

Determinants of Commitment in the Professional Football Club/Shirt Sponsor Dyad

by

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ABSTRACT

The recent growth in sponsorship expenditure has been marked with football being a major recipient, particularly through shirt sponsorship programmes. The relationship between football club and shirt sponsor is an important one for both parties leading them to routinely profess their commitment to one another. Common notions of commitment are often associated with long-term relationships, although evidence from the sponsorship literature contradicts this. Many football shirt sponsorship deals are short-term, often accompanied by a low rate of contract renewal. In this context, the study therefore sets out to identify determinants of commitment in the dyadic relationship between English professional football clubs and their shirt sponsors.

A review of printed and electronic media is initially undertaken to confirm the relevance of the study. This forms the basis for a subsequent examination of critical incident interview data which leads to the development of a questionnaire which was despatched to clubs and sponsors, achieving a response rate of 60.4%. Returns have been analysed using factor and multiple regression analyses in order to identify statistically significant determinants of commitment. A final research stage involving structured face-to-face interviews within six sponsorship dyads is presented to establish the generalisability and validity of findings.

Following the review of printed and electronic media, commitment is confirmed as a commonly used term in shirt sponsorship programmes and the critical incident interviews highlight nine determinants of commitment. The analysis of questionnaire returns indicates three variables (shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior) are statistically significant determinants of sponsorship commitment. Further analysis of dyadic interview data results in the development of a typology which highlights the nature and characteristics of four sponsorship commitment types (Calculators and Commercials, Cynics and Short-Termers, Carers and Communals, and Innocents and Indifferents). In the light of these findings, the study concludes by examining issues and implications for academics, practitioners and researchers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Table of contents	iii
List of tables	viii
Abbreviations	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	
1.1 Overview of chapter	1
1.2 Introduction to the study	1
1.3 Rationale for the focus of the study	2
1.4 Football research	3
1.5 The nature of sponsorship	4
1.6 The nature of relationships	6
1.7 The nature of commitment	7
1.8 The research problem	9
1.9 Research objectives	10
1.10 Overview of research methodology	11
1.10.1 Phase 1	11
1.10.2 Phase 2	12
1.10.3 Phase 3	12
1.10.4 Phase 4	12
1.10.5 Phase 5	12
1.10.6 Phase 6	13
1.10.7 Phase 7	13
1.11 Research hypotheses	13
1.12 Limitations of the study	14
1.13 Conclusion	16

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Overview of chapter	18
2.2 Sponsorship and football	18
2.3 The state of sponsorship research	23
2.4 Development of the sponsorship literature	25
2.5 Themes in the sponsorship literature	33
2.6 The nature of sponsorship	33
2.6.1 Objectives and motives	33
2.6.2 Targets	34
2.7 Sponsorship management	35
2.7.1 Organisation	35
2.7.2 Budget allocation	36
2.8 Sponsorship evaluation	37
2.9 Sponsorship context	38
2.10 Summary of the sponsorship literature	39
2.11 The nature of relationships	41
2.12 Dyads and networks	50
2.13 Relationship dynamics	54
2.14 The nature of commitment	56
2.15 The conceptualisation of commitment	60
2.16 Commitment and sponsorship	66
2.17 Determinants of commitment	70
2.18 Conclusions	73

Chapter 3: Research methods

3.1 Overview of chapter	76
3.2 Methodology and theory generation	76
3.3 Phase 1-Collection and analysis of secondary data	78
3.4 Phase 2-Semi-structured interviews	87
3.4.1 The Contract	93
3.4.2 Communication	97
3.4.3 Perceived benefits	102
3.4.4 Location	105

3.4.5 Timing	112
3.4.6 Perceptions of partner commitment	118
3.4.7 Trust	123
3.4.8 Managing the relationship	128
3.4.9 Shared values	133
3.4.10 Commitment	136
3.5 Phase 3-Development of survey instrument	141
3.5.1 Population characteristics which make the use of questionnaires suitable	141
3.5.2 Confidence the right person is approached	142
3.5.3 Likelihood of responses being contaminated	142
3.5.4 Selection of a research sample	143
3.5.5 Response rate considerations	144
3.5.6 Determination of an appropriate questionnaire length	146
3.5.7 Selection of question types	147
3.5.8 Covering letters and envelopes	148
3.5.9 Time scale within which questionnaires are despatched and returned	149
3.5.10 Resource implications	150
3.5.11 Analysis of questionnaire data	150
3.6 Phase 4-Pilot testing	151
3.7 Phase 5-Quantitative survey	153
3.8 Phase 6-Quantative data analysis	155
3.8.1 Response rate	156
3.8.2 Coding and input of questionnaire data	156
3.8.3 Analysis of descriptive statistics	157
3.8.4 Scale reliability	158
3.8.5 Factor analysis	159
3.8.6 Multiple regression analysis	164
3.8.7 Verification	168
3.9 Phase 7-Dyadic interviews	170
3.10 Conclusions	174
Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation of results	
4.1 Overview of chapter	178
4.2 Analysis and interpretation of factor analysis	178

4.2.1 Factor 1: Trust	178
4.2.2 Factor 2: Communication	182
4.2.3 Factor 3: Managing the relationship	184
4.2.4 Factor 4: Location	186
4.2.5 Factor 5: Perceived benefits	189
4.2.6 Factor 6: Shared values	192
4.2.7 Factor 7: Contractual terms	194
4.2.8 Factor 8: Opportunistic behavior	196
4.2.9 Factor 9: Commitment	197
4.2.10 Factor 10	200
4.2.11 Factor 11: Informal relations	200
4.2.12 Further observations	201
4.3 Analysis and interpretation of standard multiple regression analysis	202
4.3.1 Trust	202
4.3.2 Communication	202
4.3.3 Managing the relationship	203
4.3.4 Location	203
4.3.5 Perceived benefits	203
4.3.6 Shared values	203
4.3.7 Contractual terms	204
4.3.8 Opportunistic behavior	204
4.3.9 Informal relations	204
4.3.10 Comment on findings of regression analysis	204
4.4 Analysis and interpretation of dyad interviews	205
4.4.1 Dyad 1	205
4.4.2 Dyad 2	208
4.4.3 Dyad 3	211
4.4.4 Dyad 4	215
4.4.5 Dyad 5	218
4.4.6 Dyad 6	221
4.4.7 A note on normative commitment	223
4.5 Summary of results	224
4.6 Conclusions	225

Chapter 5: Implications of study and conclusions	
5.1 Overview of chapter	227
5.2 Introduction	227
5.3 Implications for sponsorship literature	227
5.4 Implications for relationship literature	231
5.5 Implications for dyad literature	234
5.6 Implications for commitment literature	235
5.7 Implications for research methods	246
5.8 Implications for practitioners	247
5.9 Implications for future research	249
5.10 Conclusions	253
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Summary of secondary data source analysis	255
Appendix 2: Analysis of critical incident interviews	256
Appendix 3: Basis for codes used during analysis of Critical Incident interviews	259
Appendix 4: Reliability calculation for Critical Incident Interviews	260
Appendix 5: Football clubs and shirt sponsors 2002-2003	261
Appendix 6: Procedure for dispatch of questionnaires to football clubs	263
Appendix 7: Final questionnaire	264
Appendix 8: Summary of questionnaire response	277
Appendix 9: Summary of descriptive statistics	278
Appendix 10: Summary of factor analysis	293
Appendix 11: Summary of standard multiple regression	296
Appendix 12: Summary of hierarchical multiple regression	300
Appendix 13: Profile of interview dyads	303
References	305

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Hypothesised relationships between commitment and determinants	15
Table 2: Definitions of sponsorship	26
Table 3: Definitions of relationship marketing	46
Table 4: Definitions of commitment in marketing	58
Table 5: Comparison of nomothetic and ideographic methods	76
Table 6: Standardised coefficients of statistically significant commitment determinants	225
Table 7: Typology of commitment	237

ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA:	Analysis of variance
CCPR:	Central Council of Physical Recreation
CIT:	Critical Incident Technique
CMMA:	Commercial and Marketing Managers Association
EI:	Eigenvalue
FA:	Football Association
IEG:	International Entertainment Group
IMP:	Industrial Marketing and Purchasing
MRA:	Multiple regression analysis
PCA:	Principle components analysis
PL:	Premier League

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of chapter

The chapter introduces the main elements of the study, providing an overview of the following: a rationale for the study; the nature and extent of the sponsorship, relationship and commitment literature; an outline statement of research objectives allied to a statement of the methodology upon which the research is based; confirmation of the specific research hypotheses developed for the study.

1.2 Introduction to the study

This study is concerned with the determinants of commitment in the relationship between English professional football clubs and their shirt sponsors and is based upon the following overall aim: *To identify and explain the nature of the determinants of commitment in the dyadic relationship between English professional football clubs and their shirt sponsors.*

Drawing from the literature, the study begins by examining the growth, development and management of sponsorship with particular reference to sports and football shirt sponsorships. The nature of inter-organisational relationships is subsequently explored with a critical assessment of relevant paradigms being offered, after which the nature of commitment within the literature is detailed. Following on from the literature review, the nature of science and methodology in marketing is discussed. By acknowledging and incorporating recommendations emanating from relevant scientific debate, a statement of methodology for the study is provided. This incorporates a range of research philosophies and strategies, which is thus reflected in the data collection and analysis methods employed. Utilising interpretivist, realist and positivist philosophies the study embraces inductive and deductive research approaches and employs strategies based around grounded theory, case analysis and the use of survey instruments.

Following the initial collection and analysis of 174 pieces of printed and electronic information, the results of 16 critical incident interviews (8 football clubs and 8 sponsors) are detailed. These results are then used as the basis for the development of a survey instrument which was evaluated following a pilot test amongst 12 respondents (5 football clubs, 5 shirt sponsors, the PL and the CMMA). Following changes to the survey instrument, a questionnaire despatched to a sample population of 182 (92 football clubs and 90 shirt sponsors) is presented, and the data from 110 responses is analysed using factor and multiple regression analyses. In order to validate the

findings of this analysis, and also to triangulate the methods employed by the study. The results of 6 structured dyadic interviews (6 football clubs and 6 shirt sponsors) are presented. The study finally goes on to discuss the findings and implications of the study, and provides a summary and conclusions derived from the research.

1.3 Rationale for the focus of the study

A rationale for the research was drawn from various sources, although Campbell et. al.'s (1982) assertion that research should develop from activity and involvement, convergence, intuition, theory and real world value was especially helpful. As such, the study can be seen as having emerged from the following:

- The author's personal and professional interests in sport, football and sponsorship.
- A perceived dichotomy between stated commitment intentions and actions in the relationships between football clubs and their shirt sponsors.
- Changes in the nature of sports sponsorship relations and management.
- Changes in football, reflecting a more overtly commercial agenda.
- Paradigm shifts in the literature.
- Proliferating and converging literature in the fields of sport, football, sponsorship, inter-organisational relationships and commitment.
- Perceived opportunities for developing the practice of sponsorship management within both football clubs and sponsoring organisations.

The scale, nature and commercial development of the football sector has been detailed in a number of books (Conn, 1997; Banks, 2002), illustrating the growing complexity of managing a football club. Reviews of the sponsorship literature undertaken by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003) were especially helpful in highlighting opportunities for the development of sponsorship research. Thwaites' (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) observations about some of the problems associated with sponsorship management in football, and Farrelly and Quester (2003) and Farrelly et. al.'s (2003) work on the convergence of sponsorship, collaboration and commitment also helped inform the study. An ongoing debate about the nature of commitment, which has been detailed in a number of studies including Meyer and Allen (1991), Anderson and Weitz (1992) and Gundlach and Achrol (1995), provided scope for examining the concept across a range of industrial sectors.

1.4 Football research

The football sector is one that has been widely researched in both the humanities and the social sciences. Some examples of this work include studies undertaken by historians (Wamplew, 1982), sociologists (Brown, 1998) and economists (Dobson and Goddard, 1992). However, there is a paucity of literature analysing the marketing, commercial and managerial developments in the sector over the last ten years. A majority of the business literature in existence explores the sport from a practitioner perspective (see, for example, Fynn and Guest, 1994; Dempsey and Reilly, 1998). Of the remainder, a limited number of academic studies have been undertaken in areas such as accounting (Morrow, 1999), strategy (Szymanski and Kuypers, 1999), human resource management (Monk, 2000), risk and crisis management (Elliott and Smith, 1993), and quality management (Ho and Galloway, 1996).

But football has thus far received relatively little attention from marketing academics. In a survey of the sports marketing literature, Shannon (1999) identified that only 3 of 526 studies were based in football. An analysis of the mainstream European marketing literature between 1999 and 2003 reveals similarly limited coverage of both football and sport in general. Of 15 reported sports marketing studies, only four have been carried out in football (Tapp, et. al., 1999; Tapp and Clowes, 1999; Beech et. al., 2000; Tapp and Clowes, 2002). There is a body of work on football in specialist sport marketing journals such as the *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*. However, this is not especially notable and is generally characterised by limited conceptual and methodological development, a weakness also observed in the broader sport marketing literature (Douvis and Douvis, 2000).

The failure of marketing academics to adopt football as either a research domain or a research vehicle is surprising. Deloitte and Touche (2003) have reported that larger clubs, such as Manchester United, are amongst the most profitable football clubs in the world. Whilst Futurebrand (2001) indicated three English football club brands are amongst the most valuable in the world. There have also been major recent industrial developments including club stock market floatation's, rising player costs, proliferating television coverage and changing customer service expectations. Each has placed a strong emphasis upon, amongst other things, developing and strengthening income streams, of which sponsorship revenue is one. Moreover, these developments have not impacted exclusively at the highest levels in the game, Valynseele (1999) observing that clubs in the lower leagues have also had to change their management practices. In some cases, this has meant the difference between survival and bankruptcy (Harris, 2000). But it has also led clubs to forge closer relations with their sponsors and other related organisations.

This study therefore accepts football is a major site for research and one that, given recent commercial and industrial changes, is potentially fruitful for marketing academics. As such, it sets out to utilise the sport as both a domain of study (an area of application for marketing) and as a domain category (the marketing of teams and clubs). In doing so, the study aims to examine a range of sector-specific issues in relation to sponsorship, relationships and commitment. It is nevertheless anticipated the study will add generic value to understanding marketing, commercial and sponsorship developments in other sports and industrial sectors by understanding the foundations upon which relationships are forged, managed and dissolved.

1.5 The nature of sponsorship

The past decade has witnessed dramatic increases in sponsorship activity at both international and national levels. IEG (2002) estimated worldwide sponsorship expenditure would rise to almost £17 billion by the end of 2002. Mintel (2002) indicated the total value of sponsorships in the United Kingdom hit almost £849 million in 2000. Of this, approximately 50% was devoted to sport sponsorship programmes with “exposure to high-profile television coverage driving most of the money to a few selected sectors like football” (Mintel, 2000, p.18). Keynote (2003) meanwhile identified that football accounts for between 30% and 40% of total sponsorship value in the United Kingdom.

The role of sponsorship is one that is important both to football clubs and sponsoring organisations. A Deloitte and Touche (2003) survey of soccer finances revealed sponsorship revenues typically account for between 20% and 30% of annual soccer club turnover. Amongst these revenues, shirt sponsorship plays a particularly important role, the £30 million and £22 million shirt sponsorship deals of Manchester United (Vodafone) and Chelsea (Emirates Airlines) respectively being the most notable examples. In the lower leagues, shirt sponsorship is no less important, Kevin Verity, Chief Executive of the CMMA, stating in a personal interview that “it is a lifeline for many clubs and can make the difference between survival and bankruptcy.” For sponsors, the benefits are equally significant. Thwaites (1995), Miles (2001) and Mosson (2001) identifying public awareness, sales leads and improved relations with local communities and other businesses as being amongst the most important outcomes of shirt sponsorship deals.

Despite the growth of sponsorship and the obvious benefits that can be derived by those involved in a deal, the prevailing view of sponsorship in the literature is one founded in the transactional

paradigm. This is evident in a number of sources including sports marketing textbooks (Pitts and Stotlar, 1996; Mullin, et. al. 2000) and academic studies (Meenaghan, 1983; Tripodi, 2001; Verity, 2002), and reduces the examination of sponsorship to little more than a one-off transaction involving the exchange of financial resources and legal rights of association. Although there has been some progress towards examining sponsorship from a relational perspective (Cousens, et. al. 2001; Farrelly and Quester, 2003; Thompson, 2003), there is little understanding of how more enduring, socially-based sponsorships are forged and developed. This deficiency is exacerbated further by a failure of the literature to conceptually or empirically consider the dyadic nature of relationships between sponsors and sponsees, the work of Farrelly and Quester (2003), Farrelly et. al. (2003), Olkkonen, et. al. (2000) and Olkkonen, (2001) being the extent of work considering sponsor relations in a dyadic or a network context.

Following the recent growth of sport sponsorship some commentators have suggested its development has been accompanied by the adoption of more professional management practices (Meenaghan, 1999; Miles, 2001; Tripodi, 2001). Others remain concerned by an apparent failure of those involved in deals to manage sponsorships properly (Burton et. al. 1998; Thjømøe et. al., 2002). Moreover, Cornwell and Maignan (1998) highlighted an ongoing failure amongst both academics and practitioners to understand how sponsorships should be managed, and Speed and Thompson (2000) have suggested there is much still to learn about sponsorship. An examination of Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser's (2003) reviews of the sponsorship literature also indicates a continuing preoccupation amongst researchers with definitional debate, the identification of objectives and the measurement of outcomes. The sponsorship research agenda has therefore evolved in a stunted and highly discrete way, largely failing to account for the process of management. Whilst Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003) clearly show the literature is replete with studies stating what sponsorship can achieve, academic analyses have been rather less convincing in detailing how sponsorship managers work to deliver these benefits.

This study acknowledges the growing financial value of sport sponsorship makes it an important area for academic analysis. The significance of sport sponsorship, and football shirt sponsorship within this, is well documented, and the study therefore sets out to examine the dyadic relationship between football club and sponsor. Criticisms that sponsorship management practices often lack rigour, and that the process of managing partner relations has attracted relatively little attention from academics, are accepted. In this context, the study draws from the relationship

marketing paradigm in order to address factors pertaining to the formation and maintenance of sponsorship relations.

1.6 The nature of relationships

Following a recent proliferation in the number of inter-organisational relationships being forged across a range of industrial sectors (Bleeke and Ernst 1993; Beamish and Killing 1997; Child and Faulkner, 1998), there has been a commensurate growth of interest in the foundations of them. Various theoretical perspectives have contributed to this debate including market-power theory (Porter, 1980), agency theory (Barney and Ouchi, 1986), increasing returns theory, (Arthur, 1989), game theory (Zagare, 1984), strategic management theory (Harrigan, 1988) and resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). The prevailing view of relationships within marketing has historically been one dominated by transaction cost theories postulated by Coase (1937) and Williamson (1975, 1985, 1996). Based upon assumptions that humans are both rational and opportunistic, this explains that businesses engage in relationships with one another in order to internalise, and so minimise, the direct financial and opportunity costs associated with transactions. This transactional paradigm has nevertheless come under heavy criticism from, amongst others, Berry (1983), McKenna (1991), Gronroos (1994), Gummesson (1999) and Peck et. al. (1999). Concerns have been expressed because the paradigm has failed to address the growth of customer, market, and marketing orientations, and hyper competition. There has thus been a consequent shift towards a relational view of marketing. Drawing from neo-behavioural (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995, IMP Group, 1982), neo-institutional (Gronroos, 1994) and neo-classical (Blattberg and Deighton, 1996) paradigms, the relational view emphasises the importance of inter-organisational relationships characterised by interaction, durability, and partner acquisition and retention. Such relationships are held to embrace supplier, buyer and lateral partnerships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Studies of inter-organisational relationships within the relationship paradigm have been undertaken at a network level (Hakansson and Johanson, 1988), a dyadic level (Anderson and Weitz, 1992) and from the perspective of single parties engaged in a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). There has been a consequent debate about the level at which relationships should be analysed (Achrol et. al., 1983; Iacobucci and Hopkins, 1992; Anderson et. al. 1994). Whilst a number of commentators appear to agree that network analysis of inter-organisational relationships is essential in order to address the complexity of such arrangements, there is also a strongly held view that one needs to understand the basic dyadic relationships of which networks

are comprised (Iacobucci and Hopkins, 1992; Johnston et. al., 1999; Lindgreen, 2001). In particular, it is felt dyadic analyses assist in understanding the bonds between organisations and the boundaries within which relationships exist.

This study contends that the relationship between football club and shirt sponsor is one characterised by relational rather than transactional exchanges. Thus far, there has been little attempt by the mainstream sponsorship literature to rigorously examine beyond the boundaries of the latter, Farrelly and Quester (2003) and Farrelly et. al. (2003) being the most notable exceptions. Equally, there has been only limited consideration of sponsorship as a form of inter-organizational relationship. This has been undertaken exclusively from within a network perspective (Cousens and Slack, 1996; Olkonnen et. al. 2000; Olkonnen, 2001), with only one dyadic study (Farrelly and Quester, 2003) being reported in the sponsorship literature. Such is the perceived importance of dyadic research that Iacobucci and Hopkins (1992) have stated it is an important link between research at the level of the business unit and at the network level. As such, the study sets out to examine both sides (sponsor and sponsee) of the football shirt sponsorship dyad.

1.7 The nature of commitment

Commitment is commonly identified as being fundamental to the success of relationships. As a result, the nature of commitment has been widely considered by a number of disciplines, examples of which include supply chain management and logistics (Moore, 1998), organisation studies (Allen and Meyer, 1990), networks (Blankenberg-Holm, et. al., 1999), marriage (Stanley and Markman, 1992) and religion (Loewenthal, 1986). With the emergence of the relational paradigm in marketing, which emphasises the importance of enduring relationships, a broad range of commitment studies have been undertaken in both industrial (De Ruyter, et. al., 2001) and service (Sharma and Patterson, 1999) contexts. There is also some evidence to suggest there is an emerging interest in the notion of commitment in sponsorship relations (Chadwick 2002; Thompson, 2003; Ryan and Fahy, 2003). A review of the literature indicates commitment is variously characterised by a desire to maintain and strengthen a relationship (Moorman, et. al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), a desire to continue in a beneficial relationship (Ganesan, 1994), and a willingness to forgo more attractive short-run alternatives in order to build a long-term relationship (Anderson and Weitz, 1992). Given the nature of commitment, a multitude of benefits may accrue to the organisations engaged in a committed relationship. These include

better communications, reduced partner turnover, lower costs, less conflict, and better decision making.

In spite of broad interest in commitment, research has effectively been completed in four key areas: the conceptualisation of commitment, determinants of/antecedents to commitment, the outcomes attainable from commitment, and the role of commitment as a mediating variable between determinants and outcomes. Analyses of the determinants of/antecedents to relationship commitment have proved to be an especially popular focus for inter-organisational research in marketing (for example, see Crotts, et. al., 1998; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000; De Ruyter, et. al. 2001; Goodman and Dion, 2001). The premise underlying this work is that commitment is built through an evaluation of factors including communication between relationship partners (Anderson, Ross and Weitz, 1998), the values they share (Dwyer et. al., 1987), the benefits partners perceive they can realise from a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), the extent to which relationship partners trust one another (Moorman, et. al., 1992), the perception of a partner's commitment (Anderson and Weitz, 1982), and the role of the written contract within the relationship (Lusch and Brown, 1996).

Commonly held definitions of commitment and the range of determinants identified by the literature betray a long running debate about the nature and constitution of commitment which dates back to the work of Thibaut and Kelley, (1959), Becker (1960) and Blau (1964). At one level, commitment is believed to be composed of calculative and affective elements (Kumar, et. al., 1994). Other studies suggest it consists of instrumental and normative elements (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer, et. al., 2002). But work undertaken by those such as Kim and Frazier (1997) suggests the precise nature of commitment and the impact this will have on its determinants are issues that remain unresolved.

In the context of inter-organisational relationships, the evidence indicates commitment has an important role in the formation and management of sponsorship contracts (Thwaites, 1995; Farrelly and Quester, 2003). This is confirmed by a review of the public affirmations of commitment often made to each other by clubs and sponsors. Three specific issues are nevertheless especially pertinent to this study: firstly, data reported by Thwaites (1995) and by Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) concerning the duration and renewal of sponsorship contracts suggests the established view of commitment in the literature runs contrary to the aforementioned public affirmations. Secondly, academic research has thus far failed to address the issue of

sponsorship commitment, its determinants and its constitution, the paucity of studies being stark. Thirdly, a majority of the studies within business and management examining relationship commitment have concerned themselves solely with determinants relating to one partner, thus presenting an incomplete analysis of the concept. To address these concerns, this study will therefore examine the determinants to commitment in the dyadic relationship between football clubs and shirt sponsor by undertaking research in relation to both parties.

1.8 The research problem

A review of the content of newspaper reports, press releases and web sites indicated football clubs and their sponsors commonly profess their commitment to one another. Notions of commitment in the academic literature emphasise it is essential for the long-term success of relationships. However, data reported by Thwaites (1995) and by Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) contradicts this as most football shirt sponsorship contract typically last no more than three years and are often unlikely to be renewed at the end of this period. It therefore appears public affirmations of commitment on the part of both football clubs and sponsors run somewhat contrary to commonly held definitions appearing in the commitment literature.

The literature has thus far largely considered sponsorship as a transactional exchange and has thus failed to adequately account for this contradiction, particularly from within other exchange paradigms. Moreover, the dominance of studies concerned with objectives and outcomes in sponsorship has effectively relegated analyses of the sponsorship management process to a secondary consideration. Drawing from the relational paradigm, this study initially sets out to establish why sponsorship should be examined from a relational perspective. It then highlights the significance of commitment within this paradigm, identifying the foundations upon which it is built. It is the underlying contention of this study that commitment is fundamental to managing and sustaining sponsorship relations.

The study acknowledges the continuing importance of the five major strands of sponsorship research identified by Cornwall and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003): the nature of sponsorship, management and leveraging, measurement of effects, strategic use of sponsorship and legal and ethical considerations. However, in identifying the determinants of commitment, it is intended this study will not only address issues pertaining to the durability of sponsorship relations, but will also implicitly help to identify the impact of commitment across each of the five research strands.

1.9 Research objectives

Given the four key themes of this study (football, sponsorship, relationships and commitment), the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explain why football shirt sponsorship research needs to be undertaken using evidence relating to sport sponsorship provided in both the academic and practitioner literature.
- To draw from reviews of the sponsorship literature undertaken by Cornwall and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003) as the basis for a critique of the prevailing paradigm, and existing themes, within the sponsorship literature.
- To address the nature of relationships, examine the inter-organisational relationship literature and establish the need for a relational, rather than a transactional, view of them to be adopted.
- To establish why a dyadic inter-organisational focus for sponsorship research should be adopted, explaining why such a research focus is more appropriate than those examining sponsorship at the level of the business unit or within networks.
- To employ a relational view of sponsorship based upon social exchange theory as the foundation for an analysis of the dyadic exchange relationship between football club and shirt sponsor.
- To identify the importance of commitment within the relational paradigm and explain the contribution it makes to inter-organisational relationships.
- To examine the extent and nature of the commitment literature, highlighting key definitions and the conceptual debate surrounding it.
- To identify the range of commitment determinants highlighted in the literature.
- To utilise interpretive research techniques in order to confirm the relevance of the study by examining the content of relevant printed material.
- To utilise grounded research techniques, specifically the critical incident technique, to identify determinants of commitment in football shirt sponsorship dyads.
- To operationalise the concept of commitment and its determinants, and hypothesise relationships between them, in the light of findings drawn from the critical incident interviews and relevant existing literature on commitment.
- To identify and employ strategies and techniques relevant both to the formulation and despatch of a survey designed to collect quantitative data and to the maximisation of response rate.
- To employ multivariate techniques, notably factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, in order to identify factors accounting for variance in the model proposed by this study, and to establish the nature of causal relationships between the variables postulated by this study.

- To identify statistically significant determinants of commitment using standard multiple regression analysis, and to confirm these findings using hierarchical multiple regression analyses.
- To triangulate the methods employed by this study, and to validate its findings. using structured interviews involving football clubs and shirt sponsors from within the same dyad.
- To identify and explore the implications of this study for literature in the areas of sponsorship, relationships, dyads, commitment, commitment determinants and research methods.
- To identify and explore the implications of this study for the practice of sponsorship management.
- To highlight opportunities for further research in areas relating to the main findings of the study in the areas of sponsorship, relationships, dyads, commitment, commitment determinants and research methods.

1.10 Overview of research methodology

In order to meet the objectives of the study, a seven stage methodology has been employed embracing a range of research philosophies, approaches, strategies, time-horizons and data collection methods. Enshrined within the overall approach, the benefits of replication and extension in marketing, identified by Hubbard and Armstrong (1994), Madden, et. al. (1995) and Easley, et. al. (2000), were accepted with methods and techniques evident in similar studies therefore being employed. A key element of the study therefore draws upon the positivist tradition that has been a characteristic of the development in marketing thought (Arndt, 1985; Swan and Martin, 1994). The contention that research in marketing is nevertheless over-reliant on positivism (Deshpande, 1983; Razzaque, 1998; Easton, 2002) and should employ other paradigms has resulted in elements of interpretivism and realism being incorporated in to the study. This helped to bridge the gap between practitioner and academic (Razzaque, 1998) and served to triangulate the methods used (Smith, 1975; Kane, 1985). As such, the methodology consisted of the following stages:

1.10.1 Phase 1-based upon an interpretivist philosophy aimed at understanding the details of a situation (Remenyi, et. al. 1998), the study initially examined 174 pieces of information pertaining to sponsorship drawn from newspapers, press releases and web site reports. Based upon observations made by Blaikie (2000) and Mason (2002), the content of this information is analysed.

1.10.2 Phase 2-information generated during Phase 1 subsequently formed the basis for a realist approach which incorporated elements of grounded theory aimed at generating predictions that could be tested following further study (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Using the CIT (Flanagan, 1954), 16 semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted (8 football clubs and 8 sponsors). Content analysis procedures were employed once more, with the addition of techniques advocated by Cohen (1960) being used to ensure coding agreement.

1.10.3 Phase 3-in the light of findings from Phases 1 and 2, nine commitment determinants were identified and operationalised using a combination of scales drawn from the existing literature (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Moorman et. al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Ross, et. al. 1997; Sarkar, et. al., 1997; Jap and Ganesan, 2000) and newly formulated scales. In this context, a survey instrument was then developed and tested. Drawing from Fink's (1995) recommendations, 12 questionnaires (5 football clubs, 5 sponsors, the CMMA and the PL) were initially pilot tested. Sample members were asked both to answer questions and to complete a pro forma comment sheet on the nature and structure of the questionnaire (Bell, 1999).

1.10.4 Phase 4-following pilot testing, a final version of the questionnaire was developed and a further round of evaluation undertaken. This was mailed to four respondents who, in Phase 3, had indicated changes to the questionnaire were needed. In the light of statistical conventions, particularly the relationship between the number of responses and the number of questionnaire items (Stevens, 1996; Tabachnik and Fidel, 1996), changes to the number of questions were also made. Following Rochford and Venable's (1995) observation that an endorsement of research can improve response rates, the assistance of the CMMA and the PL was secured.

1.10.5 Phase 5-this phase adhered to a positivist philosophy in order to enable the observation of social reality (Giere, 1979; Schon, 1983) and to a deductive research approach in order to facilitate control and prediction (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). In this context, a postal questionnaire was despatched to a sample population of 182 (92 clubs and 90 sponsors). Techniques for maximising response rate, including those advocated by Watson (1965), Veiga (1974) and Jobber (1986), were employed. This resulted in a response rate of 60.4% (based on 57 club and 53 sponsor returns). Following recommendations made by Easterby-Smith et. al. (2002), subsequent checks for the validity and reliability were employed.

1.10.6 Phase 6-the results generated during Phase 5 were subsequently analysed in two stages. An exploratory factor analysis using a Principal Components approach was employed in order to reduce the number of related variables into a more manageable number prior to subsequent analysis (Nunnally, 1978; Kline, 1994). Recommended tests including Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (Kaiser, 1970; 1974) were used to confirm the appropriateness of the model which resulted in 10 factors being identified as explaining variance in the proposed model. In order to test the predictive power of each of these [nine] factors over the [one] dependent variable (commitment), standard and hierarchical multiple regression models were used (Hair, et. al., 1992). Following procedures laid down by Tabachnik and Fidell (1996) and Pallant (2001), measures for evaluating the model and each of the independent variables were employed. This resulted in three key determinants being identified as making a significant unique contribution to the dependent variable. During both stages of this research phase, SPSS 11.0.0 was used. At this stage, statements are made concerning whether or not the hypotheses presented in Section 1.11 below are supported.

1.10.7 Phase 7-following identification of the determinants of commitment during Phase 6, Kane (1985) and Smith's (1975) observations, that research should account for the relative merits of various methods, tools and techniques and be grounded in professional practice, a final phase of triangulating interviews were undertaken. Using a cross-sectional case study approach involving an analysis of six complete dyads (six clubs and six sponsors), the structured interviews also served to examine the generalisability of the findings made during the previous phase of research. The framework listed by Bennett (1986) was used as the basis for structuring and analysing the content of these interviews

1.11 Research hypotheses

Having conducted the inductive phase of the research, specific research hypotheses were generated for testing within the deductive phase, and then for confirming with further subsequent inductive research. The research hypotheses guiding the main study are outlined below (a path diagram is shown in Table 1).

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the existence of a formal, written contract and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between communication and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of a relationship and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the geographic location of a football club/shirt sponsor and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the length of time taken to make sponsorship decisions and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between the perceptions of another party's relationship commitment and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between trust and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 8: There is a positive relationship between the role individual's play in managing relationships and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 9: There is a positive relationship between shared values and relationship commitment.

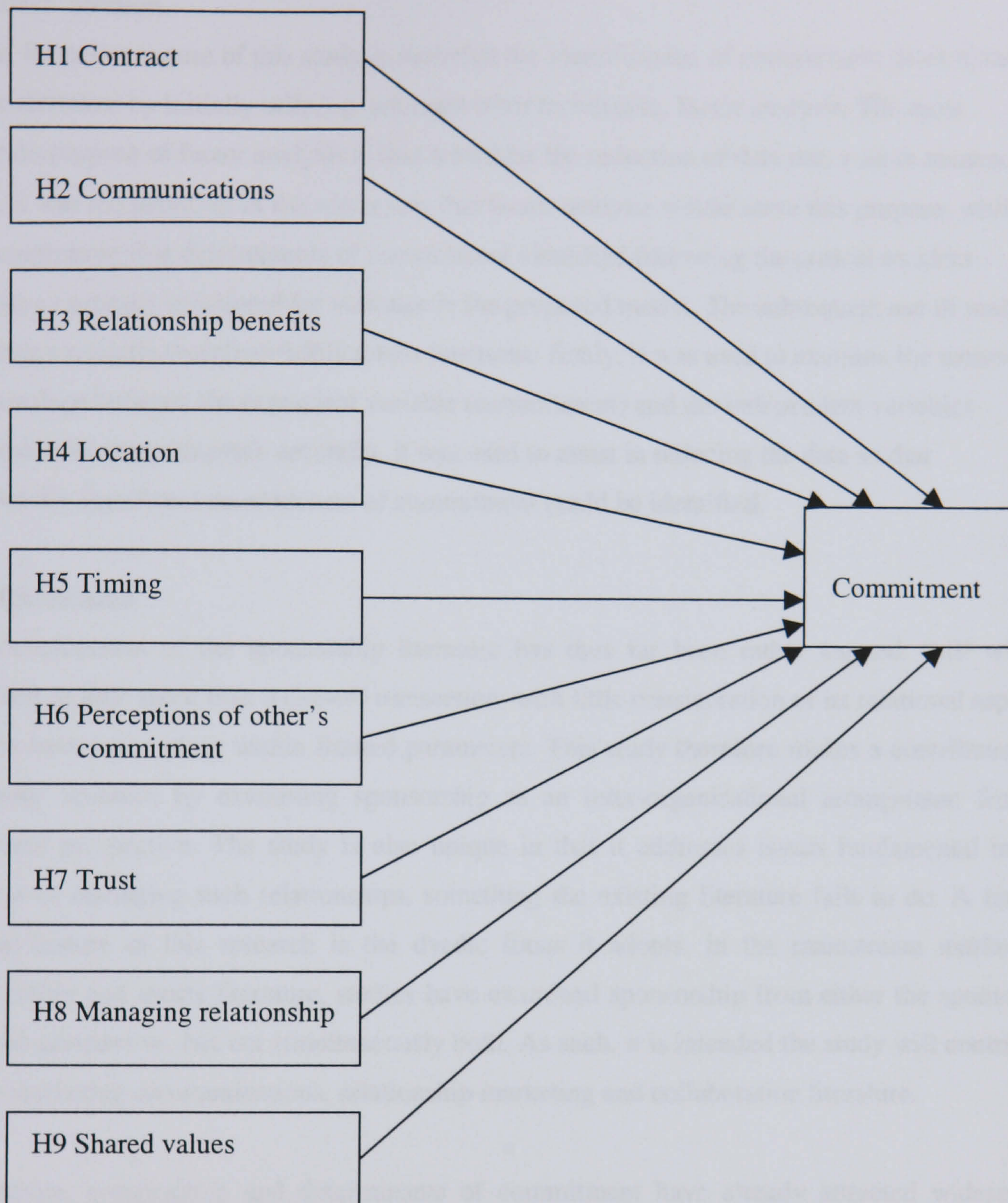
1.12 Limitations of the study

There are five principle limitations to this study:

1. The study examines commitment in football shirt sponsorship dyads during one season (2002/2003). This is because problems were encountered when attempting to put together a longitudinal database of contact details for both football clubs and sponsors. In the case of clubs, there is a high turnover of those personnel allocated to managing sponsorship deals. Added to this, many football clubs readily admitted to not remembering the names of past sponsors or their personnel. In the case of sponsors, it was identified that sponsorship staff regularly leave their positions and their replacements are often unable to comment on previous deals. Given the need to question key informants, the decision was therefore taken to restrict the analysis to one football season.

2. In the light of the first limitation, the research sample was relatively small (92 clubs and 92 sponsors). This situation was exacerbated by the exclusion of two sponsors, leaving a final sample size of 182. This restricted the range of multivariate techniques that could be used. For example, in order for the use of stepwise multiple regression analysis to comply with statistical convention, a ratio of 40 cases per variable is required. The sample size also limited the number of variables and questionnaire scale items that could be analysed in the factor and multiple regression analyses utilised by this study.

Table 1: Hypothesised relationships between commitment and determinants



3. The study examines commitment at one point in time and is therefore a static analysis. As Anderson and Weitz (1992) have noted, this is inevitable because it is difficult to characterise the varying degrees of commitment at different stages of a relationship across a wide range of dyads.
4. Given sample access problems, the number of football clubs participating in face-to-face interviews during phase's two and seven of the research was less than that which would have been desirable. In the light of observations made by Chadwick and Clowes (1998) and Valynseele (1999), this is a common problem although this study has, to an extent, been able to overcome

this (for example, by securing an endorsement for the study from the CMMA) without achieving a 'perfect' solution.

5. The formative nature of this study is such that the identification of commitment determinants was undertaken by initially utilising, amongst other techniques, factor analysis. The most common purpose of factor analysis is that it enables the reduction of data into a more manageable form. It was the intention of the researcher that factor analysis would serve this purpose, whilst also confirming that determinants of commitment identified following the critical incident interviews actually accounted for variance in the proposed model. The subsequent use of multiple regression analysis therefore fulfilled two functions: firstly, it was used to examine the nature of relationships between the dependent variable (commitment) and the independent variables (commitment determinants); secondly, it was used to assist in reducing the data so that statistically significant determinants of commitment could be identified.

1.13 Conclusion

The development of the sponsorship literature has thus far been rather stunted. Still widely regarded as little more than a one-off transaction, with little consideration of its relational aspects, studies have taken place within limited parameters. This study therefore makes a contribution to academic research by examining sponsorship as an inter-organisational arrangement from a relational perspective. The study is also unique in that it addresses issues fundamental to the process of managing such relationships, something the existing literature fails to do. A further unique feature of this research is the dyadic focus it adopts. In the mainstream marketing, sponsorship and sports literature, studies have examined sponsorship from either the sponsor or sponsee perspective, but not simultaneously both. As such, it is intended the study will contribute to the marketing communications, relationship marketing and collaboration literature.

The nature, composition and determinants of commitment have already attracted widespread interest across a number of business disciplines, and within marketing. Such has been the development of this field of research that this study therefore draws extensively from existing studies. It nevertheless represents a replication and extension of these studies into three new areas: sponsorship, sport and football. At one level, the study details the relevance of current work on commitment for the dyad involving football club and shirt sponsor. At another level, it sets the notion of commitment within the context of relations where there appears to be a contradiction between words and actions, especially where prevailing industrial conditions are such that pressures exist to undermine these established notions.

Given the construction of the research methodology for this study, it is also anticipated that it will have relevance and meaning for practitioners. Presentations have already been made to commercial and marketing managers from the English professional clubs, and feature articles have appeared in the CMMA's magazine and Football Business International. In addition, extracts from the study have already been requested by the Hollis Sponsorship Consultancy, The Sponsorship Consultancy (part of the Red Mandarin marketing consultancy), Powergen (shirt sponsor of Ipswich Town and Blackpool), MG Rover (shirt sponsors of Aston Villa) and Carlsberg (shirt sponsors of Liverpool).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of chapter

The chapter provides a critical review of the sponsorship, relationship and commitment literature. Various drawing from a range of different disciplines and paradigms, important aspects of each literature are highlighted and their relevance for this study assessed. Drawing from this examination, the chapter also highlights key conceptual considerations for this study.

2.2 Sponsorship and football

According to IEG (2002), total projected worldwide sponsorship expenditure for 2001 was set to be £17 billion with an annual expenditure increase of 9.6% identified for the same year. The general international growth in sponsorship is mirrored in the British sponsorship market. Mintel (2002) estimated the total value of United Kingdom sponsorships to be £849 million, with increases in market value of 4.2% and 3.9% being reported for 2000 and 2001 respectively. For the world market, IEG (2002) indicated that between 50% and 60% of expenditure is devoted to the sponsorship of sport. In the UK, this figure is thought to be somewhere between 50% and 55% of total sponsorship funding, valuing the market at approximately £420 million. Keynote (2003) was rather more optimistic about the total value of the sport sponsorship market in the UK, identifying that total values may be greater than £1 billion per annum. This statement is nevertheless qualified by Keynote which stated it is difficult to accurately track sports sponsorships. This is consistent with observations made by Marshall and Cook (1992) who observed problems associated with defining sponsorship mean such figures are not always accurate as the value of many small-scale sponsorship deals are not always officially recorded. Keynote therefore suggested £442 million as a more realistic figure for sport sponsorships in 2002.

Within sport, football has been the major recipient of sponsorship funding. Of the 589 leading deals agreed in 2001, 209 were football-based sponsorships (Mintel, 2002). In turn, seven of the top-ten highest valued deals during the same period were accounted for by football sponsorships, with shirt sponsorship contracts between Manchester United and Vodafone (the second most valuable), and Chelsea and Emirates Airlines (the fifth most valuable) being especially notable. Keynote (2003, p. 16) estimated that up to 40% of the total sponsorship spend is devoted to football because it enables organisations to “[have their] names emblazoned across shirts.” Such

is the importance of football shirt sponsorship, that Keynote also stressed football has largely been responsible for recent increases in the value of the UK sponsorship market.

The typical football shirt sponsorship deal noted in a limited number of existing studies (Thwaites, 1995; Miles, 2001; Rosson, 2001; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2002) generally involves an organisation (in most cases, a company) acquiring the legal rights to be associated with a football club for a specified period of time. This most notably allows the sponsor to place their name and/or logo on a team shirt¹. In addition, depending upon the nature of the contract that has been negotiated, it also facilitates joint promotional activity such as web site links (Beech et. al., 2001a; Beech et. al. 2001b), and access to corporate hospitality facilities (Hancock, 2003). Evidence reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) indicated initial approaches concerning sponsorship deals are more likely to be instigated by the football club than the sponsor. Sponsorship approaches may be solicited (based upon previous indications from a prospective partner that they would be willing to receive an approach) or unsolicited (no previous contact having taken place between the two parties) and may involve an intermediary such as a sponsorship agent.

The increase in football shirt sponsorship values should be set in the context of two key factors that have influenced the football industry. Firstly, football has changed significantly as a result of the combined influence of organisational re-structuring (FA Blueprint, 1991), the commercial development of football and cost pressures arising from player acquisition and remuneration costs (Dempsey and Reilly, 1998). Secondly, there has been a growing acceptance that football shirt sponsorship programmes benefit football clubs and sponsoring organisations (Rosson, 2001). After a period during which problems associated with hooliganism, declining attendances, poor television coverage and an absence of English teams from European competition caused problems in football, Szymanski and Kuypers (2000) observed football has become more commercially attractive. Following the inception of the PL in 1992, and pump-primed by increased revenues derived by clubs from new television contracts, the industry has changed dramatically. There have been significant increases in match day attendances, in the amount of coverage given to football by the media and in the number of high profile overseas internationals playing for English clubs. As a result, clubs have therefore adopted a more commercial approach to their

¹ The English Football Association is considering a relaxation of the rules to allow all parts of a team strip to be sponsored. Shirt sponsorship is currently the only 'legal' form of kit sponsorship in English professional football.

operations, including the development of a broader range of merchandise and the provision of more sophisticated corporate hospitality packages (Conn, 1997). At the same time, football clubs have encountered growing financial pressures: rising player transfer costs and player salary levels, allied to the costs of stadium construction and re-development, have led clubs to seek new, and develop existing, income streams (Morrow, 1999; 2003). Clubs have therefore sought to employ shirt sponsorship contracts as a commercial opportunity, as a basis for covering costs and, in some cases, as the focus for strategic partnering (Ray, 2003). Revenue generated by a shirt sponsorship contract may therefore constitute as much as 30% of turnover for some clubs (Deloitte and Touche, 2003).

The positive aspects of football shirt sponsorship are no less appealing for sponsoring organisations. Miles (2001) indicated the benefits of sponsoring football can include increased sales, enhanced awareness levels, and management of brand attitudes. Wilcox et.al. (2001) alternatively highlighted that it can help build brand personality, stature and impact, whilst Rosson (2001) explained that sponsorship of a team shirt in English football can have marked effects on consumer perceptions. In previous football shirt sponsorship studies, Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) reported that it enables sponsors to achieve corporate, product and communications objectives. The TNSSport (2002) marketing consultancy proclaimed football shirt sponsorship programmes deliver a good deal because fans perceive the involvement of specific sponsors to be beneficial for their respective clubs and to football in general.

Despite the optimism surrounding sport sponsorship programmes in the UK, Mintel (2000) adopted a more cautious view, noting the total value of other forms of sponsorship, such as broadcasting and community sponsorships, has increased at a faster rate than the total value of sports sponsorships since 1994 (121% and 126% respectively up to 1999, compared to 42% for sport). Moreover, sport marketing consultancy, Sports + Markt (2001; 2003) explained the shirt sponsorship market in the UK is somewhat underdeveloped by comparison with other European markets. They indicated the average PL shirt sponsorship contract is worth just over £1 million (compared to the leading European average of £2 million for a Bundesliga shirt sponsorship). Glendinning (2004) noted English football shirt sponsorship contracts account for only 19% of European market volume, compared to 28% in Germany and 21% in Italy. It was suggested by Rosson (2001) that sponsorship is relatively less important to football clubs than other revenue sources and may represent less than 20% of total annual revenue for some PL clubs (compared to 30-50% derived from gate receipts). Hill (2001) alternatively argued shirt sponsorships deals are

not especially valuable to sponsoring organisations because target audiences resent their involvement. Hancock (2003) was equally dismissive of shirt sponsorship claiming that it adds little value to the communications activities of sponsors

Opinion about the relevance and effectiveness of football shirt sponsorships is therefore divided and there is a simultaneous and equally intense debate about the process of sponsorship management. IEG (1999) expressed concerns that sponsorship programmes are still failing because corporations do not recognise they are complex and challenging to manage. Moreover, Mintel (2000) stated the failure to professionally manage sponsorships continues to pose a threat to their effectiveness. Irrespective of such warnings, Cornwell and Maignan (1998) highlighted a continuing failure amongst academics and practitioners to understand how sponsorships should be managed, whilst Hoek (1999) expressed concerns that sponsorship management practices remain undeveloped.

The extent of these concerns is also specifically applicable to English professional football sponsorships. Thwaites (1995) warned against the continuing failure of shirt sponsors to manage their sponsorships properly. In a later development of this study, Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) expressed various concerns including the failure to set objectives, weaknesses in evaluation techniques and problems in the way sponsors relate to sponsees. The football clubs themselves are no less culpable: figures reported in both studies imply football clubs have a somewhat cavalier and short-term approach to managing their sponsor relations. This was confirmed in a personal interview with Andy Daykin of the CMMA who claimed many clubs too readily switch from one sponsor to another because they view their shirt sponsors as short-term revenue generators to whom they have no particular obligation. He also stated clubs often fail to devote the necessary time and resources to managing their relations with a sponsor.

In this context, various commentators have called for a change to the way in which such sponsorship programmes are managed (Cousens and Slack, 1996; Amis et. al., 1999; Erickson and Kushner, 1999; Olkonnen et. al. 2000; Cousens, et. al. 2001; Olkonnen, 2001). Some, including McDonald and Milne (1997), Shani, (1997), Lapio Jnr and Morris-Spetar (2000), Hancock (2003), Thompson (2003) and Ryan and Fahy (2003) have demanded that a stronger relationship between sports properties and sponsors should be developed if sponsorship is to retain credibility. Other commentators remain less concerned with Meenaghan (1999) stating a more 'hard-nosed' corporate attitude has come to inform sponsorship management and Miles

(2001) confirming the proliferation of expenditure has forced sponsors to address how to manage sponsorships more effectively. Opinions concerning the process of management are therefore once again divided.

The debate surrounding sport sponsorship, and football shirt sponsorship in particular, suggests a number of unresolved issues are being intensified by changes in sponsorship practices, the proliferation of sponsorship values and the challenging operating conditions currently facing professional football clubs in England. Ensuring that sponsorship continues to be of mutual benefit to both clubs and sponsors thus appears to be of paramount importance. To sponsors, for whom shirt sponsorship has both a strategic and a tactical value, justifying the costs of property acquisition, establishing on what basis relationships are forged and how they are subsequently managed, appear to be pressing issues. For clubs, their quest to identify stable and sustainable revenue sources is being undermined by their often 'short-termist' and unprofessional approach to the selection and management of sponsorship partners.

For those involved in the dyad between club and sponsor, this implies they need to address a number of relationship issues. It will be argued in this study that the nature of the commitment demonstrated by club and sponsor is principle amongst these. The notion of commitment is one which has attracted interest across a range of academic studies because its existence is thought to indicate partners wish to remain in a relationship with one another. Despite clubs and sponsors routinely professing their commitment to one another in, for example, press releases, the frequency with which clubs and sponsors terminate their relationships suggests their understanding of 'commitment' is somewhat different to notions appearing in the literature. It is also interesting that, in many cases, clubs seem to think the sponsor makes a commitment, not them (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.3 of this study). This is an interesting proposition from a traditional transactional perspective because the sponsor is technically the customer and therefore entitled to expect a commitment from the club. At this stage, the nature of the relationship between the two and their respective views about relationship commitment would therefore appear to be significant.

At this juncture, it is not the intention to discuss the significance of relationship commitment (for a commentary in this area, the reader's attention is particularly drawn to Sections 2.14-2.17 of this chapter). Suffice to say, this study will contend that commitment transcends the sponsorship process. Club and sponsor make a commitment when they enter into a relationship which

subsequently impacts upon the management and termination of their relationship. It is thus anticipated the study will contribute to developing an understanding of relationship acquisition, retention and dissolution practices in football shirt sponsorship dyads and to a more general understanding of commitment across all sponsorship dyads.

2.3 The state of sponsorship research

Sponsorship has been the subject of intense interest over the last fifteen years. Although studies have been conducted in the areas of arts, cause and media sponsorships, sport has been the major field within which research has taken place. In a review of the literature undertaken by Cornwall and Maignan (1998), 80 academic articles on sponsorship were identified, of which 34 related to sport. The focus of these studies broadly fell in to five areas: the nature of sponsorship, management issues, measurement considerations, issues in strategy and the legal and ethical dimensions of sponsorship. A subsequent review of later literature completed by Walliser (2003) identified a further 133 sponsorship-related studies. These were categorised into the following research streams: definitions and forms, management challenges and measurement techniques. Of the total number, 70 were conducted in sport. In Shannon's (1999) review of 185 sport marketing journal articles, 62 were sponsorship studies. A review of previous content undertaken by (Pitts, 2002), which appeared in the tenth anniversary edition of *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, indicated 53 out of 168 articles had been published about sport sponsorship. It is notable that, despite the proliferation of sponsorship research and the challenges facing football clubs and their shirt sponsors, the studies undertaken by Thwaites (1995), Mosson (2001) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) remain the only work undertaken directly relating to shirt sponsorships.

General consensus across the literature is that sponsorship should continue to be a focus for further academic work (Meenaghan, 1999). There is also widespread agreement sponsorship is beneficial (Abratt et. al., 1987; Gilbert, 1988; Scott and Suchard, 1992; Witcher, et. al. 1991; Marshall and Cook, 1992) and that objective setting (Armstrong, 1988; Milahik, 1984; Walliser, 1997; Meenaghan, 2001) and the measurement of outcomes (Otker and Hayes, 1987; Abratt and Grobler, 1989; Turco, 1995; Abel and Long, 1996; Cornwell, et. al, 1997; Cornwell et. al., 2001) constitute the most interesting research streams. A preoccupation with the latter two issues has nevertheless served to skew the development of research leading to an overly focused agenda in which broader considerations, such as the management of sponsorship relations, have been neglected (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; Meenaghan, 1999; Walliser, 2003). A further concern is that most studies have emerged from the marketing communications literature, consequently

focusing upon sponsorship from a sponsor's perspective. This means most sponsorship studies lack any real sense of breadth, depth or context, and fail to replicate the richness of work completed in other areas of business research². Other than a small number of studies (for example, see Farrelly and Quester, 2003; Farrelly, et. al., 2003), there is little in the sponsorship literature to suggest that relationship management is an issue.

The apparent absence of dynamism in sponsorship research is arguably the result of an established view that sponsorship is a marketing communications strategy (Meenaghan, 1991; Tripodi, 2001). This view is bound up in the notion that sponsorship is effectively a one-off transaction rather than an ongoing relationship. But there is reason for optimism as recent developments have started to cast doubts on the relevance of the prevailing paradigm. Work undertaken by Amis et. al. (1999), Farrelly, et. al. (2000), Farrelly, et. al. (2003), Farrelly and Quester (2003), Cousens et. al. (2001), Cousens and Slack (1996) and Woolfe, et. al. (2002) propose that sponsorship can equally be seen as a form of resource, relationship marketing or network strategy. These new areas of work are also important in the way they shift the emphasis of sponsorship research from a business-to-customer focus, to an inter-organisational one.

One of the sponsorship literature's key strengths lay in the ability of academics in the area to assess the 'current state of play', Parker, (1991), Cornwell and Maignan (1998), Pope (1998a) and Walliser's (2003) work being examples of this. As such, there is a strong sense of where sponsorship research should be heading. Observations made by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Meenaghan (1999) were helpful when formulating an approach to this study. But the somewhat introspective nature of this literature has restricted the more rigorous development of key concepts and issues. Much of the research has been conceptual (for example, Arthur, et. al., 1998), limited in scope (for example, Cuneen and Hannan, 1993) or of limited methodological value (for example, Tripodi, 2001). Indeed, Douvis and Douvis, (2000) called for greater use of statistical, particularly multivariate, techniques in sponsorship research. This is a legitimate claim in a field of research in which the use of low level statistical techniques (for example, Zafer et. al., 1998), qualitative methods (for example, Amis et. al., 1999), and a complete failure to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, is common place. In order to address concerns about the worryingly small number of members within the sponsorship community who have utilised multivariate techniques, the study will follow the precedent set by Farrelly and Quester

² In the case of Anderson and Weitz (1992), which significantly informed this study, both sides of 378 relationship dyads were surveyed.

(2003) and Farrelly et. al. (2003) and will employ both factor and multiple regression analyses. A range of additional qualitative research techniques, including critical incident interviewing, will also be used in order to initiate and support the use of quantitative methods.

This study therefore sets out to address many of the deficiencies evident in the current literature. Although the field of research, sport, is an established one, the study will focus specifically on football shirt sponsorship dyads. As has already been noted in Section 2.2, football is a major recipient of sponsorship funding and is by far the most developed and financially valuable form of sport sponsorship, although it has yet to be studied in any great detail by academics. Despite this focus, it is nevertheless intended the study will ultimately make conclusions that are equally as applicable to other sports and to sponsorship generally. In examining the determinants of commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad, the study will transcend the predominating research foci of objective setting and outcome measurement. It will employ the process of sponsorship management as a key research theme which cuts across each of the stages previously identified in reviews of the literature, as well as issues pertaining to relationship management. This will enable a relational view of sponsorship to be adopted and so positions the study closely to more recent developments in the sponsorship and broader marketing literature. Of particular note, both sides of the football shirt sponsorship dyad will be examined giving the study a breadth that is singularly absent from other sponsorship studies.

2.4 Development of the sponsorship literature

In spite of the attention sponsorship has received in the literature, there is still no commonly held definition of the activity. An early view of sponsorship (Moonman, 1974) asserted it is effectively a form of philanthropy or gift giving where the sponsor pays the sponsee a sum of money in return for the intangible benefits of association. Such gifts are often motivated by a sense of citizenship or by a 'hobby motive', with any commercial gains thought to be incidental rather than intended (Simkins, 1980; Cunningham, et. al., 1993). The definition provided by the Sports Council of the United Kingdom (1979) (see Table 2) identified that, even in a philanthropic sense, sponsorship may still generate returns for the benefactor. Indeed, the notion of there being 'publicity for the donor' implies association, awareness, and hospitality opportunities may still result from this type of an arrangement. For the sponsee, whilst this view of sponsorship does not suggest it is necessarily a commercial transaction, the exchange of a financial payment and the subsequent association with a sponsor this implies, indicates the relationship is a dyadic one conferring benefits on sponsor and sponsee.

Table 2: Definitions of sponsorship

Definition	Origin
“A gift or payment in return for some facility or privilege which aims to provide publicity for the donor”	Sports Council of the UK (1979)
“A commercial organisation provides resources for the benefit of a leisure activity. The sponsor does so with the expectation of gaining some commercially valuable benefit. The sponsored activity consents to the sponsor company using a facility it has to offer in exchange for the resources it accordingly receives”	Waite (1979)
“The provision of assistance either financial or in-kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives”	Meenaghan, (1983)
“The support of a sport, sports event, sport organisation or competition by an outside body or person for the mutual benefit of both parties”	CCPR (1983)
“Investments in causes or events to support corporate objectives (for example, by enhancing corporate image) or marketing objectives (such as increasing brand awareness)”	Gardner and Shuman (1988)
“Buying and exploiting an association with an event, a team, a group, etc., for specific marketing (communications) purposes”	Otker (1988)
“A business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organisation which offers in return some rights and association that	Sleight (1989)

may be used for commercial advantage”	
“The financial support that industry provides in exchange for brand exposure”	Otker and Hayes (1995)
“An investment in cash or in kind activity, in return for access to the exploitable potential associated with that activity”	Kolah (1999)
“The consumer exchanges money or product for the right to associate its name or product with a sporting event”	Shank (1999)
“The financial or material support of an event, activity, person, organisation or product by an unrelated organisation or donor”	Dibb, et. al. (2001)
“The funding of an activity by a commercial organisation as part of its communications programme”	Keynote (2003)

Given recent developments in the sponsorship market, the philanthropic view of sponsorship could be discounted as largely irrelevant. It is neither overtly commercial nor linked directly to the broader objectives attached to most sponsorship programmes. There is also an implication that dyad partners need not manage their relationship, the most tangible activity involving the two simply being the flow of financial resources and legal rights between sponsor and sponsee. However, the philanthropic view retains a degree of importance in the way it demonstrates the sponsorship decision may not be a rational economic one. As Thwaites (1995) has noted, this can be especially pertinent in football where the ‘hobby motive’ has been observed as an influence on sponsorship management. In the context of a study relating to football, accepting there might be non-economic influences on sponsorship programmes is therefore important.

Subsequent definitions of sponsorship strongly emphasise commercial dimensions of the activity. These have included corporate (Gardner and Shuman, 1988) and marketing (Otker, 1988) elements whilst emphasising the exchange relationship between sponsor and sponsee. One of the most commonly cited definitions of sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1983) is important in the way it accounts for the exchange of non-financial assistance with a sponsorship partner. But it remains vague about the motives underlying a sponsor’s decision to enter into a relationship and is

insufficiently focused to enable its application to non-commercial sponsorships. Gardner and Shuman (1988) addressed this concern, although they failed to directly relate their definition to sport. The definition is nevertheless an interesting one in the way it suggests sponsorship is not simply a marketing activity and may have a long-term element to it. Otker (1988) and Kolah's (1999) definitions develop this, identifying that exploitable association is an important element.

The contrast between Meenaghan's and subsequent definitions is important because it distinguishes between different views of sponsorship in the literature. One view emphasises that sponsorship is an important part of the marketing communications mix (Meenaghan, 1991; Tripodi, 2001), whilst the other indicates it is linked more broadly to additional elements of the marketing mix (Cornwell, 1995). This suggests sponsorship within different organisations may be perceived and used in different ways. The contrast is also important because it differentiates the view of sponsorship as a simple one-way flow of financial resources from one where the sponsee actually exchanges features of a property, such as a name, a logo or an image, in return for a financial payment.

The way in which existing sponsorship definitions encapsulate activities ranging from the philanthropic through to the corporate is notable. But they all remain restrictive for a number of reasons. Firstly, the inference one could make is that sponsees are some how passive recipients of the revenue provided by a sponsor and are not necessarily engaged in managing their relationship with a sponsor. In the same way, whilst there is consensus that sponsorship programmes have to be leveraged (Armstrong, 1988; Hoek, et. al., 1990; Meenaghan, 1991; Thwaites, 1995), and may have varying degrees of success (Stotlar, 1993; Horn and Baker, 1999; Harvey, 2001), the literature has thus far failed to examine how sponsors should manage the sponsorship process (indeed, one reading of the academic literature may be that leverage expenditure is the extent of sponsorship management). Accounting for the link between objectives and outcomes-the process of management-has not, therefore, been an especially strong of feature of sponsorship definitions to date.

Sleight (1989) aside, a second criticism is that existing definitions fail to identify sponsorship as a relationship. This relegates an understanding of relationship dynamics to a minor consideration, especially with regards to how sponsor and sponsee engage with one another. Hence, it is not immediately obvious how issues such as the professed commitment partners often express to each other should be examined or managed. A further weakness evident in the literature is sponsorship

definitions invariably fail to incorporate any sense of partnership or relational exchange. Every study to which these definitions apply has been undertaken using samples consisting solely of one party: the sponsor or the sponsee, never both. Exactly how the majority of the literature can purport to accurately explain the nature of sponsorship relations is therefore open to question.

Linked to this, a third concern is that prevailing views of sponsorship reduce it to little more than a one-off transaction. Notions of a more broadly and mutually beneficial, or enduring, relationship remain largely absent. On one side of the relationship, sponsors are not just paying a sum of money to the sponsee. Rather, they are committing their reputations, their brands, management time, their advice and the potential for co-marketing opportunities. The sponsee provides access to a similar array of benefits and resources, as well as to networking opportunities, customers and to the communities within which both the sponsor and sponsee operate. The sponsorship relationship is not therefore a simple transaction, it need not be a purely rational economic arrangement and is not necessarily the strictly short-term arrangement current definitions imply.

Even though the strongly marketing transaction-oriented view of sponsorship continues to prevail, alternative paradigms are beginning to emerge which portray sponsorship as a type of network relationship enabling linkages with a range of other organisation to be established, a resource strategy helping those involved to build competence, a form of relationship marketing in which sponsorship partners build and maintain long-term relationships and a partnership strategy characterised by strategic collaboration. These developments are significant for a number of reasons: they demonstrate sponsorship can, in its own right, have a strategic element, it is a relationship based upon social exchange, it can be more durable in certain cases and it is characterised by multiple linkages and benefits beyond the one-off transaction implied by current definitions.

The network view (Cousens and Slack, 1996; Erickson and Kushner, 1999; Olkonnen et. al. 2000; Olkonnen, 2001; Woolfe, et. al., 2002) emphasises the engagement of sponsor/sponsee in inter-organisational relationships to which both bring their resources and capabilities. Through their collaborative efforts, value is added to the relationship via the communicative effects the sponsorship has on various audiences. The work of Olkonnen et. al. (2000) and Olkonnen (2001) is especially notable for the way it stresses the importance of interaction between various members of the network and for the participation of each of them in the sponsorship process. On

this basis, sponsorship is presented as a focal activity for relations between, for example, sponsors, sponsees, broadcasters, the media and sports fans. This is important because it extends the analysis of sponsorship beyond a single party to the relationship. It also implies that organisations involved in sponsorship deals exchange content beyond a simple financial transaction. The network view is nevertheless somewhat problematic in that it fails to address how relationships at the transactional level connect to network level relationships. It also neglects to account for the dyad relationships of which networks are comprised, to identify the actual extent of the network (where it begins and where it ends) and it provides no guidance about the formation or management of networks

The importance of collaborative communication, as well as market orientation and brand building behaviors, has been identified by the resource view of sponsorship as being important to the implementation and management of sponsorship programmes (Farrelly, et. al., 2000). Amis et. al. (1999) therefore suggested sponsorship can form the basis for the development of strategic competence. This view is useful in the way that it moves sponsorship on from being a tactical tool to a coherent strategy. But this is premised on a view that sponsorship is purely a foundation upon which to build competitive advantage and does not acknowledge sponsorships may incorporate other elements (such as building community relations). Accordingly, even though the importance of social exchange phenomenon such as communication is acknowledged, it rather tends to reinforce the orthodox view of sponsorship as a rational economic activity.

An interesting development of the resource view is provided by Farrelly and Quester (2003) and Farrelly et. al. (2003), highlighting the significance of marketing orientation as a resource in sponsorship deals in long-term inter-organisational, dyadic relationships. They identified that trust and commitment are determined by the communication which takes place between sponsor and sponsee, and the degree of market orientation demonstrated by a sponsorship partner. Whilst this is an important development in understanding how the sponsorship process operates, it is nevertheless rather restrictive as numerous factors are likely to influence the formation and management of sponsorship relations. For example, the benefits that can be generated through such a relationship, the cultural context within which communication takes place and the relevance of unspoken communication, such as perceptions, are all ignored.

The notion of a partnership approach existing sponsor and sponsee has been espoused by Hoek (1998) and Mason (1999) who have identified sponsorship as a form of strategic collaboration

and as a strategic alliance. This view is also common to relationship marketing and Cousens et. al. (2001) differentiated relational sponsorships from traditional transactional sponsorships. Indeed, they noted how the extent to which a partnership approach is adopted will influence the effectiveness of the sponsorship. The relational paradigm also states that committing resources involves more than a monetary exchange, which can tie sponsor and sponsee together for more than a one-off or short-term contract. In a sponsorship market where costs have recently escalated, and where value for money has become important to sponsors (SRI, 1998), value-adding partnerships would therefore appear to be an opportune development in the sponsorship literature.

Notwithstanding the more general criticisms of relationship marketing³, an overriding and major concern about this, and other recent related developments in the sponsorship literature, is that, with the exception of Farrelly, and Quester (2003), Farrelly et. al. (2003) and Woolfe et. al.'s (2002), work, they have yet to be subjected to rigorous empirical testing and effectively remain conceptual propositions. As such, they do not yield new definitions of sponsorship, nor do they substantiate any of the claims they make. Indeed, as Olkkonen et. al. (2000, p. 12) actually stated: "We are aiming at a theoretical sketch of how current sponsorship research could be developed further". Even where empirical work has been undertaken worries remain about the reliability and validity of the methods used. In the case of Farrelly and Quester's (2003) study, 92 survey returns were received from a sample population of only 108. In Woolfe et. al.'s 2002 study of the Irish sports network, only 54 organisations participated in the study. In asserting the broader credentials of sponsorship, they also fail bridge the gap between sponsorship as a transaction and sponsorship as a relationship. It remains unclear how those organisations involved in sponsorship relations work together with each other in order to achieve the relational benefits of their arrangement. That is, how the dyad between sponsor and sponsee functions in order to mutually satisfy the expectations of both parties. Farrelly and Quester (2003, p. 531) nevertheless justify the dyadic focus of their research by stating that it: "...may shed some light on the sponsorship association and its success factors. In particular, the way in which sponsors and properties perceive the relationship, including those aspects deemed most important in the development and evaluation of commitment....".

³ For a review of the relationship marketing literature, the reader's attention is drawn to Chapter 2, Section 2.11.

On the basis of observations made in relation to concerns about existing definitions of sponsorship, this study therefore proposes a new definition: "A dyadic inter-organisational relationship in which sponsor and sponsee engage in a process of exchanging and managing resources in order to achieve a multiplicity of objectives both within and without the relationship". This definition is intended to address a number of key considerations. Firstly, it is one of only two studies in existence postulating that sponsorship is a dyadic inter-organisational relationship (along with Farrelly and Quester, 2003 and Farrelly et. al., 2003). A more detailed discussion concerning the nature of dyads, and their links to networks, is presented in Section 2.12. That the relationship between sponsor and sponsee should be considered as an inter-organisational one may appear to be ill founded. However, this study will contend that a sponsorship programme entails the exchange of more than financial resources. This means the sponsor should not be readily seen as a customer in the relationship because a sponsee may contribute equally valuable resources to the relationship. As such, the contention is that sponsorships are partnerships, alliances and relationships, rather than simply being contractual agreements.

The statement pertaining to an exchange and management of resources is intended to assert that sponsorship is not simply a one-way financial transaction. Rather, it embraces the exchange of a range of resources which can include information, time and communication, from the initiation of a relationship through to its termination. It also facilitates the view of sponsorship as a process to which both sponsor and sponsee commit these resources and manage them in various ways in order to achieve their objectives. As such, it highlights how two parties to a sponsorship relationship align and what the relative contribution is that each party makes to the relationship. Further to this, the definition does not restrict the achievement of objectives to those associated with the marketing function and can thus be used to embrace broader corporate, relational, dyadic and network objectives. This is important in the way it acknowledges that sponsor and sponsee may enter into a relationship for reasons intrinsic to the relationship. This does not exclude how it enables them to build relations with customers or a network of other relationships partners, although an overall implication of the definition is that the effectiveness of managing a sponsorship is dependent upon how the relationship between sponsor and sponsee is managed.

