards brands and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand” (Low and Lamb 2000:351). For example, the Flora London Marathon has created a general sense of health and wellbeing from its association with this event (Sport Business 2005). However, it is not clear from current research whether this strategy is effective for the brand as most consumer literature on sponsorship is dedicated to measuring brand recognition.

Sponsorship can help to create more meaningful associations and relationships through passion branding (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Ayre 2008). The emotion associated with sport includes not only sport fans but general consumers in a variety of sectors (Clarke 2003), providing more inventive and engaging methods of promotion (Kolah 2006). However, the level of detailed planning required to produce this is wide-scale and currently only based on limited consumer data. The literature does not explore emotions in relation to consumer perceptions of sports sponsorship, nor does it examine whether unique and inventive programmes are effective in achieving objectives. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how consumers react to different media for promoting sponsorship. Further, it will provide an overview of how practitioners develop their sponsorships to be different from other brands.

A key determinant of this is the extent to which the brand image can project the organisation into the hearts and minds of consumers, something which requires congruence; particularly in reciprocal image transfer processes (Gwinner 2005). Reciprocation in branding is recognised as being important within current marketing relationships. However, with this comes problems in ensuring mutual benefits (Rooney 1995). Moreover, Rooney (1995) views the ability to find the right brand mix difficult, whilst generating adequate sales as a simultaneous activity. This is something that sponsorship can help a brand to achieve, given its sophistication in achieving both return on investment (ROI) and return on objectives (ROO) (Kolah 2007). A criticism in the literature is that whilst brands are moving more towards generating sales from their sponsorship programmes, they fail to explore the best media to achieve this by (CIM 2004). If brands are measuring the impact of their sponsorship purely by the number of brands they can recall at an event, they are failing to maximise the opportunities which sponsorship can provide. Recall of brands is not a measure of whether

the consumer will subsequently purchase the brand (Masterman 2007), Therefore, the whole development of sponsorship programmes from idea generation to inception requires more rigorous evaluation.

In conceptualising brand associations, Low and Lamb (2000) consider brand image (functional and symbolic perceptions), brand attitudes (overall evaluation) and perceived quality to be key dimensions. In interpreting a brand as an image, De Chernatony (2006:48) also refers to the functional qualities which contribute to the brand associations for which “It is unlikely for two people to have exactly the same image of a brand...but their images may have common features”. Connecting this to sponsorship (in particular sports sponsorship), brand image has a stronger role to play developing the desired brand associations of the organisation. This relates to the role that congruence (functional or image-based) plays between events and brands. In addition, emotional perceptions accompany the brand images developed in these circumstances (Gwinner 2005), something which sport engenders (Duffy and Hooper 2003).

Although recognised as being category-specific (Low and Lamb 2000), brand image in sports sponsorship is a more complex proposition that has gained crossover in different categories due to the nature of evolving competition (Kolah 2006) and also the need for brands to avoid being lost in clutter (Gwinner 1997, 2005). For example, the telecommunications industry which is the highest investing sector in sports sponsorship (Kolah 2006), have had to step away from traditional marketing stimuli and look to embed their own, plus new digital technology, into their sponsorship programmes to create a unique offering (Wallage 2008).

Effective branding can produce results which do ROI and ROO if they are promoted through the most suitable medium within marketing. Sponsorship is considered to be extremely valuable (Tripodi 2001; Roy and Cornwell 2003; Close, Finney, Lacey and Sneath 2006), however, there are challenges which marketers need to acknowledge relating to price elasticity, having adequate price controls in place and using effective and efficient brand building activities (Rooney 1995). Despite gaining wide acknowledgement in the literature, brands have not strengthened their grip on knowing and understanding their consumers better (Richards, Foster and Morgan 1998). This is transferable to the sponsorship fraternity and recognised as an ongoing grey area within the industry (Tripodi *et al* 2003; Walliser 2003; Redmandarin 2004). This study will explore this from both consumer and practitioner points of view. The value of taking this approach is that it will provide a more comprehensive understanding of what practitioners think consumers want and identify better to what they actually respond.

2.2 Creating consumer perception through brand knowledge and personality

The manner in which a consumer perceives a brand is recognised as a key determinant to building long-term business–consumer relationships (Low and Lamb 2000). Therefore the way in which companies develop strong brand perceptions is becoming a key consideration in business and marketing planning (Low and Lamb 2000; Holt 2004). However, whilst this is important in practice, the literature fails to present a definition or measurement technique to assess brand perceptions (Low and Lamb 2000). A key criticism is that, given the large sums of money invested in sports sponsorship, lack of thorough measurement and evaluation could be seriously impacting on the overall effectiveness of the programmes (Redmandarin 2004).

Many perceptual and cognitive models assume that brand knowledge (awareness and image) affects consumer brand perceptions, preferences and also behaviour resulting from marketing activity (Esch *et al* 2006). In a recent study, Esch *et al* (2006) found that brand knowledge affects current purchase and usage of brand and, moreover brand awareness was found to have positive effects on brand image. However, this cannot be transferred to sponsorship as there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that this is the case. A number of issues are raised here such as the impact of habitually purchased brands and also the amount of information given by the brand to consumers. The consumer phase of research will explore a variety of issues to try and discover what makes consumers more receptive to brands using sport sponsorship. This will provide a stronger platform for practitioners to develop programmes which are more likely to be positively received by consumers.

Brand awareness is recognised as being important to consumer decision-making for three main reasons (Keller 1993). Firstly, consumers need to think about the brand when they consider the product category, secondly, brand awareness can affect decisions about the brand in the consideration set, and finally, it is thought that influencing the formation and strength of associations is transferred to the brand image (Keller 1993). The practical implications of which mean that marketers have the potential to use stimuli which can engender these processes, sponsorship being recognised as one of the key media to do this (Keller 1993; Tripodi 2001; Roy and Cornwell 2003; Close *et al* 2006). The issue that needs researching is whether sports sponsorship programmes are used to meet business objectives which are based without consideration of the consumers with whom the brands need to connect (Taylor 2008). Whilst achieving commercial objectives is explored in the practitioner phases of the research the extent to which this is done with consumers in mind is addressed. It is important to understand what is occurring in the sports sponsorship industry. Are there

standardised processes to strengthen brand associations in general, or is it more of case-by-case pragmatism? If sports sponsorships are individualised, the implications for the whole industry in moving forward could present problems, particularly when there is increased financial accountability (Redmandarin 2004).

There have been numerous conceptualisations in relation to how brands impact upon a consumer's purchase behaviour, with early propositions including Aaker's brand equity model and Keller's customer brand-based equity model (Esch *et al* 2006). The focus of such models has been the exploration of the manner in which a consumer perceives and subsequently evaluates a brand through core brand knowledge attributes, including brand awareness, brand personality and also the associated image of the brand (Aaker 1991; 1997; Keller 1993). According to Keller (1993;1998), consumer perception is formed through brand knowledge which consists of brand awareness and brand image, which Keller (1993) defines as "...perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory". Such associations, as stated, can include quality and attitude towards the brand (Aaker 1991). Consumers use brand associations in order to help them process, organise, and retrieve information within memory and to assist them in the purchase decisions they make (Aaker, 1991). Further to this, Low and Lamb (2000:350) suggest that:

Marketers use brand associations to differentiate, position, and extend brands, to create positive attitudes and feelings towards brands, and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand.

The literature relating to consumer perceptions commonly suggests that brand associations can be used to create positive attitudes towards brands. However, the extent to which this is measured and evaluated is consistently criticised in literature. If brands are not aware of how consumers perceive their brand through the use of sports sponsorship, they cannot accurately develop their programmes based on these needs. Do consumers respond better to brands that

are sport related, or have functional use in sport, or do consumers acknowledge only brands with which they are already familiar with so that over-promotion of new brands is wasted? These are key issues that are explored in the consumer phases of the research with further development through the practitioner phases to identify key issues arising for sponsor brands.

2.3 Brand knowledge

In defining brand knowledge from a customer based point of view Keller (1998) proposes a modified model (from Keller 1993) which comprises brand awareness and brand image (Figure 2.1). This model depicts various types of brand associations such as attributes (both product and non-product related), benefits (functional, experiential and also symbolic) and attitudes (Grace and O’Cass 2002). Moreover, Grace and O’Cass (2002) highlight the non-product attributes as being grouped into price; user imagery; brand personality and experiences and feelings. Experiential sponsorships such as the O2 community rugby campaign enable this to be developed more effectively than a traditional advertising banner sponsorship (Sport Business 2005). The key attributes explored through such sponsorships are not dependent on price, but are more about developing favourable attitudes through the brand image.

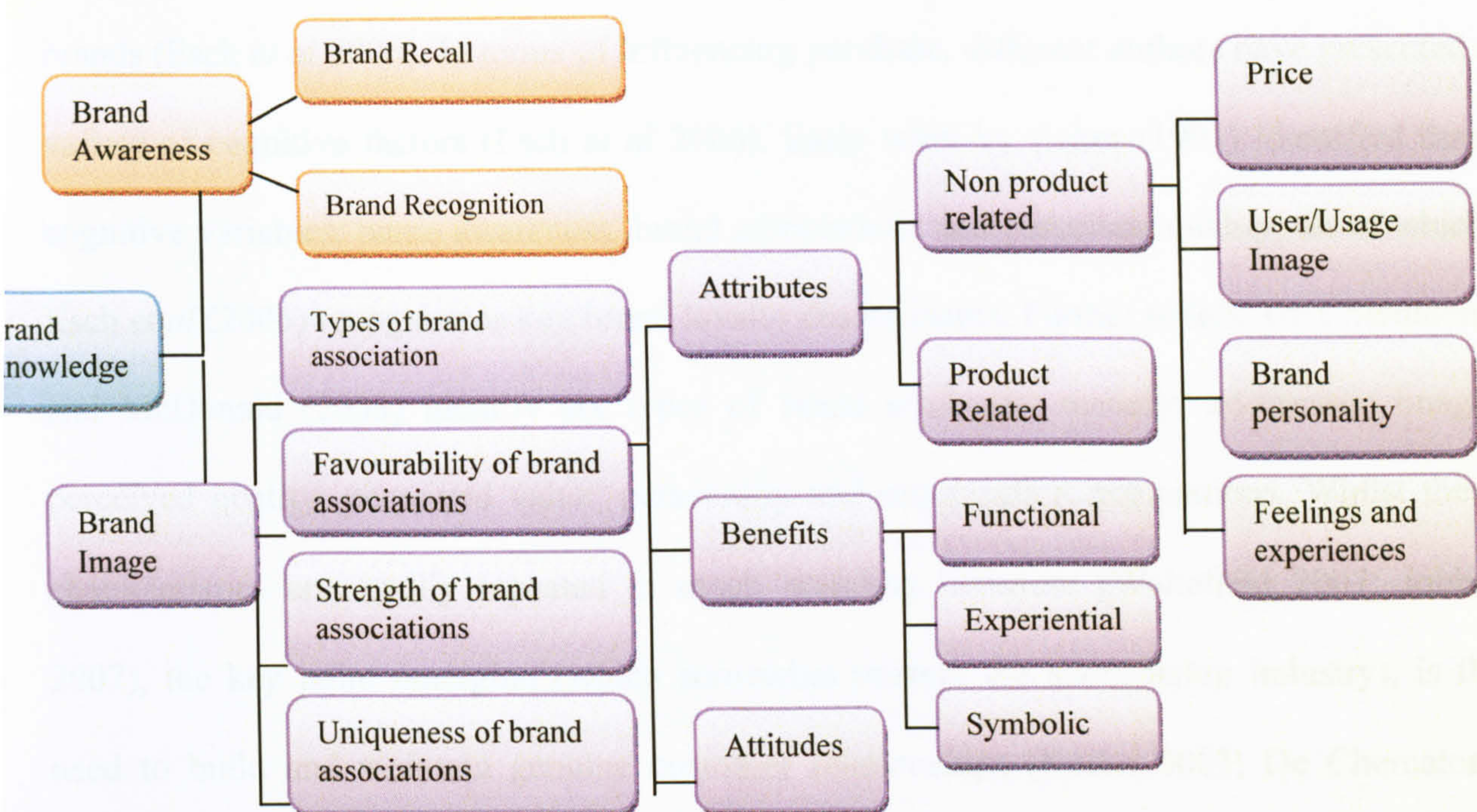


Figure 2.1: Model of brand knowledge components

Source: Keller (1998:94)

Grace and O’Cass (2002) acknowledge that the model is backed by sound theoretical argument. However, the extent to which this has been empirically tested is limited, with only certain sections being studied. Primarily in sponsorship studies, the constructs of brand recall and recognition have dominated much evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness (Walliser 2003), whilst brand image has been studied through image transfer processes (Gwinner 1997; 2005) between event and brand, the limitations of which are based around the sample groups often being controlled, rather than allowing for general consumer interpretation and perceptions, whilst exploration beyond this is somewhat limited in literature (Walliser 2003).

For numerous years, establishing brand awareness and image have been key goals of brand management, with the majority of current research taking the simplistic view of brand

performance rather than looking more in-depth at the connections between consumers and brands (Esch *et al* 2006). In terms of influencing purchase, different authors have presented a variety of cognitive factors (Esch *et al* 2006). Early work by Aaker (1991) identified three cognitive variables: name awareness, brand associations and perceived quality, all of which, Esch *et al* (2006) recognise as key brand loyalty determinants. Further to this, De Chernatony and McDonald (2003) identify six types of brand attributes, namely: awareness; image; perceived quality; perceived value; personality and organisation associations. Whilst these characteristics are readily repeated in much branding literature (Wakefield 2007; Jobber 2007), the key point emerging (which somewhat mirrors the sponsorship industry), is the need to build and maintain genuine customer relationships (Kotler 2003; De Chernatony 2006; Ayre 2008), in order to create longevity and increase brand value. The focus on brand image is simply not enough for long-term brand success (Esch *et al* 2006).

The need to understand what consumers want from this relationship is core to shaping perceptions early on, rather than a brand being static, and this is reflected in De Chernatony's (2006) interactive process in developing relationships which reinforce brand values (see Figure 2.2).

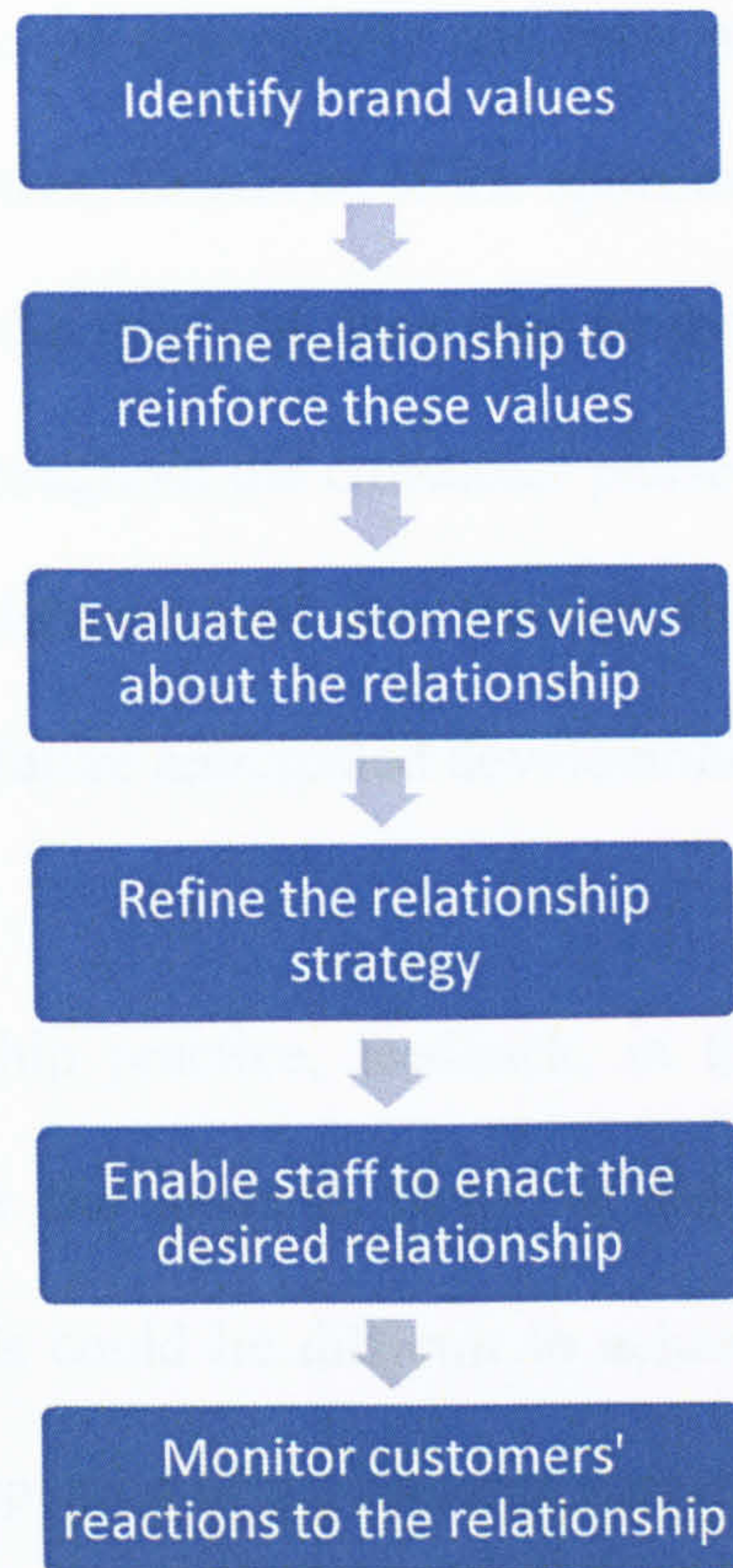


Figure 2.2: The interactive process to develop a relationship which reinforces the brand's values.

Source: De Chernatony (2006:51)

The key to relationships is the reciprocal exchange between at least two individuals (Fill 2005; De Chernatony 2006; Jobber 2007). However, the challenge for brands is to evaluate whether consumers would prefer a close or a distant relationship (De Chernatony 2006), which may be against what the brand desires. With increased use of technological advances being used in sponsorships, similar problems are evident with saturating consumer interest through SPAM (Malhotra 2008). Mobile technologies provide numerous opportunities to engage with consumers; however the risk for the brand is to bombard consumers with communications they simply do not want. A key question that is lacking in the research is the extent to which consumers tolerate promotional messages through sports sponsorship programmes (Kolah 2007; Malhotra 2008). If consumers switch off before the brand has the

chance to connect with them, the opportunity has been wasted and the effectiveness of the sponsorship is counterproductive. However, if the sponsor brand can gain a connection with the consumer through the media they use, they may be more likely to achieve a sales-related outcome. This is explored throughout the consumer phases of the research in relation to type of sponsorship media and tolerance, and also through the practitioner phases in relation to common strategies used and future anticipated developments.

Linking to current sponsorship practice, feedback, in the form of a continual process, is shown in Figure 2.2 to be the success factor of the relationship strategies. However, standardisation across brands could be difficult to achieve for differing brand cultures and ideals. The more accurate depiction of an outcome success variable will be for trust to be the cornerstone of any relationship (Delgado-Ballester 2004), whereby the brand values can be converted into the types of relationships that a brand desires. If the values reinforce each other, “....a consistent and coherent type of relationship is likely to emerge” (De Chernatony 2006:50). In knowing the customer, the opportunities to sell to a customer and subsequently turn a sale into a relationship are heightened (Pearson 1996). More importantly for Pearson (1996), the transformation from this to a customer becoming a member of the company makes direct communications to the members fundamental, rather than mass-market advertising. To achieve this, it could be reasonably suggested that the shift to precision-based marketing (Wakefield 2007) is more suitable within current environments in which consumers are becoming increasingly demanding (Kolah 2007) and knowledgeable to common marketing communications efforts and to sponsorship in particular (Kolah 2006).

However, and importantly for sports sponsorship, given the exploitable traits that accompany brands promoting through commercial sports (Meenaghan 2001a), if a relationship which is

developed on goodwill and sincerity is broken by the brand, it is recognised as being highly likely that the customer-brand relationship will be broken (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004). Therefore the selection of a marketing and communications mix which will foster and strengthen this is essential, something which Close *et al* (2006) believe sports sponsorship can achieve and is something that strong brands are entering into more frequently in current environments. As branding develops due to the driving force of competition, brands are facing the ongoing issue of dealing with key developments including progressive globalisation, which is leading brands to become increasingly consumer-orientated (Van Gelder 2002). However, the conversion of this to actual industry practice will be explored throughout the practitioner phases, as recent suggestions are that sponsors need to become more consumer-focused (Taylor 2008). Moreover, with increasingly demanding consumers (Clarke 2003; Kolah 2006; 2007), brands are constantly having to prove themselves:

Not only brand claims will need increasing substantiation to consumers, but also the ethics and behaviour of the company behind the brand...this implies increased company transparency, which currently goes against the grain of most companies (Van Gelder 2002:4).

2.4 Brand personality

Despite a considerable amount of research into brand personality, there is recognised to be a lack of consensus regarding what it is (Aaker 1997). However, it is acknowledged as being both attractive and appealing within current-day marketing which requires active communications from the organisation (Rajagopal 2006). Further, the link to brand-customer relationships is evident within brand personality, as a reflection of the value society places on personal relationships (Rajagopal 2006). From a marketing communications perspective, the attractiveness of sponsorship within this process is heightened, given the emotional responses and connections that certain types of sponsorship can evoke (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Clarke 2003).

The role that congruence plays in fostering the relationship between the brand and the individual is well-acknowledged within literature (Gwinner 1997; Aaker 1997; James 2006; James, Lyman and Foreman 2006). Given the symbolic use of brands and the way in which consumers instil brands with their own human personality traits (Aaker 1997), brand personality presents itself as a highly powerful part of the consumer-buying process (Rajagopal 2006). From a marketing communications point of view, although there is support for the role that sponsorship can play in creating strong brands (Roy and Cornwell 2003; Close *et al* 2006), advertising is accredited with playing a key role in brand personality.

According to Rajagopal (2006:61):

Brand personality refers to the emotional side of a brand image....it is created by all experiences of consumers with a brand, but advertising plays a dominant role in personality creation.

This presents a clear opening for further research from a sponsorship perspective, particularly given the acknowledgement of how powerful sponsorship can be as a marketing tool (Tripodi 2001). With advertising being viewed as too intrusive (Meenaghan 2001a), if sponsorship does have a desired effect on personality creation, new avenues of opportunity could open up for consumer marketers through sports sponsorship. However, this is a current gap in the research. Therefore, the contribution of this study to understanding how consumers view brand personality in sponsor brands is potentially important. This includes understanding how consumers view brands which engage in sports sponsorship and the media that they use. If using new technology is not viewed in a positive light by consumers, alternative strategies need to be in place to maintain cost effectiveness.

The importance of building "...a clear and distinctive brand personality" (Yaverbaum 2001:20) should not be underestimated, given that marketing needs to influence both behaviour and experience directly (Pearson 1996). Further to this, Pearson (1996:173) notes

that “Brand experience is not limited to advertising or marketing communications, but encompasses all forms of contact with the brand”. Therefore, the importance of making every contact with consumer matters is essential in order to develop relationships and reinforce the brand personality (Pearson 1996). In order to do this, marketing needs to step away from traditional media which, in modern society, may have had their day with consumers who are prone to marketing fatigue (Kolah 2006). It could be that marketing fatigue is averted if unique and interesting propositions are created for the brand, for example, as already mentioned, the O2 community rugby sponsorship and also the Adidas Urban Challenge.

Further, often through the use of a celebrity endorsement in brand advertisements, consumers can do this more easily, whereby they will start to personify brands (De Chernatony 2006), on which organisations can capitalise when brand choices are made. In relation to brand choice, Jobber (2007) notes how the notion of linking brand personality to brand choice is appealing from a marketers point of view and has been proven to be the case in some sectors, for example, brand personality of beer and the personality traits of the buyers. Moreover, Diamantopoulous, Smith and Grime (2005) recognise that brand personality is an important factor for preference and choice, whereby brand personality supports the identity of the consumer with their brands, for example, increasing the value of a brand for an individual (Ambler and Styles 1996). The meaning that a consumer attributes to a brand because of sponsorship could be vastly different depending on target markets. However, the issue of whether generic meaning can be achieved needs exploring. If key stimuli can trigger consumers to react more positively towards the brand, should a brand concentrate on these more in order to keep costs manageable? This will be considered at the practitioner phases of the research. This is important from both an academic and practical perspective in order to

update the literature which does not reflect recent developments within the sports sponsorship industry.

In portraying brand meaning diagrammatically, De Chernatony (2006) outlines how the process that consumers enter into is situationally dependent. It does however reiterate the importance which is placed on brands needing to understand the expectations consumers have and the emotional role which the brand needs to play within this (Figure 2.3).

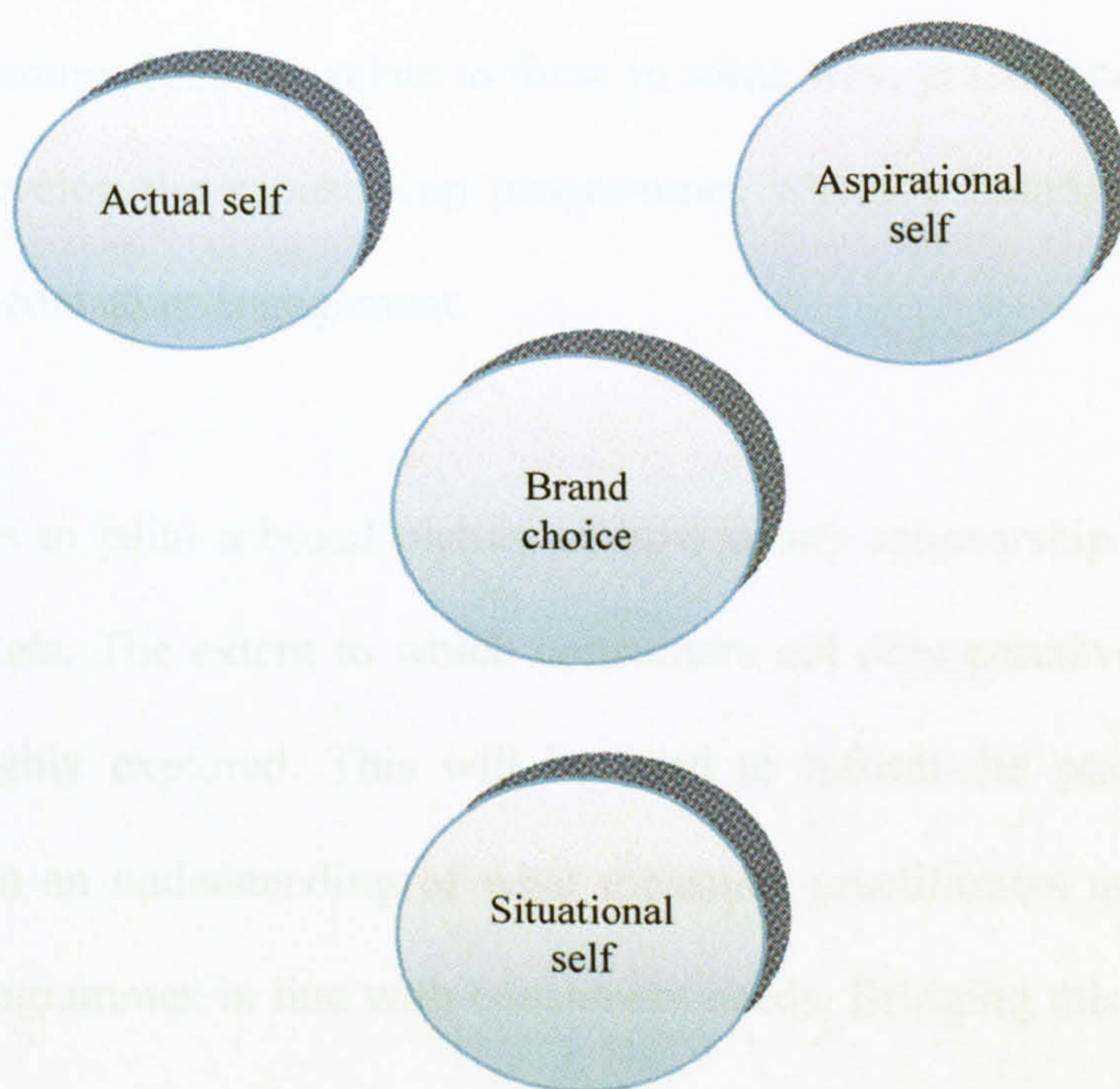


Figure 2.3: Choosing a brand to match self

Source: De Chernatony (2006: 41).

In creating opportunities for consumers to experience this, marketers need to understand consumers and also be willing to initiate creative, unique and meaningful ways to communicate the brand personality with consumers. Sponsorships are frequently used by brands in sponsored events (Kotler 2003). Therefore the role that sponsorship can play in

brand-building is often viewed as superior to other forms of marketing communications (Kolah 2006). The advantage that sponsorship provides is the manner in which it is perceived as exploitative (except in highly commercial sports) (Bennett 1999; Meenaghan 2001a). It has the ability to cross cultural boundaries, hence the appeal to global marketers (Fahy *et al* 2004) and the potential to connect and engage with consumers beyond other traditional forms is often unparalleled (if it is integrated) (Sims 2005; Kolah 2006). The extent to which this has been formally investigated in general consumer settings is minimal. If these effects only relate to a sport demographic, practitioners should focus their attention in that way. However, if a general consumer-base can relate to these in some way, practitioners have a broader base on which to develop the sponsorship programmes whereby brands can look to develop a greater level of consumer engagement.

This study aims to paint a broad picture of how sports sponsorship can impact on general consumer markets. The extent to which consumers not only perceive it, but engage with it will be thoroughly explored. This will be used to inform the practitioner phases of the research to gain an understanding of what measures practitioners use, if any, to plan their sponsorship programmes in line with consumers needs. Bridging this gap is important to the whole sports sponsorship industry to try and find best practice solutions for brands wanting to further engage in general consumer markets.

2.5 Brand equity, customer-based brand equity and the role of sponsorship

Brand equity has emerged as a central concept only within the past twenty years. However, despite this, there has been considerable attention devoted to studying brand equity in this time (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993; Leone *et al* 2006). This has resulted in the concept of brand equity being viewed as a very important topic for both academics and practitioners (Yoo and

Donthu 2001; Leone *et al* 2006; Wakefield 2007). The rationale for studying brand equity was born out of a “...strategy based motivation” (Keller 1993:1) to marketing productivity in which organisations are continually looking to improve and increase the efficiency of their marketing expenses, particularly with the increase in accountability of marketing spend (Kolah 2006; Mizik and Jacobson 2008).

In defining brand equity, Kotler (2003:422) states that it is “...the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service”. Prior to Kotler, Keller (1993:1) defined it in a similar manner. However, the difference related to, “...when certain outcomes result from marketing of a product or service because of its brand name that would not occur if the same product or service did not have that name”.

Although this may appear relatively simplistic, the depth in the ‘knowing’ of the brand name is not clearly communicated beyond recognition, and in current environments, consumers are much better informed (Kolah 2006). To that extent, earlier work by Aaker (1991) is often cited by academics (Keller 1993; Krishnan 1996; Leone *et al* 2006) to be more relevant in defining brand equity and extending this to creating value.

Aaker (1991) suggests that brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities, is linked to the brand’s name and symbol, can subtract from as well as add to the value of the brand and finally can provide value to customers as well as firms. In creating value, Aaker (1991), outlines that there are five brand equity assets which are the source of value, namely: brand loyalty; brand name awareness; perceived brand quality; brand association in addition to perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets such as patents and trademarks (Jobber 2007). The key to this is the creation of a familiar brand, something which has both strong

and favourable associations, which it is recognised that sports sponsorship, along with other promotional media such as publicity and frequent advertising, can achieve (Keller 1993). However, whilst sports sponsorship may be recognised as a medium to reach this, the manner in which this is achieved requires research and must be underpinned by thorough consumer evaluations (Masterman 2007). More specifically, a key gap within literature relates to the deal term of the sponsorship in relation to the time needed by a brand to create knowledge and develop relationships. The literature does not address whether favourable associations are more realistic in a shorter or longer duration of sponsorship programme. It is important to establish this given the financial implications for brands. Further, the type of sponsorship can be affected by the outcome of this in relation to whether brands sponsor shirts, stadia or use more recent media. These are key issues which will be explored at the practitioner phases, although consumer evaluations towards differing media will be explored in the consumer phases of the research.

Brand equity is split into two categories; customer-based brand and proprietary-based (see Figure 2.4) (Jobber 2007).

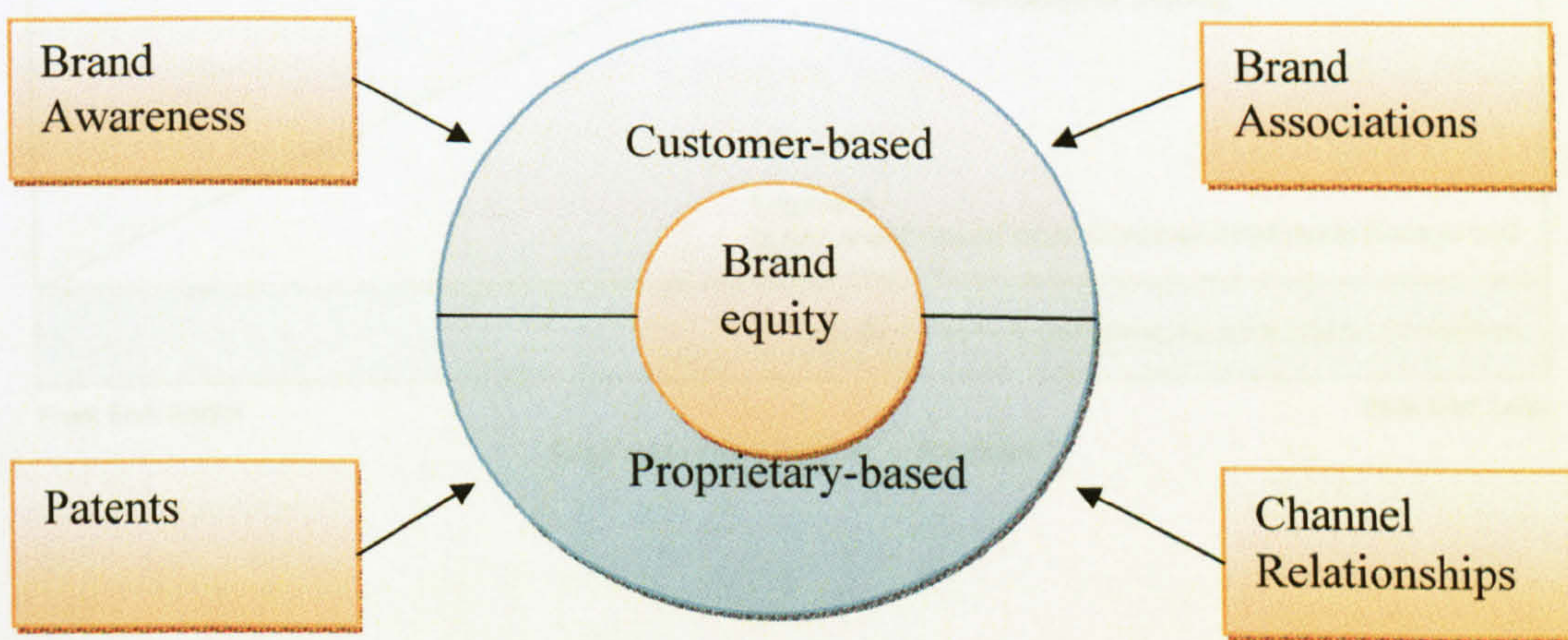


Figure 2.4: Source of brand equity

Source: Jobber (2007:332)

The essence behind customer-based brand equity derives from the impact that brand knowledge has upon a consumer's response to the marketing stimuli of the brand (Keller 1993). Further, Rajagopal (2006:64) notes how this approach:

...allows the company to derive various functions of marketing mix favourability, and strong brand equity would help to retain customers as well as to reduce the risk of abrupt brand switching.

With many organisations introducing CRM programmes to optimise customer interactions, customer based brand equity is therefore deemed as important to this process (Leone *et al* 2006). However, whilst academics and practitioners rate both customer equity and brand equity as important, little has been done to explore the relationship between the two (Leone *et al* 2006).

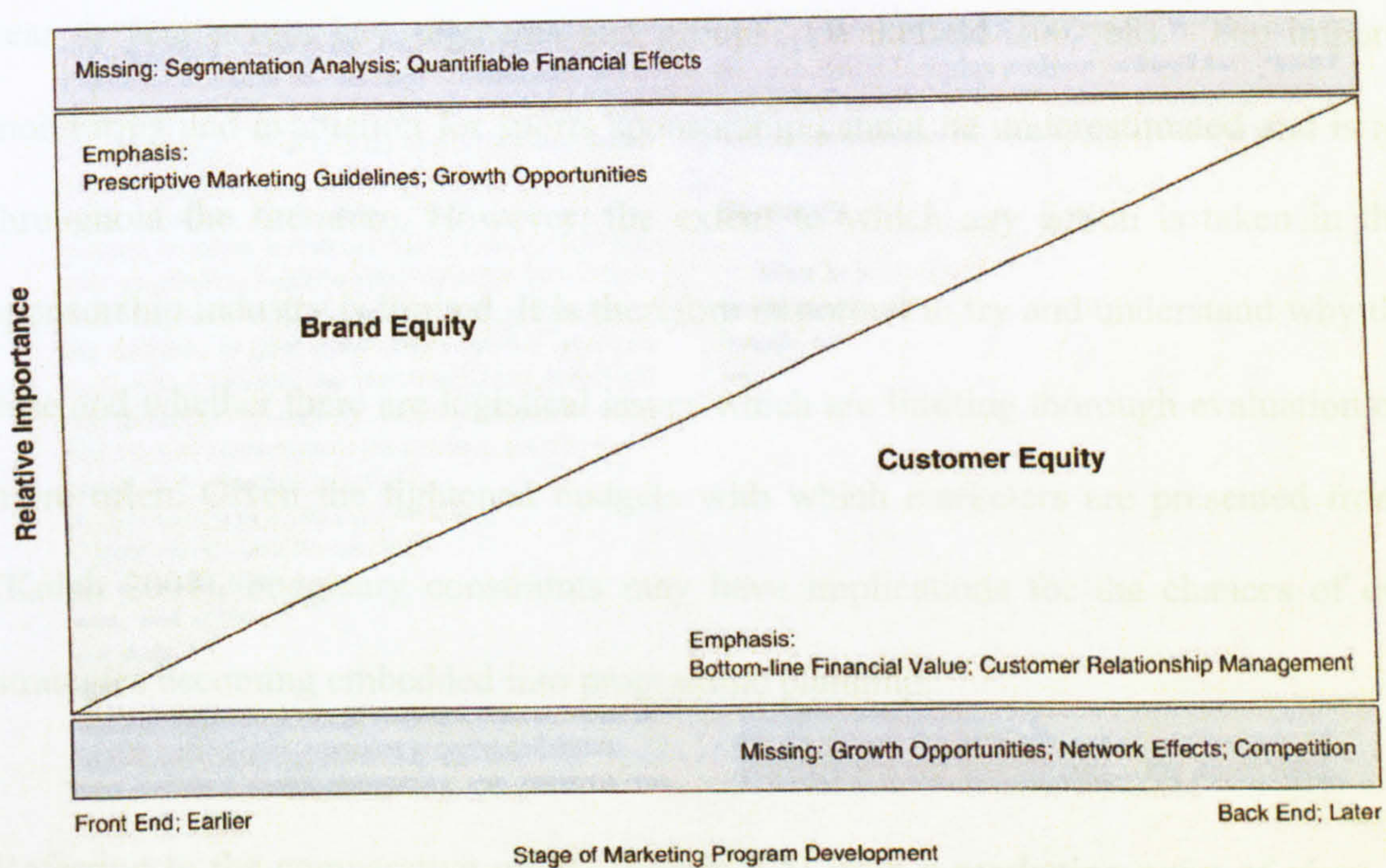


Figure 2.5: Brand equity versus consumer equity

Source: Leone *et al* (2006:130)

Although appearing distinctive in rationale (Jobber 2007), brand equity and customer equity have commonality across some of their characteristics, such as the manner in which they both highlight the importance of brand loyalty (Leone *et al* 2006). Brands see the potential for brand equity to impact upon their brand, both short-and long-term, given that the benefits are not only sales-related. Wakefield (2007) recognises that, particularly for sports organisations, brand equity can increase profits (predicting financial market value), product (where no tangibles are available), promotion, planning, perceived performance (particularly for sports teams) and participation of sponsors. With this in mind, there is a need to execute the marketing strategies accurately to build the knowledge structures in the consumer's memories, which is done through effective marketing communications (Madrigal, Bee and La Barge 2005). Further, marketers need to "...monitor shifts in its perceived brand equity from year to year across key segments and groups" (Wakefield 2007:68). The importance of monitoring and evaluation for sports sponsorship cannot be underestimated and is reiterated throughout the literature. However, the extent to which any action is taken in the sports sponsorship industry is limited. It is therefore important to try and understand why this is the case and whether there are logistical issues which are limiting thorough evaluation occurring more often. Given the tightened budgets with which marketers are presented from brands (Kolah 2007), budgetary constraints may have implications for the chances of evaluation strategies becoming embedded into programme planning.

Referring to the comparative model (Figure 2.5) from a marketing point of view, there are key differences in approaches which organisations need to consider. Customer-based brand equity places clearer focus on the end financial value that is gained from customers, favouring quantifying financial performance (Leone *et al* 2006). Alternatively, brand equity shifts away from this to look more to the strategic issues in managing the brand, with a

specific focus on marketing platforms and programmes and how these can be designed and leveraged to create positive strong brand awareness and image with consumers (Leone *et al* 2006). In order to do this, sponsorships are recognised to serve well as brand-building tools, as they provide an effective medium for leveraging secondary brand associations (Keller 1998). Moreover, in brand-building, the key is to reinforce through marketing activity, an image which is easy for consumers to remember and which is also consistent over time (Roy and Cornwell 2003). For example, in brand-building through an event sponsorship which may be yearly and sponsored by a brand who has a long-term commitment, consumers are not only exposed to the brand, but they are delivered brand messages at the same point in time each year, with similar messages which will engender brand associations, awareness and image to be developed. Sports events are often used to do this as they can help to “....develop strong, favourable and unique associations in the mind of the consumers.....the primary associations held with these events are often transferred to the brand” (Madrigal *et al* 2005:188). Event marketing in sport is also seen as being a successful means of blending brand messages into a gathering which engages the consumers rather than being a passive ad-banner medium (Close *et al* 2006).

Further to this, sports sponsorship as a general area is often seen as being a significant contributor to the formation of brand equity (Henseler *et al* 2007), whereby the issue of fit between sports sponsors and brand equity has differing perspectives, depending upon viewpoint. For example, consumers believe that fit is important in their acceptance, whilst brand managers believe that if the level of sponsorship is high enough, fit is less important (Henseler *et al* 2007). This difference has implications cross-industry if consumers believe that they need to see a clear fit, whilst brand managers choose to opt for a larger spend to

generate a vaster exposure, which evidently needs readdressing through exploring consumers' evaluations more thoroughly.

Whilst some media (i.e. advertising and sales promotion) are faced with numerous challenges (although sponsorship is not exempt from these), which relate to fragmented consumer markets (Meenaghan 1997), sponsorship has the capacity to cut through the 'clutter' to reach the target markets (Roy and Cornwell 2003). This is particularly true for sports sponsorship, providing that it avoids entering highly cluttered sectors (Gwinner 2005). The issue of market clutter for sports sponsorship is a key concern in current practice (Masterman 2007), therefore the creativity of brands in utilising their sponsorship programmes needs to be aligned to the needs of consumers (Taylor 2008). Current literature tracks differing sectors and the value of their investments (Kolah 2006). However, the extent to which brands work around clutter requires investigation. This will be investigated in detail at both the consumer and practitioner phases of the research in order to provide a comprehensive analysis and comparison between consumer opinions and practitioner strategies. This will provide clearer direction as to which specific media are effective and which can provide distinctiveness in cluttered market places.

According to Richards *et al* (1998:47), "Marketing is the best-placed function in a business to lead the management, building and measurement of brand equity". In order to maximise it through sponsorship, an integrated approach needs to be taken rather than to view sponsorship in a stand-alone capacity (Madrigal *et al* 2005; Masterman 2007). This needs to work from both sides of the partnership as sponsors brand equity is also a key factor:

Sponsors' brand equity is influential in consumers' perceptions of sponsor-event congruence. Sponsorships that are viewed as highly congruent can lead to more favourable attitudes towards the sponsor (Roy and Cornwell 2003:389).

Brand marketing faces challenges as the marketing function and profession develops which requires practitioners to move away from 'transactional' and 'tactical' marketing (Richards *et al* 1998) and more into strategies which engage demanding consumers in activities which can sustain their awareness, interest and impact upon purchase decisions. In outlining brand marketing challenges, Richards *et al* (1998) point out that key brand marketing challenges include: the challenge to change; to the brand; to the marketing function; of new media and channels of communication; of balancing long term health with short term performance and challenges to organisational individuals. Although this could be considered a traditional view, the concept has not particularly changed to meet current demands whereby brands still need to be enhanced in order to increase customer loyalty (Ross 2006). Brands are still facing challenges from embracing new media. However, they need to move with the changes and embrace the use of new media technologies, particularly through an integrated sponsorship approach to their marketing strategies (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008), for example, the Carlsberg Euro 2004 campaign shown in Figure 2.7 on page 76.

2.6 Brand loyalty, passion branding and the need for emotive communication

An increasing number of companies are shifting their focus from the acquisition of new customers to ensuring that they retain their most profitable ones (Travis 2000). This however, is not solely due to the lower marketing costs associated with this strategy (Jobber 2007). According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera Aleman (2001), the value that brand loyalty generates for organisations is four-fold, consisting of: acting as a substantial entry barrier to competitors; increasing the ability of an organisation to respond to competitive threats; providing greater sales and revenue and finally providing a customer-base which is less sensitive to the marketing efforts of competitors. With an increasing focus on competition and using brand loyalty more as a competitive advantage, it is recognised that loyalty should

be seen more from the point of view of the customer rather than the point of view of the brand (Pearson 1996; Ayre 2008). A change in marketing in general needs to be the shift away from business goals and objectives and more to the customer needs and wants (Fill 2005; Kotler 2003; Jobber 2007). Loyalty should constitute a process of rewarding customers rather than exploiting their loyalty (Travis 2000; Ayre 2008).

According to Kotler (2003), brand loyalty status can be divided into four sections: hard core loyals (who buy one brand all the time); split loyals (who are loyal to at least two or three brands); shifting loyals (who shift from one brand to another) and switchers (who have no loyalty to any brand). From a marketing point of view, consideration needs to be taken of the tolerance levels of each group to which a company is marketing, particularly if buyers are susceptible to change, due to an increased marketing fatigue within consumers (Kolah 2006). It could be the marketing stimuli which switches a consumer off a brand completely rather than a price, or product/service attribute. Brand loyalty presents a focus for the consumer phases of this study, in particular whether a consumer would purchase a brand as a result of a sports sponsorship. With the literature suggesting that brand loyalty is a key competitive advantage, the role that brands can play in using this to gain affinity to a sports sponsorship programme requires investigation. If consumer loyalty to a brand extends to the purchase of a product that is being promoted through a sports sponsorship, the brand is in a strong position to manipulate the consumer. However, this is advanced thinking, considering that brands do not understand their consumers beyond their recall ability. Therefore this study seeks to explore loyalty as part of the consumer phases to examine whether or not brands can rely upon loyal consumers.

Whilst much literature on brand loyalty focuses on the cognitive function and psychological orientation (Dick and Basu 1994; Bloemer and Kasper 1995), current research has started to shift to exploring the impact of constructs such as trust and relationships on consumer loyalty (Delgado-Ballester and Munera Aleman 2001). In exploring trust as a construct of brand loyalty, it has been suggested that research focuses more on brand trust at the high involvement level at which trust will be more central to consumers in terms of their beliefs and their attitudes (Delgado-Ballester and Munera Aleman 2001).

Whilst this phenomenon is largely viewed from a sports sponsorship and sports fans' perspective (Holt 2004; Wakefield 2007), the impact of sports sponsorship on the general consumer is largely undetermined (Meenaghan 2001a) with the majority of studies using control groups predominantly within sports event venues (Bennett 1999; Johar Pham and Wakefield 2007). This study contributes to this neglected field and, as previously stated, sponsorship (particularly sports) can have a large impact on brand equity, with loyalty being no exception. According to Travis (2000:28) "Creating customer loyalty is neither strategy nor tactic; rather it is the ultimate objective and meaning of brand equity".

As consumers develop and their needs and wants become more complex, their involvement within social networks starts to embed itself into the process of brand loyalty (Holt 2004). Given the recent rise of technological advances such as peer-to-peer (P2P) social networking, online communities and membership groups (Johnson 2008), brand loyalty relies on a consumer's 'stickiness' with the brand (Holt 2004), something which effective management of social networks can achieve (see Figure 2.6). It is therefore important, given the rise of new technology in sports sponsorship, to explore how they are embedded in sponsorship programmes. Further, the size of investment in new technologies requires evaluation to

determine whether they hold advantages over traditional media, or whether consumers react negatively. This would provide an understanding of whether practitioners' intentions to make sponsorships completely technologically-based are worthwhile. This is explored throughout both the consumer and practitioner phases of the research.

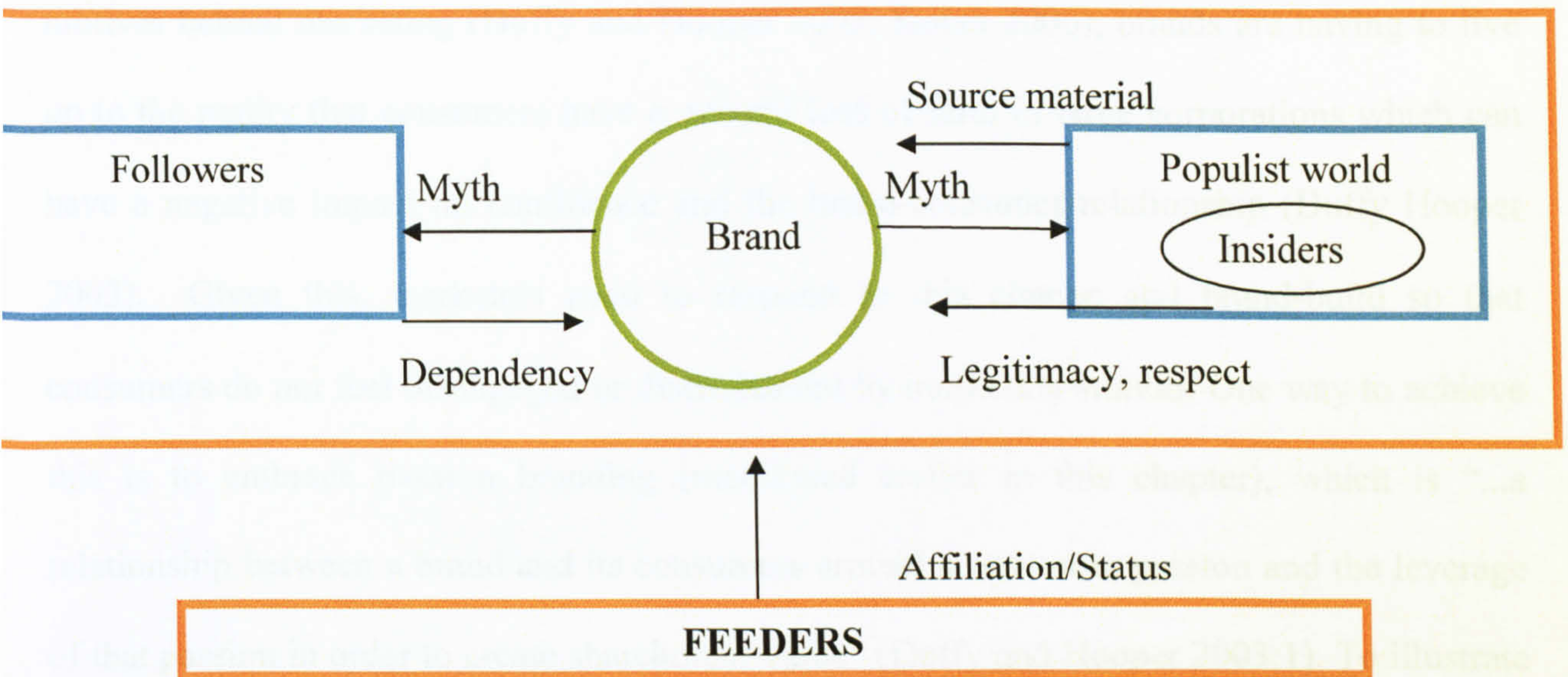


Figure 2.6: “Brand Loyalty is a Product of the Social Network”

Source: Holt (2004:140).

The essence of this model which sets it apart from more traditional views (Pearson 1996; Delgado-Ballester and Munera Aleman 2001; Kotler 2003), is the power that different groups have within it, such as the followers “...the brands magnets” (Holt 2004: 140) who buy more into the myth of the brand, rather than purely are regular purchasers who buy only one brand habitually. Sports play a key role in this within society, not just sports-based communities, but particularly when national events are held (i.e. the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, Rugby World Cup) during which the sense of pride can extend beyond sports fans and into broader consumer markets (Duffy and Hooper 2003). Essentially, the difference is in iconic brands with which consumers are not in a relationship; they are locked into a social network

in which the loyalty is not only to the brand, but to other constituents within the network, for example media providers and sponsors (Holt 2004).

As consumers become more aware of marketing promotions and understand many of the motives behind marketing (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Kolah 2006), brands are having to live up to the reality that consumers have a general loss of faith in large corporations which can have a negative impact on confidence and the brand-consumer relationship (Duffy Hooper 2003). Given this, marketers need to respond to this change and brand-build so that consumers do not feel disengaged or disenchanted by marketing stimuli. One way to achieve this is to embrace passion branding (mentioned earlier in this chapter), which is “...a relationship between a brand and its consumers around a consumer passion and the leverage of that passion in order to create shareholder value” (Duffy and Hooper 2003:1). To illustrate this, from a sports sponsorship perspective, beer company Carlsberg have revolved their main marketing strategy around football (English) for the last ten years, with the Euro 2004 campaign being regarded as a highly successful integrated campaign (Kolah 2006) (see Figure 2.7).

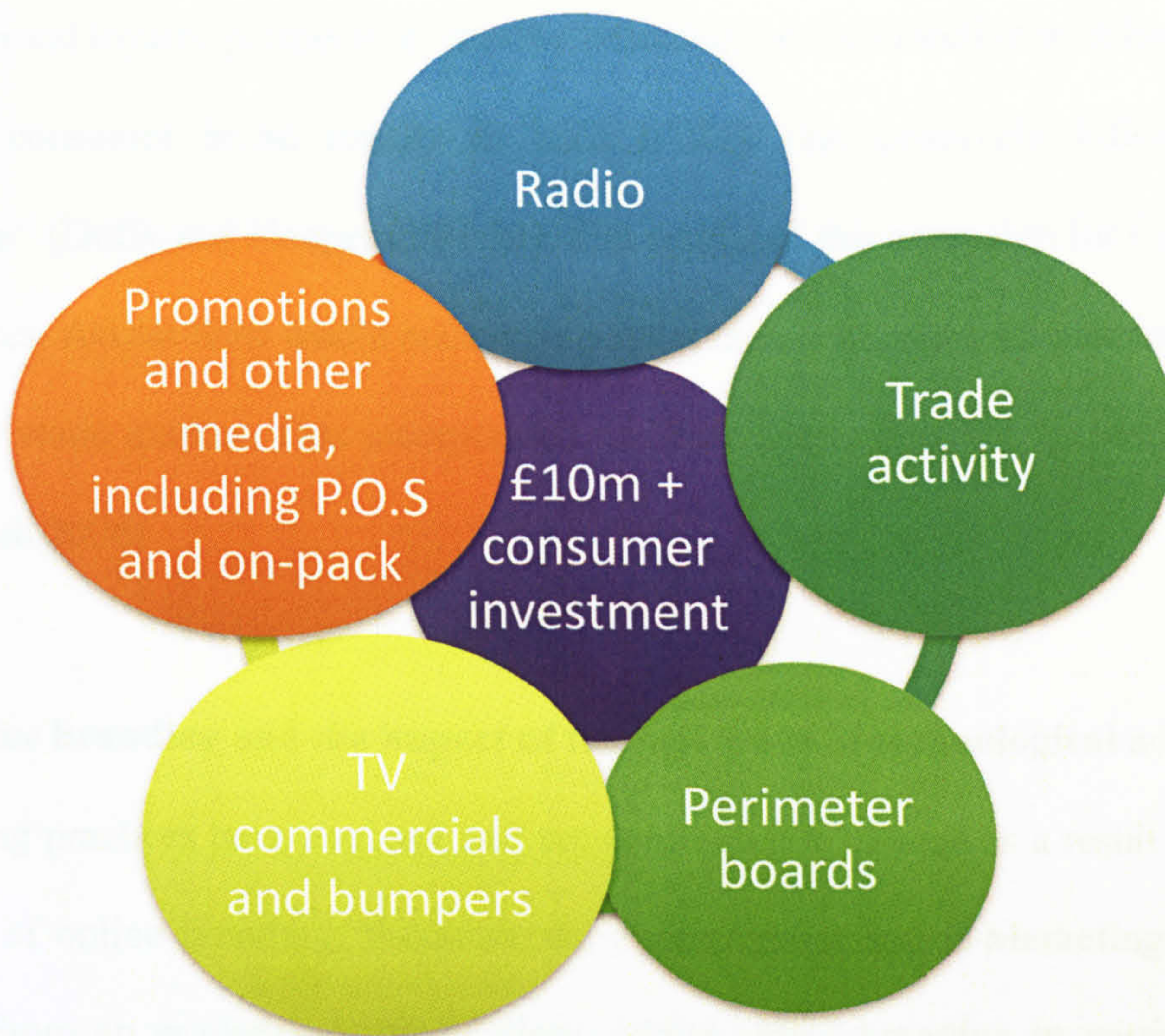


Figure 2.7: Integrated campaign in support of Euro 2004

Source: Kolah (2006:85).

Given that beer as a product, is not only associated with sports fans, but is a general consumer product, Carlsberg aimed to “...create the feeling that it was wrong to drink any other lager brand when England was playing” (Kolah 2006:85). This type of strategy does not attract all avid sports fans, but it has the potential to extend to all consumers with an interest in the national football team. In order to achieve this, brands have started to move away from blanket strategising to more inclusive advertising campaigns which embrace national identity (Silk and Andrews 2001). Further to this, Silk and Andrews (2001:191) note how brands create sporting identities through national cultures:

Sport is mobilised as a major cultural signifier of a nation that can engage national sensibilities, identities, and experiences. As such, sport is used as a de-facto cultural shorthand delineating particular national sentiments.

From a brand loyalty perspective, passion branding can be effective as it has the “...ability to develop consumer brand loyalty in such a way that positively influences purchasing behaviour” (Duffy and Hooper 2003:38). The results of this campaign for Carlsberg spoke for themselves. Across their whole consumer market they achieved a 43 percent increase in sales in a very static market. This incorporated not only sports fans but ‘general’ beer consumers too (Kolah 2006).

2.7 Online branding and the impact of the new wave of technological advances

Marketing practices have evolved, and are continuing to change as a result of E-business and the rise of online branding; E-commerce; E-purchasing and E-Marketing (Kolter 2003:Fill 2005). From an academic point of view, whilst online branding in particular gains a vast amount of press (as many recognise the need for both online and offline integrated marketing channels) (Rowley 2001), there is still a need for the online to be explored within new emerging digital environments. Consumers are constantly striving to gain as much information as they can regarding purchase decisions (Pearson 1996), particularly using the internet as a search engine. This opens up a plethora of opportunities for marketers to connect with consumers when they are actively seeking information, or browsing website sites in a more informal manner. However, this is often done with caution, given the transparency in the brand which the internet opens up, where there is “...nowhere to hide” (Travis 2000:132) for brands, particularly as the information is available 24 hours a day, 365 days in a calendar year (Travis 2000).

Further, Rowley (2001) argues that the digital environment has changed the total dynamic between the consumer and the organisation in a number of ways, four of which will be discussed due to their relevance to the study. Firstly, the consumer has greater control over

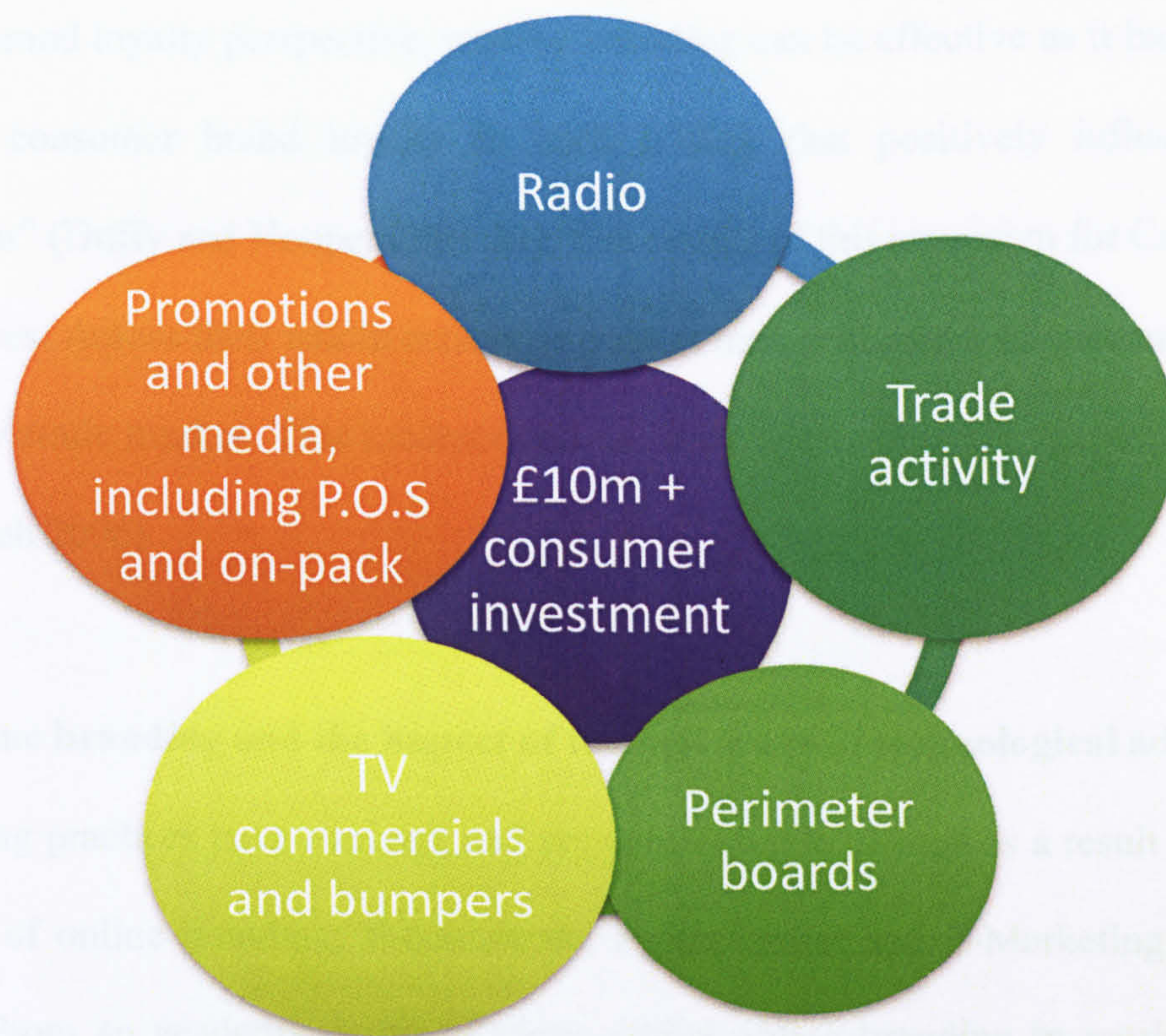


Figure 2.7: Integrated campaign in support of Euro 2004

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marketing communications, which is evident given consumer awareness of technology and marketing (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Kolah 2006). From a marketer's perspective, working online with their branding, boredom threshold and tolerance is something which online mechanisms such as video advertising need to consider. In regards to video advertising within online branding, Wright (2008:10) points out that:

.....we are nowhere with it to be honest, I think it is over-hyped, it will take a while before it becomes mainstream. The problem with it is that, no one knows where video advertising should sit. I think there is a dilemma going on.

Further to this, Wright (2008:10) notes that technologies take time before they settle down to being consistent:

Currently there are about 8-10 different ad formats which are defined as video, which makes it a problem...users don't want to see anything longer than 10-15 seconds, people look bored, and this is on high quality video advertising, there is work to be done.

The digital environment is highly important to video advertising, in which the role of 3G is going to drive video adoption (Johnson 2008). Secondly, Rowley (2001) outlines how the digital environment enables a greater customisation and development of customer relationships due to gathering consumer data into large data warehouses. Arguably, this needs to be part of CRM strategies for the organisation if they are to truly utilise this medium in creating brand loyalty (Ayre 2008). A problem for organisations in doing this is not necessarily bringing in widespread change to a variety of both online and offline systems, but ensuring that there is a synergy among all the technological systems which an organisation may use (Ayre 2008).

The next change that Rowley (2001:135) notes is the idea of a "...help yourself medium" in which consumers enter into a very much self-service environment in which, fundamentally, the complete brand experience is also initiated by the consumer. A key factor within this is the internet skills of the individual consumer who may value their online time more if they

are more proficient at using the internet (Rowley 2001). A key development within, certainly an increased exposure to online brands, has been social networking (Church-Sanders 2008) in terms of how consumers locate content that they find engaging given the amount of choice available through such networks. From a brand's point of view, social networks could become the new direction for online branding, particularly given the consumption time for such activity. For example, between April 2007-April 2008, online gaming communities have witnessed an increase in user time from 1.6 million minutes to 2.2 million minutes, with the user time of member communities (i.e. social networking sites) also rising from 2.4 million to 3.7 million minutes (Church- Sanders 2008). Social networking sites are growing in importance for brands, given that they have the power to hold a consumer's attention over longer periods of times than other internet offerings. The data gained from this, in terms of online branding, can be vital in gaining knowledge of how to best deliver brand messages to the demographic groups which are logging on repeatedly. From a brand development perspective, Johnson (2008:26) believes that there is a need to track time spent, and the social media trends are where time is spent. "We have to figure this out, we are not good at this yet, I think most of the brands are not good at it yet, but we need to figure out how to engage in that conversation". In concurring with this, Taylor (2008:26) states that, "Brands have to get into this area or they will wither on the vine". A key criticism in relation to this is that brands need to be more proactive in all aspects of their sponsorships, from tracking consumption to the actual strategies that they use to create the sponsorship programmes. This will be explored at the practitioner phases of the research in relation to what sponsors are doing to engage more in this and whether this is a key consideration in their planning of sponsorship programmes. The consistent issue in literature is whether or not brands know what consumers want. Therefore the consumer phases of the research are important in identifying reactions and opinions towards sponsorship programmes.

Finally, Rowley (2001) outlines how M-commerce has the potential to completely change the brand experience from what it currently is, whereby customers can be tracked and sent customised messages to their location. From a brand building point of view this is a highly personalised way of contacting a consumer. However, it does come with some logistical issues in terms of being over facing and actually switching consumers off. From a telecommunications company point of view, whether it is in sport or in music sponsorship, everyone wants these companies to market their service and one of the best ways to do this is directly. However, as Wallage (2008:25) points out, “This may be an SMS or an MMS etc, but we have to consider how many times someone wants to be contacted by the operator”.

Further to this:

On the one hand, it is a mass market medium which is highly pervasive, and on the other hand it is perceived by individuals to be a highly personal device, which in some sense is more intrusive, which is why SPAM to mobile phones is a big concern in the industry at the moment (Malhotra 2008:24).

Moreover, Malhotra (2008) suggested that SPAM to mobiles would really destroy the willingness that people had to use their mobiles for content and contact with brands. The way for mobiles to become the new brand marketing phenomenon is to think smarter in reaching consumers, with brands thinking more about what consumers want:

One of the things that is interesting about the mobile device is that you can not only receive content and exposure to sponsors, but you can actually create your own content. Mobile has got an interesting two-way communication (Malhotra 2008:24).

With new technologies entering the market, and consumers becoming increasingly knowledgeable about both technology and also marketing, brands need to start to engage with the consumers earlier to try and understand their consumerism beyond transactional frequency. With the increase in social networking which is becoming one of the fastest growing media online, from being a niche phenomenon to being culturally mass adopted

(Gross and Acquisti 2005:4), brands can capture the essence behind this “...shared real space” to drive both their online and offline offerings.

Brands and branding have matured with the advent of technology (Pearson 1996). However, if brand owners and in particular sports right holders are to brand successfully in the future, they are going to have to adapt to change (Richards *et al* 1998; Rowley 2001) and become more inventive in order to understand consumption (of marketing activities and products/services) much more thoroughly to benchmark against successful branding. This includes engaging with how consumers are searching for brand information, how consumers are spending an increasing amount of time on social networking and also identifying the new directions which M-marketing and video advertising are taking. It is imperative that brands view this as a continuous process in order to survive and grow through the four forces of change which shape the future for brands and rights holders, those being: globalisation; behaviour; permission and technology (Kolah 2006).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined some key areas of branding which contribute to not only making a brand visible, but this is used to improve consumer knowledge and increase brand equity through sponsorship programmes. New advances in technology have, and will, impact on both consumer reach and also tolerance of marketing stimuli. This has not been explored in literature beyond consumer recall levels of sponsor brands. Therefore, it is important to investigate how new promotional media are accepted.

A key emerging theme from a brand perspective is how they can make themselves more visible through the promotional media they use (in particular sports sponsorship). It is

reported that the need to do this relates to increasing consumer knowledge of the brand which in turn can contribute to a more positive brand image. However research has not been carried out to determine whether strategies used in practice have the intended impact on consumers. Further, whether this impact spreads to generic consumer groups requires examination.

Strategies to develop a brand through sponsorship are becoming increasingly important for brands that invest in sports sponsorship as they bid to gain favourable consumer responses. Consumers are becoming increasingly demanding and also susceptible to marketing fatigue, particularly with traditional advertising banner methods. Therefore, in order to increase the likelihood of a favourable response, industry recommendations suggest that brands need to be more proactive. The gap that requires bridging in research is to how practitioners are setting up sponsorships for this to be achieved. This includes exploring the impact of key issues such as budgets but also whether brands are actually trying to engage consumers beyond brand recall. The study will examine this, but will have the consumer data with which to provide comparisons between what practitioners believe they want, and what consumers actually want.

In chapter one an integrated approach to marketing communications was seen as best practice, chapter two has outlined how this needs to be done in a coherent manner to ensure that a consistent brand message is delivered through the sponsorship. This can be done through a variety of strategies and media. However, it is suggested that the fundamental brand messages need to remain consistent to allow for brand image to be developed in a favourable light for consumers while accurately reflecting the brand. Although limited, the literature suggests that consumers appear to react more positively to brand associations when they see congruence between the brand and the sponsor property. However, this needs to be

examined to see if this is the case or whether more factors impact on this. This study will provide a detailed investigation into how consumers react to sponsorship media both traditional and new media. This will provide a more realistic picture of how consumers react to the different marketing stimuli used by brands in promoting their sponsorship programmes.

Brand loyalty is identified in the literature as being a potentially a powerful attribute for brands, with sports fans in particular showing some cross over to the purchasing of brands associated with their team (Wakefield 2007). However, this has not been explored from a general consumer perspective to explore whether brand loyalty promotes purchase intent and favourability towards the brand. This will be explored at the consumer phases of the research.

Through new technology, consumers are creating 24/7 lifestyles. This is something that brands can capitalise through sponsorship. However, brands need to be careful not to saturate consumers with communication. The need to track consumption therefore becomes important for brands that wish to gain an accurate measure of consumers interacting with their brand and the ways they do this. The manner in which this is being done and can be developed, is discussed in chapter three. A key issue that has emerged is how brands' monitor and evaluate. This is under-researched and also not carried out regularly in the sports sponsorship industry. This presents a major gap in current literature, not only in relation to whether evaluation measures are in place, but also what the limiting factors are in the reported minimal use of evaluation. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter three, in which sponsorship is the focus of attention.

CHAPTER THREE

The importance of understanding consumer responses and evaluation of sponsorship programmes in order to centralise the consumer within marketing strategy and better establish a true reflection of ROI

“Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning”.

Bill Gates

3.0 Introduction

Chapter two explored the brand’s perspective within marketing (focussing on sponsorship), this chapter will define sponsorship as a method of marketing communications and address key components of this function. The chapter will further explore the potential sponsorship has in achieving commercial objectives and examine the role of the consumer in the design and implementation of sponsorship programmes. Additionally, the use of sport as a medium for promoting sponsorship will be discussed and the drive for integrated marketing efforts detailed. Finally, the role that technology plays in sports sponsorships will be identified in order to determine how sponsorship can be used to engage with consumers rather than to use them purely for financial gain. This again refers to how the study objectives explore both consumer and practitioner perspectives to examine how consumers respond to sponsorships, and whether this is matched in practice.

3.1 Current definitive terms for sponsorship

It is apparent that within the literature a generally accepted definition of sponsorship does not exist (Tripodi 2001). This mirrors the confusion about the nature of sponsorship and the relationship sponsorship has with other forms of communication (Walliser 2003). In its primitive form, more than a decade ago, sponsorship and patronage were viewed as similar

entities (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999; Crompton 2004). However, due to the levels of exploitation between the sponsor and the sponsored property association, the two are now distinguishable, in addition to corporate giving and sponsorship (Walliser 2003).

This is reflected by Fill (2005:713) who argues that sponsorship is "...a commercial activity whereby one party permits another an opportunity to exploit an association with a target audience in return for funds, services or resources". Fill (2005) further suggests, that the difference between this and charitable donations relates to the desired outcome of the latter being a change in attitude in which the main benefit is societal. Further, it is argued, that whilst patronage involves financial input, there are no expectations of publicity or advertising returns for the patron (Bennett 1999). This is in contrast to sponsorship, which places the benefits not to society, but more to the participants, in a venture that produces "...repeat purchase activity" (Fill 2005:713).

Patronage is an activity which is philanthropic in nature, which may either compliment or conflict with a sponsorship programme, which, in its advantageous form, can be used to foster community involvement, build relationships, create and enhance goodwill and motivate employees (Dolphin 2003). However, patronage has shown a more significant improvement in the image of a company as opposed to commercial sponsorship, (D'Astous and Bitz 1995) whilst it appears consistent that the use of patronage within sponsorship can result in consumers being more receptive to a sponsor's message (Quester and Farrelly 1997).

