

**Graduate Employability in the Sport and Recreation
Industry: An analysis of the transition from Higher
Education to the workplace.**

Susan Rosemary Minten

PhD.

The Management School

University of Sheffield

November 2007

Abstract

Over the last 15 years there has been a rapid expansion in sport related degrees with concerns raised about the appropriateness of sport graduates to the sport industry. In contrast, a number of reports have identified the need for a higher skilled sports workforce. Consequently, the aim of this study is to investigate the employability of sport related graduates in the sport industry, through an analysis of the factors affecting the transition of the graduate from undergraduate studies to employment in the sport industry.

This study comprises of two phases. Phase One used surveys to examine the patterns of employment and experiences of sport graduates (n=294), and the attributes and career expectations of sport students (n= 585). Focus groups of sport students (9 groups) and HE staff (4 groups) were undertaken to gain further insight into the motivations and expectations of students and the nature of sport courses. The surveys found that 37% of sport graduates were employed in sport and these tended to be low level jobs that did not tend to utilise graduate attributes. Sports graduates were also successful in finding jobs in other industries. The results also showed that the initial sport graduate career was dynamic with a number of job changes.

Phase Two of the study used four case studies of graduates and found that their transition into sports employment was influenced by the interaction between the nature of the graduate, the nature of the job and the nature of the employer. A major outcome of the study is the development of an Interaction Model and Theory of Graduate Employability in the Sports Industry which, in contrast to other theories, suggests that graduate employability is located external to the graduate, as a synthesis of the inter-relationship between the nature of the graduate, job and employer.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the excellent support, help and guidance of my supervisors Professor Peter Taylor and Dr. Gill Musson. Thank you to John for his support and encouragement and to Sam and Sophie for their patience.

Contents

	Page
Contents	i
List of Figures	iii
List of Tables	v
List of Appendices	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
1.1. The Nature and Importance of the Sport Industry	4
1.2. Graduate Employability	7
1.3. Objectives of the Study	11
1.4. Structure of the Study	12
Chapter 2: Structural and Historical Analysis of The Sports Industry and HE	13
2.1. The Structure and Development of the Sport Industry.	15
2.2. The Development of HE and its Impact on Sport Courses	42
2.3. The Graduate Labour Market	51
2.4. Employers' Needs	61
2.5. Chapter Conclusions and Research Issues	73
Chapter 3: Research Philosophy and the Development of the Model of Graduate Employability	77
3.1. Phase One	79
3.2. Phase Two	82
Chapter 4: Phase One Research Methods	93
4.1. Extensive Approach	95
4.2. Intensive Approach	104
Chapter 5: Discussion of Phase One Results	109
5.1. Patterns of Employment of Sport Graduates	111
5.2. Do graduates achieve employability in the sport industry?	121
5.3. Experiences of Graduate's Transition into the Workplace	130
5.4. The Nature of Sport Courses and Final Year Students.	131
5.5. Conclusions and Refinement of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.	137

Chapter 6:	Introduction to Phase Two Research and Underpinning Literature	143
6.1	Introduction to Phase Two	145
6.2	Underpinning Literature	146
6.3	Conclusions and implications for Phase Two research.	162
Chapter 7:	Phase Two Methods	167
7.1.	Objectives of Phase Two	169
7.2.	Justification of Case Study Approach	171
7.3.	Procedures	172
7.4.	Analysis	182
Chapter 8:	Description and Initial Analysis of Case Studies	183
8.1.	Case Study 1: Voluntary Sector Tennis Centre	186
8.2.	Case Study 2: Local Authority Leisure Pool and Gym.	189
8.3.	Case Study 3: Local Authority Sports Development Team	192
8.4.	Case Study 4: Private Sector Health and Fitness Organisation.	195
8.5.	Summary of Cases	197
Chapter 9:	Discussion and Comparisons of the Four Cases	199
9.1.	The Nature of the Job	203
9.2.	The Employer	212
9.3.	The Graduate	227
9.4.	Conclusions	237
Chapter 10:	Overall Conclusions and Evaluation of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry	241
10.1.	Key Conclusions and Implications for Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry References	243
10.2.	Evaluation of the Interaction Model and Theory of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.	248
10.3.	Final Conclusion	254
10.4.	Further Research	256

List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page
Figure 1.1	A model of employability-development and employment.	9
Figure 2.1	Percentage Employment in Sport in England in 2003	16
Figure 2.2.	Sport Participation by location	17
Figure 2.3	The Commercial Sport Sector	39
Figure 2.4	Growth in student numbers in HE. (1970-2000)	46
Figure 2.5	Classification of Graduate Occupations.	59
Figure 2.6	Skills and knowledge	67
Figure 2.7	Enhancement Continuum	68
Figure 2.8	Commitment Curve	69
Figure 3.1	The three ontological levels of reality	83
Figure 3.2	Critical realist view of causation	84
Figure 3.3	Model of Causation of graduate employability in sport	84
Figure 3.4	Model of the Society/person connection	86
Figure 3.5	Superimposing the Transformational Model of Social Action and the Morphogenetic/static cycle	87
Figure 3.7	Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry	89
Figure 3.8	Phases of the Research	92
Figure 4.1	The sequence of methods used.	95
Figure 5.1.	Areas of Employment of Sport Graduates	112
Figure 5.2.	Comparison of graduates use of skills and knowledge in their current job and intentions to stay in the job.	125
Figure 5.3	Comparison of graduates employed of skills and knowledge in sport jobs and intentions to stay in the job.	125
Figure 5.4	Comparison of Attributes used by graduates in sport jobs with the attributes that they gained from their degree.	127
Figure 5.5	Comparison of perception of skills gained with and without work experience.	136
Figure 5.6	Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.	139
Figure 6.1	Modalities of emergent identity.	160

Figure 6.2	The Interaction of the Graduate and Employer and the impact on Employability in the Sport Industry	163
Figure 7.1	Case Study Method.	176
Figure 8.1	Staffing Structure of the Tennis Centre	186
Figure 8.2	Management Structure of the Leisure Centre	189
Figure 8.3:	Structure of the Sports Development Unit	192
Figure 9.1	Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry	202
Figure 9.2	The Graduate Skills of Sport Jobs	204
Figure 9.3	Modalities of Emergent Identity applied to Sport Graduates	222
Figure 10.1	A model of employability-development and employment.	249
Figure 10.2	Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry	251

List of Tables

Table	Title	Page
Table 1.1	Summary of Sport-Related Consumer Spending in England, 1985-2003 (SIRC 2007)	4
Table 1.2	Categories of Organisational Settings in Sport (Skills Active 2005)	6
Table 2.1	Sport Related Employment in England 2003	16
Table 2.2	Qualifications of Recreation Managers	22
Table 2.3	Changing management styles in the public sector sport and recreation services.	33
Table 2.4	Commercial Sector Sport-Related Income and Expenditure Flows in England in 2003.	40
Table 2.5	A Classification of Graduate Occupations	57
Table 2.6	Current level of skill required: Leisure and other personal service.	62
Table 4.1	Reasons for Non Participation of Institutions.	98
Table 4.2	Composition of the focus groups.	107
Table 5.1	Qualifications Obtained Related to Ability to Gain Employment.	115
Table 5.2	Main types of sport employment entered by sport graduates.	116
Table 5.3	Types of sport organisation that graduates are employed by	117
Table 5.4	Actual employment level and expected employment entry level of graduates who obtained sport jobs.	117
Table 5.5	Entrance level expectations of students wanting to gain employment in the sport industry.	119
Table 5.6	Length of Current Sport Employment.	122
Table 5.6	Length of Current Sport Employment.	122
Table 5.8	Intended length of time in current employment.	124
Table 5.9	Appropriateness of Graduates' Skills and Knowledge to Employment	129
Table 5.10	Attributes gained by final year students from their degree.	133
Table 8.4	Comparison of indicators of employability.	197
Table 9.1	Summary of job characteristics.	210
Table 9.2	Summary of Employer Approaches to Graduates.	226
Table 9.3	Nature of the Graduates.	236
Table 9.4	Comparison of employability of graduates at the focus of the study	237

List of Appendices

Appendices		Page
Appendix 1	Report of Graduate Recruitment and Development in the Sport and Recreation Industry	281
Appendix 2	Student Questionnaire	479
Appendix 3	List of HE institutions that took part in the student survey and response rates	487
Appendix 4	Graduate Questionnaire	491
Appendix 5	List of HE institutions that took part in the graduate survey	501
Appendix 6	Aide memoir for focus groups	505
Appendix 7	Aide Memoir for Case Study Interviews	509
Appendix 8	Example of coding process	513
	8.1 Transcript codes	515
	8.2 Example of transcript	517
	8.3 Example of coding template for Sports Development Unit	533
Appendix 9	Write up of case studies	557

Chapter 1

Introduction to the study

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

The rapid expansion of sport related degrees in the last 15 years has led to concern about the employability of sport graduates. Moreover, this concern has not only been about over-supply but also the appropriateness of those graduates to the sport industry (Skills Active 2006, Buswell 2001, Einnis-Reynolds 2001, Pitchford 2001, Keep and Mayhew 1999, Brindley and Mander 1996, Bacon 1995, Mannering 1995, Todd 1995, and Wolsey 1995). Higher Education (HE) institutions have been accused of producing graduates who do not meet the needs of employers (Skills Active 2006, SPRITO 2001, Bacon 1996) or graduates have been criticised for having unrealistic expectations and perceptions about employment in the sport industry (CNAA 1991, Yates 1984). Prior to this expansion, and more recently, concerns have been expressed about the need to develop a more highly skilled workforce in order for the sport industry to progress (Yates 1984, DCMS 2003, Rowe and Moore 2004, Sport England 2004, Skills Active 2006). It would appear that there is an issue regarding the sport graduates emerging from HE institutions and how they transfer into sport employment. The aim of this study is: *to investigate the employability of sport related graduates in the sport industry, through an analysis of the factors affecting the transition of the graduate from undergraduate studies to employment in the sport industry.*

This chapter will outline the nature and importance of the sport industry to justify why sport employment should be studied and also set the scope of the study. It will then discuss the notion of graduate employability and why there are specific issues with regard to sport. The philosophical perspective influencing the study will be introduced to clarify the approach taken. Finally the chapter will end with a statement and explanation of the objectives to be studied and the structure of the study.

1.1. The Nature and Importance of the Sport Industry.

The sport industry is an important and growing part of the British economy (Gratton and Taylor 2000). Analysis by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) (2007) estimated that sport related economic activity amounted to £13,531 million in 2003, an increase of 107% from 1985. This is reflected in the increase in percentage of gross value added by sport from 1.2% in 1985 to 1.7% in 2003, and a 104% increase in consumer spending on sport in England from 1985 to 2003 (Table 1.1). The broad nature of the sport industry is illustrated in Table 1.1., which shows the range of areas included in sport related consumer spending.

Table 1.1: Summary of Sport-Related Consumer Spending in England, 1985-2003 (SIRC 2007)

	Constant Prices (2003)						
	1985 £m	1990 £m	1995 £m	1998 £m	2000 £m	2003 £m	Change 1985 – 03 %
Sports Clothing and footwear	641	1,406	1,674	2,061	2,273	2,960	362
Sports equipment	474	469	560	787	767	1,031	117
Participation subscriptions and fees	1,339	1,520	2,540	2,878	3,093	2,894	116
Admissions to events	230	386	487	687	668	618	169
Sport-related gambling	1,713	1,924	2,153	1,792	1,696	2,477	46
TV rental and satellite subscriptions		66	480	961	1,210	1,426	
Other sport-related spending	2,443	2,620	1,982	2,137	2,396	2,564	
Total expenditure on sport	6,840	8,288	9,866	11,293	12,092	13,969	104

In 2003 sport-related employment accounted for 1.8% of all employment in England, an increase of 28% between 1985 and 2003 (SIRC 2007). Sport not only has economic value to the UK but is also perceived to provide social benefits, which include: improvements in health and fitness; reductions in anti-social behaviour; and contribution to quality of life (Gratton and Taylor 2000). This is reiterated in the 2002 government strategy for sport, 'Game Plan', which stated that "Sport is a powerful and often under-used tool that can help Government to achieve a number of ambitious goals" (DCMS 2002:i).

As the sport industry refers to such a wide range of activities that, in some cases, overlap with other industries (for example retail and gambling), it is important to define what is meant by sport and the scope of the sport industry for this study. There has been much debate over the definition of sport consequently there is “no universal agreement about the meaning, purpose, and organisation of sports” (Coakley (2003:25). It is beyond the scope of this study to detail the debate, however it is important that a working definition is established in order to operationalise the research and provide a framework for analysis. Horne et al (2001:xv) argue that sport “has different meanings in different societies and refers to different activities at different historical moments”. This view is acknowledged by Coakley (2003:25) who states that any definition of sport “reflects the structure and organisation of relationships, and social life in a particular society at a particular point in time”. As this study is analysing sport employment within the context of the UK, which is influenced at a policy level by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and home country Sports Councils, it will adopt the definition they employ which is The Council of Europe’s (1992) European Sports Charter:

“Sport embraces much more than traditional team games and competition. Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or continuing results in competition at all levels.”

This definition focuses on active participation and in terms of the activities list within consumer spending (Table 1.1), relates most directly to ‘participation subscription and fees’ which corresponds to 21% of consumer spending on sport. By adopting this focus the study also aligns itself with the sector skills council for active leisure and learning, Skills Active. The remit of Skills Active includes the sport and recreation industry and the settings included are shown in Table 1.2 overleaf. The table also includes the health and fitness industries, as defined by Skills Active, as this has been seen as being closely related to sport (SPRITO 2001) and includes activities that could be classified as sport within the adopted definition. Consequently, the settings for sport employment that this study will focus on are those that are identified in Table 1.2. overleaf.

Table 1.2. Categories of Organisational Settings in Sport (Skills Active 2005)

Sport and recreation	Sport and leisure facilities; sports clubs; stadia/arena facilities; sports services; sports administrators; sports development; national governing bodies of sport; community/youth centre, coaching, activity leadership
Health and fitness	Private fitness clubs, hotel-based clubs, multi-group clubs, workplace clubs, public leisure centres, residential clubs.

With the increasing importance of the sport industry, and consequently sport employment, concern has been expressed for the need to up-skill the work force (DCMS 2003, Advantage West Midlands 2004). Pressure to up-skill is also coming from the fact that despite the growth in the sport industry, actual participation has been declining since 1990 (Rowe and Moor 2004). This has created concern about the impact on the health of the nation and Sport England (2004) has set targets to increase participation by 1% a year to 2020. Despite these pressures to up-skill there is a lack of clarity about how graduates fit in with this and whether their skills are appropriate. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the last piece of comprehensive research into graduate employment in sport examined those who had graduated in 1985 (Coalter and Potter 1990); since then not only has the industry expanded but there has been a massive expansion in the number of students studying sport related degrees. There has been an increase from 5,232 undergraduates studying in sport in 1994 (Higher Education Statistics Agency 1996) to 14,239 in 2005 (Chapman 2006). As will be discussed in Chapter 2, this growth reflects the Labour government's policy of mass higher education and between 1999 and 2006 there was an 18% increase in participation in HE (Department for Education and Skills 2007). Furthermore, it could be argued that sport has been important in this expansion, to the extent that it has been seen as playing a significant role in attracting those who have been under represented in HE (Universities UK 2004). Counter to this expansion in sport graduates, Chapter 2 argues that sport is an industry that has not been a traditional graduate employer (SPRITO 2000); in which case there are issues with regard to how the industry receives graduates, which may impact on graduate employability. The concept of employability is discussed in the next section.

1.2. Graduate Employability

Over the last two decades there has been an increasing emphasis on the contribution of the graduate workforce to the economy and the employability of graduates (Purcell and Pitcher 1998, Yorke 2006). This section will discuss what is meant by employability and why some issues regarding the employability of sport graduates may differ from the employability of graduates in general.

There is debate as to the meaning of the term employability; at a basic level employability can be defined as obtaining a job (Harvey 2001), however, Yorke (2006:5) argues that employability should not be confused with the acquisition of a job but “implies something about the capacity of the graduate to function in a job”. Harvey (2001), along with most commentators on employability, does recognise that employability is a complex concept which can be interpreted in many ways (Yorke 2006, McQuaid and Lindsay 2005, Harvey 2001). McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) observe that the differences in perspectives relate to either the individual’s characteristics and readiness for work, or a more holistic approach such as Yorke (2006). His notion of employability includes the range of factors that influence a person getting, performing in, moving or improving jobs; this suggests employability occurs over a period of time as opposed to immediate employment. Yorke’s (2006) perspective seems to be implied in definitions from the Confederation of British Industry’s and the UK government:

“Employability means the development of skills and adaptable workforces in which all those capable of work are encouraged to develop skills, knowledge, technology and adaptability to enable them to enter and remain in employment throughout their working lives” (HM Treasury 1997:1)

“Employability is the possession by an individual of the qualities and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and thereby help to realise his or her aspirations and potential in work” (CBI 1999:1).

Although both emphasise the development of attributes, the Treasury’s (1997) definition perceives employability from an overall workforce perspective

whilst the CBI (1999) takes a more individual view; which also includes the notion of the individual realising their aspirations and potential in work. This is also inferred by Hillage and Pollard (1998:12) who conceptualise employability as “obtaining and retaining fulfilling work”. With regard to graduate employability the realisation of aspirations and potential tends to refer to the job being of graduate level (Harvey 2001), although, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, there is debate over what a graduate level job means.

McQuaid and Lindsay’s (2005) description of the more holistic definitions of employability include individual attributes, but also emphasise the importance of the demand from the labour market. Hillage and Pollard (1998:12) provide a broad definition of employability as: “the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment”. Their clarification of how this relates to the individual illustrates the holistic approach:

“For the individual employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers, and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek to work” (Hillage and Pollard 1998:12).

The factors that Hillage and Pollard (1998) include in the labour market environment are labour market demand and employer attitudes. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) have built on Hillage and Pollard’s (1998) notion of context, describing it as demand factors and including: specific labour market demands, vacancy characteristics and recruitment factors. The role of employers in employability is emphasised by Harvey’s (2001:102) model of employability (Figure 1.1., overleaf), which illustrates that employers “convert the ‘employability’ of the graduate into employment”. However his model only suggests that employability leads to employment and not the type of employment with regard to realising potential or the capacity of the graduate to perform in the job.

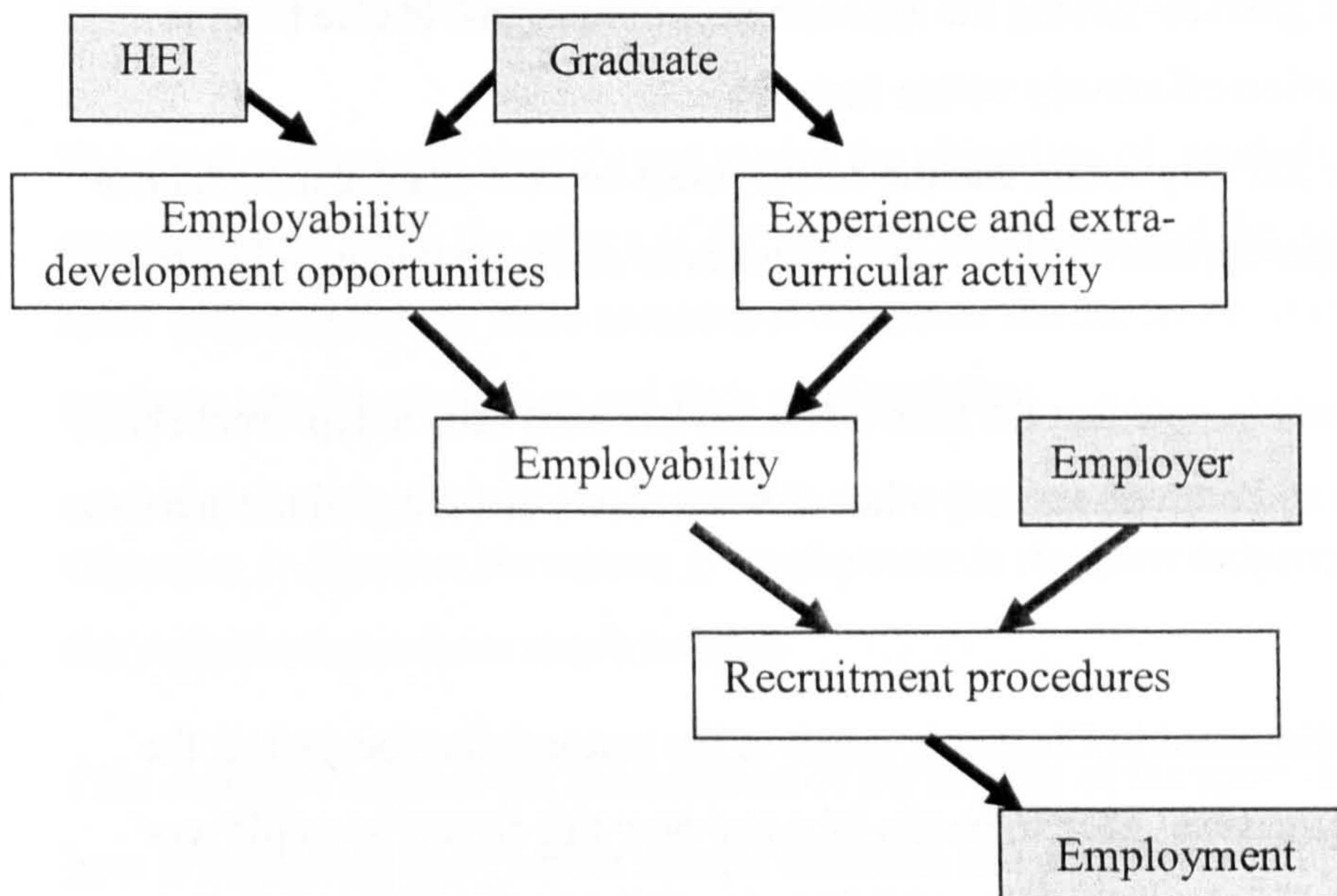


Figure 1.1. A model of employability-development and employment. (Harvey 2001)

Hillage and Pollard's (1998) notion of context and McQuaid and Lindsay's notion of demand factors are crucial in understanding how employability translates into employment. This is important with regard to sport - if it is not a traditional graduate employer then it is vital to understand how this influences labour market demands and employer attitudes and consequently its impact on the employability of sport graduates. This is also relevant to Harvey (2001) and Yorke's (2006) final element of employability, the graduate's capacity to function in the job once they have been recruited in terms of; making an immediate contribution ('hit the ground running') or being able to develop the ability to get up to speed quickly. This will be influenced by the graduate's attributes but also how these inter relate with the sport organisation. The concept of employability that will be adopted for this study is Hillage and Pollard's definition of "obtaining and retaining fulfilling work". Taking into account McQuaid and Lindsay's (2005), Harvey's (2001) and Yorke's (2006) evaluation of employability then current theories suggest that employability depends on:

- The intended industry providing opportunities for graduates to obtain jobs.
- The graduate having the appropriate attributes that are effectively presented to the employer to obtain the job.

- The graduate having the appropriate attributes that enable them to function effectively within their job.
- The job they obtain and the employment context enables the graduate to appropriately utilise their attributes to allow them to gain fulfilment.

It is important to note that the term attributes has been used to represent skills, knowledge and attitude and any other characteristics that the graduate needs to have.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, much of the research has focused on the skills that graduates' need to obtain jobs and how this relates to employers' needs. There has been little research into the performance of the graduate within the first phase of employment and how they make the transition from HE into the workplace; this study aims to provide some explanation of this process. Furthermore, the focus of the study is on how the industrial context, in this case sport, influences the employability of the graduate. As Chapter 2 will establish, research has been undertaken on the skills required by industry and to some extent the sport industry, but none has taken into account the overall nature of that industry and how it may influence employability. This is not only important in informing graduate employability in sport but may also have implications for other industries that have not in the past had a tradition of employing graduates but are now beginning to do so.

This study is influenced by the critical realist perspective which is discussed more fully in Chapter 3. This philosophy emphasises that human agents reproduce/ transform social structures (Keat and Urry 1982), thus any evaluation of the phenomena of graduate employability in sport needs analysis of the inter-relationship of the graduate and the employer within the social structures of higher education and the sport industry. This correlates to the holistic view of employability that is employed in this study, which proposes that the social structures of the sport industry and organisation provide a context that impacts on the interaction of the graduate and the employer, which in turn influences the sport organisation and sport

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This final section will identify and clarify the objectives of the study, which specifically focus on the nature of the industry in relation and the nature of sport courses and how these combine to influence the transition of the graduate into the workplace and their employability.

Objective 1: Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability

This objective enables the examination of the context of the sport industry and how it influences sport labour market demands and employers' attitudes to graduates and subsequently how this then impacts on the employability of the sport graduate.

Objective 2: Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry.

This objective enables analysis of the aims and objectives of sport courses within the wider context of HE policy and employment and how they impact on the aims, expectations and attributes of the graduates produced with regard to employability in the sport industry.

Objective 3: Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry, the factors that influence their transition into the job and how this impacts on employability.

This objective enables analysis of the experiences of graduates during their initial employment in the sport and recreation industry in terms of the types of jobs they get; the extent to which their skills have proved relevant to, and have been utilised in, their employment; and the extent to which sport graduates meet the needs of sport employers.

1.4. Structure of the Study

This section will outline and explain the approach to be taken to the structure of the study in order to achieve the aims and objectives. A fundamental tenet of critical realism is what Archer (1995) terms, 'structural conditioning'; where the past actions of agents interact with past social structures to generate phenomena that pre-date subsequent human activity, exerting a causal influence (Fleetwood 2005, Archer 1995). Archer (1995:196) argues that the agent is not a cultural dope but mediate those social structures "by shaping the situations in which they find themselves". This notion of structural conditioning means that critical realist based research must begin with an "in-depth and intensive historical and structural analysis of pre-existing institutional forms" (Reed 2005:1639). Consequently the next chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the historical and structural context of graduate employability in the sport industry.

Chapter 3 will provide a more detailed account of critical realism and why and how it underpins the study. It also explains why the study is divided into two research phases. Chapter 4 explains the methods and procedure for Phase One and Chapter 5 provides the discussion and analysis of the Phase One results. Chapter 6 introduces Phase Two of the research and focuses on organisational studies literature and the key concepts that are seen as relevant to a deeper analysis of graduate employability, following the analysis of Phase One. Chapter 7 explains and justifies the case study method and procedure that was used for Phase Two of the study and Chapter 8 provides an initial outline of the findings of the case studies. Chapter 9 provides an in depth discussion and analysis of the case studies in relation to graduate employability. Finally, Chapter 10 draws the study together to give overall conclusions on the employability of sport graduates in the sport industry, an assessment of the proposed model and theory of graduate employability in sport and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Structure and Development of The Sport Industry and Higher Education

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

As discussed at the end of the previous chapter a critical realist approach to explaining social phenomena begins with an in depth structural and historical analysis of the context to that phenomena. This chapter will provide that analysis through the discussion of a range of literature pertinent to the context of graduate employability in the sport industry. In order to begin to address objective one of the study: *Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability*, section one outlines the nature of the sport industry. This includes a historical analysis of the education, training and skill needs of those employed in this area, which will enable analysis of how the structure and development of the sport industry influences graduate employability. In order to begin to address objective 2 of the study: *Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry*, section two considers the development of Higher Education (HE) and its impact on sport related courses. This will highlight specific issues associated with HE sport courses and what makes them different from other HE subject disciplines. Section three examines the graduate labour market and the specific issues with regard to the sport. Section four analyses the previous research into the needs of employers both within sport and industry in general. Finally, section five will draw together the key issues from the analysis of the industry and HE in relation to the overall aim of the study, which will inform the primary research to be undertaken.

2.1. The Structure and Development of the Sport Industry.

A fundamental objective of this study is to understand and explain how the context of the sport industry influences the graduate transition into sport employment. Consequently, this section explores the structure and development of the sport industry with specific reference to education and training and the place of graduates. The sport industry is pluralist in nature and comprises of the public, voluntary and private sectors (Henry 1989). Table 2.1. overleaf indicates the balance of employment within those sectors in England in 2003, and that the majority of sport employment is within the commercial sector. The commercial non-sport sector includes the production

of sport-related goods and services by non-sport organisations (SIRC 2007) and do not include provision for participant sport and is not examined within this study.

Table 2.1. Sport Related Employment in England 2003 (SIRC 2007)

Commercial sport	97	157.1	158.2
Commercial non-sport	144	169.3	167
Voluntary sector	31	37.9	44.7
Public sector	32	37.5	51.3
Total	304	401.8	421.2

Figure 2.1 illustrates the percentage breakdown of employment amongst the remaining three sectors. The commercial sector still dominates in terms of employment, however with regard to the focus of this study, provision for sports participation, it also includes sports goods manufacturers and retailers, which are excluded, whilst the public and voluntary sector are both focused on participation. Figure 2.2. indicates where people actually participate in sport and this highlights the importance of the public sector, although it does not include any reference to voluntary clubs.

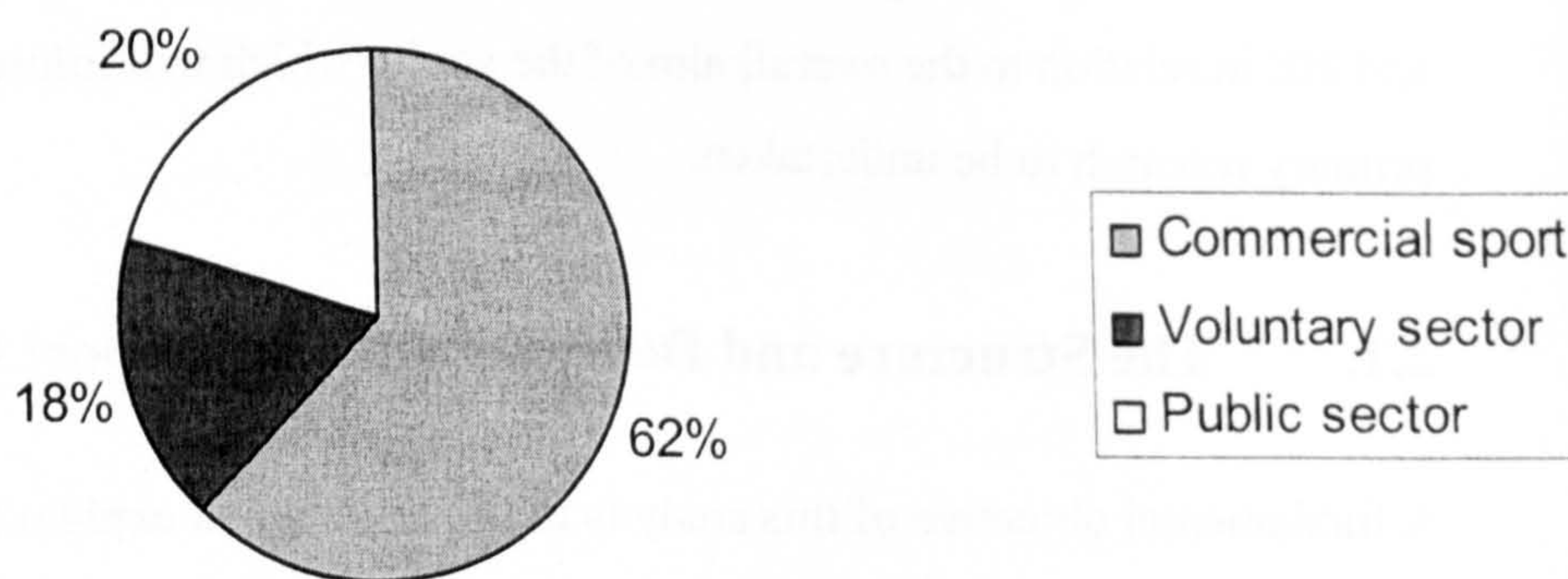


Figure 2.1.: Percentage Employment in Sport in England in 2003 (Excludes commercial non-sport). Source: adapted from SIRC 2007.

The following contextual sections will examine the structure and development of these three sports sectors in turn, particularly concentrating on the requirements of sport workers and subsequently the impact on education and training and the place of graduates. Despite the fact that the commercial sector provides the highest amount of employment in sport the majority of current

and past research has been on the public sector giving the most detailed picture of the educational background of its sport workers. Also, as will be established in the next section, the majority of graduate employment in sport has historically been within the public sector (Coalter and Potter 1990, Yates 1984, Murphy 1980).

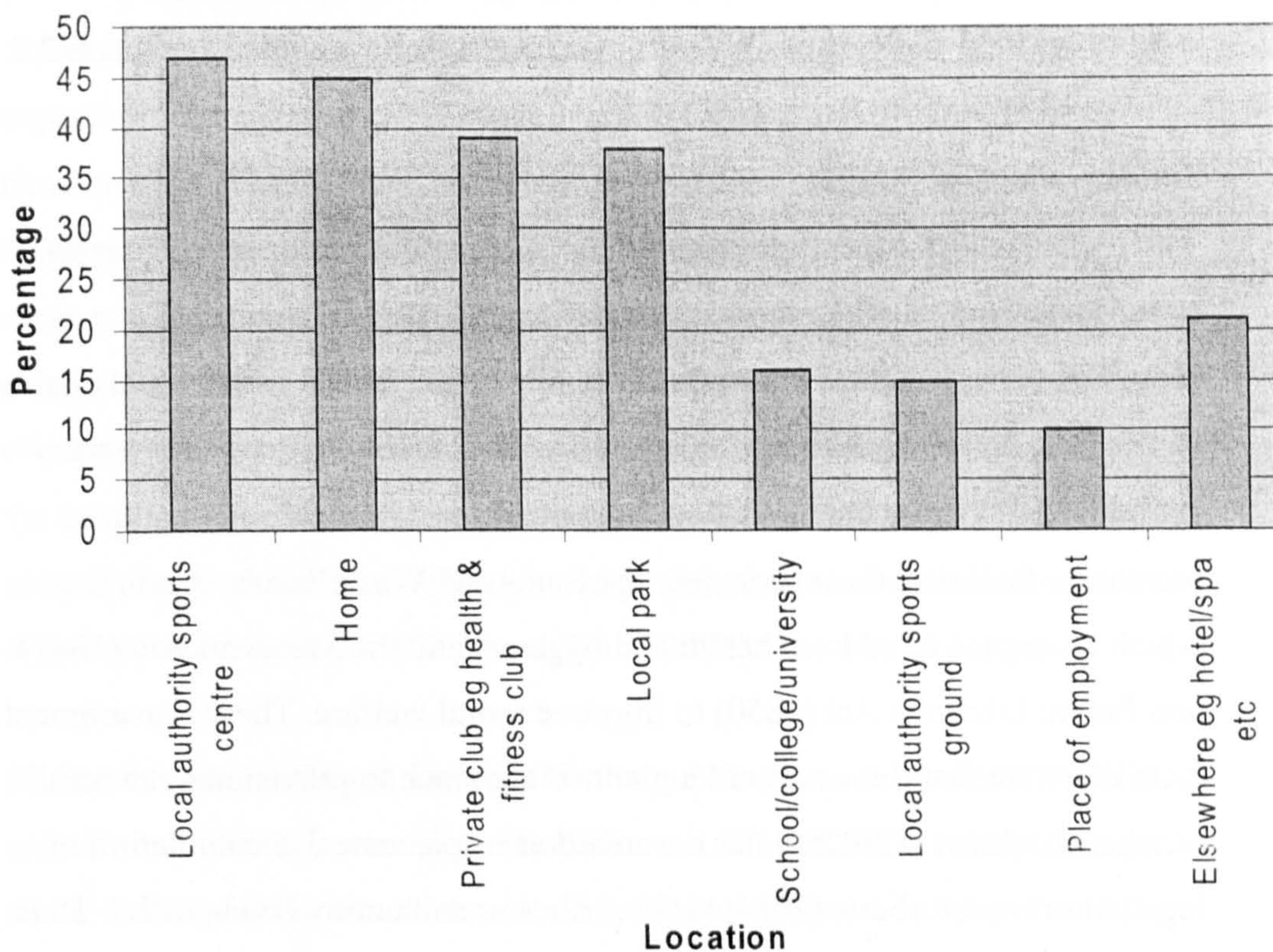


Figure 2.2. Sport Participation by location (Source: Mintel 2007).

Consequently, the first sector to be examined will be the public sector, this section will provide much more detail than the subsequent sections on the voluntary and commercial sector simple because there is more research about it. As the public sector is influenced by government policy towards sport, it will also identify the extent to which political changes have had a significant effect on the management of the sector.

2.1.1 The Development Of Sport Employment In The Public Sector.

This analysis of the development of sport provision within the public sector will focus on the opportunities for employment, the requirements of the sport worker and the place of the graduate. The analysis will be historical in order to gain understanding of the changes it has undergone and its effect on the

attributes required from its workers and thus its traditions of employment. Archer (1995) terms this historical context structural conditioning and from a critical realist perspective it may have a causal impact on the current approach to the employment of graduates. This section will also include basic details on the growth of higher education (HE) provision of sport courses in order to illustrate how this corresponded to the development of the industry. However, a more detailed analysis of HE sport provision will be provided in section 2.2.

Industrialisation – 1970

The roots of much modern legislation and state provision for sport dates back to industrialisation, when the transformation of Britain into an urban, industrial society created concerns for public health, social welfare and quality of life (Coalter 1990, Roberts 2004). A number of Government Acts were introduced that gave Local Authorities permission to provide sport and recreation facilities, these included: the Baths and Wash Houses Act (1846) which attempted to address health and hygiene, and the Museums Act (1847) and Public Libraries Act (1850) to improve moral welfare. These Government Acts illustrate that there was not a planned approach to provision but a result of what Houlihan (1991:52) has described as a “piecemeal accumulation of legislation” and Roberts (2004:43) describes as an “untidy hotchpotch”. Thus initial sport provision was not a response to leisure demands and delivery was located within different parts of a local authority with no overall sport departments.

There is little information on the staffing of these facilities and the skills and knowledge required during this period. However, Yates (1984) identified that the first professional bodies, the Institute of Baths and Recreation Management (IBRM) formed in 1921, and the Institute of Parks and Recreation Management formed in 1926, concentrated on technical qualifications such as swimming pool technology and horticulture.

Houlihan (1991) states that the piecemeal approach continued until the late 1960s with further legislation such as the Physical Training and Recreation Act (1937) which tried to address the issue of the nation’s health and fitness

and the social integration of young people. This uneven development is also illustrated by the fact that until the 1960s, despite some provision of sports facilities by local authorities, much of the direct provision of sports opportunities was left to the voluntary and private sector.

The first major attempt to develop sport policy was the Wolfenden Report, 'Sport in the Community' (1960), which was seen as having a profound impact on future sport policy and provision (Gratton and Taylor 2000, Houlihan and White 2002). Wolfenden emphasised the need to develop sport to provide "wholesome" pursuits to counter the emergence of youth sub-cultures and the anti-social behaviour associated with them and it was also concerned with the failure of national sporting teams at earlier international events. Accordingly, the Wolfenden report continued the preoccupation with the externalities of sport but it also appears to be the first major report to identify the need for more effective and professional management and organisation of sport (Houlihan and White 2002).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s the public sector expanded its role in sport through facility provision. Houlihan and White (2002) believe a major factor in this was the establishment of the Sports Council, in response to the Wolfendon Report, its main priority was a rapid expansion of the quantity of sports facilities. Coalter (1990) suggests the capital requirements of the types of facility needed were beyond the means of the voluntary sector and the low profitability of providing such facilities meant that it was not attractive to the commercial sector; thus it was achieved through providing pump priming grants to local authorities. Veal (1979) also identified that there was a rise in the proportion of the population participating in sport which created the need for more facilities.

An outcome of the increased role of the public sector and expansion in facilities was a greater scrutiny of the management of sport and recreation. The Sports Council's (1969:1) report '*Professional Training for Recreation Management*' identified the need for more highly skilled managers who were "sensitive to the possibilities which the facilities themselves offer and the need

to utilise them fully, effectively and economically". Thus, it was no longer enough for managers to be technicians. The report also identified that provision for education and training at that time was inadequate; the main options for education and training in sport were professional courses that concentrated on technical skills or alternatively Physical Education courses in universities which were not specific to sport management. Consequently, the Sports Council concluded that there was a need for post graduate / post experience courses that explicitly included management education; this was to be via the adaptation of the general management qualification, the Diploma in Management Studies (DMS), specifically for sport and recreation. However, these recommendations were against a backdrop of an industry that was staffed by those who were perceived as having low status and limited elementary or secondary education (Yates 1984). Moreover, the report did not seem to take into account the fact that the existing workforce probably did not have the basic educational skills and knowledge to access these courses and if the industry was perceived as having low status it would be difficult to attract graduates.

1970 - 1980

The growth in the development of sports facilities was further fuelled by the Local Government Reorganisation Act 1974. This led to larger local authorities, which enabled the growth of comprehensive leisure departments and the development of leisure facilities. In 1972 there were 30 municipal sports centres and less than 500 indoor swimming pools in operation in England, by 1978 this had increased to 350 sports centres and 850 pools (Sports Council 1983).

During this time of expansion the linking of leisure provision with externalities continued, but there was also a consensus amongst the major political parties that leisure was important in improving quality of life (Bramham and Henry 1985). Consequently, for a brief period, support was given to public sector provision not only for the externalities these services created but also for recreational opportunities that were supported for their own sake. This is illustrated by the Sports Council's Sport for All programme in 1972 and the Cobham Report (1973), which argued for mass sport

programmes and the need to focus funding more on latent demand (Green 2004). However by 1975, with the publication of the Government White Paper, Sport and Recreation, the emphasis of sports provision moved back to its perceived externalities and the use of recreation as welfare through the targeting of specific groups in society and areas of deprivation.

The continued expansion and changing emphasis for sport provision meant that the management of sport needed to adapt. The 1975 White Paper expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of recreation management and also identified the need to improve career prospects within the sector. It proposed the setting up of a committee to investigate sport and recreation management training, the Committee's final report, commonly known as the Yates Report, was not published until 1984. Yates (1984) found that one of the effects of the expansion of sport and recreation provision was the rapid promotion of staff from narrow specialist backgrounds to senior leisure officers. Consequently the managers themselves acknowledged to the committee that they had difficulty in adapting their technical skills to being more concerned with the management of people and their leisure needs. The issue of a mismatch between the skills of sport managers and the requirements placed on the industry by government is raised by a number of commentators. They argue that the dominant culture of sport and recreation management was to concentrate on the technicalities of providing facilities and it is suggested this may have been a contributory factor for the aims of Sport for All and recreation as welfare not being achieved (Henry 1989, Ravenscroft 1992, Yule 1997, Houlihan and White 2002).

In terms of the qualifications of managers during this period, Yates (1984) found a split between the public and private sector, with the public sector having more academic qualifications but mainly in the form of teaching certificates. Murphy (1980) made similar findings to Yates in his survey of Association of Recreation Management (ARM) members, who were mainly local authority managers, and Recreation Management Association (RMA) members who tended to be from the private sector. The RMA managers had lower numbers of qualifications than the ARM managers (see Table 2.2 overleaf).

Table 2.2. Qualifications of Recreation Managers (Murphy 1980)

n = 712	No academic or management quals.	Of those who obtained qualifications type obtained					
		Teaching Certs	Degree (or equivalent)	Postgraduate Awards	Higher Degrees	Professional Body Award	Studying
ARM	23.1%	36%	12%	17%	3%	17%	26.3%
RMA	54.9%	5.3%	5%	4%	1%	26.2%	-

The difference in qualifications between public and private sector providers may have been due to the influx of people from other areas of work into public sector sport. Henry (2001) suggests that in the past these professionals had perceived the sector to be parochial, fragmented and with restricted career opportunities, but they were now attracted due to the changes and expansion taking place. For example Murphy's (1980) results indicate over a third of the ARM staff qualifications were teaching certificates suggesting they had entered the industry from a teaching background. Yates (1984) also found that 53% of managers surveyed came from teaching backgrounds whilst 25% came from HM Forces. Similar results were found by Saperstein and Veal (1977) who undertook a survey of 140 ARM members: only four had exclusively worked in sport and leisure centres; 65% had worked in education, predominantly PE; 29% had experience of youth and community work; and 10% had been in the armed forces.

An issue arising from this influx of people, identified by both Yates and the North West Regional Advisory Council for Further Education (1976) report on the 'Education Needs of Recreation Management', was that local government reorganisation resulted in people being appointed who, in many cases, had not been professionally trained and without the appropriate qualifications. In addition Yates identified that there was limited educational provision for sport and recreation management, with only 40 colleges in the UK offering such courses from sub degree to post graduate level. The report identifies only two degree courses that provided specific education for sport and recreation management. This is perhaps reflected by the managers who were questioned in the study as they rated formal academic qualifications low compared to other aspects of training. Yates suggests that this may stem from the fact that many were from teaching and they may have been questioning their own

qualifications rather than qualifications in general. Thus they felt that the most effective method of improving their skills for the job was through “learning by doing the job” (Yates 1984:67). When asked which courses the managers and assistant managers felt were most appropriate the majority identified either Diploma in Management Studies, IBRM or MSc courses.

An influence of the entry of new people was the acceleration of the claims for professionalisation of sport management in local authorities (Henry 1993). Bacon (1996) believes that this attempt to be recognised as a profession was to counteract peoples’ perception of sport management being of low status and suggests that professionalisation confers status and power to an occupation. Thus, a key recommendation of Yates was the need to create one professional body, as sport workers were confused by the myriad of professional associations available to them. In response to this recommendation, in a interim report by Yates (1980), the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) was established in 1979 as a conglomeration of the majority of the professional bodies serving sport, recreation and leisure. However, a major issue for the development of sport and recreation as a profession was the refusal by the Institute of Baths and Recreation Management to merge and thus there was still not one overall professional body for the industry.

This period was one of enormous change for public sector sport, both in terms of the changing emphasis of delivery and the influx of staff from other professions. This created a number of tensions between the ‘traditionalist approaches’ based on technical skills and ‘the more ‘progressive’ approaches based on meeting people’s needs (Coalter et al 1986, Bramham and Henry 1985). This is illustrated by Henry (2001) who contends that the role of the sport and leisure professional became subject to severe tensions with multiple roles of facility administrator, bureaucrat, community worker and income generator. He feels that the decade between the mid 70’s to the mid 80’s was “something of an identity crisis for the leisure professional” (Henry 2001:155).

With regard to graduate employment, the analysis of this period indicates that, although more educated people were entering into the sector, they were from other areas of work often with unrelated qualifications which were not particularly of value to the job. This appears to have created a culture where job specific training and post experience qualifications, such as the M.Sc., DMS and IBRM qualifications, were perceived as being of most benefit. This perception appears to have been reinforced by the fact that there were few specific sport and recreation undergraduate qualifications available.

1980 - 1997

With the election of the Conservative government in 1979 'New Right' policies were introduced that over the next 18 years had a major influence on sports provision and the role of the local authority sports employee. In the early years of the Thatcher government local authority provision for sport continued to be justified using externalities, however, these were more focused on addressing specific social problems rather than general welfare; for example the urban riots in the early 1980's meant that the emphasis was on provision for the unemployed and inner city groups. Coalter (1998:120) explains that the traditional "facility-based, demand-led responses were to be augmented by models from social work and youth work practice". Consequently, central government grant aid was given to the Sports Council to fund programmes such as Action Sport, which is now seen as a precursor to the establishment of sports development within local authorities (Houlihan and White 2002).

There was also an emphasis on sport and leisure being used as a method for economic development and investment leading to jobs (Roberts 2004), which is illustrated by Glasgow's City of Culture, Manchester's Olympic Bid and Sheffield's World Student Games. Henry and Bramham (1993:125) summarised the shift in leisure policy from the 1970's to the 1980's by suggesting that it:

"can be characterised as a move from social consumption (leisure services as a welfare right), through social expenses (leisure as a means of promoting social order in the inner city), to social investment

(leisure provision as a means of attracting investment by the new service industries)”.

The 1980's was also a time of scrutiny for local authority sport when the Audit Commission (1989, 1990) published several reports that questioned the effectiveness of local authority sports provision and its ability to achieve social objectives. One of the main issues identified was the lack of effective strategic planning and clear objectives in many local authority sport departments. Stevens and Green (2002) suggest that this led to a perception of poor management and provided the 'New Right' with an opportunity to question the provision of sport by local authorities. This led to the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) to sport and leisure under the 1988 Local Government Act (Competition in Sport and Leisure Facilities Order 1989).

CCT was a natural extension of 'New Right' policies which commentators agree were concerned with introducing market discipline in areas that had been the domain of the public sector (Ravenscroft and Tolley 1993, Henry 2001, Stevens and Green 2002, Howell and McNamee 2003, Roberts 2004). However, there is disagreement as to the impact of the CCT legislation on the social objectives that had been a crucial aim of local government provision in the 1970's and early 1980's. Many commentators argue that CCT as a policy undermined social and welfare objectives and placed pressure on local authority managers to have a more market-led and commercial philosophy (Clarke 1992, Thomas 1992, Ravenscroft and Tolley 1993, Pringle 1995, Coalter 1998, Howell and McNamee 2003). Conversely, Stevens and Green (2002) argue that the undermining of social and welfare objectives was not an aim of CCT but was caused by how local authorities implemented it; with the first round specifications often being badly written with social objectives inadequately incorporated. They claim that the local authority retention of client side responsibilities, for example the ability to set service objectives, define target groups and control pricing and programming, meant that local authorities should have been able to achieve broader welfare goals through CCT. Houlihan and White (2002) also have a similar view in their argument that many local authorities failed to specify sports development objectives,

which were often the vehicle for the achievement of social objectives, with sufficient clarity.

In contrast Henry (2001:156) argues that the culture that flourished under CCT was one that encouraged cost control and entrepreneurial management cultures. He contends that the contract approach led to “hard edged ‘macho management styles’ employed in imposing tough decisions of downsizing and flexibility in the workforce”. MacVicar and Ogden (2001) concur with this view that the emphasis on cost by CCT encouraged managers to promote income generation targets over user targets and led to the introduction of flexible practices to sport workers. The Public Services Privatisation Unit (1992) also found that a number of Local Authorities cut jobs in sport and reduced pay and conditions.

This brief analysis of the introduction of CCT indicates that it had a profound effect not only on the provision of sport, but on the skill requirements of sport workers, and in particular managers in requiring them to have a more commercial approach than previously. Roberts (2004) believes that this shift to market disciplined sport provision and the need for entrepreneurial staff who could respond rapidly to changes in tastes, was in conflict to the sport sector’s aspiration to become a profession. On a fundamental level Coalter (1990) believed that the Thatcher government saw professions as a threat to the core New Right tenet of individual freedom particularly in sport and leisure where individuals were seen as the best judge of their needs. He maintains that professions were seen as being “motivated by self-interest, lack of accountability and unresponsiveness to consumer demands” (Coalter 1990:110).

Despite this unfavourable environment; sport continued to make claims to be a profession in order to achieve, what Bacon (1996:5) identifies as, a “sense of identity, focus and enhanced public respect”. However, the arguments he put forward, that ILAM should regulate and control the access to sport management with the intent to “increase the market value of ILAM

membership and consequently the strength of the institute”, to some extent reinforce Thatcher’s view of professions.

A key element of professionalisation is the educational requirements for entrance which enable it to legitimate its authority (Fleming 1996, Henry and Spink 1990). With regard to the level of education, Bacon (1990) argued that the status and identity of sport managers would be more likely to be enhanced if they were graduates. In contrast a report into the education and training needs of sport managers, commissioned by the Sports Council (Coalter and Potter 1990) in Greater London and the South East concluded that sport managers had relatively low level qualifications. They reported that 87% of the respondents to their survey had some form of qualification; of those who had qualifications, 25% had either a masters degree, undergraduate degree or a post graduate qualification. Nonetheless, this is still an improvement on the findings of Murphy in the 1970’s. They also found that the majority of those studying for future qualifications were following professional courses, such as ILAM and IBRM, rather than academic qualifications.

Roberts (2004) also identifies that leisure related departments and courses, including sport, were being developed in polytechnics and universities in response to the aspiring profession’s need for qualified staff. This led to a rapid expansion in the number of courses, so that by 1994 there were 5,232 undergraduate students in sport, leisure and physical education courses (Higher Education Statistics Agency 1996), and by 1996 there were 150 degrees operating in 68 Higher Education Institutes (Sports Council 1996). Consequently, during this period the debate moved from the need for more highly qualified workers to concerns about over supply of sport graduates to the sector (Bacon 1995, Brindley and Mander 1996, Mannerings 1995, Swarbrooke 1995, Todd 1995, Wolsey 1995). The rapid expansion of degree courses also raised concerns about the quality of such courses, particularly in terms of employability (Bacon 1996). ILAM attempted to respond to the increase by creating an accreditation scheme with the aim of controlling more tightly the syllabus taught and the skills developed on degree courses. Bacon

(1996) argued that by ensuring a controlled number of graduates in sport management students were more likely to get a return on their investment.

It is important to briefly examine sports development during this period as it was beginning to become an important area for graduate employment in its own right. In 1991 a quarter of sports development officers (SDOs) had a degree (Collins 1995), higher than CELT's (1990) overall findings on qualifications of those working in sport. The reason is perhaps that it was a fledgling occupation without traditions, for example Collins (1995) found that 60% of jobs had no previous incumbents. However, CCT had had a significant impact on sports development, leaving it marginalised within sports services where it was treated as a self-contained, time-constrained and project-specific activity (Houlihan and White 2002). Perhaps this was another reason for graduates entering this area of work, because of its marginalisation it was easier for them to gain posts in jobs that were often short term contracts. Nevertheless, during the early 1990's Houlihan and White identify that sports development was also beginning to produce distinct variations in approach. Local authorities continued to oversee the two different but overlapping approaches of the promotion of mass participation and the focusing of sports development on social problems, whilst National Governing Bodies concentrated on their own sports targeted at young people.

During this time the Sports Council also emphasised selectivity both in terms of funding for Olympic sports and also high performance athletes (Houlihan and White 2002). This was reinforced by the Major Government's policy statement, 'Sport: Raising the Game (1995)', which more specifically moved the Sports Council's focus to elite sport and the use of sport science and coaching to develop elite performers, increasing the role of higher education institutes in the process (Green 2004). Thus there became a divergence in sports development, with sport for the community generally located in local authorities and elite sport within national governing bodies. National governing bodies are discussed in more detail in the subsection on the voluntary sector.

This subsection has illustrated that the philosophy and delivery of local authority sport continued to change in the 1980s and 1990s which impacted on the role and skill needs of the sport manager. At the start of the decade managers had to respond to changes in philosophy where sport was used as part of wider social welfare policies, by the end of the 1990's they had to develop more commercially related skills and approaches. Roberts (2004) believes that there was a time lag in the development of managers and the training and education that was needed to provide the skills and knowledge for the recreation as welfare model, by the time these were in place CCT was implemented with its requirement for different skills. With regard to the nature of the aspiring sport profession, the sector was out of step with the political climate of the time. As Coalter (1990:17) stated:

“Public leisure service personnel therefore appear to have reached a crossroads in their development. However, none of the potential roads seem to lead in the direction of a traditional model of an autonomous, self-regulating profession”

It was also a period of rapid expansion in the number of graduates in sport related courses, at the beginning of the period there were calls for sport to become a graduate profession but by the end there were concerns over the volume and quality of graduates. However, it is not clear the extent to which these graduates had infiltrated the sport industry as Coalter and Potter's (1990) research was before this increase in student numbers graduated and there was very little further work on qualifications of those in the industry in the early to mid 1990s.

1997 Onwards

The election of the Labour Government in 1997 heralded the introduction of a new political philosophy commonly known as the 'Third Way', which was essentially about rejecting the 'Old Left' and 'New Right' and following a middle way based on the perceived strengths of both (Stevens and Green 2002). This blurring between political approaches is illustrated by Houlihan and White (2002:214) when they suggest that it is not easy to determine whether or not "New Labour represents a continuity with neo-liberal Conservative agenda or represents a new distinctive trajectory for welfare

policy". Green (2004) concurs with this view when he states that the Labour's strategy for sport *A Sporting Future for All* (2000) continued to emphasise school sport and elite development, but it also included a commitment to tackle social exclusion in and through sport and thus reasserted a commitment to Sport for All (Henry 2001).

In local authorities CCT was replaced with Best Value, through the *Local Government Act 1999*. Best Value required fundamental service reviews where services had to demonstrate their contribution to the cross-cutting, generic or corporate goals of the authority (Henry 2001). Best Value required that local authorities had to lead the development of a community strategy in consultation with a number of stakeholders including the local community, customers, councillors, local businesses, competitors and professional and advisory groups amongst others. This integrated planning approach was a key difference to the New Right approach and established Local Cultural Strategies that included sport and leisure (Henry 2001). Thus strategic objectives and corporate priorities had to be determined and a performance management framework developed that incorporated performance targets. There is little empirical research into the skills and knowledge required by sport workers under Best Value. Inspections carried out by the Audit Commission (2004:41) as part of the Best Value process identified some of the key attributes of staff required by local authority sport providers. For example, in high performing authorities:

“inspectors found competent and enthusiastic service managers, who encourage staff to be responsive to improvement opportunities, provide sufficient ‘head room’ to allow for innovation and creativity, and recognise individual contributions appropriately”.

They also emphasised the importance of effective training and development but found that there were variable levels and quality of training and development within local authorities.

Henry (2001) has suggested that Best Value created an emphasis on transformational management with the hard-edged capabilities from CCT still evident. Thus he believes that there is still an emphasis on what he terms the

“masculine skills of detached analysis, rational calculation, linear and compartmentalised thought and hard data”, but these are mediated by the “feminine elements of people and process concerns, qualitative judgements on style and image and relationship building” (Henry 2001:158). Thus he believes that management within Best Value is characterised by tensions between the importance of adopting an enabling role and partnership but also promoting competition and market testing.

With regard to New Labour’s impact on local authority sports development, their re- emphasis on Sport for All has given it greater priority in sport policy (Houlihan and White 2002) through the development of Sport England’s Active Programmes framework, implemented by local authorities. The Active Community projects concentrates on addressing social issues such as community safety, crime, drug abuse, truancy, multicultural development and community health. Houlihan and White (2002) describe the approach as a move from development of sport to development through sport. Active Sports programmes are aimed at the development of sport and the attempt to bridge the gap between participation and excellence. A key aspect of *A Sporting Future* (2000) was the recognition of the work of SDOs and the need to establish a national training scheme. However, unpublished research on local authority SDOs by Houlihan and King (1999), cited by Houlihan and White (2002), found that few were in senior posts, many felt that there was not a clear career path and that their next career move would be away from sports development.

With regard to the general education and training of sport employees during this period, the SPRITO Skills Foresight Report (2000) found that only 10% had a degree. Against this figure the numbers studying on sport, leisure and physical education courses had increased to 13,158 in 2004 (Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network (HLSTN) 2005). Seemingly it would appear that the growth in graduates in sport is not having a major impact on the industry, however as Chapter 1 (p4) showed there has been a 28% increase in the number of sport jobs (SIRC 2007). Thus the debate has begun to move back from oversupply of graduates to concerns over shortages of staff with

higher level skills and difficulties in recruiting appropriate staff (Skills Active 2004, Sport England 2004, SPRITO 2001). Neil Jenkinson (2001) Chair of the Nottingham Chief Leisure Officers group noted that there was a shortage of young talented managers with the core skills that can be developed to meet the needs of sport and leisure organisations. Another issue identified by Skills Active (2005) and Peter Gunn (2001), manager of Guildford Spectrum, is that there are problems in the sport industry with a high turnover of staff.

Finally, due to the increasing emphasis on sports development the National Association for Sports Development (NASD) was set up in 2000, with part of its remit to develop a more effective framework for training and development for this area of work. (DFES/DCMS 2002). Furthermore, in October 2004 the three main professional bodies (ISRM, ILAM and NASD) began working together to develop a new single professional institute for sport, culture and leisure (Sport England 2004a). This was established in 2006 under the title of the Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL); however ISRM refused to amalgamate with the other professional bodies and still continues as a competing professional body for sport management. Consequently, it would appear that this is a repeat of the same situation as 1984 when ILAM was formed and this may undermine the claim for professional status by the industry. ISPAL is still in its infancy so little information is available on how they will relate to HE and graduates although an interim posting on their website explains that the body aims to set up a professional accreditation scheme with universities..

Conclusion

This section has shown that there has been a tremendous amount of change for local authority sport workers over the last forty years, predominantly driven by government policy. This is because, as Coalter (1990:p110) explain, that “local government officers are increasingly placed in the role of servants, implementing politically partisan policies”. Despite these changes, a fundamental aspect of local authority provision for sport that has been constantly present has been the requirement of sport services to produce social and economic externalities. Thus sport management in the public sector can be

seen as extremely complex in terms of the outputs that are required but also ever changing in how they are delivered. These changes are summarised in Table 2.3 adapted from Henry (2001).

Table 2.3 Changing management styles in the public sector sport and recreation services.