Finally, the definition addresses calls made by Cornwell and Maignan (1998, p. 18) for the sponsorship literature to: "[To consider how] sponsorships could be perceived as a means to create bonds with business partners. The construction of alliances regrouping several businesses

around a common sponsorship may help generate trust and commitment between the businesses as well as an integrated communications programme” and also explained by Meenaghan (1999, p.25): “Traditionally sponsorship was viewed as an economic investment and the sponsor-event owner [property] relationship defined in economic terms. However, observation of industry practice clearly indicates that alternative perspectives on sponsor-event [property] owner relationships are appropriate. Today, it is quite common to hear sponsors and event [property] owners refer to one another as marketing partners reflecting the reality of longer-term, closer and more positive relations between the sponsorship parties”.

2. 5 Themes in the sponsorship literature

The debate concerning the relative merits of different paradigms in sponsorship research has been a fairly recent development in the literature. To date, studies have tended to focus on a small number of areas identified by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003), which are noted above in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. For the purposes of developing this study, a combination of the research themes they highlight is employed. Accordingly, a commentary focusing on four key sponsorship areas is presented below. The four areas are: the nature of sponsorship, its management, evaluation of its effects and the context within which it takes place.

2.6 The nature of sponsorship

Within this more general theme, there are two dimensions to research that has been undertaken thus far: the objectives of/motives for sponsorships and the targets for sponsors. These are considered below⁴.

2.6.1 Objectives and motives-there is broad agreement that sponsorship can help a sponsor to realise various objectives. The commonly held view is sponsorship is an integral component of the marketing communications mix (Wilber, 1988; Meenaghan, 1991; Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992; Irwin et. al., 1994; Tripodi, 2001). Objectives set for sponsorship programmes therefore typically include enhancing or transferring image (Ferrand and Pages, 1996, Gwinner, 1997), influencing people’s purchase behavior (Pope, 1998b; Hansen and Halling, 2000; Hansen et. al., 2001), enabling the development of associations (Crimmins and Horn, 1996; Easton and Mackie, 1998; Meenaghan and Shipley, 1999; Daneshvary and Schwer, 2000) and developing goodwill (Meenaghan, 2001). These may be seen purely as the objectives of sponsorship programmes, or

⁴ The reader’s attention is once more drawn to the observation that sponsorship research has almost exclusively been undertaken from the perspective of the sponsor rather than the sponsee.

as broader elements of a communications mix with links to sales promotions, advertising or public relations (Kuzma et. al. 1992; Hoek et. al., 1993; Cornwell et. al., 1997). But there is also acknowledgement in the literature that sponsorship has organisational and community roles. Programmes can have a motivational impact upon workers (Grimes and Meenaghan, 1998), whilst others identify that it enables organisations to establish relationships with local communities (Mount and Niro, 1995).

Existing research is therefore notable for the diversity of objectives that sponsorship programmes can help organisations achieve. This indicates the motives of sponsors could be directly or indirectly commercial, communal or social. Despite this, Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) expressed concern about the specific activities of football shirt sponsors who, in many cases, fail to set appropriate objectives and may not be entirely clear why they have chosen to associate with a particular property. More generally, there has been a widespread failure to acknowledge the social context within which objectives are set and selection decisions made. Another criticism is that sponsorship is held to be a medium through which sponsors communicate with a target audience. Studies have not addressed the role of sponsees as either intermediaries in this process or as partners with whom the sponsor may work to achieve objectives. This further implies the relationship between sponsor and sponsee is a unidirectional one driven by, and largely benefiting, the former. That the sponsee may benefit in ways other than through the receipt of a financial payment, and may seek to communicate these expectations to a sponsor, has yet to be addressed by the literature.

2.6.2 Targets-as the breadth of objectives suggests, the target audiences for a sponsorship include actual and potential customers, specific communities, the general public, employees and channel members (Gardner and Schuman, 1987; Polonsky et. al., 1995). One implication of this is that, rather than being a transaction between sponsor and sponsee or a relationship between a sponsor and a target, sponsorship is actually part of a network of relationships. As noted in Section 2.3, a network view of sponsorship has recently begun to emerge, although the literature has yet to consider the relationship dynamics between partners engaged in a network or between dyad members within such networks.

The existence of specific target audiences and objectives influences the screening and selection decisions of sponsors (Copeland et. al., 1996; Anguilar-Manjarrez et. al., 1997). In turn, this is likely to shape the way sponsorship programmes are managed. The transactional view portrays

screening and selection decisions as being strictly within the domain of the sponsor and does not acknowledge that sponsees also screen and select properties as well. In this respect, the dyadic and relational nature of sponsorships also continues to be neglected by the literature. When screening and selecting potential partners, sponsors and sponsees interact in order to determine whether the other would be a suitable organisation with which to work. It has been suggested this process is analogous to finding a marriage partner (Cheng and Stotlar, 1999) and to dancing with another person (Wilkinson and Young, 1994; Farrelly and Quester, 2003; Farrelly, et. al., 2003). The process of interaction implies sponsorship deals are not simply economic transactions. There will be a social basis to an agreement whereby both parties establish a relationship is the right one for them. Emanating from this, both will either explicitly or implicitly seek to develop a sense that a partner can be trusted to help them achieve their objectives and reach their targets. For example, in the case that a sponsorship is being used in order to reach a target through the transfer of a particular image, establishing that a partner embodies the qualities, characteristics and values with which you want to associate will be a dynamic, interactive process involving sponsor and sponsee. Whilst this process has a network context in the way that it links to, say, the use of the media to promote an arrangement between the two parties, it is effectively a dyadic phenomenon. Understanding how sponsor and sponsee work together is therefore of paramount importance.

2.7 Sponsorship management

Within this more general theme, there are two dimensions to the research that has been undertaken thus far: the organisation of sponsorship programmes and budget allocation. Each of these is considered below.

2.7.1 Organisation-when sponsors become involved with a potential sponsee, this may be a solicited or an unsolicited action (Irwin et. al., 1994; Sunshine et. al., 1995; Arthur et. al., 1997), possibly involving an agent as an intermediary. In making the final decision about whether to respond to such approaches, there has been an intense debate in the literature about the functional responsibility for decision making (Abratt, et. al., 1987; Armstrong, 1988; Witcher et. al. 1991; Quester et.al., 1998), who makes the final decision to sponsor a property (Thjome et. al., 2002), and the stages involved in the sponsorship decision making process (Abratt et. al., 1987; Armstrong, 1988; Witcher et. al., 1991; Farrelly et. al. 1997). There have been attempts to address the dynamics of decision making processes (Burton et. al., 1998), although the research agenda in this area has failed to develop the breadth or the depth needed to enhance our understanding of the relationship between the two parties.

2.7.2 Budget allocation-to leverage the full value of a sponsorship deal, it is accepted that sponsors should allocate an additional budget for expenditure on related activities (Hoek et. al., 1990). Exactly how leveraging budgets are determined and who is involved has not been clarified in the literature. Consequently, it is unclear whether such decisions have transactional or relational dimensions, or if they have a dyadic component. In a personal interview with Andy Daykin of the CMMA, it was nevertheless stated it is a valid assumption to make that sponsors allocate resources in order to make sponsorship deals a success and that sponsees also routinely devote resources to their relationship with a sponsoring organisation. The optimum level for the budget needed to leverage a sponsorship deal has been the subject of scrutiny in various studies (including Meenaghan, 1991; Witcher, et.al., 1991) which indicate organisations work within a range from zero to matching the value of the sponsorship contract on a dollar for dollar basis. What is not clear from the literature is whether or not sponsor and sponsee interact to determine levels of leveraging expenditure. Not only might the sponsee contribute valuable resources to the relationship, they may also work with sponsors to determine the levels and the nature of expenditure. The separation in the literature between consideration given to the decision making processes of the sponsor and those of the sponsee, is therefore stark. In the same way, whilst it is acknowledged that sponsors leverage their deals, there is no such acknowledgement in relation to sponsees.

This poses additional questions: do sponsor and sponsee devote additional resources to building and managing their relationship and, if so, how are the levels of these resources determined? To neglect such considerations would be naïve on the part of those involved in the dyad. It also represents an oversight by academic researchers. If one considers, for example, the community objectives of a sponsorship programme, hospitality and television advertising would appear to be rather less important than the way in which sponsor and sponsee align their activities. How they communicate with each other, establishing the nature of their relationship and building a bond of trust would seem to be more important than bottom-line considerations. In which case, leveraging becomes more an issue of facilitating relationships between dyad partners, followed by subsequent decisions about how to maximise the value of an association. Although it is not within the scope of this study to examine this, understanding how sponsorship parties engage should provide an insight into the effective management of this process.

2.8 Sponsorship evaluation

How to evaluate the effects of a sponsorship programme continues to attract widespread attention. In spite of the importance often attached to the measurement of sponsorship effects (Hulks, 1980; Abratt and Grobler, 1989; McDonald, 1991; Cornwell et. al., 1997; Grimes and Meenaghan, 1998; Meenaghan and Shipley, 1999; McDaniel, 1999; Pham and Johar, 2001), there is little consensus about how it should be done (McDonald, 1991; Pham, 1991; Javalgi et. al. 1994; Nicholls et. al., 1994; Easton and Mackie, 1998; Moore et. al., 1999), exposure methods (Hulks, 1980; Ensor, 1987), tracking studies (Sandler and Shani, 1992; Cuneen and Hannan, 1993; Stotlar, 1993; Pope and Voges, 1995; Turco, 1995) and experiments (Pham, 1991) being the most commonly used techniques. Some have suggested these techniques are not especially effective (Koschler and Merz, 1995; Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; Pope, 1998b), whilst others have explained that problems in evaluating reflect the failure amongst sponsors to set objectives for their sponsorship programmes (Thwaites, 1995; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2002; Walliser, 2003).

Evaluations are generally associated with proving value for money, so legitimising the use of sponsorship as a communications tool. The results of feedback studies therefore seek to confirm a sponsorship has been a success or a failure. This implies there is a direct link between the financial value of a contract and the value of any benefits it delivers. But the assumption that a commensurate relationship exists between the financial inputs into, and the tangible outputs from, a sponsorship programme fails to account for the value added to a deal via the dynamics of the sponsor/sponsee relationship. This is a criticism that can be consistently applied across the evaluation literature. Studies universally focus upon the relationship between sponsor and customer, not that between sponsor and sponsee. There is thus no suggestion that, for example, the quality of communication between partners, or the role of human resources in facilitating a relationship, has any particular value. This is typical of a transactional view of sponsorship: the element of social exchange is irrelevant.

The failure to acknowledge sponsees as value adding partners is further reinforced by the predominance of sponsors that employ post-sponsorship evaluation techniques. Rather than seeking to understand the state of a relationship during its course, evaluative practice is largely objective-driven and reflective. Whether or not the returns from a contract were, in part, the result of an especially committed partner, a relationship advocate or the existence of close bonds, they are simply not considered by the literature. As in other areas of the literature, sponsorship dyads

therefore appear to be peripheral to the association which is more readily made between sponsors and target audiences.

2.9 Sponsorship context

Sponsorships are set against a backdrop where competitors may try to ambush a programme, where there is often an array of regulatory and political constraints upon it and, particularly for sport sponsorship programmes, where considerations such as the location of a sponsor or sponsee can impact upon their effectiveness. The merits and legitimacy of sponsorship ambushing have been popular themes in the literature (Sandler and Shani, 1989; Meenaghan, 1994; Meenaghan, 1995; Meenaghan, 1996; Meenaghan, 1999). Ambushing typically involves an opportunistic or aggressive rival using creative strategies in order to undermine an official sponsor. This may entail sponsoring sub-categories which are related to an official sponsorship, sponsoring television coverage or developing promotions linked to the property being sponsored. Amongst the guidance provided for sponsors seeking to negate the threat of ambushers is that they should work closely with a sponsee (Meenaghan, 1994; Meenaghan, 1995; Meenaghan, 1996; Hoek, 1997; Meenaghan, 1999; Shani and Sandler, 1998). The literature identifies various ways in which sponsor and sponsee can do this, including the joint development of creative programmes, the implementation of preventative measures and the careful clarification of the contractual detail which will govern the sponsorship programme (Meenaghan, 1994; Meenaghan, 1995; Meenaghan, 1996; Meenaghan, 1999; Payne, 1998).

It is therefore difficult to understand how a transactional view of sponsorship can adequately explain the challenges posed by ambushing and the potential responses to it. The implication of the guidance presented to sponsors and sponsees is that they have to engage in an ongoing relationship if the effectiveness of a sponsorship programme is not to be undermined. At one level, both will need to communicate to establish their respective expectations, roles and responsibilities. At another level, the sponsor will need to work with a partner whom they feel they can trust to work with them in order to overcome the threat of ambush. In other words, the sponsor will look for the sponsee to commit to making their relationship work. This suggests that both will need to have a shared view of ambushing and the techniques for addressing it. Moreover, it will demand that both manage their relationship in ways enabling flexibility in the event of an ambush arising. The management process associated with this is therefore likely to be one focused upon the dyadic relationship between sponsor and sponsee, with an emphasis on a partnership approach. Despite the literature having failed to address this particular aspect of

ambush management, there would nevertheless still appear to be grounds for exploring the dynamics of sponsorship relations to assess the basis upon which dyad members engage with each other.

Just as ambushing takes place in the context of a regulatory framework, the agreement and management of sponsorship contracts adds a legal dimension to sponsorship relations. The transactional view of sponsorship portrays this as a relatively simple relationship: the sponsor acquires the legal rights to associate with a particular property, in return for which the property is entitled to receive a financial payment (Cousens et. al., 2001). This arrangement continues to be the norm, although research undertaken by Woolfe et. al. (2002) indicates sponsorship partners may have to go beyond the boundaries of a legal contract to ensure the effectiveness of a relationship. In such cases, compromise, acquiescence to a partners requests and a belief that any sacrifices made will even out in the long-term are likely to influence relations between sponsor and sponsee. Partners will therefore not only be bound by legal considerations, but also by social pressures including trust, commitment and a perception of a partner's commitment to the other organisation involved in a sponsorship dyad.

To add to the social and legal factors influencing relations between sponsor and sponsee, other studies report that geography may also play a part. Westerbeek (2000) indicating the retention of a sponsorship partner may be influenced by their locality. In observations made by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), football shirt sponsors appear to be especially influenced by the proximity of the team with which they have a relationship. Whilst this enables them to realise, for example, community relationship and staff motivation objectives, their preference for associating with teams in the same locality implies there may be an existing relationship between sponsor and sponsee, the physical closeness of the two may lead to better communication or it enables them to foster stronger relations with audiences they have in common. If this is the case, the bonds between sponsor and sponsee are likely to be much more important than the literature to date has suggested. A sponsorship programme is thus more likely to be based upon social exchange than upon a rational economic transaction. The nature and content of this exchange therefore constitutes a further area of the literature that has received scant attention.

2.10 Summary of the sponsorship literature

In spite of reasonably buoyant interest in sponsorship amongst academics, the literature is notable for its limited scope, poor use of methodology and its overly transactional focus. It is the contention of this study that a failure to address these concerns is restricting the development of understanding about how sponsorship programmes work and how it can be used in ways other than as a marketing communications tool. As such, the study asserts that sponsorship programmes are relationships within dyads consisting of a sponsor and a sponsee. Whilst there is likely to be a transactional element to these relationships, the study postulates that they are founded upon social exchange through which partners engage in ongoing relations. An important element of such relationships is that parties to them exchange more than the financial resources and legal rights commonly identified by the transactional view of sponsorship. Rather, sponsorship will be held as a process where sponsor and sponsee exchange resources including communication flows, values, commitment and trust. The study will therefore emphasise relationship management within the sponsorship dyad as being a key challenge for partners. Based on the published literature, only one other study to date (Farrelly and Quester, 2003) holds the sponsor/sponsee dyad as an important focus for research. As such, it is anticipated this study will broaden our understanding of such phenomenon. This is especially important because existing sponsorship research has been somewhat fragmented, often strongly differentiating between the various elements of the sponsorship management process, and between the sponsor and sponsee. In adopting a holistic view of sponsorship, this study will contribute to understanding the dynamism of relations between sponsor and sponsee.

Whilst it is not the aim of this study to specifically address issues pertaining to the research themes identified by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003), the relevance of the relational literature is accepted. In which case, the content of relational exchange and relationship management becomes enshrined within a sponsorship relationship from the acquisition of a partner through to the termination of an association. By examining the nature of relationships within sponsorship dyads, this study will contribute to the reconciliation of disparate themes found in the existing literature. It will also address concerns about the methodological rigour of existing sponsorship studies. Although the conceptual and qualitative elements routinely employed by sponsorship researchers are also used in this study, the use of multivariate techniques represents one of a limited number of attempts by sponsorship researchers to utilise such techniques. The methodological basis of the study should therefore help to contribute to the wider credibility of sponsorship research.

Football sponsorship programmes have attracted some attention in the literature (Thwaites, 1995; Miles, 2001; Rosson, 2001; Wilcox et. al. 2001; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2002) although this has often been case study based. The paucity of work in this area is surprising given the popularity of the medium and the sport. But the results reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) indicate there are some concerns about football shirt sponsorships, one of the most notable being the short-term nature of many sponsor/sponsee relationships. There is also evidence to suggest management problems, including a failure to set objectives and a reluctance to employ rigorous evaluation techniques. It is one of the intentions of this study to explore why football clubs and/or shirt sponsors demonstrate a reluctance to commit on a longer-term basis to one another. This calls in to question the reasons why both parties forge relationships in the first place but also implies issues concerning the management of such sponsorship arrangements are also important. It raises further questions regarding the retention of a sponsorship partner: if sponsor and sponsee are to build a relationship, on what basis does this take place?

The broader implication of this for sponsorship programmes is that the longevity of relationships is bound up in a range of factors determining the acquisition and retention of sponsorship partners. Moreover, the notion of them working together to develop their relationship suggests there will be a sense of sharing and the mutual achievement of benefits. Establishing how the bonds between sponsor and sponsee are built has yet to receive attention in the literature. This would seem to be a priority for researchers if we are to understand how effective sponsorship programmes are formulated. In turn, understanding the strategic nature of sponsorships equally demands attention. Establishing whether or not there are long-term elements to the relationship between partners would help to confirm the relevance of emerging perspectives of sponsorship programmes. It would also help to develop an insight into the relationship between the public proclamations of commitment often made by sponsors and sponsees and the implications of partnership maintenance and development implied by established notions of commitment.

2.11 The nature of relationships

The Oxford Dictionary of English definition of relationships emphasises association, connection, emotion and kinship (Soanes and Stevenson, 2003). In turn, association is defined as: “organisation for joint purpose.....a natural connection between ideas”, connection as: “a relationship with one of influence at a point where the two are linked”, emotions as: “mental or instinctive feelings” and kinship as: “shared characteristics or origins.” The basis for, and the

nature of, relationships has therefore attracted attention across a range of disciplines including marriage (Lazalere and Huston, 1980), sociology (Johnson, 1973) and religion (Loewenthal, 1986). Smith et. al. (1995) stated relationships are fundamental to human existence and inevitably impact upon business organisations, with Mayo (1945) and Fayol (1949) having initiated the debate that building effective relationships are essential for business success. The development of a relationship literature in business has been marked, examples of which are evident in marketing (Anderson and Weitz, 1992), operations management (Carter, 2000) and human resource management (Farnham and Pimlott, 1990). Themes found in the literature include the extent (Gummesson, 1999), nature (De Wit and Meyer, 1998), management (Cullen et. al., 2000) and outcomes (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) of relationships.

Relationships involving businesses and customers are held by some to be the most significant focus for researchers (Reichheld, 1996), although inter-organisational relationships have become an increasingly strong focus in the literature (Contractor and Lorange 1988; Beamish and Killing, 1997; Hausmann, 2001). These relationships can be formal or informal (Smith et.al., 1995) and can take a number of forms including strategic alliances, joint venturing and licensing (Borys and Jemison, 1989; De Wit and Meyer, 1999), and customer, buyer and supplier partnerships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). One reason for the growth in interest is the positive benefits that can be achieved through inter-organisational relationships including cost efficiencies, market benefits and location advantages (Frazier et.al., 1988; Dominguez and Zin, 1994; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Varadarajan and Cunningham, 1995; Vyas et. al. 1995).

Although the need to engage in relationships with other organisations is widely accepted, there is disagreement about how to explain their existence. Perspectives accounting for inter-organisational relationships have included market power (Porter, 1980), agency (Barney and Ouchi, 1986; Eisenhardt, 1989a), increasing returns (Arthur, 1989), game (Zagare, 1984), strategic management (Harrigan, 1988) and resource dependency theories (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978)⁵. Two further perspectives have come to predominate in both the sponsorship and the general marketing literature. One view is based upon transaction cost theory and emphasises the financial dimensions of inter-organisational relationships (Coase, 1991). The second adopts a relational view which draws from social exchange theory (Gronroos, 1997). Mohr and Nevin (1990) viewed the two as being opposite extremes of an exchange continuum, with the former

⁵ For a commentary about the relative merits of each of these theoretical perspectives, the reader's attention is drawn to Child and Faulkner (1999) and Smith et. al. (1995).

characterised as being contract-based, the latter as being governed by expected patterns of behavior. Whilst the relevance of each perspective has been the subject of intense scrutiny over the last decade (Stone and Mason, 1997), the relational view appears to have prevailed recently to the extent that some believe there has been a paradigm shift in the literature (Gronroos, 1997).

The transactional view of relationships emanates from transaction cost economics, the logic of which is that organisations will seek to minimise the costs incurred in arranging, managing and monitoring transactions (Coase, 1991). Williamson (1975; 1983; 1985) noted this is founded on assumptions that humans are rational economic decision makers and opportunistic. Those engaged in transactional activities will seek to protect themselves through the use of written contracts and will avoid the impact of committing resources to a long-term relationship by entering in to a series of short-term, discrete relationships. Shemwell et. al (1994) consequently suggested transactional exchanges are never more than arms length relationships constrained by contractual obligations. MacNeil (1980) identified transactional relationships therefore consist of parties exclusively exchanging money and commodities. This process is characterised by limited interaction, a narrow focus and a lack of concern for the identity of the exchange partner. Moreover, performance, that is the realisation of objectives, dominates above all else in the relationship between parties. Indeed, he stated: "Discreteness is the separating of a transaction from all else between the participants at the same time, before and after....it occurs when there is nothing else between the parties, never has been and never will be." (MacNeil, 1980, p.60).

Rindfleisch and Heide (1997) highlighted the importance of transaction cost theory to the literature including those in sociology (Granovetter, 1985), organisation theory (Barney and Hesterly, 1996), business strategy (Hennart, 1988) and finance (Smith and Schnucker, 1994). In marketing, use of this perspective is equally evident in areas such as vertical relationships (John and Weitz, 1988) and industrial purchasing strategy (Stump and Heide, 1996). The literature is premised on the notion that transactions between organisations can either be governed by the market or through forms of internal organisation such as contractual provision or joint planning (Williamson, 1975; Williamson 1985). If the costs of building and maintaining a relationship with a transactional partner are non-existent or low, rational economic organisations will normally chose to work through the market. When costs, "are enough to exceed the production cost advantages of the market" (Rindfleisch and Heide, 1997; p. 32), economic actors use internal organisation. The latter is often favoured when there is a perceived need to monitor and reward performance (Eisenhardt, 1985; Oliver and Anderson, 1987) and when cultural and socialisation

processes may create convergence between two parties and reduce opportunism (Williamson, 1985). The view is that organisations can therefore exercise better control over their relationships with others and employ rewards and monitoring to negate the threat of opportunism and its attendant costs.

There is a sense that sponsors and sponsees are often opportunistic. Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) noting the rapid turnover of deals amongst football shirt sponsors and the short-duration of their relationships. The view that sponsors and sponsees are opportunistic therefore has credence, especially if one assumes that sponsorship values have, in part, risen as the result of sponsees consciously seeking to inflate values. Sponsors have also contributed to this process by increasing budgets allocated to sponsorship programmes in order to secure the rights to attractive properties. The renewal figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) also indicated relationships have a discrete element to them. Despite the apparent attractiveness of football shirt sponsorship, it appears many sponsors engage in short-term relations and either move on to other properties or effectively cease their associations with the sport once their contractual obligations have been fulfilled⁶.

Sponsors and sponsees also appear to routinely engage in contractual relations as a form of protection against the opportunism often originating from within such programmes. But opportunism from outside the relationship, in the form of ambushing, similarly shows that legal protection afforded by contracts can negate the potential transaction costs of addressing this threat. Internal organisation of a sponsorship deal between two transaction partners is thus commonplace. The preoccupation in the literature with objectives and the evaluation of performance (see Section 2.4-2.5), also confirms that sponsor and sponsee use this form of organisation to govern their relationships. Moreover, the relevance for sponsorship decisions of factors such as geographic location and the potential for image transfer implies there are forces at work which create a convergence between the interests of both parties. In this sense, one view could be that sponsorship programmes are little more than contractual bonds involving discretely related sponsors and sponsees which, at one point in time, have convergent interests or objectives. This means the potential for longer-term relations is undermined within the transactional paradigm because, upon fulfilment of their immediate objectives (when the convergence ends), organisations simply withdraw from the relationship. The whole notion of social bonds or

⁶ The reader's attention is drawn to the example of BT Cellnet's move from Middlesbrough to Arsenal to illustrate the former, and Pizza Hut's sponsorship of Fulham, which lasted one year, to illustrate the latter.

relationship development being important for the governance of such relationships is therefore simply non-existent in the transactional paradigm.

Studies such as those undertaken by O'Neal (1989), Gronroos (1990), Cannon and Sheth (1994), and Christopher et.al. (1991) have consequently questioned the relevance of the transactional view. In a business environment which Achrol (1991) highlighted as being diverse, knowledge rich and turbulent, the cost focus of the transaction paradigm has been deemed unrealistic. Morgan and Hunt (1994) concurred noting that intense competition and globalisation cast doubt upon the transactional view. Palmer (1994) also questioned whether dynamic phenomenon can be examined using the static analyses employed by transaction theorists. Whilst Stone and Mason (1997) emphasised the importance of acquiring and retaining relationship partners in a complex world.

The whole premise of the marketing mix was called into question by Dixon and Blois (1983) who noted how it enshrines relationships that require no flows of communication, or any other resource, other than the exchange of money and goods between buyer and seller. Although McCarthy (1960), accredited with developing the concept of a marketing mix, acknowledged the interactive and social elements of marketing, the mix failed to embrace or explain them. This reflects the micro-economic heritage of marketing, which is one that emphasises the importance of production over consumption, and is conceptually sterile whilst being of little practical relevance (McKenna, 1991). The competitive nature of micro-economic models has been questioned by Gronroos (1996) who explained the adversarial focus of the marketing mix fails to account for instances where organisations work together on an ongoing basis. The work of Moller (1992), indicating that strategic context, political dimensions and interactions are an important part of marketing, adds to this view. Such have been concerns with the transactional view that Gronross (1994) has advocated the acceptance of a new paradigm to explain business relationships. Indeed, Gronroos (1994, p.4) stated: "Today's dominant [transactional] paradigm has become a strait-jacket.....a relationship building and management approach has become the answer."

Whilst this study is not intended to be an assessment of relationship marketing, it is nevertheless founded on literature associated with the paradigm shift from transactions to relationships which resulted in its emergence. Some definitions of relationship marketing are therefore presented in Table 2. The definitions are significant for a number of reasons: rather than being adversarial,

they clearly indicate that relationships are collaborative. In turn, their collaborative nature does not just reflect cost pressures but broader commercial considerations allied to socio-political factors. The notions of promises, understanding, interaction and bonds are therefore central to this. The final characteristic of relationship marketing is that relationships are enduring and not the short-term associations inherent to the transactional model. For a relationship to add value, working with a partner for mutual benefit is imperative. Instead of constantly switching from one partner to another and incurring the direct and the opportunity costs this implies, ongoing relations are the foundation for understanding and the fulfilment of promises made when entering into a relationship.

Table 3: Definitions of relationship marketing

Definition	Origin
“Understanding, creating and managing exchange relationships between economic parties; manufacturers, service providers, various channel members and final consumers.”	Moller (1992)
“The building of bonds with customers and other markets or groups to ensure long-term relationships of mutual advantage.”	Christopher et. al. (1993)
“To establish, maintain, enhance and commercial customer relationships so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.”	Gronroos (1994)
“A marketing orientation that seeks to develop close interactions with selected customers, suppliers and competitors for value creation through cooperative and collaborative efforts.”	Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995)

Relationship marketing studies have been undertaken in services (Berry, 1995), consumer products (Bagozzi, 1995) and inter-organisational relationships (Root, 1994). The inter-organisational category itself is sub-divided into two categories: physical good relationships and service relationships (Bruhn, 2003). The latter, into which this study places the relationship

between sponsor and sponsee fits, can be characterised as having high contact attributes reflecting interactions which take place between the parties involved (Gabbott and Hogg, 1994; Palmer and Cole, 1995; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000; Lovelock, 2001). This is very important because it means relationships with organisations are not anonymous because one may be familiar with an exchange partner. Moreover, the output attributes are complex and often non-transportable and non-transferable. In such cases, Gronroos (1996) identified one of the key strategic implications for organisations engaged in relational exchanges as being the development of partnerships and networks. The literature postulates these will be approached as 'win-win' relationships where a partner works with a focal firm in order to generate value for both. As Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.25) pointedly noted: "the paradox of relationship marketing is that being an effective competitor in the era of network competition also means being an effective co-operator". The process of forming and nurturing relationships is therefore a priority for relationship managers. Stone and Mason (1995, p.15) stating that: "Relationship management should be at the heart of marketing itself. Whether a relationship is between a consumer and a product, or between one firm and another, and regardless of the marketing action, all activities should be approached as matters of relationship management".

This poses a range of management challenges which includes the development and maintenance of commitment between two parties involved in a relationship (Hunt and Morgan, 1994), if relational exchanges are to be a success. Scanzoni (1979) believed that establishing commitment is a building process which takes place through social exchange. This entails organisations establishing a relationship through which one exchanges value with the other (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964; Bagozzi, 1975). Although one party may initially benefit more than the other, a successful relationship inevitably realises the goal of equality (Homans, 1961; Sahlins, 1972). This is important because it demonstrates that relationship justice should ultimately prevail. The types of exchange taking place in this context could be restricted to two parties or may have a network context (Levi-Strauss, 1969; Ekeh, 1974; Bagozzi, 1975). The exchange itself, at one level, entails value transfers where parties exchange money for goods. At another level, symbolic exchange involves the exchange of symbols and associations, meaning a product or service is not exchanged simply for its intrinsic benefits. As such, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) explained social exchange has both an economic basis (where the relative costs and benefits of relationships are assessed) and a social aspect (where commitment, trust, recognition and affection are assessed). The decision to maintain or continue a relationship is therefore a sum of both these components.

In Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) studies of football shirt sponsors, a number of factors were identified as being critical to the success of their sponsorship programmes. These included good communication between club and sponsor, the involvement of staff from each organisation in the sponsorship programme and the professional management of the sponsorship process. One limitation is that these studies do not reveal the views of clubs involved in relations with sponsors. However, it is interesting that sponsors do not seem to think the fee for a sponsorship, the relative costs and benefits associated with such deals, the exchange of financial resources, a partner exhibiting a tendency towards opportunism or effective legal regulation of a sponsorship deal, are especially important considerations in their relations with football clubs. This implies football shirt sponsorship programmes are actually something more than a transactional exchange of rights and financial resources. It therefore suggests this type of programme has more collaborative elements than has thus far been established by the literature. Moreover, the prominence of communication, identified in both studies as being one of the most important critical success factors, indicates the importance of social exchange and interaction in club/sponsor relations.

The flaw in this argument is that relational studies stress that the existence of social exchanges between partners ensure a degree of longevity in their relationship with each other. Although one might question what 'longevity' actually means, the retention of sponsorship properties by football shirt sponsors appears to be relatively poor. Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) studies found that most sponsorship deals are short-term in nature, typically one or two years, and are unlikely to be renewed with the same, or indeed any other, team once the contract ends. Whilst the club/sponsor relationship is clearly not a short-term, 'one-off' event in a pure transactional sense, the failure to retain sponsorship partners potentially casts doubt upon the existence of a strongly social relationship.

Whether football shirt sponsorships can be most effectively analysed as transactional or relational exchanges is therefore open to question. Given the exchange of financial resources and property rights, it is clear that a transaction is at the heart of the relationship. How such a relationship might be forged, managed, terminated and the extent to which it is adjudged a success, could be attributed to an assessment of the relative costs and benefits of the programme made by one or both parties. The relationship may alternatively be a purely opportunistic one whereby sponsor or sponsee seek to exploit the attractiveness, for whatever reason, of being associated with the other for a short period. A further explanation for the apparently short-duration of the relationship is

that a sponsorship programme may constitute a period during which the goals of club and sponsor are congruent. The period of a sponsorship deal may therefore represent a time frame within which both can collaborate in order to exploit the advantages attributable to the congruency.

But this still fails to account for the high contact attributes characteristic of a social exchange which appears to be central to the success of sponsorship programmes. What is not clear from Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) findings is whether the sample population perceived their sponsorships to be a success, to which factors such as communication contribute, or whether they perceived these factors to be important for the success of football sponsorship programmes in general. It may simply be the case that interaction and high contact are an important characteristic of some relationships but not others or that it may vary at different stages of a relationship. This implies relations between club and sponsor may therefore differ across the range of dyads found in professional football sponsorships.

Even assuming relational exchanges do take place involving football club and shirt sponsor, the paradigm is not without criticism. O'Malley and Tynan (1998) have questioned the robustness of studies in the area, whilst Sheth (1998) believed the multiple reference points for relational studies of business phenomenon have created an identity crisis for the paradigm. Others have suggested the indeterminateness of changing or historical relationships makes exchange relationships difficult to analyse (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995; Belois, 1998). Fournier et. al. (1998) pointed out the longevity of relationships identified in the literature are simply untenable in practice and demand a level of mutuality amongst relationship partners which they can not, or are not, prepared to fulfil.

The debate about the relevance of the relational paradigm, allied to apparent contradictions in the scope of relations between football club and shirt sponsor, poses some interesting questions. Is social exchange characteristic of relationships within sponsorship dyads? How might competing paradigms account for the contract lengths identified by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), and for the apparent problems of partner retention? Given the importance attributed to communication, the role of key personnel and the process of managing these football shirt sponsorship deals, is the transactional paradigm sufficiently robust to account for the contact that appears to be necessary in order for sponsorship programmes to function effectively?

This study contends there are likely to be transactional elements in the relationship between a football club and a shirt sponsor. However, the need for a broader view of relationships is accepted and so it will be argued that social exchanges are fundamental to understanding the process of sponsorship management. Given the diversity of both clubs and sponsors engaged in shirt sponsorship programmes, it is accepted there will be differences both across and within dyads. In order to identify and understand these differences, methodological techniques are employed, details of which can be found in Chapter 3, Section 3.10.

2.12 Dyads and networks

Studies of inter-organisational relationships have generally been undertaken in the context of either a single business unit (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Heide and John, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Nielson, 1998) or a network (Thorelli, 1986; Cravens and Piercy, 1994). The former is most common because it entails the analysis and understanding of management processes within one type of organisation. Access to respondents is a major consideration for researchers and the availability of respondent information from directories and trade associations is inevitably a motive for some (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Network researchers emphasise the multiplicity of relationships in which organisations are engaged (Christopher et. al., 1991) and the magnitude of the interactions and social exchanges associated with them (Powell, 1990). Understanding the position of, and the management processes employed by, each member of the network is therefore thought to facilitate analysis of the totality of inter-organisational relationships.

There are some problems with each of these approaches. In the case of the business unit, an obvious criticism is that studies fail to account for the dynamics of inter-organisational relations and partnerships, something which potentially restricts the insights they provide. This is an especially pertinent observation in work completed from within the relational paradigm where the importance of interactions between two parties is central to all relationships. Network analysis has proved to be problematic on a number of fronts. Deciding upon the scope and extent of a network is a particular problem and may lead to the arbitrary definition of network boundaries. Even in cases where network membership can be accurately identified, the number of members and diversity of membership may limit the usefulness of primary research. Gaining access to all network members and producing meaningful comparative results for these members could also prove to be problematic. Such are the difficulties with network research that studies in the general business literature (Axelsson, 1992; Hakansson and Johansson, 1992), and in the sponsorship/sport literature (Cousens and Slack, 1996; Kushner, 1999; Olkonen et. al. 2000;

Cousens, et. al. 2001; Olkonen, 2001), are largely conceptual pieces advocating the relevance of network analysis. Indeed, such is the nature of the literature, Iacobucci and Hopkins (1992) and Bonoma et. al. (1978) actually expressed concerns that most network studies are chaotic.

An alternative for relational researchers is to adopt relationship dyads as a research focus. This addresses concerns that the totality of relationships needs to be examined in order to establish the nature of the social exchange taking place between relationship partners. The dyads within which organisations are involved are also readily identifiable and constitute one element of a broader network (Iacobucci and Hopkins, 1992; Johnston et. al. 1999). Whilst this may not account for the entirety of an organisation's or a dyad's network of relationships, it contributes to an understanding of how network members interact, what their position is within a broader network and how they engage in social exchange. The general importance of dyadic research in marketing has been highlighted by Weitz (1981), Anderson and Narus (1990), Anderson and Weitz (1992), Ganesan (1994) and Siguaw et. al. (1997), although dyadic research is also evident in studies of channel relationships (Achrol et. al. 1983; Lindgreen, 2001), professional service relationships (Crosby et.al., 1988; Swartz and Brown, 1989) and family decision making (Davis et. al., 1986; Qualls, 1987). Definitions in the literature that account for the specific nature of dyads are scarce, although Iacobucci and Hopkins (1992, p.5) defined a dyad as: "a single relationship between two parties". Achrol et. al. (1983, p.58) indicated that: "wherever direct, goal oriented social interaction occurs between actors....a dyad exists".

The characteristics of dyadic relations have received rather more attention in the literature, and are commonly held to exhibit the following: the existence of an exchange at the heart of the relationship (Evans, 1963; Aldrich and Whetten, 1981a); a degree of connectedness (Cook and Emerson, 1978; Hakansson and Johansson, 1993); interaction between dyad members (Hakansson, 1982; Johnston, 1986); interdependency (Johnston et. al. 1999). Knocke and Kuklinski (1982) and Reeingen and Kernan (1986) believed the structure of network relationships can only be understood by examining dyadic relations. Achrol et. al. (1983) alternatively stated it is important for understanding the behavior of the social actors who represent the constituent parts of a network. Aldrich and Whetten (1981b) stated that before an aggregated network can be understood, relationships between two organisations need to be examined in order to understand their behavior. This opens the door therefore to broader forms of research and a better understanding of relationships (Iacobucci and Hopkins, 1992), including how organisations exert influence over each other (Anderson and Narus, 1990) and how interaction between individuals

takes places (Thorelli, 1986; Hakansson and Snehota, 1989). Because of the bounded nature of an actor's knowledge about networks, an understanding of dyad behavior enables the horizons of an actor's view to be determined.

An analysis of the social content found within a relationship between partners represents another benefit resulting from dyadic research. Spekman and Salmond (1992) and Aurifeille and Medlin (2001) have noted it enables the actor bonds and social attributes that exist between relationship partners to be understood facilitating the differentiation of self interest from collective interest. Of these bonds, Johnston et. al. (1999) identified that interaction is important because it represents the policies, procedures and programmes of each dyad partner. This is similar to the views of Hutt et. al. (1985) and Johansson and Mattson (1985) who identified the parameters within which dyadic relationships occur. These include the nature of social relations between partners, the way they communicate with each other and the extent of trust between dyad members. Understanding these processes can help establish how partner selection decisions are made and how relationships are managed (Frazier et. al., 1988; Anderson et. al. 1994).

Despite the obvious attractions of undertaking research within dyads, there are specific issues that researchers need to address. Work undertaken by Hakansson and Snehota (1995) illustrated that different dyads are likely to display different qualities, particularly in relation to their motives for engaging in joint action and the preferences governing their behavior. Price et. al. (1995) and Spekman et. al. (1996) thus questioned whether researchers are likely to find congruent actor behavior across the dyads they examine. In this context, Aurifeille and Medlin (2001) recommend supplementing survey methods with other data collection techniques. Heide and John (1992) and Kim (2000) also warned against undertaking dyadic research unless complete sets of data can be collected. A final concern that has been expressed is researchers should not aggregate partner data in to a single object (Gundlach et. al., 1995; Kim, 2000), as this may undermine the results gathered from a dyadic study. In cases where aggregation occurs, Aurifeille and Medlin (2001) again advocated the adoption of additional techniques to validate the data.

Drawing from the definitions provided by Iacobucci and Hopkins (1992) and Achrol et. al. (1983), for the purposes of this study a dyad is therefore defined as: "a relationship between two parties through which both interact in order to achieve their goals". This equates with the earlier definition of sponsorship, reaffirming that the relationship between sponsor and sponsee has a social basis. It also re-emphasises that such relationships involve more than transactional

exchanges. Moreover, it similarly reasserts that sponsorships are not simply transactional and will have dimensions both internal to and outside the relationship. In the latter case, this will include relationships with actors of which the wider network of relationships is comprised. Following Cousens and Slack (1996), Olkonen et. al. (2000) and Olkonen's (2001) studies of the sport network, the broader goals associated with sponsorship relations have already been explained. As a result, it is intended the dyadic nature of this study will help facilitate an understanding of the internal and external impact of the relations between sponsor and sponsee.

Given the financial exchange that takes place between sponsor and sponsee, whereby a payment is made in return for property rights, the view that a transaction is at the heart of the sponsorship dyad is a pertinent one. Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) findings that the appeal of football for sponsors, the need for financial resources amongst football clubs and the importance of factors such as communication in ensuring the success of football shirt sponsorship programmes, indicates interaction and interdependency are also evident in football club/shirt sponsorship dyad. The aforementioned shirt sponsorship studies, allied to the case analyses provided by Miles (2001) and Rosson (2001) are business unit analyses. As yet, there are no studies of English football shirt sponsorship (or sponsorship in England generally) that have conceptually or empirically addressed the existence of a network of related organisations. The contention of this study, that the sponsor/sponsee relationship constitutes a dyad, is therefore an important one. It extends a sparse existing literature whilst providing an opportunity to bridge the divide to a broader network view of sponsorship, particularly in football.

The social exchange taking place within such dyads equally represents a major development in both the specific football, and the general sponsorship, literature. The orientation of studies towards identifying sponsorship objectives allied to the measurement of its effects essentially ignores the social processes underpinning sponsorship relations. Through an examination of the social exchanges in which football clubs and shirt sponsors are involved, it is intended the process of developing and maintaining a sponsorship deal will become clearer. This process can be thought to embrace various stages within the dyads being analysed: that is, formation, retention and dissolution. Unlike the static analysis of phenomenon evident in most other sponsorship studies, it is intended that a consideration of relationship dyads will therefore generate an insight into the dynamism of sponsor/sponsee relations.

This study is not without its problems and acknowledges observations made by, amongst others, Aurifeille and Medlin (2001). They warn against aggregating the findings from a study across one side of a dyad and across the dyad as a whole. This study actually employs the latter as a basis for generating findings from a quantitative survey. This is done for reasons of statistical convention, further discussions relating to which can be found in Chapter 3, Section 3.8. The significance of these concerns is strongly acknowledged to the extent that an additional stage is introduced into the research methodology in order to validate the quantitative data collected. This is also intended to determine the precise behavior of sponsor and sponsee within specific dyads by recognising that relationships within dyads are not all the same.

2.13 Relationship dynamics

The antecedents to relationship formation, the determinants of their success and factors contributing to their termination have been considered in a number of reviews of the inter-organisational literature (Borys and Jemison, 1989; Smith et. al. 1995; Child and Faulkner, 1998; Spekman et. al. 1998). Studies from outside the business literature also ponder similar questions and have attempted to provide an insight into, for example, marital relations (Johnson et. al. 1999). Whilst there are inevitably unique factors governing relationships between specific business partners, there are a number of more generic determinants that prevail across the literature.

Mohr and Spekman (1994) identified partnership attributes (such as commitment, trust and coordination) and communication behavior (such as information sharing and participation) as fundamental to relationship success. The interpretation of these specific attributes was extended by Tuten and Urban (2001) who stated the perceived benefits of a relationship are likely to govern the formation and continuation of inter-organisational relations. They also re-emphasised the importance of communication and the commitment of relationship partners. Price et. al. (1995) distinguished between structural, individual, situational and dyadic factors influencing relationships. This embraced features such as the proximity of partners, the availability of alternatives, a partner's disposition towards a relationship, the nature and quality of interactions and the processes through which partners engage. To add to this, Brown (1998) suggested the success of associations between organisations is influenced by the perception of a partner's ability to build relationships, allied to the image this partner has amongst customers. The involvement of management champions (Black, 2000), the existence of legal bonds (Cannon and Perrault, 1999), the nature of a party's relationship expectations (Dwyer et. al., 1987), perceived

opportunism (Cullen et. al., 2000) and the impact of temporal factors (Wetzels et. al., 1998) are also identified as being considerations fundamental to effective inter-organisational relationship management. In the sponsorship literature, the formative work of Farrelly and Quester (2003), Farrelly et. al. (2003), Ryan and Fahy (2003) and Thompson (2003) has also suggested that commitment, trust, the role of key personnel and a shared understanding are important factors in determining the nature of relations between sponsor and sponsee. Evidence from the marriage literature provides similar insights in to the formation and management of relationships. For example, Cullen et. al. (1999) highlighted structural factors such as the availability of relationship alternatives, moral factors such as the values held by relationship partners, factors personal to specific relationships such as the attractiveness of a partner and the benefits of being involved in a relationship with them, as being central to a successful, committed relationship. Norwood (1986) advocated that sharing values with a partner, being open with them, especially through the use of communication, and being prepared to commit to a relationship all contribute to the success of a marriage.

It is widely acknowledged that sponsorship relations can be beneficial to both sponsor and sponsee. Implicit within the broader research sponsorship agenda, particularly in the literature examining sponsorship objectives, is an acceptance of what sponsorship can achieve. But, as has already been mentioned, literature encapsulating the dynamics of the relationship between sponsor and sponsee is rather limited. As has also been previously discussed, there is clearly a social, as well as an economic context, within which such relationships are conducted. Whilst Coleman (1990) and Cullen et. al. (1999) label social factors as being the soft side of relationship management, this study will argue that such factors are central to understanding how inter-organisational relationships function. Whilst the array of factors that may be construed as being 'soft' is acknowledged, the prevalence of one key factor will form the major focus for this study: commitment. The importance of commitment in relationships has been extensively covered in a broad range of literature including sponsorship (Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly and Quester, 2003; Farrelly et. al., 2003), marketing (Anderson and Weitz, 1992), supply chain management (Moore, 1998), organisational relations (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), international business (Sarkar et.al., 1997), and outside the business literature in studies of, for example, marriage (Johnson et. al., 1999) and sexual relations (Corijn et. al., 1996). By developing an understanding of commitment in the sponsor/sponsee dyad, it will, at one level, enhance our understanding of social exchanges taking place between actors in the sponsorship dyad. At another level, it is intended that the study will reveal key exchange factors underpinning the maintenance and development of football shirt

sponsorship programmes. The study therefore sets out to identify the determinants of commitment which, in turn, will enable a broader understanding of how sponsor/sponsee relations are conducted and governed.

The existence of relationships involving football clubs and shirt sponsors provides an immediate indication that both have made a commitment to work with each other. What this means and the forms it takes will be important elements of this study. However, unlike most other inter-organisational relationships, the sponsor/sponsee dyad is one that attracts huge interest both within and outside football. It is thus common for football clubs and their shirt sponsors to publicly announce the formation of relationships. In these announcements, the norm appears to be for one or both parties to stress their commitment to each other. It is from these proclamations that the study initially draws; a review of one hundred and seventy four announcements is presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.

2.14 The nature of commitment

The essence of a relational view of inter-organisational exchange is there are elements of closeness, durability and cooperation between parties to a relationship (Anderson et. al., 1998). In the context of a view that firms should collaborate to compete (Contractor and Lorange, 1988; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), the business literature is therefore replete with studies extolling the advantages of relational exchange. Organisational theorists have long been interested in the nature of relationships involving employees and organisations (Iverson et. al., 1996) and trade unions (Iverson and Buttigieg, 1997). In the area of supply chain and logistics management, Moore (1998) examined its importance and Cvsa and Gilbert (2002) highlighted its significance in channel relationships. Basu et. al. (2002) similarly noted the importance of relational exchange for international businesses. The strategic management literature further confirms the relevance of a prevailing relational view (Blankenburg-Holm, 1999). Whilst in marketing, there is also evidence of this paradigm being fundamental to an understanding of inter-firm collaboration in industrial markets (Ford, 1984; Anderson and Narus, 1990), business service relationships (Young and Denize, 1995) and marketing channels (Heide, 1994; Rylander et. al., 1997).

The general emphasis of research examining inter-organisational relationships has been focused on establishing how organisations build linkages that are close, coordinated and enduring. In situations where such relationships are evident, arrangements have been variously termed strategic alliances, partnerships, vertical quasi-integration and hybrid governance (Heide, 1994).

Kaufman and Stern (1988) indicated these arrangements are likely to be of a multidimensional nature in the sense of both parties making a contribution to the maintenance and development of relationships. This is likely to involve the parties going beyond their contractual obligations in order to facilitate the effective functioning of the relationship (MacNeil, 1980). Rylander et. al., (1997) explained this induces a sense of responsibility to the other party, through which commitment is created (Blenkhorn and Gaber, 1995). Instead of labelling inter-organisational relationships in the same way as, for example, Anderson and Weitz (1992), Heide (1994) and Anderson et. al. (1998) proposed the term 'committed relationship' as being a more appropriate way of encapsulating the essence of exchange processes taking place within such arrangements.

Dictionary definitions of commitment typically stress the importance of beliefs held by, and the responsibilities, promises and agreements made by, a party engaged in a relationship with another, especially in the way these factors influence the actions or behavior of the party. Across the general academic literature, commitment has been extensively defined. These definitions variously emphasise the economic dimensions of commitment (Becker, 1960; Kanter 1968; Stanley and Markman, 1992; Nock, 1995), the availability of alternatives (Cook and Emerson, 1978; Sabatelli and Cecil-Pigo, 1985; Nock, 1995), feelings of attachment and identity (Porter et. al., 1974; Sager and Johnston, 1989), and perceived normative pressures to behave in a particular way (Weiner, 1982; Stanley and Markman, 1992).

In the marketing literature, commitment has also attracted considerable attention, the most commonly used definitions being shown in Table 4. As in the wider commitment literature, economic dimensions in marketing are also important with the specific implications of remaining in (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Brown et. al., 1995; Iniesta and Sanchez, 2002) and leaving (Ganesan, 1994; Kumar et. al., 1995) a relationship being particularly notable. Bound up in an economic view are the benefits attainable through a committed relationship. The perceived benefits of remaining in a relationship are therefore acknowledged as an important influence upon commitment (Moorman et. al., 1992; Ganesan, 1994). However, a sense of obligation or mutuality (Brown et. al., 1995; Gundlach et. al., 1995; Kumar et. al. 1995) and stability (Dwyer et. al., 1987; Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Gundlach et. al., 1995; Mohr et. al., 1996; Iniesta and Sanchez, 2002) are also identified as influences on the decision to remain in a relationship.

Table 4: Definitions of commitment in marketing

Definition	Origin
“An implicit or explicit pledge of relational continuity between exchange partners.”	Dwyer et. al. (1987)
“A desire to develop a stable relationship, a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship, and a confidence in the stability of the relationship.”	Anderson and Weitz (1992)
“An enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship.”	Moorman et. al. (1992)
“A reflection of the desire to have and the utility of having a long-term relationship.”	Ganesan (1994)
“An exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it.”	Morgan and Hunt (1994)
<p>“A channel member accepts influence because he hopes to achieve a favourable reaction from the other firm.”</p> <p>“A channel member accepts influence because he wants to maintain a satisfying relationship.”</p> <p>“A channel member accepts influence because the content of the induced behavior is intrinsically rewarding.”</p>	Brown et. al. (1995)
<p>“Enduring intention to develop and maintain a stable long-term relationship.”</p> <p>“An affirmative action taken by one party that creates a self-interest stake in the relationship and demonstrates something more than a mere promise.”</p>	Gundlach et. al. (1995)
“The desire to continue a relationship because of positive affect toward the	Kumar et. al. (1995)

partner.” “A firm’s perception of its own and its partner’s intent to remain in the relationship.” “A desire to do more than just remain.”	
“Desire to maintain membership in the dyadic relationship.”	Mohr et. al. (1996)
“A psychological state generated by an individual’s perceptions, beliefs and emotions which provoke the willingness or intention of developing and maintaining a stable and durable relationship, because the individual wants it or feels that he/she should make it, and which manifests itself in a behavior which bears certain obligation.”	Iniesta and Sanchez (2002)

An interesting aspect of the way in which marketers view commitment are the notions that it is characterised both by durability and a long-term view, and by an intention, desire or willingness to remain in a relationship (as opposed to the actual act of remaining). This is an important distinction to make because commitment can be equated with observations typically found in the marriage literature, but also in the commentary provided by Cheng and Stotlar (1999). That is, committed parties are likely to remain in a relationship for a long period of time. However, it also indicates commitment may not singularly be a long-term phenomenon. Indeed it suggests there may be instances where committed partners engage in no more than short-term relations (Anderson and Weitz, 1992). It also implies the composition of commitment can not be examined by reference to a common set of characteristics. Above all, it counters the notion that commitment is synonymous with loyalty (Anderson et. al., 1998): parties to a relationship establish and remain in it for a number of reasons including the stability and certainty it fosters. If their reasons for engaging in a relationship change, the likelihood of a relationship dissolving therefore increases.

Implicit within these commitment definitions are the benefits associated with engaging in a relationship where commitment is present. At one level, commitment is seen as being an essential ingredient for retaining a relationship partner, especially when it leads to a partner sacrificing short-term self-interest in favour of long-term mutual benefit (Dwyer et. al., 1987). As Zineldin

and Jonsson (2000) indicated, this means parties to a relationship therefore have to actively manage the relationship in order to protect their investments and, so, limit the threats normally posed by opportunistic behavior. This is likely to result in greater openness between the parties, the creation of opportunities for partners to differentiate themselves from their rivals and the development of product and service offerings that better serve the interests of customers (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Stern and El-Ansary, 1993; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Gundlach et. al., 1995; Kim and Frazier, 1997; Goodman and Dion, 2001). Reflecting work undertaken in organisational theory, the existence of relationship commitment also reduces partner turnover (and the costs associated with partnership termination and the subsequent formation of new relationships) (Sharma and Patterson, 2000), it motivates partners to ensure the relationship is a success (Ford et. al., 1998), it promotes corporate citizenship behaviors (MacNeil, 1978) and helps develop a sense of fairness and equity (Telser, 1980). The process of developing, maintaining and, indeed, dissolving a relationship thus depends upon committing to parties who are trusted, with whom open communication can take place and where the two are likely to have similar relationship orientations (Bucklin and Sengupta, 1993).

2.15 The conceptualisation of commitment

Early studies of commitment identified it as an aggregated concept consisting of a single construct (Becker, 1960; Etzioni, 1961; Kanter, 1968; Ritzer and Trice, 1969, Hall et. al., 1970; Sheldon, 1971). This approach is generally associated with an instrumental or calculative view of commitment whereby parties to a relationship commit something of value to it, otherwise known as a 'side-bet' on consistent future behavior (Becker, 1960). In the event of inconsistency, the costs of remaining in a relationship become so high that a relationship with another party no longer remains feasible. In cases where side-bets do not exist, it is thought that commitment is unlikely to develop and more attractive alternatives will prompt one or both parties to seek other partners. Drawing from transaction cost theory, Williamson (1985) extended this view by identifying that opportunism or 'self-interest with guile' is an ever present influence on relationship behavior. In this case, a commitment is only thought to be credible when it is supported by a specific investment made by a relationship partner which would be lost by this partner should the relationship end. Williamson (1983) and Anderson and Weitz (1992) have labelled this as 'taking hostages' and 'making pledges' respectively. Either way, Gundlach et. al. (1995) explained such commitments tie parties together because they are so specific in nature they are unlikely to be of any use in other exchange relationships. Williamson (1985) therefore

argues that instrumental commitment is responsible for creating stable long-term relationships through the alignment of relationship partners bound by mutual feelings of confidence.

The instrumental view of commitment has nevertheless been problematic for a number of reasons. Work undertaken by Alluto et. al. (1973), Buchanan, (1974), Porter et. al. (1974), Salancik (1977), Steers (1977), Mowday et. al. (1979) and Cook and Wall (1980) developed scales in an attempt to measure it. However, these have been rejected as being overly simplistic in the way they conceptualise commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et. al., 1990; Meyer et. al., 2002). Particular concerns have also been expressed about the way in which relationship behaviors are all explained with reference to the credible investments made in a relationship. Bacharach and Lawler (1981) suggested relationships in which commitment is thought to exist may harbour fundamental weaknesses because these commitments can be asymmetrical. In which case, Anderson and Weitz (1992) claimed that, despite the existence of credible commitments, the potential for opportunistic behavior is exacerbated due to an imbalance between a more committed and a less committed party. A related view (Gundlach et. al., 1995) alternatively indicated that investments may not be sufficiently credible to tie parties into a long-term relationship. That is, whilst some investments may be highly idiosyncratic and therefore specific to a particular relationship, the investments may be rather more trivial and less credible. Incentives to remain in a relationship in such cases are consequently likely to be lower.

In response to problems with the aggregated approach to conceptualisation, a second view emerged where commitment was disaggregated into sub-components (Mowday et. al., 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1984; Hunt et. al., 1985; Reichers, 1985; McGee and Ford, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et. al., 1990; Meyer et. al., 2002) and was extended to embrace inter-organisational relationships, not just intra-organisational as had been an exclusive characteristic of the literature to that point. Rather than being seen as a single construct, commitment has been held to consist of a number of components, of which instrumental commitment is one. The work of Meyer and Allen, (1990), Meyer and Allen (1991), Meyer et. al. (1990) and Meyer et. al. (2002) in this area has been widely accepted across the literature, most notably in organisational studies (for example, Jaros, 1997), but also in marketing (Gundlach et. al., 1995; Kim and Frazier, 1997). Their three component model hypothesised that the concept of commitment also consists of an affective or attitudinal component and a normative or moral component.

The affective or attitudinal component (Meyer and Allen, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Porter et al., 1976; Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986) states commitment is a reflection of the attachment, identification, affiliation and value congruence that exists between relationship partners. This is often based upon a partisan attachment where the parties involved typically perform above and beyond the agreed terms of the relationship (Buchanan, 1974). Although an instrumental component may still exist, commitment in these terms is the consequence of shared values and goals which instinctively lead parties to work for the mutual benefit of them self and their relationship partners. Commitment therefore betrays a further behavioral element where those engaged in a relationship actively seek to build the relationship thereby reflecting their attitudes about a relationship through their actual behavior towards a partner. The normative or moral component postulated by Meyer and Allen (1990), Meyer and Allen (1991), Meyer et al. (1990) and Meyer et al. (2002) indicates parties to a relationship are also likely to have an attachment to one another based upon a feeling of obligation. This implies committed partners will perceive a sense of responsibility to act in a particular way in order that the goals and interests of both parties can be met (Weiner, 1982). In turn, this embraces views that commitment is a representation of morality, loyalty or a willingness to make sacrifices on behalf of a partner so long-term mutual benefits can be achieved (Weiner and Vardi, 1980; Prestholdt et al., 1987).

The disaggregated view has been criticised for various reasons, not least by Kim and Frazier (1997) who claim it confuses rather than clarifies issues regarding the conceptualisation of commitment. It also continues to be regarded with some suspicion because it has been commonly applied to internal organisational relationships and has only been guardedly accepted as applicable to external or inter-organisational relationships (Gundlach et al., 1995; Kim and Frazier, 1997). Staw (1977) was unconvinced by observations that commitment is comprised of multiple components, noting how it becomes difficult to differentiate it from other behavioral constructs such as motivation, identification and loyalty. In broader terms, Anderson and Weitz (1992) alternatively questioned the assumption that, because one party commits to build a relationship by making sacrifices, the other party will follow. In many disaggregated studies, commitment is a construct universally applied to an essentially dyadic phenomenon. Rather than investigate the reasons why one party commits to a relationship, Anderson and Weitz (1992) indicate that a notion of mutual commitment to a relationship should predominate and be applicable to both sides of a dyad.

Given multi-disciplinary interest in commitment, allied to the emergence of the relational paradigm, there has been a consequent growth in the number of studies in marketing which address issues pertaining to the concept (Dwyer et. al., 1987; Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Brown et. al., 1995; Gundlach et. al., 1995; Kumar et. al., 1995; Mohr et.al., 1996; Anderson et. al., 1998; Goodman and Dion, 2001; de Ruyter et. al., 2001). Drawing from work undertaken in organisational theory and in the social exchange literature (Scanzoni, 1979; Cook and Emerson, 1978), the use of the relational paradigm in marketing is predicated on a view that cooperative relationships are more likely to generate benefits for the parties involved (Robicheaux and El-Ansary, 1975). Cooperation between parties is identified as being an important outcome of a committed relationship between partners (Frazier and Rody, 1991). Scanzoni (1979) saw the development of commitment as being the result of a social exchange process. Based upon a central transaction, parties engage in relations enabling them to prove their worth as a potential partner, which subsequently serves as the entrée to engagement into major, possibly enduring, relations (Blau, 1964). Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) argued commitment is the result of social exchange mechanisms including communication, information exchange, cooperation and the role of managers.

This contrasts with the transactional paradigm where power is held to be the most important factor governing behavior (Thorelli, 1986). The use of power as a coordinating mechanism in exchange relationships is important for two reasons. Firstly, it indicates exchanges are loosely structured, with prior, or social, links effectively being rendered irrelevant in the determination of an exchange solution (Gundlach et. al., 1995). Secondly, power is thought to condition parties to behave in particular ways during exchanges (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This could mean one of the parties engaged in a relationship relates to the other based upon perceived notions of their relative position in the relationship. In exchange relationships which are organised for specific purposes and have a social developed dimension, the nature of power changes (Achrol, 1991). It becomes more participative and is regulated by the parameters within which the exchange relationship is conducted. Indeed, Cook and Emmerson (1978) and Provan and Gassenheimer (1994) identified that power and commitment are inversely related: the greater the degree of commitment exhibited by relationship partners, the lower will be the use of power in exchanges.

The interest shown in commitment by marketers working from within the relational paradigm represents an important development in the commitment literature. It reignited the debate about commitment at a time when the work of Meyer and Allen (1990), Meyer and Allen (1991), Meyer

et. al. (1990) and Meyer et. al. (2002) had come to prevail across the literature. Initial work undertaken by Anderson and Weitz (1992) stated commitment is the result of tangible signs. That is, parties commit to an exchange partner when they perceive there is behavioral intent evident in the investments made into the relationship by that partner or when there is a perception the partner is committed. This is especially important because it has enabled the more direct measurement of commitment to take place. Gundlach et. al., (1995) alternatively indicated there are temporal dimensions to commitment, stating that consistent lines of activity in to the long-run are at the heart of the commitment concept. Drawing from the disaggregated view of commitment advocated by Meyer and Allen (1991), and based upon the work of Becker (1960) and Moorman et. al., (1992), self interest stakes are identified as being created through the inputs exchange partners contribute to the relationship. This binds the partners together as alternative relationships are foregone and rewards for making these inputs are generated. Another view, advocated by Debling (1999), suggests commitment is a psychological phenomenon. Drawing from studies in social psychology (Hogg et. al., 1993; Barnes, 1994; Stewart, 1997), commitment is held to be a form of cognitive resistance in the way acts become less changeable, that is switching is less likely as the result of a combination of the following factors: how explicit or public exchange behavior is, how important it is to the subject, how irrevocable it is, the number of acts that are associated with the exchange and the degree of volition a partner has during exchange (Kiesler, 1971).

Despite the renewed interest in commitment amongst marketers and relational researchers, the debate about it has become even more fragmented and polarised. Instead of resolving existing issues about whether commitment is an aggregated or a disaggregated concept, studies undertaken over the last decade have simply fuelled the debate. As such, there is still no agreement either about what commitment is or about how it is constituted. There is some common ground: it is commonly accepted commitment is central to the performance and effectiveness of exchange relationships; it is a more effective way of governing relationships than through the use of power; inter-organisational relationships are not simply the reflection of cost pressures, there is a social basis to them as well.

But the definitions of commitment in marketing betray an absence of agreement about what it actually is. Commitment is variously seen as a desire and intention to continue in a relationship (Ganesan, 1994), a willingness to make short-term sacrifices (Anderson and Weitz, 1992), confidence in the stability of a relationship (Gundlach, et. al., 1995), the acknowledged

importance of a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) and identification with, and internalisation of, a partners norms and values (Iniesta and Sanchez, 2002). These not only reflect the influence of a broad range of disciplines and paradigms from which they have been drawn, but also their inherent problems. Social exchange theory has been an important influence on the relational paradigm because of the emphasis it places upon the social forces, such as interaction, underpinning all relationships. Much of the original work undertaken from a social exchange perspective has nevertheless been conceptual and is therefore of limited empirical value. This potentially casts doubt upon whether the single measures of disaggregated commitment concepts proposed by social exchange theorists are actually valid.

One of the most pointed criticisms of social exchange theories is their failure to account for the calculative nature of exchanges. Whilst exchanges may not exclusively reflect transaction cost pressures, some are likely to be based on available alternatives. Notions of commitment in organisational theory could therefore be said to be more realistic in the way that disaggregation of commitment into component parts represents a more embracing conceptualisation of the social and calculative elements. However, the use in marketing studies of Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model assumes the features of relationship commitment exhibited within an organisation are the same as those characteristic of commitment in relations between business units. Although there have been attempts to adapt organisational theories, the applicability of disaggregated constructs has still to be widely accepted. Indeed, models such as Meyer and Allen's have yet to receive detailed attention in the marketing literature. In the small number of cases where further dimensions to commitment have been proposed (for instance Debling, 1999), there is little evidence to indicate a degree of acceptance amongst mainstream studies.

Commitment has therefore been identified as a concept that is difficult to pin down (Kim and Frazier, 1997), the research agenda being characterised by studies which subsume the components of commitment into one measure (Etzioni, 1961; Kanter, 1968; Meyer and Allen, 1990) and those that conceptualise and operationalise each component separately (Buchanan, 1974; Porter et. al., 1974; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The disparate nature of commitment research is also evident in the apparent failure to agree whether or not it is an instrumental, affective, normative, cognitive or behavioral phenomenon. To add a further element of confusion, the debate about whether commitment simply represents a statement of intent or a pledge to remain in a relationship, or is premised on actions which continue in to the long-term, similarly continues as an ongoing issue for resolution.

2.16 Commitment and sponsorship

Unlike most other inter-organisational relationships, the existence of commitment between parties engaged in sponsorship exchanges is readily acknowledged. In media reports, press releases and web site announcements, the sponsor and/or sponsee often publicly confirm their commitment to the sponsorship partner⁷. Yet, despite the high profile and prevalent nature of such announcements, the notion of commitment has received little attention in the literature, the work of Farrelly and Quester (2003) and Farrelly et. al. (2003) being the extent of coverage thus far. Even in these studies, the focus has been on the relationship between commitment and market orientation, not on identifying the determinants nature or constitution of commitment in sponsorship relations. As a result, it remains unclear exactly what commitment means to sponsors and sponsees, what its constituents are and what determines sponsorship commitment.

Farrelly and Quester (2003) and Farrelly et. al. (2003) strongly acknowledged that commitment is a fundamental feature of sponsorship exchanges. However, the degree of the commitment identified in these studies is not only restrictive, but implies sponsors make a disproportionately larger commitment. It is also restrictive in the sense that it over-emphasises the importance of leveraging expenditure as the principal commitment made in an exchange. They consequently highlighted the sponsor as being the major 'committer', mentioning only briefly that the sponsee might also commit resources to the partnership. Implicit within their work is a view that commitment only develops once the contractual relationship between sponsor and sponsee has been signed. There is no sense that, from first contact, both are likely to engage in making commitments to the one another.

To overcome the deficiencies of previous approaches, this study adopts a broader view of commitment in the sponsorship dyad. That sponsor and sponsee commit to an arrangement or partnership, albeit to differing degrees, is self-evident. The sponsor not only commits leveraging resources to ensure an association with a sponsee is a success, but also the initial financial resources required to secure a contract. Whilst the extent of a sponsee's financial expenditure may not be as great as the sponsor, it is likely the sponsee will still commit resources, making either a direct financial contribution or incurring an opportunity cost, in order to work with the sponsor. But this study assumes the commitment extends beyond this: the sponsor commits elements of its marketing communications or commercial strategy to the relationship, as well its

⁷ The readers attention is drawn to Chapter 3, Section 3.4 for an examination of these announcements.

brand, reputation or image, in order to secure the benefits most readily associated with a sponsorship deal. The sponsee too makes a more complex commitment than the current literature would suggest: its brand, the agreement to allow another brand to associate with it, space on a shirt or perimeter hoardings, or in official publications, all represent the commitment of a sponsee to the other exchange party.

Commitment is therefore a cornerstone of the relationship between sponsor and sponsee. This is implicit within the models of sponsorship management advocated by (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992; Irwin et. al., 1994; Arthur et. al., 1998). That sponsorship programmes inevitably entail making choices, differentiating between alternatives, allocating budgets and interacting with others to ensure the effectiveness of a contract, is clear in the importance attributed to objective setting, screening and selection and management processes in the literature. The existence of a contractual agreement also represents the mutual consent of both to engage in an exchange relationship. The terms of a sponsorship agreement will identify the parameters of the relationship which will have a consequent impact upon the actions and behaviors of sponsor and sponsee. But this is rather restrictive because it suggests a written agreement is the extent of a sponsorship relationship. Moreover, it denies the dynamism of a process in which broader social and managerial considerations are significant. Definitions of commitment in the business literature are nevertheless relevant and help to enhance our understanding of sponsorship relations. Given the exchange of financial resources in return for legal rights of association, this indicates there is an economic or cost dimension to sponsorship contracts. But in a sponsorship market where there is a plethora of opportunities for sponsor and sponsee, the decision to forge a relationship with a particular sponsor or sponsee suggests alternatives have been foregone in order to engage with the most attractive option. Given views that geographic location (Westerbeek, 2000) the 'hobby motive' (Thwaites, 1995) and common target audiences (Polonsky et. al., 1995) can impinge on sponsorship programmes, there is also a sense that feelings of attachment and identity play a part in committing to a sponsorship deal.