Sponsorship as a concept may involve elements of patronage in relation to the desired objectives of the sponsor, yet the integration of patronage or philanthropy as definitive terms, according to current literature (Walliser 2003), should remain separate, given the exploitable

intentions of the sponsor-sponsee association. Further, Zyman (2001) refers to the term 'sponsorship' being a misinterpretation of the often portrayed one-sided relationship whereby the sponsor is the provider of monetary assistance which carries with it philanthropic association despite its commercial utilisation. In addition, Zyman (2001) notes that the term sponsorship should be replaced by 'property utilisation' which would reflect more accurately its role within marketing based on the direct commercial intent. Moreover, due to the role that exploitation plays in sponsorship, sponsors are now willing to channel extra funds into the sponsorship relationship as a means of heightening the level of success (Masterman 2007).

There are numerous definitions proposed in the literature including the commercial potential of the exploitable association (Meenaghan 1991, Tripodi 2001; Walliser 2003), the achievement of favourable publicity within certain target audiences (Bennett 1999) and reaching marketing communication objectives through the media (Derbaix, Gerard and Lardinois 1994). A common criticism in the literature is that there is not a commonly accepted definition. This reflects the fact that practitioners do not fully understand sponsorship and its potential (Redmandarin 2004). To overcome this, it is necessary to carry out more meaningful research in relation to how consumers perceive sponsorship. If practitioners can understand consumers better, they can focus on determining what exactly sponsorship is within the broader marketing function. This is explored at both consumer and practitioner phases of the research in relation to what consumers understand sponsorship to be, and what role practitioners believe it has.

Although sponsorship is defined in different ways in the literature, there is considerable recognition of its important role in marketing communications (Meenaghan 2001a; Chadwick 2006). It is argued that marketers now view sponsorship as providing a competitive

advantage (Amis, Pant and Slack 1997; Fahy *et al* 2004); an effective alternative to other marketing communication activities in terms of promotion (Tripodi 2001; Madrigal 2001; Chadwick 2006); a method of overcoming communication barriers (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998) and also the most apparent form of commercialisation in sport (Mason and Cochetel 2006; Jensen and Butler 2007). Whilst sponsorship may perform these roles, its effectiveness in achieving them is not readily studied. The gap in literature is how well sponsorship can achieve these roles as evaluation is not generally undertaken (Masterman 2007). The problem area is how practitioners regularly refer to sports sponsorship as being a central brand communication platform with little evidence to prove it. If practitioners are basing the conclusions of effectiveness on the popularity of sponsorship, financial accountability is questionable (Redmandarin 2004; Kolah 2007). This study will look specifically at the way brands are using sponsorship to meet their objectives and how they measure this. Exploring the manner in which brands justify sports sponsorship in terms of the budget will also help in identifying how effective it is as a form of communication in comparison to other forms.

However, whilst sponsorship is largely used today as a method of corporate marketing communications, for which it is highly popular (Meenaghan 2005), Chadwick and Thwaites (2005:336) argue that "...at a time when other forms of marketing communications are developing, it is imperative that sponsorship reasserts itself". This needs to be done primarily from a consumer perspective in the designing of unique sponsorships, but also in the trust and longer-term commitment between the brand sponsoring and the sports property being sponsored (Kolah 2006). Whilst trust and commitment may be viewed as core attributes within the sponsor relationships, the actual logistics of the sponsorship arrangements appear to be less favourably publicised, with a widespread absence of objective setting, this resulting in "...poorly thought through deals, characterised by impulsive property acquisition"

(Chadwick and Thwaites 2005:336). The planning, monitoring and evaluation of sponsorship programmes has been questioned within the literature (Farrelly, *et al* 1997; Walliser 2003; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). There is a need for investigation within this study to combine general consumer data with the sponsorship structures utilised by sponsorship practitioners. This will provide an in-depth view of how sports sponsorships are planned or whether they are implemented on a more ad-hoc basis. Whilst theory suggests standardised planning and evaluative processes should be carried out, the conversion of this to current industry practice requires examination.

3.2 Concepts, rationales and the role of commercial objectives

In distinguishing itself from advertising, sponsorship has a perceived benefit to society and related goodwill from the sponsor investment, which varies depending upon the sponsorship category (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999). In studying goodwill in commercial sponsorship, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) found that mass sports generated lower levels of goodwill, (Figure 3.1) potentially as a result of perceived exploitation by the sponsor, something which is relatively common within more commercialised sports.

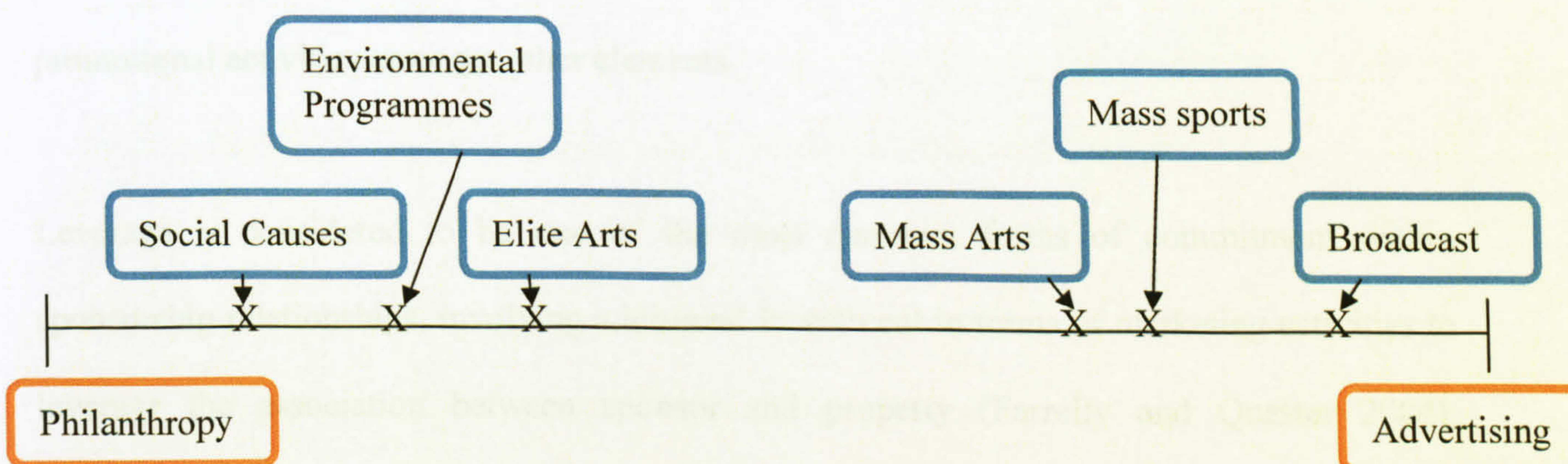


Figure 3.1: Sponsorship category and perceived goodwill.

Source: Meenaghan and Shipley (1999: 340).

From this, sports sponsorship of high-profile sports is not associated with the goodwill of social cause or philanthropic sponsorships. The central concepts of sponsorship appear to be based on key attributes such as image transfer (Gwinner 1997; Meenaghan and Shipley 1999; Cornwell and Coote 2003; Madrigal *et al* 2005) and is also based upon the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored property, in which "...both the sponsor and sponsored activity become involved in a symbiotic relationship with a transference of inherent values from the activity to the sponsor" (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999:332).

However, within a process of exchange, regardless of whether it is simple or based on more complex foundations, Fullerton (2006) argues that there are three key concepts which need to be understood from both the sponsor and property perspective in order for the sponsorship to be effective. The first is linkages, relating to the access that sponsorship generates for a company in reaching their target consumers, This can either be self evident or strategic. The second concept is leverage (Roy and Cornwell 2004; Fullerton 2006) which reflects the on-going encouragement for integrated marketing communications (IMC) (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998; Kotler 2000; Tripodi 2001; McGrath 2005; Kliatchko 2006), whereby sponsorship must be implemented as a strategic effort and incorporated within an IMC plan, including promotional activities amongst other elements.

Leverage is considered to be one of the most common forms of commitment within sponsorship relationships, involving additional investment in terms of marketing activities to leverage the association between sponsor and property (Farrelly and Quester 2004). However, leverage expenditure is acknowledged as being a grey area within sponsorship management, whereby a blasé approach is often adopted (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). This can therefore result in both an under-and over-spend, with a lack of knowledge about

how much to budget for the leverage activities. Chadwick and Thwaites (2005:330) acknowledge that the sponsoring company should "...employ a range of techniques to leverage the full version of the sponsorship contract". This is further supported by results from the European Sponsors' Survey (2004) (sports sponsorship industry-wide survey conducted by sponsorship consultants Redmandarin with the intention of identifying current practice), which found that 42% of the sponsorship executives admitted to spending less than the rights fee on activating the sponsorship which somewhat limits exploitation opportunities (Kolah 2006). Sponsors should not rely on merely owning the rights to a sports property to achieve their objectives. They need to budget funds to activate and leverage the sponsorship in a noticeable way that consumers will recognise and associate with the brand.

Budgets are of a key concern to marketers in the current climate (Kolah 2007). However, the criticism that practitioners do not fully understand the value that sponsorship has is a concern. There is a need to explore how budgets are allocated to a sponsorship programme, to explore whether the rights fee is more important to a brand or whether gaining as much media exposure as possible takes priority. This will help to understand whether brands understand what their consumers want. If consumers respond best to repeated media and brand exposure, then more should be invested in it. However, if the consumer responds better to experiential marketing, the brand may need to reconsider how they allocate their budget.

As a corporate marketing communications tool, sponsorship is undertaken to fulfil commercial objectives (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998; Meenaghan and Shipley 1999; Tripodi 2001; Kolah 2006) which appear relatively consistent in current research. These include; to project a corporate or brand image, (Howard and Crompton 1995; Bennett 1999; Meenaghan and Shipley 2001) produce favourable company publicity, (Bennett 1999) meet

communications objectives such as brand awareness and attitude (Gwinner 1997; Jalleh *et al* 2002; Madrigal *et al* 2005) and increase sales (Howard and Crompton 1995; Crompton 2004). More recently it has been acknowledged that enhancing image and increasing brand awareness were traditionally regarded as the most important objectives, or primary reasons for undertaking sponsorship (Tripodi 2001; Walliser 2003), yet this is now deemed to be dependent upon the sponsored area and activity. It is important to update the literature in relation to what the objectives are, given the pace of change in the sports sponsorship industry, particularly in relation to technological change. This is explored at the practitioner phases to not only find out what the current objectives are, but to establish how sports sponsorship can achieve them over other media. This would assist in providing recommendations based on the consumer responses as to whether sports sponsorship is the most effective medium for general consumers.

Masterman (2007:11) also tracks the growth of sponsorship from its primitive philanthropic beginnings to it now being a sophisticated communications tool that is used to “...drive sales as well as develop favourable brand associations and awareness, develop awareness of corporate image and develop organisational internal relations”. The use of hospitality in sports sponsorship is increasing both for external clients and internal staff (Clarke 2003). However whilst this is increasing, the value which brands get from this activity is not well documented (Kolah 2006). The problem that it presents is whether there is any value in the social event. This will be explored as part of the practitioner phases to develop a broader picture of the value of sports sponsorship beyond primary target markets.

Despite numerous objectives which extend beyond pure financial measures, the importance of sponsorship programmes delivering a return on investment (ROI) should not be

underestimated as many view the capability which sponsorship has to maximise delivering a ROI as being a core component of its use (Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007).

Commercial sponsorship as a marketing activity has only developed over recent decades (Meengahan and Shipley 1999). However, since then, it is now acknowledged as being common practice (Olkkonen 2001). Meenaghan (2005) notes that sponsorship is highly flexible, based on two key dimensions; the range of people it is capable of targeting and also the wide range of objectives that can be pursued. However, the issue of setting objectives by marketing practitioners serves to expose contradictions within literature. Some suggest that there is a lack of formal planning within this process (Farrelly *et al* 1997; Chadwick and Thwaites 2004), others appear to recognise that objectives are readily set (Redmandarin 2004). However, sponsorship executives appear to demonstrate a lack of understanding of the specific strengths and benefits of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool (Redmandarin 2004). Further, it is reported that this lack of understanding is limiting the use of sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004) and this may have implications for attitudes towards its cost effectiveness. Thus, it has been suggested (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001), that marketers may question the cost of sponsorship as a promotional spend.

It is therefore necessary to investigate this issue directly from a practitioner perspective to try and establish why there is a lack of understanding and what are the causes. It may be a case that a lack of meaningful consumer data is limiting the value that brands can extract from the sponsorship investment. This study will explore both points of view to provide an understanding of how consumers perceive sponsorship.

The European Sponsors' Survey (Redmandarin 2004) noted the importance of sponsorship objectives in relation to enhancing brand image; creating awareness/stability and improving brand credibility being identified as the three most highly rated by sponsors (see Table 2). Other objectives included: shifting brand and corporate perceptions; increasing brand loyalty; entertaining clients and gaining a competitor advantage (Redmandarin 2004).

Table 2: Importance of sponsorship objectives

Objective	Percentage Response	Mean (1- Lowest, 10 – Highest)
Enhance brand image	75%	8.6
Create awareness/stability	69%	7.9
Improve brand credibility	67%	7.8

n= 58

Source: Adapted from, Redmandarin (2004), The European Sponsors Survey.

Whilst the identification and setting of sponsorship objectives should be a core activity for marketers given its powerful attitude-forming technique (Farrelly *et al* 1997), it is recommended that the objectives are quantifiable. They should include target audience, time period, directional marketing variables and also a measurement sum (Tripodi 2001). Thus, the pre-evaluation and establishment of best fit between the sponsor and sponsor properties (or event) target markets should be integrated into the process of determining commercial objectives (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Fullerton 2006). From a research perspective, it is argued that there is a need to clarify the theories and the concepts underlying sponsorship, with most published work using the metrics of marketing communications such as awareness and recognition as evaluation tools (Cornwell and Maignon 1998). This limits the

opportunities that sports sponsorship can present to brands. What brands need is evaluation of their sponsorship programmes and consumer data that is meaningful and reflects their attitudes beyond brand recall. This is a gap that the study will address as it is repeatedly recognised as being under researched.

3.3. Planning, monitoring and evaluating sponsorship programmes as a crucial element to successful and effective programmes

The use of sponsorship as a marketing communication tool can pose elements of risk to a sponsor, based on various factors including; the increased emphasis on gaining a return on investment, the associated costs of sponsorship, the increased opportunities available, the availability of sponsorship opportunities outside of sport and the need for a richer understanding of target markets (Fullerton 2006). Therefore, the importance of a selection criteria, for sponsor and sponsor properties (or event), is an important element within the management process of sponsorship (Walliser 2003).

It is recognised that any selection criteria for a sponsorship activity are dependent upon the company (McCook, Turco and Riley 1997), target audiences (Tripodi 2001) and desirable commercial objectives (Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007). However, whilst such criteria within planning may be evident, the management of sports sponsorship programmes is recognised to be in need of attention by practitioners and requiring research (Meenaghan 2001a; 2005; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). It is suggested that a broader basis for the formation and management of objectives would lead to more effective leveraging of sponsorship deals. Moreover, from a management point of view, there appears to be mixed opinions concerning the expected gains derived from sponsorship and also its integration (or lack of) within the communications strategy of a company (Farrelly *et al* 1997). The lack of research into the

process of managing sponsorship programmes is reiterated by Chadwick and Thwaites (2006), who challenge the possibility that commitment has been identified as problematic in many relationships, despite its many advantages as ascertained earlier in this chapter. A further issue in the planning, measurement and evaluation of sponsorship arrangements, according to Masterman (2007), is the lack of congruence of sponsorship with wider communications efforts, with the elements of the communications mix being viewed as separate entities as opposed to integrated communication strategies.

From both a fiscal and sports sponsorship perspective, it is estimated that for every \$6 billion spent on European sports sponsorships, up to \$5 billion is wasted due to the sponsors not exploiting the sponsorship to its full potential, something which is attributed to poor planning and measurement (CIM 2004). According to the CIM (2004), poor sponsorship planning consists of five elements; weak targeting, inappropriate matching of sponsor with event, viewing sponsorship as a separate communication method, sponsoring events with too short a life span and sponsoring individuals excessively which does not reflect their long term value.

Sponsorship planning is something of a continuing contemporary issue within the management process of sponsorship arrangements and an issue which is negatively impacting upon the effectiveness and success of sponsorship programmes worldwide (Redmandarin 2004; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Sims 2005; Masterman 2007). Further, Redmandarin (2004) carried out the European Sponsors Survey (2004:24), which identified "...good planning" (94%) and "development of sponsorship strategy" (89%) to be the two factors most highly considered as determinants of successful sponsorship campaigns. However, on conclusion of their study, Redmandarin (2004:9) questioned how many organisations actually have formal strategies in place, commenting that "It is our experience that relatively few

sponsors have clearly defined and articulated strategies for sponsorship, so there may still be some way to go". Whilst it appears that benchmark standards are recognised as being important in the industry (Kolah 2006), the conversion of this to actual practice is questionable (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). Therefore it is important within the practitioner phases of the research to explore whether there are generic planning processes in place, or whether it is implemented on an individualised basis. This will help to understand the issue of planning, from both an attitude perspective and in relation to budgetary considerations which may impact on how eager brands are to invest in additional services.

In mapping levels of planning with investment made, sponsorship accounts for only around five percent of a communications budget (Masterman 2007), with the majority of sponsorship deals in the UK ranging from £90,000-£310,000. However, there has been little attention given to evaluating the net impact of the sponsorship (Kolah 2006). Sponsorship has been viewed as being more cost effective than advertising, (CIM 2004) but without any real evidence to support this claim (Masterman 2007), with many viewing sponsorship just as an alternative to advertising (Thwaites 1995). This is in contrast to CIM (2004:5) who believe that "...sponsorship could and should be one of the most flexible, creative and cost effective methods of effective marketing communications".

The activation of sponsorship in terms of the budget allocation is an important factor for practitioners, particularly with the rise of heightened accountability of promotional spend (Kolah 2007). From a budgetary perspective, the cost of activation needs to be spread across the term of the deal, therefore adequate budget for leverage needs to be factored into the planning (Kolah 2006). Generally, the industry-recommended standard appears consistent in that for every \$1 spent on acquiring sponsorship rights, the realistic expectation is for \$1 to

be spent on activation (Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007). However, the majority of sponsors actually spend less than the rights fee on activating the sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004). Current industry figures suggest that brands are moving in the right direction to achieve this (Clarke 2003). The Performance Research Group (2002:65) indicated that;

...marketing managers are still spending only an average ratio of activation spending to rights fee of 2.4 to 1,...the figures are moving in the right direction. Fewer sponsorship agreements are signed purely on the whim of the company chairman than ever before.

The need to plan more thoroughly has emerged as marketing spends are constantly being questioned as a corporate expense (Kolah 2007). Due to poor planning and evaluation, sponsorship is not being viewed as the most cost-effective way to communicate with consumers (Redmandarin 2004). However current planning mechanisms are criticised for their lack of depth and over-reliance on metric analysis, which has resulted in a gap between achieving awareness and subsequent purchase (CIM 2004; Masterman 2007). This criticism is currently dominating sports sponsorship, therefore there is a need to establish what exactly the problem is with planning and evaluation.

Based upon this, a more thorough analysis should include both qualitative and quantitative measurement (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) to offset against traditional metric methods based on recognition, awareness, media and publicity value (S-COMM 2008). Further to this, leading Australian sponsorship research and evaluation company S-COMM recognised a need for more in depth analysis in evaluation and have started to slowly develop (through new emerging technologies) and improve metric measurements which provide understanding of the capabilities of sponsorship in addition to the need for appropriate objectives to be identified. An example of this was S-COMM's original sponsorship evaluation system Spindex™, which was launched in 2000 which provided specific information relating to the

sponsorship in terms of its market value and also how it was consumed. However despite proving successful, the emerging sponsorship field forced S-COMM to react and develop a system for sponsors who were keen to develop their sponsorship potential and return on investment, therefore SponsorLink was created by S-COMM which is currently the largest compilation research programme in Australia (S-COMM 2008). The aim of it is to benchmark common sponsorship key performance indicators (KPIs) as; "...level of interest (in the sport and the team), awareness of sponsorship (by sport fan and team fan) as well as buyer behaviour (by general population, sport fan and team fan)" (S-COMM 2008:10). Thus, improvements are starting to be made. However, given the varying nature of each individual sponsorship programme, standardising evaluation tools may prove somewhat difficult. This study aims to address this in relation to exploring the current evaluation models being used by sponsor brands. This will help to identify whether there are common models being used, or whether the situation is less structured. With the issue of evaluation being highlighted in literature, gaining an insight into current practice compared to consumer evaluations will provide direction for recommendations and future research.

A fundamental criticism which is widely acknowledged within both literature and practice is for un-measurable objectives to be set (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Masterman 2007). Traditionally, there has been an over-reliance on media values as a means of measuring ROI. However, this does not provide a true reflection as to whether the sponsorship (within sport) has delivered on sales (CIM 2004; Kolah 2005). Further, according to Kolah (2006) ROI (sponsorship investment) can be measured against six criteria; additional/incremental sales/shifts in brand loyalty, B2B benefits, shifts in brand awareness, shifts in brand image and media value generated. This needs to be addressed as setting objectives defines the outcome of the sponsorship. If brands are trying to achieve objectives that sports sponsorship

can simply not reach, the effects on the brand could be damaging. This study will explore what brands are seeking to achieve through their sponsorship programmes and on what this is based. If consumers are not part of this decision-making process, brands may need to reconsider their broader marketing strategy.

As previously stated, as few as 11% of sponsorships are evaluated, which is interesting considering that Redmandarin (2004:9) reported within their European Sponsors Survey that one quarter of respondents indicated that they were “...very effective” at measuring ROI. Despite considering that measurement and evaluation and indeed planning are not well implemented as a standardised practice, the issue of whether this is due to a “...lack of desire or inherent ability” (Redmandarin 2004:9) is worth considering. Also worth investigation is where the responsibility lies for carrying out the evaluation. Whilst the argument is comprehensively swayed in the sponsor’s direction, there is valid cause to suggest that the right’s owners can “...make their sponsorship opportunity more attractive if they offer this service” (Masterman 2007; 226). However, as highlighted earlier, such agencies as S:COMM, Sports Marketing Surveys and Redmandarin can also be reliable sources, providing that they did not actually implement the sponsorship (Masterman 2007). Given how marketing budgets are being questioned (Kolah 2007), sponsors are seeking to maximise the amount of media and promotion they can use for their properties, which results in little or no evaluation spend (Church-Sanders 2008).

The actual measurement tools within sponsorship have been by both financial and brand equity metrics (CIM 2004), for which a mixture of the two is suggested to be an appropriate option within sponsorship (Kolah 2006). Standard industry measurements include profit and loss (P and L) metrics, econometrics and semiotics, the latter being a relatively new approach

which explores both fan and consumer behaviour (Kolah 2006). Table 3 critiques each approach.

Table 3: Measurement tools critique

Measurement tool	PROS	CONS
P and L	Beneficial for single brand in single market	Needs to be supplemented by general brand equity metrics
Econometrics	Often referred to as the gold standard of marketing measurement. Provides step-by-step guide on the model to which the input data is applied to. Allows brand owner to isolate core facets behind dip or spike in sales.	Does not address raw ingredients of the data Less effective with small-scale direct marketing Does not measure long-term brand building Will not provide fair reflection of the benefits of sponsorship as it is not simply about sales
Semiotics	Based on assumption that culture shapes consumers self- image and brands project representation of how they expect consumers to think and behave Usual approach includes mapping out where brand currently is (socially and culturally) and where it may go	Do not provide information about factors that predispose consumers' brand preference Not universally accepted as a research methodology Failure to transfer already established consumer research methodologies

Source: Adapted from Kolah (2006:231-234)

Regardless of whether simple metric analysis, or combined qualitative and quantitative measures are adopted, the research must “....deliver analysis as well as insight into improving the performance of sponsorship” (Kolah 2006:235). In doing this, Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) make suggestions for best practice to include; ensuring that clear links are evident between the objectives set and the evaluation utilising relevant measurement techniques, have

clear and well-communicated criteria with all internal associates of the sponsorship and clearly outline the aims of the measurement and also to exploit mixed methodologies within the measurement. However, whilst suggested good practice is made, the problem within the industry is the over-reliance upon popular methods such as sales effectiveness; media coverage and communications effect (Masterman 2007) which are not catch-all measurement tools to fully explore the complete potential value of sponsorship programmes (both financially and from a consumer behaviour point of view). This said, the underlying issue is currently a lack of standardisation within measurement and evaluation which will not occur until reliable and valid measures are in place there furthermore remaining a “...pressing need to encourage more rights owners and sponsors to evaluate” (Masterman 2007:239). There does appear however, to be a need by sponsorship executives for more reliable methods, as Redmandarin (2004:10) found respondents required “Reliable evaluation methods to gauge the real ROI”. This said, the converting of this need into a practice may remain in its infancy until sponsorship evaluation is valued, not only industry-wide, but worldwide.

In outlining sponsorship planning processes, there appears to be relative consistency in defining key stages such as objective setting, screening and selection, negotiation, activation and then a stage to review or evaluate. However, the depth of some of these processes does differ from practice-based models and models devised upon theoretical content. Figure 3.2 compares three such processes, Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), which is more theoretical in its underpinning, Kolah (2006) which was born out of industry best practice and Masterman (2007) which is a combination of both approaches.

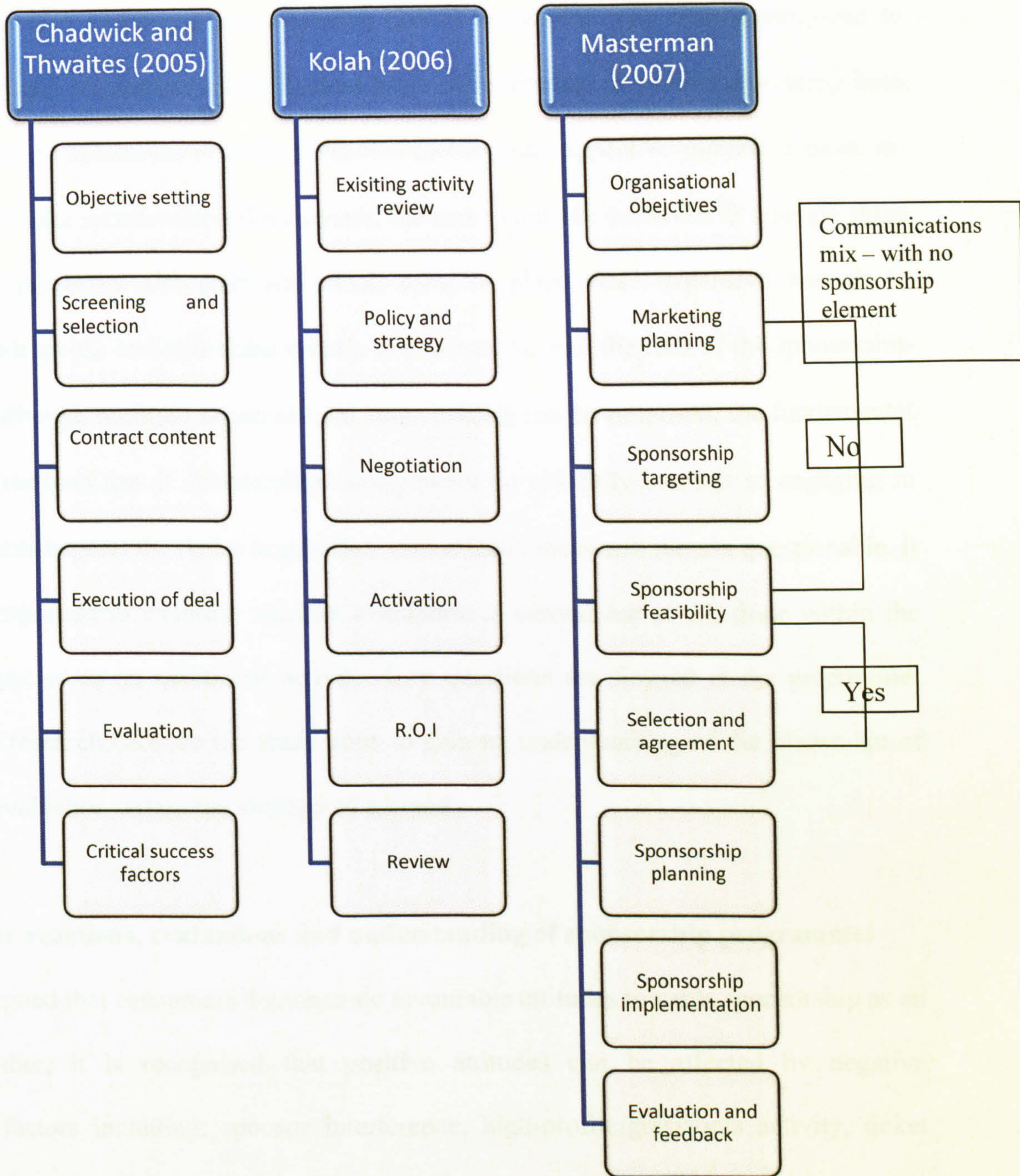


Figure 3.2: Comparison of sponsorship planning/management processes

Source: Adapted from Chadwick and Thwaites (2005); Kolah (2006) and Masterman (2007).

The importance of collaboration within these stages cannot be underestimated, with overall approaches to sponsorship value needing to occur in a reciprocal manner, in which both parties involved in seeking activation opportunities to occur as part of “...a natural process of advancement” (Farrelly *et al* 2006: 1023). The key areas to consider from all processes is the

evaluation, in which Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) incorporate two stages compared to Kolah's (2006) and Masterman's (2007) final stage of reviewing. Whilst incorporating both an evaluation and exploration of critical success factors may appear to provide a more in-depth account of the sponsorship effectiveness, the same could be achieved in a single stage review if the processes and practices which were in place were expansive enough to incorporate both metric and attitudinal criteria to evaluate beyond the ROI of the sponsorship investment. Although multiple processes and stage models can be proposed, the fundamental problem still remains that if sponsorship management do not fully commit to engaging in their investments beyond the rights acquisition, cost effectiveness will remain questionable. It is therefore important to examine whether evaluation is carried out at all, done within the overall strategy, or as an additional activity. Key questions are formed at the practitioner phases of the research because the study aims to gain an understanding of the placement of sponsorship evaluation within the strategy of a brand.

3.4 Consumer reactions, evaluations and understanding of sponsorship programmes

It has been argued that consumers demonstrate favourable attitudes towards sponsorship as an activity. Further, it is recognised that positive attitudes can be affected by negative sponsorship factors including; sponsor interference, high-profile/grassroots activity, ticket allocation and degree of exploitation (Meenaghan 2001a). Meenaghan (2001) implies that consumer interpretation of sponsorship and emotional involvement are key drivers in forming negative attitudes as well as being positive for the brand. In turn, the emotional nature of fan attachment to favoured activities is considered central in controlling the extent to which these factors are tolerated (Wakefield 2007).

In relation to consumer behaviour, Christensen (2006) infers that reactions towards sponsorship programmes occur at a low level of involvement, or at an unconscious level which makes the measurement through traditional market research techniques (operating at a cognitive level) somewhat difficult. However, Christensen (2006:61) argues that measurement of consumer reactions are better suited at a peripheral information processing level in which the effects “...can be measured on the attitudes towards-the-sponsor and emotion-towards –the-sponsor levels. This type of modelling is known as ELAM modelling”. The Elaboration Likelihood Advertising Model (ELAM) is based upon central information-processing which focuses initially on product and brand relevant information, “...which generates brand awareness, brand perception, image preferences and eventually buying intentions” (Hansen 2005: 1429) (see Figure 3.3).

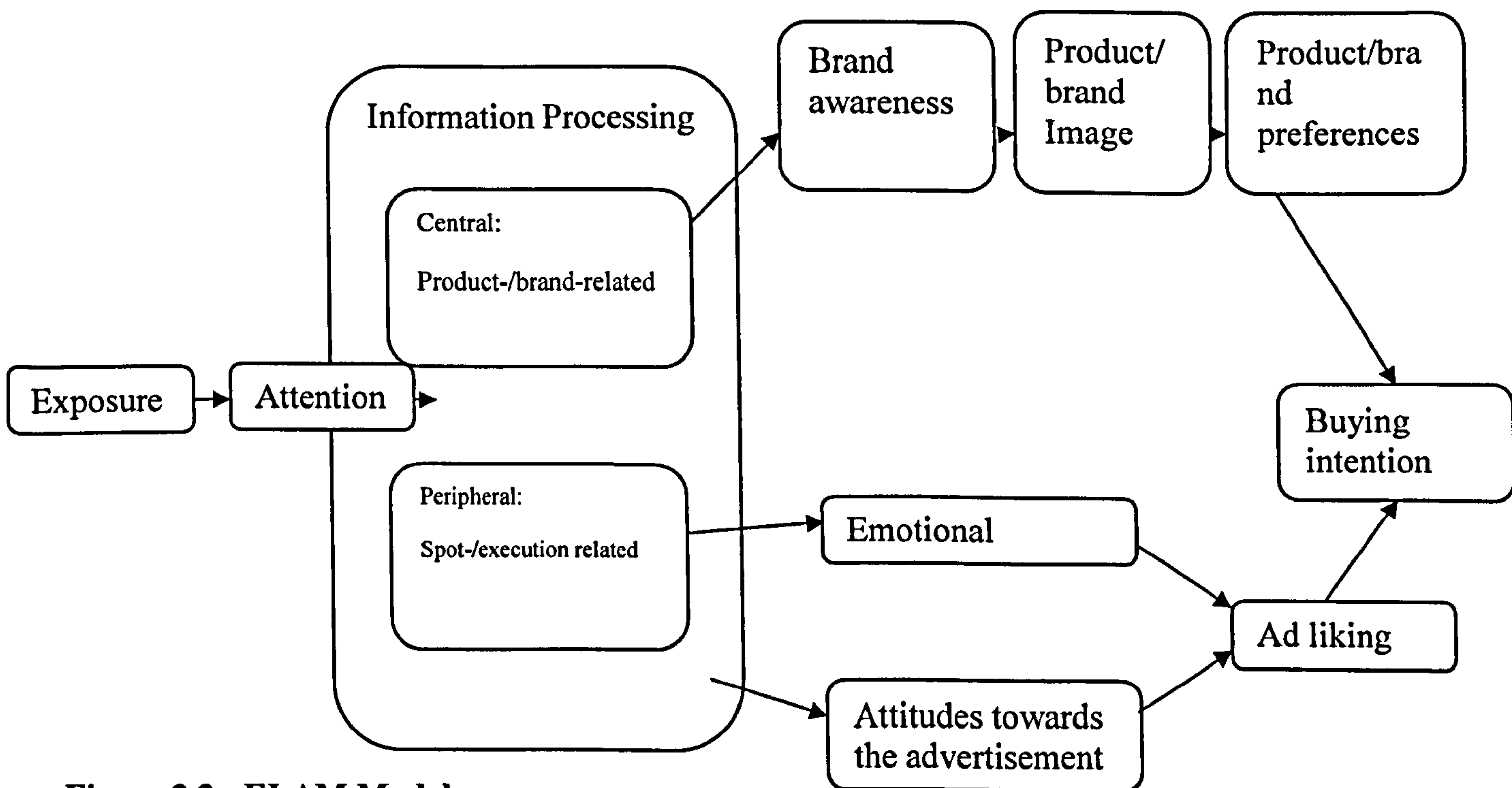


Figure 3.3: ELAM Model

Source: (Hansen 2005: 1429, adapted Hansen 1997).

Peripheral information processing measurements are more closely linked with advertisement recognition, advertisement processing and attitudes towards the advertisement (Hansen 2005). The fundamental base to this type of processing moves beyond the view of consumer

information-processing as a conscious and cognitive process (Christensen 2006) and relates itself more to attitudes towards the advertisement as opposed to the brand, and the subsequent associated emotional responses which are reflected through opinion on the advertisement (Hansen 2005). The important aspect to this (where influencing purchase intent is a recognised objective) is that stored memories may eventually be converted to recognition, possibly leading to influencing purchase decisions (Hansen 2005). However, this is dependent upon the sponsored object or property. However, whilst peripheral information-processing undoubtedly has its benefits within measuring communications effects, the impact is somewhat limited to emotional responses (Hansen 2005) which serves a purpose by with measuring consumer evaluations of sponsorship programmes which move beyond simplistic isolated descriptive metrics. This would appear to be more in line with the type of measurement that is required to provide a more holistic and in-depth account of actually understanding how consumers evaluate sponsorship programmes (Meenaghan 2001a). Further, this would contribute to a more dynamic view of sponsorship effect variables which have relied on common metrics such as awareness, recall, recognition, preferences and purchase intentions, which are all cognitively-based processes (Christensen 2006).

Prior to Christensen's (2006) work, Turley and Shannon (2000) explored consumer reactions towards sponsorship (sports) advertisements and found that consumers do not process many advertisements within a captive setting. This is consistent with Christensen (2006:63) who states that "When the spectator becomes aware of the sponsorship messages it therefore must be assumed to happen with little attention, low involvement and certainly in a peripheral way". Therefore, it is important to measure attitudes towards the sponsor message and the emotional responses towards the sponsored object and the sponsor to more suitably address the effects of sponsorship (Christensen 2006). Within the design of this study, it was always

considered imperative to not only analyse consumer recognition but also to explore consumer attitudes towards the sponsor in both a quantitative and qualitative manner to gain a more rounded and in-depth account of sponsorship effectiveness. However, the analysis of sponsorship in advertising terms (in relation to metric investigation) has been detrimental to sponsorship and has led to under-utilisation in conjunction with other marketing communications tools (Farrelly *et al* 1997).

The once popular notion of sponsorship being viewed as just another alternative, or extension to advertising (Henseler, Wilson, Gotz and Hautvast 2007) is changing to it being viewed more as a strategic collaboration (Chadwick 2006). Therefore, it is important to look at the two alternative communications methods to further enhance the understanding of sponsorship effects. Whilst the main strength of conventional advertising is recognised as being “...its propensity to send a direct and specific message” (Söderman and Dolles 2008:98), sponsorship facilitates the prospect of increasing both brand awareness and brand image enhancement, which in turn can result in sales increases (Söderman and Dolles 2008). Table 4 details a comparison between the two, exploring goodwill, focus, intent to persuade and defence mechanism as comparative factors (Meenaghan 2001a).

Table 4: Comparison between sponsorship and advertising

Comparative Factor	Sponsorship	Advertising
Goodwill	Beneficial	Selfish
Focus	Indirect/subtle	Direct/forceful
Intent to persuade	Disguised	Overt
Defence mechanism	Low state of alertness	High state of alertness

Source: Meenaghan (2001a: 101)

Reflecting on the start of section 3.4, and taking Table 4 into consideration, consumers are said to demonstrate favourable attitudes towards sponsorship as an activity, recognising that positive attitudes can be affected by negative sponsorship factors including; sponsor interference, high-profile/grassroots activity, ticket allocation and the degree of exploitation (Meenaghan 2001b). Further, Meenaghan (2001b) implies that consumer interpretations of sponsorship and emotional involvement are key drivers in forming negative factors which, in turn, projects the emotional nature of fan attachment (in sports sponsorship) to favoured activities. This is central to controlling the extent to which these factors are tolerated. The emotional connection is readily recognised as being a personal meaning that sponsors seek to access in relation to a favoured property (Madrigal *et al* 2005; Ali *et al* 2006). However, Madrigal *et al* (2005) also note that this connection (termed a secondary association) is unlikely to be the only contributing factor which influences consumer purchase towards sponsors' products. Whilst the literature notes this, in relation to sports sponsorship there is little evidence to explore whether consumers are influenced and what prompts them to be influenced in the purchasing behaviour. This is an important key gap in literature in relation to gaining better consumer data to inform marketing decisions. Addressing this will help to provide practitioners a solid basis for marketing budget investment. If this is through sponsorship, brands can channel funds into promotional activities which they know will connect with consumers.

In developing Table 4, Meenaghan (2001b:203) argues that in contrast to sponsorship, consumers do not demonstrate similar favourability towards advertising, suggesting a rather more negative approach. For example, advertising is viewed as; "...selfish, providing no benefit to society, forceful and coercive". In contrast, sponsorship was regarded by

consumers as being; “...in direct, subtle, less coercive and less commercially obvious”. In ascertaining the rationale for the formation of such perceptions, it is argued that linked factors are key drivers within this process, namely moderating effects of the sponsored activity and the background role of sponsorship in comparison to advertising (Meenaghan 2001b).

Meenaghan (2001b:205) suggests that consumers adopt different defence mechanisms when confronted with sponsorship and advertising, implying that advertising commands a “...higher state of alert” than sponsorship. This is attributed to a number of factors including, goodwill, subtlety, commercial intent, moderating effects of sponsorship activity, subtlety of the medium; varying delivery contexts; lower levels of conscious registrations and varying receptivity to sponsorship and advertising messages (Meenaghan 2001b).

Like advertising, understanding how sponsorship works is dependent on central tenets and peripheral routes to persuasion, which for sponsorship is identified as being consumer goodwill, the process of image transfer and fan involvement (Meenaghan 2001a). The goodwill phenomenon is recognised as being potentially the tenet that differentiates between sponsorship and advertising in terms of influencing consumer response (Meenaghan 2001a), the general premise being that any goodwill which consumers feel towards an event, a cause or also a sports team (or other property), may transfer onto the sponsoring brand (Madrigal 2001). Importantly, the goodwill factor is recognised to be evident at three levels, namely; sponsorship at generic, category and individual activity levels, all of which incur differentiated levels of goodwill intensity (Meenaghan 2001a). In relation to sponsorship category, social cause and environmental programmes have been recognised as having the highest benefit and returned goodwill, whilst sports and arts generate lower levels due to the

perceived over-commercialisation, with sponsors reaping sizeable commercial benefit for their investment (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999).

Further to this, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) found that goodwill also differed in the degree of exploitation (perceived exploitation), with the perception of benefit being somewhat negatively related to the degree of perceived exploitation. However, conversely, in an earlier study (McDonald 1991), feelings of goodwill could emerge if the sponsor is seen as being the supporter who enables the event to take place. Given the recognition in more recent literature that commercial sponsorship is continuing to increase together with the issue of whether sport has become too commercialised (Jensen and Butler 2007), the work of Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) appears to reflect a more accurate climate. Creating goodwill in sponsorship is evolving through corporate social responsibility and community-based sponsorship (Kolah 2006). However, it is unknown if this is more effective in engaging consumers than other media. Therefore, in order to explore how goodwill is perceived and whether it is implemented by brands, this study examines consumer perceptions of sports sponsors and also strategies which are used by brands to generate goodwill. It is important prior to this, to establish whether or not brands aim to foster goodwill or whether it is immaterial to them.

The second tenet, according to Meenaghan (2001a) is image transfer, which is an extension of the concept of meaning transfer, this being consistent with literature relating to the celebrity endorsement process (Gwinner 1997). The general notion is that through sponsorship, an events image may be transferred through association to the sponsor's product brand, This will differ depending upon the consumer group (Gwinner 1997), this needing to be factored into planning of the programme. From a sports organisation's perspective, image is becoming an ever-increasingly important factor in influencing relationships with their

stakeholders (including sponsors, fans and the media) (Ferrand and Pages 1999). Within the process of image transfer, Gwinner (1997) recognises that there are a number of moderating factors which can affect the strength of the image transfer including; degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency and product involvement.

In sports sponsorship, consumers attribute meaning to events based on differing aspects such as the type of sport, the event characteristics and the individual consumer factors that include the consumers' past experience of the event (Gwinner 2005), which ultimately link back into the moderating factors mentioned above. This again heightens the need for clear monitoring and evaluation processes within sponsorship, particularly as the image of a company can strengthen brand value (Söderman and Dolles 2008).

In modelling the image transfer process, Gwinner (1997) proposed a model of image creation and image transfer in specific relation to event sponsorship which proposed that the event characteristics, type and individual factors contributed to the events image. From this the transfer between the event and the brand was very much dependent upon, and relative to, the moderating variables aforementioned. Conceptually, the model appears to have a sound theoretical basis. However, importantly, the complexity of the process is evident within the interpretation of the individual factors, such as the number of images a consumer associates with the event and each individuals past experience with the event (Gwinner 1997). Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) proposed a simple model, which is similar in the fundamental concepts to Gwinner's model, yet does not clearly acknowledge the various facets at each stage which are included within the earlier model.

However, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) do acknowledge that there is an apparent willingness for (in some cases) the audience to make the association between the sponsor's brand and the activity. This, as will now be discussed, is not a simple situation to explain, with a plethora of factors and eventualities expanding beyond different target markets for the sponsorship (Figure 3.4).

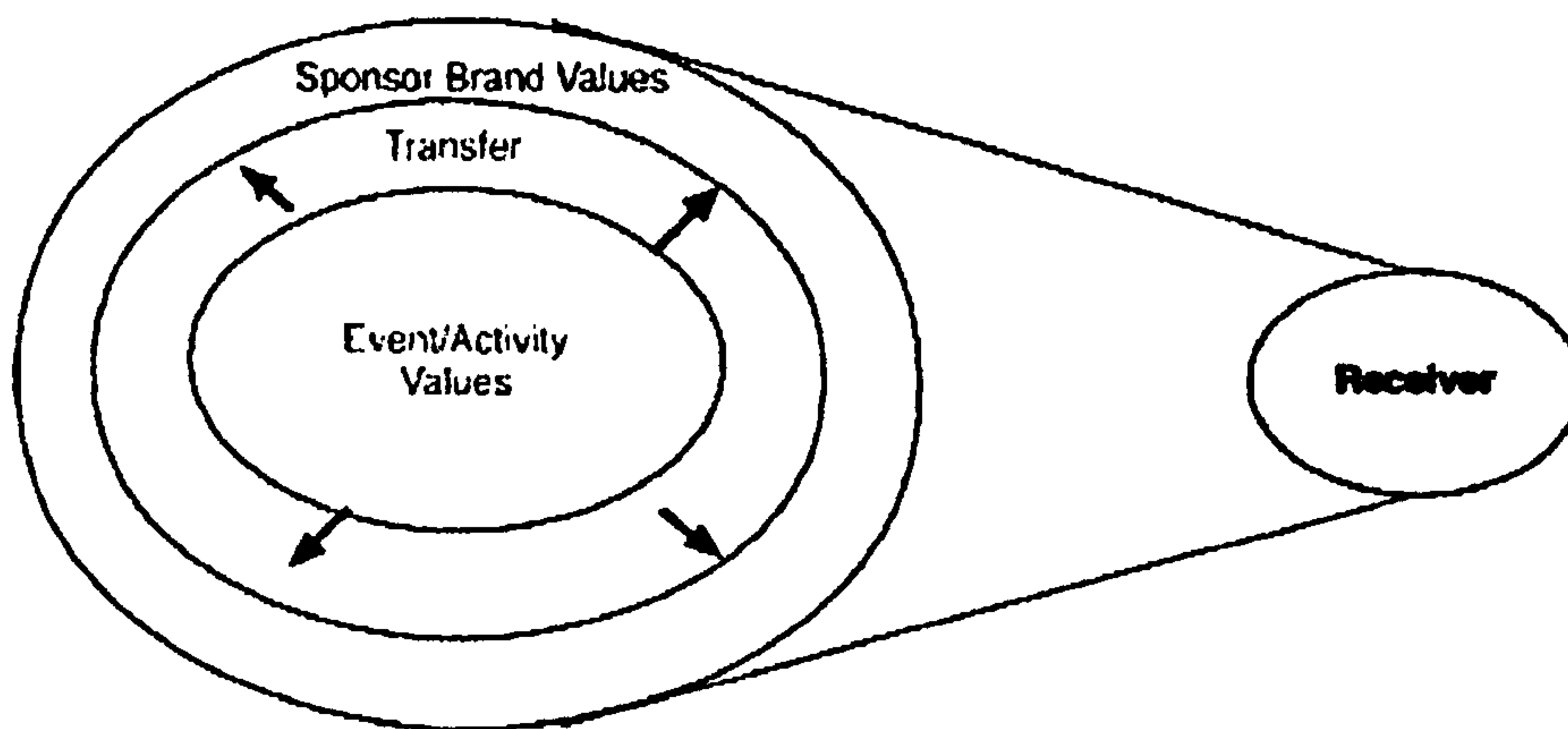


Figure 3.4: The image transfer process

Source: Meenaghan and Shipley (1999:334)

In achieving brand image effects, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) suggest that the use of two key components (the medium and the message) alter depending on whether advertising or sponsorship is being utilised. In the case of advertising, the two components act as separate entities and combine to achieve brand image effect, whilst for sponsorship programmes, the two are combined and act inextricably. With this in mind, the importance of utilising sponsorship within an integrated strategy holds firm (Smith and Taylor 2002; Chadwick 2006; Söderman and Dolles 2008), the reason being the power sponsorship has to achieve objectives (in this case brand image effects) which should not be underestimated but viewed as an opportunity to maximise capabilities. Further, whilst both sponsorship and advertising can be used in achieving brand image-related objectives, sponsorship enables the brand to “...live in the reflection of the sponsored activity. “This reflective approach differs somewhat

from the more direct approach offered by traditional advertising” (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999: 332).

A key aspect in understanding image transfer is fit, or congruence which is well-studied in marketing literature (Cornwell and Coote 2003; Gwinner 2005). The use of the pairing (event and product) which consumers make acts as a mechanism in the formation of “...their own personal meaning or self-image” which they form by buying products/services which are “...consistent with their own desired image” (Cornwell and Coote 2003:269). The importance of this in understanding image transfer, from a consumer perspective, relates to gaining knowledge of the image-related utilities that consumers may obtain at the brand level (Cornwell and Coote 2003). Brands have a unique opportunity in sports sponsorship to engage an audience, due to sports getting considerable exposure (Clarke 2003). However, what is not understood in the literature is how brands do this, and in what way they understand their consumers. This reiterates the point made in chapter two about how practitioners know what consumers want. This study will provide evidence from consumers about the media of promotion they connect with in relation to awareness and purchase intent. This will act as a basis for exploration of whether there is any consistency between practitioners and consumers. The importance of achieving this cannot be underestimated and will go some way to addressing the major concerns in literature regarding misunderstandings about sponsorship as a marketing tool (Meenaghan 2001a; Tripodi 2001).

It has been found that the image transfer between event and sponsor brand can be enhanced when the consumer perceives either a functional or image-based similarity between the event and brand (Gwinner and Eaton 1999). For example, an oil company sponsoring Formula 1 or Flora sponsoring the London Marathon. Meenaghan (2001a:105) also studied image

congruence in focus group research and found that the findings were two-fold. Firstly, "...the ability of a consumer to perceive congruence is determined by the individual's level of knowledge concerning both parties to the relationship", and secondly the "...extent to which consumers perceive a logical connection between both parties in the relationship" (Meenaghan 2001a:105).

Taking these central constructs as key factors within image transfer (from a consumer's perspective), Meenaghan (2001a:105) extended this to note that as opposed to the congruence which was associated with "...high energy snack bar" Mars and athletics, dissonance was experienced for the association of a cigarette company with athletics. However, it is now readily accepted that the link between tobacco and sport is not defensible on ethical grounds (Kolah 2005), therefore the likelihood of such associations are now limited, as a result of recent legislation (Kolah 2005). Further image fit problems can occur if some sponsors are not appropriate for certain audiences, i.e. family-related, and also within venues which may have policies which forbid alcohol sponsors (Wakefield 2007). This has implications, again within the planning stages of sponsorship arrangements, as "...failure to be selective in the properties sponsored may lead to difficult ethical dilemmas that could have been pre-empted with more selective screening and prospecting of the sponsors" (Wakefield 2007:163).

Congruence within the image transfer process can be seen to take a similar role within image transfer as it does within meaning transfer and, in particular, the endorsement process which includes three key stages; the formation of celebrity image, the transfer of meaning for celebrity to product and the transfer from product to advertisement recipients (Kim and Na 2007). Within a recent study exploring the role of credibility, attractiveness and congruence on celebrity athlete endorsements, Kim and Na (2007) found that consumers evaluate an

endorsed product more favourably when there was congruence between the endorser and the products of the endorser. Further, they found that consumers demonstrate more positive attitudes towards the endorser's product when there was congruence between the endorsing athlete and the product they were endorsing. More importantly to this study, Kim and Na (2007) also found that when the celebrity athlete was endorsing a product which had congruence with them (i.e. sports shoes), the credibility and attractiveness was transferred to favourable product evaluations. Conversely, when the celebrity athlete was endorsing a product with little congruence (i.e. perfume) only attractiveness was transferred into favourable consumer evaluations (Kim and Na 2007). Therefore the congruence was found to exert "...significant influence on attitude towards the endorsed product when the compatibility was low" (Kim and Na 2007:319).

The process of image transfer is gaining increasing acknowledgement within literature as being a key goal for sponsoring brands (Gwinner 1997; Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007). However, this does come with some logistical and implementation issues, which again, further amplify the need for both standardised and more rigorously-enforced measurement and evaluation. Firstly, if the sponsorship is being promoted on international levels, the positioning of the brand's image has to fit within different countries. As Gwinner (2005) points out, the image that fits in one country may not be suitable in another, which could be based on cultural or social traditions. A second key issue to consider is that of sponsorship clutter which impacts on the ability which a sponsor has to be visible within the event arena (Gwinner 2005) or the market as a whole. The obvious factor within clutter is the sheer number of sponsorships which may be already in place and also the level of sponsorship. For example, a low level sponsorship is likely to be lost in the clutter which can devalue the process of image transfer for the sponsor (Gwinner 2005). Additional to clutter, yet

coinciding in many respects, is the level of sponsorship as well as the frequency of events, in which it is supposed that “...repeated exposures to the event-brand linkage will more firmly establish the association of their respective meanings in the consumers mind” (Gwinner 2005: 173).

Whilst the process of transferring image values from brand into activity may appear to be simplistic as a relative concept (despite complexities of influencing factors), the idea of managing sponsorship which involves image as a sponsorship objective would appear to involve a more complex approach. According to Ferrand and Pages (1999b), a three step process exists in relation to image sponsorship management, the basis of which suggests that image can be used as a tool for identifying sponsorship opportunities (see Figure 3.5).

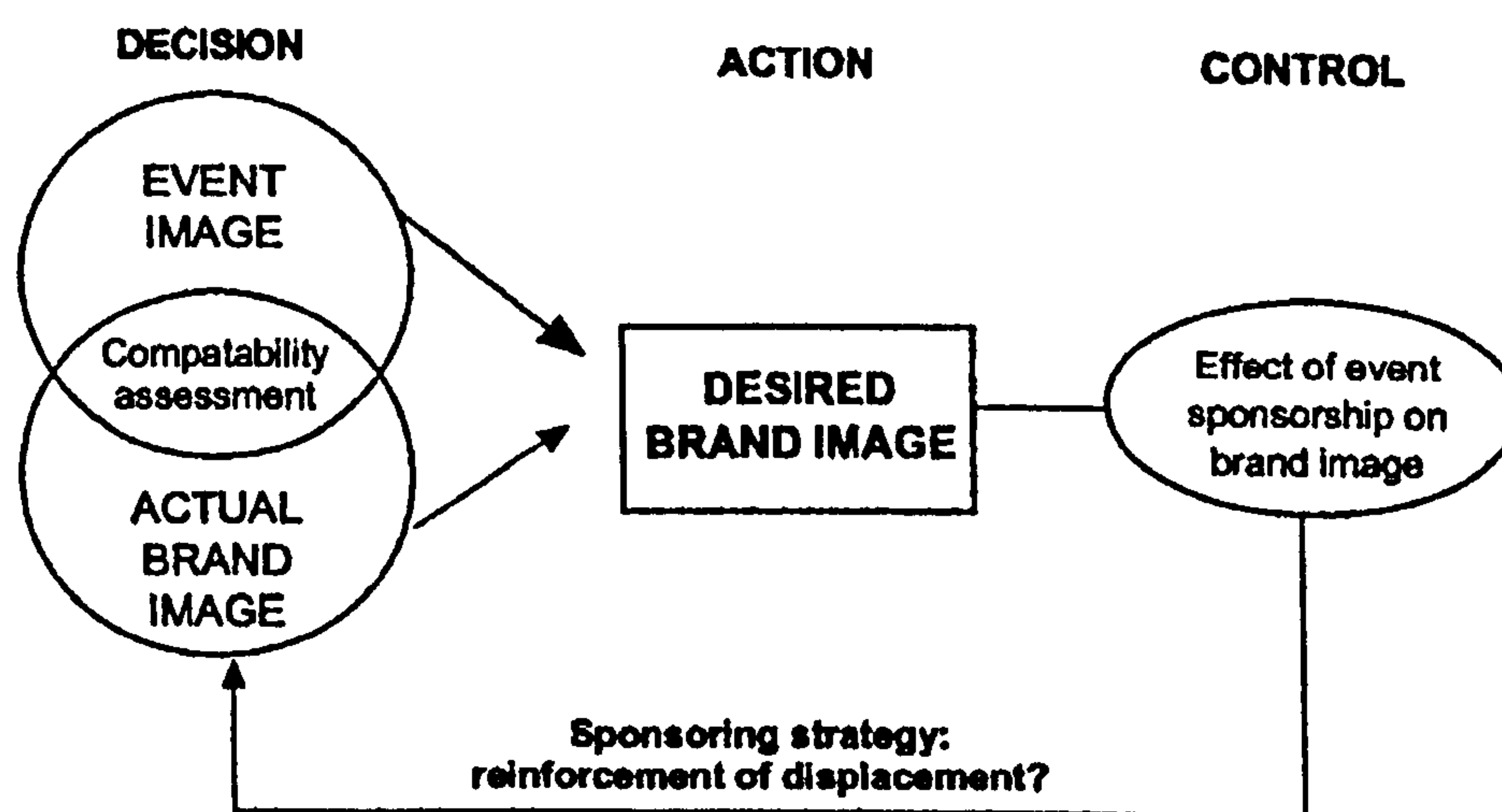


Figure 3.5: The three steps in image sponsorship management.

Source: Ferrand and Pages (1999:388).

It appears consistent from the model proposed by Ferrand and Pages (1999) that the development of both brand and event image requires structured and objective decision-making in order to produce the desired image for the sponsoring brand. This would therefore

suggest that the whole process, from decision through to control, should be in place and be reinforced by sound management practice. This could include knowledge of market competition in order to ensure that there is consistency in delivering the desired sponsored message through the culmination of brand and event image and also that the frequency of delivering the message is in line with the current trends and target audiences. Whilst this model diagrammatically provides a clear pathway and easy-to-understand process incorporating varying stages which can contribute to an effective relationship between sponsor and event through the use of sponsorship, it fails to include any form of monitoring and process evaluation. This could be problematic if plans are not in place for change at the control stage, where the effect of the sponsorship on a company or brand image is effectively assessed (Ferrand and Pages 1999).

The key issue is to create unique sponsorship programmes for brands. However, there is little research done that explores how this is being done and whether it is being done in light of consumer evaluations of sports sponsorship. This will be explored within the practitioner phases of this study. If practitioners are creating programmes that are inventive and unique, but based purely on their own ideas, how do the brands know they will be successful? Numerous suggestions are made in the literature regarding types of sponsorship. However, the literature fails to explore the whole process that practitioners go through to come to their final programme. This study will ask whether brands are using their sponsorship effectively or whether it remains a corporate benefit.

3.5 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Cause-Related Marketing

As a new and broader ideology of business related social responsibility is now called for, a large number of companies are starting to embrace CSR as organisations need to respond to new challenges and demands in respect of their aims and policies (Henderson 2001). This extends to organisations facing increasing pressure to maintain their profit in socially responsible ways. However, from a research perspective there is little evidence to show whether or not CSR impacts upon profitability (Mohr, Webb and Harris 2001). McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006:1) define CSR as:

..situations where the firm goes beyond compliance and engages in actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and then which is required by law.

From an organisation's perspective, CSR programmes can be entered into for a variety of reasons; to fulfil moral and legal obligations (Henderson 2001); product differentiation (Mc Williams *et al* 2006); to improve their reputation through the idea of contributing to the public (Henderson 2001; Mohr *et al* 2001; Kolah 2006; Jobber 2007); to increase customer goodwill (Kolah 2006) and to increase short-term sales (Kolah 2006). Further, employees are deemed important within CSR in so far as the integration of sponsorship can offer benefits to employees, particularly in terms of hospitality, thus, improving morale, team work and employee retention (Kolah 2006). The London Benchmark Group (2006) identify that there are three key motivations behind the use of CSR activities these being: a sense of moral and social responsibility; a belief that companies have a long-term interest in fostering a healthy community and the knowledge that community interventions involving employees, customers and suppliers can have direct benefits, through increased profitability, stronger image, reduced costs, better employee morale and improved customer loyalty.

The implementation of CSR programmes are considered to be win-win situations whereby citizenship is a sound business proposition (Henderson 2001). However this is not always the case, particularly if consumers see CSR for the organisation as being artificial (Jobber 2007). To this end, before an organisation can consider using CSR to impact on purchase decisions, the consumers need to become aware of the level of social responsibility within an organisation. "Building awareness is arguably the major purpose behind cause-related marketing – a subset of CSR" (Mohr *et al* 2001; 47). In order to do this, sponsorship is seen as a key vehicle for driving CSR programmes, given their similar use of partnership. However, there are distinct differences between the two, the main one being how the CRM component will be more focussed around society and community, whereas sponsorship is more about promoting the product (Kolah 2006). The use of partnership is important. Jobber (2007:216) notes that CSR is "...a commercial activity by which business and charities or causes form a partnership to market an image or product for mutual benefit". Despite the charitable, societal and community links within CSR, it is still a commercial activity which forms a key role in many organisations' marketing programmes given its potential to build the brand and brand loyalty rather than being simple cash payout (Kolah 2006).

From a sports sponsorship perspective, the use of CSR activities is set to increase as sport is now recognised by brand owners as being "...a light motif for healthy living. Sport is a way into a better lifestyle away from crime, obesity and other social issues" (Marsden 2006:83). Given that consumers need to become aware of the CSR involvement (Mohr *et al* 2001), sports sponsorship is a suitable medium given the vast exposure that sport receives across a variety of media forms, but also for brands trying to avoid the exploitation tag which is often associated with sponsorship of commercialised sports (Meenaghan 2001a). Research is limited in the identification of whether these mechanisms are having a positive impact on

consumers' brand perceptions and purchase intention. It would appear logical for research to address this, given the shift in objectives for brands and also the cost implications of using sports sponsorship. If consumers react more positively towards a brand because they are more community based in their approach, the future could hold a transfer from high value sports properties to more community/grass roots-related projects. It is therefore important to examine how this is considered in planning and indeed whether it is considered at all. To do this, the consumer phases of the research will provide the consumer attitudes for exploration at the practitioner phases. As already identified, brands need to engage more in consumer sponsorships. Therefore, by providing this joint approach, a more complete view of this issue can emerge. This is important given that the study is focussing on general consumers and not a sport specific demographic.

The benefits for the sponsoring brand, whilst including reducing costs and providing marketing opportunities (Jobber 2007), also includes impacting on consumers' decision-making when it comes to purchase decisions, something which cause-related marketing and CSR can achieve (Kolah 2006). Further, according to Mohr *et al* (2001:48):

...most consumers say that they appreciate and either do or would reward firms who make charitable donations....consumers also expect firms to protect the environment and behave ethically and sometimes base their purchase decisions on this.

Whilst CSR has its drawbacks, such as encouraging consumer cynicism if not implemented correctly (Jobber 2007), the future for CSR appears relatively positive as brand owners view CSR as being a key way of getting cut through in "...competitive marketplaces where strong social credentials, based on deeds rather than just words, can provide a competitive advantage for the brand owner" (Kolah 2006:182). Further to this, Kolah (2006) recognises that CSR can deliver on consumer trust and, in time loyalty, if brands follow three key rules. These are that CSR must be at the heart of the business about how the brand owner makes profit, it

needs to look at how fans (sport) and consumers receive information about the brand to allow them to enter into dialogue with the audience and finally, the brand needs to respond with integrity if its reputation is questioned.

3.6 Sponsorship markets

On a global scale, sponsorship expenditure has rapidly increased since 1984, from \$3.6 billion to £33.8 billion in 2006. The one exception to the continual rise being in 2001 due to a global recession which effected all marketing expenditure (Kolah 2006). In comparison, advertising markets are worth more as total markets. However, the growth of sponsorship from 2005-2006 was higher than advertising i.e. in Europe a 12.9% increase for sponsorship compared to a 4.4% increase for advertising (Kolah 2006).

Sport continues to dominate the sponsorship market on both global and UK levels, with an estimated 83% of the global market, which includes arts and culture (7%), broadcast (5%) and other property types including stadium-naming rights and corporate responsibility activities accounting for the final 5% (Sport Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). The domination of sports sponsorship expands to the value of rights fees, for which sport accounted for 91% of the total market (Sport Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). The reason for such domination, whilst commonly attributed to the popularity and sheer dominance and popularity of sport (Clarke 2003; Jobber 2007), also relates to the sheer magnitude of some of the deals made in sport. For example, FIFA and Coca Cola signed a \$500 million deal and Ferrari and Marlboro penned a \$425 million deal which has had major impact upon the global figures as deals of this enormity are unheard of in other property types (Kolah 2006). To exemplify this, in the UK, broadcast sponsorship as a complete sector has risen 25% to £205 million in 2004, with community sponsorship also witnessing a rise from £58 million in

2002 to £68 million in 2004 (Intel 2004). Further, Kolah (2006) acknowledges that the UK sponsorship market remains one of the most sophisticated markets worldwide. In addition, it holds the highest level of sponsorship expertise in Europe.

In terms of specific sports, football attracts the highest overall investment in the global market, accounting for 35% (\$2,293,888,414), whilst Formula 1 is second highest with \$1,218,000,000. This represents 15% of overall sponsorship expenditure in sport (Sport Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). However, the difference is relatively large between these top two sports and other sports used within this study, with tennis being the sixth highest with \$174,000,000 and rugby union attracting \$135,338,000, both in 2005 (Sport Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). Further, from an industry category perspective, telecommunications is the top spending industry, totalling \$1,320,000,000 (2005). However, it is the automotive industry which had the highest frequency of deals (188) (Sport Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). From this, it could be suggested that sponsorship within the telecommunications sectors is invested longer term with higher deal values, rather than shorter, cheaper deals which may accrue the same benefits that longer term deals can achieve (Sport Business 2005).

Given that this study uses the sponsorship types of sports teams, leagues, individuals and events as variables for analysis, the share of sports sponsorship (2004-2005) per these sectors is shown in Figure 3.6.

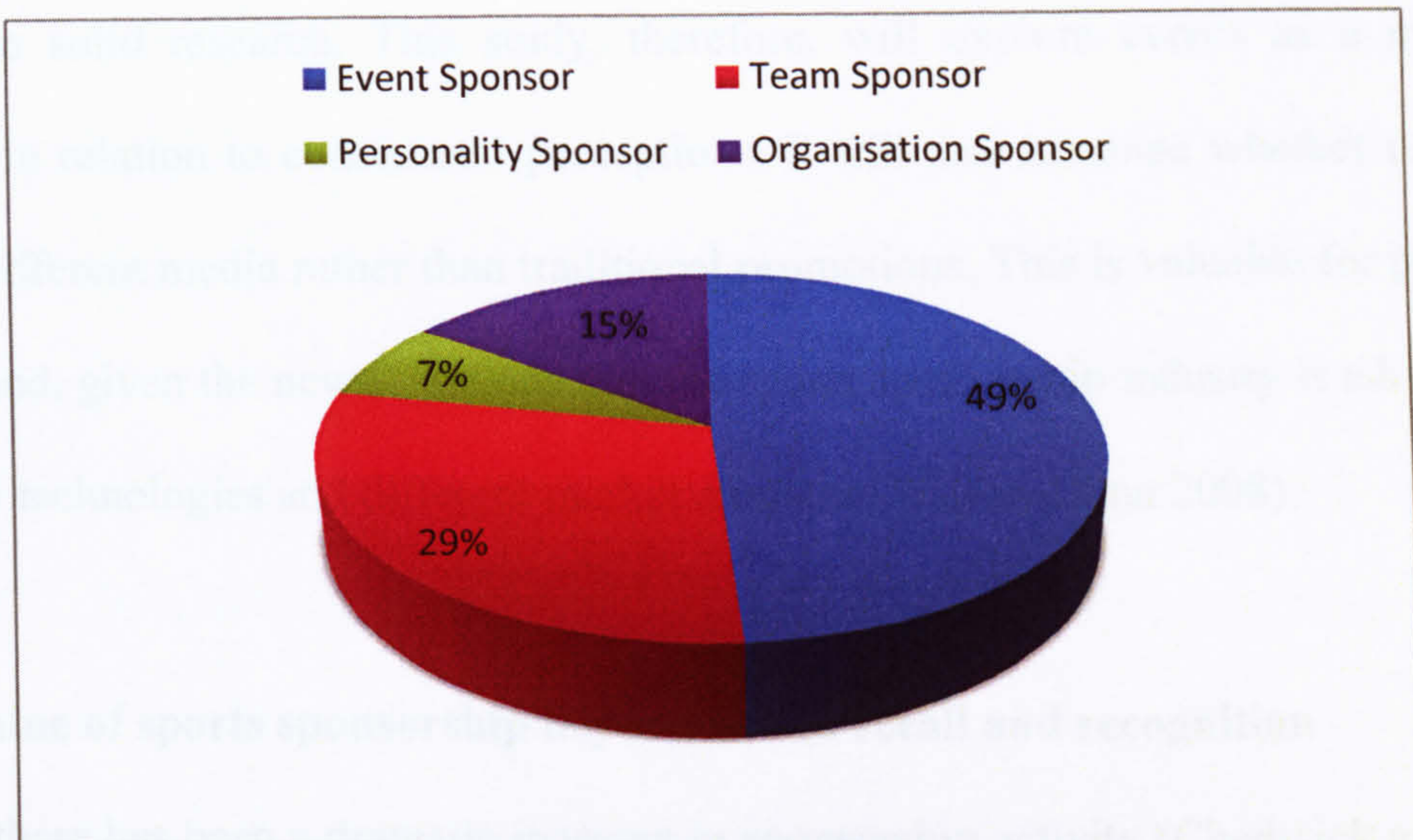


Figure 3.6. Share of type of sports sponsorship analysed (2004-2005)

Source: Sports Marketing Surveys/TWSM (2006).

Sports events continue to attract increasing levels of financial investment as a marketing communications medium (Ali *et al* 2006; Johar *et al* 2006). The reason for this relates to the ability that events have in attracting mass audiences with whom sponsors can communicate (Clarke 2003; Jobber 2007). For example, on a high profile scale, the FIFA World Cup final (2006) attracted a global audience of 603 million and the Wimbledon Men's final in the same year attracted 69 million viewers (Sport Business 2007). This provides sponsors with a plethora of opportunities to connect with consumers who have all gathered for the same reason, the sporting event. Further, the use of events in sponsorship helps to "...bridge an invisible relationship between consumers and sponsors" (Ali *et al* 2006:117). Given that commercial sports sponsorship is often open to criticism from consumers regarding their motives (Meenaghan 2001a), the use of events could provide sponsors with a more subtle way of integrating their messages. However, this needs investigation rather than being an assumption. The problem within the sports sponsorship literature relates to the number of statements which are made about what is considered most effective, or best practice, and little

is based on solid research. This study, therefore, will explore events as a medium for promotion in relation to consumers' perceptions. It will also examine whether practitioners are using different media rather than traditional promotions. This is valuable for practitioners to understand, given the new directions that the sports sponsorship industry is taking with the rise of new technologies and different market climates (Wilson-Dunn 2008).

3.7 The value of sports sponsorship beyond brand recall and recognition

Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in sponsorship activity (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) with Mintel (2003) recording a total of 589 new sports sponsorships in 2001, a majority being football-related (209). Moreover, sports sponsorships are deemed to be far more complex and sophisticated in terms of the definition of objectives, with companies seeking to generate brand awareness and foster changes in attitudes and perceptions (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). However, whilst this may appear to be the case, football sponsorships tend to adopt a more predictable view of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool as opposed to something which can build relationships (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). Whilst the sophistication of objectives within football sponsorship appears to be aimed more at higher level objectives, there is deemed to be a lack of formulation of objectives without any evidence of rational thought processes. According to Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), the main reason for this relates to timescales for decision-making. However, research into setting objectives is not exhaustive given the variety of sponsorships and types of brands that invest in sports sponsorships. Therefore investigation is required across different sports and brands to explore whether a failure to set objectives is commonplace and if so, what are the reasons for this situation. The broader aim of this is to establish whether brands are actively planning, monitoring and evaluating their sports sponsorship programmes to increase their effectiveness. This will contribute to an area requiring further research.

Farrelly and Quester (2004) recognise that sponsors and sports properties engage in typical business relationships where both parties invest time and effort to achieve pre-determined and mutually beneficial goals. Recent developments have seen public focus on endorsements by identifiable people, more commonly phrased celebrity endorsers. Within this, vast sums of investment are made solely for a brand ambassador to act as a credible source (Daneshvary and Schwer 2000; Silk and Andrews 2001). However, from a practical perspective, personality sponsorships only account for seven percent of the sports sponsorship market (Kolah 2006). The focus in literature on this type of sponsorship could be attributed to the large international deals which are done with high profile sporting celebrities such as David Beckham, Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan (Silk and Andrews 2001). The use of global superstars such as these are brought to consumers' attention through the use of mass media promotional methods (Kolah 2006). The ideal, from a sponsorship point of view, is to create a credible source which according to Daneshvary and Schwer (2000) is more likely to encourage consumers to purchase. Literature on this typically documents how sports fans use sporting celebrities as role models, and how this can transfer to purchasing brands associated. However it fails to address whether such celebrities have any impact on a general consumer-base, thereby encouraging general consumers to purchase a product associated with a sponsor brand. This will be explored within this study to determine whether or not there is a sponsorship type which is best suited to purely sports fans or whether it has transference to general consumer markets. This will be valuable information to both practitioners and to inform literature, particularly given the high levels of investment needed to secure the services of a prominent sports celebrity.

However this is too simplistic from a concept point of view, given that, regardless of whether from a credible source, consumers will each react differently to advertising stimuli

(Christensen 2006). Therefore, the endorser alone should not be considered as a brand saviour without creativity in exploitation (Taylor 2008). Studies within sponsorship have been largely focused around recall and recognition studies (Tripodi 2001; Meenaghan 2001a; Walliser 2003; CIM 2004) which are commonly focused around specific sporting events (Nicholls and Roslow 1999; Bennett 1999; Johar *et al* 2006). Such studies identify consumer recognition of brands at a given event by looking at moderating variables such as exposure duration, type and brand category (Johar *et al* 2006). The limitations of translating this into actual sponsorship evaluations and purchase intentions are vast (CIM 2004). The complexity of the purchase process which consumers enter into and the role that marketing stimuli plays in it (Jobber 2004) can be considered crucial in understanding sponsorship beyond sales figures and metric analysis.