<i>Time Scale</i>	Early 1970's	Late 1970's/early 1980's		Mid-1980's/early 1990's	Late 1990s
<i>Managerial Orientation</i>	Facility manager/engineer	Bureau/liberal welfare professional		Competitive/contract manager	Transformational manager
<i>Objectives</i>	Maximise income	Maximise participation	Maximise opportunities for 'problem groups'	Maximise revenue and economic efficiency	Maximise quality and achieve best value
<i>Management Focus</i>	Facility focus	Activity/group focus	Community focus	Market Focus	Quality focus
<i>Management styles</i>	Centralised	Decentralised	Decentralised, advocacy, catalytic role	Expert marketer	Agents of organisational change
<i>Mode of consultation</i>	Professional	Consultant	Partnership	Market sensitivity	Customer surveys
<i>Perceptions of facilities</i>	Technical	Service provision and delivery	Shared resources	Products designed to meet needs of target markets	Vehicles for achieving corporate goals
<i>Programme emphasis</i>	Reactive (e.g. clubs, schools, casual usage)	Informal, fun & sociability, elitism played down.	Proactive, creative, developmental	Selling lifestyle, health and fitness	Meeting corporate goals through leisure
<i>Key Govt Initiatives</i>	Local government reorganisation	White Paper Sport and Recreation	Urban Programme; Sports Council Areas of Special Need	CCT	Best Value
<i>Skills Implications</i>	Technical skills	Management of leisure needs	Targeting social groups	Commercial management	Commercial management & social marketing

Source: Adapted from Henry (2001)

It could be argued that the complex and dynamic nature of the local authority sport manager's role would suggest that this sector has developed into an industry which would be enhanced by a graduate workforce. In support of this argument a constant theme that has been identified in this section is the concern throughout the forty year period with the quantity and effectiveness of education and training for sport employees and in particular managers. At the beginning this was mainly concerned with the lack of provision of the relevant education qualifications that were needed to develop a technically based work force into a more highly qualified, professional occupation. However, with the rapid expansion of sport provision, what actually seemed to occur was an influx of more highly educated people from other areas of employment who

still did not have the specific attributes required. This in itself may have created tensions between the existing workforce and the incoming staff who though more highly educated, their qualifications would not have been seen as appropriate, perhaps creating an industry culture that did not value educational qualifications.

The expansion of HE sport courses in the late 1980s and 1990s can be seen as a response to the growth in the sector in the 1970s and early 1980s and was also due to changes in government HE policy, which will be discussed in a later section. However with CCT, and the corresponding rationalisation of local authority provision for sport and thus employment opportunities, it is understandable that there would be concerns about over supply of graduates. This was an environment where the existing sport workforce may have felt uncertainty about their own jobs, perhaps illustrated by the professional bodies' attempt to restrict entry to the sector through accreditation.

This section has also shown that during the last 25 years sports development has emerged as a new area of local authority sport employment. It developed during a period of expansion in HE sports provision and did not appear to be an attractive area of employment to which the traditional sports facility staff might have moved. It does not appear to have grown from the same workforce as facility management consequently, it may have been easier for graduates to gain entry into this area of employment. An interesting issue for investigation is the extent to which graduates gain employment in the public sector and whether this tends to be in the facilities or sports development and the impact of the culture on their successful transition to the workforce.

2.1.2 Private-Not-For Profit-Sector

The Private-Not-For Profit-Sector is made up of the voluntary, charitable and industrial sub-sectors (Davies 2004). As the name for the sector suggests the underlying characteristic of the whole sector is the lack of a profit objective (Gratton and Taylor 2000). Most of the limited research into the private-not-profit sector has been undertaken on the voluntary sub-sector as it is the largest and includes many different types of organisations, from small

community groups, through to National Governing Bodies (NGB) of Sport. The charitable sub-sector is becoming increasingly important with the increasing number of leisure trusts being established as a response to both CCT and Best Value. Thus there is an increasing interest in this method of delivery by academics. There is little published research on the industrial sub-sector, which is made up of the sports facilities and clubs available at industrial organisations often subsidised by businesses (Davies 2004). Consequently this section will concentrate on examining the literature relating to the voluntary and charitable sector. That is not to say that the industrial sector is not an area where graduates may find jobs.

Voluntary Sub-Sector

The voluntary sector is the largest and has generally been defined with regard to its relationship to the public and commercial sector. For example Roberts (2004:22) describes it as filling the “social, economic and political space between the state and the market”. Some voluntary organisations are completely devoted to supplying sports as with the NGBs, for others sport is just a part of a range of activities such as scouts and brownies. Thus it is a diverse sector and has been identified as having a crucial role in the provision of sport in the UK (Gratton and Taylor 2000, Davies 2004).

Voluntary sports organisations were responsible for creating modern sport through the codification of the rules of sport and organisation of competitions in the nineteenth century (Roberts 2004). Despite this long history until recently there has been little research into the nature, size, complexity and issues facing it (Nichols et al 1998). The most recent research has concentrated on the fact that the voluntary sector is characterised by its wide use of voluntary labour (Davies 2004) and the need to place an economic value on the sector. The Leisure Industries Research Centre (LIRC) (2003) identified that there were 5,821,400 volunteers in sport which they estimate is the equivalent to 720,000 full-time jobs. Previous research into the voluntary sector has concentrated on volunteers’ motivations (Hoggett and Bishop 1985). However there has been little research on the nature of paid workers in the sector. Yates (1984) did include the voluntary sector in its study but the

main conclusions regarding it was that the professionalisation of sport will increasingly impact on the management of its resources with the move towards more paid management staff in the sector. This conclusion has become a reality as the roles of NGBs have changed and some have become involved in managing facilities, championships and development programmes (Houlihan and White 2002).

The introduction of the national lottery in 1996 led some NGBs to receive substantial funding through World Class Performance Funding which meant they had to be more accountable. Since the late 1990s NGBs have had to modernise and improve the quality of their management using business practices such as strategic planning, target-setting and monitoring and evaluation (Houlihan and White 2002). The LIRC report (2003) into volunteers in sport identified the increasing complexity of managing a sports club or National Governing Body which has been exacerbated by the increased expectations of members of those organisations. The national lottery has also provided opportunities for sport scientists in the performance side of sport (BASES 2004). A major outcome has been an influx of paid professional staff into this voluntary sub-sector (LIRC 2003). A key issue identified by Roberts (2004) is the possible tensions between paid employees and volunteers as the employees are likely to want the organisation to be run professionally as its success will impact on their own livelihoods.

Another area of change has been within coaching which, in the past, has been predominantly a voluntary role. The Coaching Task Force was established in 2001 to review coaching and coach education due to the increasing need for coaches both voluntary and full time paid professionals. Its main conclusions were that there was too much reliance on volunteers and there needed to be more paid opportunities, a clear career structure and the development of nationally recognised qualifications (DCMS 2002a). The report led to the development of the UK Coaching Certificate which is a five level UK wide qualification framework that links to the national qualification framework (Sports Coach UK 2005). A significant outcome from this has been the need for extra staff to set up and implement the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC),

however there has been little analysis of the impact of the UKCC on the employment of coaches and the nature of career structure.

Overall this section has shown that the voluntary sector has been through a period of rapid change over the last ten years. The increasing demands on the sector has created pressures for a more highly skilled and professional workforce.

Charitable Sub-Sector

This sub-sector is comprised of trusts formed specifically to operate sports facilities many of which were previously owned by local authorities (Davies 2004) but also on behalf of National Governing Bodies or Sports Associations/Clubs. Simmons (2004:159) explains that trusts are a common term for “a range of entities more properly known as ‘non-profit distributing organisations’”. They are set up as either, industrial and provident societies or as companies limited by guarantee (Reid 2003). They are overseen by a board of voluntary directors who are drawn from amongst others; local business, academia, trade unions and local politicians who oversee the management of the centre; although the centre is operated by paid employees. There has been an increase in the number of leisure trusts in recent years and it is expected that their relative importance to sport provision at a local level will increase. (Cambridge Econometrics 2003). Reid (2003) explains that this is due to two reasons. First, the reduction in capital funding for local authority leisure services has meant that there is difficulty maintaining sports facilities with increasing competition from the commercial sector. Second, councils have had to concentrate on core services thus sport and leisure has been reduced to a “second tier service” (Reid 2003:171). This trend has continued with the introduction of Best Value as local authorities have been forced to review service delivery and trusts are seen as a valid option to meet the government’s emphasis on partnership (Simmons 2004).

Simmons (2004) argues that trusts have a number of advantages to local authority direct provisions. With regard to the financial advantages, he identifies that trusts are eligible for business rate relief and VAT savings. He

also believes that they offer a greater opportunity for community involvement which is crucial in order to meet the requirements of Best Value. Finally he suggests that it provides a fresh opportunity for local authorities to establish welfare objectives for leisure services. Reid (2003) also suggests that trusts “are said to produce a cultural change within the service that facilitates greater staff ownership of the organisation and a more innovative and customer-orientated approach to service delivery?”. However Reid (2003) also notes that a trust’s success is crucially influenced by key individuals such as the chair of the board. There has been no research into the impact of trusts on the employment of staff but Reid’s research implies a change in the management of staff, both in terms the suggested cultural changes, but also links back to the issue raised on the voluntary sub-sector about the relationship between professional paid staff and the voluntary directors of the trust.

Conclusions

This section has shown that there has been rapid change in the private-not-for profit sector which will lead to increased numbers of staff and could create valuable opportunities for employment for sport graduates. However there is a lack of research into the employment structure and requirements of this sub-sector thus there is a need for more work, although this study will be limited to examine the graduate needs of the sector.

2.1.3 Commercial Sector.

The commercial sector is an important provider and employer in the mixed economy of sport and leisure (Gratton and Taylor 2000). Roberts (2004) notes that the development of commercial sport and leisure followed the creation of the public and not for profit sectors but has dominated leisure provision since the second world war. The significant difference between the commercial sector and the other sectors of provision for sport is that it is primarily concerned with generating profit (Roberts 2004, Irvine and Taylor 2001, Yates 1984). Commercial leisure developed from investment in public houses, music hall and professional football in the early 1900’s and now provides for leisure in a range of areas. However, with regard to sport the commercial

sector has not always been seen as dominant as the public sector, subsequently there has been very little analysis of what constitutes the commercial sport sector. Gratton and Taylor (2000) have produced a detailed map of the area shown in Figure 2.3, which indicates the wide range of activities.

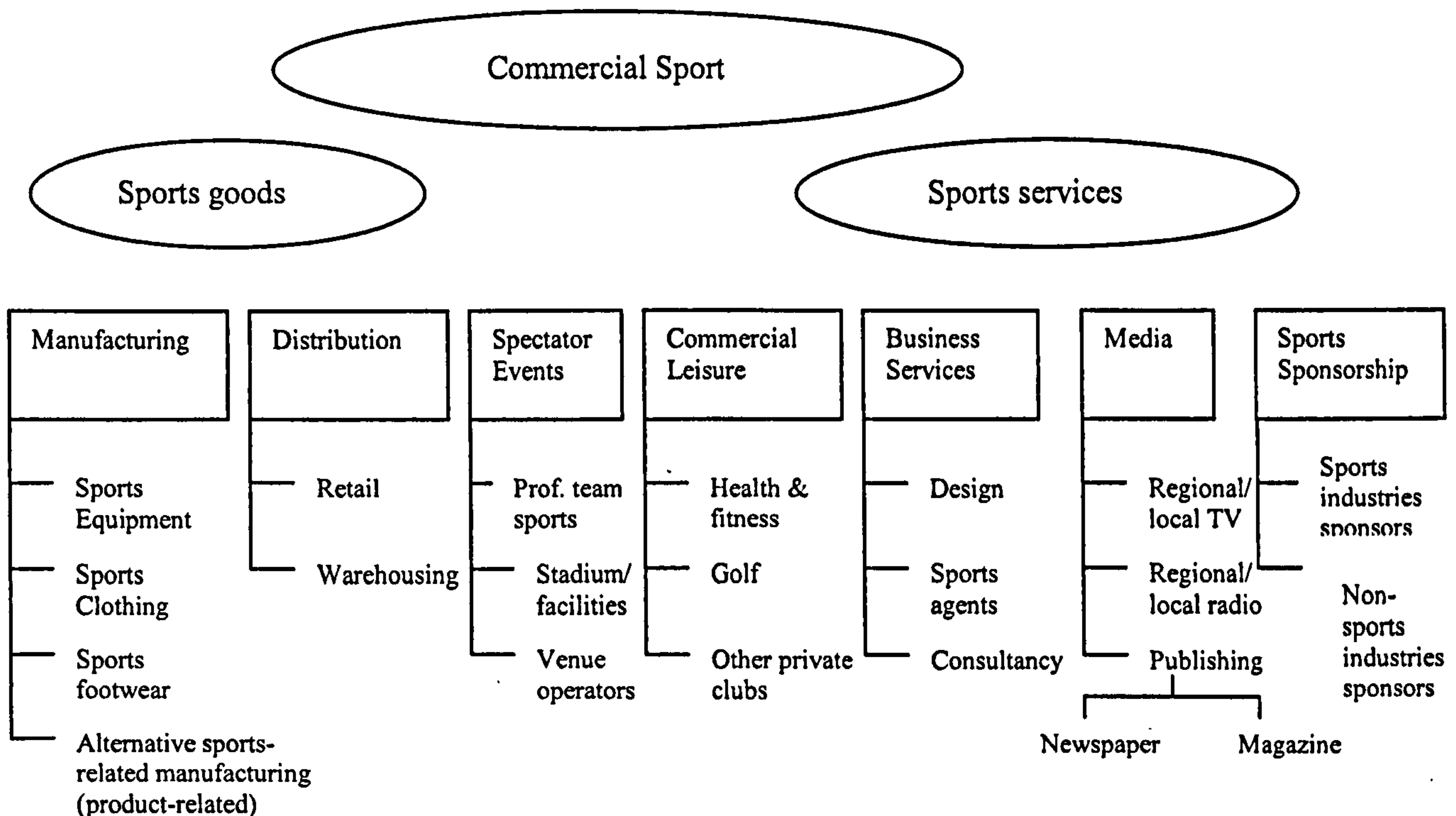


Figure 2.3: The Commercial Sport Sector (Gratton and Taylor 2000)

Despite Gratton and Taylor's (2000) claim that the commercial sector accounts for the major share of sport-related economic activity and employment, Figure 2.3 illustrates that the commercial sector do not have a wide ranging provision for participant sport, with the exception of health and fitness and golf. This is supported by the SIRC (2007) findings on sport related income and expenditure shown in Table 2.4.

The table indicates that participation sport provides the lowest level of income to the commercial sector and is significantly less than the voluntary and local government sector obtain. Roberts (2004) argues that this is because participant sport is inherently non-commercial as playing depends on how good you are rather than your ability to pay. He contends that this is one of the reasons why CCT made so little impact with regard to the commercial sector

bidding and winning contracts. He does accept that there is a limited commercial market for sports such as golf and also tennis and squash as these can be played in twos, threes and fours. Thus he is really referring to large team sports which are generally provided by the voluntary sector rather than the public sector. Henry (2001) argues that with the pressures on local authorities in the 1980's and 1990's the commercial sector has become more significant for sport.

Table 2.4: Commercial Sector Sport-Related Income and Expenditure Flows in England in 2003.

	Income	Expenditure
	£m	£m
Consumer	6,813	13,969
Commercial Sport	7,423	7,035
of which		
Spectator sports	1,111	1,055
Participation sports	498	473
Retailing	4,388	3,859
Voluntary	3,148	2,101
Commercial Non-Sport	8,051	7,804
Central Government	5,219	1,061
Local Government	1,810	2,115
Outside the area	3,125	1,048

Source: SIRC (2007)

Where there is consensus is that the commercial health and fitness sector is expanding rapidly which Roberts (2004) attributes to the fact that exercise can be commercialised. This is emphasised by Mintel's (2004) findings that private health club membership doubled between 1997 and 2002 to reach 3.4 million members.

There has been little research on the private sector and in particular the skills and knowledge required, compared to that performed on the public sector. This is probably due the diverse nature of the sector and its wide range of activities and organisations, making it difficult to generalise about (Yates 1984, Gratton and Taylor 2000). Also, Coalter (2000:163) argues that the study of leisure has tended to be from a "welfarist approach" which has meant that the "nature and importance of commercial provision of leisure has largely

been ignored". The exception is Yates (1985) and Murphy (1980) who both found that private sector sport employees had lower levels of qualifications than the public sector. Yates also found that the private sector, particularly large organisations, tended to recruit young people and put them through in-service training.

2.1.4. Section Conclusions

This section has identified the main sectors of provision and the context in which they are managed, this has illustrated the significance of the impact of the environment in which the manager works on his/her job and thus their education and training needs. With regard to objective 1: *Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability*, it has shown that sport is a dynamic and complex industry which creates changing skill requirements. It has also shown that the skills of sport employees have often lagged behind those changes. A key issue has been the consistent call from reports over the last forty years for a more highly educated and trained workforce, which would suggest the need for graduates; yet there appears to be ambivalence towards the place of graduates within sport. The section has indicated that this may be a consequence of the historical development of sport as an industry however, it has also inferred that a key contributing factor was the development of HE sport courses in terms of over production of inappropriate graduates. The next section will examine the development of sport courses within the context of the growth of HE in general.

2.2. The Development of HE and its Impact on Sport Courses

This section will examine the development of UK Higher Education (HE), which will provide a context from which to have a greater understanding of sport courses and to begin to address objective 2: *Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry*. It will demonstrate that HE is made up of different types of institutions and will assess the influence of institution type on the development of sport courses. This is important to the understanding of the nature of contemporary sport courses and their relationship with employment.

The UK HE system is pluralist in nature and made up of a number of different types of institutions that have gained university status during different periods of HE policy (Scott 1995, Bligh, Thomas and McNay 1999). Sport courses have particularly developed in specific subsections of HE. Up until the 1960's sport was studied only as an element of a PE certificate or diploma qualification and was delivered by a few specialist colleges of HE (Kitts 1995). The first known sport related degree course was set up in 1969 at Loughborough, a former technological university. However, in the 1970s and 1980s sport courses mainly developed in the polytechnic sector; which was reflected in the CNAAs (1991) findings that in 1990 there were 16 courses in polytechnics and two in the university sector. The nature of contemporary sport courses and their relationship with employment may have been influenced by the aims and objectives of the institutions that they were developed in relation to, their level of funding and their approach to teaching, learning and research. What may also influence is the period in which the subject developed. Thus, this section will go on to review the evolution of polytechnics in the context of changing government policy on HE and the impact on sport courses.

Polytechnics were established following the 1966 White Paper *A plan for Colleges and Polytechnics* which aimed to expand HE outside of the university sector. They were formed through the amalgamation of former

Colleges of Art, Education and Technology and were placed under the control of local education authorities (LEAs). Much of their original provision was for sub-degree courses and their mandate was to be vocational, practical and meet local needs (Brennan and Shah 1993, Ryan 2004). However, Pratt and Burgess (1974) argued that polytechnics soon exhibited mission drift, in that they did not attempt to differentiate themselves completely from universities. This is a view supported by Ashton et al (1989) who observed that in most cases polytechnics adopted the traditional curriculum of universities and as Scott (1995) observes they were accused of moving away from their roots as technological institutions into the areas of applied social sciences, business and management studies. Both Scott (1995) and more latterly Stevens (2004) believe the development of these subject areas were a response to changes that occurred in occupational structure as traditional industrial occupations declined and the service sector developed. Stevens (2004) explains that the development of new courses were a response to the growth in these occupational areas and their aspirations to become graduate professions. Section 2.1 clearly shows sport as an example of one of these growing occupational areas with professional aspirations but not necessarily for a graduate profession.

Pratt (1997) acknowledges that polytechnics enabled courses to be developed in new areas, which included subjects such as sports studies, human movement studies, recreation and leisure studies. However, it is arguable whether these courses were vocational in terms of meeting employers needs; in the case of sport the review of educational provision by Yates (1978, 1984) found that many of the courses that were developed were highly theoretical and to some extent consisted of traditional disciplines applied to sport. Thus, in the case of sport, the polytechnics were responsive to changes in occupational structure with regard to new subject areas but there is little evidence of the content and delivery of sport courses being directly relevant to employers needs.

A crucial aspect of the development of sport courses was the manner in which polytechnics expanded enabling the expansion of those courses. As with the

development of the provision for sport participation, the Conservative Government of the 1980s and 1990s had a major effect on HE. As discussed in section 2.1 a fundamental principle of the New Right was that public services and professions, including HE, should be accountable to their various stakeholders, in particular government and employers (Wright 1987). This was reflected in the 1987 White Paper *'Higher Education Meeting the Challenge'* which outlined the Thatcher government's aspirations for HE to serve the economy more efficiently through greater commercial and industrial relevance in HE activity. This emphasis on the link between education and work was not new. In the 1963 Robbins report into HE, the definition of the aims of HE included the need to develop skills suitable to play a part in the division of labour. This was re emphasised by the 1987 White Paper which emphasised the importance of personal transferable skills relevant to the workplace. The government initiative Enterprise in Higher Education (1990) developed this theme further with funding of projects in HE institutions that encouraged enterprise, through placement and projects in the work environment, as well as emphasising personal transferable skills (Training Agency 1990). It was further emphasised by the Higher Education Quality Council (1996) which stated that HE has an instrumental purpose, with the emphasis on the production of graduates to meet the needs of the economy.

These changes created a debate between the traditional notions of HE and the contemporary approach, which emphasised transferable skills and vocationalism. The traditional approach is exemplified by Tasker and Packham (1994:150) who argue that academic values relate to "open enquiry, intellectual freedom and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge". Vocational education is described by Ainley (1990) as having instrumental purposes rather than purely pursuing disinterested knowledge. Barnett (1994) terms the vocational approaches to HE as being based in an ideology of operational competence. He believes that it concentrates on the outcomes of HE, which he argues opposes the traditional characteristics of HE, which concentrates on the process of developing knowledge.

Assiter (1995) rejects Barnett's analysis and argues that a vocational approach to HE actually focuses on traditional notions of HE such as critical reasoning more effectively. She argues that traditional approaches to student learning where academics transmit their knowledge through lectures and "silent seminars" contrast with a vocational approach where,

"Students who are encouraged to communicate and to solve problems for themselves are more likely to challenge the academic's version of 'the truth' than those who are more compliant and more submissive". (Assiter 1995:13)

The debate between vocational and academic education is also found within the study of sport, recreation and leisure. Parker (1984), in reply to the publication of the Yates report (1984) into the education and training of recreation managers, supports traditional views when he argues that academic concerns are connected with the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. He compares this to professional concerns, which involve obtaining knowledge to achieve a qualification in order to acquire a job.

The criticism of contemporary approaches to HE are often based on the focus on skills which is discussed in more detail in section 2.4. With regard to the development of HE, Cranham (2006) maintains that the report by the National Committee of Inquiry into HE (1997), commonly known as the Dearing report, brought the debate to a close by concluding that the development of key skills should become a central aim of HE. However the debate is still important to this study in terms of the philosophy of the staff that developed the sport courses as they would have been exposed to these differing philosophies.

Brennan and Shah (1993) also observed that Conservative HE policy emphasised more value for less money. This led to a major expansion of student numbers which continued with the election of the Labour Government in 1997 (Figure 2.4)

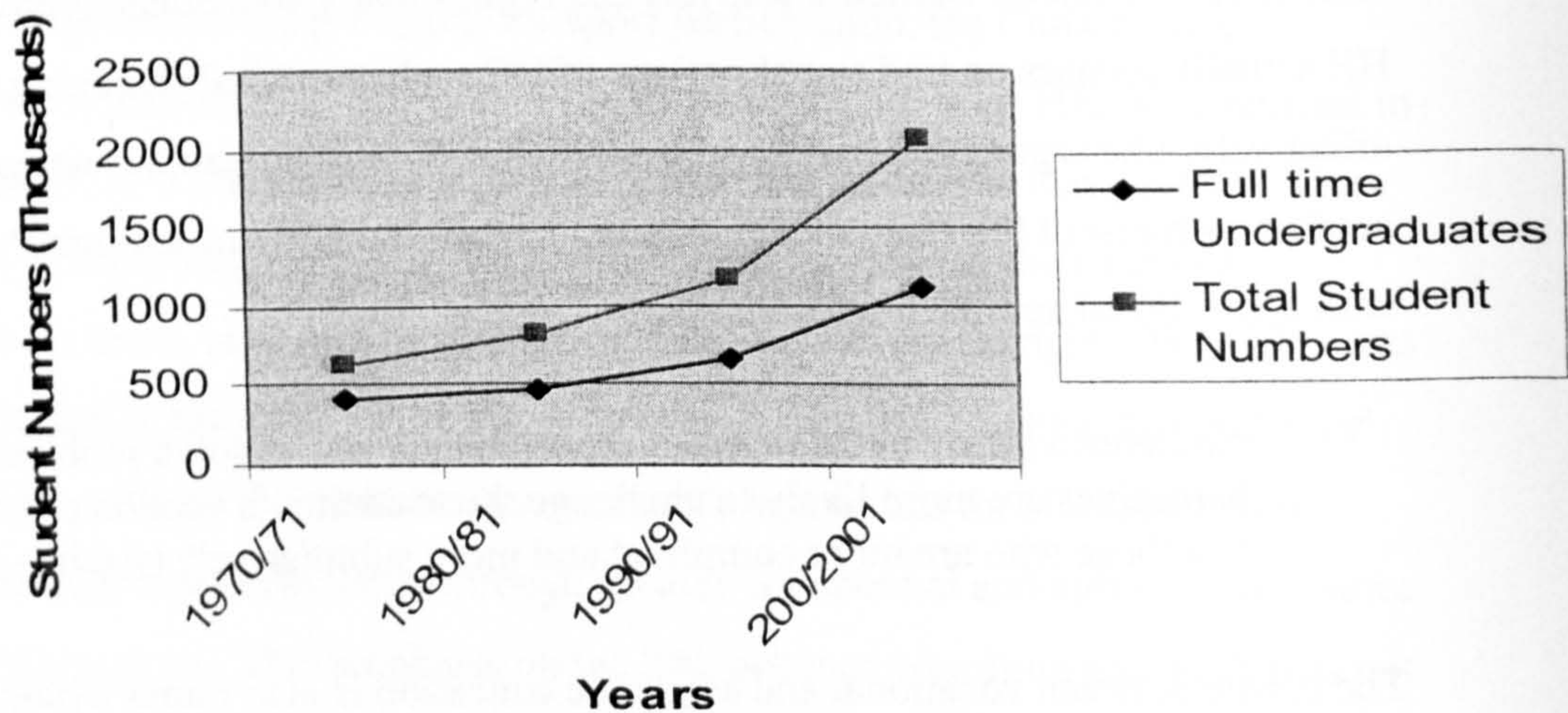


Figure 2.4 Growth in student numbers in HE. (1970-2000)

Adapted from Elias and Purcell (2003)

Brennan and Shah (1993) argue that this policy reinforced the mutual animosity between the university sector and the government. The traditional notion of HE was that the aims of HE should be left up to HE itself to define and up until the 1980's it is argued that there was consensus on this standpoint (Wright 1987). Barnett (1994) concurs with this view when he suggests that in the past universities were on the fringes of society and were not of interest to the majority of the population, thus they were left very much to get on with it. Consequently, HE, and more specifically the universities, were critical of the government's focus on HE being to instrumentally meet the needs of the economy (Barnett 1994). However, it could be argued that government policy was reflecting, what Barnett admits himself, was a change in the relationship between the three forces of HE, knowledge and wider society with the emergence of a knowledge based society. This is reflected by Gibbon (1995) who agrees with the view that traditionally most universities were built on a model of knowledge production that had a disciplinary basis where problems were set and solved in a context that was mainly determined by the academic interests of a particular community. Nevertheless he concurs that a new mode of knowledge was emerging, which is produced in the context of its application and is expected to be of value externally to the academic community whether that is industry, government or society.

As a consequence of this antagonism between universities and government, the expansion in the 1980s and early 1990s mainly occurred in the polytechnics, where there was a 72% increase in enrolments compared to a 22% increase in universities between 1980 and 1991 (Scott 1995). Hogan (2002:53) notes that “the polytechnics succeeded in persuading government that they were trying to achieve precisely what the government wanted – for example, vocationally-led education, quality measures and expansion at a relatively low unit cost”. Accordingly, as observed by Pratt (1997), a driving force of polytechnic policy was to offer HE more cheaply, which was highlighted by Watson and Bowden (1999) who reported that the public funding per student reduced by 25% between 1979 and 1996. They also argue that the ending of the binary divide, giving polytechnics university status, was a further attempt to force value for money through overt competition between the two former sectors.

During this time the government also left the expansion of subjects to the market (Brennan and Shah 1993, Scott 2003), thus it could be argued that the popularity of sport courses with students helped to feed the expansion of the polytechnic sector. For example in 1994 sports studies/management/science were fourth out of 157 subjects in terms of application to places, 22 applications for every place (Leisure Industries Research Centre 1995) and there was a substantial expansion in students studying sport related courses. Hence Morgan’s (1995) perception that sport courses were regarded as a lucrative area for the expansion of student numbers and an outcome of this was a view that sport was being forced to over recruit to compensate for under recruitment in less popular degrees which was regarded as a problem by some (Kerfoot 1998). This is reflected by Burke (1995:97) in her observation that:

“leisure educators seem to find themselves under increasing pressure to design and deliver courses which absorb ever increasing numbers, respond to changes in government policy, cope with funding restrictions, resource limitations, staffing cuts and all manner of reforms”.

It can be seen from this rapid expansion why there were concerns about the supply of sport students outstripping the demands from employers. It also

raised concern about the quality of such courses, particularly in terms of employability (Bacon 1996).

In 1993 the Conservative government stopped the expansion due to the realisation of the conflicting aims that they had set themselves; reducing costs, expansion, diversity, high quality and the preservation of comparable standards of awards. (Watson and Bowden 1999). However there was criticism of this change in policy by influential employers' organisations such as the CBI (Mason 2000). It also led to the possibility of financial failures for a substantial minority of universities, which in turn led to the threat by the CVCP to introduce fees. In response to these issues the government set up the Committee of Inquiry into HE under Sir Ron Dearing in 1996 (Watson and Bowden 1999). Its broad remit was to consider how the purpose, shape, structure and funding of HE should develop to meet the needs of the UK over the next 20 years (Council for Industry and Higher Education 1997). A key conclusion was the need for further expansion of graduate numbers to a HE participation rate of 45% in order to meet the needs of the economy (Mason 1999).

The incoming Labour government broadly supported Dearing's aims on widening participation and in 1998 the cap on degree student numbers was lifted (Mason 2000). The Labour government set out its own policy for HE in the 2003 White Paper *The Future of HE*. This further emphasised the importance of HE to the economy with regard to research, knowledge transfer and the development of higher level skills. It also encouraged HEIs to build stronger relationships with Regional Development Agencies and the newly formed Sector Skills Councils; the one for sport being Skills Active. It also set up phase two of an initiative called the Higher Education Innovation Fund to encourage non-research intensive universities to work with employers locally, regionally and nationally. Tribe (2003) observes that this is a particular issue for sport and leisure related HE providers as many would not be considered research intensive by the government and would thus be expected to work much more with employers and business.

In terms of HE participation rates the aim was to increase this to 50% of those aged 18-30 mainly through two year foundation degrees and to widen access to HE to people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Department for Education and Skills 2003). Sport was identified as playing a role in widening participation as it is seen as being attractive to groups currently under represented in HE (Universities UK 2004). It is not surprising that there was concern within the sport industry about the number and appropriateness of graduates with this rapid expansion of HE courses and the corresponding increase in graduates from 5,322 in 1994 to 14,239 in 2005 (HESA 1996, Chapman 2006) against the context of reduced public funding per student, particularly an industry that is not a traditional graduate employer.

A further important issue surrounding the development of sport courses is status. Scott and Watson (1994) believed that the new subjects introduced in the polytechnics, such as sport, were more difficult to absorb into academia than the older professional subjects, partly because the vocations to which they relate did not enjoy high status. This lack of status was highlighted in research in the USA, De Sensi et al (1990) found that 26% of students questioned commented on the lack of respect for their area of study, and in the UK Coalter (1990) observed that there was a need to establish the legitimacy of sport and leisure studies as coherent academic fields, this is reiterated by Horne et al (2001) when they state that sport is seen as too trivial to warrant serious attention. Baty (1997) supports this view of a lack of status when he suggests that courses such as sport science have been called 'Noddy' courses by critics such as Chris Woodhead, the former Chief Inspector of Schools. In an interview with Tom Reilly professor of sport science at Liverpool John Moores University in the Times Higher Education Supplement, Reilly (1997) states that when their sport science degree was set up,

“There was considerable scepticism within Liverpool Polytechnic as well as resistance from outside. We had to jump through all sorts of hoops to win accreditation from the Council for Academic Awards” (Richards 1997:40).

Roberts (2004:1) observes that this is still an issue,

“Even today, tabloid newspapers, probably for want of better headlines, occasionally mock recreation management, sport, tourism and media studies as joke subjects, and evidence of dumbing-down in higher education”.

This image, in addition to the enormous growth in sport graduates, may have further undermined the sport industry's perception of the value of sport graduates. It is of interest to see whether or not this perception still exists and if it does how it impacts on the employment of sport graduates.

This section has raised a number of issues that need to be investigated further. First the pluralistic nature of the HE sector means that sport courses are likely to have been heavily influenced by the fact they were mainly established in former polytechnics and technological universities. It will be of value to examine the current situation in relation to the influence of the nature of the institution on the nature of the course. Secondly, a crucial feature of sport courses that was identified was the expansion of this sector with minimum resources. This has led to the debate concerning oversupply of sport graduates and their quality in relation to employability, which also needs to be examined in more depth. Third, it would seem that there are certain negative perceptions of sport courses consequently it is important to examine the perception by employers of sport courses and graduates from different types of institution. Fourth, it is important to examine if the development of degree level sport courses strengthen the status of those working in the industry.

2.3. The Graduate Labour Market

This study has illustrated that since the 1980s governments have increasingly emphasised the importance of a graduate workforce to the economy and there has been a general assumption that investment in education can be correlated with economic growth and development (Purcell and Pitcher 1998). The expansion of HE resulted in the share of graduates in the workforce moving from 7% to 16% between 1988 and 1998 (DFES 1999). However, as has been highlighted in the previous section, there has been concern both generally and in sport about an oversupply of graduates to the labour market. This section will examine the graduate labour market and the extent to which this over supply exists both generally and within sport.

The concerns about oversupply were based on the argument that there was a lack of consistent evidence that an increased supply of graduates has been matched by an increased demand from the labour market for graduate attributes and degree qualifications (Sloane, Battu, Seaman 1999, Institute of Employment Studies 1997). These arguments were supported by studies in the late 1990's which reported that the demand for graduates would slow down, for example the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) (2005) reported in 1998 that demand had grown by 14%, by 1999 it only grew by 5% and in 2003 demand fell by 3.4%, although in 2004 the demand grew significantly by 15.5%. However, these figures are based on the demand by the AGR's members who tend to be traditional graduate employers. More recent research which informed the Leitch (2006) 'Review of Skills' found that the demand for high skill workers rose broadly in line with their supply. This can be explained by the findings of other studies that over a number of years have identified that a wider range of employers are taking on graduates and in positions that may not have been considered graduate jobs in the past (Pike et al.1992, Harvey et al.1997, Purcell et al. 2004). Elias and Purcell (2004) report that first destination data indicated that the proportion of those employed and working in non-graduate jobs six months after graduating was 43%. Their longitudinal study of graduates who gained their first degree in 1995 found that three and a half years after graduating their graduate careers were still

evolving and that the cohort's employment, with regard to finding graduate jobs, did not stabilise until five years after graduation. By 2002 11% were in non-graduate jobs with only 6.5% of those feeling they were in dead-end jobs, thus they conclude that there is little evidence of graduates gaining inappropriate employment. This is supported by Lissenburgh and Bryson (1996) who argued that the significance of over education is exaggerated as it is only temporary for many individuals in that as they acquire job-related experience they are able to improve their job match. However, a key issue emanating from graduates initially entering non graduate jobs is the impact of not using graduate skills which could possibly leading to a lack of challenge and frustration.

This then leads to an issue of graduates having over expectations of the level at which they will enter an organisation once they graduate. This was identified by the Yates (1984:p87) report which stated that:

“graduates often arrived with little or no practical experience, but with high ambitions to manage. The realities of the management task then left them frustrated, feeling ‘over-qualified’ for low management but lacking the competence to operate at higher levels”.

This could be a problem of recruiting graduates into traditionally non graduate jobs, particularly if they are not being used to their full potential. Mason (1995) believes that if they are not employed to their full capacity they are more likely to become demoralised. This is supported by Alpin et al (1998) who found that over educated workers were more dissatisfied at work than others and it was associated with higher rates of absenteeism, staff turnover, sabotage and poor health. He suggests that over education may lead to low morale, lower work effort and higher employer costs. It will be of interest to investigate the satisfaction graduates receive from working in the sport industry and how this relates to loyalty to the company.

A key issue of both the CNAAs (1991) report and the Yates (1984) report was that there was no recognised entry level for graduates. Both reports believed that this was due to a lack of understanding by employers of the nature of degrees, and the perceptions that graduates did not have immediately

applicable job related management skills. The CNAA endorsed the Yates report in suggesting that employers believed that graduates had unrealistic expectations about their level of entry; therefore employers felt that graduates were soon dissatisfied with their jobs. Harvey et al (1997) believe that graduates are becoming more realistic as he found that they are aware of the fact that having a degree does not necessarily mean that they will walk into a job. An interesting issue raised within the Leitch (2006:67) review was that as younger people within the workforce gain degrees and if employers are not engaged with HE;

“it increases the likelihood of poor deployment of higher-level skills with relatively under-skilled owners, managers and leaders unable to find the best uses for new graduate recruits”

This could be a fundamental issue within the sport industry as previous research and the historical analysis of the industry undertaken in section 2.1 established that it did not have a tradition of employing graduates; consequently people within management positions may not understand how to use graduates effectively.

Section 2.1 of this chapter demonstrated that concern about over supply in sport was initially raised in the early to mid 1990's. In 1994 Bacon and Buswell estimated that the number of students studying HE leisure-related courses was 12,000 and that the annual availability of management posts in leisure was 1,000. A reason for the concern stems from the fact that there was a dip in leisure related employment between 1993 and 1994, probably due to the recession that occurred at that time which would have had a knock on effect for graduate employment opportunities (DCMS 2003). Also, as discussed in section 2.1, CCT was impacting on local authority leisure employment, creating stagnation in terms of movement up the hierarchy in that sector, thus causing a blockage. Brindley and Mander (1996:11) noted that there was a sharp decrease in the number of vacancies for junior managers in the public sector in the 1990's creating an “imbalance between the number of leisure management positions and the number of undergraduates on leisure related courses”. Compounding it was the suggestion that sport jobs did not necessarily require sport graduates - a study by Morgan (1995) of ILAM job

adverts found that whilst over half of adverts specified degree level qualifications, only 18% of those specified that those degrees should be leisure related.

A key question is whether or not sport graduates actually intend to work in the sport industry; Purcell and Pitcher (1998) found that many students did not undertake courses primarily for vocational purposes. They categorise students according to their motivations for undertaking the course: the 'Hedonistic' student chose courses on the basis that they expected to enjoy them; the 'Pragmatic' student chose them in the belief that it would enhance their career and employment prospects; and the fatalistic student did not choose their programmes of study but acceded to them. Students may undertake sport courses as they play sport and therefore wish to study it for purely hedonistic reasons. However a study by Nove et al (1997) found that those who were most clear about careers from the outset tended to be the most satisfied with their early career progress.

Since 1994 there has been a general upward trend in employment in the sport sector. As outlined in section 2.1, there is now debate about the need for people with higher level skills, such as graduates, in the sport industry (Jenkinson 2001, Skills Active 2003, Sport England 2004, SPRITO 2001). A crucial question is the extent to which these changes in employment structure are due to the changing needs of employers or an increasing supply of graduates? Older studies, such as that carried out by Belfield et al (1997) on graduates from 1985 and 1990, found that a number of graduates were under employed or doing jobs that did not directly use their HE experience. The Institute for Employment Studies (1996) followed three cohorts of graduates from one university and found a high level of graduate under employment; three years after graduating less than half the graduates considered that their job required 'graduate level ability'. Three fifths felt that they were underemployed in their work, lacking intellectual challenge, or doing tasks that required little skill or knowledge, particularly those which they had gained from their degree. However Lissenburgh and Bryson (1996) believe that the significance of over education is exaggerated as it is only temporary for many

individuals. For example Purcell and Pitcher (1997), who are undertaking a major longitudinal investigation of 4,500 graduates who graduated in 1995 from 38 UK HE institutions, found that nearly a quarter of the students surveyed had expected to take up temporary employment after graduating either to consider further options or because of debts. When these graduates were surveyed seven years later in 2002 the majority felt that they were in appropriate graduate employment, three quarters were in employment related to their long term career plan and two thirds said that a degree had been required for their current jobs. A key finding was that short term underemployment trends were not reliable indicators of longer term career trends (Purcell et al 2004).

The reason for Purcell et al's (2004) finding may be, as Mason (1999) argues, that since the mid 1990's there has been a protracted adjustment process in the graduate labour market where employers have upgraded jobs or created new ones to take advantage of the potential of graduates. Elias and Purcell (2003) found that the occupational structure is changing in a way that has enabled the absorption of the increased supply of graduates. They describe the current labour market as being larger, more amorphous and overlapping and merging with the non-graduate labour market than has been the case in the past. In a later paper they conclude that there is little evidence of over-supply of graduates (Purcell et al 2004).

There are several reasons for the change in occupational structure to enable the employment of more graduates. First, there has been an increasing demand for graduates by small and medium sized enterprises who have not traditionally employed graduates (Harvey 1997, Nove 1998). Second, the development of more client orientated services has created a need for more developed interpersonal skills (Soskice 1993). Third, technological progress has had the effect of up-skilling certain occupations or made jobs much more complex so that they now require a greater breadth and more advanced skills than previously (Harvey 1997, Mason 1999, Nabi 2003, Leitch 2006). For example within sport Gunn (2001:35) states,

“When I first started there wasn't a lot you could do in leisure, if you could hold a badminton racket in the right way you could maybe work

in a leisure centre or possible an ice rink, but there are now so many things you can do it's incredible. Marketing, I.T., fitness industry, hospitality, retail, the whole leisure sector, private and public have expanded"p35.

The fourth reason is claims that graduates filling traditionally non graduate jobs can substantially raise productivity (Mason 1995). Harvey et al (1997) found that half the managers from the 91 organisations who participated in in-depth interviews, felt that graduates were cost effective. There was an overwhelming view that graduates had advantages over non-graduates, which were that they were brighter, sharper and more analytical. Graduates were able to use first principles to work things out which meant that they were more adaptable and flexible and better able to develop new ideas.

Finally some occupational areas aspire to become professions, which has led to them wishing to attract graduates to enhance their status and claims (Harvey et al 1997). As Peter Johnson (2001:52), former chairman and Chief Executive of Circa Leisure states,

"I think from the industry's point of view we do need a leisure degree, fitness, sports and recreation, call it what you like, it doesn't matter I'm not bothered about that, but we need some sort of degree for the industry. I think it says that the industry has arrived and I think it says something about the industry that's important".

However there are arguments against these points. Keep and Mayhew (1996) believe that the attributes required by the service sector do not necessarily require degree level education and that increasing the skills available to an employer will not mean that he/she will necessarily produce higher quality goods and services. Ashworth (1998) argues that the presumption that graduates are the most productive is naïve and Whitsun (1998) believes that graduates are slow to adapt to the work place. Also, despite the claims that a changing occupational structure creates a need for more graduates, Mason (1999) and Nove et al (1998) acknowledge that there is still evidence of graduate under employment. Harvey et al (1997) concedes that this is probably due to the fact that employers are recruiting graduates where they may not have done in the past which may lead to the downgrading of graduate abilities. Purcell et al (2004) also note that the growth in the number of graduates in the

work force is also because there are more graduates available for work.

Through their longitudinal research Purcell and Elias (2004) have devised a new occupational classification for the graduate labour market (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: A Classification of Graduate Occupations (Based upon the 1990 Standard Classification of Occupations).

Type of Occupation	Description	Examples
Traditional Graduate Occupations	The established professions, for which, historically, the normal route has been via an undergraduate degree programme.	Solicitors Medical practitioners HE, FE & secondary education teachers Biological scientist/biochemists
Modern graduate occupations	The newer professions, particularly in management, IT and creative vocational areas, which graduates have been entering increasingly since educational expansion in the 1960's.	Chartered and certified accountants Software engineers, computer programmers Primary school & nursery teachers Author/writers/journalists
New graduate occupations	Areas of employment to which graduates have increasingly been recruited in large numbers; mainly new administrative, technical and caring occupations	Marketing & sales, advertising managers Physiotherapists, occupational hygienists Social workers, probation, welfare officers Clothing designers
Niche graduate occupations	Occupations where the majority of incumbents are not graduates, but within which there are stable or growing specialist niches which require higher education skills and knowledge.	Entertainment and sports managers Hotel, accommodation managers Midwives Buyers (non-retail)
Non-graduate occupations	Graduates are also found in jobs that are likely to constitute under-utilisation of their higher education skills and knowledge	Sales assistants Filing and record clerks Routine laboratory testers Debt, rent and cash collectors.

Source: Purcell and Elias (2004)

They explain that in the first four groups, identified in Table 2.5, there is a strong possibility that a graduate employed in this area will be making use of their degree skills and knowledge. Sport management falls within these four groups under niche graduate occupations, thus Purcell and Elias (2004) believe that a degree is appropriate to this area of work. However, using Labour Force Survey data, they also identify that the percentage of those holding a degree in the niche graduate occupations was fairly low compared to other occupations at 15 to 25%, although there is evidence of an increase amongst the younger age groups. This reflects the discussion in section 2.1 about the industry being traditionally a non-graduate profession. In traditional

graduate occupations the figure is well over 80% and in the modern graduate occupation group the figure is 75%. Within niche graduate jobs, when Purcell and Elias (2004) surveyed the graduates in 1998/99 they found that just over 60% of those graduates stated that a degree was required for the current job, just over 60% stated that they were using the subject/discipline knowledge that they acquired on their degree course and just under 80% said that they were using the skills developed during their degree programme.

Purcell and Elias (2004) have developed an intrinsic classification of the skills required by a graduate job, using three headings - expertise, strategic managerial and interactive skills. Expertise includes occupationally-specific, specialist knowledge that is a pre-requisite for entry into the occupation such as being a lawyer, teacher or medical practitioner. Strategic/managerial includes project, process and resource management, leadership, decision-making responsibility, risk-taking, forward planning and business strategy development. Finally, Purcell and Elias (2004) describe interactive skills to include the ability to communicate ideas effectively, to influence and persuade others, and to negotiate, to motivate oneself and others, and to work successfully with other people. Purcell et al (2004) have related this internal classification to their Classification of Graduate Occupations as shown in Figure 2.5.

Purcell et al's (2004) triangular model enables a comparison of skills sets of particular occupations. In Figure 2.5 they have analysed occupations, using the intrinsic classification of skills mentioned earlier, and placed them on the model according to the balance of skills they identified in those occupations. They found that traditional graduate jobs tended to be clustered around the expert area of the model and that the subject and discipline skills developed within the degree were relevant to the occupation. Modern and new graduate jobs frequently occupied the middle ground of the model and required hybrid skills that were a mixture of the intrinsic classification of skills. In relation to niche graduate occupations, where Purcell et al (2004) categorise sport, these are located in a range of positions; however an underlying trend for these occupations was that they were less likely to have very high scores on any of

the dimensions and often combined two areas of skills. Purcell et al (2004) note the model would be useful for comparing individual jobs by analysing the graduate's account of their work to identify the balance of skills that they employ and using this to locate them on the model. This would be a useful approach use in analysing sport jobs, which can then be compared with Elias and Purcell's categories.

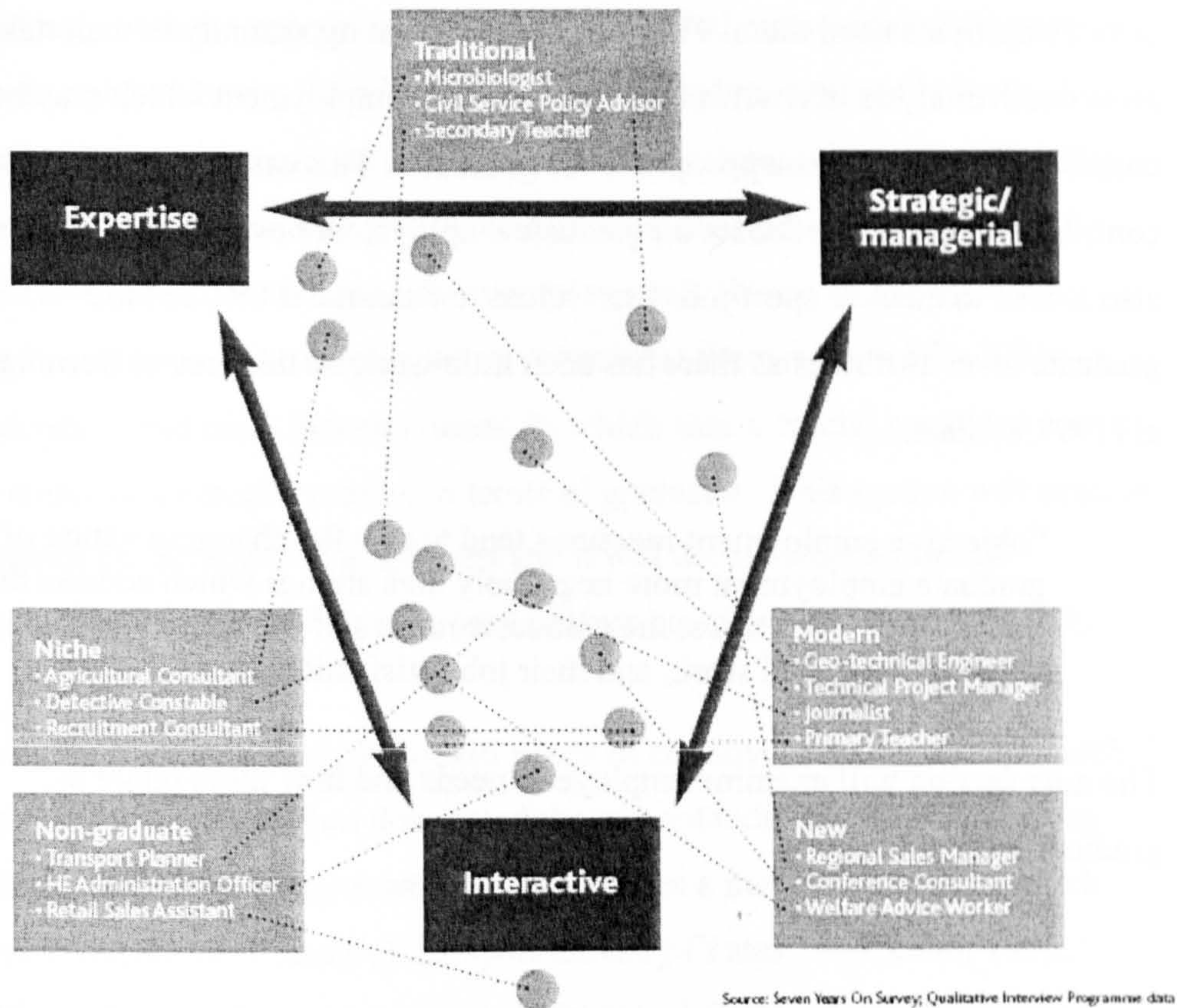


Figure 2.5: Classification of Graduate Occupations. (Purcell et al 2004).

Overall, this section has discussed concerns about the over supply of graduates to the labour market in general and to the sport industry. The main argument against these concerns is that the changing occupational structure has created a demand for more graduates. More specifically, it has been argued that occupations such as sport have developed and expanded to require more graduates. However, in recent years there has been no specific data on graduate employment in the sport industry and the studies that had been undertaken are now dated, although they do illustrate that in the 1980's the majority of graduates were able to gain employment in the sport industry.

Coalter and Potter's (1990) survey of 1985 graduates from sport and leisure courses in the south east found that 79% gained their first post-graduation job in sport, recreation or leisure. However, a report from the Council for National Academic Awards (1991) which looked at 1984 and 1985 UK sport graduates found that 35% entered recreation management and administration and 17% health and fitness employment. Thus, there is a need for research to identify whether or not sport graduates gain employment in the industry and whether or not employers need them. This study provides an opportunity to undertake an in depth analysis of a non-traditional graduate employment which may be considered by some as inappropriate for graduates. This case study will thus contribute to the wider debate on graduate employment beyond sport. There is also a need to analyse sport jobs themselves to examine if they require graduate level attributes as there has been little work on this area as Brennan et al (1997:8) state:

“objective employment measures tend to rate the changing nature of graduate employment more negatively than studies which address the character of work tasks, the graduates ratings of the relationship between study and work, and their job satisfaction”.

The next section will examine employer's needs and how these relate to graduate attributes.

2.4. Employers' Needs

The concerns over graduate employability not only relate to the issue of oversupply but also to a possible mismatch between the needs of employers and the competencies developed within HE. (Schuller 1991, Harvey & Green 1994). This is also the debate within the sport sector and Bacon (1995) has argued that many sport and leisure degrees do not adequately prepare graduates with the appropriate technical or applied managerial skills necessary for the sport industry. This has been reemphasised more recently by the Skills Active (2006:24) report on skills gaps and weaknesses which identified that employers "think too many HE graduates lack the essential vocational elements, which would make them employable". However, the increasing emphasis on graduate employability means that there is a need for HE to understand and meet industry needs. In which case a crucial question is what do employers actually require in terms of graduates? This section will examine research on the needs of employers and it will debate whether or not producing a list of useful vocational skills is beneficial for industry or HE.

Holmes (2000) argues that the skill needs of employers and how they match the skills of graduates has dominated the understanding of the relationship between HE and employment. There have been a number of studies which have listed the skill needs of the sport industry (Yates 1984, Gunn 1985, SPRITO 2001). The most recent is the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) undertaken for Skills Active (2004). This research has not specifically identified the skill requirements of graduates, however the NESS is helpful to HE as it identifies the different level of skill needs, thus high and advanced levels could be related to graduate level skills (Table 2.6 overleaf).

Unfortunately care must be taken with the data as it is reported for the whole of the Skills Active grouping of occupations which includes caravan parks in addition to the sport sector.

The results shown in Table 2.6 will be discussed alongside a key study by Harvey et al (1997), which specifically investigated the skills and attributes graduates need to enter employment, and also previous research on the needs

of sport employers. Harvey et al examined what employers' thought significant to enable new graduate recruits to become successful at work and the attributes important in the current and future workplace. The method used was semi-structured, in-depth interviews of 258 participants including strategic managers, line managers, graduate and non-graduate employees in 91 organisations throughout England and Scotland. From the research Harvey et al identified a list of personal attributes that employers required. Each attribute will be examined in relation to the needs of sport and leisure employers.

Table 2.6: Current level of skill required: Leisure and other personal service.

Skill level	Advanced %	High %	Intermediate %	Basic %	Not required %
Leisure and other personal service occupations					
Communication skills	30	44	13	13	1
Customer handling skills	29	39	29	2	1
Team working skills	22	46	21	9	1
Problem solving skills	18	27	31	14	11
Technical & practical skills	14	30	43	12	1
Management skills	9	19	31	15	26
Numeracy skills	6	12	26	46	11
IT professional skills	5	0	6	18	71
Literacy skills	2	20	34	43	1
General IT user skills	0	1	8	27	64
Foreign Language skills	0	0	6	11	83

Skills Active and Spilsbury Research (2004).

A key attribute Harvey et al (1997) identified is knowledge; including disciplinary knowledge, knowledge of the business and industry and the ability to acquire knowledge. This corresponds to Purcell and Elias's (2004) category of expertise within their classification of graduate jobs discussed in section 2.2.. There is debate in the sport industry concerning the need for managers with sport specific knowledge. Torkildsen (1997) argues that sport and leisure specific knowledge and skills are a necessity for leisure managers, as he believes that there is a need to understand sport and leisure activities and motivations. Coalter (1990) also concluded that potential employees needed to understand the industry and Yates (1984) argued that sport managers should understand theories of recreation. Bacon (1996) on behalf of ILAM created the idea of core disciplines for sport and leisure management courses which would qualify them for accreditation to ILAM.

More recently Collins (2003) observed that there is an increasing need for skills in constructing bid applications for lottery and government grants, which also requires industry specific knowledge. Conversely, others believe that there is not a need for specialist knowledge. At the time of the Yates Report, May and Botterill (1984) argued that management courses were adequate for the needs of recreation managers and there was not a requirement for a unique body of knowledge. A later study by Morgan (1995) found that 36% of ILAM job adverts for sport related jobs did not specify type of degree when stating a degree as an essential attribute. An explanation may be that the main advertisers were Local Authorities who were subject to CCT during this period, creating a need for employees who could manage contracts but not necessarily sport services (Cooper 1998). This view is reinforced by Ravenscroft (1998) who suggested that at that time expertise in leisure services was “likely to be demoted to a ‘second-order’ skill, possessed by the managerial professionals operating the contractor services” p146. The situation could have been further compounded by the structural changes caused by CCT, when specialist leisure departments were subsumed into larger multi-disciplinary departments (Wheeler and Richards 1993).

The notion that industry specific knowledge is not a pre requisite for sport management has both positive and negative connotations for HE. Positively it counteracts some of the arguments regarding oversupply of sport graduates as it would seem that the degree subject does not specifically mean a graduate is limited to a job in that industry. It also supports the traditional notion of HE that it should produce broad educational and personal development (Barnett 1994). Negatively, from an industry point of view, it undermines the need for sport and leisure management as a separate area of course provision from management and business degrees. Although it is important to remember that the students demand for courses needs to be taken into account. Thus the extent to which there is a need for industry specific knowledge and qualifications requires further investigation.

A second set of attributes that Harvey et al (1997) cite are intellectual abilities such as analysis, critique, synthesis and problem solving, which relate to

Purcell and Elias's(2004) managerial/strategic category. These are seen as the fundamental qualities of a graduate and what differentiates them from non-graduates (QAA 2000). The NESS also identifies that problem solving skills, particularly at a high and intermediate level were required by the sport industry and they are also cited by Coalter (1990) and the Gunn Report (1986) into the training needs of sport managers in Scotland. Yates also refers to academic skills such as interpretation and analysis; and Lowe (1995), who provides one of the few recent studies in sport to compare the public and commercial sectors, found that the commercial sector emphasises analytical skills particularly in relation to finance and marketing. The identification of these skills corresponds to both traditional notions of HE regarding critical reasoning and more contemporary notions of problem solving and it implies graduate level abilities are required.

Another attribute that Harvey et al (1997) identified is the ability to be flexible and adaptable and to be able to respond to, pre-empt and lead change. This is not an attribute that is identified specifically in the sport literature nevertheless, the dynamic nature of the industry illustrated in section 1 indicates that this is a key attribute. The notion of how employees need to adapt to change will be discussed in more depth at the end of this section.

Harvey et al also identify the need for employees to have self-regulatory skills including self-discipline, time-keeping, prioritising and the ability to multi-task. These skills are not identified in the NESS but are strongly supported by other sport and recreation literature. Yates identified the need for employees to be organised, Gunn mentioned the need for planning and control skills, Coalter recognised the need to be able to organise and schedule and Lowe identified the need for time management skills in both public and commercial sector organisations. Harvey et al also identified the personal skills of self motivation and self-assurance as being important. These personal skills have not been specifically identified by the studies in sport however the notion of having the right personality has been emphasised (Sport and Recreation Industrial Lead body 1989).

Finally Harvey et al identified inter-personal skills such as team and communication skills which Table 2.6 indicates are the most important skills for the sport and leisure industry (Skills Active 2004). These correspond to Purcell and Elias's (2004) interactive category and were also emphasised in other research on sport (Yates 1984, Gunn 1985, Coalter 1990, Lowe 1995). Soskice (1993) suggested that the demand by organisations for social skills has been due to two trends. First, many organisations have decentralised responsibility for profits, costs and other performance indicators to lower levels, creating smaller decision making units within larger companies; plus lower level managers and supervisors engage in organising work, requiring them to have social skills in terms of communication, negotiation, problem solving and leadership. Second, there has been an increase in interaction between employees and customers, reflecting the greater range and complexity of available goods and services. Both of these points could be said to be true of sport and leisure organisations and also reflect the reasons given earlier for the increase in the need for graduate attributes in the labour market.