The contention that commitment is consistent with the longevity of a relationship is one of questionable relevance for sponsorship programmes, especially in football. Whilst there are some examples of long-term, enduring relationships (for example, Manchester United and Sharp and Arsenal and JVC), this does not appear to be the norm. The figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) clearly indicated commitment to a sponsorship actually constitutes something different. This suggests sponsor and sponsee engage, either jointly or as

discrete decision makers, in an ongoing process aimed at establishing whether or not it is beneficial to continue in or leave a relationship. The relatively short period (between 1 and 3 years) over which most football shirt sponsorships run would therefore appear to indicate one or both parties have either achieved their objectives, failed to realise the benefits of a deal or have identified alternatives (which may or may not be other sponsorship properties) that are more attractive. The relatively short-term nature of many football shirt contracts, allied to the failure of many sponsors and sponsees to renew their contracts, thus implies sponsorship programmes are not necessarily viewed as long-term commitments by those involved.

The assumption at this stage that sponsors and sponsees both commit to a sponsorship deal poses a number of questions. Given the dyadic nature of this study, there may be differences between the two parties in terms of the commitments they make. The foundations, determinants, impact upon management processes and influence on the maintenance of a relationship are therefore likely to vary across the study. Commitment within one side of the relationship dyad is also likely to vary in the same way. For example, commitment across the 92 shirt sponsors, each of whom will be at a different stage of their relationship (and some of whom may have renewed their deals on more than one occasion), is likely to be different. Commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad is therefore likely to be of a disaggregated nature. In conceptual terms, this immediately raises the same issue that has confronted those involved in other studies: should the concept of commitment be operationalised through an examination of its component parts or, as in the case of much of the relationship marketing literature, should each of its components be subsumed into a general scale, operationalising commitment as an aggregated concept?

Rylander et. al. (1997, p. 64) noted the intensity of the debate regarding single constructs versus multi-component measures, noting that: "developments [in the literature] have done little to resolve the dilemma". In this context, this study therefore draws from other research undertaken within the relational perspective in marketing and adopts an aggregated measure as the basis for examining commitment. As Rylander et. al. (1997, p.64) stated: "regardless of whether commitment consists of a single, distinct construct or a series of related constructs, it is important to isolate the nature of commitment in terms that can be measured in a meaningful way." In adopting a single construct approach, it ensures this study is consistent with the other marketing studies from which it heavily draws. Given the formative nature of this study, it is unclear what the nature of commitment is in the football shirt sponsorship dyad. An added advantage therefore is that the existing marketing literature provides a strong foundation upon which to build an

understanding of this specific manifestation of commitment. Following an exploratory analysis of shirt sponsorship dyads, it is intended that a definition relating more precisely to the form of relationship commitment found in these dyads will be provided. There is a further advantage to adopting a single measure approach: the disaggregated view promotes commitment as a central focus, to the extent that other relationship features become little more than peripheral considerations. Issues pertaining to the formation and management of relationships receive little attention thus limiting insight in to the dynamism of inter-organisational relationships. Whilst the social, interactive and mutual nature of such relations may be implicit within multiple component conceptualisations of commitment, existing studies have thus far failed to directly embrace them. As such, the conceptualisation of commitment as a single construct provides opportunities for this study to specifically address how commitment directly relates to the processes of relationship formation and management. A further benefit of this approach is that, from the commitment construct and its determinants, inferences about the constituency of the concept can be made. Indeed, if one examines work undertaken by Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) and de Ruyter et. al. (2001) commitment is presented as a single construct but nevertheless influenced by a number of determinants which are classified according to the specific conceptual components of which commitment is comprised. It is therefore anticipated that a single construct will enable this study to identify the centrality of commitment in influencing partner selection, relationship management and dissolution issues.

In methodological terms, conceptual considerations present a number of additional challenges⁸. The relatively small sample size employed by this study constrained the range of multivariate techniques that could be used. In particular, the ratio of survey items to responses needed to ensure adherence to statistical convention restricted the extent to which commitment could be examined. Developing an understanding of how commitment impacts across sponsorship programmes was therefore, in part, driven by such statistical considerations. If commitment had been hypothesised as being disaggregated, this would have restricted the focus of the study to an analysis of the concept's core components. By postulating commitment as a single construct, this made additional survey question items available that could then serve three purposes: they could be used to identify the nature of commitment, to highlight determinants of commitment and, so, enable observations regarding the totality of sponsorship programmes to be made.

⁸ The reader's attention is drawn to Chapter 3, Section for a full statement of methodology.

Given the absence of research conducted in the area of football shirt sponsorships, a definition of commitment is not offered at this stage. Following Phase 2 of the research methodology (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4), the commitment concept is operationalised in the light of an analysis of data gathered from a series of critical incident interviews.

2.17 Determinants of commitment

Understanding the foundations upon which commitment is established and built has received attention both in the general business literature (for example, Cullen et. al., 1995) and in the marketing literature (for example, Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Bucklin and Sengupta (1993) stated it is important to understand how commitment is determined because this helps understand how the foundations are built for durable, cooperative relationships. Crotts et. al. (1998) alternatively identified that an understanding of commitment determinants is essential if parties to an exchange are to configure their relationship in a way that enables them to achieve a competitive advantage over their rivals. They also noted the importance of committed relations highlighting successful, fulfilling relationships as being those founded on something more than a legal contract. In a similar vein, observations made by Jap and Ganesan (2000) indicated that successful relationships are not simply the reflection of altruistic motives, parties are rather more considered in their selection of exchange partners and will identify those to whom they can commit and from whom they can receive commitment. The need to work cooperatively and to understand the process through which commitment is created and enhanced is an issue for businesses (Goodman and Dion, 2001). Understanding the determinants of committed relationships is therefore of paramount importance (Kim and Frazier, 1997), with an analysis of each determinant being thought of as essential in providing a unique insight into the formation and management of a relationship (Spekman and Sawhney, 1990).

Amongst those providing an aggregated conceptualisation of commitment in the marketing literature, there are three strands of research examining the determinants of commitment: those identifying determinants of commitment without highlighting the derivation of these determinants, those identifying determinants specifically based upon a single component conceptualisation of commitment, and those drawing from multiple conceptualisations of commitment as the basis for the development of a single construct. Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) posited that eight factors influence the development of relationship commitment, but they did not state on what basis they hypothesised the relationships included in their model. Hence, it does not necessarily have either the conceptual basis or the methodological justification needed to explain

how commitment influences the process of relationship formation and management. Suffice to say, they acknowledged the complexities and issues associated with conceptualising commitment and with the subsequent identification of its determinants. In the same way, Morgan and Hunt (1994) identified four factors as being key determinants of commitment without acknowledging their origins, although these determinants are founded upon the results of preliminary in-depth face-to-face interviews. In one way, both of these studies represent aggregation in its purest sense in that they represent a single notion of commitment which has not been subject to the influence of other variables. They also overcome the problems inevitably inherent in generating a single construct to represent a potentially complex conceptual base by considering a diverse range of determinants. However, they represent a somewhat static view of an otherwise dynamic phenomenon which thus limits the extent to which they can be employed as the basis for understanding the relationship management process. As such, they highlight commitment as being a relationship imperative without establishing a basis upon which to justify such a view.

An alternative view is that commitment, in being represented by a single construct, is nevertheless determined by a specific set of determinants. Anderson and Weitz (1992), in particular, presented a conceptualisation of commitment based upon short-term sacrifice and stability in which behavioral factors are key determinants. These embraced the nature and the extent of investments made in a relationship, perceptions of a partner's commitment, communication and benefits. The determinants of commitment are therefore instrumental in one respect, representing a partner's willingness to forego other alternatives in the short-term because the benefits of remaining in the relationship outweigh the costs. In another respect, it also embodies affective elements given the important role it acknowledges communication has in maintaining the relationship. That is, interaction is seen as being an indicator of the willingness to maintain or build the relationship and demonstrates a partner's active involvement in the relationship. Commitment could also have normative underpinnings: so long as one party remains committed to a relationship, Anderson and Weitz's premise was that the other party will believe it should also remain committed. This suggests parties will perceive there is a right way to behave in relationships, possibly attributed to a perceived moral obligation to remain with a partner.

Goodman and Dion (2001) identified six determinants of commitment but explicitly stated these have a behavioral and a marketing dimension. The marketing determinants are akin to the economic or instrumental components of commitment identified by, amongst others, Becker (1960), Kanter (1968) and Meyer and Allen (1990). These incorporate notions that idiosyncratic

investments are made into a relationship, that a relationship has value and should therefore be maintained and that a sense of dependence prevails between two parties, tying them together. The behavioral determinants draw from Anderson and Weitz (1992) which include affective and normative elements such as communication, trust and a desire or willingness to maintain the continuity of a relationship.

De Ruyter et. al. (2001) also accepted the aggregated commitment concept has various origins by postulating that commitment is determined by instrumental and affective factors. The former is bound up in the notion that alternatives exist and switching behavior from one partner to another may take place, although this is regulated principally by the costs of such behavior allied to the availability of a suitable partner. In the latter case, informal or interpersonal arrangements are thought to create emotional and psychological bonds which become manifest as a partner's willingness to exert effort in establishing and building the relationship. It is also identified that a willingness to work on behalf of another party to the relationship, regular formal and informal communication and the existence of conflict resolution techniques are also important affective determinants of commitment.

The incorporation into a model of a multiplicity of determinants drawn from either conceptual or empirical sources therefore has considerable appeal. They assist in helping to understand the basis upon which relationships are forged and subsequently managed. There is also an implication that, when the nature of one or more of the determinants changes, the nature of commitment changes which may result in either the continuation or the dissolution of a relationship. The problem with this approach is that subsuming components of commitment in to a single conceptualisation is, in many respects, an imprecise science. As Rylander et. al. (1997) and Kim and Frazier (1997) nevertheless noted, despite intense interest in commitment over the last decade, such an approach has neither been established as inappropriate nor proved as unscientific.

This study therefore employs the same approach, utilising a single conceptualisation of commitment, with observations about determinants being drawn from initial qualitative research and from the literature. The study subsequently goes on to measure commitment and its determinants using a survey instrument and confirms the validity and generalisability of findings using a process of structured dyadic interviewing. It is intended that this will enable observations to be made about the determinants of commitment and its composition. This will thus help to

highlight the relationship management processes being employed within 92 football shirt dyads in English professional football.

At this stage, a detailed discussion of the range of commitment determinants is not provided. As Zineldin and Jonsson (2000, p. 250) identified: “There is a considerable number of determinants affecting the development of commitment. Because of the broad nature of commitment and its varied conceptual roots, we limit [our analysis]”. Given the paucity of literature examining football shirt sponsorship programmes and commitment in sponsorship, allied to the ongoing debate about commitment, identification of relevant determinants is left to emerge from the findings of the primary research processes detailed in Chapter 3. It is at this point that the specific nature of commitment determinants and the operationalisation of ‘commitment’ will be discussed in detail.

2.18 Conclusions

The commercialisation of football over the last decade has been such that developing revenue sources has become an important responsibility for the commercial and marketing managers of football clubs. Shirt sponsorship has been an important source of revenue for clubs in England since the 1970’s, although their financial value has recently risen dramatically. At the same time, the sponsorship market has become increasingly competitive with numerous properties now seeking to attract the interest of both private and public sector sponsors. All of this is set in the context of the challenging operating conditions most professional football clubs now face. The importance of forging and building effective relationships with sponsors has therefore become an especially important task for managers.

For sponsors, football shirts remain popular sponsorship vehicles: the sport is high profile, attracts significant live and televised audiences, and is presumed to confer benefits upon them as a result of England’s obsession with the ‘national game’. The process of securing and managing football sponsorship rights is commonly associated with the marketing communications mix. This generally involves companies using their sponsorship programmes to communicate with particular target groups and is often linked to other media such as advertising and public relations. But there are concerns such sponsorships are not being effectively managed because a feeling remains that companies are seduced into shirt sponsorship deals purely because football is popular. Yet the process of managing such sponsorship programmes has received little attention to date from either academics or practitioners.

The view that sponsorship is a form of marketing communication is largely reflected by the academic literature. This has resulted in a research agenda primarily focusing upon what sponsorship can achieve and how its impact can be measured. Although there have been studies examining specific aspects of sponsorship management, the process of managing sponsorship in football and other sports has thus far received relatively little attention. What is particularly worrying about the way in which the research agenda has developed is that it has effectively perpetuated a transactional view of sponsorship. The marketing communications mix is held to be part of a broader marketing mix which is premised on the notion that exchange relationships are short-term in nature and characterised by the limited scope and nature of the exchange.

This neglects to account for the social foundations upon which sponsorship exchanges are based. That exchange relationships have a social basis and involve the exchange of multiple content, allied to the belief that such relationships are not necessarily short-term in nature, is a view which has increasingly appeared in the marketing literature over the last decade. The sponsorship literature has started to explore the notion that sponsorship programmes are similarly founded upon social relations and may incorporate elements of durability or longevity highlighted in the relational literature. The premise that sponsorship programmes can therefore be seen as relationships, dyads and networks has therefore started to attract academic interest, albeit currently of a formative nature.

This study therefore posits that football shirt sponsorship programmes involve relationships between sponsors and sponsees (the football clubs) which entail more than a simple transactional exchange between the parties. It is contended such arrangements have a social basis to them and will be characterised by mutuality and interaction. Whilst these are features of both the relational and the network literature, the study advocates the view that sponsorship relations should be viewed from a dyadic perspective. There are two principle reasons for this: firstly, an analysis of exchange relationships which uses only one of the parties as a focus undermines one's understanding of the totality of exchange; secondly, in adopting the network as a focus, there are serious conceptual and methodological difficulties which appear, as yet, to have been unresolved by the literature. The dyad therefore represents an important platform upon which the specific dynamics of the sponsorship management process involving two parties can be examined.

The features and dynamics of dyadic exchange relationships have recently attracted interest across the literature. One of the most important reasons for this is that the characteristics of these relationships enables researchers to understand the processes through which relationships are forged, built and dissolved. It is intended this will be one of the strengths of this study. By examining the social exchange process taking place between football clubs and shirt sponsor, the study will demonstrate the basis upon which football shirt sponsorship programmes are agreed and managed, and then dissolved.

The dynamism of relational exchanges is reflected in the development of relationship features such as interaction, mutuality, trust and commitment. It is in regard to the latter that this study adopts its main focus. The relational literature emphasises the importance of commitment in the exchange process, identifying it as one of the most significant factors in determining the nature of relations between parties to the exchange. There is also evidence to indicate interaction, trust and mutuality are determinants of commitment. But, beyond the philosophical or conceptual debate, it appears that notions of commitment are central to practitioner-oriented perspectives of sponsorship-football clubs and shirt sponsors routinely make statements of commitment to their deals with one another but no other studies examining football shirt sponsorship commitment currently exist. There is little understanding therefore of what these proclamations of commitment actually mean, what determines commitment between clubs and sponsors or what the impact these issues have for the management of shirt sponsorship programmes.

The important role commitment plays in sponsorship programmes should therefore become the most significant outcome of this study. Whilst the exchange of a financial payment by the sponsor in return for legal access to shirt space and other associated properties may be seen as the extent of commitment, this study postulates it as a much more complex concept. In establishing how it is determined, it is intended that our understanding of property screening and selection processes, programme management issues, termination decisions and evaluation measures will be enhanced. In these terms, it is anticipated the study will add to the academic literature relating to football, sport, sponsorship, inter-organisational relations, relational exchange and commitment. A further expectation is that the study will also help to inform professional practice, particularly in relation to the management of sport sponsorship programmes.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Overview of chapter

The chapter presents the research methodology employed by this study and begins with a brief consideration of research in business and marketing, indicating how the study has addressed concerns about them. Drawing from these observations, each phase of the methodology is subsequently examined with key issues for the researcher at each phase of the process being highlighted. The chapter goes on to provide a rationale for the various data analysis methods used as part of this investigation and begins to examine findings from key phases of the research process.

3.2 Methodology and theory generation

“Research is different to common sense because it is done to achieve specific goals, relies on specific methods and is done systematically” (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002; p. 10). The relative merits of various approaches to research have been widely documented (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sekaran, 1992; Welman and Kruger, 2001). Some portray the selection of a methodology as a straightforward choice between nomothetic and ideographic approaches (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Table 5 highlights the main differences between the two. In reality, the choice is a rather more complex one, with Saunders et. al. (2003) indicating the approach adopted by researchers reflects their philosophical position. At one level, choices made by the researcher will drive the strategies, time horizons and data collection techniques employed (Saunders et. al. 2003). At another, such choices will be driven by factors such as the target audience for the research output (Robson, 2002).

Table 5: Comparison of nomothetic and ideographic methods

Emphasis of nomothetic methods	Emphasis of ideographic methods
1. Deduction	1. Induction
2. Explanation via analysis of causal relationships and explanation by covering-laws (etic)	2. Explanation of subjective meaning systems and explanation by understanding (emic)
3. Generation and use of quantitative data	3. Generation and use of qualitative data
4. Use of various controls, physical or statistical, so as to allow the testing of	4. Commitment to research in everyday settings to allow access to, and minimise reactivity

hypotheses	among, the subjects of research
5. Highly structured research methodology to ensure replicability of 1, 2, 3 and 4	5. Minimum structure to ensure 2, 3 and 4 (and as a result of 1)

There are also broader philosophical issues relating to this study linking a debate about the importance of triangulation and the nature of marketing science in research designs. The use of triangulation-using two or more data collection methods within one study in order to help ensure overall reliability and validity of the data collected-is thought to be imperative for two reasons. To some, it is at the apex of research process design: “If you had to stake your life on which of these [archival review, questionnaires, and interviews] is likely to represent the most accurate, complete research information, you would choose the centre [of the overlap] in which you got the information through interviews and questionnaire, and checked it through documentary analysis.....Here, you are getting not only what people say they do and what you see them doing, but also what they are recorded as doing” (Kane, 1985; p. 51). To others, triangulation is necessary in order to address the relative strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. In particular, it is felt that using multiple methods protects against ‘method effects’ (Smith, 1975). That is, the unique results invariably associated with specific data collection methods. Deshpande (1983) alternatively stated that triangulation is essential in order to reduce bias.

The significance of triangulation reflects a much deeper debate concerning philosophical tradition in marketing. One view has been that marketing is insufficiently quantitative, relying too heavily on introspection and the personal motives of researchers (Stewart, 1952). As a counter argument, Deshpande (1983) questioned the insularity of marketing, criticising the prevailing nomothetic principles employed by many leading marketing academics. Hunt (1990) and Easton (2002) proposed that marketing should be founded upon realist principles, paralleling Randall and Miles (1992) and Razzaque (1998), who stated that research in marketing should be more accessible to practitioners. Arndt (1985) acknowledged other research paradigms should be employed, although Swan and Martin (1994) advocated that research in marketing should be seen as a holistic process and not dominated by one prevailing paradigm.

The use of nomothetic principles may lead one to conclude that replication of marketing studies is widespread. However, reviews undertaken by Hubbard and Armstrong (1994), and Hubbard and Vetter (1996), indicated less than 5% of the research output in marketing is based upon the replication and extension of existing work. Easley et. al. (2002) suggested this may be due to a

perceived lack of importance or creativity and a perception that journal editors are biased against such output. Nevertheless, Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984) and Collins (1985) believed replication with extension is the epitome of genuine scientific knowledge, stating that it determines the scope of empirical findings by establishing whether they can be generalised to other populations, contexts, time periods and geographical areas.

Ultimately, Hakim (1987; p.1) concluded that selecting an overall approach to research is analogous to designing and building a house: “[betraying] the architect’s own preferences and ideas....and the stylistic preferences of those who pay for the work and have to live with the result”. Saunders et. al. (2003) illustrated the breadth and depth of the choices facing researchers, when selecting an approach, through the depiction of a ‘research onion’ consisting of five stages (research philosophy, research approach, research strategies, time horizons and data collection methods). In this context, an overview of the research process underpinning this study is detailed below. This is intended to reflect the significant elements, principles and debates noted above. As such, the methodology employed incorporates elements of the nomothetic and ideographic paradigms, utilises triangulation techniques in order to assist in ensuring the reliability, validity and generalisability of findings, and replicates and extends measures and techniques evident elsewhere in the marketing literature, especially in the inter-organisational and commitment literature. In addition, whilst the pervasive requirements of academia are strongly acknowledged, they are no more significant than the requirements of practitioners. A central tenant of this research has therefore been to embrace the role of the practitioner in shaping the methodology.

3.3 Phase 1-Collection and analysis of secondary data

Remanyi et. al. (1998) identified that interpretivism seeks to understand the social reality underlying a situation. This is founded on the notion that business relationships are both complex and unique, and cannot be reduced to the sets of laws evident in work completed within the nomothetic paradigm. Whilst this casts some doubt upon the generalisability of findings generated by interpretive studies, Mason (2002) explained the distinctive interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings of social actors preclude the significance of generalising findings to other situations. Moreover, Blaikie (2000) argued these are specifically embedded in the language through which actors create a social reality. Given the uniqueness of specific social situations, interpretivism is characterised by an inductive approach to research. That is, acquiring facts through observation thereby generating theory from data (Chalmers, 1982). This enables an understanding of the social world to be developed such that cause and

effect relationships are explained through an examination of human understanding. According to Blaikie (2000), an interpretive philosophy therefore seeks to establish an 'insider view'. This entails using a variety of research strategies including ethnography and case study analysis to enable an investigation of the meaningful characteristics of real-life events, particularly with regard to processes, context and longevity (Yin, 1989; Atkinson. et. al. 2001; Mason, 2002). Despite concerns that case study and ethnographic strategies are unscientific (Saunders et. al. 2003), Eisenhardt (1989b) indicated they are well suited to new research areas, especially in the formative stages of a research project. In this context, Silverman (2000) identified that the range of data collection methods to interpretivists includes documents characterised by an organisational context which use language and signs to construct meaning.

The use of newspaper reports, press releases and web site content is widely accepted as an integral part of interpretivist research and has already been used in analyses of exchange relationships (Osborn and Baughn, 1987; Hergert and Morris, 1988; Glaister and Thwaites, 1994). These are common media through which announcements and the reporting of deals appear when football clubs and shirt sponsors engage in a relationship. In this particular case, the use of language is notable: in a review of 174 documents (for a detailed summary of the information gathered, see Appendix 1), every one used the word 'commitment' at least once⁹. As has already been argued, the conceptual and more widely accepted view of commitment implies a willingness to continue in a relationship, durability and longevity, whilst the established view of sponsorship, especially in football, is that it is a short-term phenomenon. The unique and specific nature of the language used in these documents is therefore highly specific to the context within which it is employed.

In addition to use of the term 'commitment', sponsorship announcements also typically relate it to words such as 'deal' and 'contract'. Of the 174 documents, approximately one half (78) contained the words 'deal' and/or 'contract', implying sponsorship relations are primarily founded upon a legal contract. It is only in more recent announcements, made in 29 of the documents, that partnership associations, notions of friendship or a broader social basis for football shirt sponsorships have become apparent through the use of words like 'relationship', 'partnership' and 'alliance'. A further point to note is the language of shirt sponsorships routinely indicates it is the shirt sponsor who commits to a deal, implying that football clubs are either passive recipients or reactionaries in their dyadic relationship with a sponsor. In other words, commitment appears

⁹ The announcements were analysed using direct quotes from a club or sponsor and not journalistic content.

to be a uni-directional phenomenon flowing from sponsor to club. Whilst sponsors publicly appear to accept and be bound by the rhetoric of sponsorship announcements, it is not entirely clear what they are getting as a result of their association with a club (the case of the Friends Provident sponsorship of Southampton given in Appendix 1 is a good example of this). A further point to note is that, of the announcements analysed, none directly referred to benefits likely to be attained by sponsors through their relationship with a club. This again implies a view that clubs fail to recognise, possibly even fail to make, any other commitments to sponsors apart from those explicitly covered by the legal agreement between the two parties.

The aim of this study is not, however, to conduct a detailed analysis of the content of newspaper and magazine articles, press releases and web site reports. Rather, their content is presented as a review of activity and a prompt to the main focus of the study. What is clear is that statements of commitment are frequently made in football shirt sponsorship dyads, most notably by the sponsoring organisation. In their most basic form, this is likely to involve a sponsoring organisation agreeing to pay a fee in return for legal or contractual access to the property rights associated with a shirt sponsorship deal. Football clubs appear not to make open statements about their commitment to a sponsorship partner. Yet, by engaging in a transaction, the club is actually making a commitment to its sponsor even if this represents a calculative decision that the deal represents the best available source of revenue at a specific point in time. Making space available on a team shirt, providing access to club facilities or allowing perimeter hoardings to be used suggests the nature of a club's commitment is rather more complex than they acknowledge. A further point to note about the potentially calculative nature of shirt sponsorship programmes is that the financial exchange presumed to be at the heart of relationships between clubs and sponsors is rarely mentioned. In some cases, the financial contribution of sponsors to such relationships is highlighted but this tends to be the exception. There is certainly no sense that exchange partners feel the clubs make any financial contribution to the relationship. This may explain why clubs are not commonly thought to make a commitment to sponsorship deals.

The initial review of announcements presented here is somewhat misleading because they are normally made immediately following a new deal being signed. As such, they provide no indication about what happens once both parties are engaged in a relationship, how commitment might change as a relationship develops, nor do they enable an understanding of the relationship dissolution process. As such, it is unclear on what basis their commitment to one another ends. A proclamation of commitment at best therefore provides an insight in to the initial intentions of

sponsorship partners rather than being a definitive history of what ultimately happens. Yet they do confirm that commitment starts once one party approaches another and communication between them starts. At its most basic, there would appear to be a calculative decision that the potential benefits of approaching one organization outweigh the costs of approaching another. This indicates statements of commitment do not simply reflect the semantic traditions of the sponsorship announcement. Nor is commitment simply the result of relationship building, it is fundamental to partner screening and selection and cuts across all stages of the sponsorship management process.

The announcements also reveal a number of things. Sponsor and sponsee invariably agree that shirt sponsorship programmes are beneficial to one or both parties. In the case of clubs, they euphemistically acknowledge the financial importance of such deals. In the case of sponsors, the benefits seem to range from the advantages attributed to an association with a particular club brand or links to local communities, although the wording of the announcements often makes it difficult to establish the precise nature of what the benefits might actually be. It is also made clear what the duration of their commitment will be, with statements in most cases indicating a 1 to 3 year relationship between the parties in the first instance. Their overall scope nevertheless remains limited demanding that researchers infer the precise nature of the club/sponsor relationship. Given contextual details regarding shared values, similar objectives and links to particular groups or areas, it can be inferred football shirt sponsorship programmes are not simply the result of a rational transactional exchange. The general failure to explicitly acknowledge the financial aspects of the relationship, allied to the strongly stated reasons for engagement, appears to encapsulate many of the elements commonly associated with the relational paradigm. Notions of sharing seem to be particularly strong as does the role of communication, with statements like “we have been talking for a while” and “we have spoken on a regular basis” being notable. The emphasis on linking to local communities and to customers in specific locations is also significant.

But there appears to be a contradiction between the ways in which parties to the exchange develop and maintain their relationships and what purpose they serve. The common view of most deals seems to be that they are a form of marketing communication. There is thus no evidence to suggest that sponsorship programmes are explicitly perceived as a form of relationship marketing, network or resource strategy. This possibly implies clubs and sponsors are somewhat undervaluing the power of their relationships, especially as the basis for building long-term

alliances or strategic advantage. It also demonstrates both parties do not recognize, are unwilling to recognize or do not publicly acknowledge the broader context within which sponsorship deals are agreed. Although some announcements do refer to customers, fans and communities, few refer to co-promoters, marketing partners, television and media corporations, charities or retail and distribution channels. In general terms this can be thought of as a weakness in sponsorship strategy. However, the restricted focus of the announcements, effectively being limited to clubs and sponsors, confirms that the dyadic focus of this study is an appropriate and a relevant one.

The ease and openness with which club and sponsor profess their commitment to one another is a clear feature of all the announcements. As has already been mentioned, there are problems in interpreting these statements, most notably that presumption and incorrect assumptions are likely given the limited amount of information they contain. Nevertheless, one may infer that committing to a relationship partner means both are agreeing to engage in a stable, predictable relationship underpinned by a contractual relationship for a specified period of time. Observations made by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), allied to those made in connection with the 174 announcements collected for this study, do not show that mid-contract termination is an issue.

Whether the extent of partnership commitment is solely bound by the parameter of contractual terms is an issue which will be clarified by this study. Nevertheless, it does at least indicate the stability of a short-term contract is driven by a calculative decision and an instrumental commitment to a sponsorship deal. In other words, both parties engage in a sponsorship deal because their view is that, for the period covered by the contract, the benefits of the relationship are likely to outweigh the costs. This raises some interesting issues which can not be resolved by reference to the announcements alone. For example, the binding nature of a sponsorship contract implies there is potential for opportunism within sponsorship relations. If the contract did not exist, the extent of a party's commitment might therefore be restricted to a time when a more attractive alternative became available. An added element to this notion is that once a contract has been signed, this does not preclude a partner leaving the relationship in order to engage with another party. However, the legal sanctions associated with following this course of action would be such that the costs of terminating one's commitment would be so significant as to ensure the more prudent decision would be to continue in the relationship.

In addition to possible instrumental elements of commitment, statements emphasizing sharing, mutuality and the intention to stay in a relationship indicate affective commitment may also be important in the football shirt sponsorship dyad. This is especially the case in situations where location and identity appear to have played a major role in sponsorship decisions implying that emotional attachment to a local or favourite team may be important commitment influences, in some ways echoing views that sponsorship decisions are motivated either by 'chairman's whim' or by the proximity of sponsorship properties. There is also an apparent sense that pride in being associated with a particular organisation, with certain groups of customers and fans and the statement of identity a relationship transmits may also be strong forces driving commitment. At one level, there seems to be a social basis to this often manifest in congruent values evident in the importance sponsors and clubs attribute to, for example, striving to help the local community. At another level, affective commitment appears to be driven by a more overtly commercial agenda. In statements made by Southampton FC and Friends Provident, and Sunderland FC and Reg Vardy plc, identity and affiliation are driven by a shared commercial vision. This implies that organisations operating to a commercial agenda are more likely to commit to exchange relationships with partners who make similar commitments, and with whom there will be an understanding that shared benefits are the foundation upon which the relationship is built.

The sense that most parties to shirt sponsorship deals are prepared to work at a relationship to make it a success prevails across the announcements surveyed. Whilst this may betray the fatalistic tendencies of those involved, it also suggests some clubs and sponsors enter into a relationship with a partner determined to ensure it is of mutual benefit. Commitment in the shirt sponsorship dyad may thus have normative elements whereby parties, having engaged, perceive an obligation to ensure the relationship is a success. This could be bound up in the norms of a contractual agreement although it may equally reflect the conventions normally encompassed within the parameters of sponsorship relations. As such, it may represent little more than a transitory phenomenon in the sense that one is expected to behave in a particular way in order to fulfil one's contractual obligations.

The uni-directional nature of the statements examined (that is, sponsors commit but clubs do not seem to think they do) rather implies that normative commitment is only in the domain of the sponsor. If this is the case, it may therefore be perverse to suggest clubs will also commit normatively simply because that is what they are expected to. This may be the result of a perception that the balance of power favours the football club rather than the sponsor. Given the

popularity of football, it could be argued many clubs have access to a range of prospective shirt sponsors and can therefore afford to be selective, dictating terms to suit them rather than the sponsoring organisation. Whilst both parties will commit to the relationship in some way, the perception may be that it is for the shirt sponsor to commit rather more than the club. Sponsors could therefore be at the behest of clubs and may only use the established language and semantics of a relationship because of expectations.

Just as the nature of commitment is open to interpretation at this stage, then so too are the potential determinants of it. That a contract will explicitly define the parameters, terms and conditions of a sponsorship exchange is indisputable. This will precisely identify what each party will bring to the relationship, it will highlight the allocation of responsibility and the benefits accruing from the deal between club and sponsor, it will detail the sanctions to be used in the event of termination and it will prescribe the period for which the parties agree to collaborate. But the contract effectively represents little more than one point in time. Parties will begin to commit to a relationship pre- and post-contract signing. The key questions therefore become what factors determine commitment prior to a legal agreement and, once a contract has been signed, how does commitment develop beyond it? Prior to contract signing, there are likely to be a range of issues for dyad members to consider, many of which might traditionally be thought of as screening and selection influences. Post-contract, the process of managing a sponsorship deal becomes more important, particularly in terms of how the relationship enacts the content of a contract. The extent to which partners will be prepared to work outside the scope of written terms in order to ensure the maintenance of a partnership would also appear to be important.

This implies a range of determinants may therefore have an impact upon the commitment both parties to the exchange dyad display. Commitment may be the result of a normative process through which a partner is approached, a contract is agreed, a relationship is managed and then it is dissolved. An initial statement of commitment, such as those evident in the announcements, may therefore signal the intentions of a party to fulfil their obligations to an exchange partner. An ongoing commitment to the partner may nevertheless reflect a much broader sense of normative behavior. One reason why sponsor and sponsee work together might be a belief that both share norms of behavior. In such cases, there would be a greater chance the partners could work more consensually than with others resulting in a more stable relationship, possibly underpinned by conflict resolution techniques or an openness which reflects their commonalities.

The instrumental decision to engage in a relationship with a sponsor or sponsee implies an evaluation has been made of the various alternative partners that might be available. Disregarding the option of there simply being no available alternatives, this suggests sponsorship commitment is therefore the result of a cost-benefit decision. In the case of football shirt sponsorship dyads, in spite of proliferating values, shirt sponsors in particular seem clear about their reasons for wanting to engage in a sponsorship deal, relationship benefits such as image transfer and brand association being particularly notable. For clubs too, the benefits realisable from shirt sponsorship deals can be equally as significant. Although the contention of this study is that revenue alone is not the sole underpinning for effective sponsorship relations, income generated through sponsorship is nevertheless very important to many football clubs. Commitment on their part also therefore occurs as a result of the likely benefits of their relationship with a sponsor.

To an extent, a desire to secure the benefits of a sponsorship deal represents a view shared both by a sponsor and a sponsee. But the notion of sharing as a determinant of commitment is a rather more complex one than this. Some clubs in professing their commitment routinely state they share values, in respect to their commercial operations, to their relationships with markets and communities, and to self perception's of their brands. The extent to which a club and sponsor share values may therefore reflect the degree to which their commercial goals and objectives converge. At the same time, sharing may be bound up in the culture and philosophy of the respective partners. If both 'do business' in the same way, it may reinforce the messages they are trying to transmit through the sponsorship arrangement. For example, in seeking to reinforce image, it becomes vital to associate with a sponsorship partner who encapsulates the same values one is also trying to perpetuate. Elements of identification, similarity and congruence may be linked to this and sponsorship partners may seek to reinforce self perceptions through an association with a particular club or sponsor. Organisational characteristics rather than shared values may be a more appropriate term for a determinant in this case.

A notable characteristic of many of the sponsorship announcements reviewed was the use of positive descriptions of chosen sponsorship partners. Phrases such as "a dynamic and creative company", "they are renowned" and "their track record of success" are commonplace. This indicates exchanges are conceivably founded upon the perceived role performance of an exchange partner. The greater the likelihood one organisation perceives another of being able to deliver a stream of benefits, based upon reputation or performance, the stronger the possibility they will commit to a relationship with them. Again, this is rather presumptuous because, without

further analysis, it may actually be the case that positive reflections upon a relationship partner are actually no more a behavioral norm for parties to a newly forged relationship.

A final potential determinant implicit within each one of the announcements reviewed, but yet to be mentioned elsewhere in this study, is that shirt sponsorship contracts are, in a narrow sense, exclusive. Under English Football Association regulations, short, sock and multiple shirt sponsorship deals are not currently allowed. For a sponsor concerned about communications clutter or ambushing, this may be an especially powerful appeal of shirt sponsorships which impacts upon their commitment to a club. The opposite may nevertheless be true: if a sponsor is granted exclusive rights, a counter argument might be that they need commit little to a deal in order to make it work.

At this stage of the study, it is difficult to make any definitive observations about commitment or its determinants other than to say that commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad clearly exists if for no other reason than parties to such relationships say that it does. But it is clear in statements made by clubs and sponsors that their relationships are more complex, socially based entities than is normally acknowledged. This means a decision to commit to relations with a sponsorship partner is not based upon a simple transaction cost decision. Rather, there are likely to be a number of determinants underpinning the commitments that club and sponsor make towards each other. As such, the initial review of sponsorship announcements has served to confirm the hunches upon which this study is founded.

One feature of the announcements is that the failure to precisely identify that nature of commitment rather supports the adoption of an aggregated construct of commitment. Whilst being a rather naïve statement at this stage, the widespread use of the word allied to its regular use, arguably demonstrates a rather singular interpretation of meaning or convention amongst those who employ the term. It may be an expectation, a routine or a norm to express commitment to a sponsorship partner, but there is little in the 174 documents to indicate what the true meaning of commitment is. This leaves some unanswered questions: what does commitment in the context of football shirt sponsorship dyads actually mean? Why do sponsors commit to a sponsorship deal, and do football clubs make similar commitments? On what basis does one party or both parties commit to their 'deal' with each other? In order to clarify some of the issues in respect of each of these questions, the second phase of this study is detailed below.

3.4 Phase 2-Semi-structured interviews

People inevitably share interpretations of the world although, from a realist perspective, the reality they construct is held to exist independent of the human thoughts and beliefs (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997). The way in which people perceive the world is therefore affected by forces of which they may or may not be aware. The role of the researcher thus involves understanding people's lives through the analysis of their narratives and stories (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). In one sense, realism is founded upon principles akin to the nomothetic philosophy, being concerned with the objective construction of reality, although it is also a bridge to interpretivism in the way it incorporates socially constructed reality. In the same way, realism straddles the inductive/deductive divide. For example, it displays features of induction in the ways it treats the collection and interpretation of qualitative data. It also incorporates elements of deductivism in seeking to establish causal relationships between variables drawn from this data. This is typical of grounded theoretical research strategies which combine the two approaches in building theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). Jankowicz (2002, p. 126) explained that grounded theory involves: "Collecting data, generalising findings into statements about the possible relationships involved, and checking out these statements by further data-collection to a point where you can categorise the types of results. At this point, your conceptual analysis results in a small theory."

Grounded theory therefore seeks to make predictions that can subsequently be tested using other techniques (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Using both longitudinal and cross-sectional methods, grounded research relies upon the use of qualitative data collection methods underpinned by the quantitative measures. The most common form of data collection is the interview, the content of which is normally analysed with a measure of coder agreement being determined in order to draw and verify conclusions (Dey, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994). But the approach has nevertheless been criticised for failing to explicitly acknowledge implicit theories which often guide work during the early stages of development (Bryman, 1988). More pointedly, Silverman (2000) suggested it can degenerate into the empty building of categories aimed at legitimising research. Mason (2002), noting the relevance of the strategy to the development of theory, nevertheless proposed guidance in this area, explaining it should be supported by other forms of research.

The techniques used during the first stage of research noted above were employed in order to clarify that commitment is an issue in relationships between sponsors and sponsees. Despite the

frequency with which the term is used, and the implied nature of its determinants. The documents that were examined revealed few precise details. As such, techniques were employed during the second stage of research aimed at more accurately identifying the relationships between commitment and its determinants. What became clear during the first research phase was that clubs and sponsors use a form of language which may be based upon established practice or convention, may fulfil the obligations associated with a sponsorship contract or may attribute specific meanings to the notion of commitment. Whilst there are similarities between this view of sponsorship and those found in the literature, the relatively short period over which contracts run indicates perceived notions of commitment in the sponsorship dyad are distinct from those observed elsewhere. This distinctiveness is an important aspect of commitment in sponsorship, which this study has specifically set out to examine, and may result from the customs and practices of encounters between those normally involved in building and maintaining sponsorship programmes. From a realist perspective, the telling of stories, recounting of tales and detailing of episodes would all therefore constitute a source of data which would enable the researcher to develop an understanding of a phenomena.

Incorporating techniques into the methodology that would allow this data to be captured and analysed was therefore of paramount importance. This posed the dual challenges of needing to maintain the richness of respondent accounts of their experiences whilst observing the causal relationships between determinants and commitment in a systematic way. In the light of the positivist approach adopted in Stage 3 of the research, this was particularly important because research undertaken at this stage was intended to be a precursor to the development and quantitative testing of hypothesised relationships between commitment and its determinants. This is an especially important feature of the study and addresses, in two ways, the concerns that empty categories are often developed following research undertaken from a realist perspective. Firstly, rather than being an end in itself, Stage 2 of the research is used as a basis for subsequent development of the study. Secondly, in adopting a realist approach during the formative stages of the study in conjunction with the existing commitment literature, the contention is that any categorisations of observations are based upon something more than the collection and interpretation of qualitative data.

To address these issues, the study employed CIT as the basis for generating observations about commitment and its determinants. This is an effective way of allowing respondents to recount their experiences of the world within a framework which enables both qualitative and quantitative

analyses to take place, the former through the development of categories and causal relationships, the latter through measures of inter-coder agreement. The CIT was developed by Flanagan (1954) and is often used by grounded theorists to gather data about phenomenon about which researchers have little knowledge (Ronan and Latham, 1974). Flanagan (1954, p. 327) stated: “[CIT] is a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems”. A critical incident is held to be a behavior that deviates positively or negatively from what is normally expected (Edvardsson, 1992). Through a series of semi-structured interviews where key informants¹⁰ recall critical incidents (Lockshin and McDougall, 1998), the researcher elicits detailed responses about the phenomenon under observation (Burns et. al., 2000). This forms the basis for subsequent researcher-led abstraction and inference (Bitner et.al., 1990) which, in turn, can be used as the basis for a quantitative research (O’Guinn and Faber, 1989). Anderson and Nilsson (1964) stated personal, one-to-one interviews are the preferred method for critical incident researchers because they enable details about the depth and richness of a situation to be collected. As such, Callan (1998) recommended careful preparation for interviews, whilst Flanagan (1954) offered the following interview guidelines: 1) indicate the authority on which the interview is being held; 2) make a statement about the purpose of the study; 3) inform the interviewee why they have been selected to comment; 4) highlight that the anonymity of the interviewee is assured; 5) the main question requires an answer to an incident; 6) the interviewee should do most of the talking; 6) the interviewer should ask follow-up questions.

The use of CIT is widespread in the area of business to customer marketing (for example, Bitner et. al., 1990; Bitner, 1995). However, Jackson et. al. (1986) questioned the techniques relevance for studies of inter-organisational relationships. Whereas most consumer based uses of CIT focus on outcome (for example, of a bad service experience), most inter-organisational relationships entail significant process elements. Lockshin and McDougall (1998) nevertheless identified that CIT can be effective in highlighting ‘core’ issues such as the nature of, source and response to particular behaviors. Moreover, they stated that CIT contributes to the development of classification schemes. Burns et. al. (2000) alternatively highlighted that CIT can be used in any marketing study where experiences have been encountered.

¹⁰ The use of key informants in research relating to inter-organisational relationships has been widely documented, including by Kumar et. al. (1993) who noted such individuals are not necessarily representative of their organizations. Rather, they are thought to be knowledgeable about specific issues and are willing to communicate about them.

It is commonly held that grounded theory approaches should adopt purposive sampling, where key cases are selected to enable the development of concepts and categories (Neuman, 2000). It is also held the analysis of CIT interview data should involve a process lasting only until the repetition of response categories becomes evident, with an additional case adding no new categories (Flanagan, 1954; Ronan and Latham, 1974). However, this research breaches both of these established conventions for a number of reasons. Respondent access problems noted earlier precluded widespread interviewing both within complete sponsorship dyads and across each of the English professional leagues. Moreover, given the incorporation of triangulating research methods into the study's methodology, the CIT interviews were not the principle focus for theory development. Rather, in combination with Phase 1 of the research, they were of an exploratory nature, intended to establish the key determinants of commitment in a practical context prior to subsequent quantitative data analysis.

Accordingly, the research employed a combination of random and convenience sampling. Using the guidelines suggested by Thomas (1995) and Useem (1995), network contacts and personal relationships were primarily used to gain access to football clubs. Previous research in the area of football shirt sponsorship, most notably that undertaken by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), indicated sponsors are more likely to be receptive to academic researcher's requests for interviews. However, given resource constraints, convenience sampling was employed, initially based upon the 'travel to work' area of the researcher's home. Following advice from practitioners involved at this stage, further contacts were established with other sponsors leading to random sampling being used to gain access to them.

A total of 16 face-to-face personal interviews (typically lasting between 90 and 120 minutes) were undertaken, consisting of 8 football clubs and 8 shirt sponsors¹¹. The overall composition of participants is shown in Appendix 2. The interviews were undertaken during the period from November 2002 to February 2003, and involved key informants identified through the Hollis Sponsorship Guide (2003), football club web sites, newspaper reports or following direct phone calls to relevant clubs and sponsors. Tremblay (1982) stated the role of key informants is important because they have experience and they learn to interpret behavior within an organisational context. The informants who agreed to participate typically occupied marketing and general commercial management roles in the case of the football clubs, and brand,

¹¹ The reader is asked to note that none of the 16 interviewees were engaged in a relationship together. As such, no analysis of complete dyads was undertaken at this stage.

sponsorship or marketing management roles in the case of the sponsors. Although shirt sponsorship deals are often negotiated between senior managers at board level, the day-to-day management of these contracts is the responsibility of the individuals who agreed to be interviewed at this stage. In one sense, this implies the strategic and operational management of shirt sponsorships are divorced from one another. However, key informants indicated they had been party to initial approaches and discussions, ranging from a person being 'cold called' by a sport sponsorship agent in one case through to others who had advised their boards about how to set up and manage a sponsorship.

A standard interview format was employed to generate the qualitative data which complied with Flanagan's (1954) guidelines noted above. As such, it incorporated the following elements: 1) details of the sponsorship contract; 2) an introductory statement explaining the nature and purpose of the research; 3) questions relating to the nature, content and timing of incidents that had led participants to commit to a sponsorship contract; 4) opportunities for participants to make general and specific comments about their sponsorship contracts; 5) a closing statement explaining subsequent analysis procedures. Following Ghauri and Gronhaug's (2002) recommendations, each interview was tape recorded with additional note taking by the interviewer being used in order to maintain concentration and focus, and to support data gathered from the tapes. To ensure participants were forthcoming in their views, the reasons for using a tape recorder (opportunities to re-listen and re-analyse; provision of an accurate and unbiased record; allows direct quotes to be used) were explained, and their permission to use it was sought (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994). Following the interviews, the content of each tape was transcribed which, accompanied by the supporting notes, was held to be an accurate record of the meetings (Mason, 2002). The use of computer-aided software to analyse the content of interviews was subsequently considered because of the advantages it brings to data analysis (Silverman, 2000). However, given the exploratory nature of the interview process allied to a relatively small sample size, the view that software often sacrifices depth in favour of breadth (Siedal, 1991) and a belief that such packages effectively do little more than 'word crunch' (Fisher, 1997), it was decided to analyse the interview content manually. This enabled the researcher to establish a greater appreciation for the nature and complexity of each of the cases analysed.

The collection and analysis of qualitative interview data produces results in a non-standard format that requires classification into categories (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994). These categories can be pre-determined categories and specified prior to an analysis of the data, which then form the basis

for a template analysis (King, 1998). However, when using a grounded theory approach, this does not take place as categories are expected to emerge from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This entails disaggregating data into units following the use of appropriate coding techniques and constant referral to established theoretical sources (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). The former can be achieved through the use of open, axial or selective coding procedures (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). Open coding uses terms drawn from the data, terms used by participants and existing terms found in the literature, whilst axial coding entails looking for relationships between categories of data. Selective coding involves a longitudinal process of major category and sub-category development (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998).

For the purposes of this study, a combination of open coding and axial coding techniques were employed. Open codes were primarily (and predominantly) used to identify the determinants of commitment discussed during each of the CIT interviews, whilst axial coding was used to highlight the nature of perceived relationships between each of the individual determinants and commitment. In the light of this strategy, the following procedure was employed in order to analyse the interview transcripts: 1) a briefing document was produced providing an overview both of the various theories of commitment and its determinants; 2) following the approach of Crabtree and Miller (1992), two transcripts were read and the codes within each compared. This led to a number of codes being formulated, most of which were derived from the literature. To ensure standardisation, minor differences in codes between these two interviews were reconciled through the formulation of a new single code; 3) the remaining transcripts were analysed using these codes, although further data emerging from the interviews was coded using the commitment literature and details derived from terms used in specific cases; 4) after the completion of the first three stages, a second coder was recruited and trained. The person was given the codes derived from the researcher's (first coder) initial analysis of the transcripts and asked to code them again. To facilitate this process, a guidance document, indicating the literature upon which the codes were based, was given to the coder. A summary of this is shown in Appendix 3; 5) once this had been completed, both coders met to compare their codings. A summary of results from this is shown in Appendix 4. The figures presented in the table indicate the number of times a coder identified each variable across the 16 interviews; 6) a simple measure of coder agreement was employed which showed 70.9% agreement in relation to the application of each code; 7) given the likelihood of chance agreements between coders which simple percentages imply (Jankowicz, 2002), it was decided to employ Cohen's Kappa as a more accurate measure of coder agreement.

The Kappa statistic proposed by Cohen (1960) is a measure often used to quantify the agreement between researchers involved in coding research interviews (Jankowicz, 2002). This focuses on the observed proportion of agreement and is calculated thus: $K = \frac{P_o - P_c}{1 - P_c}$ where P_o = perfect agreement between coders and P_c = expected agreement that results from chance. There are no clear rules governing the interpretation of the Kappa statistic, although Landis and Koch (1977) suggested a value of between 0 and 0.2 represents slight agreement between coders, with a value between 0.8 and 1 representing almost perfect agreement between coders. Despite widespread acceptance of this interpretation, Perrault and Leigh (1989) expressed reservations about the Kappa statistic, stating that coders are more likely to agree than disagree. Munoz and Bangdiwala (1997) concurred noting the arbitrary nature of the statistic, although they stressed it is a useful for guidance purposes. For this study, the Kappa score was 0.707 (70.7%), indicating there was substantial agreement between coders (Landis and Koch, 1977). On this basis, the outcome of the CIT interviews led to nine determinants of commitment being identified within the football club/shirt sponsor dyad. These are now examined in detail below.

3.4.1 The Contract-one of the foundations upon which this study is built is the willingness of club and sponsor to profess their commitment to one another. The nature of these statements has already been discussed in Section 3.3, but it would appear they are rather more significant than a brief overview might suggest. In a number of interviews, although particularly prevalent in the case of football clubs, use of the word 'commitment' effectively appeared to represent a euphemism for 'the contract'. Hence, when a statement is made about committing to a sponsorship, it is commonly held to be a situation whereby the sponsor makes a financial payment to a club in return for the legal rights to secure a package featuring placement of the company name on shirts and other club properties such as perimeter hoardings. This is reflected in the language used both by the clubs ("they have made a commitment to us of £600,000 lasting 2 years. For this, they get their name on our shirts and we give them a corporate box. They also get six boards in the ground and their logo on the front of the match day magazine") and the sponsors ("we have made a commitment worth in the region of £1 million for a one year deal. We could have negotiated more into the deal but that would have cost us more than we were prepared to pay").

In theory, the contract defines the legal parameters of the relationship between club and sponsor. The interviews nevertheless indicated that, in certain cases, it is actually the sum total of the relationship between the two parties. This means that in some dyads, unless the terms of a

relationship have been defined prior to the signing of a contract, it is unlikely that one or both of them will actually seek to engage in building their association beyond the legal parameters. In one case, the Marketing Manager for a sponsor expressed his extreme dissatisfaction with a football club by recounting the following story: "Our Chairman is a lifelong supporter of the club. All he has ever wanted is to be invited into the centre circle at half time to make a presentation of some sort. When we asked the club if this was possible, they flatly said no. When I asked them why, they said it wasn't part of the contract.....if I had known that's how things were going to be, I could have done something about it when we first started talking to them".

This is interesting in a number of respects: it demonstrates some parties to sponsorship contracts often conceptualise commitment in a very narrow way, limiting it almost exclusively to the terms of the contract. In turn, this often appears to be a rather secretive process bound up in the politics of negotiations between club and sponsor. It also implies a trade-off in commitment between what the sponsor is prepared to pay and what the sponsee is prepared to sell. That is, the greater the fee a sponsor pays, the more the club will be prepared to negotiate more into their contract. In one case, a sponsor stated: "We were offered all sorts. But we took the decision to pay for a package which we felt would help us to achieve our objectives."

For the purposes of a relational analysis of sponsorship, this is not especially promising because it would appear a transaction is solely at the heart of some shirt sponsorship programmes. For a sponsor, the basis for these transactions generally seems to be an assessment of the relative costs associated with securing the rights to specific properties owned by a club. For the clubs themselves, the perceived cost of allocating property rights to a sponsor effectively means not being able to sell those rights to another party in exchange for a better fee. Despite this somewhat limited view of shirt sponsorship relations, it is noticeable that clubs have no sense of sponsors actually being their customers. In one sense this reinforces the view that most sponsorship deals are in fact inter-organisational relationships, rather than being more customer-based relationships. However, it also suggests a degree of monopoly power on the part of the clubs who can view their commitment as being defined by a contract. That is, clubs are the owners of unique properties which are appealing to a multitude of sponsors. This means they need not work outside the terms of the contract, devoting valuable resources in the process, because other, possibly 'better', sponsors are readily available. The use of contracts is equally a reflection of shirt sponsors need to defend against ambushing and to ensure there is clarity in their relationship with the club (although the naivety of some sponsors that were interviewed belies the view they pay

attention to detail in striving to secure value for money). In the case of one sponsor and one club, it was nevertheless stated that getting the contract right is imperative in making a commitment to a sponsorship deal, often because one party feels they can not trust the other. Although located in separate dyads, it was revealed that: “They [the sponsor] haven’t paid this year. That’s 50% of the total from the deal. We are looking at what action we can take” and “The [sponsoring] company has a bit of a reputation for doing short-term deals. We wanted to tie them down”.

From a relational perspective, the condemnation of contracts as exclusively being the result of a transactional focus in sponsorship relationships is somewhat harsh. During the time prior to signing a contract, interviewees revealed there is a process of communication through which both parties negotiate a mutually beneficial package. Moreover, a majority of the interviewees explained commitment is not manifest simply through the terms of a contract. The perceived importance of, for example, sharing values with a partner (for example, “we both have a strong presence in the local community” was a sentiment commonly echoed by many interviewees) is seen as being equally as important as contract terms in many cases. The contract thus seems to be an embodiment of other aspects of commitment both in defining what a relationship is likely to entail and in terms of providing a foundation upon which parties may seek to develop their relationship.

Jap and Ganesan (2000) believed explicit contracts between parties engaged in an exchange relationship are central in determining the commitment of the parties to one another. In particular, they identified the role contracts play in regulating the management of situations in the future which may require initial clarification through a written document. Contracts are therefore likely to prescribe the procedures needed to address the issues and challenges of managing an inter-organisational relationship. In doing this, contracts define the roles and responsibilities of each party, providing mechanisms that will mitigate against factors such as defection or, in the case of a sponsorship contract, a unilateral attempt to change the terms of a deal.

Williamson (1983; 1985) stated that contracts are essential in establishing the parameters of a relationship because they regulate the performance of firms engaged in an exchange relationship. Moreover, they time constrain the period within which there is an expectation that partners need to fulfil particular roles and responsibilities, providing information about a point at which commitment can, if required, cease. Despite the often restrictive and prescribed nature of contractual relationships, Telser (1980) and Klein and Leffler (1981) nevertheless believed their

self-enforcing nature is a demonstration that parties are prepared to commit to working within a relationship for a specified period of time. Anderson and Weitz (1992) consequently observed that a party's intention to sign a contractual agreement is a tangible signal of preparedness to commit.

Lusch and Brown (1996) and Jap and Ganesan (2000) both identified that commitment is a function of contracting behavior. They held that contracts reduce uncertainty in the way they enshrine explicit statements about rights, responsibilities and obligations. Contracts also provide a horizon within which decisions and actions take place enabling both relationship partners to plan with greater certainty. This is thought to be particularly important because it explicitly highlights the sanctions that will result in cases where a partner violates the terms of the relationship, thus potentially undermining the commitment of another. Jap and Ganesan (2000) therefore stressed the importance of the safeguard mechanisms that contracts help to put in place.

Ring and Van de Ven (1994), Weitz and Jap (1995), and Lusch and Brown (1996) variously stated a contract involves the codification of informal understandings and commitments made during the initial or formative stages of a relationship. Hence, statements made, and actions taken, in the process of approaching and establishing a relationship with a sponsorship partner subsequently become embodied within a written agreement which formalises the content of exchanges taking place prior to an agreement. The existence of a formal written agreement is also thought to be important in the short-term (MacAuley, 1963; Lusch and Brown, 1996). When relationship partners view their relationships as short-term which, in the case of football shirt sponsorship programmes, they appear to be, it is likely each member will try to realise the maximum benefits achievable from a contract. Rylander et. al. (1997) consequently identified the regulating function explicit contracts perform. These formally state how contracted partners should behave over a period of time (Rousseau, 1995). This contrasts with normative contracts which define the patterns of behavior expected in longer-term relationships. The signing of a normatively-based contract is a manifestation therefore of both parties intention to orient towards a long-term relationship. These are likely to be more complex documents and may supplement or supplant an explicit contract. In the case of the football shirt sponsorship dyad, figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) indicated an intention to remain with a partner into the long-term is not a notable characteristic of contractual relationships. As one interviewee (a sponsor) actually stated: "Because of the popularity of football at the moment, most sponsorships are never going to last so long."

This study therefore holds that relationships between club and shirt sponsor are governed by an explicit, written and formal contract. Although evidence to support this view has not been collected from across each of the 92 football dyads, participants in the critical incident interview process stated that, without exception, this is likely to be the case. Written contracts are thus assumed to be a foundation upon which football shirt sponsorship agreements are based. The documents are held to be the formal codification of agreements made during the approach, negotiation and agreement of a deal between club and sponsor. Evidence from the critical incident interviews suggests that a majority of parties to shirt sponsorship agreements consider a contract to be the extent of their commitment. That is, whilst they are prepared to fulfil their obligations as defined by the terms of a written document, they are not prepared to go beyond this. Drawing from Macauley (1963) and Lusch and Brown (1996), this implies a short-term relationship orientation. There was some evidence from the critical incident interviews to suggest partners are prepared to work beyond contractual terms if it enables a relationship to be a success. At one level, this could form the basis for a more normative approach to contractual relations. However, there was no firm evidence of this and it is therefore assumed such actions are a demonstration of commitment, represented as an attempt by those involved to maximise the benefits of a time constrained relationship. In this context, Questions 1 to 3 appearing in 'The Contract' section of the survey instrument employed by this study are drawn directly from the scale employed by Jap and Ganesan (2000). A further item (Question 4) was added to identify whether or not clubs and sponsors work beyond a contract to deliver relationship success. In summary, it is therefore assumed commitment is in part the function of a written contract. The following relationship between the two variables is thus hypothesised:

Hypothesis 1: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between the existence of a formal, written contract and relationship commitment.

3.4.2 Communication-all shirt sponsorship programmes appear to have four distinct phases: the initial contact with a prospective partner, contract negotiations, relationship management and relationship dissolution/renewal. One characteristic identified as being important across these stages is that of communication. Although not all interviewees highlighted it as being fundamental to their relationship, the process of interaction widely appears to be the foundation upon which sponsorships relations are built. During the formative stages of a relationship, interaction with a prospective partner is seen as being especially important, particularly in cases where commitment is subsequently restricted by the nature of a contractual agreement. In the case

of sponsors, communication with a club may determine whether they commit to a club under any terms, contractual or otherwise. It also appears to shape the way in which the sponsor approaches a subsequent relationship. According to one business: "...they were very good. We went along to the stadium for a presentation. What they said convinced us this was going to be a good deal for us. They were very open about who they were and where they are going".

Interviewees from each of the football clubs also identified the importance of communication during the early stages of their relationship with a prospective sponsor. One of the reasons for this appears to be that clubs need to be certain a shirt sponsor will be in place prior to the start of a new season. This is important because replica shirt sales are thought likely to suffer if a new sponsor has not been found and it presents a problem for clubs in predicting cash flows if they are unclear about how a sponsorship deal will work. A further point is that club and sponsor are increasingly putting performance standards in place whereby the higher a club finishes in a league, the more the sponsor pays. The willingness on the part of a sponsor to talk about this (given its importance as a source of revenue and a motivational tool) was identified by one club as being very important. Another club spoke more generally, stating that: "We got on well from the first time we met. They were aware of our position and were happy to tell us what they wanted from us and from the relationship".

Having made their initial approaches and decided that a relationship with another party is desirable, club and sponsor then engage in determining the details of the contract. As has already been mentioned, the contract in itself may be a determinant of commitment but the nature of the contract may equally be a reflection of the communications that take place between the two parties. That is not to say communication is an indirect determinant of commitment, it is fundamental to the process of setting up and managing a deal. Rather, the nature of communications between club and sponsor will be important in establishing the nature of the contract and the consequent relationship between sponsor and sponsee. In the light of the following quote from one sponsor, establishing communication at this stage is vital if the relationship is to be maintained: "We didn't really talk too much. They approached us and the deal was done quickly. I have to say, we'd do it differently next time....if you're asking me 'will we renew?', we're going to have to talk to them in more detail at the end of the season because there are things we didn't know then that we know now....things haven't really worked out as we had hoped and I don't think we'll continue with them".

Communication during the relationship management phase is interesting in the sense of it being the product of communications that have taken place prior to and during contract negotiations. But it is also a phenomenon that develops as the relationship between club and sponsor evolves. Those interviewees professing themselves happy with, and committed to, their sponsorship partners were those who appeared to continue developing their communications post-contractual agreement. Instead of keeping their relationship at arms length, this had resulted in a range of measures being implemented by club and sponsor in order to maintain regular and open communication. In terms of practical measures, this typically involved regular telephone calls, formal and informal meetings and performance reviews. It also embraced relationship features such as honesty, openness and reciprocity. An interviewee from a football club stressed: "If we have a problem with them, if they haven't done something we wanted them to, then we give them a call and tell them, not nastily or anything, but they need to know so it doesn't happen again. The same goes for us. There was one case where they thought their corporates [hospitality customers] didn't get good service. We listened and did something about it. I'd rather have known because I value our relationship with them [the sponsor]". Such is the apparent importance of communication, that it also plays a major role in contract renewal decisions. One sponsor stated: "They just refuse to talk to us....as far as I am concerned, that's it. Once the term of the deal is up, we're out".

In this context, whilst one instance of poor communication may not necessarily lead to the dissolution of a relationship, the cumulative effect of a failure to engage in ongoing, open and meaningful communications may undermine the commitment of one or both parties to a sponsorship programme. Interestingly, in one case, both the sponsor and the sponsee apparently perceived the need to meet to discuss the termination of their relationship. Such was the quality of their relationship and their commitment to it that a club official admitted: "The club is in dire financial straits....they [the existing sponsor] made us an offer but we were hoping for better. We told them and they have agreed to let the offer stand....in the meantime, we are looking for another sponsor....the [existing] sponsor has asked us to keep in touch with them, but they are there if we need them".

Communication therefore appears to incorporate a number of features: it normally takes the form of verbal communication via face-to-face contact or telephone calls. It influences commitment depending upon the intent of the communicating party, the openness with which a party communicates and the way in which it enables the relationship to develop. As such,

communication appears to be a function of the perceptions one party has of another party's willingness to engage in and exchange meaningful communications, of one party's own willingness to engage in and exchange meaningful communications and of the joint or collaborative effort both are prepared to expend in order to make the relationship a success. The latter may involve developing channels through which communication can take place, interactions aimed at problem solving, or regular meetings and discussions regarding the joint marketing efforts of the club and its sponsor. In this context, despite claims in the academic literature that sponsorship may take other forms, it is still widely held to be a form of marketing communication. In one instance, a sponsorship manager indicated that: "We sponsored them [the club] because our target demographics, I think, are the same....we are looking to develop our brand in this market and they [the club] were a natural link to our customers....we meet on a regular basis, normally once a week, to discuss the best ways to take things forwards".

Communication is commonly accepted as being fundamental to the strength and success of all relationships (Thompson, 1963; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), including those between businesses (Beamish and Killing, 1997; Contractor and Lorange, 1988). As a result, communication is held to be one of the building blocks upon which commitment develops between business organisations (Anderson et. al., 1987). Communication was identified by Anderson and Narus (1990, p.44) as being: "The formal as well as informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between firms". This is a widely accepted definition utilised in studies of commitment by, for example, Zineldin and Jonsson (2000). Communication is seen as being crucial to business relationships for a number of reasons. Mohr and Nevin (1990) described it as the glue that sticks relationships together, whilst Mohr and Spekman (1996) asserted it is an essential ingredient in relationship vitality. Etgar (1979), Anderson and Narus (1990) and Moorman et. al. (1993) indicated communication is the mechanism through which expectations and perceptions are aligned. Anderson and Weitz (1989) therefore highlighted communication as being a coordinating mechanism in dyadic relationships. Mohr and Spekman (1996) went on to highlight three facets of communication that are especially important in fostering commitment. Firstly, it is important in helping partners to set goals and undertake joint marketing planning. Secondly, it results in openness and a willingness to disclose information. Thirdly, it leads to the sharing of high quality information that is of benefit to both parties. It is also important in the way it helps to foster mutuality and understanding (Anderson et. al., 1987), particularly in cases where disagreements occur. As Dwyer et. al. (1987) noted, communication enables the satisfactory resolution of potentially dysfunctional conflict.

In a range of studies, communication is identified as being closely related to trust which, in turn, determines relationship commitment. In one case, communication is held to be a function of trust (Smith and Barclay, 1995), although trust is also identified as a mediating variable between communication and commitment in other cases (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Moore, 1998). Communication has nevertheless been found to have a direct relationship with commitment (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000; de Ruyter et. al., 2001). There is no evidence from the critical incident interviews to suggest that communication is a result of the trust that develops between club and sponsor nor that commitment is the final outcome of this relationship. A cursory review of critical incident interview content suggests trust may fulfil a mediating role between communication and commitment. In some respects this is inevitable because communication may be the mechanism through which one party demonstrates their commitment to a relationship indicating that the other party can trust them and therefore commit to a relationship. However, initial coding and inter-coder agreement indicates perceptions of a partner's intentions are actually accounted for by a separate determinant. Moreover, interviewees made no direct or explicit reference to the relationships between communication, trust and commitment. It is consequently assumed trust does not have a mediating role and that communication is a direct determinant of commitment in the club/sponsor dyad. This is held to be consistent with the overall findings from the critical incident interviews and is consistent with existing studies of commitment undertaken in marketing.

In this context, the study therefore accepts Anderson and Narus' (1990) view of the communication/commitment being based upon an exchange of formal, informal, meaningful and timely information. Following Anderson and Weitz (1992), the study also holds that inter-organisational relationship partners are motivated to commit to a relationship characterised by the sharing of information. As such, the communication scale (consisting of six items) employed by Anderson and Weitz (1992) is adopted by this study. Questions 1 to 5 employed here are identical to those used in the original study. However, one item "[they] are willing to let us see their weaknesses as well as their strengths" was removed. This is because, whilst clubs and sponsors appear willing to share information about their activities and customers, the critical incident interviews revealed little to suggest that either party routinely, freely or frankly discusses their successes and failures. Overall, it is hypothesised that the following relationship between communication and commitment exists:

Hypothesis 2: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between communication and relationship commitment.

3.4.3 Perceived benefits-the decision by any party to engage in, and commit to, a relationship with another party is inevitably the result of perceptions of benefit. The mere fact other alternatives have been shunned implies the partner selected is adjudged to be the most profitable or beneficial one at a specific point in time. One interviewee claimed: "Of course we're in it for the returns....there would be no point otherwise". That is not to say sacrifices are not made: for example, sponsors are paying proliferating fees in order to secure some shirt sponsorship contracts whilst clubs, in making space available on shirts and in their stadia to satisfy a sponsoring company, exclude other potential sponsors. Nevertheless, both are likely to expect returns in excess of the costs imposed by the sacrifices they make for the decision to commit to be warranted. In cases where sponsorship decisions are planned or relationships are forged via a solicited approach, it appears that parties are likely to be clear about the benefits they can achieve through an association. Respondents variously stated: "[The company] deliberately selected this club because there are certain aspects of their operations that are in synergy with ours" and "...a number of prospective sponsors approached us but we decided to go with [them] because we have a lot in common, starting with the kind of business objectives we are both working to". Even in instances where a sponsorship has been the result of an unsolicited approach or of reactive decision making, emergent perceptions of relationship benefits may be crucial in determining the extent to which commitment exists in the relationship dyad: "Yes, didn't really think about it at the time, but [we] have been able to make use of the deal in ways we didn't expect".

At one level, the perception of benefits by parties to a sponsorship relationship will represent the congruence of goals. At its most basic, this will mean the match of a club seeking a new sponsor and a sponsor seeking a shirt opportunity. The congruence may be rather more complex than this, depending upon the expectations of each party: goals may be different but display commonalities which place both parties in congruence. In the case of the sponsor, this may mean using a sponsorship deal to access specific markets or forge relationships with local communities. For clubs, developing marketing competence in conjunction with a commercial partner may be an alternative goal. In one case, an interviewee stated: "Our fans represent their target market....they have helped contribute to our revenue streams and to enhancing our image".

Implicit within this type of relationship is a sense, therefore, of mutuality. Clubs and sponsors engage directly, indirectly, formally, informally and with varying degrees commitment. in order to secure advantages that may be specific to them or that can be generalised across the relationship as a whole. Regardless of the extent of benefits, the implication in turn is that both parties will commit resources to the relationship. Once more, this may be a simple exchange of financial resources and legal rights. But allied to this, the provision of market data, specialist personnel, specific knowledge and dedicated investments into the relationships may be made. For example, football clubs routinely provide resources which enable sponsors to entertain corporate clients: “[We] get access to their facilities which is invaluable when entertaining clients”. In this respect, the notion of resources being allocated or devoted to a sponsorship relationship in football should therefore be viewed in the broadest possible terms.