In an early study, Bennett (1999) examined how mere exposure and false consensus impacted upon aided and unaided recall and recognition within football fans. Although the methodology was limited to three London Premier League football clubs (plus a control group), the results found that false consensus (not performance-dependent) is an important consequence of sponsorship activity, with different categorises of fans (avid, regular and occasional) showing differing levels of recall and recognition for the perimeter posters and team sponsors. Further to this, conversion to purchase was low. However, fans indicated that they were encouraged to buy the products affiliated to their team's sponsor. However, the degree to which the results of this study can be deemed meaningful in current consumer climates is limited, given the lack of exploration of sponsorship beyond being a "...powerful device for communicating with spectators at sporting events and by implication therefore with team supporters who watch matches at home on television" (Bennett 1999: 309).

As opposed to actual live spectatorship in venue, Lardinoit and Derbaix (2001) explored field and television sponsorship as moderating variables for television viewer recall and recognition (unaided and aided). Television sponsorship was found to be most effective in both cases of aided and unaided recall, which simply may be down to the frequency of hours that certain sports are televised, therefore generating greater brand exposure (Kolah 2006). However, due to the peripheral nature of the processing of sponsors, it was suggested that the embedded memory traces are only superficial and are not evident in unaided brand recall testing (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001).

Developing Bennett's (1999) work, Lardinoit and Derbiar (2001) took a more in-depth approach to exploring how the television sponsorship stimuli influence both recall and recognition, with the impact on recognition being far greater. The results were more meaningful in light of the commercial objectives a company sets for the sponsorship, with influencing memorisation at a superficial level being more suited to recognition-related objectives. From a product point of view, Further, Lardinoit and Derbaix (2001) found that communication through sports sponsorship was more suited to products which were associated with low involvement which presents opportunities for brands which may be habitually purchased, yet proposes considerations for brands which have high involvement in terms of presenting their brand through the sponsorship. Despite recording low levels of recall and recognition for some brands, it is argued that despite this being superficial, it may enhance brand meaning for the consumer (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001) which could impact at some stage on product adoption (Crompton 1996).

Whilst this study may have explored recall and recognition, it failed to address any issues relating to purchase intention. This has been a significant gap in the literature (Walliser 2003)

and needs addressing for the sports sponsorship literature to keep up-to-date with change in the industry. Therefore the extent to which the literature that focuses on brand recall can be considered credible, given the shift of brands to sales-related objectives and consumer engagement, is limited. The consumer phases of the research will pursue a variety of avenues relating to sponsorship type and explore what triggers a positive reaction from consumers in relation to sponsor brands.

More recently, research has identified how frequent viewers and attendees of sports events either confuse or forget the primary sponsors of major events (Johar *et al* 2006). For example, it was reported that half of the British fans who watched or attended a Euro 2000 fixture could not recall any sponsors, with it being more common to recall brands such as Nike and Carling which were not associated with the event (Johar *et al* 2006). Further, at the Euro 2004 competition, there was an apparent mismatch in identifying Nike, rather than Adidas as the official sponsor, which may be related to a more powerful pre-tournament campaign by Nike in a bid to ambush the event from an Adidas perspective (Kolah 2006). It is apparent within literature that although sponsorship is seen as a highly pervasive marketing tool (Bennett 1999; Tripodi 2001; Fill 2005) for which sponsorship awareness can be positively related to corporate image (Pope and Voges 1999; Gwinner 2005), there is a lack of clarity as to consumer identification of sponsor brands. Whilst some studies view sponsorship effectiveness through higher levels of brand recall (S:COMM 2001; 2003), other studies reveal disappointing rates of sponsor identification which question the value of the sponsorship investment (Johar *et al* 2006). However, putting this in context, the issue may be related to the lack of generalisation which the studies adopted, with specific sports, fan groups and events being selected which somewhat neglects the broad appeal sponsorship can have to a wider community of consumers (Taylor 2008). By adopting a general consumer

approach, this study examines how sports sponsorship can impact not only on sports fans, but also consumers who may not be actively or passively involved in sport but will, due to the nature of advertising, be subject to some level of exposure with the brand. Through adopting this approach, sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool can be taken from its currently under-researched status to explore its true potential for both consumers and practitioners.

3.8 Using technology to drive the future of the sports sponsorship industry

Within the evolution of the sports sponsorship industry, a key future driver which has been identified is technology, along with globalisation, behaviour and permission (Kolah 2006; 2007). The manner in which technology has and will impact on the industry is vast, not only from an innovation perspective but from the increased investment in sponsorship by technology based industries. This is primarily through the telecommunications industry which is currently the top spending industry on sponsorship deals (Kolah 2006).

However, although new technology will be one of the key drivers in the sponsorship industry over the next twenty five years (Kolah 2006) there is a need for brands to increase the extent to which they are creative in their use of technology (Johnson 2008; Taylor 2008). It includes design, activation and leverage, which only four years ago, at a major football event (which may be considered a benchmark event for this) was not performed particularly well. In 2004, Church-Sanders was asked to look at all the Euro 2004 sponsor websites to explore what they were doing to leverage their sponsorship. The answer, according to Church-Sanders (2008) was not a great deal:

Very few of them had more than just a simple click through from their own sites to Euro2004.com, they didn't seem to be doing very much to leverage their sponsorship using new technology (Church-Sanders 2008:19).

Consumers in current market climates are far more aware of sponsorship programmes and are also prone to marketing fatigue in stagnant, repetitive promotion mediums (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Kolah 2006). This is something which has developed particularly within major events which are looking to creatively squeeze sponsorship value. Using the European Football Championship as an example, Taylor (2008:19) believes that consumers are completely different, commenting that:

It's a different world, in Euro 1996, there was very little branding, sponsorship, it was an after- thought on websites, there was no added value to it. All the creativity was done offline not online through creative PR.

In contrast to this, Taylor (2008:20) highlights how on the Euro 2008 website, there is video, sponsor competitions, mobile portals, links to ITV and BBC websites.

The consumer today is completely different and particularly the young consumer, they are very media savvy, they want to control what they are doing, they want to bundle the content, share with their friends as opposed to the older days when it was take it or leave it.

As sponsorship moves into a new technologically-driven era (Kolah 2006), creativity and innovation in designing the sponsorship programmes to engage with a broader variety of consumers is becoming fundamental to current industry thinking (Church-Sanders 2008; Taylor 2008). Traditional media used in sponsorship will only account for a fraction of communication channels open to brand owners, with sponsors needing to factor into their planning channels such as broadband, TV, voice, SMS, MMS, WAP, Bluetooth, Java and mobile technologies, including full 3G (Kolah 2006). It is therefore important to investigate how practitioners are planning to do this for their brands. If they are automatically using the new technology just because it is there, then they face the problem that they may be wasting time and money if consumers react better to more traditional media. It could be suggested that by using new technology, brands are isolating consumers that do not particularly engage with it. In these instances, traditional media such as shirt sponsorship may remain the most

effective way. However, this will not provide a mechanism to really engage with a consumer beyond brand recall, something that brands want to do. The need for thorough planning is therefore evident, given that practitioners do not carry out rigorous consumer evaluation to assist in making these decisions. To that end, this study will provide consumer data and will explore how practitioners are developing sports sponsorship programmes to meet the needs of their brands, consumers and also the advancing technology.

An example of this was the Frank Lampard campaign with telecommunications operator Orange in which the whole idea of the sponsorship was PR as it was concerned with getting into the press to showcase the range of Orange services (Wallage 2008). The idea of using video diaries of Frank Lampard was to get more people using video on their Orange mobile phones. Developing this, Orange then launched mobile TV, the ideal opportunity being the launch of the Frank TV channel which was pure PR (Wallage 2008). Further to this, key development areas such as video adoption need to be considered, given the patience thresholds of consumers to watching advertisements online which may divert them away from the actual content (Wright 2008). With reference to video adoption, Johnson (2008) suggested that video is thriving online in the United States (US). However, whilst being behind the UK in terms of mobile, the US is a few years ahead of the UK on broadband space. Moreover, video is being embraced by advertisers:

One of the things they point to is the campaigns where someone sees an ad or a related ad, in 2 diff mediums, its 30 or 40% more effective from a retention stand point. If you can reach them in both places, it's a much better campaign (Johnson 2008: 21).

However, as with most new technologies, the 'bedding in' period may limit the immediate use within sponsorship programmes, or alternatively, may be detrimental to programmes which may be unaware of their potential in following current trends.

Regardless of the technology used, the new developmental point for sponsors in the future is to ensure that they enter into a meaningful engagement with consumers and mobile technology is being viewed as key way in which this can be achieved:

All sponsors, brand guardians are looking at how they can engage with consumers in a meaningful way. The whole market place has changed in the last 4 or 5 years. There is no doubt that mobile is going to be where it is going to be because we are a society that is on the move, where time is precious (Taylor 2008:22).

The key issue from a practitioner point of view is for sponsors to consider what consumers want, rather than to develop programmes solely around what brands think they want (Church-Sanders 2008; Taylor 2008). In order to do this, sponsors need to fully engage in research that will outline what mediums consumers will respond to in the most receptive manner (Sims 2005), rather than relying on sales figures as the benchmark standard for measurement (CIM 2004). To exemplify this, the rise of social networking opportunities has presented sponsors with a new medium through which to communicate with a broader community of consumers (Singh 2008). However, sponsors need to follow consumption patterns (Johnson 2008) and track usage in order to maximise the opportunity.

With mobile technology emerging as potentially the future of technology in the short term, Malhotra (2008:24) believes that such technology presents some interesting challenges.

On the one hand it is a mass market medium which is highly pervasive, and on the other hand it is perceived by individuals to be a highly personal device, which in some sense is more intrusive, which is why SPAM to mobile phones is a big concern in the industry at the moment.

Further to this, Malhotra (2008) suggested that SPAM to mobiles would really destroy the willingness that people had to use their mobiles for content and contact with brands, which would jeopardise its inclusion within a sponsorship programme. Moreover, Malhotra

(2008:24) believes that in respect to mobile technology there is a need to think smarter in reaching consumers, with practitioners thinking more about what consumers want:

One of the things that is interesting about the mobile device is that you can not only receive content and exposure to sponsors, but you can actually create your own content. Mobile has got an interesting 2-way communication.

Although wider communities can be reached through technology in sponsorship programmes, current industry recommendations identify that it is the youth market with which brands need to engage given how they embrace new technologies within society (Taylor 2008).

According to Taylor (2008: 23):

Unless brands (sponsors) can understand the mindset of the consumer today particularly the young consumer they are going to miss out...you have to engage with youth as a major sponsor or brand or you are lost.

Taylor (2008:23) outlines how sponsors need to target consumers as young as five years old in order to start the process of building the brand as part of their society and something of a norm with which consumers can become acquainted:

I think that technology is creating a desire for a consumer to want things, there has always been that. If you are not communicating with people from about 5-8 onwards with consumer brands then you are missing a trick (Taylor 2008:24).

This theme is consistent with major events and in particular the Olympic Games which has an aging demographic population (Roberts 2008). For the IOC and sponsors this presents problems in driving and developing their brand through new technologies which are more suited to a younger demographic population. According to Tibbs (2008:13):

The Olympic Games is not that credible or relevant to most young people emerging through in the developed world, and less so in the developing world, this is a problem for the IOC... the key is for consumer sponsors, the IOC and federations, to unlock content and convert to participation, or convert to engaging with the consumer sponsors.

Looking specifically at London 2012, Balfour (2008:14) believes that whilst turning interest into active participation is a challenge, it is something that the London Organising Committee

of the Games (LOCOG) needs to grasp and implement. “There is significant potential through this medium (digital) to get that sense of engagement”. It relates to the work currently being done by LOCOG in working with Adidas which specifically targets 14-16 age groups, Balfour (2008: 14) comments that:

...it's not about showing someone where a facility is, the key drivers are what makes me feel good about myself and what makes people think I am cool. They are the drivers; it's nothing to do with activity or sport per se.

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided a substantial overview of the development of sponsorship theories, concepts and practices, whilst examining new and emerging trends within the industry that are going to shape its future direction. A key criticism within the literature is that sponsorship is not thoroughly evaluated which could be impacting on the effectiveness of using sports sponsorship as vehicle for communication. If brands are choosing to use sports sponsorship to engage with consumers they need to be doing so from factual evidence based on consumers attitudes and opinions of sponsorship in relation to their intention to purchase. Without any consistent planning and evaluation within the sports sponsorship industry, it is difficult to see how it can progress to provide the results that brands seek. The key issues for consideration are budgetary considerations and attitudes of practitioners to embedding evaluation into their programmes. If the main reason for a lack of evaluation is that practitioners do not feel it to be necessary, then the continued success of sports sponsorship may be limited. This study will aim to identify how sponsorship can be more suitably evaluated beyond simple metric analysis and also how it is perceived across different sectors of the sports sponsorship industry. As part of this, the consumer phases of this study will provide an account of consumer attitudes and intent to purchase. This will advance dated studies on brand recall. The need to understand consumers' engagement more has formed the questions relating to whether consumers would purchase a brand associated with a sports sponsorship. Further to

this, the use of different media such as sports celebrities and major sporting events will be investigated to try and understand, in greater detail, what triggers a consumer to be positive towards the brand and what prompts them to consider purchase.

Sports sponsorship adopts a non-traditional position within marketing communications, emerging as a medium on its own. The difficulty for brands using sports sponsorship is the commercial label that consumers associate with it due to the use of high-profile sports properties used. Sponsoring brands are therefore left with a complex task of minimising this, for example through CSR strategies, or community involvement. In addition to this, the fit between the brand and the sponsored property needs to be visible to the consumer (to be explored throughout both consumer and practitioner phases of the research) as mismatched sponsorships can fall short in relating to consumers. Research to date has not focussed on whether using CSR strategies or heightened community involvement has a positive impact on a consumer. This needs to be addressed given the suggestion from practice that more of these strategies will be used in the future to try and portray a positive brand image. It is important to brands given that sponsorship in sport has high exploitation values associated with it which may limit how well it is received by consumers.

Sports sponsorship needs to be used to engage consumers with the brand and with the brand values, as it has far more potential than advertisement. Sponsors need therefore to understand their consumers in order to develop meaningful relationships which will deliver more than an ROI. The way this can be done is through more unique and creative propositions which allow consumers the opportunity to actually interact with the brand. While the literature suggests that this needs to be achieved, the manner in which it is being done is not documented. It includes how brands plan, monitor and evaluate sports sponsorship programmes and on what they base their decision-making processes regarding sponsorship ideas. This will be explored

at the practitioner phases of the research to establish whether or not there are common planning processes in place, or whether practitioners work on more individualised levels with their brands.

A key area of development in the future will be how technology is used creatively and not used just because it is there. Technology needs to engage the youth market in active participation in sport and this is a key area for sports sponsorships to consider. Whilst it is suggested that the way this can be done more effectively is to track consumption, there is little evidence to suggest that this is being achieved, or how it could be done more effectively. Research on the impact of technology in sports sponsorships is limited beyond financial return. Therefore it is important to assess how consumers react to these media rather than more traditional approaches. Although literature suggests that brands must embrace technology within their sponsorship programmes, it does not explore whether this is actually what the consumer wants, or whether they will react positively. There is a major gap in research as the sports sponsorship industry develops through technological advancements in the future. Therefore the study will explore this in relation to whether consumers are more engaged through sponsorship using new technology or whether there are other stimuli which would foster a more positive reaction.

Chapter four now turns to a formal statement of the research objectives and a discussion of the research design. The key decisions which were made relating to the research tools and methods of data collection will be critically examined and the key issues arising within the methodology will also be discussed. The benefits and implications of taking a mixed methodology approach will be detailed and alternative strategies considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

“The important thing is not to stop questioning”.

Albert Einstein

4.0 Introduction

This chapter considers issues relating to the formulation of the research questions, whilst examining the challenges, justifications and rationales which underpin the selected methodological approaches undertaken within this study. The study’s main question of *“How effective is sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in impacting on general consumer buying behaviour?”* is approached using two subject groups, these being consumers and practitioners. Also, five research objectives which relate back to the main research question have been defined.

RO1: To examine the impact of brand promotion through sports sponsorship programmes on consumer brand attitude, purchase preference, intention to purchase and explore demographic differentials in brand recognition.

RO2: To investigate the use of sport as a medium for sponsorship in relation to achievability of pre-determined commercial objectives.

RO3: To explore how the concept of sponsorship is integrated within corporate marketing, communications and justified as a promotional spend.

RO4: To investigate how strategy implementation and leverage of sports sponsorship programmes are affected by changes in the sponsorship market and budgetary considerations.

RO5: To investigate the extent to which sports sponsorship programmes are planned, monitored and evaluated from inception to end of deal term.

4.1. Justification for the research paradigm and methods

This study used a multi-method approach of a sequential variety and collected both quantitative and qualitative data via the use of self-administered postal questionnaires and face-to-face semi structured interviews. The two questionnaires allowed for frequencies to be generated regarding sports sponsorship set against pre-defined variables whilst the interviews explored the perceptions of consumers and practitioners regarding sports sponsorship. According to Brannen (2005:11) “The kind of questions we pose leads to the choice of method and, increasingly commonly, to a complex of methods”. As this study’s research questions involved both frequencies regarding a population and also the thoughts and perceptions of individuals, the multi-method approach was deemed most relevant.

A key debate within multi-method studies relates to whether philosophical paradigms and research methods have to fit together (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, Creswell 2005). Whilst this remains largely unresolved, a question which has opened up further debate relates to what philosophical paradigms are best for using multi-method research (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). It is commonly noted within literature that pragmatism is the best foundation for this approach to be used, 13 prominent mixed-methods researchers believing this to be the case (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). According to Onwuegbazie and Leech (2004: 226), “Pragmatists believed that regardless of circumstances, both methods may be

used in a single study". The key aspect to this which differentiates pragmatism from other philosophical stances is that the research questions are of primary importance and are regarded as more important than both the method and the theoretical paradigm (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003; Denscombe 2007).

This study's research objectives were framed through more pragmatic assumptions than philosophical ones, given that the end outcome for the study was to feed back into the sports sponsorship industry and open up research in the sponsorship industry through exploration. Brannen (2005:10) states that "The concern of the pragmatist is more to open up the world to social enquiry and hence to be less purist in terms of methods and preconceptions (about theory and methods)". Being ruled by philosophical paradigms would therefore have been unproductive as it would have limited the choice of methods (Brannen 2005). For example, as Brannen (2005) notes, surveys are not necessarily carried out on positivist assumptions. From a research perspective paradigmatic issues which are raised by mixed methods research remains unresolved (Bazeley 2002).

In social science, positivism and interpretivism are the two broad approaches to research (May 2001; Robson 2002), with Neuman (2006) identifying critical social science as a third approach. However, Denscombe (2007:118) refers to pragmatism as an advance in social research and "...a new paradigm that is replacing the earlier paradigms based on positivism and interpretivism". Although thought on positivism is varied within literature (Punch 1998), the core essence of this stance assumes that objective knowledge is gained from "...direct experience or observation and is only knowledge available to science" (Robson 2002: 20). Positivism has been criticised for numerous reasons, including the rejection of the idea that science should only deal with observable phenomena; the over-emphasis of quantitative

measurement cannot capture the meaning of social behaviour and the suggestion that standardisation and distance from the research object cannot guarantee objectivity (Robson 2002).

This study responds directly to these criticisms as an over-use of quantitative measurement would have distorted the qualitative findings and would not have provided findings which would be useful within the sports sponsorship industry. The study aimed to provide relevant data to answer current questions about the sports sponsorship industry therefore being guided by positivist assumptions would not have suited the desired outcome.

Interpretivism moves away from realism and more towards idealism in which subjective meaning is used by individuals in social interaction as the beginning of an objective analysis of society (May 2001). Interpretivism is concerned with in-depth and detailed description which lends itself to greater understanding and insight as opposed to measurement, subsequently seeking to explore beyond the rational response (McGivern 2006). There are several different varieties of interpretive social science, including: hermeneutics, constructionism, ethnomethodology, subjectivist, cognitive, idealist, phenomenology and qualitative sociology (Neuman 2006). This approach favours inductive logic, which is the process of developing or confirming a theory by searching for themes and making meanings from the empirical evidence presented (Neuman 2006; Somekh and Lewin 2006). The main research methods used within this approach are usually qualitative including ethnographic participant observation; discourse and conversation analysis; content analysis; focus groups and qualitative interviewing (Bryman 2004). Although this study could 'fit' with interpretivism, it was not planned to be guided by a theoretical paradigm in the manner in which they are traditionally adopted, but more to be governed by the research questions, hence the study adopted pragmatism. Despite having both quantitative and qualitative aspects

it would have been inappropriate to combine the study at the paradigm level as “...combinations at the paradigm level are not true combinations of world views, but rather the explicit framing of inquiry in two or more world views, each of which remains distinct from each other” (Sandelowski 2000:247). Positivism is limited to a narrow context and is not particularly explanatory therefore it was not suitable for this study. However, following a purely interpretivist approach would not have been suitable to interpret the qualitative data as there isn't a practical way of collecting sufficient data from the sponsorship experts that is representative and generalisable. Therefore the study was guided by the end outcome of the research to feed directly back into the sports sponsorship industry, hence pragmatism emerged as the paradigm by which the research assumptions would be based.

In relation to pragmatism there has been a recent increased emphasis on dissemination, given the growth of practically-based research. However, this presents difficulties in needing to speak both technical research language and easily communicated results (Brannen 2005). This was important given that much research which occurs within the sports sponsorship industry is based on presenting figures regarding sponsorship deals. Therefore the use of methods which would produce findings which could not be understood would be detrimental to the end outcome of the study. Creswell (1994) refers to this in terms of the level of understanding of the audience. Research that is practically based needs to convey methods to the reader that may not be particularly familiar. This was important for this specific industry which has relied on metric analysis through simplistic media coverage figures and therefore would not be responsive to high level statistical testing of hypotheses nor would they be to studies which were observational. The reason for this is that this would not produce answers to the research questions in a format which they would understand or which would be useful. The study needed to gain data across the sports sponsorship industry to build up a picture of

how practice is carried out and how it may vary. By isolating specific units for longer case study research would not provide the foundation for change or further research which would be meaningful.

The use of this approach allowed for the study to develop a conceptual framework as well as to validate quantitative results through the connection of qualitative information gained at later phases of the study (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2004). This was a benefit to the study as the use of a multi-method approach allowed the study to “...better understand a research problem by converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data” (Hanson *et al* 2005:226). Further, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004:771) state that, “Compared to their monomethod counterparts, mixed methods researchers are more able to utilise quantitative research to inform the qualitative portion of research studies and vice versa”. This was applicable to this study as it provided greater flexibility and more holistic approaches to the investigative techniques (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2004). This study developed as the phases progressed and the study required the flexibility which multi-methodological approaches provide, to enhance and develop key issues arising throughout the data collection.

Multi-method studies have been criticised for combining methods which are ultimately derived from conflicting paradigms (Petter and Gallivan 2004) or for adopting a “...whatever works” approach (Bryman 2006:105). However as the study considers the term ‘method’ to mean the research technique or procedures the use of this approach is deemed acceptable (Petter and Gallivan 2004). This is developed furthered by Sandelowski (2000) who refers to multi-methods studies being operationalised at the technique level of research. There is however little direction in literature about how to achieve a multi-method study and further

confusion across such areas as terminology and conflicting paradigms (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent 1998; Sandelowski 2000; Petter and Gallivan 2004).

Whilst multi-method studies have their critics, there are significant benefits, particularly in studies which are not fixed and pre-determined (for example in positivist approaches) but develop as the study progresses. A key justification for the use of a multi-method approach which was applicable to this study is triangulation. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004: 771), “One of the general purposes of mixed methodological studies is triangulation, i.e. seeking convergence and corroboration of findings from different methods studying the same phenomenon”. As this study aimed to provide a holistic evaluation of the effectiveness of sports sponsorship from consumer and practitioner points of view, it was felt that this would provide a key benefit to the validity of the study. Brannen (2005:12) notes how, in early studies, the terms triangulation referred to checking how methods validate or corroborate one another. “The idea was to enable an understanding of a social phenomenon from different vantage points”. However, this is now not thought to be the case in simply adding together different data from a variety of methods used. Basing triangulation on the corroboration of research results Brannen (2005) notes how there are other ways in which to combine the results from different data analyses. Relevant to this study are elaboration or expansion (qualitative data may highlight how the quantitative data is applicable) and complementarity which refers to each data type enhancing each other. “Together the data analyses from the two methods are juxtaposed and generate complementary insights that together create a bigger picture” (Brannen 2005: 12). This fits well with this study as the study did not seek to provide isolated findings regarding the sports sponsorship industry, it aimed to provide an overall picture of how the current industry relates to consumer opinions.

Multi-method studies are “...not mixtures of paradigms of inquiry per se, but rather paradigms are reflected in what techniques researchers choose to combine and how and why they desire to combine them” (Sandelowski 2000:247). It was important therefore to choose methods which would provide data which would answer the research objectives in a thorough manner not in a diluted form which can occur through mixing methods (Sandelowski 2000). For example carrying out case study research would not have answered the research objectives as the researcher did not have the scope to study sports sponsorship within its natural context (Darke *et al* 1998) and would therefore have only received weakened findings.

In order to avoid this it was important to conduct interviews (rather than methods that isolated specific cases) with a range of people from the prior phase of questionnaire data and to interview individuals for a substantial period of time to gain an understanding of their opinions and perceptions. In addition, it was important not to rely on a smaller number of interviews. A key consideration for this study was to choose methods;

...because they make for better cooperation with research informants: for example semi or unstructured interviews are likely to be used with those in powerful positions in organisation since their perspectives are likely to be (or believed to be) unique within an organisation (Brannen 2005: 10).

This was important for the practitioner phases of this study given that the people sought were of high management capacity and a key stakeholder within an organisation. Although a questionnaire was used first to provide some statistical evidence to inform the interviews, the use of semi structured interviews was deemed essential to gain the required level of information in addressing the research objectives.

A critical issue within a multi-method approach relates to the “...clarity of purpose, basis and substantive focus, giving direction to the study and a logical basis for explanation” (Bazeley

2002:9). As the literature area of sports sponsorship is somewhat under-researched it was imperative that this study adopted a methodology which would provide this direction with a clear focus on the practical nature. To adopt a paradigm orientated approach would have driven the research to be more interested in "...ideas and their origins, in the ideas which drive the research and the ideals upon which research should be founded" (Brannen 2005:10). Adopting a single method would not have necessarily provided any more validity than multi-methods as "...validity stems from the appropriateness, thoroughness and effectiveness with which those methods are applied" (Bazeley 2002:9). Previous literature (Meenaghan 2001a; Walliser 2003; CIM 2004; Kolah 2006) recognises the need to perform more research relating to specific issues such as how sports sponsorship impacts on general consumers and also more strategic issues such as planning and evaluation. Therefore, if the study was to generate a general consumer group which was varied in the types of consumers, a survey was the more appropriate method to achieve a base line of data for which to develop the interview phases. This was also the case with the practitioners. If the study was to explore current practice across the sports sponsorship industry the sample needed to represent different sectors within this.

This study relied heavily on descriptive and explanatory research, its aim being to build a picture of the sports sponsorship market from both consumer and marketing communications practitioner perspectives, which was vital in order to develop plausible explanations of the implications for marketers. According to DeVaus (2002:19), "...good description is important...it is the basis for sound theory...unless we have described something accurately and thoroughly, attempts to explain it will be misplaced". The use of descriptive research was essential in the study, as the outcome was to examine issues facing marketers (McGivern

2006) and use the findings to construct more effective marketing strategies where sports sponsorship is used as a medium of promotion.

Further, the study aimed to initially develop a picture of the market and the set of consumers within the sample in terms of brand recognition scores and look to identify whether factors including sports participation, spectatorship, sport preference, sport involvement and sports-type influence the recognition scores. Further, the study aimed to understand whether sports sponsorship affects a consumer's intent to purchase as well as their attitude towards a brand associated with sport. In addition, as aforementioned in section 4.0, the study looked to investigate how sponsorship programmes are designed, implemented, planned and evaluated which allowed for a picture of the current and emerging markets to be outlined through the types of research described above.

The purpose of adopting a multi-method approach to the inquiry design and data collection methods in this study, included understanding more defensibly with less bias and stronger validity, gaining a more comprehensive understanding through multiple perspectives, understanding more insightfully and creatively and gaining a deepened understanding with heightened value consciousness and diversity (Greene *et al* 2006). Although the study utilised qualitative aspects which adopt a "...naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decision, beliefs, values), within their social worlds" (Ritchie and Lewis 2001:3), a mixed approach, of both qualitative and quantitative elements within the chosen method, was deemed to be appropriate, as Nau, (1995:1) suggests that, "...blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research can produce a final product, which can highlight the significant contribution of both".

Selecting purely quantitative methods would have been detrimental to the study as they are “...rarely able to provide more than surface depictions of the effects of causal powers in a particular social context” (Modell 2005: 1096). This would have only added to the limited research that has been done in sports sponsorship from a metric analysis stance. In a recent study, Bryman (2006:110) found that multi strategy research “...provides such a wealth of data that researchers discover uses of the ensuing findings that they had not anticipated”. In citing an example of this, Bryman (2006) notes how triangulation can be an unanticipated outcome. This study developed findings from the quantitative phases to inform the qualitative phases which additionally helped the qualitative data to “...explain some of the relationships uncovered through an analysis of survey data” (Bryman 2006:111). However, as Denscombe (2007) points out, this is not always the outcome and can be a disadvantage for mixed methods research.

The Mixed Methods approach, to a large degree, operates on the assumption that findings will coincide and that this will be a positive contribution to the research project. If the findings do not coincide, however, the researcher can be faced with a problem (Denscombe 2007:120).

This was a challenge for this study given that it used a sequential approach to data collection using two different methods. However, although this was a risk prior to starting the study, the rationale for the study included meeting the needs of the research question, to provide a more complete picture of the sports sponsorship industry and also to compensate for the strengths and weaknesses of the methods being used (Denscombe 2007). Therefore it was thought that a multi-method approach was best suited to achieve this as it provided a “...practical, problem driven approach to research” (Denscombe 2007:119). By using questionnaires and interviews the study could gain two types of data which complemented each other and which provided answers to the research problem and questions set. Some alternative methods would not have allowed this to occur, for example in participant observation, which demands “...firsthand

involvement in the social world study” (Marshall and Rossman 2006: 100). This study did not need to observe one particular sports sponsorship company as the aim was to provide a broad picture of the sponsorship industry to gain an understanding of current practice and issues in practice. This study would therefore not have benefitted from “...immersion in the setting.....to hear, to see and to begin to experience reality as the participants do” (Marshall and Rossman 2006:100).

As this study aimed to explore thoughts and opinions, the use of solely qualitative methods without the initial quantitative phases would not have been suitable, given that multi-method approaches provide “...a more comprehensive account of the thing being researched” (Denscombe 2007:118). Without collecting quantitative data to provide a basic picture of consumer attitudes towards sports sponsorship and sponsorship industry practice, the study could not have discovered the key issues which arose in the interviews. Similarly “While quantification may sometimes be useful, it can conceal as well as reveal basic social processes” (Silverman 2000:8). It was therefore important, as the study was exploring attitudes and beliefs, to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Whilst quantitative methods are criticised for their over reliance on pure science which omits any deeper understanding of the surrounding phenomena (Robson 2002), qualitative methods similarly have their critics. For example, Silverman (2000:10) notes how a key criticism relates to “...how sound are the explanations it offers. This is sometimes known as the problem of anecdotalism”. For this study to provide findings which contribute to sponsorship industry practice in a meaningful way, it was therefore important to recognise the challenges of both qualitative and quantitative methods. A key aspect to this was not to become immersed in the field too much as this “...leads to a certain preciousness about the validity of

the researcher's own interpretation of 'their' tribe or organisation" (Denscombe 2007:11). Similarly, doubts concerning qualitative research relate to how the researcher may make no attempt to deal with contrary cases. This may have biased the results in favour of the practice of the sponsorship agencies in which the research was based and would not have provided the general picture of the industry required. It is important to note that the study was not building on a wealth of previous research findings, taking a specific direction, as literature is limited, but it was developing calls in literature to carry out more research into how sports sponsorship impacts on general consumer behaviour. Therefore it was deemed appropriate, considering the advantages and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods to "...make pragmatic choices between research methodologies according to your research problem" (Silverman 2000:12).

Another key challenge to the study which is a disadvantage of multi-method research, is how the time and cost of the research project can increase (Denscombe 2007). The combining of the phases of research did mean that the time-frame for designing the research and collecting the data expanded. As the study was sequential, the interviews could not be carried out until the survey data had been collected. Similarly, the practitioner phases could not be carried out until the consumer data had been gathered and analysed. This put pressure on the time to analyse the data given that the interviews were individual therefore the time for transcription also increased. Whilst this presents problems which would not be encountered in single method studies, the logistical issues of using a method such as focus groups far outweighed the problems the chosen methodology presented. Given that the study interviewed consumers from a varied sampling frame, getting them all together for a group interview would have been impractical from a cost and timing point of view. Similarly with the practitioners, the study could not have feasibly gathered practitioners of such seniority in a focus group due to time commitments but also from a power point of view which may have skewed the data. The

sports sponsorship industry is a competitive industry, therefore it is questionable as to whether practitioners would have shared their successful models of sponsorship in a group setting, or whether it would have resulted in less information being gathered as trust cannot be established in the same manner as an individual interview (Robson 2002). Marshall and Rossman (2006:115) recognise this as a problem with using focus group interviews, noting that:

First and foremost is the issue of power dynamics in the focus group-setting. Should the researcher choose to use this method she should be exquisitely aware of power dynamics. The interviewer has less control over a group interview than an individual one.

The study needed to avoid an ad-hoc putting together of methods, but instead considered how the quantitative methods related to the qualitative methods to avoid "...any arbitrary mix-and-match approach where methods get thrown together" (Denscombe 2007:118). This was done based on three factors; the research problem and objectives, logistical issues of accessing the samples required and methods which would translate suitably to the desired audience given the pragmatic nature of the study.

4.2 Research design

In attempting to arrive at a strategy which would enable the researcher to analyse the research questions in a suitable manner, it was important to initially identify a baseline position of current industry reports, strategies, views and opinions on the issue of sports sponsorship within marketing communications. In order to address the main research question of "*How effective is sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in impacting on general consumer buying behaviour?*" a first step was to identify the stakeholders who had an involvement in this area. Following consideration of this question many societal and industry groups were identified as playing a role in this, such as consumers, marketing

communications practitioners, brand managers, sponsorship executives, athletes, broadcasters, stadium designers, sports clubs owners, National Governing Bodies and sports technologists. An extensive literature search and review limited the study to consumers and marketing communications practitioners the latter group including: sports technology, sports marketing research, sponsorship executives, commercial broadcasting and sales and marketing practitioners. This encompassing approach was deemed more relevant to providing a complete reflection of the current industry that was aligned to literature recommendations.

In order to arrive at a strategy which would enable suitable analysis of the research questions, the consumer and marketing communications practitioner groups needed to be identified. The first phase consisted of general consumers, those who the researcher did not know, and did not have any recognisable connection with sport as this would potentially have biased the sample. The desire was to include consumers of whose interest or involvement in sport the researcher was unaware. In this respect, the sample was predominantly random in that the households were selected from the Royal Mail Address Finder (RMAF) (2004) using a random number table (Thomas and Nelson 2001). The RMAF is the most up-to-date and complete address database in the UK that contains over 28 million addresses. It is licensed software to Royal Mail that allows for addresses to be selected based on Census district which helped to increase the random element of the sampling as addresses were selected by number only. The sample at this stage purposely excluded any address associated with leisure centres, sports retail, sports clubs and both public and private gymnasiums. It was deemed vital to perform this with rigor in order to ensure that the consumers would constitute a wide variety of demographic and socio-economic groupings. This would assist in addressing the overall research question and sub questions for the consumer phases and as the study does not seek a pure sports fan, or sport enthusiast perspective, the study required a general consumer sample.

The formulation of the third and fourth phases of the research was a result of both literature reviews on the subject and also personal involvement within the sport business industry. This enabled the researcher to more suitably gauge the relevant respondents who could directly contribute to answering the research question from a high professional status and level within the industry. In order to gain the relevant data, this aspect divided sections of the industry into technology, research, sponsorship and commercial broadcasting. This subdivision strategy was purposely done to reflect the various facets of using sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool. For example, it was imperative to include sponsorship executives to reflect on current practice and the processes of designing, implementing, activating and monitoring of sponsorship programmes. Also, it was vital to collect data from the area of sport technology as the future of the industry and marketing as a whole, will become more focused on the use and integration of technology within marketing strategies and programmes. As a result of this process, two categories were identified:

1. Consumers: general consumers living within the North West of England.
2. Marketing communication practitioners: working in sales and marketing, sponsorship, research and technology sectors.

Following this initial grouping of stakeholders, further decisions had to be made regarding the extent to which all of the individuals and industry sectors could sufficiently be examined, whilst being cognisant of the research questions. Therefore, a decision was made to construct further objectives related to both the stakeholder levels of consumers and marketing communications practitioners. In deciding to undertake such a strategy, the five objectives would further enable opportunities to gain a diverse range of views, opinions and practices, whilst contributing to analysing the main research question for the study. As a result of the identification of the two categories, a further decision was then made to logically address

each of the three levels in turn as part of the establishment of a coherent and systematic methodological approach to this study. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the final four-phase research design for the study, and the next part of this chapter gives details of how this process was established.

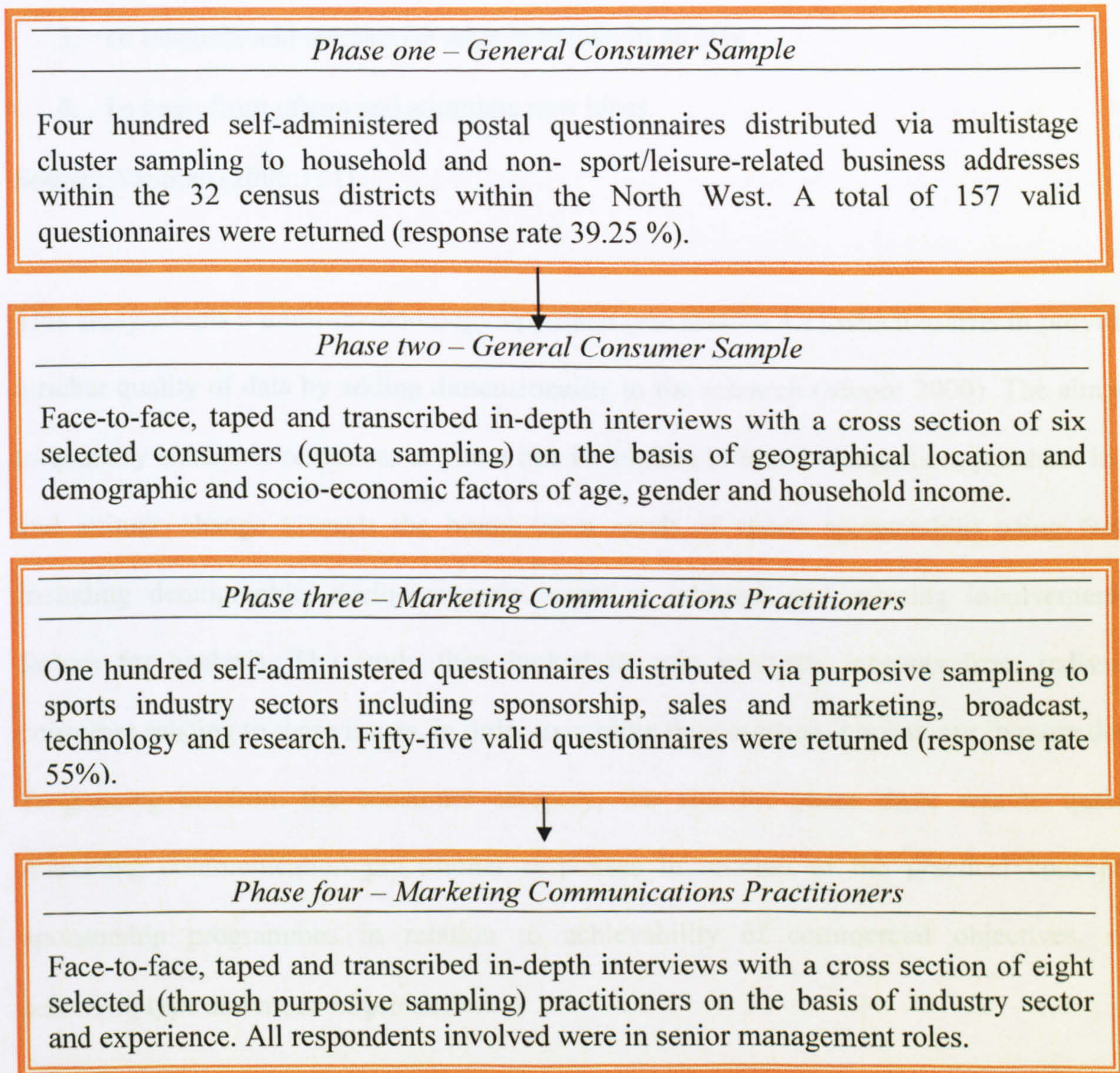


Figure 4.1: Outline of research phases

Prior to undertaking this research, a review of literature was carried out to identify and develop the initial research questions. Neuman (2006) outlines the following goals of a literature review:

1. To demonstrate a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish credibility.
2. To show the path of prior research and how a current project is linked to it.
3. To integrate and summarise what is known in an area.
4. To learn from others and stimulate new ideas.

Source: Neuman (2006:111)

This study adopts a multi-methodology approach (see section 4.1) which assists in providing a richer quality of data by adding dimensionality to the research (Moore 2000). The aim was to quantify consumer responses at phase one in relation to brand recognition, purchase intent and attitude change towards the brand (as a result of sports sponsorship) using factors including demographic; socio-economic, sporting interests and sporting involvement as factors for analysis. The study then looked to gain in-depth accounts from individual consumer relating to these issues, in order to explore their consumer behaviour in more detail. Progressing on from the consumer category, the aim for phase three was to quantify marketing communication practitioner responses in relation to the practical concept of sponsorship programmes in relation to achievability of commercial objectives, sport selection, type and mode of promotion.

Developing this, was phase four, which approached the line of enquiry relating to the overall aim by undertaking face-to-face depth interviews with practitioners working in the sports business industry. The aim here was to gain insight into issues relating to planning, monitoring and evaluating of sports sponsorship programmes, as well as exploring issues

relating to design, implementation and activation. It was vital that this was reflected in the design, in order to address the calls in literature and the industry relating to the failure to appreciate the effectiveness and potential of sports sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004).

The nature of multi-method research poses problems with regard to the writing of research (Creswell 2002). Therefore this study incorporated a sequential design of research objectives which incorporated elements which were addressed at both the quantitative phases (one and three) followed by the qualitative interview phases (two and four). This fell in line with recommendations from by Creswell (2002) which stated that mixed methods studies need to have both qualitative and quantitative research questions in order to provide focus.

4.3 Survey method

The survey method follows a rigorous process which aimed to satisfy three core conditions; standardisation, replicability and representativeness (May 2001). The survey method was used within the study as it was appropriate to collect the relevant data to explore the research objectives both quantitatively at phases one and three and then qualitatively at phases two and four. Bryman (2004:43) suggests that survey research collects "...a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables which are then examined to detect patterns of association". Given that this was a social research study of pragmatic assumptions an experimental design was not favoured, but the cross-sectional design of the survey method was seen as more suited to the desired outcome. Furthermore, as the study is descriptive and explanatory in nature, the use of the survey methods provided "...numeric description of trends, attitude or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell 2002: 153). Both survey phases are discussed below in more detail, including

sampling strategy, survey instrument and administration, as well as some of the implications of design for data analysis.

4.3.1 Phase one and two sampling– general consumers

The first phase of data collection involved the design of a self-administered questionnaire (see appendix 1) to be distributed to a sample of households (general consumer-based) within the North West of England, based on the 32 (condensed from 44) Census Districts informed by the Office for National Statistics (2004). It is important to note that the North West was chosen primarily for convenience in consideration of the following phase of interviews. While this can be considered as biased the researcher concedes that both budgetary and time commitments had to be taken into account for the interview phases. It would not have been realistic to include the whole UK population within the sampling frame however this did not detract from the rigour that went into sampling the North West as a whole area.

The aim of phase one was to quantifiably examine and explore aspects of general consumer behaviour in relation to sports sponsorship, including, brand recognition; intent to purchase and brand attitude with demographic, socio-economic and lifestyle factors as variables for analysis. This justified the need for the selection of consumers to be unknown to the researcher and as random as could be obtained, to avoid bias towards the research. Whilst self-selection cannot be accounted for, following analysis of the returned questionnaires, the sample did have sufficient variance in relation to age, gender and household income. The issue of self-selection for survey research is recognised as being problematic (Robson 2002). However, by utilising a combination of household and business addresses, the sample provided a broader range of consumer groups rather than targeting specific demographics.

While there is no typical sample size figure (Robson 2002) the size of the sample needs to be dictated by the initial aims of the research problem. Additionally, the North West has the third largest gross value generated from a number of large cities and also from a variety of traditional and other economic activities (Office for National Statistics 2004). Therefore the larger sample, combined with economic considerations was thought to have a sufficient degree of representativeness to meet the study aims and objectives (Moore 2000).

This research phase adopted a multistage cluster sampling (probability) strategy which was utilised in order to generate a sample of general consumers who could be considered to have been selected on a random basis, given the constraints of cost and time. In its simplest form, multistage sampling occurs in stages and is concerned with “...taking samples from samples” (Robson 2002:263). This ruled out the use of simple random and systematic sampling which would not have been cost-effective (DeVaus 2002). Whilst multistage cluster sampling provides a way to generate a geographically concentrated sample (Robson 2002), geographic variances were not part of the study, therefore it must be acknowledged that such variances cannot be accounted for within the thesis. In addition to this, the likelihood of socially desirable answers being given has to be acknowledged. Attempts to minimise this were made through the formulation of the questionnaire and also through the length of the interviews. According to Albarracin, Johnson and Zanna (2005:152), “It is crucial that individuals respond honestly when providing self-reports of their behaviour”. In order to increase the likelihood of this, Albarracin *et al* (2005) recommend taking four steps within the design of research to minimise the possibility of socially desirable answers. These were adopted by this study. The first is to assure individuals of the confidentiality of the study and to explain how the study used a coding system to guarantee anonymity. This study coded all the questionnaire responses and coded the interviewees by age, gender and household income

rather than name or location. Secondly, it is important to stress how important it is that respondents reply honestly for the integrity of the project. This was done in this study as well as to stress the importance of the 'don't know' response to try and increase honest answers rather than educated guesses. The third step taken was to structure the data so that respondents never have to deal with potentially socially desirable answers face-to-face. Whilst this could not be avoided in the interviews, the use of a questionnaire in the previous phase of research allowed for some consistency to be achieved as the respondents had already answered similar questions in the questionnaire. Finally the study used consent forms which stressed the need for honesty and also allowed the respondents the opportunity to not take part if they did not wish, after reading the questionnaire. It was important to ensure that these steps were part of the research design as they "...engender a formal, public commitment to honest responding that some survey researchers have found to be effective in reducing socially desirable answers" (Albarracin *et al* 2005:152). The study followed a rigorous process for identifying and selecting the sample, based on DeVaus' (2002) outline of multistage cluster sampling, shown in Figure 4.2.

Sampling Stage One

Divide into regional zones comprising: Wales; North East; North West; South East; East Midlands; West Midlands; East of England; London; Yorkshire and the Humber.

Sampling Stage Two

The North West selected and stratified into Census Districts – 44 condensed to 32.

Sampling Stage Three

The household addresses within each of the 32 Census Districts identified

Sampling Stage Four

Simple random sample of household addresses selected with equal numbers of addresses per census district using a random number table (Thomas and Nelson 2001).

Determining how many questionnaires per district.

Number of questionnaires distributed = 400

Total number of districts = 32

Questionnaires distributed per district = $400/32 = 12.5$ (rounded to 13).

Determining which postal address to randomly select. i.e. For the Calderdale

District.

Total number of streets in district = 8331

To generate 14 addresses = $8331/13$

Street to be selected = Every **640th street**

Figure 4.2. Sampling procedure for phase one

Source: Adapted from DeVaus (2002:72)

The sampling process required each district to be despatched the same number of questionnaires. This extends the multistage cluster sampling to a probability proportionate to size (PPS), which assists in minimising the bias in sending out numbers of questionnaires based on the size of each district (e.g. distributing more questionnaires to districts with a higher population) (De Vaus 2002). The sample for phase one was gained from 400 postal questionnaires of which 157 were returned (39.3% response rate).

The sample at phase two (n=6) included a cross-section of respondents from phase one who indicated their willingness to take part in a face-to-face in-depth interview. Whilst it is understood that the results at phase two may be subject to bias, given that the respondents involved were ones who indicated their inclination for the interview, the final sample at phase two was considered to be an accurate cross-representativeness based on age, gender,

household income and also interest in sport, with some respondents having limited interest and some higher levels. Further, as the sample at phase one was unknown to the researcher and was a general consumer sample with the exclusions of sports-related businesses or industries, it was felt adequate to recruit in this manner.

The sampling strategy therefore was quota (non-random/non-probability) as the general categories were initially identified (age, gender, household income and sporting interest) for which a predetermined (based on response) number of cases for each category was then selected (Neuman 2006). Criticisms of quota sampling relate to representativeness given that the choice of respondent lies with the interviewer (Bryman 2004). However, as the sample at phase one involved random elements of sampling through the multistage cluster sampling approach, the selection of the final six respondents to interview did not take into consideration knowledge (for example, brand recognition scores) as a method of selection, therefore aiming to minimise any possible bias. The sample for phase two is detailed in Table 6 below. As previously stated, self selection was recognised as a potential limitation. However, as demonstrated in Table 5, this was minimised by having a cross-representation of interviewees whose level of sports participation, age, gender and household income were considered prior to interview.

Table 5: Phase two sample

Respondent	Age Group	Gender	Household Income	Sporting interest
1	20-24	Female	£ 10,000-£19,999.	Limited social spectator
2	65+	Male	Below £10,000	Regular cricket spectator
3	45-54	Male	£30,000-£49,999	Football season ticket holder
4	35-44	Male	Not disclosed	Regular leisure participant
5	55-64	Male	£20,000-£29,999	General occasional interest
6	25-34	Female	Not disclosed	None

As already noted, the interview participants self-elected to take part in an interview through completing a consent form at the end of the phase one questionnaire (appendix 2), indicating that they would like to take part in a face to face interview. In total, ten respondents agreed to be interviewed. Further to this, the potential interviewees were all sent a letter detailing the aim of the interview and a list of dates for them to select a preferred day (appendix 3). On receipt of their returned form, interviewees were telephoned to confirm their participation, organise a time and to be given a brief explanation about the length of time the interview was expected to take. In addition the interviewees were informed about the need for the interview to be taped for transcription, whilst assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the interview and in analysis. The final sample consisted of six respondents aged between 22 and 70 who took part in an interview which lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were conducted between the 21st July 2005 and 12th August 2005.

4.3.2 Phase three and four sampling – marketing communications practitioners

The sample at phase three required practitioners working at a senior level to provide informed, direct responses to answer the objectives set. This allowed for the overall aim to be explored from the second perspective of the study, industry based, and also to allow for

exploration of issues raised at phases one and two from the consumer point of view, hence the sequential design within the phases of research. The response at phase three was 55 valid returns from 100 postal questionnaires (55% response rate), twenty-two subjects consenting to take part in a face-to-face depth interview. The respondents chosen to participate were all involved in sports sponsorship, sales and marketing, research or sport technology and shared a common identity regarding their role within their company; all were in a position of being Managing Director, Chief Executive or in a senior management role.

Therefore, the sampling was non-random (non probability) at both phase three and four as the respondents needed to have the relevant industry-based knowledge and practice experience to comprehensively contribute to the study. Thus, purposive sampling was appropriate given that the sample being selected was to fit a particular criteria, that being high-level marketing communications practitioners working in the sectors of technology, research, sponsorship executives, commercial broadcasting, sales and/or marketing. The use of purposive sampling is deemed relevant "...to select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialised population" (Neuman 2006:222). It was also relevant to choose the sample at phase four for interviews using the same strategy based on the need to "...identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation...the purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of types" (Neuman 2006:222). With regards to phase four, the in depth interviews, this was relevant in terms of sampling, in order to select respondents who fit within marketing communications and who were required to purposely contribute to the overall study.

The recruitment of the sample used two databases for selection, firstly the Sport Business UK (available online at www.sportbusiness.com) directory and the UK Trade and Investment International Sports and Leisure Infrastructure projects CD-Rom (version 3). It was important

to use two databases to check for duplication and also to identify companies which may have been omitted from either of the sources. However, both databases were found to be relatively consistent. It is important to note that given the locality of the companies selected, it would have been unrealistic to gain a large enough sample in the same area (North West) as with phase one. Thus, the majority of the sample was located in London and its surrounding area due to this being the prime location where the industries selected are located. Given the pragmatic approach taken by the study and the need to feedback into the sports sponsorship industry it was important to collect data directly from the relevant agencies which are based in the South of England. The sample for phase four consisted of nine selected respondents from a total of twenty-two who consented to be interviewed. The sample is detailed below in Table 6.

Table 6: Phase four sample

Respondent	Industry	Level	Location
1	Sport and Technology Research	Managing Director	London
2	Sports sponsorship and communications	Head of Communications	London
3	Commercial Broadcast (Pay TV)	Commercial Director	London
4	Sports Media Relations and Sponsorship Consultancy	Managing Director	London
5	Sports Marketing	Managing Partner	London
6	Sports Sponsorship	Director	London
7	Sports Marketing Research	Director	Surrey
8	Sponsorship	Director	London

4.4 The consumer questionnaire

Survey research is used to “...gather information on the backgrounds, behaviours, beliefs, or attitudes of a large number of people” (Neuman 2006:43). In contrast to experimental research, in which people are placed into groups to test a very small number of hypotheses with limited variables, survey research samples respondents who “...answer the same questions, measure many variables, test multiple hypotheses” (Neuman 2006:276). Whilst both written questionnaires and formal interviews (including face-to-face and telephone (Robson 2002) can be used in survey research (Neuman 2006), this study used self-administered questionnaires for a number of reasons relating to the development of the research questions, recording of data, target population, sample size and analysis.

In designing the instrument the key focus was to ensure that it would collect data to answer the research questions (Robson 2002). The first stage of this was to carry out a thorough review of literature. As the literature suggests that limited research exists that explores this, it was important to obtain the contemporary issues that could be explored to contribute to literature. This was done through identifying that purchase intent and attitude to purchase were not studied in any detail (Walliser 2003; CIM 2004), but also that brand recall was studied but not in relation to general consumers. It was also important within this literature search to include industry surveys (For example, European Sponsors' Survey 2004) as the study would be exploring consumers' and practitioners' opinions and in recognition that there are cross-over themes that emerged. The questions were adapted for consumers and practitioners based on literature recommendations and given the sequential nature of the study, initial findings were used once gathered to inform the next phase of research. This provided the study with currency which would provide a different dimension to previous research, but would also allow for industry recommendations to be made. In order to ensure

that the instrument was as valid and reliable as possible, the study piloted both questionnaires. Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) note that pilot studies can be used to improve the internal validity of questionnaires in a number of ways. For example, to ask the subjects for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions, record the time taken to complete the questionnaire and decide whether it is reasonable, discard all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous questions, assess whether each question gives an adequate range of responses and collect preliminary data.

In this study it was important to ensure that the pilot study responses allowed for the final questionnaire to collect a range of data that accurately reflected the research questions. For example, the pilot study needed some questions to be reworded as they were not returning responses that would contribute to the study. When asking consumers about their purchase intentions, it was not foreseen initially that socially desirable answers would be a major issue, therefore the use of Likert scales were introduced more to try and minimise these. Initial findings in the pilot study did show that consumers were relatively knowledgeable about sports sponsorship. Therefore, the questions asked could be advanced to try and gain a greater depth of information, however, at the same time being careful not to ask questions that would not be understood.

The pragmatic approach allowed the study to ask questions which would directly answer the problems facing sponsorship practitioners in their limited evaluation of consumer evaluations, for example, literature questions (CIM 2004) relating to whether sports sponsorship impacts on purchase rather than just awareness. Therefore the questions in this study needed to reflect this and ask consumers whether they would purchase a sponsor product based on the sports sponsorship. As literature suggests that sports personalities can

positively impact on consumer buying behaviour (Kim and Na 2007), the study needed to factor these in, for example, sports events and sports celebrities. The important point to note is that whilst literature suggests that more research needs to be done to explore how sports sponsorship impacts on general consumers, it is limited in the suggestions it makes for further research except for the links to purchase. Therefore this study needed to take a broad approach to the designing of the questions in order to provide a broad picture of consumer behaviour. This allowed for the following stages of research to develop upon key findings which emerged within brand recognition, attitudes and opinions of sports sponsorship and purchase intent. Table 7 outlines the process of designing the questions for phase one.

Table 7: Process for question design for phase one

Literature recommendations and links to research objectives	Questions for this study (Likert scale)	Link to solving practitioner problems
<p>More research on how general consumers evaluate sports sponsorship and what are their opinions of brand using sports sponsorship (Meenaghan 2001a; Walliser 2003; Taylor 2008). This links to ROI.</p>	<p>Sport is used excessively for the promotion of non-sport product brands.</p> <p>The association of sport with non-sport product brands has a financial benefit to both parties.</p> <p>What media create the greater association?</p>	<p>If consumers switch off at certain marketing stimuli then practitioners are wasting money as it is having no impact. If consumers perceive an exploitation tag and nothing else, they may have to reconsider their strategies.</p>
<p>Research does not explore whether sports sponsorship impacts on consumer purchase intent (Walliser 2003; CIM 2004). This links to ROI.</p> <p>Research suggests that particular stimuli may impact on the likelihood of consumers to both accept a sponsorship programme but also to purchase from it. These impacts on the cost effectiveness of sponsorship investment (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). For example, sports celebrities, events and different media of promotion such as television and on-field (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001; Kim and Na 2007; Kolah 2007). This links to ROI.</p>	<p>The brand endorser influences my choice of brands.</p> <p>I would purchase a particular non sport product brand because of the sport team, individual, league or event that it is associated with.</p> <p>When particular sporting events are on, I prefer the non sport product related to the event, as opposed my regular brand.</p> <p>The use of specific athletes to endorse non-sports products affects the brands that I prefer.</p>	<p>If brands are investing in sports sponsorship on the assumption that they will automatically get a return on investment through consumer purchase, they may not be extracting the full potential from their sponsorship programme. They may be misinterpreting metric analysis evaluation which may in turn lead to wasted marketing efforts if consumers do not purchase as a result of their programmes.</p> <p>If consumers respond better to particular stimuli and media of promotion, sponsors can tailor their sponsorship programmes to avoid wasting budget on promotion that may not be having any impact.</p>

<p>Research shows that Generation Y holds value to brands within the emerging brand culture in society (Stevens <i>et al</i> 2005). Current research suggests that practitioners need to engage with younger consumers (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008). This links to RO1.</p>	<p>I buy non-sport related products associated with sport/sports endorsers as a result of my child(ren).</p> <p>I am aware that my child(ren) pay more attention to products associated with sport.</p> <p>My child(ren) influence the products (associated with the sport) that I purchase.</p>	<p>With current literature suggesting that brands need to engage consumers far more in sports sponsorship, if adults perceived that their children paid attention to branding in sport, sponsors may be able to tailor their promotion at both adults and children. For example, if CSR activities were effective, this would encompass a more family approach than individual.</p>
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There are a number of advantages in using a self administered (postal) questionnaire which were applicable to this study, including; it being efficient at providing large amounts of data in shorter periods of time (Robson 2002; Bryman 2004; David and Sutton 2004); in lowering administration costs (David and Sutton 2004; McGivern 2006) and the provision of anonymity which can encourage honesty and willingness to participate when sensitive issues are involved (Robson 2002). This latter point was vital given that income was a factor for analysis at phase one. In addition, the use of a questionnaire ensured a high level of standardisation, which is important in consideration of the analysis (Robson 2002). Additionally, at phase three it was advantageous to use this method as it is recognised that a self-administered questionnaire is effective in reaching individuals who would not otherwise take part in research, including industry practitioners or busy professionals (Mc Givern 2006). This was vital at this phase of research given the senior marketing communications practitioners who were targeted within the sample population. However, questionnaires have disadvantages which impact upon the design and planning of the survey instrument and research design in general, including that they do not allow the researcher to probe or prompt for further information; it yields a lower response rate to other methods and are sometimes not appropriate for some kinds of respondents (Bryman 2004). This study design took these into consideration and attempted to minimise their effects and influence on the quality of data collected.

Firstly, whilst phases one and three did not allow for elaboration due to the questionnaire format, qualitative interviews were carried out at phases two and four as a way in which to explore the quantitative findings in greater depth but also to gain new insights and provide depth and an increased richness in the data collected (Moore 2000). Secondly, as regards the lower response rates, various steps can be taken in order to maximise the rate of return including; a good covering letter, a stamped self-addressed envelope and a three week reminder letter (Bryman 2004). The use of a stamped self-addressed envelope is viewed as being particularly successful in increasing the response rate of a postal questionnaire (Mangione 1995).

According to Mangione (1995), a good covering letter should not be too long and should make it clear with which institution (university) the research is associated. Additionally, it was important that the covering letter (see appendix 4 for phase one covering letter and appendix 5 for phase three) detailed who was undertaking the research, the aims of the study, why the respondent was chosen, the importance of completion, contact and return details and details of confidentiality and anonymity (David and Sutton 2004). It is recognised that respondents are more likely to respond if they feel that their responses will be kept confidential and that they will remain anonymous (Mangione 1995; Robson 2002; David and Sutton 2004). Therefore, informed consent was required which detailed the respondent's rights to withdraw and the confidentiality and anonymity by which the researcher would abide by (see appendix 6 for phase one consent and appendix 7 for phase three). This allowed the respondent time to consider their participation and was sent out with the covering letter to be returned with the questionnaire, therefore prior to data collection as opposed to after (David and Sutton 2004).

It was also vital at phase one to take into consideration that the sample was drawn from a general consumer population which was unknown to the researcher. Therefore the design, structure and layout of the questionnaire needed to consider respondents who may have limited literacy or restricted comprehension of English as a language (Bryman 2004). Thus, the questionnaire included clear instructions with an attractive layout in order to increase the chances of honest completion (see appendix 1 for phase one questionnaire). At phase one the questionnaire was relatively detailed. This was required to gain the amount of data to address the research objectives and provide insight for the subsequent interviews; however this can negatively impact on response rates (Bryman 2004). Therefore to try and avoid this, the presentation of the questionnaires was well-spaced and used a variety of print styles, including italics, bold and different print sizes to encourage respondents to participate in the study. This was done consistently to ensure that the questionnaire did not become confusing (Bryman 2004). Additionally, the writing of the questions also needed careful consideration as it was vital to avoid jargon, slang or abbreviations and also not to use emotive language, leading questions, double negatives or unbalanced responses – particularly for scale questions (Neuman 2006). The aim of the phase one questionnaire was to generate quantifiable responses in order to explore issues outlined in relation to brand recognition and attitude with demographic, socio-economic and lifestyle factors for analysis. The design of the questionnaire therefore needed to incorporate the relevant question types to enable this to occur and provide a thorough and accurate method of descriptive and inferential analysis.

As identified in Table 8, a mixture of closed questions was used in the questionnaire, including scale, ranking and categorical, in reflection of the predominantly descriptive purpose of the research enquiry. This phase purposely did not include any open questions as they had no benefit in the quantitative aspect of the study. Qualitative interviews were

carried out at phase two to support and develop quantitative findings and the inclusion of open questions may have restricted the data collected (David and Sutton 2004), particularly given the length of the questionnaire.

The study involved a number of categorical (nominal) variables which could not be ranked (Mc Givern 2006), for example, age, gender, household income, Internet usage and sporting involvement. These acted well as profiling or classification questions to generate individual respondent backgrounds. This phase also included interval (ratio) variables in the form of numerical rating scales. In order to measure attitudes towards brand purchase, intent to purchase and awareness of sports sponsorship, five-point Likert scales were used. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement towards the statements made regarding these aforementioned areas (De Vaus 2002). For example, *'When particular sporting events are on, I prefer the non- sport product related to the event, as opposed to my regular brand'*. The scales used presented the alternatives of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. Whilst this style can be presented as a single item (De Vaus 2002), the study utilised a set of statements within distinct categories (for example, section four within questionnaire). For the data analysis, each statement was used as a separate variable. The use of Likert scales in the questionnaire was vital for a variety of reasons relating to instrument design, structure and also to the research outcome. However, for this study, the choice of scales had two main benefits. Firstly, given the length of the questionnaire, scales can look interesting to the respondents and they may enjoy completing them (Robson 2002) and secondly it allowed attitude measurement in a manner that was conducive to addressing the objectives in seeking both associations and significant differences.

Additionally, the use of scales also allowed for a wider range of aspects relating to the research concepts to be explored (Bryman 2004). This was particularly beneficial given the mixed design of the study in using supporting qualitative interviews to expand on issues and provide new insight into emerging themes. However, a common problem with using scales is the error of central tendency whereby respondents may not indicate a response on the extremes of the scale. This was taken into consideration in the design stage and the extremes of the scale were not designed to appear extreme in their wording (Mc Givern 2006). Additionally, the design of the scales needed to avoid logical error by not placing similar statements together to try and avoid respondents giving similar answers to statements that they believe to be related (Mc Givern 2006).

The questionnaire also included ranking questions in order to collect data on how the respondents ranked a list of items (David and Sutton 2004), for example, how they would rank their interest in a given list of sports (generated from Mintel 2003) and also to rank the perceived involvement of industry categories in sports sponsorship where 1 indicates least involvement and 11 being most involvement, therefore using a complete set of ranked items. The questionnaire comprised five sections to initially profile the respondents, gauge their opinions and attitudes and also to test their brand recognition; both prompted and unprompted. The question types used in the phase one questionnaire are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Phase one questionnaire summary

Section	Title	Question Types	Purpose
1	About yourself	Classification	Profile respondents based on demographic and socio economic factors
2	Your sporting interests	Rank,categorical	Determine sporting preferences as factor for analysis
3	Your sporting involvement	Categorical	Determine sporting involvement as factor for analysis
4	Opinions	Scale, Rank	Identify attitude towards brand preference statements
5	Team brand recognition	Categorical	Identify whether respondents can correctly, incorrectly (or do not know) brand and sport connections
5b	League brand recognition	Categorical	Identify whether respondents can correctly, incorrectly (or do not know) brand and sport connections
5c	Individual brand recognition	Categorical	Identify whether respondents can correctly, incorrectly (or do not know) brand and sport connections
5d	Event brand recognition	Categorical	Identify whether respondents can correctly, incorrectly (or do not know) brand and sport connections
5e	Unprompted recognition	Open	Identify additional unprompted brand-sport connections

The variables involved in this phase were predominantly categorical (nominal) and scale. This was purposely done to ensure that the descriptive value of the study, in line with the study purpose and design, could be maximised. The key dependant variables were the brand recognition scores for sport teams, leagues, individuals and events and also intent to purchase and attitude to sponsoring brand on purchase decisions. The independent variables of age, gender, household income, sporting participation and sporting interests were factored in for analysis in order to explore relationships between recognition and purchase intention and to contribute to the overall aim of the study.

4.5 The practitioner questionnaire

The questionnaire at phase three was similar in structure to the one designed for phase one in terms of being predominantly quantitative in nature in order to generate numerical data to address the research objectives set. The questions were closed, in the form of categorical, list and Likert scale questions which provided the required statistical data. Whilst the data gained satisfied the quantitative aspect of the methodology for this phase, it also provided a key foundation on which to construct the interview themes and questions for phase four which was a vital progression within the study. The dependent variables in this phase were commercial objectives and industry sectors with the independent variables of sports type, promotion types, sponsorship deal-term and practitioner scaled opinions providing analysis which directly linked to the current state of literature identified in chapter three. For example, this phase looked to identify which media sports practitioners considered to be most effective in promoting a sponsorship programme for different variables which was used to compare to brand recognition and consumer opinions at phase one and two. This enabled the study to provide relevant and useful practice-based information through the transition of different perspectives within the study (consumer and practitioner) (See appendix 8 for phase three questionnaire which includes the consent-to-interview form as per phase one). Table 9 details the question types used in this questionnaire.

Table 10: Practitioner questionnaire summary

Section	Title	Question Types	Purpose
1	About yourself	Classification	Profile respondents based on industry sector and their role
2	Your opinions	Scale	Gain opinions on the value of sport as a medium for sponsorship
3	Sponsorship programmes	Scale and categorical	Gain opinions and response to the effectiveness of sports sponsorship programmes in relation to objectives, ROI and issues relating to brand value. Also gain an insight into popular mediums for promotion

The design of the questionnaire at phase three followed a similar process to the questions at phase one (in terms of guidance from literature). However, this phase developed initial findings from the consumer research in order to directly address key issues relating to consumer behaviour. It was important to ask similar questions in parts to the consumers, to see whether the problems identified in literature are occurring due to a conflict of understanding. For example, if practitioners believe that sports sponsorship impacts on consumer buying behaviour when actually, the consumers are indicating otherwise, the study may start to uncover some answers. The pilot study was important at this phase as it needed to ensure that the questions would answer the objectives therefore they needed to be as up-to-date as possible. Therefore it was important to pilot within the sports sponsorship industry to gain an understanding as to whether or not the issues being asked were reflective of the current problems and issues. While some of these had emerged from literature, it was difficult to just use literature examples without direct contact within the sports sponsorship industry given its changing pace. Therefore this instrument was constructed using consumer data, literature and key recommendations from the sports sponsorship industry. It was important to cross-check these to ensure that the questionnaire was not constructed based on one or two businesses, but to gain opinion from a variety of sub-sections. For example, to ask sports

technologists, sports agents, sports marketing practitioners and sports research companies, rather than to focus on one section of the whole sports sponsorship industry. This allowed for consistent issues to be identified and then focussed on within the questionnaire and subsequent interviews. Table 10 details the literature and initial consumer findings in constructing the questions for phase three.

Table 10: Process for question design at phase three

Literature recommendations and link to research objectives	Initial findings from consumer phases	Questions for phase three (Likert scale)
<p>Sponsorship practitioners do not fully understand the full potential of sports sponsorship as a promotional medium (Walliser 2003; Redmandarin 2004). This links to RO2 and RO3.</p> <p>Brands need to engage with consumers more in positive relationships to promote purchase (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008). This links to RO3.</p>	<p>There were some demographic differences with consumer recognition and attitude.</p> <p>Consumers were dismissive of brands which were seen to be using sport for purely commercial and exploitation reasons. This was detrimental to the brand.</p> <p>Consumers responded better to sponsorships which were community-based.</p>	<p>Sport is an effective tool for brand promotion.</p> <p>The use of sport within brand promotion can influence a consumer's attitude towards that brand.</p> <p>The use of sport within brand promotion can alter the new product adoption by a consumer.</p> <p>A sport sponsorship increases the recognition of the sponsoring brand amongst consumers.</p> <p>The age of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand.</p> <p>The gender of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand.</p> <p>The household income of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand.</p>
<p>Brands do not understand how consumers evaluate their sponsorship programme beyond metric analysis (CIM 2004; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). This links to RO5.</p> <p>The first step is to explore the factors which they perceive to impact upon recognising the brand to see whether this influences opinion prior to any promotion being carried out. This includes how they perceive the benefits to</p>	<p>Consumers showed negative attitudes towards brands which they perceived as being "too commercial", or the larger brands which "just make more money".</p> <p>The higher profile brands did have higher recognition but that was limited to the top of the apex sports.</p> <p>Consumers did not perceive any real benefit to sports in the sponsorship arrangement unless it</p>	<p>The higher the profile of a company sponsoring sport, the more likely a consumer is to recognise the brand name.</p> <p>The market share of a company using sport sponsorship to promote their brand will impact upon the likelihood a consumer is to recognise the brand name.</p> <p>Using sport sponsorship to promote a company brand has a positive impact upon the SPORT involved.</p>

<p>each party and the role that different levels of sports play in this (CIM 2004; Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008).</p>	<p>was community based.</p>	<p>Using sport sponsorship to promote a company brand has a positive impact upon the BRAND.</p>
<p>Brands are not setting measurable objectives (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005), therefore it is unclear as to how they perceive the success of sports sponsorship over other areas of sponsorship. This links to RO2 and RO4.</p> <p>There has been a shift from awareness to return on investment in setting objectives (Tripodi 2001; Walliser 2003; Kolah 2006). This links to RO2, RO3 and RO4.</p>	<p>Consumers perceive that sports sponsorship programmes are based purely on getting money back for the brand</p> <p>Consumers are not particularly aware of other purposes for sports sponsorship which may limit their capacity to accept the brand using sport as the medium of promotion.</p>	<p>In your opinion, how important are the following objectives in the design and implementation of a sponsorship programme?</p> <p>Do you think that incorporating sport into a sponsorship programme for a non-sport product brand can impact on any of the following (return on investment, image enhancement, media objectives, direct revenue, consumer loyalty, new customer adoption and philanthropy).</p> <p>Do you think that sport sponsorship can achieve sponsorship objectives more effectively than other forms of promotion?</p> <p>Do you think that a company promoting their brand through sport sponsorship will be at an advantage to a company promoting their brand through sponsorship of a different kind?</p>
<p>Practitioners need to move away from traditional media of promotion in order to engage with disenchanted consumers (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Sims 2005; Taylor 2008). This links to RO3 and RO5.</p> <p>Practitioners need to understand how consumers best react to brand logos but not to rely on this as the basis for the success of their programmes (CIM 2004; Tibbs 2008). This links to RO5.</p>	<p>Consumers had higher recognition of brands associated with sports leagues and thought that television was the most effective medium of promotion. However they perceived sports individuals to be the most promoted medium.</p> <p>Consumers felt that there is too much brand promotion in the form of brands on shirts and also new media mechanisms such as the rolling L.E.D banners around football pitch. Consumers felt that brand promotion interfered with the sports events and was often distracting.</p>	<p>Which of the following do you think is most effective for promoting a company brand through a sport sponsorship programme: sport teams, leagues, individuals or events?</p> <p>Which medium do you believe is most effective in aiding consumers to form associations between the sport and the brand involved in the sponsorship: television, newspaper, internet or radio?</p> <p>Which of the following types of sponsorship do you think is most effective in increasing consumer recognition of a company brand: shirt sponsorship, title sponsorship, broadcast sponsorship sports personality or perimeter advertising?</p>

4.6 Consumer and practitioner interviews

The use of interviews within research can be conducted via a range of mechanisms in order to generate both qualitative and quantitative data depending on their purpose (Robson 2001). To this extent, interviews could be conducted face-to-face, via telephone or through computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) or by using interactive voice response (IVR) technology (Neuman 2006). However, for the purpose of this study, qualitative face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted to gain valuable insight into consumer opinions and to gain knowledge from high level marketing communications practitioners regarding current practice and the implications of consumer buying behaviour on the effectiveness of sports sponsorship.