A key point is that, with the exception of subject knowledge, all these attributes are generic and there is nothing sport specific about them. Johnston (2003) has criticised much research into graduate employability for aggregating subject groupings which may conceal differences. The above section has attempted to apply Harvey et al's research to sport and has identified fit however, there are specific attributes not mentioned by Harvey et al (1997) that have been identified in studies of sport and recreation. The NESS (2003) mentions management skills, as does Yates, Gunn and Coalter and Lowe. Harvey et al (1997) may not have identified these skills because he was looking specifically at graduates in initial jobs, which are unlikely to have been at a management level. Also shown as important in the NESS are technical and practical skills at intermediate and high level. Yates, Gunn and Coalter do not specifically identify sport practical skills, although Lowe identifies them in some detail including: first aid, pool plant operations, health and safety, life saving and sport coaching. It could be argued that the degree is not the place to pick up these skills, however, if they are important in gaining employment in the industry then should opportunities be provided for

graduates to gain them whilst undertaking their studies? Conversely, Peter Johnson (2001:49) former Chief Executive of CIRCA Leisure states, “We don’t want them taught the nitty gritty of the basic skills, we can do that ourselves, so long as you create the right person”. This corresponds with a study by Mason et al (2003) which examined the HE delivery of employability skills, they found that when employers were asked what skills graduates were lacking a large proportion of those skills identified were technical or employer specific skills. Their conclusions concur with Johnson (2001), that these types of skills are best acquired after starting employment.

A problem with creating lists of skills is that they will vary for different levels and types of jobs, as Yates (2005:p43) states, “there may be no general agreement, even within a distinct part of any sector, upon a definitive package of necessary skills”. In a study of sport management in the USA, De Sensi et al (1990) found that that there were major differences across different work settings in sport in terms of employment needs. In local authority sport, Ravenscroft (1998) believes that jobs are divided between the professional elite and the marginalised remainder; the former jobs being those higher up the management hierarchy where he believes that there is growing flexibility and freedom and the latter increasingly constrained and routinised. If this is the case then it would make it difficult for graduates entering the sport industry at a low level, an expectation indicated in section 2, and for them to work their way up. If initial work is limited in the ability for graduates to use their attributes then they may become frustrated and de-motivated and also it would be a waste of their potential.

Another issue with the skills approach Harvey et al (1997:73) have identified, despite their list of attributes, is that there is “indifference and inconsistency of industrialists in identifying what they want”. Brennan et al (1996) believe that employers pay less attention to curricula than academics and tend to concentrate on three main aspects; the reputation of institutions and departments, relationships built through work placements and live case studies and personal skills such as communication and working with others.

What these studies have done is list skills and reflect the view that during the 1980's and early to mid 1990's there was a shift away from a focus on what graduates need to know to what they are able to do (Brennan et al 1996). However, this may well be a reflection of the labour market as Elias and Purcell's (2004) study illustrates that for modern, new and niche graduate jobs there is a greater emphasis on the use of graduate skills than knowledge, particularly compared with traditional graduate jobs. (Figure 2.6) If sport jobs are categorised under niche graduate jobs it illustrates that the skills developed on the course are important.

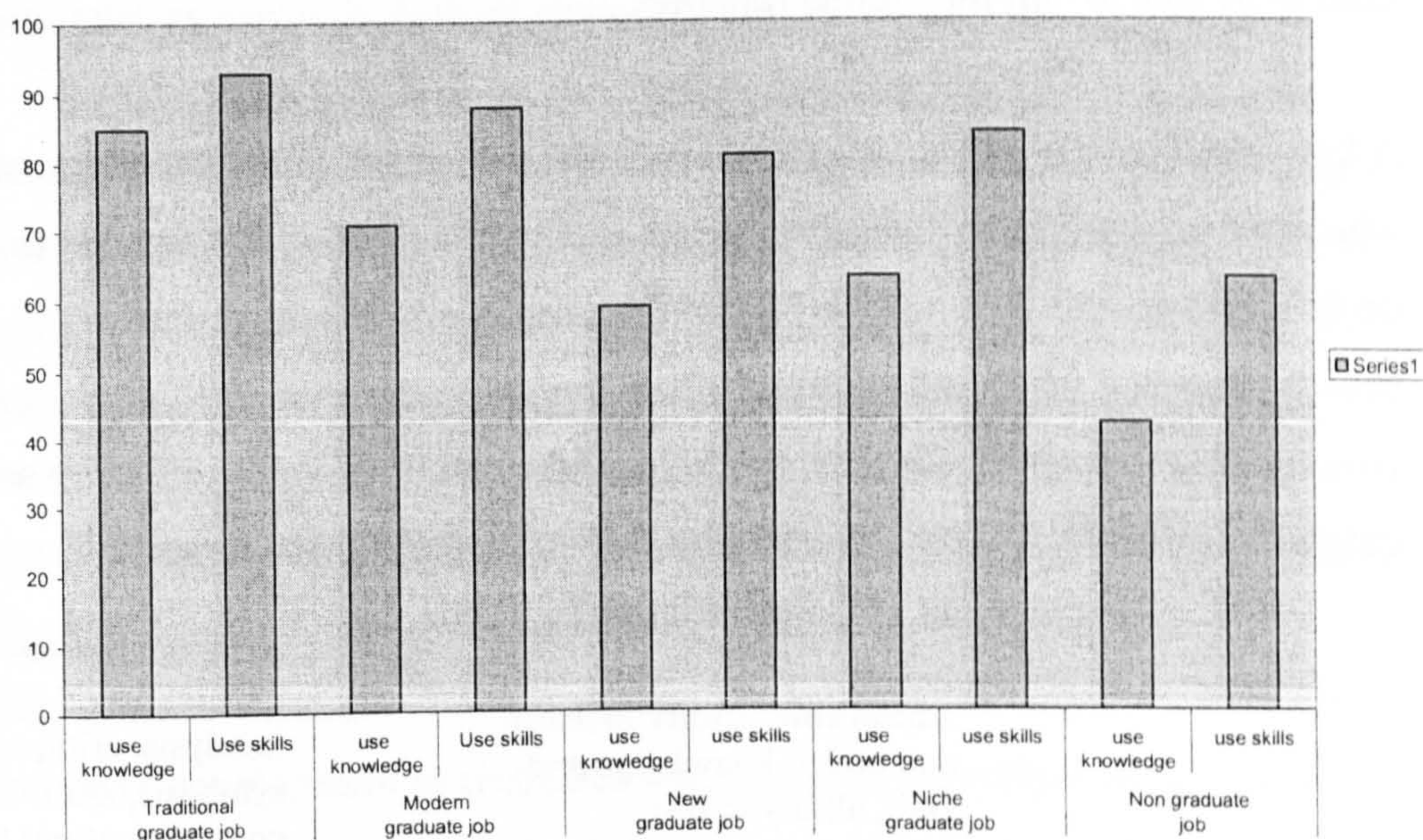


Figure 2.6: Skills and knowledge (Elias and Purcell 2004)

A fundamental problem with the lists of skills is they have become so long they may have little value (Dearing 1997). Holmes (2000) argues that there is now a plethora of different lists and models with little indication of how any particular lists relate to others. Many commentators, including some of those who have produced lists of skills and attributes such as Harvey et al (1997: 74), have argued that such lists are unhelpful as they are reductionist and “fragment a whole person into a set of isolated attributes”. Harvey et al (1997) have argued employers employ whole people, not a collection of disconnected attributes. This is supported by Morley (2001:133) who argues that “employability is not just about students making deposits in a bank of skills”.

Harvey et al (2002) now argue that there has been a shift in HE from seeking to develop specific skills to a more holistic approach, which reflects their view that some employers had moved beyond compiling lists of desirable attributes to examining how these attributes enable graduates to be effective at work. Harvey et al (2002) stress that employers are not only looking for 'oven-ready' graduates but also the importance of graduates having a range of attributes including life long learning skills. This view is also held within sport - Neil Jenkinson (2001:44) from Bassetlaw District Council argues that the lack of resources in local authorities means that graduates will have little support and need to be able to "hit the ground running".

A key finding by Harvey et al's (1997) was that employers wanted employees who can deal with change and they regard graduates as having the capacity to do that. Harvey and Green (1994) stated that employers take on graduates because they add value and potentially help transform the organisation. However they also want adaptive employees who can fit in and be effective as quickly as possible. This is illustrated by Harvey et al (1997) in Figure 2.7.

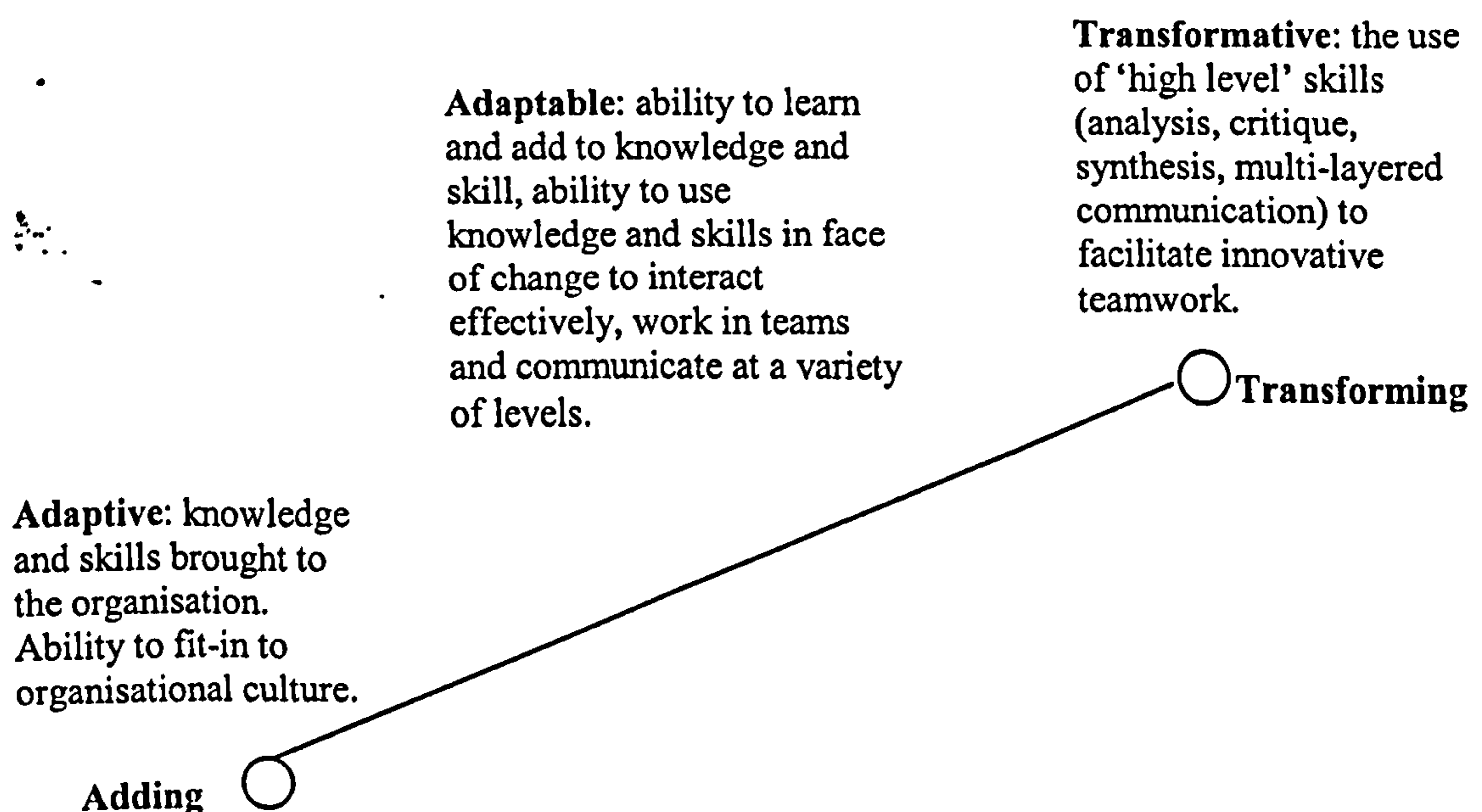


Figure 2.7: Enhancement Continuum: (Harvey, Moon and Geall 1997)

The enhancement continuum model in Figure 2.7 suggests that there are different categories of graduates. The adaptive graduate employee is able to fit in quickly to the organisation, at the other end of the continuum the transformative employee is able to take the organisation forward and view

change as an opportunity. However, Harvey et al acknowledge that transformative employees can be seen as threatening. They suggest that the more graduates are able to operate along the continuum the greater the potential evolution of the organisation. Johnson (2001:49) concurs with this view when he states that graduates should be able to challenge the status quo of the organisation they are working for - “ought to be able to come into the organisation and look at it with fresh eyes and guide us and help us change and adapt. We see that as the sort of person that we want”. However, Harvey et al (1997) also acknowledge that it is difficult to identify the transformative attributes as narrowly defined competencies.

However a key issue is how graduates make the transition into the work place, a study that has examined this is Graham and McKenzie’s (1995) study on the quality of the graduate’s induction and early training. They argued that a good start with a company can reap a number of benefits. This included making a faster contribution, higher staff retention rates, forming a positive attitude to the organisation and having a better understanding of its culture, reinforcing the initial reasons for joining and having a better understanding of performance standards. They suggested that the first few months are ideal for intensive development as graduates want to learn, are enthusiastic and flexible. Graham and Mackenzie (1995) propose a model, the Commitment Curve, which indicates the stages a graduate goes through when they join a new organisation (See Figure 2.8).

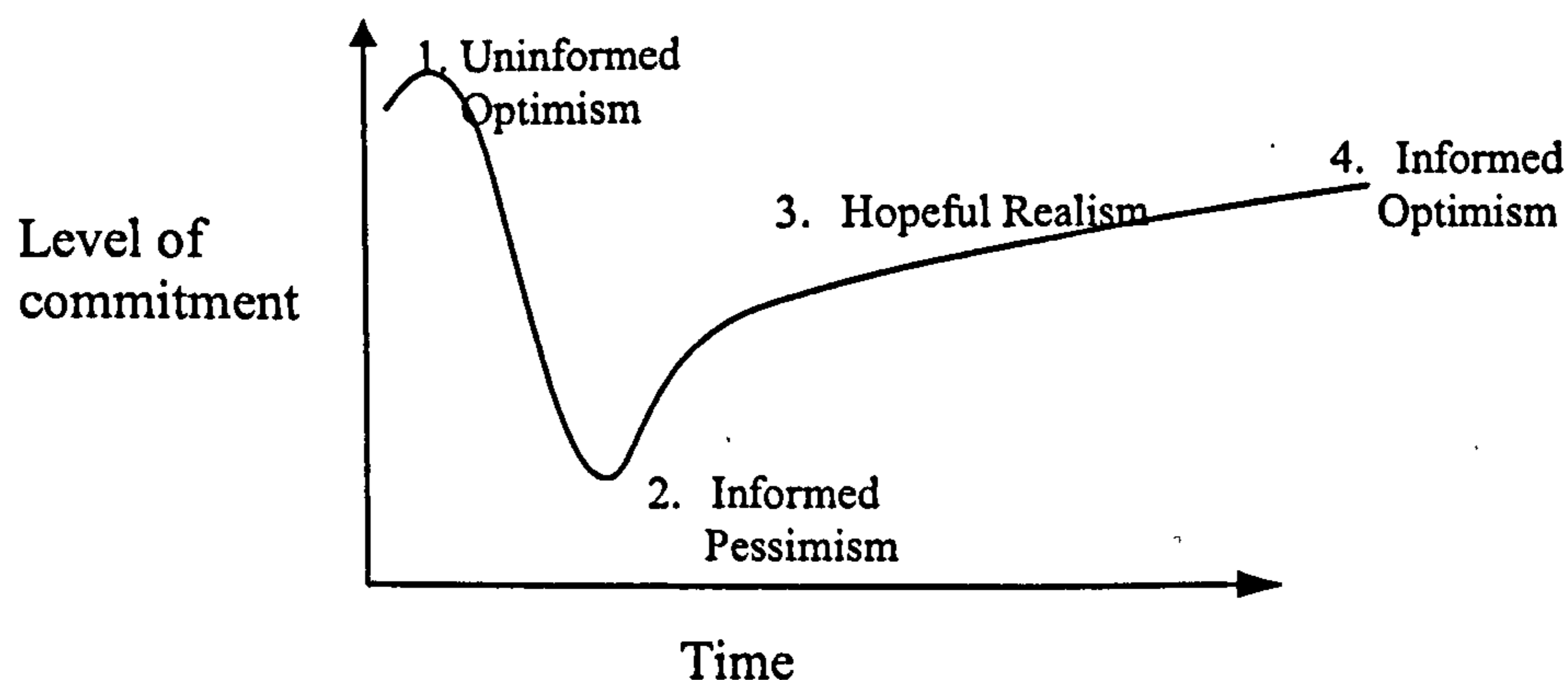


Figure 2.8: Commitment Curve (Graham and Mackenzie 1995)

Each of the phases is described below.

- **Uninformed optimism:** The new graduate feels positive about the change and themselves. They are happy to have a job.
- **Informed pessimism:** The graduate may begin to question their ability to cope and find everything is not quite as they hoped.
- **Hopeful realism:** get over the initial shock, things start to improve again.
- They now see new opportunities and are positive and motivated.

They found that effective companies undertook a number of procedures in the early stages of a graduate's career with them. This included: education of new recruits about the company, its history, overall strategy and ways of working; providing training to develop the necessary professional skills; familiarising recruits with different parts of the organisation before moving them to specific assignments; shaping attitudes and encouraging recruits to become responsible for themselves; and introducing graduates to peers and other networks with whom they will be working in the future

The value of Graham and McKenzie's (1995) study is reinforced by Johnston (2003) who argues that there is a need to go beyond lists of skills to providing a more holistic approach. A key issue is separating what employers say from what their actual behaviour patterns are in relation to graduate employment. Johnston also points out that much of the research has been on a 'self-report' basis; an issue with self reporting is the problem of social desirability which Aldridge and Levine (2001:13) suggest that respondents will,

“over-report their virtuous acts and play down or ignore their failings and foibles. They will also try to appear consistent, with the result that their opinions and beliefs will seem more coherent than they really are”.

Thus Johnston (2003:419) argues that a key area of omission from the research into graduate employability has been the voices of the graduates which are “deafening in their silence”. There has been little published research on graduate's working conditions, job fulfilment and crucially an analysis of what employers say they want from graduates and what they actually want from them in practice.

Moreover, a key criticism that has been levelled at graduate employability research is that the concentration on skills is a consequence of the fact that much of the research is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council and is thus driven by government policy towards higher education focusing on the issues conceptualised by the policy makers. (Johnston 2003, Scott 2000). Gibbs (2000) and Holmes (2000) believe that this has led to an emphasis on the hard, factual components of employability that are manifested in the skills approach. Johnston (2003) and Holmes (2000) assert that employability tends to conform to a positivist paradigm where “knowledge is perceived as being value-free, external to the knower and reliable” (Johnston 2003:420). Johnston goes on to argue that information obtained from surveys is not value-free as researchers have selected the information that they perceive as “relevant and important and interpreted it as they want”. For example much current research on employment in the sport sector is funded by the sector skills council for sport, Skills Active which has a fundamental aim of establishing the skill needs of the industry. In their analysis of gaps and weaknesses of workforce development activity they identified that a high proportion of graduates find work in other sectors and concluded that “HEIs will need to adjust their policy of supplying popular courses in favour of providing degree courses that are relevant to employers” (Skills Active 2006:24). This is based on a presumption that graduates finding work in other sectors is negative and is related to ineffective courses rather than the motivations and aspirations of graduates, or perhaps a problem with the sport industry not being a desirable place to work. This leads into Johnston’s (2003:420) other criticism that a consequence of the positivist approach to graduate employability is that previous analysis of graduate employability identifies “what is happening, but does not explain why or how”. She advocates the need for graduate employment researchers to:

“focus far more in depth, probably using underlying theories and qualitative data, in addition to the quantitative data available, in order to access the complex processes involved” (Johnston 2003:421).

Nonetheless Johnston does acknowledge that valuable information has emerged from the positivist, quantitative approach.

In terms of how successful HE is in meeting employer needs, Harvey et al (1997) suggests that students, educators and employers are in much closer agreement than generally suggested as to what they want from HE - the production of analytical, critical, reflective and transformative graduates. The Lambert (2003:115) Review into HE and industry concluded that: "Overall, and contrary to some suggestions, universities are doing a good job in meeting the needs of businesses for skilled graduates and postgraduates in most areas". This corresponds with a study carried out by Nove et al (1998) on behalf of the Department for Education and Employment, which examined the expansion of graduate numbers on the labour market. It surveyed 800 graduate employing firms in England that employed 25 or more employees, from five broad industrial categories. They found that 75% of the managers in their survey felt that universities were meeting the need of their departments in terms of skill possessed by graduates, those who were most critical frequently cited a lack of technical ability. Some of the managers emphasised that the value of graduates lay as much in their potential as in the skills that they already possessed. This positive perception of graduates can also be found in sport as Neil Jenkinson (2001:44) noted that, "Degree level courses have progressed in that they do reflect the changing face of the industry, but we are still not working closely enough together".

This section has shown that there are a range of skills that are relevant to sport employment, however it has also illustrated that it is unwise to rely on a reductionist approach to identifying the needs of employers. These needs are not always clear and they are likely to change, particularly in an industry as dynamic as the sport industry. It is important to consider whether the notion of a limited number of key transferable skills applies to the needs of the leisure industry and to investigate the effectiveness of HE in providing them. Another issue is whether or not employers can reasonably expect employees to enter their organisation 'ready made' so that the employer has no need to develop them. However, there is a need for employers to consider how they support graduates in making this transition. Finally in order to understand the effectiveness of HE in developing appropriate graduates it is important to explore the perceptions and experiences of the graduates themselves.

2.5. Chapter Conclusions and Research Issues

This section will draw together the key findings of the review of literature and relate them to the overall aim of the study: *to investigate the employability of sport related graduates in the sport industry, through an analysis of the factors affecting the transition of the graduate from undergraduate studies to employment in the sport industry.* This will be achieved using the framework of the holistic approach to employability identified in the introduction to the study. Accordingly, the section will cover: the ability of graduates to obtain employment; the nature of that employment; the curricula process and graduate's attributes with regard to employment; the labour demand and specific needs of industry; the role of the employer; and the graduate's capacity to function in the job.

With regard to the graduate's ability to obtain employment, there has been little empirical research into the employment of sport graduates since the studies undertaken by Coalter and Potter (1990) and the CNAA (1991) which examined graduates of 1984 and 1985. As there has been a massive growth in the supply of HE degree courses and major changes in the sport industry there is a need for research into the level of employment of sport graduates. It is also important to identify and analyse the nature of the jobs sport graduates obtain, in order to address the issues of over supply of sport graduates and the notion that they are obtaining inappropriate, non-graduate jobs and as a consequence not finding fulfilling employment.

A significant element of a graduate being able to develop employment related attributes is the curriculum. A key supposition from the section on the 'Development of HE' was that as sport courses have developed within new universities; they are likely to be more vocational in their aims, which means that their curricula should emphasise the employability of graduates. In order to address objective 2: *Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry,* there is a need to examine if this is the case with regard to the aims of sport courses and the perceptions and views of HE staff. This is important as an

issue that emerged from the discussion on the 'Graduate Labour Market' was that sport related degree courses are not developing the appropriate attributes for sport employment. Consequently, there is also a necessity to explore the skills, knowledge and experiences developed during sport degrees and relate them to employer's needs. Hillage and Pollard (1998) also mention the importance of how graduates present the attributes they have; thus it is important to identify the perceptions that students have of the attributes that they have developed which gives an indication of what they present to employers. However, the discussion on employer needs found that taking a reductionist approach and matching up lists of skills is not particularly helpful on its own. Hence there is also need to investigate those graduates who have found employment and the appropriateness of their skills and knowledge. Another issue that emerged that relates to the curricula and attributes is the inaccurate perception graduates have been accused of having of the sport industry (Skills Active 2006, Yates 1984), particularly with regard to level of initial entry which may impact negatively on their employability. Hence it is important to examine the perceptions students have of the industry.

With regard to objective 1: *Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability*, it has been established that the sport industry has been a growing area for employment over a number of years and throughout its development there has been a demand for more appropriate skilled and qualified managers. This would appear a positive point with regard to Hillage and Pollard's (1998) and McQuaid and Lindsay's (2005) assertion that labour market demand will impact on employability. However, they have also identified the importance of employers' attitudes, and the analysis of the historical development of the industry has indicated that sport has not been a traditional graduate employer consequently, there may be issues with regard to employer attitudes to graduates and recruitment. Thus there is a need to examine the perceptions sport employers have of sport graduates.

Finally Harvey (2001) and Yorke (2006) identified that employability also needs to take into account the graduate's ability to function in the job once

they had been recruited; thus the need to address objective 3: *Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry, the factors that influence their transition into the job and how this impacts on employability.*

In order to gain a full picture of this transition, and to address the criticism of the lack of a voice from the graduates (Johnston 2003), it is important to examine the perceptions and experiences of the key individuals involved - the graduate, the employer and any significant others. This is supported by Cranmer (2006) who suggests that the issues arising around employability of graduates may be related to transition into the work place rather than longer term mismatches between labour market supply and demand.

An overarching criticism of previous research on graduate employability was the methodologies used to investigate the issues, which have been dominated by a positivist approach (Holmes 2000, Johnston 2003). There is a need to apply other methodologies which would enable the exploration of the complexities of graduate employability. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

Chapter 3

Research Philosophy and the Development of the Model of Graduate Employability

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter will provide the context to the research and the philosophical influences underpinning the study and their influence on the aims, objectives and research strategy. The research was undertaken in two distinct phases: section 1 will outline the reasons for the two phases and will explain the context and philosophy of Phase One of the study. Section 2 will discuss critical realism, which is the philosophy that underpins both Phase 2 and the overall analysis of the findings study. A fundamental tenet of critical realism is that knowledge is theory laden and conceptually mediated, therefore there is a need for the researcher to be reflexive and reflect critically upon his or her assumptions and their practical ramifications (Johnson and Duberley 2004). Consequently a fundamental aim of this chapter is to chart my philosophical journey from Phase One to Phase Two and its implications for the study.

3.1. Phase One

The reason the study is made up of two phases emanates from the funding of the initial research and the development of my understanding of my philosophical perspective. Phase One of the research was undertaken as part of a research project commissioned by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Consequently this phase was influenced by the research project group and the DfEE. The project group consisted of representatives from: SPRITO, (the national training organisation for sport and recreation), the UK Standing Conference for Leisure, Recreation and Sport (UKSCLRS), DfEE and myself as project officer. The stated requirements of the study, as set out in the contract, related to the matching of graduate skills to those demanded by employers in order to provide greater immediate returns for the employer and better employment prospects for the graduate. The objectives of the DfEE study are identified below; the first two objectives underpinned phase one of the methods of this study, objective three and four underpinned a concurrent study undertaken by SPRITO.

- to study the perceptions and expectations of current undergraduate students about the sport and recreation industry and the nature of employment;

- to study the experiences of graduates currently employed in the sport and recreation industry, to establish the extent to which their skills have proved relevant to, and have been utilised in, their employment;
- to identify recruitment policy and practice of employers within the sport and recreation industry with regard to graduates;
- to study employers' perceptions of graduates' skills and their relevance to the workplace.

Consequently, the methods used had to satisfy both the objectives of the DFEE and this study. The overall philosophy of my study has a subjectivist epistemology which accepts that complete objectivity is impossible and researchers will be influenced by their values and prejudices (Blaikie 1993). In this case the funding organisation, the DFEE, created an extra layer of values that influenced how the phenomena of graduate employment was studied, what was deemed as acceptable evidence and how the results were analysed (Blaikie 1993, Keat and Urry 1982). The review of literature established that research into graduate employability has been criticised for being dominated by a positivist methodology (Gibbs 2000, Holmes 2000, Johnston 2003), which is based on the assumption that a graduate's attributes and employers' needs are objectively observable and measurable and can therefore be synchronised (Holmes 2000). Consequently, research associated with the skills approach has concentrated on developing a recipe of the appropriate skills that a graduate should have in order to be effective in the workplace. Although no discussion took place within the group regarding the underpinning philosophy of the research, it could be argued that it was influenced by a positivist philosophy. The purpose was to objectively measure the numbers of graduates entering the sport industry and identify the factors that might influence this. It particularly focused on the skills and work experiences of the graduates, the appropriateness of undergraduate expectations and the preparation of undergraduates in relation to skills and work experience. Thus, it could be argued that the DFEE study was following the recipe approach criticised by Holmes (2000).

The Phase One research strategy reflected this positivist approach in that it involved two surveys of undergraduates and graduates; data was collected on a

number of variables to investigate if there were patterns of association between certain attributes and employment in sport (Johnson and Duberley 2004). A detailed discussion of the methods used is provided in Chapter 4. The outcome of the research continued to follow the recipe approach as information packs were developed to inform undergraduates about the nature of the industry and practical advice was provided on how they could sell themselves more effectively. Packs were also provided for HE institutions with advice on how to develop courses that would enhance the vocational attributes of students with regard to the sport industry. These packs were piloted on undergraduates and staff in five institutions, and focus groups were undertaken with these two groups to ascertain how useful these packs were. A copy of the final DFEE report can be found in Appendix 1.

Whilst undertaking the focus groups I included questions that related to the aims of this study. The reason was that when analysing the questionnaires I had to interpret some of the open questions in terms of their meanings and this led me to read literature on the interpretive approach. This convinced me that there was a need to try to understand the behaviour of the undergraduates, graduates and staff and how they made sense of their world and thus how this may relate to employability (Bryman 2004). A detailed discussion of the focus groups is provided in chapter 4.

The analysis of both the questionnaire and the focus groups provided valuable information on the patterns of graduate employment in the sport industry and the possible influences on it from the perspective of graduates and staff. However, I still felt that there was a need to delve deeper into the situation. I particularly felt that from undertaking the review of literature a key influence on employability was that the sport industry did not have a tradition of employing graduates. In addition, the definitions of employability emphasise the importance of the context of the industry therefore it seemed critical to examine the nature of the sport industry. However, rather than deconstructing it into what its needs were from graduates, as other studies had done, I felt there was a need to examine the inter-relations between the sport graduate and sport employer and how the context of the nature of the sport industry

impacted on this relationship. The reason for this was my own experiences of working in sports facilities management after graduating with a Sports Studies degree, starting as a recreation assistant and progressing to an assistant manager and after five years moving into HE.

Phase Two of the study commenced following the completion of the upgrade report and presentation from MPhil to PhD. Prior to the write up of the report I undertook a programme of distance learning modules for research training for PhD students. This involved critically analysing the research philosophy of Phase One and consequently led to engagement in literature on the philosophy of social sciences. From this I felt an affinity to the critical realist perspective which is now discussed in relation to my research.

3.2. Phase 2

Both positivists and critical realists believe there is an external reality which social scientists aim to explain. A key difference is critical realists emphasise a metaphysical ontology; that there is an independent external reality which can constrain or facilitate human action (Fairclough 2005, Bhasker 1986) and that observable phenomena can be explained with reference to underlying structures and mechanisms (Bhasker 1979). This contrasts with positivism which has a fundamental epistemological position that only phenomena that can be observed can be genuinely warranted as knowledge (Bryman 2004). The view that, it is possible to delve deeper than what is observed in order to explain social phenomena, is one of the reasons why I felt this perspective would enable a more powerful approach to explaining graduate employability. Another reason, which corresponded with my own beliefs, was that critical realism also emphasises epistemic relativism, which asserts that knowledge is socially constructed and that it is not possible to undertake a theory-neutral observation of the world (Johnson and Duberley 2004). Thus, access to reality is mediated by, what Fleetwood (2005:199) terms, a “pre-existing stock of conceptual resources”, that are used to interpret and understand reality and take appropriate action.

Critical realism proposes that reality has three levels; empirical, actual and real/deep (Smith 1998), as illustrated in figure 3.1. This indicates that the empirical level of perceptions, impressions and sensations are distinguished from the actual level of events. The notion of employability falls into the empirical level in terms of the theories of employability and the perceptions of whether a graduate has a fulfilling job, and whether or not they function in the job. The event is the obtaining of employment that they can function in and uses their attributes to the full. As identified at the beginning of this section the aim of the study is to go to a deeper level to uncover the structures and mechanisms that cause the event.

Empirical	<u>Perceptions, impressions, sensations</u>
Actual	<u>Events, states of affairs</u>
Real/deep	<u>Structures, mechanisms, powers/liabilities</u>

Figure 3.1. The three ontological levels of reality (Smith 1998:299)

Smith (1998) notes that many empiricists have a flat ontology, they do not believe the things that are experienced and the mental constructs used to understand the empirical can be distinguished. This denies the existence of anything that cannot be observed consequently, the deep level does not exist for the empiricist because any attempt to think beyond experience is just speculation. Reed (2005:1638) asserts that a vital task is to develop theoretical models of these “complex interactions and patterns of social relations that will generate and sustain over time and place”. This process is identified by Bhasker (1989) as ‘retroduction’ which Reed (2005:1631) defines as:

“a mode of inference that aims at discovering the underlying structures or mechanisms that produce tendencies or regularities under certain conditions through a process of model building, testing and evaluation”.

This statement illustrates that Phase One of the research was of value in identifying patterns of graduate employment, but there is a need to move to a deeper level to discover the mechanism and structures that cause graduate employability. It is important to note that the critical realist meaning of causality is not about the relationship between discrete events (cause and

affect), i.e. having specific attributes will make you employable. Sayer (2000) explains that causality concerns the causal powers or liabilities of objects or relations; that is, the ability of a structure to act in a way, known as a mechanism, that will produce events (Smith 1998). Critical realists argue that the social world is an open system, so empirical regularity is not necessary to establish causality and the same causal powers may produce different outcomes depending on their spatio-temporal relations with other objects (Smith 1998, Sayer 2000). These other objects have their own causal powers which may trigger, block or modify the action of the initial object (Sayer 2000). Hence, the study will not only uncover the structures and mechanisms of employability but how they inter relate with other structures and mechanism. Sayer's (2000) illustration of causality is shown in Figure 3.2 and its application to sport is shown in the following Figure 3.3.

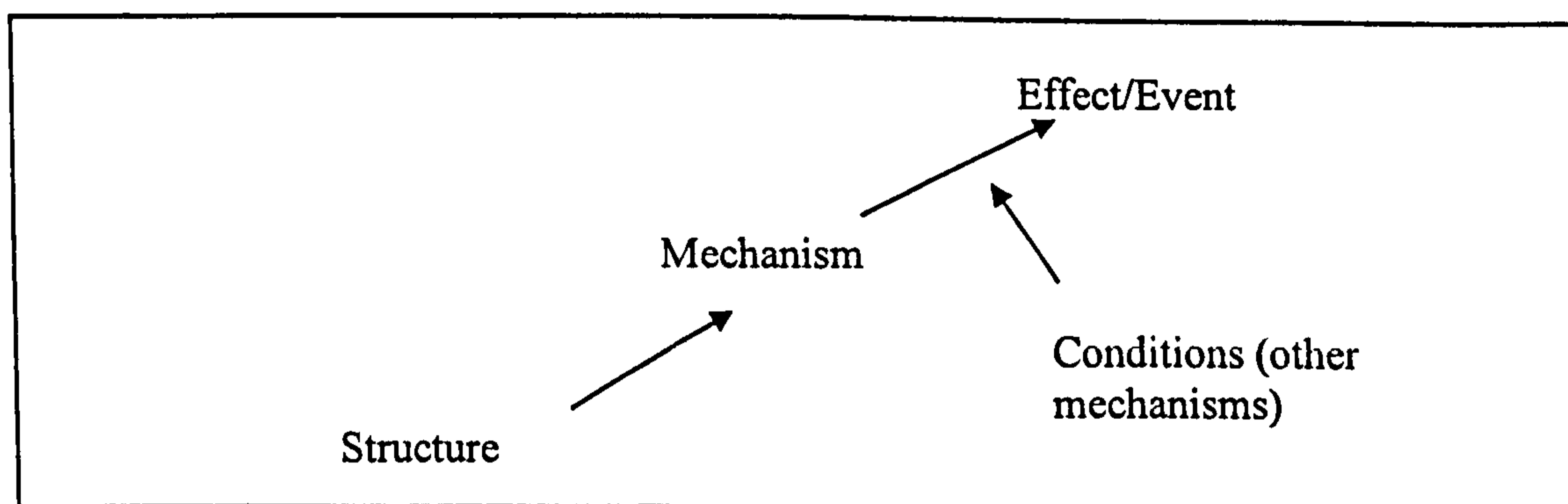


Figure 3.2: Critical realist view of causation (Sayer 2000:15)

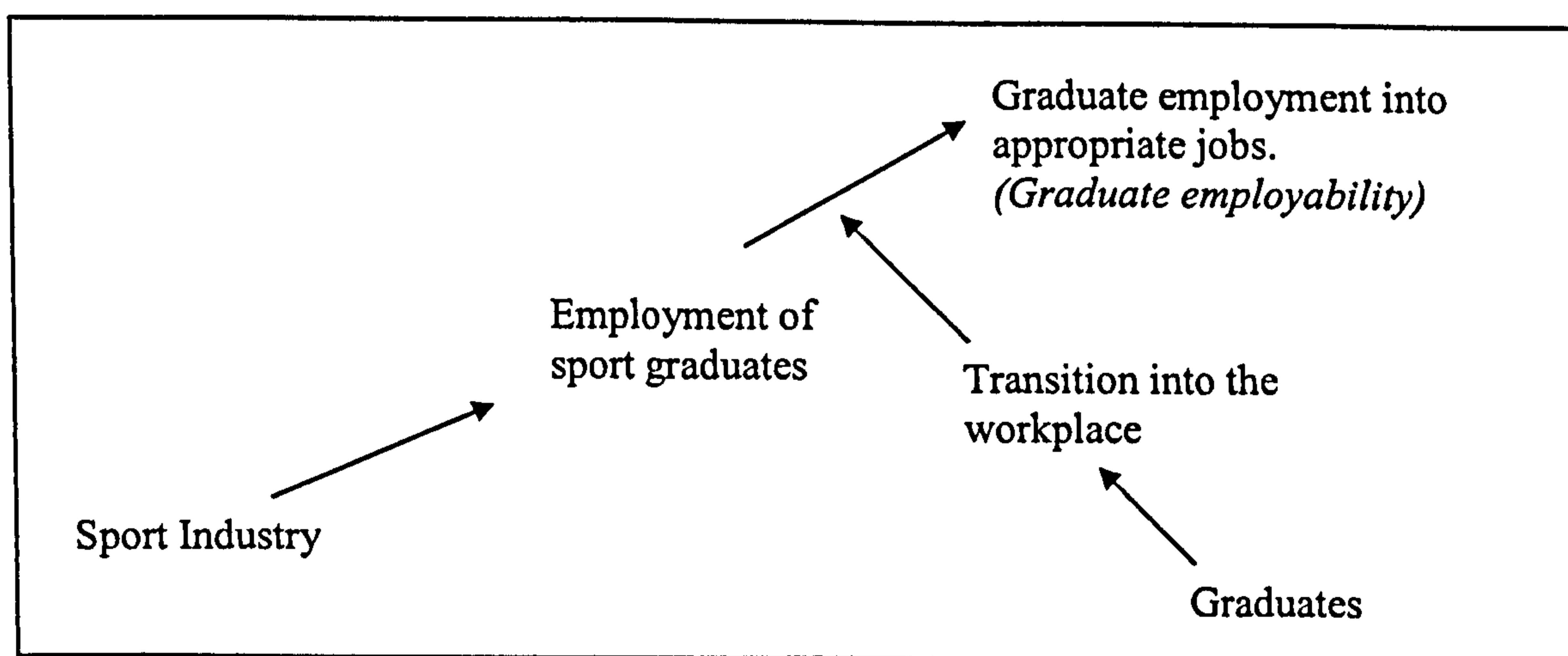


Figure 3.3: Model of Causation of graduate employability in sport (Adapted from Sayer 2003)

Figure 3.3 shows that the nature of the sport industry generates the underlying structures that influence the employment of sport graduates (the mechanism) and has a causal effect on the event of the graduate obtaining an appropriate graduate job (or not). The analysis of the nature of the sport industry in Chapter 2 suggested that it is not conducive to sport graduates obtaining appropriate graduate jobs. However, Figure 3.3 illustrates that the causal power of this structure may be modified (or not) by its inter-relationship with nature of the graduate and the attributes they have (other mechanism); the fusion of the causal powers of the nature of the industry and the graduate attributes then impact on graduate employability. Chapter 2 established that previous research on employability has identified that the attributes of the graduate impact on employability, however it also suggested graduate employability is complex and there may be other mechanisms at work. Consequently the aim of the study is to *explain the employability of sport related graduates in the sport industry, through an analysis of the factors affecting the transition of the graduate from undergraduate studies to employment in the sport industry.*

The holistic approach to employability used in this study identified the importance of the graduate obtaining fulfilling employment and being able to perform successfully in the job. The critical realist approach of retrodution enables the identification of the structures and mechanisms that produce the patterns of graduate employability within the sport industry. The models of graduate employability that were discussed in Chapter One identified the importance of the structures of HE and their inter-relationship with the graduate and the structures of the industry and this led to the development of objectives one and two.

- *Objective 1: Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability*
- *Objective 2: Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry.*

Fleetwood (2005), Sayer (2000), Bhasker (1986) and Keat and Urry (1982) all concur that social structures are human constructions and although they are dependent on human activity this does not mean that they do not exist independently of our identification. A fundamental tenet of critical realism is that agency and structure are internally related and can only exist in virtue of the other (Fleetwood 2005, Sayer 2000, Bhasker 1986 and Keat and Urry 1982).

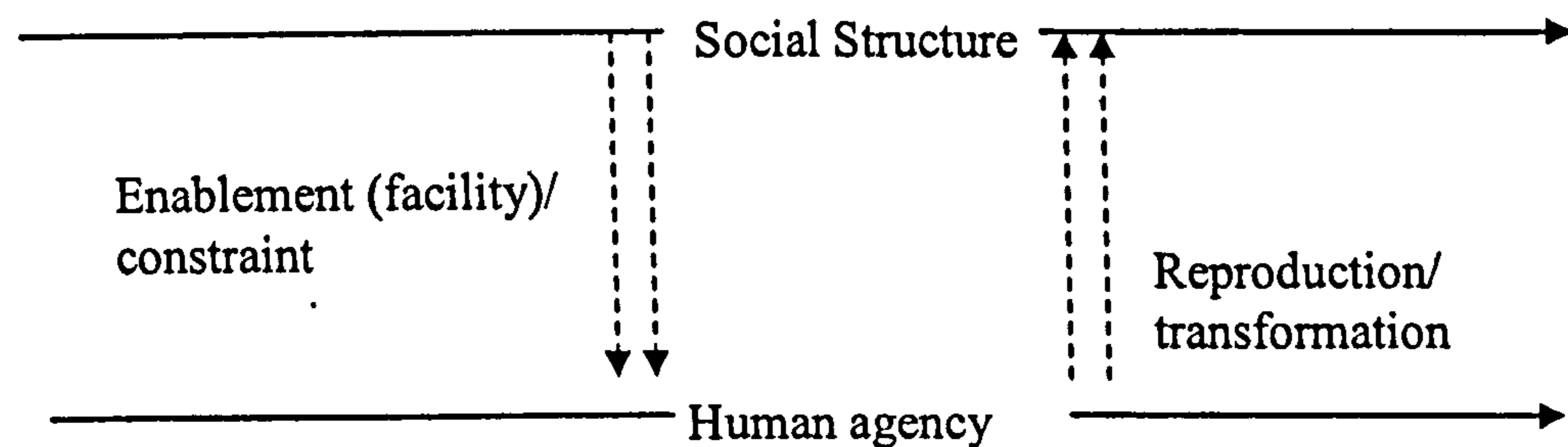


Figure 3.4. Model of the Society/person connection (Smith 1998)

Smith's (1998) adaptation of Bhasker's model of the society/person connection (Figure 3.4) shows that human agency reproduces/ transforms social structures through the actual practices of members of society. Moreover, those social structures operate as constraints for certain agents but may provide opportunities for others (Smith 1998). Keat and Urry (1982) argue that the subjective meanings through which individuals assess, interpret, and actively construct their patterns of action within the given structures are crucial for understanding and explaining social phenomena. This is explained well by Manicas (1998:320) that because:

“social structures are incarnate in the practices of persons....persons have beliefs, interests, goals and practical knowledge acquired in their epigenesis as members of society that they do what they do and thus sustain (and transform) the structures”.

Consequently, in the case of graduate employability, it is important to understand the actions of key individuals such as the graduate, the employer and significant others. However, Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2001) stress that, whereas postmodernism contends that the social world is simply socially constructed, the critical realist maintains that social phenomena can exist without the agents involved having knowledge of them and are not reducible

to only discourse. Hence, as identified earlier, social phenomena exist independently of their identification. Smith (1998) and Fairclough (2005) maintain that a critical realist perspective aims to explain social phenomena in terms of the causal powers of the social structures and their interaction with human agency which influence those structures.

This inter relationship between social structures and human agency can be further understood by examining another key dimension of the critical realist approach; the significance of time (Mutch 1999). This is highlighted by Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2001:14) who maintain that: “nothing happens out of nothing. Agents do not create or produce structures ab ignition, rather they recreate, reproduce and/or transform a set of pre-existing structures”. Moreover, Mutch (1999:329) explains that critical realism emphasises human choice and that “it is always open to humans to act in manners which are not suggested by the situations in which they find themselves”. He explains that it is not the individual’s immediate actions that create social structures, although they may contribute to their reproduction, these structures are the consequence, intended or otherwise, of previous human activity. Thus, an individual’s actions in the present can change or reinforce current structures which will go on to form the constraints or opportunities for another set of actions. This temporal dimension is illustrated by Archer’s (1995) model which superimposes her Morphogenetic/static Cycle onto Bhasker’s transformational model (fig 3.5).

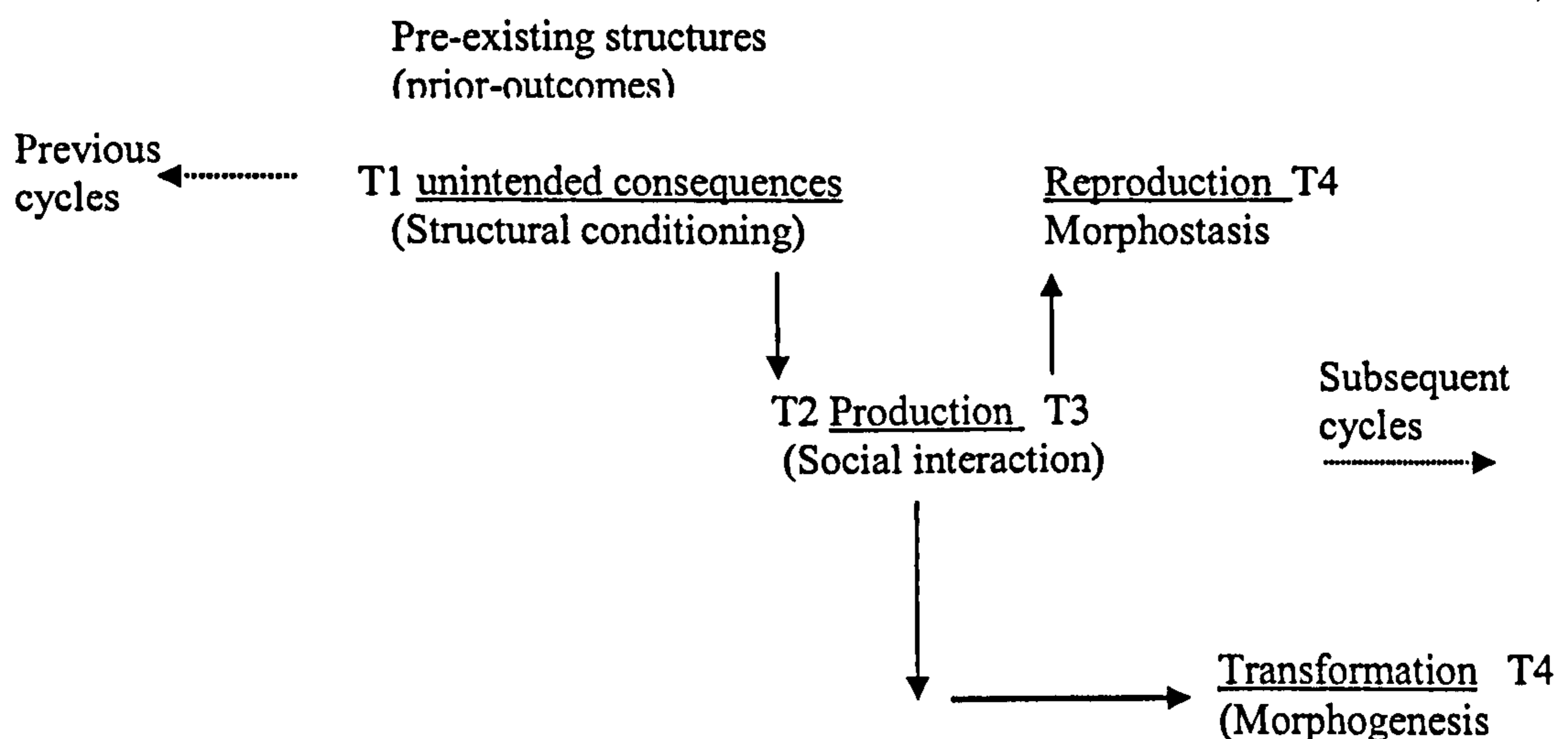


Figure 3.5: Superimposing the Transformational Model of Social Action and the Morphogenetic/static cycle (Source Archer 1995)

Fleetwood (2005:203) notes that it is important to emphasise that “action is a continuous, cyclical flow over time”. With regard to Figure 3.5, Archer (1998) suggests that the analysis of any social interaction should start at T1 – the pre-existing structures that have emerged from a prior cycle and thus govern the subsequent social interaction. In the case of graduate employability, Chapter 2’s in-depth historical review of the structure and development of the sport industry, graduates and HE has uncovered the pre-existing structures of graduate employability of sport students.

At T2 in Archer’s model, agents find themselves interacting with the pre-existing structures and a process of production is initiated where these agents do whatever it is they can do given the nature of these pre-existing structures – i.e. they are constrained and enabled by them. With regard to graduate employability in sport a major area that has not been researched is the graduate’s interaction with the pre-existing structures of the sport industry and how this constrains or enables their transition into work. Hence objective 3 of this study: *Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry and the factors that influence their transition into the work.* With regard to Archer’s model between T2 and T3 the pre-existing structures undergo change, which is completed by T4 where structures are reproduced (i.e. morphostatis occurs) or transformed (i.e. morphogenesis occurs). After T4 a new cycle starts again.

The influence of the critical realist philosophy encouraged me to use the notion of retrodution to devise the ‘Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry’ shown in Figure 3.7. It is developed from the analysis of the structure and development of Sport and HE in Chapter 2 and uses Archer’s morphogenetic cycle to create the abstract model of the context and interaction of the possible structures and mechanisms that cause graduate employability. How the model corresponds to Archer’s (1998) model is shown by the large arrows at the top of the diagram which also indicate the temporal dimension.

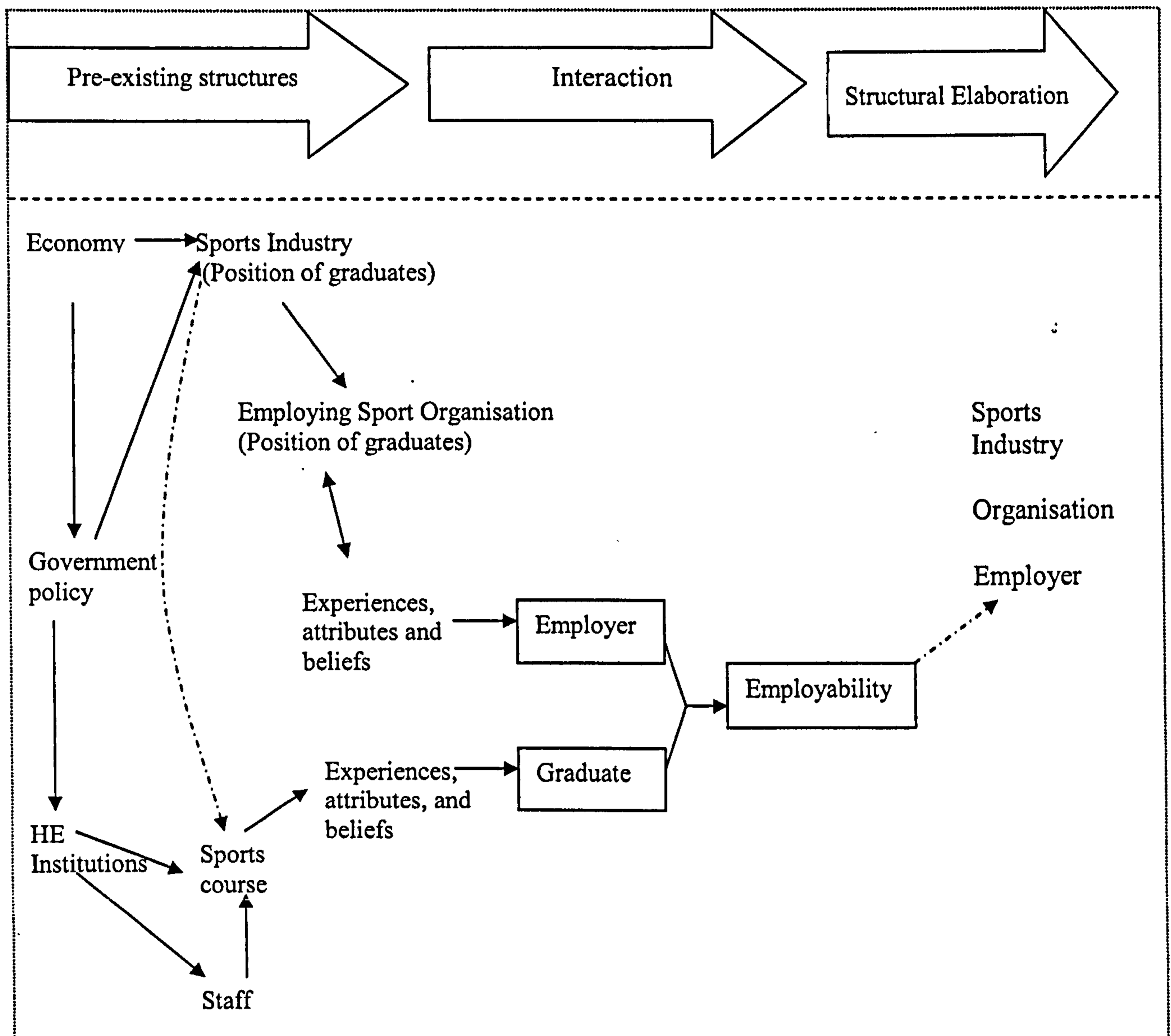


Figure 3.7: Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Shown with Archer's (1998) model of the Morphogenetic/static cycle above)

The model shows the pre-existing structures of the sport industry and HE and that they are both influenced by the economy and government policy. These structures provide the context for the interaction between the graduate and employer in terms of the influence on each one's experiences, attributes and beliefs about graduates working in sport. The model proposes that these impact on the interaction between the graduate and employer, influencing the graduate's transition into the workplace and subsequently, the graduate's employability. The outcome of the transition and the graduate's employability then interacts back with the structures of the sport industry and HE, which either remain as they are (morphostatis) or change (morphogenesis). For

example if the graduate is successfully employed and performs well in a sport organisation this may impact on the position of graduate within the organisation, and if many graduates are effectively employed in the sport organisations this may impact on the position of graduates within the sport industry. A more positive position for graduates within the sport industry would then create a changed context for sport graduates in the next cycle.

A major criticism of critical realism is that if it accepts that absolute knowledge is not possible and access to reality is conceptually mediated, how do we know that the structures and mechanism identified in the model are real (Johnson and Duberley 2004)? Sayer (1992) is one of the few critical realist commentators that address this issue and he does so through the use of the notion of 'practical adequacy'. This is defined as the extent to which a theory or model "generates expectations about the world and about the results of our actions that are actually realised" (Sayer 2000:43). That is to say the knowledge developed via the model is evaluated by the way it works in practice. Johnson and Duberley (2004:162) term this aspect of critical realism pragmatic and suggest that reality provides a feedback mechanism; if the theory or model allows people to:

"interact satisfactorily with their social or natural environments then it is reinforced, but if from the stance of the theory, those environments become unpredictable then the theory is undermined and is likely to change".

Consequently in order to assess if the model and proposed theory is practically adequate there is a need to evaluate how it works in practice in terms of explaining graduate employability in the sport industry.

The critical realist approach has implications for the methodologies employed and lends itself to multi-methodological approaches (Johnson and Duberley 2004, Sayer 2000). However, Sayer (2000) maintains that the selection of methods must relate to the nature of the object to be studied and what needs to be learnt about it. This is supported by Outhwaite (1998:291) who states that; "the conception of the object of inquiry will crucially determine the sorts of method which are appropriate to its investigation". Sayer (2000) does not use

the traditional terms of quantitative and qualitative research but extensive and intensive research. He observes that extensive research searches for regularities, properties and patterns in a population. From a critical realist perspective, Phase One identifies the sport graduates' patterns of employability which, though it was influenced by the DFEE's perspective and undertaken prior to my engagement with critical realism, is still extremely valuable for this study. The review of literature identified that there had been little research on the patterns of graduate employment in sport since the mid 1980's and that there have been changes in both HE provision for sport courses and the sport industry; thus there is a need to establish what the situation is regarding the employment of sport graduates. Critical realism influences the study in that a retroductive approach is used to discover the structures and mechanisms that underlie these outcomes that are patterns of graduate employment and graduate employability. Consequently, following the analysis of the findings of the phase one research in Chapter 6, the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Figure 3.7) will be reviewed and developed in order to explain the mechanisms and structures of employability. This will provide a framework for Phase Two of the study which uses intensive research, in the form of case studies, to examine employability of the graduate in situ and also to assess the practical adequacy of the model.

Intensive research starts with individuals and interprets meanings in context, it is primarily concerned with what makes things happen in specific cases and is strong on causal explanation (Sayer 1992). It is important to note that it is not the case that investigation of structure is best served by extensive methods and investigation of agency is best served by intensive methods, but methodologies must be developed that enable understanding of the relations between the two (Scott 2005). The next chapter will explain the methods that were used in Phase One and need to be read in the context of the positivist influences on the survey and the interpretivist influences on the focus groups. Following the methods (Chapter 5), the results from Phase One will be analysed, but in the context of a critical realist perspective and a revised model of graduate employability in sport will be put forward. A further review of

literature pertaining to organisational studies will be provided in Chapter 6 in order to inform the analysis of Phase Two of the research which involves case studies of graduates' transition into sport employment. For clarity Figure 3.8 provides a chart of the phases of the research and how each stage corresponds to the philosophical perspectives influencing the study. This chart will be reiterated at the start of each chapter to highlight the particular phase in the research process.

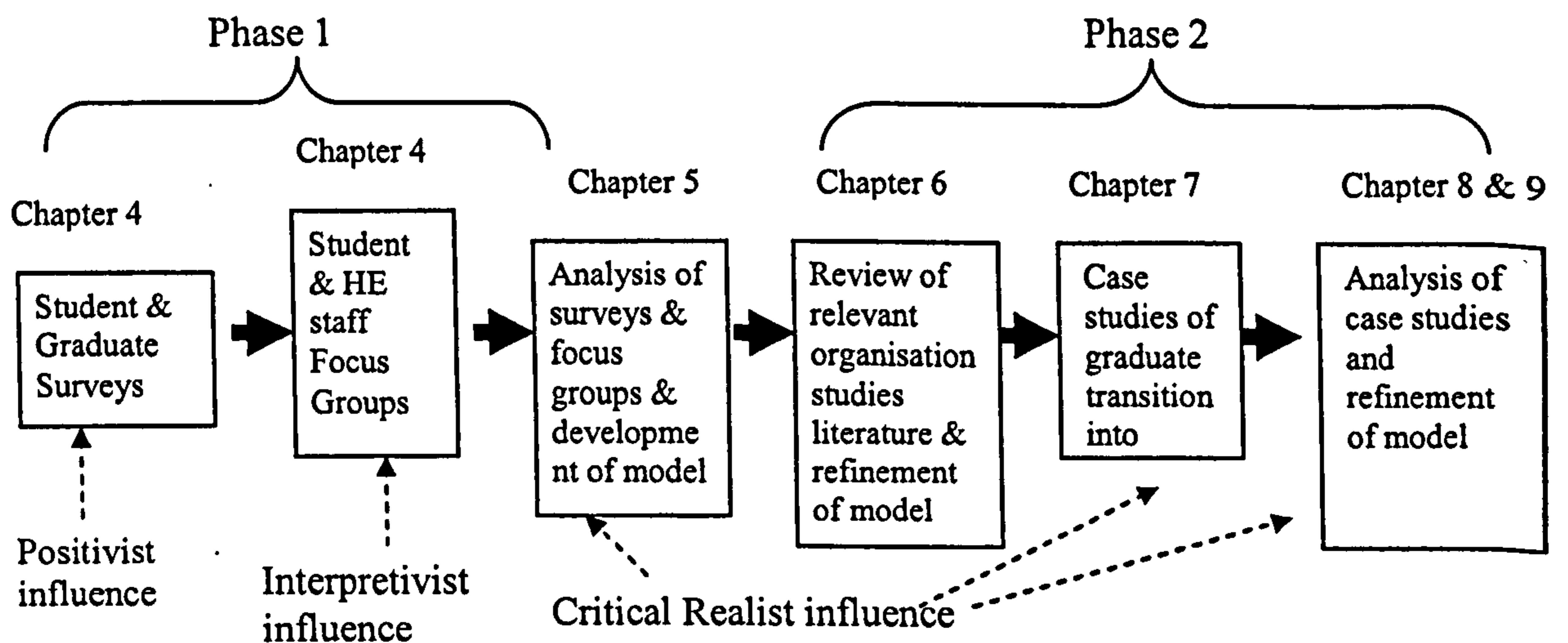


Figure 3.8. Phases of the Research

Chapter Four
Phase One Research Methods

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter will explain and justify the multi method approach used in this phase. The research followed a sequential procedure with the aim of elaborating on and expanding the findings of one method with another method (Cresswell 2003). An extensive approach using a survey was undertaken followed by an intensive approach using focus groups. The sequence of the methods is illustrated in figure 4.1 and the following sections will describe each in turn.

