

Mountains should be climbed with as little effort as possible and without desire. The reality of your own nature should determine the speed. If you become restless, speed up. If you become winded, slow down. You climb the mountain in an equilibrium between restlessness and exhaustion. Then, when you're no longer thinking ahead, each footstep isn't just a means to an end but a unique event in itself. *This* leaf has jagged edges. *This* rock looks loose. From *this* place the snow is less visible, even though closer. These are things you should notice anyway. To live only for some future goal is shallow. It's the sides of the mountain which sustain life, not the top. Here's where things grow.

But of course, without the top you can't have any sides. It's the top that *defines* the sides. So on we go...we have a long way...no hurry...just one step after the next...

(Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance*, 1974,  
pp. 198-99)

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### Statement 1

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## Abstract

The aim of this programme of research was to build on existing knowledge of impression management and self-presentation in the sport context. Theoretical advancement was made with the integration of two well-established social psychological frameworks of impression management phenomena; Leary's (1995) topography of dispositional self-presentational motives, and Leary and Kowalski's (1990) Two-Component Model of Impression Management – including situational impression motivation and impression construction – are complimentary, and their combination reflects a trait x state approach to understanding interpersonal behaviour in sport contexts. Athletes are assessed by team-mates, coaches, selectors, and the audience at a frequent rate. If they are aware of this, it could be viewed as an opportunity for personal and social development, or a threat to their existent identities. In both cases, the athlete must ensure that their performance is not affected by such thoughts, otherwise they risk conveying a negative impression regardless of their self-presentational motives (Leary, 1992). The present thesis incorporates three novel studies that address a multitude of first and second generation research questions (cf. Zanna & Fazio, 1982). Key findings include, but are not limited to: athletes have a strong dispositional motive to attain intra- and interpersonal goals via their self-presentations; if their impression efficacy does not match their impression motivation they tend to appraise this as a challenge, not a threat, contrary to theoretical expectations; in a laboratory setting, heightened impression motivation is associated with improved performance rather than increased distractibility and performance decrements (as was anticipated); impression management is important in developing desired social identities within university sport subcultures; and impression management is implicated in positive and negative group dynamics. In achieving its aims, the present thesis developed a new measurement scale, devised a successful experimental manipulation of impression motivation, and employed stimulated recall interview methodology; all novel or challenging approaches in sport psychology.

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## Chapter One

### 1.1. *Introduction to Impression Management*

It is possible to manage the impression, or public image, of many things. For example: restaurateurs seek to create a tempting impression of their service, which will entice diners to eat there; clothing manufacturers market their attire in a way that they hope will result in maximised representation of their brand on people's bodies; and sports agents attempt to control the image of their clients, so that the athlete's popularity is maintained and their career progresses untarnished. It is evident, however, that the zeitgeist, "Image is Everything," does not only apply to inanimate commodities, to political candidates, global celebrities, or the fashion *cognoscente*: at a more personal level it captures an unavoidable element of everyday human existence that can be both financially and non-financially driven. In each of the above examples there are clear goals or objectives that prompt *impression management* – the process of attempting to control how people perceive, evaluate, and react to information about an entity or person (Schneider, 1981) – and individuals are often motivated to manage *their own* public impressions through what has been termed 'self-presentation.'

Self-presentation itself is: '... a goal-directed act designed, at least in part, to generate particular images of self, and thereby influence how audiences perceive and treat the actor' (Schlenker & Leary, 1982, p. 643). In this respect, the 'self' represents a *corporation* of sorts. People select aspects of their self to display to others on the basis that it will appeal to the particular audience. In essence, we market our own very unique *product*, in the hope of influencing others to dispense our desired rewards, financial or otherwise (Schlenker, 2006). For example, consider these evaluations of two National Basketball Association (NBA) players by professional talent scouts; Boston Celtic's Ray Allen:

Allen is a professional, above and beyond. From a very young age, he embraced a discipline and work ethic and approach to the game that 90 percent of players don't understand...Allen had a very tough NBA Finals last season, including a poor-shooting Game 7 [3-of-14] when he might have made the difference by making a couple of big shots. But I don't think that will affect him negatively at all. Allen is one of the best shooters to ever play in the league, and there's a reason he's a great shooter: When a guy is as serious and driven as Allen, and has the body of work behind him that he has, then what does he have to be insecure about? If any doubts crept in his mind, he probably worked that much harder to put them out of mind (NBA Enemy Lines, 2010, Boston Celtics section, para. 11-12).

Contrast this with the description of the Denver Nuggets' J.R. Smith:

There are times I'm completely amazed by Smith and times I simply can't stand him...I don't know if you can win consistently with someone like him, because it doesn't look like it's about winning for him. He likes winning, of course, but it looks like it's more about showing up the guy guarding him and getting his points. He can shoot you into it, and he can shoot you out of it. You can't count on him...It's going to be interesting to see Smith in a year or two if he's with another team that is less accommodating to him. He'll probably try to sell himself on the promise that he won't be a distraction, that he'll say he's grown up and he's learned and he'll come off the bench and do whatever he has to do to help the team. (NBA Enemy Lines, 2010, Denver Nuggets section, para. 13-14).

Interestingly, the *impression* formed of these players by extremely influential individuals -- experienced talent evaluators employed by NBA teams -- was comprised largely in terms of their psychological 'makeup.' Hence, athletes must be aware that their 'product' is multifaceted (physical, technical, and mental skills; desirable psychological traits; team-referent qualities, etc.) and market it accordingly. An individual's impression management, via self-presentation, is a means to this end.

Impression management, often somewhat inaccurately used interchangeably with self-presentation, is a complex process comprised of many phases. In fact, the antecedent cognitions are manifest physically (actions, gestures, speech) as the resultant self-presentation (i.e., a goal-directed *act*). It is more accurate to retain the umbrella term impression management for reference to the process as a cognitive and behavioural whole. Impression management, through the employment of self-presentational behaviours, is predicated on underlying desired interpersonal goals. Research in this area suggests three categories of self-presentational motive: interpersonal influence (i.e., social and/or material outcomes), development of 'self' (i.e., esteem maintenance or enhancement, and/or identity construction), and emotion regulation (including personal and/or social functions; Leary, 1995). As one might anticipate from these brief descriptions, more than one motive may be active in a given situation, and fulfilment of one's primary objective may increase the chances of attaining a second or third. Of course, the converse is also true: unsuccessful attempts to reach one goal may stimulate negative consequences for another (e.g., being overlooked for promotion may cause a decrement in self-esteem). Hence, the motives should be viewed as interdependent and fluid.

When striving to attain self-presentational outcomes four key phases are indicative of progress through the impression management process; these are *impression monitoring* (the level to which one is aware of the need or opportunity to self-present), *impression motivation* (the driving force behind managing one's impressions; the extent to which an individual is motivated to engage in self-presentation for the attainment of desired outcomes), *impression efficacy* (the subjective probability of making the desired impression), and *impression construction* (factors that help the individual decide on the specifics of the image they attempt to portray; Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Therefore, impression management theory asserts that individuals have: underlying social motives; a perceptual-motivational system that alerts them to image-related opportunities within a situation;



subjective efficacy regarding their ability to maximise their chances of influencing a particular audience; and a pool of self-presentational strategies to draw on that are constrained by, and dependent on, personal and situational factors.

Research into the phenomenon of self-presentation dates back at least five decades, and spans diverse areas of psychology, including sport psychology; although the sport literature only goes back as far as the 1980s (e.g., Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984; Boutcher, Fleischer-Curtian, & Gines, 1988; Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986). Eminent sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) forwarded a compelling argument for the necessity of effective self-presentation in enabling smooth everyday social encounters. Goffman was primarily interested in the 'arts of impression management' – i.e. how the actor can make the context more favourable for themselves in creating desired identities – and the social significance of 'performing' in front of an audience. However, his thinking proved to be an impetus for a vast catalogue of empirical studies that show the wide-ranging importance of self-presentation to the individual's social and psychological well-being. For example, when striving to achieve, we are often 'at the mercy' of the impressions others have formed, whether accurate or not (Leary, 1995).

The 'high-strength other,' and thus the target of our self-presentation, could be a teacher, potential employer, friend, romantic partner, sporting coach or team selector. In each of the roles we may assume – pupil, employee, friend, lover, or sports team member – success *in* the role is almost always measured in terms of the impressions others form; if we are not seen as attentive, hard-working, friendly, interesting, or able to handle pressure respectively, we may not be granted access to the outcomes which we desire (Baumeister, 1982). Equally, if we are the high-strength other, and value our position as such, we must ensure that our self-presentation matches that which is expected of us in this position. Ultimately, if we are especially motivated to impression-manage, and do achieve success in

these roles, the *intra-* (e.g., regulation of our emotions) and *inter-*personal (e.g., recognition and respect for our performance in a role) goals that we meet will be all-the-more fulfilling (Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Conversely, with much time and emotional energy invested in a role, self-presentational failure, or subjective self-presentational underachievement, can prove psychologically, socially, and even financially damaging (Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker & Leary, 1982).

An example of the impression management process 'in action' is provided by the job applicant who is performing wonderfully at interview. Their self-presentational motive is to exert interpersonal influence in order to obtain a material outcome, the job. They are acutely aware that there is a real need to make a certain impression (intelligent, productive, capable of working in or leading a team, etc.), but the confidence they have in the application form, including employment history that secured them the interview, has heightened their impression efficacy. At this stage, in impression monitoring terms, they are *impression-aware* – they know they are the focal point of the interaction, but their attention is not completely dominated by impression-related thoughts. Suddenly, however, the interviewee reaches an important juncture in the interaction, when situational contingencies threaten to jeopardise the public image they have been successfully maintaining (e.g., they are 'thrown' by a question on an important issue); their impression monitoring shifts to a state of *impression focus*. This heightens their impression motivation because, accurately or not, they perceive a sudden reduction in the likelihood of attaining their self-presentational goal (a material outcome – employment). The individual in question is highly impression-efficacious, so they are 'proactive' in constructing an impression that will re-stabilise their delicate public-personal image balance. Ultimately, their self-presentation reflects this confidence – they are able to draw on their many experiences in employment to construct the optimum image – and has the desired effect. The preceding sequence – in particular the motivation

aspects – will be elaborated in detail in chapter two as it is the underpinning of the current thesis.

The importance of effective self-presentation is certainly implicated in the highly interpersonal and interpersonally-evaluative domain of competitive sport (Leary, 1992). Everything the athlete does will be scrutinised by those with an interest in their investment, be it the athlete's performance, dedication to practice, ability to facilitate the performance of others (in team sports), general conduct, and so on. Desired outcomes therefore – including squad places, playing opportunities, captaincy, teammate friendships, sponsorship, and even post-playing sport-related career prospects – may be largely dependent on important others having formed a positive impression of the athlete (Leary, 1992).