The advantages of using qualitative interviews within this study were predominantly as a result of the flexible and adaptable manner in which issues emerging from previous quantitative research phases could be explored. Further, it offered, "...the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self administered questionnaires cannot" (Robson 2002: 273).

As qualitative interviewing is flexible in nature, it allowed for the emphasis of the research to be subject to change as a result of issues of significance which may have arisen during the course of the interviews (Bryman 2004). This was vital within both phases of interviews as firstly, (consumer phase) beliefs, opinions and attitudes regarding issues such as factors influencing intent to purchase, were sought. Therefore, freedom for the interviewee to change the direction proved effective in creating rapport and trust, which are viewed as important steps in the administration and carrying out of interviews (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

Additionally, this provided a more conducive environment from which to gain in-depth insights. Secondly, at phase four, the use of a flexible approach allowed the practitioners the opportunity to interpret, adapt and enlighten their responses. This not only enabled them answer the immediate question, but also to align their ideas in context with current practice based issues, which provided an additional line of enquiry and added value to the study outcome.

There are a variety of different types of interviews that can be used within research, including fully structured, semi-structured, unstructured, informant, group and focus group interviews (Robson 2002). This study utilised semi-structured interviews, which allowed the interviewer the opportunity to modify the question order based on the progress and direction of the interview. Further, this included changing, omitting or including questions or lines of enquiry when deemed appropriate during the interview (Robson 2002). This allowed the research to fulfil its part-explanatory purpose in terms of providing high quality explanations through both fixed and flexible methods (De Vaus 2002).

The use of fully structured interviews was rejected given that they do not allow for variation or expansion on questions and are too rigid in format to elicit in-depth responses which may offer new insights. While unstructured interviews would offer the latter and are beneficial in providing an informal setting through which completely open-ended questions are posed, the interviewer works mainly through general themes. This was not deemed appropriate as the researcher had research questions to answer, therefore a certain element of structure was required in order to maintain focus whilst still allowing for new lines of enquiry to be explored as they arose, hence the semi-structured approach.

In addition, focus groups were also rejected as a method for a number of reasons, primarily due to the geographic locations of individuals within similar categories and also that very few topics can be covered (Moore 2000). Therefore, the likelihood of gaining the type of data required to address the research questions may have been in jeopardy if focus groups were employed. Further, with a recommendation of between five and eight people for a focus group interview, the organisation to gather this number of senior practitioners at phase four would have been extremely difficult given the problem of busy schedules which was sometimes encountered for the individual interviews.

4.7 Design and administration of consumer and practitioner interviews at phases two and four

The aim of the interviews at phase two (consumers) was to gain in-depth, insight and understanding of the process a consumer goes through to adopt a product and also to examine factors which impact upon their buying behaviour. The key questions therefore explored the impact sports sponsorship has on product choice and one's intent to purchase, consumer attitudes towards different media of promotion, acceptance of message relay, attitudes towards sports sponsorship in comparison with other elements of the marketing communications mix, i.e. advertising, attitudes and opinions towards sponsor industry categories. These questions were derived from the findings of phase one and informed through literature identified within chapters two and three. To this extent it was vital to gain an appreciation of what consumers understood about the manner in which sponsorship works; conceptually and in practice, hence the questions relating to what they perceived the rationale to be for non-sports product brand involvement in sports sponsorship programmes and whether they believed the partnership between brand and sport to be equal (see appendix 9 for phase two interview themes). The questions at this phase were again aimed at directly

answering the research objectives based on the literature and also the findings, therefore the study pulled together early analysis points to probe for further detail. For example, RO1 was a generic exploration about how sports sponsorship impacts on consumer attitudes, purchase preference and intention to purchase. Therefore in order to ask relevant questions, the interview schedule was devised based on results which explored issues within each of these areas, for example, in regards to consumers' attitudes, the interview questions needed to explore what stimuli impacted positively and negatively on the formation of these attitudes. This then led into the practitioner phases (in reflection with the pragmatic approach) to identify whether practitioners recognise how consumer attitudes are formed in this manner and also what stimuli they use to assess whether there are conflicts.

The aims of the interviews at phase four (marketing communications practitioners) was to gain specific industry-related information and informed opinion as to the manner in which sports sponsorship programmes are designed, implemented, activated, leveraged and evaluated, as well as to explore the extent to which planning is incorporated into the process. The key questions identified for the interviews at phase four included the impact of sports sponsorship programmes on consumer buying behaviour, the impact of programme type on outcome of objectives, rights acquisition and leveraging, the use of sport as the medium for promotion and issues surrounding planning, measurement and evaluation of programmes. Additionally to these, the impact of changing market trends amongst industry sectors, the use of sponsorship within integrated marketing communications (or as a stand-alone capacity) and the differentials between high, medium and low tier sponsors and properties were explored. As with phase two, the interview questions were derived from phase two and three findings, knowledge gained from involvement within the industry and also key literature outlined in chapters two and three, in particular sponsorship surveys (S:COMM 2001;

Redmandarin 2004) given the practice-based nature of the study (see appendix 10 for phase four interview themes). The design of the exact questions linked directly to the research objectives in relation to how could the problem be solved through the questions being asked. To that extent, at this phase, the questions combined consumer findings, literature and the research objective. For example, in assessing how well practitioners plan and evaluate sponsorship programmes it was important to ask whether they believed sports sponsorship are currently well planned and evaluated, and then to explore issues within this, such as budget (as literature identifies that budgets are becoming increasingly tight) and also whether practitioners believe there is a benefit to planning and evaluation. This type of questioning allowed for the study to gauge both what was actually occurring but also practitioner opinions towards these activities to explore whether it was a logistical or attitudinal issue that may be limiting planning and evaluation. The interviews at phase four were between 60 to 90 minutes in length and took place between 2nd November 2005 and 1st March 2006.

It was important in the preparation and carrying out of the interviews that three key considerations were considered in order to maximise the effectiveness of the interview method and maximise the quality of responses gained. The conditions related to accessibility, cognition and motivation (May 2001).

Firstly, *accessibility*, in terms of whether the individuals being interviewed had access to the information required by the study, which required a different level of consideration for the consumers (phase two) and marketing communications practitioners (phase four). The consumer phase had no pre-requisites for participation in the interviews in terms of brand knowledge or sporting involvement, hence the need for general consumers. Thus, the issue of accessibility with this phase related more to creating an environment which was suitable to

encourage the respondents to willingly give the information and to feel inclined to give in-depth responses to enable the study to explore their beliefs and attitudes at a more informative level. In order to do this, the interviews took place at either the respondent's workplace or home address rather than the university as it is understood that apprehension is an issue when carrying out interviews (Robson 2002).

In terms of the practitioner interviews (phase four), the issue of accessibility required heightened consideration be given to the specific industry-based knowledge and information required from experienced practitioners. Therefore the selection of respondents was undertaken in respect of the industry sectors deemed relevant to answer the research questions. This was achieved through prior knowledge gained from involvement with industry-based conferences and meetings and also through the research of practitioners' biographies and involvement in high level sports sponsorship programmes. In addition, in order to maximise the quality of information gained, it was important to structure the questions in a manner in which the interviewee could discuss both the broad and narrow perspectives within the themes. This was vital given that some sensitive issues were broached, for example at phase four, concerning financial input and investment.

The second condition to fulfil was *cognition* and the need for the interviewee to understand what is required (May 2001). This was an issue for both consumers and practitioners, regardless of their level of expertise in the subject field as the information gained was more likely to be relevant, in depth and of value to the research if the interviewee was made aware of their role and felt fully informed of the purpose of the research (Robson 2002). Thus, the interviewees were all read an instructions sheet prior to the start of the interviews at both phases two and four (see appendix 11) which detailed the purpose of the study, the

requirements of the interviewees and was also used to gain verbal (in addition to written) consent which included information concerning rights to withdraw and confidentiality and anonymity issues. This was particularly important as the interviews were being voiced-taped and transcribed for analysis.

Finally, according to May (2001) there is a need for *motivation* to be factored into the process of interviewing in terms of maintaining interest as the interviewer and also that of the interviewee in order to make them feel that their answers are valued (May 2001; Robson 2002; Silverman 2004). This was done by the use of the question wording and the tone of the interviewers voice, for example by asking “Can you tell me a little more about that” (May 2001:129) or to repeat what the respondent has said with a “...rising inflexion in the voice” (May 2001:129). In addition, the use of probes was done in a manner to encourage the interviewees to expand on responses or to assist in understanding the questions (Robson 2002), as well as to avoid hostility by a means of generalisation rather than a direct question (May 2001). This was important for both consumers and practitioners. However, the degree to which techniques such as those mentioned above was implemented was dependant on each individual interview and used to either aid understanding or to delve for deeper insights.

Having detailed the interview timescales, the timeline for the whole study data collection is shown in table 11 below. Given the pragmatic and sequential nature of the study, it was important in collecting the data to ensure that there was sufficient time to get the data back and perform an initial analysis in order to generate the themes for the following phases. This analysis provided findings that helped to develop the study in a more relevant and up-to-date manner, rather than relying solely on the limited literature in the sports sponsorship field.

Table 11– Timeline for research study

Phase of research	Action taken	Timescale
Phase one – consumer questionnaires	400 questionnaires posted to selected addresses	4 th April 2005 - 3 rd May 2005
Phase two – consumer interviews	Interviewees recruited and interview dates arranged	6 th June 2005 -17 th June 2005
Phase two – consumer interviews	Interviews undertaken	21 st July 2005 – 12 th August 2005
Phase three – practitioner questionnaires	100 questionnaires posted to selected addresses	5 th September 2005- 3 rd October 2005
Phase four –practitioner interviews	Interviewees recruited and interview dates arranged	5 th October 2005 -14 th October 2005
Phase four – practitioner interviews	Interviews undertaken	2 nd November 2005-1 st March 2006

4.8 Pilot study

It was important that the questionnaire administration and also the selection of interview themes was subject to a pilot study in order to minimise the chance of any technical difficulties to ensure, for example, that the questionnaires were unambiguous and comprehensible (Robson 2002). The procedure for the pilot study was adapted from Moore (2000) who identifies that a pilot study has two stages: firstly to distribute a draft questionnaire to a small number of people who are trusted to give an honest opinion and who will identify potential problems within either the design or method of sampling, and the second is to distribute to a small number of people under the conditions similar to those of the real survey. These individuals were then removed from taking any further part in the study. Table 12 details the pilot process adopted at each stage of the research.

Table 12: Pilot study process

Phase	Stage One Pilot	Stage Two Pilot	Response Rate	Issue raised and action take
One	Questionnaire distributed to two supervisors of study and one person informed in research	Distributed randomly to a sample of 30	14/30 = 47%	Format & Length too long. Action: Questionnaire reduced, more focused and closed questions inserted
Two	Interview themes discussed with supervisors	One interview performed for pilot	1/1=100%	Issue of brand loyalty requires emphasis, small wording issue Action: Brand loyalty clarified during interviews
Three	Questionnaire distributed to two supervisors of study and one person informed in research	Distributed to 10 people informed in sponsorship industry	8/10 = 80%	Small issue of wording on Q9, inclusion of broadband/wireless as medium Action: Broadband/wireless added as an option
Four	Interview themes discussed with individual involved in sports sponsorship and technology industry	One interview performed for pilot	1/1=100%	Specificity on objectives Action: Specific objectives referred to in interviews rather than as a collective term

4.9 Data analysis

The data analysis process adopted a sequential mixed-analysis approach as the data analysis always begins before all the data is collected (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2004:780). As the qualitative analysis followed the quantitative analysis in this study, this is known as “...sequential quantitative-qualitative analysis” (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie 2003:780). This process was important to the pragmatic approach taken as it enhanced significant results.

4.9.1. Quantitative data analysis

The analysis techniques used for the data collected at phases one and three were dependent upon a number of different factors including the type of research question, the number of dependent and independent variables and also the existence of covariates. The analysis of the quantitative phases relied predominantly on descriptive statistics in order to satisfy the purpose of the research and also to maximise the value of the information gained.

The data was inputted into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) (version 14.0 for Windows), which is an analysis tool for social science research (Pallant 2004). SPSS was used for data storage and allowed for both descriptive and inferential statistics to be carried out. The first stage of using SPSS for data analysis was to explore whether the data was normally distributed in order to be able to use a mean score or whether a median value was the accurate statistic to use (Pallant 2004). This was done through histograms to check if the distribution lacked symmetry (skewness) or pointyness (kurtosis) (Field 2005). Although the statistics used were descriptive, it was still important to consider thoroughly, checking normality where necessary, which involved following up histograms with Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests (Field 2005). This then was used to determine whether a parametric or non-parametric test was carried out. In testing the data, it is assumed that the populations of the samples have equal variances (Pallant 2004).

The study, through the use of SPSS, used mainly non-parametric tests, mainly due to parametric assumptions being violated. These included Friedman's ANOVA to explore differences among several related groups (Field 2005); chi-square, Kruksall-Wallis (significant differences) and Mann Whitney U tests (comparison of two independent conditions) (Field 2005). Further, where relevant, follow-up-tests were carried out to identify the strength of significant associations (Cramers V) (Field 2005). As discussed, descriptive

statistics were heavily relied on given the nature and approach of the study outlined in chapter four. This was mainly achieved through frequency and percentage counts displayed in graphical form, followed up with the relevant non-parametric tests which were considered relevant.

4.9.2 Qualitative data analysis

Analysis of the interviews at phases two and four involved a qualitative approach since it “...emphasises the fluidity of the text and content in the interpretive understanding of culture” (Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1991: 50). Taking into consideration the significance of words or phrases in relation to others within the text and other texts in this way is considered more meaningful than the quantitative approach of counting the frequency of words or phrases (May, 2001). The interviews were transcribed and then coded in terms of key words and associated themes, using the “...process of deconstruction, interpretation and reconstruction” (May, 2001: 193). This will allow the most significant issues to be identified and explored. Validity of themes arising from the data were checked by another researcher to avoid possible biased interpretation.

Protocol analysis (Robson 2002; Marshall and Rossman 2006) was used in order to provide a rich insight into the general and specific issues related to the consumer and practitioner opinions of sports sponsorship. The responses were then further coded according to four factors to demonstrate credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity of the results as a means of validating the findings (Robson 2002). In relation to credibility, the objective measures of data collection were gained via the questionnaire data, whilst in contrast the subjective interview data was coded through protocol analysis (Marshall and Rossman 2006) to identify key themes and issues arising from the data. The themes emerging were guided by

the research objectives which were derived from literature. Transferability was achieved by comparing the data with previous studies at early phases in order to identify areas of commonality which were arising from the data, which also contributed to the dependability of the data set as it could be triangulated with data from previous findings. Finally, this process contributed towards the conformity of data as key themes and issues emerged from different levels of interpretation. The process for analysis of the interviews is detailed in figure 4.3.

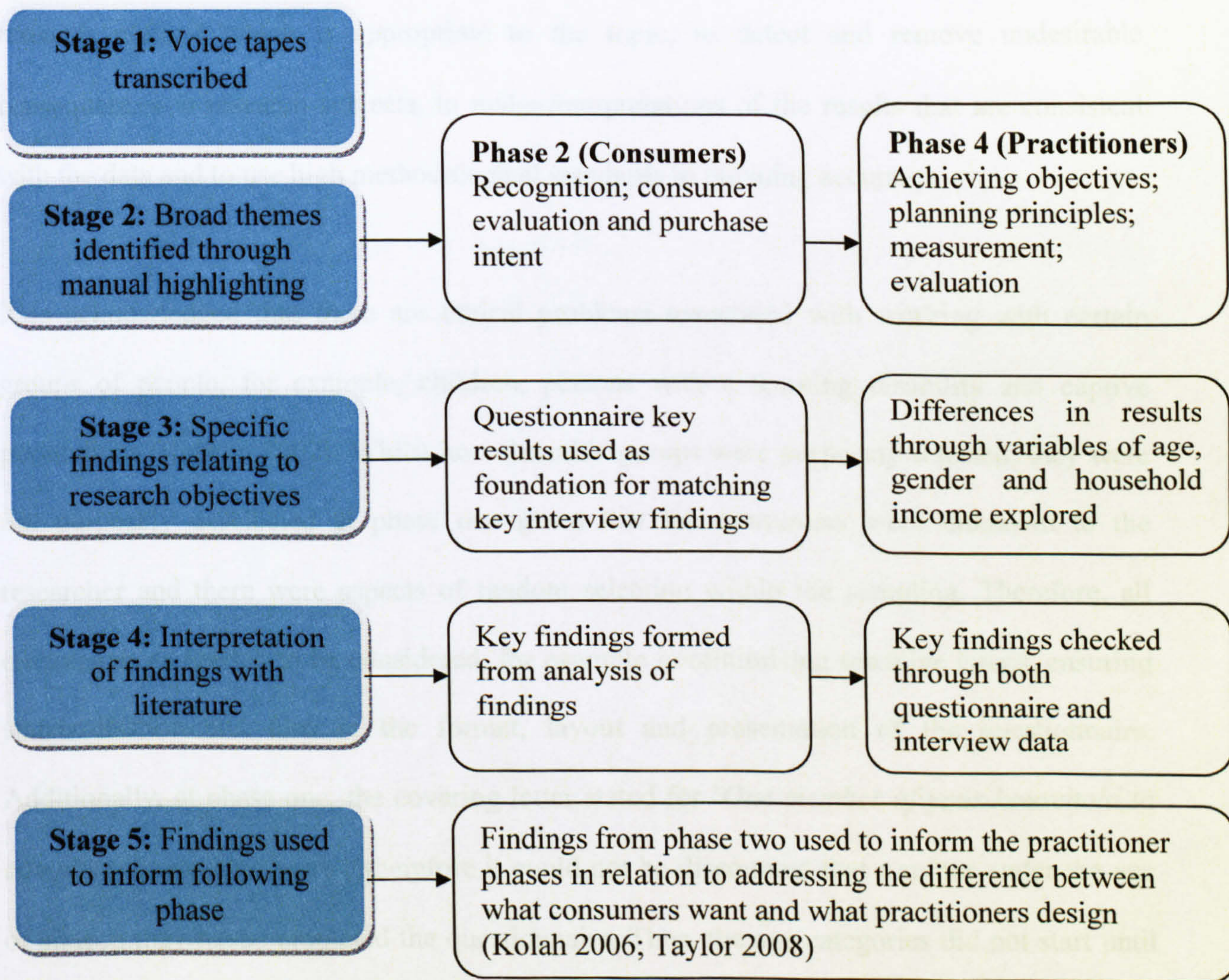


Figure 4.3: Interview analysis process

4.10 Ethical considerations

The need for the research study to respect the respondents in both ethically and morally acceptable ways was not underestimated and formed an integral role in the planning, data collection and the presentation of findings. In order to do this, it was vital to embed core principles of ethical social research into the designing of the research. Neuman (2006) identifies that they include; not to exploit subjects for personal gain, to honour all guarantees of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, to not coerce or humiliate subjects, to use a research method which is appropriate to the topic, to detect and remove undesirable consequences to research subjects, to make interpretations of the results that are consistent with the data and to use high methodological standards in pursuing accuracy.

It is acknowledged that there are ethical problems associated with working with certain groups of people, for example, children, persons with a learning disability and captive populations (Robson 2002). Whilst no vulnerable groups were purposely selected, they were not purposely deselected at phase one given that the consumers were unknown to the researcher and there were aspects of random selection within the sampling. Therefore, all circumstances needed to be considered, for example in minimising sensitive issues, ensuring standardisation and also in the format, layout and presentation of the questionnaire. Additionally, at phase one, the covering letter stated for '*One member of your household to complete the questionnaire*', therefore it could not be discounted that a minor under the age of sixteen may have completed the questionnaire. Thus, the age categories did not start until eighteen years of age in order to try and minimise the chances of this occurring and to encourage adults to complete.

It was important throughout to have respect for all respondents and not to view them as “...research material” (David and Sutton 2004:18). Therefore both voluntary and informed consent was sought throughout and embedded into the design and planning of each phase of research. Voluntary consent was pivotal to establishing a sound ethical foundation which respected the rights of the respondents to only participate if they “...explicitly and freely agree to participate” (Neuman 2006:135).

In order to achieve this, informed consent was sought at each phase through the covering letters sent out with the questionnaires (phases one and three) and also in terms of the interview instructions which were read out to respondents at phases two and four. Prior to the interviews, the interviewees had already self-elected to take part with the researcher having no control over whether they opted to be involved in an interview or not. According to Neuman (2006:130) informed consent is “A statement, usually written, that explains (aspects of the study to participate in) and asks for voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins”.

It was also important to respect the respondents’ privacy throughout the study (David and Sutton 2004) which was important, particularly at the phase two and four interview phases, due to the fact that they were voice-taped and transcribed. This was done through ensuring anonymity and confidentiality with respondents throughout the study being identifiable only through a numerical code. Whilst informed consent was gained for each phase, it was important to report and write the findings up in a way which protected the personal identification of those involved and also to ensure that the respondents were responsible about the claims that they made (David and Sutton 2004). Ethical approval for the research study was granted by the University Ethics Committee.

CHAPTER FIVE

Consumer quantitative results (Phase one)

5.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyse the consumer questionnaire data at phase one by exploring issues associated with aspects of general consumer behaviour relating to sports sponsorship. This includes using demographic, socio-economic and lifestyle variables as key factors for analysis in relation to brand recognition percentage scores. The brand recognition scores were gained from a four-type test consisting of brands sponsoring sport teams, leagues, individuals and events. In addition, the chapter examines whether consumers actively purchase products associated with sport due to the associated brand and also whether endorsers have any influence on brand choice.

Given the descriptive and explanatory purpose of the research, it was important to carry out the correct analysis. This was predominantly descriptive statistics that utilised histograms and boxplots with inferential testing (non-parametric) including Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal - Wallis and Chi Square. Four hundred postal questionnaires were distributed via the sampling method identified in chapter four, the final results consisting of 157 valid responses (39.3% response rate). The frequency and percentages for the three key independent variables of gender, age and household income are shown in Tables 13, 14 and 15. In addition to this, the frequency of respondents with access to the internet and satellite television is shown in Tables 16 and 17.

Table 13: Gender

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	91	58.0	58.0
Female	66	42.0	100.0
Total	157	100	

Table 14: Age

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
16-19	3	1.9	1.9
20-24	8	5.1	7.0
25-34	24	15.3	22.3
35-44	33	21.0	43.3
45-54	46	29.3	72.6
55-64	24	15.3	87.9
65 Plus	19	12.1	100.0
Total	157	100.0	

Table 15: Household Income

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below £10,000	23	14.8	14.8
£10,000-£19,999	28	18.1	32.9
£20,000-£29,999	32	20.6	53.5
£30,000-£49,999	47	30.3	83.9
£50,000-£99,999	21	13.5	97.4
£100,000 plus	4	2.6	100.0
Total	155	100.0	
Missing	2	14.8	

Table 16: Access to Satellite television

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Satellite television access	104	67.5	67.5
No access to satellite television	50	32.5	100
Total	154	100	
Missing	3		
Total	157	100.0	

Table 17: Access to the internet

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Internet access	132	84.1	84.1
No access to the internet	25	15.9	100
Missing	0		
Total	157	100.0	

5.1 Brand recognition by sports type

Part B (see appendix 1) concerns the consumers' level of prompted brand recognition demonstrated through four parts, non sport related product brands who sponsor sport teams, leagues, individuals and events. The sports selected were based on the six most popular sports of 2003 identified by Mintel (2003) as being, Football, Rugby Union, Tennis, Cricket, Snooker and Motor Racing (Formula One). However, in order to achieve the aims of the study the instrument used was designed to test recognition levels amongst general consumers, in non-sport specific environments and with limited stimuli to act as prompts. For example, three brands were detailed all from the same industry category with one sponsor brand being the correct sponsor of the name sports property. This was to ensure that the consumers could not guess at the industry category. Moreover, their awareness of brands associated with the sports properties would be tested. The sports properties selected were done so taking a top, middle and bottom approach to league positioning (season 2003/2004) and where applicable, this approach was used to ensure that a broad range of sports properties and brands were included.

Initial analysis of the data demonstrated some relatively high levels of brand recognition (30-40%) (Sport Business 2007). However this was dependent upon the type of sports property being used. Sport leagues (37%) and sport events (32%) revealed higher percentages of brand

recognition than sports teams (13%) and individuals (11%). Overall brand recognition across all four types was also medium with 23% of brands being recognised correctly (See Table 18).

Table 18: Median and percentage recognition scores by sports property type

Recognition Type	Median	Percentage
Overall	0.22	23%
Team	0.12	13%
League	0.38	37%
Individual	0.12	11%
Event	0.29	32%

A Friedman's ANOVA was conducted with the results demonstrating that there were significant differences ($\chi^2(3) = 219.4, p < 0.05$) between the four sporting property types and the average recognition scores. Wilcoxon tests were used to follow up this finding. A Bonferroni correction was applied ($0.05/6$) and so all effects are reported at a 0.008 level of significance. It appeared that individual recognition and team recognition ($T=4439, r=-0.07$) and league and event recognition ($T=3943.5, r=-0.22$) were not significantly different. However, there was significance between recognition types for event and team ($T=607.5, r=-0.73$), league and team ($T=296, r=-0.76$) and event and individual ($T=403.5, r=-0.77$). The effect sizes from the tests were large as they were not close to zero. As zero scores are not accounted for in the Wilcoxon signed ranks test it is important to present the frequency of zero scores to validate the significance found within the results (Table 19). The percentage of zero scores for each recognition type are all <40%, therefore the results can be considered as significant.

Table 19: Zero scores for all sport type brand recognition.

Recognition Type	Frequency Zero scores	Percentage of sample
Team	56	35.7%
League	26	16.6%
Individual	36	22.9%
Event	18	11.5%

5.2 Brand recognition grouped by sports

Some of the brand recognition percentages could be considered medium to high. However there is a need for a greater level of level of analysis to explore whether the more commercialised, high profile sports returned higher recognition scores.

Table 20: Brand recognition grouped by sports

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Football (10)	43.73%	665	9.76%	152	47.30%	736	1556
Cricket (12)	12.73%	211	7.09%	121	80.53%	1373	1705
Rugby Union (12)	12.13%	207	4.51%	77	83.42%	1424	1707
Tennis (6)	25.80%	240	10.75%	100	63.11%	587	930
Snooker (6)	16.15%	150	8.72%	81	75.13%	698	929

The results indicate that the sport with the highest recognition was football (43.73%), with tennis gaining 25.80% recognition from six properties. The properties consisted of major events and individuals, therefore a more accurate dispersion amongst sports would be to identify cricket (12.37%) and rugby union (12.13%) as immediately second and third to football. The properties included for football, cricket and rugby union consisted of all four

types; teams, leagues, individuals and events. With 43.73% correct recognition, football brand recognition could be considered high (Sport Business 2007), as could tennis which polled high event recognition for two UK showcase events. Football returned the lowest score for both incorrect recognition (9.76%) and 'don't know' (47.30%). Whilst Rugby Union had the lowest score for incorrect recognition (4.51%) as a sport, it did return the highest level of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the brand and property connection (83.42%). Football in the UK is the most heavily sponsored sport in terms of number of deals; deal value and also prominence of sponsor brands (Bennett 1999; Kolah 2006). Further, football sponsorship is considered to reach a disparate audience, due to its abundance of signage, brand logo promotion and television coverage (Bennett 1999). Sport Business (2007) acknowledged that football is the most watched sport on TV in the UK. However, it is only the third most popular participatory sport with swimming and cycling more popular. The extent to which consumers participate in and have interest in the sports within this study will be explored later in this chapter.

Another factor to consider is the combination of both television and field sponsorship which seasonal sports such as football, rugby and cricket use. Whilst a mass campaign of both may be desired due to raising awareness, from a recognition perspective, it is acknowledged that television sponsorship is the most effective for both prompted and unprompted recognition, whilst field sponsorship has positive impacts on prompted recognition only (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). The implications of this for marketers is to choose the best strategy for their sponsorship depending on their objectives and the audience reach required. However, whilst recognition of brands is deemed superficial, there is an argument that consumers are still gaining access to the fundamental meaning of the brand (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001), but this needs to be carefully planned across all platforms of activation.

In order to explore whether the respondents interest in particular sports impacted on their brand recognition of each sports properties sponsors, a Kruskal-Wallis test demonstrated significant differences between the level of interest in football and level of correct football brand recognition ($H=42.51, p<0.05$) and correct rugby union brand recognition ($H=16.14, p<0.05$). Further, there were significant difference between level of interest in rugby union and correct football brand recognition ($H=10.50, p<0.05$), and level of interest in tennis and correct football brand recognition ($H=18.46, p<0.05$). However, there was no significance between level of interest in cricket on correct football, rugby union or cricket brand recognition.

In order to explore whether preference for major events was associated with correct brand recognition levels, a Mann Whitney U test was conducted by event preference. This demonstrated significant differences for correct football brand recognition ($U=1832.0, p<0.05$). However, there were significant differences between preference for major events and correct rugby union brand recognition ($U=2710.0, p=0.629$) and correct cricket brand recognition ($U=2679.0, p=0.530$). Further to this Mann Whitney U tests were carried out by league preference, which again demonstrated significant differences for correct football recognition ($U=18932.0, p<0.05$). As with event preference and recognition, there were no significant differences for rugby union ($U=2728.0, p=0.683$) or cricket ($U=2690.0, p=0.558$). From this it is evident that those with a greater interest in football and rugby union show higher levels of brand recognition in football and rugby union. This could be attributed to mere levels of exposure type of sponsorship (i.e. field, television), and sponsorship on interaction platforms (Kolah 2006).

5.2.1 Brand recognition by profile of sports property and sports type

The sports properties were all selected based on a high, medium and low approach from their respective leagues in the season 2003/2004 (for team and league sponsorships). Within this, all sponsorships chosen were shirt sponsorships and/or club predominant sponsors (the brand which gains maximum exposure). Table 21 shows the level of brand recognition based on each category.

Table 21: Brand recognition by profile of sport

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
High	29.58%	919	9.75%	303	58.69%	1823	3106
Medium	16.97%	342	9.03%	182	73.94%	1490	2015
Low	6.15%	124	4.76%	96	88.74%	1789	2016

N.B Properties included football, cricket and rugby – other sports were not suitable for analysis given their sponsorship type.

High profile sports properties had the highest level of brand recognition (29.58%), whilst medium profile sports returned the highest level of incorrect brand and sport connections. Low profile sports properties polled the lowest scores on correct and incorrect recognition and also the highest majority (88.74%) of 'don't know' responses.

To gain a greater understanding of which sports specifically gain higher recognition, the recognition scores were factored by sports and profile to identify difference between profiles within sports. In order to give the most accurate reflection of this, football, cricket and rugby union have been chosen, given that they both have team and league sponsors within the test. Other sports did not have this within their sporting structure.

Table 22: High profile sports properties

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Football	49.52%	309	12.18%	76	38.30%	239	624
Rugby Union	21.84%	102	8.99%	42	69.16%	323	467
Cricket	13.98%	87	6.10%	38	79.90%	497	622

Recognition (for high profile sports) for football were high (49.52%), with rugby union also showing credible scores (21.84%). Cricket however was low (13.98%), which could relate to a number of issues, including audience demographic and the pace of the game. Whilst cricket had the lowest levels of incorrect recognition (6.10%), this was supplemented with a higher level of 'don't know' responses (79.90%) than either of the other two sports. With high profile properties which are televised more regularly, the impact of the televised sponsor messages is heightened with the immediacy of sponsor messages being shown before and after the sports event itself which has positive impact of the memorisation of the brand (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). Further to this, and an important factor in the visibility of the high property sponsor brands, is the multi-level use of sponsors signage, name and logo which is more prominent at these levels of sports properties (Busser, Benson and Feinstein 2002).

Table 23: Medium profile sports properties

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Football	42.92%	200	9.87%	46	47.21%	220	466
Rugby Union	12.07%	56	3.44%	16	84.48%	392	464
Cricket	11.33%	70	11.81%	73	76.86%	475	618

Different levels of correct recognition were witnessed with football. Although still holding the highest percentage across the three sports, for a medium property, there was a greater

level of 'don't know' responses (47.21%), than correct (42.92%). Cricket was again the lowest scoring on correct recognition (11.33%), with rugby union showing a low level of correct recognition (12.07%), but with the least percentage of incorrect brand connections (3.44%). Although the medium sports properties were all found within the same league, lower levels of recognition could be attributed solely to exposure, whereas increased exposure to the brands can increase the recognition (Busser *et al* 2002). The issue of a financial divide between sports properties within the same leagues (Sport Business 2007) appears to be translatable to recognition given that the high profile sports properties have more concentrated coverage than medium and low.

Table 24: Low profile sports properties

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Football	33.47%	156	6.44%	30	59.23%	276	466
Rugby Union	7.73%	48	3.06%	19	89.21%	554	621
Cricket	8.71%	54	1.61%	10	89.67%	556	620

From table 24, football (33.47%) and rugby union (7.73%) and cricket (8.71%) all showed lowered levels of correct recognition. Cricket had the highest number of 'don't know' responses (89.67%), with cricket also returning the highest percentage of incorrect brand connections (1.61%). At this level, clutter becomes problematic (for low-level sponsors and profiles) in integrating into the over saturated market place that is dominated by the higher profile sports (Gwinner 2005).

Recognition of sponsor brands is done at a peripheral level. However, whilst it may be superficial, low levels of recognition can still contribute to brand meaning being transferred. The problem with low profile sports properties could be related to the involvement levels of

the products. Whilst Lardinoit and Derbaix (2001) suggest that communication through sponsorship seems to be more suited to low involvement products, the highest spending industry by value is currently telecommunications, which amassed \$1,320million in 2005 (Kolah 2006), this involving products of high involvement. Brands need to factor into their strategies the complexity of their product which they are promoting through their sponsorship. Achieving objectives which are sales related may prove difficult if consumers have limited recognition of the brand as a foundation and then are required to process this with the product attributes and evaluate against brands they may regularly purchase.

Table 25: Combination of correct recognition per sports property profile

High Profile			
Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Total Frequency
Football	49.52%	309	624
Rugby Union	21.84%	102	467
Cricket	13.98%	87	622
Medium Profile			
	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Total Frequency
Football	42.92%	200	466
Rugby Union	12.07%	56	464
Cricket	11.33%	70	618
Low Profile			
	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Total Frequency
Football	33.47%	156	466
Rugby Union	7.73%	48	621
Cricket	8.71%	54	620

In combining this data together, Table 26 indicates how football gained the highest level of correct recognition for high- (49.52%), medium- (42.92%) and low- (33.47%) profile properties. Rugby union's high profile properties did return a respectable recognition level (21.84%). However medium and low properties for both rugby and cricket were relatively

low. This is consistent with S-COMM (2001) who, in a recent recognition study of football club sponsors, found that second tier sponsors (which can be viewed within all profile of sports property) gain little awareness. Another key factor was external leverage which increased the linkages between property and sponsor (S-COMM, 2001), whilst other well-known brands which do not partake in this type of leverage did not return a high level of recognition. Importantly for this study, shirt sponsorship is recognised as adding to brand recognition (S-COMM 2001). When this is combined with external leverage, profile of brands and sport properties; level of exposure and activation across multi level platforms, the recognition scores are promising given the general consumer sample who took part.

In presenting these findings, it is important to consider the process of sponsor identification and to justify the minimisation of educated guesses so that the results can be considered as accurate as possible. The first level of this process is that the brands have been recognised from memory. Secondly, the consumers may have quasi-randomly guessed the connections and thirdly it could have been as a result of an educated guess (Johar *et al* 2006). Whilst the second and third levels cannot be discounted, the design of the study with a 'don't know' option which was stressed to the consumers aimed to minimise the occurrence of these. Looking at the above figures, the results would appear to be accurate given the vast shift in correct responses from football, rugby union and cricket. In exploring the differences between the sports, a point that has already been eluded to is media visibility and its use as a default measurement criterion (Quattrocchi-Oubradous 2007) which may work for large brands operating within high profile sports properties. However, this could be a dangerous strategy for smaller brands working with lesser profile sports. The result of this is that while sponsorship partnerships generate the highest ROI, only 20% of this is from visibility.

Therefore, if visibility is the sole objective of the advertiser, then a more traditional pure advertising media strategy would be more appropriate (Quattrocchi-Oubradous 2007).

Table 26: Number of brands correctly recognized for Formula 1

Number of Brands	Frequency correct recalled	Percentage	Total Response
One brand	54	11.54%	468
Two brands	41	8.76%	468
Three brands	22	4.70%	468
Don't Know	351	75.0%	468

As the three Formula 1 properties (Ferrari, BAR Honda and Jordan Ford) all have multiple brand sponsors rather than one predominant shirt sponsor as for football, rugby union and cricket, the brand recognition was measured on the correct number of brands recognised. Whilst the majority (75%) did not know, 11.54% could correctly recognise one brand, 8.76% two brands and 4.70% three brands. Although 11.54% may be perceived as low, considering that there is clutter in Formula 1 sponsorship in terms of placement, (Clarke 2003) this response should be given some credibility from a general consumer point of view, as Formula 1 is not as regular a competition as the weekly leagues of football, cricket and rugby union. However, viewing figures are high for Formula 1, which may translate into actual advertising real estate for sponsors. For example, in the Formula 1 2004-2005 season, from the 19 races there were a total of 580 million unique viewers, with 162 hours of original programming (Roberts 2006). In terms of sponsorship exposure, the combined hours during qualification and the actual live race were estimated at 22:25:48 for one race (S-COMM 2003). Interestingly, in the 2003 season (one season prior to the data collection of this study), Ferrari gained the second highest coverage with BAR Honda and Jordan Ford falling below the mean exposure for both qualifying and the live race (S-COMM 2003). The recognition scores from this study could therefore be considered favorable from BAR Honda and Jordan Ford's

perspective, given their lesser amount of sponsorship exposure time (to Ferrari). Given that the sample was a general consumer sample, the predominance of having onscreen sources for the title sponsor appear to be effective from a recognition point of view (S-COMM 2003).

With F1 holding the second highest percentage share of sponsorship expenditure (Kolah 2006) the need to transform this, with some favourable recognition scores into an all year round sponsorship activity, from a consumers mind, has been acknowledged (Reid 2006). However, it is not only to make an ROI, but to impact positively on the host country's global image, something with which sponsors would want to be involved (Reid 2006).

Table 27: Number of brands correctly recognized per Formula 1 team

Number of Brands	FERRARI		BARHONDA		JORDAN FORD		Total Frequency
	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	
One Brand	16.66%	18	9.61%	15	14.10%	21	156
Two Brands	12.82%	20	12.17%	19	1.28%	2	156
Three Brands	6.41%	18	1.92%	3	0.64%	1	156
Don't Know	64.10%	100	76.28%	119	84.62%	132	156

From Table 27, it is evident that for BAR Honda, two correct brands were correctly recognised most (excluding 'don't know' responses), whilst for Ferrari and Jordan Ford, this was one. Some rationale for this could link to the predominant sponsor being congruent with motor sport, for example, a fuel supplier, or an automotive manufacturer.

As aforementioned, the sources of title sponsors are dominated by on-screen (28%), with the nose of the car second highest (20%) and the rear wing third (15%) (S-COMM 2003). The implications of this is that it is very focused brand-positioning from a sponsor point of view due to the car, the focus of the race for the whole duration, being constant mobile advertising.

With general consumers who may not choose to watch a whole race, infrequent viewing on a reduced timescale will still deliver a predominant sponsor image. The industry category and congruence can be seen as attributable factors within this, given the predominance of automotive sponsors (31%) within a live race which dwarfs the second highest category of tobacco (now banned) (S:COMM 2003).

Table 28: Number of brands correctly recognized for Euro 2004

Euro 2004	Percent Recognition	Frequency respondents	Total responses
One brand	18.83%	29	157
Two brands	9.70%	17	157
Three brands	13.54%	21	157
Four brands	4.50%	7	157
Don't Know	53.43%	83	157
Total	100%		

Table 29: Number of brands correctly recognized for UEFA CL

UEFA CL	Percent Recognition	Frequency respondents	Total responses
One brand	9.15	14	153
Two brands	7.84	12	153
Three brands	11.78	18	153
Four brands	15.68%	24	153
Don't Know	55.55%	85	153
Total	100%		

The findings show that from a combined perspective, 45.87% of the respondents could recognise at least one brand associated with Euro 2004, with 44.45% for the UEFA Champions League. From those who could correctly associate a brand with the event, the highest percentage could recognise one brand for Euro 2004 (18.83%). However for the UEFA Champions League, respondents who could identify correct brand associations could recognise all four of the official sponsors (15.68%). The timing of the data collection needs to be considered given that the questionnaires were sent out six to eight months following the

Euro 2004 Championships. These findings contradict Johar *et al* (2006) who found that during the previous European Championship to 2004 (Euro 2000), frequent viewers could not recognise primary sponsors of the event, with half of the British fans not recognising any brands. The results in this study clearly show a progression from this, with relatively high levels of recognition for primary sponsors. From a basic metric-reach perspective, the UEFA Champions League (UCL), in the 2005-2006 season, gained an average attendance of 40,100 per match. This was broadcast in 227 countries with audience figures in European markets of 760 million and a cumulative global TV audience of 3.7 billion (20Knots 2007). However, the explanation for increased recognition must be developed beyond this to understand how key industry developments are contributing to increased consumer awareness.

Sponsorship has developed since Euro 1996, through Euro 2000 and 2004 and now into the recent Euro 2008 competition (Taylor 2008). Moreover, the fundamental reason for this change is developing consumers whereby a very different type of consumer is becoming involved with the sport. Taylor (2008:20) comments that:

It's a different world. In Euro 1996, there was very little branding and sponsorship. It was an after- thought on websites, there was no added value to it. All the creativity was done offline not online through creative PR.

In contrast to this, Taylor (2008) notes how on the Euro 2008 website there is video, sponsor competitions, mobile portal and links to ITV and BBC websites:

The consumer today is completely different and particularly the young consumer, they are very media savvy, they want to control what they are doing, they want to bundle the content, share with their friends as oppose to the older days when it was take it or leave it (Taylor 2008:20).

Further, the types of rights are also important factors within recognition, awareness and purchase-related objectives given the value that sponsors will seek in both exclusivity and quantitative rights (Kolah 2006).

Table 30: Brand recognition for tennis events

Sport	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Total Frequency
Wimbledon	70.30%	109	155
Queens	55.50%	86	155
Eastbourne	5.80%	9	155
Sport	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Total Frequency
Wimbledon	0.60%	1	155
Queens	5.20%	8	155
Eastbourne	16.80%	70	618
Sport	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Wimbledon	29.00%	45	155
Queens	39.40%	61	155
Eastbourne	77.40%	120	155

Tennis events generally show high levels of recognition (Wimbledon 70.30% and Queens 55.50% correct) with low levels of incorrect recognition for both of these showcase events. For tennis as a sport, correct brand recognition in the study was respectable (25.80%), which could be attributed to a number of reasons. Firstly, although the events are profiled high, medium and low, they are yearly run with a televised focus (particularly on Wimbledon and Queens). Additionally, the sponsors have been associated with the two events for a number of years. For example, Queens, most commonly referred to as the Stella Artois Championship had been a sponsor for five years worth \$17,000,000 (Brit Sport 2005), which has secured exclusive Stella Artois ownership based advertising activities. Further to this the All England Club has very strict policies on corporate branding with the Wimbledon Championships not allowing on-court advertising or title sponsorship (Clarke 2003). The result of this is that the two partners, Slazenger and Robinsons have developed an almost automatic association with Wimbledon without the need to rely on the on-court branding which is common with other sports.

In testing whether the level of interest in tennis and correct brand recognition were associated, a Kruksall-Wallis test was performed. There was no significant difference between level of interest in tennis and correct brand recognition ($H=2.78$, $p=0.75$). This suggests that consumers do not have to have a specified interest in the sport to heighten their recognition levels where general consumers are concerned.

Table 31: Brand recognition for snooker events and individuals

Snooker	Percentage Correct	Frequency Correct	Percentage Incorrect	Frequency Incorrect	Percentage Don't Know	Frequency Don't Know	Total Frequency
Events	22.19%	103	13.14%	61	64.65%	300	464
Individuals	10.10%	47	4.30%	20	85.59%	398	465

Snooker as a sport did not have property types to match football, cricket and rugby union, therefore only events and individual sponsors were used. Table 32 shows that correct recognition is relatively low for individuals at 10.10%, with events recording 22.19%. However, one event of the three used, the Snooker World Championships, did generate a 51.90% correct recognition (32.50% indicated they did not know). To test whether levels of interest in snooker and correct snooker brand recognition were associated, a Kruksall-Wallis test was performed. There was no significant difference between the level of interest in snooker and correct brand recognition ($H=10.1$ $p=0.07$). Therefore it cannot be assumed that those who are more interested in snooker will automatically recognise more brands. This may be an issue for media planners working on the sponsorship who may need to look at their mechanisms for visibility.

5.3 Brand recognition grouped by gender

In order to gain a more insightful view of the brand recognition scores to provide more valuable practice-based recommendations, the demographic variables of age, gender and household income were used to explore whether differences amongst the percentage recognition scores could be linked to these factors. Male consumers demonstrated a higher mean recognition score for all types (see Table 32). However, it was the sports events and sports leagues which demonstrated higher scores for both males and females.

Table 32: Recognition scores grouped by gender

Sport Type	Male		Female	
Team Median recognition/Std. Deviation	0.151	0.125	0.100	0.179
League Median recognition/Std.Deviation	0.433	0.273	0.272	0.229
Individual Median recognition/Std.Deviation	0.112	0.096	0.102	0.089
Event Median recognition/Std.Deviation	0.398	0.169	0.213	0.169

A Mann Whitney U test conducted by gender demonstrated significant differences for gender and team recognition ($U=2009.0, p<0.05$), event recognition ($U=1628.5, p<0.05$) and league recognition ($U= 1993.0, p<0.05$). However, there was no significant difference for gender and individual recognition ($U=2857.5, p=0.59$). In exploring this further using Boxplots, it was interesting to note that although males had a higher recognition for all sport types, the outliers demonstrated particularly high levels of recognition for events, individuals and teams related to females (see Figure 5.1).

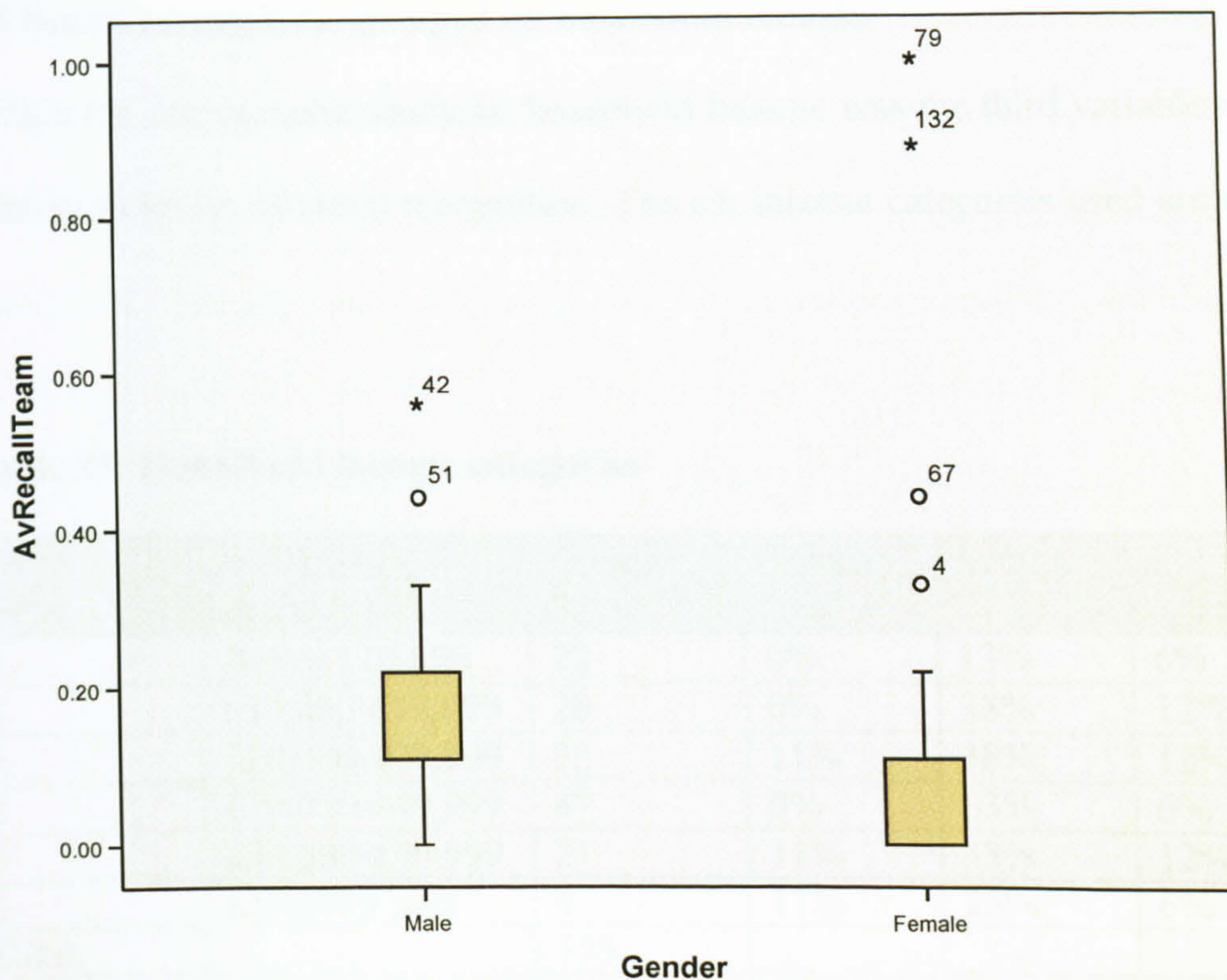


Figure 5.1: Average Team Recognition for males and females

5.4 Brand recognition grouped by age

The second variable to be explored was age in which six categories were used. Using the two highest recognition sport types, leagues and events, it was the 35-44 year olds who demonstrated the highest percentage score (40%) for events, and the 20-24 year olds for league recognition (47%). A Kruskal-Wallis test conducted by age groups demonstrated significant differences between age groupings for team recognition ($H=20.7, p<0.05$), individual recognition ($H=29.5, p<0.05$) and event recognition ($H=16.3, p<0.05$). However, despite sport leagues being the second highest recognised sport type, it failed to produce a significant difference ($H=11.1, p=0.08$).

5.5 Brand recognition grouped by household income

Within the demographic analysis, household income was the third variable to be explored in relation to levels of brand recognition. The six income categories used are detailed in Table 33.

Table 33: Household income categories

Income Category	Per Annum Income	Sample Size	Team	League	Individual	Event
1	Below £10,000	23	0%	13%	6%	0%
2	£10,000-£19,999	28	0%	38%	12%	21%
3	£20,000-£29,999	32	11%	38%	12%	21%
4	£30,000-£49,999	47	0%	63%	6%	43%
5	£50,000-£99,999	21	11%	38%	12%	36%
6	£100,000 plus	4	11%	25%	6%	7%
Total		155				
Missing		2				

N.B. The scores recorded are for the most frequently occurring correct recognition scores

Again, using the two highest recognised sport types, the respondents with £30,000-£49,999 per annum income demonstrated the highest event recognition (40%) with those earning £100,000 plus recognising the highest percentage of brand recognition for sport leagues (56%). However, given the small sample size within this income category (4), the more accurate percentage can be taken from those earning £20,000-£29,999 per annum (42%). Table 33 shows the most occurring correct percentage recognition per sports type for each income category. To test for significant differences, a Kruskal-Wallis test, conducted by income categories demonstrated significant differences between income categories for event recognition ($H=22.0$, $p<0.05$), and league recognition ($H=12.9$, $p<0.05$). Team recognition ($H=10.1$, $p=0.72$) and individual recognition ($H=6.52$, $p=0.25$) failed to produce significant differences.

5.6 Consumer opinions towards non-sport product brands sponsoring sport

In order to provide a base for the interviews at phase two, it was important to establish an understanding of what consumers thought of brand promotion in sport; brand preference and intention to purchase as a direct result of the sports sponsorship. It is acknowledged that consumers are more receptive to sponsorship as opposed to advertising (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999). However, there are issues with goodwill within sports sponsorship given its perceived commercialisation and over exploitation (Meenaghan 2001a).

Item A	Sport is used by non sport product brands for promoting their brand
Item F	Sport is used excessively for the promotion of non sport product brands
Item G	The association of sport with non sport product brands has a financial benefit to both parties
Item D	When particular sporting events are on, I prefer the non sport product related to the event

Table 34: Items A, F, G and D.

Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Item A	2.50% (4)	7.00% (11)	18.50% (29)	22.30% (35)	49.70% (78)	157
Item F	9.70% (15)	9.00% (14)	36.80% (57)	25.80% (40)	18.70% (29)	155
Item G	1.30% (2)	9.10% (14)	17.50% (27)	32.50% (50)	39.60% (61)	154
Item D	64.50% (100)	13.50% (21)	14.80% (23)	5.80% (9)	1.30% (2)	155

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The majority of respondents agreed that sport is used as a medium to promote non-sport product brands (72% combined strongly agree and agree) (Table 34). In addition, the results indicate that whilst the combined percentage of agree and strongly agree is 44.50% in agreeing that sport is used excessively for brand promotion, 36.80% of the respondents had a

neutral opinion on this, indicating that either acceptance, approval or tolerance of sports sponsorship was evident. Further to this, Figure G shows that the majority of respondents (39.60%) believe that there are financial benefits to both the sports property and the brand, which contradicts Meenaghan (2001a), who identified that over exploitation of the sports property by the brand is the cause of some negative feelings towards sports sponsorship. From a brand preference point of view, 64.50% of respondents indicated that they did not prefer non-sport product brands that are related to sports events as oppose to their regular brand.

In terms of purchase preference when sporting events are on (Item D), a Mann Whitney U test was conducted to test for significant differences between gender and purchase preference. This found that there were no significant differences for gender and preference to sponsor brands when events are on ($U=2817$ $p= 0.65$). In factoring age into this, a Kruksall Wallis test was performed which did identify significance for age and purchase preference when sporting events are on ($H=14.18$, $p<0.05$). Household income as a variable did not return any significant differences for item D ($H=8.02$, $p=0.15$).

From a participation perspective, there was a significant difference between those who were considered as participants and item D ($U=2900$, $p<0.05$) and also those who were non-active spectators ($U=114$, $p<0.05$). However, being classed as a spectator generally did not return any significance ($U=672.5$, $p=0.32$), neither did the most popular spectator category of being an active occasional spectator ($U=425$, $p=0.69$).

5.7 Sports sponsorship impact on likelihood to purchase

Part A, section 4 of questionnaire one (see appendix 1), relates to whether a consumer would choose to purchase a product as a direct result of the sport property associated with it. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they strongly agreed or strongly disagreed (5-point Likert scale) with item 4C. There was positively skewed distribution, which suggests the respondents do not purchase products as a direct consequence of a sports sponsorship programme (See Figure 5.2).

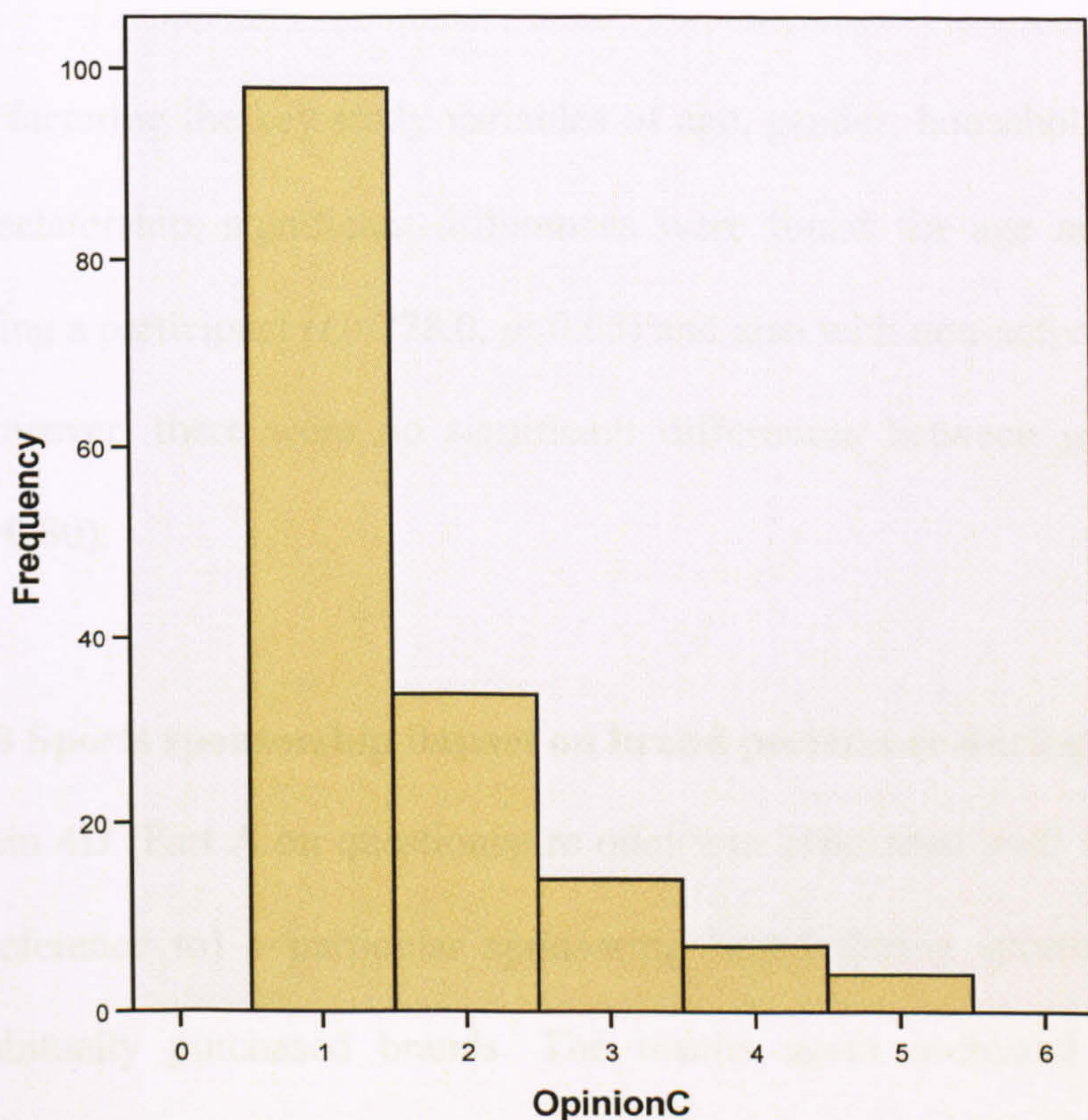


Figure 5.2: Frequency response to item 4C – consumer purchase as a result of sports sponsorship

Chi Square results demonstrate a significant association between the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a non-sport product brand (because of the sports property with which it was associated) and sport league brand recognition ($\chi^2(36)=51.2, p<0.05$). However sport team recognition ($\chi^2(28)=35.2, p=0.16$), individual recognition ($\chi^2(28)=39.7, p=0.70$) and event recognition ($\chi^2(56)=50.7, p=0.67$) failed to reveal any significant associations between

recognition sport type and consumer intent to purchase as a result of a sports sponsorship. Following the significant association between sport league brand recognition and consumer purchase, the strength of the association was tested using Cramer's V . The Cramer statistic was 0.29, demonstrating a medium-low association between the two variables with a significance value of 0.047. As this value is only just significant, the strength of the relationship cannot be deemed as significant.

In factoring the key study variables of age, gender, household income and participation and spectatorship, significant differences were found for age and item C ($H=16.49$, $p<0.05$); being a participant ($U=278.0$, $p<0.05$) and also with non-active spectators ($U=106.0$, $p<0.05$). However, there were no significant differences between gender and item C ($U=2943.5$, $p=0.80$).

5.8 Sports sponsorship impact on brand preference during sporting events

Item 4D (Part A on questionnaire one) was concerned with whether consumers would (take preference to) a particular sponsoring brand during sporting events as opposed to their habitually purchased brands. The results again indicated a low mean score ($M=1.66$, $SD=1.02$) with a positively skewed distribution (see Figure 5.3). This would appear to indicate that consumers (do not take preference to) brands promoted through sports sponsorship during sporting events as opposed to their regularly purchased brands.

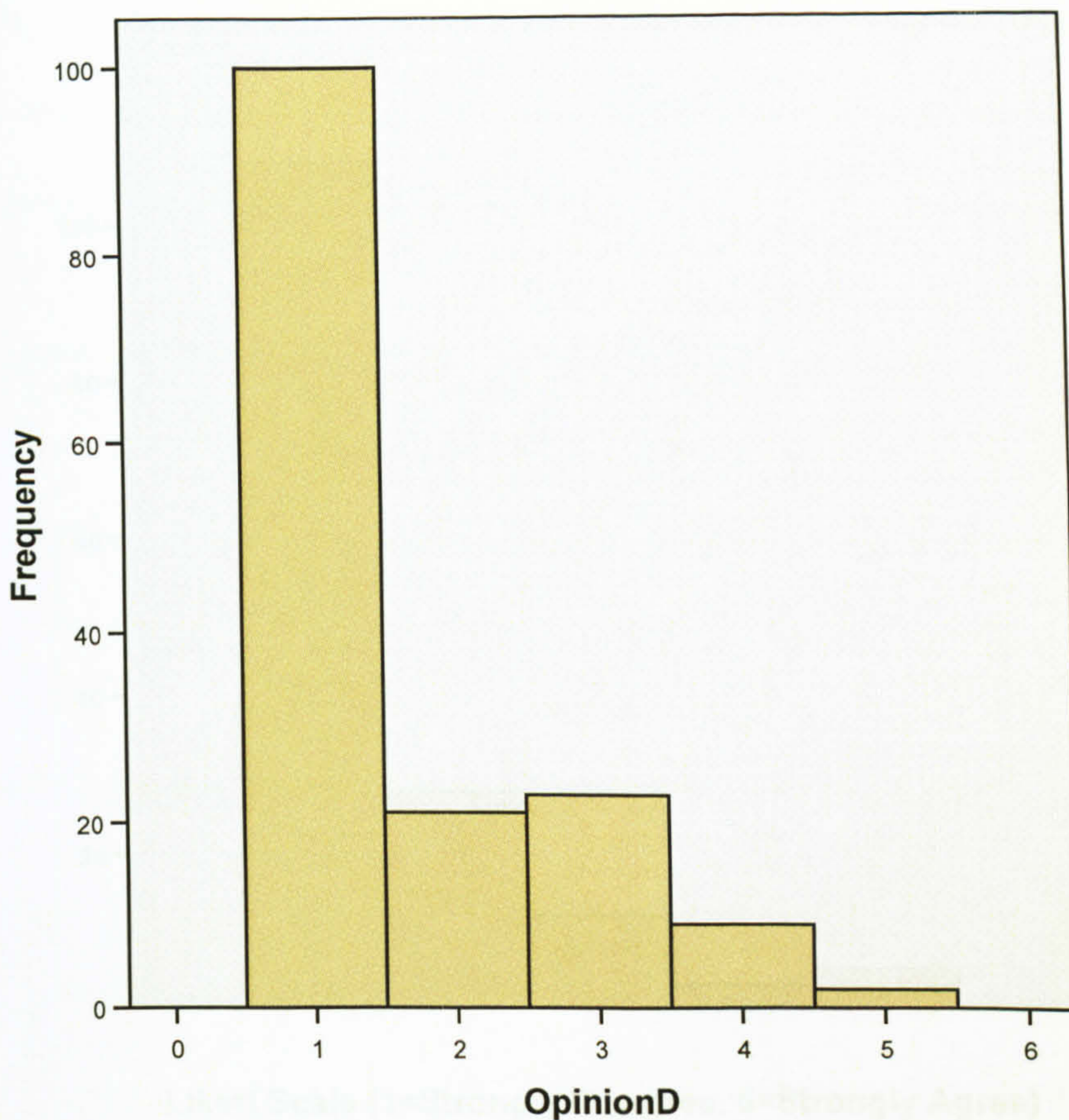


Figure 5.3: Frequency response to item 4D, brand preference during sporting events

In testing for significance using Chi Squared analysis, team recognition ($\chi^2(28)=22.0$, $p=0.78$), individual recognition ($\chi^2(28)=23.1$, $p=0.72$), league recognition ($\chi^2(56)=33.4$, $p=0.59$) and event recognition ($\chi^2(36)=33.4$, $p=0.59$), failed to produce any significant associations between the recognition and whether consumers prefer a brand associated with a sporting event (during that event). Therefore there can be no links made between recognition and brand preference at sports events.

5.9 Brand endorser influence on brand choice

The third attitudinal item used related to whether consumer brand choice was impacted upon by the brand endorser (Figure 5.4) This item recorded the lowest mean score ($M=1.52$, $SD=0.95$) out of items 4C and 4D aforementioned. The distribution was positively skewed with a slightly lower standard deviation than items 4C and 4D on the questionnaire.

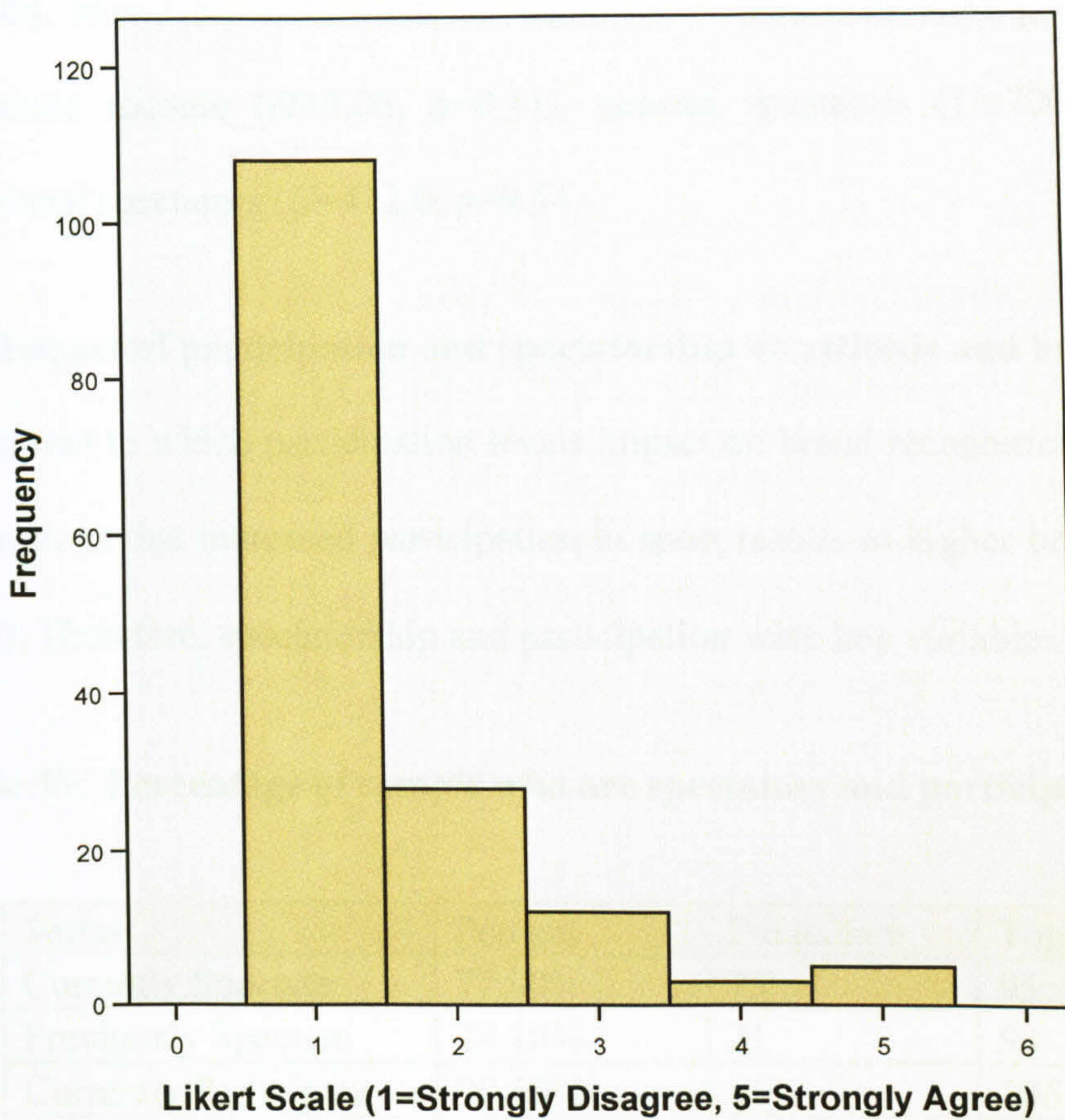


Figure 5.4: Frequency response to item 4E, brand endorser influence on brand choice

The influence a brand endorser has on consumer brand choice cannot be related to any fluctuations or differences in brand recognition levels as three out of the four sport types used in the recognition section were non-significant. Using Chi Squared analysis, team recognition ($\chi^2(30.0)$, $p=0.36$), individual recognition ($\chi^2(32.9)$, $p=0.24$) and event recognition ($\chi^2(56)=44.9$, $p=0.86$) failed to produce significant associations. However, there was a significant association between league recognition and whether or not a brand endorser influences a consumer's brand choice ($\chi^2(51.4)$, $p<0.05$). Using Cramer's V to test for the strength of the association, a medium-low strength was recorded (0.28), with a significance value of 0.046. Therefore, it cannot be recorded that the association strength is significant. In exploring key variables (age again demonstrated significant differences) between item E and age ($H=12.73$, $p<0.05$), participants ($U=236.0$, $p<0.05$) and non active spectators ($U=106.5$,

$p < 0.05$). However, there were no significant differences with gender ($U = 2955$, $p = 0.99$); household income ($H = 5.06$, $p = 0.41$), general spectators ($U = 700.5$, $p = 0.41$) and active occasional spectators ($U = 412.0$, $p = 0.54$).

5.10 Impact of participation and spectatorship on attitude and brand recognition

The extent to which participation levels impact on brand recognition has been explored with suggestions that increased participation in sport results in higher brand recognition (Kitchen 1994). Therefore, spectatorship and participation were key variables to consider.

Table 35: Percentage of sample who are spectators and participants.

Status	Percent	Frequency	Total Frequency
Currently Spectate	77.90%	75	95
Previously Spectate	22.10%	21	95
Currently Participate	90.60%	96	106
Previously Participate	9.40%	10	106

Table 36 shows that the majority of the sample participate in sport (48%) (which could be defined through leisure activities, such as gym membership), whilst 37% are sole spectators of sport with no participation. Further, 10% of the sample indicated that they previously were spectators but are no longer and 5% have previously participated in sport but have now ceased. In terms of spectatorship, the most common type identified was 'non-active' (which was classed as television, radio and the internet), with 'active occasional' spectators the second most common. This refers to spectators who may go to watch a live sporting fixture or event, but it is not a regular occurrence. Of those who indicated that they were participants, this was most frequently done so on an occasional basis rather than regular active involvement. The upshot of this is that the sample was not sport-biased from either a

spectatorship or participatory level, therefore the impact of the sponsorships would be clearer from a neutral perspective.

A Mann Whitney U test conducted by spectatorship demonstrated significant differences for average league recognition ($U=534.0$ $p<0.05$) and correct football brand recognition ($U=574.0$ $p<0.05$). However, there was no significant difference for spectatorship and average team recognition ($U=591.5$, $p=0.84$), average individual recognition ($U=604.5$, $p=0.11$), average event recognition ($U=705.0$ $p=0.52$), correct rugby union recognition ($U=664.5$ $p=0.12$), correct cricket recognition ($U=728.5$, $p=0.39$), correct tennis recognition ($U=675.0$ $p=0.24$) and correct snooker recognition ($U=627.5$, $p=0.22$). From this, it could be determined that those who are considered as spectators are more likely to correctly recognize football brands and league related brands.

The level of interaction with consumers on television platforms is evolving (Clarke 2003) and with services such as BBCi (i.e. Wimbledon, Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games), the interaction element of consumers with not only the sport, but the sponsors, has elevated television leverage to new heights of engagement (Kolah 2006). For example, at Wimbledon, significant developments in services on offer have increased, within a short period of time from the initial interactive digital TV application in 2000, to more text rich services that are offered simultaneously with quarter screen offerings of the broadcast (Clarke 2003).

From a participation perspective (Mann Whitney U tests conducted) there were significant differences for correct cricket recognition ($U=366.0$ $p<0.05$). However, all other categories did not return any significant differences. In testing for associations between those who are spectators and those who are participants, and purchase preference and intent, Chi Squared

analysis was performed. However, there were no significant associations between spectators and item B ($\chi^2(4)=5.4$, $p=0.24$), item C ($\chi^2(4)=4.02$, $p=0.40$), and item D ($\chi^2(4)=1.57$, $p=0.81$). Using participation as the grouping variable, there was a significant association with item C ($\chi^2(4)=12.9$, $p=0.12$). However, there was no significance for items B ($\chi^2(4)=4.5$, $p=0.34$) or D ($\chi^2(4)=8.3$, $p=0.82$).

5.11 Medium of promotion

Table 36: Consumer opinions of the most effective mediums of sponsorship promotion

Medium	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
TV	2.50% (4)	3.80% (6)	8.90% (14)	34.40% (54)	50.30% (79)	157
Radio	12.30% (19)	21.90% (34)	41.90% (65)	15.50% (24)	8.40% (13)	155
Newspaper	3.80% (6)	10.90% (17)	24.40% (38)	37.80% (59)	23.10% (36)	156
Internet	12.60% (19)	24.50% (37)	36.40% (55)	20.50% (31)	6.00% (9)	151

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The results show that the medium that consumers perceive to be most effective in promoting a sponsorship is television (50.30%) (newspapers were second most popular and the internet third). From an industry point of view, the view on television is reflective, given the dramatic growth in terms of rights fees and also hours of broadcast that sponsors receive (Clarke 2003). However, whilst the rise in television rights has been vast, there is a conflict with the results and current industry developments. This may need practitioners who work within internet services to ensure a full cross consumer application is developed in order to heighten the possibility of achieving objectives from sponsorship (Clarke 2003; Church-Sanders 2008). The key to this is the manner in which content can be delivered on demand and to a device on which the consumer actually wants to receive it, for example, audio-visual clips via a mobile device or a PC, or periodic news feeds. The basic element is to ensure that the internet

medium is exploited across all consumer genres given the level of interaction potential for general consumer groups (Clarke 2003; Taylor 2008; Johnson 2008).