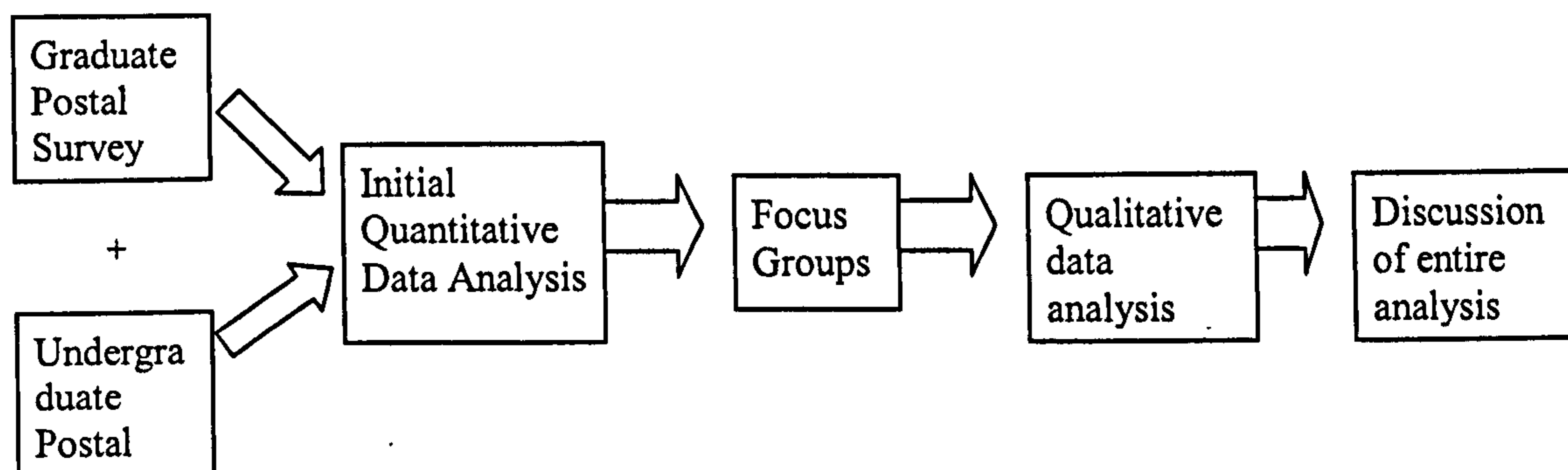


Figure 4.1: The sequence of methods used.

4.1. Extensive Approach

Surveys were used in order to identify the patterns and levels of employment of sport graduates and the broad attributes, expectations and perceptions of those graduates and final year sport students. Questionnaires were used as it was the most practical method of collecting standardised information about a large group of people, i.e. students and graduates from different types of sport related courses. (Oppenheim 2004). This enables an overall picture to be developed of the population and basic associations to be identified through analysis of the results using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following two sections will describe each survey in terms of objectives and research questions, the design of the questionnaire, sample method and distribution. It is important to note that due to the complexity of sport employability each objective will not be completely addressed by the research questions underpinning the extensive methods; the intensive methods will also provide data that is relevant to the objectives.

4.1.1. Undergraduate Survey

Survey Design

The survey of undergraduates was undertaken to address objective 2 and the corresponding research questions which are identified below.

Objective 2: Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced in relation to employability in the sport industry.

Research Questions

- 2.1. What skills and knowledge do students' perceive they gain from HE sport courses?
- 2.2. What are the aims and expectations of students in terms of employment in the sport industry?
- 2.3. What perceptions do students have of the needs of sport employers?
- 2.4. What perceptions do students have with regard to the appropriateness of their degree to their employment.

In order to achieve Objective 2 and its corresponding research questions a questionnaire was used to gather descriptive data on the pertinent variables. The following section will explain how the data was collected for each of those variables. To aid explanation the relevant question numbers are provided in the text and a copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

With regard to skills the variable that the questionnaire is measuring are the students' perceptions rather than the actual skills they have gained, which would be beyond the scope of a questionnaire. The word 'skills' was used as this is the terminology that is used within the literature on graduate employability (Coalter 1990, Yates 1984, Gunn 1984, Robbins 1963, Gibbons 1995), and the project officer and project team also felt that it is the term that is used in HE and would be understood by students. Open questions were used to collect this data as it was important not to lead the students; the use of tick boxes next to a list of skills would have prompted students and would not have enabled them to provide a spontaneous answer (Q14). A list may have also indicated to the students what skills they should have developed on the course

and they may have ticked them all without reflecting on whether they had actually developed them. Open questions also meant that the answers were not constrained by the skills that the researchers' thought the students should have gained. The same approach was also used to collect the skills and knowledge that students' perceived employers' needed (Q21 and Q24).

The aims of students in relation to employment in the industry were broken down into the variables of the types of job that they were considering working in and the type of employer. The reason for splitting type of job from type of employer corresponds to the public, private and voluntary structure of the industry and the finding in Chapter 2 that graduates had generally been employed in the public sector (Coalter and Potter 1990, Yates 1984, Murphy 1980). With the increased importance of the commercial sector it was also of interest to see if graduates aspired to work there. As with skills and knowledge, the type of job was presented as an open question so as not to lead the students (Q16 and Q18). Also the DfEE requested that the commercial sector be broken down into large, medium and small organisations; as they were interested in whether or not undergraduates aimed to work in small and medium organisations (SMEs). Student expectations were determined through the level at which they expected to enter employment (Q20). These categories were informed by previous unpublished research by SPRITO (1996) which collected information on the structure of the sport and recreation industry. In order to ascertain students' perception of their degrees in meeting employers' skills and knowledge needs, a five point likert scale was used (Q22 and 23).

Data was also collected on work experience to enable analysis of the extent to which it was associated with the types of skills and knowledge gained (Q7,8,9, 10,12, 13). Closed questions were used to collect data on factual aspects such as: age, mode of study, whether or not students were working and whether or not they wanted to work in sport and recreation in the future (Q1-6, Q15).

Once the questionnaire had been constructed a two stage pilot study was undertaken. The first pilot was conducted with five second year students studying a Sports Studies degree at Liverpool Hope University College. The

aim of this pilot was to examine the phrasing, how the respondents interpreted the questions' meanings and the length of the questionnaire. From this the structure of the questionnaire and the phrasing of some of the questions were changed: for example Q24 and Q25 had originally been linked together so that specific knowledge and skills were linked to specific methods of development, again this was complicated and the two were separated. Feedback from the pilot also suggested that too many questions asked for lists of skills which became repetitive. For example, in the initial questionnaire students were asked to list the skills developed in their work experience, this was removed as it was felt that this could be identified by comparing the students who had undertaken work experience with the ones who had not. A pilot of the whole undergraduate questionnaire was undertaken with 40 second year Sports Studies students from Liverpool Hope completing the questionnaire at the end of a lecture; as this was how the questionnaire was intended to be completed in the field. The main change from this pilot was that the questionnaire was further shortened by taking out a question which asked students to list their skills from part time work or previous work.

Sample Method and Distribution

A convenience sampling approach was used for the undergraduate survey. The sample was from English, Welsh and Northern Irish HE institutions belonging to the UKSCLRS who were prepared to participate in the research. The reason for this was that the UKSCLRS was one of the partners in the research. Scottish institutions were not included in the survey as SPRITO did not cover Scotland. At the time of the research there were 26 members of UKSCLRS eligible and 19 took part in the survey (see Appendix 3). The institutions were approached through their named contact for the UKSCLRS. Table 4.1 summarises the reasons for those institutions who did not take part.

Table 4.1: Reasons for Non Participation of Institutions.

Reason	Number of Institutions
Courses were not sport related	2
Students no longer at college	2
No level 3	1
Refused to take part	1
Could not contact	1

Convenience sampling can compromise the validity of the results as it may create a bias within the sample, for example only certain types of institutions belonged to the UKSCLRS (Aldridge and Levine 2001). All institutions that provide sport, leisure or recreation related courses are eligible to join the UKSCLRS. At the time of the survey there were 60 HE institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that offered sport related courses; thus there is a possibility of bias as only 43% were members. If the sample is analysed in relation to type of institution then the main gap is pre 1992 universities. The review of literature identified that sport related courses are predominantly found in post 1992 universities (Pratt 1997, CNA 1991), however there were seven pre 1992 universities offering sport related courses at the time of the study. This means that a comparison cannot be made between the employment of pre and post 1992 courses and it may be that pre 1992 universities are perceived as being of higher status than post 1992 which may mean those graduates were more likely to be employed.

The questionnaires were distributed across the 19 institutions via the named contact for each institution. A list of institutions, numbers of questionnaires sent and completed, and individual response rates achieved are provided in Appendix 3. Overall 1411 questionnaires were sent out to final year students and 585 were returned giving an overall response rate of 41%. Appendix 3 indicates that the response rate varied considerably across the institutions, the reason for this was due to the variation in the method of distributing questionnaires. This variation occurred due to the timing of the survey which took place in April 1996; many of the final year students had finished formal teaching thus institutions were asked to distribute in the most appropriate manner to their circumstances. The method used by each institution is shown in the Appendix 3. This also meant that individual reminders were not possible due to institutions being the focus for the distribution, although telephone prompts were made to the contacts to ask them to encourage students to return the questionnaires. Once students had completed the questionnaires, these were returned to the institution's contact and then the batch was sent back to the researcher. The exception was the two postal surveys where institutions

were provided with addressed envelopes which they sent out with the questionnaires to the students.

The complexity of the distribution means that the actual response rate may be higher than that calculated as some institutions may not have distributed all of their questionnaires. However the issue is not necessarily about the response rate but whether there is a possibility of bias in the sample. The questionnaires were returned from students on a wide range of courses and the percentage of males and females who responded were similar to their participation rates in HE (Institute for Employment Studies 1997).

4.1.2. Graduate Survey.

Survey Design

A survey of graduates was undertaken to address the objectives of the study and their corresponding research questions.

Objective 2: Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced and how this influences employability in the sport industry.

Research Questions:

- 2.5. To what extent do graduates use the skills and knowledge gained whilst in higher education in their employment?
- 2.6. What are the perceptions of graduates with regard to the appropriateness of their degree to their employment?

Objective 1: Examine the nature of graduate employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability.

Research Questions:

- 1.1. What are the levels of employment of sport graduates?
- 1.2. What types of jobs do sport graduates obtain?
- 1.3. What are the skills and knowledge graduates' perceive are required for employment in the sport industry?

- 1.4. What were the expectations of graduates in terms of sport employment and how did they correspond with the actual outcomes of employment?
- 1.5. How do the attributes of the sport graduates correspond to those required in the sport industry.

Objective 3: Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry and the factors that influence their transition into the work.

Research Questions:

- 3.1. What factors are associated with a graduate who gains employment in the sport industry?
- 3.2. What is the career progression of sport graduates in their first three years of employment?
- 3.3. What induction and training have graduates had?
- 3.4. Do graduates have a staff development programme?
- 3.5. What are the future intentions of graduates?

In order to achieve the above objectives and research questions, data on the key variables were collected using a questionnaire (see Appendix 4). With regard to the patterns of employment, factual questions were used to collect information on their current and previous jobs; this included a table which enabled the respondent to show the detail of all the jobs held since graduating in order to collect information on career progression. (Q16-19) Questions were also included pertaining to the variables that were identified as possibly influencing the employment of graduates; these were determined by previous research (Yates 1984, Gunn 1984, Brennan et al 1996, Wellington 1987) and the experiences of the project team. These were: the degree classification the graduate had gained (Q7), the theoretical content of the courses (Q8), the skills they had developed whilst undertaking these courses (Q9), their work experience (Q13 -15) and the other qualifications they had undertaken whilst studying (Q10,11).

The skills and knowledge required in the graduate's current job were also collected in order to ascertain the needs of sport jobs (Q22). As with the

undergraduate survey, open questions were used so as not to lead the graduates. In order to evaluate relevance of the graduates' degrees to their current jobs a number of areas of questioning were followed. As with the undergraduate survey, an open question was included regarding perception of the skills gained during their degree (Q9). This was to enable a comparison between, the skills the graduates said that they used in their current job and the skills that they felt that they had developed in their degree. Thus any disparities between the two could be identified which could indicate either a gap in preparation or students having skills and knowledge not being used which might suggest over-education (Mason 1995). These two issues were further investigated by asking the students directly what skills and knowledge they needed to develop further (Q28) and if their current job uses the skills and knowledge they gained during their degree (Q23). Additionally, two five point likert scale closed questions were included to ask graduates directly the extent to which they felt that their programme had provided them with the relevant skills and knowledge (Q25, 26).

Once the questionnaire had been constructed a two stage pilot study was undertaken. To examine the phrasing and how the respondents interpreted the questions' meanings, the first stage involved testing the questionnaire on five staff from Liverpool Hope University College. These were the sports facilities manager, a laboratory technician and three lecturing staff; all had undertaken a sport degree within the previous six years. I sat with the respondents as they were completing the questionnaire and changes were made following their comments. These changes were generally related to the order of the questionnaire and the phrasing of questions, for example the initial structure of Q19 was seen as too complicated and it was restructured in order to simplify it. Also more detailed questions had been asked about the nature of the induction programme and it was felt that these could be edited as those involved in the pilot suggested that the questionnaire was too long. In the second stage of the pilot the questionnaire was tested in situ by mailing it to eight sport graduates who had been fellow students of the HE staff in the initial pilot. The respondents were asked to write on the questionnaires where

they experienced any difficulty and again slight changes were made in phrasing in response to those comments.

Sample

The sample of graduates was from HE institutions belonging to the UKSCLRS that had participated in the undergraduate research and were willing and able to contact their graduates. This was a key issue for this survey as the names and addresses of graduates were generally held by administrative units such as registry, careers and alumni within the institution and were difficult to obtain due to the Data Protection Act. Thus there was a reliance on administrative staff to distribute the questionnaires; subsequently only ten of the institutions took part in the survey (a list is provided in Appendix 5). 1,490 questionnaires were sent to sport graduates of the ten institutions who graduated in 1993, 1994 and 1995. 294 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of approximately 20%. Due to the fact that the questionnaire was sent by the individual HE institutions themselves reminders were not possible. The response rate may have been affected by institutions not distributing all the questionnaires, also the addresses for earlier graduates may not have been current. De Vaus (1996) suggests that a major problem with low response rates is whether or not they are representative. As with the undergraduate survey, consideration was given to any systematic bias in the results. It was felt that this was not the case as the main results were in line with similar surveys of graduates at the same time (Purcell and Pitcher, 1996 and Levy and MacKenzie, 1996). Also, questionnaires were returned from graduates on a wide range of courses and the percentage of males and females who responded were similar to overall HE participation rates (Institute for Employment Studies 1997).

Analysis

Both the student and graduate questionnaires were analysed using SPSS. Closed questions were coded and the data entered in the package. Open questions were assigned codes as the questionnaires were analysed, which De Vaus (1996) suggests lead to the researcher imposing their own order on the data. This occurred in the research to some extent, answers that were not

identical, but appeared to have the same meaning, were coded into a single category. This depended on my interpretation which although I felt would not significantly influence the results prompted me to reflect on the need for qualitative research that would examine the students own meanings of open questions. Descriptive statistics were used to identify patterns of association which could inform areas for discussion within the qualitative methods in Phase Two. Critical realism acknowledges the value of descriptive statistics as a starting point for investigations as the identification of patterns may indicate the underlying structures and mechanisms generating them and they may also supplement qualitative descriptions (Sayer 1992, Mingers 2006).

4.2. Intensive Approach

The intensive phase of the study was undertaken using focus groups of HE staff and students. Focus groups involve “engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion ‘focused’ around a particular topic or set of issues” (Wilkinson 2004:177). This section will justify the use of focus groups in relation to the objectives and corresponding research questions that underpin this phase of the research, it will then outline how the research was undertaken.

The extensive element of Phase One began to address objective 2: *Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced and how this influences employability in the sport industry*. However the extensive methods only provide a broad picture of the nature of graduates being produced by sport courses. It was felt, after a preliminary analysis of the results, that richer information was needed about the perceptions, beliefs, actions and intentions of undergraduates to explain the patterns found in the surveys. Intensive methods, such as focus groups, enable greater understanding of the more intricate details of the phenomenon collected with questionnaires (Krueger and Casey 2000, Strauss and Corbin 1998). The survey had only been of undergraduates and graduates and had excluded information from HE staff, who are key agents in the development and

delivery of courses which impact on the nature of graduates produced. Consequently, focus groups were undertaken with undergraduates and staff in relation to objective 2 and the corresponding undergraduate research questions restated below. This section will also identify separate research questions for the staff.

Undergraduates: Research Questions

- 2.1. What are the skills students perceive they gain from HE sport courses?
- 2.2. What are the aims and expectations of students in terms of employment in the sport industry?
- 2.3. What are the perceptions students have of the needs of sport employers?
- 2.4. What are the perceptions of students with regard to the appropriateness of their degree to their intended employment.

A fundamental element of the critical realist approach is to explore how human agents interact with social structures and how their beliefs, interests, goals and practical knowledge sustain or transform structures (Manicas 1998). Focus groups are valuable in exploring experiences, opinions, behaviour, concerns and motivation and how they are constructed. (Wilkinson 2004, Krueger and Casey 2000, Barbour and Kitzinger 1999, Morgan 1988). This is particularly important in this study as it enables the exploration of why students have certain perceptions and expectations of sport employment and if and why they feel certain skills and knowledge are important. This may impact on how they approach gaining employment in sport and how they act once they are employed, which then impacts on their employability.

Wilkinson (1998) argues that focus groups are more naturalistic than interviews and, as other researchers have observed, they enable the researcher to learn about how respondents talk about the topic studied as they hear the language and vernacular used by them (Wilkinson 2004, Stewart and Shandasani 1990). This is important as it informs the interpretation of the skills and knowledge listed in the questionnaire. However, Smithson (2000:105, 116) makes a note of caution when she states that “focus groups should not be analysed as if they are naturally occurring discussions, but as

discussions occurring in a specific, controlled setting". She also goes on to say that the "opinions stated in the focus groups should be viewed not as previously formed, static things which people brought to the focus group, but as constructed social situations."

Staff: Research Questions.

- 2.7. What are the aims of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in providing sport courses?
- 2.8. To what extent do HE courses attempt to meet the needs of sport and recreation employers?
- 2.9. What is the attitude of sports staff towards employability of sport graduates.
- 2.10. What do HEI sports staff perceive are the needs of employers?

Kitzinger (1994:105) suggests that focus groups allow the researcher "to access sites of collective remembering", through the use of pre-formed groups. Focus groups enable staff to react to and build on the responses of other staff, creating a synergistic effort regarding their individual and collective philosophy, aims and perceptions (Wilkinson 2004). The method also identifies where there are disagreements, confusion and contradiction, thus tensions may be seen within staff discussion (Smithson 2000). This allows data to be collected in the social context in which the aims of the HE programme and the needs of employers were developed and decisions on the nature of the programme were made. It also enables examination of the lecturers' perceptions of the aims of HE, particularly in relation to vocationalism and traditional notions of HE. It also enables exploration of the lecturers' perceptions of employers' needs. Thus the relationship between the lecturers as human agents and the structures of HE provision and graduateness can be explored.

Procedure

Focus groups were carried out at five institutions which were selected from the original 19 who took part in the undergraduate survey, on the basis of achieving a geographical spread and different types of courses (Table 4.2). In

order to carry out some comparative analysis the method used a multiple-category design, which means that the focus groups were conducted with two different audiences, staff and students (Krueger and Casey 2000).

Table 4.2: Composition of the focus groups.

Institute	Nature of the group	Number of people
Manchester Metropolitan University	Staff	3
	Level 3 Sport Science	8
	Level 1 Sport Science	6
University of Luton	Staff	5
	Level 3 Sport Management	5
University of Northumbria	Staff	6
	Sports Development/Sport management	2
University of Ulster	Staff	7
	Level 3	8
	Level 2	7
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	Staff	6
	Level 3 Human Movement Studies	6
	Level 3 Sports Studies	3
	Level 2 Human Movement Studies	4

At each institution the contact for the surveys was re-contacted to organise focus groups with, members of academic staff lecturing on sport related courses and level 2 and 3 students on sport related courses. The fact that the contact within the institution acted as a gatekeeper and selected the students may have created a bias in that he or she may have chosen the better students (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999). Consequently, there is a need to take into account that better students may have more awareness of employability issues and therefore may have different responses regarding skills and employment prospects.

The focus groups at each institute were carried out over one day and varied from 30 minutes to an hour. The meetings were held in classrooms and followed the same procedure for both staff and students. As the moderator for the groups I introduced myself as the project officer; this was felt to be important in the case of the students as identifying myself as also being an HE lecturer may have made the students see me in a position of authority, although this probably would happen to some extent (Barbour and Kitzinger

1999). I then explained the reason for the focus group and the approach to be taken. All the focus groups began with a question that required all to answer in turn; for the students it was their first name and reasons for doing the course, for the staff it was their first name and area of responsibility. The reason for this was, first to provide a voice check so that individuals would be recognisable, and also to get the participants to immediately make a contribution as the longer it is before someone says something the less likely it is they will contribute (Krueger and Casey 2000). This seemed to work quite well as all the participants continued to contribute to the discussion. Identical aide memoirs setting out the sequence and nature of the questions were used for staff and for students (see Appendix 6). However, in practice I deviated from the aide memoir depending on the discussion of the group and the aide memoir acted as a checklist to ensure specific topics were covered. All the focus groups were tape recorded.

In order to analyse the focus groups the tapes were transcribed using a simple orthographic transcription method (Wilkinson 2004), where only the words spoken were recorded and not the way they were spoken. A thematic analysis using content analysis was then carried out where patterns and themes were systematically identified across the groups using a coding system (Wilkinson 2004). Quotations from the transcript were then listed under the relevant codes.

In summary this chapter has explained the underpinning philosophy of the methodology and has justified and explained the methods in the context of this philosophy. It has provided a description of how the methods were operationalised and has identified possible issues arising from application of the methods. It has outlined how the data from the extensive and intensive methods was analysed. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the analysis of those results.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Phase One Results

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter will discuss the results of the graduate and final year student survey, and the staff and student focus groups, in relation to the objectives of the study. Section one will examine the patterns of employment of sport graduates to establish the numbers gaining jobs in the sport industry and elsewhere, and the level of those jobs. It also begins to uncover possible explanations for those who gain employment in sport and those who do not. Section two will examine the extent to which graduates achieve employability. Section three investigates the induction, training and development the graduates receive and the extent to which this impacts on employability. Finally, section four will examine the nature of the HE sport courses, the final year sport students they produce and how these relate to the employability of the sport graduate.

5.1. Patterns of Employment of Sport Graduates

5.1.1. Numbers of Graduates Employed and Occupational Area.

This section will examine the patterns of employment of graduates in terms of: overall numbers employed, whether or not they got sport jobs, and the possible reasons for those graduates who did not obtain sport jobs. The survey of graduates from 1993, 1994 and 1995 found that 81% of the total sample were employed. Of the other 19%, none could be classified as unemployed as they were either travelling or undertaking post-graduate courses. This broadly compares with Levy and MacKenzie's (1996) study of 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 Scottish graduates, from all subjects, which found that 86% were employed. However, the Scottish Study and this current study show lower levels of employment compared to the UK study by Purcell (1999) of graduates of all subjects who graduated in 1995; that 91% were in employment, 2% unemployed and the rest in further study or choosing not to be in the labour market. The lower employment levels for sport graduates found in this current study do not appear to be an issue of concern; the reasons for not being employed appear to be by choice, as they are either travelling or undertaking further study and are not unemployed. Consequently, it would appear that sport graduates are as successful as other types of graduates in obtaining employment.

In terms of areas of employment; the percentage of graduates who had ever worked in sport, post graduation, was 48%. Furthermore, 6% (n=15) of graduates employed, initially worked in sport and then left the industry for other occupational areas. At the point in time the survey was carried out, June 1996, 42% (n=101) were employed in sport, 21% (n=51) were PE teachers and 37% (n=88) were in non sport related jobs as illustrated in figure 5.1.

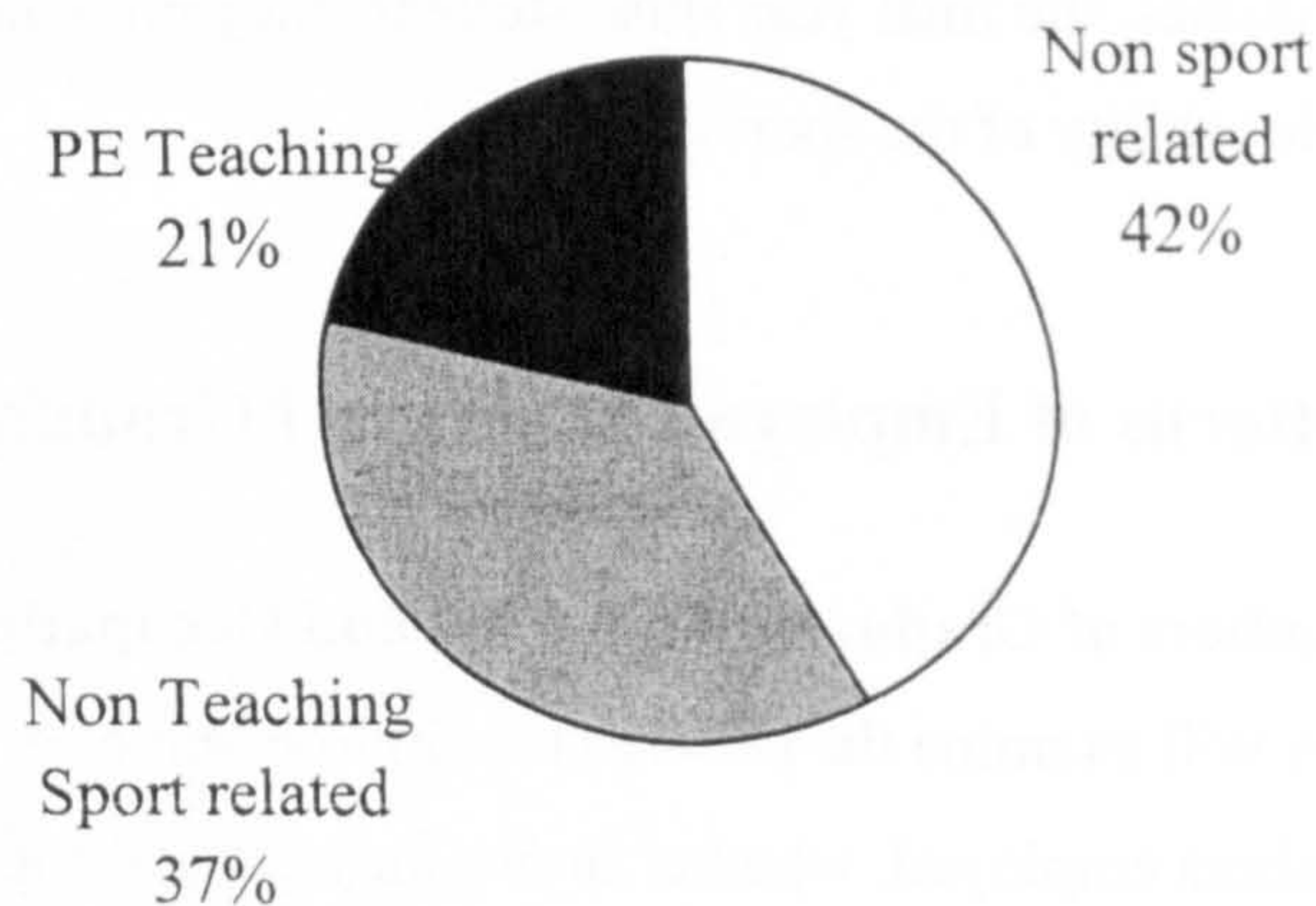


Figure 5.1. Areas of Employment of Sport Graduates

The percentage of graduates who had ever been employed in sport (48%) is slightly less than the CNAA's (1991) national survey of 1984, 1985 and 1986 graduates, which found that 52% gained employment in recreation management and administration and health and fitness; although care has to be taken when comparing these figures as the classification of sport jobs were not the same but covered broadly similar areas. The results from the current study, that not all graduates gained employment in sport, appear to support the argument detailed in Chapter 2 (p27, p51); that there is an oversupply of sport graduates for the jobs available (Bacon 1995, Brindley and Mander 1996, Mannerings 1995, Swarbrooke 1995, Todd 1995, Wolsey 1995). They also support Skills Active's (2005) findings that a high number of graduates find work in other sectors. A key issue is whether or not it matters that 37% of sport graduates are not employed in

sport related jobs or as PE teachers; the figure needs to be considered in relation to the aspirations of sport graduates. It could be argued that sport graduates are not necessarily looking for employment in the sport industry and are using their graduate attributes to obtain other employment. This is supported by the findings that, approximately half (48%) of those who were not employed in sport actually chose to work in other industries and had no intention in working in sport; this is 17% (n= 51) of all the graduates. Of those 51 graduates, 24 stated that they were just not interested and 19 cited the low levels of pay in the industry. A similar trend was found in the results of the student survey where 21% of final year students did not intend to work in sport.

The findings indicate that a number of sport students and graduates do not undertake sport degrees specifically to get a job in sport. In order to clarify and understand this finding the student focus groups were asked about their motivations for studying sport courses. Most of the students chose their course because they had an interest in sport and wanted to do a degree in an area that they enjoyed. There were few that had definite career options in mind and, with the exception of those that wanted to do PE teaching, most had not undertaken the degree for vocational reasons. Laura, a third year from Luton, and Chris, a third year from Cardiff, are fairly typical of the comments received when students were asked why they did the degree:

“I’ve always liked sport, but I never thought that I would see myself doing anything actually in sport”. (Laura)

“I enjoy sport, but have no aspirations job wise. I wanted to participate in sport as part of lectures instead of sitting in lectures”. (Chris)

All the staff who participated in the focus groups acknowledged that students did not undertake the courses for vocational reasons; Mick from MMU states:

“Generally I don’t think the students come in with really set career paths in mind, they kind of land here and think ‘I like sport and I like sounding like a scientist, but what do I do with it, they really don’t address it ‘til they get to the final year.”

They also recognised that the students were able to find employment in other areas of work and have good transferable attributes; this is reflected by Nora from Northumbria who felt that sport students are capable of doing a wide range of jobs and it is “too narrow to just look to the sport and recreation industry for employment”. Other staff had similar views:

“if they don’t go into sports specifically a lot of companies will employ graduates and train them for their own purposes, all they want is that to say that they are a graduate, they have a degree they are not concerned about what the degree is in. I think our students do quite well if you compare them across other graduates”. (Jenny Ulster)

“If you actually compare them with their peers from other types of disciplines or from non coaching type sectors they are in some respects head and shoulders above them but they just don’t realise”. (Clive UWIC)

Using Purcell and Pitcher’s (1996) categorisations of motivations to do the course, discussed in Chapter 2 (p54), many sport students chose their degree for hedonistic reasons rather than pragmatic. This meant that a clear theme that emerged from both the student and staff focus groups was that, most students did not know what they wanted to do when they chose their degree and most were still not sure when they reached their third year. This perhaps explains the student survey results in which many students identified a number of possible areas of work they were thinking of going in to: 64% of those who were considering sport jobs were also considering other jobs outside of sport.

These findings create a dilemma for HE providers; as explained in Chapter 2 (p71), Skills Active (2006:24) are demanding that HE adjusts “their policy of supplying popular courses” and provide courses that meet employers’ needs. Conversely, many students undertake sport courses out of interest rather than for specific employment reasons, and they require the development of attributes that will enable them access to a range of occupations. This suggests a tension between the increasing emphasis on HE to meet the specific needs of employers, and the motivations and needs of students.

Another area of concern from the results of the graduate survey is that 14% of all the sport graduates who were actively looking and applying for sport jobs were unable to get one, which is obviously an issue for those individuals. This subset of graduates were analysed to isolate the factors that may have affected why they were not able to get a job. Table 5.1 compares those who got jobs with those who did not in relation to the extra curricula qualifications they gained in HE.

Table 5.1: Qualifications Obtained Related to Ability to Gain Employment.

Awards & Experience Gained During H.E. course.	Sport Jobs (n= 101)	Unable to get sport jobs (n = 41)
Governing Body Award	50%	49%
Life Saving	23%	15%
First Aid	13%	9%
Work Experience	52%	36%

The table suggests that possible factors for not gaining employment in the sport industry could be, the lack of work experience and, to a lesser extent, vocational skills such as life saving and first aid qualifications. However, the findings for work experience were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). Also, there was little difference in those who obtained jobs and those who did not by their degree classification.

This section has shown that the percentages of sport graduates employed are similar to graduates from other subject areas. The findings did show that a small but notable number of graduates (6%) initially found jobs in the industry and then left. However, there is also an issue that a number of graduates (14%) wanted to obtain employment in sport and were not able to achieve this. No statistically significant relationships were found between extra curriculum activities or work experience and getting a sport job, although there did appear to be a trend between those getting sport jobs and these attributes. There needs to be further qualitative research with sport employers to examine their requirements from graduates and also with successfully employed sport graduates to find out the attributes they utilise. Conversely, the findings have also established that a similar

number of graduates did not want to work in the sport industry, which the focus groups suggest emanate from students studying sport for interest rather than for vocational reason. This has implications for the design and delivery of sport courses, there needs to be a balance between being appropriate to employment in the sport industry and also providing transferability to other industries.

5.1.2. Types of Sport Jobs Obtained by Sport Graduates.

This section will focus on the types of sport jobs obtained by sport graduates and their level of entry into the sport industry. Table 5.2 shows the main types of sport jobs that the graduates obtained in the sport industry.

Table 5.2: Main types of sport employment entered by sport graduates.

Job Type	Types Sport Jobs Entered by Sport Graduates % (n=101)
Sport & Recreation Manager	24
Fitness Instructor	21
Sports Development Officer	15
Lecturer	14
Research	10
Recreation Assistant/Lifeguard	7
Sports Scientist	3
Coach	3
Other	3

In terms of the nature of the sport and recreation jobs: 83% are full-time and 62% are permanent; by comparison, for non-sport related jobs: 84% are full-time and 65% permanent. This is comparable to Purcell's (1999) findings that 82% of graduates were in full time employment, although her survey did not provide figures on temporary employment. It is interesting that half of the sport development posts were temporary; this correlates with Houlihan and White's (2002) findings, reported in Chapter 2 (p28), that many sports development posts are short term contracts, which may be a reason for graduates being able to enter this area of work. Teaching, which made up 21% of all employment, offered the most secure area of work with 82% permanent and 97% full-time; this may explain why such a high percentage enter the profession.

Table 5.3 shows the type of sport organisations that the graduates work for. It reflects Yates (1984) and Murphy's (1980) studies, reported in Chapter 2 (p17), which found that the majority of graduates were employed by local authorities. In those studies there was a large difference between the numbers of graduates employed by the public and commercial sector; Table 5.3 indicates that the difference has reduced, reflecting the growth in the commercial sector provision for sport; particularly in health and fitness where 60% of fitness instructors worked in the commercial sector.

Table 5.3. Types of sport organisation that graduates are employed by

Type of Employer	Percentage of Graduates in Sport Jobs
Local Authority	37
Commercial Organisation	32
Educational	26
Charity	4
Self Employed	1

Table 5.4 shows the level of the jobs in which the graduates were employed when the survey was undertaken, against the level at which they had expected to enter employment in sport.

Table 5.4: Actual employment level and expected employment entry level of graduates who obtained sport jobs.

Entry Level	Actual Employment Level (%) n = 101	Expected Entry Level % n=101
Shop Floor	28	7
Specialist (e.g. SDO, Coach)	25	44
Academic (e.g. lecturer, researcher)	23	19
Junior Manager	8	12
Middle Manager	14	5
Senior Manager	0	1
Trainee Manager	2	8
Other	0	3

In terms of actual employment level of graduates, the percentage who were in management positions is low compared to the study by the CNAA (1991); this

examined the entrance level of sport graduates in 1984, 1985 and 1986, and found that 31% were in junior management and 20% at middle management. However, the lower percentage at shop floor is probably because this current study has taken a snapshot and includes graduates who have been out for up to three years, which makes the lower levels in management positions more surprising. This could be due to there being more graduates competing for these positions and also the decrease in the number of vacancies for junior managers in the public sector in the early and mid 1990's (Brindley and Mander 1996). Another key difference between the two studies are the specialist positions, such as Sports Development posts, which expanded as an area of work in the 10 years between this study and the CNAA study (Houlihan and White 2002).

A key issue raised in Chapter 2 (p52) was the high expectations sport graduates have of the level of job they expected to obtain in their initial employment (CNAA 1991, Yates 1984). Table 5.4 indicates the level of job that the graduates had obtained at the time of the survey and compares this with the level of job the graduates expected to get. It is not a direct comparison as the current jobs of many of the graduates are not their first, but the table shows that the graduates did not necessarily expect to be in jobs at shop floor level and also expected to be in specialist jobs.

A greater difference in expectations can be seen when the results from the graduate survey (Table 5.4) are compared with those from the student survey (Table 5.5). It is important to note that the graduate categories for level are slightly different to the student categories. Following an initial analysis of the student results it was felt that specialist roles, such as SDO's, should be disaggregated from the shop floor figure by creating separate categories in the graduate questionnaire (See Appendix 4, Q21).

Table 5.5: Entrance level expectations of students wanting to gain employment in the sport industry.

Entrance Level	% Expecting to enter at that level
Shop Floor	17
Trainee Manager	33
Junior Manager	23
Middle Manager	6
Senior Manager	3
Teacher	14
Other	4

With regard to shop floor jobs, 17% of students expected to enter at that position whilst 28% of graduates were in that position. In the case of the entrance level of junior manager, 23% of students believe that they will go in at this level whilst in the survey 8% of graduates were actually in that position. The students also overestimate the possibility of becoming trainee managers; 33% students compared to 2% of graduates being in this position. The results suggest that over expectations are an issue for sport students and graduates, this was explored further and in more depth with the focus groups. There was a mixed response from the students with regard to their expectations of the level they would enter employment. The students from Luton University very much reflected the survey findings in expecting to get a higher level job:

Les: Trainee, junior manager that's what I want to go in as, I don't want to start lower than that and have to faff around for years to get where I want to be, cos its not for me, I want to be there and do it.

Lisa: If you wanted to do that you would have gone in before your degree

Les: Yeah

Lisa: If you want to work your way up you would go in then

Although the students at UWIC were a little more realistic, some did feel that they should go in higher up because of their degree, as Craig states:

“In theory mid rank, you've put these three years, along with A levels you've put 5 years of quite hard study but I don't think it always works

like that. You have to work your way up. I don't think that's how it should be but that's how it would happen".

The students from Ulster realised that they would need to start at the bottom, but as John points out, "as long as there are opportunities to move up, I mean you wouldn't want to be stuck there". There was a feeling that they would feel frustrated if they were in a position they felt over-qualified for, as Jane identifies:

"I mean there's no point being over qualified for a job, you know you see maybe a duty manager in a centre and you say to yourself I could do a better job than that, they're not even qualified, they've just come through the ranks".

Staff at Ulster also realised that graduates have to start at the bottom, but they do question if that is appropriate; as Jim states:

"So you come in here and do a three year degree, four year degree and you've got to go and start at the bottom of the ladder. Sometimes it just begs the question are we equipping them with the right background".

This is also recognised by staff at UWIC, a number of which have worked in industry; as Clive says:

"They come into industry expecting too much too soon, they're not prepared for the work at the lower level, they expect to go in at the middle management level and very few do that and they have to start at the bottom. A lot of them don't have the patience, a lot of them do, and a lot of them say this isn't for me and off they go too soon when potentially they're very good employees."

The survey results of graduates and students indicate the over-expectations of students in terms of their point of entry into sport jobs. The focus groups provide a more complex picture of the thinking of the students, even though some accept that they will need to go in at a low level, this causes them frustration with regard to having studied for three/four years. Staff also recognised this frustrating situation. This issue of over-expectations was identified by Yates (1984) and the CNAA (1991) report for sport. Research into general graduate employment, discussed in Chapter 2 (p52), has also identified it as a problem; both Alpin (1998) and Mason (1995) found that gaining employment at a lower level than

expected impacts on motivation and job contentment. This is an issue that needs further investigation as it may have implications for graduates who have gained employment in the industry, who are potentially good employees, but as Clive from UWIC suggests leave due to lack of fulfilment. This could be a reason for the findings identified in section one of this chapter; that 6% of those graduates' employed, initially entered the sport industry and then left to go into other occupations. The majority of these people were in shop floor jobs, but two were in sport management jobs and left to take up management positions in other industries. The reasons given for leaving the industry were: they found a better job; left because the job was temporary (and in most cases their contract ended); or gained promotion. These findings compare well with Coalter and Potter's (1990) 1985 survey, which found that 18% of graduates left the sport industry after gaining initial employment in it.

This section has identified the main types of sport job and sport employer that graduates work for, it has found that they reflect the structure of the sport industry in terms of the growing importance of the commercial sector. It also confirmed that sport students and graduates have over expectations of the level of entry into sport jobs; there is a need to examine in further research how this impacts on their employability.

5.2. Do graduates achieve employability in the sport industry?

The perspective of employability used in this study concerns graduates obtaining fulfilling jobs and functioning within employment. Much of the previous section focused on patterns of employment rather than employability; however towards the end of the section issues began to emerge as to whether or not the graduates were fulfilled in their jobs and thus had achieved employability. This section will look at three possible indications of employability of graduates. First, it will examine whether graduates stay in their jobs, and if they move what are the reasons. Second, it will investigate the extent to which graduates' skills are used

within the workplace and the issue of underutilisation. Third, it will evaluate the appropriateness of their degree courses to employment, to get an indication of how they function in the job.

In order to gauge the graduates' commitment to their jobs, the length of time that the graduates in sport occupations had been employed in their jobs was examined. This is shown in Table 5.6 overleaf and is broken down by year of graduation as this is obviously affected by how long ago they graduated.

Table 5.6: Length of Current Sport Employment.

Employment Length	Percentage of 1993 Graduates % (n=28)	Percentage of 1994 Graduates % (n=39)	Percentage of 1995 Graduates % (n=34)
Less than one month	7	3	3
Between 1 and 6 months	14	13	32
Between 6 months and 1 year	14	28	47
More than 1 year.	64	56	18

The figures suggest that the movement within sport and recreation employment is dynamic early on in the graduate career, although there appears to be some stability in the 1993 cohort, with 64% having been in their job for more than a year. This cohort also appears to show more settled employment patterns; Table 5.7 indicates that they had the least number of jobs, which is surprising as they had been in the workplace for the longest period.

Table 5.7: Number of Sport Jobs in Relation to Year of Graduation.

Number of Jobs	Percentage of 1993 Graduates % (n = 41)	Percentage of 1994 Graduates % (n = 57)	Percentage of 1995 Graduates % (n = 57)
1 Job	46	44	38
2 Jobs	21	28	35
3 Jobs	29	10	24
4 Jobs	4	8	3
5 Jobs	-	5	-
6 Jobs	-	5	-

The results from 1994 and 1995 illustrate that there is a lot of movement within the sector with regard to jobs: 56% of 1994 and 62% of 1995 graduates, employed in sport, had two or more jobs in the two years since graduating. Care must be taken in generalising from these results because the cohort numbers involved are small as they have been broken into subgroups, but it does offer an illustration of the situation. This high number of job changes since graduating was also found in the study of Scottish sports graduates from a range of subjects (Levy and MacKenzie 1996). The CNAA report (1991), on sport graduates in 1984, 1985, 1986, also suggested that the employment patterns of graduates were characterised by a lot of job changes in the first three years after graduation. These results correspond with the issue raised in Chapter 2 (p32), of high staff turnover in the sport industry (Gunn 2001, Skills Active 2005). These results also support Elias and Purcell's (2004) findings on UK graduates from a range of disciplines, discussed in Chapter 2 (p55); that in the first three years after graduating, the graduate career is in a state of flux and is evolving, so it takes quite a long period of time for many graduates to move into graduate positions. If this is the case for sport graduates, it would support the need to look behind these figures to examine how this career uncertainty after graduation impacts on their motivation and desire to continue or even enter the sport industry.

Table 5.8. overleaf shows the length of time graduates intended to stay in their current job and indicates that around a third of graduates in sport and non-sport jobs currently want to leave. More non-sport employed graduates intended to pursue a career in their current employment; 28% indicating they expected to stay in their job three years and more, compared to 18% in sport. For the non-sport employed graduates, the results seem to suggest that there is a split between those who have taken short term jobs to pay off debts and those who have found fulfilling careers outside sport.

Table 5.8: Intended length of time in current employment.

Length of Time	% Employed in Sport (n=98)	% Employed in Non Sport (n=83)	% PE Teachers (n=47)
Currently Looking	31	37	6
Between 6 – 12 months	17	10	9
Between 1 - 3 years	34	25	43
Between 3 - 5 years	12	9	23
5 years and more	6	19	19

The reasons given by those employed in sport jobs for wishing to leave within 3 years suggests a lack of fulfilment and career structure: 21% were looking for promotion; 13% felt that they were not challenged; and 6% cited poor pay. These findings support an issue highlighted within Chapter 2 (p21, p31, p36), the lack of career structure within the sport and recreation industry (Yates 1984, Houlihan 2002). They also appear to support another issue identified in Chapter 2 (p52) - the dissatisfaction of graduates when they feel they are underutilised (Alpin 1998). In order to ascertain this, the survey asked whether or not graduates felt their jobs used the knowledge and skills they had gained on their degree. Of those employed in sport, 46% said that they used all of the skills and knowledge gained from the course in their job. As expected fewer of those who worked outside of sport said that they used all or most of the skills and knowledge (19%). These figures suggest that, although many sport jobs do enable graduates to use the skills and knowledge they have developed in their degree, there are a high number (54%) who only use some or none of the skills and knowledge they have gained. Figure 5.2 shows the results of a cross tabulation of the graduates' perceptions of usage of the skills and knowledge gained on their degree, with their intentions with regard to staying in their current job; which gives an indication of contentment.

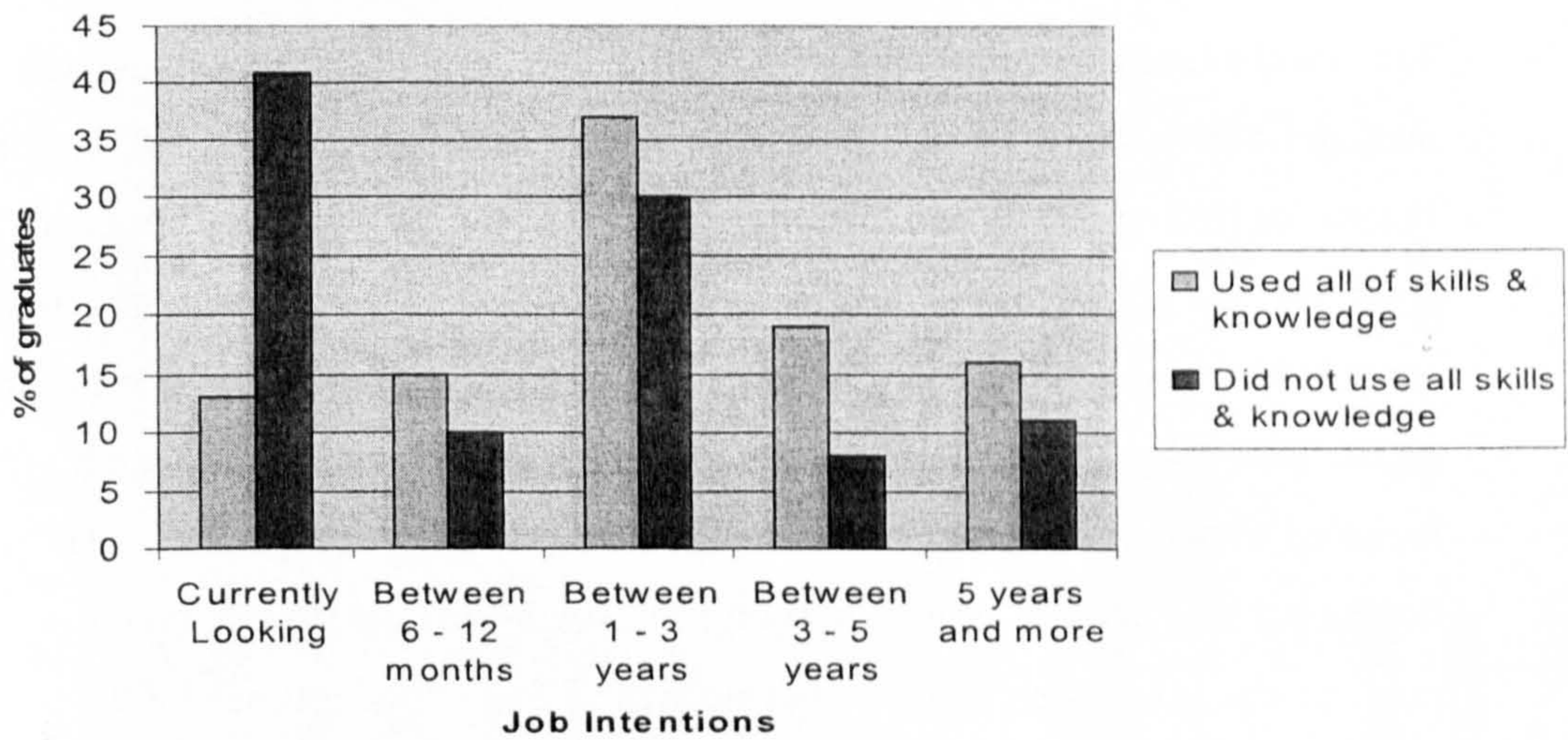


Figure 5.2. Comparison of graduates use of skills and knowledge in their current job and intentions to stay in the job.

Figure 5.2 shows that many more of those who do not feel they use all the main skills and knowledge that they developed in their degree are looking for another job compared to those who feel they are using their skills. A Chi Square test was performed and found a statistically significant association between skills used and job intentions ($P < 0.05$). The same comparison was made using only those students employed in sport jobs, which is shown in figure 5.3.

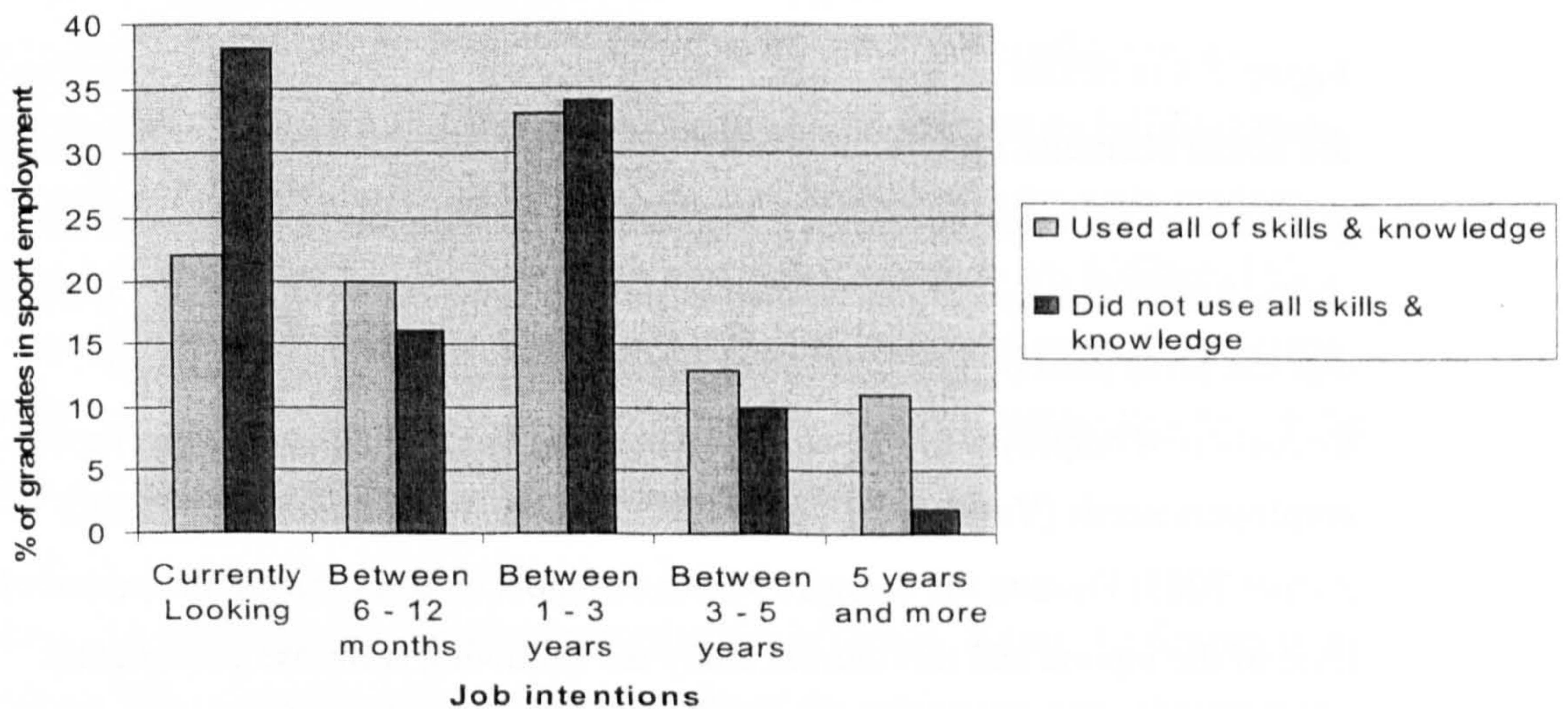


Figure 5.3: Comparison of graduates employed of skills and knowledge in sport jobs and intentions to stay in the job.

This shows similar trends as Figure 5.2., however when a Chi Square test was used it did not show the association to be statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). The reason for the less strong association could be that the students have obtained sport jobs and are therefore more likely to continue in the job because it is in the sport industry, and they may realise that they need to get experience to move to higher level jobs. The association may be stronger when non-sport jobs are included as not only are they not using their skills and knowledge from their degree but they are also not in the sport industry. More detailed qualitative research needs to be undertaken to explore the effect of underutilisation of graduate skills and knowledge, but it would appear that it is an issue. This is reflected by the thoughts of the staff from the focus groups:

“I think the problem is retaining, because the job when they come in doesn’t stretch them at all and that’s when they get fed up and want to move, they don’t want to stay down at the bottom that long” (Craig, UWIC).

“They’ve had very negative experiences in terms of being used, so they would put in a short period of time and move onto something else. Still their perceptions about what the industry has to offer is very much lacking in terms of their ideal, whereas teaching has a career structure” (John, Ulster).

Figure 5.4 indicates an approximate match between the graduates’ perceptions of the actual attributes used in the work place, with their perceptions of the attributes gained from their degree in the case of: communication skills, organisational skills, fitness assessment, social interaction and coaching. Additionally, it shows that the skills used by graduates working in sport jobs, which gives some indication of employer needs, are comparable to the findings of the key reports on employers needs (Yates 1984, Gunn 1985, Coalter 1990, Lowe 1995, Skills Active 2003) Despite the changes within the sport industry during the period of time of the reports and this current study the following skills are consistently identified: communication, customer care, computing and team working.

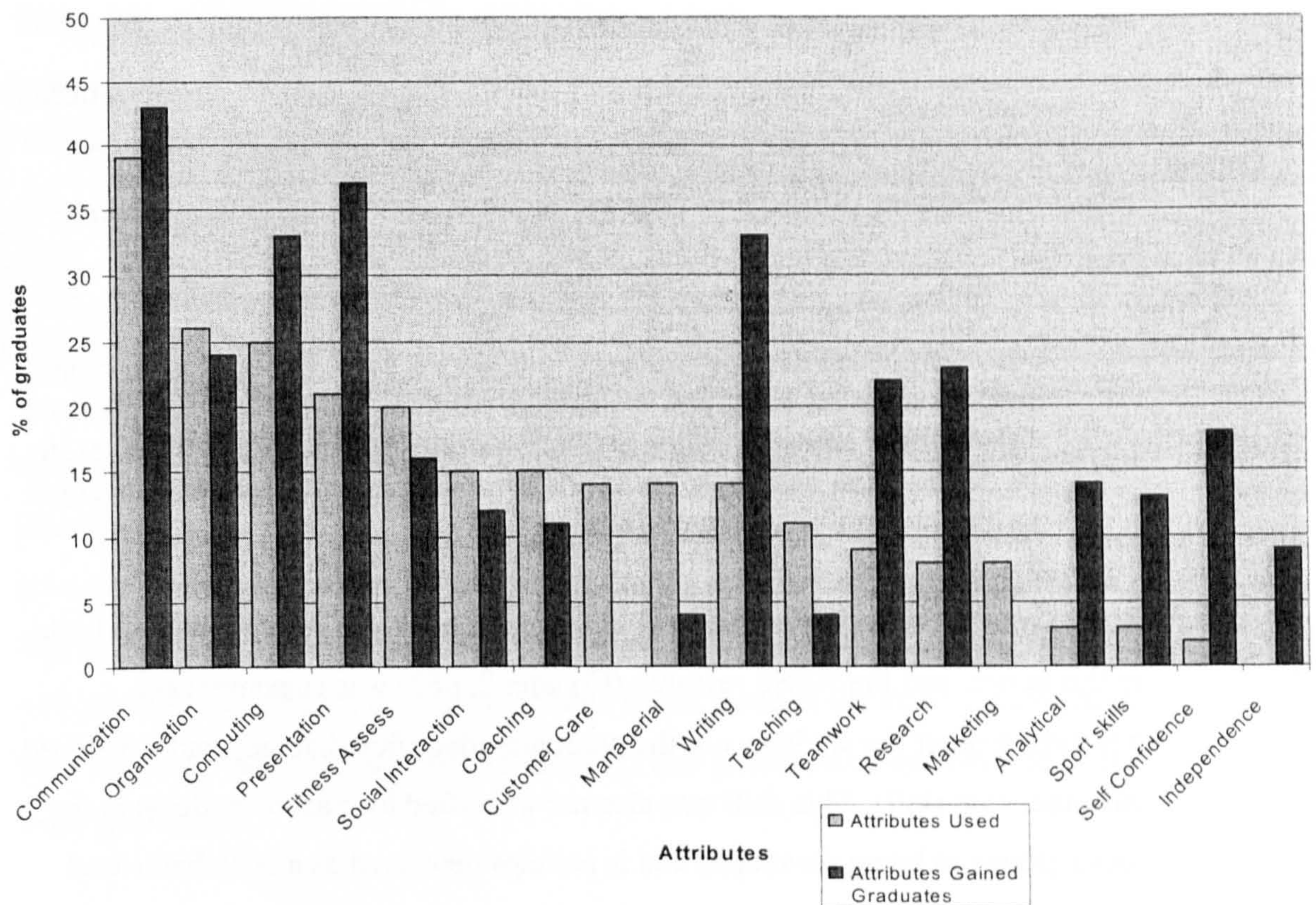


Figure 5.4: Comparison of Attributes used by graduates in sport jobs with the attributes that they gained from their degree.

There are a number of attributes where there is a mismatch between graduates having those attributes and not using them, these are: presentation skills, writing skills, teamwork, research, analytical skills, sport skills, self confidence and independence. This further suggests that the graduates may not be fulfilling their potential and are being underutilised, and it may explain why the early graduate career is so dynamic as they try to move into jobs where they are fulfilled. This is an area that needs more research to examine the interaction between the graduate and the job, to ascertain if there is underutilisation and what impact this has on the graduate.

Figure 5.4 shows that the development of self confidence, during the degree, is an attribute that is identified by just under a fifth of the graduates; nevertheless it is not perceived by graduates as being used in workplace. Although, as reported in Chapter 2 (p64), Harvey et al (1997) found that self-assurance was important in

his survey of employers of graduates. Confidence was an attribute that all the students in the focus groups felt that they had developed, which was also reflected by the staff; Mark, a member of staff from MMU, sees confidence being a key aspect of graduates, although he does recognise that it could also be a negative trait.