Exacerbating this, coaching staff, selection committees, refereeing bodies, sponsors, peers (including team-mates, opponents), and parents have considerable influence on – control over, even – an individual's experience of sport. These high strength others will all carry slightly different expectations of the athlete. Practice, competition, the bus journey to a match, and even the locker room or clubhouse all provide a forum for the athlete to satisfy the wants of his/her 'audience' (Goffman, 1959). Hence, there are numerous opportunities to fail in one's self-presentation; the athlete's sporting performance being just one. Anecdotal evidence abounds of, for example, athletes being demoted from starter to substitute, or being penalised with a severe suspension from competition for a seemingly minor infringement, largely because of the impression the influential other has formed of them (e.g., "France striker Nicolas Anelka has been sent home from the World Cup after verbally insulting coach Raymond Domenech during the Mexico game"; BBC Sport, 19 June 2010). Not only would such punishments limit the athlete's chances of attaining their desired interpersonal, intrapersonal, and sporting rewards, but they could simultaneously harm the individual's sense of self (Leary, 1992).

Indeed, the constant pressure to act in line with expectations – even those that are informal, vague, or imagined – and convey a positive image of oneself, adds an interpersonal dimension to sporting participation that transcends physical proficiency, and can be anxiety-inducing for the performer (Leary, 1992). From an impression management perspective, *social anxiety* is posited as a negative emotional response to the interaction between high impression motivation and low impression efficacy (Leary, 1983c, 1991, 1995; Schlenker & Leary, 1982); and can be chronic and/or acute. This combination is represented in Leary's (1995) formula for social anxiety:  $\text{social anxiety} = M \times (1-p)$ , where 'M' represents impression motivation and 'p' is the individual's impression efficacy judgement. From this formula it is evident that an individual will not be socially anxious if their efficacy at least matches their impression motivation, nor if they are very low in impression motivation (Leary, 1995). People are motivated to convey certain impressions when they believe that desired outcomes are dependent on doing so. Social anxiety is elicited when the individual perceives a reduced likelihood of making the necessary impression and/or they believe that the impression is unlikely to have the intended effect (Leary, 1983a, b, c; Leary & Atherton, 1986; Maddux, Norton, & Leary, 1988).

Social anxiety is somewhat analogous to competitive anxiety in sport because many of the sources of anxiety uncovered by sport psychology research are either directly self-presentational in nature or at least contain a self-presentational element (James & Collins, 1997). Examples of the former include anxiety-inducing social evaluation concerns and stressful interpersonal relationships (Bray, Martin, & Widmeyer, 2000; Brustad, 1988; Gould, Horn, & Spreemann, 1983; James & Collins, 1995, 1997; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Passer, 1983; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984); and examples of the latter include performing individually compared to the relative anonymity of team-sports and the possibility of incurring a negative public appraisal from one's coach (Gould & Weinberg, 1985; Kroll, 1979). James

and Collins (1997) concluded that many of their participants' competitive stressors were self-presentational because the athlete was attaching the importance of public image to their desired outcomes.

Numerous rewards are available to athletes, including captaincy, sponsorship, favourable contractual terms, and most fundamentally, being selected to compete. Further, a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence shows that they are aware of the importance of making favourable impressions. A BBC Sport interview with tennis player Andy Murray exemplifies this:

Andy Murray has admitted his on-court behaviour needs to improve after he was branded "miserable" by former British number one Tim Henman. Henman recently said Murray's behaviour needs to improve if he wants to win Wimbledon and it is a weakness the 21-year-old admits he is working on. "Sometimes I'm immature on court and that's not acceptable," said Murray. "It needs to get better. This year it's definitely been much better than the last four or five months of last year." He added: "I personally think that off the court I'm pretty happy and don't get too down about things." But on the court I could be more bubbly, if that's what everybody thinks. "I've watched matches of myself and sometimes I think the way I act on court is great, and at other times I don't like it" ("Murray looks to improve behaviour," 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008).

This type of anecdote is encountered frequently in sport journalism, and is supported by empirical research. For example, in first generation research on impression management in sport, male athletes reported that the most important impressions to convey were competence, aggression, honed mental attributes, and specific fitness factors; and for female athletes, 'competent' and 'determined' were particularly important images to convey to others (James & Collins, 1995). However, those in a position to influence the attainment of athletic rewards are unlikely to do so if, for example, the athlete is perceived as a selfish player, a malcontent, or unable to facilitate the performance of others. Therefore, if an athlete is motivated to have his/her

coach form a certain impression of him/her, but lacks corresponding impression efficacy, this negative discrepancy could manifest as cognitive anxiety in the form of self-doubt and worry as the athlete's self-presentational goals are apparently endangered (James & Collins, 1997).

The strong theoretical link between self-presentation and competitive anxiety has largely dominated the attention of sport (and exercise) psychology researchers to date (Bray *et al.*, 2000; Eklund, Dugdale, & Gordon, 1999; Hudson & Williams, 2001; McGowan, Prapavessis, & Wesch, 2008; Payne, 2004 *unpublished Bachelors dissertation*; Payne & Greenlees, 2007; Williams, Hudson, & Lawson, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998; Wong, Lox, & Clark, 1993). The overall message from these investigations is that 'self-presentation concerns' – an associated construct proposed in this research to represent worry emanating from a perceived threat to one's interpersonal-goal attainment (i.e., strong impression motivation and correspondingly weak impression efficacy) – correlates positively with both trait and state competition anxiety. This narrow focus on self-presentation concerns is interesting because Leary's (1992) treatise on self-presentation in sport and exercise – arguably the catalyst for impression management research in sport – mentioned various other potential directions for sport psychologists, including: "...the motivation to engage in physical activity, people's choices of physical activities and the contexts in which they engage in these activities, [and] the quality of athletic performance" (p. 340). However, at that time anxiety research was enjoying a prolonged surge (e.g., Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996; Jones, 1995; Jones & Hardy, 1990; Krane, Joyce, & Rafeld, 1994; Krane, Williams, & Feltz, 1992; Martens, Vealey, & Burton, 1990), and it was hoped that the impression management theoretical framework would offer additional explanatory power for some of the questions being tackled.

It could be argued that this focus on self-presentation concerns has been to the detriment of growth in understanding of impression management in sport. Although self-presentation concerns are related to impression motivation and

impression efficacy, they are conceptually distinct. For example, knowing that athletes are concerned, threatened or worried about facets of their public image does not tell us their reasons for wanting to create these impressions, how strong this motivation is, their efficacy to present the particular impression, and the athlete's affective response. The team sport context fulfils many of the preconditions of impression motivation, thus providing frequent opportunities for self-presentation: constant competition for desired rewards, through the risk of being substituted or dropped, for example; dependency on a high-strength audience for these desired rewards; high likelihood of future interaction with this audience; and publicity of performance, whether to those present or those who will hear about it second hand. These ideas however remain merely suppositions drawn from social psychology because research in sport has not yet addressed these elements of impression management. The area is still in its infancy hence, fundamental questions remain unanswered, and it is the aim of this thesis to begin to address such limitations. However, before outlining the ways in which the programme of research investigates impression management in sport, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical model on which the research is based (cf. Baumeister & Leary, 1997).

### 1.2. *Conceptual Starting Points: Leary's (1995) topography of self-presentational motives, and Leary and Kowalski's (1990) Two-Component Model of Impression Management*

Leary's (1995) review specified three categories of self-presentational motive, and these were described previously (1. interpersonal influence, i.e. social and/or material outcomes; 2. development of 'self,' i.e. esteem maintenance or enhancement, and/or identity construction; 3. emotion regulation, including personal and/or social functions). This topography of dispositional motives for self-presentation was combined with Leary and

Kowalski's (1990) model of the situational influences on impression management, and greatly influenced the direction of this thesis.

Leary and Kowalski (1990) first identified impression motivation and impression construction as two discrete processes involved in impression management, before addressing the primary aim of their review, which was to: "...reduce the myriad of variables that affect impression management to the smallest possible set of theoretically meaningful factors" (p. 35; Figure 1.1). The model's three impression motivation and five impression construction variables are the result of this reduction. Due to the amount of literature assimilated by Leary and Kowalski (1990) it is considered an authoritative text that is extensively used to understand impression management.

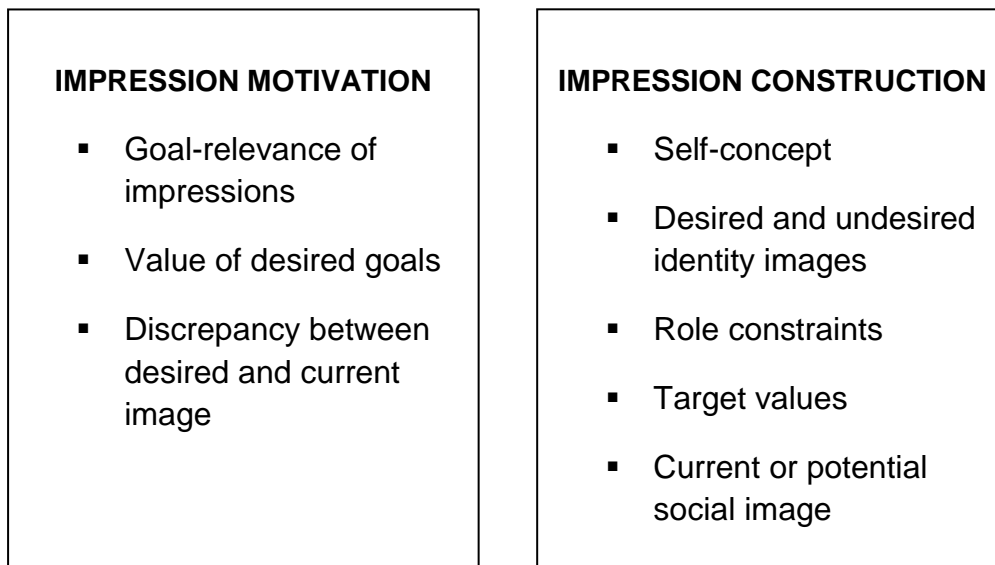


Figure 1.1. *Leary and Kowalski's (1990) Two-Component Model of Impression Management.*

From the literature, Leary and Kowalski (1990) determined that one's strength of motivation to impression-manage – when a self-presentational motive is active – is a function of the interaction between the *goal-relevance of impressions*, *value of desired goals*, and the *discrepancy between desired*



*and current image*. When an individual is impression-motivated, their constructed impression is influenced by two dispositional (*self-concept, desired and undesired identity images*) and three situational (*role constraints, target's values, current or potential social image*) factors. Leary and Kowalski's model – and to a lesser extent, Leary's (1995) topography – have also been cited as a primary influence in most of the key articles related to impression management in sport and exercise contexts, despite many of these not explicitly investigating their components – self-presentational motives, impression motivation and impression construction. This literature has rather focused on the related, but conceptually distinct, construct of self-presentation concerns (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2).