From the critical incident interviews it also appears there are three distinct phases during which a perception of benefits may be forged. Depending upon whether a deal is planned or unplanned, likely benefits may therefore be perceived of as intended or emergent at the point when a relationship is forged or during the period of time covered by the sponsorship contract. There is also likely to be a perception amongst parties that benefits may endure beyond the length of a contract, in which case commitment becomes a function, not only of the contractually defined relationship, but of the longer-term beyond this. Hence, one interviewee noted: “People don’t forget....they still remember that you sponsored the club years ago and will carry on buying your products as a result”. There are a number of ways in which this might take place. In a critical incident interview with a sponsorship manager, the benefits of a brand association with a football club were identified as having a longer-term impact. A football club representative alternatively noted that staff had accumulated specialist knowledge following a relationship with a marketing-oriented sponsorship partner. Whilst the relationship had ended, the competence developed over the period of the relationship had continued to impact upon their operations.

The perception that a relationship will lead to the delivery of benefits is therefore an important determinant of the commitment respective dyad members make to a relationship. This will be a function of the benefits which may be realised across an extended time horizon. Given the period over which benefits may accrue, this could be labelled as a strategic as well as a tactical phenomenon. Following the critical incident interviews, participants identified benefits at both the tactical and strategic levels. However, the two were often linked together by interviewees and bound up in the specific intent of both parties when they had first engaged in a relationship

together. Given the additional constraint of statistical convention (particularly the item to case ratio), it was decided in this context to subsume strategic intent (coded as SI in the critical incident interviews) and strategic benefit (coded as SB in the critical incident interviews) into the overall determinant heading 'perceived benefits'. Hence, an assumption is made that question items contained in this section of the questionnaire are a reflection of both the short and long-term nature of any benefits perceived by the relationship parties.

Webster (1991) identified the principle motive when engaging in an inter-organisational relationship is to add value to a customer's experience. In the context of Christopher et. al.'s (1991) six market model of relationship marketing, the notion of a customer is a broad one embracing internal, referral, supplier, recruitment, influence and end user/customer markets. Hence, sponsorship value could, for example, be added in terms of employee motivation (the internal market) or raising media profile (the influence market). As Morgan and Hunt (1994) observed, the decision to engage in a relationship with a partner implies they are valued above all others and will deliver superior benefits to the available alternatives. This forms the consequent basis for developing and maintaining the relationship and, as such, suggests there will be an instrumental component to commitment within the dyad. Indeed, this congruency of interests between two sponsorship parties may be transitory leading one party to terminate a relationship at a point when the benefits delivered no longer exceed those available elsewhere.

As Hamel (1991) noted, engaging with a partner may be necessary in order to secure resources that are not available elsewhere. In relation to sponsorship dyads, this may indicate, for example, that a sponsor is not able to secure an appropriate transfer of values from other partners. For clubs, it might, for instance, be the case that no other organization is prepared to sponsor them. Whether or not this is an acceptable basis upon which to build a relationship is a moot point, but Beamish and Banks (1987) explained that organizations must value each other's resources if the relationship is to be successful. Hamel et. al. (1989) extended this by stressing the importance of allocating unique resources in order to strengthen business relationships. When the resources contributed by each party to a relationship are scarce and they fulfill a specific need, Emerson (1981) stated that commitment to a relationship is likely to be stronger.

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Sarkar et. al. (1997), commitment is therefore manifest in perceptions shared by relationship partners that their association is likely to be a beneficial one. This is likely to represent the congruence of goals, such as the need to secure a

revenue stream for a football club and the need to communicate with a market for a sponsor. But the nature and extent of the resources contributed by each is far more complex than is normally acknowledged and may include the allocation of labour, knowledge and entrepreneurial resources to a sponsorship programme. In devoting these resources, both club and sponsor will have an expectation of return or profitability. At one level, this is likely to be measured in direct financial terms like 'profit' or turnover. At another level, profitability may be a more indirect benefit achieved via, for example, the transfer of knowledge or market data, the development of strategic competence or the increased financial value of a brand. Benefits may thus accrue in the short-term, the period of time covered by a written contract and in the longer-term, despite a relationship having been terminated.

Acknowledging the contribution of Sarkar et. al. (1997) which embraced notions that a relationship is beneficial for reasons of goal congruence and resource availability, this study adopts the benefits scale employed by them. This consists of three items which correspond to the first three questions presented in the questionnaire used by this study. Questions 4 and 5 were added to the scale specifically to differentiate between the benefits attributable to a committed relationship in the period of time covered by a sponsorship contract and the benefits that may emerge on a longer-term basis, even though a formal, contractual relationship may have ended. A further point to note is the use of the term 'perceived benefits'. This was included for two reasons: firstly, given evidence that evaluation techniques are poor (Thwaites, 1995; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2002), benefits emerging from a sponsorship programme may be perceived rather than real. Secondly, because of the static nature of this study (respondents are surveyed at a specific point in time, and clubs and sponsors are therefore at various stages of their relationships), parties involved in each dyad will consequently be at different stages in understanding the likely benefits their relationship has brought/will bring. In the context of the above commentary, it is consequently hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of a relationship and relationship commitment.

3.4.4 Location-it is not an aim of this study to consider, statistically or otherwise, the correlation between the location of a football club and the location of a sponsor. Nevertheless, a cursory glance at names and contact details of the 90 shirt sponsors surveyed during this study indicates an apparently strong relationship between their location and that of the football club they sponsor. This is most obvious in the lower leagues where clubs routinely appear to be sponsored by local

organisations (for example: Preston North End and New Reg in the 1st Division; Plymouth Argyll and Ginsters in the 2nd Division; York and York and County Press in the 3rd Division). Even in the PL, the geographic proximity of many clubs and sponsors is noticeable (for example: Aston Villa and MG Rover Group; Southampton and Friends Provident).

Taken at face value, the geographic link between sponsor and sponsee is an inevitable one. As they both operate in the same area, they are both simultaneously associated with the same stakeholders. For instance, employees of a sponsoring business may also be customers of that business and supporters of the local football team. Where football retains strong popularity in a particular area and an organisation is one of the largest employers, this reinforces the link. In both cases, the benefits of the relationship for the team and sponsor are apparent. Such might be the closeness of the two parties there may already be an existing relationship between them. This could take the form of an inter-organisational relationship such as a supplier contract, an organisational link such as the same or related directors, or a customer/fan relationship where executives from the sponsor are loyal supporters of the local football club.

Following an analysis of the critical incident interview data, many of these observations hold true. The commonest geographic feature linking organisations appears to be through their mutual commitment to the local community. This acknowledges the role that football clubs and local employers play in some communities but also unites the two in terms of their self-images and shared values. Two unrelated quotes from a sponsor and a club illustrate this: "We have been based in this town for the best part of one hundred years and, like us, the club play an important role in the local community" and "They are a company with strong family values, as are we....the people in this area are important to both of us". Such statements often betray a sense of paternalism on the part of one or both parties. For example, shirt sponsors may perceive they have responsibilities to a club or a local community. In one case, a sponsor stated: "The company wanted to give something back to the local community. Given the club's financial problems, we felt this was the best way of doing it". In another case, a club suggested that its relationship with a sponsor had enabled it to: "Work together with kids in the poorer areas of town".

Nevertheless, the relationship between club and sponsor does not singularly fulfil a social role. Indeed, the relationship between the two can sometimes be a predominantly commercial one. Amongst clubs in the lower leagues, geographic proximity may embrace marketing objectives but can also impact upon, for example, the motivation and morale of the local workforce. In cases

where sponsors are national or international companies with no prior or apparent link with a club, the relationship with a club is more often motivated by marketing or commercial considerations. In the same way, some clubs may seek to engage with businesses that provide them with the opportunity to promote their name further afield than a small geographic area. Being associated with a national or international brand may also provide access to new markets or categories of supporter, or enable image transfer to take place. But even in such cases, there may be some practical considerations that force sponsors and clubs into working with geographically closer partners than others. One interviewee suggested they chose to work with a partner who was: “...just down the road. It’s far easier to work with someone close to where you do your business. Bringing in people, sorting out arrangements, that sort of thing, is just so much easier if you are close together.”

The consensus amongst interviewees therefore seemed to be that locality is an important determinant of their commitment to a sponsorship partner. For most, the link appears to be based upon an historic, existing or close geographic relationship. This is manifest in the statements of shared values that clubs and sponsors make and in their shared intentions. But commitment to a partner from a specific location can also be a reflection of the relative importance a party attributes to a geographical area. The strategic relevance of a particular market or target group may lead club and sponsor to commit to a party that best enables them to pursue commercial objectives. In a small number of cases, location of the partner may not be an issue for either the club or the sponsor. This is classically illustrated by the case of Manchester United and Vodafone, although this is probably an exception rather than a rule, especially outside the PL.

Following a review of the literature, it is clear that no studies currently exist to indicate there is a direct link between commitment and location. In a majority of the critical incident interviews undertaken, there nevertheless appeared to be a link between the locations of club and sponsor. The nature of the perceived link emphasises that features of relational exchange, such as mutuality and interaction, are an important part of the decision to associate with a partner located in a specific area. In turn, this is often linked to a sense of sharing values, identities or a market place. This suggests the literature relating to the congruence of values (see Section 3.4.9) or relationship benefits (see Section 3.4.3) may be indirectly relevant to the relationship between location and commitment. However, such an association is spurious at this stage.

The relationship between geographic location and commitment is therefore a problematic one, although the former has attracted some interest amongst sponsorship researchers. In Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), the location of a sponsorship partner was identified as a consideration enshrined within the objectives of a football shirt sponsorship programme. In studies of sponsorship and dependence, Westerbeek and Shilbury (1999) and Westerbeek (2000) have tried to operationalise 'location'. This has led to a conceptualisation where geographically related sponsorships are deemed to be those where the head quarters of a sponsor are located within a ten kilometre radius of the sponsee. This is overly prescriptive and simplistically quantifies a relationship which will be more complex, embracing qualitative elements. As a conceptualisation for English football sponsorships, it is also irrelevant because locality is more regionally based. For example, Carlisle United is Cumbria's only football team and attracts fans from a wide geographic area. A sponsor need not be based within the 10 kilometre radius therefore if it is to appeal to customers as a local organisation. Contrast this, say, with Merseyside where three football teams are in close proximity to one another. In this case, the decision to associate with a particular sponsorship partner can not singularly be accounted for by factors of geographic location.

Distribution and place are important features of the marketing literature and the selection of appropriate channels is identified as being driven by considerations of cost minimisation and revenue maximisation (Peter and Donnelly, 1995). This may reflect the notion of position enhancement which is thought to drive the location aspects of some sponsorship decisions. According to Irwin and Sutton (1994), this can deliver benefits including increased sales turnover and enhanced profit. For the purposes of this study, this also appears unsatisfactory, for two reasons. Firstly, the community-oriented dimensions of sponsorship deals means that direct financial benefits may not be so important. Secondly, although 'chairman's whim' is now less prevalent in English football sponsorship programmes, it is clear that sponsorship partners in English football may be motivated by objectives other than profit, costs and sales. This is confirmed by reference to objective setting practices identified by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites, (2002).

An alternative view is that the commitment of a sponsor or sponsee within a relationship dyad is the function of an identification process similar to that identified by Pritchard et. al. (1999). This leads to an association between two parties based upon combinations of product involvement and position involvement (Freedman, 1964). In the former case, commercial values are made salient

through the decision taken by a party to collaborate with another. The latter involves a particular stand being taken or brand choice being made in order to publicly transmit values and self images. This embraces the notion of exchange partners being keen to portray a particular self-image. In which case, associates are selected because of the way they in which they can help perpetuate this image (Salancik, 1977). Salancik stated that commitment is maximised in situations where the 'publicness' of an association is greatest. This results in the party concerned demonstrating a strong desire to remain consistent and resist changing the relationship. In some cases, there may be no utilitarian value to this (Assael, 1987), meaning relationships have a symbolic value or meaning. Indeed, Buchanan (1985) believed the highest form of commitment is driven by the need for social representation.

The decision to commit to a sponsorship partner may therefore be motivated by the congruence of commercial values between club and sponsor which is evident in the statement released by Reg Vardy plc and Sunderland Football Club (see Appendix 1), and is implicit in relationships such as that between Manchester United and Vodafone. However, whilst both imply that a transfer of commercial values is important the former is significant because it frames this within a regional context. Such a relationship may manifest itself in a number of ways, such as the provision of corporate hospitality facilities to 'local' clients and customers, which the critical incident interviews revealed to be important. But the projection of image and values may not be a solely commercial one. Rather, notions of there being a social basis to sponsorships, or paternalistic motivations on the part of an organisation, may also be important. Club and sponsor may wish to perpetuate the view of there being a close geographic bond between them (as in the case of Plymouth Argyle and Ginsters). In some cases, the owner of a sponsoring company was observed through the critical incident interviews to have been a lifelong supporter of a club, betraying the motivation for an involvement in the sponsorship. It is also the case that clubs often wish to be associated with organisations in a particular locality. This can be used to create bonds with the local community but can also help to foster a sense of glamour or mystery (as in the case of Sheffield United and Desun). But irrespective of the commercial, paternal or social messages a sponsorship programme can convey, the nature of football is such that a shirt sponsorship deal is a very public way of conveying the message and, as such, is likely to enhance relationship commitment between those involved.

Whether as the result of goal congruence, the mutuality of perceived benefits or the use of sponsorship properties as a medium through which self-images are portrayed, this suggests

dependence may tie club and sponsor together. From the perspective of location, this view has some resonance. For example, in seeking to raise profile or create identity, football shirt sponsorship programmes are an excellent way for both clubs and sponsors to publicly emphasise their credentials as, say, businesses, family-oriented organisations or local champions. This view is akin to that evident in the image transfer (Stipp and Sciavone, 1996) and brand association/brand values (Quester and Farrelly, 1998) literature in sponsorship. As such, it implies there is a level of interdependence between both club and sponsor in the way they seek to foster a particular identity. The view that interdependence is a determinant of commitment can already be found in the literature (Jacobs, 1974; Andaleeb, 1996; Goodman and Dion, 2001). This view holds that one party will be dependent upon another when the value and number of alternative parties is limited which creates a need that is heightened when the resources exchanged between the two parties are important to one or both of them (Thorelli, 1986; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

Sponsors in a specific geographic location are clearly more likely to be dependent, therefore, upon a local football club as there may be few other opportunities to commercially, paternally or socially relate to another such high profile property. Whilst clubs may be rather less dependent in this sense, as El-Ansary (1975) noted, finding suitable partners in a particular area can prove to be a problem, particularly when an organisation is seeking to identify potentially profitable associations. In sponsorship, such associations may simply form the basis for revenue generation but may also be used to strengthen relationships with business and with local communities. The way in which clubs and sponsors engage in order to acquire resources and/or create/perpetuate an identity also necessitates a degree of coordination between the two parties (Spekman and Sawhney, 1990). This too may be a determinant of commitment in the way it creates linkages between two organisations. Indeed, evidence gathered from the critical incident interviews indicates that coordination is a component in the relationship between club and sponsor. In the case of one relationship, a club stated that: "Relationships with certain parts of the community in this town are important to us [the club and the sponsor]....we spend a lot of time working together thinking about how to serve them the best way we can". Coordination may thus begin with prospective partners establishing the need for a relationship with organisations based in a particular locality. It could go on to embrace discussions about the resources they will exchange and how this will serve to create an identity for the relationship and those involved in it. At some stage, the nature of communications taking place between club and sponsor may also become an issue, facilitating the exchange of information resources between the two parties. Clearly this

process is one generally applicable to almost all sponsorship deals. However, what differentiates this form of coordination from other forms is the role that geographic location plays in driving the coordination effort. That is, if club and sponsor are physically proximate to each other, it enables both parties to coordinate more effectively.

This study therefore postulates that sponsorship commitment will be a function of locational factors. That is, the commitment one party to a relationship displays will be influenced by the importance of the other party's location. Location is nevertheless a rather difficult concept to conceptualise and operationalise. Despite general acceptance of its importance amongst the critical incident interviewees, location in the sponsorship literature has thus far received scant attention with the result that no scales currently exist to measure it. Moreover, data generated during the critical incident phases suggests that whilst location is important, it is not a uniform concept. Rather, some clubs and sponsors will commit based on location for commercial or business reasons, others will use shirt sponsorships as the basis for creating a regional identity or emphasising geographic loyalty, and another group will be influenced by a sense of geographic or location specific paternalism. The multi-dimensional nature of the location concept thus creates some problems: firstly, in accounting for its diverse nature; secondly, given the statistical constraints imposed by the small sample upon which this study is based. The scale employed by this study has thus been constructed within these parameters and attempts to reconcile a number of location influences.

Location is conceptualised as incorporating elements of identification, interdependence and coordination. In terms of identification, the study holds that commercial objectives will play an important role in the selection of a partner from a particular geographic location. This is likely to be bound up in decisions regarding, for example, the impact a sponsorship programme can have on image transfer. Whilst this is commonly identified as an influence on sponsor decision making, this study holds that clubs are also likely to select partners based upon influences such as brand association. The additional dimensions of identification are equally as important and, as such, it is implicit within the location concept that elements of symbolism, perpetuation of self-image and publicness exist. In other words, parties to a sponsorship dyad will commit to a relationship because football shirt sponsorships are high profile (publicness), demonstrate regional loyalties and affiliations (symbolism) and reflect paternalistic tendencies or personal interests (self-image). In these terms, the specific location of a football club and the way that sponsoring organisations relate to them indicates inter-dependence is also an influence.

Fundamentally, this will be based on a financial/legal rights exchange. However, the critical incident interviews demonstrate the link between sponsor and sponsee is more complex than this. The geographic inter-dependence of club and sponsor is linked to identification, implying an association will provide other resources such as those associated with, for example, image creation. In turn, this highlights coordination as being an additional component of the location concept. This may take the form of coordination for commercial purposes in a geographically important market or coordination intended to communicate local affiliation or to facilitate a public expression of paternalism. In this context, a new five item scale is proposed by this study, intended support the hypothesis that:

Hypothesis 4: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a relationship between the geographic location of a football club/shirt sponsor and relationship commitment

3.4.5 Timing-during one of the critical incident interviews, an interviewee pointedly admitted that: “An agency ‘cold-called’ us and within three weeks we had sealed a seven figure deal with the club....I think we [the sponsor] rushed things a little bit. If we had held out longer, the terms of the deal would have been better. As a result, I don’t think the arrangement has really worked out for us....we’re reviewing the contract at the moment, but I can’t honestly see us renewing”.

The nature of both the decision making processes within an organisation, and the point at which a sponsorship opportunity arises and is selected, therefore appear to be determinants of commitment in the sponsorship dyad. Following the critical incident interviews, these do not seem to be unrelated factors. The use of agents, in addition to unsolicited approaches from one prospective partner to another, often means sponsorship decisions have to be made within a relatively short time frame. In the case of agents, if there has been a problem identifying a potential partner, the use of high pressure tactics is sometimes evident. This often forces one of the parties into making quick decisions that are often ill thought through, with neither a strategic nor a tactical rationale underpinning the final decision to engage in a relationship with a partner. Even in cases where agents approach parties relatively early in the decision making process, it is apparent they are very persuasive in espousing the virtues of sponsorship contracts. In such cases, it is possible that sponsorship decisions are taken without due consideration of the benefits and issues associated with building and maintaining a partnership.

One of the other issues in relation to agents, but also a key issue in the context of unsolicited approaches from a prospective partner, is the point at which contact is made. In some cases, an

unsolicited approach may coincide with a decision to engage in a sponsorship programme. In which case, the goals of partners may be congruent creating an opportunity for them to work with one another. But this does not appear to be a common feature of football shirt sponsorship deals. In most cases parties are not aligned, either in strategic or tactical terms, and the decision to sign a contract may therefore be founded upon the most tenuous of linkages. At its most basic, this can mean, for example, a football club signing a deal with a shirt sponsor simply because they have been offered an attractive fee, not because there have been considered negotiations or because the need to associate with a specific type of sponsor has been discussed at length. As one football club representative stated during an interview: "He turned up, offered us six figures and we accepted". In this particular case, the club concerned were experiencing severe financial problems and admitted they were being short-termist and financially-oriented in their approach to partner selection. Although face-to-face access to the sponsor could not be secured, the club's view was that the company's decision to contract with them also lacked a strategic dimension and was more likely to have been based upon 'chairman's whim'. Given that a basic transaction seems to be at the heart of some deals, the alignment of other factors between the two parties is therefore of paramount importance in determining relationship commitment.

Therein lay a further issue: the speed with which a sponsorship decision is made may also have an impact upon relationship commitment. In cases where a sponsor or sponsee has been engaged in a lengthy process of planning their sponsorship activities, they are more likely to be clear about the benefits they are seeking from a deal, the type of partner they are looking and, in some cases, may be highly strategic in their view of sponsorship programmes as a result. In one case, an interviewee stated: "It took us a long time, but the company thought about things carefully.....we knew exactly what we were looking for....it took us a while, but I think we made the correct decision in the end". When the approach is planned, the screening and selection of prospective sponsors/sponsees thus reflects decisions that have been made regarding the goals of a sponsorship. In such cases, a party is likely to make a much stronger investment in the relationship, leading to a greater sense of commitment. Under alternative scenarios, where one of the partners is unclear or unsure about their involvement, or where they engage in post hoc reasoning in order to justify a sponsorship decision, their commitment to a deal will consequently suffer. Whilst this does not necessarily preclude a sponsor or sponsee renewing their contract in the future, thus tangibly demonstrating their commitment, it could mean the alignment between each partner, and the resulting benefits of their relationship, are never fully established.

From the interviews, it is clear that sponsorship programmes have temporal dimensions which have not, thus far, been explicitly considered by the literature. In the context of this study, this is significant because timing appears to be a crucial factor in determining commitment. The notion of there being temporal influences upon sponsorship programmes is nevertheless implicit within the existing literature. Screening, selection, management and termination issues have all been addressed, with each reflecting the planning and organisational processes through which many parties build and maintain their relationships. But there are problems with this, not least that most sponsorship studies have tended to focus on the sponsor rather than the sponsee. Another issue is that sponsorship decision making, whilst being a popular theme in the literature, has largely focused upon the allocation of responsibility and the personnel involved in making final decisions. To date, there has been no consideration of the time frame within which decision making takes place. Given the narrow sponsorship research agenda, which focuses purely on sponsors, a further point to make is that one gets no sense of the congruence evident between two parties when they engage in a relationship. Although the congruence between sponsor and sponsee can be understood by referring to the nature of the financial transaction between them, it is clear from the critical incident interviews that it is a more complex phenomenon, represented through the demonstration of commitment by each party.

The notion of a temporal dimension to sponsorship programmes is one that is implicit within the literature. For example, Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) identification of contract lengths essentially defines a period during which a club and a sponsor have made a commitment to each other in one form or another. Dwyer et. al. (1987) portrayed such a process as a life cycle consisting of awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment and dissolution stages. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and Jap and Ganesan (2000) similarly analysed relationships as a series of phases through which partnerships develop. All three have a certain resonance in the way they effectively define the screening and selection process through which parties to a sponsorship deal initially relate to each other, the process of managing the deal and the eventual termination of it.

During the early stages of a relationship when prospective partners are approached and identified, the potential obligations, burdens and benefits of engaging in a relationship are normally assessed (Brickman, 1987; Eidelson, 1980; Holmes, 1991). The availability of alternatives and the development of strategies for minimising risk are identified as being fundamental to this phase (Kent et. al., 1981; Berger and Bradac, 1982). The work of Scanzoni (1979) adds to this,

highlighting the importance for respective dyad partners of establishing partner attractiveness, the basis for communication, the development and exercise of power, norm development and expectation development.

The attractiveness of a prospective partner implies the ultimate selection of a party will convey particular rewards (Secord and Backman, 1974), which may include direct financial rewards and complementary rewards such as status and information (Lott and Lott, 1974; Lusch and Brown, 1982). Using this as a focus, parties then make an undertaking to engage in communication and bargaining through which a willingness to rearrange the distribution of obligations, benefits and burdens is demonstrated (Dwyer et. al., 1987). Enshrined within this process, the nature and style of a party's approach to bargaining is held by some to be both an overt and a covert reflection of their relationship orientation (Weitz, 1981; Raiffa, 1982).

In some cases, one party may seek to exercise power over the other during the early stages of a relationship. That is, one party may use its ability to to achieve intended effects or goals (Dahl, 1957). Power may be exercised justly or unjustly (French and Raven, 1959), the two being differentiated by the notion of there being voluntary and involuntary compliance. Where unjust use of power is evident, a party is sometimes thought to influence the behavior of another without this other party having a full understanding of their partner's behavioral intentions. It is consequently predicted that at a later stage in the development of the relationship, the party which was initially coerced into the relationship will chose to terminate the relationship (Lusch and Brown, 1982; Dwyer et. al., 1987).

From the point at which parties first interact, Ekeh (1974) and Leigh and Rethans (1984) explained that relationship norms are being developed as patterns of expected behavior are established (Lipset, 1975). In some cases, these norms turn out to be false, Fox (1974) identifying that spontaneous consensus is not always the strongest foundation upon which to found a relationship. Indeed, Brickman (1974) stressed this may undermine the strength of a relationship because negative experiences during the formative stages of a relationship can undermine expectations of it at a later date. Indeed, Fox (1974) noted that sharing relationship experiences and expectations is fundamental to relationship effectiveness. Dwyer et. al. (1987) stated that expectations which emerge during the formative stages of a relationship will enhance or diminish the solidarity of a relationship. So important is this process, Golembiewski and McConkie (1975) suggested it is a significant influence upon relational behavior. Expectations are commonly held

to be linked with trust and coordination (Pruitt, 1981) in that if a partner is trusted, one is likely to engage with them in coordinative behavior. This may include the exchange of statements between partners regarding motives and priorities (Schurr and Ozane, 1985).

The observation that timing is a determinant of commitment to dyadic relations in sponsorship programmes is intended to reflect two key considerations. Drawing from the critical incident interviews, it was firstly observed that in relationships where parties carefully plan the search for, and the selection of, a sponsorship partner, they are more likely to be committed to a relationship with their eventual ally. It was secondly observed that, in instances where one or both parties to a relationship had made a quick decision to engage in a sponsorship deal, commitment to the deal was likely to be lower. The difference between the two approaches is bound up in the notion of some parties being more strategic and/or proactive in their approach to sponsorship selection, whilst others are more opportunistic, tactical and reactive. In terms of the sponsorship literature, this indicates commitment to a sponsorship deal is therefore influenced by the behaviors and actions of relationship partners during the objective setting, screening and selection phases of a relationship. This study therefore contends these two phases of the sponsorship process correspond to the awareness and exploration phases identified by Dwyer et. al. (1987).

In making this assumption, the intended inference is that in cases, for example, characterised by the elapse of a short-period of time between an approach to a prospective sponsorship partner and the agreement of a deal with them, both sponsor and sponsee will be less committed to the relationship. Drawing from Dwyer et. al.'s model (1987), there is likely to be a number of reasons for this. In quickly reaching an agreement to work together, one or both parties may fail to accurately establish the benefits of being involved in such a relationship. This may be the result of bargaining and communication problems which routinely occur in newly forged sponsorship relations, but which are likely to be intensified when decisions are made within a highly limiting time frame. Given the lack of relationship clarity which may as a result emerge, this can undermine the longevity of the association and the orientation of partners towards maintaining the relationship.

In failing to understand the basis for attraction, this is likely to create a sense of risk. In the case of one sponsor questioned during a critical incident interview, the feeling was they had been approached very late (that is, very close to the start of the football season) and had therefore failed to understand the implications of the agreement made with football club. The interviewee

stressed that, having become more aware of how such relationships work, they had subsequently looked at alternative sponsorship opportunities and were thus looking to terminate their relationship with the club in favour of pursuing relations with alternative properties. Observations made by interviewees working in sponsoring organisations add a further dimension to this as many of them perceive that football clubs often abuse the power of their position (as participants in a popular sport and as owners of an appealing commercial property) by not fully disclosing information pertaining to their operations. This could be a result of the speed with which sponsorship decisions are made but, in some instances, represents the deliberate use of power. In one case, a sponsor expressed their dissatisfaction that a club partner had neglected to inform them about the costs of maintaining their relationship. In another instance, a club similarly perceived that in their quest for a shirt sponsor, they had rapidly agreed a deal with a company which had used the club's financial plight to their advantage in contractual negotiations. The club official consequently felt the deal was not been the right one for them and that he had therefore forced the club to search for an alternative shirt sponsor.

Drawing from Dwyer et. al. (1987), the spontaneous nature of the consensus achieved between club and sponsor in agreeing a sponsorship deal can create a sense of mismatch. Quickly agreed sponsorship deals characterised by bargaining and communication problems can lead to sponsor and sponsee developing different expectations of the relationship. In cases where these expectations are not fulfilled, the attractiveness of the relationship is undermined and commitment to an ongoing relationship with the sponsorship partner is thus negatively influenced. This situation may be exacerbated even further by a consequent failure to coordinate with the other party and the withholding of information by one or both parties. There is further evidence from the critical incident interviews to indicate that some clubs and sponsors engage in a lengthy process of communication, bargaining and negotiation. This ensures both are clear about one another's expectations, mutually acceptable norms of behavior are established and openness emerges in relation to the coordination and management of their relationship. In such cases, they will both have a stronger relational orientation and commit more strongly to maintaining a stable relationship with the partner.

In spite of Dwyer et. al.'s (1987) formative work analysing the development of business-to-business relationships and subsequent refinements of it, there are no scales currently available in the literature which directly address the issues identified in these studies. This study therefore proposes a new six item scale which is intended to directly identify the relationship between the

time frame within which sponsorship partners are approached and a deal signed, and the commitment that both clubs and sponsors demonstrate towards each other within the shirt sponsorship dyad. As such, the following hypothesis has been derived:

Hypothesis 5: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between the period of time taken to make sponsorship decisions and relationship commitment.

3.4.6 Perceptions of partner commitment-the continuing focus of the academic literature upon one side of the sponsorship dyad, the sponsor, is aptly highlighted as being narrow by considering the following two quotes made during the critical incident interviews: "I've heard they are on the look out for a better deal than the one they have with us. If it's true then clearly it's not in our best interests to spend too much time building up our relationship with them" and "They've developed a bit of a reputation for being 'fly-by-nights'....look at their record over the past few seasons, they don't keep their sponsors for longer than two seasons normally". This suggests that, rather than sponsorship decisions being driven solely by internal organisational or market considerations, it may also reflect the nature of dynamics between relationship partners. Indeed, initial findings from the critical incident interviews indicate that a perception of another party's commitment to a relationship is so significant it can impact upon one's own commitment to that same relationship. In some respects, this has echoes of game theory and the notion of prisoner's dilemma. That is, where interconnected or interdependent social actors engage in games which enable predictions about the outcome of their relationship to be made (Zagare, 1984). As Rapoport (1961) noted, game playing involves making and demonstrating commitments in order to affect the outcome of a relationship. Alternatively stated, it initially appears clubs and sponsors engage in a game the sum of which might be the termination of a shirt sponsorship contract or, at the other extreme, the formation of a new and more beneficial relationship. In the light of the above quotes, the perceived likelihood of a relationship being terminated clearly influences the commitment a partner has towards a relationship which, in turn, may be self-fulfilling in that this perception may ultimately lead to the demise of an association.

The influence of one party's commitment on the commitment displayed by their dyad partner may equally betray the intentions of both a football club and a shirt sponsor. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, a majority of football clubs currently have significant financial problems which continue to pose major short-term challenges for club managers. In order to generate the liquidity necessary for short-term survival, many clubs therefore pursue sponsorship deals enabling them to secure more revenue from another deal rather than maintaining an existing relationship.

Indeed, one interviewee noted that: "I think they want more money than we are prepared to give them. They are holding out for more but I think they are looking elsewhere". In some quarters, this perpetuates a view that football clubs are unreliable, uncommitted partners to whom significant resources should not be devoted (other than through the payment for the acquisition of legal rights to sponsor their shirts). If they can secure a better deal elsewhere, they will do so, meaning that no more than a surface commitment between the two parties ever exists. Indeed, if shirt sponsorship contracts are agreed premised on the notion that their termination is foretold, it is inevitable one or both parties will not fully commit to a relationship. Dismissing this as the fault of clubs is nevertheless naïve as sponsors are just as culpable for the termination of relationships. As Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) noted, football shirt sponsorship can be the result of fashion or 'chairman's whim'. In which case, the sponsor's commitment sometimes extends no further than the payment of a fee in return for an association with a club. As one interviewee in a football club observed of a previous sponsor: "They came in for a year, it was nice for them. They got what they wanted, you know, some tickets, they got to meet the players. As far as I know, they're not involved in anything else now".

In other cases, Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) suggested the popularity of football is such, many shirt sponsors chose not to actively manage their sponsorship programmes because of a perception that football's popularity does not require them to do so. The figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) in relation to objective setting, leverage expenditure and the employment of evaluation measures suggest there is some credibility to this view, implying that sponsors do not manage their programmes as effectively as they otherwise might. This may appear to be an overly pessimistic assessment of the state of relationships between clubs and their sponsors, particularly as some shirt sponsorship dyads have endured over a period longer than the three years normally associated with such deals. It may however be the case that doubt about the commitment of a partner is inherent in shirt sponsorship relations. If one accepts sponsorship is simply a form of short-term tactical spending, premised upon the notion of a transactional model of marketing, it signals to a sponsee that a sponsor's commitment to their relationship is likely to be a short-term one. In a similar vein, the sponsor may also have reasons for continuing doubts about a club. When it is signed, the contract a sponsor has with a club may seem like a good one to which the sponsor may want to make substantial commitments. But the seasonal nature of football, the public scrutiny of performance and the impact of industrial conditions (such as the amount of television exposure a team receives) may be rather less appealing at stages in the future, particularly if a team is performing poorly or actually gets

relegated. In such instances, if the commitment of a sponsor diminishes, it is therefore likely a club will reciprocate potentially resulting in a breakdown of the relationship. In one critical incident interview, it was stated: "The sponsor's not happy so they haven't paid for this year. The club could do with the money but it doesn't matter....we're looking elsewhere now".

That is not to say shirt sponsorship dyads are entirely characterised by games playing, suspicion and distrust. In some cases, there is intense loyalty to a particular partner because the perception is they are at least as committed to the relationship as their partner. Instead of searching for new sponsorship partners, the partner's commitment is manifest in the resources devoted to making a relationship work. These can include allocating specialist staff members to the deal, devoting resources over and above those agreed in the written contract and establishing channels of communication in order to facilitate a closer relationship. Such measures reinforce the view that a partner is making a long-term commitment to the relationship. This imbues the relationship with a sense of security which serves as the basis for another party reciprocating by also committing to the relationship. In which case, it appears likely that one partner will be more likely to make sacrifices towards the other if there is a perception their actions will not be exploited or that they are in the spirit of maintaining the stability and longevity of a relationship. One interviewee stated: "For certain matches we like to invite large numbers of our customers. This sometimes results in the club having to take on extra staff to look after them....our relationship with the club is strong enough for them to know we don't take advantage....this is a partnership". Whilst this more positive, longer-term, scenario also implies the prisoner's dilemma may be an appropriate way of conceiving of a partner's relationship commitment, it nevertheless illustrates it need not be a zero-sum game.

Anderson et. al. (1998) explained that commitment is the outcome of a process with strong emotional components. That is, the decision to commit to a relationship with another party emanates from beliefs about that, and other, partner's past and current behaviors. In cases where it is perceived an exchange partner will make similar commitments to the relationship, then one is more likely to commit in turn to them. This is not only analogous to prisoner's dilemma in game theory, but also suggests the development of commitment may be an iterative process characterised by mutual concession by parties working together with one another. As part of this process, Anderson et. al. (1998) emphasised the notion of perception because it reflects the way in which a party conceives of its partner's behavior as being normal or otherwise. If it is felt a

partner is making a commitment, the likelihood of reciprocal commitments is likely to emerge (Anderson and Weitz, 1992).

According to Gouldner (1960), reciprocity is an inevitable and natural balancing act which occurs when two entities engage in relations. This is a reflective phenomenon in that entities are likely to reciprocate based upon a judgement of what they think they face. In other words, if it is perceived a partner does not value a relationship, it would be normal for the other partner to display a similar absence of commitment towards a relationship. Anderson and Weitz (1992) explained this involves discernment on the part of each party whereby both will decipher information cues provided by the other side of a relationship dyad which is used to determine their level of commitment. These cues may be tangible in the sense of being explicit words or behaviors, although Anderson and Weitz (1992) argued it is difficult for a party to mask their true intentions because every action, unwittingly or unwillingly, reveals what a partner's true intentions actually are. Hence, throughout an exchange relationship, parties will transmit signals about their intentions which are subsequently used by a partner for assessing commitment intentions. Despite the instrumental or calculative nature of commitment which this implies, Axelrod (1984) believed the perception of behavior is an intrinsic part of the decision to cooperate with an exchange partner. The work of Bacharach and Lawler (1981) is similar, indicating that parties inevitably engage in a bargaining process through which they establish their relative contributions to a relationship. Eisenberger et. al. (1986) alternatively identified that issues regarding the mix of motives underpinning each party's actions need to be resolved to facilitate commitment. The need to establish the position of one's partner is important if both parties are to commit to a relationship. When there is asymmetrical commitment, the implication is that one party is more committed than another, in which case the committed party is more open to opportunism and defection. This situation also serves to highlight that another party may be less willing to work at maintaining the relationship and may thus devote less resources or make few sacrifices in order to promote relationship stability or longevity. The instinctive reaction of a party facing potential exploitation by a partner, which this implies, would thus be to minimise its commitment to them.

The whole notion of an exchange partner's commitment determining that of another is one that has resonance in a football setting. Given the figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002), there is clearly a retention and commitment problem in football shirt sponsorship programmes. Reflecting upon findings from the critical incident interviews, perceptions of a partner's commitment is also a factor determining commitment within these

dyads. Whilst findings from the interviews are elucidated above, it is also clear that a culture of suspicion and secrecy predominates across a number of shirt sponsorship relationships. Sponsors are aware that football clubs have financial problems and will often seek to pursue more attractive alternatives at the earliest possible opportunity. There is also an apparent feeling amongst sponsors that clubs are secretive organisations and reveal little about their operations or their intentions when engaging in a relationship with them. At the same time, sponsors are seen by some clubs as being equally as uncommitted. Football is very fashionable, it represents a quick and easy way to communicate with certain target markets and it is notoriously susceptible to the advances of sponsors who simply want the glamour of associating with the sport. Both clubs and sponsors thus appear to recognise the limitations of their potential partners and consequently engage in processing information cues as one element of their commitment decisions. In situations where a partner devotes resources to a relationship, or where they make sacrifices or concessions, commitment is likely to increase. This is an important signal because it conveys the message that a club or sponsor wants to build and maintain a relationship. Evidence from the critical incident interviews also indicates that when, for example, a club or sponsor begins to monitor the availability of alternatives, it is a signal of their commitment to which there will be a commensurate response from a partner.

This study accepts the observations of Anderson and Weitz (1992) and Anderson et. al. (1998) that commitment is characterised by reciprocity and signalling. As such, the scale used in the questionnaire for this study is an amalgam of the scales used in these two studies. This has resulted in certain items being retained and others being omitted. The items retained reflect the notion that commitment is a function of the perception a partner is also committed to a sponsorship deal. Using a simple example, if a club is perceived to be making a commitment to a sponsorship deal, a sponsor will reciprocate. In these terms, commitment is akin to loyalty and implies that sponsorship partners will forgo other alternatives in favour of a relationship with a party of whom the perception is that they are committed to the dyad. The instrumental nature of this commitment is likely to be enhanced by the allocation of specific resources to the relationship, such as specialist personnel or stadium facilities, again suggesting that sacrifice and concession will be key signals in shaping the perceptions of a dyad partner.

The items removed from the original scales used in the above two studies are those which emphasise the use of particular labels to describe dyad relationships and those establishing the protective responses displayed by one party towards another. Regarding the former, the original

scales sought to establish whether or not parties perceive their relationship to be a partnership or a strategic alliance. Research undertaken during Phases 1 and 2 of this study indicate that only a very small number of clubs and sponsors view their association as anything other than a contractual relationship. As such, there was no mention of either term during the critical incident interviews and no evidence of this type of approach being used in football shirt sponsorship deals. For these reasons, the scale proposed by this study does not include items relating to alliances or partnerships. A second omission from the original scales concerns public defences used by a party to protect their partner from criticism. In cases where a partner has, for example, made a mistake, a measure of one's perceived commitment is thought to be the extent to which one is prepared to publicly defend the partner. Whilst there is evidence that public defence can be a feature of sponsorship dyads¹², this is not commonplace. In none of the critical incident interviews was it evident that either clubs or sponsors had publicly or routinely engaged in defending a partner. That is not to say that defence and perceived commitment are not positively correlated, rather it indicates it is not a common practice. In the context of the above discussion, a seven item scale is therefore employed, and is intended to support the following hypothesised relationship:

Hypothesis 6: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between the perceptions of another party's relationship commitment and relationship commitment.

3.4.7 Trust-the notion of trust is one that appears to be central to the relationship between football club and shirt sponsor. One critical incident interviewee was explicit about this: "Do we trust them? Of course we do. If we didn't trust them, we wouldn't have signed a deal with them in the first place". Although such remarks can be taken a face value, they nevertheless betray the important role trust plays in sponsorship programmes. The logical implication of partner's committing to one another is that each trusts the other. For example, whilst the decision to enter into a relationship with a sponsorship partner may be motivated by the perceived benefits of a relationship, each party will need to be able to trust that working with the other party will ensure these benefits are realised. In this context, trust would appear to be an important foundation upon which commitment is built.

¹² For example, when two Leeds United fans were killed prior to a match in Turkey, the shirt sponsor (Bulmer) issued a public statement supporting the club, despite various criticisms directed towards United.

It can therefore be argued that trust is fundamental to the sponsorship process, being pervasive throughout from screening and selection through to eventual termination. At the screening and selection stage, for example, this may mean a sponsor has to be able to trust its partner club to maintain and convey an image that will transfer across to its brands. In one instance where a football club had been involved in a series of violent incidents, during a critical incident the shirt sponsor insisted: "...they are doing what is necessary to manage the problems in an appropriate way. We have no doubts about that....How does it reflect upon our brand?....The company is unconcerned at this point, we trust the club to do what is right". One notable feature of the relationship in this particular case was the closeness of the partnership between the club and the sponsor. Indeed, the sponsor's representative stated he was sure the club would keep him informed of any developments which might have an impact upon the sponsorship deal. The belief that both were therefore working together in order to manage their relationship in the face of adversity appeared to be a key part of the perceived trust that existed between them.

That a club or a sponsor can trust another party carries with it a sense of reliance. When a sponsorship partner can be relied upon to keep its promises, the greater will be a party's commitment to a relationship with them. In the case of a sponsor, this means, for example, being able to trust that a club is prepared to work with you in order to achieve the goals attached to the sponsorship deal. In the case of one sponsor, the interviewee stated: "If I tell the club I need something, you can generally be sure they will do it". This may also extend to the sponsor trusting a club not to search for alternative sponsorship partners or trusting them to share information which may be relevant to the ultimate effectiveness of the sponsorship. In the same way, the relationship commitment demonstrated by football clubs also seems to be founded on trust. Given the financial plight of many clubs, this fundamentally means being able to trust that a sponsor will actually pay for the rights agreed as part of the sponsorship contract. But trust also reflects the belief that sponsors would similarly not endanger the relationship by engaging with rival clubs, withholding information, lying or being deceitful. In one critical incident interview, a club official claimed that: "I've no reason to doubt that they would do anything to undermine our relationship".

There is clearly an organisational dimension to the notion of trust, but there may also be an interpersonal element as well. Although the organisation as a whole may be trustworthy, and have demonstrated this by, for example, paying the full amount for a contract, the role of individual managers may enhance or detract from the overall trustworthiness of a relationship partner. This

links into the observation that a relationship champion may be an important determinant of commitment. To reinforce the impact trust can have upon commitment, it is therefore imperative that trust is seen as the sum total of the actions taken by individuals working for the partner. One interviewee identified: "They seem like really nice people. I've no reason to doubt that they would do anything to undermine our relationship".

Trust as a concept in its own right has been widely researched (Rotter, 1967; Altman and Taylor, 1973; Cook and Emerson, 1978; Lindsold, 1978; Lazelere and Huston, 1980; Dwyer and LaGace, 1986; Lewicki and Bunker, 1995), although it has recently started to attract the interest of researchers working in the area of inter-organisational relationships and relationship marketing (Schurr and Ozane, 1985; Anderson and Weitz, 1989; Anderson and Narus, 1990; Moorman et. al., 1993; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Madhok, 1995). Such is the importance of trust in exchange relationships that MacKean (1972) observed market exchanges can not function effectively unless trust is present. In inter-organisational relationships, Madhok (1995) indicated that trust impacts upon the efficiency of exchanges, leading to cost reductions and the generation of value. Others have highlighted trust as being a critical success factor in collaborative relationships, serving as the basis for the development of closer, more cooperative bonds between partners (Dwyer et. al., 1987; Spekman and Sawhney, 1990; Ring and Van de Ven, 1992). In instances where partners distrust one another, this can therefore be a stumbling block to relationship success (Sherman, 1992).

Given diverse interest in the trust concept, numerous definitions of it have been proposed. These definitions generally fall into three categories whereby it is postulate as a cognitive expectation, a risk-taking behavior or a combination of both (Sarkar et. al., 1997). The cognitive view stresses the importance of beliefs about the motives or intentions of another party (Blau, 1964; Pruitt, 1981; Butler and Cantrell, 1984; Rempel and Holmes, 1986). According to Luhmann (1979) and Gambetta (1988), an important feature of this view is the need to recognise that trust can be abused. This consequently raises issues of expectation, confidence, reliability and integrity in that, if a party believes a partner will not disappoint their expectations, they will be more likely to have confidence in trusting them as reliable associates who will act with integrity (Rotter, 1967; Altman and Taylor, 1973; Dwyer and LaGace, 1986; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). An alternative view (Ring and Van de Ven, 1992) suggests trust is bound up in cognitions of goodwill. If a party is confident about another's goodwill, they are more likely to trust their relationship. In both

cases, a willingness to trust is premised on the belief that a relationship will be beneficial (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Weitz and Jap, 1995; Andaleeb, 1996).

The behavioral view of trust mirrors the cognitive view in accepting confidence, reliability and integrity as important facets of it. However, rather than trusting based upon expectation, definitions emphasise a willingness to trust a partner and take actions commensurate with this (Moorman et. al., 1993; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Willingness is seen as a vital element in the conceptualisation of trust because it indicates a party is prepared to trust. As Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) noted, an exchange partner can not be labelled trustworthy unless a party is prepared to take actions which entail risk. This means that if a party is confident about a relationship, they will be willing to take risks. Of the reasons why these risks are accepted, it is identified a partner's honesty, fairness, helpfulness and consistency will be especially significant influences upon the trust process (Lazalere and Huston, 1980; Lamming, 1993; Zineldin et. al., 1997; Zineldin, 1998). The debate about whether or not trust is a cognitive or behavioral phenomenon has yet to be resolved. As a result, some have proposed a conception emphasising trust as being both cognitive and behavioral (Dwyer and LaGace, 1986; Moorman et. al., 1993; Sarkar et. al., 1997). Instead of a belief or an expectation that a partner can be trusted, an intention and an action must be manifest in the partner's behavior in order to demonstrate trustworthiness. Whilst this is explicitly stated in the combined cognitive/behavioral construct, Morgan and Hunt (1994) nevertheless argue a willingness to trust signifies a willingness to act.

The existence of trust in an exchange relationship is so important that Spekman (1988) believed it to be the cornerstone upon which partnerships rest. The relatively scarcity of partners in whom one can place trust ensures parties are more likely to commit to relationships with partners where trust is present (Hrebiniak, 1974). Moreover, because commitment implies an element of vulnerability, parties will only enter into relationships with trusted partners (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In social exchange theory, McDonald (1981) explained reciprocity is significant in this respect: a failure to trust a partner results in the partner similarly mistrusting you. This may result in both parties gradually withdrawing from the relationship upto a point at which the relationship is reduced to little more than a series of discrete, transactional exchanges. In this context, observations made by Doz (1988), Achrol (1991), Moorman et. al. (1992) and Morgan and Hunt (1994) postulated a positive relationship between trust and commitment.

In some studies, trust is held to be a mediating variable between the determinants of trust and commitment, and the commitment variable itself. In one example, shared values, communication and opportunistic behavior are determinants of trust which then serves as a subsequent determinant of commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In another example, it is hypothesised that shared norms, two-way communication and partner fit are trust determinants, and trust is a determinant of commitment (de Ruyter et.al., 2001). However, other studies undertaken by Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) and Goodman and Dion (2001) indicated trust is simply one of a number of determinants and has no mediating effect between the other determinants and commitment.

Following the critical incident interviews, the findings indicate trust is a significant determinant of commitment in football shirt sponsorship dyads. From the perspective of clubs, this may simply mean being able to trust that a sponsor will pay the requisite fee to cover their contracted terms (although unofficial feedback from the interviews suggests this does not always happen). For sponsors, similarly being able to gain access to the properties commonly associated with a shirt sponsorship contract may be the foundation upon which trust is built. The existence of a contract is somewhat paradoxical in that it implies parties are distrustful and therefore unwilling to work outside the terms of a legally binding agreement. However, it also demonstrates that parties trust one another and are prepared to act in a way that commits them to a relationship. In this context, drawing from Moorman et al. (1993), trust is held by this study to be both a cognitive and a behavioral phenomenon. Signing the contract is a manifestation of trust and represents a willingness to act. However, this does not preclude the possibility that a party to the football shirt sponsorship dyad, in committing to a relationship based on an assessment of a partner's trustworthiness, may subsequently have its trust either undermined or strengthened. Evidence from the critical incident interviews suggests that, whilst cognitive and behavioral trust may exist in the short-term and often continue into the longer-term, dyad partners may ultimately become less trustworthy than was first thought. The actions of a sponsorship partner in the period subsequent to the signing of a contract may therefore be an important determinant of the future longevity and success of subsequent relations. In conceptualising trust in cognitive and behavioral terms, it is assumed that parties to the dyad are confident in their expectations of a partner's reliability and integrity. The result of this is an assumption that trusting partners, through their actions, will be open, honest and fair in their relationships with one another. Drawing from the trust scales employed by Moorman et. al. (1993) and Zineldin and Jonsson (2000), an understanding of trust therefore emanates from the measurement of information sharing, the

perceived need for caution when dealing with an exchange partner and perceptions of a partners sincerity. This study utilises these closely related scales as the basis for a combined new scale consisting of seven items which serves as the basis for testing the hypothesis that:

Hypothesis 7: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between trust and relationship commitment.

3.4.8 Managing the relationship-this determinant was identified following the amalgamation of three coded determinants (Relationship Champion-RC, Social Bonds-SD and Personal Factors-PF) used for the purposes of the critical incident interviews. The important role that human resources inevitably play in the sponsorship process can be assumed. It is for personnel from both parties to a sponsorship deal to instigate contact, negotiate terms, manage the arrangement and then, eventually, terminate it. The literature examining sponsorship decision making underpins this notion, whilst Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) identification that factors such as communication are critical factors in the success of shirt sponsorship deals similarly illustrates the 'human element' of sponsorship deals is a crucial influence upon the success of sponsorship programmes.

However, the contention of this study is that the role of human resources and their impact upon commitment is not restricted to the official parameters of the relationship or to the allocation of specialist staff by the parties involved. Following the critical incident interviews, an assumption is made that formally defined roles and responsibilities, and channels of communication, are enshrined in some form within the contracts to which sponsor and sponsee are co-signatories. Instead, the role of individuals within respective organisations, embracing personal and social elements, is viewed as having an impact on the extent to which an organisation commits to sponsorship relations. That is, the way in which an individual responsible for maintaining relations with a sponsorship fulfils their role, and the way in which this person relates to the sponsorship partner, will have an influence upon the commitment demonstrated by an organisation. This is premised on the notion that individuals play a key role in moderating the relationship between club and sponsor, particularly in the way they translate the intentions and values of each party into the day-to-day reality of managing the relationship. This acknowledges commitment at the organisational level is a key to the longevity of sponsorship relations, but that this is in part a function of the role individuals fulfil in establishing and managing such relationships. As one interviewee stated: "It's my job and I want to do it well. It's a matter of pride".

The debate surrounding sponsorship effects has resulted in the development of tangible measures of sponsorship outcomes. But the basis upon which these outcomes are achieved is important. For example, if a sponsor and sponsee have aligned due to perceptions about one another's values, the way in which the two relate will have an impact on the ultimate achievement of intended outcomes. Although this is a screening and selection issue, it will equally be the result of the way in which the two engage. The people allocated to be responsible for managing the relationship therefore become key interfaces in determining commitment because they serve as communication points through which information flows backwards and forwards between decision makers. They consequently serve as communication filters, facilitating the development of favourable attitudes amongst key decision makers towards a sponsorship. This influences their perception of the dyadic relationship, reinforcing their own commitment to it. The role fulfilled by these individuals also demonstrates the commitment of a party to its partner. Whilst they may not have a direct impact upon the commitment of their organisation, it can nevertheless be seen as an influence upon the sum total of commitment in the relationship dyad, impacting directly upon a partner's commitment and indirectly upon their organisation's commitment. In this respect, a claim made by one interviewee highlights the importance for a dyad of an individual stressing the commitment a party is making to it: "It is not just about what they can do for us. It's important to recognise we can do something for them as well".

At the heart of an individual's role are communication and the sense of personal commitment or sacrifice made for the greater good of the relationship. In the case of the former, maintaining regular contact appears to be an important basis upon which a partner will build their commitment to a relationship. When the individual is representing the views of a sponsorship partner, and where the role of the partner is being championed by this individual, this is thought to have a strong impact upon both parties. Communication therefore becomes not only a determinant of commitment but a demonstration of it. This is suitably highlighted through the following statement of one football club representative: "If there's something going on, may be the press is coming down, I always let them know so they can be here to do something".

There is also a personal element to the process whereby an individual may be willing to make personal sacrifices, or may be keen to demonstrate personal commitment, as the basis for determining their organisation's commitment to the relationship. Hence, socialising with people from the other party to the relationship, outside the terms of a contract, is thought by some to

have an influence upon commitment at the organisational level. As one interviewee noted: "If it helps to make the relationship work, I am happy to go for a drink with them. I've been to the pub with the guy's a few times". Individuals are also likely to be engaged in a relationship on a day-to-day basis and will work to build and maintain the relationship with a partner based upon a personal understanding and style of working. This similarly influences the commitment displayed at the organisational level through the way in which the individual links the sponsor and the sponsee.

During the critical incident interviews, three separate codes were used to identify determinants which have subsequently formed the basis for this one determinant: 'Managing the relationship'. These were included because the context within which relationships are organised is not simply a function of commitment at the organisational level. The interpersonal relationships between organisational actors and their behaviors are not only held to influence relationship commitment but also represent the constituent parts of commitment at the organisational level. An important aspect of this, and a reason for identifying them as a determinant of commitment, is that interpersonal relationships, whilst regulated by contractual obligation, also contain elements of personal motivation and personal sacrifice. Hence, it was deemed important for this study to ascertain the extent to which commitment is the result not just of the official contract, but of the behavior outside a legal agreement.

A champion was initially identified as being an important influence on commitment in the way they support the maintenance and development of relationships. The success of a relationship is therefore held, in part, to be the consequence of their efforts to ensure a party's commitment is manifest in their actions. The second determinant identified, personal factors, was founded upon the view that individuals will be personally motivated to work for the success of the relationship. This may be for reasons of career development, job quality or personal satisfaction. This results in strong commitment behavior being demonstrated by an individual, which then influences both the commitment of the organisation within which they are employed and also the partner with which they work. In the same way, the social parameters of an individual relationship can be a third influence upon commitment. Through the social interaction and contact that takes place between parties, socialising and entertaining for example, a stronger sense of commitment on the part of both parties to a relationship is believed to emerge.

The problem for this study has been that, given the sample size involved, there was a pressing need to minimise the number of questionnaire items that could be used. Moreover, following discussions between the critical incident interview coders, it was apparent that differentiating between a relationship champion, personal factors and social bonds was very difficult. For example, an individual may be motivated by a personal desire to be successful which leads them to work outside the terms of a contract between club and sponsor in order to secure that success. But a problem then emerges: trying to differentiate between personal motivation, social bonds between actors and the desire to build an effective relationship becomes difficult. The decision to amalgamate the three determinants was therefore intended to principally reflect the role of individuals as determinants of relationship commitment. In studies where the case to item ratio is greater, thus enabling more detailed statistical analyses to take place, the composition of an individual's influence upon commitment could become the basis for a more detailed analysis.

Drawing from observations made during the critical incident interviews it appears, aside from the commitment implied by the initial contractual relationship, the total commitment made by one party to another is effectively the result of efforts made at the individual level. The need for organisations to effectively manage their relationships with other parties at this level has already been examined in the literature (Håkansson, 1982; Krapfel et. al., 1991; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Wilson, 1995; Weitz and Jap, 1995). Such is the significance of individuals that Wilson (1994) stated it has taken on an accelerated and strategic importance. De Ruyter et. al. (2001) also emphasised the role that individuals play in inter-organisational relationships, whilst Gemunden and Walter (1994) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) explained formal transactions between businesses are actually a reflection of the informal and interpersonal agreements and commitments made between appointed managers and officials. Drawing from Deutsch (1960), who identified that relationships emerge as the result of one's general perceptions of another allied to perceptions of their intentions, Smith and Barclay (1995) stated commitment at the individual level is a major influence upon commitment at the organisational level. Weitz and Jap (1995) consequently placed individual relationships at the centre of inter-organisational relationship development.

One of the reasons for this is that personal contact is seen as a good source of information (Abratt, 1986). This provides a foundation for identifying the potential gains and returns from a relationship and is especially effective in the way it spans organisational boundaries. Larsson (1992) alternatively explained how informal contact between individuals working for different

organisations contributes to a reduction in perceived risk and uncertainty, and provides a basis for the development of affective commitment. That is, through interaction, both parties create a sense of shared identity and understanding which binds them together creating closer, more open, ties. This links in very closely to inter-personal communication (Anderson and Weitz, 1992), which Dwyer et. al. (1987) identified as a key influence upon commitment behavior. It also relates to the cooperation processes through which parties determine mutually acceptable goals (Anderson and Narus, 1990). Meanwhile, Achrol (1997) and Gundlach et. al. (1995) explained that social interaction through informal means is an effective method for resolving conflict without having the need for recourse to formal procedures. The resolution of conflict in this way strengthens relationships through constructive means giving rise to stronger commitment between parties (Meldrum and Milman, 1991).

Relationships at the level of those individuals responsible for managing football sponsorship programmes is thus postulated as an important feature in the overall composition of inter-organisational relationships, commitment at the organisational level being a function of individual relationships, both formal and informal. In turn, individual relationships are held to develop through interaction. The critical incident interviews revealed an individual's perceived role in managing sponsorship relations is also central in determining commitment. At one level, a sense of pride in developing and maintaining effective relations appears to be important. At another, there is a sense that individuals make self-sacrifices in favour of the greater good of the relationship. Moreover, it seems likely the overall commitment intentions of an organisation are actually manifest through the intentions and actions of individuals. The critical incident interviews indicate this is the result of an individual accepting the need to work collaboratively with another party for the mutual benefit of both and therefore to interact with them.

Despite acceptance of the individual's contribution in the determination of commitment, no scales exist to specifically measure this contribution. Rather, multi-dimensional scales, which subsume 'the individual' into broader measures, are commonly employed. For example, in de Ruyter et. al.'s (2001) study of relationship commitment in high technology markets, a variable 'relationship characteristics' is proposed which combines individual relationships with communication, cooperation and conflict resolution. Evidence from the critical incident interviews nevertheless indicates that, whilst management challenges such as conflict resolution may be part of an individual's perceived relationship management role, there are more important aspects in football shirt sponsorship management. This includes the relationship orientation of the person

responsible for managing the relationship, the importance of personal sacrifice in ensuring the overall effectiveness of sponsorship relations, the influence of personal motivation as a source of commitment intentions and a feeling of being empowered to manage the relationship on behalf of a dyad partner. The new scale, consisting of six items, therefore proposed by this study is intended to establish the relative contribution of these features to sponsorship commitment. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 8: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between the role individual's play in managing relationships and relationship commitment.

3.4.9 Shared values-in seeking to work with a prospective partner, a majority of interviewees were clear about with whom they would be prepared to work. In one case, a football club representative was adamant in his views: "The club wouldn't just work with anyone, we're not like that. This is a family run business and most of our supporters are family oriented. We get fathers, sons, whole families coming down....there's no way we would ever get into a relationship with, say, a pornographer. It just doesn't fit in with who we are....I think it would offend people....not so sure about gambling either, although there is more of a link between betting and football than porn and football". The value judgements implicit in this statement are characteristic of many similar statements made by other interviewees. The whole notion of sponsor and sponsee sharing values is therefore an interesting one that would appear to operate at a number of levels, most notably in relation to the general sponsorship process and in terms of the congruence between parties which leads them to commit to one another.

From the earliest stages of the sponsorship decision making process, it is likely shared values will impinge upon the engagement between a sponsor and a sponsee. From the above quote, it is clear parties will have criteria, implicit or explicit, against which they will assess the suitability of prospective partners. In cases where there are a number of these, the implication is sponsors and sponsees will associate with those whom they judge to be best suited to them as prospective partners. In such cases, it is more likely a relationship will have greater durability and longevity. Sharing values may thus be one of the foundations upon which partners are screened and selected. Whilst there could be an ethical or cultural dimension to this, in terms of accepting a partner's style of business, there may also be more overtly commercial reasons for identifying a partner. For example, if a sponsor has set programme objectives aimed at securing the benefits of image transfer or brand association, the nature of a partner will be integral to establishing and managing a relationship with them. Three further quotes illustrate how the similarity between club and

sponsor is important: “We have similar aspirations to be the best in our chosen fields”, “We both have an important role to play in the local community” and “....we’re both family businesses, we care about the family”.

Shared values may also represent the extent to which sponsor and sponsee are relationship oriented. That is, it may demonstrate mutual acknowledgement that a collaborative approach to sponsorship relations is preferable to a transactional association characterised by a rights/financial exchange. This is likely to imbue parties with a stronger sense the relationship is one that will at least be stable, if not durable. Indeed, a relational orientation suggests communication, mutuality and loyalty will be features of the association. In cases where sponsorship partners work together to develop their relationship, it is also implicit that both have congruent commercial values. This means parties may have common or related strategic intentions, similar perceptions about the nature of their brands or equivalent market positions. As a result, both are likely to display stronger commitment to one another, secure in the knowledge that their partner is moving in the same direction as they are. As one interview stated: “This area is important for us....this is where we draw our support from; it’s important for them because they see it as a growth market”.

Sharing values is therefore likely to exist at three levels. Firstly, it is the extent to which parties share a cultural orientation, a style of doing business and an ethical stance. Secondly, it indicates congruency in the way partners orient towards relationships. Thirdly, it reflects common commercial goals, although this is a broad term as many clubs and sponsors may also have shared notions about their societal or community roles. To some, this may seem like no more than ‘partner fit’, a common theme in the sponsorship literature (for example, see Copeland et. al., 1996). However, sharing values and the way in which this impact’s upon partnership commitment is something deeper than the notion of ‘fit’ implies. Sharing values is enshrined within the culture of an organisation, creating opportunities for the development of mutually beneficial associations built upon collaborative communication. Commitment thus emerges from a sense of partner similarity, imbuing relationships with stability. Indeed, if one party is clear about why they have entered into a relationship with another party and are committed to them, if values are shared the implication is the other party will exhibit a similar degree of commitment to their association. As one interviewee put it: “We are both pulling in the same direction....at the moment, I can’t see any reason to look for another [sponsor]”.

Following the initial stages of the coding process, morality was identified as being a determinant of commitment, although there was less agreement between coders about the strength of its influence. Morality effectively differentiates between right and wrong behavior and, as such, is associated with normative commitment to a relationship. But contracts are often used to regulate such behavior meaning inappropriate behavior will lead to sanctions against a party engaging in such activity. In turn, this suggests an element of instrumental commitment will regulate the morality of certain types of behavior. But morality, as a concept, fails to add to an understanding of sponsorship relations for two reasons. Firstly, is it necessarily immoral that an organisation adopts a transactional approach to its business activities rather than a relational approach? Secondly, is it immoral for a sponsorship partner to pursue different relationship goals to their partner, particularly if it has been clear from the outset they intended to do so? Given the notion that ethical behavior (such as not undermining your partner) is nevertheless part of a sponsorship arrangement, morality has therefore been subsumed into 'shared values'. This also serves to ensure an acceptable item to case ratio for the purposes of statistical analysis.

Following Heide and John (1992) who identified 'appropriate actions' as being important for successful relationships, Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 25) and Zineldin and Jonsson (2000, p.252) indicated that sharing values is characterised by: "Partners having common beliefs about what behaviors, goals, and policies are important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong". This draws from the organisational commitment literature where Kelman (1961), Meyer and Allen (1984), Chatman (1991) and Anderson et. al. (1994) highlighted that the attitudes and behaviors of one party are the result of values shared with another party. Dwyer et. al. (1987) explained this has implications for inter-organisational relationships because one firm is likely to commit more strongly to another firm when they share similar values.

Values are held as being central to an understanding of organisational culture and are bound up in the behaviors and actions of organisations and those who work within them (Enz, 1988; Weiner, 1988). Schein (1990) identified that culture manifests itself through values which are thought to highlight an organisation's 'way of doing things' (Weiner, 1988). In the organisational literature, the congruence of values is therefore thought to indicate a fit between employee and employer, fostering a greater sense of commitment by the former to their employing organisation (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; Chatman, 1991). Kelman (1961) suggested this is bound up in the rewards and punishments employed by relationship partners, the desire of a party to associate with others with whom they identify, and the sharing of values between the two parties. Drawing

from this conceptualisation. Morgan and Hunt (1994) explained commitment emerges from the internalisation of a partner's values and the instrumental recognition a relationship is worth maintaining in the light of an assessment of the relative gains and losses, and rewards and punishments of the relationship.

In marketing studies of commitment, Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) established shared values as having an impact on trust and commitment, the former being identified in turn as having a further impact on the latter. This is not widely accepted in the literature however, added to which results from the critical incident interviews did not clearly or explicitly indicate a mediating role for trust or the joint impact of shared values upon trust and commitment. It is therefore held by this study that shared values have a direct impact upon the commitment of both the football club and the shirt sponsor. In turn, this is assumed to reflect four elements of sharing: shared elements of culture, common goals, common approaches to business and common beliefs regarding the adoption of a relational approach to business. The latter is particularly important and is held to be enshrined across the other three levels. The study accordingly accepts Morgan and Hunt's (1994) close approximation to this (linking behaviors, goals and policies) and utilises the seven item scale employed by them. The following relationship between shared values and commitment is therefore hypothesised:

Hypothesis 9: In the football shirt sponsorship dyad, there will be a positive relationship between shared values and relationship commitment.

3.4.10 Commitment-a notable feature of the critical incident interviews was that all participants were able to provide a view of commitment. This is unsurprising given the observations made during Phase 1 of this research. However, rather than commitment being a unilateral phenomenon whereby a sponsor makes a commitment to a club, the commonly held view is that both are involved in making a commitment to the shirt sponsorship dyad. This commitment is moreover held to be one based upon more than a basic evaluation of the relative costs and benefits of engaging in a relationship. A sense of there being value in working closely with a partner appears to pervade across the views of dyad members who were interviewed. In particular, the observed stability provided by such relationships suggests clubs and sponsors are prepared to compromise to ensure the effectiveness of their relationship. In a number of cases, both were also willing to dedicate additional resources to facilitate the maintenance of a relationship.

As has previously been mentioned in this study, at the heart of all exchange relationships is a transaction involving the exchange of financial resources between two parties. In the case of the sponsorship dyad this is no different, the exchange of a payment for legal rights being a characteristic common to all club/shirt sponsor relationships. At a basic level, commitment is therefore instrumental in the sense that club and sponsor have identified the benefits of engaging in a relationship and have therefore decided to forego alternatives. In one critical incident interview a sponsor stated: “[The company] considered a number of different properties before deciding upon a deal with this club. It was considered to be the most appropriate one at the time but we are involved in other sports....I am not sure this deal is working for us now because the club doesn't really seem interested....we are looking elsewhere. we sponsor horse racing, we do a bit of golf as well....”. Whilst this quote illustrates that a cost/benefit assessment is indeed at the heart of most sponsorship arrangements, it also highlights the importance perceptions play in shaping one's commitment to a relationship. That is, the commitment made by one party to a deal is likely to be greater when they perceive the other party is also committed. In other words, a relationship is likely to have longevity in cases where one partner commits to a relationship and their behavior is replicated by the other partner, to which the first partner then responds again. A committed relationship therefore emerges from a virtuous cycle through which club and sponsor develop a sense of mutuality and a consequent loyalty to their relationship with each other. The commitment may involve the allocation of resources to a relationship, most notably financial resources. For example, one interviewee emphasised that: “It is pointless to spend in order to secure a deal and then do nothing to support it. We spend whatever it takes in order to generate the maximum value from the sponsorship”.

One point to note in this respect is the suggestion that leveraging a sponsorship deal is actually something rather more than expenditure made to protect or support the instrumental nature of an initial payment made to secure a sponsorship deal. The commitment or resources may alternatively be represented by, for example, the allocation of specialist personnel. Quotes from two cases illustrate this: “It's my job to stay in contact with them. I get them involved in things, organise the hospitality, make sure their best interests are being served, you know, that sort of thing” and “I call them every day and go up to see them once a week....I have to say, they are pretty good as well. They are prepared to sit down and talk about how to move things forwards”.

Commitment is also likely to be manifest in the behaviors of parties to a relationship. If one partner makes concessions or sacrifices to the other, this demonstrates commitment in an

instrumental sense because it shows the partner will remain even though, at that point, there may be better alternatives available. Commitment may also be affective or normative in such situations. In relation to the former, concessions or sacrifices could be made because a partner may feel the identity and affiliation with a relationship partner is such that it is acceptable and worthwhile to make short-term sacrifices in favour of long-term relationship maintenance. The normative dimension to such behavior rests in the perceived moral obligation to remain in a relationship despite any short-term difficulties a relationship may encounter. This is bound up in the notion that there are 'right' ways to behave in such situations. It is therefore implicit that long-term behavioral orientation will transcend short-term behavioural orientation, meaning some committed clubs and sponsors will have a sense of loyalty to one another irrespective of any short-term difficulties they face. One interviewee claimed: "We've been together for seven years, and I can see us being together for another seven". In another case, the interviewee stated: "It's working for us and I think it is working for them. On this basis, I don't see why we can't continue working together".