“the confidence that they develop, they do a lot of work on presentations, they do an awful lot of that in different contexts and different settings and I think those communication skills, the ability to articulate themselves, to be confident in what they know and what they are, that sometimes verges on the arrogant for some of them”.

A skill which has been identified as being important in the sport workplace both in this survey and the NESS research (Chapter 2, p62) was customer care however, neither the students nor the graduates identified that they had developed customer care skills. This skill was also not identified by staff or students in the focus groups as being developed and is perhaps perceived as a skill that is best developed in the workplace.

A fundamental problem with the findings of the Phase One is understanding the context and level at which the attributes are used; thus it is difficult to relate these findings to Elias and Purcell's (2004) categorisation of graduate jobs as more qualitative information is required as to the context. In some respects the findings illustrate the view that lists of skills are limited in that they do not provide the whole picture of how the graduate fits into the workplace and how effective they are (Morley 2001, Holmes 2000, Harvey et al 1997). Consequently, there is need to undertake further research that examines the use of the graduates' attributes in situ.

The third area of employability identified at the start of this section, is how the graduates' function in the job. This is difficult to identify from the questionnaire but an indication can be gained from the relevance of the graduates' degree to the job, which is shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Appropriateness of Graduates' Skills and Knowledge to Employment

	Skills			Knowledge		
	Sport Jobs	Non Sport	Teachers	Sport Jobs	Non Sport	Teachers
All	7	5	8	5	2	6
Most	39	20	40	45	13	49
Some	50	67	46	45	53	39
None	4	8	6	5	32	6

As might be expected, more of the sport employed graduates and teachers felt that their course gave them appropriate skills and knowledge compared to the graduates not employed in the sport sector. To some extent this suggests that the degree enabled the graduate to function in their job. For graduates employed in non-sport jobs a large percentage were able to use some of the skills developed in their course in their jobs, suggesting that they had gained basic transferable skills from their course.

This section has raised a number of issues with regard to the employability of sport graduates in sport jobs. It suggests that graduates are not obtaining fulfilling jobs during the early stages of their career, as there is a high turnover of jobs. This is reflected in the fact that a number of graduates are looking for other jobs in order to gain promotion and provide more challenge. The findings also suggested that the graduates were not being fully utilised and not able to achieve their potential thus undermining their employability. The section also speculated on whether the graduates were able to function in their job, but more detailed information is needed here. The survey findings have identified these issues and possible reasons, but there is a need to uncover, through more research, the extent to which the graduate is fulfilled within the workplace and how this impacts on employability and patterns of employment of graduates.

5.3. Experiences of Graduate's Transition into the Workplace

This section will examine the survey's findings on the induction and development of graduates in the workplace, with the aim of gaining a basic understanding of their transition into the workplace and, to some extent, assess the support for them from employers. Consequently the information used will only come from the graduate survey.

For both those who worked in sport and those who did not, only 50% received a formal induction into their first job. This is concerning from the viewpoint of ensuring the effective transition of graduates and also from a basic health and safety and human resources point of view. However, 73% of those who worked in sport that had an induction found it valuable; 76% in teaching found it valuable although this was less than the 88% of those who worked outside of sport, despite this difference there was no statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). In the sport related jobs the induction generally covered introductions to the company and job. Overall the results show that only 35% of those working in sport had an induction which they considered valuable. Chapter 2 (p69) identified that an effective induction was crucial for graduates' transition into the work place and this current study has suggested that sport graduates do not generally receive an adequate induction (Graham and MacKenzie 1995). This may be a factor for graduates leaving the industry or not staying very long in jobs, it needs to be examined in more depth to see how induction impacts on the graduate transition into, and effectiveness in, the workplace.

In terms of staff development, the percentages of those employed in sport and outside of sport that had their own development programme were the same (37%). Teachers, as would be expected in an organised profession, were much higher with 63% having a staff development programme. The low numbers raise two issues: first, it suggests a poor approach to human resources by sport employers and second, combined with the fact that 84% of sport employed graduates stated

that they had undertaken further qualifications, suggests many were not part of an organisational training plan and had been undertaken at the graduates own initiative. Only 13% had done in-service vocationally specific training and very few had undertaken professional courses such as ILAM and ISRM. The main course undertaken by sport-employed graduates was the PGCE which 14% had done, however these graduates were not in teaching jobs. Other main courses were first aid (10%) and sports therapy (7%).

Although this section has been brief it has raised a number of issues about the transition of graduates into sport employment that need to be explored further – particularly the support that is provided by employers and the extent to which this specifically enables the graduate to be as effective as possible. The review of literature did identify that employers need graduates to ‘hit the ground running’ but from this basic information it would appear that they may not even be providing the basic assistance, never mind developmental support, to enable them to work effectively and also establish loyalty to the organisation and industry.

5.4. The Nature of Sport Courses and Final Year Students.

This section will examine the nature of sport courses, to determine the extent to which they are aiming to produce graduates who have attributes that are specifically relevant to the sport industry. This is important in terms of understanding the structural context of HE courses and the staff influence on them; it may also explain the findings in section 5.1 that 17% did not want sport jobs.

A key conclusion from the focus groups was that none of the courses had very specific vocational aims. The discussions in the staff groups identified that there was a continuum of approaches, with Luton being the most vocational in aims and Manchester Metropolitan being the least - actually associating vocational with ‘less challenging’.

“One of the arguments we put forward when we were designing the degree was that we took the traditional HND philosophy which is very vocational and we took the traditional degree philosophy that is quite academic and we combined the two”. (Lucy, Luton Staff)

“The aims of the course are to develop the intellectual and academic capacity of the students, to develop their professional expertise, their ability to go into the workplace and perform as a professional and we also pursue excellence incorporating performance and coaching”. (Will, UWIC staff)

“the course states quite categorically the object of sport in terms of academic challenge of the sciences and the social sciences and so on. Providing a course of academic credibility and challenge as well as producing the skills that can transfer to the job market”. (Ulster staff)

“The main thing is the underpinning academic knowledge and cases to apply the knowledge” (Nigel, Northumbria staff)

“The degree is not meant to be vocational and you’ve got the dilemma and you can get the Mickey Mouse degree or you can have decent standards” (Mark, MMU staff)

With the exception of MMU, the discussions in the staff groups show an acceptance of the need to be vocational and to varying degrees reflect the arguments of Assister (1995) discussed in Chapter 2 (p45). This contrasts with the findings of the CNAAs (1991) report which suggested that academic staff in the late 1980’s favoured the more traditional approach exemplified by Tasker and Packham (1994) and Barnett (1994). However, the focus groups revealed the tensions within departments as illustrated by Jane from Ulster:

“I do think its part of our job, but I don’t think it should be all of our job. I think employers, the like that Jeff ‘s talking about, would like to see that as our main job of training people and giving them skills to work in employment. In a way I think employers have to take more responsibility for giving the skills. I think we’re still first and foremost an educational establishment and there is good reason for educating people not specifically for vocational skills but to broaden their own minds”.

This is supported by Colin from UWIC who felt that employers shouldn’t expect graduates to be completely trained. Thus there is still a range of approaches and

philosophies on vocationalism that will impact on course aims and their response to employers needs.

A key aspect of employability is the specific attributes that students and graduates develop during their course and how these relate to the needs of employers: Table 5.10 indicates the attributes that the students perceive that they have. It is important to note that the attributes identified are only their perceptions. Without direct measurement it is difficult to specify exactly whether or not they possess them. Furthermore, the students may have other attributes that they have not explicitly identified and are not aware of.

Table 5.10: Attributes gained by final year students from their degree.

Attributes Gained From Degree	% of Students
Communication	49
Computing	40
Management	24
Research	23
Writing	22
Organisation	22
Teamwork	20
Social Interaction	19
Self Confidence	19
Coaching	14
Sport Skills	14
Analytical	12
Managerial	10

The results are comparable in terms of the skills mentioned by Purcell and Pitcher (1996) in their survey of 1995 graduates from all disciplines; however a much higher percentage response was gained for each category within the Purcell and Pitcher study as the skills were listed in the questionnaire and could have acted as a prompt. Nevertheless, the lower figures for skills identified within the current survey perhaps illustrates a lack of awareness by the students and graduates of the attributes that they have developed, this may reflect how they sell themselves to potential employers. For example, when the students in the focus groups were asked about how they had developed during their degree they struggled to respond

without prompting and Lisa from Luton actually says she just saw the degree as “a piece of paper”.

The general comparability between the Purcell and Pitcher’s (1996) findings and this study of the types of skills developed during the degree suggests that there are generic graduate skills, however, there may be differences in the emphasis of certain skills in relation to discipline studied. Purcell and Pitcher identified that communication skills were mentioned less than other skills, in contrast in the current study communication skills were mentioned the most by both students and graduates. This may reflect the nature of sport courses in that they offer more opportunities, perhaps through practical situations, for the development of communication skills.

An implication of the results in Table 5.10 is that they show students’ levels of awareness and perceptions of the skills that they have and, as mentioned earlier, in the focus groups it was difficult to get students to identify them without prompting. These are likely to be the attributes that students identify when they complete application forms and attend interviews. Staff at UWIC, felt that in an interview situation students find it difficult to sell themselves. As Mark says, who has come from industry and has interviewed some of the UWIC graduates in his previous job,

“you’ve got to ask them leading questions because they’re not selling themselves and you know they’ve got the ability and you know they can do it, but the other people on the panel don’t know and they just don’t sell themselves. They don’t realise what skills they’ve got”.

The focus groups of both staff and students identified very similar skills to those in the surveys including; presentation, teamwork, organisational, time management and coaching skills. However a major issue was how the skills they had learnt in an education setting would translate into practice, as illustrated by Lisa, a student from Luton:

“We’ve done a lot of theory, we’ve written training sessions, we’ve written a coaching pack but we’ve never got out there and done it. I haven’t got the confidence to go out and do it, on paper it looks good but whether it would work in going out there and doing it”.

Many of the staff acknowledged that the students are not explicitly taught vocational skills, even at the institutions that are more vocational; Jeff a member of staff from Ulster states:

We don’t have a theoretical basis to the skills, they tend to be caught rather than taught, so if a student is doing their presentation skills they might be given some clues as to the best way to present, but generally I suppose they are hit and miss”.

Figure 5.5 overleaf indicates that those that had undertaken work experience were more able to identify the attributes they have developed on their degree; this may be because they have developed more or they have increased awareness of their attributes. The attributes that relate to employers needs were mentioned more by those with work experience, whilst more academic skills were identified more by those without work experience, which may relate back to the courses’ aims and objectives. A statistically significant relationship (Chi Square $p < 0.05$) was found between awareness of attributes developed and students who have undertaken work experience in the case of: communication, organisation, coaching, leadership and managerial skills. The more specific area of managerial skills may be explained by the fact that those students who have done work experience are more likely to have undertaken sport management courses therefore management is studied specifically. However, the other skills highlighted could be termed as transferable across all sport courses. It would seem that those students with work experience are more aware of transferable skills.

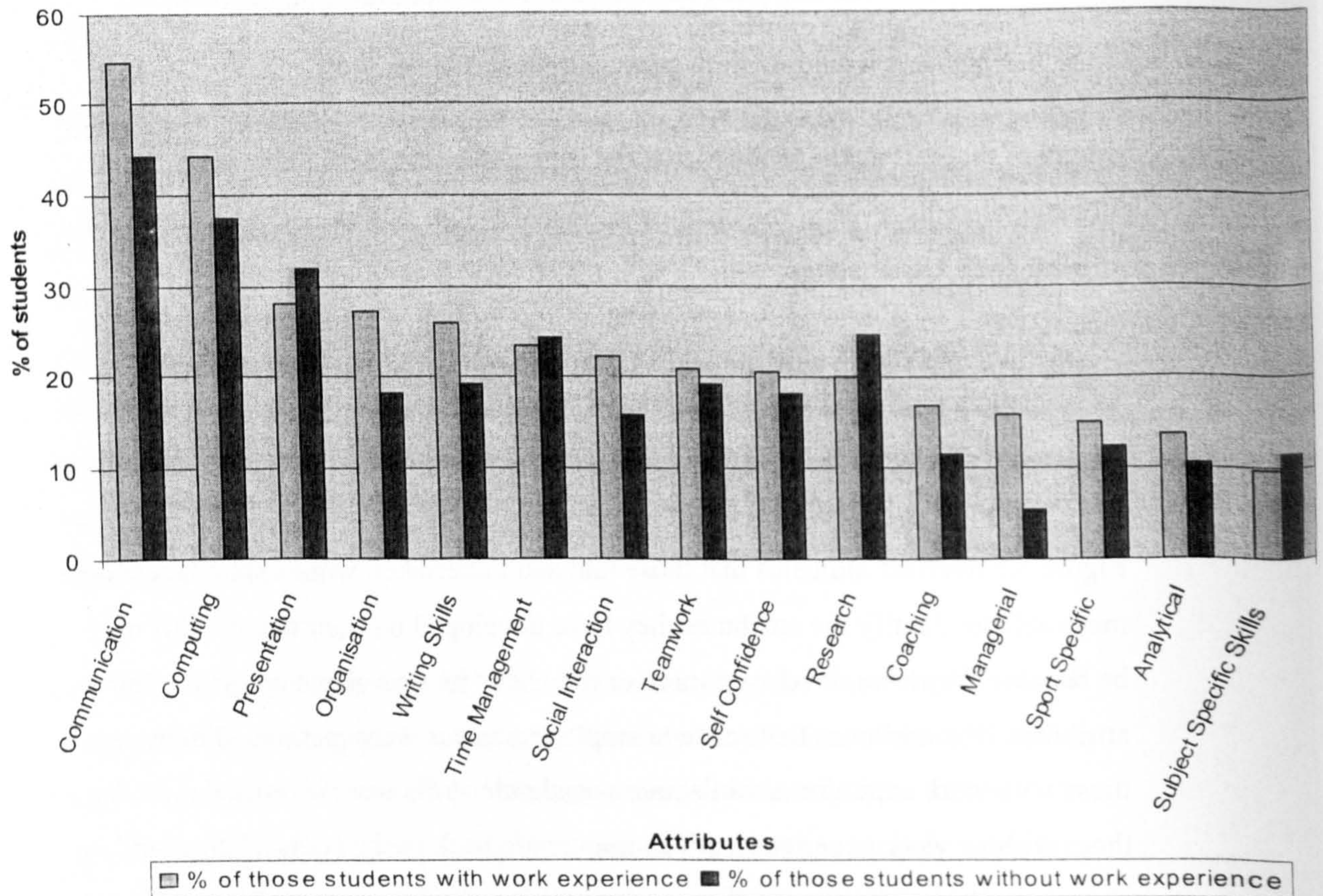


Figure 5.5. Comparison of perception of skills gained with and without work experience.

The importance of work experience is appreciated by the staff and students in the focus groups. Students from Ulster could undertake an optional year's work experience and both staff and students recognised its worth, as Jack identifies:

“I think the students that have been out on placement definitely come back with a definite advantage, they've been asked to do a range of skills when they're out there, presentations, helping prepare this in the work situation and I think it gives them more confidence by the time they've finished that year”.

At Northumbria and UWIC students could undertake a short placement that was not assessed, however they felt that it needed to be longer and assessed. Although in both these cases the staff felt that the placement was appropriate. At Luton both staff and students recognised that a placement would be extremely beneficial and

consideration was being given to introducing one. At MMU many of the students felt that it would be beneficial to have a placement, although the staff felt it was not appropriate to have it within the course and that it should be undertaken in the vacation. This demand by students for work placements was also found by the CNAA report (1991).

This section has identified that none of the courses examined through the focus groups were specifically vocationally, though staff at most of the institutions were sympathetic to the need to develop vocational attributes. It also indicated a reason for the high percentage of graduates who had undertaken placements gaining jobs, as they identified more skills than other graduates.

5.5. Conclusions and Refinement of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in Sport the Industry.

This section will draw conclusions from the discussions of the findings of Phase One of the research in relation to the three objectives of the study.

- 1. Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability.*
- 2. Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced and how this influences their employability in the sport industry.*
- 3. Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry and the factors that influence their transition into the work.*

Each objective will be discussed in relation to the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry that was introduced in Chapter 3 (p89). This discussion will include a review of the model and areas for further research will be identified in order to delve deeper into uncovering the factors that impact on employability. The slightly changed model as a result of this review is shown in Figure 5.7 (p139).

In relation to objective 1, the headline finding of Phase One was that the majority of sport graduates who want to work in the sport industry obtain employment there. The range of jobs that the graduates got tended to reflect the range of opportunities within the sector. Those jobs also included the more recent areas of work such as sports development and commercial sector health and fitness. These patterns of employment highlighted a number of important issues which will be restated below and further implications and research identified.

There were a number of students (14%) that did not achieve employment in the industry, but desired to do so. The results of the surveys did not provide definitive reasons for why they did not get jobs but suggested that lack of work experience could be a factor. Consequently, there is a need to undertake further research with employers to ascertain, from their perspective, the factors that influence whether they employ a graduate or not. In contrast, with regard to objective 2, there were also a higher number of students (17%) that did not intend to find employment in the sport industry; the focus groups illustrated that some students undertake the degree as it is an interesting area of study and not specifically to enable them to gain employment in the industry.

The contrasting results indicate that within a cohort of students undertaking a degree there will be very different aspirations and needs. This could create tensions for course providers, as Chapter 2 (p43-46) established, government HE policy has increasingly emphasised the importance of HE to the economy and the development of vocational skills. Within sport this has been reinforced by Skills Active (2006) who also found that a high proportion of graduates found work in other sectors. However, their perspective suggests that this is a negative outcome and HE providers should ensure they provide courses that meet the specific needs of the sport industry so that graduates gain employment in sport. In contrast, some of the graduates themselves are choosing to use their degree for other purposes; consequently HE sport courses have to address both the differing needs of students and a range of stakeholders, which in some cases conflict. This was reflected in the views of HE staff who understand that there is a need to provide

vocationally relevant sport courses, but that those courses must also provide attributes that enable graduates to access a range of occupations. Hence, there is an underlying tension between meeting the specific needs of industry and widening participation in HE, and attracting students who may have different needs. The Interaction Model of Graduate Employability, shown in Figure 5.6, illustrates this complex relationship between: the structures of Government Policy, HE Institutions and the Sport Industry and the agents, who are the staff and students/ graduates; and that the outcomes of these interrelationships impact on the nature of the graduate that is produced. However, the motivations and actions of the graduates' impact back on the sport courses in terms of adjusting courses to provide for both their needs and future students' needs, consequently creating this complex situation. Thus this model now includes an arrow showing a two way relationship between the graduate and the sport course.

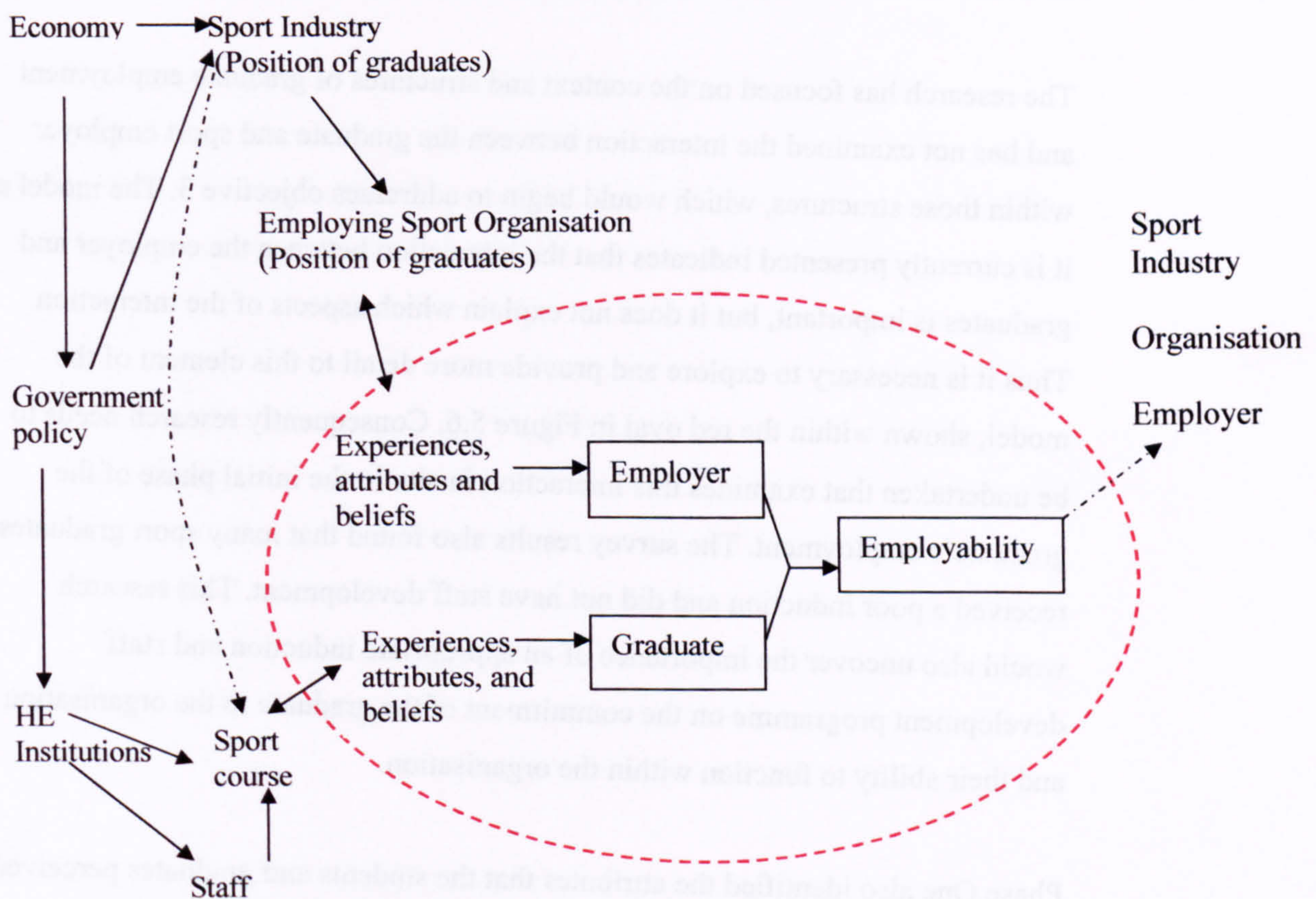


Figure 5.6: Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.

Another issue that was identified was that approximately a third of sport graduates employed in the sport industry were either looking for another job and a further 17% expected to be looking to move in the next to six months. The study also found that a small, but notable number (6%), had initially found jobs then left. The reasons given for the movement included the need for challenge and promotion. Analysis of the results also found that those graduates were being underutilised in terms of not using the attributes that they had gained from their degree, particularly key graduate skills such as analysis, research and writing skills. In addition to this, the results also showed that the level of jobs that the graduates had obtained did not match their expectations. This would suggest that when graduates do get jobs in the industry they are not particularly happy in them. There is a need to examine this situation in more depth to explore some of the implications of the survey results and get a clearer picture of the graduates' initial transition into the workplace and their interrelationship with the sport employer.

The research has focused on the context and structures of graduate employment and has not examined the interaction between the graduate and sport employer within those structures, which would begin to address objective 3. The model as it is currently presented indicates that the interaction between the employer and graduates is important, but it does not explain which aspects of the interaction. Thus it is necessary to explore and provide more detail to this element of the model, shown within the red oval in Figure 5.6. Consequently research needs to be undertaken that examines this interaction in situ in the initial phase of the graduate's employment. The survey results also found that many sport graduates received a poor induction and did not have staff development. This research would also uncover the importance of an appropriate induction and staff development programme on the commitment of the graduate to the organisation and their ability to function within the organisation.

Phase One also identified the attributes that the students and graduates perceived that they developed on their degree and found that they matched the sport employers' needs that have been found in studies from Skills Active (2006).

However there is a need to move beyond this list of skills to examine what sport employers' overall needs are from graduates and how they perceive graduates meet those needs. There is also a need to examine how the attributes the graduates gain translate into employment.

Phase One has identified the overall patterns of employment of sport graduates, both within the sport industry and in other occupations. It has begun to uncover some of the structures and mechanism that may impact on the employability of the graduate, but there is a need to delve deeper into the situation to particularly examine how the interaction between key agents during the initial transition into employment further influences employability of sport graduates in the sport industry.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

Chapter 6

Introduction to Phase Two Research and Underpinning Literature

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter will provide an introduction to the second phase of the research into graduate employment in the sport industry and will specifically address objective 3: *Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry, the factors that influence their transition into the job and how this impacts on employability.* It will go on to discuss the literature that will provide a foundation from which to analyse this transition and will conclude by using the literature to further develop the model of graduate employability, updated in the previous chapter.

6.1. Introduction to Phase Two

The findings of the first phase of the research identified a pattern of activities and a number of issues regarding graduate employment in sport. A key issue that was uncovered was the possibility that the graduates who had gained employment in the sport industry were dissatisfied with their jobs, suggested by the high number of graduates who were looking for new jobs and changed jobs early in their career. This supports sport employers' concerns discussed in Chapter 2 (p31) about the high turnover of staff within the industry (Gunn 2001, Sport England 2004, Skills Active 2006). This dissatisfaction was also suggested by the findings that many graduates did not achieve the entry level position into the industry that they expected, and a number of them were also unable to use the attributes that they had developed during their degree. Phase One also found that many graduates received poor levels of induction and staff development, which may have further added to this dissatisfaction.

The critical realist philosophy that influences this study, discussed in Chapter 3, maintains that social phenomena can be explained in terms of the powers of social structure and their interaction with human agency. Phase One has identified the patterns of the social phenomena, but there needs to be exploration and explanation of the interaction between the social structures of the sport industry, the social agency of the sport graduates and the staff within the sport employment setting. A key criticism of the dominant discourses of employability has been that it has been a 'one-way' gaze that has not

examined the employment practices of employers (Morley 2001). This is reflected in the literature underpinning Phase One of the study, which focused on studies of graduate employability that consist of research that concentrates on how the nature and supply of graduates relates to the demand from employers and in particular the attributes required. This is surprising considering that many definitions of employability highlight the importance of the context of the labour market and the role of employers, yet there is limited employability literature that explores this and none in sport. The Phase One literature has been valuable in providing a framework for analysing and identifying the attributes required of sport graduates and has helped to identify the problems of high turnover, underutilisation and over expectations at a general level. However, it has only told part of the story and has not involved an in depth analysis of the transition of the graduate into the workplace and the inter-relationship of the graduate with the sport employer.

Within organisational studies literature, research has been conducted examining the graduate transition into the workplace and the graduate career, although links have not been made to the literature and research on graduate employability and vice versa. By making the links between the two sets of literature a fuller picture of graduate employability can be uncovered. The next section of this chapter will examine the organisational studies literature that is relevant to the graduate transition and examine the links to graduate employability.

6.2. Underpinning Literature

Research on graduate transition into the workplace, within the organisational studies literature, has focused on organisational commitment and the psychological contract. Separate research, which is also relevant, has been undertaken on the development of a graduate identity through employment. This chapter will explore all three areas and evaluate their application to the transition of sport graduates into the workplace.

A key issue with the research, that needs to be highlighted immediately, is that most has focused on large organisations with a history of employing graduates (Jameson and Holden 2000), and existing graduate development programmes (McDermott, Mangan and O'Connor 2006, Sturges and Guest 2001, Garavan and Morley 1997). Nevertheless, the concepts used in the research, organisational commitment and psychological contracts, are helpful in explaining the issues within the sport industry. Moreover, some research has been undertaken within the hospitality sector which has evaluated graduate transition into non-traditional graduate occupations, and has also highlighted the concepts of organisational commitment, the psychological contract and graduate identity (Kelley-Patterson and George 2001, James and Holden 2000).

6.2.1. Organisational Commitment

The section will focus on organisational commitment, although some reference will be made to the psychological contract. The relevance of organisational commitment to this study is illustrated by Sturges and Guest's (2001) suggestion that, the ability of organisations to retain graduate recruits depends on the commitment those individuals feel to their employers. The more committed the graduate the less likely they are to leave. Furthermore, Sturges and Guest (2001) report that the link between organisational commitment and turnover intentions may be strongest early in the graduate's career. Thus, it is an important concept that may be used to explain the high numbers of sport graduates who changed jobs early in their career.

It is generally accepted that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct (Sturges et al 2002, Meyer et al 1998). Meyer et al (1998) have identified three forms of commitment: continuance, normative and affective. Continuance commitment reflects the employee's recognition of the costs of leaving the organisation, normative involves their feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation and affective commitment reflects their emotional attachment (Conway and Briner 2005). Most literature on organisational commitment and graduates has focused on affective

commitment (Sturges et al 2002, Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999), with Sturges et al (2002) describing it as the core dimension.

Across the literature there is concurrence with Mowday, Porter and Steers' (1982) definition of the affective dimension of organisational commitment: that is the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organisation (Armstrong 2006, Sturges et al 2002, Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999). Armstrong (2006) elaborates on the definition by reporting that it consists of three factors:

1. A strong desire to remain a member of the organisation;
2. A strong belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organisation;
3. A readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation.

Gaining affective organisational commitment from employees is not only important in terms of the retention of recruits, but Armstrong (2006:277) also argues that a strong commitment to work is likely to lead to "conscientious and self-directed application to do the job, regular attendance, nominal supervision and a high level of effort". This is supported by Sturges et al (2000) who note that organisational commitment has been positively associated with the attributes that organisations would wish to encourage, such as motivation and job performance.

The findings of the studies into the organisational commitment of graduates are very relevant to this current study of sport graduates. Sturges and Guest (2001) used semi structured interviews with 50 graduates, employed for three years by five large graduate recruiting organisations, to examine their attitudes and experiences in relation to organisational commitment. They found that a major influence on the graduates' positive affective organisational commitment was having challenging, stimulating, enjoyable work and early responsibility. They valued these elements of their job more than pay, which they felt would not compensate for a boring, unstimulating job. Other studies, that have used questionnaire based quantitative methods, also identified the

importance of intrinsic job content on graduate commitment during early employment in terms of; challenging work, opportunity to grow, recognition of contribution (Meyer et al 1998, McDermott et al 2006, Arnold and MacKenzie Davey 1999). Arnold and Mackenzie Davey (1999) particularly noted that organisational commitment was influenced by the extent to which graduates were able to use and develop their graduate skills. These intrinsic job characteristics correspond with the reasons given by sport graduates for changing jobs, identified in Phase One of this current research, and suggest that organisational commitment may be a factor in enabling an effective transition into sport employment.

In their study of hospitality graduates Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) also concluded that graduates were most concerned about equity and job variety, but in contrast to Sturges and Guest (2001) they found pay and conditions were also important to graduates; which is a form of continuance commitment. The studies by Sturges and Guest (2001), Myer et al (1998) and McDermott et al (2006) do not elaborate on the pay of their graduates, however, Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) note that graduates in the hospitality industry are low paid compared to other industries. It may be that once a certain level of pay is achieved this is no longer an issue with regard to continuance forms of organisational commitment. Phase One of the current study also identified that some sport graduates were looking to leave due to poor pay. The sport industry is similar to the hospitality industry in that it is not a traditional graduate employer and it would appear that both affective commitment and continuance commitment are factors that could impact on the employability of sport graduates with regard to their transition into the workplace. There has been little research on normative commitment and the graduate transition and yet this may also be a factor.

Another area that has been found to impact on the affective organisational commitment of graduates is career management. Studies found that graduates expected to get considerable help from employers (Sturges et al 2000, Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999). Arnold and Mackenzie (1999) reported that a lack of career progression posed a threat to commitment and many feared

being 'stuck'. Their research indicated that graduates understood that it was not possible for the organisation to provide guarantees of long-term paths, but they wanted "a map of the terrain, with an indication of the paths that were potentially available and how to get onto them" (Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999:232). These studies acknowledge that this finding contradicts the notion of the 'new career' which maintains that careers are the responsibility of individuals not organisations (Sturges et al 2000, Cohen and El-Sawad 2006). Sturges et al (2000) explain that in the past career management was shared between the employer and employee; however the onus is now on the individual as people no longer move up the corporate ladder but hop from job to job to further their career. Cohen and El-Sawad (2006) question whether, in the past, the notion of a job for life was ever available to the majority of workers. This doubt can certainly be applied to sport as the literature discussed in Chapter 2 established that there has always been a lack of career structure in sport (Houlihan 2002, Henry 2001, Yates 1984).

Kelley-Patterson and George's (2001) study of hospitality graduates found contrasting results; although graduate employers assumed that graduates would place priority on career development, the graduates themselves did not see themselves having a long-term career with the organisation. The graduates saw their employment in terms of short term gain of earning some money and the opportunity to take advantage of training. Over half were not clear about what their career intentions were. The final year students in the focus groups in Phase One were similar in that they were not clear about their career aim and intended to get initial jobs to pay off debt, and then find a job that related to the career. It may also have been a reason for the initial job moves found in the graduate survey, in that initial jobs were to pay off debts then students began to look for career jobs. There needs to be more exploration of graduates' attitudes to their first jobs after graduation.

Another factor Sturges and Guest (2001) found that impacted on affective organisational commitment, was the effect of the organisational culture and how much the graduate felt that they fitted in. They reported that cultural disparity was a key reason for those who were less committed to an employer.

They also identified that a graduate's relationship with their line manager and recognition by them of their achievements and performance were important in acknowledging the value of the graduate to the organisation, which enhanced their organisational commitment.

This section has shown the importance of organisational commitment to the transition of graduates into the workplace. This study's approach to employability has highlighted the need to include the effectiveness of the graduate's transition into initial employment in order to evaluate their employability. The early career patterns of sport graduates found in Phase One of this current research, and the reasons suggested for these patterns, concur with the factors that influence organisational commitment. Consequently there is a need to examine the transition of sport graduates in relation to organisational commitment, particularly as the sport industry is relatively new in employing graduates; if managers do not have a degree they may not have an understanding of the attributes that graduates have and their need to utilise them and be challenged. This provides more support for the need for research that examines the inter-relationship between the graduate and the sport employer.

All the factors that influence organisational commitment, which have been discussed up to now, relate to what graduates' require from a job or organisation. A number of these studies also found that the impact these areas had on organisational commitment were tempered by graduates expectations, or the promises they perceived had been made as part of a psychological contract with the organisation (Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey 1999, Kelley-Patterson and George 2001, Sturges and Guest 2001, McDermott et al 2006).

6.2.2. Psychological Contract

This section will define what is meant by the psychological contract and the key debates surrounding the concept, it will then go on to examine its importance to the graduate transition and the relevance to this study.

Armstrong (2006) explains that at its most basic level the employment relationship consists of a unique combination of beliefs held by an individual

and his/her employer about what they expect of one another. This concept is of relevance to the employability of sport graduates because, as established in the review of literature and reiterated in the previous section, the sport industry does not have a history of employing high numbers of graduates. This may mean that, at a fundamental level, the employer may have misconceptions or may not fully understand the graduate. At the same time Phase One results show that the inaccurate expectations of sport graduates and students of entry into the sport industry may impact on their expectation of their employer.

There have been many definitions of the psychological contract since the term was first used by Argyris in 1960 (Arnold et al 2005). Conway and Briner (2005) report that over the last four decades researchers have used the concept in many different ways, consequently there is no agreed definition. In order to analyse previous research and provide a framework for the study, it is important to identify where there is agreement, difference and a lack of clarity on the meaning of the concept.

There is general agreement that the psychological contract involves an exchange; it consists of the actions of the employee as a response to what that employee expects from their employer (Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey 1999, Kelley-Patterson and George 2001, Rousseau 2001, Conway and Briner 2005, McDermott et al 2006, Armstrong 2006). This exchange is dynamic with repeated cycles of each party fulfilling their promise to one another. Its ongoing nature has led to researchers recommending that employers continually monitor the status of the psychological contract of the graduate (Garavan and Morley 1997, Guest and Sturges 2001, McDermott et al 2006).

There is also general agreement that there are no limits in the number and nature of items that form the content of the psychological contract; it could be any aspect of the employee's work or working conditions (Conway and Briner 2005). Although the number of items is potentially vast, Conway and Briner (2005) report that specific research on the psychological contract has tended to focus on employer inducements such as pay, training and promotion and career management; or employee contributions such as effort and ability.

Kelley-Patterson and George (2002) argue that research has focused on organisational change, such as downsizing; rather than management development and learning and the early development of the contract. Rousseau (2001) also believes that there is a need to examine the formation of psychological contracts. Study of the transition of graduates into the workplace provides an opportunity to examine this formation, although up to now the research that has shed light on this have been derivative of the work on organisational commitment and relates to the areas discussed earlier: careers; pay; working conditions and environment; training and development; and the content and nature of the job (Kelley-Patterson and George 2002, McDermot at al 2006, Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999, Garavan and Morley 1997). Also, as has been identified, this work has generally focused on traditional graduate occupations which may create different conditions for the formation of the psychological contract, compared to non-traditional graduate occupations such as sport.

The main disagreement over the psychological contract relates to the beliefs that constitute the psychological contract. Conway and Briner (2005) explain that early definitions of the psychological contract by researchers, such as Kotter (1973) and Schein (1980), tended to emphasise beliefs about expectations, whilst later definitions by Rousseau (2001) and Herriot and Pemberton (1995) emphasised beliefs about promises and obligations.

The two approaches are found in graduate employment research. Both Sturges and Guest (2001) and Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey (1999) take a promissory approach to the psychological contract. Arnold and Mackenzie Davey (1999:214) explain that the key point of the concept of the psychological concept is that:

“people form beliefs about their unwritten ‘deal’ with their employer – that is, about the rights and obligations of each side in the employment relationship and about promises that have been made”.

However Kelley-Patterson and George (2001, 2002) and Garavan and Morley (1997) take an expectations approach, as can be seen in their definitions of the psychological contract:

“a series of mutual expectations and needs arising from an organisational – individual relationship. The contract is nearly always implicit and usually covers a range of expectations of rights, duties, obligations and privileges, which have an important influence on employee behaviour” Kelley-Patterson and George (2001:55).

“an overall set of expectations that a graduate holds with respect to his/her potential contributions to the organisation and the organisation’s potential response to those contributions” Garavan and Morley (1997:120).

It is therefore important to explore the difference between expectations and promises. Conway and Briner (2005: 23) explain that expectations suggest a general belief about whether something will or should happen, whilst a promise is a “much more specific belief about what will happen, when it will happen, and why it will happen”. Guest (1998) argues that it is important to identify whether the psychological contract is based on promises or expectations, as failure to meet promises is of a different level of significance to failing to meet expectations. Conway and Briner (2005) suggest that promises offer more conceptual clarity than obligations and expectations and are thus more closely related to the notion of a contract. However, Guest (1998) does argue that the promissory approach is very close to the conventional contract. In his later work with Sturges on graduate employment, he addresses the issue by stating that the graduate’s perceptions of the promises made by organisations, before the graduate started work, generated expectations of the job content and support from the organisation (Sturges and Guest 2001). This brief discussion has illustrated Guest’s (1998:651) view that there is a “conceptual muddle” concerning the psychological contract.

With regard to the current study, Phase One found that there is an issue regarding graduates’ and students’ over expectations of the level of job they expected to obtain, but these expectations were related to the industry as a whole rather than with regard to a specific organisation, as the psychological contract is. The psychological contract is an important concept to apply to this

study, but there is a need to separate the analysis of graduate expectations of employment in the sport industry and the psychological contract between the individual graduate and individual organisation.

A development of the concept of the psychological contract has been to categorise it into two types – transactional and relational. Conway and Briner (2005:43) explain that transactional contracts are highly specific exchanges and take place over a finite period, and include terms and conditions and pay. Relational contracts are broader, less defined and relate to the “exchange of personal, socio-emotional and value-based resources”. Thus an individual’s contract could consist of both types to varying degrees. This categorisation will be helpful in using the psychological contract to analyse the relationship of sport graduates and sport employers within sport organisations and its implications for employability. Furthermore, this study will also take into account Sturges and Guest’s (2001) perspective and examine how graduates’ prior expectations may impact on their perceptions of those promises.

The transactional – relational approach is also helpful in examining the issue of the extent to which the promises/ beliefs are explicit or implicit. Guest (1998:662) argues that psychological contracts are unwritten and implicit and they cease to become psychological contracts if they are written and explicit. Drawing on work from Rousseau and Parks’ (1993) ‘contract continuum’ he identifies four distinct steps in the continuum. The first three are explicit and consist of: the contract of employment; organisational handbooks and rulebooks; and the agreements between manager and subordinate that emerge from processes such as appraisals, performance reviews and goal setting. These seem to correspond to Conway and Briner’s (2005) description of the transactional contract. The final step identified by Guest (1998), are those promises that are implicit and unwritten such as understandings about career and reciprocal commitment, which appear to relate to relational contracts. With regard to graduate employment research, most studies appear to take the view that the contract is implicit (Garavan and Morley 1997, Mcdermott et al 2006, Kelley-Patterson and George 2001), or simply say that the psychological contract is not written down (Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey 1999). This then

corresponds to the view that the psychological contract is subjective and that it is “held at the individual level and exists in the eye of the beholder” (Briner and Conway 2005:28). This is the underpinning belief in the general research on graduates, where the focus is on the individual graduate’s perceptions (Sturges and Guest 2001, Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey 1999, McDermott et al 2006, Garavan and Morley 1997). As mentioned earlier this study will examine transactional and relational contracts in terms of those that are explicit and implicit.

The subjective nature of the psychological contract means there is an issue about whether there is actual agreement over the psychological contract with both parties holding the same beliefs; or as the agreement is individually perceived there may be different beliefs about the contract. Guest (2004) supports the individually perceived contract when he argues that if the contract is subjective then there is unlikely to be actual agreement. He summarises the notion of an implicit, subjective contract as:

“the result may be two strangers passing blindfold in the dark, disappointed at their failure to meet. Or to put it another way, both may have drawn up contracts in the hope that the other has drawn up exactly the same contract. But since both contracts are locked away – in the mind rather than the safe – there is no way of checking” (Guest 2004:652)

This point is important to consider when examining the relational contracts of sport graduates and sport employers, the different backgrounds of the graduate (having a degree) and the employer (perhaps not having a degree) may mean that they may pass by each other in relation to understanding and meeting each others expectations.

The final area for discussion is that most definitions refer to the psychological contract being between the employee and the organisation. Both Guest (1998) and Conway and Briner (2005) note that it is relatively easy to identify the employee but it is not clear what is meant by the organisation, as the contract cannot be held by groups. The question is then who or what represents the organisation? Conway and Briner (2005) suggest that employees do not see a particular person or agent as being the organisation, but it is the overall view

of actions by agents of the organisation such as line managers, signals from the organisation such as human resources practices and company documentation. With regard to the research on graduate employment none of the studies clearly identify who or what represents the organisation. Much of the research has only examined the psychological contract of the graduate; the depiction of the organisation in that research concurs with Conway and Briner's (2005) interpretation, in that they have included line managers, human resources and company documentation plus work colleagues (Sturges and Guest 2001, McDermott et al 2006, Arnold and Mackenzie-Davey 1999). However in their work on hospitality graduates Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) examined the psychological contract from the graduate's perspective and the employer's perspective. For the perspective of the employer they chose managers who had responsibility for graduates to represent the organisation. This is an issue for this research that, within the discussion up to now, has used the term employer to represent the organisation. Within further research there is need to clearly define who represents the employer.

Leading on from this is the issue of the extent to which the psychological contract is shaped by the organisation itself and the influence of external factors (Conway and Briner 2005). All the studies of graduate employment appear to concentrate on internal organisational promises made by the organisation. (Arnold and Mackenzie 1999, Sturges and Guest 2001). The reason for this is that an organisation would not be expected to be held responsible for promises made by other parties. Although those studies that used expectations rather than promises identified that it was likely that the employee's perception of the contract would be influenced by external factors such as previous experiences (Conway and Briner 2005). For example, Garavan and Morley (1997:119) argue that individuals do not enter the organisation as a completely "blank slate". Sturges and Guest (2001) suggest that expectations are developed during the recruitment and selection process, personal experiences and information gained from friends, family and peers and university career guidance. Thus, they argue that both employers and university career guidance must enable graduates to construct accurate pictures of potential employers. In the case of this study this issue was touched

on earlier in this section and the decision was made to treat the external factors as separate to the psychological contract, but recognise that they impact on the expectations of the graduates and employers and subsequently influence the perceptions of the psychological contract by both parties.

Despite the difficulties with defining the psychological contract it is a useful concept from which to analyse and explain organisational commitment, graduate transition to the work place and employability. Conway and Briner (2005) suggest that it is particularly helpful when examining breach of the psychological contract; where one party in the relationship perceives that the other has failed to fulfil their promised obligations. This could lead to the employee having negative attitudes towards the job, lower job performance and lower organisational commitment. This may be a particular issue within the employment of sport graduates and the notion of a breach of contract could be helpful in analysing the reasons why sport graduates look for other work.

This research is also important because this section has shown that, with the exception of Kelley-Patterson and George's (2001) study of the hospitality industry, research on the organisational commitment of graduates has tended to focus on traditional graduate occupations. With HE government policy continuing to focus on widening participation and up-skilling the workforce inevitably more graduates will be entering occupations like sport, which do not have a embedded graduate workforce and may have implications for their organisational commitment and transition.

6.2.3. Graduate Identity.

The research into the organisational commitment of graduates has argued that graduate expectations are different to other employees (Garavan and Morley 1997). A concept that may help explain why graduates are different and how this impacts on their expectations is Holmes' (1999) notion of the graduate identity. The next section will explain the concept and relate it to sport graduates.

Holmes (1999) considers higher education as a process through which an individual may develop their identity as a graduate, as one who is highly educated. Thus graduate identity relates to the notion that being a graduate has some social significance and makes a difference in terms of employment opportunity and career progression (Holmes 2001). Holmes (2001) describes his theory as being influenced by Harre and Langehove's (1999) view of identity, which argues that the actor is not a sovereign self, monadic entity who acts totally rational, but a social self who is positioned within a structured social world. From a critical realist perspective Archer (2000: 94) disagrees with Harre's and Lagnehove's (1999) view arguing that he conflates identity into a flat 'personhood' stating that he believes that

“Between molecules and meanings there is nothing? no inner states, no mental attributes and no personal psychology. There are only persons as powerful particulars and persons have no inner psychological complexity”.

Archer (2000) argues for a stratified personhood where personal identity and social identity are distinct, whilst there is only the social identity of persons in Harré's and Langehove's (1999) version.

Despite his acknowledged influence by Harre, Holmes' (1999) theory also seems to follow a critical realist perspective. He suggests a stratified personhood, as he proposes that an emergent identity is formed through a process involving a dynamic relationship between an individual's personal sense of self, and the social processes which determine what counts as criteria for being ascribed a particular identity. Thus the emergent identity of being a graduate is the outcome of the interaction between the claim of the individual to being a graduate and the affirmation of that person as being a graduate by significant others. The identity is emergent as the interaction process is continuous and identities change over time or between different contexts (Holmes 2000) Holmes argues that graduate identity does not occur with the formal award of a degree, but the extent to which the graduate gains affirmation of the graduate identity, such as gaining a job that is explicitly regarded as a graduate job. Jameson and Holden (2000:267) summarise:

“so far as graduate identity is concerned neither employers’ expectations of what a graduate should be like, nor graduates’ understanding and aspirations of what it is like to be a graduate in employment (as a graduate), are separately determining. Rather these two sides of the dynamic process interact and affect each other”.

Holmes (2005) submits that the interaction between the claims or disclaims of the individual in relation to identity, and the affirmation or disaffirmation of that claim by the significant others, leads to different modalities of emergent identity. He has developed a model, shown in figure 6.1, to graphically present the conceptualisation of emergent identity which displays the salient modalities in zones.

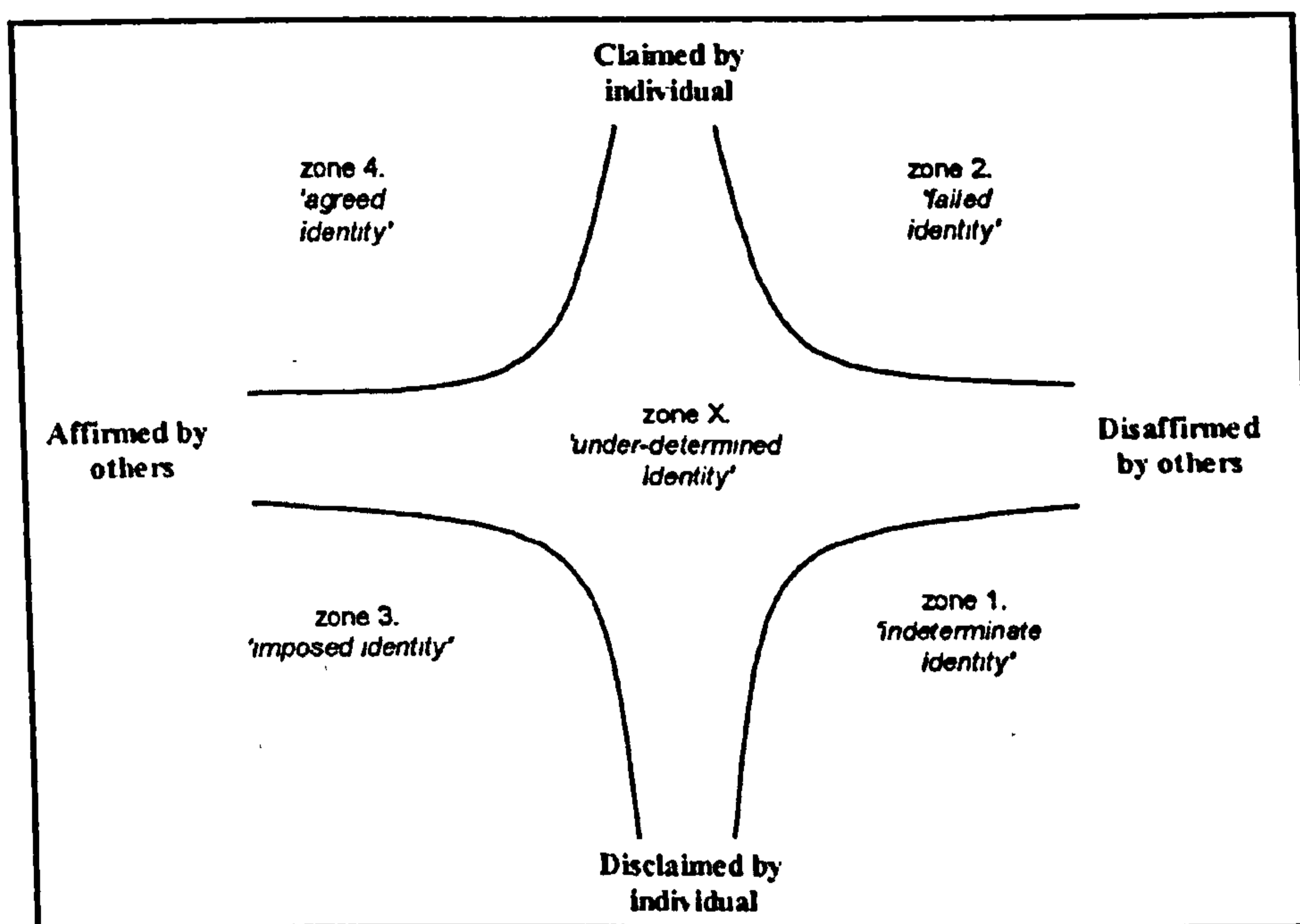


Figure 6.1. Modalities of emergent identity (Holmes 2005).

In order to explain the model it will be applied to graduates and how it relates to this study. In zone 1 no graduate identity is being claimed and none is being ascribed, thus their identity is undetermined; for example an individual who has gained their degree and perhaps then gone travelling. Zone 4 is where the individual’s graduate identity claim is affirmed by others; for example gaining a recognised graduate job. Zone 3 is where significant others ascribe an identity to the person and the individual disclaims that identity. This could be a situation where a person disclaims their graduate identity in an attempt to fit in with colleagues who do not have graduate backgrounds. Zone 2 represents

failed identity where an individual may claim a graduate identity but does not gain affirmation of the identity by others. This is the zone that may be very relevant for this research, in that the sport industry does not have a tradition of employing graduates and some employers may not see the need for graduates; thus when a graduate gets a job he/she may lay claim to their graduate identity but it is not affirmed by the employer. This may be even more significant for the sport graduate because, as Chapter 2 (p49) has shown, the sport degree has been perceived as having low status (Coalter 1990, De Sensi et al 1990, Scott and Watson 1994, Baty 1997, Richards 1997, Roberts 2004). Finally, the central zone X of Holme's model is where there is no clear claim/disclaim by the individual and no clear ascription by others so the individual's identity is under-determined.

Holmes primarily focuses his research on traditional graduate occupations, where graduates have an identity and status. Thus, his model tends to concentrate on how an individual achieves affirmation of graduate status in the workplace. He does acknowledge that graduates are accessing industries that have not had long histories of employing graduates, although he does not provide an analysis of these areas. Also he does not explore the outcome of experiencing failed identity, or any of the other modalities; yet this is a very interesting area for exploration in terms of how it may impact on the individual's performance, job satisfaction or organisational commitment.

Jameson and Holden (2000) undertook research into graduate identity in the hospitality industry which, like sport, does not have a tradition of employing graduates. They found that being a graduate plays little importance in obtaining and undertaking a job and that employers do not have an understanding of how the employment of graduates makes a difference; thus do not have high expectations of them. Consequently, they suggest that hospitality graduates appear to be failing to develop their graduate identity. Jameson and Holden see this as an issue in terms of the increasing number of graduates going into non traditional graduate jobs, but they do not examine how failing to develop an identity impacts on the performance of the graduate and organisational commitment.

6.3. Conclusions and implications for Phase Two research.

Phase One and the concepts covered in this chapter have highlighted the importance of analysing sport as an example of an industry that does not traditionally employ many graduates. The critical realist perspective emphasises the value of studying things in context. Sayer (1992: 248) argues that contexts are not just background but “exploration of how the context is structured and how the key agents under study fit into it – interact with it and constitute it – is vital for explanation”. Chapter 2 (p45) established that government policy is pressing for increased participation within HE and for up-skilling the workforce. This is an issue in industries where the majority of the current workforce are not graduates and consequently may not accurately perceive the needs of graduates with regard to organisational commitment, the psychological contract and their graduate identity. The discussion of the literature in this chapter has been incorporated into the ‘Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry’ to provide more detail of the factors in the interaction between the graduate and employer that may impact on employability. Figure 6.2 shows this part of the model (that indicated within the red oval in the model in Figure 5.6 p139) and an explanation on the new detail is provided below.

The original model of Graduate Employability in Sport in Figure 3.7 (p89) indicated that the interaction of the graduate and employer impacted on employability. However, it did not deconstruct what was meant by employability and the extent to which the graduate had achieved employability could not be assessed. Figure 6.2 focuses on the interaction element of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (shown in the red oval in Figure 5.6, p139). In this model the concept of employability has been broken down in light of the discussion in this chapter, the reasons for the inclusion of each element (shown in italics in the following text) will now be explained.

In Chapter 1, Hillage and Pollard’s (1998) definition of employability as “obtaining and retaining fulfilling work” was identified as underpinning this

study. Chapter 1 noted that obtaining and retaining work related to the graduate effectively *performing* in their job. In terms of fulfilling work, the discussion of *organisational commitment* within this chapter suggests that this concept would be appropriate to include. It is relevant to the analysis of the sport graduate's transition into sport employment as it impacts on the desire to stay with an organisation and is associated with job performance and motivation. A finding of Phase One was the high number of graduates who changed jobs, which indicates that sport graduates' organisational commitment may be low. A reason suggested from the findings was *underutilisation* of the graduates' attributes; this was also found as an influential factor on organisational commitment within graduates in the studies discussed in this chapter (Arnold and Davey 1999, McDermott et al 2006). Thus this element of employability has also been included in the model under employability.

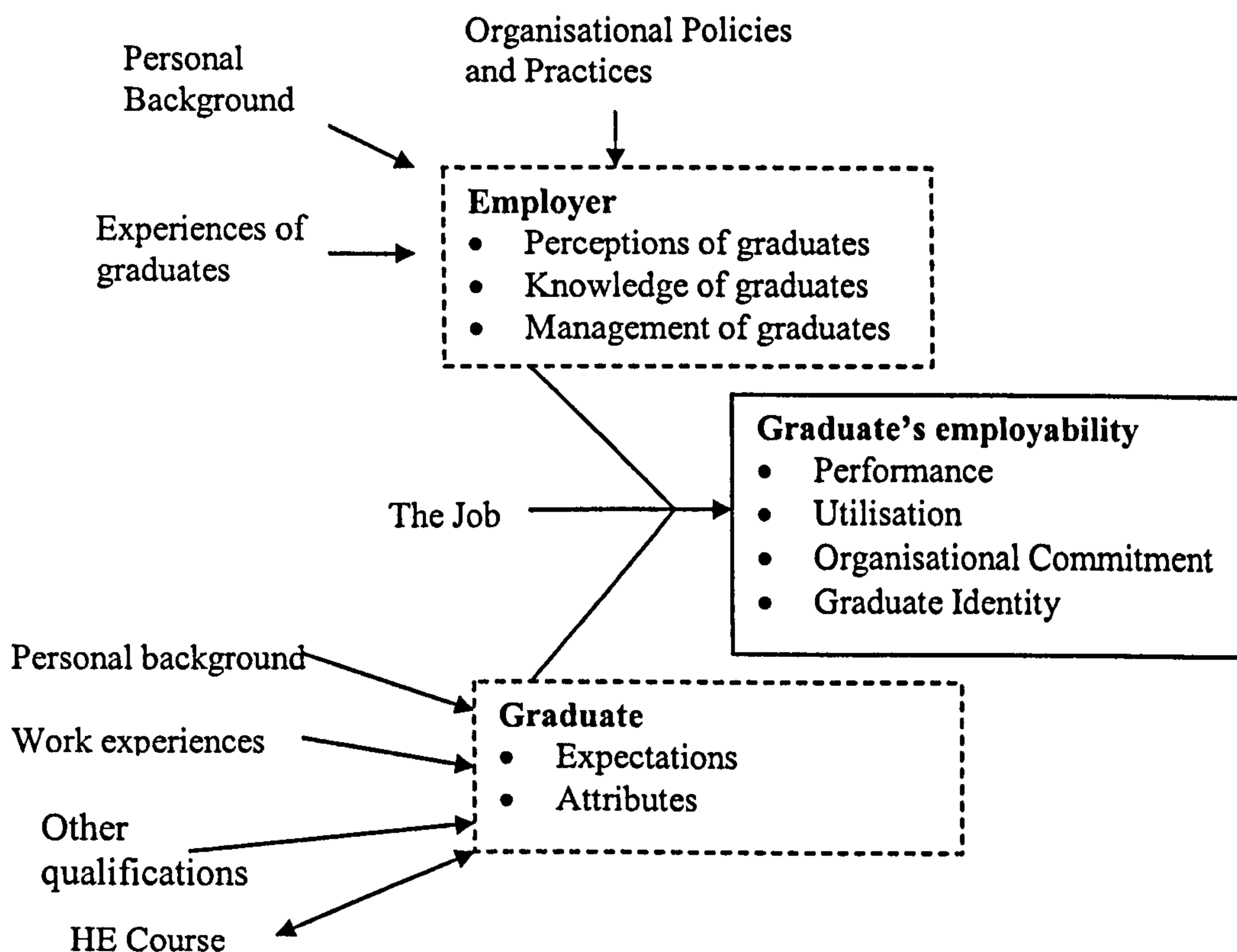


Figure 6.2. The Interaction of the Graduate and Employer and the impact on Employability in the Sport Industry
 (Element of the model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry shown in the red oval in Figure 5.6, p139)

The final element of employability is *graduate identity*. The discussion within this chapter suggested that graduate identity may be affirmed by gaining a graduate job which corresponds to the notion of graduate employability and obtaining a fulfilling job. Thus, what may distinguish graduate employability from general employability is the graduate's need to affirm their graduate status. The discussion in this chapter suggested that sport graduates being employed in sport organisations may be failing to develop a graduate identity. There has not been any research on the impact of experiencing a failed identity yet it may be important in explaining the high number of graduate job changes and could impact on organisational commitment and employability.

The Model in Figure 6.2 shows the interaction of the employer and graduate and also the importance of the job within this interaction; each will be explained in relation to the model. With regard to the graduate, the Phase One results and discussion in Chapter 2 (p61-65) indicated the importance of their attributes in obtaining and retaining a job. Phase One also identified that the expectations of graduates may also be a factor in employee commitment and thus their employability. The importance of expectations and their influence on organisational commitment and, indirectly, the psychological contract was also corroborated by the discussion in this chapter. The Phase One results, discussion in Chapter 2 and this chapter suggest that these attributes and expectations are affected by the personal background of the graduate, their work experiences, other qualifications and the HE sport course that they have undertaken.