A further branch of literature touches on impression motivation (or, often more accurately, self-presentational motives) and impression construction as *somehow* involved in other associated processes, rather than treating them as topics for investigation in their own right (Martin Ginis, Lindwall, & Prapavessis, 2007). For example, there exists excellent research into the role of impression management processes in: performance decrements in front of supportive audiences (Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984); group-dynamic phenomena, such as social loafing, stereotype cognitions, social facilitation, self-handicapping, attributions of responsibility (cf. Carron, Burke, & Prapavessis, 2004; Prapavessis, Grove, & Eklund, 2004); coaching practice (Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones, 2010; Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002); changes in athletic identity following team selection (Grove, Fish, & Eklund, 2004); female boxing (Halbert, 1997); social desirability in doping research (Petróczy & Nepusz, 2006); uncertainty in the working lives of professional footballers (Roderick, 2006); sport preference (Leary *et al.*, 1986; Sadalla, Linder, & Jenkins 1998); peer relationships in youth sport (Smith, Ullrich-French, Walker, & Hurley, 2006), and experiences of soccer players recently demoted to a substitute role (Woods & Thatcher, 2009). Hence, the combination of Leary's topography and Leary and Kowalski's model remain an ideal conceptual and structural

basis for research in sport psychology, yet their tenability has as yet gone untested.

The three self-presentational motives and two components of Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model (impression motivation and impression construction) are central in an expanded model of impression management constructed for the current thesis (Figure 1.2). As depicted by Figure 1.2, this comprehensive model also includes additional factors involved in the impression management complex (e.g., self-presentation concerns, impression monitoring, impression efficacy, self-presentation tactics, impression management and performance, affective responses to impression management cognitions; Figure 1.3 displays the location of each of these topics in the thesis). The model is underpinned by social psychology literature which forms the basis for the current programme of research. It is presented here, before the literature is reviewed, so that the full theoretical conceptualisation influencing the thesis is clear from the outset (cf. Baumeister & Leary, 1997). Hence, later chapters will provide expanded discussion of the model.

Further, this model represents the framework on which the sport psychology impression management literature is overlaid, allowing for a re-thinking of the model depending on the evidence that is available from sport contexts. This research evidence is evaluated in part according to Zanna and Fazio's (1982) distinction between three generations of research in social psychology. Briefly stated, first generation questions ask whether there is an effect or phenomenon, and if so, what consequences or effects follow on from it – termed "Is" questions. For example, do athletes report being impression-motivated, and if so, does it influence how they act towards their teammates; second generation questions investigate under what conditions the effect holds (the 'boundary conditions' of an effect; "When" questions). For example, what circumstances compel athletes to alter their self-presentational behaviour; and third generation, or "How" questions seek to

determine by which process(es) the phenomenon occurs (questions of mediation). For example, does the relationship between impression motivation and perceived self-presentational success depend on impression efficacy. Hence, if knowledge is to be advanced past the first generation (i.e., descriptive and exploratory; e.g., James & Collins, 1995), further theoretical development is required. Appraising the impression management literature in sport using the generational approach helped uncover areas of the framework most in need of research attention. In this way, research questions and hypotheses were derived, and the model is re-presented in Chapter Six with reference to the research findings contained in this thesis.

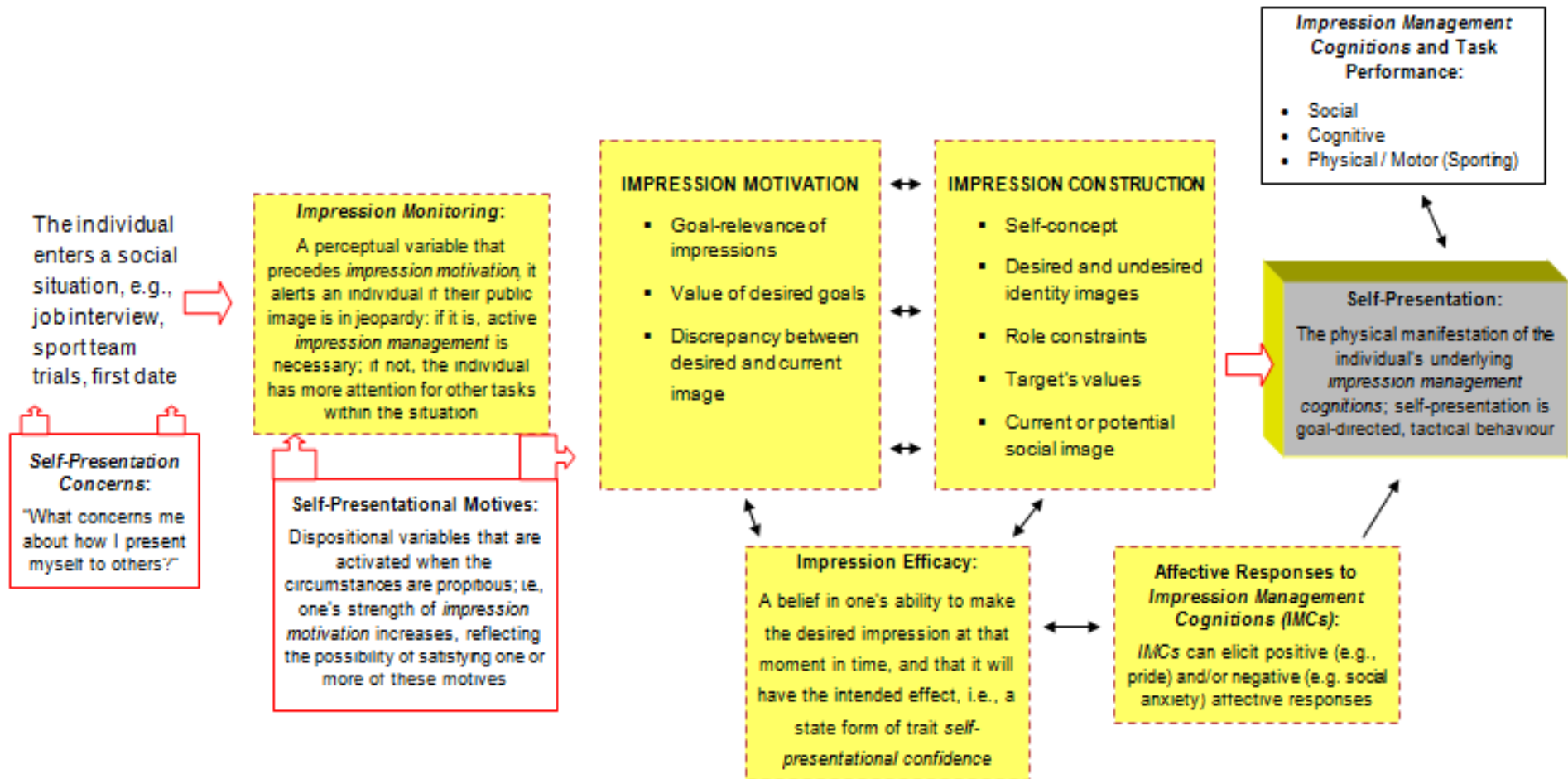


Figure 1.2. An expanded model of impression management

(Note. Boxes with a yellow background represent the state-like constructs, although there are caveats even with this attempted distinction – e.g., impression construction has trait influences, and affective responses to IMCs can be enduring)

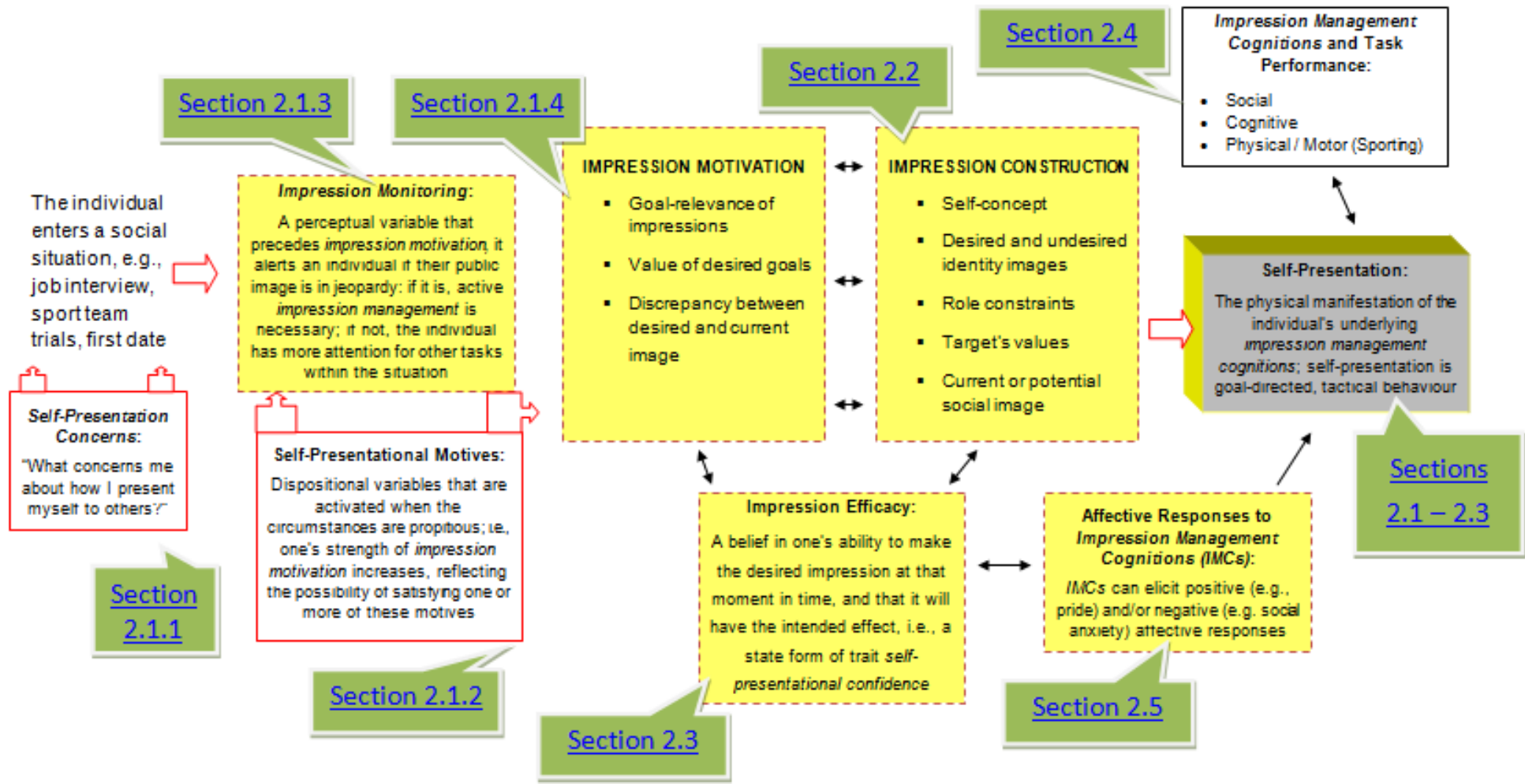


Figure 1.3. Location of each impression management topic in the thesis

### *1.3. Aims of the Thesis and Outline of Studies*

The overarching aim of the present thesis was to build on existing knowledge of impression management and self-presentation in the sport context. To identify pertinent research questions, a model of impression management was formulated: an integration of, and extension to, Leary's (1995) topography and Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model (Figure 1.2). This model is referred to throughout the literature review, in terms of the state of the literature in sport psychology compared to social psychology. Hence, the model influenced the chosen studies which filled certain gaps in knowledge as illustrated during the literature review. Specifically, the thesis has provided information pertaining to: the strength of dispositional impression motivation and impression efficacy of team-sport athletes, and some of the different affective responses these constructs elicit; the categories under which self-presentation motives in sport fall; the relationship of demographic variables to impression management variables; the relationship between socially desirable responding and impression management constructs; how well impression motivation can be elicited in a laboratory setting, and whether fluctuations in impression efficacy and impression affect are observed due to experimental demands; the impact of impression management cognitions on cognitive functioning; and the ways in which athletes' talk about their impression management attempts and that of others, including personal and team-level preconditions and consequences. What follows is a brief description of why and how the programme of research achieved this. Ethical clearance for the entire programme of research was granted by an institutional committee.