The notions of concession and sacrifice also reflect the way in which club and sponsor handle the problems they encounter. In situations where one may have, for example, made a mistake, a committed partner will not use this as the basis for terminating a relationship or seeking another partner. Moreover, in a relationship where commitment is present, this will not undermine or weaken the relationship but will be accepted as being an inevitable part of relationship management. In one case, an interviewee indeed observed: "It's give and take most of the time. If they do something we are not happy with, we don't make a big deal out of it. It's far better just to have a quiet word". In a further case, the interviewee was rather more forthright: "I remember one time when we forgot to do something, I think we'd forgotten to get something ready for them one match day, they called up and gave us a right 'bollocking'that's the way things work, we were wrong, we took it....relationships have got to work in that way."

The above discussion does not mean that all clubs and sponsors are committed to their relationship with a sponsorship partner. In some cases the commitment appears to be little more than transactional in the way that certain clubs simply accept the payment of a fee, whilst certain sponsors simply acquire the legal rights of association and engage in no further activities to support their relationship with a club. In such instances, the feeling seems to prevail that contractual obligation defines the extent of a party's commitment. This seemingly locks dyad partners into a series of short-term commitments whereby some clubs move from sponsor to

sponsor and some sponsors move from property to property, both inside and outside football. As two interviewee's stated: "Unfortunately the business we're in means we always have to be on the look out for a sponsor who is prepared to pay us more money" and "There is always a contract figure in mind that we work to. If we don't get what we are looking for, we go elsewhere".

Commitment in inter-organisational and interpersonal relationships is characterised by stability and sacrifice (Becker, 1960; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Anderson and Weitz, 1992). As such, Anderson et. al. (1998) proposed that commitment is a largely behavioral phenomenon based upon observations of one's own and a partner's behaviors and expectations within a relationship dyad. This consequently implies reciprocity and information cues (or signaling) are therefore important in determining the nature of relationship commitment. Rather than simply being determined through an assessment of the current benefits and costs of engaging in a relationship, commitment is thus a function of broader influences such as the perceived need for stability, the sense that a relationship is worth working at in order to maintain it and an acceptance that the longer a relationship continues the more likely a party is to realise a greater level of benefits. In order to facilitate these influences, it is widely held (for example, see Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994) that parties should, for instance, ally themselves to partners with whom they share values and then engage in open communication with them.

Drawing from Meyer and Allen's (1990) disaggregated conceptualisation of commitment, commitment is therefore held to be a complex construct. At one level, it incorporates instrumental elements indicating partners engage with one another in preference to other alternatives. This imbues dyadic relationships with a sense of stability and a willingness on the part of both parties to continue in the relationship (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Scheer and Stern, 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Gundlach et. al., 1995). The intentions and perceptions signaled by these behaviors foster reciprocation bringing partners closer together. A second component of commitment implied by the critical incident interviews is that it also consists of an affective element. That is, the unifying influence of shared interests, goals and values ensures a cooperative and harmonious view of the relationship develops between partners, thus reinforcing their commitment to each other. A third element is that of normative commitment whereby both parties perceive there is a right and moral way to behave in a relationship. In these terms, undermining the relationship or a partner, failing to make concessions or sacrifices to them and actively seeking other partners are all held as behaviors that will threaten relationship commitment. Conversely, commitment is

therefore held to be a reflection of the desire of club and sponsor to be involved in a stable relationship where a partner will behave in an appropriate manner. On this basis, commitment is defined for the purposes of this study as being: "A desire to develop a stable relationship, a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship, and a confidence in the stability of the relationship." (Anderson and Weitz, 1992, p.19)

The scale employed by this study consequently reflects that employed by Anderson and Weitz. In their original study, a ten item scale was used to reflect elements of stability and sacrifice. In this study, a refined scale of eight items was employed. This was done for two reasons: firstly, pruning was necessary to enable adherence to statistical conventions for the purposes of subsequent statistical analysis; secondly, the notion of one partner defending another and the labeling of shirt sponsorships as alliances did not appear in the way commitment is conceptualised by clubs and sponsors. Otherwise, the scale replicates the original and is intended to reflect commonly held perceptions amongst sponsorship dyad partners that loyalty, foregoing alternatives and making sacrifices on behalf of the relationship by contributing additional resources are all commensurate with making a commitment to a partner.

One of the limitations of this research is that it is restricted to the analysis of commitment at one particular point in time. As Anderson and Weitz (1992) noted, the static nature of commitment studies is inevitable because it is difficult to characterise the varying degrees of commitment at different stages of a relationship across a wide range of dyads. It is therefore implicit that commitment in each dyad is symmetrical. Given this is simply not the case in reality, Phase 7 of this study serves to identify the nature of commitment in a sample of dyads. This is primarily intended to address the relevance of commitment determinants identified by this study, but will also serve to highlight any dyadic asymmetries in commitment. A further issue impacting upon this study relates to the importance of perceptions and behaviors in shaping respondent views of commitment. The views of interviewees and questionnaire respondents may be held as merely being perceptions of commitment. However, Anderson and Weitz (1992), Ross et. al. (1997), and Jap and Ganesan (2000) concluded perceptions of commitment are accurate indicators of true commitment. Given the signaling of intentions which takes place between dyad members, perceptions of a partner's commitment is therefore held to be commensurate with the actual commitment of that partner. This observation consequently cuts across each of the identified

determinants where a partner is asked to perceive the intentions and behaviors of a dyad partner, and confirms commitment is a behavioral phenomenon.

3.5 Phase 3-Development of survey instrument

Surveys are the commonest form of instrument used by deductive researchers. There are a number of reasons for this including the economy with which one can gather data from large populations, opportunities for standardising this data and the control it gives over the research process (Saunders et. al., 2003). Those concerned with triangulation (for example, Smith, 1975; Deshpande, 1983; Kane, 1985) and established statistical conventions relating sample size to number of survey items (Guadagnoli and Velicer, 1988; Comrey and Lee, 1992), question the breadth and depth of the data that can be generated. However, amongst mainstream marketing studies completed in the areas of relationships and commitment, the use of questionnaires and subsequent quantitative data analysis has predominated.

Gill and Johnson (1991) advocated that researchers using surveys as a method of data collection need to address whether the questions asked are accurate measures of variables the researcher is seeking to examine. In turn, Dillman (1978) and Frey (1983) indicated that design and sampling, questionnaire construction, administrative issues and bias are key considerations in the development of a survey. In formulating questionnaires, specific considerations for the researcher include maximisation of response rate, the selection of questionnaire styles and the nature of data input (Dillman, 2000; Oppenheim, 2000). Saunders et. al. (2003) alternatively outlined the following ten factors researchers should address when using questionnaires: 1) population characteristics which make the use of questionnaires suitable; 2) confidence the right person is approached; 3) likelihood of responses being contaminated; 4) selection of a research sample; 5) response rate considerations; 6) determination of an appropriate questionnaire length; 7) selection of questionnaire types; 8) time scale within which questionnaires are despatched and returned; 9) resource implications; 10) analysis of questionnaire data. Each of these stages is now considered in relation to the research undertaken as part of this study.

3.5.1 Population characteristics which make the use of questionnaires suitable-the list of English professional football clubs and their respective sponsors in the 2002/2003 season (shown in Appendix 5) highlights the geographical spread of the sample population relating to this study. The direct financial and opportunity costs of using alternative data collection methods meant they

were rejected in favour of postal questionnaires. Many of the problems commonly associated with postal questionnaires are addressed below in Sections 3.5.2-3.5.10.

3.5.2 Confidence the right person is approached-two principle sources were used to ensure the people to whom questionnaires were sent were appropriate. For sponsors, the annual Hollis Guide to Sponsorship (2003) lists the names and contact details of football shirt sponsorship managers throughout the United Kingdom. In cases where named people were not given, or where companies had not bought space in this guide (approximately 30% of the sample population), a telephone call was made to the company in order to determine the name, position and contact details of the person responsible for managing their relationship with a football club. In the case of the football clubs themselves, the endorsement of the study by the CMMA enabled direct access to personnel who identified themselves as holding a sponsorship management role. Although not strictly a measure of accuracy, following dispatch of the final questionnaire, none were returned due to incorrect addressing nor were there any returns from people other than those originally named in the database of contacts.

3.5.3 Likelihood of responses being contaminated-Saunders et. al. (2003) noted it is very difficult to control or test for the contamination of postal questionnaires. Contamination occurs in a number of ways (Dillman, 2000): it happens when the person to whom the questionnaire is addressed does not complete it and delegates the task to another person who may have less experience of a particular phenomenon. It may also take place if the person approached has insufficient knowledge and therefore makes an uninformed response. This is especially prevalent when questionnaires have been 'incentivied'. A discussion with colleagues about how to respond to questions and the perceived social desirability of responding in particular ways may also pose a threat to the reliability of questionnaire returns (Matthews and Diamantopoulos, 1995). This is similar to observations made by Peterson and Klein (1981) concerning response errors, which are the differences between a response and what is actually true or correct. Moser and Kalton (1971) in turn suggested that errors are the result of biased responses which can be accidental (Neter, 1970), be the result of a respondent knowingly providing an incorrect answer (Frankel and Frankel, 1977) or be intentional misrepresentation because the respondent has felt threatened by certain questions (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974). In such cases, Matthews and Diamantopoulos (1995) proposed that researchers should use factual data to verify questionnaire findings. But Peterson et. al. (1981) stressed this is a near impossible task when gathering attitudinal data.

Moser and Kalton (1971) therefore conclude that supporting data should be gathered from as many other sources as possible to ensure the accuracy of questionnaire responses.

The nature of this research phase meant contamination and bias were potential threats to the reliability of the data generated via the questionnaires. Nevertheless, a number of measures (which are outlined at various stages below) were employed in an attempt to negate such effects. The named contacts drawn from the Hollis Sponsorship Guide (2003) and the endorsement of the study by the CMMA were helpful. Whilst the latter may have resulted in positive response bias, the correspondence sent out to clubs clearly stated it was a Leeds University research project, not a CMMA one, and that it was being used to assist in the development of sponsor relations. The use of incentives, although employed by the researcher, was also carefully managed. Financial rewards were rejected in favour of draws for both significant (a magnum of champagne) and relevant (copies of a sport management textbook) prizes. In accordance with the debate about the breadth and diversity of research in marketing, it should also be noted that findings from the questionnaire were the precursor to a further phase of dyadic interviews involving clubs and sponsors.

3.5.4 Selection of a research sample-the selection of a research sample initially proved to be problematic. An exploratory telephone survey carried out by the researcher revealed sponsorship studies undertaken on a longitudinal basis are fraught with difficulty. The first problem is that many football clubs are often unable to remember who their shirt sponsors have been. In one case, the respondent stated: "I can remember the last two or three. Go back any further than 97 or 98 and I'm struggling". Constructing a longitudinal database of past shirt sponsors for each club therefore represented a huge task which would therefore have had to rely upon the use of historic photographic evidence. The second problem is sponsoring companies are frequently unable or unwilling to participate in sponsorship research. Although historic Hollis Sponsorship Guides are a good source of contact details, companies participating in the telephone survey commonly responded in one of three ways: the person responsible for overseeing the deal with a club had left the company, the person had retired/was deceased or the break from the club was so acrimonious the company refused to speak about their relationship.

Given the strong likelihood therefore that the researcher would only be able to construct an incomplete historic database of football clubs and their sponsors, the decision was taken to sample on a cross-sectional basis, not a longitudinal one. Further analysis of football shirt

sponsorship contracts nevertheless indicated that typically between 20 and 25 clubs change their shirt sponsorship contracts on a seasonal basis. The problems noted above were thus likely to be just as immediate as historic. The decision was therefore taken to conduct a census which, according to Bryman and Bell (2003, p. 93) is: "The enumeration of an entire population. This involves the collection of data in relation to all units in a population, rather than in relation to a sample of units in that population". This enabled an accurate and up to date database of both clubs and sponsors to be constructed, whilst addressing the sampling problems previously noted. It also served to overcome the problems associated with sampling error (Jankowicz, 2000). The census included all of the professional football clubs in the four English leagues during the 2002/2003 season, and their shirt sponsors. The potential sample size was therefore 184 (92+92), although two shirt sponsors (Keijian-sponsors of Everton, and Desun-sponsors of Sheffield United) were omitted because the two sponsoring corporations (both Chinese) did not have offices in the United Kingdom at the time.

3.5.5 Response rate considerations-an examination of the marketing literature relating to sport generally, and to football specifically, indicates response rates often tend to be low (Chadwick and Clowes, 1998, Valynseele, 2000). As a result, researchers have typically used case study approaches to gain access to relevant organisations (for example: Tapp and Clowes, 1999; Miles 2001; Mosson, 2001). Suffice to say, there is no current evidence indicating academic researchers have thus far been able to secure access to the full range of professional clubs across the English leagues. The response of sponsors to academic research has been rather more encouraging. Thwaites (1995) and Thwaites and Chadwick (2002) analyses of football shirt sponsorship reported response rates of 68% and 84% respectively. This compares favourably with related studies (for example, Thwaites, et.al. (1997) reported a response rate of 44% in a survey of horse racing sponsorship; Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) achieved a response rate of 68% in a study of rugby union shirt sponsors) although all of these studies only surveyed sponsors. From the outset, it appeared the questionnaire response rate was potentially a major obstacle in undertaking the research. A number of techniques were therefore employed in order to affect an acceptable response rate. This was imperative given the relatively small sample size and the consequent data analysis techniques that could be employed by the researcher.

The use of endorsements is a technique that has failed to attract widespread interest in the research methods or marketing literature (Rochford and Venable, 1995). Endorsements are nevertheless thought to impact positively on both survey response rates (Faria and Dickinson,

1992; Faria and Dickinson, 1996) and the quality of responses (Armenakis and Lett, 1982). Kelman (1961) stated the attributes of the endorser are important in such cases, identifying that credibility, attractiveness and power are important for establishing trust amongst prospective respondents. In turn, these appear to be a function of the appropriateness of the endorser to the phenomenon being analysed (Freeman, 1957) and the job title or role of the endorser (Brennan, 1990). Following representations to a number of organisations, including the English Football Association, agreement was reached with the PL and the CMMA to endorse the study¹³. In the case of the former, the Head of Commercial Relations agreed to distribute questionnaires at a bi-monthly meeting of PL club commercial and marketing managers which was held in June 2003 at PL headquarters. In the latter case, the Chief Executive of the CMMA agreed to send out pre-notification details, questionnaires and follow-up documents under his name to all professional football clubs in England. This was particularly significant as the organisation is essentially an employers association for marketing and commercial managers in football. Following further discussions with the Head of Commercial Relations at the PL, the importance of the CMMA's role was reinforced because it was felt that many clubs tend to be suspicious of the PL's motives when undertaking such research. As such, the endorser had a recognised position within the industry which was important for establishing the credibility of the study.

There is further evidence to suggest both the front cover design and paper colour of a questionnaire are significant influences on the nature and speed of response. Dillman (1978) and Nederhof (1988) variously identified that a bold cover image, contrastive lettering and a picture can stimulate greater interest amongst the sample population and therefore prompt a response. Scott (1961), Cavusgil and Kirk (1998) and Greer et. al. (2000) alternatively stated that paper colour can stimulate a response. In particular, LaGarce and Kuhn (1995) found the use of yellow or green paper can have a significant impact upon response rates. It was therefore decided to use yellow paper and black type to facilitate a stronger response to the questionnaire and the Leeds University logo was displayed prominently on the front cover to emphasise the status of the study. Statements about confidentiality were also made on the front cover, throughout the questionnaire and in the covering letter which was enclosed in the questionnaire pack. As Bryman and Bell (2003) pointed out, this is not only an ethical consideration but also serves to protect the identity and interests of the respondents. Moreover, Saunders et. al. (2003) noted that sample members are more likely to respond if they know their identity is secure.

¹³ The English Football League declined to be associated with or participate in the research.

As a final technique for maximizing the response rate, the use of incentives was considered. There has been widespread debate about the cost-effectiveness of such techniques embracing a discussion of the relative merits of prizes (Hubbard and Little 1988; London and Dommeyer, 1990), enclosing cash in the questionnaire pack (Jobber, 1986; Walker et. al., 1987) and the provision of non-monetary material gain (Hansen, 1980; Nederhof, 1983). In the relationship between football clubs and sponsors, the relevance of incentives is questionable. It is an industry where corporate hospitality and high levels of expenditure (on players, sponsorship deals and leveraging) are common place. Given additional considerations, such as the resource constraints faced by academic researchers and the general underdevelopment of football club marketing and commercial departments, three levels of incentive were offered to respondents. These were copies of the results from the questionnaires, a prize draw to win a magnum of champagne and a prize draw to win a copy of a sport management textbook.

Despite the supposed appeal of response incentives, there is a stronger body of evidence to indicate the use of follow-up methods is a stronger influence on response rates (Dillman, 1978; Walker, et. al., 1987; Sutton and Zeits, 1992). A five-stage framework has been recommended (de Vaus, 2002) consisting of pre-notification, questionnaire dispatch, and first, second and third follow-up letters. This study adopted this approach but only used two follow-up letters. There were two reasons for this, principally that football clubs and sponsors begin to prepare for a new season at the end of July and it was therefore felt further responses would be unlikely at this stage. Being more pragmatic, it was also felt the total response secured after the second follow-up mailing was sufficiently large enough to ensure the validity of the research.

3.5.6 Determination of an appropriate questionnaire length-the appropriate length for a questionnaire has been widely debated. According to de Vaus (2002), researchers must manage multiple challenges including the maximum number of pages the researcher can use to guard against response rate problems, the number of questionnaires required to meet research objectives and the appeal of space and design. Kanuk and Berenson (1975) believed response rates fall as questionnaire length increases, Berdie (1973) noted the opposite effect and Fox, et. al. (1988) found no significant effects in either case. Dillman et. al. (1993) believed the ultimate length should therefore be bound up in the aesthetic of the questionnaire, with further reference being made to one's research objectives. When using quantitative data analysis techniques, this is an especially pertinent observation. The number of questions the researcher can include within a questionnaire will be directly driven by the conventions of the statistical techniques being

employed. For example, in the case of factor analysis, estimates of the number of cases to factors being analysed varies between 5 (Pallant, 2001) and 300 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). As such, the researcher has to reconcile the demands of the potentially large number of items needed for statistical purposes and the likelihood that longer questionnaires may lead to smaller response rates. As a benchmark, Jankowicz (2002), and Saunders et. al. (2003), advocated an optimum questionnaire length of between four and eight double-sided pages.

Given potential response problems, especially amongst football clubs, allied to the relatively small sample size (n=182) and the formative nature of this research, concerns about questionnaire length were acute. The initial version of the questionnaire used during pilot testing (which is discussed below) was nine double-sided pages long but was later condensed down to seven double-sided pages. This followed discussions with the pilot sample about the relevance of specific question items and subsequent referral back to the sponsorship and commitment literature. To further negate the potential problems of length, page numbers were also removed from the questionnaire to limit perceptions the questionnaire might be too long.

3.5.7 Selection of question types-in preparing a questionnaire, Kornhauser and Sheatsley (1976), Dillman (1978) and Oppenheim (1992) advised working through the following process on an item-by-item basis to maximise its effectiveness: 1) steering-determination of the most appropriate form of wording in order to secure unbiased responses; 2) format-determination of the response format that is most likely to generate the data needed for the purposes of the study; 3) item content-determination of content which is most likely to elicit a valid response; 4) item wording-determination of wording that is clear and unambiguous; 5) recording answers-determination of response format and associated instructions; 6) analysis-determination of items which are consistent with the intended method of analysis. In addition, the process of replication and extension, noted elsewhere in this study, was a key determinant of the question types used by this study. As such, issues relating to the selection and construction of question types were less pressing than others associated with the formulation of the questionnaire. Of the ten scales appearing in the original questionnaire, seven were drawn from existing studies and adapted for the purposes of this study. Bourque and Clark (1994) accepted this as common practice, whilst Bryman and Bell (2003) confirmed the acceptability of using the approach noting that use of questions from other studies is advantageous for a number of reasons, including the chance to use pre-tested items and the opportunity to make comparisons with other research. They nevertheless cautioned against using existing items without first understanding the purpose of them.

Following recommendations made by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002), regarding the use of questionnaires in explanatory research, by undertaking a thorough review of the literature, conducting CIT interviews and pilot testing an initial questionnaire, such concerns have been accounted for by this study. This process also led to the development of a further three scales specifically for the study. These were devised in accordance with the process noted above, with Dillman's (2000) observations about the collection of data relating to opinion variables, Cox's (1980) conclusions about the optimal number of responses for a scale and Foddy's (1994) work on the formulation of scales, informing the process. In addition, following Schindler and Cooper's (2001) view that researchers should ensure they are collecting relevant data, a data requirements table was also compiled for each item.

Given the dyadic nature of the study, two versions of the questionnaire were devised for despatch to respondents during the pilot and the final stages. In the case of the football club questionnaire, the word 'sponsor' was used throughout the document. For sponsors, this was reversed. A further semantic point is that different versions of the questionnaire were sent out to different dyads. The reason being that, of the 92 dyads, 25 involved deals which were being re-negotiated or were due to be terminated. Where relevant, the questionnaire was therefore sent in either present tense or past tense form. Using guidance provided by Pallant (2001) and Saunders et. al. (2003), the questionnaire was constructed to facilitate ease of coding prior to data inputting.

3.5.8 Covering letters and envelopes-there are a number of issues one has to consider when formulating a cover letter and dispatching questionnaire packs to the sample population. Research relating to the use of personalised letters and mailings reveals some studies strongly advocate this is a major influence on response rates (Kerin and Harvey, 1976; Clark and Kaminski, 1990; Dillman, 2000), whilst others (Kimball, 1961) dismiss its relevance. Given the general absence of research involving football clubs and the poor response rates reported in instances where research has taken place, it was decided to use a personalised approach. Once the CMMA had agreed to endorse the study, this became inevitable rather than desirable as the Chief Executive was able to use personal relationships with his members to facilitate a response. Following Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites' (2002) earlier studies of football shirt sponsors, the benefits of personalising letters also appears to have been proven.

In terms of content, there is little evidence to suggest brief letters are any more likely to be positively received than longer ones (Jobber and Saunders, 1993), nor that setting deadlines leads to improved response rates (Futrell and Hise, 1982). However, research indicates assurances of confidentiality (Futrell and Hise, 1982; Tyagi, 1989) and the use of various appeals (Kerin and Harvey, 1976) are important influences on the extent and quality of response. Research suggests egoistic and altruistic appeals will positively influence response, whilst the emphasis of 'societal' benefit (Simon, 1967; Vocino, 1977) and novelty (Houston and Nevin, 1977; Jones and Linda, 1978) may also help.

To establish the relevance of the project for sponsors, and to enable the Chief Executive of the CMMA, as a third party, to communicate the value of it to his members, a letter containing details of the study was attached to the questionnaire. This was restricted to one side of A4 paper in the belief that longer documents would limit response behavior, especially amongst football clubs. The use of deadlines was discounted for the reasons stated above, although the close season break effectively imposed natural deadlines upon the response timeframe. In addition to assurances of confidentiality, a combination of various appeals was incorporated into the letter. These included the following: egoistic ("Your response therefore counts!"; "Win a magnum of champagne"), altruism and societal benefit ("It is intended that the study will identify ways in which shirt sponsors and football clubs can build durable, strategic, mutually beneficial relationships with one another") and novelty ("Leeds University is currently undertaking a major study of the relationships between shirt sponsors and professional football clubs in England"). Further work focusing on the importance of stamped versus business reply envelopes (Kimball, 1961; Veiga, 1984) indicated use of the former positively influences response behavior. The first and second mail out's of the questionnaire therefore used personalised, stamped addressed envelopes. In turn, these contained stamped, addressed envelopes for return postage.

3.5.9 Time scale within which questionnaires are despatched and returned-the time of the year when questionnaires are despatched has attracted little attention in the literature, although Delenius (1965) and Losch et. al. (2002) identified it is an important factor in ensuring sample efficiency. Vigderhous (2002) highlighted seasonality as being a key influence on response rates noting that January, February, March and April attract higher response rates and June, July and August lower response rates. Although the relevance of the latter study is acknowledged, the nature of the football season is such that the reverse is likely to be true in the football sponsorship dyad. Clubs are involved in various competitions at the times formerly noted by Vidgerhous, but

are preparing for the following season at the times noted latterly and, so, are not especially busy. Previous research undertaken by Chadwick and Clowes (1998) indeed indicated the summer break is a good time to approach clubs. Following a review of the sponsorship literature, there appears to be no evidence to suggest researchers perceive the time of year to be a key influence on the response rates of sponsoring organisations.

The decision was therefore taken to dispatch questionnaires during June and July 2003. This involved the four stages shown in Appendix 6¹⁴. It has been established that pre-notification is important both as a mechanism for prompting a response from the sample population and for ensuring sampling efficiency (Robson, 2002). However, in spite of Dillman's (1978) recommendation that researcher's follow-up questionnaire mail-out's at one, three and seven weeks after original dispatch, Nichols and Meyer (1966), Fern et. al. (1986), Peterson, et. al. (1989), and Foushee and McLellan (1990) indicated the length of time between mail-out's does not have a significant impact on response and efficiency. Indeed, the findings of Claycombe et. al. (2000), that 'quick follow-up strategies' do not jeopardise response, appear to validate the approach adopted by this study.

3.5.10 Resource implications-having followed the various stages which have been prescribed by the literature, the resource implications of distributing the questionnaire were therefore significant. The costs incurred included postage, photocopying, provision of inducements, clerical support and data entry. In order to offset these costs, an application for a research grant was made to the Leeds University Business School Research Committee. This was successful and served to supplement the additional non-financial support provided by the CMMA. The other financial costs of the study were self-funded.

3.5.11 Analysis of questionnaire data-a number of computer software packages, each incorporating a range of features, are available to researchers seeking to analyse the data generated via questionnaires. The relative merits of each were discussed by Tabachnik and Fidel (1996). They noted that the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is an especially useful package enabling high order calculations to be undertaken, whilst Gratton and Jones (2004) stated it is easy to use, incorporates numerous features, allows large data sets to be used

¹⁴ The table shows the procedure used for the dispatch of questionnaires to football clubs. The reader is asked to note that the same procedure was also used for shirt sponsors.

and facilitates the professional production of tables and charts. For these reasons, and because of access to Version 11.0.0 through Leeds University Business School, SPSS was employed.

3.6 Phase 4-Pilot testing

Pilot testing is an essential prerequisite in the construction and development of a questionnaire, particularly when seeking to use language, words and images that will prove appealing to the sample population and maximise response rates (Fink, 1995). Stylistic and semantic considerations aside, Mitchell (1996) stated pilot testing can help to establish content validity. This occurs via feedback from a small sub-sample of the total sample population. Bell (1999) stressed researchers should refrain from eliminating the pilot phase from their research, noting the importance of gaining feedback on the length of time a questionnaire takes to complete, the clarity of instruction given to prospective respondents, the nature and content of questions asked, and whether any additions or omissions are required. A concern for pilot research is the number and profile of respondents to an initial questionnaire. Although some believe that between 100 and 200 are necessary (Dillman, 2000), Fink (1995) nevertheless believed a minimum of ten is sufficient for the purposes of amending an instrument. Following the latter's advice, and given the problems likely to be associated with securing responses from a high proportion of the sample population, a smaller sub-sample was selected. Using network contacts, especially those established during earlier phases of the research, twelve organisations agreed to participate in the pilot phase of the research. This consisted of representatives from five football clubs and five sponsors, the Chief Executive of the CMMA and the Head of Commercial Relations for the PL. The latter two were included in the sample as an endorser and a representative of clubs respectively. Having secured guarantees from those involved that they would return the questionnaires, pilot testing took place two months prior to the first mail out to the full sample.

Drawing from guidelines provided by Bell (1999), respondents were asked to complete a feedback sheet commenting on the nature, style and content of the questionnaire. In return for undertaking this, respondents were entered into a prize draw to win a £35 gift voucher. A stamped, addressed envelope was also included in the mail out in an attempt to maximise the response rate. A total of ten replies were initially received although, following a series of telephone calls, the final two questionnaires and feedback sheets were returned. The forms revealed general satisfaction with the nature, style and structure of the questionnaire, although some people questioned the administrative arrangements associated with it. These concerns fell into four categories: 1) statement of confidentiality-two respondents expressed concerns that, as a

result of especially sensitive relations with a dyad partner, assurances about the confidentiality of the questionnaire and its findings should be made stronger. To address these concerns, a stronger statement about the strictness of confidentiality was included in the covering letter of all subsequent mail-outs; 2) indication of deadlines-one respondent suggested that setting deadlines would be a good way to maximise response rates, stating "people just stick questionnaires on the pile and then forget to send them back if they are not thought to be pressing." Despite this concern, in the context of time constraints imposed by the football season on sponsorship managers and given evidence from the literature, the decision was taken not to apply deadlines. All subsequent mail-outs were therefore left open-ended; 3) provision of incentives-one respondent stated that sample members would be more likely to respond to the questionnaire if they were offered different incentives, although the respondent failed to indicate the nature of these incentives. Following a telephone call to the person in question, they stated that it is very difficult to motivate people sometimes and that what was being offered by this survey was realistic. No further action was therefore taken; 4) provision of open-ended questions-two respondents expressed a wish for an open ended-section to be included at the end of the questionnaire. The reason given by both was that they wanted to clarify answers they had given in the questionnaire. Although the intention was not to use the survey to collect and analyse such qualitative data, it was felt that it could prompt sample members to respond and might help in identifying potential cases for further analysis in Phase 7 of this study. In the final version of the questionnaire, one side of A4 was therefore made available to those respondents who might want to express more detailed views.

In addition to the feedback sheet, respondents were also asked to complete the questionnaire. In such cases, Pallant (2001) recommended that, if possible, all returns should be subject to a full statistical analysis to ensure the measures employed work properly. The number of returns was too small to be able to generate valid and meaningful results, so a random sample of four organisations (two football clubs and two sponsors) were contacted by telephone in order to discuss their answers. In conjunction with a further review of the literature, the following were modified or removed: 1) Section A: Details about your shirt sponsorship contract-the primary purpose of data gathered from this section of the questionnaire was to confirm details of the sponsorship contract, whilst providing background information about the long-term orientation of the organisations engaged in the dyad. This was not intended to be part of a statistical analysis; 2) Section E: Managing the relationship. Question 7 "There are people in this football club who are not as keen as I am to see our relationship with this shirt sponsor succeed"-upon reflection, this

item was thought to be vague and imprecise, especially when trying to identify the role of a relationship champion. It required respondents to consider the attitudes of others within an organisation which, ultimately, might do little to detract from the role or effectiveness of the person responsible for managing relations with a sponsorship partner. The item was thus removed; 3) Section F: Commitment, Question 7 “We see our relationship with this shirt sponsor as a long-term alliance”-although examples of shirt sponsorship deals being labelled ‘an alliance’ exist, football clubs and shirt sponsors do not commonly conceive of shirt sponsorships in these terms. In one respect, this possibly reflects the prevailing view that a sponsorship relationship is a one-off transaction or short-term contract. But ‘alliance’ appears not to be a commonly held term and the decision was therefore taken to remove the item from the final questionnaire. Additional changes were also made to the spacing and layout of the questionnaire in order to reduce the overall length of the questionnaire. The final questionnaire resulting from feedback gathered during the pilot phase of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 7.

3.7 Phase 5-Quantitative survey

Arndt (1983) observed that nomothetic methods have dominated marketing history. Despite growing interest in other paradigms (Easton, 2002), this continues to be the case with positivism being widely accepted as an orthodoxy. Drawing from the traditions of the natural sciences (Popper, 1959; Kuhn, 1962), positivism is premised on a belief that social reality is observable, enabling the generation of law-like observations (Remanyi et. al. 1998). The ‘truths’ attributable to these generalisations are the result of hypothetico-deductivism, through which highly structured methods are employed to facilitate replication (Gill and Johnson, 1997). There is some scepticism about the relevance of nomothetic methods, and the positivist philosophy, especially for management research (Deshpande, 1983; Hunt, 1990). Others argue that all research is effectively non-positivist (Morse, 1994) for a number of reasons. These include its failure to account for the complexity of social reality (Allport, 1981), for the multi-disciplinary nature of most academic studies (Eden et. al., 1983), for separating reality from the humans engaged in creating it (Jankowicz, 2002) and for utilising over-simplified methods which distort the research process (Bennett, 1986). Despite the scepticism, Jankowicz (2002) identified that positivism has been the most widely used and successful research philosophy over the last two hundred and fifty years, and noted the following framework within which positivists work: a) the theory: a formal statement designed to explain social reality; b) the hypothesis: a relationship between variables deduced from a ‘true’ theory; c) the operational definition: a precise definition of what the researcher intends to measure; d) measurement: the making of observations; e) testing:

conclusions made about the hypothesis; f) verification: implications of the research in relation to theory.

At the heart of this process, is a deductive approach to research whereby an independent, objective researcher engages in a process of explaining causal relationships through the collection and analysis of quantitative data. In marketing, this has typically involved the use of surveys, particularly questionnaires, administered to cross-sectional sample populations¹⁵. This stage of the research process therefore focused on developing a research instrument that would enable the causal relationships between commitment and its determinants to be identified. By employing a survey containing scaled questions designed to generate attitudinal data, this study replicated the methods used in other comparable studies (for example, see footnote 15 below). Research undertaken to this point indicates that commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad is a complex phenomenon, resulting in ten determinants being identified. The questionnaire used consequently consists of ten sections: one relating to the measurement of commitment, the remaining nine to measurement of the identified determinants. As was indicated in Section 3.4.10, the concept of commitment was operationalised using Anderson and Weitz's (1992) definition. Of the nine determinants, communication, shared values, perceived benefits, contract, perception of the other's commitment and trust are operationalised using the conceptualisation and scales originally employed by Anderson and Weitz (1992), Morgan and Hunt (1994), Sarkar et. al. (1997), Jap and Ganesan (2000), Anderson and Weitz (1992) and Moorman et. al. (1992). In the case of managing the relationship, location and timing, each has been conceptualised, with question scales being developed, in the context of findings generated during Stage 2 of this study.

In the light of observations made by Dillman (2000) and de Vaus (2002), question rotation was used to address the potential for response bias. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires, the data contained within them was handled through a four phase process. Firstly, responses were coded in order to convert the data into a form that could be input into SPSS. This also entailed the screening and checking of data to identify errors which may have occurred during coding and the subsequent inputting of returns. Secondly, the reliability of the question scales was undertaken to ensure the scales used were internally consistent. This resulted in a number of items being pruned from the original scales noted above, resulting in the improved reliability of each construct.

¹⁵ For examples of research related to this study that have been completed from within this paradigm, the readers attention is drawn to the following selection of marketing studies which have strongly informed this study: Anderson and Weitz, (1992); Moorman et. al., (1992); Morgan and Hunt, (1994); Ross, et. al. (1997); Sarkar, et. al., (1997); Jap and Ganesan, (2000).

Thirdly, factor analysis was used, primarily because of its established role as a data reduction technique. Following a process of rotation, eleven factors were identified as explaining variance in the model. These formed the basis for the fourth phase during which standard and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were carried out. These were used to identify the strength of inter-correlations between the dependent variable (commitment) and the independent variables (the determinants) of commitment.

The use of standard multiple regression analysis resulted in three factors being identified as statistically significant determinants of commitment. In order to confirm conclusions regarding the relationships between these three determinants and commitment, three further measures were employed. The ten factors, with the commitment factor set as the dependent variable and the other nine set as independent variables (Factor 10 was removed from the analysis because no items greater than 0.4 loaded on the factor) were firstly analysed using hierarchical multiple regression. Secondly, alternative models were tested in which the nature and direction of the relationships between variables was changed. A final stage was undertaken consisting of a series of structured, in-depth, face-to-face dyadic interviews being conducted with football clubs and their shirt sponsors (details of this are provided in Section 3.9 below).

3.8 Phase 6-Quantative data analysis

The selection of appropriate quantitative data techniques depends upon the nature of the objectives set by the researcher from the outset of a study. This decision may be influenced by other research conducted in the area, or the nature of perceived relationships between the variables included in the analytical model (Goodwin, 1998; Stangor, 1998). In making the decision, Pallant (2001) proposed researchers should follow a process that clarifies questions they wish to address, establishes the nature of the items and scales that will enable these questions to be answered, highlights the nature of each variable included in the analytical model and addresses whether the researcher should use parametric or non-parametric statistics. In accepting the role replication and extension play in marketing research, the observations noted above and the findings that emerged during the formative stages of this study, the process of data analysis explained below was employed. Given that items and scales were drawn from previous studies, the techniques of data analysis employed by them, and other related research, formed the basis for techniques employed by this study. Moreover, in the light of observations made by Briggs and Check (1986), Hair et. al. (1992), Pallant (2001) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), techniques

and measures to ensure the robustness of findings from the study were used. This was intended to ensure the validity and reliability of results generated by this study.

3.8.1 Response rate-a total of 182 questionnaires were mailed to 92 football clubs and 90 shirt sponsors¹⁶, of which 110 were returned. This constitutes an overall response rate of 60.4%. A detailed profile of response composition is presented in Appendix 8. Two observations pertaining to the response rate are relevant. Firstly, given the general absence of other dyadic sponsorship studies, and the low response often associated with postal questionnaires (Jobber and O'Reilly, 1998), this constitutes a good return. It also compares well with response rates in other football shirt sponsorship studies, including 68% reported by Thwaites (1995) and 84% reported by Chadwick and Thwaites (2002)¹⁷. The response rate also compares well with those reported in similar dyadic studies in the broader marketing literature. For example, Anderson and Weitz (1992) and Anderson et. al. (1998) reported responses of 58.7% and 54.2% respectively. Secondly, the overall distribution of responses is reasonably even, initially indicating that response bias is not a major concern.

3.8.2 Coding and input of questionnaire data-handling the data generated via a questionnaire for subsequent input into an appropriate computer software package requires careful preparation on the part of the researcher (Robson, 2002). Saunders et. al. (2003) highlighted careful coding of the data as being one of the most important features of this process. Morris (1999) and Pallant (2001) provided guidance on the development of coding procedures, noting how the grouping of data, the allocation of codes and the aggregation of data are important considerations for the coder. De Vaus (2002) explained that missing data or data errors can cause problems for researchers. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) and Pallant (2001) outlined procedures intended to locate and rectify such problems. Drawing from these observations, codes were devised according to each section of the questionnaire. Hence, Question 1 from Section B (Communication) was allocated the code B1 and so on. Missing data and data errors posed relatively few problems because of the relatively small sample size. Nevertheless, following initial input of the data, a second researcher manually checked for omissions and mistakes. Particular attention was paid to reverse item questions. SPSS generated frequencies were also used in order to check for data errors, that is values falling outside the range of possible values. An analysis of the maximum and

¹⁶ The reader is reminded that two shirt sponsors, Desun (Sheffield United) and Keijian (Everton), had no offices in the UK at the time of the study. Both were therefore excluded from the study.

¹⁷ The reader is asked to note that these two studies only involved surveys of shirt sponsors in the English PL and Division 1.

minimum values was used to check that the values of continuous variables fell within the maximum and minimum values prescribed by the item scales.

3.8.3 Analysis of descriptive statistics-the initial presentation of a range of descriptive statistics is recommended in order to describe the characteristics of the data sample and to check for violations of conventions underpinning the statistical techniques used (Pallant, 2001). Techniques that can be used to analyse categorical and continuous variables are recommended by Hair et. al. (1992). In particular, recommendations pertaining to the number of valid cases, and the mean and trimmed mean (at 5% in this case) were observed. The former requires checking in order to confirm sample validity and omission of errors, the latter to assess the influence of outlying values. In cases where mean and trimmed mean “values are very different” (Pallant, 2001, p. 58), manipulation of the data set may be required. In addition, measures of skewness were used to provide an indication of the symmetry of distribution. Positive values indicate positive skew (scores clustered towards low values) and vice versa for negative values. Moreover, the further a value is from zero, the greater the skew. Kurtosis values were also employed to examine the characteristics of the distribution peak. Kurtosis values above zero indicate peaked distributions, those below zero being characterising flat distributions (a zero value indicating a normal distribution). The existence of Kurtosis can lead to the underestimation of variance when sample sizes are less than 200 (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2000). This may create a problem for researchers requiring the transformation of variables or necessitate the use of other methods to confirm findings (Pallant, 2001). In terms of this study, further research stages were employed, most notably the dyad interviews, in order to confirm findings from the quantitative research phase. At this stage, the possible existence of kurtosis is nevertheless identified, with accompanying comments being made.

In line with further observations made by Pallant (2001) and Tabachnick and Fidel (1996), a test of normality (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic) was employed. In this case, non-significant results ($>.05$) indicate normality, although Pallant (2001) suggested that breaches of assumed normality ($<.05$) are not uncommon. Histograms and Normal Q-Q Plots were used to assess the distribution of values, Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots were employed to assess distribution: points are normally expected to be collected around zero, “with no real clustering of points taking place” (Pallant, 2001, p. 59). Finally, boxplots were examined to highlight outliers. In cases where outliers are identified, Tabachnick and Fidel (1996) recommended either an extreme course of action (removing the cases) or a more moderate course of action (revaluing the cases). Pallant

(2001) suggested retaining the cases at the stated values if they are thought to have a relatively small impact upon the dataset and results. A set of results for the descriptive statistics is presented in Appendix 9. Observations made in relation to skewing, the normality of distribution and outliers were not dealt with at this stage for a number of reasons. Firstly, a test of reliability (noted in Section 3.8.4) was used in order to prune items from scales. Secondly, the verification of findings was undertaken using alternative models (noted in Section 3.8.7). Thirdly, a qualitative phase of the research (noted in Section 3.9) was used to test the reliability, validity and generalisability of findings.

3.8.4 Scale reliability-an important consideration when using survey methods is whether or not the questionnaire scales being used are reliable (Pallant, 2001). This observation primarily relates to the internal consistency of the scales employed and concerns the extent to which the scales employed are all measuring the same thing. A measure commonly used by researchers is Cronbach's alpha which helps to ensure that a set of latent construct indicators are consistent in their measurements (Hair et. al., 1992). According to convention, Cronbach alpha values should be above 0.7. In cases where values fall below 0.7, items may be pruned from a scale in order to increase its reliability. Scale reliability for each of the items used in this questionnaire is presented below:

-Communication: according to Anderson and Weitz (1992) their communication scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.835. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.85. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

-Shared values: according to Morgan and Hunt (1994) their shared values scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.76. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.59. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, items C1 ('To succeed in this business, it is often necessary to compromise one's ethics') and C2 ('If an employee is discovered to have engaged in unethical behavior that results primarily in personal gain-rather than corporate gain, he or she should be promptly reprimanded') were therefore pruned from the scale. This improved correlation between the remaining items and the scale variance, resulting in a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.77.

-Perceived benefits: according to Sarkar et. al. (1997) their perceived benefits scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.78. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.86. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

-Managing the Relationship: this is a new scale developed as part of this study. With a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86, the scale had good reliability. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

-Commitment: according to Anderson and Weitz (1992) their commitment scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.9. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.42. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, items F2 ('We are continually on the look out for another deal to replace our current one with this sponsor') and F3 ('We expect to be sponsoring this football club for some time') were therefore pruned from the scale. This improved correlation between the remaining items and the scale variance, resulting in a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.72.

-Location: this is a new scale developed as part of this study. With a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.79, the scale had good reliability. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

-Timing: this is a new scale developed as part of this study. With a Cronbach alpha coefficient of -0.46, the scale had poor reliability. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, the entire scale was removed from the study because, even after pruning, the scale failed to achieve a Cronbach's score of 0.7. This indicates the items contained in the scale are unlikely to have been measuring the same thing.

-The Contract: according to Jap and Ganesan (2000) their contract scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.57. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.67. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, item I4 ('The written shirt sponsorship contract represents our total commitment to them') was therefore pruned from the scale. This improved correlation between the remaining items and the scale variance, resulting in a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.71.

-Perception of the Sponsor's Commitment: according to Anderson and Weitz (1992) their perception of sponsor's commitment scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.9. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.85. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

-Trust: according to Moorman et. al. (1992) their trust scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.84. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.93. For the purposes of subsequent analysis, all items in the scale were therefore retained.

3.8.5 Factor analysis-the use of factor analysis in preliminary analyses of commitment is widespread for which there are two principle explanations: firstly, it is often used as data

reduction technique when there are large sets of variables that need to be summarised into smaller groupings (Pallant, 2001); secondly, it enables factors or components to be generated through an analysis of intercorrelations between variables that appear to group together (Kline, 1994). Hair et. al. (1992, p. 225) defined factor analysis as: "A generic term given to a class of multivariate statistical methods whose primary purpose is data reduction and summarisation....it addresses itself to the problem of analysing the interrelationships among a large number of variables and then explaining these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions". Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) identified that PCA and FA are the two most commonly used forms of factor analysis. Stevens (1996) expressed a preference for using PCA because it is psychometrically sound, is mathematically simpler and avoids factor indeterminacy. Tabachnick and Fidell's (1996) observation, that PCA provides a good empirical summary of a data set, added to this argument.

The family of techniques falling within the broad umbrella of factor analysis are not without their generic problems. A common failing is that factor analyses are sometimes difficult to interpret, especially when correlations between variables are low or when there are a large number of intercorrelations between variables (Hair et. al., 1992). A second problem is there are no criterion variables against which to test a factor solution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Kline (1994) also warned against the problems associated with factor rotation. Although this process will be detailed below, it is sufficient to say the scope for interpretation during this process is such that a researcher's subjectivity inevitably impacts upon it. In the light of these weaknesses, some have concluded that, unless it is approached systematically, factor analysis may constitute little more than 'sloppy research' (Cattell, 1978). In order to address some of these concerns, Pallant (2001) identified factor analyses are often used in conjunction with other multivariate statistical techniques, which is evident in existing studies of commitment particularly during the formative stages of research. Hair, et. al. (1992), Kline (1994) and Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) alternatively identified a number of stages through which a 'good' factor analysis should be undertaken. These are: Stage 1-Assessment of the suitability of data for a factor analysis; Stage 2-Factor extraction; Stage 3-Factor rotation and interpretation.

The approach to factor analysis adopted by this study embraces observations made regarding usage of the technique, but also replicates how it has been used in other studies of commitment, especially in the marketing literature (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Moorman et. al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Ross, et. al., 1997; Sarkar, et. al., 1997; Jap and Ganesan, 2000).

Factor analysis was therefore used with the principal aim of it being a data reduction technique. This is important given the absence of studies examining commitment in the sponsorship and the consequent failure to understand the phenomenon. It also serves as the basis for subsequent analysis of the data using other multivariate techniques (multiple regression analysis) and qualitative methods (face-to-face interviews).

Stage 1: Assessment of the suitability of data for a factor analysis-when using factor analysis, there are two issues that researchers initially need to address: the sample size and the strength of the relationships among the items. Comrey and Lee (1992) highlighted a continuum of sample sizes ranging from 50 (classed as being poor for the purposes of factor analysis) through to 1000 (classed as excellent). Others have suggested smaller sample sizes will suffice (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996), especially given developments in software and measurement techniques (Stevens, 1996). Nunnally (1978) alternatively recommended the number of cases to scale items is a more important indicator of suitability, suggesting a ratio of 10 cases to each scale item to be analysed. Opinion seems to be divided, with some arguing this ratio can be as low as 5 to 1 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996) or even 2 to 1 (Kline, 1994). In either case, the general rule of thumb seems to be: the bigger the sample size or the higher the ratio, the better.

Establishing the strength of relationships among the items is important because it serves to confirm the appropriate use of factor analysis. If a matrix of items does not contain several sizeable correlations, it is likely that factor analysis cannot be used to analyse the data (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Following a factor analysis, it is recommended researchers inspect the correlation matrix to check for coefficients of greater than 0.3 (Pallant, 2001). Alternative measures of the factorability of data have been provided by Bartlett (1954) and Kaiser (1970; 1974). The Bartlett test of sphericity is often criticised as being overly sensitive but it is an especially good measure when used with small ratios of cases to scale items. For a factor analysis to be considered appropriate, the test should be significant ($p < .05$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is commonly held to be a more sophisticated test. This provides an indication of the reliability of relationships between pairs of variables which is measured using an index that ranges from 0 to 1. The data should achieve a score of 0.6 or more if the factor analysis is to be a good one. Drawing from Kline (1994), a 58 item questionnaire was despatched to a sample of 182 clubs and sponsors. Following the pruning of 12 items from the questionnaire and with 110 responses, the item to case ratio exceeded the benchmark 2 cases to 1 scale item rule. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.3 and above.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.842, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p < 0.5$). According to these measures, the data was therefore suitable for factor analysis. An overview of the statistical output generated at this stage of the research is presented in Appendix 10.

Stage 2: Factor extraction-the purpose of factor extraction is to identify the smallest number of factors that can be used to best represent the interrelationships among a set of variables (Pallant, 1996). There are various techniques which can be used to perform extraction including principal factors, image factoring and maximum likelihood factoring¹⁸. The most commonly used approach is principle components analysis which leads to the identification of components or factors through an analysis of all the variance in observed variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). The best outcome when using this technique is a solution that generates as few factors as possible which account for as much variance in the data as possible.

In order to achieve this, two tests are commonly used to limit the number of factors identified by a solution; these are Kaiser's criterion and Catell's Scree test. Kaiser's criterion uses eigenvalues, which account for the amount of the total variance explained by a factor, to identify factors that should be retained. In such cases, factors with a value of 1.0 or more are normally retained. One of the problems with this approach is that too many factors are often retained, in which case Catell's Scree test represents an alternative of complimentary technique. SPSS automatically produces plots of eigenvalues which Catell (1966) recommends retaining factors above a break in the plotted values. These factors are then identified as accounting for most of the variance in the data.

Using principle components analysis, 11 components were identified as having eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 75.41% of the variance in the model. An inspection of the screeplot revealed a clear break after the first component. Thereafter, a number of components were identified as having a marginal effect. It was therefore decided to utilise Kaiser's Criterion from which 11 components were retained for further investigation.

Stage 3: Factor rotation and interpretation-following Stage 2, during which the factors are normally reduced to a more manageable number, the researcher is required to interpret them. To

¹⁸ The reader's attention is drawn to Chapters 3 and 4 of Kline (1994) for a detailed assessment of the respective merits of different techniques.

assist in this process, factors are normally rotated in order to maximise the high correlations and minimise the low ones (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Various rotation methods are available although the orthogonal and oblique factors solutions are most commonly used (Pallant, 1996). Both lead to similar outcomes but orthogonal produces results that are easier to interpret and report. However this approach is based upon an assumption that underlying constructs are uncorrelated. Oblique rotation is more difficult to interpret but accounts for correlation between factors. Thurstone (1947) proposes that researchers should use whichever approach enables them to develop a clear structure. An additional consideration for users of SPSS is the availability of different rotation techniques. In cases where orthogonal rotation has been employed, the Varimax method is recommended. When oblique rotation is employed, Direct Oblimin is commonly used (Pallant, 2001). One concern when using SPSS is that, unlike some other packages, it does not interpret or label factors. Researchers are therefore required to interpret the output using prior knowledge of other related studies or theoretical frameworks.

To aid in the interpretation of the 11 factor components, orthogonal varimax rotation was performed, converging in 20 iterations. Using Comrey and Lee's (1992) guidelines, variables with loadings over 0.4 were retained because they are identified as being fair measures of a factor (factors with loadings over 0.7 are considered to be excellent measures of a factor). This resulted in the rotated solution which revealed that eleven components explained 75.406% of total variance in the proposed model. Weightings loaded most heavily on factors 1 and 2 and no loadings over 0.4 were recorded for factor 10. Of the other remaining factors, variances within the range 2.913 to 8.135 were identified. The factors were interpreted as follows: Factor 1: Trust; Factor 2: Communication; Factor 3: Managing the relationship; Factor 4: Location; Factor 5: Perceived benefits; Factor 6: Shared values; Factor 7: Contractual terms; Factor 8: Opportunistic behavior; Factor 9: Commitment; Factor 10: Informal relations. These were identified and labelled by a team of two researchers working together.

A more detailed explanation of the factors takes place in Chapter 4. The results at this stage were generally characterised by a failure of the factor analysis to reduce the data. As a result, the ten factors (factor 10 in the output shown in Appendix 10 was omitted) formed the basis for a subsequent multiple regression analysis.

3.8.6 Multiple regression analysis-MRA has been used in a multitude of commitment studies¹⁹ although MRA is an umbrella term for a number of techniques, the purpose of which is to explore the relationship between a continuous dependent variable and a number of independent variables, sometimes called predictors. Although it is a form of correlation analysis, it is a more sophisticated technique that allows complex research questions to be addressed (Pallant, 2001). Hair et. al. (1992, p. 25) defined multiple regression as: “A statistical technique that can be used to analyse the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables. The objective of MRA is to use the independent variables whose values are known to predict the single dependent value the researcher wishes to know. The result is a variate, a linear combination of the independent variables that best predicts the dependent variable.”

Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) identified three types of MRA that can be used: standard, hierarchical and stepwise. Standard MRA is the most commonly used form and predicts the variance in a dependent variable resulting from a set of independent variables. This approach is significant because programmes such as SPSS simultaneously enter variables into the MRA. This contrasts with Hierarchical MRA which enters variables in a sequence determined by the researcher. The final type of MRA, Stepwise, requires the researcher to provide SPSS with a set of independent variables which the package then enters into the analysis according to a set of statistical criteria. Stepwise regression is identified as being a controversial form of MRA and Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) emphasised that researchers should be cautious when using it.

There are further problems associated with using MRA, the most fundamental of which is that correlation between variables does not prove a causal relationship exists (Fox, 1991; Berry, 1993). This suggests that variables other than those included in a model may explain a greater proportion of the variance. At this point, a researcher may have the opportunity to add in further independent variables to the model which effectively reduces MRA to a highly subjective process. In other cases, a large number of independent variables may predict the dependent variable to the extent that little understanding of the latter emerges. There are nevertheless a series of measures that can be employed in order to mitigate against such problems. Drawing from Hair et. al. (1992), Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) and Pallant (2001), these can be incorporated into a series of stages that are summarised thus: Stage 1-Checking the assumptions

¹⁹ The reader's attention is drawn to Rylander et. al. (1997) and Meyer et. al. (2002) for a detailed overview of examples.

of multiple regression; Stage 2-Evaluating the model; Stage 3-Evaluating the independent variables.

Whilst the use of factor analysis is good for reducing the amount of data a researcher has to work with, it is not intended to test hypotheses. The purpose of this study is such that establishing the nature and strengths of the relationships between commitment and its determinants are an imperative. Consistent with usage in the commitment studies and recommendations made in the multivariate statistics literature, Standard MRA is initially employed to support or reject the hypotheses postulated by this study. However, in order to account for the relative strength of specific independent variables, and for the purposes of verifying the results of the Standard MRA, Hierarchical MRA was also used. Concerns regarding the interpretation of output from an MRA and the causal relationship between the dependent (commitment) and independent (the determinants) variables were addressed by employing the stages outlined above. The final stage of face-to-face dyadic interviews was also an important feature in confirming the validity and reliability of findings from the MRA. A full set of results for the MRA is presented in Appendix 11. Observations pertaining to each stage of the analytical process are discussed below. A more detailed interpretation and analysis of the results appears in Chapter 4.

Stage 1: Checking the assumptions of multiple regression-there are three main issues the researcher needs to address when using MRA. These are the ratio of cases to independent variables, the possibility of singularity or multicollinearity and how to handle outliers. The sample size is a particular concern because small samples may not generate scientifically acceptable findings which are generalisable to other samples. As a consequence, there is a debate concerning the appropriate size for a sample with Stevens (1996) indicating there must be 15 subjects per independent variable when using standard or hierarchical MRA. Green (1991) alternatively specified a formula that samples should meet the following criteria: $N > 50 + 8m$ where N =number of cases and m =number of independent variables. When using stepwise multiple regression, the requirements are tighter still, with Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) stating there should be a ratio of 40 cases for each independent variable.

The relationship between independent variables also needs to be checked by the researcher. Multicollinearity is said to exist when independent variables are strongly correlated. In order to test for multicollinearity, Berry (1996) recommended using R (the Pearsonian correlation) values which, if they are greater than 0.9, indicate multicollinearity is a problem. Outliers may also pose

problems as MRA is especially susceptible to them. In the light of previous checks employed by this study, these were not thought to be a particular problem. However, to reinforce the methodology's validity, additional procedures were employed. Mahalanobis distances produced by the SPSS viewer were used to check the influence of outliers. As Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) identified, pre- or post- regression procedures employed to check for outliers are both acceptable. A final task for researchers using MRA entails an analysis of the residual scatterplots produced by packages such as SPSS. This enables the normality (the distribution of residual values around the predicted dependent variable scores), linearity (the nature of the straightline relationship between residual values and dependent variable scores) and homoscedasticity (the extent to which the variance of residual values around the predicted dependent variable scores are the same) of the model to be assessed.

Given the factor analysis' failure to reduce the data into a more manageable form, MRA was used both to establish the influence of independent variables over the dependent variable and to isolate the key determinants of commitment. In the light of observations made above regarding the number of cases to variables, standard MRA was used to determine the nature of the relationship between the dependent variable (commitment-Factor 9 in the factor analysis output) and the nine independent variables (trust, communication, managing the relationship, location, perceived benefits, shared values, contractual terms, opportunistic behavior, informal relations). The strict requirements on sample size when utilising stepwise MRA eliminated it from potential use. As a result, standard MRA was employed, with hierarchical MRA being used for verification purposes.

In the light of Stevens (1996) and Green's (1992) observations, somewhere between 122 and 135 cases were needed to ensure the generalisability of findings from the MRA. However, following guidance provided by Larsson (1993), Hampton (2003) and Statsoft (2003), it is nevertheless suggested an MRA can be undertaken with as few as five observations for each independent variable included in the model. Following standard MRA, 3 independent variables (shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior) were identified as statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable. This falls within the recommended ratio of variables to cases, which lies between 45 (Stevens) and 74 (Green).

Pallant (2001) recommended an initial analysis of results to ensure there is some relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Shared values (0.577), communication (0.552)

and perceived benefits (0.539) show evidence of high correlation. Trust (0.470), opportunistic behavior (0.444) and contractual terms (0.311) show evidence of medium correlation. The model reaches statistical significance with Sig. = .000. Two independent variables, location and informal relations, are weakly correlated with the dependent variable and fail to reach statistical significance. A further analysis of the results confirms neither multicollinearity nor outliers pose a problem. For the former, Pallant (2001) explained that when low values (towards zero), are recorded, the possibility of multicollinearity is high. An examination of the Tolerance figures in the Coefficients table indicates six of the independent variables have respectable values, suggesting multicollinearity may be an issue. In one case (communications), there are indications it could be an issue. With outliers, the critical chi-square value for nine independent variables was identified as 27.877. Having checked the Mahalanobis distances, one outlier was detected with a value of 32.434. As Pallant (2001) observes, it is not unusual for a small number to appear and it was therefore decided to retain this outlier within the analysis.

Following observations made by Pallant (2001) with regards to normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and the independence of residuals, there are no further concerns. A review of the Normal Probability Plot indicates the regression standardised residuals lie in a straight diagonal line running from left to right. The Scatterplot of standardised residuals shows a rectangular distribution approximately concentrated in the centre (zero value). This also provides further confirmation that outliers are not a problem as the Scatterplot shows the residuals fall within the recommended range of -3.3 to +3.3 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

Stage 2: Evaluating the model-Pallant (2001) recommended R Square values should be inspected to evaluate the model fit. This is otherwise known as the Coefficient of Determination, defined by Hair et. al. (1992, p.20) as: “The proportion of the variance of the dependent variable about its mean that is explained by the independent, or predictor, variables”. SPSS also produces figures for Adjusted R Square which is particularly important in cases where the sample size is small. The reason for this is that R Square figures normally overestimate the variance in the dependent variable attributable to the independent variables. The adjusted values are therefore thought to provide better estimates of population values (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996).

The R Square figure identified for this model was 0.492, indicating that 49.2% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. Given the small sample size, the adjusted R Square figure is 0.446, indicating that 44.6% of the variance in the dependent variable is

explained by the model. In the light of observations made by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) and Pallant (2001), and in comparison with figures reported by, amongst others, Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Rodriguez and Wilson (2002), this is a respectable result. In order to assess the statistical significance of results from the MRA, an inspection of the ANOVA table indicates Sig. =.000. The result therefore reaches statistical significance thus proving the null hypothesis that multiple R in the population equals zero.

Stage 3: Evaluating the independent variables-the final stage of an MRA involves checking which of the independent variables included in the model contribute to predicting the dependent variable. Using standardised Beta Coefficients, direct comparisons can be made between the independent variables in order to compare the relative predictive power over the independent variable (Hair et. al., 1992). SPSS also generates Significance figures which allow the unique contributions of individual variables to be identified. This occurs when the 'Sig' value for a dependent variable is less than 0.05.

The three strongest unique contributions were recorded for shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior, with associated Beta values of 0.309, 0.274 and 0.197 respectively. This shows these three variables make the largest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable when the variance explained by the other dependent variables included in the model are controlled for. Further inspection of the Sig. values for each of these three variables indicates figures of 0.001 (shared values), 0.007 (perceived benefits) and 0.021 (opportunistic behavior). Each variable can therefore be said to be making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. Given a requirement that Sig. > 0.05 in order to demonstrate a significant unique contribution none of the remaining independent variables reach statistical significance. The results of the standard MRA therefore show that, in order from the largest to the smallest, shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior make the strongest unique contributions to explaining the dependent variable.

3.8.7 Verification-in order to verify the results of the standard multiple regression, a second phase of data analysis was undertaken. This utilised hierarchical regression to test the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Sometimes referred to as sequential regression, independent variables are entered into the regression model in an order determined by the researcher (Pallant, 2001). This enables the researcher to assess the relative influence of each independent variable upon the dependent variable. Following

procedures presented by Hair et. al. (1992), variables were inserted to the model based upon the results of the factor analysis. Hence, trust was inserted first, followed by communication, and so on. The main aim of this process was to verify the initial findings resulting from the standard multiple regression analysis.

A summary of the output from the Hierarchical MRA is presented in Appendix 12. An examination of R Square values in the model summary table shows the model as a whole explains 49.2% of the variance in the dependent variable, with the adjusted R Square indicating the model accounts for 44.6% of variance. The data presented in this column represents a cumulative total of variance as each independent variable is added to the model. In order to assess how much of the overall variance is explained by each independent variable, figures for R Square Change need must be considered. Following the addition of independent variable 1 (trust) to the model, the R Square Change value is 0.221. This indicates that an additional 22.1% of the variance in commitment is explained by trust when the effects of other independent variables are controlled. When independent variable 2 is added to the model, the R Square Change value is 0.09, indicating this explains an additional 9% of variance and so forth. Figures shown in the Sig. F Change column indicate the addition of trust, communications, perceived benefits, shared values and opportunistic behavior to the model achieve statistical significance, where $p < 0.05$. The ANOVA table shows the model as a whole is significant [$F(9, 109^{20}) = 10.761, p < 0.0005$]. An examination of the Coefficients table reveals how much each of the independent variables contributes to the regression equation. Results for the model, with all the variables entered into the equation, are shown in Model row 9. At Sig. < 0.05 , three variables reach statistical significance. They are shared values (Beta = 0.309), perceived benefits (Beta = 0.274) and opportunistic behavior (Beta = 0.197). These results confirm those obtained following the standard MRA.

In the light of findings from previous studies, where trust is not only identified as a determinant of commitment but also a mediating variable between the independent variables (the determinants) and the dependent variable (commitment), further analysis of the relationship between trust and commitment was undertaken. Following standard and hierarchical multiple regression analyses, there appears to be no statistically significant relationship between trust and commitment in football shirt sponsorship dyads. Hence, a further standard MRA was undertaken.

²⁰ 109 denotes calculation with the outlier removed.

with commitment being held as the dependent variable and trust as the independent variable, in order to test the accuracy of these findings.

Inspection of the of the correlation matrix indicates a medium strength relationship between the dependent and the independent variable, with the R Square figure for this model being 0.221. This shows that 22.1% of the variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variable. Given the small sample size, the adjusted R Square figure is 0.214, indicating that 21.4% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. This is a relatively weak relationship, although one which does nevertheless achieve statistical significance (Sig. = .000) for the null hypothesis. Unlike in some other studies (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Sarkar, et. al., 1997; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000) where trust and commitment are identified as being strongly related, there appears to be a relatively weak link between commitment and trust in the dyadic relationship between club and sponsor.

3.9 Phase 7-Dyadic interviews

The rationale underlying the use of triangulating methods, noted by Smith (1975), Deshpande (1983) and Kane (1985), has already been noted above. This process involves the transition back from one philosophical stance (and its implicit approaches and strategies) to another. Campbell and Fiske (1959) thought the use of multiple methods is an important part of the validation process, whilst Mason (1996, p. 6) stated: "I do not think researchers should be satisfied with producing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study...Research should [therefore] produce explanations which are generalisable in some way, or which have some wider resonance".

Silverman (2000) therefore proposed that researchers should combine qualitative research with quantitative measures of populations. This helps to provide a deeper understanding of social reality than would be the case if quantitative data had simply been used. As Saunders et. al. (2003) noted, business management research is frequently a hybrid of positivism and interpretivism, often reflecting the principles of realism. The integration of such elements in to research studies is also important when small sample size is an issue and may therefore affect the validity of the quantitative output (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996; Hoyle, 1999; Pallant, 2001).

There are a number of techniques available to researchers seeking to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods. Nevertheless, Yin (1994) asserted that case study methods are

especially effective for a number of reasons. Firstly, following the generation of a set of outcomes in specific circumstances, the case analysis of an organisation operating within these circumstances provides a critical test of theory and application in relation to the organisation. Secondly, case analysis enables researchers to compare and contrast the reality of a phenomenon rather than simply describing it. Thirdly, cases help to elucidate the detail of phenomenon in relation to organisations that may not have been examined before. Mason (2002) concurred, noting that cases studies give research a sense of distinctiveness, especially where cross-sectional methods have been used. Miles and Huberman (1994) nevertheless stressed case studies are important not as a means for generalising findings, but as a basis for replication. That is, comparing organisations in a systematic way to establish differences in the variables being studied. Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasised the importance of case selection and the nature of structured sampling methods. But Cooper (1984) believed it is more important to think in terms of the accessible population which, in the light of observations made by Thomas (1995) and Useem (1995), implies researchers may not be able to systematically select representative cases. In such instances, Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002) noted case study methods are flexible, particularly when serving the specific needs of both inductive and deductive philosophies.

In order to triangulate the methods employed in this study, to ensure the relevance of observations made, and to confirm the validity and generalisability of its findings, the seventh phase of research entailed twelve structured, in-depth, face-to-face interviews. These represented six complete dyads, consisting of both club and sponsor. The interviews served the additional purpose of establishing the respective positions of both parties involved in dyadic relations, particularly in relation to the potential asymmetry of commitment. Following observations made by Anderson and Weitz (1992), Anderson et. al. (1997), and Jap and Ganesan (2000), it was intended that such interviews would highlight issues pertaining to perceptions of commitment and commitment behaviors.

Organising interviews involving current sponsorship dyad partners proved to highly problematic. As Thomas (1995) and Useem (1995) have already identified, it is difficult to gain entry to some organisations. In such instances, the recommendation is that network contacts are the primary vehicle for securing access. The selection of dyads in this study was thus driven by the receptiveness of sample members to engage in a dialogue with the researcher rather than by a notion of 'representativeness'. Whilst this might otherwise have been a limitation to the research, it is contended the array of research techniques employed across the study represents an

underpinning framework which ensures the overall relevance of observations made during this phase of the research. Interviews took place between July 2003 and December 2003, involving the parties profiled in Appendix 13. In each case, the key informant responsible for completing the questionnaire sent during Phase 3 of the research was interviewed. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

The data generated from these interviews was read and analysed using similar methods and procedures to those detailed in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. As such, several readings of the case materials were carried out with open codes being used to identify and analyse the nature of the three statistically significant determinants of commitment (shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behaviour). Additional open coding was used in order to identify the context-specific nature of these determinants which included an assessment of the impact that factors such as geography and social bonds can have on sponsorship relations. Axial coding was also utilised in order to address the nature and extent of the relationship between the determinants and commitment. A second individual, who read the case notes, was subsequently involved in this process although, in the light of the specific knowledge built up by the researcher during the study, no formal inter-coding measures of agreement were calculated. Rather, the individual served as a facilitator to critical discussion in relation to each case and contributed to interpreting the data and also to labelling the different forms of commitment evident within each of the dyads.

In the spirit of analytical induction (Yin, 1994), this enabled a detailed examination of the case study material enabling the precise nature of commitment and its determinants to be explored. Resulting from this was an identification that the generality of observations made following the multivariate analysis was such that an approach which “was thorough and rich, based on the explored actions and meaning of those who participate in the process” (Saunders et. al., 2003, p. 173) was needed. As such, various techniques which might enable the researcher to differentiate between dyads were considered. These included the use of a continuum of commitment, although this was discounted due to the perceived need to provide detailed profiles of the commitment behaviour demonstrated by specific relationship parties and the similarities which would inevitably arise between organisations at opposite ends of the continuum. A further technique considered was a form of positioning map because it was thought that it would facilitate the depiction of different types of commitment, especially by highlighting the relative positions of different dyad members. The main problem with this was that it proved to especially difficult

establishing a meaningful way of representing the four variables which resulted from multivariate analysis (commitment and the three determinants).

Whilst it was not an initial aim of the dissertation to formulate an approach for comparing different dyads, the context specific nature of the observed relationships resulted in a typology of commitment eventually being identified as being the most appropriate way to represent the various behaviours observed in the case material. The relevance of classifying different types of inter-organisational relationship has already been established by Oliver (1990), Bleeke and Ernst (1995) and Rhoades and Lush (1997). Cook et. al. (1999) identified that typologies are important because they bring order to the objects under consideration, thus providing a greater insight into the activities of organisations. Hambrick's (1984) work adds to this by noting how classifications allow researchers to make inferences about the attributes of organisations. This enables the researcher to establish that these organisations are simultaneously similar to but different from other organisational forms. Rich (1992) concurred with this view, stating classifications allow the ordering and comparison of organisations. Rhoades and Lush (1997) nevertheless explained that typologies are more than just classification systems and provide a strong basis for understanding the actions of organizations. They stated that this assists in organisational problem solving and decision making, contributes to predicting the behaviour of organisations, and explains the development of a phenomenon. These characteristics are supported by Doty and Glick (1994, p. 234) who questioned the use of the term 'typology' to describe what are often little more than: "...classification systems that categorise phenomenon into mutually exclusive and exhaustive sets with a series of discrete decision rules". They asserted that typologies are conceptually derived interrelated sets of ideal types which identify multiples of these types with an associated and unique combination of attributes that determine relevant outcomes. As such, typologies are not just classification systems but should be used to postulate specific organisational attributes. Moreover, Doty and Glick (1994) proposed that good typologies should be consistent with conceptual and/or analytical models and should define complete sets of ideal types, accompanied by descriptions using the same set of dimensions.