With regard to the importance of the employer's impact on graduate employability, this chapter has indicated that the graduates' relationship and management by their line manager was an influence on organisational commitment (Sturges and Guest 2001). It has also discussed the implications of the concepts of the psychological contract on graduate employability. The manager's knowledge and perceptions of the graduate may impact on their psychological contract and may influence whether or not it corresponds to the graduate's perception of the psychological contract. The model proposes that the employer's management, perception and knowledge of graduates are

influenced by the organisational policies and practices, the background of the line manager and their own experiences of graduates. This aspect of the model needs more specific research which will be undertaken in the next phase of the study.

An addition to the model, resulting from the discussion of the literature in this chapter in relation to the Phase One results, is the importance of the job that the graduate is undertaking. The results of Phase One suggested a reason that graduates changed jobs was for more challenging work which corresponded to the importance of intrinsic job content on graduate commitment during early employment (Sturges and Guest 2001, McDermott et al 2006, Arnold and Davey 1999). The discussion in this chapter also highlighted the importance of the job on affirming graduate identity.

From the model a theory of graduate employability in the sports industry can be developed: *'graduate employability within the sports industry is a dynamic phenomenon that is the synthesis of the complex interaction of; the nature of the graduate, their job and the employer, within the context of the structure and culture of the sports industry at a specific moment in time'*. Consequently, employability is not just a matter of a HE course developing the appropriate skills and knowledge within a graduate and the graduate then being able to obtain and retain a fulfilling job.

The next phase on the research will examine this developing theory and model. As discussed in Chapter 3, a criticism levelled at critical realism is that if absolute knowledge is not possible and access to reality is conceptually mediated, how can the strength of a theory be evaluated (Johnson and Duberley 2004). In response to this issue, Sayer's (1992) notion of 'practical adequacy' was submitted as a means of evaluating the model or theory by the way it works in practice. Phase Two of the research will assess the 'practical adequacy' of the model and developing theory by examining graduate employability in situ through the use of case studies.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

Chapter 7

Phase Two Methods

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter provides an explanation and justification of the research strategy and methods for the Phase Two research. It will identify the objectives and research questions that relate to this phase and discuss the methods and procedures used to collect the data.

7.1. Objectives of Phase Two

The introduction to Chapter 5 established the implications of the findings of Phase One of the research in terms of, the key issues identified and the need for further research. It also suggested that Phase One had only told half of the story of graduate employability and there needed to be a deeper analysis of the transition of the graduate into the workplace and the inter-relationship between the graduate and the sport employer. Moreover, Chapter 3 discussed the philosophical influences of the research and highlighted the need to delve deeper into the graduate/employer relationship in the context of the sport industry. The critical realist philosophy emphasises that human agents reproduce/transform social structures (Keat and Urry 1982); thus a proposition of the study is that graduate employability can be explained through the analysis of the inter-relationship of the graduate and the employer, which impacts on the transition of the graduate and thus the structures of graduate employability in the sport industry. Phase Two provides a fuller exploration of the three objectives of the research; the associated research questions at the focus of this phase are reiterated below, additional research questions have also been identified to enable analysis of the interaction between the graduate and the significant others within the workplace, these are shown in bold.

Objective 1: Examine the nature of employment in the sport industry and how this influences graduate employability.

Research Questions

- 1.1. What are the levels of employment of sport graduates?
- 1.2. What types of jobs do sport graduates obtain?
- 1.3. What are the skills and knowledge graduates' perceive are required for employment in the sport industry?

- 1.4. What were the expectations of graduates in terms of sport employment and how did they correspond with the actual outcomes of employment?
- 1.5. How do the attributes of the sport graduates correspond to those required in the sport industry.
- 1.6. How do the perceptions and expectations of sport employers' impact on the employment experiences of sport graduates?

Objective 2: Analyse the nature of higher education sport courses and the graduates produced and how this influences their employability in the sport industry.

Research Questions

- 2.5. To what extent do graduates use the attributes gained whilst in higher education in their employment?
- 2.6. What are the perceptions of graduates with regard to the appropriateness of their degree to their employment?

Objective 3: Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry and the factors that influence their transition into the work.

Research Questions

- 3.1. What factors are associated with a graduate who gains employment in the sport industry?
- 3.2. What is the career progression of sport graduates in their first three years of employment?
- 3.3. What induction and training have graduates had?
- 3.4. Do graduates have a staff development programme?
- 3.5. What are the future intentions of graduates?
- 3.6. How do the inter-relation of the graduates' and employer's expectations and perceptions impact on the transition of the graduate?
- 3.7. To what extent have graduate expectations been met and how does this impact on the transition of the graduate?
- 3.8. What are the perceptions of the graduates performance by the employer, graduate and significant others?

7.2. Justification of Case Study Approach

In order to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions, this phase of the study will use a case study approach. The reason for this approach is that case studies enable the investigation of phenomena within a real life context (Robson 1993, Gillham 2000, Yin 2003). Most other studies of graduate employability have used questionnaires or interviews and have concentrated on graduate attributes and how they relate to employers' needs, which are isolated from the real life context of the graduate's interaction with the sport organisation or employer. This study proposes that graduate employability is a complex phenomenon and there is a need to take a holistic view of the employability of the graduate in situ. Macpherson et al (2000:54) state that case studies enable the "rich understanding of the social site and the meaning structures created by the actors that operate there", which is fundamental to analysing the inter-relationship of the graduate, employer and significant others within the sport organisation. With regard to critical realism it is important to interpret meaning in relation to its contexts (Sayer 2000). Thus the case provides an example of the sport graduate working in the sport workplace, which can be interrogated using multiple methods and data sources to achieve a rich description of the phenomena of graduate employability and the graduate transition. (Stark and Torrance 2004).

Stake (2003) has categorised three different types of cases; intrinsic, instrumental and collective. This study uses instrumental and collective types of cases. The instrumental case is used to provide an insight into specific issues, in this situation graduate employability and the graduate transition; the actual case itself is of secondary importance. In contrast, the intrinsic case study is where the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case for its own sake. The approach to this study can also be categorised as collective since a number were studied to investigate the phenomena. Stark and Torrance (2004) assert that a key concern of case study research is depth versus coverage with the emphasis on depth. Nevertheless, both Stark and Torrance (2004) and Yin (2003), believe that multiple cases are more beneficial if resources allow them to be studied in depth and also allow cross

comparisons. Yin (2003) argues that evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study more robust. This study examines four cases in order to investigate graduate employability, and more specifically the graduate transition into the workplace. There were two reasons for choosing four cases: first it was felt that this was the optimum amount the researcher could undertake that still enabled in depth analysis; and second it fitted with the types of cases that were felt to be of relevance to the study, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

7.3. Procedures

This section explains the procedures that were followed in defining, selecting, executing and analysing the cases. A key step once the objectives and research questions had been developed was to define the case through the identification of the unit of analysis (Yin 2003): in this study it is a sport graduate employed within a sport organisation. To further define the case, boundaries need to be drawn around it to signify the features that are within the case and those outside, in order to clearly identify the phenomena to be studied. (Stark and Torrence 2004, Stake 2003). This phase of the study is focused on graduate employability through an analysis of the factors that affect the graduate's transition into employment within a specific organisation. Hence, the case is only examining those aspects of the organisation that relate to the graduate and those aspects of the graduate's life that relate to their transition into employment with that sport organisation. Yin (2004) also suggests that a time boundary should be identified to define the beginning and the end of the unit of analysis. In this study this was that the graduate must have graduated in the two years prior to Phase Two of the research. The reason for this delimitation was to enable the study to focus on the phase of transition from education to work. The Phase One findings suggest that some graduates travelled or took on short term temporary jobs to pay off initial debt therefore graduates were used who had completed HE two years previously to account for this pattern.

The next stage of the procedure was to identify the sources of evidence to be collected and evaluated. A key characteristic of case study research is the use

of multiple sources of evidence to provide converging lines of enquiry, or triangulation (Yin 2004). Objective 3's research questions emphasise the inter relationship of the perceptions, expectations and experiences of the graduate and employer and their impact on the graduate's transition into the workplace. In order to examine these relationships, and uncover other factors that impact on the transition of the graduate interviews were undertaken with the graduate and significant others within the workplace.

As identified in Chapter 3 (p86), critical realism emphasises that analysis of social phenomena should include the unobservable structures and subjectively experienced social phenomena (Sayer 2000). Consequently, Johnson and Duberley (2003:165) argue that this analysis should include a "hermeneutic understanding of the interpretations and intentions that consciously motivate member's behaviour" Interviews generate data that enable a rich insight into peoples' experiences and the meanings people attribute to those experiences, which facilitates an understanding of their social world and how they act within it (May 2001, Miller and Glassner, 2004, Marshall and Rossman 1999). However, Johnson and Duberley (2003:168) warn that it is "impossible to experience the experience of another". Miller and Glassner (2004) concur with this when they state that research cannot provide a "mirror reflection of the social world" although information about that world is achievable through in-depth interviewing". Consequently the aim of using interviews was to gain an insight into the social world of the graduate and significant others within the workplace.

A key issue that is acknowledged by Sayer (2000:17) is that social science operates in a double hermeneutic where the "researched actions and texts never simply speak for themselves and yet are not reducible to the researcher's interpretation of them either" Sayer (1992:49) argues that "although social phenomena cannot exist independently of actors or subjects, they usually exist independently of the particular individual who is studying them. As discussed in Chapter 3 (p79) there is a need for the interviewer to be reflexive, the implications of this for the practice and analysis of interviews will be discussed later in this section.

With regard to the analysis of social phenomenon and the interaction of structure and agency, in addition to attempting to understand people's experiences, the critical realist approach should also involve the analysis of the:

“structural conditions which impinge upon these social activities which agents skilfully sustain and transform through these intentionally motivated activities yet remain opaque to individuals involved” (Johnson and Duberley 2003:165).

This is supported by Porter (2001) who argues that behaviour needs to be explained through reference to the concrete situations in which actors are situated. This leads on to the view that much of what is happening does not depend on or correspond to the actor's understanding, as there are unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions that happen to people regardless of their understanding (Sayer 2000). Sayer (2000:34) also states that the “concepts used by actors are necessary for an explanation of their situation, they are not sufficient, for they are likely not only to be flawed but to mask or misrepresent certain aspects of what happens”. It is for this reason that the significant others were interviewed, in order to establish their perceptions and expectations of the graduate and how these were manifested in their patterns of action towards the graduate and relate this back to how the graduate responded to this action.

The significant others that were interviewed were those that directly manage, work with and work for the graduate, as appropriate for each case study. The idea for this pattern of interviews was adapted from the 360 degree feedback system used in performance management. Torrington et al (2005:271) describe it as collecting “feedback from every angle on the way the individual carries out their job” and thus it is seen as an effective way of capturing the complexities of performance. A key criticism of 360 degree feedback, in terms of performance management, has been that it is subjectively based (Redman and Wilkinson 2006). However, in this study the subjective views of the significant others are important because it provides us with an understanding

of their perception of the graduate and how it may influence their interaction with them.

An important matter within case study research is the selection of the cases; in this case which graduates, employed by which organisation. Both Yin (2003) and Stake (2003) concur that the criteria for the choice of case studies does not relate to sampling logic, as statistical generalisations cannot be drawn to the wider population. Stake (2003) argues that important attributes are balance and variety, but the opportunity to learn from the case is of primary importance. In contrast, Yin (2003) believes that every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall study; he argues that rather than statistical generalisations, theoretical generalisations can be developed where a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the study. Yin's (2003) strategy influenced the research strategy for this study; the model and theory of graduate employability and graduate transition into the workplace has developed from Phase One and the case study research strategy will be used to examine if the propositions derived from that model and theory are demonstrated in the cases. Each case study will be analysed individually and conclusions drawn, those conclusions will then be compared across the case studies and from this the model and theory will be modified. This process is illustrated in figure 5.1 overleaf which is adapted from Yin (2003).

The graduate case studies for this study were selected for the following reasons. Sport graduates are a heterogeneous population in terms of course type. An analysis of the modules undertaken by students participating in the Phase One research identified three generic types of sport related courses, Sports Studies, Sport Science and Leisure Studies/Management. This phase of the research is focused on the interface between the graduate and the employer and thus concentrates on the dynamics of the workplace and not the differences in courses. Different course types or institutions create other variables which would have to be considered as they may influence performance in the workplace; consequently, the case studies were of graduates from one course. This enables more meaningful comparison

between the cases, as the variation between the types of graduates will be reduced as they have studied the same course. The graduates who participated are those from the Sport Science degree at an HE Institution in the North West which will be referred to as NWIHE. This institution was chosen for two main reasons. First, when the cases were selected it had only been providing sport courses for five years and is an example of the expansion of sport courses. As identified in the review of literature, there has been concern about the rapid expansion of courses and oversupply of sport and recreation graduates. Thus, a key feature of HE provision for sport has been the high proportion of new courses provided by institutions new to delivering sport related courses. Second, the staff at NWIHE were supportive of the research and helped in the initial contacting of graduates, this was required in order to work within the Data Protection Act. As Stake (1995) acknowledges, it is important to choose cases which are easily accessible both physically and in terms of the response of the participants in the case study.

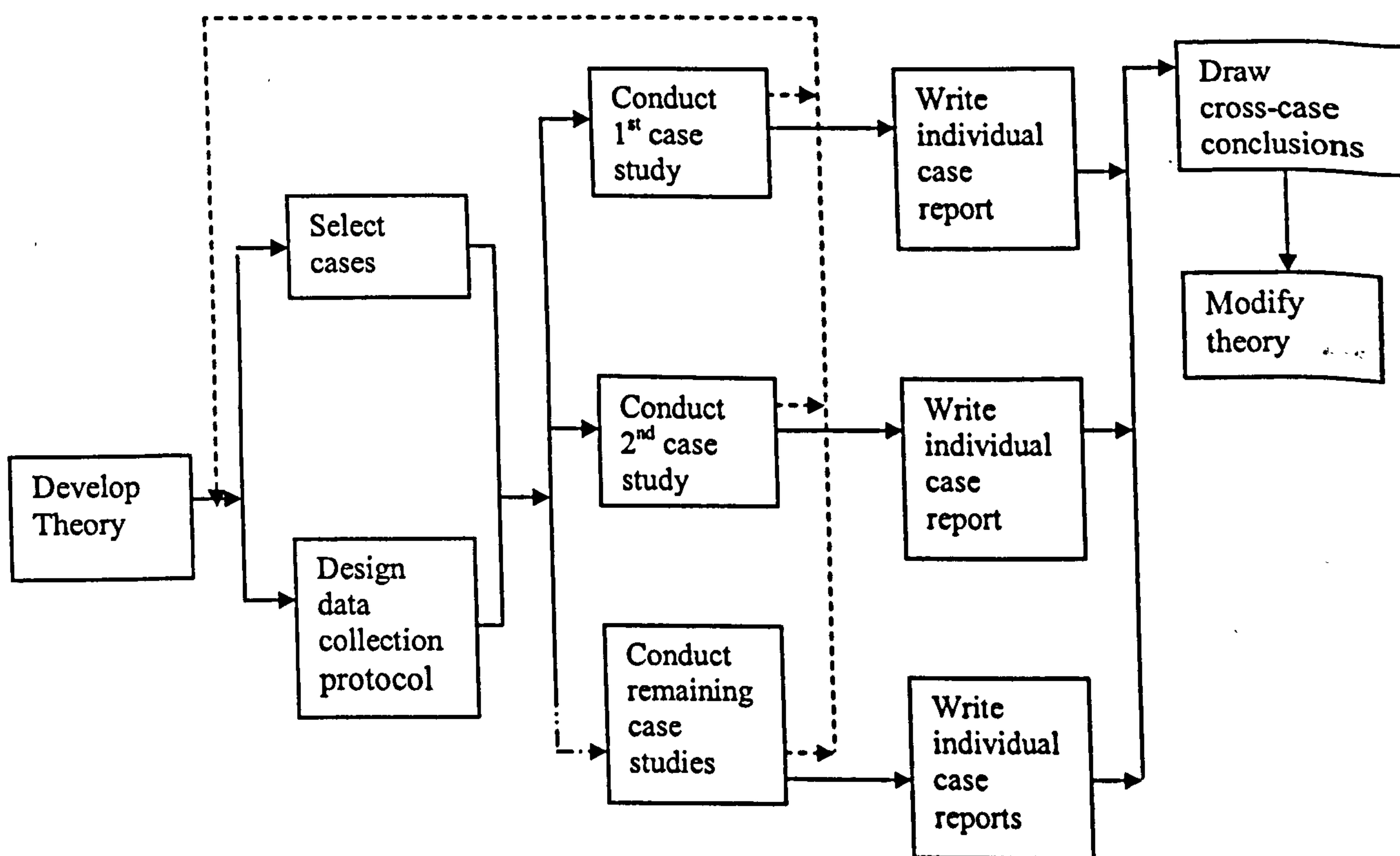


Figure 7.1: Case Study Method (adapted from Yin 2003).

The staff at NWIHE provided a list of 32 graduates who had graduated in September 2000, two years previous to the case study research, which was undertaken between August 2002 and January 2003. Of the 32 graduates nine were employed in sport related jobs and five of those were based in the north-west; which was the most accessible area for the researcher to carry out the case studies, taking into account that the researcher would have to undertake a number of visits to the graduates' organisations. A member of staff at NWIHE contacted the five graduates to ascertain their actual job and if they would be interested in being involved in the research, all replied that they were interested. The jobs the graduates were employed in were:

- Local Authority Sports Development Officer (SDO)
- Local Authority Senior Lifeguard
- Charitable Trust Tennis Centre General Manager
- Swimming Programme Leader, Commercial Health and Fitness chain.
- High Education Sports Studies Lecturer

As it had previously been decided that four case studies were the optimum amount that the researcher could investigate in depth it was decided not to pursue one of the potential cases; this was the HE lecturer, as it was felt this was outside of the sport industry, particularly in relation to SPRITO's categorisation which included: sport facilities, sports development, coaching and health and fitness as its core components (SPRITO 2001). The different types of organisations also enabled the application of another of Yin's (2003) approaches to case study research, replication logic and theoretical replication. Replication logic refers to case studies that are expected to provide similar results in order to test a theory and theoretical replication refers to cases that are expected to provide contrasting results for predictable reasons. In relation to critical realism, Sayer (2000) proposes that the strategies of actors need to be uncovered alongside knowledge of the context which enabled those strategies to be successful or not. The review of literature had suggested that there may be differences in graduate employment experiences according to the organisation they worked for. Thus the study to some extent takes on the idea

of theoretical replication in that contrasting results between the cases may occur due to the different approaches of the organisations.

Once the case studies had been identified each graduate was contacted by telephone to organise a face to face meeting at a convenient location for them. The SDO and the Tennis Centre Manager both chose to meet at work whilst the Fitness Instructor and Lifeguard chose to meet in the coffee bar at NWIHE. During the meeting the aim and nature of the research was outlined and it was explained that their line manager, colleagues and staff would be interviewed. The graduate was also asked to provide an outline of the structure of the organisation and the staff they worked with. The graduate was then asked to confirm that they would be prepared to continue with the research which they all did. They were then asked to speak to their line manager to gain agreement for the organisation to take part in the research and confirm this with a contact number for their line manager. The line manager was then contacted to confirm their participation and the nature of the research was explained to them along with the initial organisation of interviewing other staff.

The staff interviewed were selected from the structure in line with the 360 degree approach and in all cases their role directly interacted with the graduate. With regard to the Tennis Centre, this included all the permanent staff and the director of the management committee. In the local authority sport centre they were all the staff that worked on the graduate's shift and her direct line manager, plus the centre manager. With regard to the sports development officer this included her line manager, one colleague that worked closely with her and her only member of staff at that time. Finally the swimming programme manager worked on a peripatetic basis and had just been promoted in this role so only he and a centre manager that he had worked for in both his previous role and current role were interviewed. Due to the peripatetic nature of the graduate's role he also reported to another manager within head office in Manchester. She was new to the role and had not appointed the graduate; attempts were made to organise an interview with this person but proved very difficult in that appointments were made and

cancelled. This person's perspective would have been of interest and does weaken this case but it was felt that meaningful analysis could be undertaken with the participants in the case.

With regard to the other three cases the researcher either contacted the individuals directly or liaised with the line manager to organise interview times; all of those identified agreed to take part. Initially the intention was to follow Yin's (2003) method more closely and fully undertake each case study before moving on to the next, to enable feedback into the method to make changes to any areas of questioning. Unfortunately, this proved very difficult in terms of obtaining appointments with the participants. However, for each case study the majority of interviews were undertaken before moving to the next case with just one or two carrying over, thus enough of the case had been carried out to enable consideration of any changes to the aim memoir in the next case. However, the graduate was always interviewed first in the organisation and the researcher reviewed the topic guide before interviewing the other members of staff in case the topic guide needed changing slightly as appropriate to the case. The only change was that slight adaptations were made due to identification of other graduates within significant other participants; this will be discussed later in this section. Major changes were not made as there needed to be a basis for cross-case comparison between cases and interviews.

With regard to the impact of the interviewer on the interview, Miller and Glassner (2004) argue that it is extremely important to reflect on how we present ourselves to the interviewees and how much we reveal about ourselves and how this influences the interviewee's ability and willingness to tell various sorts of stories. When conducting the interviews, in each case, I explained to the graduates and significant others that I was a HE lecturer in sport at a different institute to the one that they attended; however they were aware that I knew staff at their institution as the initial contact had been through them. The influence this seemed to have on them was a desire to feed back on the appropriateness of the course and the issues that they faced. I also explained that I had experience of working in the industry which I felt helped

them perceive that I understood some of the issues that they faced. The reaction corresponds to Miller and Glassner's (2004) view that what is often important to interviewees is that what they say matters.

Semi structured interviews were used and comprised of a list of questions based on the research questions for this phase (Appendix 7). The first question for each participant covered the same topic – a description of the nature of the graduate's job; after this point I did not strictly abide by the list but enabled the interviewee to lead the interview, this included allowing the interviewee to deviate thus providing an insight into what they saw as relevant (Bryman 2004). This was important as the reasons for using interviews was to gain a glimpse into their social world and move beyond my preconceptions (May 2001). However, towards the end of the interview I checked that the selected areas of questioning had been covered and asked questions relating to them if they had not been. The specific areas covered in the interviews were similar for all participants as the idea was to gain different perceptions of the same areas. The areas covered were:

- ***Their job and what they did*** – this was to gain a picture from the participants of what the job entails and also to see if there was agreement on what that job was, and if there was not agreement the reasons for this and the effect of different views and expectations.
- ***The course the graduate undertook*** – the questions for the graduate were to ascertain the nature of their course and also their perception on the appropriateness of the course to the job and its general strengths and weaknesses. The questions for the significant others were to ascertain their knowledge of the course the graduate had undertaken and of sport degrees in general.
- ***The work experiences and other training/education of the graduate/ employer*** – these questions were to build up a picture of the background of both the graduate and employer. This is important within critical realist research as it enable the background of the participants to be uncovered which provides further understanding of the context. As Sayer (2000:16)

states “what actors do at a given time is likely to be affected by dispositions which were ‘sedimented’ at some earlier stage”

- ***Perception of the effectiveness of the performance of the graduate:*** this was asked of the graduate and the significant others to triangulate views of how well the graduate was performing in the job and, if there was not agreement, the reasons for this. Questions were also asked of all participants for the reason for the graduate’s performance.
- ***The perceptions towards the graduate and graduates in general:*** the graduate was asked this to ascertain positive or negative perceptions towards them and graduates in general and how this impacted on them. It was also asked of the significant others to ascertain their perceptions, but also to compare them to how the graduate perceived their views.
- ***Induction, training and development:*** this area of questioning was to gain information of whether the graduate had an induction and any training and education and what this involved; and also their perception of its effectiveness. The significant others were also asked to compare views.
- ***Why the graduate undertook the degree:*** this was to ascertain the graduates initial expectations and motivations.

The interview always finished with the participant being given the opportunity to add anything else they felt they wanted to share, again trying to enable understanding of the interviewee’s perspective. There were a number of graduates from other HE institutions who were included within the significant others, where this was the case their interview was adapted so that the initial focus was on the chosen graduate but, at the end of the interview, questions were also asked about their feelings as a graduate in the organisation, although in many cases these came through in the main interview. The interviews were recorded which enabled the researcher to be responsive to the participants answers in terms of follow up questions where needed. The length of interviews varied and took between 30 minutes to an hour and a quarter.

7.4. Analysis

As with the focus groups in Phase One, the tapes were transcribed using the simple orthographic transcription method (Wilkinson 2004). The transcripts were analysed using template analysis (King 2004), this section will describe the process and an example of how the process was carried out on the Sport Development case study be found in Appendix 8. A list of codes were developed prior to analysis to represent themes emanating from the research questions and interview topic areas, these were modified and additional ones identified as the transcripts were read and analysed (Appendix 8.1). The codes were arranged hierarchically (King 2004) in that a code group was given a colour and then sub codes in the group were numbered – the transcript was then marked with the colours and numbers (Appendix 8.2). This was done to enable finer distinctions between themes to aid the write up of the case studies. The transcripts were coded manually by reading through three times and marking the transcripts according to the coding template. A new coding framework was developed that combined all the transcripts of a case (Appendix 8.3); the transcripts were analysed a fourth time to identify the number of times themes emerged and from which interviewee, also relevant quotations were taken from the transcripts and were listed under the relevant codes. With the exception of skills, where numbers are reported in the text, the frequencies were not used to identify meaningful differences in the scripts but to draw attention to areas that needed to be examined again to reflect on why there were differences (King 2004). The case studies were then individually written up based around the main themes of the case; the write up of all the cases can be found in Appendix 9.

Once they had all been written up, comparisons were made across the case studies using the same themes to provide an initial assessment of the level of employability of the individual graduate at the focus of each case. The reasons for this approach and the outcomes of the assessment form the basis of the Chapter 8. Chapter 9 provides a more in depth evaluation of the characteristics of the cases and how these may influence the transition of the graduate and employability.

Chapter 8

Description and Initial Analysis of Case Studies

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter will examine each case study individually to provide a basic description of the nature of the case and an initial assessment of each graduate's level of employability. The description will include: an outline of the graduates at the focus of the case studies; the structure of the organisation; a list of the participants interviewed and their position within the organisation; and a description of the job that the graduate is undertaking. With regard to the initial assessment of the graduate, this is following an analytical approach advocated by critical realists. They suggest that case studies with contrasting outcomes can be analysed to tease out the characteristics of the cases that create the differing outcomes (Sayer 1992). In this study this can be achieved by undertaking a rudimentary assessment of each graduate's level of employability and analysing how this is influenced by the particular characteristics of the case study.

In order to assess graduate employability a framework is required. Hillage and Pollard's (1998) definition of employability has been adopted by this study and has influenced the concept of employability used in the study's proposed Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Figure 6.2, p158). Therefore the variables that will be used to assess employability are:

- The performance of the graduate
- Organisational commitment
- Utilisation of graduate skills

Each of the graduates at the focus of the cases will be assessed against these three variables and the outcomes for all the cases will be summarised in a table at the end of chapter. Chapter 9 will then analyse and compare across the cases to identify the characteristics that enable an effective transition compared to those that seem to hinder the transition. The individual case studies are:

- Case Study 1: Voluntary Sector Tennis Centre
- Case Study 2: Local Authority Leisure Pool and Gym.
- Case Study 3: Local Authority Sports Development Team
- Case Study 4: Private Sector Health and Fitness Organisation.

8.1. Case Study 1: Voluntary Sector Tennis Centre

(Appendix 9: pp560-577)

8.1.1. Description of the Case

Case Study 1 is of Alison who gained a 2:1 degree in Sport Science in 2001. She is employed as a tennis centre manager and the organisation that employs her is a non-profit making company, limited by liability. The organisation is overseen by voluntary directors who do not receive remuneration and fits into the charitable trust sector of the sport industry. The centre has 6 indoor courts, 6 outdoor courts, a fitness gym, café/bar and small shop selling tennis related goods. The staffing structure of the centre is shown below.

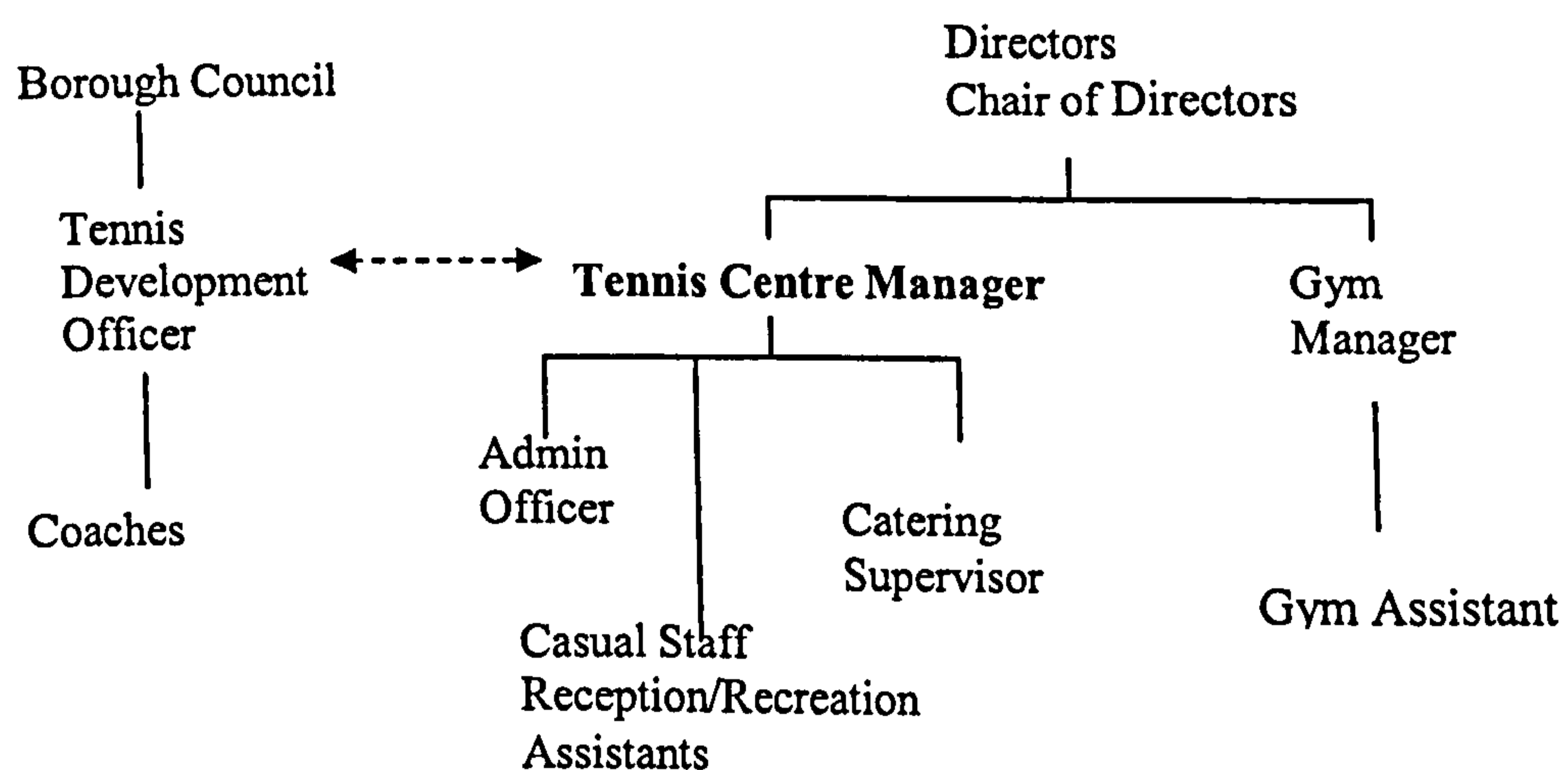


Figure 8.1: Staffing Structure of the Tennis Centre (Graduate identified by bold text)

Also included on the structure is the Tennis Development Officer, who is employed by the Borough Council but is based at the Centre and works very closely with Alison in organising activities. The majority of the casual staff are students who are studying at the same institution that Alison attended.

Alison has been employed at the centre for six years. She initially began with a Saturday job, whilst at university she increased this to working week nights and weekends and in the second year of her degree she was promoted to shift

manager. After leaving Higher Education (HE) she was promoted to duty manager along with another graduate of her HE institution. The other graduate left after a year and Alison was promoted to manager of the tennis centre. Alison did not have a formal interview when she started working at the centre and has worked her way up through internal non-competitive promotions. She has never had a job description and there are no strategies for human resource management.

In compiling the case study the following people were interviewed.

Name	Position	Relationship to graduate
Alison	Manager	Graduate at focus of case study
Alan	Chair of voluntary board of directors	Line manager of graduate
Andrew	Manager of fitness suite	Colleague of graduate
Andrea	Sport specific development Officer	Colleague of graduate based at the centre but employed by the local authority
Amy	Administration Officer	Staff
Ann	Catering supervisor	Staff

8.1.2 Effectiveness of the Graduate's Transition

This section provides an outline of Alison's transition into the workplace. Overall Alison is seen to be performing very well which is illustrated by her line manager, Alan, when he maintains that, "she doesn't actually have many weaknesses". He feels that her strengths are her strong determination and ability to see things through and the fact he feels she is performing well is illustrated when he says:

"If she had a job that offered her substantially more increase in salary we would be priced out of the market by the nature of the job but we would go quite a long way before we would lose her".

Alison herself states: "I think that they've grown to trust me and they know that I am a good worker and I just put 100% in basically whatever I do." The others interviewed also concur as she is seen as being positive, hard working, organised and getting on with people. Appendix 9 (pp567-572) provides more evidence of her performance.

In terms of whether Alison is reaching her potential she feels that she could be “utilised a little better”. This is reflected by Amy, the Administration Officer, who suggests that:

“ Some of the people here are wasted, the graduates to be honest, and maybe they could, if they were allowed by the management committee to get their teeth, dig their teeth into something better, its something more I think they would get, you know of the, you know doing what they did at university.”

All of those interviewed concurred with Amy, that a degree was not required to perform the job as it was currently structured; however, with the exception of Alan, the Chair of Directors, they felt there was a lot of scope for growing the job and using graduate skills to improve the performance of the centre (Appendix 9, pp569-572). Alison is very clear that there is much more scope within her job and listed a range of projects that she would like to do to improve the performance of the centre.

With regard to organisational commitment and intention to stay in the job, Alison does not appear to see her future at the tennis centre: “I just see this as a stepping stone, this job, to get experience in everything in the area and to just widen my knowledge”. Alison does enjoy the job and it is clear that she does not know what her career path is:

“I was doing it because I enjoyed doing itI didn't really know where I wanted to go with it, cos I kept asking myself what do I want to do with my degree. I still don't know what I want to be you know, where I am now. I've always wanted to go into the police force that's still at the back of my mind as a possibility”.

Overall Alison is perceived by all as performing well and she does enjoy her job, however she is not being used to her full potential and she does not see her future career with the organisation. Consequently although she is employed in a sport related job she has a low level of graduate employability.

8.2. Case Study 2: Local Authority Leisure Pool and Gym.

Appendix 9: pp578-601

8.2.1. Description of the Case

This case study is of Barbara who graduated with a 2:1 degree in Sport Science 2001. She is employed as senior pool attendant within a leisure centre operated by a borough council which is categorised as being a public sector organisation. The Centre has a 25 meter, 6-lane competition pool with spectator seating for 300, learner and function pools, a 65 metre slide, a bubble pool and rapids river ride. It also has a health and fitness gym and café. There is a hierarchical management structure within the centre, which is shown below to illustrate Barbara's position.

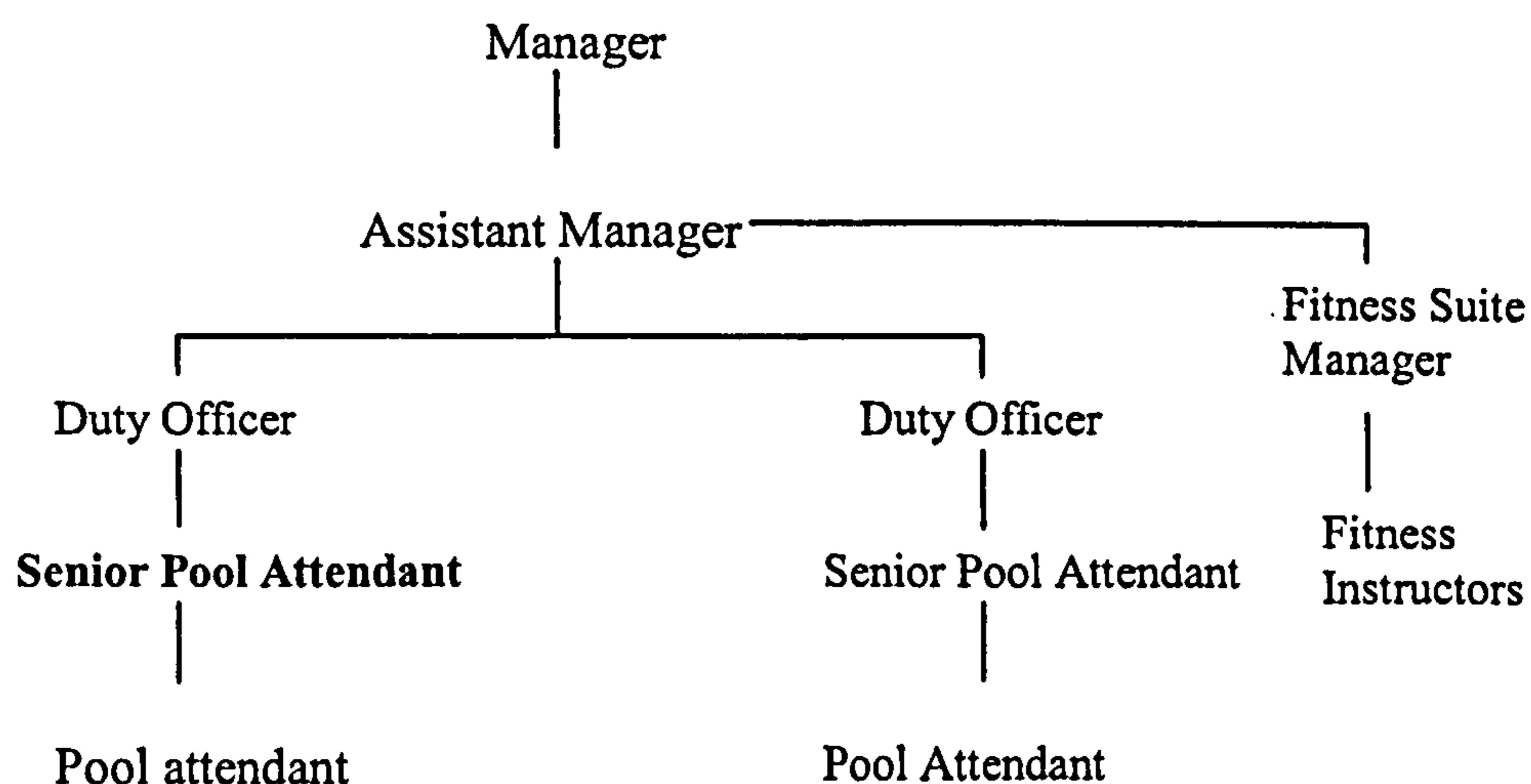


Figure 8.2: Management Structure of the Leisure Centre (Graduate identified in bold text)

Barbara has been employed at the centre for four and a half years, she started working there as a part time pool attendant in the first year of her degree course. Once she had completed her degree she increased her hours to the equivalent of full time although she wasn't on a full time contract. She was promoted to a full time senior pool attendant two months prior to the interview.

In compiling the case the following people were interviewed.

Name	Position	Relationship to graduate	Highest Qualification
Barbara	Head Pool attendant	Graduate at focus of case study	Degree
Brian	Centre manager	Senior manager to graduate	ILAM Diploma D32/33 NVQ Assessor
Bob	Assistant Manager	Middle manager to graduate	NVQ Level 4 Management
Barry	Duty Officer	Line manager of graduate	
Bradley	Head Pool attendant	Colleague of graduate	
Bill	Pool attendant	Staff (2002 Graduate)	Degree
Ben	Pool attendant	Staff (Student)	Degree

8.2.2. Transition of the Graduate

In terms of performance, Barbara believes that she is doing well but she attributes this to her experience working at the centre: “I’m doing quite a good job, it’s just that I’ve done it for so long, its just second nature to me”. The fact that she has recently been promoted to Senior Lifeguard also reinforces this view. The others interviewed also agreed that Barbara is performing well and her strengths particularly relate to her personality, people skills, hard work and commitment. Some of the positive comments about her are given below, more evidence of her performance is provided in Appendix 9 (pp587-590).

“She’s always been a good worker, she practices what she preaches basically, she’s not one who will just say do that, she leads by example and she does the work herself” (Bob).

“She can adapt, she will learn, she will watch and she will listen and if she’s not sure she will ask and that is a good quality to have” (Barry).

With regard to fulfilling her potential, Barbara felt that she had been utilised much more fully since her promotion to head pool attendant; although she still felt that she could be using her degree and the skills and knowledge she had developed much more. This is supported by Brian, the centre manager, who states that: “She’s not challenged at all, she has much, she clearly has more to offer”; although he has helped this by giving Barbara extra tasks that have particularly employed her skills.

In terms of Barbara's organisational commitment she is unclear about her future career and when asked whether she wanted to stay with the organisation she replied: "Yeah, I would but I really don't know what I want to, I can't explain. I like what I'm doing but I don't know if that's what I want to do". However, Brian, her manager believes that she does want to develop a career with the local authority, although he thinks she will have to move to progress:

"She's looking at this building as providing the you know, to achieve what she wants to do, I think she's looking to do it here and I think she just needs to make a sideways step even looking for a similar position or an improved position at another facility within ** but she particularly wants to stay within this authority".

Overall Barbara seems to be making a fairly effective transition, she is doing well in her job and is beginning to make use of her graduate skills now she has been promoted, although it is not clear if she will stay in the job. It could be argued that she is achieving a medium level of graduate employability, but it is the lack of a clear idea of what her career path is that means that it is not at a higher level.

8.3. Case Study 3: Local Authority Sports Development Team
Appendix 9: pp602-618.

8.3.1. Description of the Case.

This case is of sport science graduate, Carol who gained a 2:1 degree in 2001. She has just been promoted to the post of Senior Sports Development Officer (SDO) for a borough council and has been in the post for four weeks. The structure of the unit in which Carol works is shown in figure 8.3 below. Previously to this she was a part time disability sports development officer for 9 months with the same council. She got that job in the January after she graduated. Whilst at college, and in the period after graduation up to when she got the Disability Officer job, she had a number of part time jobs these included; working as a recreation assistant in a sport centre, managing a stable yard and assistant manager of a shop. She also undertook casual coaching work in hockey

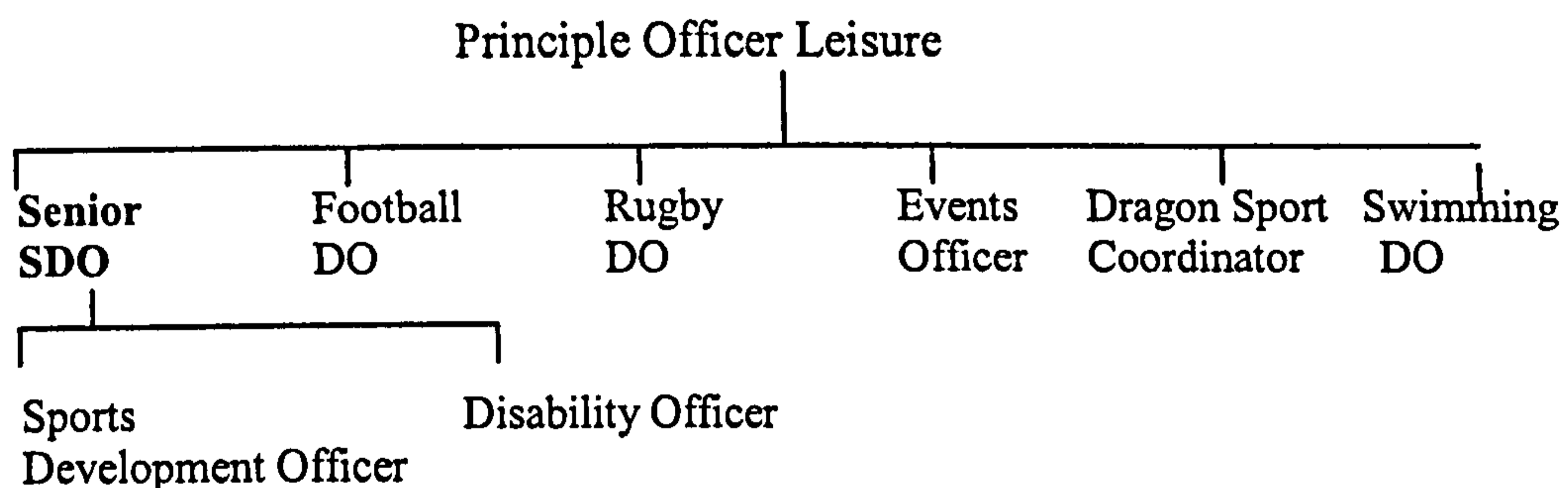


Figure 8.3: Structure of the Sports Development Unit (Graduate identified in bold text)

In compiling the case the following people were interviewed

Name	Position	Relationship to graduate	Highest Qualification
Carol	Senior Sports Development Officer	Graduate at focus of case study	Degree
Chris	Principle Officer Leisure	Line Manager of Graduate	
Colin	Football Development Officer	Colleague of Graduate	
Carrie *	Sports Development Officer	Staff	Degree

* also applied for the Senior Sports Development job but was unsuccessful but appointed to permanent position of sports development officer from temporary position of SDO.

8.3.2. Transition of the Graduate

It is difficult to judge Carol's performance in her current job as she recently had an internal promotion; however, she was working for the same unit so they were able to make a judgement on her effectiveness at work. Carol's line manager, Chris, thinks very highly of her and it was the combination of her character and her knowledge that got her the job,

“We did buy Carol's character in a big way because she was just wonderful, very articulate, very bright, very positive, above all else she brought a huge understanding of sports development having never been a sports development officer, which was critical”.

Carol herself feels that she has the right attributes to do the job well.

“I've got the initiative to get on with it, to go out there and get what I want...I've got a bit of imagination to foresee where I want **shire to go, what to achieve and just what I want everybody to achieve as a team.”

Her colleagues also perceived that she has the appropriate skills and personality and would do well in the job as indicated in Appendix 9, (pp610-612).

In terms of realising her potential Carol does feel she is being fully utilised both in her current job and she also felt she was challenged in her previous job,

“its challenging, especially this one cos you know its new, but its rewarding at the same time because your working with members of the public, you might not like the members of the public in * but you know it is challenging. If you can, when I was working in disability sport I actually gained four and a half grand of extra income from people to spend on facilities and you can do things like that. You can do whatever you want to do, your helping other people, you learn a lot, you meet a lot of people”.

Chris, Carol's line manager agrees that she is being challenged and believes that part of that is due to the culture of the unit:

“What we tend to do here though is we actually stretch them beyond sports development because we evolve their work programme quite

quickly in so much as we give them individual management responsibilities”.

With regard to Carol’s organisational commitment she suggests that she intends to stay with the organisation for the foreseeable future:

I’ve got the perfect opportunity to develop myself here now, you know I’m lucky enough to get this job and obviously I can work up and its nice to know there are routes.

Overall it would appear that Carol has achieved a high level of graduate employability in that she is performing well in her job, feels as if she is realising her potential and exhibits commitment to the organisation.

8.4. Case Study 4: Private Sector Health and Fitness Organisation.

Appendix 9: pp621-633.

8.4.1. Description of the case.

This case is of sport science graduate Dan, who gained a 2:2 degree in 2001. He has been promoted to the post of Peripatetic Swimming Instructor for a private sector Health and Fitness company and has been in the post for approximately five weeks. The company has 21 clubs in the North of England and Dublin. Dan's post does not fit into the normal organisational structure as he has responsibility for swimming lessons across five clubs in the North West. His line manager is the manager of one of the clubs where he is based administratively and he also reports to the company's Swimming Manager who is responsible for swimming at all the clubs. Previously he worked for a year as a lifeguard at the club in which he is now administratively based. Prior to that, immediately after graduating, he had a summer job working as a maintenance person with a company that rented out industrial units.

The case is only made up of two interviews, Dan and David his club based line manager. The Swimming Manager who appointed Dan had recently left the organisation, attempts were made to contact his new line manager but, as explained in Chapter 7, it proved impossible to set up an interview.

8.4.2. The Transition of the Graduate

In terms of performance, Dan feels that the fact he has been promoted to his current job indicates that he is performing effectively: "I think personally, from my point of view, really, really well. Cos I'm probably high up in a short space of time. So I think really well". David also believes that Dan is performing very well and suggests this is because of his personality, "There's not many people I do trust but Dan is one". He goes on to explain this view:

"If I give Dan something to do, I could be 99.9% sure that it's come back and not need a lot of adjusting or if any. He's quite relaxed as well in the way he goes about things, you know, he never seems to be under pressure, so he's confident and basically he's got the full

package. Like I was saying he's got good interpersonal skills, he's very, very intelligent. Yeah, he's an all rounder".

Further information on Dan's performance is provided in Appendix 9, pp626-628.

Dan is happy with his job but he feels that he could be utilised more to achieve his potential:

"from what I know I'm being utilised as much as I can be but that's limited in what I can do within the job role. I think I said before that they are expanding and I think given time when it expands a bit more and there's more work for me to do I will be able to apply a bit more"

In terms of his organisational commitment he states that he intends to stay in the job for a year to 18 months, but then wishes to obtain a job in sports development. Dan appears to have made an effective transition in that he is performing well in his job, but has not achieved a high level of graduate employability in that he does not feel he is fulfilling his potential and will eventually apply for other jobs.

8.5. Summary of Cases

It can be seen that in all four case studies the graduates who were the focus of analysis were perceived to be performing well both by significant others and themselves. The reasons provided for their performance tended to be attributed to the graduates' personality with a clear pattern of strengths emerging across the cases; these were interpersonal skills, initiative, a positive attitude, ability to work hard and show commitment and having past relevant experiences.

There were few weaknesses expressed about the graduates and these tended to relate to the graduates' age and the need to gain specific experience in the job.

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter the graduates employability has been broken down in the table into performance, utilisation and commitment and categorised based on the findings of the case studies. This is obviously a rudimentary measure but gives an indication of where each graduate fits in terms of employability; this creates a framework from which to compare and contrast the different cases to try to explain the structures and mechanisms that create each graduate's level of employability.

Table 8.4. Comparison of indicators of employability.

Case	Level of Performance	Level of utilisation	Level of organisational commitment	Level of graduate employability
Graduates at the focus of the study.				
1. Tennis Centre (Alison)	High	Low	Medium/low	Low/medium
2. Leisure Centre (Barbara)	High	Medium	High/medium	Medium/high
3. Sports Development Unit (Carol)	High	High	High	High
4. Commercial Health & Fitness (Dan)	High	Medium	Medium/low	Medium

The next chapter will examine the characteristics of the cases in order to explain these different levels and to identify possible factors that create high levels of employability.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

Chapter 9

Discussion and Comparisons of the Four Cases

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

In order to address the aims and objectives of the study this chapter will provide a more detailed analysis of the four case studies; it will particularly focus on objective three: *Evaluate the initial experiences of graduates employed in the sport industry, the factors that influence their transition into the job and how this impacts on employability.* It will do this by drawing on Chapter 8's conclusions regarding each graduate's level of employability to analyse and compare the four cases; this will enable the identification of the specific characteristics of those cases that may provide explanations for the level of employability of the graduate.

Fundamental to the research approach of critical realism is the use of abstraction to conceptualise social phenomena, consequently the analysis of the cases will be undertaken using the framework of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Figure 9.1, overleaf). This latest draft of the model has been developed further with the inclusion of the detail of the interaction between the graduate, employer and the job, discussed in Chapter 6 (p163). This current chapter will focus on this interaction phase of the model, shown within the red oval in Figure 9.1; thus the analysis of the case studies will focus on how the key actors: the graduate, manager and significant others, interact with each other within the context of the nature of the organisation and the sport industry. Archer (1995) maintains that the actor is not a cultural dope, thus the interaction depends on the graduate and employer's perceptions and the choices they make within the circumstances of their situation. The model suggests that these perceptions and choices will be affected by the graduate and employer's own background and experiences therefore these will also be analysed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the evaluation of the similarities and differences in the cases to identify the specific factors that cause the effective or ineffective transition of the graduate into the workplace and consequently their level of employability.

The chapter consists of three sections: the nature of the job the graduate has obtained; the nature of the employer; and the nature of the graduate. The analysis in these sections will draw on the write up of the cases provided in appendix 9 and, where appropriate, reference will be made to the pages and paragraphs of the appendix in which a specific issue is described, rather than include large amounts of description in the main text.

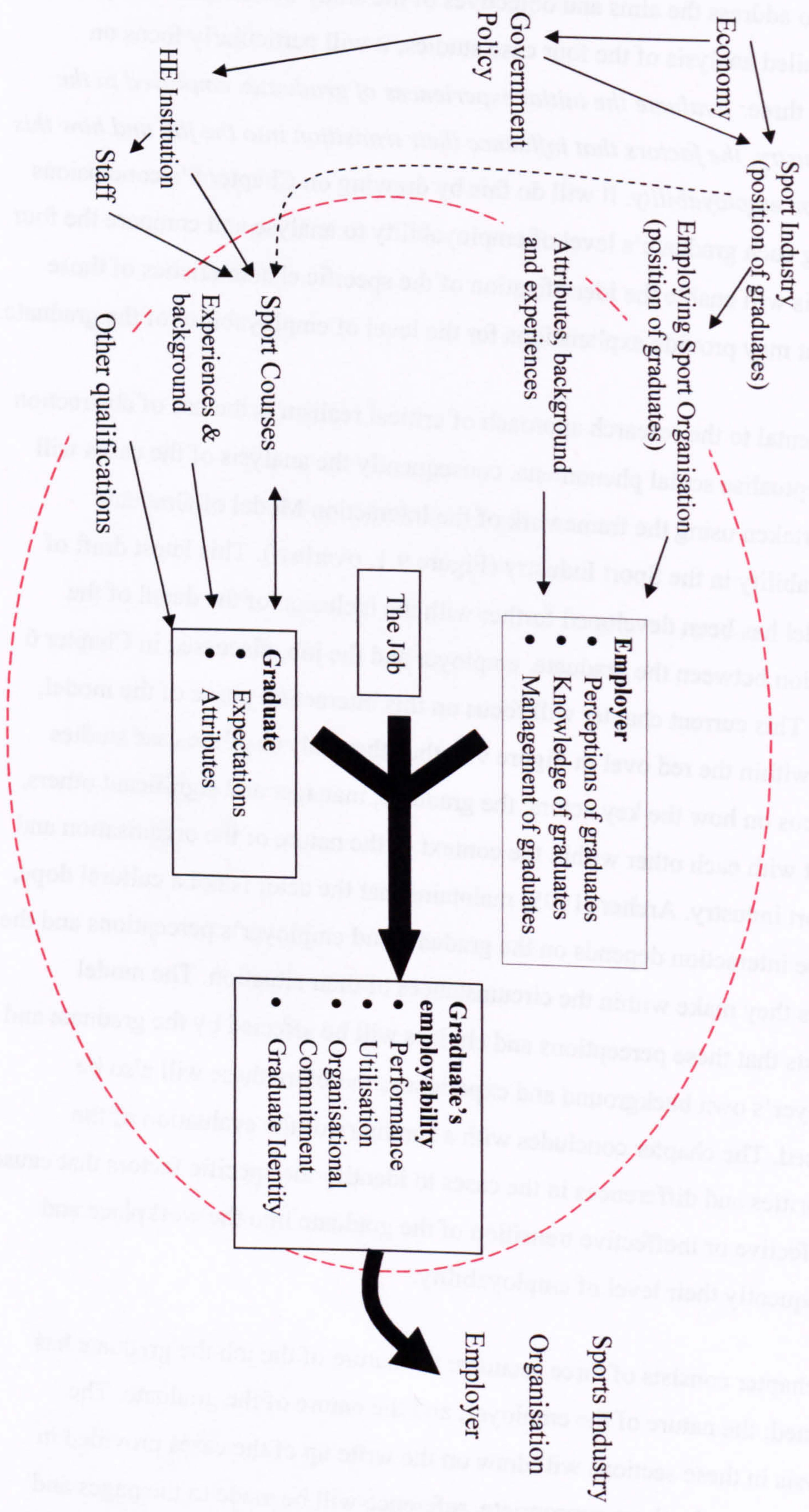


Figure 9.1: Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry

9.1. The Nature of the Job

This first section will examine the nature of the graduates' jobs and how this impacts on their performance, utilisation and organisational commitment. Appendix 9 provides a full description of the graduate's job for each case study.

Three of the case studies involved jobs that did not require a degree and Carol's (Case 3) job description merely indicates that a degree is desirable. In terms of actually undertaking the jobs, none of the graduates or other interviewees, including Carol, felt that graduate skills were needed to do the job as it currently existed. This finding corresponds to the analysis of the sport industry in Chapter 2 (p52), which established that the culture within sport is for individuals to gain experience and work their way up; consequently graduates are unlikely to enter the industry in positions that greatly utilise graduate skills (Yates 1984). This was reinforced by the case studies where all those interviewed, including the graduates, emphasised the need to work your way up the industry. An example is Dan (case 4) who says: "I don't mind starting at the bottom and working up." This also supports the findings of Phase One, which identified that large numbers of graduates entered the sport industry in low level jobs (p117). A major issue for sport that arises from this analysis is the impact on graduates' motivation, which is reflected by Barbara when she says, "I worked really hard for three years and I just don't feel like I've, well, I'm not using it at all". Before proceeding to discuss this issue further it is necessary to establish the extent to which the jobs within the cases actually use graduate attributes.

9.1.2. Attributes Required in the Job

Purcell et al's (2004) Model of Graduate Skills, introduced and explained in Chapter 2 (p59), has been used to evaluate and compare the extent to which the graduates' jobs utilise graduate skills. This was done by analysing each case study for the descriptions of the jobs and the attributes they required, these were then compared to Elias and Purcell's (2003) intrinsic classification of skills (see Chapter 2, p58); from this analysis the graduates were located on the model (Figure 9.2).

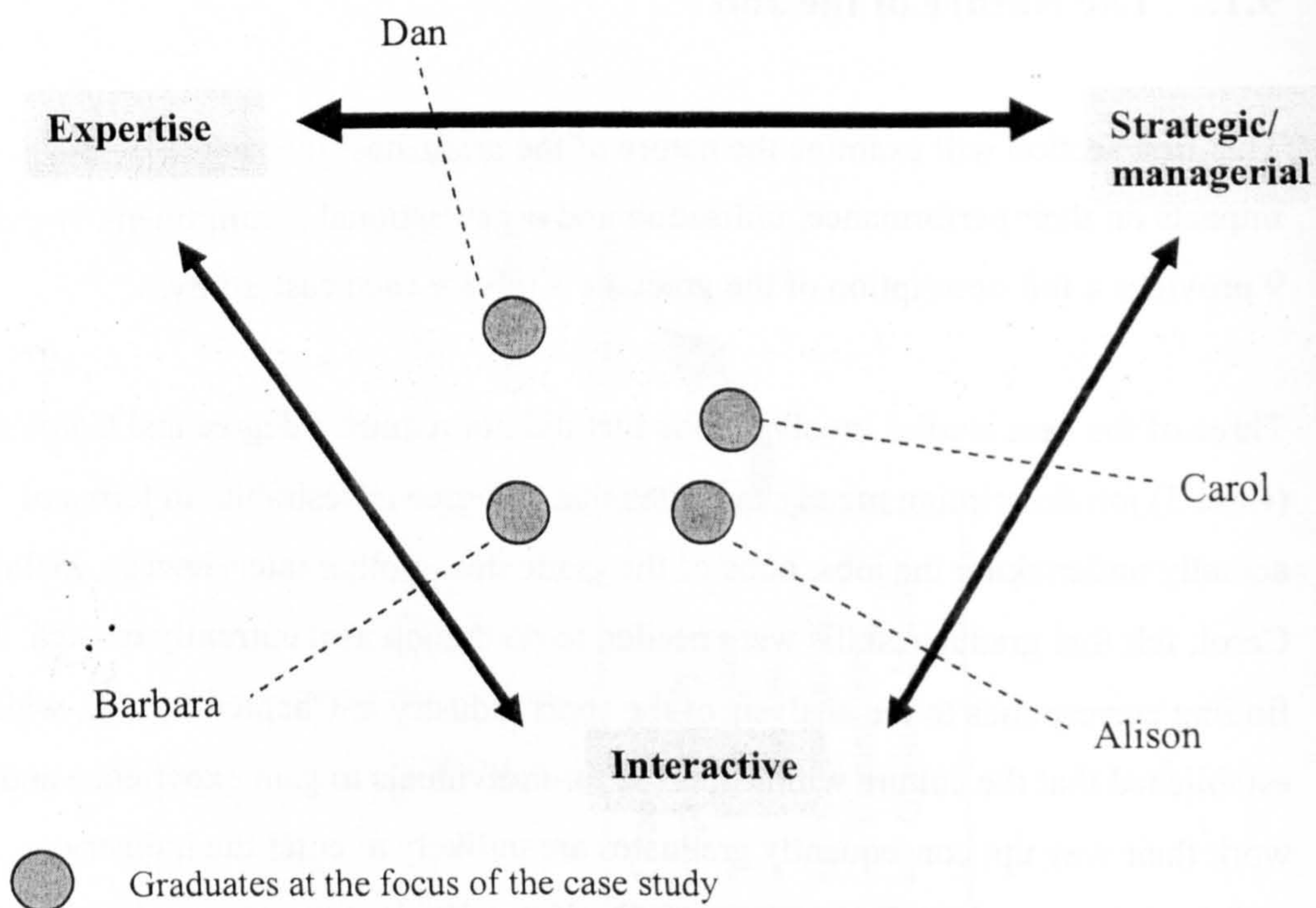


Figure 9.2: The Graduate Skills of Sport Jobs (Adapted from Elias and Purcell 2003)

Carol is placed at the centre of the model as her job employs the fullest range of graduate skills (see Appendix 9 pp604-605). In terms of 'expertise' the Senior Sports Development Officer's job does have occupational specific expertise, and specialist knowledge; which is the development, implementation and monitoring of sports development programmes. However, the interviewees all felt that this expertise and knowledge was not at graduate level, and that a non-graduate with experience would be able to develop this knowledge. Chris goes as far to say, "I really genuinely believe in the nicest possible way we could actually teach monkeys to deliver sports development". However, he does feel that in order to be effective there is a need to use, what Elias and Purcell (2003) term, the higher level expert skills and knowledge of analysis, problem diagnosis and solution. This seems to imply that a degree is not required for the basic job, but there seems to be a feeling within the unit that there is a need to go beyond the basic job and challenge the current approaches to sports development to move the unit forward (Appendix 9, p605:3.7). This is reflected in Colin's statement that, "you need people to challenge sports development, it should never be the same, it has to evolve and it has to go on", and it is this that requires graduate skills.