#### *Study One*

Theory development, and the advancement of knowledge past first generation questions, is the primary aim of the current programme of research, towards which: "The availability of valid and reliable measures of

self-presentation constructs is crucial” (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007, p. 147). As Martin Ginis *et al.* also highlight, there is currently no known scale that assesses impression motivation variables in sport contexts. Hence, the first step (study one: Chapter 3) was to develop a psychometrically sound measure of impression motivation. The new scale, entitled the Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire-Team (IMSQ-T), is for use with team-sport athletes only – a decision elucidated in upcoming chapters. Measurement of this key construct enables sport psychologists to identify team-based sportspersons, as well as sporting sub-populations, who are especially impression-motivated (first generation research questions).

In developing the IMSQ-T a variety of construct validity checks were used to reduce an initial pool of items. Next, at a team training session, participants completed the IMSQ-T, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Short Form C; MCSDS-C; Reynolds, 1982), and provided demographic information. Two independent samples of team-sport athletes were employed: data from the first sample were subjected to exploratory analyses, which uncovered the factor structure of the newly-developed scale; confirmatory factor analytic procedures, with data from the second sample, provided a modified version of the scale that retained theoretical integrity and psychometric parsimony. This process resulted in a 22-item, 5-factor model, the IMSQ-T. The IMSQ-T is forwarded as a valid measure of the respondent’s dispositional strength of motivation to use self-presentation in striving for five interpersonal objectives: development of self, avoidance of impression-damaging reactions, avoidance of negative sporting outcomes, seeking esteem-enhancing reactions, and development of a social identity (i.e., the five factors of the IMSQ-T).

For each item the IMSQ-T has a second response scale measuring impression efficacy which, alongside impression construction, is inextricably implicated in self-presentational behaviour prompted by impression motivation (Leary, 1995; Leary & Atherton, 1986; Maddux *et al.*, 1988). The

third response scale of the IMSQ-T asks respondents to indicate how their impression motivation-impression efficacy coupling makes them feel. Therefore, as with impression motivation, the IMSQ-T can distinguish those athletes who seem to lack impression efficacy (or not), or consistently experience a negative (or positive) affective response to impression management cognitions.

The IMSQ-T also allows for determination of the strength of association between impression motivation, impression efficacy, and theoretical correlates of the two (e.g., self-monitoring, public-self consciousness) – interesting first generation questions for future research to investigate. Questions of mediation and moderation could also be answered with such data (second and third generation questions). This line of research would help build a nomological network that evidences the position of impression management constructs in relation to theoretically convergent (public self-consciousness, self-monitoring) and discriminant (narcissism, social anxiety) constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). It is also possible to hypothesise a relationship between impression management constructs and the athlete's goal orientation, strength of athletic identity, and introversion/extraversion (Grove *et al.*, 2004; Thatcher & Hagger, 2008); research in this direction would strengthen our theoretical knowledge of impression motivation, impression efficacy, and affective responses to impression management constructs.

### *Study Two*

In interpersonal situations, thoughts related to one's impression, such as those that influence impression motivation and that are involved in impression construction, may distract the individual from attending to their primary task (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Indeed, it is unlikely that creating a certain impression would be the person's primary objective rather, they believe that portraying that image would *help* them achieve their



interpersonal goal(s). Alternatively, they may wish to create a desired impression alongside performing the task well. However, if impression-related thoughts impair cognitive functioning by diverting attention away from the task to task-irrelevant stimuli, or cause anxiety with accompanying cognitive disruption (Smith, Smoll. & Schutz, 1990), then the individual may be less likely to succeed in the primary task, self-presentation, or the desired interpersonal outcomes. For example, at a sports team trial the ultimate objective, presumably, is to secure a position on the squad. To do so the athlete may want to create an impression that packages sporting competence with aggression, honed mental attributes, and specific fitness factors (cf. James & Collins, 1995). Such motives and impression construction factors, especially those leading to in-game decisions regarding *how* exactly to display competence and aggressiveness, for example, may diminish the athlete's ability to process task-relevant cues. Hence, study two focused on the practical effects of impression motivation and its relationship with information processing capacity.

Study two adopted an experimental approach to answer the question: "Does being highly impression-motivated impair an athlete's ability to focus on task-relevant cues?" Participants were purposively sampled from the study one database according to their IMSQ-T factor scores, to select those individuals whose strongest and least strong self-presentation motives were sufficiently distinct. On agreeing to participate, athletes were manipulated into a state of 'impression focus' at the test location, with instructions in the second and third visit based on their two most distinct IMSQ-T factors (counterbalanced; first visit was a baseline condition). The manipulation was designed, first to have them consider the self-presentational opportunities contained within the test scenario and, second to elicit contrasting strengths of impression motivation according to the two different sets of instructions. Hence, task performance was presented as having varying degrees of self-presentational implication. Various markers of sport-relevant cognitive functioning (e.g., reaction time, selective attention in the visual area) were assessed to

determine whether impression-related thought depletes a limited cognitive resource, thus impairing functional task performance.

Study two provided information about the potential for impression management to disrupt or facilitate performance, and as such, adds to the model of impression management in sport. If optimal, or indeed sub-standard performance also results in self-presentational goal fulfilment (or non-attainment), it is possible that the athlete will experience altered perceptions of self (Tice, 1992; these types of supposition were examined in study three also). The data addresses first (e.g., can performance be affected by impression-related thoughts?) and second (e.g., at what strength of impression motivation does this effect hold?) generation questions. In the design of and sample recruitment for study two, both trait and state influences were considered – an approach extended in study three. Further, the study's method can inform laboratory-based research on impression management, and the findings generate hypotheses to continue refinement of the impression management model in sport.

### *Study Three*

Having tackled measurement issues with study one, practical and theoretical issues in study two, attention turned to impression management in the 'real world' of competitive sport in study three. Behaviour is: "a function of a continuous interaction process between an individual and the situations that he or she encounters" (Endler & Magnusson, 1976, p. 968). Therefore, to comprehend social behaviour, including self-presentation, research must account for person factors (e.g., dispositional self-presentation motives; state impression management cognitions including, but not limited to, impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression construction) and situational specifics (e.g., transient influences that impact state impression management cognitions; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; nuances of the subculture; group dynamics such as leadership and climate within the particular squad).

Hence, study three employed a qualitative approach to explore what impression management 'looks like' when it occurs in its natural environment, through trait, state, *and* 'trait by state' lenses. By concurrently examining trait and state variables and their interaction, study three sheds light on second- ("When?") and third- ("How?") generation questions (Zanna & Fazio, 1982).

Grounded in the *constructivist-interpretivist* tradition, study three recognises that capturing the lived experiences of social actors constitutes a major route by which to understand psychological phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). The *meaning* research participants attach to objects and events are often consolidated – or 'socially constructed' and/or 'locally situated' – through their shared stories of these experiences (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). Hence, the importance of a person's perceptions in shaping 'reality,' and the collaborative nature of research, between participant and researcher, in drawing out these unique viewpoints (Bruner, 1990). Specifically, in study three a stimulated recall method of interviewing was used: participants were video-taped during a competitive performance, and subsequently invited to discuss person and situation factors using the video record to aid memory recall of pertinent information (cf. Bloom, 1953; von Cranach & Harré, 1982).

The narrative accounts elicited during these semi-structured interviews were analysed in two concurrent ways: (i) in terms of their structure and content, and (ii) for their connection with theory for interpretation purposes (Murray, 2003; see Chapter 5, Section 5.3). Narrative analytic techniques were chosen to facilitate transforming the raw data *back* into meaning, and because: "...human existence consists of a realm of meaning, and humans ascribe their experiences with meanings. Indeed, we literally make sense, strive to make experience meaningful, and generate our behaviour from, and inform it by, this meaningfulness" (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b, p. 280). Clearly, the narrative approach has much to offer those impression management researchers who ask questions best explored with qualitative data.

As alluded to frequently throughout the introduction to this thesis, impression management – and impression motivation in particular – has not received a great deal of research attention in sport psychology. Despite review papers that have appeared periodically and have identified future research directions (Leary, 1992; Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007; Prapavessis *et al.*, 2004), the narrow focus of the extant literature has remained. Thus, a purpose of study three was to give equal importance to the *trait, state, and trait by state* approach – and continuing on from the first two studies, generate hypotheses for future research to test. It reflects the embryonic state of the research area that the thesis is concluded with yet more suggestions for questions that need to be answered.

#### 1.4. Conclusion

Impression management is intuitively relevant in sport. As Sal Garcia, manager of Ultimate Fighting Championship legend Tito Ortiz asserts: “I hammered it home to Tito...Having a strong image is more important than winning or losing” (Wright, 2009, p. 249). However, there is a paucity of academic research in this area. The sport context is inherently social, but this does not automatically support a direct and non-critical application of the social psychology model of impression management to sport. It does, however, justify research which seeks to evaluate the plausibility of Leary’s (1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990) framework in this context. This thesis synthesises the extant literature, advances the knowledge base through original research, and provides sport psychologists with a comprehensive and contemporary framework of impression management in sport out of which research hypotheses and questions are borne.

## Chapter Two

### 2.1. *The Self-Presentational Motive*

This was the side of [Bob] Nyquist – earnest, clean-cut, antismoking, antidrinking, antidrugging – that his manager of four years, Steve Astephen, called, with a big, pleased smile, “American Pie.” In addition to his X Games medals, Nyquist had a slew of sponsors and corporate tie-ins, from phone companies to candy bars, that added up to a six-figure income; Adidas was about to introduce an upgraded version of his signature shoe, which would retail for \$80 and include the extra padding he demanded. “He’s very corporate friendly,” Astephen said...Other riders cultivated images as hard-living, scuzzy wild boys on two wheels. Nyquist knew them all, even liked many of them, but that image was not for him; he was and remained a dedicated professional BMX rider (Browne, 2004, p. 43).