In exploring this further (see Table 37), from a recognition point of view, there was very little significance between promotional medium and recognition type which may suggest that the promotional medium is not a core facilitator in this process, but other factors such as brand knowledge and brand personality may enable recognition of brand logos beyond a superficial level, depending on emotional involvement which is still a key aspect within the process (Christensen 2006).

Table 37: Chi Square analysis on medium of promotion and recognition type

Promotion	Recognition type	Chi Square value	Significance
Television	Correct Football	12.80	p=0.20
	Correct Rugby Union	7.21	p=0.52
	Correct Cricket	2.43	p=0.97
	Tennis	4.85	p=0.77
	Snooker	7.67	p=0.47
	Team	20.93	p=0.82
	Individual	29.63	p=0.38
	League	34.98	p=0.51
	Events	49.92	p=0.70
Radio	Correct Football	7.32	p=0.50
	Correct Rugby Union	13.58	p=0.09
	Correct Cricket	3.57	p=0.89
	Tennis	6.44	p=0.60
	Snooker	6.03	p=0.64
	Team	22.70	p=0.74
	Individual	29.30	p=0.40
	League	32.34	p=0.64
	Events	50.32	p=0.69
Internet	Correct Football	8.39	p=0.40
	Correct Rugby Union	20.65	p<0.05
	Correct Cricket	4.84	p=.076
	Tennis	5.69	p=0.66
	Snooker	1.56	p=0.99
	Team	26.17	p=0.56
	Individual	28.40	p=0.44
	League	32.78	p=0.62
	Events	50.54	p=0.68

Interactivity has re-shaped traditional one-way media channels such as television with the advent of interactive TV (iTV) and personal video recorders (PVRs) as the new de-facto television experience (Kolah 2006). Further, Kolah (2006) recognises how mobile television and content through 3G will dominate interactivity within future sports sponsorships. Therefore, the exploration of the variables of satellite and internet on recognition was done to identify whether on a standard level, access to these two services and higher recognition was evident, the rationale being to identify whether communicating through multi level platforms had potential to increase brand recognition.

5.12 Impact of access to satellite television and the internet on recognition

A Mann Whitney U test conducted by access to satellite television demonstrated significant differences for average team recognition ($U=2038$, $p<0.05$). However, there was no significant difference for consumers with satellite television and average individual recognition ($U=2356$, $p=0.33$), average event recognition ($U=2449$, $p=0.56$), average league recognition ($U=2292$, $p=0.23$), correct football recognition ($U=2226$, $p=0.09$), correct rugby union recognition ($U=2389$, $p=0.26$), correct cricket recognition ($U=2337$, $p=0.16$), correct tennis recognition ($U=2298$, $p=0.21$) and correct snooker recognition ($U=2427$, $p=0.75$). Whilst a high number of the recognition types were not significant, there was significance with average team recognition and those with satellite access. This could be attributed to a variety of factors such as team preference and preference to leagues not events. However, the level of exposure that high-profile team-sports receives per season on satellite television should be considered.

Similarly with internet access, team recognition returned significant differences ($U=1195$, $p<0.05$), as did average league recognition ($U=1181$, $p<0.05$). However, no other recognition

types showed any significance with the grouping variable of internet access. Linking into the factors above, the issue could also be around consumption in terms of how consumers actually view the brands that they can recognise. As the sample was not intentionally biased to sports fans, the visibility of brands outside of these mechanisms may be proving successful for practitioners. For example, Church-Sanders (2008) stated that in April 2007, UK consumers spent 7 million minutes on sports websites. However, in April 2008, this figure stood at only 4 million minutes. The current areas of market growth are online games, which have witnessed a rise from 1.6 million minutes to 2.2 million minutes, with member communities (i.e. social networking sites) rising from 2.4 million to 3.7 million minutes in the same time span (Church-Sanders 2008). Such mechanisms as online gaming and social network sites may be lucrative in engaging consumers who are not classified as sports fans, given the shift in consumption, which marketers, broadcast, new media and sponsorship industries are all keen to follow (Johnson 2008).

5.13 Most promoted sports properties

Table 38: Consumer perceptions of most promoted sports properties

Property Type	Most Promoted (%)	Second Most Promoted (%)	Third Most Promoted (%)	Least Promoted (%)	Total
Teams	33.80% (51)	27.80% (42)	20.50% (31)	17.20% (31)	151
Leagues	9.30% (14)	19.90% (30)	36.40% (55)	34.40% (52)	151
Individuals	45.70% (69)	21.90% (33)	9.30% (14)	23.20% (35)	151
Events	11.30% (17)	30.50% (46)	33.10% (50)	25.20% (37)	151

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The sports properties used were grouped in teams, leagues, individuals and events which matched the common grouping within the industry, although leagues are not commonly viewed discretely, rather integrated through organisation sponsorships (Clarke 2003; Kolah

2006). Consumers were questioned on which group they felt was most promoted through sports sponsorships in order to see whether recognition and perception of highly-promoted property groups were associated or whether general cross-over of properties and recognition were more common. The results show that consumers believe sport individuals to be the group where sports sponsorship is most heavily promoted (45.70%), with sport teams second (33.80%). Sport leagues were thought to be the least promoted (34.40%) with events showing (a stronger inclination) for not being heavily promoted.

Initial observations reveal that this conflicts with the average recognition scores for each property type. In order to test whether there are significant associations between the recognition and the perception of property types sports sponsorship is promoted, a chi square analysis was performed which showed no significance between any of the variables (see Table 39).

Table 39: Chi Square analysis for average recognition and property types

Property type	Recognition property type	Chi Square value	Significance
Sport teams	Sport teams	24.06	p=0.68
	Sport individuals	28.12	p=0.46
	Sport events	43.95	p=0.88
	Sport leagues	47.99	p=0.09
Sport Leagues	Sport teams	24.21	p=0.28
	Sport individuals	17.25	p=0.69
	Sport events	48.65	p=0.22
	Sport leagues	39.60	p=0.06
Sport Individuals	Sport teams	26.54	p=0.19
	Sport individuals	21.51	p=0.43
	Sport events	41.41	p=0.50
	Sport leagues	33.85	p=0.17
Sport events	Sport teams	18.05	p=0.65
	Sport individuals	22.90	p=0.34
	Sport events	27.86	p=0.95
	Sport leagues	32.30	p=0.22

From an industry perspective, the share of type of sports sponsorship properties is distributed 49% for events, 29% for teams, 7% for individual personality sponsorships and 15% for organisations (including properties such as the Olympic TOP programme and the FA pillar sponsorships) (Kolah 2006). In examining sponsorship deals specifically within UK Sport, the connections between consumers perceptions of most-promoted property groups becomes more apparant. In 2005, out of the top ten UK sports sponsorships, six were of sport teams; two were for leagues and two for individuals with no event sponsorships within the top ten (WSM 2005). Factors to extract from this, relating to the higher levels of recognition, link to the properties for which the sponsors gain exclusive naming rights, the longer deal terms and also the amount of investment. Higher recognition was associated with the properties who did have naming rights, for example the Stella Artois Championship returned over 50% correct recognition which could be down to the consistent brand promotion at the event as well as the exclusivity of the deal, which is key for sponsors (Kolah 2006).

5.14 Impact of sport sponsorship on children (parental perspectives)

Item I	I am aware that my child(ren) pay more attention to products associated with sport
Item J	My child(ren) influence the products (associated with sport) that I purchase
Item H	I buy non sport related products associated with sport/sport endorsers as a result of my children
Item B	The use of specific athletes to endorse non sport products affects the brands that I prefer

Table 40: Items I, J, H and B

Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Item I	22.60% (24)	19.80% (21)	25.50% (27)	23.60% (25)	8.50% (9)	106
Item J	44.20% (46)	22.10% (23)	17.30% (18)	13.50% (14)	2.90% (3)	104
Item H	48.10% (52)	22.20% (24)	17.60% (19)	9.30% (10)	2.80% (3)	108
Item B	47.80% (75)	17.20% (27)	19.70% (31)	10.20% (16)	5.10% (8)	157

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

As aforementioned, the youth market is increasingly lucrative (Kolah 2006). Therefore, the impact of whether children are more aware of brand promotion through sports sponsorships, and the subsequent impact that this has on parents to purchase due to their children, was explored. The rationale for this was based on the growing brand culture within society (Stevens *et al* 2005) which sport sponsors have embraced and have started to build sponsorships around. The prime example is mobile marketing (M-marketing) which is forming the basis of CRM activities (Kolah 2006), something which sports sponsors are starting to adopt given the ability mobile marketing has to connect with consumers of all ages (Taylor 2008). Product placement within sport from a sponsorship point of view is moving towards more interactive platforms such as gaming, interactive TV, 3G, 4G, WAP, iTV/HDTV and other interactive media (Kolah 2006), which will dominate in the future.

The results indicate (item I, Table 40) that parents were more neutral about whether they thought that their child/ren pay attention to products being associated with sport (25.50%) as opposed to strongly countering or championing this notion. There was confusion apparent between parents who agreed (23.60%) and those who strongly disagreed (22.60%) that their child/ren paid more attention to the promotion. From the consumer opinions, there was a general acknowledgement that the promotion was occurring through sport (item 4A), and

from recognition scores there is evidence that some subconscious and conscious awareness occurs, which is transparent to the children. However, the strength of opinion is not as great.

Similarly as consumers, parents strongly disagreed that they would purchase a product associated with sport through a sponsorship as a result of their children (48.10% strongly disagree) (item 4H, Table 40). Nor did they believe that their child/ren influence their purchase decisions due to the sports sponsorships (44.20% strongly disagree) (item 4J, Table 40). Whilst there may be an inclination that the promotion does attract the children, converting this to impact and influence on purchase shows similar results to the consumer who strongly disagreed (47.80%) that the brand endorser influences their purchase decision (Item 4B, Figure 5.3). The suggestion can therefore be that whilst high levels of recognition have been found for some sports, depending on type of property and profile of brand, the translation of this into an influencing factor on purchase and the actual transactional acquisition of the product is minimal. However, this will be explored in greater depth within chapter six which presents the findings of the qualitative interviews. These are focused more at the purchase decision-making processes which a consumer goes through and whether sports sponsorship can assist non sport product brands in achieving objectives with a general consumer basis, rather than purely a sport specific group.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion of qualitative consumer findings

(Phase two)

6.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the key themes which have emerged from the individual face-to-face interviews. The purpose was to examine the extent to which sports sponsorship programmes impact on general consumer attitudes to the brand; brand recognition, purchase preferences and subsequent issues relating to brand loyalty. The interviews were conducted with a cross-section of consumers who completed the phase one questionnaire (see chapter four for further detail).

The interviewees were both male and female with a varied spread of age and household income categories to allow for consistent findings to be noted and also for the identification of issues which may be market-specific depending upon these key variables. In order to suitably address the research aims for this phase, it was important that the analysis identified the emerging themes which were consistent from the statistical data already presented. It was also hoped that there were new findings from the interviews. Therefore as outlined in chapter four,

protocol analysis (Robson 2002; Marshall and Rossman 2006) was carried out to allow for greater depth of exploration. This was achieved by treating the raw data using a systematic process that was guided by the aims of the study to extract the data which was deemed most useful to the study. The chapter will conclude by proposing a model which not only summarises the findings from this phase but also looks to project a communication-based approach to consumer attitude, purchase and recognition, which will highlight how key factors such as brand and sport loyalty impact on the process, whether consciously or subconsciously or whether as a reinforcement tool for habitual purchase and established loyalty. Following the analysis of the consumer questionnaire data (used as a basis for interview themes) the results have been used in parts to support the qualitative findings. Table 41 summarises these findings under the three key themes of brand recognition, consumer evaluations and purchase intention. This tracks the process of how the key findings emerged in line with relevant literature and the interview transcripts.

6.1 Consumer evaluations of sponsorship programmes

The interviews took a broad view of sports sponsorship and linked into calls in literature (Meenaghan 2001a; Tripodi 2001; Tripodi *et al* 2003; CIM 2004) for further research to be carried out to explore how consumers evaluate sponsorship programmes. To this extent it was important to gain a perspective on the rationale consumers attributed to companies becoming involved in sponsorship in sport. In general, consumers demonstrate more favourable attitudes towards sponsorship as opposed to advertising, this being attributed to the lack of exploitation of the company and recipient association (Polonksy & Speed 2001). This may be acceptable as a generic notion, however, the unique nature of sports sponsorship somewhat project traditional views on advertising and sponsorship into a new dimension. This is mainly attributed to the emotional nature of fan attachment (Wakefield 2007). As previously discussed in chapter three, positive attitudes towards a sponsorship programme can be impacted upon by various negative factors, the ones which are most pertinent to these findings being sponsor interference, profile of sport, exploitation, consumer interpretation and emotional involvement (Meenaghan 2001b). Given that the study purposely chose not to target sports fans (as it is recognised that sports sponsorship has a lot to offer) (Ali *et al* 2006) but to look at the impact that sports sponsorship has on general consumer behaviour, the results partially-model themselves on current literature. They also provide insight into how consumers not only perceive the whole sponsorship programme from objective to leverage, but also the transference of conscious awareness to subconscious impact. The results showed that this is dependent on numerous factors including brand loyalty, habitual purchase routines, sports property, brand personality, brand trust and match up of brand values to the sport being sponsored.

This leads to the first key finding regarding goodwill which is consistent with Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) who report that mass sports generate lower levels of goodwill. This could be as a result of perceived exploitation by the sponsor, something which is relatively common within more commercialised sports.

Key finding one:

Sports sponsorship does not foster goodwill towards non-sport related brands promoting their brand through sport.

There was a consistent theme from the respondents that sponsorship in sport was purely a commercial deal whereby there was little or no benefit to the general public. As a broad starting point within the interviews, it was important to explore the rationale for the development of the strong negative attitudes that emerged. Across all cross-sections, the respondents were consistent in identifying that the sole reason for companies partaking in sports sponsorship was merely related to exposure and the net minutes (mass coverage, exposure and the 24/7 availability) that sport is publicised per week was seen as the underlying rationale for this. For example, interviewee four commented that:

I just think about it in terms of exposure, the more the company's name is bandied around the more it sticks in people's brains, whether it is negative or positive publicity it makes no difference, it is publicity.

Extending this, interviewee five, suggested that:

It is the public at the end of the day that really do the sponsorship.....the best way to do it is through the general public and the more they can get (them to know about what they are doing) the better it is for them.

From this, the onus that was placed on the role of the general public within the sponsorship demonstrated that sports sponsorship, as opposed to other traditional forms of marketing communications, may promote a process of involvement between the consumer and the

company. This process appears to be unaffected by the consumer opinions about the brand. The rationale for this can be attributed to the ideology that brands teach us over a number of years about their brand image and values through repetitive exposure (Silk and Andrews 2001). For example, when asked about whether the profile of a brand engenders brand recognition, (using a sports brand to exemplify) one respondent commented that:

Of course it would but that is part of what it is about. I mean nobody would know this little squiggly line means Nike unless we had been taught over a number of years what Nike stands for (interviewee four).

This has significance for general consumers who appear to recognise that their knowledge of a brand has been embedded within their thinking by the brand, something which makes sport all-encompassing and a highly powerful medium of promotion (Tripodi 2001; Ali *et al* 2006).

Exposure and publicity were consistent across all respondents in their evaluation of the rationale as to why sport is used as a vehicle for the sponsorship programmes. However, there was a connection made early on directly to sales as opposed to any other objective. Interviewee six stated that the reason for this (in their opinion) was:

To get people to buy their products, probably think linking either a famous person or brand to a team will get people to buy their products.

Further to this, interviewee five noted:

The public tend to buy them because they are following a certain sport.

This more sales-related evaluation that was presented somewhat questions processes outlined in literature (Söderman and Dolles 2008) which see sales increases as a sub-product of facilitating brand awareness and brand image enhancement. Consumers appear to recognise that awareness of the brand through sport is a fundamental reason for sponsor's investment. However an immediate sales related mindset, more aligned with advertising (Meenaghan 2001b) may act as a barrier to the natural process of adopting a product from a standardised

process (Crompton 1996). Table 42 summarises the total interview sample in relation to common associated phrases and individual responses which differed across the interviewees.

Table 42: Summary of consumer responses regarding evaluating sports sponsorship factored by age, gender and household income

Gender	Age	Household Income	Associated phrases	Differing individual interpretation
Female	20-24	£10,000-£19,999	Exposure, sport is on Television a lot,	Companies are probably quite wise
Male	65+	Below £10,000	Extensive coverage, people seeing brands, commercial for national brands (more sales related) local sponsorships may .	More to do with glamorisation of sport
Male	45-54	£30,000-£49,999	Sport is high profile, coverage, publicity, merely commercial	Deregulation of Television, sport is 24/7
Male	35-44	Did not disclose	Exposure and publicity, sales related	Companies seek exposure to brand within areas that get national television coverage. It funds sport in some way
Male	55-64	£20,000-£29,999	Publicity, purely commercial, no return to public	The public tends to buy if they follow a sport
Female	35-34	£50,000-£99,999	Purely commercial, exposing brand name, sales related	Growth in sports sponsorship attributed to David Beckham. Money should be put back into lowering price

The issue of goodwill within sponsorship has been well documented in chapter two. Madrigal (2001) identified that goodwill towards a sports team (or other sport property) may be transferred onto the sponsorship brand. Whilst the interview sample did not include any fans who could be termed fanatical, there were fans who could be loyal to either a sport or more

specifically a team. There was a mixed opinion on this from a purchase point of view with some respondents indicating that they would consider purchasing but others not, the dissimilarity between the opinions being age related (discussed in more depth later in the chapter).

In general, whilst the findings did not present high levels of goodwill related to a supported team or sport, the respondents did show a tolerance and acceptance of the capitalist society in which companies are operating, which may influence initial evaluations of the sponsorship programmes and brands. The majority of respondents across all categories indicated that companies utilising sports sponsorship did not overly concern them in terms of it being a corporate function for the companies being involved. However, it was indicated that there was “too much”, perhaps indicating that general consumers (as opposed to avid sport fans) have reached their threshold of tolerance (saturated), which may in turn negatively impact on their perception of the brand longer term. For example, interviewee four commented that:

I think in the capitalist society in which we live... then it is a market and why wouldn't sport be a market like any other?

This was consistent with interviewee five who stated:

At the end of the day they are in a business to make money...and if they can see a way that is the best way of doing it then they will do it, rightly or wrongly.....sometimes I think it is a good thing if it helps the general public, but there are a lot of times when I don't think they do help the public.

There was a general consensus that there are no visible benefits to the general public from sports sponsorships, which again, could be a factor that negatively impacts on the potential for forming positive attitudes. Interviewee three suggested that:

I don't think they (the public) receive any benefits. What benefit can they get? The only people who benefit is the sports personality who's advertising it and the company who is selling the product.

This is in direct contrast to Meenaghan (2001a) who identifies that sponsorship rather than advertising has more beneficial factors. This is however consistent with Meenaghan (2001b) who argues that how a consumer interprets a sponsorship will impact on the formation of negative factors, something about which practitioners need to take greater care in monitoring and evaluating.

Further to this one interviewee, who had no sporting involvement, felt that whilst the business approach was the norm, the money invested in the sponsorship should be channelled back into lowering the price of the product rather than:

...paying millions for some football star or sponsoring of team....the public do not get any commercial benefits (interviewee six).

Whilst the respondents were rational in their thoughts regarding the use of sport within current society and emerging markets, they also did not perceive that sport was incorrectly used for brand promotion. Interviewee three commented that:

I don't think you can say it's wrongly used...you can't blame the companies (for using) such as Gillette using David Beckham to sell their products, you can't blame them so I don't think it is wrong.

This, in turn, somewhat diminished any level of goodwill towards a non-sports related brand. However, there were differences depending on brand personality, values and how a product matches with the sports property. For example, interviewee one stated:

I think some companies use sport to advertise products and stuff when it has nothing to do with sport but they get famous footballers to advertise for them when really they could have anybody that they wanted to advertise it but obviously the more famous people are usually to do with sport.

The link from this approach to goodwill appears to remain consistent with literature (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999) which places sports and arts sponsorship at lower levels of goodwill generation due to the perceived over commercialisation and sizeable return on investment sponsors may gain. However, the findings, whilst supporting this, also

interestingly show that whilst goodwill may not be evident for non-sport brands, there is an acceptance of the role that sport plays for businesses who are seeking to promote their brand.

The perceptual conflicts appear to arise with the over-use of sport and (apparent saturation that consumers have) the role of sports sponsorship within society, particularly of brands which are not sport related. The solution for practitioners could relate to the presentation of their sponsorship programme in a way in which they actively seek more creative methods to engage the whole spectrum of consumers and not just sports fans. According to Taylor (2008:48) “Unless brands (sponsors) can understand the mindset of the consumer today particularly the young consumer, they are going to miss out”. Within the current sponsorship industry, there is an inward push to find the next way to engage with the consumer in order to give them what they want rather than what brands may think they want (Taylor 2008). From a consumer perspective this current reflection of the industry suggests that traditional shirt sponsorships and logo awareness strategies are switching consumers off the brands, the sport and the concept of the sponsorship prior to any meaningful transfer being facilitated through more proactive and creative leveraging. This is key to progressing sponsorship as a marketing communications tool to general consumer audiences as there is interest and some engagement with promotion methods viewed as being original and therefore more receptive. For example, interviewee six commented that:

The higher the profile the star (like David Beckham) the more it annoys me because he just gets too many deals, and he gets paid to sponsor all sorts of things now, nearly everything you could buy. Whereas, someone like Thierry Henry who is doing Renault, that wouldn't put me off that, I think it is quite a funny advert, so him being in it doesn't annoy me but some do.

Another respondent who was at the opposite end of the age spectrum to interviewee two also made reference to finding brand names which are a clever play on words as more likely to increase their awareness.

Taylor Made is a play of words because the best clothes are tailor-made, like a suit, as opposed to being mass produced. So I suppose with Taylor Made they put the Y in, using an old-fashioned expression for good quality stuff and putting the Taylor Made in. I think that is what it is, I would notice things like that (interviewee 2).

The interesting point within this is that whilst interviewee three has some sporting interest, neither can be considered fanatical, with interviewee six not being a sports fan and having no sporting involvement. So from a general consumer perspective, sponsorship may, if created and packaged innovatively, be effective in particular objectives, for example creating awareness within a generic market.

Key finding two:

Brand personality and transparent brand values are influencers for acceptance of message transfer from sport to sponsor.

The findings from the interviews suggest that the use of a non-sport related brand as a sponsor acted somewhat as an automatic defence mechanism in the formation of attitude and opinion about not only the sponsoring brand but about sports sponsorship as a concept. Whilst Meenaghan (2001a) recognises that sponsorship has a lower defence mechanism to advertising, the findings within this study suggest that consumers are more aware of the process and outcomes of sponsorship, with the gap between the perceptions of advertising not being too dissimilar. A key variable within this is the congruence (between the sponsoring brand the sport), which consumers felt they needed in order to perceive a more worthwhile connection between the brand and the sport. In relation to congruence, interviewee four recognises fit between brands within motor racing and the actual sport, despite not having a high level of involvement in sport, nor an avid interest in motor racing:

With motor racing the images that stick in my mind are of brands that are associated with cars, so the link is that these cars go very fast and so will yours if you have this brand.

This is similar to Speed and Thompson (2000) who found that a positive relationship between degree of fit and respondent interest in the sponsor, attitude towards the sponsor and intention to use the sponsored product. Whilst this study can satisfy the first two of these, the purchase aspect was not as strong. Further, although the brand link is functional, which Gwinner and Eaton (1999) recognise can enhance the image transfer process, the results found that brands and sports (which have no functional or image similarity) were easily identifiable, with particular reference to football, which did not have congruence for the interviewees.

According to interviewee four:

You do get nonsensical ones that's a certainty. I have seen them in football where televisions are advertised for example, directly next to a football pitch, I am not sure what the direct link is there. It's subtly different somehow.

The importance of consumers understanding the match between the sport and the sponsor is imperative if objectives are image-related (Gwinner 1997). This was a key point emerging from the interviews, with a lack of acceptance for brands not related to sport becoming involved with sport through a sponsorship programme. Interviewee six commented that:

Everything is now associated with a brand....they are all sponsored so you have got used to it, but I don't see why they should be when they are not associated with sport, like Tetleys and the Rugby, it seems stupid to me.

The implications of these findings from a practice point of view is that consumers may have an automatic switch-off mechanism in relation to how receptive they are to the sponsoring brand, if they are not associated with sport. The recommendations to overcome this could be to showcase and educate the consumer as to how the brand can contribute to the sport it is sponsoring, whether this is through a cause-related aspect as part of the programme, or through highlighting it's community involvement. The consumer needs an understanding of

how the sport and brand connect. An example of this was from mobile operator 02 who have a sponsorship commitment with England Rugby Union. The core objectives of their strategy was to see the brand in action, to educate consumers about 02 as a brand, but to do this through their connection with Rugby and highlight the value of the sponsorship for the sport. The objectives set were to create value-added memorable experiences which they did through creating an event which 02 could own, brand and publicise to a mass audience (not solely a sport demographic). In order to do this, the core strategy actions 02 implemented were based on the community and family and involved showcasing the England Rugby team (World Cup Winners 2003) and to also showcase 02 technology. The results were impressive with spontaneous awareness of 02 up 11% (from a general consumer point of view) with rugby fans being 9% more likely to consider 02 (European Sponsorship Association (ESA) 2005).

Another example could be to underpin the sponsorship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to cut through "...consumer marketing fatigue" (Kolah 2006:160). Although some CSR partnerships are greeted with cynicism regarding the true rationale behind the partnership, typical attitudes towards CSR include; it is for the public good and therefore no commercial gain is expected, the community is being served by maximising shareholder returns as well as consumer demands and there is an enlightened self interest for brand owners (Kolah 2006).

Within the study findings, there were two factors that contributed to a general heightened sense of goodwill towards brands. Those were brands which were deemed as 'healthy' and therefore conformed to the respondents traditional view of sport in terms of 'being good for you', and those which were cause-related and had charitable connections as an outcome process. In relation to the first area (health-related) the results can be diagrammatically shown

as having a layered effect as the respondents took the ideal of a healthy connection with sport and progressed this from initial attitude to recognition to impact on purchase (See Figure 6.1).

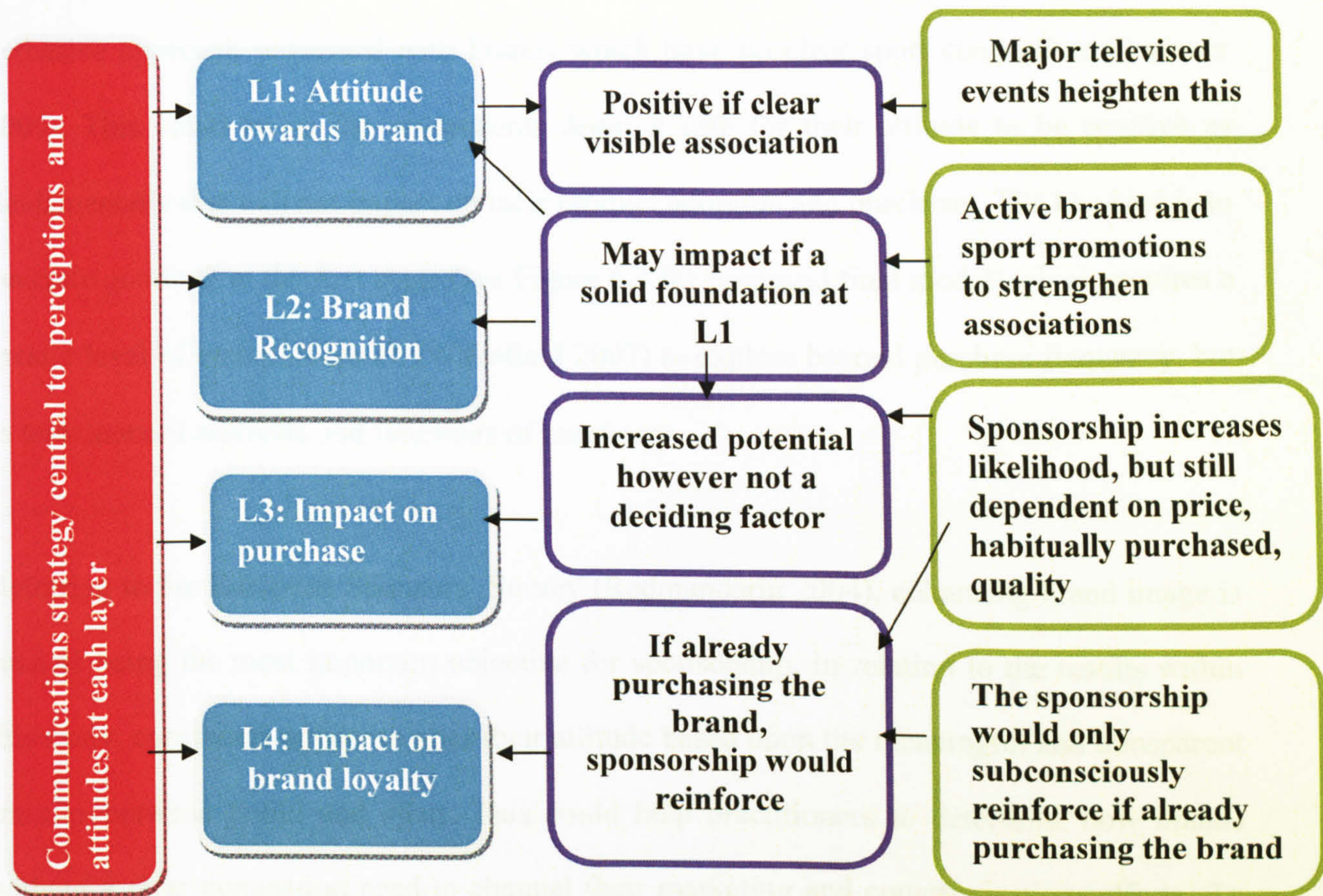


Figure 6.1: Layered effect of a brand with a meaningful transfer

In extracting some of the key layers within this proposed model, the initial attitude was where the majority of the goodwill and positive attitude formation appeared. Interviewee five was very positive in inferring that:

If they are doing it for promoting healthy living then yes I am all for it yes, because the more people who get to know about it and even though they are selling more (i.e. Flora), if people are buying it because they have seen it in the sport or a sports company has generated this then yes it is a good thing.

In addition, interviewees one and two commented:

I think it (sponsorship) is wise because there is the whole thing with health now which is really important (interviewee one).

That (health-related brand) is something I would not object to. I think that is a good idea (interviewee two).

At a fairly basic level, in terms of initial attitude towards a brand, it appears that a brand which is associated with health (therefore functional congruence) does not face the same defensive approach witnessed with brands which have no clear sport connection (Gwinner 2005). This could be as the respondents deem it safe for their attitude to be positive as fundamentally this will not impact on their product adoption and purchase. The key here is to generate goodwill at the first stage (see Figure 6.4 for proposed final model) which requires a greater level of market research (Wakefield 2007) to explore beyond purchase frequency, but to look more at rationale and functions of purchase.

Referring to the European Sponsors' Survey (Redmandarin 2004), enhancing brand image is seen as being the most important objective for sponsorship. In relation to the results within this study, consumers appear to alter their attitude based upon the meaningful and transparent transfer between brand and sport. This could help practitioners to determine how brands without a clear connection need to channel their marketing and communications efforts. To further support this, Kim and Na (2007) found that consumers evaluate a sponsor's product more favourably when there is congruence between the product and the endorser (i.e. athlete, event or team). There is a recognisable tension between international sport and health promotion, with a need for sports organisations to reassess their relations with sponsors and for "...governments to reassess both the scope of existing regulation and the terms of public investment in elite sport" (Collin and MacKenzie 2006:1964). To exemplify this, three of FIFA's official partners are Budweiser beer, McDonalds and Coca-Cola, each paying \$40 million. From the brand's point of view, the World Cup 2002 offered great potential to gain access to a cumulative audience of 28.8 billion across 213 countries, which gives access to a vast amount of real estate for advertising (Collin and MacKenzie 2006:1964). However, whilst elite sport is somewhat dependent upon public investment (i.e. the rebuild of Wembley

stadium) there are calls within literature for governments to look at the broader effects of health promotion conditions to the public funding of sports (Collin and MacKenzie 2006: 1964).

This is consistent with the findings outlined. However, the goodwill does not extend throughout the whole process outlined in figure 6.4, with respondents appearing to reach a threshold of acceptance prior to purchase. A contributing factor to this is whether the brand category was deemed acceptable by the respondents (Wakefield 2007). There was a conflict in opinions regarding this, with some respondents deeming alcohol, tobacco (which have ceased in Formula 1) and fast food brand sponsorships as being unacceptable in sport and did identify a misfit between the role that such brands can have within sport. For example interviewee six indicated that:

If McDonalds is the sponsor, well that is not right at all because if you have got something that you are trying to encourage kids to do (sport) that is healthy, and you have McDonalds, that is just wrong.

The formation of opinions like this from the general public could have greater negative implications on the brand given that consumers appear to be able to see misfits between brand and sport connections. For example, interviewee one also commented that:

You don't want to buy something when they (brand) have already got lots of money and to see sales increases when they will get more money from this.

However, this was not the general consensus in respect of this issue, with a broader moral position being adopted by some respondents. For example, interviewee four believed that:

It is up to the purchaser where the responsibility lies. Are we saying that we are so less able to make a choice about what we buy and we need other people to sort out our buying ethics.....that is just garbage.

There is an argument with children and exposure, e.g. cigarettes in sport, but I am not convinced by those arguments.

The importance of this on the general consumer rather than sports fans is that whilst there is some higher philosophical thinking, there are also lower levels of tolerance which could impact on the brand outside of their sport involvement, with the problems in some cases stemming from their sports sponsorship. The implications for marketers is to carefully consider their corporate social responsibility and demonstrate a higher level of community involvement and benefit to minimise the negative transfer that is evident in some industry categories. For example, to integrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as an underpinning foundation for a sponsorship, particularly if it is high profile, something which brands could use to enhance their corporate reputation, amongst many other objectives (Kolah 2006).

There was a similar pattern in terms of acceptance of messages when there was a charitable connection, again, with the turning point being the final purchase. From an impact point of view, a sports sponsorship which had charitable associations was seen in a more positive light, with greater open mindedness about the relationship.

That would probably make more of an impact on me rather than just the sport (interviewee four).

However, in relation to whether this would influence a purchaser there was a slight possibility indicated (this was more in an acceptance manner of the proposition as opposed to transactional). Interviewee three noted that "This would not sway or impact on me".

Linking this to Crompton's (1996) product adoption process shown in chapter two, the process appears to end at the second stage (interest), following the generation of awareness, hence the proposed model in figure 6.4 which incorporates some of Crompton's (1996) stages but is more detailed. The factors for this emerging from the results are strongly linked to the personality of the brand and also the values which the consumer can attribute meaning to and

which are also transparent. The implications of this for the industry from a general consumer point of view is that whilst the awareness and interest may produce metrics which are acceptable, more creative sponsorships need to be undertaken to actually engage the consumers with the brand and get them interacting with the sponsorship as the catalyst for this (Roberts 2008).

Involved in the process of transferring values from sport to brand and brand to sport, are moderating variables (discussed in chapter three) which play an important role within this, for which degree of similarity of event frequency (Gwinner 1997) were deemed as most relevant for inclusion within the results. Further to this, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) note that the medium and message are the two key components in achieving brand image effects, which differ, dependent upon whether the vehicle is advertising or sponsorship. This will now be discussed given that the variety in forms of mediums within sport to leverage a brand which are increasing with the growth of technology and the advent of digital technologies as communication methods (Church-Sanders 2008).

The most popular vehicle for creating awareness and fostering brand recognition was through the media vehicle of television, mainly due to the subliminal promotion of messages and the frequency that brand names are seen through the 24/7 sport culture that has been created.

I think what makes you recognise logos more is television....they are visually in front of you (interviewee five).

Further, interviewee six noted that:

I think TV, I wouldn't notice as much on the internet or papers....the main focus is TV because you watch it all the time, and you see it more, it's more visual, it's not just listening to it.

Whilst the medium of the television facilitates increased opportunities for the brands to create awareness and get their brand logo noticed, this does not appear to translate into any meaningful connections.

It is something that you notice when you watch it on the television but I wouldn't say that unless I saw it on television it wouldn't go through my mind that I associate something with a certain type of brand or product (interviewee three).

However within this, there was a divide between the actual sponsorship type, with shirt sponsorships being recognised as both the most effective and also least effective method. The conflict came from the predominant nature of the brand logos on the shirts. For example, interviewee three commented:

It would definitely be on a shirt (increased brand recognition).

However interviewee two disagreed:

I don't like the way all the football shirts are plastered with all these silly names on them and I don't like how first class cricket has company names on.

Fundamentally, within this, age was a key factor with the older respondent (who deemed himself a cricket 'purist') appearing to be more negatively impacted by the use of shirt sponsorship. The impact of this from a brand point of view could be detrimental if the brands are seen as being over dominant and too blatant in their promotion, particularly in sports that have complex segmentation structures depending upon the game format (i.e. for cricket, whether one-day, three-day or test match).

Sponsoring brands need to carefully research and plan their approach given that there appears to be a low level of tolerance amongst consumers who perceive that some sponsorship types (i.e. shirt sponsorships) are too invasive on the actual sport being played.

From an industry point of view, the drive through of new technologies, particularly digital media, will embed new methods of promotion across a range of platforms, both traditionally and in terms of new media. Given the media and technologically informed society which is spread across a wide spectrum of ages and lifestyles (Taylor 2008), the engagement of consumers with consumer brand sponsorships in less invasive commercialised leverage, could become more realistic, for example, with the advent of Mobile TV. Malhotra (2008:22) reports that one of the things Mobile TV is driving is subtlety about the way that advertising sponsorship is delivered. “Small mobile screens do not give much real estate for good old-fashioned ad banners” (Malhotra 2008:22). The positive development within mobile TV in relation to this, is that it is driving innovation and thought around how sponsorship can be embedded within the video reels and inside the TV streams because that is the only place in which there is live real estate to deliver advertising. Further, according to Malhotra (2008:22), “It will be the thing that drives the catalyst for new methods of promotion”. The drive for new methods of creative promotion within sponsorship is a current industry recommendation (Roberts 2008; Taylor 2008) which, based on the results presented, is required in order not only to increase basic metrics such as brand recognition amongst general consumers but also to generate higher levels of acceptability and receptivity towards sponsor brands involved in sport.

The need for greater creativity in exploring the potential sponsorship has, is essential not only to engage more positively with consumers, but also to cut through clutter which is evident in some sponsorship markets (Kolah 2006), particularly in shirt sponsorships of football teams and Formula One (Sport Business 2005). Whilst clutter can negatively impact on the visibility of sponsorships, particularly those at a low level, from a consumer perspective, the idea of being overpowered by too many sponsorships is also an issue. The respondents

indicated that they felt, where high profile sports were concerned (and mainly football and cricket related), the sponsorship logos, through mediums including shirts, was:

Too much in your face (interviewee two);

Far too predominant (interviewee five);

Distracting from the sport (interviewee six).

In addition to this, frequency of exposure and level of sponsorship are seen as key tenets in the reinforcement of associations for the consumers. According to Gwinner (2005:173) “...repeated exposures to the event-brand linkage will more firmly establish the association of their respective meanings in the consumers mind”. From the results, the implications appear more directly linked to the over-commercialised high profile sports, such as football which is seasonal, therefore generating mass exposure on a regular basis. The upshot of this is that if consumers have negative associations with the brand simply due to the level of advertisement (advertisement banner) for the sponsorship, they will be less receptive to the brands which are involved within this type of sponsorship. From an industry point of view, if consumers are automatically negative towards a sponsor brand before they have had the opportunity to showcase their involvement and intentions within the sport, from an adoption and purchase point of view, this poses difficulty in altering the mindset of consumers. Referring to football, this approach is commonplace, viewing sponsorship purely for marketing communications purposes rather than for building relationships with its consumers (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). However, there are moves within the football industry to adopt more CRM approaches in order to provide a single view of connecting, understanding and retaining customers through a more tailored, precision approach to marketing (Ayre 2008). In order to do this, market research by the sponsoring brands needs to be systematic and rigorous (Clarke 2003; Wakefield 2007; Ayre 2008) to identify not only what aspects of the sponsorship attracts consumers, but also what turns their attention and interest away from them as a brand.

Key finding three:

Corporate high profile sports properties and prestige brands prompt brand awareness.

However, the conversion of this to prompted recognition, association and purchase is low.

The findings indicate that there was a clear divide between different profiles of sports, with corporate, commercial sports being attributed as being the top apex of where the investment is. There was a clear divide recognised by all respondents between low profile 'grassroots' sports and the commercial, 'glamorised' sports in terms of funds invested in sponsorship not filtering down beyond being a commercial investment. For example, interviewee five comments that:

I don't think every sport gets a fair share. Sponsors tend to lean to football and cricket maybe another. But there are other sports like athletics, tennis, that doesn't get the same backing. It is about their marketing and how much they can generate for themselves.

This was consistent with interviewee three who again recognised a tier of sports as being evident.

I think that at the top of the apex (i.e. football and cricket) you are getting the most and the people at the grass roots are getting nothing and it is not even. I don't think money filters down. The Olympics now, we are crying out to get these kids training now to be Olympians in 2012, but unless that money comes from the top and filters down they have no chance.

The issue here is about promotion, given that there is firm belief within the industry that London 2012 through the LOCOG will be the first Olympic games which will actively convert content into a form in which young consumers will react to it, including through sponsorships, and also into getting them active and participating (Tibbs 2008). However, from a consumer point of view, if they are to be receptive towards sponsorship programmes that are more community focused and CSR related, the sponsorships must be publicised to a level that engenders this reaction from a consumer.

Football was consistently recognised throughout the interviews as being the most highly sponsored sport which linked back to the issue of gaining exposure for the brand, which is accurate in terms of both number and value of sponsorship deals (Sports Marketing Surveys 2004). Further figures include football having a cumulative sponsorship value of \$2,293,888,414; holding the majority share of sports sponsorship expenditure (35%) and having the highest number of deals (188) all in 2005 (Sports Marketing Surveys/TWSM 2006). The impact of this is that the respondents appear to have further reason to form negative attitudes towards the sponsors involved in sports which are high profile and subject to high levels of sponsorship. The attribution of negativity towards sponsorship programmes in sports such as football and cricket was articulated through phrases such as:

It is too much in your face (interviewee two);

There is too much of it in football, it has spoilt the game (interviewee five);

I know all the branding is going on but I try to block it out when I watch sport (interviewee three).

This appeared to have no impact as to whether the respondents would either be receptive towards the sponsorship leverage (i.e. through traditional advertising methods) or whether it would impact upon their intention to consider the brand for purchase. This did not vary amongst the variables of age, gender and household income, nor did it alter with sporting involvement or interest in sport. There was a general consensus that the respondents tried to ignore, or avoid paying attention to the sponsorships, with some respondents feeling that the sponsorships have little or no impact on them. Interviewee two commented:

Most of it is on football....it doesn't have any impact. I just see them stuck on shirts and it spoils the attraction of the shirt.

There was also a divide within high profile sports (EPL and FL), but this was dependent on the interest and loyalty to a football club of the particular respondent. This was recognised

within lower league football and it was increased financial revenue and commercialisation of the EPL which was attributed as a key driver in this process.

At one time the success of teams like Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea was brought on by acquiring young players from teams like us (Oldham Athletic) but money has gone stupid. Money is the root of all evil. I wouldn't say it was as strong as that, but it's had a big impact (interviewee three).

Taking this from a B2B perspective, in the sponsor-sport relationship, the variables of commitment, satisfaction and cooperation have been found to increase the relationship whilst trust was seen as insignificant (Buhler, Heffernan and Hewson 2007). However, whilst this may be strategically acceptable, the implications of this seem rooted with the consumer rather than with the business. The recommendation could therefore be to channel more resources into trying to achieve the same outcome variables with consumers on the back on the sponsorship arrangement. Whilst this may be more suitable to sports fans, or fans with high levels of loyalty (which can increase brand equity, Wakefield 2007), the sheer power that the strategic role sponsorship can have for a vast array of consumer markets needs should not be undervalued (Dolphin 2003).

The profile of both the sport and the brand were viewed as being important to whether the respondents would recognise a brand more within a sponsorship programme. That majority of respondents linked this singularly to the notion of increased exposure means that you are more likely to see the brand logo. For example:

Definitely, just because you see it more or hear about it more...it is football and cricket and that is it, they are on for so long (interviewee six);

Yes, you have your main sports which are shown on TV...other sports which don't get much coverage or are only on Sky, you don't get the opportunity to watch so the main sports are the ones everyone is familiar with (interviewee one);

Yes but it is also about the sports you are interested in (interviewee three).

Similarly for high profile brands, the general consensus was that if you are already aware of the brand, you will be able to associate it more with the associated sport, such as high street brands, brands that are visible daily. However, whilst brands such as Vodafone, Gillette and Natwest were correctly identified within the interviews on a prompted recognition test, smaller brands and sports were attributed with some subconscious connection between the sponsor brand and a sport in general. For example, interviewee six correctly recognised that Gillette was associated with David Beckham, Natwest sponsored first class cricket and Manchester United were sponsored by Vodafone. However, for SPAR, the respondent was aware of a sporting connection, but could not make the correct link. Linking back to literature, Turley and Shannon (2000) noted how consumers cannot process many advertisements when in a captive setting, which is similar to Gwinner's (2005) point on clutter, whereby low level sponsorship will get lost. If consumers are only able to process the higher profile sports and brand as they are more readily made aware of these brands, smaller sports and brands are going to struggle to even generate awareness that they are in the marketplace.

Developing this further, Christensen (2006) comments how there is a low level of involvement of sponsorship message awareness, done in a peripheral way. Therefore for a consumer to translate this from anything other than logo recognition, the presentation of the sponsorship needs to capture the essence of what the consumer will react most positively to. From a practitioner point of view this causes challenges, particularly for the future developments in sponsorship which will be digital media driven (Taylor 2008). For example, from a mobile operator point of view, rights holders will want them to market their services through the best way, which is directly. However, as Wallage (2008:25) points out, "This may be an SMS or an MMS, but we have to consider how many times someone wants to be

contacted by the operator". Additionally to this, from an email marketing point of view, with 85% of all emails being SPAM (Church-Sanders 2008), consumers are becoming increasingly harder to target as marketers may have done previously, through mass marketing campaigns. This can be transferable to any form of sponsorship leverage and connecting with consumers. There is a fine line between suitable promotion to develop positive attitudes and opinions about a brand and possibly to influence purchase, and between a perceived level of over-exposure and dominance of commercial, high profile sports and brands.

From a purchase point of view (one-off transactions, not regularly purchased brands) the rationale for the lack of impact on purchasing included the period of time the respondents had bought their regular brand; other tenets such as price being more important and also the fact of not wanting to be seen to purchase because of a sports sponsorship.

I might know if it's linked to someone but on the other side if I know someone is linked to something and I don't like them it would make me not want to buy it because I think I don't want it to be thought I am buying because they advertise it (interviewee six).

This was consistent within the majority of interviews, whereby there was some element of awareness of the sponsorships occurring but this did not translate into influencing any purchase decisions.

I am aware of a lot of brands in sport but this does not mean to say that I will run out and buy something just because it is a logo that is shoved in front of me, be it in football, cricket or whatever. It really does not affect me in that respect (interviewee five).

From a theoretical point of view this is directly concurrent with current literature which recognises how sponsorship executives often rely on catch-all evaluation methods which do not move beyond metric analysis (CIM 2004). There is an over-reliance upon methods to measure media coverage and communications effect (Masterman 2007). However, the extent

to which this translates longitudinally is unknown, therefore planning to achieve beyond awareness could be difficult to implement.

Further to this, the recommendation would be to perform evaluation that would identify if the medium of promotion was having an adverse effect on purchase behaviour. For example some respondents would purposely not purchase goods for others as a result of the involvement of a sports personality.

I would almost not buy a Gillette razor for my boyfriend because I don't want him to think I am buying that because I want him to be like David Beckham, as I definitely don't (interviewee six).

Moreover, interviewee six indicated that certain sports (as well as sports personalities) would stop them from purchasing, commenting:

On certain things, I would not buy due to the sport, a lot of the other things I just buy because I want to buy it not because of the advertisement.

This was also reinforced with the idea of succumbing to some societal trends, in which interviewee five commented that:

I don't think really in my mind I would (think to purchase because of the connection) because I am not a person that goes along and sort of follows the crowd. I don't consider who the sponsors are, it doesn't bother me.

Taking Hansen's (2005) ELAM in chapter three, based on the findings within this study, the point at which sponsors need to more comprehensively engage is by giving the consumer more detailed showcasing of their products through sport. If the brand is not sport related then they need to highlight the role that the sponsor can play in developing the sport from grass roots up. Evidentially, consumers are aware of the sponsorships occurring and they do have some peripheral processing of this with certain levels of emotional attachment (depending on sporting interest and involvement with a team), and some can engage with creative advertising. The barrier to the final buying intention stage appears to revolve around

the perceived over-commercialisation, exploitation in certain high profile sports and also a lack of education about the brand and their involvement.

6.2 The impact of sports sponsorship programmes on purchase intentions

Key finding four:

Trust in a habitually purchased brand is a key factor as to whether a consumer is more likely to accept a sports sponsorship.

Whilst there were very low levels of purchase preference to brands sponsoring sports, there was an increased trust about the intentions of the sponsorship if a habitually-purchased brand became involved. Key finding four can be separated into two parts as follows:

1. The habitually-purchased brand does not change due to a sports sponsorship, however health-related connections and charitable causes can influence this process.
2. If a habitually-purchased brand is involved in a sport, or became involved in a sport, this would not alter the attitude towards that brand.

KF4(1) The habitually-purchased brand does not change due to a sports sponsorship, however health related connections and charitable causes can influence this process.

It was consistent through the findings for respondents to indicate that a sports sponsorship would not impact upon their loyalty towards a habitually-purchased brand. The role sport plays within the purchase decision-making processes was minimal and categorically secondary in the process:

If I buy anything to wear it is just what fits me, what colour it is. The secondary thought might be, oh, they advertise on football shirts, or something like that (interviewee two).

The impact of sport on purchase decisions was minimal, with respondents indicating that they would not be swayed from their habitually-purchased brand as a result of a sponsorship, particularly through the advertisements:

It wouldn't change my opinion because if it was a brand I had purchased over a number of years, then that means I am happy with that brand (interviewee five).

Whilst the respondents all demonstrated that there would be no impact of the sponsorship on their conscious purchase of habitually-purchased brands, they did indicate that certain factors may, if delivered suitably, influence their interest. However, this was very much in its infancy as a concept and would require in-depth market research to identify the best triggers for this reaction from the consumer. For example:

It's not the main thing that would influence me. I think the price would be the main thing but if they were similar price and there was the sports thing associated with one brand, then maybe I would consider it more, but it is not necessarily going to be the only reason I would change brands (interviewee one).

A key trigger which evoked a varying reaction amongst the respondents was the linking of a healthy brand into the sponsorship which was considered to be not only more acceptable for sponsorship as a concept, but also as something which could potentially impact on purchase. The packaging of this promotion was again highlighted as being core, yet the heightened acceptability towards this type of sponsorship was promising from a practitioner point of view. For example, interviewee five indicated:

Only if it was a brand that was promoting healthy living that is my only contention. If it is promoting other things then I am not influenced one bit.

This links to Gwinner's (2005) notion of functional congruence whereby the consumer needs to see a fit between the brand and the sport. In this instance, the match up of the sport values as being 'healthy' and 'good for you', with the brand (for example, the respondent referred to Flora in this link) has a positive impact on the consumer who is not an avid sports fans, yet

the use of sport within their product adoption has some value. Further to this, interviewee five noted that:

If it was brought to my attention through sport I would go and buy it but only because I would think it was promoting healthy living. I would have to like whatever was being promoted.

There was a similar response with charitable connections for the majority of the respondents, with an increased likelihood to consider the brand associated with a charity event. The Flora London Marathon was again raised as an example by respondents with the event fostering greater goodwill towards the brand. From an industry point of view, the key objective for Flora is to:

...promote the key messages that Flora cares for the family, is fun and is good for health. Flora has sought to fuse its brand with the London Marathon with the key to the relationship being the relevance of the brand to the event in terms of a healthy lifestyle (Clarke 2003: 60).

The consumers recognise this, which has made the Flora and London Marathon partnership one of the most successful in British sport (Bitel 2003). For example:

They are ordinary people who are doing it, not big business men, genuine sort of people, they have one or two professionals but the vast majority are ordinary folk, so I am more positive (interviewee two).

I'd probably have a positive attitude because like the Flora Marathon, most people who do the marathon, unless they are high quality athletes, do it for charities which gives them (Flora) better public view, so I think it's always better when they are not always trying to get everything to earn money, it's better to give back (interviewee one).

Again, the link to CSR within the sponsorship as underpinning factors would help to alter consumer opinions and attitudes (Kolah 2006) if they do not fall into one of the more 'acceptable categories'. From an impact point of view on habitually-purchased brands, the proposed model (Figure 6.2) shows how sports sponsorship has a minimal effect.

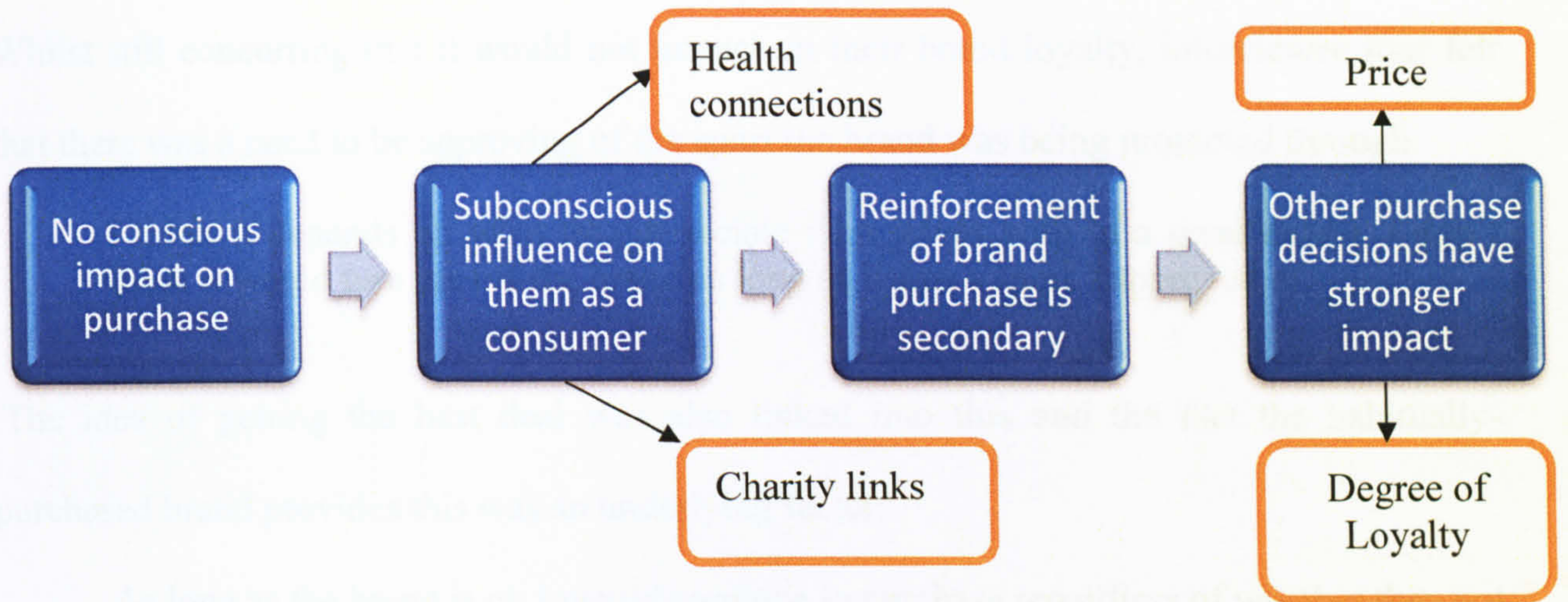


Figure 6.2: Impact on habitually-purchased brands

KF4(2). If a habitually-purchased brand is involved in a sport, or became involved in a sport, this would not alter the attitude towards that brand.

With the respondents demonstrating commitment to their habitually-purchased brands with sports sponsorship having minimal effect, the impact that a trusted brand investing in sports sponsorship would have on them as consumers was explored. The rationale for this was to investigate whether there is the opportunity for brands to involve themselves with sports sponsorship and maintain that established loyalty and therefore ensure that the sponsorship programme has the potential to develop this relationship as opposed to acting simplistically as a metric marketing communications tool to acquire new customers.

All six respondents reported that if their habitually-purchased brands became involved in a sports sponsorship, this would not alter their attitude or opinion of the brand, nor would it alter their loyalty to that brand. In fact, the strength of feeling was that there would be more trust in the actual sponsorship programme.

There are no particular sports I think you shouldn't promote, and I think well, if they are starting it (sponsorship programme), say Marks and Spencer, well, they must have some idea of what they are doing because I shopped there for years myself (interviewee two).

Whilst still concurring that it would not impact on their brand loyalty, interviewee four felt that there was a need to be approving of the sport the brand was being promoted through.

I think it depends on what they associate themselves with to a great extent. I don't think it would turn me off the brand as long as it was a sport I approved of.

The idea of getting the best deal was also linked into this and the fact the habitually-purchased brand provides this was an underlying factor:

As long as the brand is ok I would continue to purchase regardless of whether they got involved or not (interviewee three).

There was more recognition that the impact of the sports sponsorship may act as a subconscious reinforcement of brand loyalty rather than having any direct influence on the product adoption, or purchase decision-making process. This extended to past associations with brands being reinforced through the sport. For example:

Years ago I used to sail and I still to this day buy North Sail products because there is still the connection there with quality and I think this is subconsciously that I do it but I still have the association in there. It's funny but I think that because sport is in there it does reinforce why I purchase the products (interviewee four).

Using this example, although North Sail could be deemed more of a leisure-based product brand, the respondent also inferred that they go through the same process with Jewsons, a non-sport related product brand who was involved in the sport of sailing from a sponsorship point of view. In summarising the findings in relation to this, the following model can be proposed which recognises how important brand trust and the values of the brand are in relation to how consumers embrace sports sponsorship (Figure 6.3).

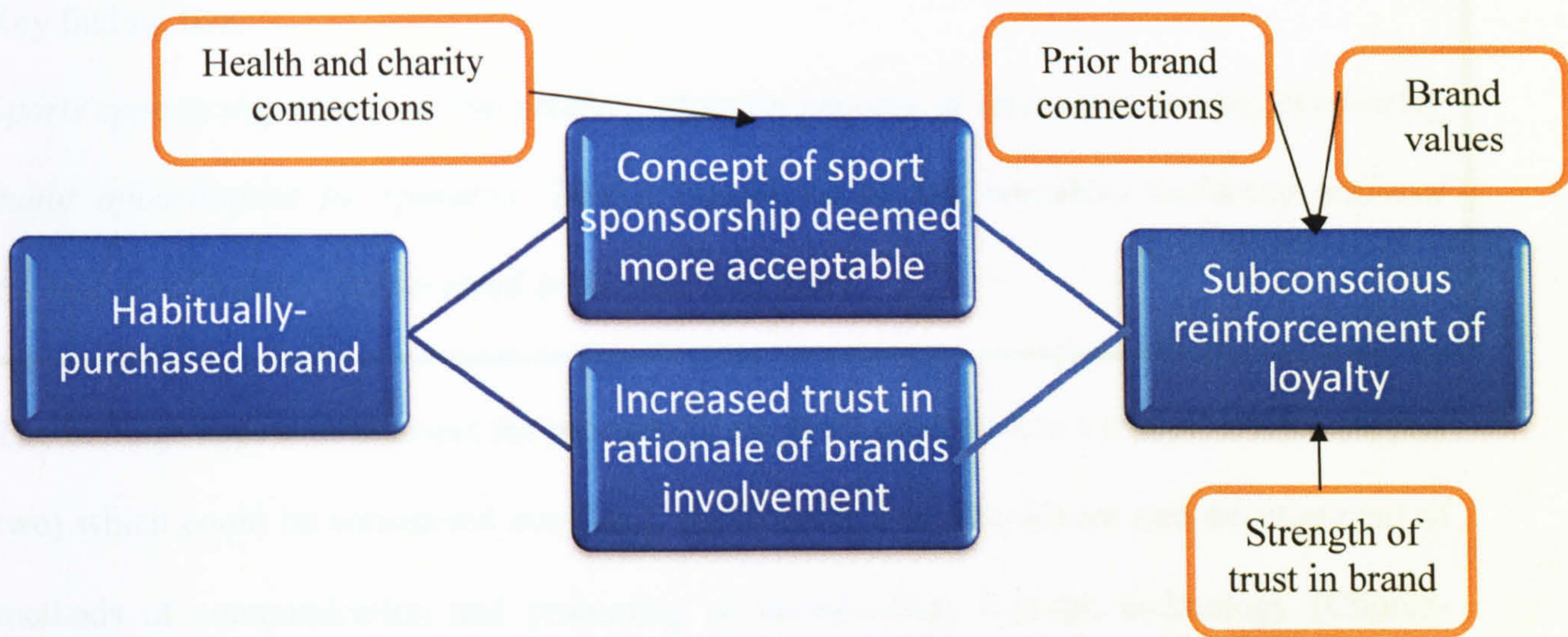


Figure 6.3: Using brand loyalty to engender favourability to sponsorship

The value of sport in reinforcing loyalty could be paramount if you are targeting a consumer group that are at more advanced life cycle stages, who may have brands that they have purchased over a sustained period of time. The use of sports sponsorship in this instance, could (regardless of product category) reinforce that purchase transaction and perhaps encourage the consumer to expand their loyalty throughout a broader range of their product lines. The key would be to carefully execute the media strategy from an exposure point of view to ensure that new customers can be acquired but also to ensure that there is subtlety to engender the loyalty process and not alienate regular purchasers. Ayre (2008) noted that it is important to reward consumers for their contribution and loyalty is paramount in order to continue developing the relationships between the two. In order to do this, a CRM approach which takes a singular view of consumer data would be suitable so that instead of looking at a very broad range of consumer data, you can start to drill down into the data to understand tenets such as level of purchase, regularity of purchase and what is purchased. Further, Ayre (2008) suggests that this will provide greater customer intelligence and also greater integrated inbound and outbound marketing campaigns whilst centralising consumer contact.

Key finding five:

Sports sponsorship intersects the product adoption process at interest to loyalty, presenting major opportunities for sponsors. This is influenced by key variables including national success, local loyalty and personal involvement in sport.

The findings appear to intersect the production adoption process (see Crompton 1996 chapter two) which could be considered out-dated, particularly with the advent and development of methods of communication and promoting of sponsorships through technology (Church-Sanders 2008). Consumers appear to be aware of the sponsorships, with some levels of influence, whether this is through subliminal message acceptance or more direct recognition depending on the functional congruence and fit (Gwinner 2005). However, the conversion of these factors to purchase (non-habitually purchased brands) is low, with more adverse effects evident as opposed to positive brand reactions. The process then appears to re-connect at the loyalty stage in terms of the brand reinforcing the concept of the sponsorship, and also reciprocally, in terms of the sport values reinforcing the purchase, if there is congruence.

The issue of involvement, whether this is in a passive, active, or spectator role should be explored to try and understand where the connection between consumers and sponsor brand is heightened. This would help to identify whether marketers need to promote more aggressively or discreetly to increase the levels of engagement in brand-related education. Congruence between brand and sport has been identified as a factor in whether the respondents are more or less receptive to the sponsorship. McDaniel (1999) recognised that a consumer's involvement contributes to the perception of a good match between sponsor and event. With congruence playing a part within this study, this is of relevance given that consumers are involved with sport regardless of whether they are actively participating, given

that our lives in some way are touched daily by sport whether we know it or not (Kelley and Tian 2004). However, the study's findings appear not to coincide completely with this in that the respondents were more brand savvy to the high profile, high street brands which were recognisable to them anyway, so they already had a basic knowledge of what industry category the brands were in, hence constituting an automatic barrier if they identified a mismatch. McDaniel's (1999) notion could apply to lower level sponsorship at local levels where the brands are not as well known; therefore increased involvement may lead to a greater level of fit. Given the less-commercial nature of these sports, consumers could be educated through the sponsorship on a neutral basis whereby they had no predisposition about the brand so opinions would be formed through how the brand wanted to educate them.

Whilst the majority of work from a consumer behaviour perspective has focused more on recognition and attitudes towards sponsors, little has been done to look at how consumers' experience with sport affects behaviour (Ali *et al* 2006). However, within this, the actual definition of where the experience begins is unknown (Ali *et al* 2006). In the context of this study, this could be in a passive manner, where consumers may be subject to receiving subliminal messages and basic exposure to the sport and brand through a variety of traditional and new media mediums; it could be active involvement, in terms of participating (whether recreationally or more competitively), or it could be as a spectator, with the range varying from occasional to regular and to more committed. Varying degrees of involvement were recognised by the respondents as impacting upon whether a sports sponsorship would impact more than the interest stages (Crompton's product adoption process 1996). The key factors within this included; levels of enjoyment in a sport, interest, loyalty to a sport, popularity of sports property and also the value of the youth market (which will be discussed within the next key finding). For example:

It depends on how much you enjoy something or how passionate you are about it (interviewee six).

If it was something that I had never really heard of or had no interest in then I don't think it would bother me at all, or I wouldn't think twice about staying with my brand (interviewee one).

A consistently emerging issue from the findings is that whilst there is some interest shown, and in many respects that has become a key factor, the conversion of this to proactive transactional consumption remains very low. An aspect which did return higher levels of willingness to consider purchase was local loyalty to a team. There was a conflict however with this, between ages, as the younger respondents appeared more inclined to use this as a sole factor for considering purchase, as oppose to the more senior respondents who did acknowledge local loyalty but this was mediated through previous brand experiences. For example: one football supporter stated:

I buy what I buy because of what I think is best for the money, irrespective of who they are linked with, (my team), it doesn't make any difference (interviewee three).

However:

If you admire somebody or a team you support and you are loyal maybe you would be more susceptible to think that they are going to be a better product because your team is associated with them (interviewee one).

Possibly yes. I can't think consciously that it does but it might do if you think, well I already buy Lurpak, now its sponsoring the Leeds stand, you know it's a local thing. I really want to get behind it, they are sponsoring something I like so I am really going to be encouraged to buy it now because they are supporting the team that I support (interviewee six).

This rationale for willingness to purchase is somewhat of a sub-process to Wakefield's (2007) five steps to affinity transfer which results in commitment to purchase with key steps including exposure to sponsorship through media, attribution of personal benefits, activation and attribution and concrete and distinct brand image translation to brand commitment. The process evidenced within this study is somewhat acceleratory of this when local team loyalty

is concerned. Further to this, the loyalty to a sports team or property was seen as an excuse for purchase which could “Provide a reason for why I bought it” (interviewee six).

Marketers should look beyond such processes and gain accurate data regarding those customers who may go through an affinity process, but also those who have varying rationales for their willingness to purchase, as marketing strategies will differ depending upon this. On a local basis, for sports without the corporate/commercial realms (for example local leagues), there did appear to be a greater willingness to show goodwill to sponsors who were perceived to have a genuine interest in funding and developing the sport:

If something like the Lancashire League Cricket (LLC) is being sponsored by some organisation like Musbry fabrics (who sponsor the LLC), well we have bought things from Musbry before. We know that they are local and we are local to them, so yes we have bought from them in the past (interviewee two).

With this in mind, this was connected to past experience of the company and also an interest in the Lancashire League Cricket:

Because we have bought from them in the past, they are a local organisation, so it does probably help the local ones really, they probably do benefit from it because in the past people like Marsden Building Society sponsored the league (Lancashire League Cricket) and they benefitted from it, ‘oh it is Marsden’s we will go and bank there’. At East Lincs (Cricket Club), they do have Booths sponsor the covers but we quite often shop at Booths anyway (interviewee two).

From extracting these two examples, the same respondent showed more of a positive attitude towards the sponsors from a local point of view, if they were actively contributing to the sport of local league cricket:

If they were genuinely local and doing something for the local cricket, well they have been good enough to put something into local cricket, we will go and support them (interviewee two).

Whilst the loyalty within this study from general consumers does not extend to identification which moves beyond mere exposure (Wakefield 2007), the willingness to embrace local sponsors is encouraging for the brand. Taking the volume of consumption and usage into

consideration (of such local sport leagues), the use of precision marketing would be more relevant to target those consumers who have shown this willingness. Mass marketing on this scale would not work given the frequency and range of exposure. Therefore precision-marketing, which works from a quality customer database would more suitably target the consumers who may have previous purchase experience and provide the opportunity to reward them (Wakefield 2007; Ayre 2008). As evident from the example of O2 and England Rugby, detailed earlier, (ESA 2005), marketers would benefit from giving consumers more experiential opportunities to engage with their sponsorship (Ali *et al* 2006). Further to this, Ali *et al* (2006) indicate that involvement in sponsor activities has a positive impact on sponsors linked purchase intentions, which provides greater opportunities for sponsors to build beyond metrics and look to foster longer-term relationships with its consumers.

Another key factor in influencing a consumer's awareness, attitude and purchase consideration potential was the building of national pride and in particular the success of the nation in sporting events. However, this related more to increasing awareness of brands rather than direct conscious purchase, yet purchase in some instances was affected more on a short term basis rather than anything long-term. Silk and Andrews (2001:191) outline how brands create sporting identities through national cultures:

Sport is mobilised as a major cultural signifier of a nation that can engage national sensibilities, identities, and experiences. As such, sport is used as de-facto cultural shorthand, delineating particular national sentiments.

Whilst the majority of respondents indicated a two-fold impact, to them and the brands involved regarding national success (football and rugby were referred to most commonly unprompted), this was considered to be more of a short-term interest, condensed to the timeframe of the event and as little as a few weeks following the event, and again was attributed mainly to exposure. For example:

I think there is an impact because it is back to exposure isn't it. The World Cup in Rugby (2003) had a huge impact. It was a national celebration. We named an aeroplane after it, Sweet Chariot. I mean, what an opportunity for British Airways, having the height of exposure of the success of the team associated with their airline (interviewee four).

The recognition of increasing awareness of brands around the time of sporting events which involve the national teams/individuals was a common theme, whilst some responses were specified to particular high profile sports like football:

Yes I think you would definitely, yes I would definitely be more aware because football is a thing I watch anyway (interviewee five).

The number of sponsor brands was also acknowledged within this in terms of recognising more than one brand. Interviewee five continued:

I would be more aware if they were promoting half a dozen brands, it's like with 02's involvement. I would be more aware because it is a National thing, they could be more successful in the World Cup so you are bound to be more aware maybe of brands they are associated with because it would never be off the television

This is true of the Olympic Games which, like World Cup football has an extremely high volume of broadcast output, which provides a myriad property with which brands can become involved. For example, for the Beijing Olympics 2008, broadcaster NBC put out 3,600 hours of output across its portfolio of standard broadcast and digital channels (Roberts 2008). From a consumer perspective, "If you watched your television, computer, mobile phone, for 16 hours a day, it would take you 225 days to view all of that output" (Roberts 2008:12). From an audience-reach perspective, this is again accurate, with the Rugby World Cup final 2007 gaining an audience of 33 million, with an average of 260 million (but global reach of 600 million) for the FIFA Football World Cup Final (Wilson-Dunn 2008). With captive audiences, the advertising real estate that major events provide is unparalleled (Clarke 2003: Kolah 2006). However, the planning process before and after the event should also be seen as an opportunity to extend this national identity which appears to transcend to a wider

population than sport fans. From a future perspective and with the advent of new digital media, the preparation process prior to major events such as the Rugby World Cup, FIFA World Cup and the Olympics should be seen as being just as valuable as the event itself.

According to Vronski (2008:14):

When we talk about new media it is not just about games time, a month before and a few weeks later, the preparation process is a festival too. We can engage everybody in this process.

Taking the Olympic Games London 2012 as an example, the need to embrace the whole community, not just sports fans is recognised as being a longitudinal process from the LOCOG; sponsors and consumer perspective:

We are engaging in a fairly ambitious programme of developing social media applications which we think will give us an opportunity to engage with the public and young people over the next 4 years leading up to the games (Balfour 2008:13).

The respondents also indicated that whilst the impact of such major events would be more short term, it was also more likely to affect young people from a purchase point of view, with more senior consumers potentially viewing it more as a longer term effect.

I would probably notice it but it wouldn't inspire me to buy things from it....It would probably affect younger people more because I think younger people are influenced more than older people of our generation (interviewee two).

The issue of the youth market will be discussed within the next key finding, however there appears potential for major events to impact on the broader community from a more longer term perspective.

With older people I don't think it would be a short terms thing. I think they would be influence by it and if it is a product they are promoting, that a lot of the general public like, they may go out and buy it, but it doesn't influence me in that way (interviewee five).

The importance of legacy programmes which extend through communities will be core within this process to maintain longevity of impact from both a brand perspective and in terms of the sport. The recommendation, again, is to embrace digital media technologies within marketing and sponsorship to help provide personal identities for consumers. From a

London 2012 point of view, this is what the Olympic Games will encompass, “The key potential that we see is that digital media gives people, young or old the opportunity to express themselves” (Balfour 2008:13).

From the results, the respondents have demonstrated greater receptivity to sponsors and sponsorship programmes when there are localised benefits to the sport; the brand is local; there is national success; there is functional congruence; their habitually-purchased brands become involved and if there is charitable or health-related connections. Globally, the challenge therefore for non sport related brands engaging in consumer sponsorship, which has national intentions, but international scope, is to try and capture the nationalistic passion rather than to be visible purely as exposure. To do this, brands have started to move away from blanket strategising to more inclusive advertising campaigns which embrace national identity (Silk and Andrews 2001). Additionally, the use of appropriate sporting celebrities as a mechanism of identity within a locality should be carefully considered (Silk and Andrews 2001). Some respondents indicated that they aspired to certain sports people, which could impact on their attitude towards the brand:

I think it is to do with popularity. If a team is popular, or a sporting star, say David Beckham, then you want to aspire to be somebody like him so you are going to copy, you know the way he is what he does, what he buys, so for people who are impressionable, especially when you are growing up, you are more likely to buy (interviewee one).