The specific content of the commitment typology was developed following first and second coder analysis of the questionnaire items upon which the factor analysis had loaded. Despite the amount of qualitative data that was collected (twelve participants and 15 questionnaire items), both the first and second coder were able to reach agreement about the characteristics of the data and to

identify that the data was effectively characterised by the following four types of commitment behaviour:

-Parties that commit to a sponsorship deal primarily for reasons of commercial gain: likely to have a more strategic or long-term view of sponsorship; actively seek to find an appropriate sponsorship partner; sponsorship partner likely to have similar commercial or organisational values.

-Parties that commit opportunistically to a sponsorship deal, motivated only by commercial gain: likely to have a short-term view of sponsorship; often move quickly from one sponsorship partner to another; generally reactive, approaching sponsorship partners as they become available; sponsorship partner often has few, if any, links or similarities.

-Parties that commit to a sponsorship deal for personal reasons or for the benefit of the community, although commercial factors generally still play a part: have a longer-term view of sponsorship, particularly when there are existing links between the sponsorship partners; actively seek sponsorship partners, especially with organisations where there are existing, local or community links; sponsorship partner may or may not have similarities, although could have common location or community profile.

-Parties that are not really sure why they have committed to a sponsorship deal, but perceive it as beneficial; likely to have a short-term view of sponsorship; react to an approach from a prospective sponsorship partner; sponsorship partner may not have any particular links or similarities. The nature and characteristics of each of these types is discussed at length in Chapter 5.

3.10 Conclusions

The main focus of this chapter has been a detailed statement of the methodology used in this study, with the principle aim being to ensure the rigour and credibility of the research undertaken. As such, it is anticipated the output from the study will be reliable, valid and generalisable to other populations. The methodology has also been designed in such a way as to provide the researcher with a thorough understanding of a range of different research paradigms, data collection techniques and data analysis methods. In addition to the academic rigour of the research, the need to ensure practical relevance has been a further pervasive underpinning to the study. The methodology has therefore incorporated the involvement of dyad members across a process which has adhered to the principles of triangulation and replication evident in the literature. It is particularly notable that, in comparison with other related published research, this study is characterised by the breadth, depth and richness of the methods used.

The first stage of the methodology, the collection and analysis of secondary data generated from newspaper articles, press releases and web site reports, enabled the study to be founded upon a social reality perceived by participants in football shirt sponsorship dyads. Whilst the depth of information contained in these pieces of information is relatively limited, the identification of key terminology enabled the researcher to confirm the relevance of the central theme of this study: notions of commitment are fundamental to relations between football clubs and shirt sponsors. Following this confirmation, a second phase of research involving semi-structured interviews was undertaken. Drawing from grounded theory, and based upon the CIT, the interviews were used to help identify the determinants of commitment and to enable the conceptualisation of commitment. Given the current absence of detailed research in the area of sponsorship commitment, the use of critical incident interviews proved to be especially fruitful. The open ended nature of the interviews yielded observations grounded in social reality and produced a rich source of textual information for subsequent analysis. This analysis entailed the coding of transcribed interview data and the determination of inter-coder agreement, from which a series of commitment determinants and a conceptualisation of commitment was provided. Although the primary purpose of the second phase of research was to identify variables that would form the basis for subsequent data analysis, it also served a secondary purpose. As was noted in Chapter 2, studies of commitment across the literature have focused exclusively upon the conceptualisation or quantitative measurement (within the positivist tradition) of commitment. As such, the use of qualitative techniques, whereby dyad members were requested to recount tales of their 'experiences', therefore represents something of a new direction in commitment research.

Drawing from the sixteen interviews, nine commitment determinants were identified, along with a conceptualisation of commitment. In the light of observations concerning the replication of methods in marketing, seven of the ten scales utilised in a survey were drawn from existing studies, the remaining three being formulated specifically for this study. A process involving the analysis of descriptive statistics, tests of scale reliability, the use of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and the verification of findings using alternative models was subsequently employed.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth phases of the research methodology proved to be problematic, principally because of the small sample size used and access/response issues. A sample consisting of clubs and sponsors from only one football season was used because initial work undertaken by

the researcher indicated that retention of contract specific resources and personnel is often limited. Finding reliable and informed respondents to retrospectively complete surveys therefore proved difficult. A further restriction to the sample size was the sole focus upon football shirt sponsorship. However, given that sport sponsorship, especially football, is the predominant form of sponsorship in England, it was felt this was a valid parameter to impose upon the study. In the context of these observations, treatment of the data was thus heavily constrained by statistical convention.

The small sample size meant response data for clubs and sponsors had to be amalgamated in order not to breach statistical convention. Clearly this negated the potential richness of responses made separately by each side of the shirt sponsorship dyad. In order to capture the specific detail of each dyad member, a seventh research phase was therefore incorporated involving interviews with both partners in six relationship dyads. This was intended to confirm the validity, reliability and generalisability of findings made during the quantitative phase of the research. The six dyads are not necessarily representative of the totality of shirt sponsorship dyads, access to both partners being a significant problem. However, they provide a guide to the conceptual and statistical relevance of observations following the quantitative data analysis, in a way that other published commitment studies do not.

Overall, the methodology detailed in this chapter is distinctive in the breadth and diversity of the perspectives and techniques used. Moreover, there are a number of lessons to be learnt at both a generic and a specific level. With regards to the former, the implications for quantitative research when using a small sample are a major consideration, of which all researchers should be aware. A second issue is the importance that should be attributed to triangulation and replication which, whilst they go hand in hand to an extent, are strong principles upon which to design and build a methodology. In this vein, the need to ground business research in social reality is a third consideration for researchers to consider, especially when combined with a view that social reality is an objective phenomenon. To address this point, the study therefore incorporated multiple methods. At a more specific level, when researching football and sponsorship a further number of concluding observations are pertinent. Firstly, gaining access to football clubs continues to be a problem that many researchers have encountered before. It therefore appears important to establish the credibility of research. In this case, an endorsement of the study by an authoritative body proved to be the foundation for a highly satisfactory response rate. Secondly, there are significant temporal considerations for any research engaging in studies of sponsorship.

In the case of football clubs, many are often unable to remember their shirt sponsors, little more than two or three years after termination. Amongst sponsoring organisations, there are comparable problems in that the employees responsible for managing sponsorship relations may not always remain with an organisation once the sponsorship is terminated. Gaining access to key informants can therefore pose difficulties. A further temporal consideration relating to access is the time of year at which one approaches sample members. During the months from September to May, many potential respondents within football clubs are frequently engaged in other commercial activities and appear to be less receptive to approaches from researchers. Paradoxically, there may also be problems during the summer months when many may be searching for a new sponsor, developing their sponsorship activities for the forthcoming season or away from their clubs on holiday. Whilst these observations are less relevant in the case of sponsors, the start and the end of a football season are not the optimum times for an approach as some may be just starting or about to terminate a relationship. In future studies relating to both sides of the shirt sponsorship dyad, prospective researchers would therefore need to be mindful of such considerations when planning their methodologies.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Overview of chapter

The chapter examines the results of the research study in detail. Drawing from the quantitative data analysis, the determinants of commitment are analysed. This will indicate the nature and strength of relationships between the determinants and commitment in sponsorship relations. Given the small size of the sample forming the basis for the study, the chapter goes on to examine in detail the results of dyadic interviews undertaken to assess the validity, reliability and generalisability of the quantitative findings, as well as to triangulate the methods employed

4.2 Analysis and interpretation of factor analysis

The reader's attention is drawn to the presentation of results from the factor analysis, in particular the rotated factor solution, in Appendix 10. Each of the factors is considered in turn as follows: labelling of the factor, a statement of loadings according to each factor²¹, a commentary on the statistical findings and an analysis of the constitution of each factor.

4.2.1 Factor 1: Trust-fourteen items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.512 (B5), 0.572 (C3), 0.515 (D2), 0.568 (J1), 0.662 (J5), 0.561 (J6), 0.661 (J7), 0.820 (K1), 0.754 (K2), 0.741 (K3), 0.795 (K4), 0.787 (K5), 0.798 (K6) and 0.669 (K7) respectively. The values for Items K1, K2, K3, K4, K5 and K6 are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating trust between club and sponsor may be an important influence on commitment. The factor accounted for 17.340% of total variance. This suggests that if one party to a sponsorship dyad trusts the other, they are more likely to commit to a relationship with them, thus providing support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between trust and relationship commitment.*

This conceptualisation of trust therefore appears to have been an appropriate one, although the relative strength of each loading provides further insights into the nature of it. Most notably, it appears trust has cognitive and behavioral dimensions suggesting the decision of one partner to trust another is based upon both the actions of another party and perceptions of their trustworthiness. The reliability and integrity of the partner are particularly strong elements of this.

²¹ Loadings are presented on an item by item basis. In the case of Factor 1 for example, B5 corresponds to Question 5 in Section B of the questionnaire used by the study.

as are perceptions of their willingness to share information, the need to be cautious when dealing with them and perceptions of their sincerity.

The role of perception seems to be an important one given the links between items from the 'Trust' scale and those from the 'Perception of other's commitment' scale. This suggests a party's commitment is the function of the belief there are grounds for a partner to be trusted. In demonstrating a willingness to share information, or in being sincere in their contact with another partner, a party thus exhibits traits of trustworthiness, providing the grounds for the other to commit to a relationship with them. Additional loadings upon items relating to loyalty suggest this results from a perception that a partner is willing to make concessions and provide information, demonstrating they are prepared to make concessions in order to develop and maintain a stable relationship. This is significant because it highlights an intention to make some form of sacrifice for the greater good of the relationship. This indicates again that trust will be behavioral, founded on the concessions and sacrificial actions of a partner, and cognitive because of a perception the partner is working for the good of the relationship.

The interrelationship between trust and perceptions of another's commitment nevertheless implies that an effect similar to the Prisoner's Dilemma may exist. That is, in making decisions about whether or not to trust a partner, and therefore commit to a relationship with them, judgements will be made about the extent to which the partner is making similar or equivalent sacrifices and concessions. This imbues the sponsorship dyad with a sense that one will trust and commit only if the other party does. As Anderson et. al. (1998) similarly observed, this can be a strongly emotional process bound up in notions of reciprocation and loyalty. What it does suggest is the development of commitment as a function of trust is therefore likely to be an iterative process whereby a relationship is forged and managed through a combined behavioral and cognitive process.

The loading of item B5 on the factor establishes a link between trust and communication. In cases where a partner communicates openly, they exhibit trustworthy behavior which eliminates suspicions they are withholding information pertaining to the relationship. The decision to trust thus has behavioral elements in the sense that communications which are central to the development of the relationship take place. This may be underpinned by cognitive notions about the relevance and value of these communications. In being open and communicative, this demonstrates a willingness to cooperate which helps shape perceptions of another party's

objectives and intent, and whether they see the relationship as being a beneficial one. The process may nevertheless be seen as a risk taking behavior in that open communication on the part of one party may be needed in order to prompt open communication on the part of the other. Communication and trust and therefore likely to be closely related, again suggesting the iterative development of the latter.

In loading upon the trust factor, item C3 establishes that in order to trust a partner, the employees of one dyad party should hold similar values to those in the other dyad party. This is likely to be manifest at a number of levels: it may relate to the personal values of individuals involved in managing relations between the two parties. For example, those who fail to demonstrate an orientation towards maintaining a stable relationship may be deemed untrustworthy. At another level, employee values could be held to represent the wider values of a partner organisation. If there is a basis for trusting an employee within the dyad partner, this could therefore become a function of the trustworthiness of the whole organisation. Ergo, if the employee is trusted, the organisation should be trusted and a commitment can therefore be made to a relationship with them.

Establishing a link between employee values and trust of the organisation within which they work will involve cognitions about their intentions and motives in respect of the relationship. If it is believed values are convergent between employees, a party is more likely to trust them, commit to a relationship and be confident the commitment will be reciprocated. On this basis a partner will fulfil expectations of how they should behave, essentially because they will behave in the same way as their partner. For example, if the self-perception of a party is one of being prepared to make sacrifices in order to develop a stable relationship, convergent employee values will indicate a partner will be likely to adopt a similar orientation towards the relationship. This may nevertheless be linked to relationship behavior in that a partner, in order to trust, will require tangible evidence that values are shared. This could for instance develop through open communication or the provision of information about one's motives and goals.

The notion of one dyad partner trusting the other, depending upon perceptions of their commitment, is confirmed by the loading of item D2 from the Perceived Benefits scale. This indicates trust is more likely to emerge when the other party has already committed resources of value to the relationship which therefore signals they can be trusted. One reason for trusting them on this basis is that some of the resources they commit may be of an idiosyncratic nature which

therefore locks them into the relationship. An alternative view might be that a partner needs the resources contributed by the other party and a decision to trust them is consequently a calculative act. For example, in the case of a football club, trusting a sponsor may be necessary in order to secure revenue, especially if no other alternatives are available. For sponsors, it might alternatively be the case that benefits of, say, association and image transfer are achievable through football shirt sponsorship and unattainable elsewhere. Football could therefore be held as the resource and trusting a club would enable access to it. This process has a cognitive underpinning because one must perceive resources of value are being dedicated by a partner to the dyad relationship. But it is more likely to be behavioral in that trust will be a function of the tangible actions of a partner contributing valuable resources. This is confirmed by the loading of items from the 'Perceptions of partner commitment' scale which indicate the resources will also be significant to the relationship.

Given the importance of perceptions and the allusion to a 'prisoner's dilemma' type situation, the strong implication is of trust influencing commitment in an instrumental way. Because trust is effectively a risk taking behavior, parties to the sponsorship dyad will seek to establish the relative costs and benefits of engaging in a relationship. One interpretation of relations with the partner to whom a sponsor or sponsee ultimately commits is they are the most trustworthy. A more accurate interpretation would be that parties chose to commit to partners whom they perceive are the most trustworthy of a number of alternatives. In allying with a partner, signing a contract, contributing resources and demonstrating a willingness to make sacrifices to maintain a relationship will all reflect commitment emerging out of the trust one has in another party.

There may also be normative and affective elements to commitment decisions emanating from trust. In the case of the former, parties to a relationship may perceive that trusting a partner is an appropriate or a correct way to behave. Although this will probably be dependent upon each partner's relationship orientations, trust demonstrates acceptance of another party's expectations, values and goals. From the discussion appearing in other parts of this chapter, there is confirmation that shared values are important in sponsorship dyads. But trust points to a more general acceptance of a partner's intentions even in cases where values may deviate from one's own. In which case, affective commitment influences, such as perceptions of shared identity and pride of association, could supplement or enhance the bond between sponsor and sponsee. Commitment to a relationship in these terms would thus become a function of the way in which

trust creates a sense of attachment or a feeling of the need to be attached, to a particular relationship.

4.2.2 Factor 2: Communication-ten items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.719 (B1), 0.688 (B3), 0.676 (B4), 0.640 (B5), 0.602 (D1), 0.552 (D2), 0.580 (D3), 0.513 (D4), 0.603 (E1) and 0.528 (E2) respectively. The value for Item B1 is notable for being a strong measure of the factor, indicating regular communication between club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 11.343% of total variance. From the original five item 'Communications' scale employed, four loaded strongly on this factor of which one (B1) is a strong measure of the factor. This indicates the communication that takes place between one dyad partner and another may have an impact upon the commitment exhibited by both parties, thus providing support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between communication and relationship commitment*. A further six items loaded heavily on the factor: four being drawn from the 'Perceived benefits' scale (item D1 being a reasonably strong measure of the factor) and two from the 'Managing the relationship' scale (item E1 also loading reasonably strongly).

Communication is highlighted as an important factor in the relationship between sponsorship dyad partners, with the need for both parties to keep each other well informed identified as being particularly important. An involvement in the marketing efforts of a partner and the provision of advice to them are also strong measures of the factor indicating a willingness to engage in meaningful or productive communications with them is likely to be a signal of commitment intentions. The respective loadings also appear to suggest communication could be of both a solicited and an unsolicited nature, be imbued by a sense of receptiveness and be characterized by the need for reciprocation. Moreover, it seems communication fulfils a coordinating role in the way it helps both parties to ally their marketing and planning activities. Enshrined within the process of communication, the factor indicates openness is important in relations with a partner.

It is unsurprising that items from the 'Communication' scale loaded heavily on this factor, following an earlier observation about communication being one of the cornerstones of relationship commitment. The strength of the loading on item B1 confirms that a willingness to engage in communication is an important element in the relationship between dyad partners. This is likely to serve as an important signal that another party is prepared to commit to a relationship because it is important in shaping perceptions and expectations, and it may involve the disclosure

of relevant or valuable information, which constitutes a risk taking behavior. Above all, a willingness to engage in communication demonstrates a relationship orientation on the part of a party, rather than an inclination towards withholding information and the pursuit of individual gain.

Given strong loadings on both the 'Communication' and 'Perceived benefits' scales, it would seem one of the motives for openly communicating with a partner is that it enables both parties to share information pertaining to the achievement of relationship benefits. The strength of the loading for item D1 indicates communication is also important in helping partners to achieve their goals. In this context, communication appears to be an important factor in helping to build and manage sponsorship relations. The factor loadings emphasise the relevance of the communication that takes place between sponsor and sponsee, particularly in terms in generating value from an association. One element of this pertains to the marketing and planning efforts of both parties, another element relates to the resources they contribute to the relationship.

Communication thus needs to be conceived of in constructive terms. That is, in the way it enables the collaborative achievement of relationship benefits. This is premised on a view that parties need to communicate with their dyad partners if they are to generate maximum value from their association. There may be selfish motives for engaging in communication because the perception may be that one needs to work with a partner in order to achieve one's own objectives. This will nevertheless depend upon the relationship orientation of each party involved in a dyad. What the factor loadings do indicate is relevant, constructive or valuable communications only take place within the period defined by the contractual agreement between sponsor and sponsee. In the event of there being a statistically significant link between communication and commitment, this may be, in part, a function of contract duration.

In communicating with regard to the benefits of their relationship, loadings from the 'Managing the relationship' scale highlight the importance of a marketing manager, a sponsorship manager or another key informant in the process of communicating with a partner. Items E1 and E2 suggest frequency and regularity will be central to the role these personnel fulfil in managing dyad relations. Drawing from the other loadings, there is also a sense the relationship orientation of individuals managing relationships, represented through their willingness to engage in constructive communications, will influence the nature of relations between parties. This implies that it is important for those working within sponsorship dyads to serve as something akin to a

relationship champion. In the light of the commitment concept employed by this study, this will help in signaling commitment intentions whereby the individual communicates which then serves to reduce risk and uncertainty for a partner whilst highlight the potential benefits of engaging in a relationship. This adds strength to the association by helping each of the parties to understand how the relationship can/does work and what it may achieve.

The sense that communication is closely related to the mutual or collaborative achievement of benefits points to dyad partners using it as a vehicle through which they can establish whether or not their association is going to be an advantageous one. The link between communication and commitment may therefore be instrumental enabling the sponsor or sponsee to acquire the best of a range of available alternative partners. But communication is also an instrumental act in itself because it represents an organisation committing a valuable resource to a relationship in order to maintain the stability of a relationship. Indeed, the nature of the communication may be such that it represents an idiosyncratic investment or a side-bet (Becker, 1960) which strengthens the ties a party has to its dyad partner.

The loading of an item from the 'Managing the relationship scale' adds an affective element to this by highlighting the role an individual can have in establishing and managing the congruence of goals and values between sponsor and sponsee. Communication between individuals thus enables the representation of broader organisational attitudes and feelings towards a relationship and may be used to demonstrate a tangible or an intangible desire to develop a relationship. This would help to strengthen relationship identity and create affiliation. At the level of the individual in particular, commitment as function of communication may also reflect a perceived moral obligation to communicate. That is, having signed an agreement with a sponsorship partner, rather than ignoring them, an individual may feel it is their duty to engage with personnel from the dyad partner. Quite what the motives for such behavior might be is unclear from the factor analysis. It could be emotional, and hence affective, but it could equally be instrumental, the individual having made a decision that communication is the best form of behavior in which to engage in order to maximize relationship benefits.

4.2.3 Factor 3: Managing the relationship-five items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.500 (E1), 0.656 (E2), 0.795 (E3), 0.785 (E4) and 0.734 (E5) respectively. The values for Items E3, E4 and E5 are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating the role of an individual in managing the relationship between club and sponsor may be an important

influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 8.135% of total variance. From the original 'Managing the relationship' scale employed, five of the items loaded on the third factor, three of them being strong measures of the factor. This indicates individuals fulfill an important role in managing the relationship between one partner and another and this may impact upon commitment, thus providing support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between the role individual's play in managing relationships and relationship commitment.*

The results therefore establish the important role individual personnel perform in building and managing relations between sponsor and sponsee. Because other scale items failed to load on the factor, it is not immediately obvious what the role of the individual might involve. The original scale was intended to characterise the role of the individual as one involving elements of communication, networking and the promotion and development of relationship oriented cognitions and behaviors. A further element of the factor indicates the motivations of the individuals concerned also have an influence on the relationship dyad. For instance, in deriving great pride from management of the relationship, the individual will signal the importance and value of the relationship both to decision makers within their own organisation and those on the opposite side of the dyad. As such, the role of this individual may prove to be vital in a party demonstrating their willingness to maintain the relationship with a partner, and make sacrifices in order to do so. The factor therefore confirms observations made by Weitz and Jap (1995) that individuals are at the heart of business relationships. Moreover, given that Gemunden and Walter (1994) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) highlighted the importance of informal and interpersonal relationships in building commitment, it points to the factor being a determinant of sponsorship commitment. As Abratt (1985) explained, individuals are a good source of information, whilst de Ruyter et. al. (2001) suggested individuals are fundamental in fostering cooperation.

Congruence between organisation level commitment and the role of the individual presents a strong argument that commitment as a function of this factor is likely to have an affective component to it. In creating an emotional bond between sponsor and sponsee, an individual represents their employer's willingness to build and maintain a relationship, demonstrating a party's confidence that a relationship is stable. The extent to which this intent is signalled to a partner may nevertheless be bound up in the attitudes and feelings of an individual. For example, because they may derive a certain pride in being associated with the relationship, or they have a sense of reflected glory via their role in the relationship, the individual might be prepared to adopt a more constructive or sacrificial approach to managing the relationship. The perception one

should behave in a particular way when managing an inter-organisational relationship alternatively implies that commitment may also be a normative phenomenon. In perceiving there is a moral obligation to behave in a particular way, the individual is responding to internalised normative pressure. This may occur either because an individual manages the relationship according to a set of personal morals or as result of perceived organisational pressures to manage relations in a particular way. In each case, the implication will be that a partner interprets the signal an individual sends as being representative of the commitment intentions their partner wishes to demonstrate.

Supplementing this view, individuals may feel they have to 'protect the investment' a club or sponsor makes in a sponsorship deal. As such, the decision to, for example, attend informal meetings with representatives of a partner may constitute a safeguard to the commitment made by their employer. This link between sponsor and sponsee suggests commitment is calculative act facilitated through the role of an individual. A different, and arguably more subtle interpretation of the relationship, is the individual adopts a calculative view of the relationship for personal reasons and transmits this to the partner organisation which, in turn, makes a calculative commitment to their relationship partner. One of the personal reasons could be that the individual wants to create a particular impression with their employer and therefore strives to develop a stable relationship with the partner. In creating this self-interest stake in the relationship, the individual also effectively creates an additional self-interest stake on behalf of their employer. In which case, individual commitment would therefore impact significantly upon perceptions of the employer's commitment.

4.2.4 Factor 4: Location-four items loaded heavily upon this factor, with values of 0.855 (G1), 0.751 (G2), 0.822 (G3) and 0.734 (G4) respectively. The values for all items were notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating the location of a dyad partner may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 6.430% of total variance. From the original five item 'Location' scale employed, four items loaded strongly on this factor, all of which are strong measures of the factor. This indicates that geographic location is an important influence upon the relationship between sponsor and sponsee and may influence relationship commitment. This provides support for the hypothesis: *There is a relationship between the geographic location of a football club/shirt sponsor and relationship commitment.* Only one item (G5) from the original scale did not load suggesting there is no direct or explicit link between the location of one party and the business objectives of another.

The strongest loadings on the factor were for Items G1 and G3, the former indicating location of a partner is one of the main reasons for engaging with another organisation, the latter item linking this to existing relationships the party may already have with people in a specific geographic location. In the context of the third strongest loading item (G2), one implication is that sponsorship relations are important because they enable links with communities in specific geographic areas to be built. This is likely to be bound up in the traditional link between local employers or businesses and football clubs, and may also reflect the continuation of hobby motives underpinning some football sponsorship programmes. It may nevertheless represent a recognition that clubs and, to a lesser extent, sponsors are both geographically constrained in their operations, with there being a consequent synergy between them. In other words, customers and employees of the sponsoring organisation are also fans and customers of the local football club. The loading of Item G4 is interesting because it refers simply to objectives rather than emphasising a strong community orientation in relations between sponsor and sponsee. Whilst it is now clear there is a link between business objectives and the community, the factor does not necessarily preclude other business, or more commercial, objectives influencing the sponsorship dyad. This is important as some organisations may alternatively substitute an affinity with the 'local community' with those of a 'target market' or 'target segment'.

The 'Location' factor is variously bound up in elements of identification, interdependence and cooperation. Football sponsorship is one way through which an organisation can establish an affiliation with groups in a particular locality which enables support to be shown for key local businesses, thus enhancing the geographic identity of those involved. This may perpetuate the image of a club or a sponsor as being a local paternalist or benefactor, but may also demonstrate a broader commitment to a locality through support for a relationship partner. Sponsors and sponsees can both benefit from this, illustrating the interdependence that often exists between them. For example, in seeking to build relations with certain groups in specific locations, a football club may allow a club to benefit from an association in order to raise its profile amongst members of these groups. This will require coordination between the two in order to establish and maintain the value this association might add to their relationship.

In some respects, the belief that a party should identify or cooperate with a local sponsorship partner may be founded on a perceived obligation to demonstrate support for a particular geographic area. For example, a sponsor may recognise the potential benefits for a club and

provide them with an established and certain income stream. This may be of particular importance where a club is encountering financial problems. A club may alternatively seek to ally with a local firm to, for instance, foster closer relations with local fans. This highlights possible normative influences on commitment decisions whereby one or both parties perceive a need to engage with a partner in an 'appropriate' manner. In exclusively instrumental terms this may mean the relationship is not the best available alternative. But the perceived normative pressure to demonstrate local affinity and identity in such cases would lead one party to commit to another.

The perception a partner holds that it has a moral obligation to commit to working with a local club or sponsor is likely to be related to micro-level emotional or psychological attachment. In which case, affective reasons for committing to a sponsorship deal may underpin or supplement normative reasons. This may reflect influences such as the chair of a sponsoring company being born and raised in an area where the football club is located, or the tangible demonstration of paternalistic tendencies on the part of a local industrialist. It could also be bound up in the sense of pride an organisation derives from being associated with another high profile local organisation. Indeed, in referring back to the initial review of documentation undertaken during Phase 1 of the research methodology, this is evident in statements made by clubs and sponsors to explain their relationship. In combination, affective and normative determinants of a commitment decision may be so powerful, they enhance the longevity of a relationship by promoting acceptance of mutual sacrifice, stimulating confidence it is a stable association. Congruency may also be an influence in terms of the need both parties perceive there is to keep their inter-organisational relationships within the locality.

Irrespective of perceived moral obligations or the feelings of identity a sponsor and sponsee may share, sponsorship deals are generally expected to fulfill commercial expectations. The loadings on this factor do not detract from this view but indicate locality can be a major influence upon this. In making a decision about the acquisition of a sponsorship partner, such considerations are more likely to be enshrined within more geographically-oriented decisions. Working with a local partner may enable bonds to be forged with relevant stakeholders, whilst at the same time the commercial benefits of a relationship will be implicit within relations with a partner. Paternalism, altruism, even 'chairman's whim', may all play a part in this process, but location specific motives will ultimately predominate. Clearly this imposes a more instrumental meaning of commitment on the sponsorship dyad. Clubs, particularly if they are having financial problems, will inevitably seek more lucrative sponsorship contracts, just as sponsors will consider

sponsoring properties which provide a stronger return. This arguably establishes commitment as an affective and normative phenomenon set within more instrumental parameters.

4.2.5 Factor 5: Perceived benefits-four items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.455 (D4), 0.578 (D5), 0.784 (J3) and 0.837 (J4) respectively. The values for Items J3 and J4 are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating the perceived benefits of a long-term relationship between club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 6.420% of total variance. From the original 'Perceived benefits' scale employed, two items loaded on the factor. This indicates that if one party to a sponsorship dyad perceives there are benefits achievable through relations with a partner, they may commit to a relationship with them thus providing support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of a relationship and relationship commitment.*

The loading of items D4 and D5 indicates sponsors and sponsees perceive that benefits from an association are likely both during the period covered by a contract and beyond it. This implies, in the case of a club for example, there will be the initial benefits of association such as the payment of a rights fee plus longer-term benefits such as the enduring association people may make between a club and a sponsor. The failure of other items from the original 'Perceived benefits' scale to load on this factor is telling. Because D3 fails to contribute to variance in the model, the implication is that sponsorship relations are not simply focused upon the direct achievement of financial returns or profit. A broader interpretation of benefits would therefore appear to be appropriate. In the case of clubs, rather than simply receiving a rights payment for the deal, relations with a sponsor may alternatively be viewed in terms of, say, access to the local population, enhanced image or the attainment of marketing competence that an association with a sponsor enables. For the sponsor, this confirms football shirt sponsorship programmes are not necessarily commensurate with direct financial returns or increased sales. Rather, it would appear likely that benefits such as increased brand awareness or recall, corporate hospitality opportunities and engagement with local markets will be pursued through an association with a club. Whilst this does not preclude the importance of the financial returns to a sponsorship deal, this is likely to be of a more indirect nature.

The failure of item D2 to load on the factor also casts doubt upon the value of resources contributed to the dyad by club and sponsor. One possible explanation for this is that shirt

sponsorship revenue constitutes a relatively small proportion of turnover for most football clubs, which can derive 50% or more of revenue from gate receipts. Sponsors may contrastingly view a shirt sponsorship deal as being only one of a number alternatives and therefore not of especially unique value to them. The final item from the original scale which fails to load (D1) adds to our understanding of the shared values factor identified below. Whilst the latter emphasises the importance of goal congruence in committing to a relationship, the absence of the former from this factor indicates club and sponsor may not recognise the contribution each can make to the other in terms of helping them achieve their goals. This would seem to deny that a sense of mutualism exists in sponsorship dyads implying parties effectively engage in relations primarily for their own benefit. In which case, the perceived need for common goals would seem to reflect self-interest or be incidental to the development of a relationship.

The general nature of the scale for perceived benefits achievable via a sponsorship deal actually fails to explicitly account for the precise nature of what these benefits might be. However, strong loadings recorded for items J3 and J4 demonstrate perceptions of a partner's commitment combine with perceived benefits to explain some of the variance in the model. The nature of the two items implies that a realisation of perceived benefits therefore depends upon perceptions of the other parties long-term commitment intentions towards the relationship. From the factor analysis, it is not immediately obvious what the nature of the relationship between the respective items is. However, one possible explanation is, if a party believes their partner has engaged in a relationship on a long-term basis, they are likely to perceive the benefits of the relationship will therefore be greater. In which case, this will have a positive impact upon relationship commitment. An alternative explanation could be the benefits derivable from a dyadic relationship are such that one party commits to the relationship, which signals to the other party they should also commit. This could, for example, be based on one parties calculative perception that if the other is benefiting, then they should be able to as well.

When considered in conjunction with the failure of other items from the original 'Perceived benefits' scale to load, the strength with which items relating to partner perceptions load on the factor appears to confirm that parties to the sponsorship dyad do not believe partners contribute valuable resources to their relationship. This suggests that, whilst sponsor and sponsee may perceive a deal creates benefits, they do not readily allocate additional resources to it in order to facilitate their achievement. One explanation for this could be a view that sponsorships are beneficial in themselves and do not require the allocation of any further resources. Previous

concerns expressed about the additional resources needed to manage and leverage sponsorship programmes may nevertheless serve as a counter argument to this view.

Despite the possibility of parties perceiving a relationship is more likely to deliver benefits on a longer-term basis, there is no specific evidence from the factor analysis to suggest sponsorship relations are characterised by either loyalty or longevity (for example, item J1 fails to load). This may be the result of dyad partners having few expectations that a relationship will endure when they enter into an association with a club or sponsor. This is interesting because it implies sponsor and sponsee perceive the potential benefits of their relationship, but they are variously passive, indifferent or fatalistic in their approach to it. This appears to be confirmed by the failure of other items from the 'Perception of others' scale to load, most notably J6 and J7, indicating parties engage in a relationships characterised by an absence of cooperative intent or they are passively presumptuous their relationship will somehow deliver benefits.

The latter observation rather undermines an argument that commitment is comprised of affective elements because there is no sense of sponsors or sponsees being willing to exert any particular effort to maintain or build their relationship. In one respect, this characterises sponsor relations as hollow associations bereft of emotion, feelings of pride or notions of shared identity. It also implies naivety or cynicism based on the belief by one party that another will inevitably perceive a benefit in being associated with them. In these terms, there also appears to be an absence of normative dimensions to commitment. Parties to the football shirt sponsorship dyad do not seem to perceive a moral need to make sacrifices or make concessions for the mutual benefit of a relationship partner. According to the tradition or convention of a sponsorship contract, this may be an accepted way to engage with a partner, but this does not mean in more broadly moral terms, it is an acceptable way to behave. This is a particularly valid argument because partners appear to have no sense of identification other than through the benefits their relationship can deliver.

The apparent absence of affective and normative elements for this factor suggests commitment is likely to be of an almost exclusively instrumental nature. That is, parties engage in a sponsorship relationship on the basis of a straightforward calculation: whether the benefits of an association outweigh the costs. In reality, relationship commitment may well be more complex because this decision may be made according to different time horizons, parties variously perceiving that benefits will be achieved in both the short and long-term. Irrespective of the differences between

parties, the calculative nature of the commitment will nevertheless reflect the clarity and certainty of the benefits perceived.

4.2.6 Factor 6: Shared values-three items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.710 (C4), 0.780 (C5) and 0.588 (F1) respectively. The values for Items C4 and C5 are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating that the existence of goals and policies common to club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 5.431% of total variance. From the original five item 'Shared values' scale employed, two items loaded strongly on this factor, both of which are strong measures of the factor. This indicates that values shared by sponsor and sponsee may influence relationship commitment. This provides support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between shared values and relationship commitment.*

The strength with which Items C4 and C5 load on sixth factor highlights the strong emphasis sponsor and sponsee place on establishing commonality between their respective goals and procedures. There may be two aspects to this: firstly, organisations with congruent goals and procedures may be more likely to ally; secondly, partners may seek to align their policies and procedures once they have engaged in a relationship with each other. The failure of other items from the original 'Shared values' scale to load on this factor indicates ethical compatibility and the more cultural elements associated with values are not important in forging a relationship with a sponsorship partner. This is not intended to imply sponsorship deals are inherently unethical, although it does suggest the evaluation of decisions to remain with a partner are more likely to be instrumentally based rather than affective or normative. The third item loading on this factor (F1) relates to the loyalty parties believe they have to their relationship partner. Linking this to the other two items, it would therefore appear parties are more likely to remain loyal to a relationship during a period where there is congruence between their goals and procedures. Given the close link between loyalty and commitment, it can therefore be assumed this will underpin the stability of a relationship whereby both parties retain a sense of confidence their relationship is worth developing.

The identification of a shared values factor reflects earlier observations made by Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Zineldin and Jonsson (2000). This confirms that an agreement between parties about the need for the relationship is implicit within the decisions of two parties to engage, based upon a perception they are both in congruence (or are potentially in congruence). In one respect,

all relationships display this characteristic but what differentiates relational from transactional exchanges is that partners will deliberately seek to align their goals and policies in order to promote the longevity of a stable relationship. Relationships are therefore much more than one-off, arms length transactions, particularly as parties may seek to ally with others whom they perceive as being willing to adapt or who exhibit a comparable relationship orientation as them.

Interestingly, shared values do not necessarily appear to be an overtly cultural phenomenon because the other three items from the 'Shared values' scale fail to load. This implies the artefacts and symbols normally associated with sharing values are likely to be of secondary importance to the commercial nature of an interrelationship between sponsor and sponsee. Common goals are therefore more likely to be expressed in commercial terms, with policies representing the actions through which they will seek to achieve them. This is likely to be bound up in the potential rewards and costs of engaging in a relationship with a partner. If partners believe they can work together to achieve the same goals by employing the same or similar approaches to their operations, then they may perceive the relationship is more likely to generate value and profit, and be stable and enduring.

The way in which the items load on the factor means the potential relationship between commitment and loyalty is not immediately evident, although they would appear to be closely related. The link could occur in situations where, because partner goals and policies are in congruence, they may have a greater sense of loyalty to the dyad and will consequently commit more strongly to a relationship. In which case, loyalty would be a somewhat transient phenomenon restricted to the period during which congruence is evident. The implication of this is that, should one or both parties, adjust their goals or policies without the agreement of the other, this could undermine loyalty and impact negatively upon relationship commitment.

A factor which identifies that shared values underpin the relationship between two parties suggests commitment behavior in sponsorship dyads is strongly affective. This links notions of a willingness to remain in a relationship, the preparedness to make sacrifices and loyalty, with congruency. Affective commitment is commonly associated with an acceptance of another's goals, values and ways of working. In terms of this factor, the implication is that shared goals and policies are likely to more readily facilitate an acceptance of, and a commitment to, a dyad partner. An alternative view might be that congruence ensures the costs of engaging in and developing a relationship will be reduced, and the benefits increased. The synergy of goals may

promote the achievement of a greater level of benefits whilst common policies ensure that the costs of establishing an association are less. In which case, the relationship becomes both a beneficial and a risk minimising one, creating a self-interest stake which reflects a calculation that an association with a partner is the most attractive alternative.

4.2.7 Factor 7: Contractual terms-two items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of -0.876 (I1) and -0.789 (I2) respectively. The values for both items are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating that the terms of the written contract between club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 5.018% of total variance. From the original 'Contract' scale employed, two of the items loaded on the seventh factor, both of them being strong measures of the factor. This indicates that the contract between sponsor and sponsee may have an impact upon commitment, thus providing support for the hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between the existence of a formal, written contract and relationship commitment.*

In loading on Items I1 and I2, the seventh factor identifies that relations in the football shirt sponsorship dyad are governed by a formal written contract which spells out the terms of their deal. The failure to load of I3 indicates respondents attribute less importance to informal aspects of their relationship, whilst the failure of item I4 to load on the factor does not preclude parties devoting additional resources to a relationship. Nevertheless, a formal written contract between the two strongly implies that it represents the most tangible evidence of commitment they can make towards one another. Drawing from other observations previously made throughout this study, both the terms and the period of a relationship covered by a contract therefore appear have a major impact upon commitment in the sponsorship dyad. Such contracts are important because they not only define the extent to which partners need commit to one another, but also incorporate terms or procedures for the dissolution of a relationship.

The loadings on this factor thus confirm the findings of Ring and Van de Ven (1994), Weitz and Jap (1995) and Jap and Ganesan (2000) that a contract can determine commitment in relationship dyads. This means the formalisation of informal understandings and commitments through written documentation is important because it protects against the opportunism of a partner who might seek to capitalise upon a looser arrangement. In this respect, it seems trust is a possible influence upon the perceived need to sign a contract. A partner who has signed up to an agreement will be likely to fulfil their obligations and therefore be more trustworthy, than one

who has not. The contract could also be closely related to the perceived benefits of a relationship. For example, if a football club is willing to commit to a relationship with a partner, they may only be prepared to do so if a guarantee, for instance through the terms of a formal contract, is provided enabling them to secure payment from the sponsor.

The decision to sign a contract with one party rather than another indicates clubs and sponsors make an instrumental commitment to one another in doing so (especially in the club's case given Football Association regulations allowing only one shirt sponsor). It is implicit within this process that a contract represents the best available alternative at a specific point in time. There are potentially two elements to this: a contractually governed relationship is perceived as generating a level of benefit relative to cost greater than other options, and the decision to sign with a particular partner represents the most effective way of minimising risk and uncertainty. In either case, this demonstrates a willingness to behave in ways covered by the terms of a contract which maintain the stability of a relationship with the dyad partner. Signing a contract in itself therefore serves as a signal to a partner that one is willing to make a tangible and explicit commitment to them. Despite the failure of items from the original 'Trust' scale to load on this factor, there is however a sense that commitment based upon contract is underpinned by perceptions of trust. Because a partner may demonstrate opportunistic tendencies or high self-interest traits, trusting, and so making a commitment, to them may depend upon the mitigating effects of a formal contract.

Within the period covered by this study, every sponsorship deal was governed by a contractual agreement between two parties and tradition appears to indicate this has always been the case. In theory, there is no reason why parties to the dyad need to sign a contract, although common practice shows they do. This possibly symbolises the normative nature of the contractual agreement being an acceptable way to behave. In terms of Anderson and Weitz's (1992) definition of commitment, the willingness to sign a contract fulfils the expected norms of a relationship signalling the intent to make a commitment to a partner. But it also demonstrates a willingness to accept the partner's expectations and values. The contract therefore has huge symbolic meaning, representing the encapsulation of partner identification. This further suggests an affective component for sponsorship commitment in that contracts explicitly acknowledge partners are in congruence. Moreover, they formally establish the extent to which a party is prepared to expend effort and make sacrifices in order to maintain and develop a relationship.

This is consequently symbolic of the attitudes and feelings a party holds in regard to their relations with a partner.

4.2.8 Factor 8: Opportunistic behavior-four items loaded heavily upon this factor, with EI values of 0.473 (B2), 0.422 (E6), 0.716 (F4) and 0.723 (F5) respectively. The values for Item F4 and F5 are notable as being strong measures of the factor, indicating that opportunism on the part of club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 4.704% of total variance.

Following the review of printed media undertaken during Phase 1 of this research and the CIT interviews completed during Phase 2, opportunism was not explicitly identified as a significant influence on the shirt sponsorship dyad. However, strong loadings on items F4 and F5 indicate not only that the availability of alternatives is an important consideration in relations between sponsor and sponsee, but also that dyad partners may not demonstrate a long-term commitment to one another. This implies club and sponsor may only be prepared to engage in a short-term relationship, likely to be the period covered by a contract, during and after which one or both parties will seek alternative relationship partners. This suggests commitment is likely to be of a strongly instrumental nature whereby club and/or sponsor constantly evaluate the costs and benefits associated with current and potential future relationship partners. As such, the implication is that sponsorship decisions are underpinned by economic considerations. This may explain the figures reported by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2002) which show sponsorship contracts generally tend to be short, with limited evidence of partners being retained.

The ability of a party to behave opportunistically is in practice regulated by factors such as the idiosyncratic investments made in a relationship (Dwyer et. al., 1987). The greater or more idiosyncratic these investments, the stronger will be the ties that bind a party to a relationship. These can be seen as affirmative actions which create a self-interest stake in the relationship, hence affirming one's commitment to another party. The loading of scale item B2 onto this factor indicates information provided to a party may be construed as an idiosyncratic investment, justifying the decision of opportunistic partners to withhold it from their partner. This enables them to dissolve the relationship more readily in the event of an alternative partner becoming available. The loading of item E6 indicates this is an organisational level phenomenon. That is, the tendency to evaluate alternative partners transcends the role an individual might play in managing or championing a sponsorship deal. Given the role that key informants completing the

questionnaire play in managing sponsorship contracts, this implies an almost fatalistic view on their part that clubs and sponsors at a senior level inevitably, and routinely, monitor other opportunities.

There may be a sense of self-fulfilling prophecy underpinning opportunism in that partners, because they expect such behavior, will actually engage in it. Whilst being a somewhat perverse, if not spurious, observation, there may consequently be normative dimensions to relationship commitment. However, it seems highly likely that economic factors strongly govern sponsorship decisions, reinforcing the transactional view of sponsorship which prevails across throughout literature. Williamson (1975, p. 6) characterised such behavior as being: “self-interest with guile”, whilst John (1984, p. 279) viewed the essence of opportunistic behavior as: “[a] deceit-oriented violation of implicit or explicit promises about one’s appropriate or required role behavior”. The more opportunistic a party is, the less likely they are to commit to a long-term relationship and, as a result, they will hesitate to engage in actions (such as information sharing) which may undermine their efforts to leave a relationship. A further dimension to such behavior is that it signals to a partner that one is not committed to a relationship, in which case the partner engages in comparable behavior, withholding information and routinely searching for alternatives.

4.2.9 Factor 9: Commitment-from the original item eight item ‘Commitment’ scale, four items loaded heavily upon this factor recording EI values of 0.415 (F1), 0.443 (F6), 0.806 (F7) and 0.556 (F8) respectively. The value for Item F7 is an especially strong measure of the factor, indicating that patience when dealing with a partner is an important feature of club and sponsor commitment to one another. The factor accounted for 4.698% of total variance. The main implication of loadings on the factor seems to be that commitment is a behavioral phenomenon whereby parties demonstrate their desire to maintain a relationship by being patient with a partner when they make mistakes (F7). This suggests sponsors and sponsees are willing to make sacrifices in order to stabilise relations implying both are prepared to accept short-terms problems in anticipation of the relationship being beneficial in the longer-term. Patience therefore serves as an important signal to a partner that one is willing to move towards a state where both parties work together in a relationship characterised by confidence and stability.

The second strongest loading item on this factor (F8) appears to confirm observations made earlier in this study that commitment is inextricably linked to resources. Hence, commitment is tangibly represented and signalled through a willingness to dedicate significant resources to

building relations with a partner. For a sponsor, this is likely to mean commitment is most readily expressed in terms of the financial expenditure an organisation makes in order to secure a sponsorship contract. But it may also embrace the resources dedicated to managing and leveraging a deal, the human resources allocated to developing and maintaining a relationship or the commitment of a brand to an association with a partner. The same is largely true of a football club, one difference being that clubs dedicate the space on a football shirt to relations with a sponsor. What is significant about this resource is the exclusivity it gives, derived from league regulations, to sponsoring organisations. No other shirt sponsors are currently allowed implying there is a significant opportunity cost involved in working with a specific partner during a set period of time. This notion is equally applicable to sponsors although the sense of foregone alternatives may be less acute given the availability of other sponsorship properties. But in either case, opportunity costs incurred inevitably create a sense of sacrifice demonstrating commitment to making a relationship work.

The relatively weaker nature of the loading for item F6, pertaining to the allocation of resources on a long-term basis, reinforces the view that commitment to a football shirt sponsorship arrangement is essentially short-term. Based upon observations made elsewhere in this study, the short-term is likely to be the period covered by the contractual agreement. One reason for clubs and sponsors being less willing to commit resources on a longer-term basis could emanate from their concerns that contracts may not be renewed or that partner's are opportunistic. That is, it works as a safeguard to the investment both parties have made in a relationship. In terms of Anderson and Weitz's (1992) work therefore, the commitment of one party may thus only take place when another partner signals its intent by making a resource commitment themselves. The process through which sponsor and sponsee move towards stability in their relationship, would consequently appear to be an iterative one.

The iterative nature of committing to a sponsorship relationship may similarly reflect perceptions of the benefits achievable through an association with a sponsor or sponsee. This may account for parties committing resources in the short-term in order that they can assess whether a relationship is beneficial or not. In the case of the former, further resources would then be allocated until such a time that a further assessment might take place. Moreover, while key informants may not perceive they make long-term resource allocations, one conception of long-term resource commitment might be that it is comprised of a series of short-term resource commitments. Resource commitment may therefore be perceived almost as an efficiency decision.

The loading of scale item F1 once more associates loyalty with commitment. In combination with other items loading on this factor, the link seems to be one closely related to the allocation of resources in developing and maintaining a relationship. The factor also suggests commitment is demonstrated through loyalty, especially in relation to the patience one shows in cases where a partner makes a mistake. This would appear to have a stronger short-term focus given the relatively weak loading of item F6, the implication being that loyalty is induced by contract rather than being an enduring willingness to allocate resources to maintaining relations with a sponsorship partner.

A willingness to dedicate resources to sponsorship relations, the preparedness to be patient when mistakes are made by a partner and the sense of loyalty displayed to another party all suggest sponsors and sponsees calculate whether or not to commit to a relationship. That loyalty is displayed and that resources are allocated even in situations where partners make mistakes confirms parties make judgements about long-term commitment in the light of potential short-term difficulties. The willingness to allocate valuable resources to what is effectively a commercial, inter-organisational relationship also implies the partner to whom a commitment has been made is currently the best available alternative. Such investments may be of an idiosyncratic nature tying a party into their relationship with a partner. They may also create a self-interest stake in the relationship and therefore represent one of Becker's (1960) side-bets.

The sense of loyalty felt towards a partner may be a calculative judgement in that, if a partner makes a mistake, terminating an agreement with them might prove to be costly for various reasons. This may also be influenced by more normatively based commitment intentions where parties perceive that, having signed an agreement with a partner, they are obliged to behave in a certain way. Hence, resources are allocated to the relationship and patience is shown when mistakes are made because it is the 'right thing' to do. Normative commitment would therefore appear to have a strong influence on an association, at least in the short-term, because it signals acceptance of a partner's relationship expectations. That is, it demonstrates a party is prepared act in a way that provides stability to the relationship. This also suggests commitment is likely to encapsulate further affective elements: if patience, loyalty and resource allocation characterise it, this implies partners are willing to exert effort in order to develop and maintain the relationship. This could be motivated by pride of association, emotional bond or psychological identification, but it will betray a willingness to remain involved in a relationship.

4.2.10 Factor 10-no loadings with EI values over 0.4 were identified for this factor. No further examination of the factor was undertaken and the factor was therefore omitted from subsequent analysis. The factor had accounted for 2.975% of the total variance.

4.2.11 Factor 11: Informal relations-one item loaded heavily upon this factor, with a value of 0.735 (I3). The value for the item shows it is an especially strong measure of the factor, indicating that informal relations between club and sponsor may be an important influence on relationship commitment. The factor accounted for 2.913% of total variance. The item (I3) loading on this factor is drawn from the 'Contract' scale but suggests informal relationships between partners are likely to have an impact upon the dyad. Factor 3 (Managing the relationship) similarly demonstrates the importance of informality, although this factor does not differentiate between the informality of relations between individuals and organisations as a whole. This suggests individuals and groups within sponsoring and sponsored organisations may all develop ways of working together in order to maintain the stability of a relationship. This seems to enforce a view of there being two levels to relations in the sponsorship dyad: the formal, legally prescribed relationship (underpinned by a contract) and the informal relationship based upon unwritten agreements and understandings. Whilst the contract may set the parameters for, or be an embodiment of, relations between two parties, it does not exclusively represent the totality of behaviors in which both engage in order to maintain the relationship. In this respect, one related point to note is the frequency with which football shirt sponsorship programmes are used for corporate hospitality and networking purposes, implying the unreported, undocumented, informal aspects of a sponsorship are as important as the more formal ones.

Because other items fail to load on this factor, the extent to which further observations can be made is limited. However, one assumption could be made that partners engaging on an informal basis are likely to share similar values, demonstrating similar approaches to relationship management. In turn, this implies an additional link to trust in that, if one party trusts the other and perceives such practices are not a risk, it will work outside the terms of the formal contract. The converse view to this is that the contract is a safety net, insuring against risk, thus providing the opportunity for partners to develop more informal and effective ways of working together. In either case, the temporal nature of informality may be such that customs and practices build up which do not require formal codification through a contract. One might therefore speculate that longer-term relationships are more likely to be built around such a process.

The interpersonal, informal nature of relations between individuals involved in a sponsorship deal points to commitment being a strongly affective phenomenon underpinned by emotional and psychological bonds or pride in being associated with a particular club or sponsor. In which case, it seems likely that relationship partners would be more willing to work together to build the relationship. This is an embodiment of the desire to maintain a stable relationship, indicating partners will be prepared to go beyond contractual terms to ensure its success. An additional dimension to this could be the way in which such informal relations constitute a vehicle through which individual goals values become congruent with those formally demonstrated within the dyad. This may be perceived of as being an obligation or duty on the part of those involved in managing sponsorship relations, especially once a contractual agreement has been signed. In which case, this highlights the possibility of there being a further normative element to commitment. Whilst the nature of the commitment may represent a unilateral or individual behavior, contractual terms may effectively regulate the relationship in such a way as to create internalised pressure within key informants to behave in this way.

The nature of the items loading on the factor does not explicitly identify instrumental commitment as underpinning either informal relations or the overall association between club and sponsor. But in engaging with a partner on an informal basis, parties may in Becker's (1960) terms be creating 'side bets'. That is, by sharing information, resources or competence at this level, a self-interest stake is being created in the relationship. This makes the exchange between the sponsor and sponsee a very specific one which ties them together. Whilst it may not be formally acknowledged, in either contractual terms or in a questionnaire of the nature used in this study, it may nevertheless represent a powerful influence upon overall commitment.

4.2.12 Further observations-given that the purpose of factor analysis was to reduce data it can not be used to directly test or prove hypotheses. The main aim of the above commentary has therefore been to provide supporting evidence that the model employed by this study is an appropriate one, with a significant proportion of variance in the model being explained. Of the ten variables (commitment and its nine determinants) identified following the CIT interviews, factor analysis provides support for ten variables, the codes of a majority of which indicate strong similarities with the original variables. Of these original ten variables, 'Timing' was eliminated following scale testing, and questionnaire items failed to load on a factor that could readily be labelled 'Perceptions of the other's commitment'. The two new variables identified are

'Opportunistic behaviour' and 'Informal relations'. The factor analysis performed one of its functions very well by highlighting the large proportion of variance accounted for by the model. Its second function, to reduce of data, was performed less satisfactorily, although this justified the initial decision to subsequently employ both standard and hierarchical multiple regression analyses. An examination of the scree plot would have led to the analysis cutting off after two factors: trust and communication. Clearly this would have eliminated commitment from the analysis thereby undermining the central focus of the study. By not cutting off after the second factor, loadings were fairly equally distributed up to the ninth factor. A decision was therefore taken to retain the first nine factors and the eleventh factor. In order to reduce the data into a more manageable form, whilst establishing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, multiple regression analysis was therefore employed.

4.3 Analysis and interpretation of standard multiple regression analysis

With commitment postulated as the dependent variable, and trust, communication, managing the relationship, location, perceived benefits, shared values, contractual terms, opportunistic behavior and informal relations as the independent variables, the reader's attention is drawn to the presentation of results from the standard multiple regression analysis in Appendix 11. Each factor²² from the analysis presented in Section 4.2 is considered in turn as follows: an examination of the Standardised Beta Coefficients to assess the unique contribution each independent variable makes to the prediction of the dependent variable, and an examination of the Sig. values to identify whether each is making a statistically significant unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable.

4.3.1 Trust (coded as TRUST)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.014 indicating that, of the nine independent variables 'Trust' makes the eighth largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.901 is reported confirming the 'Trust' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not therefore provide any further support for the initially hypothesised relationship between trust and commitment.

4.3.2 Communication (coded as COMMS)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.06 indicating that, of the nine independent variables 'Communication' makes the fifth largest

²² New factors (variables) were created for use in the multiple regression analysis using the 'Compute' facility provided in SPSS.

unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.71 is reported confirming the 'Communication' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not therefore provide any further support for the hypothesised relationship between communication and commitment.

4.3.3 Managing the relationship (coded as MANREL)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.007 indicating that, of the nine independent variables 'Managing the relationship' makes the ninth largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.951 is reported confirming the 'Managing the relationship' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not therefore provide any further support for the initially hypothesised relationship between the role of an individual in managing a relationship and commitment.

4.3.4 Location (coded as LOCA)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.056 indicating that, of the nine independent variables 'Location' makes the sixth largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.462 is reported confirming the 'Location' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not therefore provide any further support for the initially hypothesised relationship between location and commitment.

4.3.5 Perceived benefits (coded as BENEFI)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.274 indicating that, of the nine independent variables, 'Perceived benefits' makes the second largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.007 is reported confirming the 'Perceived benefits' variable achieves statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This provides further support for a relationship between perceived benefits and commitment, thereby proving the initially hypothesised relationship between them.

4.3.6 Shared values (coded as SHAVAL)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.309 indicating that, of the nine independent variables, 'Shared values' makes the largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.001 is reported confirming that the 'Shared values' variable achieves statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This provides further support for a relationship between shared values and commitment, thereby proving the initially hypothesised relationship between them.

4.3.7 Contractual terms (coded as CONTRA)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is -0.098 indicating, of the nine independent variables, 'Contractual terms' makes the fourth largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.236 is reported confirming the 'Contractual terms' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not therefore provide any further support for the initially hypothesised relationship between the contract and commitment.

4.3.8 Opportunistic behavior (coded as OPPBEH)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.197 indicating that, of the nine independent variables, 'Opportunistic behavior' makes the third largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.021 is reported confirming the 'Opportunistic behavior' variable achieves statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not prove an initially hypothesised relationship but confirms a new variable, linking opportunism and commitment, identified by the factor analysis.

4.3.9 Informal relations (coded as INFORM)-the value for the Standardised Beta Coefficient is 0.056 indicating that, of the nine independent variables, 'Informal relations' makes the joint sixth largest unique contribution to predicting the dependent variable. A Sig. value of 0.475 is reported confirming the 'Informal relations' variable fails to achieve statistical significance (< 0.05) as a unique contributor to the model. This does not prove an initially hypothesised relationship or the importance of a variable identified by the factor analysis.

4.3.10 Comment on findings of regression analysis-the multiple regression analysis served the dual purpose of condensing the data and establishing the nature of relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Of the nine independent variables identified following the factor analysis, three are proven to be statistically significant. This means only perceived benefits, shared values and opportunistic behavior have been established as statistically significant determinants of commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad. Because of the small sample size, and the amalgamation of club and sponsor responses into one unit for the purposes of statistical analysis, further investigation is necessary in order to provide a more specific interpretation of these factors from both a club and a sponsor perspective. The results of this are detailed in Section 4.4 below. This serves additional functions by highlighting the relevance of the analysis and interpreting each factor presented above in Section 4.2.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation of dyad interviews

With 'Shared values', 'Perceived benefits' and 'Opportunistic behavior' having achieved statistical significance, they have been identified as the main determinants of commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad. In the light of previous observations made regarding the benefits of triangulation, allied to the statistical constraints imposed by the small sample size, a final phase of structured face-to-face interviews was undertaken. In order to ensure consistency of response, each interview was conducted with the key informant responsible for completing a questionnaire during Phase 5 of the research (see above). A standard set of questions was used in each case, with participants being asked to respond both to specific questions drawn from the items which had loaded on each variable during the factor analysis and their general understanding of relationships between commitment, perceived benefits, shared values and opportunistic behavior. An analysis of each dyad is presented below, consisting in each case of the club's and then the sponsor's responses. The reader's further attention is drawn to the typology of commitment types subsequently proposed in Chapter 5, Section 5.6 of this study.

4.4.1 Dyad 1²³

Club: Shared values-As a family club with strong ties to the local community, the interviewee agreed there were links between the goals of the club and those of the sponsor, the perception being that both had engaged in deliberate strategies of building affiliation and support in the local area. As such, the key informant noted situations where both parties had worked together for mutual benefit, including instances where common policies had been adopted. Relationships with the media were given as an example in this regard. Despite the harmonious nature of their association with the sponsor, the club nevertheless explained the financial imperatives of running a football club had undermined their relations with the company. Mounting losses had forced the club to seek alternative partners indicating it had not been, and could not be, as loyal to the sponsor as the sponsor had been to the club. In other words, the long-term financial viability of the football club had taken precedence over demonstrations of loyalty to the sponsor.

Club: Perceived benefits-The club identified the main benefit as being the direct financial returns generated through its association with the sponsor. One of the pleasing aspects of this process, according to the key informant, had been the view of relations with the local community shared by both parties. An indirect benefit of the relationship was the bonds that both club and

²³ The reader is reminded that a profile of the clubs and sponsors participating in the interviews is presented in Appendix 13.

company had therefore built with people in the town and surrounding area. The interviewee suggested this had had the effect of increasing attendances at games, still the principle source of revenue for the club. One contract renewal had previously been negotiated by the club and the view expressed was therefore one emphasising the longevity and loyalty of the existing association. However, the key informant openly admitted the club was in the process of seeking an alternative sponsorship partner.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-Because of the parlous state of their financial situation, the club admitted it had no alternative other than to be opportunistic in its pursuit of a more lucrative sponsorship deal. Despite the key informant's view that the club had been a loyal and committed partner to the sponsor, their current predicament was forcing them to behave in an opportunistic way. For the duration of their contractual association, the interviewee stressed the club had been willing to develop and maintain a strong relationship with the sponsoring company. But this willingness had started to diminish once the parties drew closer to the point at which a renewal decision was going to be made. Thereafter, the interviewee acknowledged the club had begun to behave more opportunistically.

Club: Commitment-In spite of recent financial pressures, the key informant strongly asserted the club's loyalty to the sponsor. The company was acknowledged to have provided valuable financial resources whilst enabling the club to establish a clear community focus in its operations. Resources had therefore been invested into the relationship, the club perceived it had consequently been very patient with the sponsor and both were thought to have been mutually supportive in their association. But the underlying premise of the relationship was identified by the interviewee as having become untenable. In strict financial terms, the club could not continue to demonstrate such a commitment to this partner.

Sponsor: Shared values-Above all, the sponsor strongly emphasised it was a multinational corporation motivated predominantly by commercial considerations. But the key informant drew attention to the fact that the company had facilities in the local area and explained both parties have mutual stakeholders. Employees and customers of the sponsor were highlighted as the fans, customers and employees of the club. The pursuit of commercial goals was felt to be something which could be achieved through a close association with the local community and the company had made significant investments in the relationship because of the multiplicity of benefits it had identified could be achieved. Most significantly, the company identified the closeness of the two

parties and their willingness to work together. This had been personified by the sponsor making a contract renewal offer, the club rejecting this because of a perceived need to generate more revenue from shirt sponsorship, the sponsor responding by agreeing to stand by the offer in the event of the club failing to secure a better deal, with the club also agreeing to come back to the sponsor if a better alternative was not found. The key informant highlighted the feelings of loyalty this conveyed on the part of both parties.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-The interviewee stressed the relationship between company and club was a commercial one. The first benefit identified was the increased brand awareness and brand recall the sponsorship had generated. Secondly, the sponsorship was identified to have had an impact on the workforce, the sponsor's headquarters being located close to the club's stadium. In this respect, the sponsorship deal had influenced staff motivation, but the key informant also stressed a social role to this. By committing to a deal with the club, the company had implicitly made a commitment to the workforce and, in turn, the local community. At the time of the interview, such was the extent of these combined benefits, the sponsor had agreed to stand by the club even though it had asked for extra time to find an alternative, more lucrative, sponsorship deal.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-Although it appeared the club would eventually agree to a new sponsorship deal with an alternative partner, the key informant nevertheless professed the sponsor's continuing commitment to its deal with the club. As such, it was stressed the company had worked, and would continue to work, towards the maintenance of the association. Whilst the interviewee suggested the sponsor was as commercially oriented and opportunistic as any other, it was nevertheless felt they were committed to the club. Alternative sponsorship opportunities had been made available to the company, but these had been rejected in favour of a continuing deal with this particular club. In part, this is thought to have reflected the role of individual managers involved in the relationship, many of whom have strong existing affiliations to the club. Their involvement in developing and maintaining the relationship at both an operational and strategic level was one identified to have been central to the commitment shown by the company towards the club.

Sponsor: Commitment-Because of the location factors common to sponsor and club, allied to the support of company managers for the relationship, the key informant strongly emphasised the sponsor's commitment to the club. This was most aptly demonstrated by the offer to remain as

the club's sponsor in the event of the club failing to secure an alternative shirt sponsorship deal. In spite of the geographic and personal affiliations, the interviewee nevertheless indicated the relationship had been a commercial one, the result of which had been an additional investment into the relationship made by the sponsor. The relationship was seen (and potentially might continue to be) a long-term one where the company had made a series of concessions in order to retain links with the club.

Overall comment-In this dyad there is general evidence of symmetry between the club and the sponsor, where both have committed to their relationship based upon a combination of community-based and commercial factors. The somewhat general nature of this observation is intended to reflect the status of relations between the two, the club having signaled its intention to seek an alternative partner due to financial pressures. In many ways, the process through which club and sponsor have worked to dissolve their relationship indicates the strength of their commitment to one another. It can thus be concluded they have been desirous to build and maintain a stable relationship with each other. Over the period of two contracts, it is clear both parties have benefited from their association and they share a number of goals in relation to which they have developed common policies. Although the sponsor has indicated a willingness to continue the association, the financial pressures facing the club have led it to seek alternative relationship partners. The sponsor acknowledges the club is not opportunistic, rather it is realistic, and the sponsor itself has not itself exhibited opportunistic tendencies in relation to this specific association. The relationship can therefore be said to be characterized by a strong sense of mutual commitment in which instrumental influences have come to outweigh affective ones for the club and vice versa for the sponsor.

4.4.2 Dyad 2

Club: Shared values-The key informant stated the club's priority had been to secure a sponsorship deal with an organisation prepared to pay a rights fee comparable to those achieved by their playing rivals across Europe. Given the commercial parameters within which the club operates, a more strategic relationship than the one implied by the simple payment of a rights fee had had to be considered. In reconciling these two potentially conflicting considerations, the club felt they had selected a sponsor with whom they share common goals and common policies. Moreover, as a strategic alliance rather than a basic sponsorship deal, the relationship has become one through which both parties are collaborating to jointly develop their brands. The sponsorship partner is therefore one to whom the club feels a great sense of loyalty, particularly in commercial

terms. The two partners have thus recently agreed to extend their relationship for a further five years.

Club: Perceived benefits-The club acknowledged the importance of revenue generated by the sponsorship deal, although it remained only a fraction of the income earned through its match day ticket sales. The key informant more pointedly identified the long-term value-adding nature of its alliance with the sponsor. Developments such as the production of content for 3G handsets and an internet portal, allied to the global strategic development of the club brand, were identified as foci for this. In this respect, the short-term funding secured through the deal was acknowledged as being important, although the overall success of the association was felt to be something being more broadly and strategically measured.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-Because both parties are commercial organizations, perceiving themselves to be market leaders, the key informant stated club and sponsor have displayed, and will continue to display, opportunistic tendencies. The club's sponsorship deal was identified as being less valuable than others in Europe and they were consequently looking to secure a rights fee comparable with those paid to their rivals. Given the strategic value of the relationship, the club official nevertheless stressed the synergy between sponsor and sponsee. As a result, the perception was of its relationship with this sponsor being rather less opportunistic than some of those exhibited by its rivals and their sponsors. Meetings are regularly held during which both partners share information, and sponsorship managers are routinely empowered to make decisions which add to the strategic value of the association. The relationship was therefore perceived to be long-term and not one characterised by a short-term notion of opportunism.

Club: Commitment-Despite only having signed one contract with the sponsor, the key informant confessed the club felt a strong sense of loyalty towards the sponsor. Such was the extent of this, that both parties had been engaged in negotiating an extension to their contract. At one level, the loyalty shown toward the sponsor reflected compatibility between the brand images of the two organisations. At another, loyalty was thought by the club to be necessary if the long-term strategic advantages of the relationship were to be secured. Commitment was therefore thought to be best represented through a willingness to work at building the relationship, relegating short-term concerns in favour of longer-term considerations. The interviewee stressed their commitment to the sponsor was a total one involving the allocation of valuable club resources

including their brand, key personnel, stadium space and money devoted to co-marketing activities.

Sponsor: Shared values-The interviewee strongly asserted that the company rigorously screens and selects sponsorship properties based upon criteria of commercial appeal and strategic compatibility. Underpinned by a self-perception the company is one of the world's leading sports brands, the sponsor had set out to assemble a sponsorship portfolio of properties which display similar corporate, marketing and brand characteristics. The relationship between the sponsor and sponsee was therefore identified as being one which fulfils these criteria. An initial selection decision was therefore made on this basis, with the club being selected because they displayed congruent goals and policies. In working with this club over the period of an initial contract, the key informant identified that the parties had nevertheless developed links creating an even closer convergence between their respective goals and policies. The strategic intent of both parties, allied to their commercial aspirations, had therefore promoted a feeling of loyalty to the association on the part of the sponsor.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-Unless an association with a sponsorship partner is believed to be a strategically advantageous one, the interviewee stressed the company would not engage in a relationship with them. The achievement of short-term benefits was not dismissed as being undesirable. But the intended focus of the relationship was identified as being the long-term generation of value for the brand and the company. On this basis, the key informant re-emphasised that selection of a partner, and the development and maintenance of a relationship with them, was undertaken for strategic reasons.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-In the context of its strategic relationship with the club, the existence of overtly opportunistic behavior was rejected by the sponsor. Given the perceived power of the company, the interviewee stressed they had the resources to secure additional sponsorship properties if need be. However, it was felt this might detract from the way in which the company uses its existing relationship with the club, it being suggested the somewhat short-term nature of such behavior would undermine relations. The key informant thereafter emphasised that short-term problems or sacrifices would also be extremely unlikely to threaten the stability of their relationship with the club. One of the reasons identified for this was the role that key strategic and operational personnel from both parties play in communicating with one another.

Sponsor: Commitment-According to the key informant, the sponsor has a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the club with which it is associated. This is likely to be demonstrated with the forthcoming agreement of another contract between the two for a further five years. The understanding of commitment adopted by the sponsor was one of making investments in a relationship in order to secure the long-term benefits associated with such an alliance. One of the reasons identified for this was the perceived importance attributed to specific sponsorship deals, leading the sponsor to accept potential short-term difficulties or challenges in order to secure longer-term benefits from the sponsorship.