It is hard to imagine an individual who *never* experiences the motivation to control how others perceive them; indeed, a person reporting this may even be trying to maintain an image of aloofness or nonchalance for reasons known only to themselves. Perhaps they lack efficacy to present themselves in any other way, or maybe their personality otherwise cuts short attempts to self-present differently (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989). In any case: “The types of impressions people prefer to create depend on what they are trying to achieve” (Schlenker & Leary, 1982, p. 645). However, for the majority of people the motivation to manage one’s impressions stems from a desire to maximise expected (interpersonal) rewards and minimise expected (interpersonal) punishments – the same motivational source as all behaviour (Schlenker, 1980); impression management is such a pervasive feature of relationships that to know more about the self-presentational motive is to gain considerable insight into the social behaviour of humans (Leary, 1995).

It is unfortunate that, in the extant literature, self-presentational motives and impression motivation are often inferred from the behaviours observed/recorded or measured in research, and not assessed directly

(Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Equally as often, these key variables are measured indirectly, using validated measures of associated constructs. This may be due to a lack of reliable measures of self-presentational motives and impression motivation or difficulty experimentally separating the different facets of impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Of course, without knowing a participant's motives we can only make theoretical assumptions. However, some research *has* explicitly linked motives to behaviours, thus allowing us to be fairly confident that certain behaviours are a reflection of self-presentational motives. For example, modesty, apologising, conformity, and excuse-making often emerge as a self-presentational strategy to avoid disapproval – a social influence motive with the potential to also aid the individual's development of self (Arkin, 1981).

This section discusses: self-presentation concerns; fundamental self-presentational motives; attentional processes that elicit impression motivation – impression monitoring; and situational factors that convince the individual as to the pertinence of self-presentational behaviour (i.e., they heighten impression motivation; cf. Leary, 1995). These processes – along with state impression construction and state impression efficacy – are inherent in attempted impression management, i.e., they precede self-presentation. While this brief description – and the thesis' table of contents – implies temporality, research has not yet empirically teased apart the sequence in terms of chronology; they are presented as such for ease and clarity. Thus, the current section of the thesis is concerned primarily with the motivational underpinnings of impression management, and literature which examines this directly is foregrounded.

Importantly, however, due to the conceptual fusion of certain behaviours with their underlying motive and the impression construction process, and in the interests of clarity, the behavioural manifestations of these self-presentational motives and impression construction are presented concurrently. Consequently, a description of a variety of self-presentational

behaviours will be provided wherever they are most appropriate and have the most impact, so we can see how people act to satisfy their interpersonal self-presentational motives. A brief introduction to self-presentational behaviours follows.

### *Self-presentational behaviours*

The essential portrait of [baseball legend, Joe] DiMaggio which had emerged over the years was of someone as attractive and graceful off the field as he was on it. DiMaggio had rather skillfully (sic) contributed to this image – he was extremely forceful and icy in his control of his own image, as attentive and purposeful in controlling it as he was in excelling on the field (Halberstam, 1999, p. xxi).

Self-presentation refers to: “the use of behavior (sic) to communicate some information about oneself to others” (Baumeister, 1982, p. 3): typically, information that people would not necessarily pick up or be aware of without our purposive attempts to convey the information. To do so: “...we sometimes must deliberately behave in ways that disclose information about our personalities, abilities, attitudes, interests, personal histories, moods, intentions, reactions, or whatever” (Leary, 1995, p. 161). The choice of *what* information to communicate initially depends on the interpersonal goal(s) the individual has, their self-concept and desired (and undesired) identity images, but is subsequently constrained by situational characteristics, including role constraints, the target’s perceived values, and current and desired social image.

Tactical self-presentational behaviours include self-description, verbal communication, nonverbal behaviour, public attributions, association with other people or groups, physical appearance, and conspicuous use of material possessions (DePaulo, 1992; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Hence, the individual must match personal and contextual variables with a behaviour that will maximise their chance of goal-fulfilment: a cognitively demanding

task (Tyler & Feldman, 2004). Adding to this burden, there is also a risk that the chosen self-presentation will lead to an unintended impression being formed, and any interpersonal consequences that ensue (Leary, 1995). The sections on self-presentational motives, antecedents of impression motivation, and impression motivation will thus be interspersed with examples of the types of tactics and strategies that individuals employ, from myriad options, to help them achieve their objectives. (*Note.* the impression construction section also contains examples of corresponding self-presentational tactics)

### 2.1.1. *Self-Presentation Concerns*

The concept 'self-presentation concerns' is frequently encountered in the literature, but it is operationalised inconsistently by social, organisational, health, sport, and exercise psychologists – both within and between disciplines – and no precise definition exists. Often, researchers employ a battery of tests (e.g., social anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, public self-consciousness, self-monitoring) and cluster them together as representative of this concept, *self-presentation concerns*. Further clouding the issue is the fact that the word 'concern' has multiple definitions, all of which could refer to self-presentation ("relate to, affect; interest oneself; anxiety or worry," etc.; [english.oxforddictionaries.com](http://english.oxforddictionaries.com)); authors do not always clearly state which they are drawing on.

For example, Nezelek and Leary (2002) use both *impression motivation* and *self-presentation concerns* to represent instances in which the individual perceives a need to control their public image (i.e., "interest oneself in self-presentation"); whereas Wilson and Eklund's (1998) measure of self-presentation concerns in sport – the *Self-Presentation in Sport Questionnaire* – assesses how frequently athletes *worry* about evaluative others forming a



negative impression of them (i.e., “worry about self-presentation”). Further, Wilson and Eklund (1998) base self-presentational worry on the endangerment of self-presentational goals – a threat-based appraisal associated with cognitive anxiety. Hence, the temporal position of self-presentation concerns in the model of impression management is also unclear.

The most amenable and theoretically sound way to conceptualise self-presentation concerns is to have it represent conditions with the *potential* to engender social anxiety; whether or not this potential is actualised depends on subsequent mental processes: in particular, the individual’s impression motivation-impression efficacy balance in a given social encounter (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Therefore, self-presentation concerns, for the purposes of the present thesis, are those things which an individual thinks about (i.e., they *concern* themselves with self-presentation), be it enduringly or quite infrequently, in relation to how they are perceived by others; they are neutral precursors to the activation of self-presentational motives and state impression motivation, which is when the self-presentation concerns become tangible – they are soon to be taken control of by the individual. Leary (1995) concurs: “People differ in the degree to which they are concerned about others’ impressions of them and, thus, the degree to which they impression-manage at all” (p. 13).

Following from this, examples of self-presentation concerns are: gender-appropriate or stereotyped bodily concerns and associated health behaviours (Martin, Leary, & O’Brien, 2001); body image concerns (Thøgersen-Ntoumani & Ntoumanis, 2007); concerns regarding specific aspects of one’s appearance (e.g., acne, varicose veins; Culos-Reed, Brawley, Martin, & Leary, 2002); the decision to engage in risky sexual behaviour (Scandell, Klinkenberg, Hawkes, & Spriggs, 2003); the compulsion to engage in disordered eating and/or excessive exercise (Crocker *et al.*, 2003); whether or not to express one’s true opinion (McFarland, Ross, & Conway, 1984);

participating in experiments, focus groups, or other scientific investigations (Egloff & Schmukle, 2004; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Wooten & Reed, 2004); and identity disclosure on the internet (Joinson, 2001; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Vasalou & Joinson, 2009).

With regards specific populations: older adults are especially concerned about age-related and disease-related changes in physical appearance, the image of self-reliance and competence (physical and psychological), and adhering to age-group specific self-presentational norms (Martin, Leary, & Rejeski, 2000); and athletes' self-presentation concerns have been uncovered by qualitative means and quantitative measures. With regards the former, James and Collins (1997) identified the following concerns: "pressure to attain external standards" (external pressure to succeed, pressure to attain other's standards, and meeting other's expectations), "significant-other-directed-concerns" (being afraid of what others think, letting others down, trying to please and impress others, trying to prove self to others, and embarrassing oneself in front of others), and "implied and overt criticism from others"(self-explanatory; pp. 23-25). James and Collins (1997), in keeping with the self-presentation and anxiety perspective in sport psychology, labelled these self-presentation concerns because the raw data strongly implied an increase in impression motivation and/or reduction in impression efficacy.

As regards quantitative self-presentation concerns data in sport psychology, athletes' impression-related worries tend to centre around how evaluative others perceive their talent, current form (disappointing others or not meeting others' performance expectations), ability to cope with pressure, fatigue/low energy levels, appearance and presentation of the physical self (Hudson & Williams, 2001; McGowan *et al.*, 2008; Payne & Greenlees, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). These studies have provided some norms for measures of these concerns (i.e., quantifying *how* self-

presentationally concerned athletes are), but have predominantly focussed on the ability of the construct to predict trait and state competition anxiety. Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3 presents the literature that has examined the link between self-presentation concerns and competition anxiety in sport.

Indeed, in all walks-of-life, there are many stimuli that can prompt self-presentational concerns. If individuals are concerned, from an impression management standpoint, about any of these interpersonal issues, they have a basis on which to enact goal-directed self-presentational behaviours. Leary, Tchividjian, and Kraxberger (1994) concur: "Because many of people's material, social, and personal outcomes in life depend in part on how others regard them, people are understandably concerned that others perceive them in desired ways" (p. 461).

### 2.1.2. *Primary Self-Presentational Motives*

It has been noted that Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is frequently attributed as the work that stimulated self-presentation research in social psychology. If this is true, origins of the self-presentational motive can also be traced to Goffman, when he declared that: "when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey" (1959, p. 4). According to a comprehensive literature review from one of the most prolific researchers in the area, self-presentation has been shown to have three primary functions for the individual (Leary, 1995). These functions (also serve as *motives*: in the right conditions they induce a person to act in a manner that will maximise their reward-cost ratio in social encounters (Schlenker, 1980). The inter- and intra-personal outcomes that can realistically be attained through self-presentation include: the enhancement

of one's social influence; construction and maintenance of 'self,' in terms of self-esteem, and the identities on which the outside world draws inferences about one's dispositions; and regulation of one's emotions (Leary, 1995).

Therefore, impression motivation is a precondition for self-presentation, and varies in strength depending on the characteristics of the situation. Section 2.1.4 explains the transient factors that either intensify or reduce impression motivation, when a self-presentational motive is active. The upcoming section introduces the primary functions that make self-presentation a 'goal-directed act' (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). By examining what these goals are, it is possible to better understand what makes an individual *impression-motivated*.

#### 2.1.2.1. *Interpersonal Influence*

But a close second to results are the intangibles that a rider can possess: public image, public relations, sponsor relations, etc. These characteristics and qualities may be second in line to results on the master list but can be equally as important. You can be winning championships but if you lack favorable (sic) public image or you are constantly upsetting the team sponsors you are severely limiting your options as to where and for whom you can ride. Motocross is a small community in reality: close doors in a community this small and before you know it you won't have any doors left to knock on when you are in a time of need (Ishii, 2008, paragraph 3).