From an individual sports endorser perspective, sports celebrities have been viewed as role models for many years, with technological advancements in broadcast and interaction aiding this process (Bush, *et al* 2004). The process which underlines this is consumer socialisation which aids how consumers learn through modelling, something which a high profile sports celebrity can engender (Bush *et al* 2004).

To exemplify how a brand can incorporate itself within society as the nations' brand, using patriotism as its catalyst, Danish beer Carlsberg's sponsorship of the England football team can be used. Through a £10 million (plus consumer investment) integrated marketing campaign for Euro 2004, Carlsberg managed to create the feeling that it was wrong to drink any other lager brand when England were playing (Roberts 2006). As a non-sport related brand, Carlsberg have engaged a vast community in both supporting England as a football team and also their brand. A key aspect of this is the manner in which they extend their market reach through creative advertising. For example, part of 2006's £10.5 million budget, was the "Probably" campaign which included "The Old Lions" pub football team, consisting of legendary players such as Bobby and Jack Charlton, Peter Shilton, Stuart Pearce, Peter Reid and manager Sir Bobby Robson (Kolah 2006). The cleverness of the advertisement was that it appealed to a number of different age groupings with World Cup heroes of 1966 as well as players from more recent eras. As a result of their adoption of the England football team, Carlsberg has seen sales rise an impressive 43% in a very static beer market (Kolah 2006). Whilst some consumers may only have their awareness raised through such national sporting events, as shown, building on the passion, emotion and loyalty of sports events (Silk and Andrews 2001; Kolah 2006) for general consumers can be rewarding as well as targeting avid sports fans.

Key finding six:

The conversion of brand awareness to purchase transaction is recognised as being targeted at the youth market given the role of brand culture within society.

The study purposely did not include any respondents under the age of 16 years due to ethical issues and also the sampling strategy adopted which aimed at occupiers of households rather than specific ages, therefore the impact of sports sponsorship on Generation Y (Stevens *et al* 2005) could not be explored. However, the findings did reveal that the younger members (20-24 years, 25-34 years) appeared more comfortable to contemplate purchase and more receptive to the sports sponsorship than the more senior respondents. It was recognised by senior respondents that sports sponsorship programmes (from a purchase point of view) were more targeted at the younger generation:

Within the community here, there are brands associated with even baby and child products that are associated with a football team. Round here its Everton and Liverpool and there are particular brands including pushchairs (interviewee four).

From an industry point of view, there is recognition that young people should be being engaged with brands given the culture within society and also the lucrative market that the youth hold (Bush *et al* 2004; Kolah 2006). According to Taylor (2008:24) "If you are not communicating with people from about five to eight years onwards with consumer brands then you are missing a trick". This is becoming more achievable for brands through gaming platforms (below-the line sponsorship activities), more commonly now third generation consoles such as PSP3 and the Xbox 360. The global games industry is estimated to grow 120% over the next three years from \$25bn (2005) to \$55bn (2009) with the youth market proving highly lucrative (Kolah 2006). Partnerships already exist connecting sport and gaming platforms such as the Adidas and Xbox 360 football-based sponsorship in 2005, which featured Xbox 360 kiosks in Adidas stores globally, with Xbox being involved on the

Adidas FIFA 2006 World Cup mobile portal (Kolah 2006). The core to success was the linkage between sport, lifestyle and video games, which Moore (2006) believes are inextricably linked.

From the respondents' point of view, the notion that had been created by the brands through sponsorship was that it was a very 'must-have' situation for the youth, with the sponsorships somewhat fuelling the brand culture:

I think it has an influence on the younger generation. You only have to see it on the football shirts they are wearing. From five to 13/14 years you can see it in the way they dress. 10-13 year old lads, you can tell in the way they dress so it definitely has an influence on them. I know that for a fact from talking to parents you know that they do, get a bit of ear ache. It's a must have situation (interviewee three).

Extending this on, the family was deemed as a captive audience from a sponsorship point of view, interviewee one commented that:

I think there is pressure yes but it still has to be down to the family to say yes or no, but I think the more and more people who say, 'Oh, I want Wayne Rooney's football', the next kid is going to want them....but I think it has to be controlled by the parents.

This 'must have' ideology was consistent across the respondents, with the volume of exposure and advertising being held responsible for the pressure that is put on families, for example:

Families tend to bow to their kids today and the sports, it's down their throats every day of the week by advertising, television, and they feel that they have to, they are forced into it in a sense (interviewee five).

For particular markets, such as mobile and gaming platforms, the youth market is highly lucrative (Kolah 2006) and this was recognised by respondents in terms of the marketers using very precise target marketing as opposed to a catch-all situation.

The easy example would be ringtones and mobiles, at the moment that has hooked a whole generation of teenagers. Look at how insurance companies target older people.....I think it is getting more and more tightly banded and advertising is being

targeted at age groups and gender groups more specifically as time goes on (interviewee four).

In terms of sponsorship on multi-level platforms, and specifically advertising across these platforms, Wallage (2008:26) encourages that a more tailored approach should be taken by brands to meet varying consumer needs, commenting that: “You need to look at what is appropriate for each (platform) and I still think there are lots of opportunities there to make the most of each one, accompanying each other”

With young people being heavy users of digital media; the recommendation to foster developments through this medium in sports sponsorship appears sound (Roberts 2008). However, there appears to be a lack of compelling strategies which will transform this into engagement, particularly with major events such as the Olympic Games. As already identified, the power and reach that major events have to “...shrink the world” (Wilson-Dunn 2008:4) is undeniable, with sponsors using sport to gain access to local, regional, national and international audiences. However, from a societal perspective, the impact of sports sponsorship on general consumers, particularly with technologies that are used to integrate non-sports fans into sport, may be detrimental to participatory levels, if the ‘at-home’ experience is valued more than the live experience. Future trends show that the total expenditure on sport will grow more slowly than consumer spending as a whole due to deflationary and demographic pressures. For example, Drewer (2006) noted that consumers have doubled their spending on spectator sport since the 1990s but overall attendance at sporting venues has actually fallen. Further, with attendances falling over the last five years, televised sport has shown a dramatic growth in popularity (Wilson-Dunn 2008).

6.3 Proposed model of general consumer awareness, adoption and impact on loyalty of sports sponsorship.

Following the consumer findings presented within chapters five and six and developing models proposed within this chapter, the following has been proposed as a model of general consumer evaluations of sports sponsorship programmes based on the study results. The model is not purely a modified product adoption process (Crompton 1996), nor does it seek to map objectives against metric outcomes. The model aims to provide an overview of the stages the respondents went through from mere exposure, through awareness and interest, product choice and adoption and reinforcement of brand loyalty (see Figure 6.4). Consumers do not have to enter at the first stage and progress through, they could enter at any stage depending on their experiences and attitude.

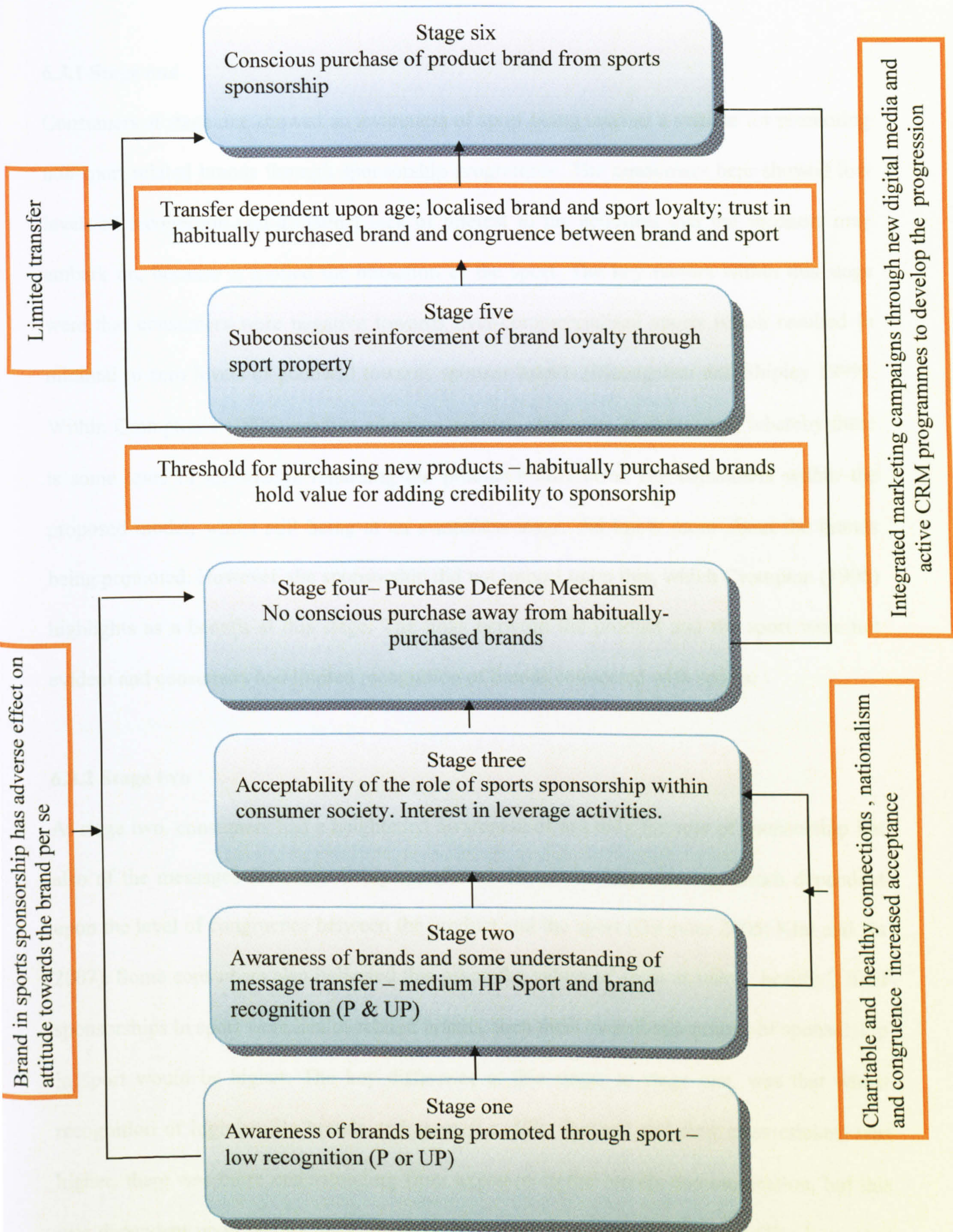


Figure 6.4: Proposed model of general consumer evaluation of sports sponsorship.

6.3.1 Stage one

Consumers at stage one showed an awareness of sport being used as a vehicle for promoting non-sport related brands through sponsorship programme. The consumers here showed low levels of recognition and a distinct lack of interest in the activities that the sponsors may embark on, because it spoiled the attraction of the sport. The key factors within this stage were that consumers were negative towards over-commercialised sports which resulted in minimal to zero levels of goodwill towards sponsor brands (Meengahan and Shipley 1999). Within Crompton's (1996) product adoption process, stage one is awareness, whereby there is some level of knowledge regarding the product's attributes. The consumers within the proposed model, whilst still being at an awareness stage, did know more about the brands being promoted. However, the sponsorship did not impact upon this, which Crompton (1996) highlights as a benefit at this stage. The links between the product and the sport were not evident and consumers had limited recognition of brands connected with sports.

6.3.2 Stage two

At stage two, consumers had a heightened awareness of not only the role of sponsorship but also of the messages that were being transferred. However, this was very much dependent upon the level of congruence between the product and the sport (Gwinner 2005; Kim and Na 2007). Some consumers also indicated that given the values of sport as being 'healthy', if all sponsorships in sport were health-related brands, then their overall acceptance of sponsorship in sport would be higher. The key difference at this stage, to stage one, was that whilst recognition of high profile brands and sport (i.e. EPL football and first class cricket) was higher, there was more understanding from exposure to the brands communication, but this was dependent upon factors highlighted in the model. Crompton (1996) identifies interest at stage two of the product adoption process which relates to the product benefits. Whilst there

is some similarity here with Crompton showing image enhancement as a benefit, the proposed model does not view the knowledge of the products benefits as being central to this stage. Acceptance of the sponsorship was again dependent upon certain factors; therefore acceptability at this stage could not be determined.

6.3.3 Stage three

The progression to stage three was relatively significant, whereby consumers developed their recognition of logos and product awareness into some acceptability of the sports sponsorship mechanism of promotion. However, this was dependent upon the congruence again and also links to charity and national success. At stage three in Crompton's (1996) model, desire is influenced by product trials or sales opportunities which, from these findings, is not the most suitable approach. If consumers are to be engaged in a product beyond interest and accepting their role in sponsorship, they need to experience the brand (Ali *et al* 2006) and be educated about the brand. Corporate social responsibility could be embraced more by brands as a mechanism for underpinning their sponsorship, particularly if they are high profile. This however needs to be done with caution given the cynicism sometimes attached with these approaches (Kolah 2006).

6.3.4 Stage four

At stage four, some consumers reached a threshold of tolerance and this impacted upon their willingness to take the association of the sports sponsorship any further than a certain level of acceptability. Consumers at this stage would not consider any move away from their habitually-purchased brands, and would need to be convinced by a charitable association, although it was seen as being more tolerable for purchase. Additionally, recognition of brands at this stage was seen as being more of a taught element (on the brands behalf), whereby the

brands and sports could be connected (high profile brands and sports) but this was credited not only to mass exposure but also to 'clever marketing'. Whilst Crompton (1996) identifies purchase action as stage five in which the decision to purchase is made, the proposed model recommends that more creative leverage activities need to be incorporated at this stage, potentially through digital new media, which will hold the future for engaging consumers in sponsorships (Taylor 2008). From these findings, consumers appear to show similar feelings towards sports sponsorship as are known for advertising, such as sales-related, direct and intrusive (Meenaghan 2001b). Sports sponsorship therefore needs to reassert itself within marketing communications (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005), but this needs to be done not on a mass communications basis but by following more singular CRM practices (Ayre 2008).

6.3.5. Stage five

A key aspect at stage five was that whilst most consumers reached their purchased consideration threshold at stage four, the idea of habitually-purchased brands becoming involved in sports sponsorship heightened the trust a consumer had in the rationale and the role of the sponsorship, therefore increasing acceptability. Brands need to consider this factor when planning sports sponsorship programmes as it could open up new opportunities to increase sales. However, there was a limited transfer to this stage and beyond this stage with age being a factor in this, as well as loyalty to a sports team and sport. At stage five, Sun *et al's* (2004) ideology of consumption communities could impact whereby spectators (attending events, watching on television and reading sports magazines) and participants (competitive, fitness and nature-related) appear to define the progression of consumers any further in the model. There was a difference between those who had different levels of interest through these communities, particularly the younger consumers with loyalty to a team. Aspiration of an individual was a factor for some consumers and tolerance of particular

sports stars was also important. For example, David Beckham was both admired and loathed, something which would to one extent, turn a consumer against the brand, whilst another respondent would be more interested in products associated with him. At Crompton's (1996) stage five (final stage), reinforcement is identified with hospitality opportunities linked as a benefit. This study did not explore hospitality as a benefit therefore the link cannot be made. However, the proposed model provides an alternative view where the loyalty and conscious purchase are placed.

6.3.6 Stage six

The loyalty experienced within the findings was not loyalty to a product the consumer would purchase as a result of the sponsorship, but more of the brand they habitually purchase, thus reinforcing the sponsorship. Therefore, the final two stages are opposite to Crompton's (1996) model. The consumers who indicated that they would purchase (although this was limited) did so based only on their connections with sport, particularly locally; however this came with reservations before the purchase. This final stage is where the opportunities to develop relationships with consumers can become personalised, tailored and individualised (Wakefield 2007) to target the specific audience who are willing to engage with both sport and brand. Through using CRM practices, there is the opportunity to reward customers (Ayre 2008) which may in turn translate from loyalty to the product they currently invest in, to becoming involved across the brand's platforms. Further, from a brand point of view, it is important they whilst they need to consider the advertisers, they do not alienate the fans and the general public (Rolapp 2008). The proposed model affirms the need for marketers to take a holistic view of the whole process a consumer may go through, not just to target the stages which their objectives relate to, given that a consumer holds a very complex and layered

evaluation of a sports sponsorship which ultimately could make or break the whole brand for them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Practitioner quantitative results

(Phase three)

7.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the sponsorship executives and marketing practitioner's questionnaire data from phase three. It will explore issues relating to sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in terms of objectives and factors influencing strategy decisions, and also to analyse the perception of demographic variances within target markets. In addition to this, sponsorship type-specific elements were explored including property, medium and type, as well as looking at differences as to how specific sports may achieve different objectives. The sample (n=55) was gained from a variety of industry sectors within the sports business, including sponsorship, technology, research, marketing and advertising and athlete management. All respondents were in senior management positions within their organisations, with the majority being managing directors or CEOs.

The research objectives explored at phase three (questionnaire) used descriptive statistics as a means of providing a base for the interviews at phase four which examined the issues in more detail. Phase three aimed to predominantly explore research objective two, to *investigate the use of sport as a medium for sponsorship in relation to achievability of pre-determined commercial objectives*. Within this, factors including profile of brand and sports property were explored as well as demographic variables on planning to provide a basis for comparison to the consumer results presented in chapter five.

Table 43: Industry sectors for practitioner phase three

Area	Percentage	Frequency	Total Frequency
Sponsorship	34.50%	19	55
Technology	3.60%	2	55
Law	3.60%	2	55
Retail	5.50%	3	55
Event Management	3.60%	2	55
Sports Rights Holders	3.60%	2	55
Athlete Management	9.10%	5	55
Public Relations	5.50%	3	55
Research	5.50%	3	55
Finance	3.60%	2	55
TV Production	5.50%	3	55
Other	16.36%	9	55

The sample at phase three (n=55) was spread over a number of different industry categories all related to sports sponsorship in some manner. The highest percentage of respondents (34.50%) were involved directly in sports sponsorship from an agency point of view. The variety included a range of companies which are involved with sponsorship from either a pre-during or post involvement status. The 'other' category (16.36%) included corporate communications, finance, event insurance, strategic planning and management, giant outdoor screen production and broadcasting. It was important to highlight how the sponsorship industry is not confined to just sponsorship agencies, but spans across a wide variety of sectors, which heightens the importance of exploring the practitioner viewpoint, given its wide appeal.

Table 44: Practitioner roles within organisations

Role	Percentage	Frequency	Total Frequency
Managing Director	49.10%	27	55
Business Development	5.50%	3	55
Senior Partner	5.50%	3	55
CEO	20.00%	11	55
Account Manager	7.30%	4	55
Other	12.72%	7	55

The majority of respondents were either the Managing Director (49.10%) or CEO (20.00%) of their respective companies, with the 'other' section (12.72%) consisting of sales managers, consultants, principals, marketing managers, directors of sport, event managers and personality managers.

Table 45: Sports in which the respondents are involved with

Sport	Percentage	Frequency	Total Frequency
Most sports	38.20%	21	55
Football	10.90%	6	55
Golf	5.50%	3	55
Football, rugby, golf, cricket	5.50%	3	55
Motorsport	3.60%	2	55
Other	36.36%	20	55

Most of the respondents (38.20%) worked with properties in 'most sports' which included football, rugby union and league, golf, cricket and motorsports. The second highest return was for respondents who work solely in football (10.90%). In total, 36.36% fit into the 'other' category which included working solely in sports such as sailing, F1, athletics, volleyball, winter Olympic sports, speedway and badminton.

7.1 Influence of sports sponsorship on consumers

Table 46: Influence of sports sponsorship on consumers

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
8	1.80% (1)	5.50% (3)	7.30% (4)	36.40% (20)	49.10% (27)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Q8 - The use of sport within brand promotion can influence a consumer's attitude towards that brand.

Table 46 shows that the majority of respondents either strongly agreed (49.10%) or agreed (36.40%) that brand promotion involving sport can influence a consumer's attitude towards the sponsoring brand. As identified in chapter five, brand promotion which includes sport does influence consumers, but this occurs both positively and negatively and is dependent upon how the sponsorship promotes the property and also whether the sponsorship is deemed exploitable (Meenaghan 2001a). This is in contrast with the consumer results which found that respondents generally indicated that the sponsorships have no impact upon them from a purchase point of view. However, whilst the sponsorship had limited influence on purchase (dependent upon variables including involvement and type of sponsorship) some sports and brands returned high recognition levels (high profile sports and high profile brands), which suggests that consumers (general and fans) are well aware of sponsorship as a platform for brand promotion (Kolah 2006, 2007). The differentiation that practitioners must make is where this influence lies, and how best to nurture this into fitting into their objectives and also to engage with consumers in a manner which encourages them to foster longer terms relationships (Ayre 2008).

Table 47: Influence of sports sponsorship on consumers

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
9	1.80% (1)	5.50% (3)	18.20% (10)	40.00% (22)	34.50% (19)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Q9- The use of sport within brand promotion can alter new product adoption by a consumer

The findings show that the highest percentage of respondents (40.00%) agreed that sports-based brand promotion can impact on new product adoption, with 34.50% strongly agreeing. From a general consumer point of view (which this study adopts) this ideal is somewhat quashed when related to purchase whereby less than 10.00% (combined strongly agree and agree) of consumers would purchase a non-sport brand because of the sports property associated with it. Whilst this was dependent upon factors including fan involvement, type of sponsorship and level of congruence and strategic implications (i.e. CSR linked, health-based, charitable links), there appears a need for practitioners to delve deeper into the issue of involvement in order to fully exploit its full potential within not only a sport market but also a general consumer base. It could be reasonably suggested that the model proposed in chapter six acts as solid outline for general consumers in terms of purchase. A similar model could be designed for fans in order to clearly map out thresholds of tolerance and acceptance to purchase but also to minimise marketing fatigue (Kolah 2006).

Table 48: Influence of sports sponsorship on consumers

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
10	3.60% (2)	3.60% (2)	5.50% (3)	25.50% (14)	61.80% (34)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Q10 - A sports sponsorship increases the recognition of the sponsoring brand amongst consumers.

A high percentage (61.80%) of respondents strongly agreed that sports sponsorship can increase the brand recall and recognition of sponsoring brands. Whilst this is consistent in some sports from the consumer results, this is very much dependent initially on the property and the brand; other factors including creativity of the promotion of the sponsorship and also the perceived rationale of the sponsoring brand's involvement, were factors within generic recognition. The importance for this in line with the practitioner results is that in-depth research will provide practitioners with the knowledge of whether their brand impacts on consumers initially from a recognition point of view, but beyond this more to purchase decisions. This will enable brands to more effectively exploit the sponsorship to advertise issues such as tolerance and attitude towards mechanisms of brand promotion. This will need to detail the whole sponsorship arrangement in terms of, for example, how different types of sponsorship (i.e. field or television) can impact on the type of recall (prompted or unprompted) (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). Therefore, the exact nature of recall within an awareness objective needs to be defined, especially if gauging general consumer awareness, or that of a more exact target market. However, as highlighted in chapter five, there is a need to consider the role sports sponsorship can play in general consumer markets particularly given the ability that sponsorships (particularly creative ones) have to impact both subconsciously and consciously.

7.2. Impact of demographic variables on sponsorship planning

Table 49: Demographics impact on sponsorship planning

Variable	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Age	5.50% (3)	1.80% (1)	12.70% (7)	27.30% (15)	52.70% (29)	55
Gender	5.50% (3)	5.50% (3)	16.40% (9)	34.50% (19)	38.20% (21)	55
Household Income	5.50% (3)	10.90% (6)	36.40% (20)	32.70% (18)	14.50% (8)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Table 49 shows that out of the three demographic variables of gender, age and household income, it was age (52.70%) which represented the highest percentage in relation to impacting on the choice of sports sponsorship to promote a brand. Gender was less highly viewed as being an impacting factor on this decision, with 38.20% strongly agreeing and 34.50% agreeing with this notion. However, respondents demonstrated a neutral opinion with regard to household income impacting upon the sports property chosen to promote a brand through sponsorship. With results in chapter five indicating that gender and age did impact on recognition scores and also levels of goodwill and propensity to purchase, sponsorship practitioners need to recognise not only the inclination to purchase as an outcome factor, but also levels of tolerance towards sports sponsorship which was found to be more of an issue for more senior respondents. In addition to this, gender impacted on certain types of sponsorship, for example personality sponsorships and the idea of over-exposure and exploitation of some personalities in sport.

7.3 Impact of brand and property profile on recognition

Table 50: Profile of brand and property

Profile	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Brand	1.80% (1)	9.10% (15)	27.30% (19)	34.50% (19)	27.30% (15)	55
Property	1.80% (1)	18.20% (10)	27.30% (15)	32.70% (18)	18.20% (10)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The results indicate that for both the profile of the brand and profile of the property, respondents did agree that this will increase recognition. However, this was not convincing from a percentage point of view with 27.30% strongly agreeing that the profile of the brand would increase recognition and 18.20% strongly agreeing with this notion from a property profile perspective. Higher percentages agreed that brand profile impacted more on consumer

recognition (34.50% for brand profile and 32.70% for property profile) with identical percentages for neutral opinions for both (27.30%). The results somewhat contrast with those of the consumers, whereby the highest recognition was returned from the premium properties associated with high-profile brands. However, this was mainly made up of football properties, with low levels of recognition being recorded for rugby union and cricket (medium and low properties). Further to this, the integration of well known 'high-street' brands into sports sponsorship from a consumer point of view, was seen to be a key factor in reinforcing the recognition and validity of the sponsorship (if a habitually-purchased brand). For consumers, this was about repetition of the brand logo through the brand promotion. However, for regular, 'high-street' brands, this was a secondary connection.

Table 51: Impact on sport and brand

Variable	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Sport	1.80% (1)	9.10% (5)	41.80% (23)	36.40% (20)	10.90% (6)	55
Brand	1.80% (1)	3.60% (2)	16.40% (9)	47.30% (26)	30.90% (17)	55

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Table 51 shows that there was felt to be a more positive impact on the brand rather than the sport, with 10.90% strongly agreeing that the sport gains positive benefits, whereas 30.90% strongly agreed that sports sponsorship impacts positively on the brand. When combining the levels of strongly agree and agree, sport represented 47.30%, whilst for the brand this was 78.20%. The highest single percentage response for the opinion regarding benefits to the sport was for respondents to have a neutral opinion (41.80%), which indicates that the shift in outcome benefits appears to be with the brand, whilst the sport may not receive the same amount of either tangible or intangible rewards. This is similar to the consumer responses, whereby the consumers showed consensus (in the interviews) to the brand being the main

benefactor in the relationship which did result in some negativity towards the sponsorship brand due to the exploitation factor.

7.4 Exploring linear relationships amongst variables of commercial objectives not-associated with sport and achievability of the same objectives with sport

To initially explore linear relationships amongst the variables of commercial objectives achieved un-related to sport and objectives achieved using sport within the sponsorship (data obtained through a five point Likert Scale), bivariate correlation was used. The data were checked for skewness and kurtosis and the data set was deemed to be normally distributed; therefore the mean was used. The mean scores per objective are detailed in Table 52.

Table 52: Mean score per commercial objective

Objective	Group	Mean	SD	N
Return on Investment	NS*	4.28	0.968	51
Image Enhancement	NS*	3.83	1.069	51
Media Objectives	NS*	3.87	0.981	51
Direct Revenue	NS*	3.19	0.982	51
Consumer Loyalty	NS*	3.94	0.795	51
New Customer Adoption	NS*	3.91	0.986	51
Philanthropy	NS*	2.65	0.976	49
Return on Investment	S*	3.82	0.910	51
Image Enhancement	S*	4.04	0.894	51
Media Objectives	S*	3.90	0.900	51
Direct Revenue	S*	3.24	0.971	51

Consumer Loyalty	S*	3.71	0.855	51
New Customer Adoption	S*	3.84	1.027	51
Philanthropy	S*	2.88	1.081	49

*NS = Non Sport Achieving Objectives; S = Sports sponsorship Achieving Objectives.

The relationship between each of the named objectives (no association with sport and sports sponsorship) was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong positive correlation between the return on investment (no sport association) and return on investment (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.59$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$); image enhancement (no sport association) and image enhancement (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.56$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$); media objectives (no sport association) and media objectives (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.58$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$); new customer adoption (no sport association) and new customer adoption (sports sponsorship), ($r= 0.65$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$); philanthropy (no sport association) and philanthropy (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.60$, $n=50$, $p<0.01$). A medium positive correlation was evident between the variables of direct revenue (no sport association) and direct revenue (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.45$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$); consumer loyalty (no sport association) and consumer loyalty (sports sponsorship), ($r=0.33$, $n=53$, $p<0.01$).

It is reasonable to suggest from this that there is some relationship between sport achieving certain objectives rather than other forms of promotion, with higher mean scores for image enhancement, media objectives, direct revenue, new customer adoption and philanthropy. It is important to note however that this is based on the results being the perceptions of the practitioners. Therefore whilst the practitioners were spread across various sectors of sports sponsorship to try and gain a more diverse response, further research based on these findings

would need to be carried out in order to firm this finding up more. For example, if the practitioners worked more with sports such as football that do gain more media coverage that will help to achieve media objectives, the results may be favoured towards these types of high profile sports.

The implication of this for practitioners is to consider that whilst sports sponsorship is highly sophisticated (Sims 2005; Kolah 2007), it may not be a catch-all solution for achieving all objectives. The importance of research and rigorous planning is therefore highlighted as being essential if the sponsorship is to fully connect with the desired outcome. This needs to move away from the chairman's whim approach which is currently still taken within some organisations (Sims 2005).

7.5 The effectiveness of different sports in achieving objectives

The analysis at this phase also aimed to examine whether different sports can achieve single or multiple objectives and whether this differs amongst the sports chosen. The sports chosen were identified as being the most popular sports within the UK in 2004 (Mintel 2004). The frequency analysis of the sports chosen and their perceived effectiveness in achieving the commercial objectives named is shown in Table 53.

Table 53: Frequency analysis of different sports effectiveness in obtaining sponsorship objectives

Objective	Sport	Percentage	Missing	N
Return on Investment	Football	60%	6	47
	Rugby Union	34%	6	47
	Tennis	17%	6	47
	Cricket	34%	6	47
	Snooker	19%	6	47
	Formula One	34%	6	47
Image Enhancement	Football	53%	6	47
	Rugby Union	57%	6	47
	Tennis	49%	6	47
	Cricket	36%	6	47
	Snooker	9%	6	47
	Formula One	75%	6	47
Media Objectives	Football	75%	6	47
	Rugby Union	47%	6	47
	Tennis	34%	6	47
	Cricket	47%	6	47
	Snooker	28%	6	47
	Formula One	62%	6	47
Direct Revenue	Football	60%	6	47
	Rugby Union	28%	6	47
	Tennis	15%	6	47
	Cricket	15%	6	47

	Snooker	6%	6	47
	Formula One	30%	6	47
Consumer Loyalty	Football	75%	6	47
	Rugby Union	51%	6	47
	Tennis	21%	6	47
	Cricket	35%	6	47
	Snooker	17%	6	47
	Formula One	37%	6	47
New Customer Adoption	Football	75%	6	47
	Rugby Union	36%	6	47
	Tennis	23%	6	47
	Cricket	36%	6	47
	Snooker	13%	6	47
	Formula One	37%	6	47
Philanthropy	Football	21%	6	47
	Rugby Union	17%	6	47
	Tennis	23%	6	47
	Cricket	17%	6	47
	Snooker	11%	6	47
	Formula One	9%	6	47

n=47

It was expected that 'football' would be selected as being the most effective for some objectives, given that football is recognised as being the most popular sport in the UK (Davies, Veloutsou and Costa 2006) and also the most watched sport in the UK (Sport Business 2007). Further, it has been suggested that sponsoring football increases levels of

exposure in relation to consumer reach, frequency and opportunities for fans to convert their goodwill into “...positive attitudes and then purchase intentions towards the sponsoring brand” (Davies *et al* 2006: 31). However, as previously mentioned, this is not the case with a more generic consumer base whereby 65% indicated that the sponsorship would not influence their purchase. Whilst the respondents were not all dedicated fans, they did include a variety of levels of involvement and therefore it is important to not see sport as being a solution to all marketing and brand communication needs, but to recognise its strengths and also limitations within some markets.

However, it was interesting to note that formula one was viewed as being more effective in achieving ‘Image Enhancement’, whilst tennis was seen as more likely to achieve philanthropic objectives. It would appear evident that some sports more than others have the potential to achieve commercial objectives from sponsorship, yet it is expected that this is dependent upon factors including the strength of the brand, choice of leverage activity (Jalleh *et al* 2002), sport property used and the budget of the sponsoring company.

Table 54: The role of sports sponsorship in achieving objectives and providing a brand with an advantage over other forms of sponsorships outside of sport

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't Know(%)	Total
Achieve objectives	74.50% (41)	10.90% (6)	10.90% (6)	54
Brand advantages	50.90% (28)	21.80% (12)	23.60% (13)	53

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The results show that the majority of respondents (74.50%) indicated that sports sponsorship can achieve commercial objectives more effectively than using another form of promotion. In addition, the highest percentage (50.90%) of respondents believe that, in a parallel situation, a

brand using sports sponsorship would have an advantage over a brand using a non-sport related sponsorship. This is consistent with literature that identifies the popularity of sports sponsorship as a marketing communications medium (Tripodi 2001; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005), which looks set to continue in the future (Sport Business 2007).

Table 55: Most effective medium of promoting sponsorship in sport

Type	Least Effective (%)	Third most effective (%)	Second most effective (%)	Most effective (%)	Total
Team	12.70% (7)	12.70% (7)	14.50% (8)	32.70% (18)	41
League	23.60% (13)	14.50% (8)	10.90% (6)	20.00% (11)	38
Individual	20.00% (11)	12.70% (7)	14.50% (8)	20.00% (11)	38
Event	5.50% (3)	20.00% (11)	20.00% (11)	34.50% (19)	45

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The results were somewhat conflicting with teams (32.70%) and events (34.50%) being identified as the most effective mediums to promoting a brand through a sports sponsorship. Whilst teams and events do account for the highest share within the industry, event sponsorship has a 49% share, with teams accounting for 29% (Kolah 2006). There is a disparity between consumers and practitioners regarding this, with consumer results showing that the perception is for sport's individual (personalities) to hold the majority share, with teams second. Events were perceived as being the third most promoted medium with sport leagues the least selected.

Table 56: Most effective mediums of increasing consumer brand recognition in sports sponsorship

Medium	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Shirt sponsorship	76.40% (42)	20.00% (11)	53
Title sponsorship	80.00% (44)	16.40% (9)	53
Sport personality	43.60% (24)	52.70% (29)	53
Broadcast advertising	56.40% (31)	40.00% (22)	53

N is shown in brackets after the percentage.

The results show that in terms of increasing consumer recognition, shirt sponsorship (76.40%) and title sponsorship (80.00%) were deemed to be the categories which could return higher brand recognition, with sports personalities (43.60%) not being considered as able to aid this process. This was consistent in part with the consumer findings, in which the title sponsorships did return favourable recognition levels. Practitioners should therefore consider the deal term more when they are acquiring a sports property for the brand, depending on the objectives they desire. If they seek to foster longer-term relationships, brands ideally should look to commit to longer term partnerships, which are ownership-based (Sport Business 2005).

However, from a shirt sponsorship perspective, whilst they were identified as being the most prominent in the interviews (phase two), their impact was both encompassing but also irritable for consumers. This again depended upon the profile of property and the brand. For example, Arsenal football club and then sponsor, 02 returned 60% correct recognition. However, from a cricket and rugby union point of view (with teams with similar on-field success at the time of data collection), correct recognition was extremely low. Following this up in the consumer interviews, shirt sponsorships were perceived to be 'everywhere', 'very obvious' and also detrimental in terms of 'ruining the appeal of the shirt'. The idea of logos being emblazoned on shirts was acknowledged by consumers as aiding their recognition but their tolerance of these in context with their enjoyment of the sport was low.

7.6. Exploring relationships between growth in market share, brand value and brand stability within one year and five years of sponsorship inception

The aim of this analysis was to explore whether there were significant associations between market share, market value and brand stability in one year from sponsorship inception and over a period of five years. Table 57 details the mean scores per group (SPSS coding – 0=Yes, 1=No).

Table 57: Mean scores categorised by periods of time

Benefit	Time	Mean	SD	N
Growth in Market Share	1 Year	0.38	0.490	50
Increased Market Value	1 Year	0.50	0.505	50
Brand Stability	1 Year	0.64	0.485	50
None	1 Year	0.94	0.420	50
Growth in Market Share	5 Years	0.20	0.404	50
Increased Market Value	5 Years	0.22	0.418	50
Brand Stability	5 Years	0.32	0.471	50
None	5 Years	1.00	0.350	50

n=50

The data set violated parametric assumptions for one-year growth in market share ($D(51) = 0.40, p < 0.05$), increased market value ($D(51) = 0.34, p < 0.05$), brand stability ($D(51) = 0.42, p < 0.05$), five year growth in market share ($D(51) = 0.49, p < 0.05$), increased market value ($D(51) = 0.48, p < 0.05$) and brand stability, ($D(51) = 0.42, p < 0.05$). Therefore in order to

explore relationships amongst the variables between one year and five years from sponsorship inception, a non-parametric was deemed appropriate.

Using chi-squared analysis, the results indicated that significant associations existed between one year growth in market share and five year increased market value, $\chi^2(1) = 4.41$, $p < 0.05$, one year increased market value and five year growth in market share, $\chi^2(1) = 4.46$, $p < 0.05$, one year increased market value and five years increased market value, $\chi^2(1) = 5.65$, $p < 0.05$ and no potential named benefits in one year and five years from inception, $\chi^2(1) = 55.9$, $p < 0.05$. However, no significant associations were found between one year growth in market share and five year growth in market share, $\chi^2(1) = 0.97$, $p > 0.05$, one year growth in market share and five year brand stability, $\chi^2(1) = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$, one year growth in market value and five year brand stability, $\chi^2(1) = 2.19$, $p > 0.05$, one year brand stability and five year growth in market share, $\chi^2(1) = 0.12$, $p > 0.05$, one year brand stability and five year increased market value, $\chi^2(1) = 0.33$, $p > 0.05$ and one year brand stability and five year brand stability, $\chi^2(1) = 1.32$, $p > 0.05$.

The results indicate that a growth in market share, increased market value and brand stability is more likely to occur as a result of a sports sponsorship over a period of five years from the inception of the sponsorship programme rather than within the first year. It was interesting to note that 61% of respondents indicated that growth in market share was the most likely benefit to a sponsoring company over the first year from inception of the sponsorship. This was similarly the case with a longer term, 82% of respondents indicating that growth in market share was the more likely benefit over a five-year period.

Statistics from the industry show that on a global level, from the top twenty five sponsorship deals, fifteen were between five and ten years in duration, seven were less than five years and

three were over eleven years (Kolah 2006). However from a UK perspective, the same level of confidence is not evident for more medium-based properties opting for shorter three to four year deals rather than five to ten years in duration (Sport Business 2005). From the UK's top 25 deals, 13 were three to four years in duration, five were five year and two were 15 years in duration (not all were disclosed) (Brisport 2005). Whilst the trend globally appears to be for longer term deals, the UK is starting to follow global patterns by engaging in long-term deals which are ten years plus. For example, Emirates Airlines have signed a fifteen year deal with Arsenal football club for naming right and shirt sponsorship for \$178,000,000 (Sport Business 2005). The essence behind this is not only the longevity of the deal but the ownership of the property that Emirates have in the form of the stadium name and also the dominance of the Emirates brand around the stadium. Importantly, the brands are global brands which are committing to longer term deals with properties which are high-profile, rather than this being a trend cross-sector.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discussion of Practitioner qualitative findings

(Phase four)

8.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of the second phase of interviews which were with marketing communications practitioners and sponsorship executives. The sample at this phase consisted of eight, 60 to 90 minute interviews with senior management at either dedicated sponsorship consultancies, or integrated sponsorship departments within broader marketing companies all of whom deal with sports sponsorship, but also in the arts and broadcast. The depth of experience within the sample was vast, with some companies dealing with both high-profile properties across the four categories (teams, leagues, individuals and events) and similar breadth in the brands who are involved in sport. This phase aimed to explore RO3, RO4 and RO5 in terms of more of the practicalities of sports sponsorship and issues within the industry which are current practice, including planning, evaluation and leverage mediums. Table 58 details the sample and code by which each respondent is identified by within this chapter.

Table 58: Marketing Communications practitioners and Sponsorship executives

Respondent	Industry	Level	Location
1	Sport and Technology Research	Managing Director	London
2	Sports sponsorship and communications	Head of Communications	London
3	Commercial Broadcast (Pay TV)	Commercial Director	London
4	Sports Media Relations and Sponsorship Consultancy	Managing Director	London
5	Sports Marketing	Managing Partner	London
6	Sports Sponsorship	Director	London
7	Sports Marketing Research	Director	Surrey
8	Sponsorship	Director	London

Similar to the consumer interviews, the practitioner interview themes were formed by using both findings from the questionnaire and also key literature. This allowed for current issues within the industry to be examined, but it also allowed this study to project into future issues surrounding sports sponsorship programmes. Table 59 shows the key interview findings mapped against key literature to provide a rationale for the emergence of the key findings identified within this chapter.

2010-10-10

In order to address the research objectives for this phase of data collection, the chapter has been divided into the following sections:

8.1. Sponsorship and the role of commercial objectives

8.2. Strategising sponsorship as a marketing communications tool

8.3. Planning, monitoring and evaluating sports sponsorship programmes

8.1. Sponsorship and the role of commercial objectives

Key finding one:

Sports sponsorship has developed into a business platform shifting objectives from brand awareness to more focussed ROI.

The definition of commercial objectives which are desired by sponsorship programmes does return common responses in literature areas, such as to project a corporate or brand image; (Howard & Crompton 1995; Bennett 1999; Meenaghan & Shipley 2001) to produce favourable company publicity; (Bennett 1999) to meet communications objectives such as brand awareness and attitude (Gwinner 1997; Jalleh *et al* 2002; Madrigal *et al* 2005) and to increase sales (Howard & Crompton 1995; Crompton 2004). Sponsorship may be used to achieve these singularly or combined, depending upon the strategy designed and the outcome required. In recent research, Redmandarin (2004) found that enhancing brand image; creating awareness/stability and improving brand credibility were the three most popular objectives sought by sponsorship executives; objectives which will be discussed within this chapter.

Linking this to the results, the findings revealed that there had been a shift in objectives from mass awareness to a more focused and sophisticated approach in recognition of the value that

sponsorship holds as a marketing communications tool, with stronger business objectives now becoming more common place.

People want a commercial return. Some buy awareness from scratch but other more sophisticated sponsors think about how it changes behaviour in terms of shifting services or products. It is much more hard-nosed than perhaps it used to be, its more integrated with other elements, with a lot more understanding of target audiences, their behaviours and influences (interviewee two).

Sponsors are moving away from the issue of simplistic brand name recognition, with the shift aligned more with exploring the purchase intentions of consumers. For example:

In terms of recording a brand, sponsors are opting to move away from a straight 'are you aware of our brand?', now into wanting to know if they have the product on the back of it, so questions are becoming much more targeted now (interviewee one).

This shift away from basic visibility requires sponsors to carefully consider whether their activation activities will motivate consumers to purchase the sponsors product or service (Kolah 2006). To exemplify this interviewee two refers to a deal for which they have implemented with Vodafone (previous sponsor of Manchester United) who sponsor the England cricket team. According to interviewee two, this sponsorship generates:

...a lot of content and usage by their current users as well as helping them acquire new people so they were getting a lot of money from that. People make the direct association.

This is a different scenario to simple brand awareness and visibility which is softer marketing and more concerned with eyeballing the sponsorships to create subliminal influence on choice (interviewee two). From an industry point of view, whilst there has been a shift in objectives (for which it is argued is reflective of the level of sophistication that sponsorship holds), its true potential is still untapped as far as sponsorship executives are concerned (Redmandarin 2004).

Whilst all respondents recognised that solely seeking brand awareness is now somewhat aged as a concept, the common objectives were still rooted in two areas; media and return on investment. Sponsorship in general, as a concept, was not felt to have changed, however the changes within the concept are the key milestones of progress within the use of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool (interviewee one). The major factor within this was the manner in which sponsorship has progressed from being a 'chairman's whim' and 'a hospitality jolly' to the central brand communication platform for a brand. This was seen as a fundamental and much needed development for the industry to progress as a professional set up:

Objectives are becoming more and more clearly defined. I am glad to say the days of sponsorship done on a chairman's whim, while not exactly behind us, have become rarer and rarer...any sponsorship package now has to involve the buy-in of the marketing director, they will want to see a return on investment (interviewee five).

Further to this, interviewee three commented that:

Ninety nine percent are looking for a return on investment. The days of companies just throwing money at events and properties on a chairman's whim are pretty much behind us. It still does happen but generally companies will go into sponsorship because they want a return through sales.

However, similar to the conflict in literature in which some believe that there is a lack of formal objective-setting (Farrelly, Quester and Burton 1997; Chadwick and Thwaites 2004), with others outlining that objectives are readily set (Redmandarin 2004), there was a difference of opinion from the practitioners regarding this. There was still strong feeling regarding the understanding of the use of sponsorship, with one respondent believing that objectives were not clearly defined at all:

It is a grey area, that is one of the problems...the business has been going since 1968. I am still appalled at the lack of real understanding by a lot of companies with regard to what sponsorship all about (interviewee eight).

Further to this, Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) identify that within sponsorship (football in particular), there is a widespread absence of objective-setting which has resulted in "...poorly thought through deals, characterised by impulsive property acquisition" (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005:336). This lacklustre acquisition is recognised by interviewee seven who works within the planning and evaluation aspect of sponsorship from a research point of view who evaluates every aspect of the sponsorship programmes from both the sport and sponsor perspective:

I don't think often sponsors have clear objectives. They only sort of evolve after being in it for one to two years....quite often the objectives are, changed over the period of the sponsorship (interviewee seven).

The key reasons for the lack of depth in objectives setting, according to interviewee eight, were based on measurement of results in relation to what they (sponsors) want to get out of it and also the sponsorship searches that are being done by companies responsible for this. From an ROI perspective, the measurement can be difficult as the common question of "What impact has it had on my sales?" (Interviewee seven) requires consumers to be interviewed who are exposed to the sponsorship, but not exposed to it in a control group setting, something which is common within sponsorship evaluation (Kolah 2006).

Whilst progress has been made, and this has been acknowledged by all respondents, according to interviewee eight;

There is still a long way to go and a lot of improvement needed.

The issue of sponsorship being done on a more ad-hoc basis was referred to by interviewee eight as "...happening more than you think". In citing an example, a deal the interviewee was involved in with a large airline company and Formula 1 revolved around:

The fact that the Vice President of the company loves going to the races. He always finds a way of justifying it but that's not why it was done. He likes the party times and

all the pretty girls, all lovely things that we all like in F1, but there has to be a business reason, so it will still happen (interviewee eight).

This was not seen as primarily revolving around the large multi-national/international companies, but from the significant growth area of medium to smaller businesses whereby, according to interviewee eight:

The chairman is a golfer. You can bet your bottom dollar if he loves golf that's where they'll end up.

This improvement has been witnessed with some sport properties, such as Euro 2008, which has witnessed significant developments in the manner in which it not only produced content; delivered it and made it available, but in the creative manner in which the partnerships were activated and leveraged (Taylor 2008). There are however still developments to be made with the dominance of interactive platforms. Within the future gaming technologies and enhanced digital media opportunities will be presented for sponsors (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008; Church-Sanders 2008) to engage with consumers on a more precision-based, CRM platform (Kolah 2006; Wakefield 2007; Ayre 2008). This suggestion is reasonable given the change in consumers' needs and purchase patterns witnessing a dramatic change, hence the need for companies to look more to customer-orientated marketing such as using CRM systems, in order to gain a competitive advantage (Ko *et al* 2007).

Before discussing the two most mentioned objectives, it is important to understand that trends in objectives were recognised by the respondents with shifts from awareness to more ROI/direct revenue-related objectives. The need for a business return was seen as imperative in terms of placing sponsorship as a business platform which can produce an ROI but also in how it can create value beyond recognition. Interviewee eight believes that in sponsorship, there is now:

...far more emphasis on there being a business return at the end of the year.....there is a lot more interest in measuring sponsorship and that is probably one of the areas that is going to see the biggest change over the next few years.

In moving away from brand awareness, the acknowledgement that sponsorship can deliver beyond this is attracting a wider plethora of companies to invest:

There are still some companies for whom brand awareness is important but a lot of other businesses that traditionally wouldn't have considered sponsorship are starting to realise that sponsorship can be about other things, but it must be measurable. This sees growth away from brand awareness (interviewee eight).

The benefits of a brand moving away from just awareness to building customer relationships can include customer loyalty which can be achieved through collaborative marketing, however,

...there needs to be a genuine rather than contrived fit between the sports property and the brand owner. This relationship must appear both natural and transparent to the fans, consumers, customers and other audiences, otherwise it will damage the credibility of both sports rights holder and sponsor alike (Kolah 2006:135).

If this relationship is strong, the impact on ROI will be positive:

If the choice of sponsorship is a strong one for business and brand objectives and there is a good fit then I think those are the sponsorships that deliver a good return (interviewee two).

Further, Hall (2007) argues that sponsorship is only effective if consumers can make a connection between the sponsoring brand and the programme, for which poor execution can lead to irritation. This was consistent with findings from phases one and two within this study which found that consumers were generally more receptive and fostered heightened goodwill (not necessarily purchase-related) if there was either a perceived functional congruence (Gwinner 2005), or there was a health- related connection or a charitable cause.

The results show that the objectives that can be achieved by sports sponsorship are vast, from simplistic mass brand awareness, to corporate hospitality to image enhancement and also for internal motives such as employee relations. However, whilst a plethora of opportunities was identified, the interviewees focused primarily on media-related objectives and ROI, (with image enhancement receiving notable attention) as being the predominant objectives desired. On a basic level, the ROI is viewed as being statutory from a basic business model of money in, money out sales-related perspective.

Nobody goes into spending any money without trying to ensure that their sales are increased. People sell or market their products to basically increase their sales. I think it's quite difficult to actually get this (interviewee seven).

The difficulties relate, in the main, to the lack of understanding that is still evident within the industry as to the true value and potential of the sales proposition (Kolah 2006) and also the creation of a saleable property (Sims 2005) which requires consumer intelligence and heightened targeting (Ayre 2008). According to Kolah (2006:31):

Simply slapping a logo onto an existing property, without understanding the sales proposition to the market and customer segments that the brand owner wants to target, will end up being a futile exercise which will not deliver a return on investment.

Interviewee five cited an example of this in action from the automotive industry, for whom the first, second and third objectives are to get people into their cars. According to interviewee five, (who has Land Rover as a client), Land Rover has a sponsorship arrangement with rugby union and they can attribute 20% of their sales directly back to the sponsorship:

It is because they've got people down there, got people trying them out and it's exactly the right target market (interviewee five).

Media-related objectives were also identified as being of high importance, mainly from an exposure point of view. This relates back to earlier studies by Lee *et al* (1997) who note that objectives relating to the media were a key priority. However, the perception of media objectives as being about getting exposure to guarantee results (interviewee four) is a slightly

ageing perception given the sophistication of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool. However, it is important to recognise that there are boundaries to media objectives which relate to lack of resemblance and strong relationship with consumers if opting solely for a catch-all media-related objective. For example, interviewee two refers to broadcast sponsorship TV programming as being able to attract a lot of people. However, they feel no affinity with it.

But it does reach a lot of people, whereas a more targeted approach through a combination of well-targeted media relations, sales promotions, point of sale, online marketing, direct marketing, where there has been quite a lot of thought about the target audience – identification and then targeting a very specific proposition does return a higher rate of success (interviewee two).

A key issue in delivering media objectives that was highlighted was the impact that the fragmentation of media has had in not being able to hit the same market by advertising.

If you take the advertising around the Champions League Football it would be a pretty pricey option. But TV advertising has suffered ever since remote controls came in. People just flick over straight away, you just can't engage them (interviewee five).

Whilst all respondents did indicate that there had been a shift in objectives and that some objectives are more common than others, there was an underlying feeling of 'it depends' (on the property and the sponsor), a theme which was consistent not only across sectors but also across topics within the interviews. This is consistent with Walliser (2003) who recognises that variance in objectives is largely dependent upon sponsorship area; activity and sponsor industry and company size. For example, interviewee seven points out that:

If a new company is looking for awareness of a sponsorship, or exposure, like Event Q, which are a new technology company, new to the market-place, sponsorship will be used purely to get the name across.

However, for a more established international brand, this would be different, given the specific market they need to grow in:

If Coca-Cola were sponsoring something they have very clear objectives. They need to interact with families and kids, sort of be a family environment and a good servicer. So I really think it depends on which company and what type of sponsorship they really get into (interviewee seven).

The matching of sponsorship opportunity to the marketing requirements is very much central to the importance placed on numerous objectives which sports sponsorship can achieve. These include brand awareness; B2B opportunities; community involvement; sales incentives; case study development; integration with advertising; personal appearances; merchandising; product sampling; recruitment; hospitality and image transfer (Sims 2005). Hospitality as an objective was seen as important by respondents in terms of the quality time which can be spent with a client in an informal, relaxed manner, something which can work both internally and externally. According to interviewee five:

It is a great place (sports event) to do deals and at the end of the day, it's a great place to make contacts.

In terms of the key reasons for corporate hospitality, Clarke (2003) recognises that improving and building customer relationships and gaining more business, or potential customers, are the two most important. The likelihood of achieving this can increase due to the positive light in which business can be done at events which are perhaps on the world stage, or where tickets are scarce to the general public and interest in the event is high (Clarke 2003). An example of this is the Wimbledon Tennis Championships which boasts 25 marquees and 11 hospitality suites and operates one of the most comprehensive hospitality programmes in world sport (Clarke 2003).

The value of corporate hospitality within sponsorship should therefore be viewed very much as integral to programmes but not only those that have an expendable budget, but also in the worth it has to develop long term relationships rather than singular transactions. This is more important as clients are becoming more demanding and the amount of actual business sealed on the back of hospitality is dwindling (Clarke 2003). The prestige and exclusivity that some events hold (i.e. Wimbledon) may price hospitality out of the equation for some sponsors.

However, although the strategic use of hospitality in sports sponsorship is manifest at global events (i.e. Wimbledon, Olympic Games, Ryder Cup and FIFA World Cup), there is further research needed into whether this impacts on the decision-making process (Amis and Cornwell 2005).

Whilst cross over with arts sponsorship and sport has been recognised from a lifestyle perspective (Kolah 2006), the use of brand awareness in arts sponsorship is perceived to be lower than in sport. However the type of hospitality can achieve this for a brand.

In the arts it is a very prestigious thing to take people to the Royal Opera House for the first night of the latest ballet if you are a high end luxury brand, it fits very well with brand awareness (interviewee five).

The role of hospitality within sponsorship is becoming more predominantly viewed as a recognisable intermediate which highlights the value it has beyond simple client entertainment whereby the outcome may be minimal beyond gratitude for investment.

According to interviewee one:

We are seeing hospitality coming into a medium in its own right and not just shoved on the end of the sponsorship.

The upshot of this is that if hospitality is to be incorporated as a purposeful strategic element to the sponsorship, given the cost implications it has, the role of a planning process which covers all aspects of the proposed deal needs to be drafted out prior to any discussions. This could take the form of multi-dimensional planning (Sims 2005), which could be used to move away from targeting individual companies to become sponsors and more to trying to gain some synergy between a variety of companies, something Sims (2005:43) terms a "...strategic alliance concept". To achieve this, the move away from the notion of the 'chairman's whim' would need to be evident across the whole industry given that it relies on communication across like-minded companies who strategically plan.

Companies will be more receptive to sponsorship opportunities that demonstrate how they might improve their bottom line. Bringing like-minded companies to help develop new business opportunities should gain their interest (Sims 2005:45).

Extending hospitality from external purposes with clients, another key developing area is the internal incentivisation of staff which can reap the benefits of having a fully-motivated workforce to ensure the internal operations of the company are maximised (Clarke 2003; Kolah 2006). However the use of corporate hospitality to reward staff is the least most important reason for opting for this route (Clarke 2003), which may be damaging if this becomes transparent to a workforce which may feel discontent towards their employer prior to a small gesture of reward which has longer-term business goals. The hospitality integrated into the sponsorship in this manner may only serve to increase awareness of a brand internally from the sponsoring brand, as a means of generating goodwill from within, prior to the externalisation of the programme.

In citing an example of this, interviewee five referred to a current deal just brokered by the interviewee with Clydesdale Bank who sponsored the Scottish athletics team for the Commonwealth Games (Manchester 2004), which was their biggest move into sponsorship.

Their objectives were very much about raising awareness and motivating staff. I think it's a very good sponsorship for them. They are a Scottish bank, make no mistake, and it is the Scottish team so it's been very well received as actually supporting sport in Scotland which it really needs right now (interviewee five).

Whilst this links into the CSR point within the next key finding, the impact on the employees of Clydesdale Bank from the sponsorship were significant, with 96% internal awareness by staff of the sponsorship with the Scottish team, which is a phenomenal recognition from an internal point of view.

I don't know what will happen after the games start because 96% awareness is the highest you can get because a lot of people are very disengaged from the business.

They may be on the books but they are so far removed that you'll never reach them (interviewee five).

This, in turn, can help employees identify more closely with their company "...by following the fortunes of its sponsorships. They can also attract new employees who feel comfortable in a company that sponsors a sport in which they are interested" (Clarke 2003:48). However, despite numerous objectives that extend beyond a pure financial measure, the importance of sponsorship programmes delivering a return on investment (ROI) should not be underestimated, as many view the capability sponsorship has to maximise delivering a ROI as being a core component of its use (Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007).

Key finding two:

Sports sponsorship needs to embrace innovation across its delivery platforms in order to connect and engage with consumers of all demographic groupings.

From a developing trend point of view, the use of CSR (which runs parallel with sports sponsorship) is starting to drive the increasing use of cause-related marketing and sport (Kolah 2006). In sport, this is being done at the grassroots level and is working effectively for non-sports product brands, which is important given the negativity already identified in chapter six towards brands which are unrelated to sport. For example, within rugby union, there is the Powergen Cup sponsorship. However, Powergen are involved in a lot of community based initiatives which ties into their CSR programme, something on which a lot of companies are now modelling their sponsorship programmes (interviewee six). According to interviewee six:

If a company goes in at the top level and just buys media, and some hospitality its not seen as being that credible. If they are right down at the bottom level, helping the kids out in rugby, or any other sport, or whatever form of support it is, if they are at the grass roots level, then they are seen as being a more credible sponsor of the sport.

Further to this, from a fiscal investment point of view, the translation of high-level investment into goodwill was something which was viewed as being achievable through a more CSR/grassroots approach. Interviewee eight refers to this, by commenting:

...you can get a lot of brownie points from your market if you say, 'well ok, we are putting a million in there, why don't we then put a programme into the grass roots level of the sport to help the youngsters coming to the sport so that people can see that we are not just milking it at the top end but actually helping young people on their way.

This has crossover with the consumer results in chapters five and six which identified a general notion of needing to 'give something back' from the sponsorships rather than to enhance the profitability of already very wealthy sports properties and brands. This becomes of greater relevance and importance for general consumer groups rather than fanatical sports fans who have an increased loyalty to their sport and associated brands through identification (Wakefield 2007). As identified in chapter six, regardless of whether a consumer is involved with sport or not, the impact on their attitude towards the brand sponsoring sport can be negative, based solely on the fact that they have used sport as the means of promoting their brand through a sponsorship. The need for more CSR and cause-related platforms can be easily justified given that there is a shift to direct revenue which may need to be disguised through community and societal involvement rather than bold and aggressive sponsorship sales techniques (Kolah 2006). A key motivation behind the use of CSR activities, according to the London Benchmark Group (2006:78) is:

...the knowledge that community interventions, employees, customers and suppliers can have direct benefits, through increased profitability, stronger company image, reduced costs, better employee morale and improved customer loyalty.

With more businesses now viewing societal improvement and social inclusion as important issues not only for the community but business (Kolah 2006), sponsorship executives could strongly benefit from taking this approach as a basis to improve attitudes towards them as a brand as a precursor to achieve their more sales-related objectives.

There has been not only a shift in objectives but also in the manner in which sponsorship is moving away from a repetitive roll-out of brand logos through traditional media platforms, to now striving to be creative and produce a sponsorship which will stand out.

The sponsorship is now a business platform. It is not just about media and media buying, or brand awareness. It's got to interact and do something really creative. Everyone wants to do something that's unique, that's bespoke, something no-one has done before (interviewee six).

This links to the consumer findings that appeared to identify more with the sponsorship programmes which were 'interesting', 'humorous' and 'clever'. Whilst this is recognised as something which from a consumer point of view could have value, it is also recognised as something which needs to be invested in more heavily and not purely from an increased financial investment (Taylor 2008). Whilst sponsorship is a highly popular corporate marketing communications tool (Meenaghan 2005), the recommendations from the study findings concur with Chadwick and Thwaites (2005:336) who argue that "...at a time when other forms of marketing communications are developing, it is imperative that sponsorship reasserts itself". An issue within this was the perception that some sponsorship executives within the industry view sponsorship very much as a cheap replacement for advertising, without any real rationale (interviewee two). The impact of this on consumer buying behaviour becomes negative, whereby it:

...quickly becomes wallpaper. People blank it out and it is not relevant to them so they dismiss it (interviewee two).

Innovation, effective targeting and understanding of the consumer and delivering sponsorships which can really engage with all consumers are all requirements within the industry in order to maximise the platform sponsorship provides (Sims 2005; Ayre 2008; Johnson 2008; Taylor 2008). The manner in which this can be done is through the new media and digital platforms and through embracing technology, and also in the approach taken to

find unique and engaging ways to connect with consumers, whether they are fans or general consumers (interviewee one). An example of this is provided by telecommunications company Orange whom launched 'Frank TV', a video diary involving Chelsea and England football personality Frank Lampard who filmed behind the scenes clips on his mobile which could be viewed by Orange customers (Wallage 2008). Initially, the Frank Lampard sponsorship was PR as it was concerned with getting into press to showcase Orange's other services. The idea of using video diaries was to get more people using video on Orange. According to Wallage (2008:20) "It worked really well. We were a little concerned about the quality of the clips, but with editing from a professional outfit we ended up with some real quality clips".

Innovative sponsorships such as these can really start to connect and engage with consumers from a vast array of backgrounds and communities beyond brand awareness and more to influencing a brand-consumer relationship which can stand the test of time much better than simplistic ad-banner mechanisms which are often tiring to consumers who suffer from marketing fatigue (Kolah 2006). The youth market is again core to starting this process off at a younger age in order to try and gain some consistency and rapport with consumer and brand. Remaining with the Frank TV example, Taylor (2008:23) believes that this is highly successful and an example of good practice.

They do it through things like Frank TV that is viral, it is brilliant, and it is original. You have to engage with youth as a major sponsor or brand or you are lost.

However, the important factor for practitioners is really to explore the platforms that they have already got established rather than looking to multi-platform offerings which may lose some meaning in translation. For example, Wallage (2008:26) points out that:

Orange made the mistake when first looking at convergence, to say well, let's pump it all out across all platforms, it doesn't work. You need to look at what is most

appropriate for each and I think there are still lots of opportunities there to make the most of each one, accompanying each other.

8.2. Strategising sponsorship as a marketing communications tool

Key finding three:

Sports sponsorship can work independently, depending on brand and strategy factors; however it is recommended that an integrated approach is adopted within planning.

With sports sponsorship being the most popular form of sponsorship, with vast amounts of financial investment (Kolah 2006), it was important to see whether sports sponsorship can work singularly (as a distinct competence) or whether there was a need to treat it as equal to other marketing communications tools. With some sponsorship executives questioning its cost effectiveness (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001), clarity on the placement of sponsorship within the marketing function as either a sole function, or an integrated element could contribute to a greater maximisation of its potential within specific target markets. The results, on the whole, conflict with some thoughts presented in literature which identifies that there is a lack of congruence in sponsorship with wider communications efforts in which elements of the communications mix are viewed as separate entities as opposed to integrated communication strategies (Masterman 2007). However, as this key finding will present, the issue of integration versus singularity is more complex than merely combining promotional elements.

An initial theme was for brands to question whether sponsorship was seen as being 'better' than advertising and vice versa, rather than to view them as elements which could work well together:

People often say “which is better, advertising or sponsorship?” Well, neither is better, it depends entirely on what you want to do. You should always integrate both activities with themselves within the whole discipline.....sponsorship and advertising can work hand in hand (interviewee four).

Whilst Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) state that sponsorship distinguishes itself from advertising in that it has perceived benefit for society and related goodwill from the sponsor investment, this is somewhat mixed, in reality, from both consumers and practitioners. The variance in practitioners response is dependent upon numerous factors, including sponsor category, sport, leverage activities and also the level of creativity in the programme design. This greater level of depth delves into a chasm which requires strategy at every level of planning which casts a very general and basic overview on some marketing theory. For example, Smith & Taylor (2002) believe an integrated approach is the current trend which is required as being reflective of the need to meet consumer perceptions and requirements (Smith *et al* 1999). However, this begs the question as to whether the current literature is reflective of the practicalities of the industry, especially given the forces of change which are set to influence brand owners and sports right holders – globalisation, behaviour, permission and technology (Kolah 2006). Whilst these catalysts are already in existence, their importance in shaping the future of sponsorship should be recognised as fundamental and will require communication and marketing activities to be frequently monitored (Kolah 2006). From a fiscal point of view, in the past there was a trend amongst brand owners to discount sponsorship value by as much as 70% of advertising value. However, currently that is not the case, with the value being similar if not greater for sponsorship (Geach 2006).

Whilst sponsorship and advertising were recognised by interviewees as being connected, they were by no means the two elements on which a successful sponsorship programme relied on. The integration required strategy across the whole marketing campaign. According to interviewee five:

Sports sponsorship cannot stand by itself. It has to be integrated into the marketing campaigns, advertisement and PR function, everything. It's all got to be tied into each other because it will not stand alone. That's what we say, it has to be part of a package marketing campaigns.

This is consistent with the views of Fill (2005) who argues that in a stand-alone capacity, sponsorship will not work. However, there is an acknowledged confusion regarding the true meaning of an IMC programme. Extending this, Erdogan & Kitchen (1998:369) suggest that misinterpretation can be attributed to the exposure through broadcast coverage that sponsored events receive, which leads to sponsorship being considered "...another form of advertising – not promotion – as if advertising is not a form of promotion".

There was thought from the respondents that sponsorship could work alone. However, this was very much dependent upon the strength of the sponsorship, the property, the objectives and the brand:

It can work on its own but it would have to be very strong all on its own, but I think that there is any point having all this sponsorship and doing well with it if you are not going to promote it, use it in your advertising or other campaigns (interviewee five).

An integrated approach was referred to as being ideal by the majority of respondents, although this was seen to vary. However, (more importantly from an industry point of view), there is a lack of understanding as to the full benefits that sponsorship can achieve, with some treating it merely as an add on component of the promotional mix:

I have been astonished by the lack of understanding of sponsorship by big organisations.....they know they should be involved in sports sponsorship and have got so much to spend but don't really understand how its working and still treat it as "oh and there is sponsoring, I suppose we better do something. The successful ones are those who integrate it (interviewee eight).

White (2007) believes that whilst there are exceptions which can achieve marketing objectives through sponsorship on its own, gaining an ROO is best done within an integrated programme. Earlier work by Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) suggest that the effectiveness of

outcome is reliant upon the degree to which the sponsorship is supported by advertising and promotion that leverage the rights. In itself, this is rather simplistic given the opportunities for above and below line activation now in operation within the industry, which will become more sophisticated with increased new media and digital avenues (Kolah 2006). However, to integrate this on a practical basis will require further research if sponsorship executives are to see the value of IMC, given that there is little empirical evidence to show to what extent exploitation is necessary (Masterman 2007).

Further to this, the size of the budget in connection with the sponsored property was highlighted as being a factor for consideration as to whether sponsorship could achieve objectives as a sole element. According to interviewee three:

It depends on the property. Someone that has a small budget and has chosen to sponsor someone to make a name for themselves, i.e. brand awareness, get their name out there when they are unknown, that may be their only activity and they are throwing all their eggs in one basket. That may or may not work for them.

However, whilst this was seen as having some potential for a sponsor who fits into this category, the actual logistics of this occurring were more aligned within a mix, as interviewee three pointed out:

Some companies do that but generally no, it is part of the media mix so it will include print advertisement, TV advertisement and direct advertisement, all those types of media. It is just one of the options.

The acceptance that sponsorship alone could work appeared at very superficial level, more related to smaller brands and properties which may not have the budget or access to sponsorship agencies to gain the relevant knowledge and reach to fully integrate their efforts beyond the sponsorship acquisition.

The complexity of marketing strategies increased with the size of the brand, the combination of not only marketing communications elements but also the synthesis of internal and

external efforts being seen to be vital to a well planned campaign. Interviewee two (who has international blue chip companies amongst his client list as well as smaller brands), commented:

If you are a large brand like Coca Cola, it is much more complex and works in tandem with other marketing disciplines. It is integrated into a carefully planned marketing campaign throughout the year which ties in with certain internal events or internal milestones, as well as linking back in with internal marketing.

Additionally, the use of multiple channels and different disciplines to reach a variety of audiences with diverse messages was seen as being more of a gold standard approach to adopt.

The best brands do everything in an integrated fashion so you don't find many big sponsors of sports who aren't also big advertisers, who don't also do the whole lot of the marketing mix, so trying to isolate whether it was their advertising campaign or the fact that they'd sponsored a sport or the point of sale campaign they've got or the direct mail campaign – it's very hard to do (interviewee two).

However, whilst large brands may be at more of a natural advantage to adopt fully IMC marketing campaigns, this does not eradicate the need for strategic planning at every level of sponsorships programmes. This is regardless to whether the investment is small or large or the company is local, national or international (Sims 2005).

Whilst this may be the case, if a sponsor wishes to project to a mass audience, using an international 'super' property such as the Olympic Games, the costs of leverage can spiral out of control given the forces of change (Kolah 2006), in particular the impact of technology. For example, in response to whether sponsorship can meet objectives on its own, interviewee seven commented that:

I do think it depends on the sponsorship. I do think that there are some sponsorships that can achieve the objectives but I do think that you have to combine all the other disciplines.

Having worked with international blue chip companies which sponsor major events, interviewee seven referred to the Olympic Games as an example, given the fact it is a clean venue event:

People buy the sponsorship for the honour of putting those rings on their product. Then you've got to spend double or treble the amount of money leveraging it. So I think that in general, sponsorship needs to be integrated with other disciplines whether it's PR, hospitality or traditional advertising.

With the sponsorship industry overtaking advertising from an investment perspective (Kolah 2006), the prominence of TV advertising in particular has seen a decline due to technology, which impacts on the need to integrate a marketing programme to fully maximise the avenues available to meet an ever demanding consumer-base.

You know if you have got Sky or anything like that and you are in the middle of Coronation Street and the adverts come on you flip over to the football and Sky and have a look. In the old days you had no real choice, just terrestrial TV (interviewee seven).

The outcome of this is that in order to deliver a ROO or ROI, sponsorship as a key brand communication platform needs to not only be creative and unique, but it needs to develop a trust with consumers which will ensure that they will value the sponsorship programme beyond a sales pitch which was found within the consumer findings (chapter five). Consumers are now extremely sponsorship literate (Kolah 2007), therefore, certain sponsorships, i.e. broadcast, have high cut-through potential given the low degree of clutter with there being fewer sponsorships than commercials (Hall 2007). Whilst clutter within sports sponsorship may be evident (Dolphin 2003; Gwinner 2005), lessons can be learnt cross-sector to determine the most effective manner in which to tap into the literacy that consumers have about sponsorships and more importantly translate this into a meaningful connection. Further:

Sponsorship as a collaborative marketing platform can create such as climate of trust and confidence with the audience and so establish an environment where the sales of sponsors product or services is more likely to take place than not (Kolah 2006:36).

The importance of achieving this, according to Kolah (2006:36) is paramount to achieving a truer ROI:

If it can achieve this, then sponsorship will have earned its place in modern brand communications and marketing by providing the brand owner with a return on its investment.

From a commercial objectives angle, the integration of marketing communications tools was seen to vary depending on this, although the underlying theme was still to produce a totally integrated approach, given the need to exploit the sponsorship to maximise ROI and sales.

For example, interviewee five believes that:

....marketing sits under sport. It (sponsorship as one element) depends on what your objectives are. You can say yes, if the only objective was to get media coverage then I think you can say 100% yes.

In citing an example of a client with whom they have worked with (B&Q and Ellen McArthur), the media coverage gained actually outstripped the sponsorship. However, the profile of the brand and property were key components of this:

I firmly believe you have got to exploit it. It (sponsorship) will deliver media coverage but it never really gets into the grain of it. Only very rarely it works on tangible benefits for your brand, it won't necessarily directly drive sales, it can, but really it is just a link to then really market and get standout (interviewee five).

In using the B&Q sponsorship of Ellen McArthur's solo round the world record bid as an example, the media coverage was immense, supplying B&Q with fifty plus hours of coverage in the UK alone, reaching over 100,000,000 million viewers worldwide (OC Group 2007). Further to this, new media wise, there were 70,000,000 pages viewed during the world record attempt; 3.2 million unique visitors on the site during the attempt; 700,000 user sessions on the last day and 70,000 emails sent to Ellen McArthur (OC Group 2007). Whilst B&Q had defined objectives beyond media coverage, the media return outshone the achievement of the other objectives, exploiting numerous marketing and media opportunities and projected the value that sponsorship has to an audience who may not have been aware of the potential (Marketing Week 2005).

From a brand point of view, the use of an integrated approach can also be dependent upon the type of product, for example, if you are trying to do a large-scale new product launch.

I think it is very important to have a whole mix of different tools for your brand to reach people. Sponsorship may not particularly reach everyone, because it is specific to a sport or a consumer activity.....it's obviously not hitting everyone. So the wider mix obviously ticks other people's boxes and the people you are trying to get to (interviewee four).

A key aspect within this comes down to performing research (Sims 2005) which tells you who and where the audience are, as well as which platforms to activate the sponsorship across. If sponsorships are not thoroughly researched and planned, given their inflated costs, their effectiveness will be questioned as investment will not provide either an ROO or ROI (Kolah 2007). In order to add value beyond a sale, three key components need to be explored which require creativity and innovation to be delivered to where it matters the most, those being; to enrich the brand value proposition, and to extend the brand experience and finally to enhance the customer benefits delivered by the product/service (Kolah 2007).