The post also involves the lower end 'strategic' skills of tactical day-to-day decision making, responsibility for the operation of processes and the management and coordination of people; and also the higher end skills of long term decision-making, risk-taking, forward planning and strategy development. The post also requires 'interactive' skills as Carol has to: communicate her ideas; influence and persuade others; negotiate; motivate herself and others; and work with others. Thus, despite the fact that the interviewees in this case felt that a graduate was not required to do the job, the analysis using Elias and Purcell's (2003) intrinsic classifications, does indicate that to be effective there is a need to draw on the full range of skills and knowledge expected in a graduate occupation.

The jobs in the other cases provide some of the graduate skills identified in Elias and Purcell's (2003) intrinsic classifications, but these tend to be at the lower level. Alison and Barbara have both been located around the 'interactive' area of Purcell at al's model in Figure 9.2, as in both cases their main duties require the day to day supervision of staff and interaction with customers. There is a difference in the other skills their jobs require, which explains why they are in slightly different positions on Figure 9.2. Alison is slightly towards the 'strategic' area compared to Barbara as she uses some strategic skills, which are; tactical day to day decision making and responsibility for the operation of processes and people. She complains that there is scope to draw on more of these skills as there are a number of changes she wishes to make, but she is constrained by the directors (see Appendix 9 p570:1.34). She uses minimal 'expert' skills and knowledge.

In contrast to Alison, Barbara employs more 'expert' technical skills; ensuring the quality of the pool water, health and safety and overseeing life guarding. However, these technical skills were developed through the Amateur Swimming Association Pool Lifeguard qualification and the Pool Plant Certificate, which are sub degree level. She has also been involved in web site development, which has drawn on the generic IT skills that she developed in her degree. There are small elements of Barbara's work that draw on 'strategic' skills, such as being a member of the Council's Best Value Committee. Both this role and the web site task are outside of her normal job remit because the manager has specifically given her extra tasks and not the other head pool attendant. Barbara feels that the manager does this because

she is a graduate; she quotes him as saying: "Oh you've got a degree so I can give you this job to do". Consequently, Barbara is using graduate skills but some of these are for tasks outside the scope of the job and does not actually impact of the effectiveness of the head pool attendant job, but does impact on the performance of the centre. In her actual job, Barbara does not draw on strategic skills as she does not have responsibility for a lot of tactical day to day decision making, this is due to the hierarchical structure where the duty officer makes these decisions.

Dan's job has been placed towards the 'expertise' area of Figure 9.2, as he uses expert skills and knowledge to teach swimming and develop swimming programmes. However, like Barbara, this expertise has not been developed on his degree programme but through him undertaking sub degree swimming qualifications and also from the fact he is an experienced swimmer. There are elements of 'strategic' skills involved in Dan's job as his role involves him developing a swimming programme for the company and introducing it into the clubs. However, he does not seem to have the final decision as to whether the club takes on the programme as he has to convince the individual club managers to put it into practice: "They seem dead attentive, 'Oh yea, we'll do that and there's no problem and you go back two weeks later and nothings been done". The effective communication of ideas and need to influence and persuade others in trying to get his programme implemented corresponds to the 'interactive' aspect of the model. Consequently, like Carol, Dan draws on a range of skills, but the balance is more towards 'expertise' skills than her. All of the graduate jobs appear to support Purcell et al's (2004) conclusions that niche graduate jobs, in which sport is classified, are unlikely to draw on high levels of any particular skill set. They also concluded that niche graduate occupations have a tendency to combine two areas of skills which Alison's and Barbara's do, whilst Carol and Dan draw on all three.

If the positions of all the jobs on Figure 9.2 are compared with how the graduates' were categorised, in terms of level of employability in Chapter 8, Table 8.4 (198); then the fact that Carol's job has the widest range of graduate skills may be a factor in her achieving high utilisation and commitment. She also has the scope to develop her job and is in fact encouraged by Chris to do so, as he sees this as important for driving the department forward:

“It was very important that the character fit the role as well as the role being moulded to the character and that’s what we are doing we are evolving that process with her now because we see her as being the key person to do it”.

At the Tennis Centre, Alison, her colleagues and staff have indicated that there is much more scope for Alison to develop her job (Andrea), as at times the Centre is “dead” (Ann) and is facing increasing competition (Amy) (Appendix 9, p562). However, she is unable to do this because of the physical constraints of the job, which will be discussed later in this section, and the management style, which will be discussed in the next section. By digging deeper into the nature of Alison’s job and exploring the context, it can be seen that it does contain elements that require graduate skills in order for the role to be more effective; although the initial response of all those interviewed was that it was not a graduate jobs. A reason for their response could be that the previous incumbent was not a graduate, consequently the job is not perceived as a graduate job. In addition, as the industry is not a traditional graduate employer the opportunities the graduates present to develop the job may not be immediately recognised.

Chapter 2 (p55) discussed that graduates are being employed in traditionally non-graduate jobs, due to the requirement for higher level interpersonal skills, new technology and generally to improve productivity (Mason 1996, Harvey 197, Nabi 2003, Leitch 2006). This could apply to the Tennis Centre and raises the concern that those who employ graduates in these types of jobs may not understand how graduates can be used. Within the Sports Development Unit and Leisure Centre, there does seem to be some comprehension of the value of graduates and the possible reasons for the difference in approach between the two organisations will be discussed later on in the section on the employer.

9.1.2. The Structure of the Job

The problem with Alison’s job, which partly explains the constraints on her, is the structure of the job. She is temporally and spatially constrained by her job (Appendix 9 pp569 -570), in terms of time she has to work on the rota and therefore finds it extremely difficult to undertake the more strategic type of work that she would like to do.

“I’m working on rota as well. I’ve got six hours off where I’m expected to all my admin and everything in that six hours, which today should have been but I’ve had to work on rota tonight to cover so there is no time to do it”.

This is also recognised by Alan and Andrea who realise that Alison could do more if she had the time and wasn’t included in the rota, as Andrea states:

“I think her time and some of the experience and some of the background she’s got that she could be used better and probably being on rota or on shift is not best use of her time in a managerial role”.

Being on rota also leads to her being spatially constrained as she has to stay on reception:

“I’ll try and do my work whilst on rota but the phone will ring or a customer will come in and everything is put on hold for that and once you break that line of thought its hard to get, by the time you get back to your desk you know, something else will crop up”.

Barbara, who is also within a facility based job at the Leisure Centre is also constrained by being on rota, which is recognised by Brian:

“she is restricted, you know her movement’s restricted and if we do potentially see an opportunity for her, on nearly every occasion there’ll be a financial consequence of having to cover her job or her rota or period of time on her shift and you know we do very tight budgets and I have encouraged her in particular to identify periods herself, you know if your in control of the rota and you know that between 2 and 4 on a Tuesday afternoon you can have, without any holidays or sickness to consider, you’ve got a period of time then perhaps you can do this for me”.

The difference between the cases, in terms of constraints, is that Brian recognises the problem and facilitates Barbara in trying to overcome it, whilst Alan does not seem to realise how much it is an issue for Alison. Thus, Barbara is enabled to do projects that employ her graduate skills, whilst Alison is left to try and sort the issue out herself. This then leads to frustration for Alison in that she and her staff can see she could do more, but is physically unable to. Consequently, the management approach can make a large difference in mediating the constraints of the nature of the job and enabling the graduate to be utilised. Further discussion on the difference in management approach will be provided in section 9.2. In comparison both Carol

and Dan do not have such constraints as they are not in facility based jobs and have more control over their work.

The issue of constraint is important for understanding employability within the sport industry where many jobs can be facility based and within a rota system. If graduates enter employment in the industry at low levels and are expected to work their way up, then it is difficult for them to develop their experiences or prove themselves if they are constricted by their job. These findings support and partly explain the results of Phase One, which showed that graduates generally have to initially work in low level jobs and the reasons for them changing jobs is to gain promotion and more challenge. The case studies have shown that facility based graduates in particular, may obtain positions that do not enable them to develop themselves in order to move on, as they are constrained by rotas. This can be seen particularly in life guarding roles where there is also a need to gain the Pool Plant Qualification to progress as Bill explains:

“Cos at the moment with a degree I can’t get any other job in a leisure centre other than that of lifeguard of which you need no qualifications other than pool lifeguard. In order for me to move up the ladder I need to get supervisory experience and to get supervisory experience you need to get pool plant. So it all starts off with just that one qualification”.

The consequence of a culture of starting at the bottom creates a vicious circle in that graduates are gaining jobs to get experience of the industry; however, within facilities those jobs are often restrictive in terms of the graduate using the attributes they have developed. This means that they cannot obtain experiences that will enable them to move up the career ladder and they also become frustrated. In addition within ‘wet’ centres promotion depends on the Pool Plant Qualification which creates an extra barrier. However, Barbara has overcome this issue by paying for the qualification herself which has helped her gain promotion.

A contrast can be seen in the case of sports development, both in terms of the nature of the job, which is not so constraining, and the attitude of Chris the line manager, who is the only person interviewed who does not seem to subscribe to the view that you need to work your way up, when he states:

“We’ve got graduates, we’ve got people who worked their way up, Dave and myself, but I feel that everyone put, you know, everyone works together and it’s a great thing as well because we are learning off each other everyday and that’s a great thing as long as we’re learning isn’t it”.

However, he seems to imply that this goes against the department’s culture: “I think they’re settling into the understanding that yea, it’s great to have new ideas, people fresh from college”. Nevertheless, Carol has got experience from part-time work whilst at college and also as a disability development officer, and Carrie started with the unit on work experience as part of the New Deal scheme as she was unemployed. Although Carol has moved into a fairly senior position quite quickly, she recognises that there is still a culture where experience is seen as critical and that you need to work your way up, but it is changing:

“He might have got there later than I’ll get there but I don’t think you can justify that as I’ve got a degree therefore I’m better. I don’t, I really don’t think it works like that. It will get to that point that so many things are on offer now, it will get to that point where the old school system will go out and all these diverse degrees will come in, but at the moment it’s still the case when ‘hang on I’ve done seven years experience in this therefore I am more qualified than you’ and it is still true.”

Overall, the findings of the case studies illustrate how the nature of the job impacts on the graduate’s employability and for each graduate this is summarised in table 9.1.

Table 9.1. Summary of job characteristics.

	Carol	Barbara	Dan	Alison
The Job				
Graduate attributes required	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Structure of job	Flexible	Restricted	Flexible	Restricted

The table reflects the analysis of the case studies findings, that Carol’s job requires a high amount of graduate level attributes and the structure of her job is flexible allowing her some control over her work. In contrast Alison’s job gives her little opportunity to utilise her graduate level attributes (although there could be more scope to develop the job), and the structure of the job is temporally and spatially restrictive so she has little control over her work. Both Barbara and Dan use a medium amount of graduate level attributes. For Dan they are utilised as part of his job, which is flexible in nature and gives him some control; whilst for Barbara her

job is temporally and spatially restrictive, but the extra tasks she does enable her to utilise some of her graduate skills. Thus, the section has illustrated that the actual impact of the job is mediated by other factors such as the management style of the employer. This corresponds with the critical realist view of causal analysis which, as was discussed in Chapter 3, is not about regularity between separate events i.e. cause and effect but about what an object is like and what it can do and what it will do in a particular situation. Hence, the analysis of the nature of the job is not simply that a specific type of job leads to graduate employability (or not), but that, in the analysis so far, the structure of how the job is undertaken, the attributes required for that job and the management style may mediate the effect of that job. The next section will examine the effect of the employer in more depth.

9.2. The Employer

The discussion of the psychological contract in Chapter 6 identified the problem of who, or what, represents the organisation in terms of the interaction with the graduate. There is a similar issue in analysing graduate employability within the cases: in the Sports Development Unit and Leisure Centre the line manager of the graduate was identified; the Tennis Centre was overseen by a voluntary board of directors and the Chair was interviewed as he had day to day, line management contact with Alison; with regard to the Commercial Health and Fitness Organisation there were difficulties as Dan worked on a peripatetic basis so one of the managers he worked for was interviewed. The interviews with the significant others also helped build up a picture of the culture of the organisation in relation to graduates and also different perspectives on organisational policies and procedures such as induction and training.

This section will analyse the line managers' perceptions, knowledge and management of graduates within the context of the organisation and how they impact on employability. It will also explore how this is influenced by the managers' backgrounds and experiences. Case study 3, the Sports Development Unit, will be analysed first as it was established in Chapter 8, Table 8.4 that Carol has high levels of performance, utilisation and commitment to the organisation. It will then be compared to the other cases to identify any differences with regard to the organisation and line manager and their interaction with the graduate. The section will end with an analysis of graduate identity, the reason for inclusion here is because graduate identity is affirmed by others therefore the employers' perceptions, knowledge and management of graduates may impact on their graduate identity.

9.2.1. Perceptions of Graduates

The previous section has already begun to tease out that, in the Sports Development Unit, Chris has a management style which aims to allow Carol to develop in her job. This section will delve deeper to uncover if there is anything else about the unit that enables Carol to achieve employability and compare this to the other cases. The previous section suggested that the perceptions of the staff within the unit towards

graduates seemed to be positive; in that Chris views that a mix of different backgrounds creates an effective team. This is supported by Colin, the Football Development Officer who is a colleague of Carol's: "It can be a very, very positive thing, not only for themselves, but also the knowledge that they can pass on to others, definitely I think that it's a great asset". These views are reflected by Carol when she states that "I don't think its negative in any respect at all".

The previous section also highlighted the encouraging management style of the Leisure Centre manager, Brian, towards Barbara and there also appears to be a fairly positive attitude towards graduates at the centre, which is indicated in the description in Appendix 9 (pp595 -596) and demonstrated by Brian,

"I mean my personal view is that you know somebody coming to us holding a degree is coming to us with a high academic background and would make a quick adjustment into any role".

However, this positive attitude towards graduates is tempered by the feelings expressed by all interviewed and discussed in section 1, that graduates need to gain experience and should start at the bottom. This is illustrated by Barbara herself although she also highlights the issue of the vicious circle of progression discussed in section 1:

"I mean the other comments are that you know cos you've got this degree then you should be able to apply for the higher jobs and you will get along more, but then its just, its just like a circle really cos we need the experience and I haven't got it"

In addition the staff emphasise that the graduates also need to have the right personality (Appendix 12, p580:2.7, 596:2.51), which will be discussed in the next section on the graduate.

There seems to be mixed views towards graduates at the Tennis Centre and the Commercial Health and Fitness club. At the Tennis Centre the Chair of Directors shows a fairly negative view of graduates: "Often they've got less practical skills than if they'd got a job". He also seems to imply that a sport degree does not have as high a status as other degrees when he says "I think a sort of good degree in a good subject indicates a certain level of education doesn't it, a certain attainment level to move on to other things". He then goes on to say:

“Well, for example if you came out of university with a math’s degree or a French degree you probably could go to any of the law firms, accountancy firms, international firms, there’s lots of things you could do.....but I don’t think sport science they would, so they become by very virtue of their numbers, they become devalued”.

He contradicts himself as the courses he gives as examples do not provide the practical skills for the jobs he gives as illustrations. He also admits to a lack of understanding of what is involved in sport degrees believing it to be mainly practically based: “you can do a specialist sport, like you can do tennis, you can do rugby and then you do other modules and they build up to a whole picture”.

Furthermore, Alan’s views conflict with his experiences of graduates working in the centre, which he himself has indicated have been good; he justifies this by suggesting that Alison is ‘an exception to the rule’ and when probed about his experiencing different types of graduates he replies that it is just his perception. In contrast, the staff seemed to have a higher opinion of graduates and perceive that they have got the potential to do more and that this is not recognised by management. Amy the administrative officer believes this is the reason that they leave:

“They come in full of ideas unfortunately as I say they can’t always carry them out. I mean one person we had here he stayed a couple of years and he wasn’t allowed to expand and do things that he wanted so he’s gone on to do something else. You know same for another girl who was here she’s gone on to work for the council and do things.”

This is particularly reflected in the response of the other graduate employed at the Centre, Andrew, who has become demotivated and is looking to find another job, using his spare time to undertake fitness consultancies to gain experience to get another job.

At the Commercial Health and Fitness Organisation, David seems to have similar views to Alan at the Tennis Centre: “Graduates to be honest lack life skills. I sort of say that is a main problem. If they stay in education too long they lack that communication thing”. Also, like Alan, he has had positive experiences of graduates both through Dan and other good graduates at his centre; although he describes Dan as “far from typical”. With regard to the organisation in general, Dan

does have a positive view of the perceptions people in the company have towards him.

“I think you get given, I don’t know if its more respect but I personally get left alone to do my own thing. I don’t know if it’s the way I work or whether I’m a graduate, it’s hard to say. I know cos the other person I know that’s a graduate, they do, its been said that because you two have been to university we’ll let you get on with things, cos you know, I think there is some sort of attitude to graduates definitely”.

Comparing David with Alan, he seems to have more knowledge of the sport degree and that graduates do make a good contribution because of their degree, and he does acknowledge that he has learnt from the graduates, “There are things I’ve learnt you know from them. I’m not the sort of person who thinks I haven’t got a degree they’ve got a degree I’ll shut them out”. In terms of knowing what is involved in a sport science degree, David admits he only knows a little about them and perceives that they mainly cover anatomy and physiology. His negative perceptions appear to come from experiences in another organisation and to some extent he admits that it may be due to the organisation rather than the graduates themselves:

“Maybe that’s the way the local authority makes them, maybe it does demotivate them in some ways. The private sector seem to be, the graduates seem to be more motivated”.

This discussion has exposed an interesting issue; both Alan and David have contradictory attitudes towards graduates, on the one hand they have the attitude that graduates are not practical and lack common sense and therefore need to gain experience in the industry from the bottom up. However, on the other hand the graduates that actually work for them are the exception and are performing well. There could be two contrasting reasons for this. First, the graduates could be exceptions and that is why they have gained employment and also promotion in the industry, compared to the rest of their degree cohort who entered into other industries. With the exception of Dan, they have also gained experience in the industry through part time work when they were at college and/or they also undertook practical qualifications such as life guarding, pool plant and governing body awards. In contrast the second reason may be that sport graduates have changed and more recent graduates are more appropriate. Consequently, the perceptions of those interviewed could have come from a combination of: their

previous experiences; the nature of the of the sport industry as non graduates; and the image of graduates within the industry as being inappropriate, which perhaps emanates from others managers' experiences of the standard of previous cohorts. This appears to be the view of Chris who does suggest that Carol and Carrie were different to other graduates he has interviewed:

"I've interviewed many candidates in the past that have been degree qualified or HND They're the first two characters, the pair of them together, that I've seen that have actually come to the table with an understanding of sports development, and not just a written understanding of theoretical understanding. They've come with the fact that they've tried even in a small way to turn into practice within a voluntary role, be it club, leisure centre whatever it might be, whereas others have brought me to the table theory".

However, he attributes this to changes within HE and graduates, rather than Carol and Carrie and the other graduate employed in the organisation just being exceptions:

"The great thing about this is that all three of them come from different college or university backgrounds, so if that's a thing that is happening and being reflected across the UK then that to me is really positive, because its not just a local change, its probably a national change and that's really good."

This supports the view of Jenkinson (2001) cited in Chapter 2 (p72) who also recognised that degree courses had changed. However, there may also be a change of views within the industry as Peter Johnson (2001:49), former Chief Executive of CIRCA cited in Chapter 2 (p66), says that HE courses do not need to provide basic applied skills as employers can do that, what is needed is the creation of the right person. Chris concurs with this view that higher education can't be expected to prepare people practically for management,

"She's now in a management side and she needs to understand how to develop that role and that range of experience will come we've obviously got to give her guidance and training for that as well which is clearly something that they can't give in college's and universities, and we appreciate that, that's our role."

In the Leisure Centre case Bob views the situation in another way that the industry itself is changing and that graduate attributes are becoming more relevant: "The industries changing that much over the last couple of years, they've got that

background to understand the people, how people work”. Although he acknowledged that the degree has some elements that are relevant to first line jobs, he thought that the skills that Barbara had developed on her degree would be particularly relevant as she moved to a higher position in leisure.

The differing perceptions of graduates and degrees seem to correspond to the managers’ and the graduates’ colleagues level of understanding of them. Chris and the managers at the Leisure Centre have more knowledge of sport degrees than Alan. Although Chris states that he is “not wholly au fait with the full content” of Carol’s degree he has a good idea in general as his son has a PE and Sports Development degree. This is perhaps why he realises the need to stretch the graduates. Chris also has a PGCE for teaching in further education which he undertook because of the number of presentations he has to do. He has also undertaken National Coaching Courses on a distance learning basis from Leeds Metropolitan University; which again may give him more understanding of the needs of graduates, having interacted with HE

In the Leisure Centre, Bob has a good understanding of what Barbara has done on her degree and is described in more detail in Appendix 12 (pp596:2.51). In addition he declares, “I think PE and Leisure is one of the hardest ones, even at O level and GCSE, it is one of the hardest subjects”. He is currently undertaking a NVQ level 4 in management and thus may have empathy with those who have studied. Brian acknowledges that he does not have a very good understanding of what Barbara has done on her degree but recognises that it would mean that she is able to learn. He has also undertaken further college study undertaking his ILAM Certificate and Diploma on a taught basis at an HE institute, which has also exposed him to HE organisations.

It would appear that the organisations with graduates’ who have high levels of organisational commitment and utilisation, are those where there is a more positive perception of graduates and a better understanding of the degree and graduates; and a corresponding positive management approach to the graduates. This is consistent with previous studies of graduate organisational commitment, discussed in Chapter 6 (p150), which found that graduates had higher organisational commitment when

they felt that they fitted into the organisation (Sturges and Guest 2001). It would seem that Carol and Barbara may feel that they fit in and this impacts on their higher levels of commitment. In contrast, the other graduate in Barbara's organisation, Ben does not seem to feel this and interprets the support for Barbara in another way, "there's too much favouritism going on in the building if you want my honest opinion". The next section, which focuses on the graduates, will provide more discussion of the nature and attributes of the graduates which will attempt to identify why Barbara has progressed as compared to Ben.

The effect of the positive approach by managers towards graduates can be seen in the response by the graduates, Carol recognises that Chris is supporting and helping her to develop:

"Chris will say the same thing, the next step up is his office basically, and he said I want to see you there in a few years time, so why should I leave? I've got the perfect opportunity to develop myself here now, you know I'm lucky enough to get this job and obviously I can work up and it's nice to know there are routes. The only thing is when you're stuck in a job and you can't see any progression at all, that's when you start getting bored and thinking I don't want to be here anymore".

This approach is also reflected in the Leisure Centre, where Barbara has also been given extra tasks to do by Brian that are outside the normal requirements of her job, to provide her with broader experiences. These are membership of the Centre's Best Value Committee, reviewing and developing the induction procedures and updating the web site. The fact that these tasks are extra is highlighted by Barry, "she's got lots of these separate tasks on top of her senior rec post and she's adapting to them". The response of the graduates fits in with two areas of Sturges and Guest's (2001) findings on the organisational commitment of graduates. As discussed in Chapter 6 (p149), a major influence on the graduates' positive affective organisational commitment was having challenging, stimulating and enjoyable work and early responsibility. The cases have shown that the manager is crucial in enabling this to happen. Sturges and Guest (2001) also found that the graduates' relationship with their line manager and recognition by them of their achievements and performance were important in acknowledging the value of the graduate to the organisation, which enhanced their organisational commitment. This may also impact on

normative commitment as Carol and Barbara may feel that the support they have had means that they also feel an obligation to stay with the organisation.

A negative influence on organisational commitment was where there was a lack of help with career management and a lack of career progression, this undermined commitment and many feared being 'stuck' (Sturges et al 2000, Arnold and Mackenzie Davey 1999). Both Carol and Barbara have been given considerable support with regard to the career development. Carol's situation reflects the finding of Sturges et al (2000) as she has high organisational commitment which is a reflection of the help she perceives she will receive from Chris with her career. Barbara also reveals that she is getting this support, "as soon as I've got promoted they've started teaching me how to be a duty officer which is the next step up". This is also reflected by Bob, "We'll help her out so she sees what manager's do and all that, we can help and teach her that side of it, you know if it's a stepping stone".

However Bill, a current student who works at the leisure centre suggests that not all graduates receive help with career progression:

"I'd like to see something like maybe you know, them taking graduates on and maybe giving them like, starting off like I am as a pool attendant and then giving them a supervisory role of some sort".

Brian also suggests that the other graduates may be jealous of the support Barbara gets but he justifies it as being because of her attitude and that she has proactively asked for extra tasks. However he admits that there are not enough resources to give every one support.

The case studies have shown that when graduates get career management support it has a very positive impact on them. However, there is a mixed approach from those who do not receive help, Alison and Dan do not appear to expect any from the organisation and realise it's their own responsibility, reflecting the idea of the new career (Sturges et al 2000, Cohen and El-Sawad 2006); whilst for the other graduates encountered in the cases, such as Carrie and Ben, it causes some frustration. This is perhaps because they see others in the same organisation being supported. As noted earlier the possible reasons for the difference between individual graduates will be discussed in the next section. The cases also reflect the

findings of Chapter 2, that there is not a clear career pathway through the sport industry. Carol and Barbara do see a career pathway but this is because of the support of their line managers, Alison and Dan are struggling to identify how to progress their career within sport.

The case of the Leisure Centre indicates that the approach to graduates does reflect the philosophy of the individual manager. The previous manager to Brian did not seem to have a developmental approach to graduates and they seemed to have been ignored. Brian has been promoted to another job and a new manager is yet to be appointed so he doesn't know if he will have the same approach to Emma: "I mean obviously I'm not here now so I don't know whether that will continue".

Both Brian and Chris suggest that the approach they have taken with both Carol and Barbara reflect the approach that was taken with them. When Chris became an SDO his then manager was a key influence on him and acted as a mentor. An example of the relationship is given by Chris,

"I used to have a boss here who was brilliant and he used to say 'if you wanna be a sergeant wear the stripes' and that was a clever way of making me do it for free I think, but you know it worked because I wanted that experience and I realised if I was going to develop I needed to have that broader understanding".

Chris hints that he worked beyond his job, which helped him get on, and he also explained that to get into sports development he undertook a number of coaching qualifications and voluntary work. Carol is similar in that she funded herself through a number of qualifications and picked up voluntary work whilst at college and when she was working part time with the authority, "I went out and did my own. I got NVQs, I got BHS courses, I got hockey coaching".

Brian states that he had a clear vision of where he wanted to go but a major influence on his progression was that one manager took an interest in his development.

"I had some good advice and I was guided quite well and part of the brief was 'you're going to have to tolerate having a year you know on the pool but we will help you and you won't be in that position long'. Now I can't make that kind of guarantee to people".

Thus he progressed, not through a formal career development system, but because of the approach of one man and he seems to be replicating that with Barbara.

9.2.2. Graduate Identity

Section one of this chapter established the complexity of graduate employability, in terms of how the nature of the job impacts on the graduate's employability and that the actual impact is mediated by other factors such as the management style of the employer. This chapter has confirmed that management style, alongside the perceptions of graduates within the organisation, influences the effectiveness of the graduate's transition into employment and hence their employability. Another factor that may compound this is the effect of the nature of the job and the perception of graduates on graduate identity.

As established in Chapter 6 (p159), graduate identity relates to the notion that being a graduate has some social significance and makes a difference in terms of employment opportunity and career progression (Holmes 2001). Graduate identity does not occur with the formal award of a degree, but is emergent on the outcome of the interaction between the claim of the individual to being a graduate and the affirmation of that person as being a graduate by significant others, and would include gaining a job that is explicitly regarded as a graduate job.

Holmes' research focused on those who got graduate jobs and how this affirmed their identity but he did not examine the impact on graduates who did not achieve this. Obviously this could be an issue for the sport graduates as section 1 identified that, with the exception of the Sports Development job, none of the jobs gained by graduates required a degree. Holmes' (2005) model of the Modalities of Emergent Identity, shown in Figure 9.3, has been applied to the graduates to analyse if they have affirmed their graduate identity and how this may impact on employability. All the graduates, both those at the focus of the case studies and the others encountered in the interviews, were included to enable comparisons between them.

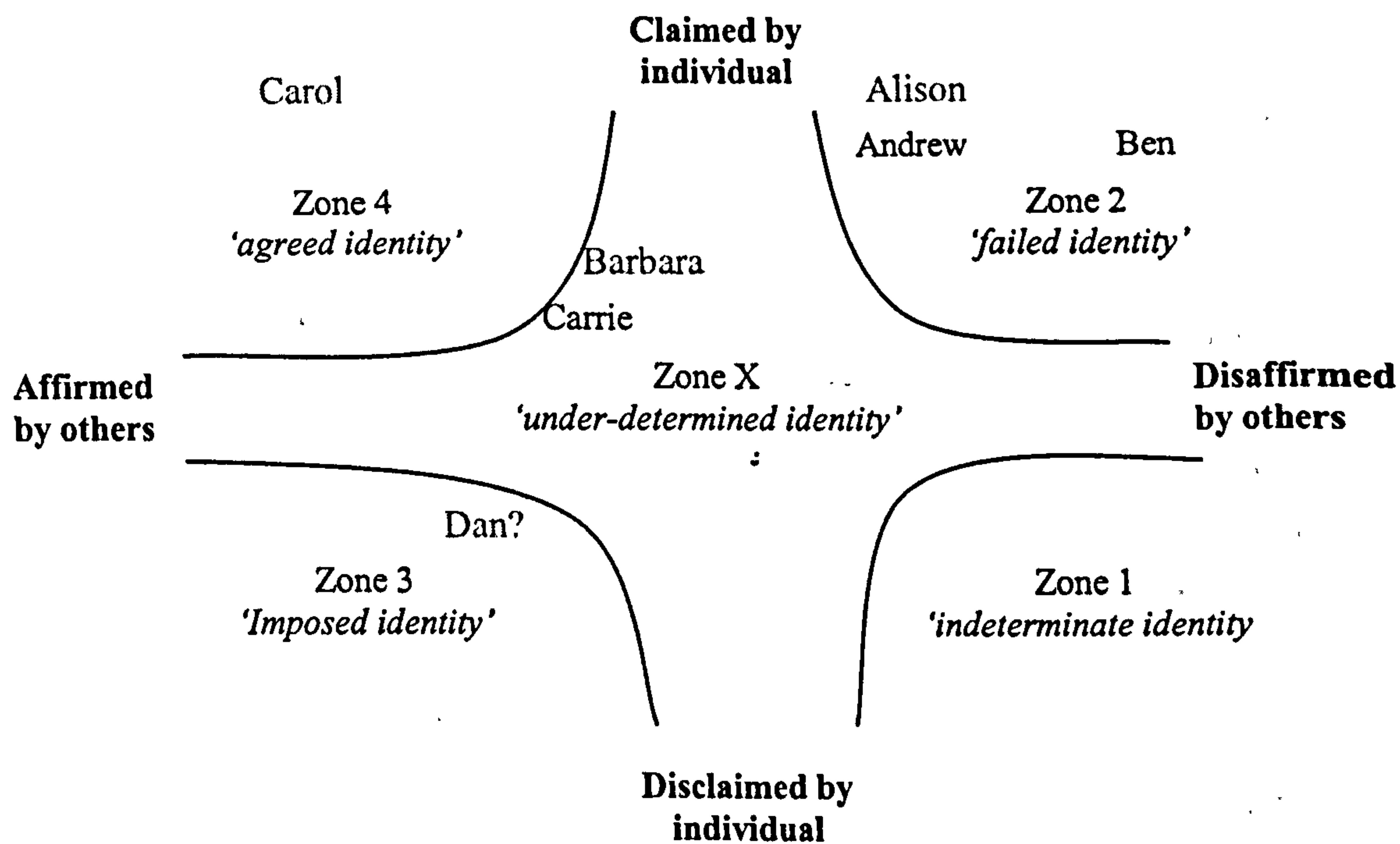


Figure 9.3: Modalities of Emergent Identity applied to Sport Graduates (Adapted from Holmes 2005)

Carol has been classified as having an agreed identity in that she makes a claim to be a graduate and uses her attributes within her job and this is affirmed by Chris and Colin, in that they perceive that her graduate attributes are appropriate for the job. Barbara has been placed in a position towards being affirmed by others but within zone X, she is recognised as a graduate and she is beginning to utilise graduate skills, however she does not seem to feel this herself. She implies that she did not expect to be still working in the centre when she graduated and also that she still does not know what she wants to do, even though she does see a career pathway at the centre. Her frustration is that it will take a long time to get to the position where she is using her graduate skills, she says: "I worked really hard for three years and I just don't feel like I've, well, I'm not using it at all".

Alison has been placed in the failed identity zone as she has tried to lay claim to a graduate identity by trying to use her graduate skills, but this has not been recognised by her line manager and her job is also not recognised as being of graduate level by others. This is reinforced by Amy who believes the job is not appropriate for a graduate and she actually suggests that she would not be happy if her daughter, who is doing a degree, ended up in working in that role at the centre:

“I just think my daughter’s doing a degree and I’m thinking what would I think about her”.

Dan has been placed in Zone 3 ‘imposed identity’, with a question mark, because he makes an interesting point that he does not flaunt the fact that he is a graduate:

“The people who I’ve come across in the company, I wouldn’t say a lot of people know that I am a graduate, not cos I hide it just cos they never ask or they never. I think if you did say you were a graduate they would think your being snotty, however the ones that have found out that I am they do sort of treat you a little better as well I think and to an extent they expect a bit more out of you”.

It appears that he does not explicitly make claim to being a graduate because, although he has some positive comments about being a graduate, not all people in the organisation have this positive view; as demonstrated by David when he says, “I do think a lot of graduates have a high opinion of themselves”.

As mentioned in Chapter 7 the case studies did include other graduates within the significant other interviewees. From the analysis of their interviews it was possible to assess their graduate identity and locate them on Holme’s model. Their results must be treated with some caution as they were not the focus of the cases, but some interesting findings arose from the analysis of their identity. Andrew, from the Tennis Centre, has been placed in the failed identity for the same reasons as his colleague Alison. However, he seems to have become much more demotivated in relation to his job after he initially tried to implement his ideas when he first got the Gym Manager’s job, but they were not accepted by the directors. Ben, a lifeguard at the Leisure Centre, has also been placed in the failed identity zone, he at first had a positive attitude to his job but he feels that as his graduate skills were not recognised he became demotivated and was not actually recognised as a graduate by Brian when he took over as manager of the centre:

“I have to say that there was nothing that particularly stood out to identify people who were academically well qualified, to distinguish them from anyone else, but in chatting to them they were obviously in these positions awaiting a better opportunity, you know that became very clear”.

In the case of Carrie, the Sports Development Officer, she has been placed in zone X, even though she wants to be recognised as a graduate, she feels that her low

level job and the way she initially accessed the organisation through a New Deal placement, undermines her claim.

I don't know what their perception, I mean I get on with them all well and you know they don't have any problems with me but I sometimes wonder you know, I wonder what they think of me because I was brought on first on all and was introduced as work placement you know, and then I've, and obviously I don't get to talk to them as much so they may not know that I've got a degree or what have"

She actually feels the only way to overcome this is to find another job. This is despite the fact that Chris does recognise her as a graduate, which is why she has been placed in a position towards being affirmed by others within zone X.

This analysis indicates that affirmation of graduate identity is important to many of the graduates and if they do not receive this it undermines their commitment to the organisation and may impact on their motivation. In Andrew and Bill's case it creates a vicious circle where they're not treated like graduates they no longer try to use their graduate attributes. Both have strategies to get them out of the situation which is to leave the organisation and in Bill's case leave the industry as he is so disillusioned.

9.2.3. Induction and Development

An element where the employer, as an organisation, impacts on the graduate is the induction and development process. The Phase One research found that induction and training and development in the sport industry was poor. The case studies included questions regarding this and whether the graduates received adequate inductions and the impact of induction on their employability. The case studies reflected the findings of Phase One in that there was a mixture of formal and informal approaches to induction, however, all of the graduates felt that they had had an inadequate induction. This contradicted their line managers who generally felt that the induction of the graduates had been appropriate.

With regard to the case studies, where there were formal processes, these did not appear to be implemented as described by the line manager. The graduates in these organisations described a very basic procedure more aimed at meeting health and safety requirements rather than development needs. This is illustrated by Carol and

Carrie in the Sports Development Unit. Chris felt that the induction process was thorough for both Carol and Carrie. This involved familiarity with the geography of the borough and the operational processes of the local authority. He also spent time talking with Carol as part of her induction.

“I spent quite a bit of time in the first week, ten days of her new appointment with Carol talking about existing programmes, reviewing where we are now, reviewing the status of the department, the budget issues. So I guess on a fairly informal casual way we’ve sat for a good few hours”.

Carol and Carrie both contradict this view,

“all I basically got shown was where the photocopier was. It was honestly, that was it”. (Carol)

“A bit of a mish mash, obviously I had the initial induction, you know fire escapes and toilets and all that type of thing. Never really had a proper induction within the office.” (Carrie).

There were no approaches that specifically varied the induction to meet graduate needs, although with Alison and Carol their induction involved some shadowing of the line manager which may have enabled a more individual approach although it would appear that these did not address any differing needs a graduate may have. If this is related to the Graham and McKenzie’s (1995) model of transition to the work place, discussed in Chapter 2 (p69), which identifies that the first few months working within a company are crucial for graduate performance then the induction processes are not supporting this.

With regard to training and development there were formal systems in three of the organisations in the form of personal reviews; in case study four Dan was unsure of the ongoing process but did identify that there was a formal review process as part of his probation period. However, he was too new to his current job to have experienced a review interview. The two local authority organisations had two similar systems of staff review processes, which involved an annual formal interview to identify development needs over the next year, which was not connected to pay reviews. Both of the line managers implementing the system acknowledged that it was very difficult to implement development plans due to the lack of resources available to fund training courses. This created frustration amongst all staff as they could not see the worth of their reviews if there were no

outcomes. In the case of the Leisure Centre it could be argued that the reviews caused bad feeling.

“Although I turn up but there’s not a lot, you air your views, you write them down and then a year later you do exactly the same and nothing happens. I’ve been here 6 years now and I’ve not been sent on one course, nothing”.
(Ben)

Centre staff explained that they would identify courses often these couldn’t be funded but were crucial to them being promoted which then halted their career progression. A case in point is the Pool Plant Course which was required to become Senior Lifeguard yet there was no funding for the course for the lifeguards; Barbara was able to fund herself to undertake these courses and consequently received promotion, but this created some suspicion amongst other graduate staff of whether she had been funded.

There was a general belief by managers that graduates should undertake certain technical qualifications that were crucial for their jobs whilst doing their degree. All of the graduates had undertaken these relevant qualifications whilst in Higher Education, but under their own initiative, and these had been extremely valuable in the early stages of their career in order to help them gain promotion. This raises a key question as to whether these should be included in degree courses. In three of the cases, the importance of the graduates undertaking professional body awards either via ILAM or ISRM were raised by either the line manager or the graduate themselves and were viewed as important for the graduate to acquire specific vocational skills.

Overall this section has shown that there are differences in approaches between the different employers and this may have an impact of the employability of the graduates. The approaches are summarised in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2. Summary of Employer Approaches to Graduates.

	Carol	Barbara	Dan	Alison
Employer				
Perception of graduates	+ve	+ve	Mixed	Negative
Knowledge of graduates	Medium	Medium	Medium/low	Low
Management of graduates	Developmental	Developmental	Laissez Faire	Autocratic

In the cases of Carol and Barbara, their manager's perception of graduates was positive and they also had a developmental approach to managing the graduates. Both their perception and their approach are possibly influenced by them having some knowledge of graduates and their needs. As discussed in the previous section, this means that in Barbara's case she is able then to work beyond the scope of her job and utilises some graduate skills. In contrast Alison's manager has little knowledge of graduates and a negative perception which seems to lead to little understanding of their needs. Thus, his autocratic approach combined with the restrictive structure of the job means that Alison has little control over her work. In Dan's case the manager has mixed views about graduates and a little knowledge of them. However, both the fact that Dan does not appear to be closely managed, and has a lot of flexibility means that he has a fairly high level of control over his job.

9.3. The Graduate

This section will examine the appropriateness of the graduate and the relationship of the attributes of the different graduates to their levels of utilisation and organisational commitment. It will include reference to the other graduates included in the study as significant others in order to provide comparisons with the graduates at the focus of the study.

9.3.1. Appropriateness of the Graduate

A key issue that emerged in Chapter 2 (p61) that impacted on employability is the appropriateness of the graduate (Skills Active 2006, Bacon 1995). In relation to the jobs that the core graduates obtained in the case studies, all were performing effectively. The most cited area of weakness for all the graduates was age and lack of experience, which corresponds with earlier discussion about graduates having to work their way up. Conversely, experience is something that degree courses cannot provide, unless they are sandwich courses.

The main reason given for the graduates' performance tended to be attributed to the graduates' personality, with a clear pattern of strengths emerging across the cases. These were interpersonal skills, initiative, a positive attitude, ability to work hard

and show commitment and having past relevant experiences. This corresponds with the discussion in Chapter 2 (p67) which found that some studies and employers believe that HE needs to create the right character. This is exemplified by a number of commentators: Johnson's (2001) view of HE's role being to create the right person not necessarily to provide the specific sport related skills; Harvey's (1997) findings that employers in general are not looking for 'oven-ready graduates and are employing whole people and not "disconnected attributes". It is difficult to determine the extent to which the individual graduate's personality has been influenced and developed by their degree. However, a major attribute that the graduates' credit to their degree was increased confidence. Barbara, Carol and Alison attribute this to the presentations and group work they undertook at NEWI. With Barbara and Alison this was reinforced by others, as they had both worked at their organisations throughout their degree, the others that were interviewed in the organisation could see how they changed. In relation to Barbara, both Bob and Barry confirm that she has developed her confidence and also her analytical skills in terms of questioning why and how tasks are done. The increased analytical skills were also identified as a change in Alison:

"After she'd done the degree I think yea it tended, I think she probably tends to go back and think, right I'll see if we can improve on this and we'll get this sorted out."

Carol also believes that her degree has helped develop her analytical skills and Chris agrees when he says:

"She's not prepared to just accept it because its written down, she wants to know why we do it that way, she's very innovative in the way she tries to approach things and she's prepared even at this very early period in her sports development career to challenge the concept of what sports development is trying to do, and more importantly how it is doing it, and rightly or wrongly I can only really say that that's come from an awful lot of teaching she's had within the college environment because this is only her second job and previously she's worked very specifically in disability".

Dan does not identify for himself that he is confident but David does note that:

He's quite relaxed as well in the way he goes about things, you know, he never seems to be under pressure, so he's confident and basically he's got the full package. Like I was saying he's got good interpersonal skills, he's very, very intelligent. Yeah, he's an all rounder".

Another key attribute that all the core graduates have is a positive attitude towards work. Barbara is praised by her line managers for using her own time to undertake a number of courses that will help her progress, but are also valuable to the organisation. Carol is also seen as very dynamic and wanting to take on more responsibility. Dan has also shown initiative in that part of the reason he got promoted was getting involved in a project in his own time that led to his promotion.

“You think you go into work and you do and go in at nine and finish at five or whatever, you do so many jobs a day and then you go home; but you don’t cos you get sidetracked and you do other things and you end up staying until half past six, cos you do”.

Alison attributes her own positive attitude directly to her degree.

Em, its given me to want more whereas if I hadn’t have done my degree I probably would have been happy just being, sitting on reception. But it has given me more goals, I want more out of this job than just sitting at reception making toasties etc, you know I’m wanting to do more”.

Within the jobs where some graduates have progressed compared to other graduates or appear to have higher levels of commitment than others, a difference seems to be their attitude to working beyond their job and taking the initiative. For example in the Leisure Centre Brian maintains he helped Barbara because of her attitude:

“I would do it for them all, but obviously its got to be a two way thing as well, the individual has to show some desire to do that, and obviously have some ability to see through and there’s no question that she’s, you know, she has both really. She’s demonstrated the fact that she’s different and she is frustrated in the job and wants to move on”

Also it was she that asked to shadow the head pool attendant and duty managers to gain more experience.

Alongside this positive attitude to work the interviews suggested that the core graduates also seem to have a tenaciousness and self motivation compared with the other graduates. This is particularly in evidence at the Leisure Centre; the previous manager did not have the same developmental approach as Brian and an outcome was Ben’s demotivation, in contrast Barbara continued to show self motivation and her positive attitude was recognised by Brian when he took over and he has helped

her to progress. Brian indicates that graduates such as Ben have not exhibited the same character which means they don't have the same opportunities.

"I think from a negative point of view I think there's this element of 'well I've got myself qualified and I've invested quite a lot of time into the qualification and as a consequence I'm only working in a part time capacity in a job that you know that I obviously don't want to do as a career'. I just sense this sense of frustration and almost a complex really where they have got a little bit of a chip on their shoulder as a result of that".

This is a situation where the interaction between a positive attitude from the graduate and a developmental management style from the manager has enabled the graduate to progress. However where a graduate does not have that attitude then they do not interact in the same way and miss the opportunity to develop themselves, which may impact on their chance of progression.

Within the Sports Development Unit the management style is also developmental, which Carol has taken advantage of partly through her dynamic personality and self motivation. In contrast, Carrie feels less utilised but she seems to be less driven and indicates that she expects others to motivate her when she says: "I mean there's probably a lot more that I can learn but it's just being pushed". However, her attitude could be accounted for by the fact she has missed out on the Senior Sports Development job to Carol.

The differences in attitude can also be seen with Alison and Andrew within the tennis centre. Despite her frustrations, she continues to try and progress herself and the organisation by trying to battle with the Directors; this is illustrated by Andrea when she describes Alison as self motivated and Amy says "she goes there and puts her views forward but, like everybody before her they've always come up with the same brick wall". However, Alison seems to have a sense of pride that will not allow her to give up:

"I've always had something about me wanting to progress and impress people and you know and aware that people are watching me. I always want to have a good appearance, that I look like I'm doing something."

In contrast Andrew has become very demotivated within the job and describes himself as "brain dead", "stuck in a rut", "very bored" and also says about the directors "my ambition is not matched by theirs really"; he admits he no longer

makes an effort in the job and has focused his energy elsewhere. Unfortunately, unlike the Leisure Centre there is no one to respond to Alison as Brian did to Barbara, so she feels underutilised and has medium to low organisational commitment.

This discussion has highlighted the importance of the character of the graduate both in terms of functioning well in the job, but also enabling them to manage themselves to make the most of (or not) situations. The nature of the sport industry being traditionally non graduate, and the culture of having to gain experience and starting at the bottom, means that the graduate will have to be self motivated to progress. However, it can be seen that even where graduates, such as Barbara, have this character and are progressing through the structures they see it as a long haul, hence she is not convinced she will continue with the organisation.

9.3.2. The Degree

The previous section identified some of the strengths of the degree that the core graduates undertook. More detailed examples of the strengths and weaknesses of the degree can be found in each case in Appendix 9. (pp564-567, pp581-583, pp606-608, pp623-626).

A criticism of the degree from all of the graduates was that it was too broad and they used little of the knowledge that they developed. However, they all acknowledged that when they started their degree they did not have a clear career path in mind and were motivated because of an interest in sport. A sport science degree does not aim to explicitly prepare the graduates for specific careers and its broadness reflects the wide range of activities within the sport industry.

Furthermore, the broadness of the degree and the industry meant that none of the graduates were particularly sure about what they wanted to do as a career when they finished their degree and, with the exception of Carol, were still unsure when interviewed. This is a similar finding to the Phase One focus groups where the majority of students did not have a clear career path in mind. This could be due to poor career guidance whilst on courses, in terms of actual information and accessing that information. However, this could be exacerbated by a lack of a clear

career structure within the industry which was identified in Chapter 2 (p21, 30) (Yates 1984, Houlihan 2002, DCMS 2002) and has emerged in the case studies.

All of the graduates have identified the need to undertake more technical and/or professional body courses which are more specific to their job needs. This seems to support Bacon's (1996) notion that sport degree courses are not specifically relevant to sport employment; however, a key issue identified earlier is that students do not have a clear career pathway in mind when they undertake the degree therefore it is difficult for degree courses to be specifically relevant. What the degree has done is develop the graduates' ability to learn and research information. This is specifically identified by Dan and is demonstrated by Carol, who states that in her job "You have to read up on things don't you, keep in touch with things" and she links the development of these skills back to her degree, "its something you learn at university as well, your use to going to the library and sitting down with a book or the internet as it is now and having a research and look through things". The development of these particular skills relate back to the notion of lifelong learning emphasised by Harvey et al (2002). This issue also connects back to the issue raised at the end of Chapter 5 (p138) in terms of, the conflicting demands from government and employers wanting very vocational jobs against students not being sure what they want to do. For three of the graduates in the cases they still are not completely clear about what they want to do, whilst the most successful graduate, Carol, seems to have a clear view of where she wants to be; this is reflected by Colin when he states "she knows exactly what she wants career wise".

9.3.3. Expectations of graduates

A key issue that was identified in Phase One and the review of literature was graduates' over expectations of level of entry. In contrast, the case studies have shown that the graduates' accept the need to work their way up the organisation and their frustration seems to have been created by the lack of opportunity to use their skills as opposed to not being in a higher position. However, as was found in the focus groups in Phase One (Chapter 5 p118), there is some tension within this, in that the graduates accept this is the case but still find it disheartening. Several times in her interview Barbara comments that the process takes so long. In contrast those who have not progressed seemed to have the higher expectations, probably because

they haven't progressed, as Ben states: "When I first started my degree I thought I would be able to walk into a high paid job but I'm finding it hard to actually get the right job". This is reflected by Brian and Barry who believe that graduates have high expectations as Brian states:

"Perhaps their understanding of once they became qualified there would be an opportunity that immediately opens up and you know that they slot into a job that takes them into the right career path"

This is also reflected by David at the Commercial Health and Fitness Organisation when he recounts a conversation he has had with a student who is employed on a casual basis:

"I think that they need to realise that the days of just going into a top job just when you graduate, and this is the thing with John at the moment. Now John has mentioned to me on a few occasions saying, 'well I want to go in as manager'. Well I can tell you now it's not going to happen. He would be very lucky if he does. There may be some but again there's a lot a degrees out there and you've got to be the cream of the crop of them degrees to do that".

Chris, within the Sports Development Unit, does mention he thinks graduates have high expectations but Carrie acknowledges that her expectations were not appropriate when she says, "I didn't realise how difficult it would be to get a job".

The cases have illustrated that there is a mix of expectations within the graduates in terms of level of entry and there is a perception within employers that graduates have high expectations of level of entry. However the difference in expectations seems to relate to the utilisation of the graduate. This can be analysed using Harvey et al's (1997) Enhancement Continuum Model discussed in Chapter 2 (p68). The model examines how the organisation uses the graduate and can be applied to analyse the difference in the expectations of the manager and the graduates. In Alison's case there was a mismatch in expectations, she can be categorised as a transformative graduate, who is able to take the organisation forward and view change as an opportunity (Appendix 9, p562:1.11, p570). In contrast Alan's requirements are categorised as for an adaptive graduate, who is able to fit into the organisation (Holmes 1997). This creates frustration as Alison has a need to be more creative and to be able to use her initiative.

In the case of Barbara she can be categorised as an adaptable graduate, who is able to use her knowledge and skills within a changing situation (Holmes 1997). This is matched with the organisation's requirement and thus she exhibits less frustration than Alison (Appendix 12, pp515:2.21). With Carol her expectations match with her manager in that she can be categorised as a transformative graduate (Appendix 9, p605:3.7). Finally Dan can be seen as an adaptable graduate, which seems to match the expectations of his managers in terms of the nature of his job, but he has to work in different parts of the organisation with other managers who do not appear to want change, which conflicts with Dan's expectations (Appendix 12, p623:4.7). This analysis shows that the closest match between expectations is in the case of Carol, again providing another reason for her having the highest level of utilisation and organisational commitment. Barbara and her organisation also have a close match in expectations, however, unlike Carol she is constrained by her job and thus the realisation of her expectations are also constrained, even though the managers at the centre have tried to help her overcome them. At the other end of the scale there is a strong mismatch in the expectations of Alison and Alan which provides another reason for and Alison's frustration.

The analysis of expectations can be developed further with the application of the concept of the psychological contract. As identified in Chapter 6, (p151) it explains the combination of beliefs held by an individual and his/her employer about what they expect of one another within the employment relationship (Armstrong 2006). It can be seen in the analysis of the outcomes of the differences/similarities in expectations of how the organisation uses the graduates that differences in beliefs can impact on the organisational commitment of the graduate. There has been debate in the studies of the psychological contract of whether it consists of promises or expectations. With the exception of the Sports Development Unit, promises do not seem to have been made by the employer about how the graduate would be utilised. However, in relation to the other graduates included in the cases, both Andrew and Ben seem to have had expectations that if they behaved in a certain way and worked hard then this would be recognised by their employers and they would be encouraged to use their graduate skills.

“When I was coordinator first, when Ian left I was doing quite lot, set loads of projects up and then I got no recognition for it really so I thought well rubbish that, just go back to doing the mundane stuff” (Andrew).

“When I first came here I was using my initiative all the time I was eager, I was doing jobs without being asked and then cos you do all that and then you don’t get anything from it its sort of a backlash now and I just do the opposite. I’ll sit around until I’m told to do something sort of thing, cos your thinking to yourself ‘why bother’” (Ben).

Both quotes illustrate that when their efforts were not reciprocated they became disillusioned; this fits with the notion of a breach of contract in that both Andrew and Ben perceive that their organisations have failed to fulfil their obligations and thus their organisational commitment and job performance have been negatively affected. However, it is interesting that there does not seem to have been a promise made by the organisations, the expectations appear to have been inaccurate from the start of the employment. The cases are slightly different, with Andrew his interview suggests that he faces the same style of management as Alison and yet she seems to cope with it better. She does not seem to have the same expectations of the obligations of management and even though she is frustrated she seems to have had accurate perceptions of the organisation when she became manager, thus it does not seem to have affected her motivation as much as Andrew. Ben’s situation is slightly different in that he does see Barbara being supported and developed by the organisation. She seems to have a positive psychological contract and Brian’s explanation of the support given to Barbara compared to the Ben can be related to the psychological contract in that she is meeting her obligations:

“I would do it for them all, but obviously its got to be a two way thing as well, the individual has to show some desire to do that, and obviously have some ability to see through and there’s no question that she’s, you know, she has both really.

In contrast to the Andrew and Ben, Carol can also be seen to have a positive psychological contract with Chris, which is emphasised in the way he is facilitating her development.

This discussion has illustrated that a psychological contract may be based on expectations and if both parties do not understand what is required from each other

then this can impact on their relationship, job performance and organisational commitment.

The section has shown that the nature of the graduate influences their employability in terms of their attributes and expectations, which were included in the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry in Figure 9.1. However, it has also identified the importance of the clarity of the graduate's careers aspirations as being an influence. Table 9.3 summarises the key findings on the nature of the graduates in the case studies.

Table 9.3: Nature of the Graduates.

		Carol	Barbara	Dan	Alison
The Graduate					
Attributes	Ability	High	High	High	High
	Character	+ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
Expectations		Realistic	Realistic	Realistic	Realistic
Career Aspirations		Clear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear

All of the graduate's at the focus of the cases were perceived as having a high level of ability and a positive character, which was reflected in all being seen as performing well in their job. They also all had realistic expectations about their job and the industry in terms of having to start at the bottom and working up. However, Carol is the only graduate to have clear aspirations for her career.

9.4. Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the nature of the employer, job and graduate are key elements that influence the employability of graduates. This analysis of the case studies shows the complexity of graduate employability and how it is not just the nature of these three elements, but how they interact with each other (or not), that influences a graduate's employability at a specific period in time. This can be illustrated by amalgamating the summary tables 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 from the end of each section in this chapter with the summary table at the end of Chapter 8 (Table 8.4), this is shown in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4: Comparison of employability of graduates at the focus of the study

		Carol	Barbara	Dan	Alison
Structures and mechanisms					
Employer					
Perception of graduates		+ve	+ve	Mixed	Low
Knowledge of graduates		Medium	Medium	Medium/low	Low
Management of graduates		Developmental	Developmental	Laissez Faire	Autocratic
The Job					
Attributes required (graduate)		High	Medium	Medium	Low
Structure		Open	Restricted	Open	Restricted
The Graduate					
Attributes	Ability	High	High	High	High
	Character	+ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
Expectations		Realistic	Realistic	Realistic	Realistic
Career Aspirations		Clear	Moderately clear	Unclear	Unclear
Employability					
Performance		Good	Good	Good	Good
Utilisation		High	Medium	Medium	Low
Commitment		High	Medium/High	Medium/low	Medium/Low
Graduate Identity		Agreed	Under-determined	Imposed?	Failed
Overall Graduate Employability		High	Medium/High	Medium	Low/medium

Table 9.4 indicates that Carol could be described as achieving the highest level of graduate employability; she is performing well, is utilising her graduate skills and her graduate identity has been affirmed, all leading to high organisational commitment. This high level of graduate employability can be seen to be due to the factors all positively interacting together and reinforcing one another; she has a good employer, which combines with a job that enables her to use her graduate attributes and with her own positive attributes, expectations and aspirations.

In contrast, Alison can be described as achieving the lowest level of graduate employability: she is performing well, which could be ascribed to her attributes and the fact that she did not have unrealistic expectations and so has not become demotivated. However, her graduate attributes have not been utilised and she has not affirmed her graduate identity, which is due to a combination of the nature of her job as it is currently structured and the nature of her manager. Both Alison and her staff and colleagues identified that if she was managed differently her job could be restructured, which would enable her to utilise her attributes and possibly affirm her identity. Thus, the nature of Alison's manager is negatively impacting on her job, undermining her graduate employability. Alison's job is comparable to Barbara's job in that both are spatially and temporally restricted and Barbara's basic job does not require graduate attributes. However, the nature of Barbara's manager has an enormous impact on her employability in that he has facilitated the utilisation of her graduate skills by enabling her to undertake tasks beyond the scope of her basic job. Barbara's attributes mean that she has responded to his approach and thus her commitment is medium/high. However, it is not categorised purely as high as she does feel frustrated with the length of time it will take within the organisation's structure to obtain a job that will enable her to affirm her graduate identity and utilise her graduate attributes. Thus the combination of Barbara's attributes and the nature of her manager interact positively on her employability, but to some extent are undermined by the nature of the job.

Finally, with regard to Dan he could be described as achieving a similar, slightly lower level of graduate employability due to his seemingly lower level of commitment, as he doesn't envisage staying with the organisation. His job is flexible allowing him control over his work, however his graduate attributes are only being utilised to a medium amount due to the nature of his job. However, the laissez faire approach of his managers, in that he is left to get on with his job, also means that, unlike Barbara, he is not facilitated in undertaking tasks that use his graduate attributes more fully. An interesting aspect of Dan's character was that, unlike the other graduates, he did not appear to have high expectations from the job in terms of utilising his graduate attributes any further or affirming his graduate identity. He appears to be content with what he is doing but does plan to apply for more graduate level jobs in the future. Thus his medium level of graduate

employability would seem to be due to a combination of a factors mixing in a neutral way that enables some utilisation of graduate attributes, but with a graduate who does not seem to be desperate to utilise them further and with an employer who seems to have a passive approach to his management.