The opportunity to enhance one's 'social influence' is a powerful and alluring motive for behaviour, but rather non-specific. For some, wielding power over an individual or group of people is a desirable end in itself, and may in fact represent an innate *need* for power (McClelland, 1975); for others, such influence is a route to more specific outcomes, and does not reflect any 'extreme' form of underlying achievement motivation. In the latter case, the desired consequence may be perceived to be contingent on the target believing that we possess the characteristics necessary to be worthy of

reward; hence, the target must form a favourable impression of the individual, and the individual will be impression-motivated (Leary, 1995). In other words, the individual must tailor their self-presentation to *augment their influence* on the reward-giver in that social context (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Perhaps the outcome that would first come to mind when self-presentation is mentioned, social influence is the most widely researched primary function of impression management (Leary, 1995). Social influence is the outcome associated with self-presentation that may conjure images of the Machiavellian, deceptive individual who 'will do anything to get ahead.' However, certainly not all individuals with this motive are Machiavellian, nor would they adopt fabricated self-presentational strategies to achieve their objective. Nevertheless, this motive is often very powerful, and its strength persists in many social situations, despite different audiences and varying impression-related requirements (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In the impression management literature, social influence has been discussed in relation to social and material outcomes.

Desired social outcomes can include friendship (or *enhanced* platonic relationships), respect, leadership duties, approval, recognition, constructive and enjoyable working collaborations, attraction, more meaningful romantic encounters/partnership, and social support (Doherty & Schlenker, 2006; Jones, 1990; Park & Krause, 1992; Schlenker, 1980). In fact, the definitions separating such outcomes are often blurred, making it difficult to discern *what* outcomes research designs are tapping; and from the alternative perspective, *how* to tease them apart when designing investigations. Social influence can also confer esteem-enhancing, identity developing, and material benefits (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985) on the successful impression-manager, suggesting that this motive may in many cases be superseded by a more important alternative.

With regards to the relationship-based motives, it is not surprising that people are attracted to individuals who seem to possess qualities that they value. Indeed, friendships are unlikely to develop past a superficial level without each person involved believing that they have something to gain from it. Therefore, it is possible to exert one's influence in interpersonal relationships via selective self-presentation of abilities and traits that one believes the target desires (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Thus, people are motivated to be perceived as possessing desirable attributes, including for example, loyalty, compassion, generosity, and intelligence (Jones, 1964; Jones, 1990; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Park & Krause, 1992). Individuals may be especially motivated to appear intelligent, as many other attractive qualities are inferred from intelligence. These include maturity, common sense, open-mindedness, kindness, goodness, likeableness, meaningfulness, and normality (Anderson, 1968; Berg & Sternberg, 1992; Fuhrman, Bodenhausen, & Lichtenstein, 1989).

Entry to new social groups is also likely to present an opportunity for the fulfilment of social self-presentational motives. Under these circumstances, people tend to be highly motivated to be accepted and thus present themselves in a way that will allow them to ingratiate smoothly (Gergen & Wishnov, 1965; Moreland & Levine, 1989). If the impression-manager has wilfully entered the group, they presumably have something in common with the other members, which should help them to construct an appropriate impression. Once the individual has spent time in the context, the strength of their social motive might lessen, as people begin to react less to them (i.e., novelty wears off; Nezlek & Leary, 2002). Interestingly, people are often motivated to seek opportunities for self-affirmation through ingratiation in one context after being criticised elsewhere (Steele, 1988).

The desire to be liked is a general trait that encapsulates many of these potential social outcomes (friendship, approval, attraction, romantic partnership, etc.). Liden and Mitchell (1988) reviewed a vast literature

supporting the view that ingratiation behaviour is a self-presentational strategy stemming from either a general desire to be liked, or the identification of an opportunity or need to promote or defend oneself. Indeed, university students cited the importance of being known and the desire to be liked as reasons for engaging in impression management to their college tutor, and presenting themselves as friendly was often the chosen self-presentational strategy (Valerius & Parr, 1997). Thus, social outcomes do tend to promote a relatively narrow range of self-presentational tactics that are generalisable across contexts (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

A broad category of self-presentational behaviour includes those that refer to indirect impression management. Basking in reflected glory is a connection-focussed self-presentation by association tactic, now termed 'boasting.' Others include burying, blaring, and blurring (Cialdini, 1989; Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). We *bury* by distancing ourselves from unfavourable others, *blare* by denying or minimising publicly known connections to unfavourable others, and *blur* by trying to maintain a link to favourable others even though the connection is tenuous. In a series of experiments, Cialdini *et al.* (1976) repeatedly supported their hypothesis that college students would strategically align themselves with successful sports teams and distance themselves from negative sources. By wearing clothing attire which displays their affiliation with the university after one of its teams has beaten a rival university, students may bask in reflected glory/boast – a self-presentation tactic theoretically geared to gain them recognition or approval.

Cialdini and colleagues' work wasn't in organisational settings, but Andrews and Kacmar (2001) applied it there by developing the Impression Management by Association Scale (IMAS) for use in organisation research. The IMAS is a 12-item, 4-factor questionnaire, and correlations between the boasting, burying, blaring, and blurring subscales range from .33 to .53. Interestingly, the boasting factor displayed the strongest association with

measures of self-monitoring, need for power, and assertiveness (.26, .24, and .29, respectively), suggesting that verbalising one's positive connections with influential others is the optimal indirect self-presentational strategy for the social motive of recognition or approval (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001). It is unfortunate that participants in the two validation samples did not have their mean factor scores reported, so we cannot compare them to the convergent validity check sample. However, this latter sample ( $n = 221$ ) reported between "Never do it" and "Rarely do it" on each of the four 'self-presentation by association' tactics, so the above correlations are only true for them. It is somewhat doubtful that the same pattern emerges for people who report more frequently employing these tactics, but the authors only implicitly acknowledge this.

Social influence is an interpersonal outcome especially valued by individuals in positions of authority and leadership, or those who are hoping to obtain such positions. To be seen as worthy of a leading role, one's self-presentation must have others infer certain unique qualities, including: perceived competence, 'attraction power,' perceived as moral or exemplary, potency (powerful, decisive), and intimidating (Leary, 1995). Unfortunately, impression management research with those in positions of leadership in sport has been limited to the coach perspective. In the past decade a steady stream of enlightening qualitative research has been maintained by sociologists and social psychologists interested in identity and self-presentational practices in sport (e.g., Jones, 2006; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). For the most part, these articles have described the self-presentational motives and impression management dilemmas experienced by coaches in their tenuous occupational (leader) roles. Self-presentation variables have also been investigated with other leaders in physical activity domains, such as aerobic instructors (Greenleaf, McGreer, & Parham, 2006; Thøgersen-Ntoumani & Ntoumanis, 2007). Similarly conceived research should now investigate the self-presentational motives, impression



motivation, impression construction, and self-presentations of team captains and those occupying informal leadership positions.

Interestingly, research has shown that the desired social outcome may be *undesirable* in an intuitive sense. Management of a poor impression in selection contexts is typically assumed to occur in interviews pertaining to mandatory military service or workplace compensation claims (Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990). However, Becker and Martin (1995) sampled 'mature' students (mean age = 30.25 years) enrolled on a business course, because they had current and/or ample previous experience as employees (i.e., compared to straight-from-high-school undergraduates who often do not). These participants described either their own or others' motives and strategies for managing poor impressions in the workplace. Cited motives were classified according to the categories established in a pilot study, these being: avoidance of additional work or stress, obtaining concrete rewards, organisational exit, and power over others. Further, specific behaviours were associated with different outcomes; for example: "Not working to potential in order to look bad tends to be motivated by the desire to avoid additional work. Displaying a "bad attitude" in order to look bad tends to be motivated by a desire to leave an organisation" (p. 191). One's immediate supervisor was the most common target for these tactics, with peers ("sometimes") and subordinates ("on occasion") less likely to be the target. Importantly, management of a poor impression in the workplace was empirically distinguishable from management of a favourable impression and self-handicapping, with only 10% shared variance. Hence, employees may not always try to create impressions they assume will be favoured by their employers, but the motives for doing so still cohere with Leary's (1995) framework.

In sport, too, sometimes a seemingly negative behaviour can have the desired social outcomes. A female boxer in Halbert (1997) reported having to take "her share of beatings from the guys" as a self-presentational tactic to

gain their respect; and: “Once respect has been established, male supporters may legitimize a woman boxer’s status” (p. 21). Respect goes hand-in-hand with escaping stigmatisation, which was also cited as a social motive for female boxers to manage their public appearance and behaviour (Halbert, 1997). Finally, in terms of the maintenance of non-mainstream impressions, the bad-boy image of many professional BMX riders – actively and strategically managed in many cases – brought the attention of admiring women after each stop on the tour circuit (Browne, 2004).

In contrast to social outcomes such as friendship and respect, the self-presentational motive to exert interpersonal influence may be stimulated by desired material outcomes. Examples of material rewards include promotion, more favourable working conditions and/or better contractual terms (higher earnings, incentives), better sponsorship terms (for the athlete, in particular), monetary value/recompense, and total relocation (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Tedeschi, 1981). Opportunities to progress in a professional capacity – and thus reap material rewards – are often dependent on a combination of both capability in the workplace *and* the worker being perceived as flexible, a ‘team player,’ and ‘hard worker’ (Baumeister, 1982, 1989). In this example of a major human life domain, the boundary between primary and secondary self-presentational motive is not clear (making friends or at least respectful colleagues versus obtaining a pay-rise), and will only truly be known by the employee. For many, the financial motive is very powerful, and sometimes ingratiation behaviour that seems outwardly to be for social outcomes may have an ulterior (material) motive (Baumeister, 1982). Indeed, an individual’s self-presentational success may depend on how well they can conceal their subtle, true objective in generating a generally positive public image (Baumeister, 1982). Although this task is made difficult because those in a position to offer material rewards are usually aware of their status as such, and are attuned to sycophantic self-presentations from subordinates (Jones & Pitman, 1982; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Conversely, some individuals are

willing to bypass social approval altogether if it leads to a desired material outcome (Jellison & Gentry, 1978). However, it is clear that in the presence of a desired material outcome, satisfying the value system of the 'higher status agent' becomes crucial, and impression management key (Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Pandey, 1981; Ralston, 1985; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

While not strictly a 'material' outcome, school grades may also be influenced by self-presentation. There is evidence to suggest that teachers may grade submitted work according to the preconceptions they have of the student (Babad, 1985; Brager, 1970; Wiskin, Allan, & Skelton, 2004). Teachers may not let this happen consciously, but it explains why at higher levels of education, work is submitted anonymously and marked 'blind'; the same applies to manuscripts submitted for consideration in peer-reviewed publications. Therefore, impression-motivated pupils may seek to convey the impression of a polite, studious, and non-disruptive member of the classroom, under the assumption that this will satisfy the teacher's value system *and* ensure good grades (cf. Takei, Johnson, & Clark, 1998). In university contexts, many students ask for references from academic staff, so the same general principles are in operation at that level of academia. The schooling examples highlight, again, that material and social rewards are often not mutually exclusive.