Whilst the suggestion within literature that a fully integrated communications programme is needed in order to examine sponsorship's potential within the promotional mix (Erdogan & Kitchen 1998; Smith & Taylor 2002; Fill 2005), the reality of this is somewhat dependent upon a variety of internal and external planning factors. Further to this at a macro-level, Holm (2006) offers three factors which have impacted upon and indeed altered the conditions for IMC, those being; the deregulation of markets, the globalisation of the economy and the individualisation of the consumption, all of which are underlined by the ascendancy of information technology. As concepts, these can be construed as accurate in their application to the generic sponsorship industry. However the forces of change which Kolah (2006) articulates are evident within sports sponsorship have generic cross-over within all

sponsorship industries given the role that technology is going to play in the future of the whole sponsorship industry (Jobber 2007; Kolah 2007; Masterman 2007).

Without doubt, globalisation, permission-based marketing and the fragmentation of media have been enabled by technology. Software tools currently have the power to unlock the identities, addresses, purchasing habits and intimate information of customers and reach them through emerging channels such as iPods, broadband, 3G mobile devices and games platforms (Kolah 2006: 36).

Key finding four:

The size of budget is not a determining factor within the effectiveness of a sponsorship programme.

Prior to exploring planning within key finding five, the financial side of sponsorship needs to be explored to identify whether as a brand communication platform effective sponsorships will only emerge from large companies which have the financial capacity to invest heavily. Linking into planning, the evidence appears to suggest that due to sponsorship accounting for around five percent of a communications budget (Masterman 2007), or with the majority of sponsorship deals ranging from \$150,000-\$500,000, there has been little attention given to evaluating the net impact of the sponsorship (Kolah 2006). As already identified, within marketing communications, sponsorship and advertising are often viewed as similar or just as an alternative to advertising (Thwaites 1995; Meenaghan 2001b). From an industry point of view, sponsorship has almost grown twice as much as the advertising industry from 2002-2005 (Kolah 2006). Whilst this does highlight confidence that brand owners are placing on sponsorship as a key brand communication platform, it doesn't outline the success that the sponsors are having from their investments. If simply higher budgets result in more effective and successful sponsorships, the market then out-prices smaller to medium sponsors and becomes an exclusive marketing tool which is in contrast to its sophisticated reach. For

example, the CIM (2004:5) believe that "...sponsorship could and should be one of the most flexible, creative and cost effective methods of effective marketing communications".

All respondents indicated that the effectiveness of a sponsorship programme was not dependent upon the budget allocation and moved away from the notion of the bigger the budget, the better the programme. The theme that is consistent throughout the findings is that the response to this is dependent upon the objectives, something which has underpinned any area within the findings. According to interviewee two:

Effectiveness is measured on whether it meets its objectives and objectives can range massively...There is a general rule of thumb that the more you spend the more effective it will be but it's not nearly as important as thinking it through, planning, making sure that you have correct fit and a really thought-out programme at the beginning....that's much more important than throwing £20 million at it.

This heightens the need for clear pre-evaluation and establishment of best fit between the sponsor and sponsor properties (or event) and target markets within a structured planning process which includes the determining commercial objectives (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Fullerton 2006).

The notion of finding what is right for the sponsor and property was referred to by all respondents as being more important than merely a fiscal figure from an effectiveness point of view:

It depends on what the property is you have chosen. That's the most important thing. It has to fall in line with your objectives, meet your objectives....and be an important part of what you are currently doing or intend to do with you brand...properties range from £1000 to £50 million so it's not just one property out there that is right for a sponsor....it depends what they want to do (interviewee three).

A key rationale for this was the need to create unique sponsorships, something which is creative which would not benefit from a large investment sum purely for ad-banners with media coverage. Interviewee six alludes to this by commenting that:

I think again what people are seeking is something unique, something which stands out and sometimes we do sponsorship where they are not that type of sponsors, but what they get out of it suits them down to the ground.

To exemplify this, interviewee six referred to a recent deal they had done with Mercedes Benz in the automotive industry, a brand which is in the top three of globally recognisable brands:

They don't need brand awareness, that's not the problem for them. What they wanted was to be associated with a sport because that sports audience was their target audience...and have a good reputation within that sport and be really supportive of it. It wasn't really about budget. They could have gone for a title sponsorship, paid X millions of pounds to get the shirt title but it wasn't about that. It was actually about getting credibility in the sport. It was about paying a small amount to get into the right property.....so it wasn't about throwing millions at it. It was about really activating it well (interviewee six).

The activation of sponsorship in terms of the budget allocation was also important, given that it needs to engage with fans and consumers directly and in a personal way, where dialogue creation is important (Kolah 2006). From a budget point of view, the cost of activation needs to be spread across the term of the deal and more importantly, a sufficient budget for leverage needs to be factored into the planning (Kolah 2006), otherwise a ROO or ROI will not be possible. This was recognised as being a key danger with sponsorship and something which limits sponsorship in the current industry:

The greatest danger from sponsorship is say you have £5million and that's all the budget you have got. A lot of people say well ok, we'll use £5million buying out the rights. That is actually wrong, you should put £3million on acquiring the rights and £2million on leverage and things like that...people make the mistake of doing that. Yes Samsung for the Chelsea sponsorship spend a huge amount of money getting some moderate success. But I don't think it has to be, it can be disproportionate, the key I think, is the rights fee and also what you do with it (interviewee seven).

The issue of supporting a sponsorship acquisition with resources that are over and above the rights costs is seen as being a key determinant of a sponsor reaching its target market (Masterman 2007). To achieve this, as aforementioned, sponsorship should be integrated into

a wider communications mix (Masterman 2007) in order to fully exploit the true potential of the sponsorship for the sponsor and the property.

The key distinction that was made was to move away from the ideology of increased investment equals increased effectiveness and more to using the budget more efficiently across all platforms in the programme to ensure that full exploitation is gained. For example:

Budget helps, but it depends a lot on the brand. If you have not got a lot of cash then straight away you look at PR. If it's a sponsorship that lends itself to PR, then great. Generally we find that anyone worth their salt that is selling a sponsorship will be attaching a price which is realistic to what you can get out of it (interviewee five).

Alternatively, the need for a reasonable balance between rights fees and activation was seen as a contributing factor within budget considerations:

The flip side is, if you are playing very little for the rights then there is a very good chance you are going to spend a lot exploiting them. So somewhere along the line the budget kicks in but I do genuinely believe that if you can meet your objectives and you are smart about the way you leverage it you don't need to throw millions of pounds at a TV advertising campaign (interviewee five).

The idea of 'throwing millions' at a campaign with little planning was coupled with more traditional sponsorships which do not prove to be effective, given the lack of cohesion between all parties involved and the consumers they are trying to target.

I have seen companies spend millions on sponsorship but because they haven't structured it, not planned it, no wow factor, no one comes up with an idea, they have just done traditional boring sponsorship and it hasn't worked (interviewee eight).

Developing this, interviewee eight recognised that some deals are:

...unimaginative, so boring and tired that you think they might as well just throw money down the drain.

From the findings, whilst the budget was not seen as a sole determinant of a successful sponsorship, the level to which the sponsorships are planned and activated with creativity and uniqueness was viewed as being more imperative to a successful and effective outcome. In terms of the future direction that the sports sponsorship industry needs to take, this is very

much paramount to ensuring that sponsors can connect and more importantly engage consumers with their programme beyond simplistic brand name recognition. Kolah (2007) believes that in order for the industry to progress, new ideas on how to exploit the sponsorships in existing markets and customer segments need to be generated in order for sponsorship to function more effectively. Moreover, this needs to stem worldwide based on the global nature of the industry in order to “...explore options for communicating with market and customer segments that fall outside of traditional communication channels in the activation of sponsorship” (Kolah 2006:183). The challenge for sponsors is getting their messages out through a multi-channel environment in a “...densely packed digital world.....this means that more than ever brands must consistently resonate with their target markets across various media” (Kolah 2006:183).

Key finding five:

A 360 degree view of the sponsorship from planning is recognised as fundamental to ROO and ROI. However, converting this into practice remains fragmented.

The interviewees all have a breadth of experience in the sponsorship industry across a variety of sectors and all hold senior positions, dealing with international blue chip companies who invest millions of pounds in sponsorship as well as more medium to lower-sized companies which operate on smaller scales. Therefore, the insight into how planning impacts on sponsorship from the operational side, was deep, accurate and also reflective of current industry practice, something pivotal to this study. The idea of a 360 degree view of sponsorship was proposed by Kolah (2007) given that the most common failing of sponsorships are down to a lack of focus and measurable objectives. If sports rights holder and sponsor are to be protected against failure, the execution of a robust, well thought

through planning process is essential as sponsorship is an associative platform requiring balance between all parties involved (Kolah 2006). Further to this, sponsorship executives identify that good planning and development of a sponsorship strategy are the highest-rated factors in ensuring a successful sponsorship programme (Redmandarin 2004). However, research into consumers and fans from an attitude and beliefs perspective was rated low, which begs the question as to whether the planning is meaningful if the end user, the consumer (or fan) is not accounted for, given their level of current interaction and knowledge of sponsorship (Kolah 2007).

All respondents indicated that a structured planning process was vital to the effectiveness of a sponsorship programme, with a variety of reasons cited for this, the most common being the activation spend required to move beyond logo advertisement. According to Clarke (2003), the industry is moving in the right direction. Further, The Performance Research Group (2002:65) indicated that "...marketing managers are still spending only an average ration of activation spending to rights fee of 2.4 to 1. The figures are moving in the right direction".

For example, interviewee three commented:

It is massively important; we have a rule of thumb whereby a client will generally need to spend double what they spend on the sponsorship in terms of activation. So they are not just putting their logos somewhere, they are activating it which they need to spend money to do, so that is a very important part of the process.

This rule of thumb appears consistent, whereby for every \$1 spend on acquiring sponsorship rights, the realistic expectation is for \$1 to be spent on activation (Kolah 2006), with the majority of sponsors spending less than the rights fee on activating the sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004). Again, within much of the results, this is dependent upon the objectives, which makes the value of a planning process imperative due to the disparate nature of individual sponsorship programmes. Further to this, interviewee six noted that:

It's absolutely vital, it's the first thing we start with, we look at the strategy behind it. Everything has got to have some sort of rationale, every selection, every choice we make, it's every step of the way, through the selection of the sports, entertainment or music property. Every step of the way it has to be filtered down and thrashed out with the provider at each step, the strategy as well.

Referring to activation spend, the issue of planning is a pertinent topic within both literature and industry-wide given that the CIM (2004) estimate that for every \$6 billion spent on European sports sponsorships, up to \$5 billion is wasted due to the sponsors not exploiting the sponsorship to its full potential. This lack of meaningful exploitation could be a remnant of previous practice whereby sponsorship was very much done on an ad-hoc basis, done to meet a closed agenda with little criteria for selection, let alone strategy within the planning.

For example, interviewee six points out that:

I think before, sponsorship was always throw a lot of money at something, have you brand on the car, the shirt, where as now, there are so many different aspect tied into it. Like, hospitality, B2B prospects, the merchandising revenues, the tie into advertising and promotional campaigns. So I think it just has to be planned much better, it has to have a real structure and plan to it.

The reasons for such ad-hoc planning, according to the CIM (2004), relate to weak targeting, inappropriate matching of sponsor with event, viewing sponsors as separate communications methods, sponsoring events with too short a life span and sponsoring individuals excessively to their long-term value, all factors which have been identified by all respondents in some form. The degree to which each is considered a factor varies, again, dependent upon the property, sponsor and internal/external factors associated with the sponsorship.

The general consensus was that whilst examples of poor planning may still exist in some areas, the industry as a whole has become more sophisticated, which mirrors the opinion of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in the current climate (Sims 2005; Kolah 2007). To exemplify this, interviewee two commented that:

I think generally it's got more sophisticated and the people who are doing it are more sophisticated. Classically you will start with the brand and say, "what are the brand values, what are its business objectives?"

With this in mind, the idea of large companies 'throwing money at sponsorship' is still in operation within the industry which somewhat undermines any progress which has been made:

There is still a lot of that sort of sponsorship about because people haven't really thought them through very well and there's a lot of people with lots of different hats on and different reasons for suggesting and supporting them (interviewee two).

However, with greater emphasis across the whole industry being placed on accountability of spend (Kolah 2007), planning processes need to be seen as central to any sponsorship proposition, from researching the brand and wanting to invest, right through to matching the properties based on value and then the subsequent activation and leverage and reviewing with robust monitoring and evaluation (Kolah 2007). This was translated into budget allocation whereby planning was seen as necessary to justify spend from a complete marketing budget point of view:

The accountants of these brands will want to have everything justified as well so there has to be a strict planning structure. You can't just throw money at it now because that money has to be justified so you have to have a planned process to show where things are being spent and why, or the brands can't justify it and the sponsorship budget will reduce the following year and so on (interviewee six).

This did conflict with the responses of some interviewees who believed that this still occurred, one reason for this being that:

...quite often the sponsorship manager is the bloke that signs it off, he isn't going to turn round and say this is rubbish, quite often the PR agencies are on a £200k retainer for leveraging it. By large they may say we wish we had got this or that in the contract but they won't turn it down, they all have a vested interest (interviewee two).

In a recent survey, (from a decision-makers point of view), the three principal individuals within a company who are key to making the decisions regarding the sign-off of a sponsorship strategy were recognised as typically being the CEO/Chairman; Head of

Marketing and the Managing Director (Redmandarin 2004). Within itself, this may cause some conflict if the companies are still driven very strongly through the CEO's preference to sports properties. Although the ultimate sign-off should be the CEO/Chairman (Kolah 2006), it is reasonable to suggest that the issues of trust, understanding and knowledge regarding the strategy needs to be transparent across all departments involved with it, particularly if integrated, to ensure some element of consistency in approach.

From the findings, whilst progress has been made from the industry in terms of ensuring planning structures are in place, there appears still evident cases (isolated or otherwise) whereby the larger companies are getting involved in sponsorship in a very lacklustre manner, simply dedicating a large budget to the idea but not putting the groundwork in which is essential to develop effective strategies (Sims 2005). Whilst this may not be in the same context as a chairman's whim approach, it is reasonable to suggest that a true reflection of ROO or ROI is extremely difficult to achieve without a blue print strategy as this will cover more eventualities such as lead-in time for delivering on media commitments.

The European Sponsors Survey (2004) identified that over 55% of respondents indicated that the funds allocated to sponsorship represented between 1-10% of the organisations overall brand communication and budget, with the average allocation being 17.7% (Redmandarin 2004). Despite the value that sponsorship can deliver across numerous platforms from both a B2B and B2C point of view, the fragility it has as a brand communication platform is the risk of under-investment from budget cut backs and also under-utilisation by no activation investment (Redmandarin 2004). The importance of planning at each stage of the sponsorship is underlined by two "...active ingredients" (Redmandarin 2004:98), these being strategy and creativity, whereby the opportunity to maximise ROI should be mapped-out in a blue- print

which identifies good fit between the property and the sponsor (Kolah 2006). According to Masterman (2007), the budget allocation should not be done prior to making any marketing communications decisions as this is counter-productive. What Masterman (2007) proposes is that the cost of achieving the objectives is priced prior to deciding on the communications option to be selected. However, with cost being difficult to define, it should be approached case-by-case rather than as a standardised model across the industry.

Whilst providing greater economic accountability, it somewhat neglects the sophistication of sponsorship beyond ROO which may naturally evolve over the period of the deal. This provides money can't buy benefits (such as goodwill which can occur through sponsorship-related CSR off-shoot activities and the longevity of association of consumer with brand). The suggestion should therefore be to fully cost (as much as possible) the sponsorship in order to provide a basic cost comparison with other communications options. Also, it should be integrated with a full 360 degree view (Kolah 2006:2007) of the projected benefits that sponsorship has for the brand and the rights holder, which should be ultimately underlined by the objectives desired from all parties involved.

Planning was not seen just as being important from an overall strategy viewpoint in terms of mapping out the sponsorship across all platforms and through all processes involved (i.e. pre-planning, rights acquisition, activation and leverage), but also as a necessity to maximise the exploitation, particularly if media exposure is desired. For example, interviewee four commented that:

Well, planning, it's everything. I mean if you are not meeting media deadlines, in particular, sponsors want media exposure and particularly with consumer media, the monthlies, I mean, you are now on a 3, 4 month lead-time.

The delay on lead-time was also identified for other promotional activities such as on-pack promotions which demanded a longer lead-in of around 18 months (interviewee five):

It's (planning) essential. Once again, going down your objectives, if you are going to support sponsorship or exploit a sponsorship from an on-pack promotion, or depending which way you look at it, support on promotion through sponsorship....they are done 18 months in advance so if you are planning, that's where you'll see the value of sponsorship as a purchase will drop the closer you get to the event (interviewee five).

Within this, timing of acquiring the rights in order to fully exploit the sponsorship was deemed as important given that many 'ad-hoc' sponsorships which are acquired very late in the run-up to an event cannot achieve full exploitation:

You can pick up sponsorship for very little a month before the event, but all they'll then do is frantically run around getting branding boards created and put up, you won't be able to exploit it properly, a bit of media activity maybe. This narrows down your arsenal of marketing tools the closer you get to an event, so planning.....I would see it as essential (interviewee five).

The media is recognised as a very powerful marketing tool, not only to exploit the sponsorship, but also in attracting commercial partners (Sims 2005). Therefore, the importance of planning in line with media-related deadlines should not be underestimated and should form a key aspect of any planning process.

Key finding six:

Practitioners do employ strategy development processes for planning. However, there is no set structure to these as it is dependent upon sponsor objectives and associated property.

With sponsorship accounting for at least 20% of a global brand owners' total brand communications and marketing budget, producing an effective sponsorship strategy is vital. To do this, sports sponsorship is seen as the main marketing platform that supports an organisation's business strategy (Kolah 2006). However, the issue of planning, coupled with

measurement and evaluation (discussed in a later key finding) is seen somewhat as a grey area (Tripodi *et al* 2003; CIM 2004) This may be down to a lack of responsibility between rights holders and brands for such activities, or it may be a case that planning is being carried out, but given the changing nature of the sponsorship industry and also very different objectives set by differing brands, the reality of standardised processes are limited. The findings show that all respondents believed that there were key milestones within a planning process for a sponsorship programme, which in part cut through the processes outlined by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005); Kolah (2006) and Masterman (2007) shown in chapter three. However, as will be discussed, the-case by-case nature of sponsorship means that variation within these broader stages is common.

A key aspect which was identified was the need for research to be carried out in order to define the objectives considering that some objectives evolve and some change over time (interviewee seven). However whilst research per se was regarded as important, this did vary from being comprehensive to a more simplistic view of just identifying it within the process (interviewee two).

Research forms a key foundation in making provision for unexpected occurrences which can be performance-related, given the unpredictable nature of sport. Interviewee seven related this to performance given that a property could gain unprecedented success which changes the whole make-up of the sponsorship, something for which planning needs to account.

If you are sponsoring a team like Chelsea who suddenly win their first cup in 50 years, or the England team with the NPower Ashes (cricket), then the objectives or the outputs change, the whole dynamics change so you have to be adaptable...you need to plan right at the beginning (interviewee seven).

According to Sims (2005:61) the value of research within the planning process is principal to not only generating ways of approaching a company, but can help to create "...a powerful attention-grabbing sales approach, one that is capable of generating enough interest at the right level within a company". The use of this mind-set can help to clearly outline the desired outcome early on within any brand and sponsor relationship. Interviewee eight believes that the research stage should ideally establish what the brand wants to achieve, but also what they are not achieving through other traditional methods such as advertising. By including a stage which is in depth like this, the production of more measurable and realistic objectives for all parties involved can be designed. However, this needs to occur early on and after a true reflection of the brand's intentions have been gained (interviewee five).

From a literature point of view, a fundamental criticism which is widely acknowledged within both literature and practice is for un-measurable objectives to be set (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Masterman 2007). Therefore, in-depth research would set the process off in a more concrete manner as intentions, objectives and budgetary limitations and reach could be clearly articulated throughout the whole organisation. This would fall in line more with Chadwick and Thwaites' (2005) suggestions for best practice which include ensuring that clear links are evident between the objectives set and the evaluation, utilising relevant measurement techniques, have clear and well-communicated criteria with all internal associates of the sponsorship, clearly outline the aims of the measurement and also to exploit mixed methodologies within the measurement. The findings reveal a variety of differing planning processes with some cross-over between them but there was clearly a lack of standardisation evident. However, it is reasonable to suggest that providing key stages such as those identified by Kolah (2006) and Masterman (2007) are covered, there can be variety per sponsorship deal. The problems arise when key stages are either not entered into fully, or

worse still, they are not considered important. In order to outline the approaches taken, the following figures show three processes that respondents outlined they go through with commentary regarding other key milestone processes that respondents identified. The three processes do not adopt a consistent strategy with the three processes identified in chapter three. However, they do show a lack of standardisation across industry from a more logistical approach to those which integrate research and evaluation as core competencies.

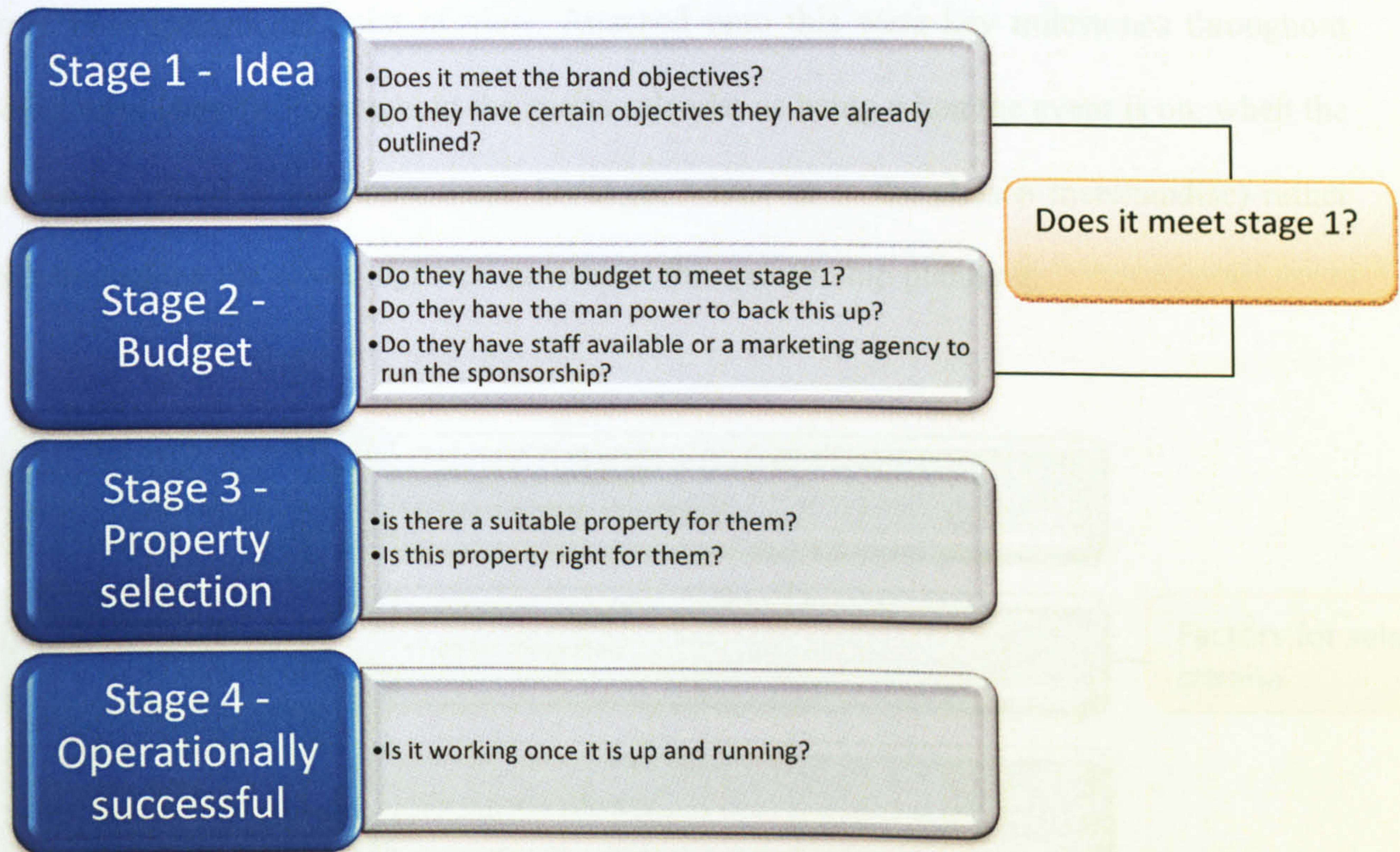


Figure 8.1: Interviewee three planning process

Figure 8.1 details a process which falls more in line with the work of Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) and Masterman (2007) in terms of starting off with the objectives as opposed to any activity review as Kolah (2006) suggests. The fundamental essence behind this process is that it is very matter-of-fact in terms of whether the idea is suitable, which is the fundamental point for the whole process, whilst it also lacks any real evaluation and feedback, but favours more of a basic view of whether it works once it has been set up, as being the key factor for success.

Another process outlined within the interviews, which consisted of six stages, extended the first process by having more depth within negotiations and also integrating evaluation in at the final stage (see Figure 8.2). However, as will be discussed, evaluation for this interviewee was seen very much as a 'bugbear' and something which cannot be fully completed due to a lack of standardisation. This prompts a question as to whether evaluation is actually carried out within this process or whether it is just included as a tick-box exercise from an organisational point of view. Attached onto this were key milestones throughout which were identified throughout the sports calendar as being when the event is on, when the launch is and when the promotional DVD (or whatever is the chosen merchandise) rather than throughout the actual logistical process of the sponsorship planning.

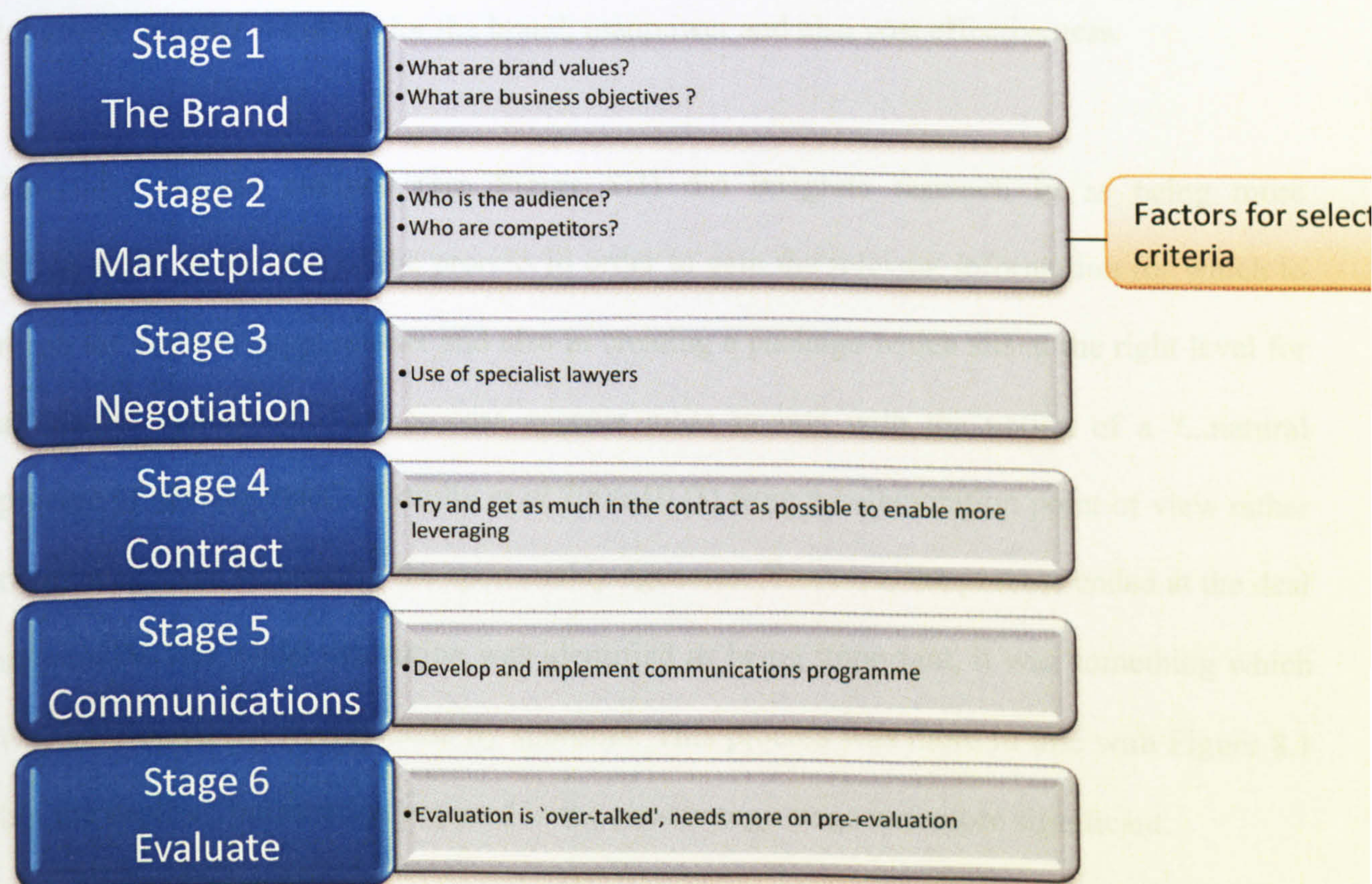


Figure 8.2: Interviewee two planning process

This process, whilst cutting across more stages from Chadwick and Thwaites (2005); Kolah (2006) and Masterman (2007), does appear more business-focussed from a transactional point of view. This is instead of having research as the foundation for each stage which can act as a positive reviewing tool throughout the whole process (Sims 2005). It can also foster the organisational relations of the arrangement. The key aspect which is missing in the presentation of this process (see Figure 8.2) which Masterman (2007) identifies, is the feasibility stage which explores the strengths of the sponsorship against other communication alternatives. Whilst Masterman's (2007) process is based on an integrated approach to marketing communications, it could be suggested that there needs to be some evaluation of the proposed sponsorship's feasibility for the brand prior to committing to the contract. This would help to overcome potential challenges such as performance-based, sponsorship longevity, gaining stand out for the brand, manpower and also cost effectiveness.

The third process outlined (see Figure 8.3) did integrate research in as being more fundamental to the start of the process in order to gain the relevant information for which to reach the defined target market and also in creating a package which sits at the right level for all parties concerned. This process appears more in line with the notion of a "...natural process of advancement" (Farrelly *et al* 2006:1023) from a collaboration point of view rather than being more dictated by the sponsorship agencies. However, the process ended at the deal negotiation and whilst evaluation was identified as being important, it was something which was considered not readily done by sponsors. This process was more in line with Figure 8.1 but the depth of information required in the pre-strategy stage was more significant.

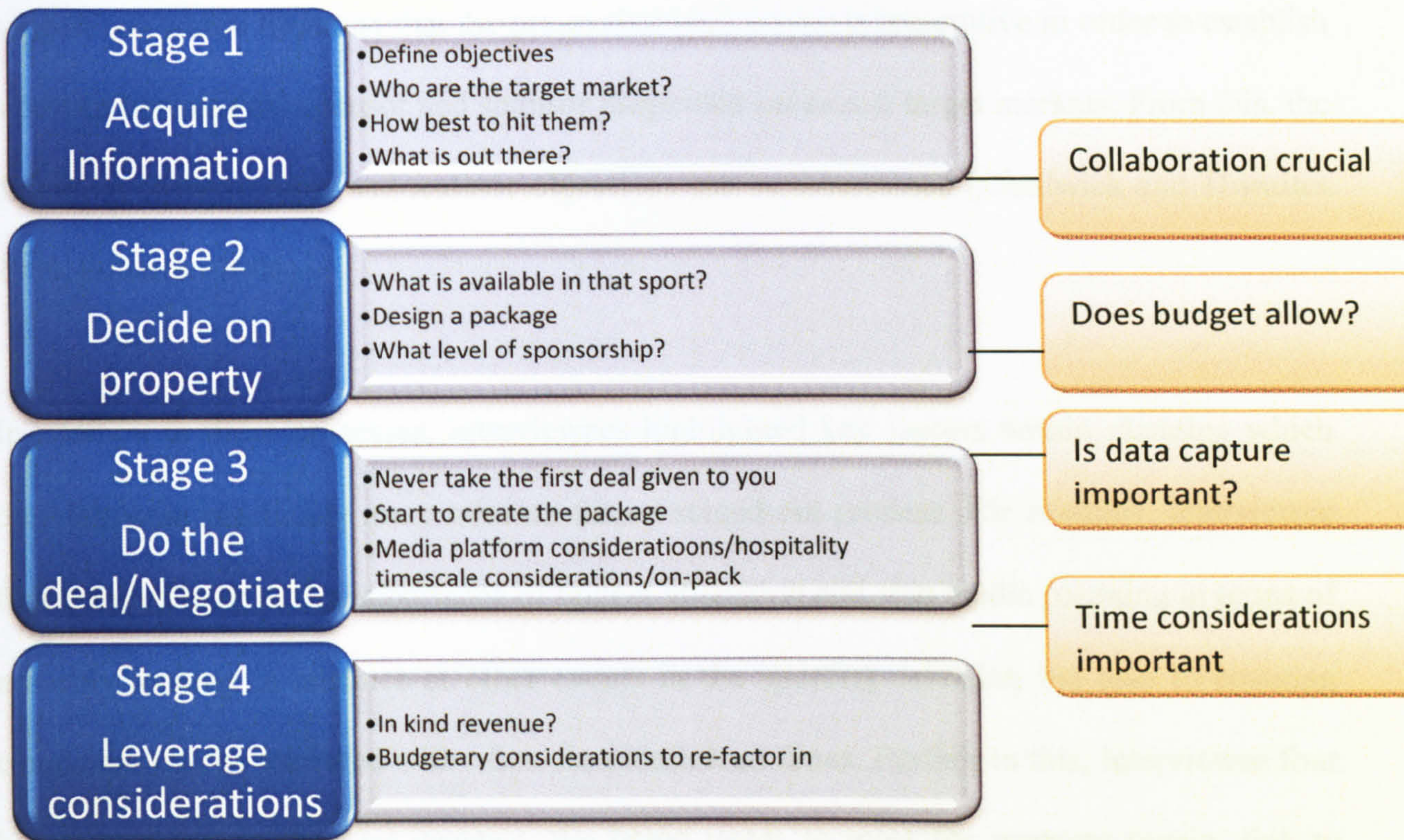


Figure 8.3: Interviewee five planning process

This final processes outlined may appear brief in terms of number of stages and also the lack of 'general' stages in line with those outlined in chapter three. However, this process does propose somewhat of a more depth pre-planning process than the others outlined, ensuring that the collaboration and information acquisition is well incorporated. Whilst the latter half of the process is based more on the negotiation aspect rather than the ROI (Kolah 2006) or any review process (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007), it is reasonable to suggest that good practice could be extracted from the depth at which the information gathering is conducted. The value of research prior to a sponsorship programme is paramount (Sims 2005). Therefore the suggestion could be to adopt a thorough pre-strategy as a basis for which to minimise the complexities for latter stages such as feasibility which may be able to be pre determined from developing this in-depth picture of not only the market, but the capabilities of the sponsorship and parties involved. This is supported with

suggestions within literature that the pre-evaluation process is imperative in order to establish a best-fit between the sponsor and sponsor properties (or event) target markets. From this, the definition of measurable and realistic objectives can be determined (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Fullerton 2006).

In addition to these processes, interviewees highlighted key factors within planning which they felt were practically more relevant than a staged-out process. For example, interviewee four referred back to the importance of budget allocation and also media planning in terms of not only looking in advance at other events in the sporting calendar, but also in ensuring campaigns can be executed with often six month lead times. Further to this, interviewee four highlighted that in the first instance, the brand needs to meet the property (again, link to collaboration rather than one-track planning from agencies); secondly, through the sponsorship, the right media needs to be selected as some are not suitable and finally there needs to be a company employed to evaluate the sponsorship, usually from a press coverage point of view.

From this it is evident that there is no clear single standardised process that sponsorship adopts, with a variety of both long and short processes in place. Whilst this may not be counter-productive in producing effective sponsorship programmes (Kolah 2006), there does need to be some aspect of consistency if adopting an IMC approach to the programme. By this, Masterman (2007) notes how planning for IMC should incorporate all promotional efforts in order to maximise a total communications package. Sponsors need to ensure that they follow a basic three step process in order to evaluate the extent to which sponsorship may or may not be effective incorporating organisational marketing decisions, sponsorship selection decisions and sponsorship planning and implementation. Although some

practitioners may bring a wealth of experience to the planning process, questionable practice emerged from sponsorship executives who do not have adequate understanding or knowledge of how sponsorship can be effective, or how best to implement this (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Sims 2005).

Further, Redmandarin (2004:24) reported in the European Sponsors' Survey, that "...good planning" (94%) and "...development of sponsorship strategy" (89%) were factors most highly considered as determinants of successful sponsorship campaigns. These findings are relatively consistent with this study whereby although strategies are in place, the variability in these demonstrates a certain level of coherence to the results of the European Sponsors' Survey (2004:9). This found that "...relatively few sponsors have clearly defined and articulated strategies for sponsorship, so there may still be some way to go". Moreover, a key factor within this is the extent to which measurement and evaluation is undertaken following a sponsorship programme, this being seen as an area of conflict within literature (Tripodi *et al* 2003) and also, from a practitioner point of view, discussed within the next key finding.

Key finding seven:

Measurement and evaluation in sponsorship has improved in terms of exploring consumer behaviour. However, there is still a lack of receptiveness to incorporating evaluation beyond metric analysis by both sponsors and sponsorship agencies.

The evaluation of sponsorship programmes has been questioned within literature (Farrelly *et al* 1997; Wallier 2003; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) with an over-reliance on metric analysis being deemed as the gold standard for effective measurement and evaluation (CIM 2004). A key problem within the industry is that whilst it is recognisable that sponsorships

should be explored from both ROI and ROO perspective (CIM 2004), a lack of standardisation in evaluation tools is resulting in a very hit and miss approach to evaluation (Sims 2005). Although tools such as Spindex™ and Sponsorlink (S-COMM 2008) are being developed to gain a far greater depth of information for evaluation, a key aspect within this is the attitude of sponsorship executives and agencies to adopt such approaches which will value the end outcome of the sponsorship as much as the earlier key milestones within the programme. The findings revealed a somewhat mixed view on measurement and evaluation with an acknowledgement in the main that it is important, with sponsors keen to evaluate. However, in converting this to whether this is currently done well in the industry, the consensus was that it has improved, with further progress needed.

Interviewee seven who is a Director at one of the UK's largest sports marketing research companies, indicated that:

Generally speaking it is much better than it has been....most sponsorship deals are evaluated now because about 2 years ago when we were trying to sell research, people were looking at me as if I had two heads, but I think that over the years people have realised the value of evaluating....there is always room for improvement, peoples budgets are still small.

The idea of sponsorship (as opposed to advertising) being the "...poor relation" (interviewee seven) of research within marketing is slowly starting to develop as sponsorship is getting viewed as a more sophisticated communications platform. This has witnessed the rise in sponsorship specific research companies.

There is a rise in the number of sponsorship evaluation agencies that have been set up now and they are becoming more sophisticated in the way they move forward. This is part of a, hopefully, more sophisticated approach from an industry that has had up to now a very thumb suck approach as to whether it works or not (interviewee eight).

From a literature point of view, the reliance on studies to explore recognition and measure sponsorship effects based on logo recognition is common, with three broad approaches taken.

Firstly, to measure to what extent the public takes notice of the sponsors; secondly, to identify the factors which influence this recognition and finally to analyse the internal processes that relate to recognition taking place in the mind of the consumer (Walliser 2003). This approach can be considered relatively outdated given the far more complex objectives for which brands are striving, particularly relating to purchase intent, something which recognition metric analysis does not cover (CIM 2004). The results showed that the more tangible measurements, such as the number of deals gained from the sponsorship, the amount of space for advertising which was converted to national TV coverage and the number of people reached can be easily measured (interviewee five). This reflects the traditional view whereby media values have been over-relied on as a means of measuring ROI. However, this does not provide a true reflection of whether the sponsorship has delivered on sales (CIM 2004; Kolah 2006).

This was consistent with findings in which respondents did not constitute thorough measurement as being solely responsible for tangible evaluation. According to interviewee five:

I think it is getting better....but there will always be intangibles, essentially it should be better evaluated.

As sports sponsorship moves into the future, intangible benefits will increase in importance in both market and consumer segments, in which sponsorship as a marketing communications tool will have a major role in delivering these for the brand (Kolah 2006). Therefore, the need for rigorous evaluation beyond financial return and metric analysis is heightened and requires comprehensive sponsorship analysis to be performed (Kolah 2007).

A key factor which is inhibiting this is budget, given the desire by sponsors to pump as much capital into the actual contract rather than to give any thought on evaluating the success:

If you go to a sponsor and say you want to do this (evaluate) and I need another £5000 for this, they'll always say no, can't we put that £5000 into a bit more media activity, more coverage and then we just do a rock evaluation at the end. They have a certain budget and they see evaluation as very expensive.....that said, bigger sponsorships are very good at doing research all the way through (interviewee five).

The extent to which this type of measurement and evaluation extends simplistic base line figures to address; "How clear was the sponsorship; who took notice and did it achieve the objectives set for it" (Masterman 2007:226), is unclear. However, the clear starting point again should revert back to the objectives set.

The issue of evaluation improving within the industry was consistent amongst all respondents with the common metric measurement tools (see chapter three) being identified repeatedly throughout the interviews, particularly where media value was concerned. However, whilst media coverage measurement was identified, the issue of fallacy in the production of this was brought into question as something in which the industry still partakes, which is where independent research companies come in to act as a neutral party. For example, interviewee four revealed that:

I mean you can always make statistics lie, they are very dangerous. I mean you always have to step back and almost be really negative when you first look at them. Obviously, as an agency we try and turn them around to be very powerful. We use an independent agency to evaluate all our clients' cuttings, TV and radio coverage. Therefore, you get a neutral view, and I think 90% of companies do that.

This however contrasts with figures from Redmandarin (2004) who identified, in a study of small, medium and large organisations, that 11% of sponsorships are fully evaluated, even though one quarter of the respondents believed that they were highly effective in measuring ROI. Further, Kolah (2006) recognises a change in the industry in terms of maturing in measuring and evaluating sponsorship through both a cost comparison metric and the impact sponsorship has had in relation to volume; price; distance; revenue and sponsor profits. This was something which the respondents acknowledged in terms of needing to justify an ROI.

Interviewee three referred to the “...proving its worth” notion of sponsorship in this context, believing that it has to be well-measured and evaluated, otherwise brands simply would not sign or resign to the programme. However, within this, there was still the underpinning thought that it is evolving within the industry, rather than a well-adopted formalised procedure:

They have to research at the end and during, proving its worth, so yes more and more it is being evaluated successfully (interviewee three).

It is important to consider the differences in evaluation between advertising and sponsorship as this may lead some practitioners to evaluate the outcomes from the sponsorship. In addition it is important to look towards the advertising from the sponsorship, which will not provide the desired outcome beyond the metric figures of exposure. Interviewee eight eludes to this by commenting that:

It is important to define the difference between sponsorship and something like arena advertising, which isn't sponsorship. Sponsorship is the event side.....The Olympics have done a huge job over the years in terms of developing measurement of what sponsors get but there is still a huge area of sponsorship benefit that people still don't know how to measure....one of them is image transfer.

Whilst image transfer processes are outlined in chapter three (Gwinner 1997; Meenaghan and Shipley 1999), the extent to which they are evaluated is less comprehensively detailed (Walliser 2003), which is reflected in practice (interviewee eight). A recent application of evaluation techniques within literature has been in event analysis (Walliser 2003), which has shown how sponsorship can increase the financial value of the sponsor organisation (Miyazaki and Morgan 2001). However, again, translating this into practice, the criticism from industry is very much related to using control groups to do this (interviewee seven) rather than to explore the exposure in a natural setting to give a truer reflection.

Further, with the advent of research companies, databases of individuals who complete online questionnaires to allow for the effect of sponsorship on brand image to be determined are in

operation, for example, Sponsorship Intelligence (SI), who gain feedback from individuals to assess whether an image is “...good, bad or indifferent” (interviewee six). Sponsorship Intelligence (SI), provide “...specific sponsorship research experience and recourse to benchmark data acquired over two decades of business... whether the target for sponsorship is corporate clients, employees, business decision-makers, retail buyers, spectators or the general public” (Sponsorship Intelligence 2008).

However, again, the problem is that whilst the more developed and advanced companies such as SI can provide tailored in-depth data, the controlled nature of some companies’ internal efforts do not provide for more general consumer/fan benefits to be explored. This should be an area into which sponsorship executives look, based on the results from the consumer phase of this study. These results showed that consumers do show some levels of interaction with the sponsorships and, if executed correctly, could interest a group wider than their specific target market or fan-base of a particular sport.

The recurring notion of an aspect of sponsorship being objective-dependent was again evident within measurement and evaluation, with some objectives requiring little or no formal evaluation:

It depends on the objectives and what is their return. If they went into a specific area thinking “oh I want to attract more people, I want to get more meetings, basically I want to look after our corporate clientele”, then they may sponsor something to get the hospitality rights and they may be happy with that.....if their corporate clients are happy then it’s been successful (interviewee six).

This moves away from always expecting to generate profit if the objectives do not stipulate this. However, an ROI is deemed as almost wholly vital within the current climate (Masterman 2007).

Whilst there was a general level of consensus that, given the sophistication of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool beyond a fiscal ROI, measurement and evaluation should be entered into in much more depth. There was some resistance and nonchalance towards this from high-powered, influential industry professionals which is concerning from a progress point of view for the industry. Although this view was in the minority, it is still important to note given the level of the practitioner and their integral role within planning high powered sponsorships. In exploring this view, it was more a struggle with the concept of 'back-end' evaluation rather than 'front-end' or post-evaluation as opposed to pre-evaluation.

The whole notion of this (evaluation) is my bugbear. I'm so bored of having the next sponsorship lecture on 'evaluation, the holy grail of sponsorship'. The whole problem is you are never going to get agreement on an evaluation technique because there are so many different objectives (interviewee two).

Whilst this point is reasonable in light of the interchanging nature of sponsorship objectives, sometimes even during the duration of the sponsorship programmes, Kolah (2006) recognises that sponsorship can be measured against six criteria; additional/incremental sales/shifts in brand loyalty, B2B benefits, shifts in brand awareness, shifts in brand image and media value generated. However, according to interviewee two:

You can't match apples with apples because you need to match apples with pears. Also, what I don't like about it is I think much more thought should be at the front-end of what you chose to do and you chose to do it right because in my mind it's negative and a back-ended way of doing it, so I am not fond of evaluation.

Despite key metric analysis being extended through intelligence companies to explore a broader range of objectives from an outcome point of view, the idea of using a "...gut feeling" (interviewee two) to evaluate sponsorship was highlighted by one respondent as preferable to any other mechanism.

You can guess or know by the gut feel whether it was good or bad or could have been better, so I think evaluation is over talked and there should be much more on pre-evaluation (interviewee two).

The issue of evaluation is improving in terms of adoption by sponsors and sponsor agencies. However, there is still some resistance towards entering into fully-structured evaluation processes within planning strategies. The reasons for this varied, for example, from sponsors' unwillingness to invest money into evaluation in addition to their original commitment; difficulty due to a variety in objectives; interchanging objectives and the standardisation of media-value evaluation as a central method of measuring ROI and beyond. However, regardless of whether simple metric analysis, or combined methodologies are used, the research must "...deliver analysis as well as insight into improving the performance of sponsorship" (Kolah 2006:235). In doing this, the industry must move away from the view of catch-all mechanisms such as sales effectiveness, media coverage and communications effect (Masterman 2007), which do not fully explore the effectiveness of sponsorship, particularly if part of an IMC programme.

This said, the underlying issue which is consistent with the literature is the lack of standardisation within measurement and evaluation which will not occur until reliable and valid measures are in place and furthermore remains a "...pressing need to encourage more rights' owners and sponsors to evaluate" (Masterman 2007:239). However, from this study's findings it can be proposed that given the variety of objectives, standardisation may be somewhat problematic as an industry standard. Whilst this may be deemed acceptable within industry, the key differentiation to make is that this should not be transferred into a lack of interest in evaluation, but should more encourage the sharing of good practice of evaluation across the industry to determine multiple models of evaluation more suited to meeting different objectives. However, given the competitive nature of the sponsorship industry, it is reasonable to suggest that this cooperation is unlikely. Progress could therefore be limited, given that there is a need by sponsorship executives for more reliable methods to be

established, as Redmandarin (2004:10) found that “Reliable evaluation methods to gauge the real ROI” are required by practitioners. This said, the converting of this need into a practical tangible, may remain in its infancy unless sponsorship evaluation is committed, not only industry wide, but worldwide and across the numerous platforms on which sponsorship operates.

The need for the industry to achieve this is paramount if brand owners are to channel their resources and investment into the relevant areas which will deliver unsurpassable return on investment (Kolah 2007). Additionally, Kolah (2007:271) suggests that, “Only with access to the right granularity of data can a comprehensive sponsorship analysis be performed”. However, as is evident, there may be a need to alter attitudes towards this process cross-industry in order to validate its worth for all parties involved within the sponsorship programme.

Key finding eight:

Sports sponsorship will continue to grow if traditional mediums of contact are exchanged for more online marketing and digital media technologies.

Sports sponsorship, over the next twenty five years, is set to remain as one of the fastest growing brand communication and marketing platforms with sports sponsorship playing a vital role in delivering the intangible value of a brand (Kolah 2006). Interviewee two commented that:

It will continue to grow. I think that there are a number of factors linked to sports sponsorship or linked to other things.

The key areas identified included the media, which will continue to fragment over the next five to ten years, which was related to the differing media situation with the youth market in particular, who no longer read newspapers. Traditional media as stated, will only account for a fraction of communication channels open to brand owners, with sponsors needing to factor into their planning, channels such as broadband; TV, voice, SMS, MMS, WAP, Bluetooth, Java and mobile technologies including full 3G (Kolah 2006). This was recognised as taking the shape of mobile phone rights, online and gaming experiential events with:

...a lot more pressure on advertisement and even P.R.....lot more emphasis on data direct marketing and online marketing (interviewee two).

From a growth perspective, interviewee six noted that:

There is definitely growth in sponsorship....I think the reason it is growing is that you can do some really creative things.....you've got your brand in action, your brand doing what it is made to do rather than hiding away.

The need for creativity was a consistent factor in ensuring that sponsorship can thrive and not be content to have developed through a period of growth (Kolah 2006). This needs to be driven through technology and more importantly, in strategies that embrace and engage the consumer (Taylor 2008; Kolah 2006). It has been recognised that sponsorship needs to reassert itself (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) and this needs to be done through platforms that are recognisable within the current industry and target markets. This can impact on a vast cross-section of consumers, far beyond the a-typical sports fan whom may have loyalty towards their team which is expected to transfer to the brand:

Not only are you doing a sponsorship in a sport but you get your consumers involved in it too and drag them in, make it more interactive and they can respond to it (interviewee six).

From a business point of view, the need for inventiveness between sponsors and rights-holders was also evident, to foster and engender loyalty within the relationship:

Sellers need to be clever, more market-orientated and actually prove their product works. Back it up with research, numbers and effective account management and produce fresh ideas, not just accepting their logo and their money and saying thank you very much, we will see you in three years for re-negotiations (interviewee three).

The continuing fragmentation of the media has resulted in an increased pressure on the TV spends of clients, hence the need for these relations to be continually developed to make the clients want to return:

New areas of media like broadband, like TV on your mobile, it is becoming so fragmented that clients can be a bit confused as to where to put their money and sponsorship can get pushed to the back a little. So sponsorship properties have to be out there selling in a way that will make the client understand that this is where they want to be, simple and effective (interviewee three).

As previously stated, updating strategies in line with new advancements within the industry is not necessarily about working across a multitude of platforms, it is about using the platforms which are best suited to the target market (Wallage 2008), and the key to this is research (Sims 2005) and understanding not only the concept of sponsorship, but its potential both singularly and as favoured, integrated (Fill 2005; Masterman 2007).

Sport was recognised as being a very powerful medium in the manner in which it can cut through the interests of a cross-section of people, for example, you can reach a large number of people because they congregate at a sporting event:

I don't think you can call it media planning anymore, it has become channel planning, I think sports sponsorship will do very well at the expense of what has been mass advertisement (interviewee two).

In terms of looking at the future of advertisement, technological advancements in mechanisms such as video advertisements could provide opportunities for sponsorship. However it is not guaranteed that they will successfully enhance a sponsorship given the confusion over their role as a piece of technology. Wright (2008:10) noted that:

I think we are nowhere with it (video advertising) to be honest. I think it is over-hyped. It will take a while before it becomes mainstream. The problem with it is that, no-one knows where video advertising should sit. I think there is a dilemma going on.

However, this does result in considerations for sponsors looking to exploit through digital technologies such as video advertisement. In relation to this, Wright (2008:10) points out how technologies take time before they settle down to being consistent. "Currently there are about 8-10 different ad formats which are defined as video, which makes it a problem". Whilst this is set to develop over time, the issue of consumer tolerance is considered important to advancing any technologies and would need to be factored into sponsor planning, given that the programme is much wider than an advert. "Users don't want to see anything longer than 10-15 seconds. People look bored and this is on high quality video advertising. There is work to be done" (Wright 2008:10).

However, whilst there was a recognition that despite already peaking in 1999 and dropping in 2002 (Kolah 2006), sports sponsorship can continue to rise. This was made with some reservations of which industry practitioners needs to be aware when planning. The importance of this from a budgetary point of view was acknowledged, given the lack of stability within marketing budgets, particularly in the allocation of sponsorship.

It is definitely bright. Unfortunately if a global company is struggling financially, it is usually the sponsorship budget that is axed. Marketing in general has cut down but I think in terms of what they get out of it, then basically they are very happy and it's growing (interviewee six).

The future of the sports sponsorship industry was seen throughout as something which needed working on by all involved, despite having significant growth as an industry spanning more than 20 years (Kolah 2006). This hinged on the developments already highlighted, but also on an area readily criticised within literature, the need to set measurable objectives, something which is not readily done (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Kolah 2007; Masterman 2007). Further, in order to maintain pace with a fast growing industry, planning must be seen as vital throughout every stage of the strategy development in order to allow for impromptu

changes due to market climate, for example, with reference Kolah's (2006) four forces of change. Interviewee seven referred to this when advancing the future concept, by commenting that:

I think that sports sponsorship is highly effective in meeting objectives....this all hinges on whether those objectives are defined at the beginning and I'd be wrong to say they are always defined at the beginning. Highly effective sponsorships are the ones which have had clear plans but also the ability to change a little bit on the way through to be adapted. The future is good for sports sponsorship, but people need to work on it.

The idea of sponsorship being very much a work in progress was reiterated by interviewee five who commented that:

I think it has got a way to go yet. There is an awful lot of agencies doing it out there with varying degrees of success and there might be a consolidation within the market but essentially I think the future will be in rights' holders understanding the commercial realities in sponsorship and what they have to do for it.

Further to this, the idea of using an integrated approach and varying platforms was deemed acceptable, if there was one common goal by all parties for the sponsorship (not one objective):

I'd like to see sponsorship as the floating media across all marketing with everyone using it to reach one common goal....you have big sponsorship properties and you go and speak to the head of department of the company and they don't know anything about it....it has to get a lot smarter and start pushing it more throughout the whole business and meet business objectives rather than just marketing objectives because it can do that....you can show brand revenue through a deal you have done and you can obviously charge more money and the industry will grow (interviewee five).

As the industry moves into the future, the increasing accountability placed on money invested in sponsorship is key to identifying whether sponsorship delivers, but also what it delivers (Kolah 2007) and this is something which practitioners need to keep ahead of in order to prevent sponsorship being viewed as a commodity. Interviewee eight noted this, in stating that:

I think it has got to be very careful. I think it is in danger of losing impact because everybody takes it for granted now.

Linking back to the consumer phases within this study, sponsors need to be cautious of how large multi-million pound deals are viewed by consumers in respect of the prices charged for the company's products or services:

Throwing a lot of money at a big sporting event, you have got to be very careful as it is a very fine line between people saying 'oh its good they are supporting that event', and 'if they brought their prices down a bit that is more help than sponsoring that event'....They see a gas company like Powergen putting their prices up 20-25%, they have to be very careful because the perception might be to the man in the street that he is paying for all this high level entertaining. That's a big danger (interviewee eight).

From a consumer perception point of view, the transformation within 9-10 years has been evolutionary in changing mindsets. However, as interviewee eight points out:

...sponsorship is constantly changing and I think that companies are going to have to be very careful about the perception of what they are doing, not just simply, are they reaching the target group?

One of the main key drivers the future of sports sponsorship is technology, not only from a advancement point perspective but also in terms of considerations of how to maximise reach to an ever-demanding consumer market (Clarke 2003; Kolah 2006; 2007). However, whilst brands will strive to adjust to the changing landscape, scepticism from larger organisations remains, which may limit the potential that sponsorship has for them on world stages.

Firstly, with regards to federations and organisations like, FIFA, the IOC, Euro 2008, one of the reasons you don't see technological innovations is that they are incredibly conservative beasts. They will not take any risks, so they are lagging behind (Taylor 2008: 23).

Whilst such major organisations may lag behind embracing technological innovations in their sponsorships, they are influencing the industry by withholding the properties they are purchasing from exploitation. Agencies are choosing to orchestrate their operations in house which may not utilise the suitable expertise:

It is astonishing how many governing bodies right now have properties under their belts. They are selling them for big money but giving nothing to the sponsor. You could be the best exploitation agency in the world and you have got this property that

you know you could do so much with, but they are just saying 'you can't do this, you can't do that' (interviewee five).

Technology is not merely influencing the industry from an innovation and advancement point of view, but sectors within technology as a broad genre, in particular telecommunications have become heavy investors in the market. As a complete industry sector, telecommunications currently stands as the highest-investing sector in sponsorship across the board with \$1,320,000,000 invested in 2005 alone, with only the automotive industry executing a higher frequency of deals in the same year (Kolah 2006). Their impact was recognised by the interviewees, some of whom have involvement with the giant brands in the sector such as Samsung and 02:

It has been great because they are now the biggest supporter of sponsorship generally. 02 have just spent £7-8 million a year to sponsor the London Dome. That is not just sport but it shows the kind of money that they have in all areas of sponsorship. We did the Samsung sponsorship at Chelsea which is £11 million a year, which is a huge growth area for us (interviewee three).

As a whole industry, technology is in a positive situation using sponsorship within their marketing mixes given the reliance that consumers place on products such as mobile phones, televisions and currently more new media based/digital, internet-based products. According to interviewee six:

Technology is in a strong position because people are more reliant on technology; it is the up-and-coming thing. Ten years ago no one had a mobile phone, now everyone has. It is a new marketing avenue, a new media format that people link directly to. So if you own a media format like Motorola owns a mobile phone sector and Vodafone owns the air waves, they have got something that they can use to help target their audience.

Moreover, from specifically a mobile point of view, Malhotra (2008:24) believes that in using mobile technology in sponsorship, there is a need to think smarter in reaching consumers, with brands thinking more about what consumers want.

One of the things that's interesting about the mobile device is that you can not only receive content and exposure to sponsors, but you can actually create your own content. Mobile has got an interesting 2-way communication.

However, there are a couple of interesting challenges:

On the one hand it is a mass-market medium which is highly pervasive and on the other hand it is perceived by individuals to be a highly personal device, which in some sense is more intrusive, which is why SPAM to mobile phones is a big concern in the industry at the moment (Malhotra 2008:25).

Therefore the need for sponsors to take caution, as highlighted within the findings, is valid within the new platforms, given the low tolerance levels of some consumers who may not wish to engage through the sponsorship if they feel they are being bombarded with content. Further to this, Malhotra (2008) suggests that overloading SPAM to mobiles would destroy the willingness that people had to use their mobiles for content and contact with brands. Thus, as the sponsorship industry progresses into a digital era, the importance of doing rigorous research, planning and evaluation becomes more evident. This will provide a sponsorship that is not only engaging, but has longevity in the relationships that it builds with business partners and consumers.

CHAPTER NINE

Discussion of consumer and practitioner findings

9.0 Introduction

Research into consumer perceptions of commercial sponsorship in its generic form is yet to be explored (Meenaghan 2001a). Whilst recent research incorporates different theories in examining sponsorship effects on consumer behaviour (Roy & Cornwell 2004) advertising is still the key focus of attention and understanding the phenomenon of sponsorship is poorly outlined. Further, evidence concerning how sponsorship programmes work in terms of their relationship and impact upon consumers is lacking in current research (Meenaghan 2001a). Literature has failed to explore whether sports sponsorship as a promotional medium can connect and engage with consumers in relation to purchase decisions. Little research has been carried out to examine whether practitioners are designing sports sponsorship programmes in line with the recommendations from the sports business that relate to being more creative and innovative.

The aim of this study was to provide insight into the effectiveness of sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool for general consumers and how, as a medium, it can be used by a variety of communities rather than being primarily targeted at sports fans.

9.1 To examine the impact of brand promotion through sports sponsorship programmes on consumer brand attitude, purchase preference, intention to purchase and exploration of demographic differentials in brand recognition (ROI).

Walliser (2003) notes how awareness studies have been the benchmark for measuring consumer effects of sponsorship and have been focused in three areas; to what extent the public notices sponsors, factors which influence recognition and association and also to analyse the processes related to recognition taking place in a spectators' mind. Whilst this study explored recognition factored by a number of variables including demographic; lifestyle and sporting involvement, the important distinction to make is that the sample group was a general consumer group in which sports involvement was neither known, nor was it actively sought in recruitment. The rationale being that this study did not want to purely repeat past works which have based their objectives around recognition of brands predominantly at sports events (Bennett 1999; Johar *et al* 2006), nor did it want a sports-based sample. As sports sponsorship becomes increasingly sophisticated as a marketing and brand communication platform, its potential, but also its limitations, needed to be explored.

The recognition section of the study returned some high level correct recognition which showed demographic differences. Sports leagues (37%) and events (32%) had the highest level of recognition across the sample which it could be suggested from the practitioner interviews, is indicative of the high level of investment in events (49% of sponsorship type share) and also of the success of title sponsorship, in terms of naming rights, which is often found within sports leagues (Sport Business 2005). In addition to this, it was reiterated within the practitioner interviews that major events provide brands with mass exposure opportunities which, depending on the objectives, is vital to ensuring success of a programme where mass awareness is desired.

The three key demographic variables of gender, age and household income did return differences, with male respondents having the highest recognition for each property type, with 35-44 year olds having highest recognition in events (40% correct), with 20-24 year olds showing highest recognition in leagues (47%). In terms of household income, the sample in the £30,000-£49,999 category returned the highest event recognition, again at 40%, with the highest league recognition (42%) being achieved by those in the £20-£29,999 bracket. It is reasonable from this to suggest that practitioners, if looking to generate awareness and brand recognition, could look to specifically target sports which fall into these categories for the demographic groups which have returned the highest scores. This type of targeting does already exist, for example, interviewee six (practitioners) referred to the Rugby Union demographic as being 35-44 years of age. However, from these results, the research needs to delve deeper into specifics, given that it was major events for which this age group returned higher recognition scores.

Extending demographic variables, spectatorship and participation were also found to be determinants of higher recognition scores for particular properties. For example, the degree to which a consumer was an active or a non active spectator was significantly associated with football and average league recognition, whilst participation levels and average cricket recognition were significantly associated. The implications of this for practitioners is dependent upon the commercial objectives desired and implies that precision based marketing (Wakefield 2007) needs to be adopted if the brand is seeking a tight banded target market rather than a more widespread approach. To do this, it is important that practitioners and brands address a common failure within the industry relating to evaluation (Tripodi *et al* 2003; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). They need, as collective partnerships, to carry out in-

depth research such as presented in this study to actually understand consumers beyond a control group which may return attitudes and opinions which are not as raw as they can be.

Whilst there are evidently differences in recognition from a demographic and involvement point of view, the more dominant factor within the findings was the extent to which the profile of the sport and the brand impacted. High profile sports properties (the top selection for each sport) returned the highest scores on average. However, this was somewhat predictable in football (McGrath *et al* 2005). Tennis events also returned high scores (30%), the score being made up in the majority by Wimbledon and the Artois Championship. Whilst this could be related purely to the exposure of yearly events such as these which gain mass publicity for their duration, the integration of new services such as BBCi have increased the opportunity for viewing to be done on a more personalised level (Clarke 2003). These events also have commercial partners which have been with the sports for a long duration (Sport Business 2005), which naturally gives the consumer longer to recognise and become used to seeing the brands at these events. Although Wimbledon have strict policies about title sponsorship and naming rights (Clarke 2003), the manner in which they have integrated their key partners (i.e. Slazenger and Robinsons) over the years has built up a strong and positive image in the minds of the consumers which has resulted in high recognition. The suggestion to the industry could therefore be to look at these types of events as models of good practice in the way in which they de-clutter the venue from signage, but lever their sponsorships through singular, consistent messages which the consumers finds easier to process.

Medium-to-low profile properties returned low recognition scores across the board with the exception of medium profile football properties which had a respectable level returned. The key factor to consider is the divide which the highly commercialised sports properties are

forging through increased financial backing (Sport Business 2005; Kolah 2006) enabling them to command the types of brands which can commit to longer term deals and are already recognisable for consumers. The limited impact on brand recognition in medium and low-profile sports properties suggests that seeking awareness and recognition within these types of properties may not be the most effective investment of marketing spend. More creative and inventive methods may need to be adopted if a mass budget to exploit rights are not available. For example, high profile sponsors can create visibility by using multi level sponsors' signage, name and logo which is more prominent at these levels of sports properties (Busser *et al* 2002). This type of mass exposure is simply beyond smaller sponsors who may fall into the trap of acquiring rights for a desirable property, but then have no budget to effectively exploit and leverage it to its full potential. Choosing suitable leverage for the rights acquired is a vital component of achieving the set objectives (Jalleh *et al* 2002), therefore the limitations of budgetary allocation and realistic reach of the brand need to be factored into the deal in order to ensure cost effectiveness and increase ROI and ROO.

Although the sports properties may seem desirable as they are the traditional sports within the UK which do gain high level coverage (ESA 2005), it is evident that beyond Premiership football, or major high-profile events, or high profile events which are title sponsored (i.e. Wimbledon, Euro 2004, Natwest Trophy), sponsors need to become more inventive in how they can fix the brand name in a consumer's mind. A key way to do this, as evident from the results, is to integrate CSR through the programme and create the goodwill factor between the brand and the sport. Consumers needed to see that the brand was 'giving something back', rather than being a purely exploitable property, as the idea of promoting through sports properties which 'don't need the money' was seen very negatively and produced an adverse

effect on the brand which is dangerous, if consumers are discarding brands prior to gaining any experience of their products.

In the literature it is acknowledged that television sponsorship is the most effective for both prompted and unprompted recognition, whilst field sponsorship has positive impacts on prompted recognition only (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). However, this is only superficial from an impact point of view, as this study shows that whilst recognition may be high in certain sports, it can be damaging for the brand, given the intrusive nature of its projection. Consumers felt that shirt sponsorships and newer mechanisms such as the Light Emitting Diode (L.E.D) rolling boards are distracting and unnecessary for sports events, to the extent that in some instances, the sports event would be switched off as they are too distracting.

Further, studies in the area are somewhat lacking in using simple recognition as an accurate measurement of sponsorship effects, which in light of this study's findings, need to explore beyond a metric awareness measurement given that consumers are savvy to sponsorship in the current market (Kolah 2007). For example, Lardinoit and Derbaix (2001) recognise that the impact of the televised sponsor messages is heightened with the immediacy of the message as this impacts on the memorisation of the brand. However, this does not explore the upshot of that memorisation process, which as this study found, needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that the sponsorship leverage does not underpin the total consumer attitude and opinion about the brand, thus discarding the brand from future purchases.

Although recognition is done at a peripheral level and can be construed as superficial from a total consumer experience point of view (Christensen 2006), there is still the potential for meaning transfer (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). However, considering the low recognition

levels of some brands, it could be argued that the scale of this, (without the brand creating meaning through innovation), is minimal. This is where CSR could assist in changing the attitudes of consumers away from the brands being 'money-grabbing' to actually trying to help the sport to develop from the grassroots.

CSR is starting to drive the increasing use of cause-related marketing and sport (Kolah 2006) whereby the need for more CSR and cause-related platforms can be easily justified given that there is a shift to direct revenue. This may need to be disguised through community and societal involvement rather than bold and aggressive sponsorship sales techniques (Kolah 2006). From the consumer interviews, the three key areas of healthy living, charity and community involvement, would support the integration of CSR and would help to minimise and possibly eradicate the negativity which was evident with some large brands and wealthy, high-profile sports properties. This is a key area that sponsors need to consider as the industry moves through change into hyper competitive environments (Kolah 2007), where consumers are becoming increasingly demanding (Masterman 2007) and expectant beyond a logo on a shirt.

Sponsorship as a marketing communications tool has developed into being a core brand communication platform (Kolah 2006), which has progressed within a relatively short period of time. Studies, (Johar *et al* 2006) have identified that at a major football event (Euro 2000) frequent viewers could not recognise primary sponsors of the event, with half of the British fans not being able to recognise any brands. From a basic recognition level, consumers are well-informed and this is transferring to their knowledge regarding sponsorship programmes (Kolah 2007). There was a level of tolerance from consumers which translated into the interviews as being taught by brands and to be normally accepted in sport. To this end, the 44% who believed that sport is used excessively to promote brands appears slightly reserved

in a generic context. However, the tolerance when discussing particular high-profile properties and brands shifted to negative impacts on the brand.

A key finding to emerge from this study was the marketing fatigue (Kolah 2006) and threshold of tolerance that consumers have which did not translate to purchase and to influencing purchase decisions in the main. The model presented in chapter six (see Figure 6.4) suggests that sports sponsorship does have value for general consumers (rather than just sports fans). However, as the multi-faceted layering would infer in the model, the process a brand must go through to connect with a consumer-base requires understanding of the opportunities sports sponsorship has within generic consumer groups. For example, although some consumers had little or no sporting interest or involvement, some sponsorship programmes did appear to have both subconscious and conscious impact from an awareness and recognition perspective. Further, within this model, key factors including congruence, CSR, charity and healthy connection were influencers in sports sponsorship being viewed as a reinforcement agent for habitually purchased brands.

Habitually-purchased brands played a key role in how consumers embraced a sports sponsorship programme, which is something that CRM techniques could help to determine and exploit (Ayre 2008) from a generic consumers point of view. Ayre (2008) recognises that consumers need to be rewarded for their commitment to the brand and also for their involvement with the property. Therefore, CRM could help to keep the consumer engaged with the brand, given the disapproval of some consumers to sports sponsorship as a brand communication platform. Through building up sustainable relationships with consumers, the brands can use sports sponsorship to their advantage to shape attitude, particularly if

strategies which foster emotive responses (for example, grassroots sponsorships and cause-related) are executed within the programme.

The strength of a habitually-purchased brand should not be underestimated as the trust a consumer had in their brands transferred into trust in a sports sponsorship programme. For example a common response was *'if my habitually-purchased brand engages in sports sponsorship, they must know what they are doing'*. This view is extremely powerful for marketers to have in their promotional armory and once again heightens the value of sponsorship as a highly sophisticated brand communication platform (Kolah 2006). This trust overarches previous views on sports sponsorship as merely to increase brands' financial wealth rather than giving something back, or lowering the price of the product. If practitioners could harness this more within their planning, the perception of exploitation which consumers have of commercial sports (Meenaghan 2001a) may be minimised.

Whilst some brands returned high levels of recognition, the conversion of this to impacting upon purchase was minimal with 65% of the sample indicating that they do not prefer non-sport related brands when sporting events are on as opposed to their regular brand. Further to this, within the interviews, consumers outlined that other purchase influences such as price, quality and knowledge of the brand and product were far more important than purchasing off the back of an endorsed sports property. The key factors which may influence purchase (and this is stated cautiously given the complexity of the decision-making process consumers go through) related to how the brand was promoted through the sponsorship. For example, short-term national success heightens awareness for a short-period following success and conversion to purchase by consumers would be considered. In addition to this, cause-related and charitable connections, a healthy connection and CSR programmes (within the

community which developed sport at a grassroots level) would also contribute to purchase decisions.

Further, the majority of respondents indicated within the questionnaire data, that the brand endorser does not influence their brand choice, this being confirmed in the interviews. On gaining a deeper insight into this, consumers are '*influenced*'. However, this is done more subconsciously than consciously, with the leverage activities being important to gaining the initial engagement. For example, the advertisements which were deemed to be creative, clever and required the consumer to think about the messages were seen in a more favorable light rather than a more American model of being very direct (Meenaghan 2001b; Kolah 2006). In terms of variables impacting upon purchase, significant differences were identified among brands influencing purchase through sports sponsorship and participants and non-active spectators.

However, whilst this does not guarantee that the more a consumer participates in sport, the more regularly they will purchase the associated products, it is encouraging for a brand, particularly with products which have non-functional congruence. The more encouraging result is the non-active spectator which again, should not be deemed as revolutionary given the low strength of connection between the variables. However it does provide brands and sponsorship practitioners' encouragement that if the sponsorship is delivered through the correct medium, and more importantly to a consumer who will be receptive to this, the opportunity to engage with generic consumers is rife.

In summarising the consumer phase of the study, the results have provided much needed insight into how general consumers embrace, connect and interact with sports sponsorship

programmes beyond simplistic recall and recognition studies which have dominated literature over recent years (Meenaghan 2001a; Tripodi 2001; Walliser 2003). The findings are encouraging for brands and practitioners looking to use sports sponsorship as either a core, or their sole platform for brand communication. General consumers appear to present marketers with opportunities for engagement. However, the complexity and variety in consumers' evaluations of the programmes need to be researched rather than it being taken for granted that sports sponsorship is for sports fans and those who have an involvement in sport.

The key to maximising these opportunities is to engage in-depth research prior to planning, in order to identify the core target market for the product, and then to back this up with a secondary market which could increase the success of the programme. It is accepted that marketers will have specific target markets for their products or services. However, this study has shown that the general consumer market holds value due to the magnitude of coverage that some sports get and the role sport plays within our society. A key opportunity for marketers in the future lies with major events such as the London 2012 Olympics (Kolah 2006). Such events have the power to capture the heart and the minds of consumers, something that the results show can have an impact if it is packaged and delivered in a manner which the consumers want, rather than how marketers want to deliver it (Taylor 2008).

In a consumer-driven world which is very much "...switched off and disenchanted" (Duffy and Hooper 2003:1), it is imperative that new methods of communication are taken onboard and integrated into marketing strategies, which recognise the people who buy the brands (Duffy and Hooper 2003). This links very much to Ayre (2008) who outlines how consumers need to be rewarded and treated with care, as they are the individuals at the end of the day

who purchase the brands. A key driver for this will be advancing technologies for a society which is knowledgeable about technology (Kolah 2007) with certain technologies (i.e. mobile phones) becoming standardised accessories. Sponsorship is not being used as effectively as possible (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Redmandarin 2004), with the recommendation that it needs to reinvent itself as other promotional platforms catch up (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005). Therefore with digital media looking to establish itself within the market place, the opportunities for innovation to drive sports sponsorship through a changing consumer and fragmenting media landscape must be engaged with (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008).