Overall comment-This dyad appears to be one where there is symmetry of both commitment and the commitment determinants, with the club and the sponsor betraying strongly commercial and strategic tendencies. In the case of the club, the self-perception is one of a brand with global preeminence, which is shared by the sponsor whose view is that it is one of the world's leading players in the telecommunications market. The notion of commitment in these terms is of two organizations which carefully acquire and retain strategic partners for the purposes of value generation. This is bound up in a view that commitment is synonymous with durability and loyalty, with relationships inevitably being characterized by resource investments and sacrifices. Moreover, both partners retain a sense that short-term sacrifices are necessary if long-term value is to be generated from their relationship. Building and maintaining a stable strategic relationship is therefore seen as the principle challenge for both parties who will, in turn, develop common goals and policies. Both are likely to display opportunistic tendencies, although the short-term nature of certain types of behavior is not expected to undermine the longer-term relationship. Commitment is therefore of a strongly instrumental nature, but influenced heavily by affective factors such as identity.

4.4.3 Dyad 3

Club: Shared values-The club perceived it self to be a family oriented business, a characteristic it felt is shared with the sponsor. A number of the club's leading shareholders were members of the same family, whilst the club's management believed they have been very successful in attracting family supporters from the local geographic area. The sense of community was pervasive, the team's sponsor being located in the same town as the club. Club officials felt this demonstrated a strong commitment to the local community and that both parties fulfilled a strong social role through their association. Relations with the sponsor nevertheless retained a

commercial focus particularly in terms of the way the club was trying to position its brand. Moreover, the club had recently considered, but rejected, more financially lucrative alternatives. As a result, the club continued to profess its loyalty to the sponsor, the relationship between them dating back fourteen years.

Club: Perceived benefits-A significant reason for the club continuing in its relationship with the sponsor was a perception the association had strengthened links with the local population creating a natural affiliation between club, sponsor and fans/customers/workers. Part of this affiliation was the social role the club perceived it fulfilled and relations with a local employer were thought to represent a natural, and a logical, link. This meant the club was not necessarily overtly commercial in their collaboration with the sponsor, although the club is based in an area of high population density with a large number of other clubs effectively posing a threat to 'club market share'. Working with a high profile international brand therefore served to differentiate the club from rivals. To this end, the deal had been used to raise awareness of the club, share expertise and build competence. Amongst the benefits the club identified as having emerged from the relationship, were the benefits of brand association and a strong local image. Financial problems in the past had in part been alleviated by revenue generated for the club by the sponsorship. But the club has recently been rather more opportunistic in assessing alternative sponsors because managers have felt the club brand constitutes a valuable property. The cost of player acquisition and retention was also identified as a major influence on the need to develop income streams.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-The club believed it had been committed to the sponsor for a majority of the period during which they have worked together. This continued to be the case, although the key informant acknowledged the club had displayed more opportunistic tendencies in the last two years because the current contract was due for renewal. Whilst the club did not want to undermine its relationship with the sponsor and, by implication, the local community, the feeling was it might have to pursue relations with a sponsor prepared to pay a higher fee for the shirt sponsorship rights. Otherwise, the club had always been keen to foster an open relationship with the sponsor, meeting regularly with representatives from the company and openly sharing information with them.

Club: Commitment-With origins in the links it provides to the local community, the club retained a strong sense of loyalty to the sponsor. Because of the strategic nature of the relationship, allied to the commercial and financial benefits it delivers, the club therefore believed

it was committed to its relationship with the sponsor. As such, it had been willing to allocate resources, such as specialist personnel, data and stadium resources, to help build and maintain the relationship. Whilst the view was that sacrifice had not been a feature of the relationship, concession and compromise had. A major influence on the continuation of the relationship nevertheless remained the financial pressure most football clubs find themselves facing. At the time of the interview, the key informant appeared not to be overtly confident about the long-term prospects for the relationship.

Sponsor: Shared values-The sponsor emphasised the synergy between its values and those of the club, in particular noting the great sense of history and pride both have derived from being located in a particular geographic area. A tangible manifestation of this was the way in which sponsor and club have sought to align their goals and policies in order to promote and strengthen relations with the local community. In particular, the sponsor expressed concerns about its role as a local employer which it had been able to address through the shirt sponsorship arrangement. Committing to a relationship with the club had, in turn, enabled the sponsor to display its somewhat paternalistic commitment to the company's workforce. The company believed it had therefore been very loyal to the club to the extent that the two have become synonymously associated. This has brought additional benefits such as raised brand awareness which it had been able to achieve because football is perceived to be a high profile sport, and one which remains part of the sponsor's core business.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-The relationship was perceived by the sponsor to have been so beneficial it had offered the club a chance to renew their association at the end of the current contract. Indeed, such was the value the sponsor placed on the relationship the new deal represented significantly improved terms for the club. The sponsor therefore perceived the relationship would continue to be an enduring, long-term one, particularly given the community benefits the deal has enabled them to realise. The respondent was nevertheless anxious to stress the sponsorship had not simply been about locality and community. Rather, the view was that, because the PL retains a strong international profile, the company had benefited from the association with the shirt sponsorship provided.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-Given the geographic and, in some cases, the personal affinity between the sponsor, the club and managers of both organisations, the relationship between the parties was perceived to be a long-standing, stable and open one. As a result, neither

party was thought to have withheld information or set obstacles to the effective management of the relationship. The sponsor was clear about its reasons for being involved in the relationship, was prepared to continue in it and was committed to its success. Opportunism did not therefore appear to be an issue, a point reinforced by the familiarity those involved in managing the deal have with each other. An advantage of this familiarity, and the confidence it promoted, was the sense of empowerment it had created amongst those personnel engaged in managing the relationship on a daily basis.

Sponsor: Commitment-The strong sense of loyalty bourn out of local ties, allied to the broader commercial benefits attributable to the relationship, have provided the basis for the long-term development and stability of the relationship between the club and the sponsor. It was acknowledged the company did not pay the highest rights fee in the PL and could not compete with some of the larger shirt sponsors. But the feeling was the company had worked hard to build the relationship, directly and indirectly devoting resources to it. This had embraced the allocation of specialist personnel, the commitment of the company's brand and the support demonstrated through a related stadium sponsorship deal. Whilst the perception was that, at times, both sponsor and club had made mistakes, the longevity of their association had been such that short-term problems were not allowed to detract from the longer-term value of their association. Indeed, the key informant observed that constantly focusing upon short-term mistakes made by a partner would be likely to undermine the relationship rather than enhance it.

Overall comment-This dyad appears to be one where there is symmetry of both commitment and the commitment determinants, with the club and sponsor both retaining a strong sense of communal orientation underpinned by commercial or financial motives. The notion of commitment in these terms therefore appears to be one characterized by an enduring sense of identity and loyalty where both parties recognize the value of the association. Moreover, both seem willing to contribute to the relationship in the pursuit of mutual benefit, particularly given the stability of the relationship to date and the confidence they both have in it. Resources are therefore routinely shared and both partners appear willing to make short-term concessions. The nature of relations therefore denotes affective elements as being key determinants of commitment in the dyad, although instrumental influences are also pertinent to club and sponsor. These are nevertheless more notable in the case of the club which has pressing financial concerns. Instrumental commitment is thus manifest in the consideration of other, more attractive, sources

of sponsorship revenue, although this is not intended to imply the club is especially dissatisfied or uncommitted to its partner.

4.4.4 Dyad 4

Club: Shared values-The key informant admitted that in its relationship with a previous sponsor, the association between the two had been closer and more strategic in nature. However, it was stressed this sponsor had terminated its contract with the club at fairly short notice causing serious problems for the club. These had been exacerbated by a downturn in the market for football shirt sponsorships at the time. An intermediary had therefore been employed in order to locate a sponsor willing to meet the financial demands of the club. As such, a partner with whom the club acknowledged it did not share common goals or policies, was identified and an agreement reached. The interviewee suggested they had developed a certain loyalty to the sponsor although, because the relationship was neither strategic nor creative, they would be seeking an alternative partner at the earliest possible opportunity.

Club: Perceived benefits-Given the time frame within which the decision to associate with the sponsor had been made the key informant indicated that short-term financial considerations principally governed it. Although the interviewee signaled the club's willingness to engage in more strategic and creative relations with sponsors, as was the case in the previous sponsor relationship, this relationship had not developed in the way anticipated. Accordingly, whilst the club felt the relationship had been hugely important to them in the short-term, it was thought likely that it would soon be replaced by an alternative, longer-term deal with another partner.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-Because the implications of not finding a suitable sponsor were perceived as being potentially acute, the interviewee readily agreed the club had been openly opportunistic in forging a relationship with the sponsor. This had resulted in the failure of the two organisations to develop an especially close relationship. Little valuable information was thought to pass between the two parties, whilst the club admitted it would be seeking to agree a new sponsorship deal with an alternative partner in the near future. This, in combination with the financially motivated haste which prompted the current deal, led the key informant to believe he had little influence in such matters.

Club: Commitment-According to the key informant, the club felt it had not demonstrated a strong commitment to the sponsor other than through their contractual agreement. Because

neither party planned the association, nor had they had sufficient time to consider in detail the foundations for it, the club seemed to perceive that both parties were not committed to it. The interviewee indicated the club had no feelings of loyalty to the sponsor and had not built the relationship in a way they might should they have worked with an alternative partner. Most notably, few resources had been devoted to stabilising or developing the association. Despite the fragile nature of the relationship, the club nevertheless stressed they had been patient in their dealings with the sponsor, although one reason for this was their avowed intent to secure another sponsor at the end of the current contract.

Sponsor: Shared values-A short time before the start of the new football season approximately one and half years prior to the interview, the sponsor indicated it had received an unsolicited approach from an agent representing a football club. The period within which a decision had to be made regarding an agreement with the club was so short the interviewee stated the company was unable to consider whether or not the deal was an appropriate one. Because such opportunities effectively only arise on a once annual basis, and given that competitors were already involved in similar sponsorship deals, the company had rapidly agreed to the deal. The interviewee agreed the company had been somewhat rash in doing so and the club was not necessarily the best one to be associated with. The company's perception has been that neither the goals or policies of the parties are especially congruent, nor have they converged. To the sponsor, this implied the club has not been committed to them and is likely to seek other opportunities as soon as possible. On this basis, the sponsor did not feel especially loyal to the club and was similarly assessing relations with other prospective sponsorship properties.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-An initial motivation for the sponsor to become involved in a shirt sponsorship deal with the club had been the perceived need to compete with its competitors, many of whom were already involved in football and sports sponsorship. It had therefore been anticipated that the association would be a beneficial one, particularly in terms of increased sales and brand awareness. It was acknowledged that attributing direct financial returns to sponsorship is a difficult task, but the deal was still expected to be a profitable one. At the time of the interview, the company was satisfied, if not hugely impressed, by the results of the sponsorship. The key informant expressed a view that, if the relationship had been established and built in a more strategic and coherent way, it may have been a more beneficial one for both parties. But the reactive nature of the decision making process and the implication the relationship would be a

one-off contract had led to the view that relations with the club would be short-term. By implication, any benefits associated with the relationship would therefore also be short-term.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-In spite of a self-perception the company was not seeking to be opportunist in its relationship with the club, the sponsor was aware the club had been looking for an alternative sponsor. This had effectively served as signal to the sponsor that they too should begin to display more opportunistic tendencies and consider alternative sponsorship arrangements. With this in mind, the company had thus engaged more guardedly with the club, being careful to regulate the information shared with them. Although the key informant felt this was somewhat disloyal, it was thought to be the inevitable result of a relationship that would dissolve within a short period of time. As a footnote to this, the interviewee stressed he therefore felt powerless in attempts he had made to maintain the relationship between the sponsor and sponsee.

Sponsor: Commitment-When the sponsor signed its agreement with the club, they believed it constituted a new opportunity for them. Management felt they had made a commitment to the club and this would be reciprocated leading to both parties making a much stronger, and possibly longer-term, commitment to the relationship. The subsequent behavior of the club had nevertheless signaled their intent to dissolve their relationship at the end of the period agreed in the contract. The key informant thus asserted the sponsor felt no particular loyalty to the club, was unprepared to allocate additional resources to managing the relationship because the return on them would be negligible and would not tolerate the arrogant attitude of club officials any longer than was necessary.

Overall comment-Although club and sponsor appear to be aligned in some ways, most notably in respect of the short-term nature of their commitment to the relationship, the dyad fundamentally appears to be an asymmetric one. Neither party at the time of interview seemed to perceive the relationship would be enduring, both having failed to make any strong moves towards developing or maintaining the relationship. For the club, the decision to commit to the sponsorship deal appears to have been almost exclusively determined by the perceived benefits of the relationship. The need to secure a source of finance close to the commencement of a new football season had brought a somewhat reactive decision being taken to associate with this sponsor. In response, the sponsor appears to have been equally reactive, subsequently engaging in the kind of post hoc rationalisation of commitment also displayed by the sponsor in Dyad 5. At

the time of the interviews, the club acknowledged it was looking for alternative, more attractive sponsorship partners. The sponsor meanwhile, had yet to decide whether or not they would seek to renew their deal with the club. In both cases, commitment appears to have been an instrumental phenomenon, strongly so in the case of the sponsor. This implies the association could only ever have been a short-term one until such a time that better options became available to one or both parties.

4.4.5 Dyad 5

Club: Shared values-Because of the intense financial pressures confronting the club, the key informant stressed the need for them to find the highest valued sponsorship deal possible. This had led the club to work with a number of different shirt sponsors, typically for one or two year periods, over the last decade. In this respect, the interviewee did not believe sponsors need share any particular values with them and that they are more interested in willingness to pay rather than a demonstration of similarity. Relations with sponsors were therefore perceived to be a straight forward exchange involving a sponsor paying for the right to place their name on the team shirt. Beyond this, the key informant perceived there to be little need to engage in dialogue with a sponsor to whom they feel no particular loyalty.

Club: Perceived benefits-The main financial benefit for the club was identified as being the fee paid to them by the sponsor. It was identified that contracts work in one of two ways: the sponsor either pays the full fee at the start of a contract or in stages throughout the contracted period. Once the payment had been received, the interviewee stressed there were few other benefits to the club. In the longer-term it was suggested that some fans might continue to view the club or sponsor more favourably because of a particular deal but that this would be incidental rather than intended.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-In the light of considerable financial pressure, the club perceived it has to be opportunistic in order to survive. But even in better times, the feeling of the key informant was that sponsorships have always been about getting the best financial deal possible for the club. The need for club and sponsor to engage in a more meaningful way, perhaps through regular meetings, was discounted, as was the need to share information with them. Relations with the current, or indeed any, sponsor were thus identified as being a straightforward exchange between the two parties. Because of the financial imperative faced by many clubs of their size and stature, the key informant did not feel particularly empowered or inclined to manage relations

with the sponsor in a productive way because contracts tend to be short-term and decisions to sign with a sponsor made at board rather than operational level. In this overall context, neither the interviewee nor the club believed they needed to have a strong sense of loyalty to their sponsor, other than through what might be imposed by a contract.

Club: Commitment-When asked if the club was committed to their sponsor, the key informant agreed they were. But further questioning indicated a rather perverse notion of commitment: because the sponsor agreed to pay the club a fee for a specific period of time, the club agreed to accept the fee and was, by implication, committed to a relationship with them. This somewhat tenuous understanding of commitment betrayed a short-term, low involvement relationship where the club acknowledged it has allocated few, if any, resources to building its relationship with the sponsor. There essentially appeared to be two reasons for this: clubs expect their 'commitment' to be a short-term one (possibly as short as one year), and a belief that sponsors pay clubs, clubs do not pay sponsors.

Sponsor: Shared values-According to the interviewee, the principle reason they had agreed to sponsor the club was simply because they had been asked. Following an unsolicited approach from the club five weeks before the start of a new football season, the company had made a quick decision to sign a two year deal with them. At the time the contract was agreed, the key informant felt they did not know enough about the goals or policies of the club for them to be able to establish whether or not they were compatible. This effectively remained the case because the club subsequently showed a marked reluctance to engage with them, thus leaving the company unclear about any commonalities the two parties may have. The loyalty of the sponsor to the club was therefore identified as primarily being the result of the contract between the two, although the interviewee did not discount signing a further deal with the club.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-The respondent confessed to not being entirely sure why the company had agreed to sponsor the club in the first place. A story was recounted whereby a company manager located in the same town as the club had persuaded the organisation's board of directors to sponsor the club. As a result, the sponsorship manager was reticent in suggesting both that the relationship had been identified as being a potentially beneficial one and that it had actually been beneficial. Indeed, the interviewee intimated the sponsor had engaged in post-hoc rationalisation in order to justify their initial involvement in the deal.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-In the same way that each of the participants in the dyadic interviews have emphasised their need to be opportunistic, the sponsorship manager in this case similarly explained the need to be opportunist in order to secure 'the best deal'. There is a certain irony to this observation because this sponsor remained unclear about why it agreed to a shirt sponsorship deal in the first instance. Whether or not the sponsor would drop the club in favour of a more attractive alternative was therefore a moot point. Compounding this situation, the key informant stressed the company would be willing to share information but that they had not because the club were unwilling to communicate with them. The nature and extent to which the sponsor was opportunistic or committed to the club in question thus remained unclear.

Sponsor: Commitment-The sponsor's perceived willingness to work with the sponsee implied a commitment on its part to the dyadic relationship. But the club's reluctance to demonstrate a similar willingness appeared to have rendered the company almost indifferent to its relations with the club. Most fundamentally, the key informant indicated the sponsor had made a financial commitment to a deal with the sponsee. Beyond this, the interviewee seemed unable to clearly elucidate upon other any foundations for the company's commitment to the relationship.

Overall comment-This dyad appears to be one where there is an asymmetry of both commitment and the commitment determinants. The club has a calculative short-term view of relations with the sponsor, governed principally by the contractual agreement whereas the sponsor has a rather more pragmatic, almost naïve notion of commitment. In these terms, the club would seem marginally less inclined to view the relationship as an enduring one. This means the organization concerned is less willing to work at building and maintaining relations with the sponsor, devoting few if any resources to the association and being neither patient nor especially communicative in its contract with the sponsor. This does not discount the sponsor behaving in a similar fashion, although the company appeared prepared to be more flexible in its approach to the relationship. In terms of the determinants, the benefits achievable through the relationship were a more strongly apparent influence upon the club whereas the sponsor was more open in its approach. This suggests the latter is more likely to engage in post hoc rationalization of its decision to commit, whilst the former has a clear calculative basis for its commitment decision. A sense of normative commitment also seems to prevail for the club in that, if it is so opportunist, it would immediately seek to pursue alternatives mid-contract, which it has never done and, according to the key informant, would never do.

4.4.6 Dyad 6

Club: Shared values-The key informant stressed that an important goal for the club had always been to retain its close relationship with the local community. In recent years, it was acknowledged this had become more tenuous than it once was, partly as a result of the financial pressures the club was facing. This was one reason why they had decided to work with their current sponsor. Not only was the sponsorship deal a lucrative one, it also represented a congruence of goals because the sponsor had identified the town where the club is based as a key target market. At one level, the goals and policies of both parties had been in congruence creating a natural synergy between the two. At another, club and sponsor had therefore used this as the foundation for establishing a more cooperative alliance whereby the two could pursue the mutual achievement of benefits. Therein lay a perceived tension between the two parties because, whilst the club acknowledged the clear communal benefits the sponsorship had brought, it was felt even more lucrative direct financial benefits could potentially be secured from a relationship with an alternative sponsor. The interviewee therefore suggested the club was simultaneously loyal to the partner whilst being highly aware of the alternative partnerships available to it.

Club: Perceived benefits-Given the congruence between club and sponsor, the alliance had enabled both parties to pursue commercial, financial and community goals. For the club's part, at the point a deal was signed, the interviewee noted it was the most financially lucrative available to them. The attractiveness of the relationship had been enhanced because the sponsoring company was seeking to work with the same groups in the local community as the club. This enabled the club to re-assert its commitment to the local community and also to build relationships with prospective supporters. The latter was deemed to be particularly important because a rival team in the city had been performing better and was therefore attracting large numbers of younger supporters from the local area. In the light of the combined benefits of the sponsorship deal, the club therefore stated its intention to remain in the relationship, although this was premised on a statement about the club's need to develop its income streams.

Club: Opportunistic behavior-By working together for both commercial and communal purposes the key informant stressed neither it nor the partner had displayed overtly opportunistic behavior. The wider benefits of the relationship had necessitated a collaborative approach to the sponsorship which the club had been happy to foster by sharing information, meeting regularly with managers from the sponsoring organisation and by fully integrating key sponsor personnel into their management and decision making processes. The key informant was consequently

insistent the club was not opportunistic and was prepared to build upon its relationship with the sponsor. In spite of this, the interviewee reiterated the nature of the context within which this loyalty has been displayed: one characterised by intense financial pressure.

Club: Commitment-At the time of the interview, the interviewee stated the club retained a strong sense of communal and commercial loyalty to the sponsor, although the latter was weaker because of alternative sponsorship opportunities that had recently become available. Whilst the intention of the club had always been to maintain the relationship into the long-term, pressures were mounting forcing them to consider the nature of these alternatives. In the meantime, the key informant conceded the club would be likely to continue devoting resources to the existing relationship until such a time they decided not to renew their relationship with the current sponsor. The club felt there was no perceived need to deviate from the commitment intentions it had otherwise consistently displayed in relation to the existing sponsor.

Sponsor: Shared values-The key informant indicated there had been more high profile sponsorship alternatives available at the time when the company had made their selection decision. But the geographic location, allied to the community orientation, of the club exhibited synergy with the sponsor's goals and policies, and a decision to work with them was therefore taken. The goals of the two had already been similar and these were subsequently aligned to a greater degree following agreement of the sponsorship deal, although specific policies had been developed to govern the relationship. Because the key informant perceived both parties were working towards the same goals, the sponsor affirmed its commitment to the club, although this was highlighted primarily as a commercial rather than a community-oriented one.

Sponsor: Perceived benefits-In the context of relationships the company perceived it could build with key groups in the local population, the sponsorship was identified as one that had generated direct and indirect financial benefits for the company. Given the continuation of common goals and a flow of benefits related to them, the interviewee suggested the relationship would be likely to endure. As such, the view given was that the sponsor's ongoing commitment was principally a commercially driven one.

Sponsor: Opportunistic behavior-The strategically beneficial nature of the relationship was identified by the key informant as being central to their association with the club. It was explained the company would therefore be unlikely to behave opportunistically until their goals

had been achieved. Once they were in this position, the interviewee indicated the sponsor would then consider whether or not to renew or terminate the sponsor deal, sponsor another club, sponsor another property outside football or focus on alternative strategies. Such decisions, it was explained, would be made at the strategic, rather than operational, level.

Sponsor: Commitment-For the duration of their contract with the club, and possibly beyond to a further contract, the interviewee asserted the sponsor's commitment to the association. Loyalty was therefore identified as being a feature of this, although this had been motivated by the strategic and commercial nature of the relationship. The key informant explained the company had made significant investments in the relationship because it had been deemed necessary for the effectiveness of the sponsorship deal. Moreover, it was suggested the club had made a number of mistakes but the company had been patient with them in order to protect their investments.

Overall comment-This is a dyad characterized by symmetry between commitment and the commitment determinants, with the club and sponsor both retaining a strong sense of communal orientation underpinned by commercial or financial motives. The nature of the link between community and commerce is different to that observed in Dyad 3. Whereas both parties in Dyad 3 are located in the same town and are connected by a multiplicity of common, often geographically specific, stakeholders, the two organizations in this case appear to be in congruence for differing reasons. That is, the club has a strong community focus but has been encountering financial problems, whilst the sponsor has been seeking to target specific markets to which the club can facilitate access in return for the payment of a rights fee. Both parties can therefore be said to be in symmetry because of this and have consequently made a commitment to one another. This involves making investments into the relationship, working together to ensure the effectiveness and success of the relationship, and focusing on developing and maintaining a stable relationship. The nature of the congruence between the two nevertheless implies the club's commitment is affective followed by an instrumental commitment given the strong emphasis placed upon relations with the local community. With the sponsor, there is a sense it is using the sponsorship as a vehicle through which to gain access to target markets. This consequently suggests instrumental, and then affective, elements of commitment underpin its behavior.

4.4.7 A note on normative commitment

Having commented throughout this study on the possible existence of normative commitment, it is appropriate to make a final comment about its existence. Following the dyad interviews, it

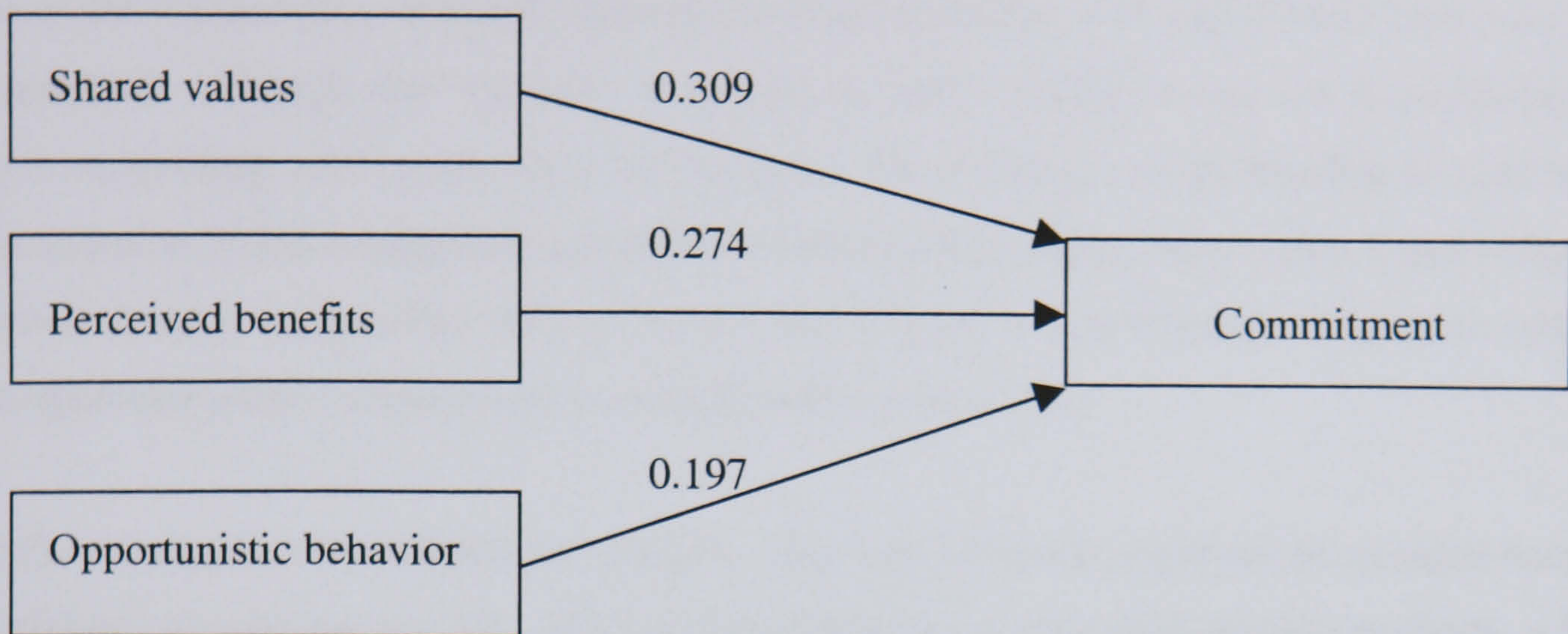
appears clubs and sponsors do not explicitly believe they should behave in a particular way in relations with their partner. Wherever specific and common behavior was evident, this often seems to have been motivated by contractual obligation. That is, parties have perceived they should engage with a partner because there is a legal duty to do so. This implies a more instrumental basis for their commitment rather than a moral one. In the same way, the identification with partners is one often based around commercial intent or community orientation, not around a perceived need to accept the values of another. Normative commitment, if it exists, would therefore seem to be implicit to relationship commitment. Because an aggregated conceptualization of commitment was employed in this study, it was not the intention to expressly consider components of commitment. In this light, no further comments about normative commitment will be made.

4.5 Summary of results

Following the factor analysis, eleven factors were identified of which ten, once interpreted and coded, were retained for subsequent analysis using multiple regression techniques. This held commitment as the dependent variable and trust, communication, managing the relationship, location, perceived benefits, shared values, contractual terms, opportunistic behavior and informal relations as the independent variables. Results drawn from this analysis indicate that three variables (shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior) have a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable and are therefore determinants of commitment. The standardized coefficients figure for each of these variables is depicted in Table 6. In the case of the perceived benefits variable and the shared values variable, there is confirmation of the initially hypothesized relationships (H3 and H9). In the case of opportunistic behavior, this represents a determinant which, whilst it has been previously identified in the literature as a determinant of commitment, was not part of a relationship initially hypothesised by this study. In the light of statistical testing, Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have not been confirmed by this study. In order to comply with statistical convention, the data for clubs and sponsors was amalgamated to enable the factor and multiple regression analyses to take place. To account for differences between both parties, a series of dyad interviews was undertaken resulting in the formulation of a commitment typology (shown in Chapter 5, Table 7). The reader is asked to note that specific differences between clubs and sponsors are not noted by this typology. Rather, the analysis of findings indicates there are commonalities and differences within and between clubs and sponsors. As such, one may find, for example, one dyad may be characterised by strong similarities (symmetry) between the members whilst another dyad may be characterised

by strong differences (asymmetry). A general statement about the common characteristics of one group (club or sponsor) can not therefore be made.

Table 6: Standardised coefficients of statistically significant commitment determinants



4.6 Conclusions

Following the factor analysis, ten factors were identified as accounting for the variance in the model proposed by this study. This indicates how accurate the proposed model was, especially given the confirmation of eight of the original ten variables incorporated into the survey instrument. One of the limitations of factor analysis is that it does not indicate the strength or direction of relationships between variables. In this study, a further problem encountered was the failure of the factor analysis to condense the data down into a smaller number of factors. Being critical, this may indicate either an element of over replication on the part of the researcher or the failure to strictly apply techniques such as cut-off measures. A counter argument to the former case is the formative nature of this study. Whilst the number of factors could have been reduced from the ten identified, quite how this should have been achieved is debatable. Comfrey and Lee's (1992) recommendation for cutting off values at 0.4 was adhered to because alternative guidelines would have led to a lower value being used, simply exacerbating the problem of too many factors. An alternative approach would have been to use the scree plot to cut-off the factors. But this would have been highly problematic, for two reasons: only two variables would have been identified (trust and communication), and commitment would have been removed from the model.

Accordingly, the initial intention to employ multiple regression analysis was therefore an additionally important one. Not only was it used to establish the nature of relationships between

the dependent (commitment) and independent variables, it also helped to reduce the number of variables by identifying the statistically significant determinants of commitment. Following the multiple regression, three key determinants of commitment were established: shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior. In the first two cases, this provides statistical proof for two of the relationships originally hypothesised by this study. In the latter case, a new variable was identified. Although this has been examined by other studies it was not hypothesised as having a relationship with commitment by this study. On this basis, it can therefore be concluded that the extent to which a party believes it shares values with another, the benefits it perceives can be derived from a relationship with a partner and a party's opportunistic tendencies will all impact upon that party's commitment to a relationship with another.

Given the constraints of small sample research, which in this study could not be avoided because of the defined population (n=182), allied to the identified need for triangulating methods, a final stage of dyadic interviews was undertaken. This proved to be one of the most difficult parts of the study to organise. Despite having established strong links with certain stakeholders in football, general access continued to be a problem. With a great deal of effort, persuasion, network influence and an endorsement, the researcher was finally able to gain access to six complete dyads. One alternative would have been to work with a larger number of clubs and sponsors from different dyads, but a need was identified to work with direct dyad partners. This facilitated a more holistic interpretation of findings and also ensured that attempts to validate each variable were not a major issue. The closer and more detailed investigation of determinants predicted by the model appears to mask a multitude of differences within and between each dyad, the implications of which are detailed in the next chapter of this study. One characteristic however is that different clubs and sponsors have varying desires to build and maintain relationships with a dyad partner. This means parties differ in their intentions to make short-term sacrifices, they have varying amounts of confidence in their relationship with a partner, and a relationship can vary in length from the short-term (a one year contract) to a long-term commitment (up to ten years and beyond in some cases).

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of chapter

The chapter identifies the implications of this study at a number of different levels. In the light of findings made following the qualitative and quantitative research, observations made during various literature reviews and the grounded nature of the research, the chapter serves to highlight the contribution this study makes to understanding in these areas. A final concluding statement is provided highlighting key aspects both of the chapter and of the study as a whole.

5.2 Introduction

There are early indications this study is adding value to understanding how sponsorship programmes work. Aspects of it have already formed part of a number of invited seminar papers, publications have requested that specific pieces be written based upon it, and four academic and practitioner conferences have either asked for or accepted presentations by the author. Moreover, sponsors and football clubs have enquired about the findings of the study. It is anticipated the study will also form the basis for future journal publications, with the International Journal of Advertising already having approached the author and the Journal of Advertising Research routinely publishing sponsorship papers. In these terms, it is therefore argued this study is of relevance to both the academic and practitioner communities.

5.3 Implications for sponsorship literature

A vast majority of the existing sponsorship literature examines phenomena specific only to one of the parties involved in a sponsorship programme. This invariably means studies have focused upon 'the sponsor' or 'the customer'. Little or no work has been undertaken within the sponsorship dyad and few studies consider the role of the sponsee in establishing and managing a sponsorship deal. The nature of this prevailing research agenda is reflected in many of the sponsorship definitions routinely adopted by researchers in which objectives and outcomes are implicit, and where the transactional exchange of resources is effectively postulated. Sponsees do not appear to have a role as these definitions seemingly portray them as little more than 'passive recipients'. This is not only limiting but also naïve; this study demonstrates relations between sponsor and sponsee link objectives and outcomes and that their association is a rather more complex arrangement than the transactional paradigm indicates. As a result, the proposed definition of sponsorship presented earlier is intended to represent the breadth and depth of the association between sponsor and sponsee. This acknowledges the relationship is a socially-based

one in which resources, such as information, are exchanged. It also highlights the context within which sponsorship programmes operate, indicating parties do not simply pursue their own transactional and/or financial objectives, they will also work to help their partner and view a sponsorship deal as a vehicle which can be used to realise network level objectives. Above all, it represents the relationship management process between sponsor and sponsee as being central to the effective management of a sponsorship programme.

Given a growth in sponsorship expenditure over the last decade, especially in sports, one would have imagined both the academic literature and the development of professional practice would have kept pace. This has not, however, been the case; the sponsorship literature remains a rather fragmented and arguably limited body of work, whilst some remain sceptical about the effectiveness of sponsorship programmes. Once again, this study therefore asserts that the process of relationship management is central to sponsorship effectiveness because it links elements of the literature which appear to predominate (objectives and outcomes) whilst extending the analysis of sponsorship into new areas (management process and relationship orientation). One of the main reasons the research agenda has developed in this way is the commonly held view that sponsorship is a one-off transaction, linked to the marketing communications mix. Many sponsors thus appear to have taken a short-term view of their sponsorship programmes, often capitalising upon the popularity of football rather. In turn, many clubs have come to rely upon sponsorship as a 'revenue source'.

For some clubs and sponsors this is both logical and sensible because there may be strong context specific factors which mean that a transactional orientation proves to be the most fruitful relationship form for them to take. For example, taking money from a sponsor or generating recall through a sponsorship programme clearly acknowledges the reason why most parties engage in any form of relationship: that is, to secure the benefits of their relationship. In addition to this, it may be that the financial position of clubs, for example, is so precarious that they need to engage in a short-term relationship in order simply to generate the direct and immediate financial benefits needed in order to survive. Rather than engaging in a committed relationship which may flourish in the long-term, at which point benefits (tangible or otherwise) are achieved, a relational orientation may simply exacerbate short-term problems (for example, cash flow problems) potentially leading to their long-term demise. Compounding the need for such a pragmatic view is the complete absence of any literature which confirms that the benefits attributable to long-term sponsorship programmes are any greater or any more tangible than those

achievable from a series of short-term deals. Indeed, evidence from the broader literature (for example, see O'Malley and Tynan, 1998) similarly questions the logic of a relational orientation, casting doubts not only on the returns of it but also upon the perceived necessity to engage in long-term associations. Hence, whilst this study maintains that a relational orientation is an appropriate way forwards for some sponsorship programmes, the nature of context specific factors facing sponsorship dyads may be such that it is better for those involved to adopt a clear transactional orientation. For researchers this will mean having to examine sponsorship programmes on a dyad by dyad basis in order to assess either the extent to which a particular orientation has been adopted and what the consequences of this might be. In turn, this strongly presents a case for qualitative data collection in order to understand the nature of context specific factors rather than using the generalised data generated through positivist, multivariate analyses.

Irrespective of the orientation adopted by dyad members, at the heart of every football shirt sponsorship programme is a contractual relationship which may be termed 'a transaction'. This is effectively a risk minimising behavior, aimed at limiting the uncertainty of an association with a partner. It also enables parties in cases where there are context specific influences upon them to engage in short-term rather than longer-term associations. However, based upon the findings of this study, it can now be argued that a majority of sponsorship dyads have a much stronger social basis to them than has thus far been acknowledged by the literature. One reason for this view is that communication is at the heart of the sponsorship process. Even in the most extreme cases²⁴, sponsor and sponsee will at least engage in a dialogue aimed at establishing a relationship. A second reason is that some parties to sponsorship relationships take the process of acquiring and retaining partners very seriously. In this sense, sponsorship is more than a one-off exchange, it involves a process through which a relationship is built and understanding is developed. It may seem like a minor semantic point, but rather than talk in terms of the screening, selection and management phases of sponsorship, it now seems more appropriate to characterise sponsorship as the acquisition and retention of a key business partner. In these terms, MacNeil's (1980) assertion that the transactional paradigm is characterised by an almost total absence of contact would seem to be a highly inappropriate as many parties to sponsorship dyads routinely engage in ongoing exchange activities.

²⁴ In one of the cases examined by this study, a football club, once it had agreed a deal with a shirt sponsor, ceased to communicate with the sponsoring organisation once they had taken payment for the deal.

This is an especially pertinent point because the principle reason many of the organisations participating in this study engaged with a sponsorship partner was the attainment of indirect or non-financial benefits such as relationship building with local communities and key customers. The premise of such relationships has therefore been to extract value rather than simply use them as direct profit making vehicles. The notion of, for example, leveraging expenditure to exploit a sponsorship deal would thus seem to be a misrepresentation of a process whereby one or both parties involved in a shirt sponsorship dyad actively seek to build their relationship in the pursuit of mutual benefits. Supplementing many existing transactional studies, this study therefore proposes that managing and leveraging a deal involves communicating with a partner, formulating policies which enable the mutual achievement of benefits and managing opportunism. This poses some interesting challenges for those involved in the process of sponsorship management, not least in differentiating between the challenges which arise in transactional and relational oriented programmes.

Having identified shared values, perceived benefits and opportunism as determinants of commitment, this has implications for the evaluation of sponsorship success. Because it is traditionally associated with, for example, measuring increases in sales, sponsorship evaluation is not readily associated with adding value through key business relationships. Moreover, it is not a proven way of measuring sponsorship effectiveness. The results of this research indicate that evaluation techniques need to be rather more subtle and rigorous in the way they account for transactional returns, the value added by a sponsorship and for relationship quality. Even in cases where a sponsorship deal lasts only for, say, three years and then dissolves, measuring sales or assessing the financial returns is an acceptable way to measure sponsorship effectiveness, but it may just too simplistic, especially across the full range of dyads in which sponsors and sponsees are involved. In a relationship where parties have made a commitment to one another, this demands a more sophisticated assessment of both transactional and relational returns. Clearly the challenge for researchers in the future will be how to identify and measure the returns from building relationships with local communities or developing strategic competence through commercial sponsorship relations, whilst at the same time allying this to more traditional and/or more effective transactional measures.

Despite these observations, one of the principal findings of this study is that different organisations approach football shirt sponsorship programmes in varying ways. Whilst some are socially-based associations revealing a strong relationship orientation on the part of those

involved, others are clearly transactional with weaker social underpinnings. This study argues the latter form of relationship does deliver short-term benefits, but at the same time there is reason to believe that parties may be able to secure a greater sum of long-term benefits should those involved address the relational context of their sponsorship arrangements. At one level, this poses an interesting research question: that is, whether transactional or relational models of sponsorship are more likely to be effective in delivering returns. Some clubs and sponsors appear to be locked into a transactional, opportunist model of sponsorship management. Whilst this approach is advantageous, for reasons previously stated, it may deny the opportunities which a stronger relational orientation might create. At the same time, sponsors and sponsees with a longer-term or relational orientation may simply be naïve or misguided in their belief that a stream of, sometimes intangible, benefits will inevitably accrue to them. Two potential foci for subsequent research and management practice therefore become: firstly, establishing how sponsors and sponsee can move from a transactional orientation to develop a relational view of sponsorship in organisations where there may currently be strong cultural or financial obstacles preventing it; secondly, how those parties and dyads with a relational orientation reach the decision that this is an appropriate way to relate to a sponsorship dyad partner, and on what basis it might be decided that a transactional orientation might be a more relevant approach to sponsorship.

The ultimate outcome of this research is the view that all organisations engaged in a sponsorship deal with another party have made some form of commitment to a dyadic relationship. At its most basic, this entails the sponsor committing financial resources and a club committing space on a football shirt. Where the study adds real value is in identifying sponsorship dyad relationships are not always so symmetrical, the commitment demonstrated by other types of organisation often being more complex and indeed more extensive than this. Commitment can be long-term, and relationships can be durable and characterised by loyalty so long as expectations and signals regarding commitment are identified and accepted by a dyad partner.

5.4 Implications for relationship literature

The inter-organisational relationship literature is one extending back more than forty years, although there has been a dramatic increase in the number of studies examining the phenomenon in the light of a view that organisations should 'collaborate to compete'. Despite intense interest in other areas of business, sponsorship as an inter-organisational relationship attracts minimal attention in the literature. In cases where sponsorship has been examined, it is typically seen as a form of transactional exchange linking sponsors and customers. There has been little

consideration of sponsorship from within other paradigms and this represents a major gap in the literature which has only partially been addressed by the recent emergence of a relational view of sponsorship. Whilst this study does not necessarily strongly advocate, say, a game theory view of sponsorship, a broader development of the sponsorship literature would serve two purposes. Firstly, it would instigate a broad conceptual debate about sponsorship and, in so doing, would secondly help to facilitate the more general acceptance of a relational view of sponsorship. Only then is the literature likely to begin considering a broader view of the issues and challenges facing sponsorship management. The transactional paradigm has nevertheless been a productive one for researchers, and there has already been some interest in sponsorship from within the relational paradigm. In this regard, it is intended that this study will make a contribution to understanding how relationships are forged, managed and dissolved. It is also hoped the inter-organisational, dyadic nature of the research (seemingly one of only two sponsorship studies conducted in this way) will help to provide a bridge between transactional, relational and network views of sponsorship, as well as between studies of single parties to sponsorship relationships and those involving dyads or multiple parties.

One of the accomplishments of the study is an extension of the sponsorship literature into the area of football sponsorship programmes. To date, related published studies have been case study based, have relied on limited samples or have failed to enter a conceptual debate concerning sponsorships. A relational dyadic view therefore adds value to the existing stock of published material, especially from a dyadic inter-organisational perspective. This is important because sports properties are a major focus for sponsorship expenditure across the world, especially in the United Kingdom and Europe where football clubs are significant recipients of sponsorship funding. Trying to understand the nature of sponsorship relations in this context is therefore of paramount importance, particularly given the rather tentative nature of American literature in this area. The relational view of sponsorship has attracted more serious consideration in Australia, focusing on Australian Rules football and the arts. But this is quite specific and does not account for factors such as location which impact heavily on European sport sponsorship programmes. Whilst this study acknowledges the ground breaking nature of Australian research, it nevertheless attempts to be the first to present a uniquely European view of relations in the sponsorship dyad.

Based upon the specific focus adopted by this study, and derived from the research undertaken during it, the following new definition of 'relationship' in a sponsorship context is proposed: "A finite, contractually based association through which two parties engage in both relational and

transactional exchange activities'. Enshrined within this definition is a clear acknowledgement that football shirt sponsorship dyads are contractually based relationships involving football clubs and shirt sponsors. Indeed, the evidence from the study indicates that, without exception, parties to such agreements always sign written contracts as a foundation for their relationships. Allied to this, it is acknowledged the nature of contractual relations are such that they are agreed for a specified period of time after which one or both parties may choose either to terminate their association or re-negotiate the terms of a new relationship with one another. The main basis for any relationship is that parties inevitably engage in exchange activities. Within the shirt sponsorship dyad, this may have a strongly relational, often context specific, focus which draws from the importance that is attributed to factors such as geographic identity or informal links between relationship partners. However, the definition also acknowledges there are transactional elements to most sponsorship contracts in that both clubs and sponsors will seek to minimise costs and maximise benefits associated with a deal, thereby dictating that they select the most attractive partner available to them at a specific point in time.

In complying with the traditions of the relational paradigm, one of the additional strengths of this study is that it draws from a range of different disciplines. As such, sponsorship is not just presented as a marketing communications tool. By utilising literature such as that found in corporate strategy and operations management, this is intended to reinforce the broader nature of sponsorship and the view that it is more than a short-term marketing transaction. Moreover, it introduces a notion that sponsorships can be conceived of as strategic alliances between organisations which can be established for the mutual long-term benefit of two parties. One of the major conclusions that can be drawn in the light of this is the relationship between sponsor and sponsee is not a discrete, arms length one. It is a socially-based arrangement involving the exchange of multiple content including resources such as information and competence. This is an important observation to make in the context of an increasingly cluttered marketing communications arena where rival forms of media create clutter and noise for sponsorship programmes. Whilst this assumes sponsorship is a form of marketing communication, a relational view nevertheless differentiates it from a transactional one in the way that parties can work together to address how to work together to add value to their relationship and so differentiate their arrangement from other forms of marketing communication. By engaging in such a process, parties effectively commit to one another and will inevitably communicate in various ways, share values, develop common policies and/or devote resources to ensure the effectiveness of their relationship. This is not intended to imply shirt sponsorship programmes are always strategic

relationships, but it does denote them as something more than transactions. A more general point is that programmes across the sport involve different types of organisations ranging from those engaged in relatively short-term relationships to those with more overtly strategic intent.

5.5 Implications for dyad literature

It was observed at the start of this study that most published sponsorship research only addresses issues pertaining to one party, normally the sponsor or the recipient of a communications message (the customer). Apart from the evidence from a very small number of Australian studies, little attention is paid to the sponsee. This not only renders the sponsee as little more than a passive vehicle for sponsors to exploit (which in football is clearly not the case), it is the antithesis of the relational view that social processes underpin associations between organisations. The failure of sponsorship studies to acknowledge and accept this is not only a major deficiency in the literature, but also betrays the restrictive conceptual foundations of much sponsorship research. The extent of these failings is exacerbated when one notes the dyadic nature of many inter-organisational studies in the broader literature. The decision to focus solely on sponsors also makes a major implicit assumption: that sponsorship dyads are symmetrical when in fact, by referring to the findings of this research we now know they may not be.

In adopting a relational view of sponsorship, the imperative is for researchers to consider both sides of the dyad. A failure to do so represents something analogous to basing an assessment of a marriage on the view's of the husband without ever asking the wife for her observations. This acknowledges relationships and commitment to them may be asymmetrical which, in the case of this research, they clearly are. In turn, this reinforces observations made by Anderson and Weitz (1992) that parties to a relationship will seek to minimise risk and reduce uncertainty by committing to another party prepared to commit to them. Significantly, this acknowledges relationship partners do not commit in isolation and will respond to signals and information provided by their dyad partner. Understanding the nature of these signals and information exchanges is essential if one is to be clear about how the relationship between sponsor and sponsee works, because the two are inextricably linked.

Despite having its origins in the mid-1990's the network view of sponsorship has progressed little over the last decade. When added to criticisms of the transactional view and observations made above, the case for dyadic research becomes even more irresistible. Research of the dyadic nature undertaken in this study not only promotes our understanding of relationships between parties at

what has typically, and falsely, been held as the transactional level. It also re-emphasises the importance of the network by examining its constituent parts. Given the problems commonly associated with network level research, examining a dyad relationship enables one to extrapolate what the network level motives of respective partners might be. Understanding why a party has engaged in a dyad relationship may, for instance, reveal intentions to create relationships with the local community or other strategic and commercial partners. The dyadic nature of this study's focus therefore plays an important role not only in understanding the motives, intentions and actions of parties to relationship dyads, it also facilitates a better understanding of sponsorship networks.

5.6 Implications for commitment literature

This study represents the first direct assessment of commitment in sponsorship whereby the determinants and, secondarily, the constituency of the concept have been examined. Although other published studies highlight the relationship between market orientation and commitment (Farrelly and Quester, 2003), there are no other current studies focusing specifically upon commitment. In this context, it has been identified that shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic tendencies are key determinants of commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad. This is not especially unusual because related determinants have been reported in other studies of commitment, although the dyadic nature of this study differentiates it from others which have sought to establish determinants on only one side of a relationship. Using structured interviews subsequent to the use of quantitative methods has provided a unique view of the symmetries and asymmetries of commitment within a range of different dyads.

Although there is a broad range of commitment definitions in the literature, a sponsorship specific definition has yet to be proposed. Whilst other definitions may be variously relevant to commitment within sponsorship dyads, this study indeed having utilised Anderson and Weitz's (1992) version, the specific nature of commitment within these dyads dictates that a new definition is applicable. As a result, this study advocates that the following definition of commitment is appropriate: "The period during which relationship parties with shared values engage in a beneficial relationship until such a time that more attractive alternatives become available". This definition is intended to incorporate two key elements which have been derived from this study. Firstly, it couches commitment in both relational and transactional terms. That is, whilst acknowledging that some sponsors and sponsees will be driven by cost and revenue considerations, it also highlights the importance of a social basis for their relationship, including

for example, the importance both might attribute to close relations with their local communities. Moreover, it sets the relationship within the specific period of time during which sponsor and sponsee are co-signatories to a contractual agreement. Secondly, it specifically incorporates the determinants of commitment identified by the study (shared value, perceived benefits and opportunistic behaviour). It is therefore implicit within this that there will be congruent policies and behaviours between those engaged in a committed relationship, that parties will be seeking to attain benefits from this relationship, and that sponsorship commitment will end once more attractive alternatives have become available meaning that one or both parties switch to other exchange relationships. At this point, the contractual relationship and therefore sponsorship commitment ends.

Given the differing impact each commitment determinant has upon the dyads examined, a typology consisting of four types (Calculators and Commercial; Carers and Communal; Cynics and Short-Termers; Innocents and Indifferents) of organisation is therefore proposed. This is shown in Table 7. By classifying the different commitment behaviors exhibited by sponsor and sponsee in to different types, it is hoped researchers and practitioners will be able to develop a stronger understanding of how and why both parties to a sponsorship engage, relate and dissolve their relationships. As such it is intended to serve as a predictive tool which highlights the foundation's upon which a relationship might be built, what the management implications of associating with a particular type of partner might be and on what basis a relationship is likely to end. The typology is based upon the specific responses of key informants who participated in the structured dyadic interviews to standardised questions about commitment, shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic behavior. These in turn were drawn specifically from the questionnaire items of the constructs found to be statistically significant determinants of commitment.

In seeking to develop this study, the typology could be considered within other football shirt sponsorship dyads, as well as further sponsorship dyads both within and without sport. In accepting its relevance, this raises a series of issues for researchers and practitioners. Most notable amongst these is the view that associating with a particular type of partner will pose a distinct set of challenges, the most important of which will be acquiring and retaining a partner with compatible commitment intentions. During the formative stages of a relationship, this will

Table 7: Typology of commitment

Nature of commitment behavior	Calculators and Commercials	Cynics and Short-Termers	Carers and Communitals	Innocents and Indifferents
	<p>Loyalty to sponsorship dyad partner is based upon a strategic decision motivated by commercial considerations.</p> <p>Not only willing to make long-term investment in relationship with sponsorship dyad partner, but view it as important to the overall effectiveness and success of the association.</p> <p>Likely to be patient with the sponsorship dyad partner when they make mistakes because it is perceived as being important in maintaining the stability and longevity of the relationship.</p> <p>Not only willing to dedicate significant</p>	<p>No particular loyalty to sponsorship dyad partner; will seek to commit to relationship which is most profitable in the short-term.</p> <p>Make little or no long-term investment in relationship with sponsorship dyad partner because of expectation it will be a short-term association</p> <p>Show no inclination towards patience when dealing with sponsorship dyad partner because sole motive is to secure maximum benefit within a short period of time; also that no expectation the relationship will endure.</p> <p>Dedicate few, if any, resources to building the</p>	<p>Have a strong sense of loyalty to sponsorship dyad partner based upon locality of the partner and/or perceived need to support the partner in some way, allied to other, more commercial motives.</p> <p>Likely to make long-term investments in relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner, especially linked to community based activities and/or support for the development of the partner.</p> <p>Because of community links or perceived need to support the partner, party will show strong inclination to be patient with them.</p> <p>Prepared to dedicate significant resources to</p>	<p>Will be unsure about the extent and nature of their loyalty because have failed to directly address or establish their motives for engaging in a relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner.</p> <p>May or may not be willing to make long-term investments in relationship with sponsorship dyad partner, although decision to do so will emerge rather than being planned.</p> <p>Likely to be pragmatic when dealing with mistakes made by sponsorship dyad partner; may be unsure how to deal with, or unprepared/unwilling to deal with, situations where partner makes a mistake.</p> <p>May or may not be prepared to dedicate</p>

	<p>resources to help build relationship with sponsorship dyad partner, but view it as important to the overall effectiveness and success of the association.</p>	<p>relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner because no expectation relationship will endure.</p>	<p>build the relationship, especially in seeking to develop relations with the local community or to ensure support for the partner.</p>	<p>significant resources to help build relationship with sponsorship dyad partner;</p>
<p>Shared values</p>	<p>Sponsorship dyad partner will be selected and a relationship established with them specifically because both have common goals, especially those of a commercial and/or strategic nature.</p> <p>Sponsorship dyad partner will be selected and a relationship established with them specifically because both have common policies (or are prepared to develop common policies), especially those of a commercial and/or strategic nature.</p> <p>Have a strong sense of commercial and strategic loyalty to sponsorship</p>	<p>Fails to recognize or accept the need for it to adopt goals common to its sponsorship dyad partner because no expectation relationship will endure; associates with partner because of financial gain which may be the only common goal the two parties share.</p> <p>Fails to recognize or accept the need for it to adopt policies common to its sponsorship dyad partner because no expectation relationship will endure; only adopt common policies to enable pursuit of financial gain.</p> <p>No sense of loyalty, other than in contractual and financial terms, to a</p>	<p>Accepts that commonality of goals with the sponsorship dyad partner is an important determinant of their commitment, particularly when it supports links with the local community or the development of the partner.</p> <p>In seeking to establish links with the local community or provide support to the sponsorship dyad partner, will adopt policies common to the partner.</p> <p>Has strong sense of loyalty to sponsorship dyad partner based upon</p>	<p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to reasons why they should/need to have goals in common with a sponsorship dyad partner; realization during relationships of reasons for adopting common goals may be considered during the period of the relationship.</p> <p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the reasons why they should/need to have policies in common with a sponsorship dyad partner; realization during relationships of reasons for adopting common goals may be considered during the period of the relationship.</p> <p>May or may not have a strong sense of loyalty to sponsorship dyad partner;</p>

	<p>dyad partner; loyalty will depend upon continuing effectiveness and success of the relationship.</p>	<p>sponsorship dyad partner because no expectation relationship will endure.</p>	<p>relationship with local community and/or support for the development of sponsorship partner.</p>	<p>in case of the former, may be unsure about the basis upon which this loyalty is built; in case of the latter, loyalty to a partner may emerge during the relationship.</p>
<p>Perceived benefits</p>	<p>Relationship with dyad partner likely to deliver commercial return, most notably in terms of long-term generation of value; benefits will therefore be of both a directly and an indirectly financial nature.</p> <p>Benefits attainable through relationship with the dyad partner may be achieved in the short-term, although effectiveness and success of the relationship generally judged in the longer term, both within and beyond the contractual duration of the relationship.</p> <p>Basis of relationship with sponsorship dyad partner is an expectation that it will be a long-term one; attainment of benefits will</p>	<p>Relationship with sponsorship dyad partner viewed primarily in terms of the direct financial benefits a party perceives can be achieved through the relationship.</p> <p>Party identifies that relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner is likely to be of direct financial benefit only during the contractual duration of the relationship.</p> <p>No expectation they will have a relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner any longer than the period provided for by the</p>	<p>Relationship with sponsorship dyad partner likely to be of direct financial benefit and indirectly beneficial through links to community or support for the partner.</p> <p>Benefits attainable through relationship with sponsorship dyad partner are significant, and of both a directly financial and indirectly financial nature.</p> <p>Given the combination of motives underpinning the arrangement, relationship with sponsorship dyad partner likely to be an</p>	<p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the profit achievable through a relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner; justification of the relationship may be made on post hoc basis.</p> <p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the extent and/or nature of the benefits which may be generated through a relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner; achievement of any benefits may be incidental and lead to the relationship being deemed to be a success.</p> <p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the possible longevity of relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner; does not preclude</p>

	<p>be viewed as being the result of a long-term, strategic commitment.</p> <p>View their relationship with sponsorship dyad partner as a commercial and a strategic one; relationship will be oriented towards attainment of longer-term benefits.</p>	<p>current contract, and that more attractive alternatives will become available to replace existing relationship.</p> <p>View their relationship with sponsorship dyad partner as a short-term contractual and financial arrangement; do not see their relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner as being a long-term one.</p>	<p>enduring one.</p> <p>Perceived benefits of relationship with sponsorship dyad partner leads to view that the association is a long-term one.</p>	<p>an enduring relationship being forged, although decision to engage on this basis likely to be reactive.</p> <p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the possible longevity of relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner; does not preclude long-term relationship being forged, although decision likely to be reactive; decision to forge long-term relationship likely to be emergent rather than planned.</p>
<p>Opportunistic behavior</p>	<p>Given the strategic nature of relationship with sponsorship dyad partner, readily share information relevant to strategic and commercial development of the relationship.</p> <p>Sponsorship manager occupies central operational role in building relationship with the sponsorship dyad partner, although strategic</p>	<p>Given the relationship is a short-term, transitory one, do not share information with, sponsorship dyad partner.</p> <p>Sponsorship manager has limited control of the sponsorship dyad relationship as commitment decisions are made elsewhere in the</p>	<p>Willing to provide sponsorship dyad partner with information, particularly if it is linked to support for local community or helps in development of the partner.</p> <p>Sponsorship manager has some control at operational level over relationship with sponsorship dyad partner, although commitment to a partner is a strategic</p>	<p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to reasons why information should be shared with sponsorship dyad partner; information may be shared but this decision will be made during development of the relationship.</p> <p>Sponsorship manager may be unsure, unaware or indifferent to the role they could/should play in relationship with sponsorship dyad partner;</p>

	<p>decisions regarding relationship made at board level.</p> <p>Once strategic relationship with sponsorship dyad partner has been forged, this partner unlikely to be dropped even in the event of a better sponsorship deal becoming available; opportunism manifests itself more towards the end of a relationship when a party may begin to consider alternatives.</p> <p>Commitment to sponsorship dyad partner is a long-term one involving the maintenance of a stable relationship in which sacrifices are made and from which both parties benefit.</p>	<p>organization; sponsorship decisions motivated by short-term, financial considerations rendering a more informed or strategic view as being irrelevant.</p> <p>Would willingly drop a sponsorship dyad partner in the event of a better, more financially lucrative, sponsorship contract becoming available.</p> <p>Other than at the most basic transactional level, fail to make any commitment to a sponsorship dyad partner; no sense of loyalty to the relationship other than contractual obligation.</p>	<p>decision.</p> <p>Because relationship forged for reasons in addition to commercial gain, reduces the likelihood that a sponsorship dyad partner will be willingly dropped.</p> <p>Given the relationship's functions, likely that a strong commitment will be made to the relationship dyad.</p>	<p>likely to have a role in maintaining the relationship but not in establishing or building it.</p> <p>May or may not willingly drop a sponsorship dyad partner; decision likely to be taken reactively; decision may not be taken at all as party simply lets contract run for its term and then leaves relationship/sponsorship.</p> <p>May be unsure, unaware or indifferent to whether or not commitment has been made to a sponsorship dyad partner; commitment to relationship may not be exhibited other than in terms of making a further subsequent contractual commitment</p>
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mean searching for, and engaging with, a partner that will fulfil one's expectations of a sponsorship programme. The extent to which, for example, a partner is prepared to share information or dedicate information at this stage is therefore likely to be one indicator of their commitment intentions. Subsequent use of the typology is likely to be helpful in predicting the potential behavior of a specific type of sponsorship partner and will help sponsorship managers to assess the challenges they are likely to face. For example, in the case of a dyadic relationship with a 'Cynic' or 'Short-Termer', acceptance that a partner will seek to switch to more attractive sponsorship opportunities will enable remedial action which minimises risk and uncertainty to be taken. The differences between each of the commitment types also implies the way relationship benefits are viewed will be different in each case. In the event of relations with a partner who, say, displays short-term commitment intentions, the signal will be that one should seek to maximise short-term benefits and devote few resources to the achievement of longer-term returns.

Unlike most other inter-organisational relationships, where the commitment of one or both parties is either privately stated or implicit in their cognitions or behavior, commitment in the football shirt sponsorship dyad is publicly professed. This simultaneously presents challenges and opportunities: the narrative of public statements is one data source which provides an opportunity to build further understanding of the commitment concept. The challenge comes in terms of conceptualising, quantifying and measuring a readily identified relationship feature. This is an important point to make given the apparent deviation of statements made about commitment by clubs and sponsors, and the high turnover, short-contract duration evident in many shirt sponsorship dyads. Anderson and Weitz's (1992) notion of commitment proved to be a valuable one in this respect because it does not necessarily imply commitment is either enduring or long-term. Rather, it specifies commitment behavior will be built upon signals and perceptions which induce a party to commit to a stable relationship dyad. In the case of, say, 'Cynics and Short-Termers', an organisation might therefore be committed to their sponsorship partner for the duration of their sponsorship contract. This contrasts with the definitions of, for example, Ganesan (1994) and Morgan and Hunt (1994) where it was explicitly stated that commitment is akin to a desire to remain in a long-term relationship.

The aggregated conception of commitment employed by this study is an approach common to a majority of comparable studies found elsewhere in the marketing literature. Instead of

considering the constitution of commitment, in such cases the nature of it is established through references to the factors which determine its existence. Hence, observations concerning instrumental, affective and normative elements reflect the factors leading to the development of commitment. This enables a level of flexibility in interpreting the existence of commitment which disaggregated conceptualisations do not. An additional advantage of the single dimensional approach is that disaggregated conceptualisations tend to be inwardly focused, neglecting to address the context within which commitment develops. One reason for this is much of the work in this area has emerged from studies of internal organisational relationships, focusing on one side of the employment relationship dyad (normally the employee). In these terms, adopting a disaggregated conceptualisation in this study would have caused problems, firstly because a dyadic view of sponsorship commitment was thought to be necessary. Secondly, and more importantly, the existence of influences external to the dyadic relationship, such as location, was deemed to be such that a disaggregated construct would have neglected to identify its possible existence amongst key determinants.

Although this study is based upon an aggregated commitment construct, the identified determinants nevertheless indicate there are more specific constituents to the commitment concept. At an instrumental level, there is clear evidence 'Calculator and Commercial' type organisations clearly make considered judgements and calculations regarding the costs and benefits of remaining in a relationship with a sponsorship partner. But this is not exclusive and there is evidence other types also demonstrate instrumental commitment behavior. The difference being that, in the case of for example 'Carer and Communal' types, the cost/benefit decision is more likely to be couched in less tangibly financial terms. It will nevertheless remain a calculative decision in the sense of a selected partner being more attractive than another.

Instrumental commitment appears to confirm the view that football clubs use shirt sponsorship programmes as a source of revenue, and sponsors associate with football because of its perceived popularity. But this now appears to be a benchmark rather than the norm because parties may actually be more representative of different types of commitment. In the case of 'Carer and Communal' type organisations, there are likely to be strong affective elements to commitment, representing the emotional identification of sponsor and sponsee. This may be founded on the notion of organisations being supporters or advocates of a partner, the existence of 'chairman's whim', notions of paternal responsibility or the perceived need to demonstrate local geographical affiliations. Elements of identification show value congruence may also be present amongst

'Calculators and Commercials', particularly in terms on commercial goals, whilst being less obvious influences on the commitment behavior of 'Cynics and Short-Termers' and 'Innocents and Indifferents'.

A normative element in sponsorship commitment is also evident, although often less obvious, which could be said to be inextricably bound up in the behavior of each commitment type. For instance, 'Cynics and Short-Termers' may be expected to display particular traits which consequently lead to self-fulfilling behavioral patterns. That is, they may be expected to behave opportunistically and therefore do so. This is a rather simplistic view of normative commitment which nevertheless indicates there are perceived obligations to behave in a certain way when engaged in a relationship. A more tangible way in which normative commitment is displayed is through the morality of remaining within the contractual boundaries of a sponsorship deal. The study reveals it is unknown for parties to breach a contract and that, even in the case of opportunistic behavior, the switch to another partner takes place after only after a contract has expired. Clearly there are instrumental influences upon such a decision, most notably the financial penalties associated with a contract breach, but it does suggest that in most cases there are acceptable and unacceptable norms of behavior. Because it is beyond the direct scope of this study, it is sufficient to say that interpretations of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' may however differ between the commitment types identified by this study.

The reliability of the questionnaire scales used to operationalise commitment determinants in this study provides further insight into the nature of commitment in the shirt sponsorship dyad. In comparison with the Cronbach alpha's reported during original use of the scales, 'Communication', 'Perceived benefits', 'Perceptions of another's commitment' and 'Trust' appear to be especially reliable. Of the new scales proposed by the study, 'Managing the relationship' and 'Location' also show strong reliability. On this basis, the study therefore provides a rationale for adopting these determinants in further subsequent studies of sponsorship commitment. The emergence of an 'Opportunistic tendencies' determinant also indicates the potential for adopting or modifying a related scale when examining the desire to maintain a stable relationship. One minor concern is the alpha score for 'Commitment' which was relatively low, whilst the 'Timing' scale demonstrated an absence of reliability and was omitted from both the factor and multiple regression analyses. In the case of the former, further refinement of the scale may be needed, although there are still strong grounds for optimism that stability, sacrifice and confidence in a partner are important facets of sponsorship dyad relationships. In the case of the

latter, it is disappointing that reliability was poor. This possibly reflects the confusing nature of the questions asked. Whilst some related to the strategic nature and orientation of decisions made by dyad partners, others addressed the time frame within which decision making takes place. The author of this study maintains there is a temporal dimension to the determination of sponsorship commitment, although future studies addressing the concept of 'time' will need to clearly differentiate between the period within which decisions are made and the broader strategic context influencing sponsorship decision making.

Above all, this study confirms that commitment is an important aspect of the relationship between a football club and a shirt sponsor. This is most pertinently considered in the context of the printed material examined during the first phase of the research method when public proclamations of commitment suggested sponsors commit but clubs do not. Initial assessments of content made during the early stages of this study nevertheless have some resonance for the study of commitment given the emphasis they place upon the locality, shared values and perceived benefits of a relationship. However, what they do not betray, which only becomes evident later in the study, is the opportunism often underpinning sponsorship relations. There is also no sense that trust, or the role of a sponsorship manager, are likely to be important determinants of commitment. Whilst the narrative of the printed media was an important component of the study, the use of subsequent techniques was important in establishing the true nature of commitment.

What subsequent analysis does prove is that commitment can be synonymous with loyalty, longevity and durability. Hence, common associations with the concept have become evident, particularly amongst, for example, 'Carer and Communal' type organisations. The conceptualisation used in this study to operationalise commitment also appears to be relevant to football shirt sponsorship deals. Depending upon the values shared by dyad partners, benefits they perceive can be achieved through the association and the opportunistic behavior of a partner, clubs and sponsors that are prepared to engage in a stable relationship will make sacrifices in order to maintain it. One of key findings of this study, however, is that this form of commitment behavior is not common to all parties in football shirt sponsorship dyads. Indeed, commitment may be represented by little more than a short-term contractual relationship characterised by the unwillingness of a party to engage in commitment behaviors commonly identified in the literature. This may lead one to conclude some sponsorship dyads still have a strong transactional orientation. However, this study reiterates that a relational view and the importance of commitment are the key in understanding shirt sponsorship associations. What is nevertheless

clear is further work is needed in order to understand the varying demonstrations of commitment across a range of sponsorship dyads.

5.7 Implications for research methods

Having replicated the methods, techniques and scales used in previous studies of commitment, this study was built upon solid foundations. But one of the main constraints upon it was the small sample size which constrained the validity of findings made during quantitative phases of the research. In addressing the latter concern, this examination of commitment has nevertheless added consequent value to the methods used in the formerly mentioned previous studies. The strategy employed a multiplicity of methods incorporating elements of replication and triangulation not evident in published studies of sponsorship or commitment. In progressing from a consideration of printed media through to an examination of direct dyad partners, the study establishes the relevance and value of adopting a coherently holistic approach to relationship research.

As a foundation for the subsequent development of a broader study, the initial use of documentary evidence such as newspaper articles proved to be invaluable. Stories relating to sport, football and sponsorship are regularly reported, providing a standard narrative which is at once both rhetorical and a strong reflection of the basis upon which parties commit to a shirt sponsorship dyad. Understanding the narrative of these reports is a potentially fruitful source of data for sponsorship researchers seeking to understand notions of commitment. Whilst the rigorous examination of printed media was not a priority of this study, it nevertheless sets a benchmark for a more detailed future examination of a potentially significant resource.

The use of the CIT is not evident in any other published study of sponsorship, this study seemingly being the first to use it. The main reason for this is that it is commonly used in analyses of service failure. Nevertheless, it proved to be an excellent technique for gathering qualitative data in an open ended way that did not impose a structure or an agenda upon interviewees. This is an especially pertinent observation given the paucity of research analysing sponsorship and commitment. In other uses of CIT, custom and practice dictate interviews should be undertaken to the point at which one gets the duplication of categorised responses. Although this study breaches convention, the usefulness of the technique was nevertheless realised through the development of a set of determinants which were subsequently assessed using other techniques.

One of these was the use of a survey instrument, in this case, a postal questionnaire. Despite concerns expressed in the literature about this form of data collection, the response rate reported for this study is highly satisfactory. Whilst it was not an aim of the study to explore reasons for variations in postal questionnaire response rates, it seems likely the impact of endorsement by the CMMA was significant. This is confirmed both by comparing the response rate of football clubs here to other studies and by noting that more clubs than sponsors surprisingly responded. Added to this, issues such as the credibility of the research source (Leeds University Business School) and the point at which questionnaires were despatched (during the close season) are also possible explanations for the pleasing response.