The link between self-presentation and material reward is exemplified in the following story about famous basketball player Michael Jordan's position in contract negotiations:

[Chicago Bulls CEO, Jerry...] Reinsdorf understood early in Michael Jordan's career, for instance, that Jordan's one weakness in negotiations was a desire to protect his corporate image and his almost unique commercial value to the companies whose products he sold; therefore, Jordan was wary of holding out and looking like one more spoiled contemporary athlete (Halberstam, 1999, p. 27).

Here, social and material outcomes are explicitly connected to impression motivation and the avoidance of undesired impressions. It is also worthy of note that, at such elite levels of professional sport, impression motivation may be used to one's disadvantage by others. It would be interesting to see if this is also true of sub-elite sport, including the group dynamic consequences of purposeful stifling of team-mates' self-presentational motives.

In sport, material outcomes associated with effective impression management would seem to be most pertinent to those who operate at semi- or professional standards. However, a large number of students in many countries receive athletic scholarships (e.g., America's National Collegiate Athletic Association oversees 3 divisions of intercollegiate sports competitions; divisions 1 and 2 comprise 623 member institutions, which award a total of over 126,000 full or partial athletic scholarships each year to the best high-school recruits they can attract; [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)), thus placing a financial incentive on their conduct and, tacitly, their performance. Indeed, there are numerous websites dedicated to offering high-school students advice on 'How to impress a college scout.' Some of these 'amateur' athletes will go on to follow professional careers and so, their scholarships are an important stepping-stone in terms of talent development and exposure to professional 'scouts.' Therefore, it is imperative for student-athletes to carefully manage their public image at all stages of their career, because long-term material rewards may be partially dependent on early impression management.

Further, many amateur sports teams (e.g., university and members of recreational-but-competitive football or rugby leagues) – and the players they support – could not survive without sponsorship from local businesses, in the same way that most professional British athletes rely on National Governing Bodies of sport, local councils, and National Lottery funding. Benefactors are generally unwilling to sponsor athletes or teams whose behaviour sullies

their own name – see the response to Tiger Woods’ alleged extramarital affairs of sponsors Accenture, General Motors, and Gillette. Returning to the NCAA example, this very large and influential organisation has a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee whose mission is: “...to enhance the total student-athlete experience by promoting opportunity, protecting student-athlete welfare and fostering a *positive student-athlete image*” ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org); emphasis added). Of course, the NCAA has much to lose when a player displays moments of indiscretion; studies have even looked at the relatively recent tendency for embarrassing behaviours to be broadcast on the internet (Martínez Alemán & Wartman, 2009). Similarly, the British Olympic Association (BOA) offer media training for athletes predicated on their stance that: “It is imperative that athletes are confident and skilled at dealing with the media in order to represent themselves in a positive manner to potential sponsors and the general public” ([www.olympics.org.uk](http://www.olympics.org.uk)). Of course, this is of mutual benefit.

The motivation for organisations such as the BOA and NCAA to maintain their marketability thus filters down to athletes, and it is again clear that social and material outcomes are often not independent. Supporting this, female boxers reported the reciprocity of social outcomes (e.g., avoidance of discrimination; removal of undesired stereotypes) and the need to be promotable (Halbert, 1997). And tensions between the two outcomes are evident in professional football:

while players build relations among colleagues which may subsequently prove important, there is not permanent reduction of workplace uncertainty as player interdependencies are characterized by their complexity and changeability; the ample supply of labour ensures that competition remains an abiding feature (Roderick, 2006, p. 261).

All of sport is, to one degree or another, an exercise in interpersonal influence: squad members seek to influence coaches for selection; athletes

seek to influence the expectations of their opposition; team-mates seek to influence each other to be included more in the action; managers seek to influence ownership as to what new players to bring in or trade away. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted with this general theme as the focus.

#### *2.1.2.2. Development and Maintenance of 'Self'*

The second function of self-presentation is to help the individual forge their 'self' into a desired, coherent, and publicly acknowledged being (Fox, 2002). This means that self-presentation is almost always motivated according to the 'ideal self' criterion, that is, the desire to make one's public image congruent with one's ideal self. At this point it is pertinent to reiterate that the highly impression-motivated individual is not necessarily a Machiavellian. Impression management is not a process guided by deceit, of fabricated personal characteristics and manipulative half-truths. Those individuals who employ such tactics are the exception, not the rule (Leary, 1995), and one's self-presentation is usually the behavioural culmination of an intrinsic desire to make people aware of one's desirable attributes (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

Even so, people do tend to bias their self-presentations in favour of their 'desired selves' and away from the undesired alternative (Schlenker, 1985). Interestingly, internalisation of this self-serving tendency may actually lead the individual to develop into his or her desired self (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985; Tice, 1992). In any case, an individual will need to behave in a manner that is consistent with the type of person they want to be (Leary, 1995). Therefore, public expression of intrinsic thought processes can lead to both development of self and identity development. Identity development through self-presentation is an integral way in which impression management

demonstrates both *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* functions (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985).

An individual's *identities* are the roles that they assume in the different sub-domains of their lives, with an emphasis on: "the meaning a position in the social structure holds for the self-concept" (Large & Marcussen, 2000, p. 49). Goffman's (1959) concept of 'face' aids our understanding of identity in that we have different faces for the different audiences with which each role brings us into contact. 'Face-work,' then, reflects the self-concept that is active at any one time, and what is done in developing it. Varying identities – or faces – do not imply an inconsistent self-concept, merely a flexible approach to interacting with others. An individual can stake claim to a particular identity by enacting behaviours that are socially accepted as representative of this identity (Cooley, 1902; Gollwitzer, 1986; Mead, 1934; Sullivan, 1953; Tice, 1992; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). Interestingly, the individual may or may not choose the identity, it may be conferred upon them (Calder, 1977). Self-presentation is a mechanism by which an individual can gain public validation for the self that they would *prefer others to know* (Swann & Read, 1981). Of the roles to be 'played' in life – be it of employer, employee, parent, friend, priest – our success in the role is ultimately decided by the opinions of others, or more accurately, of the impressions they have of us in the role (Turner, 1990). It follows then that if we desire to exert influence in areas of our life, or to have our identities affirmed, then our impression motivation will be high (Leary, 1995).

Appearance communicates much information about an individual: appearances elicit responses, thus meaning is conveyed to the observer about the individual who is the focus of their attention (Stone, 1962). Indeed, the feedback generated by how we look, on the outside, can shape a subsequent interaction. This may be especially true during the early stages of one's relationship with a target audience. Stone's (1962) extensive interview data suggests that 'appearance management,' as a self-

presentational tactic, can be harnessed as a tool of impression management to aid the development of desired identities. Self-presentation strategies employed in the development or creation of identities have been labelled assertive, and are summarised in Table 2.1 (Tedeschi, 1981; Tedeschi & Lindskold, 1976; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Boasting and blurring, discussed previously, are also assertive tactics, albeit indirect in nature (i.e., associating oneself with favourable others; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). Different desired identities are associated with certain self-presentational actions, and each carries a certain amount of risk; as with the appearance management tactic discussed above.

On the other hand, those tactics employed in the defence or restoration of desired identities are termed defensive (Tedeschi, 1981; Tedeschi & Lindskold, 1976; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Such tactics include excuse making, apologising and expressing guilt or remorse, offering pre-emptive disclaimers in case predicaments arise, justification of negative behaviours while taking responsibility nevertheless, and self-handicapping to divert others from making dispositional inferences of one's failure (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Hewitt & Stokes, 1975; Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999; Scott & Lyman, 1968; Tedeschi & Lindskold, 1976). Blaring and burying, discussed previously, are defensive tactics too, albeit indirect forms of impression management (i.e., minimising one's associations with undesirable others; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980).



Table 2.1. *Assertive self-presentational strategies (adapted from Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 249)*

Strategy	Attributions sought	Negative attributions risked	Prototypical actions
Ingratiation	Likeable	Sycophant, conformist, obsequious	Self-characterization, opinion conformity, other enhancement, favours
Intimidation	Dangerous (ruthless, volatile)	Blusterer, ineffectual	Threats, anger (incipient), breakdown (incipient)
Self-promotion	Competent (effective, "a winner")	Fraudulent, conceited, defensive	Performance claims, performance accounts, performances
Exemplification	Worthy (suffers, dedicated)	Hypocrite, sanctimonious, exploitative	Self-denial, helping, militancy for a cause
Supplication	Helpless (handicapped, unfortunate)	Stigmatized, lazy, demanding	Self-deprecation, entreaties for help

Sport is an activity that provides an ideal forum for the participant to develop a desired identity. Even Goffman (1959) talked of the allure of sport and physical pursuits, in saying:

Although fateful enterprises are often respectable, there are many character contests and scenes of serious action that are not. Yet these are the occasions and places that show respect for the moral character. Not only in mountain ranges that invite the climber, but also in casinos, pool halls, and racetracks do we find worship; it may be in churches, where the guarantee is high that nothing will occur, that the moral sensibility is weak (p. 268).

Goffman (1959) also emphasised that establishment of a social identity requires effective use of one's 'front' – that is, the 'setting,' 'appearance,' and 'manner' components of an individual's performance – in the role. Arguably, the athlete's body, appearance, and manner constitute a front of primary importance for them. Greenlees, Buscombe, Thelwell, Holder, and Rimmer (2005) observed that opponent's expectations of success can be influenced by an athlete's body language (e.g., eye contact and good posture). For females but not males, athletic identity significantly predicted self-presentation concerns (Thatcher & Hagger, 2008). Specifically, athletic identity contributed to the prediction of self-presentation concerns related to physical appearance only, which points to the centrality in self-concept of the working physical body and how it interfaces with its audience. No research has explicitly investigated the mechanisms by which self-presentation in sport can aid in the development of desired identities – although people may enter team sports to claim an athletic social identity and/or fulfil social identity motives (Grove & Dodder, 1982; Leary *et al.*, 1986) – and this would seem a worthwhile endeavour given that performance in training and competition is fraught with peril regarding an athlete's public image (Leary, 1992).

Aside from developing one's identity through the public expression of one's desired selves, self-presentation is implicated in the enhancement of self also through the concept of self-esteem. One's self-esteem represents a multidimensional and hierarchical self-rating in various life domains (Harter, 1985, 1996). In a similar way to the confirmation of success in life-roles (identities), an individual's self-esteem can be enhanced by receiving praise, acceptance, or approval from high-strength others. These outcomes are usually granted by observers when they view an act that satisfies their value system, entertains them, or otherwise pleases them (Gollwitzer, 1986). While it is difficult to rule out other possible reasons for self-esteem change, research has consistently demonstrated the robustness of self-presentation explanations (Leary *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, self-presentation to target

audiences is integral to the confirmation of desired identities, to gaining opportunities for esteem-enhancement in these roles, and ultimately, for making one's ideal self congruent with one's public image (Leary, 1995). As a point of contention, it is doubtful that self-presentation serves an esteem-enhancing function for the individual who is attempting to convey an unrealistic representation of themselves. Positive feedback will only raise esteem when the individual believes that they do possess those characteristics (Leary, 1995). The minority of persons who make unrealistic claims through their self-presentation may be more likely to be motivated by the potential social and/or material rewards available if they are successful.