9.2 To investigate the use of sport as a medium for sponsorship in relation to achievability of pre-determined commercial objectives (RO2).

From an industry point of view, sports sponsorship is still not completely understood by practitioners in relation to the best way to utilize its effectiveness (Redmandarin 2004), with this lack of understanding contributing to some questioning its cost effectiveness (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). The upshot being that decisions have been very much based on a chairman's whim approach (interviewee five and eight) whereby the chairman would select which sport to invest in, these normally being sports which they enjoyed, or which offered suitable hospitality (Sims 2005). The results have found that progress has been made within the industry and although this approach is still evident, it is not as dominant as it once was.

In terms of sports sponsorship impacting on consumers, practitioners believe that it can influence a consumer's attitude to a brand (85% combined strongly agree and agree), with 62% believing it can increase recognition. From an industry point of view, the lack of understanding can be witnessed in responses such as these, in which the lack of measurement of how it influences consumers is often recorded purely in recall and recognition (Walliser

2003), not in whether the sponsorship has directly impacted on the end outcome of purchase (CIM 2004).

Although sports sponsorship is becoming increasingly sophisticated (Masterman 2007), it is not a catch-all brand communication platform due to the complexity of commercial objectives which are now being set. This however could be seen as progress from an industry which was renowned for either not setting objectives (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) or for setting un-measurable objectives (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Kolah 2007; Masterman 2007).

However, the consistent issue which emerged from the interviews regarding all themes discussed was that the outcome was dependent upon the objectives set, whether this was acquisition, activation, leverage or budget allocation related. Given this, the recommendation that remained constant throughout the findings, is the need to perform rigorous and meaningful pre-planning research, monitoring and evaluation in order to determine the best fit for each level of the sponsorship programme.

It was well-acknowledged from the findings that seeking brand awareness as a sole objective is now a thing of the past, with brands now looking beyond this and more to sales-related direct revenue, as well as ensuring that ROI is delivered, which is a core component of its use (Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007). Redmandarin (2004) found that enhancing brand image, creating awareness/stability and improving brand credibility were the top three desired objectives. Whilst these were highlighted, in parts, within the results, the reality of the issues came back to direct revenue and ensuring a commercial return for which practitioners

recognised a need to understand the consumers at a deeper more meaningful level. For example:

People want a commercial return, some buy awareness from scratch but other more sophisticated sponsors think about how it changes behaviour in terms of shifting services or products. It is much more hard-nosed than perhaps it used to be, its more integrated with other elements, with a lot more understanding of target audiences, their behaviours and influences (interviewee two – practitioners).

Further, whilst image enhancement was recognised as being important, depending on the property selected, the shift to direct revenue and providing accountability for the rights acquisition and subsequent leverage costs was highlighted as being currently important within the industry. The essence of many sponsorship deals in the current industry is that:

Ninety nine percent are looking for a return on investment, the days of companies just throwing money at events and properties on a chairman's whim are pretty much behind us. It still does happen but generally companies will go into sponsorship because they want a return through sales (interviewee three – practitioners).

The results indicated that sports sponsorship can achieve objectives relating to image-enhancement, media, direct revenue and philanthropy more than sponsorship programmes not sports-related. However, it was indicated that customer loyalty, new product adoption and ROI could be better achieved through other media, but this may not account for an integrated approach, which may, if planned correctly, deliver across all objectives. In total, a majority of 76% of practitioners believe that sports sponsorship can more effectively achieve objectives than other forms of promotion. This does not only indicate a confidence in sports sponsorship, but it highlights how powerful its potential is, and from merging other findings with this, how sports sponsorship still has un-tapped markets and sectors to access. For example, Gen-Y holds great potential for sponsorship within the future technological landscape through M-Marketing (Kolah 2006) and also through the emergence of social networking opportunities which need to be embraced rather than disengaged from (Johnson 2008).

9.3 Exploration of how the concept of sponsorship is integrated within corporate marketing communications and justified as a promotional spend (RO3).

Sports sponsorship on its own, whilst working in some instances (White 2007), needs to be done in an integrated manner in order to totally exploit the rights fully. From a consumer loyalty point of view, the need to build in CRM strategies are acknowledged as being core to retaining the consumers and more importantly developing relationships which span over a longer period of time (Ayre 2008). Therefore, achieving this through a sponsorship only programme would be extremely difficult as there is no innovation beyond the property acquisition which, on its own, cannot retain consumers who are not only increasingly demanding, but disillusioned by some traditional media of promotion (Duffy and Hooper 2003) leading to marketing fatigue (Kolah 2006). Again, the practitioners reverted to the adage that 'it depends on the objectives'. However, in the main, best practice was to integrate sponsorship with other elements of the mix to provide a more robust brand communication platform, this reflecting the support for IMC within marketing (Kotler 2000; Tripodi 2001; Kliatchko 2005; Kolah 2006).

Whilst the consensus was for an integrated approach, new lines of thinking projected sponsorship as a bridging platform across the whole marketing of the brand. This may become a possibility with new avenues made available through technology, particularly as the media continues to fragment (Kolah 2006). To highlight this, interviewee five (practitioners), commented that:

I'd like to see sponsorship as the floating media across all marketing with everyone using it to reach one common goal.....you have big sponsorship properties and you go and speak to the head of department of the company and they don't know anything about it....it has to get a lot smarter and start pushing it more throughout the whole business and meet business objectives rather than just marketing objectives because it can do that....you can show brand revenue through a deal you have done and you can obviously charge more money and the industry will grow.

A key issue within this is the lack of understanding by brands as to the cost of fully exploiting the sponsorship through an integrated approach, whereby acquiring the rights is not the only cost that will be incurred. Budget allocation must cover the activation and leverage activities in order to get the most out of it. A general rule of thumb within the industry is that for every \$1 spent on acquiring sponsorship rights, the realistic expectation is for \$1 to be spent on activation (Kolah 2006). However the majority of sponsors spend less than the rights fee on activating the sponsorship (Redmandarin 2004), which has led to some brands not maximising the potential of the sponsorship, which the practitioners believed came down to either a lack of understanding or the 'throwing money at it' sponsorship which is done without any clear planning.

Literature suggests that structured planning processes are vital to maximising the effectiveness of sports sponsorship (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Sims 2005; Kolah 2006), particularly if the programmes are being integrated cross-platform (Masterman 2007). However, the extent to which sports sponsorship is thoroughly planned is questionable (CIM 2004), yet within the European Sponsors' Survey (Redmandarin 2004), sponsorship executives identified that good planning and development of a sponsorship strategy are the highest-rated factors in ensuring a successful sponsorship programme (Redmandarin 2004). The findings have highlighted a slight conflict with converting theoretical ideals into best practice, based upon factors including desired objectives and budget allocation. However, poor practice is still identified as being in operation in the current industry climate.

Whilst planning processes outlined in literature (Chadwick and Thwaites 2005; Kolah 2006; Masterman 2007) identified some common stages such as objective-setting, negotiation, leverage and evaluation, similar stages were identified within practice. However,

the extent to which they were adopted remains somewhat erratic. The processes outlined by practitioners were either short, and concentrated more on the financial investment, or more in-depth including research in defining the target markets and the capabilities of the brand and property. The importance of this is that whilst a lack of standardisation is inevitable given the vast variety in sports properties, brand capabilities and objectives desired, this should not be seen as an excuse to approach a deal in a more ad-hoc manner which is based purely on the practitioners' experience, which, in some cases is not sufficient to operate in this way.

From a sports point of view, out of seven named objectives within the practitioners' questionnaire, football was seen to be most effective with the exception of image enhancement (Formula 1 identified) and philanthropy (tennis), which highlights again, how the process goes beyond merely selected a property on whim-based decisions (see Table 24). The sport chosen (amongst other key decisions) needs to be factored thoroughly into the planning in terms of its reach and ability to ROO as well as ROI. Further, within the results, out of the three demographic variables of gender, age and household income, the practitioners identified that it was age (53%) which was the biggest consideration out of the three with gender second (38%) and household income third. The percentages are not particularly high, which suggests that either they are not too important, or there is a lack of knowledge as to attributing levels of importance to them. The reasonable suggestion to make is that whilst consumers become more demanding, and sport encapsulates broader audiences beyond sports fans, considerations need to be taken to ensure that consumer groups do not feel disengaged from the marketing which may only impact them at a low level. However, this can still transfer meaning (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001).

9.4 Investigation of how strategy implementation and leverage of sports sponsorship programmes are affected by changes in the sponsorship market and budgetary considerations (RO4).

Given the increase in the accountability across the whole industry from a spend point of view (Kolah 2007) progress has been made, with specialist sponsorship agencies playing the key role in facilitating the relationship-building between the brand and properties. Whilst the results indicated that the sponsorship has more benefits to the brand rather than to the sport, the need for strategic mutual agreements in terms of design and implementation should be considered cross-party to ensure that neither brand nor sport feel exploited. Interviewee six (practitioners) summed this up well by commenting that:

It's absolutely vital, it's the first thing we start with, we look at the strategy behind it. Everything has got to have some sort of rationale, every selection, every choice we make, it's every step of the way, through the selection of the sports, entertainment or music property. Every step of the way it has to be filtered down and thrashed out with the provider at each step, the strategy as well.

However, there was evidence of certain elements of planning being not fully embraced, or worst still, not entered into, which still highlights that the days of the chairman's whim have not been completely eradicated. Interviewee eight (practitioners) noted that:

There is still a long way to go and a lot of improvement needed.....if the chairman is a golfer, you can bet your bottom dollar if he loves golf that's where they'll end up.

This was not an isolated opinion, with some acknowledgement from other practitioners that whilst it occurs less, there are still occasions when it is adopted as an approach. Although larger global brands appear to plan more robustly, there is a need for all properties to adopt a structured planning process, as the smaller properties and brands cannot rely upon the brand name as much as brands such as Coca-Cola; Vodafone and Microsoft which naturally command attention given their global status.

Kolah's (2006:2007) suggestion of adopting a 360 degree view of sponsorship appears relevant and timely given that the most common failing of sponsorships are down to a lack of focus and measurable objectives, which requires a clear balance between all parties involved. The CIM (2004) recognise that any ad-hoc planning relates to a number of factors including; weak targeting, inappropriate matching of sponsor with event, viewing sponsors as separate communications methods, sponsoring events with too short a life span and sponsoring individuals excessively to their long term value.

Sponsorship planning needs to consider these factors given that it is seen as the main marketing platform which supports an organisation's business strategy (Kolah 2006). Practitioners recognise the need to achieve a growth in market share, increase market value and brand stability over a five year period, rather than a short one-three year deal. This reflects the current direction within the industry in which a number of large global brands (i.e. Emirates and Arsenal football club) have started to demand ownership through title sponsorship and naming rights of properties (Sport Business 2005) for the vast sums of money they are investing. From a planning point of view, with regards this, whilst practitioners recognised that title sponsorship and shirt sponsorships are most effective in increasing brand recognition, the consumers identified a somewhat tiresome attitude to shirt sponsorship, which needs to be considered when mapping for congruence against the objectives.

From the results, it can be suggested that an industry standardised planning process, (despite going against literature) would not be effective, nor would it constitute best practice for all sectors given, not only the changing nature of the industry, but more importantly, the degree to which sponsorship is dependent upon a variety of internal and external factors, which

simply cannot be set in stone. The important thing to note is that key stages are required that need to be embraced. The variation to which these are achieved will be dependent on the brand and sports property requirements.

9.5 Investigation of the extent to which sports sponsorship programmes are planned, monitored and evaluated from inception to end of deal term (RO5).

It is recognised that measurement and evaluation of sponsorship programmes has long been a grey area within literature (Farrelly *et al* 1997; Wallier 2003; Chadwick and Thwaites 2005) which is, in the main, related to the over reliance on metric analysis as the benchmark for accurate evaluation (CIM 2004). From the results, this continues to remain a problematic area, and something which is unlikely to be standardised cross industry given time, budgetary and attitudinal constraints.

The results show that this is again, an improving industry area with global tools like Spindex™ and Sponsorlink (S-COMM 2008) providing greater depth of information for evaluation, which for larger brands is working effectively, as they can budget this into the programme. Similarly, with the advent of sponsorship evaluation agencies, there is the potential for the future of sponsorship measurement and evaluation to be extremely bright. However, attitudes across industry must change. Fundamentally, employing such agencies to work on evaluation is an additional expense, this money the practitioners recognise would rather be invested into additional media by the brands . Interviewee five (practitioners) sums this up well by stating that:

If you go to a sponsor and say you want to do this (evaluate) and I need another £5000 for this, they'll always say no, can't we put that £5000 into a bit more media activity, more coverage and then we just do a rock evaluation at the end. They have a certain budget and they see evaluation as very expensive.....that said, bigger sponsorships are very good at doing research all the way through.

In measuring and evaluating sponsorship, the suggestion is that it should explore “How clear was the sponsorship; who took notice and did it achieve the objectives set for it” (Masterman 2007:226). However, to do this from both an ROI and ROO perspective (CIM 2004), methods of evaluation need to be determined within the industry, given the discrepancies in interpreting the outcome:

The whole problem is you are never going to get agreement on an evaluation technique because there are so many different objectives (interviewee two-practitioners).

This is consistent with current thought on ROI measures for which practitioners are seeking “Reliable evaluation methods to gauge the real ROI” (Redmandarin 2004:10). The solution to this appears complex and something which the industry needs to explore as a continuous process, including pre-evaluation prior to the commencement of the programme. This would facilitate a planning process which had accurate and meaningful background research regarding all aspects, including; reach, target market, best-fit property type and other design and implementation issues already highlighted.

However, before this can be identified, instances of practitioners not buying into the idea of evaluation should be addressed in order to provide added value to the measurement and evaluation as core components of a sponsorship programme. Again, there has been progress made within this area with the majority of practitioners indicating that sponsors are increasingly looking for evaluation at the end of the sponsorship for ROI and ROO purposes. Despite this, there is still some attitudinal difference of opinion which need to be highlighted as they may slow progress down if this is not an isolated case, which some suggest it isn't (Sims 2005).

The disapproval of intelligence companies at the evaluation based on a “...gut feeling” (interviewee two - practitioners) are worryingly evident within the industry. This limits the potential of the sponsorship for both brand and property. The particular issue raised here was to undertake pre evaluation rather than post evaluation as:

You can guess or know by the gut feel whether it was good or bad or could have been better, so I think evaluation is over-talked and there should be much more on pre-evaluation (interviewee two – practitioners).

Evaluation is a much broader issue for sponsorship programmes given the “...lack of desire or inherent ability” (Redmandarin 2004:9) to carry out robust measurement and evaluation, but also in the lack of responsibility that sponsors and rights owners take for this aspect. From a measurement point of view, whilst media value through (for example) newspaper cuttings, cost per thousand analysis (CPT) and logo signage coverage can provide a base of metrics with which brands and rights holders can work, this does not convert to whether a consumer would actually purchase the product being promoted (CIM 2004). If the responsibility for this activity was determined within the planning, or potentially as a core component of the cost (either rights fee or activation), then both parties would gain the benefit of professional evaluation through measurement tools which can provide consumer behaviour-related outcomes. Importantly to add to this is that if a neutral research agency were to become involved, the idea of manipulating the statistics to the advantage of the brand, which was identified with the interviews (interviewee four: practitioners), would be minimised, which may increase trust in the worth of sports sponsorship as a complete brand communication platform.

This could in turn, make the rights more valuable to other sponsors and could provide their portfolio with clearer results-driven data for future use. In swaying the argument in favour of

the rights holders to take responsibility, Masterman (2007:226), comments that this could “...make their sponsorship opportunity more attractive if they offer this service” (Masterman 2007; 226). Further, and as highlighted earlier, research agencies including S:COMM, Sports Marketing Surveys and Redmandarin can also be reliable sources providing they do not actually implement the sponsorship (Masterman 2007), and are therefore neutral in the process, as biased data would be a step back rather than progress forward. Further to this, from a content perspective, content providers have a key role to play in providing brands with information regarding how content is consumed, something which in the future needs to be monitored and evaluated more clearly in order to provide base data which feeds back into the planning:

The ability to acquire content, distribute content and then measure and record that feedback as to how the content was consumed will be the way forward especially in terms of sponsors and advertisers (Jamieson 2008:23).

9.6. Summary and the future direction for sports sponsorship.

Over the next twenty-five years, sponsorship is set to continue to be one of the fastest growing brand communication platforms available to a marketer (Kolah 2006). However, the findings would suggest that this will be done away from traditional media and more in line with digital media offerings which can be used to connect and engage consumers (Taylor 2008; Wallage 2008). A key finding from the practitioner phase is the necessity to understand the needs of the consumer in order to deliver a programme which is not only cost-effective, but has the power to reach consumers beyond brand recognition. If this can be done, the opportunity for brands to engage in CRM techniques to create longevity within consumer relationship (Kim *et al* 2007; Ayre 2008) can be heightened.

The use of sport within sponsorship engenders passion and there are clear emotional ties between consumers, fans and sports (Duffy and Hooper 2003; Wakefield 2007), whether this

is from a fanatical point of view, or from general consumers taking an interest in the success of the country when being nationally represented (i.e. Olympic Games; World Cups). Marketers need to be aware of the impact which sports sponsorship has on all consumers, given that this study has shown unearthed potential in many respects for greater utilisation in general markets, rather than sports-specific consumer groups.

As the future of a dynamic industry starts to unfold, it is imperative that practitioners start to evaluate not only the sponsorship programmes but also their own practice to ensure that they can stay ahead of the field and provide programmes which are not only thoroughly planned, monitored and evaluated, but those which are creative, innovative and capture the true essence of the brand. This is essential as the forces of change set to influence brand owners and sports right holders (globalisation, behaviour, permission and technology) start to shape future practice and industry opportunities (Kolah 2006). Brands are starting to recognise that there is a need to more effectively use sponsorship as communication to connect with the consumers and, for some sectors, tried and tested models of sponsorship are not yet in place. However, the value of sport as the medium is readily identified. According to Wilson-Dunn (2008:4):

Sport translates, it communicates, and as a society, we need to find a way of using that communication, that adoption, that brand and that lifestyle, in a better way, to bring the world together.

Taking this further, using the London 2012 Olympic Games as an example, which Kolah (2006) recognises will be a significant test for sponsors, the idea of community involvement rather than purely focusing on those interested in sport, will drive the ethos of the games beyond a sporting event. Balfour (2008) outlines how the Olympics (London 2012) is not just about sport. There needs to be engagement from groups (community aspects, education,

culture) who although not interested in the sport itself are still meaningfully connected to the event, this being something which sponsors need to take into consideration.

All sponsors and brand guardians are looking at how they can engage with consumers in a meaningful way, given that the whole market place has changed in the last four or five years (Taylor 2008). The advent of new technologies within the sponsorship industry will either make or break many sponsors in terms of whether they embrace it or they opt to remain with traditional media, which the results of this study have shown, are somewhat tiring for consumers. Consumers are more sponsorship savvy (Kolah 2006) and more knowledgeable about technology, which produces a relationship which, on paper, should be complimentary to all parties involved, whether this is through M-marketing, broadband, mobile TV, video advertising or social networking. A key to this is the longer day that consumers are creating for themselves through digital media, whereby, "It is interesting that people are creating a 26/27 hour day. We see the expanding digital media universe as a positive as we try to grow our sport and our business" (Rolapp 2008:34).

However, brands will need to move quickly if they are not to be left behind in an advancing sponsorship industry. For example, according to Taylor (2008:23) "There is no doubt that mobile is going to be where it is going to be because we are a society that is on the move where time is precious". Further to this, Taylor (2008) recognises how the current industry scenario is that everyone is trying to find the next way to engage with the consumer in order to give them what they want rather than what brands may think they want. The key recommendation to achieve this, is not to sit back and recognise that as the media landscape continues to fragment, technologies are emerging which could positively impact on the sponsorships, but to actively research, investigate and really look to sap the potential that they

have within current society. Thorough pre-during and post-evaluation will enable this to occur in terms of highlighting where the innovation and creativity fits best within the programme and by which digital media methods. This links to the idea of following consumption which will produce longer term benefits. Rolapp (2008:34) states, "You follow the consumption and that is where the money is going to go. It may take a while but the consumption is going to go there".

However, this begs the question as to whether the current literature is reflective of the practicalities of the industry. Studies continue to explore (mainly empirically, which does not allow expression of feeling) areas which in essence could be deemed out-of-date (brand recall and recognition studies as measures of sponsorship effectiveness) and not in touch with the reality of the industry from the point of view of being an honest and current indication of both best practice and areas which are still developing and will continue to develop.

Sports sponsorship clearly has potential in general consumer markets, far beyond the credit that it is given within literature which bases its research largely around control groups which are exposed to sponsorship logos either at an event (hence they have an automatic interest in the sport) or through manufactured situations which are neither natural nor reflective of how a consumer may react to a brand beyond recalling it. In order for the industry to benefit from scholarly research, studies exploring general consumer behaviour following major national events (for example, the Olympics) which explore when exactly the sponsors impacted (if at all) and how this translates into the objectives desired by the brand would be desirable. Further, comparative studies which explored the effectiveness of sponsorships with digital media, CSR and longitudinally with CRM strategies integrated would provide practitioners

with a more useful set of data which would evaluate the extent to which their platforms were operating cross sector.

From a practitioner's point of view, the industry is continuing to develop, and although this has become more sophisticated, with practitioners who have a greater understanding of the value of sports sponsorship, the industry in parts requires up-skilling. This needs to be done in aspects of planning, monitoring and evaluation to try and encourage best practice across industry, which will include an embracing of technology as the industry moves into a new digital era (Kolah 2006; Taylor 2008; Church Sanders 2008). Progress has been made. However, to understand how consumers react to sponsorship programmes and to completely see where exploitation of rights can deliver the best return, practitioners will need to stay alert to market climates and consumer needs as the industry continues to evolve. If this can be achieved, best practice can be shared industry-wide, and practitioners are very much proactive rather than reactive to change, the eradication of the ad-hoc approach may become a reality.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusions and recommendations

10.0 Introduction

This study set out to explore how sports sponsorship impacts on general consumer behaviour, in particular brand recognition, consumer evaluation and purchase intention were the key points of interest. The study also aimed to explore how practitioners design and implement sponsorship programmes and whether they are comprehensively planning and evaluating to gain a true reflection of the value to brands. From initial analysis of questionnaire data followed by in-depth interview transcripts, key findings have emerged as discussed in chapters six, eight and nine. The study adopted a mixed methodological approach which was deemed appropriate in order to suitably address the five research objectives. The conclusion, recommendations and limitations are now presented within this chapter.

10.1 Conclusion

In answering the overall question of *how effective is sports sponsorship as a marketing communications tool in impacting general consumer buying behaviour?*, this study concludes that it has the potential to be the core brand communications platform for many companies however this is dependent upon numerous factors. Consumers showed high levels of brand recognition, however purchase intention was largely unaffected. The manner in which brands could impact on this is through sponsorships which are community based, related to healthy living or connected to charity. The main reason for consumers discarding a sports sponsorship was due to overly commercial links and also to the idea that these types of brands did not give anything back to the sport. This study concludes that the key direction for

brands to take in the future is through a more CSR approach which uses sports sponsorship for more visible social good than is currently occurring in the sponsorship industry. In general, consumers take notice of the brands involved in sports sponsorship. However, if this is to be converted to a meaningful association the sponsorship programme needs to be creative, innovative and capture the imagination. This needs to be done away from traditional advertisement banners and more towards engaging the consumer in the sponsorship programme and the brand values and messages.

Sports sponsorship can achieve commercial objectives more than other forms of sponsorship. However, this is very much done on a case-by-case situation. It was found that one sponsorship programme is not the same as another, therefore standardisation across many factors including achieving objectives was not possible. Brands are now seeking to achieve an ROI rather than just brand awareness, therefore the creativity in designing programmes that will achieve this is further underlined.

A key conclusion surrounds the issues of planning, monitoring and evaluation which have been poorly undertaken within the sports sponsorship industry. This study concludes that whilst some attempts are being made to integrate these processes in a more substantial manner there is still a long way to go. Given the variation between sponsorship programmes and the types of brands investing in them, the idea of standardising processes to plan and evaluate is completely unrealistic. A key factor involved in this is budget, whereby some brands will not invest in evaluation as this limits the amount of media exposure they can generate from their investment fee. However this study found that brands do not necessarily understand their consumers in such a manner as to engage in a meaningful relationship with them. Money should be allocated to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorship

programmes as brands may still be providing consumers with what they want rather than with what the consumer wants. This is a key issue considering the amounts of money which are invested in sports sponsorship programmes which may not be reaching their full potential due to a lack of planning and evaluation across the sports sponsorship industry.

Technology is becoming vital to brands using sports sponsorship as it provides the innovation and creativity to which brands respond positively. However, this must be embedded within planning processes and not used as an addition to the sponsorship programme. Traditional advertising media such as advertising banners are not producing positive reactions from consumers as they do not give any information about the brand or their intentions, therefore consumers cannot see past the exploitation tag. Technology can be used to work around this issue and gain individualised consumer data which can be used to tailor communication to consumers in a manner which gives them the information that they need.

This study concludes, overall, that sports sponsorship has the potential to be a highly effective and efficient marketing tool if brands engage in thorough planning, monitoring and evaluation. Brands should not be satisfied with metric recognition test results on which to base their effectiveness, but they need to monitor consumption patterns and track how their consumers respond best to their marketing stimuli. If brands do not use sports sponsorship more strategically through media to which consumers respond better they may find that their investment is not having a positive impact, for example through CSR programmes, grassroots, charitable connections and also through congruence with their brand (i.e. healthy brands). Brands need to ensure that practitioners are gaining a true reflection of their ROI as well as a ROO which would ensure that sports sponsorship is a highly effective brand communication platform. It is important to conclude that whilst sports sponsorship has the

potential to be the primary communication platform for a brand it is not a catch-all medium and needs to be evaluated against what the brand wants and what it can achieve for them.

10.2 Recommendations for practice and for future study

Drawing on the findings and conclusions from this study a number of recommendations have been made to feed back into the sports sponsorship industry which can be used as direct points of reference or as points to compare and contrast against individual practice. This study recommends that practitioners must engage consistently in thorough planning and evaluation to ensure that they can have an in-depth understanding of their consumers. This needs to be done in order to ensure that sports sponsorship is the correct method to use as their focal brand communication tool. Whilst standardisation across the sports sponsorship industry may prove extremely difficult, brands must have some consistent processes in place to address this within their planning. Therefore, this study recommends that brands allocate a proportion of their budget to allow an external evaluation company to do this for them.

The study also recommends that brands look to invest in their sports sponsorship at grassroots levels and through CSR programmes, as general consumers respond more positively to these approaches. Whilst this may not achieve some commercial objectives it is recommended to be the most effective way to connect with a general consumer group in a meaningful way. Regardless of the brands' objectives for the sponsorship they need to consider extracting ROI in order to justify the investment. This may make sports sponsorship an unrealistic option for some brands.

Another key recommendation from this study is for brands to use technology within their sponsorship programmes and also to track consumer trends through CRM technology. This

would provide them with data to allow for a more tailored approach to marketing which would help to minimise the negativity towards brands associated with mass marketing.

In making recommendations for future study, further empirical research should be carried out to explore patterns amongst consumer buying behaviour and sports sponsorship. This should be done pre-during and post-event to examine whether or not there is a peak time for maximum sponsorship impact. In addition, qualitative interviews with consumers who purchase as a result of sports sponsorship would assist in providing brands with reasons as to why they purchase, for example, whether this is a direct result of the promotional strategy and leverage or whether it is more associated with the relationship the brand has with its consumers. As this study did not account for geographic variances, future study would need to explore these areas throughout broader geographic areas.

A longitudinal study would also benefit practitioners in order to identify at which point the use of sport as the medium provides an advantage over other media. This could then extend to exploring whether different deal terms impacted, for example, shorter three to five year deals or deals which extend longer than ten years. To do this, a quantitative study would allow for trends to be analysed and this could be supported by consumer opinions depending on the nature of the objectives.

Further study is required from a brand owner's perspective to explore how the sports sponsorship is placed within the organisation and how this impacts on the roles of the different departments. This would be most suitably done through a more qualitative approach to explore the value that sponsorship managers place on the role sponsorship can play within the organisations' wider corporate strategy. This would enable a cross departmental viewpoint to be established.

The sponsorship industry would benefit from a longitudinal case study research of sports sponsorships which used technology as the primary promotional medium. This would allow for a wide range of issues to be explored, such as consumer reach and interactivity and also the impact that this has on the purchase intentions of consumers. In order to provide a more holistic view of this, future study would need to explore whether technology-based sponsorships have greater impact at events, through leagues, teams or with sports personalities.

10.3 Summary tables of conclusions and recommendations

Table 60-64 highlights the summary findings and recommendations for each research objective.

Table 60: Research objectives findings summary (RO1)

Research Objective One	
RO1: Examine the impact of brand promotion through sports sponsorship programmes on consumer brand attitude, purchase preference, intention to purchase and explore demographic differentials in brand recognition.	
Summary of findings	Recommendations for practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brands using sports sponsorship are presented with a plethora of opportunities for impacting on consumer buying behaviour. Brand recognition did reveal demographic variables with male consumers recording overall higher recognition, however high profile sports and high profile brands when combined revealed encouraging recognition levels across the whole sample. Although purchase intention was in the main unaffected, there was potential for sports sponsorship to impact upon buyer behaviour if the brand was related to healthy living, or there was a charitable connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brands need to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of using sports sponsorship as their focal brand communication. Despite sports sponsorship having the capability to impact on a broad range of consumer groups, it is not a catch all communications medium and therefore brands should still recognise the target groups who respond most favourably. Brands which have little congruence or fit with the sport property should look more to CSR and cause-related sponsorships to increase the goodwill and transference to purchase intentions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the sponsoring brands are habitually purchased by consumers, this acts as a reinforcement agent for purchase and also would promote trust in the intentions of a sports sponsorship if the brand was purchased by the consumer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands which have loyal customer bases should investigate how sports sponsorship can work for them given the increased acceptability of sports sponsorship as a medium of promotion and communication by consumers who habitually purchase.
Recommendations for study	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further empirical research should be carried out to explore patterns amongst consumer buying behaviour and sports sponsorship pre, during and post event to examine whether or not there is a peak time for the sponsorship to impact the most. • In addition, qualitative interviews with consumers who purchase as a result of sports sponsorship would assist in providing brands with reasons as to why they purchase, for example, whether this is a direct result of the promotional strategy and leverage or whether it is more associated with the relationship the brand has with its consumers. • As this study did not account for geographic variances, future study would need to explore these areas throughout broader geographic areas. 	

Table 61: Research objectives findings summary (RO2)

Research Objective Two	
RO2: Investigate the use of sport as a medium for sponsorship in relation to achievability of pre-determined commercial objectives.	
Summary of findings	Recommendations for practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports sponsorship was recognised as being more effective in achieving objectives overall, however this was very much dependent upon the objectives. • Any measures of effectiveness in achieving objectives could not be standardised given the varying nature within each objective • Objectives have shifted from brand recall and recognition more to direct revenue given the increase accountability of sponsorship as marketing spend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands must recognise how best to apply sports sponsorship within their marketing strategies and ensure that they have sufficient data as a foundation for this. • The sponsorship industry needs to recognise that whilst standardisation of measurement tools is difficult, a set process to ensure suitable analysis is carried out could be implemented. • Brands need to consider extracting ROI regardless of their objectives in order to justify the investment. This may make sports sponsorship an unrealistic option for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage activities to promote the sponsorship were dependent upon the objectives, however generally, more unique and creative methods were viewed as being imperative in the future. 	<p>some brands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to fully exploit sponsorship programmes brands need to engage with consumers beyond a traditional ad-banner and utilise more current strategies such as through technology.
<p>Recommendations for study</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to explore patterns and trends in the achievability of objectives, a longitudinal study would need to be carried out in order to identify at which point the use of sport as the medium provides the advantage over other mediums. This could then extend to exploring whether different deal terms impacted, for example, shorter three to five year deals or deals which extend longer than ten years. To do this, a quantitative study would allow for trends to be analysed and this could be supported with consumer opinions depending on the nature of the objectives. 	

Table 62: Research objectives findings summary (RO3)

<p>Research Objective Three</p>	
<p>RO3: Explore how the concept of sponsorship is integrated within corporate marketing communications and justified as a promotional spend.</p>	
<p>Summary of findings</p>	<p>Recommendations for practice</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports sponsorship was viewed as being the key brand communication platform for brands moving into the future, given its flexibility and ability to reach consumers. • Sports sponsorship needs to be used as an integrated component in order to fully exploit its full potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If brands are to use sports sponsorship as their sole communication platform, the whole organisation needs to buy into the process and all departments need to connect their strategies together. • Brands need to recognise the need to budget effectively for both rights acquisition and subsequent leverage activities in order to fully exploit the proposition.
<p>Recommendations for study</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further study is required from a brand owner's perspective to explore how the sports sponsorship is placed within the organisation. This would be most suitably done through a 	

more qualitative approach to explore the value which sponsorship managers place on the role sponsorship can play within the organisations wider corporate strategy. This would enable a cross departmental viewpoint to be established.

Table 63: Research objectives findings summary (RO4)

Research Objective Four	
RO4: Investigate how strategy implementation and leverage of sports sponsorship programmes are affected by changes in the sponsorship market and budgetary considerations.	
Summary of findings	Recommendations for practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological advancements were seen as being important to the industry in order to create unique and innovative sponsorship propositions. • Brands need to budget for both rights acquisition and leverage costs in order to achieve this, as some fail to capitalise on fully exploiting the property through a lack of understanding of the whole costs of using sports sponsorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands need to use technology as a means of communicating their sponsorships through active engagement, for example a more tailored approach through mobile marketing. • Some brands may need to opt for a lower tiered sponsorship if their budget does not allow for a top tier partnership. Ultimately the objectives will define this. However, brands need to understand the implications of not budgeting for meaningful leverage.
Recommendations for study	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sponsorship industry would benefit from longitudinal case study research of sponsorships which used technology as the primary promotional medium. This would allow for a wide range of issues to be explored, such as consumer reach and interactivity and also the impact that this has on the purchase intentions of consumers. In order to provide a more holistic view of this, future study would need to explore whether technology-based sponsorships have greater impact at events, through leagues, teams or with sports personalities 	

Table 64: Research objectives findings summary (RO5)

Research Objective Five	
RO5: Investigate the extent to which sports sponsorship programmes are planned, monitored and evaluated from inception to end-of-deal term.	
Summary of findings	Recommendations for practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning processes are undertaken. However, the degree to which these are formalised is dependent upon the knowledge and expertise of the sponsorship agency. • The general practice within the industry is for some form of evaluation to take place. However, this is too difficult to standardise across the industry. • Sports sponsorship programmes are still planned and subsequently evaluated poorly. Some programmes continue to be implemented on a chairman's whim. However, this is an area of improvement within the industry • Despite new measurement and evaluation tools which look beyond metric analysis, standardising industry evaluation tools is viewed as extremely problematic given the varied nature of objectives and sponsorships types. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands need to ensure that they have a structured process for their sponsorship activities which start with pre-planning involving sponsorship agencies, in order to maximise their proposition. This needs to be driven by their objectives. • See second practice based recommendation for research objective two. • Successful sponsorship which have been thoroughly planned and evaluated should be highlighted as good practice within the industry in order to provide worth to these processes. • Specialist evaluation agencies should be incorporated into sponsorship programmes in order to provide a richer source of data. This would need to be budgeted into the sponsorship investment so as not to create additional expense.
Recommendations for study	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an area which requires a great deal of research attention in order to provide brands with comprehensive data which spans beyond metric analysis and more to holistic evaluations which encompass the impact on consumer behaviour as well as coverage generated. This will allow brands to plan more effectively through having data on which to build from past sponsorships. This again would need to be longitudinal in order to explore pre, during and post effects and would benefit from a mixed methodological approach which included brand owners; sponsorship agencies and sports properties. 	

10.4 Limitations

The study encountered limitations at both consumer and practitioner phases. However, the potential for limiting factors to impact on the achievability of the study's objectives was reduced through taking steps to increase response rates and also to ensure that the study was as valid and reliable as possible. A key limiting factor within the consumer phase was that geographic variance could not be accounted for as the sample was only based within the North West. This could be extended to further studies to compare whether geographic location is a key factor on sports sponsorship impacting on consumer behaviour. It would also have been beneficial to conduct further consumer interviews in order to explore a broader variety of consumers' views. Despite this, the interviews did represent a wide spread of ages, income and also a mix of both males and females. A further limitation to the data collection was the lack of response for Part C of the questionnaire which was an unaided recall test in which respondents had to recall sport and brand connections without any assistance. It was not deemed as relevant to the study objectives for the small response to this section to be analysed, and in reflection, the recognition test (Part B) was more aligned to addressing the objectives. In relation to the practitioner phases of data collection, the study could have explored the brand owners' perspective. This would have enabled all aspects of the sponsorship arrangement to be researched in order to provide an overview of how much control a brand owner has on the sponsorship programme that is finally implemented.

The methodology chosen did provide a clear pathway to answer the research questions and gain data that could be used across all four phases to inform the research design and also in relation to the objectives. However, it did present some limitations that the study must acknowledge. The first is the experience of the researcher to undertake interviews. The interviewer needed to extract the correct data to answer the objectives and in some instances

in the practitioner interviews, a greater level of experience would have aided the study in capturing more data when interviewees gave particular cues to other areas of interest. However, the role of the individual within their organisation, coupled with their time commitment meant that some interviews had to be more focused than others which restricted further exploration and may have resulted in information being missed.

With the study being guided by pragmatic assumptions, a limitation was the manner in which the results could be more easily influenced by the researchers own biases. Whilst steps were taken to minimise this (such as writing down personal reflections on the subject prior to carrying out interviews) it cannot be discounted. The study did adopt a varied sample of consumers and practitioners to try and gain a broader understanding of the issues. However, given the involvement of the researcher within the industry and interest in the subject, the likelihood of bias within interpretation should not be ignored.

The methodological approach taken has a limitation in general that concerns the issue of not generalising knowledge to other sectors. The study did seek to investigate a cross-section of consumers and also a cross-section of the sports sponsorship industry. However, the results could be limited to those studied given that in reflection of the whole UK population, a sample of 157 (consumers) could be considered as small. The practitioner phases did recruit a larger number (n=55) based on the number of businesses that operate in sports sponsorship, however the generalisability is limited.

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Order of Appendices

Appendix 1	Phase one questionnaire
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Appendix 1

Section 1 - About Yourself

This section asks you questions about yourself. *Please tick one response only unless stated to do so otherwise.*

1.0 Please indicate whether you are:

Male Female

1.1 How old are you?

16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.2 What is your occupation? [_____]

1.3 Which of the following best reflects your annual household income?

Below £10,000 p/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10,000-£19,999 p/a	<input type="checkbox"/>
£20,000-£29,999 p/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30,000-£49,999 p/a	<input type="checkbox"/>
£50,000-£99,999 p/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100,000 +	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.4 Please identify your residential status.

Homeowner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rented Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, Please State	[_____]

1.5 Including yourself, how many people live in your household? [_____]

1.6 Do you use the Internet?

Yes No

1.7 Do you have access to Satellite/Cable/Digital Television?

Yes No

1.8 Please identify which Newspaper(s) you read.

	Daily	2-3 times per week	Once per week	Occasional (less than once per week)
Daily Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [_____]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please State & tick relevant box

1.9 Do you have any children?

If no, proceed to Section 2.

Yes

No

1.10 If yes, how many?

0	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 +	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.11 What age are your child/children?

If multiple children fall into the same age bracket, indicate next to the box how many children i.e. 0-5 {√} (2)

0-5	6-11	12-15	16-18	19+
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.12 How many hours physical activity per week does your child/children take part in?

If different categories apply, indicate next to the box how many children, i.e. 1-3 hours per week [√] (1), 7-10 hours per week [√] (2)

None	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3 hours per week	<input type="checkbox"/>
4-6 hours per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	7-10 hours per week	<input type="checkbox"/>
11+ hours per week	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Section 2 - Your Sporting Interests.

This section asks questions about your personal interest in sport. *Please tick one response only unless stated to do so otherwise.*

2.0 Below is a list of sports. Please rank the following sports from 1 (least interest) to 6 (most interest) to identify your level of interest in each.

- Football []
- Rugby Union []
- Tennis []
- Cricket []
- Snooker []
- Motor Racing (Formula One) []

2.1 Please identify whether there are any other sports that you have more interest in, and rank them appropriately.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Rank</u>
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]

2.2 Please identify which form of sport you prefer to **PARTICIPATE** in and be a **SPECTATOR** for.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Participate</u>	<u>Spectator</u>	<u>Neither</u>
Team Sports (e.g. Football, Rugby Union)	[]	[]	[]
Individual Sports (e.g. Tennis, Snooker)	[]	[]	[]

2.3 Please state which of the following you prefer, or have most interest in.

Sport

Please tick

Season Long Leagues

[]

(e.g. Premiership football, Premiership Rugby Union, County Cricket Championships)

Major Events

[]

(e.g. Grand Slam Tennis Tournaments, World Cup Football)

2.4 Please state which specific sport League/Event is your favourite?
(e.g. Wimbledon, Twenty20 Cricket)

[_____]

Section 3 - Your Sporting Involvement.

This section asks you to identify your **CURRENT** involvement in sport, and your **PREVIOUS** involvement in sport. *If multiple answers apply, please tick more than one box.*

3.0	<u>CURRENTLY</u>	<u>PREVIOUSLY</u>	<u>WHICH SPORT(S)</u>
None	[]	[]	[_____]
Spectator (Active -Occasional)	[]	[]	[_____]
Spectator (Active e.g. Season Ticket Holder)	[]	[]	[_____]
Spectator (Non-Active e.g. Television)	[]	[]	[_____]
Participant (Regular i.e. > 3 times per week)	[]	[]	[_____]
Participant (Occasional i.e < 3 times per week)	[]	[]	[_____]
Professional Sports Person	[]	[]	[_____]
Sport Club Member (Player)	[]	[]	[_____]
Sport Club Member (Social)	[]	[]	[_____]
Sport Club Member (Both)	[]	[]	[_____]
Administrative (e.g. Sport Club Chairman, Secretary)	[]	[]	[_____]
Other, Please State	[_____]	[_____]	[_____]

3.1 Are you a member of a health club?

Yes []

No []

3.2 If yes, what type of health club is it?

Private []

Public []

Section 4 - Your Opinions.

4.0 Please circle the number which best reflects your opinion, where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree. *Only respond to statements that are applicable.*

a) Sport is used by non sport product brands for promoting their brand. <i>(e.g. washing powder company sponsoring a high profile sport team)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
b) The use of specific athletes to endorse non sport products affects the brands that I prefer. <i>(e.g. washing powder company sponsoring a high profile sport person)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
c) I would purchase a particular non sport product brand because of the sport team, individual, league or event that it is associated with. <i>(e.g. purchasing specific washing powder brand because of its connection with a particular sport)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
d) When particular sporting events are on, I prefer the non sport product related to the event, as oppose my regular brand. <i>(e.g. preference of a particular soft drink brand and a sporting event)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
e) The brand endorser influences my choice of brands. <i>(i.e. purchasing specific washing powder brands because of the sport related endorser)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
f) Sport is used excessively for the promotion of non sport product brands.	1	2	3	4	5
g) The association of sport with non sport product brands has a financial benefit to both parties.	1	2	3	4	5
h) I buy non sport related products associated with sport/sports endorsers as a result of my child(ren). <i>(e.g. my child(s) encourage me to purchase brands which are promoted by a specific sport person)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
i) I am aware that my child(ren) pay more attention to products associated with sport.	1	2	3	4	5
j) My child(ren) influence the products associated with sport that I purchase.	1	2	3	4	5

4.1. Please circle the number which best reflects your opinion, where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree

Television creates a large association between sport and brands.	1	2	3	4	5
Radio creates a large association between sport and brands.	1	2	3	4	5
Newspaper/Magazines creates a large association between sport and brands.	1	2	3	4	5
The Internet creates a large association between sport and brands.	1	2	3	4	5
Other					
Please state [_____]					

4.2. Which industry category has the highest level of involvement with sport?

Please rank the following, from 1 (least associations with sport) to 11 (most associations with sport)

- Telecommunications []
- Food - Confectionary []
- Drinks - Soft Drinks []
- Alcohol []
- Tobacco []
- Airline []
- Financial Services []
- Automotive []
- Information Technology []
- Games/Toys []
- Energy/Power/Gas/Electric []

4.3 If you think that there are other industry categories that are used more than those stated above, please list and rank appropriately.

<u>Industry Category</u>	<u>Rank</u>
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]
[_____]	[]

4.4 Which of the following varieties of sport are used most to promote non sport products? (e.g. washing powder)

Please rank, where 1 is the least promoted, and 4 is most promoted.

- Sport Teams** []
- Sport Leagues** []
- Sport Individuals** []
- Sporting Events** []

This is the end of Part A, please turn over the page and read the instructions on how to complete Part B.

The final section of the questionnaire is Part C.

Thank you

Introduction - Please read before completing Part B

This part of the survey measures whether you can recognise the sport team, league, individual or event from a stated non sport product brand. *(i.e. the sport person connected with a washing powder brand)*

Please tick the box next to the brand that you think is associated with the named sporting connection. Only tick ONE per selection of brands unless stated to do so otherwise.

If you are unsure, please tick 'Don't Know', it is important that you do not guess the connection if you are unsure.

An example is shown below:

Rugby Union Team	Brand				Don't Know				
Newcastle Falcons	Chelsea Building Society	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheltenham & Gloucester	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nationwide Building Society	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Rock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As you can see, the respondent has selected 'Northern Rock', who are associated with Newcastle Falcons as they are the main shirt sponsor.

Part B- Section 1 - Sport Teams

Football	Brand								Don't Know
Arsenal	O2	[]	Vodafone	[]	Orange	[]	TMobile	[]	[]
Birmingham	BMI	[]	Jet 2	[]	Easyjet	[]	Flybe	[]	[]
Wolverhampton Wanderers	TLC Ltd	[]	Chaucer	[]	Atkins	[]	AMC Associates	[]	[]

Cricket	Brand								Don't Know
Sussex	Pav	[]	Time	[]	Microsoft	[]	AMD	[]	[]
Leicestershire	Heinz	[]	Cravendale	[]	Kraft	[]	Masterfoods	[]	[]
Warwickshire	Lion	[]	Thwaites	[]	Cains	[]	Bank's	[]	[]

Rugby Union	Brand								Don't Know
London Wasps	NTL	[]	10tele.com	[]	BT	[]	One.Tel	[]	[]
Sale Sharks	Time	[]	Pav	[]	AMD	[]	Microsoft	[]	[]
Rotherham Titans	KDS Finance	[]	Earth Mortgages	[]	Kwik Loans	[]	CitiFinancial	[]	[]

Formula One	Brand								Don't Know
Ferrari PLEASE TICK ALL THAT YOU CAN RECALL	O2	[]	Vodafone	[]	Orange	[]	TMobile	[]	[]
	AMD	[]	Microsoft	[]	Time	[]	Pav	[]	[]
	Shell	[]	Esso	[]	BP	[]	Texaco	[]	[]
	Ford	[]	Fiat	[]	Renault	[]	Citroen	[]	[]
	Kodak	[]	Olympus	[]	Fuji	[]	Canon	[]	[]
	Barum	[]	Bridgestone	[]	Firelli	[]	Goodyear	[]	[]
BAR - Honda PLEASE TICK ALL THAT YOU CAN RECALL	Ford	[]	Citroen	[]	Renault	[]	Honda	[]	[]
	XLO	[]	Intercond	[]	Totoku	[]	Novacavi	[]	[]
	Oakley	[]	Ray Ban	[]	Police	[]	Bolle	[]	[]
	Spyder	[]	Diesel	[]	Brunotti	[]	Versace	[]	[]
	Philip Morris	[]	Imperial Tobacco	[]	Hail & Morris	[]	British American Tobacco	[]	[]
	USA Barum	[]	Michelin	[]	Goodyear	[]	Firelli	[]	[]
Makita	[]	Mac Tools	[]	M Power Tools	[]	Snap On Inc	[]	[]	
Jordan - Ford PLEASE TICK ALL THAT YOU CAN RECALL	Nike	[]	Puma	[]	Adidas	[]	Reebok	[]	[]
	Camel	[]	Embassy	[]	Marlboro	[]	Benson & Hedges	[]	[]
	Phard	[]	Versace	[]	Gucci	[]	Diesel	[]	[]
	RE/MAX	[]	King Sturge	[]	Grimley	[]	CAMCO	[]	[]
	Beta Corp	[]	TB	[]	Capital Finance	[]	Argo Invest	[]	[]
	AESP Inc	[]	MCSI Inc	[]	Trust	[]	Canon Inc	[]	[]

Part B- Section 2 - Sport Leagues

Football	Brand								Don't Know
Premiership	Natwest	[]	Barclays	[]	HSBC	[]	Halifax	[]	[]
Championship, Football League 1 & 2	Pepsi	[]	Cadbury Schweppes	[]	Coca Cola	[]	Glaxo SmithKline Ltd	[]	[]
Scottish Premier	Natwest	[]	HSBC	[]	Bank of Scotland	[]	Halifax	[]	[]

Cricket	Brand								Don't Know
National Cricket League	William Hill	[]	Totesport	[]	Stan James	[]	Ladbrokes	[]	[]
County Championships	Zurich	[]	AXA	[]	Sunlife	[]	Frizzell	[]	[]
One Day Knock Out Competition	Britannia Building Society	[]	Chelsea Building Society	[]	Cheltenham & Gloucester	[]	Bank's	[]	[]

Rugby Union	Brand								Don't Know
Premiership	Zurich	[]	AXA	[]	Prudential	[]	Sunlife	[]	[]
South West/Midlands/Northern/London & South East Leagues	NPower	[]	Powergen	[]	Scottish Power	[]	British Gas	[]	[]

Part B- Section 3 - Sport Individuals

Football	Brand								Don't Know
Thierry Henry	Ford	[]	Citroen	[]	Renault	[]	Nissan	[]	[]
Michael Owen	Persil	[]	Daz	[]	Ariel	[]	Surf	[]	[]
Wayne Rooney	Pepsi	[]	Coca Cola	[]	Cadbury Schweppes	[]	Glaxo SmithKline Ltd	[]	[]

Cricket	Brand								Don't Know
Andrew Flintoff	Morgan Stanley	[]	Barclays Capital	[]	Merrill Lynch	[]	Smith Barney	[]	[]
Michael Vaughan	Mercedes	[]	Jaguar	[]	BMW	[]	Honda	[]	[]
Mark Butcher	Sweet Chariot	[]	Sports Tours International	[]	Your Sporting Challenge.com	[]	Bank's	[]	[]

Rugby Union	Brand								Don't Know
Geoff Appleford	Alpha Business Communications	[]	BT Local Business	[]	Cable & Wireless	[]	One.Tel	[]	[]
Jason Robinson	Your Sporting Challenge.com	[]	Sports Tours International	[]	Sweet Chariot	[]	Burleigh Travel	[]	[]
Matt Rhodes	Taylor Mc Gill Insurance	[]	Thompson & Richardson Group Insurance	[]	The Burley Group Insurance	[]	Trinity Insurance Group Ltd	[]	[]

Formula One	Brand								Don't Know
Michael Schumacher	Rolex	[]	Maurice Lacroix	[]	Omega	[]	Cartier	[]	[]
Jenson Button	Glow	[]	BT	[]	NTL	[]	One.Tel	[]	[]

Tennis	Brand								Don't Know
Roger Federer	Accurate	[]	Maurice Lacroix	[]	Omega	[]	Cartier	[]	[]
Tim Henman	Persil	[]	Daz	[]	Ariel	[]	Surf	[]	[]
Andy Roddick	Rolex	[]	Maurice Lacroix	[]	Omega	[]	Cartier	[]	[]

Snooker	Brand								Don't Know
Mark Williams	Ladbrokes	[]	Paddy Power	[]	William Hill	[]	Totesport	[]	[]
Stephen Hendry	Buxton	[]	Highland Spring	[]	Evian	[]	Vittel	[]	[]
Anthony Hamilton	CD Bramall	[]	Evans Halshaw	[]	Peoples	[]	Greyhound	[]	[]

Part B- Section 4 - Sport Events

Football		Brand							Don't Know
Euro 2004 PLEASE TICK ALL THAT YOU CAN RECALL	Burger King	[]	McDonalds	[]	KFC	[]	Pizza Hut	[]	[]
	Becks	[]	Fosters	[]	Carsberg	[]	Amstel	[]	[]
	Pepsi	[]	Cadbury	[]	Glaxo	[]	Coca Cola	[]	[]
	JVC	[]	Schweppes	[]	SmithKline Ltd	[]	Toshiba	[]	[]
	O2	[]	Hitachi	[]	Sony	[]	Vodafone	[]	[]
	Visa	[]	TMobile	[]	Orange	[]	Americian Express	[]	[]
	Ford	[]	Mastercard	[]	Barclaycard	[]	Renault	[]	[]
		[]	Citroen	[]	Hyundai	[]		[]	[]
UEFA Champions League PLEASE TICK ALL THAT YOU CAN RECALL	Becks	[]	Amstel	[]	Fosters	[]	Carlsberg	[]	[]
	Xbox	[]	Nintendo	[]	Playstation 2	[]	Game Boy Advance	[]	[]
	Ford	[]	GameCube	[]	Renault	[]	Hyundai	[]	[]
	American Express	[]	Citroen	[]	Barclaycard	[]	Mastercard	[]	[]
		[]	Visa	[]		[]		[]	[]
Domestic League Cup	Fosters	[]	Carling	[]	Amstel	[]	Carlsberg	[]	[]

Cricket		Brand							Don't Know
International Test Series	British Gas	[]	NPower	[]	Scottish Power	[]	Norweb Energi	[]	[]
International One Day Challenge	HSBC	[]	Halifax	[]	Natwest	[]	Royal Bank Of Scotland	[]	[]

Rugby Union		Brand							Don't Know
Domestic Challenge Cup	Faber Castell	[]	Parker Pen	[]	Mont Blanc	[]	Cross	[]	[]
International 6 Nations Championship	Natwest	[]	HSBC	[]	Halifax	[]	Royal Bank Of Scotland	[]	[]
Domestic European Cup	Fosters	[]	Heineken	[]	Amstel	[]	Carlsberg	[]	[]

Tennis		Brand							Don't Know
Wimbledon	Vimto Soft Drinks	[]	Robinsons	[]	Britvic Soft Drinks Ltd	[]	Glaxo SmithKline Ltd	[]	[]
Annual Championships (Queens)	Becks	[]	Stella Artois	[]	Heineken	[]	Fosters	[]	[]
Eastbourne International Tennis Championships	Direct Line	[]	Esure	[]	Hastings Direct	[]	Churchill	[]	[]

Snooker		Brand							Don't Know
World Championships	Benson & Hedges	[]	Embassy	[]	Silk Cut	[]	Marlboro	[]	[]
Grand Prix	Totesport	[]	William Hill	[]	Ladbrokes	[]	Stan James	[]	[]
UK Championship	Jewson	[]	Build Centre	[]	Travis Perkins	[]	Wickes	[]	[]

Appendix 2

Interview Consent form.

If you would like to take part in a short face to face interview, which will be at your convenience, please complete the contact form below. This form will not be kept with your completed questionnaire.

Name :

Address:

Postcode:

Contact
Telephone
Number:

Appendix 3



Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

Dear [_____]

You may recall in December I sent you a questionnaire to complete as part of my PhD study on Sport and the promotion of brands. Firstly, thank you for taking the time to complete it and send it back to me, your input has had great impact on my study and the results have provided me with a valuable insight which I have started to integrate into the writing of my thesis.

I am writing in response to your willingness to complete a short face to face interview which forms the second phase of the research study, another vital part of me completing my PhD.

I was therefore wondering if you are still willing to take part in the interview which will be at your convenience and arranged to meet a date and time suitable to yourself.

The interview should only take 30 minutes and will focus on themes similar to what you have already experienced within the questionnaire, for example, gaining your opinion on whether sport being used to promote particular products has any impact upon the products you purchase.

I have listed some dates on the attached sheet which act as a guide for scheduling the interview, if any date is suitable please tick the corresponding box. If no date is suitable, please indicate which date would be suitable for you in the near future.

On receipt of your response if you are still willing to participate, I will telephone you to arrange a time for me to visit for the interview.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the help you have offered already in my study and thank you in anticipation that you will be able to help me further in my research.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Williams.
PhD Student – Liverpool John Moores University.

Louise Williams
Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus (Room H105)
Barkhill Road
Aigburth, Liverpool L17 6BD
T: 0151 2315226, E: esslwill@livjm.ac.uk

Interview Reply Form

I am willing to take part in a short interview YES [] NO []

Please select a suitable date for the interview from the selection below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Please tick</u>
▪ Thursday 21 st July 2005	[]
▪ Friday 22 nd July 2005	[]
▪ Monday 25 th July 2005	[]
▪ Tuesday 26 th July 2005	[]
▪ Monday 1 st August 2005	[]
▪ Tuesday 2 nd August 2005	[]
▪ Wednesday 3 rd August 2005	[]
▪ Thursday 4 th August 2005	[]
▪ Friday 5 th August 2005	[]
▪ Monday 8 th August 2005	[]
▪ Tuesday 9 th August 2005	[]
▪ Wednesday 10 th August 2005	[]
▪ Thursday 11 th August 2005	[]
▪ Friday 12 th August 2005	[]

Other date (please indicate a preferred date) : _____

Name : _____

Contact telephone number : _____

Thank you, on receipt of this form I will be in contact with you via telephone. Please post the form back to me in the stamped address envelope provided.

Louise Williams
Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus (Room H105)
Barkhill Road
Aigburth, Liverpool L17 6BD
T: 0151 2315226, E: esslwill@livjm.ac.uk

Appendix 4



Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

My name is Louise Williams and I am a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, within the School of Physical Education, Sport and Dance.

I am currently undertaking research into the examination of branding in sport, with a particular focus upon non sport product brands and their association with sport. For example, the use of a football player to promote washing powder company Persil, or the association of mobile phone company Vodafone with a Premier League Football Club.

As part of the research I need to collect data from members of the public within the North West Region of England to gauge how consumers respond to sport promoting particular brands.

Your household has been selected from the Census Enumeration Districts within the North West of England to take part in this research.

I would therefore be extremely grateful if *one person within your household* could take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. It will only take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and returned questionnaires will enable me to continue with my study and present data for my PhD thesis.

It is important to stress that the questionnaire is completely confidential, and whilst some of the data may be used in the final writing of the thesis, all responses will be kept private and remain anonymous at all times.

If you kindly take the time to complete the questionnaire, please return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided which I have provided.

If you would also like to take part in a short face to face interview (confidential and anonymous) at your convenience, please fill in your name and contact details on the separate sheet at the end of the questionnaire.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your time and cooperation in being of assistance in my study, it is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Williams.
PhD Student – Liverpool John Moores University.

Louise Williams, Room H105, I.M.Marsh Campus
Email: esslwill@livjm.ac.uk Tel: 0151 2315226

Appendix 5



Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

Dear

My name is Louise Williams and I am a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, within the School of Physical Education, Sport and Dance.

I am currently undertaking research into the examination of brand promotion through sport sponsorship, with a particular focus upon *non sport product* brands and their association with sport. For example, the use of a football player to promote washing powder company Persil, or the association of mobile phone company Vodafone with a Premier League Football Club.

As part of the research I need to collect data from informed professionals working within the sport industry. I have selected your company to distribute a questionnaire to because of your knowledge and expertise within the area of my research topic, which will be invaluable to my study.

I would therefore be extremely grateful if *yourself or one person within your business* could take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. It will only take approximately 5 minutes to complete and returned questionnaires are vital to allowing me to continue with my study and present data for my PhD thesis.

It is important to stress that the questionnaire is completely confidential, and whilst some of the data may be used in the final writing of the thesis, all responses will be kept private and remain anonymous at all times.

If you kindly take the time to complete the questionnaire, please return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided which I have provided.

If you would also like to take part in a short face to face interview which is a secondary phase of data collection for this sector (confidential and anonymous) at your convenience, please fill in your name and contact details on the separate sheet at the end of the questionnaire.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your time and cooperation in being of assistance in my study, it is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Williams.
PhD Student – Liverpool John Moores University.

Louise Williams
T: 0151 2315226
E: esslwill@livjm.ac.uk

Appendix 6



Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your responses are extremely valuable to this study. Before you complete the questionnaire please can you take the time to complete the consent form below to indicate that you are both happy to take part and you understand the details of the study. On receipt of this with your completed questionnaire, I will detach the consent form, keeping it separate from your questionnaire at all times. If you have any problems, or would like more information please do not hesitate to contact me, 0151 2315226, or email, esslwill@livjm.ac.uk.

Please may I stress that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, you may withdraw at any time, and any information you give will remain anonymous and will be kept in strict confidence.

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely,

Louise Williams.
PhD Student – Liverpool John Moores University.

Please tick if you agree with the statements made:

I understand the details of the study

I give consent for information that I may give being used in this study

I understand that the information will remain anonymous

I understand that the information will be treated in a confidential manner

I voluntarily consent to taking part in this study signed

____/____/____

Appendix 7



Liverpool John Moores University
I.M.Marsh Campus
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your responses are extremely valuable to this study. Before you complete the questionnaire please can you take the time to complete the consent form below to indicate that you are both happy to take part and you understand the details of the study. On receipt of this with your completed questionnaire, I will detach the consent form, keeping it separate from your questionnaire at all times. If you have any problems, or would like more information please do not hesitate to contact me, 0151 2315226, or email, esslwill@livjm.ac.uk.

Please may I stress that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, you may withdraw at any time, and any information you give will remain anonymous and will be kept in strict confidence.

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely,

Louise Williams.
PhD Student – Liverpool John Moores University.

Please tick if you agree with the statements made:

I understand the details of the study

I give consent for information that I may give being used in this study

I understand that the information will remain anonymous

I understand that the information will be treated in a confidential manner

I voluntarily consent to taking part in this study signed

____/____/____

Appendix 8

Section 1 – About You

This section asks you questions about your area of work. *Please tick one response only unless stated to do so otherwise.*

Q1- Please indicate which area best suits your industry sector:

Sponsorship	[]	Broadcasting	[]	Online Gambling	[]
New Media	[]	Intellectual Property	[]	Sports Rights Holders	[]
Technology	[]	Retail	[]	Direct Marketing	[]
Law	[]	Event Management	[]	Athlete Management	[]
Advertising	[]	Marketing	[]	Public Relations	[]
Stadia & Facilities	[]	Corporate Communications	[]	Research	[]
Administration	[]	Education	[]	Finance	[]

Other: (Please state) _____

Q2 - What is your role within the company?

Q3 - Does your company currently or has previously had any involvement with sport?

CURRENTLY : Yes [] No [] Don't Know []

PREVIOUSLY : Yes [] No [] Don't Know []

Q4 - If you answered yes, please give a brief description of in what capacity your company is/was involved with sport?

Q5 - If you can, please name the sport(s) that you were involved with.

Q6 - If you can, please state which type of sport it is/was from the list below: (Please tick the relevant response(s) below). If multiple apply please indicate this next to the relevant response – i.e [√] (2)

Sport Teams [] Sport Leagues [] Sport Individuals [] Sport Events []

Section 2 – Your Opinions

This section asks you to demonstrate your opinion on the statements made below. Please circle the number which best reflects your opinion whereby: 1 – STRONGLY DISAGREE, and 5 – STRONGLY AGREE

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q7- Sport is an effective tool for brand promotion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q8 - The use of sport within brand promotion can influence a consumer's attitude towards that brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q9 - The use of sport within brand promotion can alter the new product adoption by a consumer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q10 - A sport sponsorship increases the recognition of the sponsoring brand amongst consumers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q11 - The AGE of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q12 - The GENDER of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q13 - The HOUSEHOLD INCOME of a consumer will impact upon the sport sponsorship chosen to promote a brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q14 - The higher the profile of a company sponsoring sport, the more likely a consumer is to recognise the brand name. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q15 - The market share of a company using sport sponsorship to promote their brand will impact upon the likelihood a consumer is to recognise the brand name. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q16 - Using sport sponsorship to promote a company brand has a positive impact upon the SPORT involved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Q17 - Using sport sponsorship to promote a company brand has a positive impact upon the BRAND. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Section 3 – Sponsorship Programmes

Q18 - In your opinion, how important are the following objectives in the design and implementation of a sponsorship programme?

(Please circle, where 1- Not important to 5 – Very Important)

▪ Return on Investment	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Enhancement	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Media Objectives	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Direct Revenue	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Consumer Loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
▪ New Customer Adoption	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Philanthropy (Charity)	1	2	3	4	5

Other, please state _____

Q19 - Do you think that incorporating sport into a sponsorship programme for a non sport product brand can impact on any of the following:

(Please circle 1 – Strongly Disagree, 5 – Strongly Agree)

▪ Return on Investment	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Image Enhancement	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Media Objectives	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Direct Revenue	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Consumer Loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
▪ New Customer Adoption	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Philanthropy (Charity)	1	2	3	4	5

Other, please state _____

Q20 - Do you think that sport sponsorship can achieve sponsorship objectives more effectively than other forms of promotion? (Please tick one response only)

Yes [] No [] Don't Know []

Q21 - Do you think that a company promoting their brand through sport sponsorship will be at an advantage to a company promoting their brand through sponsorship of a different kind? (Please tick one response only)

Yes [] No [] Don't Know []

Q22 - Which of the following do you think is most effective for promoting a company brand through a sport sponsorship programme:

(Please rank where 1 is least effective and 4 is most effective)

Sport Team [] Sport League [] Sport Individual [] Sport Event []

Q23 - Which medium do you believe is most effective in aiding consumers to form associations between the sport and the brand involved in the sponsorship.

(Please circle where 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 is Strongly Agree)

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▪ The use of TELEVISION to promote a brand through sport sponsorship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ The use of RADIO to promote a brand through sport sponsorship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ The use of NEWSPAPER'S/MAGAZINE'S to promote a brand through sport sponsorship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ The use of the INTERNET (broadband/wireless) to promote a brand through sport sponsorship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Q24 - Which of the following types of sponsorship do you think is most effective in increasing consumer recognition of a company brand: (Please select all that apply)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Shirt Sponsorship | [] |
| ▪ Title Sponsorship | [] |
| ▪ Broadcast Sponsorship | [] |
| ▪ Sport Personality Sponsorship | [] |
| ▪ Perimeter Advertising | [] |

Other , please state _____

Q25 - Do you think that a company using sport sponsorship to promote their brand will gain any of the following over a short term period of up to 1 year from the inception of the sponsorship?

Growth in Market Share [] Increased Market Value [] Brand Stability []

None []

Q26 - Do you think that a company using sport sponsorship to promote their brand will gain any of the following over a longer time period of over 5 years from the inception of the sponsorship?

Growth in Market Share [] Increased Market Value [] Brand Stability []

None []

Q27 - In your opinion which industry category has the highest level of involvement with sport through sponsorship? (Please tick one box only)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Telecommunications | [] | ▪ Tobacco | [] |
| ▪ Food – Confectionary | [] | ▪ Energy/Power/Gas/Electric | [] |
| ▪ Financial Services | [] | ▪ Airline | |
| ▪ Alcohol | [] | | |
| ▪ Information Technology | [] | | |
| ▪ Soft Drinks | [] | | |
| ▪ Games/Toys | [] | | |
| ▪ Automotive | [] | | |

Other, please state _____

Q28 - Please select which of the following sports you believe are most effective for achieving the named sponsorship objectives in the left hand column.

(Please tick as many sports you believe apply to each objective)

	Football	Rugby Union	Tennis	Cricket	Snooker	Formula 1
Return on Investment						
Image Enhancement						
Media Objectives						
Direct Revenue						
Consumer Loyalty						
New Customer Adoption						
Philanthropy (Charity)						

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, please will you now post it back to me in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed. If you would be willing to take part in a short face to face interview as part of my next phase of research please complete the attached form. Your opinions are of great help to the continuation of my study.

Interview Consent form.

If you would like to take part in a short face to face interview, which will be at your convenience, please complete the contact form below. This form will not be kept with your completed questionnaire.

Name :

Address:

Postcode:

Contact
Telephone
Number:

Appendix 9

Phase two - Interview themes and questions

General

1. In terms of a company using sport sponsorship to promote their brand, how would you describe your level of understanding as to why they use sport? What does sport have that other forms of promotion don't?
2. What is your opinion of companies investing in sport sponsorship to promote their brand?
3. Are you aware of messages that the brand is trying to communicate with consumers within a sponsorship programme?
4. Do you believe that the general public receive any benefit from the money that is invested into corporate sport sponsorship?
5. Given that society appears to adopt a brand culture, particularly in young people, do you think that by using sport to promote a non sport product brand, pressure is put on families to purchase the brands associated with sport?
6. In your opinion is sport wrongly used as a medium for promoting brands?
7. Do you think that specific markets are targeted?
8. Do you think then that sports people are rivalling other people in different forms of entertainment?
9. In your opinion do you think that specific markets are overused than other ones when a company promotes a brand, do you think there are certain ones, if you could pin an age group down what would you say it is?
10. Do you feel that a sponsorship programme is more than just a financial investment or at the end of the day do you think that everything revolves around making money?
11. Do you think there is too much of brand promotion in sport, brands that aren't associated with sport, like I have labelled them non sport product brands, do you think there is too much in UK sport or not enough for different sports?

Brand Recognition

1. How would you describe your level of awareness of non sport product brands promoted in sport?
2. Does this differ dependant upon the sport and your personal interest in specific sports?
3. Do you think the amount of sport you participate in impacts on your awareness of a company promoting its brand?
4. Which method of advertising a brand in sport do you think aids your recall of the brand name? (TV/Radio/Internet/shirt sponsorship/perimeter advertising)
5. Profile of sport aids recall?
6. Profile of brand aids recall?
7. Are you aware of messages that the brand tries to communicate with consumers when they use a sponsorship programme or is it more to do with the logo?

Brand Preference

1. Does sport being used to promote a brand have any impact upon the decisions you make when purchasing products?
2. Would you choose specifically to purchase a product that is associated with sport dependant upon the sporting property?
3. Would you purposely choose not to purchase a specific brand because they were using sport to promote their brand?
4. If your habitually purchased brands decided to use sport to promote their brand would this make any impact upon your attitude towards the brand?
5. Would the sponsor brand impact upon your attitude towards a specific team, league, individual or event?
6. If you have children, do you feel pressured to buy brands associated with sport because you are aware that your child(ren) recognise the product because of the sport promoting it?
7. If a company chose to promote its brand through associating with a charity, would this impact on your attitude towards the brand?
8. Does National success in a sporting context impact on your awareness and preference?

9. If the brand associated with sport is promoting something healthy, a healthy message would you be more likely to buy into this?
10. Impact of charitable associations on preference?
11. Does your own personal loyalty towards a sport team/league/event or individual impact on your preference of brands?

Appendix 10

Phase four Interview themes and questions

Consumer Brand Preference

- Do you believe that a sport sponsorship alone can impact on a consumer preference to the sponsoring brand? If yes what does this depend upon?
- In your experience, which promotional mediums for the sponsorship programme have been most effective in impacting on a consumers brand awareness and potential brand preference?
- In your opinion which method of promoting the sponsorship will aid the most in a consumer recalling the brand associated with it?
- Do you believe that sport sponsorship is a valuable form of promotion in influencing consumer buying behaviour?
- How important do you consider fan loyalty as a factor for a sport sponsorship impacting on brand preference?

Brand Sustainability

- In your opinion, is sport sponsorship a worthwhile promotional spend in the short term and long term?
- Generally speaking, can investment in sport sponsorship by a non sport product brand, sustain that brand for the duration of the sponsorship programme?
- How important can sport sponsorship be in the promotional armoury of an investing company?
- If you could plot the impact of a sports sponsorship from inception, what are the key milestones in contributing to the sustainability of the sponsoring company?

Brand Strategy

- In your opinion, can a sponsorship programme alone meet pre set commercial objectives?
- If not, what other factors need to be considered?
- Do you think that sport impacts on this?
- What commercial objectives would you consider to be related to the outcome of a sponsorship programme?
- In your experience how important is the choice of leveraging for the sport sponsorship, how does this impact on the success of meeting commercial objectives?
- What do you believe are the key factors in designing and implementing a successful sport sponsorship?
- Does the strategy for the sport sponsorship differ dependant upon the sport used in the deal – is this purely objective dependant?
- Does the industry category of the sponsoring brand impact upon the potential for the sponsorship to be successful?
- What is the main advantage/ benefit of using sport as a vehicle for promotion within the sponsorship programme?

- Do the desired commercial objectives differ dependent upon the type of sponsorship? Do different types (i.e. event/league) of sponsorship generally achieve different objectives?
- What risks do the sponsoring company face in investing in sport sponsorship?
- What challenges (for sponsoring brand) are involved in investment in a sport sponsorship?
- Is the sponsorship budget alone the main factor in ensuring the sponsorship programme is effective?
- Are different consumer groups targeted to meet different commercial objectives or are the objectives set applicable to all consumers?
- How is technology being used within sponsorships? Is it becoming more important in a move away from traditional?

Planning and Monitoring

- Are sports sponsorship programmes well planned?
- Are they well monitored and evaluated?
- If not, what are the reasons for this? Do budgetary issues come into play?
- Are sponsorships developed strategically or on a Chairman's Whim?
- What are the benefits of evaluating thoroughly?
- What are the problems within the industry that may lead to evaluation being a problematic issue?

Appendix 11

Instructions To Interviewee.

PHASE TWO - CONSUMERS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. My name is Louise Williams.

The study is examining the use of branding in sport, with a particular focus upon non sport product brands and their association with sport. For example, the use of a football player to promote washing powder company Persil, or the association of mobile phone company Vodafone with a Premier League Football Club.

In order to do this I am gathering information about yourself, your sporting interests, your sporting involvements and your opinions about sport branding and also gauging your recognition of non sport products and their associations with different types of sport.

As part of the research I am generating a population sample within the North West Region of England.

All the information gathered will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and you will only be identified by a number.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You can refuse to answer particular questions, stop the interview process at any time and if you are not happy, request that the information is not included in the study.

Are you happy to participate in the study?

Do you have any questions?

Could you please sign the consent form attached.

Interview Consent Form

USED FOR BOTH PHASE TWO AND PHASE FOUR

- I have had the details of the study explained to me.
- I understand that all the information gathered will be held in strict confidence.
- I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at any stage.
- I give my consent for the interview to be taped.

Signed (Participant) : [_____]

Signed (Researcher) : [_____]