The case studies illustrate that the key elements of graduate employability; the job, the employer and the graduate, impact on the level of achievement of employability through the way that they interact in a neutral way or work with or against each other. The tables illustrate a fundamental tenet of critical realism that structures and mechanisms create outcomes which can be activated or deactivated by the outcomes of other structures and mechanisms eventually causing the social phenomena. For example if Alison and Carol swapped jobs then their level of employability would be very different, or if Alan were to swap jobs with Chris it is likely that the change in manager would impact on Carol's employability and vice versa on Alison's. A conclusion therefore is that the graduate could have completely appropriate attributes, expectations and aspirations in terms of employability, but the level of employability also depends on the interaction with the nature of the job and the employer. The implications of the conclusion for HE and industry will be discussed in the final chapter.

The overall conclusion from this phase of the study is that the nature and structure of the job provides a framework of the extent to which the graduate can achieve employability, and this is mediated by the nature and management style of the employer and the nature of the graduate. However, Chapter 2 and Phase One have also identified that the sport industry and Higher Education provide the context for this interaction, in that its structure and history influences the structures and actors involved. The next chapter will draw together the conclusions of Phase One and Phase Two to further examine the nature of the interaction between the job, graduate and employer in the context of the industry and HE and make over conclusions on the employability of the sport graduate within the sport industry.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

Chapter Ten

Overall Conclusions and Evaluation of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

This chapter consists of three main sections: the first section will develop the main conclusions of the study related to the aim: *'investigating the employability of sport related graduates in the sport industry through an analysis of the factors affecting the transition of the graduate from undergraduate studies to employment in the sport industry'*. From these conclusions the implications for the sport industry will be identified. The second section will assess the effectiveness of the proposed 'Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in Sport' and the corresponding theory, in terms of its practical adequacy in explaining graduate employability in the sport industry. Practical adequacy is discussed in Chapter 3 (p90) but the section will include an explanation of how it will be used to assess the model and theory. The third section of this chapter will identify the implications of the study for further research.

10.1. Key Conclusions and Implications for Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.

A fundamental finding of Phase One's survey of sport graduates was that the majority of graduates, who wished to do so, obtained employment in the sport industry. The graduate survey also established that the attributes developed from sport degrees, in the main, matched with what they required for their job; moreover the case studies suggest that graduates function well in their jobs. Applying the existing theories of graduate employability, which focus on matching skills to employers' needs, these findings could suggest that sport graduates are achieving high levels of employability. However, using the definition of employability accepted by this study, "obtaining and retaining fulfilling work" (Hillage and Pollard 1998), the underlying employment patterns of sport graduates suggest that this is actually not the case. These employment patterns were characterised by a high number of job changes within the graduates' initial careers; furthermore, a small but notable, number of graduates entered sport and then left for other industries. Both Phase One and Phase Two also found that these initial jobs were generally at a low level and were unlikely to use graduate attributes. The case studies indicated that the under-utilisation of graduate attributes was the main reason for them looking for other jobs, in some cases, within other industries. Consequently, it can be argued that these graduates are not

obtaining fulfilling work and are therefore not achieving graduate employability. A key problem with the existing theories of employability is that they do not account for the graduate's experiences once they have gained employment and only focus on matching graduate skills to employer needs. A more detailed analysis of this complex situation has been enabled by the application of the study's 'Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in Sport' shown in Figure 10.2. (p251) and proposed Interaction Theory of Graduate Employability in Sport, introduced in Chapter 6 (p165): *'graduate employability within the sport industry is a dynamic phenomenon that is the synthesis of the complex interaction of: the nature of the graduate, their job and the employer, within the context of the structure and culture of the sport industry at a specific moment in time'*.

Chapter 2 establishes that studies of the sport industry have repeatedly identified the need for higher level skills (Sports Council 1969, Yates 1984, Skills Active 2006), yet paradoxically this study has shown that the higher level skills that graduates possess are not being utilised because they enter low level jobs. This apparent mismatch between the graduates produced and industry needs have been attributed to graduates having inappropriate skills (Skills Active 2006, SPRITO 2001, Bacon 1996) and the focus has been on encouraging HE to develop graduates with more appropriate skills. However, Chapter 2 and the case studies reveal that there is a culture of new entrants being expected to gain experience at the bottom of the industry, then working up through the ranks to obtain positions that enable utilisation of their graduate attributes. The analysis of the case studies found that those graduates employed in low level jobs were unable to affirm their graduate identity which led to frustration at being unable to immediately utilise their degree. This frustration was manifested in the graduates looking for other jobs, often outside the industry, and in some cases impacted on their motivation to do their job. The situation seemed to be exacerbated where graduates were in positions that were temporally and spatially constrained: e.g. being on rota and in lifeguard and reception work. Consequently, it was difficult for them to find opportunities where they could work beyond the scope of their job, in order to gain experiences which would enable them to progress and also to gain satisfaction through utilising their attributes. If this is the situation for many graduates in sport jobs, it is then further aggravated by the industry's poor levels

of training and development identified in Chapter 2 (Audit Commission 2004, Skills Active 2006), the graduate survey and the case studies. Consequently it may be difficult for graduates to see a way to progress within the industry. Additionally the industry's lack of history of employing graduates, and consequently its low numbers of graduate employees (SPRITO 2001), means that, as identified in the case studies, managers may not have an understanding of the needs of graduates and may not manage them appropriately. This is an issue that has been hinted at in the Leitch Report (2006) but has not been a focus of previous research. Overall, these findings suggest that sport is an industry that is not supportive of new graduates and their transition into the workplace, and yet it espouses the need for higher skilled people.

However, a significant finding of the case studies and a fundamental conclusion of this study illustrates the critical realist view of the importance of understanding the interaction between structure and agency; that is that although the structural context of the industry has been shown as crucial in providing a framework of influence on graduate employability, the case studies uncovered that this is mediated by other factors: the nature of the graduate themselves, the job and the employer.

In order to obtain and perform within sport jobs, graduates do need appropriate attributes that meet employers' needs. Both Phase One and Phase Two identified that graduates need the appropriate skills, knowledge, experiences and personality in order to achieve employability. As was established in Chapter 2, the nature of the graduate has been the main focus of employability in other studies and this study concurs that this is an important factor, but contends that the other two mediating factors are also crucial. The nature of the sport job, in terms of its structure and the attributes required to undertake it, will impact on the extent to which the graduate is able to utilise their graduate attributes. For instance, the job may be a graduate level job that requires utilisation of the attributes developed within the degree, or it may be flexible enough to enable the graduate to undertake extra graduate level tasks, allowing the achievement of a high level of graduate employability. Conversely, the study found that many sport jobs graduates obtain do not require graduate attributes and are also restrictive in

structure, so the graduate is unable to undertake extra tasks that use their graduate attributes. Additionally, the employer acts as a mediating factor where they may either recognise the needs of the graduate and help overcome the problem of a restrictive job, or conversely they may not understand the graduate's needs, do not help them overcome the restrictions of the job and leave them trapped and achieving low levels of graduate employability.

The case studies and Chapter 2's analysis of the structure and development of the sport industry indicated that graduates do not have a clear position of where they fit within the industry. Thus, as found in the case studies, the approach of the employer is likely to be strongly influenced by their own perceptions of graduates emanating from their own personal experiences, in addition to the influence on them by the culture of the industry. This means that there are likely to be large disparities across the industry in the way graduates are supported in their transition to employment. The impact of the interaction of these different factors on employability illustrates Sayer's (2003) view that the same causal powers may produce different outcomes depending on their spatio-temporal relations with other objects, which have their own causal powers which may trigger, block or modify action. In this case the structures of the sport industry create an overall context for the employment of sport graduates that does not facilitate graduate employability. However, the nature and interaction of the manager, the graduate and the job may lessen the impact of those structures and depending on the interaction, produce different outcomes of employability.

In contrast to the conclusions of this study that, graduate employability is a synthesis of the interaction of the nature of the graduate, job and employer within the context of the sport industry, the current approach to graduate employability within the sport industry focuses only on HE and the graduate. Chapter 2 established that government policy and the sport industry, in the form of Skills Active, have placed the emphasis on HE institutions to ensure they produce employable sport graduates. However, as the findings of the study suggest and the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in Sport (Figure 10.2) illustrates, this is a flawed approach. HE institutes could develop 'perfect' graduates who have the attributes that are critical to the industry, but these are futile if graduates

enter positions where they are not used and there is little potential for them to be used. As has been seen, if the expectation is that graduates need to serve their time and gain experience before they can use these attributes and they do not have a supportive employer, then they will become frustrated and may either leave or lose motivation and under perform. This perhaps explains the lack of penetration of sport graduates into the industry suggested by the growth in the graduate numbers (Skills Active 2000).

A fundamental question that arises from this study is, does the industry actually want or need graduates? The answer is not clear. Recent research, led by Skills Active (2006) to develop regional Sector Skills Agreements does not provide a clear steer on the place of graduates within the industry. However, government skills policy overlies Skills Active and the Sector Skills Agreements and, as has been discussed in Chapter 2, it has set targets of 50% of 18-30 year olds participating in HE by 2010 (Leitch Report 2006). The Leitch Report (2006) also identifies that 40% of jobs could be filled by graduates by 2014. Therefore, despite the lack of clarity of the place of graduates in the industry, this is likely to provide pressure on the sport industry to employ more graduates. If this is to succeed, in relation to the holistic meaning of the term graduate employability, it will require the sport industry to play a more proactive role in working with HE to establish how they can assist in the transition of graduates into the workplace, to enable effective utilisation and ultimately the up-skilling of the industry.

10.2. Evaluation of the Interaction Model and Theory of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry.

This section will assess the ‘practical adequacy’ of the study’s proposed Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Figure 10.2), and corresponding theory: *‘graduate employability within the sport industry is a dynamic phenomenon that is the synthesis of the complex interaction of: the nature of the graduate, their job and the employer, within the context of the structure and culture of the sport industry at a specific moment in time’*. The theory is illustrated in the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry shown in Figure 10.2. (p251) The following section will assess the ‘practical adequacy’ of the theory and corresponding model. As discussed in Chapter 3 (p90), practical adequacy refers to the evaluation of the veracity theories and models through their practical success or failure (Johnson and Duberley 2003). Consequently, the study’s proposed model and theory will be compared with the existing models and theories of employability to evaluate their account of graduate employability in sport in relation to the findings of the both Phase One and Phase Two of the study. The section will conclude by establishing how the new model and theory advances understanding of graduate employability, particularly, within new graduate industries such as the sport industry.

The introduction to this study identifies the two different perspectives on employability: the first relates to the individual’s readiness for work, the second takes a more holistic approach (McQuaid and Lindsay 2005). The holistic approach identifies that a range of factors influence a person getting, performing in, moving or improving jobs and suggests that employability occurs over a period of time, as opposed to immediate employment (Yorke 2006). This study concurs with this holistic approach, in terms of the impact of a range of factors and the temporal dimension to employability. Those factors are identified in broad terms as; labour market demands, vacancy characteristics and recruitment factors (McQuaid and Lindsay 2005, Hillage and Pollard (1998). Harvey’s (2001) model of employability, introduced in Figure 1.1. (p9) and reiterated in Figure 10.1, does identify the role of the employer in employability and that employers “convert the ‘employability’ of the graduate into employment”, but this seems to suggest that if the graduate has developed the appropriate employability

attributes during HE then they can be used by the employer. Although these holistic theories of employability have been helpful in identifying the importance of the role of the employer and industry on employability, they do not suggest that the nature of the industry or employer may actually contribute to the employability of the graduate, consequently they place the responsibility for a graduate's employability entirely on the graduate and HE institution. This is epitomised in Hillage and Pollard's (1998) explanation of employability which focuses on what the graduate does, emphasised by my italics in the quote. It does identify the context, but this is in terms of the graduate matching to the requirements of that context in terms of skills, knowledge and attitude.

“For the individual employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes *they possess, the way they use* those assets and *present them to* employers, and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek to work” (Hillage and Pollard 1998:12).

Furthermore, in Harvey's (2001) model, responsibility for graduate employability is depicted as being established prior to the graduate gaining employment in the industry and enables them to meet employer's needs by successfully navigating the employer's recruitment procedures and functioning in their job. This model and Hillage and Pollard's explanation correspond to the skills approach to employability which concentrates on the appropriate skills/attributes that a graduate should have in order to be effective in the workplace.

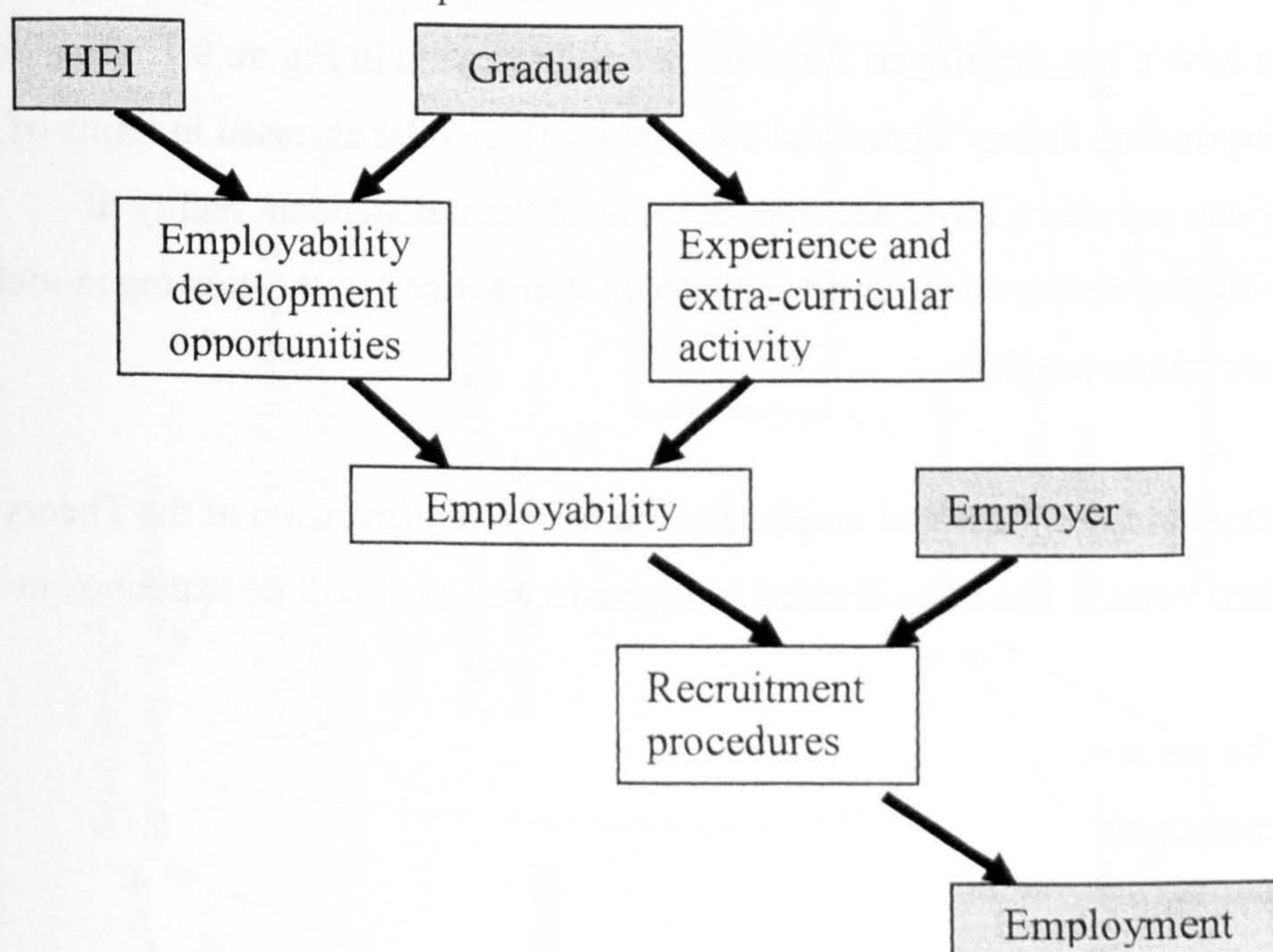


Figure 10.1: A model of employability-development and employment. (Harvey 2001)

The fundamental difference between these existing theories of employability and the proposed Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry (Figure 10.2) and corresponding theory, is the location of the responsibility for graduate employability. Existing theories and models have placed it within the graduate and in the context of their inter-relationship with HE; the proposed Interaction Model and Theory locate it external to the graduate, as a synthesis of the inter-relationship between the nature of the graduate, job and employer. This means that graduate employability is not just the sole responsibility of the graduate and HE, although it is acknowledged that the attributes that the graduate develops are a crucial factor in employability; graduate employability also depends on the structure and requirements of the job and the knowledge, expectations and management approach of the employer, which are in turn influenced by the structure and culture of the sport industry. To illustrate the point, an HE institution could develop graduates with all the appropriate attributes but these may stay dormant if the graduate obtains a job with an employer who does not activate those attributes. However, the level of activation required by the employer is in turn affected by the characteristics of the graduate themselves.

Figure 10.2 presents the finalised version of the Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry. A detailed explanation will be provided, including how it has developed from the previous version in Figure 9.1; the model and corresponding theory's practical adequacy will also be assessed in terms of, how they can provide a more accurate account of the independent reality of graduate employability in the sport industry in comparison to the existing models of graduate employability.

To help explain the Model and emphasise the temporal dimension of the Theory the finalised version has been divided into phases and each will be explained in turn:

1. The context
2. Interaction
3. Outcome
4. Subsequent cycle.

1. Context

2. Interaction

3. Outcome

4. Subsequent cycle

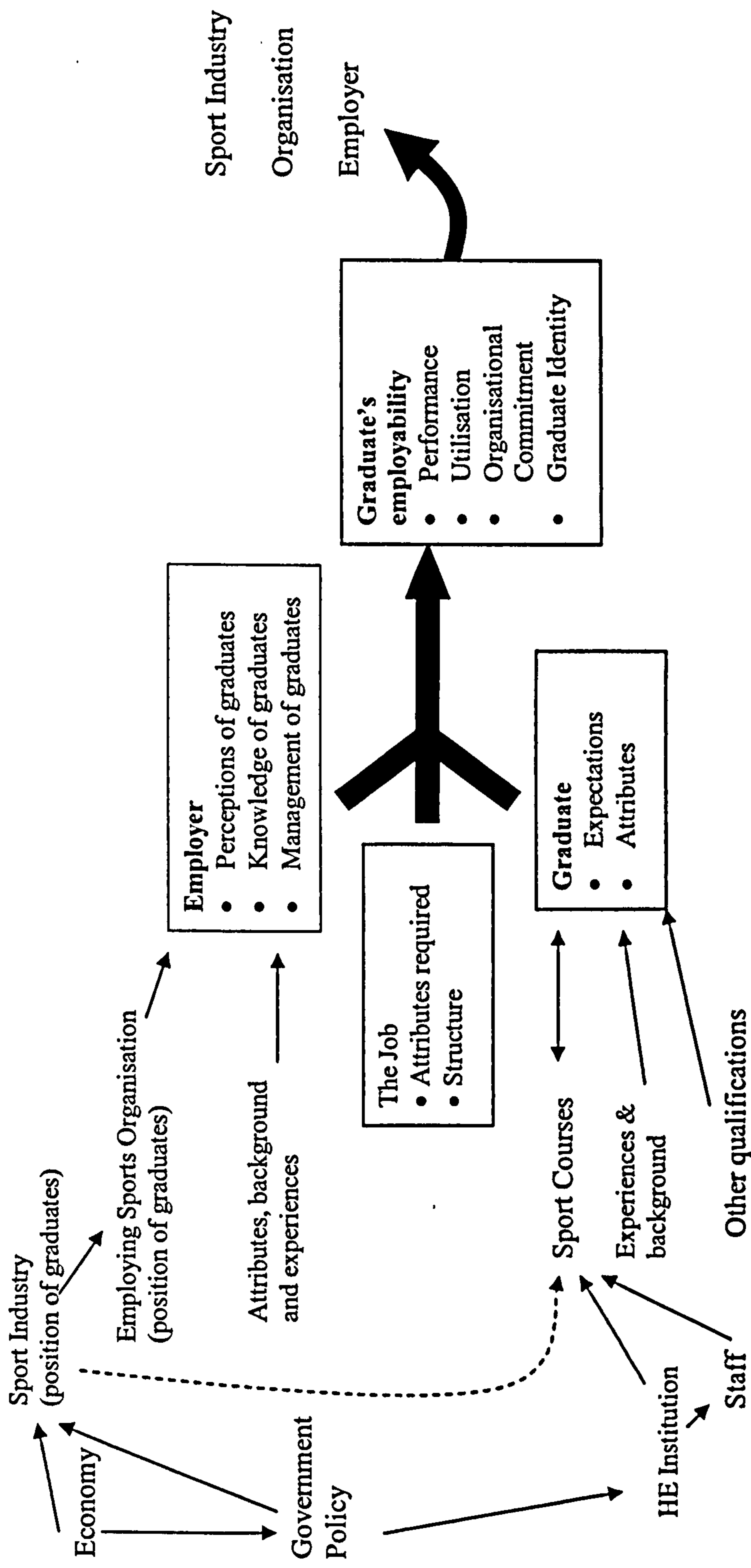


Figure 10.2: Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry

1. The Context

The context phase of the Model indicates that the pre-existing structures of the sport industry, created by previous human activity, influence the position of graduates within the industry and individual sport organisations. The analysis of the history and structure of the sport industry concludes that it has not been a traditional graduate employer, meaning that the position of graduates in the industry is unclear. This phase of the Model also shows that government policy impacts on the sport industry and HE. Chapter 2 establishes that the government instigated reports and policies have emphasised the need to up-skill the sport industry (Yates 1984, Leitch 2006) and also increase the number of graduates in the labour market. This has meant pressure on HE institutions to increase the number of students onto their courses, and sport has been a subject area where expansion in numbers has been particularly prolific due to the demand from students to study the subject. Government policy, over a number of years, has also emphasised that HE courses should relate more to the needs of industry; shown on the model with the inter-connecting arrow between the sport industry and HE. However, the focus groups in Phase One found that, the mediators on the influence of industry and government are the staff who develop and deliver the courses, and also the needs and aspirations of the graduates themselves. The understanding of this context is crucial in understanding employability in sport as the structure and culture of the sport industry provides a framework of influence on graduate employability. Other theories and models of employability have simply perceived the influence of the industry in terms of, identifying the employers' needs that need to be matched by the attributes developed by the graduate during their degree.

2. The Interaction

Phase Two of the model indicates that the context of the sport industry has an influence on the interaction between the structure of the job and employing organisation and the agents: the graduate and the manager. However, the Model also recognises that, within that context, the agents have human choice, which is also influenced by their own attributes, background and experiences. This phase of the model enables deeper analysis to uncover how this

interaction between job, employer and graduate, enables (or not) achievement of graduate employability. The Theory supports the notion, put forward in previous theories of employability, that graduates need to attain key attributes to enhance their employability and sport courses are critical in facilitating this. If these key attributes are not attained then, even if the graduate obtains an appropriate graduate job with a supportive graduate employer, they may not function appropriately and will not have achieved a high level of graduate employability. In fact if they do not have those attributes it is unlikely that they would obtain the job. However, the theory and model differ from the other theories as it views this phase of employability as an interaction rather than a matching of graduate attributes to employer needs. A critical finding of the case studies is that if the interaction between the job, employer and graduate does not activate the graduate attributes, then the graduate's potential level of employability is not achieved. As identified earlier in this section the context of the industry does create a framework of influence to the interaction, in that the initial jobs graduates obtain are unlikely to require graduate attributes and employers may not have an understanding of graduates' needs. However, these factors are mediated by the choices and decisions made by the employer and graduate.

3. The Outcome

This phase of the model emphasises that employability is dynamic and depends on the synthesis of the interaction of the nature of the employer, job and graduate within the context of the industry. The model indicates that graduate employability is complex and involves not only the graduate functioning in their job; the analysis of employability, using the theories of 'organisational commitment', the 'psychological contract and 'graduate identity', highlights the significance of the graduates' utilisation, organisational commitment and identity to the achievement of employability. This more complex view of graduate employability establishes the importance of understanding the needs of graduates as well as the needs of employers, and that employability can only be achieved when both are being addressed. The study shows that where existing studies have concentrate on employers' needs and expectations they fail to explain the dynamic nature of the initial graduate

career and the requirement for employers to also understand graduates' expectations and needs.

4. Subsequent Cycle

The model shows that the outcome of the interaction and level of achievement of graduate employability reinforces or changes current structures which go on to form the constraints or opportunities for future graduate employability. Where a high level of graduate employability is achieved this may influence the organisation's and employer's perception of graduates. If this happens over a number of organisations it will lead to more graduates being employed in the industry, which will impact on the structures of the industry in terms of the position of the graduate. If graduates do not achieve satisfactory levels of employability this may reinforce the existing structures of the industry in relation to the lack of position of graduates. The impact of graduates on the industry seems to have been a slow process in terms of actual numbers employed, the existing perception of graduates by employers and the current need for higher skills. If graduate employability policies continue to focus only on the graduate and HE then the impact will continue to be slow as employability will only be achieved where the job, employer and graduate *happen* to interact positively together.

10.3. Final Conclusion

The Interaction Model of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry and corresponding theory provide a more practically adequate explanation of graduate employability in the sport industry than previous models of graduate employability. They enable a deeper understanding of how the context of the sport industry is crucial in setting the framework for graduate employability. This is not just in terms of identifying employers' needs and matching the attributes developed in graduates, as depicted in other theories, but also how the industry will receive the graduate. The model and theory go beyond the matching approach used in previous models of employability to identify that graduate employability lies not within the graduate, but is a synthesis of the

interaction between the graduate, the employer and the job. This makes employability a dynamic concept that changes depending on the interaction; in contrast to the static concept proposed by other theories and models where graduates leave HE with a level of employability that either matches (or not) employer needs. For example the dynamic approach helps explain the graduates who are perceived as having appropriate attributes who then struggle to achieve graduate employability in the sport industry.

In terms of the implications of the new model and theory, they do reinforce the need to ensure graduates develop employability related attributes within their degree courses and also through their extra curricula activities; however, they also suggest that the strategies to address employability of graduates which focus only on HE and the graduate are fundamentally flawed. There is a need to recognise the reciprocal nature of graduate employability and strategies must involve the sport industry to identify how more support can be provided for the transition of graduates into employment both at industry and organisational level.

10.4. Further Research

This final section will examine the implications of the findings and conclusions of the study for further research. This research can be separated into three parts: refinement and improvement of the theory and model; wider application of the theory and model and further longitudinal research with the participants of this study.

10.4.1. Refinement and Improvement

The study used case studies of four sport graduates in order to refine and assess the practical adequacy of the Interaction Model and Theory of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry. The graduates were all perceived to be performing well and the differences in the nature of the job and their employer enabled key factors that impact on employability to be teased out. The case studies also included graduates from other institutions, some of whom did not appear to be performing particularly well; unfortunately as the research was not focused on those graduates it was difficult to draw clear conclusions about their employability. In order to further assess the theory and model's practical adequacy cases could be examined of situations where there are different employability outcomes. For example the same 360 degree procedure could be used with graduates who may not be performing well within sport organisations, or graduates who gained employment within a sport organisation and then left, and their former organisation.

10.3.1. Further Application of the Theory and Model

The Interaction Model and Theory of Graduate Employability in the Sport Industry have focused on one particular employment sector and there is scope to apply a generic version of the model to other industries. The model could be used to examine other non-traditional graduate industries, which have also experienced a growth in the numbers of graduates, to identify if they face similar issues in terms of the position of graduates and how that influences graduate employability. In contrast, it would also be of interest to use the model to examine industries that do have a tradition of employing graduates to identify if this impacts differently on employability. The findings of this

research would also be extremely useful in testing the practical adequacy of the model in accounting for employability within a different context.

10.3.3. Longitudinal Employability Research

Phase One of the study surveyed 836 students and undergraduates. The final section of the questionnaire asked the participants for addresses where they could be contacted after they had graduated and if they were willing to take part in follow up research. Three hundred participants agreed to be contacted. A follow up survey and interviews could be undertaken to identify the career path and experiences of those graduates, some of whom will have been in the workplace for fourteen years. This would enable comparison with Purcell and Elias's (2004) study to ascertain if underemployment of sport graduates continues or whether, in time, the graduates do obtain an appropriate level job that utilises their attributes. Also, it would also be of value to revisit the graduates within the case studies to examine their career path and explore how their initial levels of employability impacted on their subsequent career.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

References

- Ackroyd, S. and Fleetwood, S. (2001) in Ackroyd, S. (ed) *Realist Perspective in Management and Organisations*, London: Routledge.
- Ainley, P. (1990) *Vocational Education and Training*, Cassell: London.
- Aldridge, A. and Levine, K. (2001) *Surveying the social world: principles and practice in survey research*, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Alpin, C., Shackleton, J.R. and Walsh, S. (1998) Over and Under education in the UK Graduate Labour Market, *Studies in Higher education*, March, Vol. 23, Issue 1, pp17-34.
- Archer, M. (1995) *Realist social theory: the morphogenetic approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. (2000) *Being human: the problem of agency*, Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Armstrong, M. (2006) *Handbook of Human Resource Management, Practice* (10th edition) London: Kogan Page
- Arnold, J. and Mackenzie Davey, K. (1999) Graduate's Work Experiences as Predictors of Organisational Commitment, Intention to Leave, and Turnover: Which Experiences Really Matter? *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 48 (2), pp211-238.
- Arnold, J., Silvester, J., Patterson, F. (2005) *Work Psychology: Understanding human behaviour in the workplace* (4th edition) London: FT Prentice Hall
- Ashton D., Green F., Hoskins M. (1989) The Training System of British Capitalism: Changes and Prospects, in Green F. (ed) *The Restructuring of the British Economy*. Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
- Ashworth, J. (1998) A Waste of Resources? Social rates of return to Higher Education in the 1990s, *Education Economics*, Apr98, Vol. 6, Issue 1.
- Assister, A. (1995) Transferable Skills: A Response to the Sceptics. In Assister, A (ed) *Transferable Skills in HE*, Kogan Page, London.
- Association of Graduate Recruiters (2005) *The AGR Graduate Recruitment Survey*, January, Warwick: AGR.
- Audit Commission (1989) *Sport for Whom?* London: HMSO.
- Audit Commission (1990) *Preparing for Compulsory Competitive Tendering*, London: HMSO.
- Audit Commission (2004) *Sport and Recreation: Learning from audit, inspection and research*, London: Audit Commission.

- Bacon, W. (1990) Gatekeepers of public leisure: A case study of executive managers in the UK, *Leisure Studies*, Vol 9, No. 1, pp71-87.
- Bacon, W. (1995) *Accreditation: Key Issues and Questions for ILAM*, Paper presented at ILAM National Education and Training Conference, Stoke, Nov. 9th and 10th.
- Bacon, W. (1996) Accredit to the Industry, *The Leisure Manager*, February/March.
- Bacon and Buswell (2000) *ILAM Guide to Leisure Courses*, ILAM: Lower Basildon.
- Barbour, R.S. and Kitzinger, J. The challenge and promises of focus groups, in Barbour, R.S. and Kitzinger, J. (eds) (1999) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Barnett, R. (1994) *The Limits of Competence*, OU Press: Buckingham
- BASES (2004) *A Guide to Careers in Sport and Exercise Science*. London: Human Kinetics
- Baty, P. (1997) Hands on era reaches lift off, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, October 31st.
- Belfield, A., Bullock, A. N., Chevalier, A., Fielding, W. S. Siebert and Thomas, H.R. (1997) *Mapping the Careers of Highly Qualified Workers* Bristol: HEFC
- Bhasker, R. (1979) *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Harvester Press: Brighton.
- Bhasker, R. (1986) *A Realist Theory of Science*, Verso, London
- Bhasker, R. (1989) *Reclaiming reality*, London: Verso.
- Blaikie, N. (1993) *Approaches to Social Enquiry*, Polity: Cambridge
- Bligh, D., Thomas, H. and McNay, I. (1999) *Understanding Higher Education: An Introduction for Parents, Staff, Employers and Students*, Exeter: Intellect.
- Bramham, P. and Henry, I. (1985) Political Ideology and Leisure Policy in the United Kingdom, *Leisure Studies*, 4 (1).
- Brennan, J. and Shah, T. (1993) *Higher Education Policy: An International Perspective*, Pergaman Oxford: Press: Oxford.
- Brennan, J., Kogan, M. and Teichler, U. (1996) *HE and Work*, Milton Keynes: OU Press.

- Brennan, J. and Fredericks, M. and Shah, T (1997) *Improving the quality of education: the impact of quality assessment upon institutions* Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council of England
- Brindley, C. and Mander, P. (1996) Leisure by Degree, *Leisure Manager*, June/July.
- Bryman, A. (2004) *Social research methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Burke, V. (1995) Learning by Design ~ The Case for Leisure Studies, in Leslie, D. (ed) *Tourism and Leisure: Towards the Millenium; Vol 2, Tourism and Leisure - Perspectives on Provision*, Brighton: LSA.
- Buswell, J. (2001) The Match Between Jobs and Courses in Sport, *Link, Learning and Teaching Support Network for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, Issue 1, June.
- Cambridge Econometrics (2003) *The Value of the Sports Economy in England*, London: Sport England.
- Chapman, T. (2006) *Accepted Students and Applicants 1996 – 2005 in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism: Based on Data Provided by UCAS*, Oxford: Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network
- Clarke, A. (1992) Citizens and consumers, in J. Sugden and C. Knox (eds) *Leisure in the 1990s: Rolling Back the Welfare State*, Leisure Studies Association Publication No 46, Eastbourne, pp109-120.
- Coakley, J. (2003) *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies, (8th edition)* New York: McGraw Hill.
- Coalter, F. (1990) The politics of professionalism: Consumers or citizens? *Leisure Studies*, 9, 107-119.
- Coalter, F. (1998) Leisure Studies, leisure policy and social citizenship: the failure of welfare or the limits of welfare, *Leisure Studies*, 17 pp21 - 36
- Coalter, F. (2000). Public and commercial leisure provision: Active citizens and passive consumers? *Leisure Studies*, 19, 163-181.
- Coalter, F., Long, J. and Duffield, B. (1986) *Rationale for public sector investment in leisure*, London: Sports Council/E.S.R.C.
- Coalter, F. and Potter, J. (1990) *A study of 1985 graduates from Sport, Recreation and Leisure Studies*, London: Sports Council.
- Cobham Report (1973) *Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sport and Leisure*, London: HMSO.

Collins, M. (1995) *Sports Development Locally and Regionally*, Reading: ILAM.

Collins, M. (ed) (2003) Special Issue: Sports Employment in Europe, *Managing Leisure*, 8, pp51-103

Confederation of British Industry (1999) Making Employability work: An agenda for action, *Human Resources Brief*, July.

Cohen, L. and El-Sawab, A. (2006) Careers, in Redman, T and Wilkinson, A. (eds) *Contemporary Human Resource Management: Text and cases* (2nd Edition), London: FT Prentice Hall.

Conway, N. and Briner, R. (2005) *Understanding Psychological Contracts at Work: A critical evaluation of theory and research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, I. (1998) Best Value, *Leisure Manager*, June

Council for Industry and Higher Education (1997) *Class and Higher Education: The participation of young people from lower social groups*, London: CIHE

Council for National Academic Awards (1991) *Review of Sport, Recreation and Leisure Degree Courses*, London: Council for National Academic Awards,

Council of Europe (1992) *European Sports Charter*, Strasbourg.

Cranmer, S. (2006) Enhancing graduate employability: best intentions and mixed outcomes, *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp169-184.

Davies, L. (2004) Valuing the voluntary sector in sport: rethinking economic analysis, *Leisure Studies*, Vol 23, pp347-364.

De Sensi J, Kelly D, Dale Blanton M.D. and Beitel P. (1990) Sport Management Curricular Evaluation and Assessment: A multi-faceted Approach. *Journal of Sports Management*, 1990, 4, 31-58.

De Vaus, D.A. (1996) *Surveys in Social Research*, UCL Press: London

Dearing, R. (1997) *The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education*, HMSO

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2000) *A Sporting Future for All*, London: Cabinet Office.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2002) *Game plan: a strategy for delivering government's sport and physical activity objectives*. London: HMSO.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2002a) *The Coaching task Force: Final Report*, London: HMSO.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2003) *The Government's plan for sport review 2003*. London: HMSO.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Department for Education and Skills (2002) *A sporting future for all: The Role of Further and Higher Education In Delivering The Government's Plan For Sport*, London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (1966) *A Plan for Polytechnics and other Colleges*, White Paper Cmd 3006, London: HMSO

Department of Education and Science (1987) *Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge*, White Paper Cm. 114, London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (2003) *The Future of HE*, London: HMSO

Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Participation Rates in Higher Education: academic years 1999/2000 - 2005/2006*, London: National Statistics Office.

Department of National Heritage (1995) *Sport: Raising the Game*, London: HMSO.

Department of the Environment (1975) *Sport and Recreation*, London: HMSO.

Einnis-Reynolds, G. (2001) Are Leisure Degrees Out of Touch with Employability, *Link, Learning and Teaching Support Network for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, Issue 1, June.

Elias, P. and Purcell, K. (2003) *Measuring change in the graduate labour market*, IER Warwick/ESRU UWE.

Elias, P. and Purcell, K (2004) *SOC(HE): a classification of occupations for studying the graduate labour market* Graduate Careers Seven Years On Research Paper No.6 IER Warwick/ESRU UWE.

Fairclough, N. (2005) Discourse Analysis in Organisation Studies: The Case for Critical realism, *Organisation Studies*, 26 (6), pp915-939.

Fleming, I. (1996) The professionalisation of leisure management in Western Europe, *Managing Leisure*, 1, pp248-251

Fleetwood, S. (2005) Ontology in Organisation and Management Studies: A Critical Realist Perspective, *Organization*, Vol. 12(2), pp197-222.

- Garavan, T. and Morley, M. (1997) The socialisation of high-potential graduates into the organisation: Initial expectations, experiences and outcomes, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol 12, No. 2, pp118-137.
- Garrett, R., Holmes, K. and Nichols, G. (2001) *Report of the conference on the vocational relevance of university leisure management courses*. Wednesday 2nd May, University of Sheffield.
- Gibbon, M. (1995) The University as an Instrument for the Development of Science and Basic Research, The Implications of Mode 2 Science, in Dill, D. and Sporn, B. (Eds) *Emerging Patterns of Social Demand and University Reform: Through a Glass Darkly*, Pergomon Press: London.
- Gibbs, P. (2000) Employability and Higher Education, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol 52, No 4 pp559 – 571
- Gillham, W. (2000) *Case study research methods*, London: Continuum
- Graham, C and McKenzie, A. (1995) Graduates in the Workplace, *Education and Training*, No 1, vol 37, pp4 -11
- Gratton, C. and Taylor, P. (2000) *Economics of Sport and Recreation*, London: Spon.
- Green, M. (2004) Changing policy priorities for sport in England: the emergence of elite sport development as a key policy concern, *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 23 Issue 4, p365-385.
- Guest, D. (1998) Is the psychological contract worth taking seriously? *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 19, pp649-664.
- Guest, D. (2004) Is the psychological contract worth taking seriously? *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 19, pp649-664.
- Gunn, L.A. (1986) *Management Training for Leisure and Recreation in Scotland*, Working Party Report, Scottish Education Department, Edinburgh.
- Gunn, P. (2001) *Report of the conference on the vocational relevance of university leisure management courses*, Wednesday 2nd May, University of Sheffield.
- Harre, R. and Van Lagnehove, L. (1999) *Positioning Theory*, London: Sage.
- Harvey, L. (2001) Defining and measuring employability. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7, (2), 97 – 109.
- Harvey, L. and Green, D. (1994) *Employer Satisfaction*, QHE, Birmingham.
- Harvey, L., Moon, S, and Geall, V. (1997) *Graduates Work: Organisational Change and Student Attributes*, Centre for Research into Quality, University of Central England, Birmingham.

Harvey, L., Locke, W. and Morey, A. (2002) *Enhancing employability, recognising diversity: making links between higher education and the world of work*, London and Manchester, Universities UK.

Henry, I. (1989) The Development of Sports Policy in Post-War Britain, *Coaching Focus* Autumn No 12.

Henry, I. (2001) *The Politics of Leisure Policy*, London: Macmillan

Henry, I. and Spink, J. (1990) Planning for Leisure: The Commercial and Public Sectors in Henry, I. (ed) *Management and Planning in the Leisure Industries*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Henry, I and Bramham, P. (1993) Leisure and policy in Britain, in Bramham, P., Henry, I., Mommas, H. and Van der Poel, H. (Eds), *Leisure Policies in Europe*, Wallingford: CAB International.

Higher Education Quality Council (1996) *Graduate Standards Programme: Draft Report and Recommendations*, London: HEQC.

Her Majesty's Treasury (1997) *UK Employment Action Plan*, London: HMSO

Higher Education Statistics Agency (1996) *Data Report and Reference Volume: First Destinations of Students Leaving Higher Education Institutes 1994/95*, Cheltenham: HESA

Hillage, J. and Pollard, E. (1998) *Employability: developing a framework for policy analysis*, Research Brief 85, Department for Education and Employment.

Hogan, J. (2002), More money for more rope: the Taylor Report and the funding debate, *Perspectives*, 6(1)

Hoggett, P. and Bishop, J. (1985) *The Social Organisation of Leisure*, London: Sports Council and ESRC.

Holmes, L., 1999, 'Competence and capability: from confidence trick to the construction of the graduate identity', in O'reilly, D., Cunningham, L. & Lester, S. (Eds.) *Developing the Capable Practitioner: Professional Capability Through Higher Education*, pp. 83- 98, London: Kogan Page

Holmes, L. (2000) *Reframing the Skills Agenda in HE: graduate identity and the double warrant*, paper presented at the Future Business of HE Conference, Oxford, March.

Holmes L. (2001) Reconsidering Graduate Employability: the 'graduate identity' approach, *Quality in HE*, Vol 7, No. 2 pp111 – 119.

Holmes, L. (2005) *Becoming a graduate, becoming a manager: the warranting of emergent identity Critique and Inclusivity: Opening the Agenda*,

the 4th International Critical Management Studies Conference held at
Robinson and Selwyn Colleges, University of Cambridge, 4-6 July 2005

Horne, J., Whannel, G. and Tomlinson, A. (2001) *Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sports*. London: Spon.

Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network (HLST) (2005) Accepted Students and Applications 2003-2004 in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism, *Link* 12, pp8-9.

Houlihan, B. (1991) *The Government and Politics of Sport*, London: Routledge.

Houlihan, B. and White, J. (2002) *The politics of Sport Development*, London: Routledge.

Howell and McNamee (2003) Local justice and public sector leisure policy, *Leisure Studies*, 22, 17-35

Institute for Employment Studies (1997) *Graduate Salaries and Vacancies*, Association of Graduate Recruiters, Cambridge: IES.

Irvine, D. and Taylor, P. (2001) Commercial Leisure - an International Perspective
in Wolsey, C. and Abrams, G. (eds) *Understanding the Leisure and Sport Industry*, Harlow: Longman.

Jameson, S. and Holden, R. (2000) Graduateness – who cares? Graduate identity in small hospitality firms, *Education and Training*, Vol 42, No 4/5, pp264-271.

Jenkinson, N (2001) *Report of the conference on the vocational relevance of university leisure management courses*. Wednesday 2nd May, University of Sheffield.

Johnson, P. (2001) *Report of the conference on the vocational relevance of university leisure management courses*. Wednesday 2nd May, University of Sheffield

Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2004) *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology*, London: Sage

Johnston, B (2003) The Shape of Research in the Field of Higher Education and Graduate Employment: some issues, *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 28, No. 4.

Keat, R. and Urry, J. (1982) *Social Theory as Science*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Keep, E. and Mayhew, K. (1999) *The Leisure Sector, Skills Task Force, Research Paper 6*, September.
- Kelley-Patterson, D. and George, C. (2001) Mapping the contract: an exploration of the comparative expectations of graduate employees and human resource managers within the hospitality, leisure and tourism industries in the United Kingdom, *Journal of Services Research*: Vol. 2, No. 1, pp55-73.
- Kerfoot R. (1998) Gulf Course, *The Leisure Manager*, November 1998, pp.35-37
- King, N. (2004) Template Analysis in Symmon, G. and Cassell, C. (eds) *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organisational Research*, London: Sage.
- Kitts C. (1995) Managing Change and Changing Managers in Leslie D. (ed) *Tourism and Leisure: Towards the Millenium; Vol 2, Tourism and Leisure - Perspectives on Provision*. Eastbourne: LSA.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994) The Methodology of Focus Groups: the importance of interaction between participants, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 16 (1) pp103-21.
- Krueger, R. and Casey, M. (2000) *Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research*, London: Sage Publications.
- Lambert Review (2003) *Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration: Final Report* London: HM Treasury.
- Leisure Industries Research Centre (1995) *Leisure Forecast 1998 – 2002* Sheffield: Leisure Industries Research Centre.
- Leisure Industries Research Centre (2003) *Sports Volunteering in England 2002: A report for Sport England*, Sheffield: LIRC
- Leitch, S (2006) *Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills*, London: HM Treasury.
- Levy, M. and MacKenzie, K. (1996) *The Class of '92*. University of Glasgow: Scottish Graduates Careers Partnership.
- Lissenburgh, S. and Bryson, A. (1996) *The Returns to Graduation: How the labour market experience of recent graduates compares with that of non-graduates*, Department for Education and Employment Research Series RS15, London: HMSO.
- Lowe, M. (1995) Box Clever-Packaging Leisure Management Expertise in Leslie D. (ed) *Tourism and Leisure: Towards the Millenium; Vol 2, Tourism and Leisure - Perspectives on Provision*. Eastbourne: LSA.
- Macpherson, I., Brooker, R. and Ainsworth, P. (2000) Case study in the contemporary world of research: using notions of purpose, place, process and

product to develop some principles for practice, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp49-61.

MacVicar, A. and Ogden, S. (2001) Flexible working in sport and recreation: current practices in Scottish public, not for profit and private leisure facilities, *Managing Leisure*, 6, pp125-140.

Manicas, P. (1998) A Realist Social Science in Archer, M., Bhasker, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norrie, A. (eds) *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, London: Routledge.

Mannerings, H. (1995) Does Education Need New Leisure Courses? in Fleming, S., Talbot, M. and Tomlinson A. (ed) *Policy and Politics in Sport, PE and Leisure*, Brighton: LSA Publication No. 55.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (1999) *Designing qualitative research*, London: Sage.

Mason, G. (1995) *The New Graduate Supply-Shock – Recruitment and Utilisation of Graduates in British Industry*, Report Series Number 9, National Institute of Economic and Social research.

Mason, G. (1999) *Graduate Utilisation and the Quality of Higher Education in the UK*, Discussion Paper No. 158, London: National Institute of Economic and Social.

Mason, G. (2000) *The Mix of Graduate and Intermediate-Level Skills in Britain: What Should the Balance Be?* National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Mason, G., Williams, G. Cranmer, S. and Guile, D. (2003), *How Much Does Higher Education Enhance the Employability of Graduates?* Discussion Paper No. 161, National Institute of Economic and Social Research

May, T. (2001) *Social research: issues, methods and process* (3rd ed), Buckingham: Open University Press.

May and Botterill (1984) An American Perspective, in Mckinney, G.R. Ed. (1984) *Yates and After: The Management of Recreation Management and Training*, Leisure Studies Association, Nov.1984

McDermott, E., Mangan, J. and O'Connor, M. (2006) Graduate development programmes and satisfaction levels, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol 30, No 6, pp456-471.

McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) The concept of employability, *Urban Studies*, Volume 42, Issue 2, February, pp 197-219.

Meyer, J.P, Irving, P.G, and Allen, N.J. (1998) Examination of combined effects of work values and early work experience on organisational commitment, *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, Vol. 19 pp.29-52.

- Miller, J. and Glassner, B. (2004) The “inside” and “outside”: finding realities in interviews in Silverman, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Mingers, J. (2006) A Critique of Statistical Modelling from a Critical Realist Perspective, *Operational Research Society*, Vol. 57, No. 2, pp202-219.
- Mintel (2004) *Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools*, May.
- Mintel (2007) *Sports Participation - UK*, January
- Morgan, D (1995) An Investigation into Employment Trends in the Leisure Industry, eds S. Fleming, M. Talbot and A. Tomlinson *Policy and Politics in Sport, PE and Leisure* Eastbourne: LSA.
- Morgan, D.L. (1988) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Sage: London
- Morley, L. (2001) Producing New Workers: Quality, equality and employability in HE, *Quality in HE*, Vol. 7, No 2 pp132 – 138
- Mowday, R., Porter, L. and Steers, R. (1982) *Employment-organisation linkages: the psychology of commitment, absenteeism and turnover*, New York: Academic Press
- Murphy, W. (1980) *Recreation Managers: Current Practitioners in Local Government and Industry*, The Centre for Leisure Studies, University of Salford.
- Mutch, A. (1999) Critical Realism, managers and information, *British Journal of Management*, 10, 4, pp324-34
- Nabi, G. (2003) Graduate employment and underemployment: opportunity for skill use and career experiences amongst recent business graduates, *Education and Training*, 45 (7). pp. 371-382.
- Nichols, G., Gratton, C, Shibli, S. and Taylor, P. (1998) Local Authority support to volunteers in sports clubs, *Managing Leisure* 3, pp119-127.
- North West Regional Advisory Council for FE (1976) *Educational Needs of Recreation Management*, NWRACFE
- Nove, A., Snape, D. and Chetwynd, M. (1997) *Advancing by Degrees: A Study of Graduate Recruitment and Skills Utilisation*, London: DFEE
- Oppenheim, A.N. (2004) *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and attitude Measurement*, London: Continuum.
- Outhwaite, W. (1998) Realism and Social Science in Archer, M., Bhasker, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norrie, A. (eds) *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, London: Routledge.

- Parker (1984) *The Core of Leisure Studies* in McKinney G. (ed) *Yates and After: The Management of Recreation Management Training*, Eastbourne: LSA.
- Pike, G., Connor, H and Jagger, N. (1992) *The IMS Graduate Review Report 232 Review of Post-graduate Education*, IMS, Bristol.
- Pitchford, A. (2001) *The Relevance of Leisure Management Degrees: Some Unanswered Questions*, *Link, Learning and Teaching Support Network for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, Issue 1, June
- Porter, S. (2001) *Critical Realist Ethnography: The Case of Racism and Professionalism in a Medical Setting*, in Fleetwood, S. and Ackroyd, S. (eds) *Realist Perspective in Management and Organisations*, London: Routledge.
- Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic Experiment 1965 – 1992*, Milton Keynes: OU Press.
- Pratt, J. and Burgess, T. (1974) *Polytechnics: A Report*, London: Pitman.
- Pringle (1995) *Education for Leisure Management* in Leslie, D. (ed) *Tourism and Leisure: Perspectives on Provision*, Eastbourne: LSA No. 52.
- Public Sector Privatisation Research Unit (1992) *CCT, the story so far*, *Leisure Management* 12 (5), 26-7.
- Purcell, K. and Elias, P. (2004) *Seven Years On: Graduate Careers in a Changing Labour Market*, Report for the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU), June.
- Purcell, K., Elias, P. and Wilton, N. (2004) *Higher education, skills and employment: careers and jobs in the graduate labour market*. Bristol: Employment Studies Research Unit
- Purcell, K. and Pitcher, J. (1996) *Great Expectations: the new diversity of graduate skills and aspirations*, Higher Education Careers Service, University of Warwick.
- Purcell, K. and Pitcher, J. (1998) *Diverse Expectations and Access to Opportunities: is there a graduate labour market?* *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol.52, No.2, pp.179-203.
- Quality Assurance Agency (2000) *Benchmarking Academic Standards: Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, QAA: Gloucester.
- Ravenscroft, N. (1992) *The future role of the public sector in the provision of leisure facilities in Britain* in Sugden, J. (ed) *Leisure in the 1990s: Rolling Back the Welfare State*, Eastbourne: LSA no 46.

- Ravenscroft, N. (1998) The changing regulation of public leisure provision, *Leisure Studies*, vol. 17, pp138-154.
- Ravenscroft, N. and Tolley, J. (1993) The Response of local authorities in Britain to compulsory competitive tendering, *World Leisure and Recreation*, 35 (4),40-44.
- Redman, T. and Wilkinson (2006) *Contemporary human resource management: text and cases*, Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall
- Reed, M. (2005) Reflections on the “realist turn” in organisation and management studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42, 8, 1621-44.
- Reid, G. (2003) Charitable Trusts: Municipal leisure’s ‘third way’? *Managing Leisure* 8, pp171-183.
- Richards, H. (1997) Off the blocks and into the class, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, December 12th.
- Robbins Report (1963) *HE Report of the Committee Under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins*, CM1254, HMSO, London.
- Robson, R. (1993) *Real World Research*, Blackwell: Oxford
- Roberts, K. (2004) *The Leisure Industries*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rousseau, D. (2001) Schema, promise and mutuality: The building blocks of the psychological contract, *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 74, pp511-541.
- Rousseau, D. and McClean Parks, J. (1993) The contracts of Individuals and Organisations, *Research in Organisational Behaviour*, 15, 1-43.
- Rowe, N. (ed) (2004) *Driving up participation: The challenge for sport*. London: Sport England
- Ryan, A. (2004) Higher Education and New Labour, *Dissent*, Spring.
- Sayer, A. (1992) *Method in social science: a realistic approach*, London: Routledge
- Sayer, A. (2002) *Realism and Social Science* London: Sage
- Schuller, T. (1991) *The Future of Higher Education*, Milton Keynes: OU Press
- Scott, P. (1995) *The Meanings of Mass HE*, Milton Keynes: OU Press
- Scott, P. (2000) Higher Education research in the light of dialogue between policy-makers and practitioners, in Teichler, U. and Sadlak, J. (eds) *Higher*

Education research: its relationship to policy and practice, Amsterdam: Pergamon Press.

Scott, P. (2003) 1992 – 2002: Where next? *Perspectives*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp71-77.

Scott, D. (2005) Critical Realism and Empirical Research Methods in Education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 39, No. 4.

Scott, P. and Watson, D. (1994), "Managing the curriculum; roles and responsibilities", in Bocock, J. and Watson, D. (Eds), *Managing the University Curriculum*, Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press,.

Simmons, R. (2004) A trend to trust? The rise of new leisure trusts in the UK, *Managing Leisure* 9, pp159-177.

Skills Active (2005) *Skills Needs Assessment for the Health and Fitness Sector*, London: Skills Active.

Skills Active (2006) *Analysis of Gaps and Weaknesses*. London: Skills Active

Skills Active/Spillsbury Research (2004) *Key findings from the National Employer Skills Survey, 2003*, London: Skills Active

Sloane, P.J. Battu, H., and Seaman, P. T.(1999), Overeducation, undereducation and the British labour market, *Applied Economics*, Vol 31, 1437-1453.

Smith, M.J. (1998) *Social Science in Question*, London: Sage.

Smithson, J. (2000) Using and analysing focus groups: limitations and possibilities, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp103 -119.

Soskice, (1993) Social Skills from Mass Higher Education: Rethinking the Company-based Initial Training Paradigm, *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, vol. 9 no. 9

Sport and Recreation Lead Body (1989) *Mapping Sport and Recreation*, 7th June 1989

Sports Council (1969) *Professional Training for Leisure Management*, London: Sports Council.

Sports Council (1972) *Provision for Sport – Indoor Swimming Pools; Indoor Sports Centres; Golf Courses*, HMSO: London.

Sports Council (1983) *Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years*, London: Sports Council

- Sports Council (1996) *Training and Education Courses*, Sports Council, London.
- Sport England (2004) *Sports Employment Research In The West Midlands*, Birmingham: Sport England West Midlands
- Sport England (2004a) *Professional Bodies Discuss Joint Venture*, Press Release, October 14th.
- Sport Industry Research Centre (2007) *The Economic Importance of Sport in England and in the nine English regions: 2003*, London: Sport England.
- Sports Coach UK (2005) *United Kingdom Coaching Certificate: Guidance for Developing a Delivery Plan*, Leeds: The National Coaching Foundation.
- SPRITO (1996) Unpublished research London: SPRITO
- SPRITO (2000) *A Labour Market Information & Skills Foresight Report for the NTO for Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations*, London: SPRITO
- SPRITO (2001) *Workforce Planning: Mapping of Sport and Recreation*, SPRITO: London
- Stake, R. (1995) *The art of case study research*, London: Sage
- Stake, R. (2003) Case Studies in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Stark, S. and Torrance, H. (2004) Case Study, in Lewin, C. (ed) *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.
- Stevens, D. and Green, P. (2002) Explaining continuity and change in the transition from Compulsory Competitive Tendering to Best Value for sport and recreation management, *Managing Leisure*, 7, p124-138.
- Stevens, R. (2004) *University to Uni: the Politics of Higher Education since 1944*, London: Politicus.
- Stewart, D.W and Shandasani, P.N. (1990) *Focus Groups*, London: Sage.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, London: Sage
- Sturges, J. and Guest, D. (2001) Don't leave me this way; a qualitative study of influences on the organisational commitment and turnover intentions of graduates early in their career, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 29, 4, pp447-462.
- Sturges, J., Guest, D. and Mackenzie Davey, K. (2000) Who's in charge? Graduate attitudes to and experiences of career management and their relationship with organisational commitment, *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 9 (3), pp351-370.

- Sturges, J., Guest, D., Conway, N. and Mackenzie Davey, K. (2002) A longitudinal study of the relationship between career management and organisational commitment among graduates in the first ten years of work, *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, (23), pp731-748
- Swarbrooke, J (1995) National Systems of Tourism and Leisure Education: UK in Richards, G. (ed) *European Tourism and Leisure Education: trends and Prospects*, ATLAS: Tilburg
- Tasker, M. and Packham, D. (1994) Changing Cultures? Government Intervention in HE 1987 – 93, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, No 2, June pp150 – 162
- Thomas (1992) ILAM 1992 Conference Report, *Leisure Under New Management*, Harrogate International Conference Centre 29th June-1st July 1992, ILAM Services Ltd.
- Torrington, D. Hall, L. and Taylor, S. (2005) *Human resource management*, (6th Edition) Harlow : Financial Times Prentice Hall
- Todd, S. (1995) Graduate Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment in Fleming, S., Talbot, M. and Tomlinson A. (ed) *Policy and Politics in Sport, PE and Leisure*, LSA Publication No. 55.
- Torkildsen G. (1997) Who Needs Leisure Managers?, in Collins M.F. & Cooper I.S. (eds) *Leisure Management: Issues and Applications*, Wallingford; Oxon, CAB International
- Training Agency (1990) *Key Features of the Enterprise in Education Proposals* (1990 - 1991), Training Agency, Sheffield.
- Tribe (2003) Editorial: The Future of Higher Education in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, Vol. 2, No.1. pp1-4.
- Universities UK (2004) *Participating and performing: sport and higher education in the UK*. London: Universities UK.
- Veal, A. and Saperstein, H. (1977) *Recreation Managers in Britain: A Survey*, working paper 56, CURS, Birmingham.
- Veal, A J, (1979) *Sport and Recreation in England and Wales: Adult Participation Patterns 1977*, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Birmingham University
- Watson, D. and B. Rachel (1999) Why did they do it? The Conservatives and mass higher education, *Journal of Education Policy* 14:3, 243-56.
- Wheeler and Richards (1993) *Leisure Manager*, October.

- Whitston, K. (1998) Key Skills and Curriculum Reform, *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 23, Issue, 3, pp307-320.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998) Focus Group Methodology: A Review, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1 (3) pp181-203.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004) Focus Group Research, in Silverman, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage
- Wolfenden Report (1990) *Sport in the Community*, London: HMSO
- Wolsey, C. (1995) *From Theory to Practice and Back Again: An Examination of the Role and Development of Recreation Within Higher Education* in Fleming, S., Talbot, M. and Tomlinson A. (ed) *Policy and Politics in Sport, P.E. and Leisure*, Eastbourne: LSA Publication No. 55.
- Wolsey, C. (1996) The Changing Nature of Employment for the Leisure Graduate, paper presented at Accelerating Leisure? *Leisure, Time and Space in a Transitory Society*, LSA Conference, Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands, 12 - 14th September.
- Wright, P. (1987) Rethinking the Aims of Higher Education, in Eggins, H. (ed) *Restructuring Higher Education: Proceedings of the Annual Conference*, The Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.
- Yates, A. (1978) *Recreation Management Training Committee: Interim Report* London: HMSO.
- Yates, A. (1984) *Recreation Management Training Committee: Final Report*. London: HMSO.
- Yates, S (2004) *Doing social science research*, London: SAGE
- Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case study research: design and methods*, London: Sage
- Yule, J. (1997) Engendered Ideologies and Leisure Policy in the UK, Part 2: Professional Ideologies, *Leisure Studies*, 16, (3).
- Yorke, M. (2006) *Employability in higher education: what it is – what it is not*. York: The Higher Education Academy.