In triangulating the research findings, the six dyad interviews helped to translate the standardised output from the quantitative phase back into a narrative understandable to parties engaged in football shirt sponsorship dyads. This is not only good methodological practice, because it attributes meaning to measured correlations, but, as interest in the results of this study proves, it also ensures academic research of this nature is accessible to multiple constituencies. A further benefit that has been realised is structured confirmatory interviews can be powerful tools in overcoming the constraints of small sample size.

5.8 Implications for practitioners

Most practitioners (sponsors, sponsees and agents) still seem unsure what to make of sponsorship and opinion is divided about whether it is an effective medium of communication or if it represents a coherent strategy in itself. Sport sponsorship has come under particular scrutiny in recent years, especially in the light of interest in rival forms of sponsorship including media and causes. Further challenges have been encountered in football because clubs often chase revenue and sponsors simply seek to 'associate' with a supposedly attractive property. These challenges have been exacerbated even further by the polarisation of the football shirt sponsorship market whereby a small number of high value deals increasingly account for a large proportion of expenditure. It is an interesting time therefore for those involved in establishing and managing sponsorship relations.

In the context of these challenges, the most important implication for sponsorship partners is that they need to recognise a football shirt sponsorship programme is not simply a one-off transactional spend, nor is it just the result of short-term tactical decision making. If the intention is for, say, a sponsorship to deliver the benefits of long-term association, partners need to be

carefully selected. What this study shows is that by selecting different types of partner such benefits are more or less likely to be achieved. This means sponsors and sponsees need to understand the basis upon which they and their prospective partners commit to one another. If an organisation associates with a party it does not share values with, this automatically undermines their intentions and goals. Alternatively, if a party is seeking to realise particular benefits, allying to one type of partner may yield benefits more or less readily. What this commentary is not intended to imply is that by engaging with, say, a 'Calculator and Commercial' type as opposed to a 'Cynic and Short-Term type', commitment will be more significant. Moreover, the typology presented does not portray this type of relationship partner as being an inherently bad one, nor that the former is an inherently good one. Instead, the different types illustrate what sponsorship managers should expect when engaging with each of the different commitment types.

Rather than view their relationship as a transaction, a business-to-customer arrangement or, in too many cases, as a sponsor giving a football club some money, the need to manage the sponsor/sponsee association as an inter-organisational relationship is now irresistible. This establishes the association as one where partners, on both sides of the dyad, are carefully assessed for the benefits they can deliver and then acquired and retained as key business partners. This raises the status of the management process, emphasising the importance of value-adding partnerships rather than basic revenue generation or the simple benefits of an association. This logically implies that allying with an opportunist is unlikely to be the most beneficial relationship in which one might engage. It also indicates that when managing a relationship, long-term strategic goals can be achieved but sponsorship programmes have to be managed. This will involve working with a partner to develop common goals and policies and to establish the mutual recognition that an association is of potential benefit to both parties. Only then will clubs and sponsors be able to work towards a more open relationship through which information is shared by key personnel who are empowered to work for the success of the dyad.

Practices evident across a range of football shirt sponsorship programmes indicate its management is often less sophisticated than other forms of marketing communication or strategy, in some cases being used either brutally or naively. This highlights the need for sponsorship managers to be more professional and adept at generating long-term value through an association with a partner. Only when both parties to a dyad step back and understand the processes through which they relate to one another, will they be able to appreciate that the cumulative benefits of sponsorship come through managing business relationships more effectively, and not by chasing

revenue or exploiting a property. It is anticipated this study will make a contribution to a changed view.

5.9 Implications for future research

The prevailing use of a restrictive transactional view of sponsorship, allied to this study's and other relational studies, clearly highlights opportunities for adopting a relational view of sponsorships generally. Although this study has explicitly dealt with issues pertaining to relationship commitment, further studies may chose to view the process of engagement between sponsor and sponsee as a more overt process of acquisition, retention and dissolution. This could draw from existing relational and relationship marketing studies, reinforcing the relevance of replication and extension. In this respect, the extent to which future sponsorship research mirrors the paradigm shift evident in the broader marketing literature will be a true indicator of advances in thinking.

Within the relational paradigm, sponsorship commitment has only just started to attract attention and our understanding clearly has the potential to parallel that emerging in other studies of relationship commitment in the business literature. Whilst this study has established the importance of shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic tendencies in determining commitment, and Farrelly and Quester (2003) have linked it to marketing orientation, the nature of commitment, its determinants and its effects on sponsorship have still to be widely understood. In both cases, there is a consequent need to establish the generalisability of findings by applying appropriate measures and scales to other forms of sponsorship, both within and without sport.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the view that sponsorship programmes represent a form of relational exchange. Given the small number of advocates of this view, allied to relative paucity of work confirming the paradigm's relevance to sponsorship, a detailed discussion which strongly establishes a relational view of sponsorship and establishes its implications would make a significant contribution to the sponsorship literature. This could be supplemented, if not preceded, by a debate about how sponsorship relations should be conceptualised. One would expect this to reinforce a dyadic view of sponsorship relations, address the relevance of the network and resource-based views, and consider the relevance of other perspectives such as game and resource dependence theories. This may seem like a retrograde step, especially in the light of observations made earlier in this study that too many sponsorship papers engage in introspective analyses. However, work of this nature would be

intended to provide a conceptual underpinning to sponsorship. This is important because the sponsorship literature appears largely to have grown haphazardly out of professional practice which necessitates a more fundamental understanding and re-evaluation of it.

A limitation of this study is that it did not deliberately set out to specifically consider the life-cycle aspects of sponsorship relations. As such, it does not account for the fact relationships change over time. Accounting for these changes and the impact they have both on commitment and upon the perceptions of dyad partners would constitute an interesting development of this study. The complexity in constructing a dyadic study of this nature could mean researchers may have to examine a range of sponsorships or they may have to introduce a longitudinal element into their work. If one was to restrict a study in this area to football shirt sponsorship dyads during one season, the various temporal groupings would inevitably create problems for quantitative researchers by breaching sample size conventions. A subsequent general problem would then become how to differentiate the temporal effects upon one form of sponsorship from those upon another, although this may potentially be solved by engaging in subsequent structured interviewing.

The relative scarcity of published studies focusing on relationship dyads is, in one sense, understandable. Issues pertaining to large sample sizes and to the symmetry of findings drawn from such analyses, potentially undermines their validity. It may alternatively be the case that studies can independently examine both sides of a dyadic relationship. However, this study strongly advocates the further development of dyadic sponsorship research because of the insight into relationship dynamics it provides. Given the social basis of sponsorship relations, an accurate representation of such associations can only be achieved through the simultaneous examination of both sponsor and sponsee behavior. This is a general point which is intended to apply to any future studies that couch sponsorship as an inter-organisational relationship, and to potential extensions of this study. Hence, there may be opportunities for replicating the dyadic analysis of Italian or Spanish football shirt sponsorship programmes (as has already been requested by the publication: Football Business International), other sport sponsorship programmes or, indeed, any sponsorship activity. This is especially the case where factors such as locality are important components of the sponsorship.

This study apparently represents one of the first attempts to identify the determinants of sponsorship commitment and, as such, it constitutes a development for both the sponsorship and

commitment literature. However, further work will inevitably be needed in order to refine and develop the conclusions of it. This could take place in football, sport, sponsorship, or in any dyad where organisations engage in relationships. One of the surprising aspects of this study's findings was the failure to establish a strong link between trust and commitment. The link is strongly evident in other studies and subsequent analyses of sponsorship commitment may seek to re-examine the relationship.

A majority of the measurement scales used in this study demonstrated good reliability, although some needed pruning and one was omitted from the study completely. Clearly in the latter case (Timing), how to conceptualise and measure temporal influences upon relationship commitment indicates further attention is needed. Subsequent analyses would nevertheless need to clearly differentiate between the strategic context within which sponsorship relations are forged and the time horizon within which sponsorship decisions are made. A further point to note regarding scale reliability is the Cronbach's alpha score for the commitment scale. Although it indicates the scale was reliable, the score was relatively low, particularly in comparison with its use in both the original and other comparable studies. This suggests the scale may need further development in subsequent sponsorship commitment research or that other conceptualisations may prove to be stronger measures.

Whilst it was not an intention of this study to propose a typology, apparent differences between partners suggested this was the most effective way to characterise the potentially asymmetrical commitments demonstrated by clubs and sponsors. One of the most obvious opportunities emerging from the study relates to confirming the relevance of the types. This poses some key questions: do the types work in all football shirt sponsorship dyads? Do they work in other sport sponsorship dyads? Do they work in other sponsorship dyads? Are alternative or additional types relevant to different sponsorships? In answering these questions, researchers may also be able to refine the types suggested here.

One way in which the typology's validity, and that of the identified determinants, might also be established is by using alternative conceptualisations of commitment. In particular, researchers might seek to work with more exclusively cognitive or behavioral notions of commitment, or a combination of both. Added to this is the view that commitment can be conceptualised as being both aggregated and disaggregated in nature. This study adopted the former whereas other studies outside sponsorship and the inter-organisational literature have explicitly sought to identify

individual instrumental, affective and normative elements. In which case, there is an opportunity to use scales developed by Meyer and Allen (1990). Irrespective of how commitment is conceptualised, an underlying issue that should be addressed, possibly employing longitudinal and cross-sectional methods, is how commitment may differ at the start, middle and the end of a sponsorship relationship.

A foundation for this study was the large amount of printed, electronic and broadcasted material that is produced in relation to football shirt sponsorship arrangements. This is a huge resource for researchers to work with using interpretive methods, an important observation given access problems to key informants and other respondents in sponsoring and sponsored organisations. Clearly there are opportunities in this respect for a structured and coherent analysis of content to take place. Other techniques used by this study also warrant further attention, most notably the critical incident interviews. These were used essentially to generate observations for use in subsequent quantitative analyses, but were also undertaken in this way for reasons of economy. In so doing, the researcher breached the convention that interviews should be undertaken until such time that the categorisation of responses is repeated. One way to develop this study might be to carry out further interviews on this basis. Another consideration is that CIT is frequently used to address issues of service quality. This suggests it could be used to examine the nature of relationship quality between sponsor and sponsee, with particular reference to commitment.

The structured interviews undertaken at the end of the research process were notable for the access to direct dyad partners that was obtained. In spite of initial pessimism, network contacts and the role of the study's endorsers ensured good access to a number of dyads, albeit small. This highlights the chance for other researchers to assess the validity of findings by undertaking further interviews of this nature. Prospective football researchers need to be aware that a culture of secrecy prevails in sport making access difficult to achieve. Moreover, many football clubs' commercial and marketing departments are small, under resourced and sometimes lacking competence. It is therefore questionable whether football represents the most fruitful vehicle for undertaking further interviews and other researchers may thus seek to consider alternative sponsorship dyads.

The small sample employed caused a number of problems for the quantitative phases of this study, particularly in terms of the ratio of cases to variables. It was nevertheless deemed necessary to examine both sides of the shirt sponsorship in order to establish a holistic view of

commitment across both clubs and sponsors. In so doing, measurement of the specific characteristics of commitment demonstrated by both parties may have been undermined. The researcher utilised structured interviews to address this concern but future research could focus exclusively on one side of the dyad. Researching clubs or sponsors from one football season would yield an insufficiently large sample for statistical purposes. Longitudinal or cross-sectional elements would therefore need to be introduced into subsequent extensions. This might enable the use of alternative measurement techniques such as stepwise multiple regression or structural equation modelling. Moreover, it would allow researchers to consider how the determinants of commitment link directly to the outcomes of it.

A final point to note about academic research of the nature evident in this study is that, if it incorporates grounded elements, it should be accessible to a practitioner audience. An opportunity for both this researcher, and others, is to ensure the findings are translatable for appropriate practitioner audiences. The benchmark for this would appear to be establishing the bottom-line returns, as this study argues, of the value added by a sponsorship relationship. This reiterates the point that further development of this study should strive to establish the link between commitment and the achievement of outcomes. One avenue of opportunity in this respect could be for a decision making model to be developed which enables sponsors and sponsees to assess prospective partners and make predictions about the likely implications of a relationship should they chose to associate with, say, with a 'Cynic' or 'Short-Termer'.

5.10 Conclusions

In being one the few studies to address the notion of sponsorship commitment, especially in the context of the football shirt sponsorship dyad, it is anticipated this study will make a contribution to both the academic and practitioner literature. The study directly addresses common usage of the term 'commitment' by sponsors and sponsees, in turn highlighting both its conceptualisation and determinants. It concludes by indicating what the implications of this are likely to be. By focusing only upon one aspect of the sponsor/sponsee relationship, the study nevertheless aids our understanding of the total process of sponsorship management, from the acquisition of a key business partner (otherwise termed screening and selection) through to the development and retention of a relationship with them (otherwise termed management and leverage). Unlike other studies of sponsorship, which characterize the activity as a series of stages, the implication of this study is that it is more of a process. This is reflected in a new definition of sponsorship which has

been proposed and in the emphasis placed upon the relationship between sponsor and sponsee, rather than that between sponsor and customer evident in much of the existing literature.

The overall implication of the study is that, in addition to professing one's commitment to a sponsorship dyad partner, actually understanding what this means, on what basis it is built and what the implications of allying with particular types of partner will be, should help organizations to manage their sponsorship programmes more effectively. In turn, this should contribute to the overall success of sponsorship deals by highlighting which particular types of relationship will contribute to the growth and development of associations between sponsor and sponsee. Enshrined within this observation, it is now clear that 'committing' is not exclusively within the domain of the shirt sponsor but is also evident in the behavior of football clubs. Irrespective of whether sponsorship commitment is little more than an instrumental phenomenon or something more complex, the implications for managing a deal are significant.

The identification of shared values, perceived benefits and opportunistic tendencies as key determinants of commitment makes a unique contribution to the sponsorship literature. These variables have previously been identified as determinants of commitment and, so, this study has met its goal of replicating and extending observations made in other studies. Yet it has also identified variables such as 'Location', developed scales and established their relevance to the sponsorship management process by using quantitative and qualitative techniques. This has served to highlight certain key aspects of sponsorship which have thus far failed to attract any interest in the literature. In these terms, it is hoped the study will serve to motivate other researchers and practitioners concerned with the development of sponsorship programmes. After all, in a complex commercial environment where sponsors must strive to add value to their sponsorship deals, and when football clubs must generate revenue to survive, if not become profitable, understanding one of the most important inter-organisational relationships they are involved in is imperative.

Appendix 1: Summary of secondary data source analysis

Stage	Analysis
1. Sample size.	174 pieces of hard-copy and electronic information.
2. Nature of sample.	Newspaper articles, magazine articles, press releases, web site reports gathered over a three year period between 1998 and 2001.
3. Structure of data collected.	67 newspaper reports, 34 magazine articles, 28 press releases and 45 web site reports
4. Unit of analysis.	Multiple responses retrieved from the same source were treated as single entries irrespective of the number of sentences relating to the entry.
5. Categories of response. Illustrative examples from an analysis of secondary data-key characteristics noted in italics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken from Birmingham Post (2001): "After agreeing a two-year deal [with Coventry City], Subaru Marketing Director Jon Nealon said 'Despite the perilous position the club find themselves in, I believe it was important to demonstrate our commitment in a positive way'." • Taken from Pinnacle Assurance Press Release (2002): "Pinnacle has for many years supported sport, a <i>commitment</i> that has led to the current <i>sponsorship</i> of Nottingham Forest." • Taken from www.bbc.co.uk (2001): "The new three-year <i>sponsorship deal</i> seals Ginsters' <i>commitment</i> to supporting the South West's leading football club." "Ginsters is a massively successful and growing brand with national reach. It's a highly dynamic and creative company that is as proud and <i>committed</i> as we are." • Taken from www.saintsfc.co.uk (2003): "[Friends Provident and Southampton Football Club] are both <i>committed</i> to success...making this a natural <i>alliance</i> of two organizations sharing a similar vision." • Taken from www.l.safc.com (2002): "There's a lot of common ground between Reg Vardy and Sunderland AFC. We are both fully listed Sunderland-based plc's, we are both renowned for our staunch <i>commitment</i> and we are both determined to develop our brands on a national basis. I'm sure this sponsorship will provide great benefits for both Reg Vardy's business and Sunderland Football Club over the years to come." • Taken from Sport Business (2002): "In the past 10 years, and through both highs and lows at the club, Carlsberg's loyalty and <i>commitment</i> has been steadfast; [Liverpool's] <i>partnership</i> with Carlsberg provides both parties with a mutually beneficial <i>relationship</i>." • Taken from ESPN (2001): "We believe the [York] Evening Press' decision to become our new sponsor underlies the club's and the newspaper's strong sense of <i>commitment</i>. The sponsorship deal emphasizes the mutually beneficial <i>relationship</i> between a successful local newspaper and a hopefully resurgent football club."

Appendix 2: Analysis of critical incident interviews

Stage	Analysis
1. Sample size.	16 key informants.
2. Nature of sample.	8 representatives from football clubs; 8 representatives from sponsoring organizations.
3. Respondents.	16 comprised of 3 PL clubs, 2 1 st Division clubs, 2 3 rd Division clubs, 1 3 rd Division club, 4 shirt sponsors of PL clubs, 2 shirt sponsors of 1 st Division clubs and 2 shirt sponsors of 2 nd Division clubs.
4. Unit of analysis.	Respondent's replies were treated as single entries irrespective of the number of sentences relating to the entry.
5. Categories of response.	<p>Derived from an analysis of the interview data; key characteristics noted in italics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>extent of commitment</i> within the <i>relationship dyad</i> is <i>limited</i> to the <i>contract</i> between the football club and the shirt sponsor. • Illustrative quote: "Our commitment to them really depends upon what we negotiate in to the contract. We tend not to go beyond the contractual agreement because it will cost us either financially or in terms of time and effort." • The involvement of a <i>relationship champion</i> within the <i>dyad</i> will influence the <i>commitment</i> of the football club and shirt sponsor to their <i>deal</i>. • Illustrative quote: "If it wasn't for XXXX, who pushed the whole time to make the relationship work, it [the deal] wouldn't have been as successful as it has been." • The <i>stronger</i> the <i>communication</i> between football club and shirt sponsor, the stronger will be their <i>commitment</i> to the sponsorship <i>deal</i>. • Illustrative quote: "Regular communication is an important part of our commitment to the sponsor. We meet every week and probably speak on the phone every day about how things are going." • The <i>greater</i> the <i>opportunities to leverage</i> the full value of a shirt sponsorship deal, the stronger will be the <i>commitment</i> of the football club and shirt sponsor to it. • Illustrative quote: "Ultimately it's a business relationship. Unless we can see opportunities for leveraging our deal with them it's pointless making a commitment in the first place." • The <i>closer</i> the football club and the shirt sponsor are to one another, in <i>geographic and community terms</i>, the stronger will be their <i>commitment</i> to the sponsorship <i>deal</i>. • Illustrative quote: "When approached by the club, we chose to commit to a deal because they are the local team. It is allows us to do so much more than if, say, a club two hundred miles away approached us." • The <i>stronger</i> the sense of <i>morality</i> in the <i>relationship</i> between football club and sponsor, the stronger will be their <i>commitment</i> to the

sponsorship deal.

- Illustrative quote: "I think there is a right way to behave and a wrong way to behave. If someone commits six figures to a sponsorship deal, you owe it to them to look after their investment."
- The more *open* is the *relationship* between football club and shirt sponsor, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "You have to be open with each other and that includes sharing sometimes sensitive information with them. Otherwise, how can you ever make a solid commitment?"
- The *greater* the *benefits* that football clubs and shirt sponsors *perceive* they can *derive* from their *relationship*, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "If we had gone with another organization, we wouldn't have got generated the same level of benefits. We decided it was best to commit to these guy's because we felt we would get more out of the relationship."
- The *stronger* the *perception* of an organization on one side of the *sponsorship dyad* that the organization on the other side of the *dyad* is *committed* to the relationship, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "We don't think they are particularly committed to us. As far as I can see, they have taken the money and that's it. So why should we bother if we're not going to get anything in return?"
- The *greater* the level of *personal interest* in the sponsorship deal demonstrated by a key individual, the *stronger* will be the *commitment* of the football club and shirt sponsor to it.
- Illustrative quote: "I set up this deal and I am determined to make it work. It's professional pride as much as anything."
- The *greater* the *strategic benefits* that football clubs and shirt sponsors *perceive* they can *derive* from their *relationship*, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "The sponsorship deal is very important to us. We considered a number of different options before committing to this club. We believe they provide us with the best vehicle through which we can move our brand forwards."
- The greater the extent that football club and shirt sponsor share the same values, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "We like to think we have a strong family atmosphere here and believe they have a similar approach to their business. That's why we made a commitment to them."
- The *stronger* the *strategic intent* of the football club and shirt sponsor, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship deal.
- Illustrative quote: "We are looking to drive this business forward and they are a big name. Clearly there is some synergy between who

they are and who we want to become. Hopefully by committing to this deal, we will be able to do just that.”

- The *stronger* the *social bonds* and *ties* between football club and shirt sponsor, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship *deal*.
- Illustrative quote: “They’re a great bunch down there. I think one of the reasons we have been so committed to one another is that, as people, we get on well together. I regularly call up and ask them if they want to go for a drink.”
- The *longer* the *time scale* within which a sponsorship *deal* has been *negotiated and agreed*, the *stronger* will be the *commitment* of the football club and sponsor to it.
- Illustrative quote: “We knew our previous deal was coming to an end so we started thinking over what we were going to do probably eight months ago. That meant we had time to reflect on where we wanted to go and what we wanted to happen. Once a decision had been made, we fully committed to the deal.”
- The stronger the degree of trust between football club and shirt sponsor, the *stronger* will be their *commitment* to the sponsorship *deal*.
- Illustrative quote: “We are committed to them because we trust them. They always play things straight and we’re confident they have our interests at heart.”

Appendix 3: Basis for codes used during analysis of Critical Incident interviews

Code	Category	Origin
CC	Contractual commitment	Lusch and Brown (1996) Jap and Ganesan (2000)
RC	Relationship champion	Harber et. al. (1997) Burton et. al. (1998)
CM	Communication	Anderson and Weitz (1992) Morgan and Hunt (1994)
LO	Leveraging opportunities	Cornwell (1995)
LN	Location	Westerbeek (2000)
MO	Morality	Johnson et. al. (1999) Anderson, et. al. (1998)
OP	Openness	Harari (1998) Moore (1998)
PB	Perceived benefits	Morgan and Hunt (1994) Neubert and Cady (2001)
PP	Perception of partner commitment	Anderson and Weitz (1992) Ross et. al. (1997)
PF	Personal factors	Steers (1977) Swenson and Trahaug (1985)
SB	Strategic benefit	Sarkar et. al. (1997) Amis et. al. (1999)
SV	Shared values	Morgan and Hunt (1994) Zineldin and Jonsson (2000)
SI	Strategic intent	Amis et. al. (1999)
SD	Social bonds	Gregerson and Black (1992) Hocutt (1998) Johnson et. al. (1999)
TI	Timing	Holmlund (2003)
TR	Trust	Morgan and Hunt (1994) Kim and Frazier (1997)

Appendix 4: Reliability calculation for Critical Incident Interviews (n=16)

	CC	38	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	3	-	50
RC	-	47	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	55
CM	-	-	42	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	49
LO	-	-	-	33	1	1	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	45
LN	-	4	-	-	24	1	1	-	1	4	2	-	2	2	-	1	-	42
MO	1	2	-	-	-	16	2	1	-	-	1	1	-	2	2	3	-	30
OP	1	2	2	-	-	4	22	1	2	-	-	3	-	1	-	2	-	41
PB	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	37	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	46
PP	3	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	33	1	2	2	1	-	2	-	-	48
PF	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	29	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	37
SB	2	-	1	2	1	-	-	2	2	1	19	-	1	-	4	3	-	38
SV	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	43	2	-	-	-	-	49
SI	1	1	-	2	1	-	2	4	2	-	3	2	13	-	2	-	-	33
SD	-	3	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	3	-	1	-	17	1	2	-	33
TI	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	35	-	-	45
TR	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	38	-	44
Total	49	69	48	41	34	26	32	48	52	41	33	54	23	30	48	56	685	
	CC	RC	CM	LO	LN	MO	OP	PB	PP	PF	SB	SV	SI	SD	TI	TR		

Percentage Agreement

$$38+47+42+33+24+16+22+22+37+33+29+19+43+13+17+35+38/685 = 0.709 \times 100 = 70.9\%$$

Coder 1: 50/685 55/685 49/685 45/685 42/685 30/685 41/685 46/685 37/685 38/685 49/685 33/685 33/685 45/685 44/685

Coder 2: 49/685 69/685 48/685 41/685 34/685 26/685 32/685 48/685 52/685 41/685 33/685 54/685 23/685 30/685 48/685 56/685

$$(0.07 \times 0.07) + (0.08 \times 0.1) + (0.07 \times 0.07) + (0.06 \times 0.05) + (0.06 \times 0.04) + (0.04 \times 0.03) + (0.05 \times 0.04) + (0.06 + 0.07) + (0.07 \times 0.07) + (0.05 + 0.05) + (0.05 \times 0.04) + (0.07 \times 0.07) + (0.04 \times 0.03) + (0.04 \times 0.04) + (0.06 \times 0.07) + (0.06 \times 0.08) = 0.0567 \times 100 = 5.67$$

$$\frac{486 - 5.67}{685 - 5.67} = \frac{480.33}{679.33} = 0.707 \times 100 = 70.4\% \text{ (Cohen's Kappa value)}$$

Notes:

Codes-CC Contractual commitment; RC Relationship Champion; CM Communication; LO Leveraging opportunities; LN Location; MO Morality; OP Openness; PB Perceived benefits; PP Perception of partner commitment; PF Personal factors; SB Strategic benefit; SV Shared values; SI Strategic intent; SD Social bonds; TI Timing; TR Trust

Appendix 5: Football clubs and shirt sponsors 2002-2003

Club	Shirt sponsor
AFC Bournemouth	Seward Motor Group
Arsenal	O2
Aston Villa	M G Rover Group Ltd
Barnsley	iSOFT
Birmingham City	Phones 4 U
Blackburn Rovers	Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)
Blackpool	Electricity Direct
Bolton Wanderers	Reebok UK Ltd
Boston United	Finnforest UK
Bradford City	J C T 600
Brentford	GMB
Brighton and Hove Albion	Skint Records
Bristol City	DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Company
Bristol Rovers	Cowlin Construction Ltd
Burnley	Lanway C B S Ltd
Bury	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Cambridge United	Quicksilver Messenger Service Limited
Cardiff City	Ken Thorne Car Sales Ltd
Carlisle United	Eddie Stobart Ltd
Charton Athletic	Allsports (Retail) Ltd
Chelsea	Emirates Airline
Cheltenham Town	Towergate Insurance
Chesterfield Town	Gordon Lamb
Colchester United	Wilkin & Sons Limited
Coventry City	Subaru (UK) Ltd
Crewe Alexandra	L C Charles
Crystal Palace	Churchill Insurance Company Ltd
Darlington	Darlington Building Society
Derby County	Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, PLC
Everton	Keijen (excluded from study)
Exeter City	Jewson Ltd
Fulham	Betfair
Gillingham	SeaFrance Ltd
Grimsby Town	Dixon Motors
Halifax Town	Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, PLC
Hartlepool United	DNO Britain Ltd
Huddersfield Town	Primetime Recruitment
Hull City	Bonus Electrical
Ipswich Town	The GEM Group
Kidderminster Harriers	OGL Computers Service
Leeds United	H.P.Bulmer Ltd
Leicester City	L G Electronics U K Ltd

Leyton Orient	Matchroom Sport
Lincoln City	Alstom Power UK Holdings Ltd
Liverpool	Carlsberg-Tetley Brewing Ltd
Luton Town	SKF (UK) Ltd
Macclesfield Town	James Irlam & Sons Ltd
Manchester City	First Advice Ltd
Manchester United	Vodafone Group Services
Mansfield Town	Vodka Kick GBL International Ltd
Middlesbrough	Dial-A-Phone Ltd
Millwall	24 Seven Utility Services Ltd
Newcastle United	N T L
Northampton Town	Nationwide Building Society
Norwich City	Digital Phone Company
Nottingham Forest	New Horizons
Oxford United	Buildbase Ltd
Plymouth Argyle	Ginsters
Port Vale	Tunstall Assurance Friendly Society
Portsmouth	Ty Europe Limited
Preston North End	New Reg Limited
Queens Park Rangers	John David Sports plc
Reading	Westcoast Limited
Rochdale	Keytech
Rotherham United	T-Mobile
Rushden and Diamonds	R. Griggs Group Ltd
Scunthorpe United	H & L Garages
Sheffield United	Desun (excluded from the study)
Sheffield Wednesday	Chupa Chups UK Ltd
Shrewsbury Town	RMW Electrical Services
Southampton	Friends Provident
Southend United	Martin Dawn plc
Stockport County	A G Parfett and Sons
Stoke City	Britannia Building Society
Sunderland	Reg Vardy Plc
Swansea City	The Travel House Ltd
Swindon Town	Nationwide Building Society
Torquay United	Sparkworld Limitd
Tottenham Hotspur	Thomson Holidays
Tranmere Rovers	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Walsall	The Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries Plc
Watford	Toshiba Europe Ltd
West Bromwich Albion	West Bromwich Building Society
West Ham United	R.Griggs Group Ltd
Wigan Athletic	J J B Sports Plc
Wimbledon	Go-Mk

Wolverhampton Wanderers	Walkers Snack Foods Ltd
Wrexham	Gap Recruitment Ltd
Wycombe Wanderers	Integrity Software Systems Ltd
York City	York and County Press

Appendix 6: Procedure for dispatch of questionnaires to football clubs

Stage	Correspondence involved	Completion date
1. Initial send out letter Explains nature of the research and what will be involved.	1 letter (KV to generate and send).	By 2 nd June 2003.
2. Questionnaire Dispatch of questionnaire, cover letter and return envelope.	1 letter (KV to generate and send). 1 questionnaire (SC to generate; KV to send). 1 return envelope (SC to generate; KV to send).	By 20 th June 2003.
3. 1 st follow-up. Letter to all clubs reminding them to complete their questionnaire. Includes second copy of the questionnaire and return envelope.	1 letter (KV to generate and send). 1 questionnaire (SC to generate; KV to send). 1 return envelope (SC to generate; KV to send).	By 4 th July 2003.
4. 2 nd follow-up. Letter to all clubs reminding them to complete their questionnaire. Inclusion of additional inducement information.	1 letter (KV to generate and send).	By 18 th July 2003.

Note: KV=Kevin Verity, Chief Executive of the Commercial and Marketing Managers Association.



LEEDS UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS SCHOOL

**FOOTBALL SHIRT SPONSORSHIP
RESEARCH PROJECT**

**SHIRT SPONSOR
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE
ATTACHED STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.**

²⁵ Sections of this questionnaire have been shortened for purposes of study presentation.

SECTION A: DETAILS ABOUT YOUR SHIRT SPONSORSHIP CONTRACT

Question 1

Which football club did you sponsor during the 2002/2003 season?

Please tick the relevant answers in this section of the questionnaire

Question 2

What is the financial value per annum of your basic shirt sponsorship contract with this football club:

Less than £100,000 ₍₁₎ Between £100,000 and £499,999 ₍₂₎
Between £500,000 and £999,999 ₍₃₎ £1,000,000 or more ₍₄₎

Question 3

How long is your current contract with this football club?

Less than 1 year ₍₁₎ 1 year ₍₂₎ 2 years ₍₃₎
3 years ₍₄₎ More than three years ₍₅₎

Question 4

How many times have you renewed your contract with this club?

Never ₍₁₎ Once ₍₂₎ Twice ₍₃₎
Three times ₍₄₎ More than three times ₍₅₎

SECTION B: COMMUNICATION

The questions in this section concern the communication that takes place between your company and the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

Please circle your answers using the scale indicated

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

The company and the football club make it a point to keep each other well informed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

We hesitate to give this football club too much information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

We are quite well involved in the marketing and planning efforts of this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

This football club seeks our advice and opinion concerning their marketing efforts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

Our relationship with this football club is like an open book.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION C: SHARED VALUES

The questions in this section concern the values your company shares with the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

To succeed in this business, it is often necessary to compromise one's ethics.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

If an employee is discovered to have engaged in unethical behavior that results primarily in personal gain (rather than corporate gain), he or she should be promptly reprimanded.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

Employees at this football club have similar values to ours.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

To succeed in our relationship with this football club, it is often necessary to have common goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

To succeed in our relationship with this football club, it is often necessary to have common policies.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION D: PERCEIVED BENEFITS

The questions in this section concern the benefits your company perceives can be achieved through your shirt sponsorship of the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

The company and this football club can help one another to accomplish their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

This football club contributes resources to our relationship that are highly valuable to us.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

Our relationship with this football club is very profitable for the company.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

Our relationship with this football club is likely to generate substantial benefits for us over the period of the sponsorship contract.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

Our relationship with the football club is likely to generate substantial benefits for us beyond the period of the sponsorship contract.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION E: MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP

The questions in this section concern your personal role in managing the shirt sponsorship of the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

I take great personal pride in the way I manage our relationship with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

I always ensure that I maintain regular contact with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

I am willing to socialise with people from this football club if it helps build our relationship with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

I recognise that the company and the football club can both benefit greatly from our relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

I always try to make sure the sponsor and the football club get the full benefit from our relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 6

I don't think I have much influence over the way in which our relationship with the football club is managed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION F: COMMITMENT

The questions in this section concern the commitment your company shows to the shirt sponsorship of the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

We have a strong sense of loyalty to this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

We are continually on the look out for another deal to replace our current one with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

We expect to be sponsoring this football club for some time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

If we got a better sponsorship offer, we would take it on even if it meant dropping this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

We are not very committed to this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 6

We are quite willing to make long-term investments in our relationship with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 7

We are patient with this football club when they make mistakes that cause us trouble.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 8

We are willing to dedicate significant resources to help build our relationship with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION G: LOCATION

The questions in this section concern the location of your company in relation to the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

The location of this football club was one of the main reasons we became involved in a relationship with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

Our relationship with this football club enables us to make a positive contribution to the local community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

We have a strong and established relationship with people in the town where this football club plays.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

Working with a football club from the same locality as our business can help us to achieve our objectives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

Achieving our business objectives is more important to us than the location of this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION H: TIMING

The questions in this section concern the timing of your company's decision to engage in a shirt sponsorship of the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

The decision to forge a relationship with this football was important for the long-term development of our business.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

We weren't actively looking for a sponsorship deal but responded to a request from this football club to forge a relationship with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

The decision to establish a relationship with this football club was taken quickly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

We established a relationship with this football club following a carefully thought out and thorough selection process.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

We established our relationship with this football club over a short period of time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 6

We did not plan and organise our relationship with this football club properly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION I: THE CONTRACT

The questions in this section concern your company's contractual relationship with the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

Our relationship with this football club is governed primarily by the written contract.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

The only way we can work effectively with this football club is if everything is spelled out in detail.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

Over time we have developed ways of doing things with this football club that have never needed to be expressed formally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

The written shirt sponsorship contract with this football club represents our total commitment to them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION J: PERCEPTION OF THE CLUB'S COMMITMENT

The questions in this section concern your company's perception of the commitment the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire shows towards your relationship with them.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

This football club has a strong sense of loyalty to us.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

This football club is continually on the look out for another deal to replace their current one with us.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

This football club expects us to have a relationship with them for some time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

This football club sees our relationship as a long-term one.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

This football club is willing to dedicate significant resources to help make our relationship a success.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 6

This football club feels that any concessions they make to help us will even out in the long run.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 7

This football club is quite willing to make sacrifices to help us out from time to time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION K: TRUST

The questions in this section concern whether your company trusts the football club identified in Section A of this questionnaire in your dealings with them.

1 = Strongly disagree

4 = Neither disagree nor agree

7 = Strongly agree

Question 1

This football club can be relied on to keep its promises.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 2

There are times when I find people at this football club to be a bit insincere.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 3

I find it necessary to be cautious when dealing with this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 4

This football club is trustworthy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 5

I suspect that this football club has sometimes withheld certain pieces of information that might have affected the company.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 6

I have confidence in this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Question 7

I generally do not trust this football club.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

FURTHER COMMENTS

If you want to make any further comments in support of your answers, or you would like to make any other comments about your relationship with the shirt sponsor identified in Section A of this questionnaire, please do so below:

THANKING YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FOR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Your name will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win one of the following (please specify):

EITHER

A magnum of champagne for yourself

OR

10 hours worth of free marketing consultancy for your company

If you do not want to enter the draw, please tick here

If you would like a copy of the research findings, please complete the section below:

Name:

Job title:

Postal address:

E-mail address:

Telephone number:

Appendix 8: Summary of questionnaire response (n=182)

Football clubs (n=92)			Shirt sponsors (n=90)		
League	Number	Percentage of sub-sample total	League	Number	Percentage of sub-sample total
PL	15	26	PL	12	27
1	13	23	1	15	28
2	16	28	2	13	25
3	13	23	3	13	25
Total	57	100	Total	53	100

Response rate for football clubs=62%; response rate for shirt sponsors=59%; overall response rate=60.4%

Appendix 9: Summary of descriptive statistics²⁶

Communication

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
B1	110	1	7	5.15	1.837
B2	110	1	7	5.55	1.542
B3	110	1	7	4.23	1.754
B4	110	1	7	3.74	1.861
B5	110	1	7	4.51	1.806

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		23.1727	.66859
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	21.8476	
	Upper Bound	24.4979	
5% Trimmed Mean		23.2273	
Median		23.5000	
Variance		49.172	
Std. Deviation		7.01226	
Minimum		7.00	
Maximum		35.00	
Range		28.00	
Interquartile Range		12.0000	
Skewness		-.129	.230
Kurtosis		-1.000	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.091	110	.026

²⁶ For reasons of economy, distribution histograms, normal Q-Q plots, detrended normal Q-Q plots and box plots are not presented.

No significant difference between the mean (23.17) and the 5% trimmed mean (23.22) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of $-.129$; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -1.00 indicates a relatively flat distribution.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.026) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows some evidence of normal distribution, although this is not especially strong.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a relatively straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals no outlying values.

Shared values

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
C1	110	1	7	2.44	1.684
C2	110	1	7	6.16	1.722
C3	110	1	7	5.04	1.718
C4	110	1	7	5.29	1.461
C5	110	1	7	4.72	1.503

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		23.6455	.47464
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	22.7047	
	Upper Bound	24.5862	
5% Trimmed Mean		23.7071	
Median		23.0000	
Variance		24.781	
Std. Deviation		4.97809	
Minimum		10.00	
Maximum		35.00	

Range		25.00	
Interquartile Range		6.2500	
Skewness		-.134	.230
Kurtosis		-.018	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.073	110	.200

No significant difference between the mean (23.64) and the 5% trimmed mean (23.70) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of -.134; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -0.018 indicates a slightly flat distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.200) is insignificant (<0.05), confirming the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows strong evidence of normal distribution.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals two outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Perceived benefits

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
D1	110	1	7	5.75	1.447
D2	110	1	7	5.07	1.790
D3	110	1	7	5.02	1.761
D4	110	1	7	5.12	1.635
D5	110	1	7	4.17	1.647

		Statistic	Std. Error
--	--	------------------	-------------------

Mean		25.1364	.63278
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	23.8822	
	Upper Bound	26.3905	
5% Trimmed Mean		25.4242	
Median		27.0000	
Variance		44.045	
Std. Deviation		6.63667	
Minimum		9.00	
Maximum		35.00	
Range		26.00	
Interquartile Range		8.0000	
Skewness		-.674	.230
Kurtosis		-.206	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.134	110	.000

No significant difference between the mean (25.13) and the 5% trimmed mean (25.42) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of -0.674; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -0.206 indicates a relatively flat distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.000) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows strong evidence of normal distribution, although skewed towards top end values.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a relatively straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals one outlying value which, for the purposes of this analysis, is retained because it is not an extreme outlier and is therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Managing the relationship

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
E1	110	1	7	5.92	1.422
E2	110	2	7	5.97	1.436
E3	110	2	7	6.13	1.250
E4	110	1	7	6.23	1.194
E5	110	3	7	6.38	.888
E6	110	1	7	5.53	1.744

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		36.1545	.59118
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	34.9829	
	Upper Bound	37.3262	
5% Trimmed Mean		36.6869	
Median		38.0000	
Variance		38.444	
Std. Deviation		6.20031	
Minimum		17.00	
Maximum		42.00	
Range		25.00	
Interquartile Range		9.0000	
Skewness		-1.064	.230
Kurtosis		.470	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.173	110	.000

No significant difference between the mean (36.15) and the 5% trimmed mean (36.68) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores strongly negatively skewed, with a value of -1.064; the magnitude of the skewing will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Kurtosis value of -0.470 indicates a relatively peaked distribution.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.000) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows little evidence of a normal distribution, with values being strongly skewed towards higher values.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line suggesting a normal distribution, although breaks at the lower and upper ends suggest this is not strong.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line with no evident clustering of values, although this is also notable for the breaks in data evident at the lower and upper ends.

Box plot reveals three outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are temporarily retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis. Nevertheless, in the light of the above observations, further analysis using Cronbach's Alpha is undertaken to determine the reliability of this scale.

Commitment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
F1	110	1	7	5.61	1.497
F2	110	1	7	3.36	2.053
F3	110	1	7	3.88	1.905
F4	110	1	7	5.17	1.871
F5	110	1	7	5.62	1.852
F6	110	1	7	4.96	1.862
F7	110	1	7	4.89	1.336
F8	110	1	7	5.05	1.691

	Statistic	Std. Error
Mean	38.5545	.59922

95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	37.3669	
	Upper Bound	39.7422	
5% Trimmed Mean		38.5253	
Median		39.0000	
Variance		39.497	
Std. Deviation		6.28466	
Minimum		23.00	
Maximum		55.00	
Range		32.00	
Interquartile Range		8.0000	
Skewness		.075	.230
Kurtosis		.147	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.064	110	.200

No significant difference between the mean (38.55) and the 5% trimmed mean (38.52) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores positively skewed, with a value of -0.075; skewing does pose any notable issues particularly as the value is close to the normal distribution.

Kurtosis value of 0.147 indicates a slightly peaked distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.200) is insignificant (<0.05), confirming the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows strong evidence of normal distribution.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals two outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Location

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1	110	1	7	4.95	2.237
G2	110	1	7	5.17	1.812
G3	110	1	7	4.96	2.213
G4	110	1	7	5.21	1.877
G5	110	1	7	2.64	1.765

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		22.9273	.70109
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	21.5377	
	Upper Bound	24.3168	
5% Trimmed Mean		23.2121	
Median		24.0000	
Variance		54.068	
Std. Deviation		7.35310	
Minimum		5.00	
Maximum		35.00	
Range		30.00	
Interquartile Range		8.5000	
Skewness		-.607	.230
Kurtosis		-.229	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.101	110	.008

No significant difference between the mean (22.92) and the 5% trimmed mean (23.21) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of -0.607; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -0.229 indicates a slightly flat distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.008) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows evidence of normal distribution, with some skewing towards higher values evident.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals four outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Timing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
H1	110	1	7	5.07	1.712
H2	110	1	7	3.45	2.084
H3	110	1	7	5.05	1.809
H4	110	1	7	4.03	1.908
H5	110	1	7	3.55	1.810
H6	110	1	7	3.26	2.012

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		24.4091	.37617
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	23.6635	
	Upper Bound	25.1546	
5% Trimmed Mean		24.2828	
Median		24.0000	
Variance		15.565	
Std. Deviation		3.94526	
Minimum		15.00	

Maximum		36.00	
Range		21.00	
Interquartile Range		5.0000	
Skewness		.532	.230
Kurtosis		.382	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.114	110	.001

No significant difference between the mean (24.40) and the 5% trimmed mean (24.28) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores positively skewed, with a value of 0.532; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of 0.382 indicates a slightly peaked distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.001) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows strong evidence of normal distribution, although values are strongly clustered.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line suggesting a normal distribution, although a break at the top end of the values is a cause for concern.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line with no evident clustering of values, although a break at the top end of the values is also a cause for concern

Box plot reveals three outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

The Contract

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I1	110	1	7	4.25	1.937
I2	110	1	7	3.17	1.920
I3	110	1	7	3.10	1.724
I4	110	1	7	3.72	2.103

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		14.2455	.52082
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	13.2132	
	Upper Bound	15.2777	
5% Trimmed Mean		14.1465	
Median		14.0000	
Variance		29.838	
Std. Deviation		5.46244	
Minimum		4.00	
Maximum		28.00	
Range		24.00	
Interquartile Range		8.0000	
Skewness		.222	.230
Kurtosis		-.541	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.087	110	.038

No significant difference between the mean (14.24) and the 5% trimmed mean (14.14) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores positively skewed, with a value of 0.222; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -0.541 indicates a relatively flat distribution.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.038) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows limited evidence of normal distribution, the depiction of two peaks being a cause for concern.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals no outlying values.

Perception of Partner's Commitment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
J1	110	1	7	5.00	1.713
J2	110	1	7	4.98	1.782
J3	110	1	7	4.70	1.860
J4	110	1	7	4.65	1.894
J5	110	1	7	4.48	1.770
J6	110	1	7	4.52	1.488
J7	110	1	7	4.61	1.592

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		32.9455	.83878
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	31.2830	
	Upper Bound	34.6079	
5% Trimmed Mean		33.2677	
Median		34.0000	
Variance		77.391	
Std. Deviation		8.79724	
Minimum		9.00	
Maximum		49.00	
Range		40.00	
Interquartile Range		10.2500	
Skewness		-.599	.230
Kurtosis		.035	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.105	110	.005

No significant difference between the mean (32.94) and the 5% trimmed mean (33.26) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of -0.599; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of 0.035 indicates a slightly peaked distribution approaching normal distribution (at zero).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.005) is insignificant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows strong evidence of normal distribution.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line, with no evident clustering of values.

Box plot reveals four outlying values which, for the purposes of this analysis, are retained because they are not extreme outliers and are therefore not thought to have a significant impact upon the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Trust

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
K1	110	1	7	5.34	1.672
K2	110	1	7	5.13	1.838
K3	110	1	7	4.88	1.933
K4	110	1	7	5.41	1.616
K5	110	1	7	5.05	1.844
K6	110	1	7	5.55	1.560
K7	110	1	7	5.77	1.601

		Statistic	Std. Error
Mean		37.1182	.96232
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	35.2109	
	Upper Bound	39.0255	
5% Trimmed Mean		37.7323	
Median		38.0000	
Variance		101.867	
Std. Deviation		10.09290	

Minimum		11.00	
Maximum		49.00	
Range		38.00	
Interquartile Range		17.5000	
Skewness		-.540	.230
Kurtosis		-.603	.457

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
.138	110	.000

No significant difference between the mean (37.11) and the 5% trimmed mean (37.73) indicating that extreme scores do not have a strong influence on the mean.

Scores negatively skewed, with a value of -0.540; skewing does pose any notable issues.

Kurtosis value of -0.603 indicates a relatively flat distribution.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic (0.000) is significant (<0.05), breaching the assumption of normality.

Distribution histogram shows limited evidence of normal distribution, the depiction of a number of peaks being a cause for concern.

Normal Q-Q Plot shows a straight line suggesting a normal distribution, although a break at the lower end is a cause for concern.

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot show points collected around the zero line with no evident clustering of values, although a break at the lower end is also a cause for concern.

Box plot reveals no outlying values.

Appendix 10: Summary of factor analysis

N.B. The large size of the correlation matrix meant that it could not be presented in either a short or an economical form.

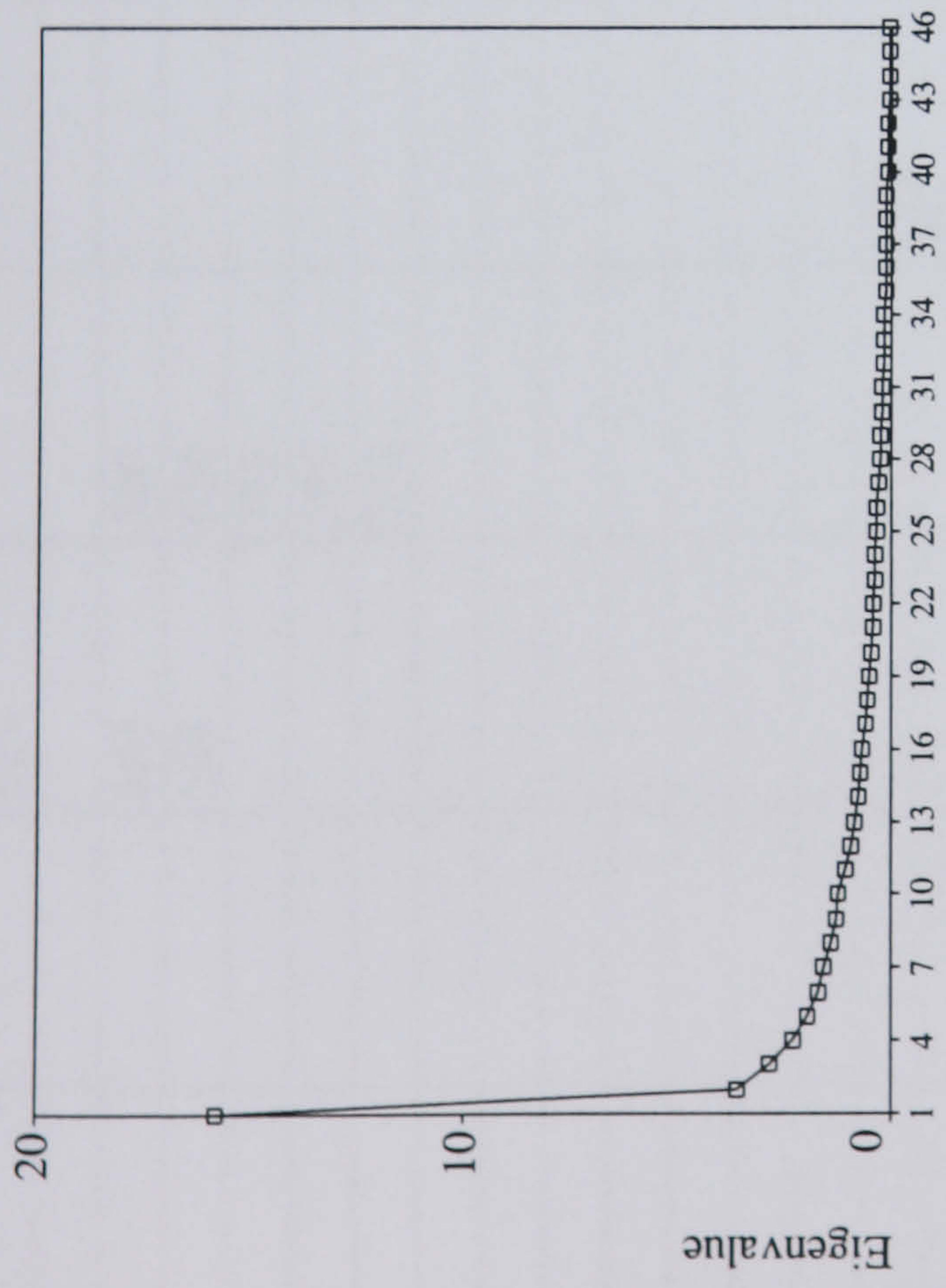
Assessment of factorability of data

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.842
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3997.496
	Sig.	.000

Principle components analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		Cumulative %
	Total	% of Variance	Total	% of Variance	
1	15.772	34.286	15.772	34.286	34.286
2	3.614	7.856	3.614	7.856	42.142
3	2.848	6.192	2.848	6.192	48.334
4	2.287	4.972	2.287	4.972	53.306
5	1.951	4.242	1.951	4.242	57.548
6	1.682	3.656	1.682	3.656	61.204
7	1.579	3.432	1.579	3.432	64.636
8	1.391	3.025	1.391	3.025	67.661
9	1.267	2.755	1.267	2.755	70.416
10	1.223	2.659	1.223	2.659	73.075
11	1.072	2.331	1.072	2.331	75.406

Scree plot



Component Number

Rotated factor solution

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
B1		.718									
B2								.473			
B3		.688									
B4		.676									
B5	.512	.640									
C3	.572										
C4						.710					
C5						.780					
D1		.602									
D2	.515	.552									

D3																								
D4				.580										.455										
D5				.513										.578										
E1				.603			.500																	
E2				.528			.656																	
E3							.795																	
E4							.785																	
E5							.734																	
E6																				.422				
F1													.588									.415		
F4																				.716				
F5																				.723				
F6																						.443		
F7																						.806		
F8																						.556		
G1									.855															
G2									.751															
G3									.822															
G4									.774															
I1																								
I2																								
I3																								
J1																								
J2								.568																
J3																								
J4																								
J5									.662															
J6									.561															
J7									.661															
K1									.820															
K2									.754															
K3									.741															
																								.735

K4	.795																				
K5	.787																				
K6	.798																				
K7	.669																				

Total Variance Explained

		Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings			
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %		
1	7.976	17.340	17.340		
2	5.218	11.343	28.683		
3	3.742	8.135	36.818		
4	2.958	6.430	43.248		
5	2.953	6.420	49.668		
6	2.498	5.431	55.099		
7	2.308	5.018	60.117		
8	2.164	4.704	64.821		
9	2.161	4.698	69.519		
10	1.368	2.975	72.493		
11	1.340	2.913	75.406		

Appendix 11: Summary of standard multiple regression

Pearsonian correlations

	COMIT	TRUST	COMMS	MANREL	LOCA	BENEFI	SHAVAL	CONTRA	OPPBEH	INFORM
COMIT	1.000	.470	.552	.468	.173	.539	.577	-.311	.444	-.075
TRUST	.470	1.000	.752	.566	-.011	.560	.486	-.359	.395	-.150
COMMS	.552	.752	1.000	.790	.050	.653	.607	-.344	.405	-.120
MANREL	.468	.566	.790	1.000	.103	.517	.529	-.278	.368	-.094
LOCA	.173	-.011	.050	.103	1.000	.223	.048	-.001	.169	.075
BENEFI	.539	.560	.653	.517	.223	1.000	.432	-.197	.277	-.089
SHAVAL	.577	.486	.607	.529	.048	.432	1.000	-.314	.375	-.071
CONTRA	-.311	-.359	-.344	-.278	-.001	-.197	-.314	1.000	-.269	.341
OPPBEH	.444	.395	.405	.368	.169	.277	.375	-.269	1.000	-.233
INFORM	-.075	-.150	-.120	-.094	.075	-.089	-.071	.341	-.233	1.000

ANOVA

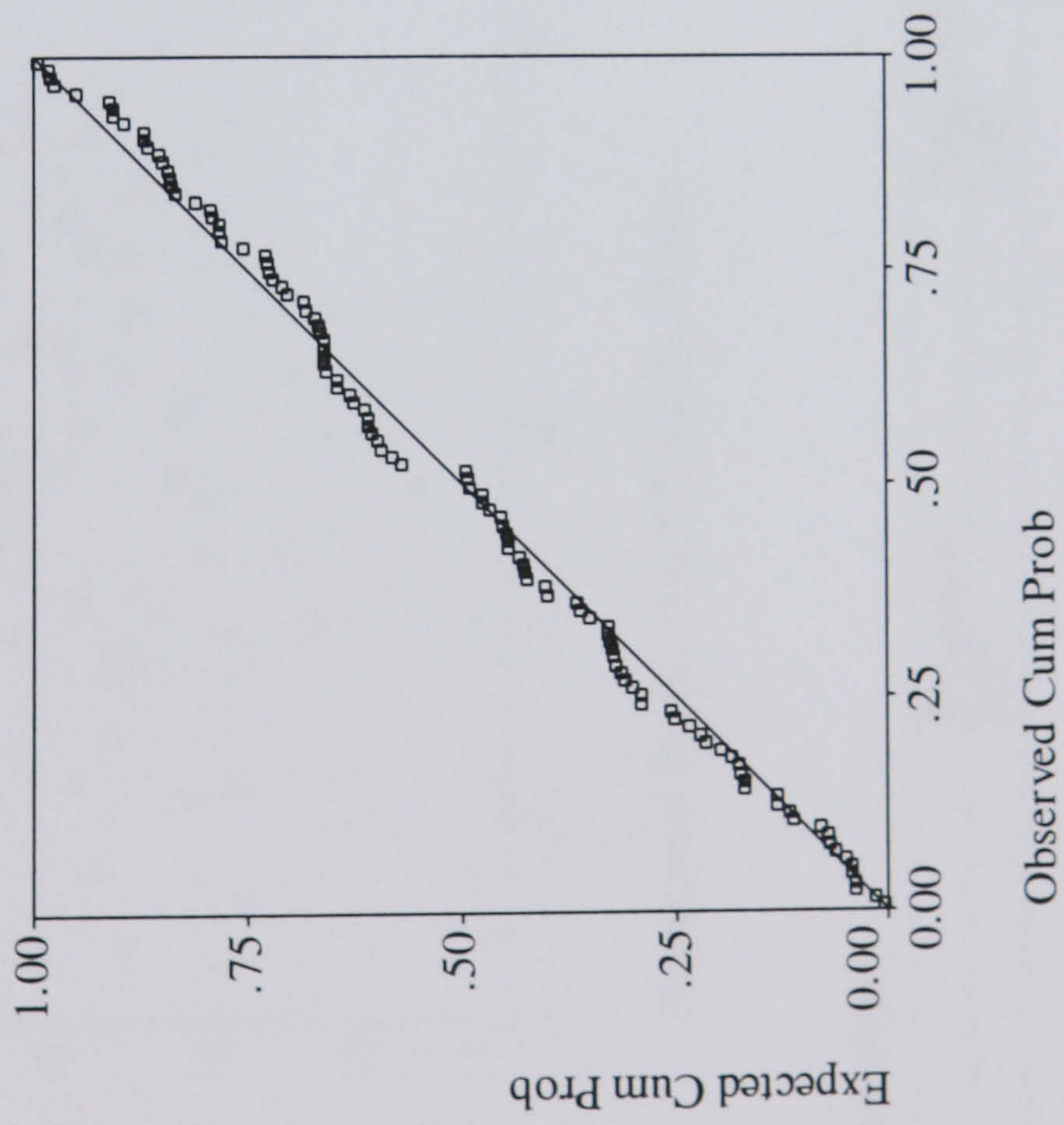
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1263.199	9	140.355	10.761	.000
Residual	1304.265	100	13.043		
Total	2567.464	109			

Tolerance coefficients

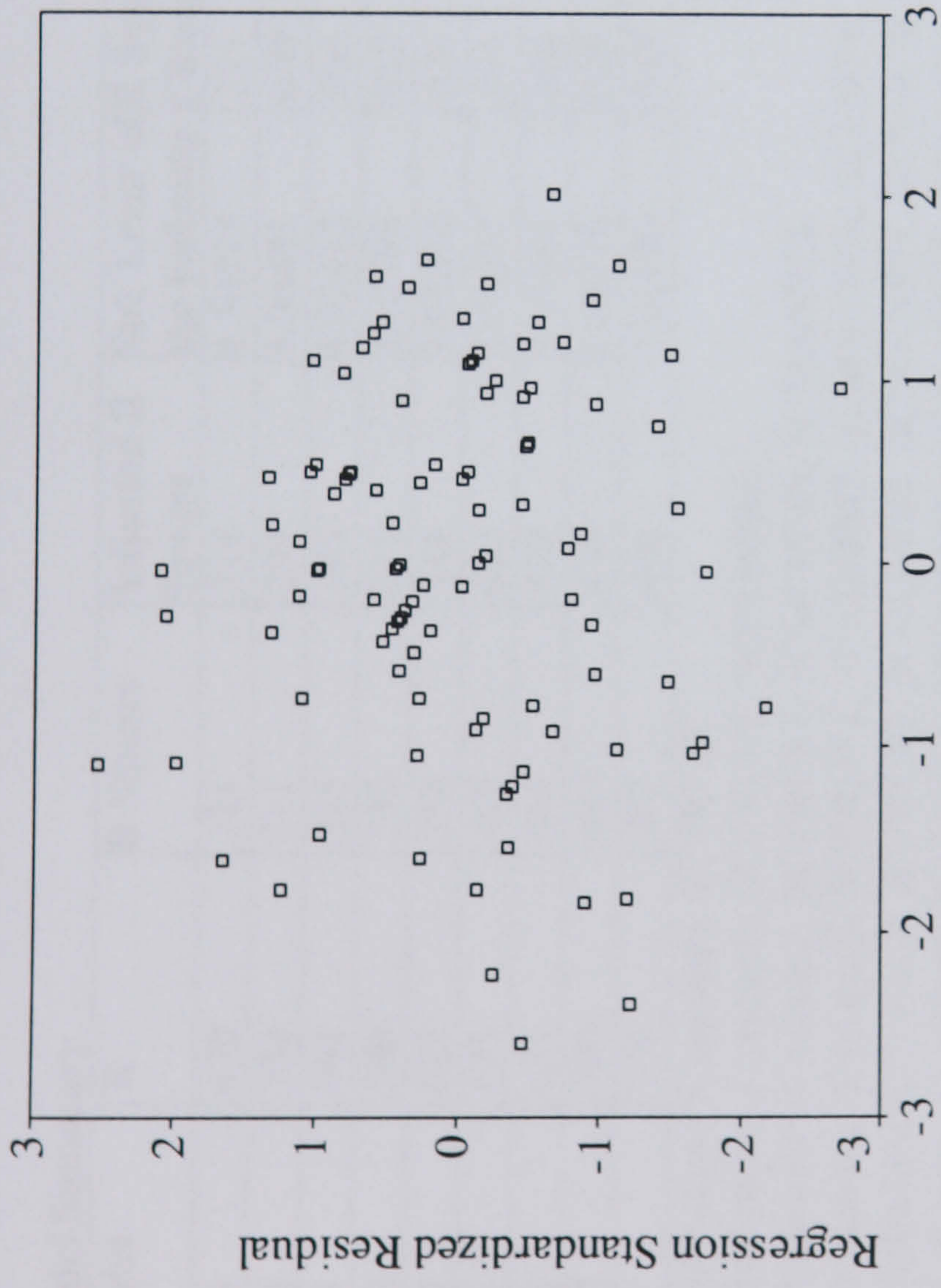
	Unstand. Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
	B		Beta			Tolerance
(Constant)	3.864	2.976		1.299	.197	
SCTRUST	0.0037	.030	.014	.125	.901	.397
SCCOMMS	0.0206	.055	.060	.373	.710	.199
SCMANREL	0.0067	.109	.007	.061	.951	.364
SCLOCA	0.0409	.055	.056	.739	.462	.871

SCBENEFI	.233	.084	.274	2.759	.007	.516
SCSHAV AL	.400	.120	.309	3.329	.001	.591
SCCONTRA	-.134	.113	-.098	-1.193	.236	.752
SCOPPBEH	.190	.081	.197	2.353	.021	.726
SCINFORM	.157	.219	.056	.717	.475	.841

Normal probability plot



Scatter plot



Regression Standardized Predicted Value

Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.701	.492	.446	3.61146

Appendix 12: Summary of hierarchical multiple regression

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1(a)	.470	.221	.214	4.30273	.221	30.681	1	108	.000
2(b)	.558	.311	.299	4.06481	.090	14.013	1	107	.000
3(c)	.561	.315	.295	4.07412	.003	.512	1	106	.476
4(d)	.580	.336	.311	4.02796	.022	3.443	1	105	.066
5(e)	.612	.374	.344	3.93074	.038	6.259	1	104	.014
6(f)	.675	.455	.423	3.68507	.081	15.329	1	103	.000
7(g)	.681	.464	.427	3.67481	.008	1.576	1	102	.212
8(h)	.700	.489	.449	3.60276	.026	5.121	1	101	.026
9(i)	.701	.492	.446	3.61146	.003	.514	1	100	.475

a. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST

b. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS

c. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL

d. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA

e. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI

f. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAL

g. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAL, SCCONTRA

h. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAL, SCCONTRA, SCOPPBEB

i. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAL, SCCONTRA, SCOPPBEB, SCINFORM

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1(a)	Regression	568.010	1	568.010	30.681	.000
	Residual	1999.454	108	18.513		
	Total	2567.464	109			
2(b)	Regression	799.535	2	399.767	24.195	.000
	Residual	1767.929	107	16.523		

	Total	2567.464	109				
3(c)	Regression	808.031	3	269.344	16.227	.000	
	Residual	1759.432	106	16.598			
	Total	2567.464	109				
4(d)	Regression	863.892	4	215.973	13.312	.000	
	Residual	1703.571	105	16.224			
	Total	2567.464	109				
5(e)	Regression	960.593	5	192.119	12.434	.000	
	Residual	1606.871	104	15.451			
	Total	2567.464	109				
6(f)	Regression	1168.752	6	194.792	14.344	.000	
	Residual	1398.711	103	13.580			
	Total	2567.464	109				
7(g)	Regression	1190.034	7	170.005	12.589	.000	
	Residual	1377.429	102	13.504			
	Total	2567.464	109				
8(i)	Regression	1256.499	8	157.062	12.100	.000	
	Residual	1310.964	101	12.980			
	Total	2567.464	109				
9(j)	Regression	1263.199	9	140.355	10.761	.000	
	Residual	1304.265	100	13.043			
	Total	2567.464	109				

a. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST

b. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS

c. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL

d. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA

e. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI

f. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAI

g. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAI, SC'CONTRA

h. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAI, SC'CONTRA, SCOPPBEEH

i. Predictors: (Constant), SCTRUST, SCCOMMS, SCMANREL, SCLOCA, SCBENEFI, SCSHAVAI, SC'CONTRA, SCOPPBEEH, SCINFORM

Coefficients

		Unstand. Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.690	1.646		7.104	.000
	TRUST	0.125	.023	.470	5.539	.000
2	(Constant)	9.498	1.661		5.717	.000
	TRUST	0.034	.032	.128	1.049	.296
	COMMS	0.158	.042	.456	3.743	.000
3	(Constant)	8.214	2.448		3.356	.001
	TRUST	0.036	.033	.134	1.095	.276
	COMMS	0.130	.057	.377	2.288	.024
	MANREL	0.087	.122	.094	.715	.476
4	(Constant)	6.412	2.608		2.459	.016
	TRUST	0.040	.032	.149	1.229	.222
	COMMS	.130	.056	.377	2.314	.023
	MANREL	0.065	.121	.070	.537	.592
	LOCA	.108	.058	.149	1.856	.066
5	(Constant)	6.375	2.545		2.505	.014
	TRUST	0.027	.032	.101	.840	.403
	COMMS	0.082	.058	.237	1.405	.163
	MANREL	0.070	.118	.075	.589	.557
	LOCA	0.070	.059	.095	1.169	.245
	BENEFI	0.228	.091	.268	2.502	.014
6	(Constant)	4.066	2.458		1.655	.101
	TRUST	0.020	.030	.076	.676	.500
	COMMS	0.030	.056	.087	.537	.592
	MANREL	0.024	.111	.026	.214	.831
	LOCA	0.068	.055	.094	1.239	.218
	BENEFI	0.212	.086	.249	2.473	.015
	SHAVAL	0.468	.120	.361	3.915	.000
7	(Constant)	5.968	2.881		2.071	.041
	TRUST	0.014	.030	.052	.461	.645
	COMMS	0.026	.056	.076	.468	.641
	MANREL	0.022	.111	.024	.204	.839
	LOCA	0.068	.055	.093	1.231	.221
	BENEFI	0.219	.086	.258	2.561	.012
	SHAVAL	0.447	.120	.346	3.718	.000
	CONTRA	-0.136	.108	-.099	-1.255	.212
8	(Constant)	4.207	2.930		1.436	.154
	TRUST	0.003	.030	.014	.124	.901
	COMMS	0.022	.055	.063	.394	.694
	MANREL	0.006	.109	.007	.062	.951
	LOCA	0.046	.055	.063	.833	.407
	BENEFI	0.229	.084	.270	2.729	.008
	SHAVAL	0.407	.119	.314	3.410	.001
	CONTRA	-0.110	.107	-.080	-1.026	.308
	OPPBEH	0.179	.079	.185	2.263	.026

9	(Constant)	3.864	2.976		1.299	.197
	TRUST	0.004	.030	.014	.125	.901
	COMMS	0.021	.055	.060	.373	.710
	MANREL	0.007	.109	.007	.061	.951
	LOCA	0.041	.055	.056	.739	.462
	BENEFI	0.233	.084	.274	2.759	.007
	SHAVAL	0.400	.120	.309	3.329	.001
	CONTRA	-0.134	.113	-.098	-1.193	.236
	OPPBEH	0.190	.081	.197	2.353	.021
	INFORM	0.157	.219	.056	.717	.475

Appendix 13: Profile of interview dyads

Dyad 1	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: 1	Nature of business: Electronics
Location: South East	Location: South East
Position of person interviewed: Marketing Manager	Position of person interviewed: Sponsorship Manager
Length of current deal: 3 years	
Number of years remaining: Contract terminated for 2003/2004.	
Number of times previously renewed: 1	

Dyad 2	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: Premier	Nature of business: Telecommunications
Location: North West	Location: South East
Position of person interviewed: Marketing Manager	Position of person interviewed: Global Sponsorship Manager
Length of current deal: 5 years	
Number of years remaining: 3	
Number of times previously renewed: 0	

Dyad 3	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: Premier	Nature of business: Sportswear
Location: North West	Location: North West
Position of person interviewed: Commercial Manager	Position of person interviewed: Sponsorship Manager
Length of current deal: 3 years	
Number of years remaining: 1 year	
Number of times previously renewed: 3	

Dyad 4	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: Premier	Nature of business: Telecommunications
Location: North East	Location: South East
Position of person interviewed: Commercial Manager	Position of person interviewed: Sponsorship Manager
Length of current deal: 3	
Number of years remaining: 2	
Number of times previously renewed: 0	

Dyad 5	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: 4	Nature of business: Building supplies
Location: South West	Location: Home Counties
Position of person interviewed: Commercial Manager	Position of person interviewed: Marketing Manager
Length of current deal: 2	
Number of years remaining: 1	
Number of times previously renewed: 0	

Dyad 6	
Football club	Shirt sponsor
League 2002/2003: 1	Nature of business: Confectionary
Location: Yorkshire	Location: Home Counties
Position of person interviewed: Marketing Manager	Position of person interviewed: Brand Manager
Length of current deal: 3	
Number of years remaining: Contract terminated for 2003/2004	
Number of times previously renewed: 0	

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