Maintaining 'face' – that being the public face of one's self-esteem – is a prevalent motive for self-handicapping behaviour; although it can serve self-protection or self-enhancement motives (Arkin, 1981; Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985; Tice, 1991). Self-handicapping: "involves any action or choice of performance setting that enhances the opportunity to externalise (or excuse) failure and to internalise (reasonably accept credit for) success" (Jones & Berglas, 1978, p.406). Self-protective self-handicapping tends to be used when there are potential threats to self-esteem, so can be seen as a coping strategy: those high in self-esteem self-handicap to enhance chances of success, whereas those low in self-esteem self-handicap to avoid the negative implications of failure (Tice, 1991). Hence, as with the construct underpinning its use, self-handicapping is relatively enduring. Self-handicapping can be self-reported or behavioural, with the former being less extreme than actually physically self-handicapping oneself. They serve the same purpose, but the former often requires more 'acting' to make it realistic (Berglas, 1985; Berglas & Jones, 1978; Harris & Snyder, 1986; Kolditz & Arkin, 1982; Leary & Shepperd, 1986; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1983; Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986; Snyder & Smith, 1986; Tice & Baumeister, 1990).

Self-handicapping can be classified as self-presentational because it allows the performer to protect their image in other people's eyes. People who score high in public self-consciousness self-handicap more than those low in public self-consciousness. Because this trait is related to thinking about one's public, observable characteristics, including one's impressions, it suggests that impression motivation is involved in self-handicapping (Shepperd & Arkin, 1989). Self-handicapping is also related to other individual difference variables. For example, in a sample of 112 male and female undergraduate psychology students, the influence of characterological depression on the likelihood of claiming negative mood as a self-handicap was investigated (Baumgardner, 1991). Participants were categorised as low, moderate, or high, according to scores on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mack, & Erbaugh, 1961), performed a test of "social accuracy," and were informed either that they'd performed well or poorly (randomly assigned), and that the experimenter either knew or was not aware of this initial success or failure (be it true or false). Participants were then told of a subsequent memory test, in which performance would be inhibited by low mood; half of the sample was not given this information.

Baumgardner (1991) reported results that suggest characterologically depressed persons were most likely to claim a self-handicap – by self-reporting high depression scores prior to the memory test – when they had previously been informed that (a) failure (not success) on the prior test was (b) private (not public). This pattern was interpreted as a self-presentational strategy to deflect potential failure on the second test to transient mood – away from stable factors – thereby protecting their self-esteem. Hence, protection of self-esteem might be an especially pertinent self-presentational motive for depressed individuals. The results also suggest that impression efficacy is decreased, at least in the short term, with failure experiences. It should be noted, however, that university student BDI norms were not provided as a comparison, and so it is difficult to confirm the veracity of

Baumgardner's categorisation of individuals scoring over 10 as "highly depressed," when the range of responses was 0 – 36 (mean = 6.99; SD = 6.97): would the same pattern have emerged with a clinically depressed, non-psychology student population?

Prapavessis *et al.* (2004) reviewed the self-handicapping literature in sport and provided a model of the factors influencing the self-presentational consequences of this practice. Their model places believability at the forefront in any self-handicap attempt; if the handicap is not believable, impression management costs are immediately incurred, in the form of questions regarding one's character, and reduced perceived competence. Of course, these costs would damage the development of self-esteem, public-esteem, and desired identities. If the self-handicap *is* believable, the same costs will be suffered if the handicap is perceived by others to be dispositional, intentional, controllable, and/or not socially desirable. However, if the handicap is believable and the audience believes that the cause is situational, unintentional, uncontrollable, and socially desirable, then ability will be discounted after failure or augmented after success (Prapavessis *et al.*, 2004). In a study of interest to the nomological network of impression management constructs, Thatcher and Hagger (2008) observed that for male athletes, self-handicapping contributed to the prediction of all four CSPCI categories of self-presentation concern (physical appearance, appearing athletically untalented, appearing fatigued/lacking energy, and performance/composure inadequacies); for females, self-handicapping contributed to all but the *concern about performance/composure inadequacies* factor. The CSPCI conceptualises self-presentation concerns as a fear based appraisal, so interpreted with the help of Prapavessis *et al.*'s (2004) model, Thatcher and Hagger's results would suggest that the athletes in their sample would attempt self-handicaps to avoid esteem-deflating reactions from others on a variety of sporting fronts (talent, appearance, form, composure, etc.).

The way in which people make sense of their own everyday behaviour and that of others who they encounter in life is the focus of attribution theory (Ross, 1977). Attributing causality to behaviours and events is a fundamental human process that serves important functions; protection or enhancement of self-esteem and establishment/maintenance of rewarding relationships being the most extensively studied (Baumgardner, 1990; Blaine & Crocker, 1993; Bradley, 1978; Crocker & Major, 1989; Harter, 1999; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; Scott & Lyman, 1968; Zuckerman, 1979).

Attributions are frequently private, as when one explain one's outcomes to oneself; but attributions are often made publicly, and it is the promise of goal-relevant (i.e. esteem-enhancement or identity-development) feedback from others which motivates and makes it a self-presentational tactic in such instances (Tetlock, 1981).

Similarly, if an athlete wants to develop their social identity, they need to carefully consider how best to attribute an outcome in the interests of the team. Attributing the team's failure internally, to personally controllable factors, is usually an adaptive strategy – it encourages more concentration and effort in the future – but it may also aid impression management interests (modesty, leadership qualities, desire to improve). However, the athlete may be perceived by teammates as placing an inordinate amount of importance on their role/contributions to the team's performance, presenting a self-presentational dilemma. Alternatively, for the sake of their own psychological stability the athlete may wish to distance themselves from those 'responsible' for the poor result, and are thus faced with a similar dilemma. Confounding these decisions is dispositional self-monitoring, with high self-monitors tending to make relatively situational attributions, and low self-monitors offering relatively dispositional attributions for their own behaviour (Snyder & Campbell, 1982).

### 2.1.2.3. *Emotion Regulation*

A mechanical, a bad result, a crash etc. are all times when you could act out in a way to vent your frustrations but remember the camera! Take it as an opportunity to show the public what kind of person you really are inside, past the initial frustration and anger. They will remember that far longer than the actual incident that spurred those emotions in the first place. Example: at Red Bud this year in the second moto of the Lites class there was a fierce battle for second place between Canard and Dungey. Dungey had been tripling Lorraco's Leap almost every lap while Canard was doubling up. On the final lap Dungey was right up on Canard entering the turn before the leap and clearly was railing the outside to triple up and pass Canard who took the inside to double up. Dungey's motor quit on him right up the face thus ending the battle and losing precious and hard fought points. Was he angry? How could he not be? He is a true competitor and a winner and winners hate not winning. He could have made a display of his inner turmoil for sure but he calmly handed the bike over to the technicians. He actually went over to the fence and gave out his helmet, glove, goggles, and shook hands with the fans that witnessed the epic battle and the hard luck. What do you think the fans remembered? Guess what? The camera WAS on and they showed all this on Speed Channel. I was supremely impressed by RD's poise and actions during such an emotional time and I am sure the fans and sponsors felt the same (Ishii, 2008, *online*).

The emotion-regulating function of self-presentation can refer to regulation of *mood* – a more general, often longer lasting form of emotion, which tends to have a positive or negative valence (Thayer, 1989). Social psychology research has shown that the gaining of approval and acceptance – potentially esteem-enhancing and identity-developing social rewards associated with effective self-presentation – are also known to enhance mood (e.g., Esses, 1989). This motivates the individual to convey impressions that others will value, which elicits favourable reactions, thus improving the individual's mood (Baumgardner, Kaufman, & Levy, 1989). Additionally, *negative* emotions often lead to an inward focus of attention. This can result in the individual talking to others about themselves – disclosing more personal information – which has been shown to decrease internal distress, elevate mood, and even improve health (Pennebaker, 1990;

Stiles, 1987). In self-presentation terms, increased, even unabashed, disclosure, may lead to undesired impressions being formed by the listener. So while self-presentation can aid in elevating one's current mood, the longer-term consequences may be less than ideal (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006). Self-mockery is also a self-presentational strategy that holds a socially located emotion regulation function (Ungar, 1984).

Self-presentation can serve a useful emotion regulation function for athletes. Hackfort and Schlattmann (1991, 2002, 2005) have investigated the role of emotions and emotion-presentation – a specific form of self-presentation – in sportspersons. Indeed, their research has furthered our understanding of the functional meaning of self-presentation in sport. First, at the *intra*-individual level, Hackfort and Schlattmann (2002) suggest that there are benefits to be gleaned from performing a pre-programmed expressional routine prior to performing, e.g., before taking a penalty shot, serving in tennis, etc. That is, a demonstrative self-presentation can help an individual regulate their psycho-physiological state, thus 'tuning' them for optimal performance. John McEnroe's histrionics could be interpreted as an example of this in action. Also, it is possible to demonstrate (e.g., pride) or not demonstrate (e.g., disappointment) emotions when they are felt, and to demonstrate emotions when they *are not* actually experienced (e.g., presenting oneself as calm when one is actually anxious; Hackfort & Schlattmann, 1991). The psychobiology behind this strategy is well-understood: adverse physiological responses can be attenuated or modified if the individual can call forth counteracting emotion-presentations to bring down the intensity of the felt emotion (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 2002, p. 65); an example of self-regulative self-presentation.

Second, emotion-presentation serves an *inter*-individual or social-regulative function, in that it can be used to (a) intimidate an opponent, or even lull them into a false sense of security, and/or (b) foster a particular group atmosphere or social climate (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 1991; Totterdell,



2000). For example, during performance team-mates can interact in an emotionally expressive way, potentially conveying an intimidating impression of extreme unity and confidence in one another (e.g., the New Zealand rugby team's Haka ritual). The self- and social-regulative functions of emotion-presentations can be seen in action in the following quote from professional basketball:

A confident team glowed with the communal sense of its own ability; a team filled with doubt seemed to signal with its eyes and its body language to opponents, to referees, that it was vulnerable. Some of the veteran players like Larry Steele could remember the great opposing teams which had come into the Portland Coliseum: the old Kicks, the Celtics. There was, even in their pregame drills, a lazy controlled arrogance, as if they were saying it did not matter where they were playing, they might as well be playing at home, it did not matter what the crowd wanted or who the refs were, all they had to be was themselves (Halberstam, 1981, p. 188).

The first part of the quote illustrates how non-verbal behaviours can be either an effective or detrimental form of self-presentation, convincing the athlete (or team) of their poor chance in the upcoming contest, and the opponent that they should be confident of success (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 1991, 2002, 2005). The framework provided by Hackfort and Schlattmann offers the opportunity to better understand the motives athletes have for their purposeful emotion expressions, and indeed, what proportion of these are conscious and strategic versus implicit.

### 2.1.3. *Impression Monitoring*

Impression monitoring is a perceptual variable that precedes or triggers *impression motivation* in a given situation; it alerts an individual if their public image is in jeopardy or an opportunity to strive for an interpersonal goal has arisen. If circumstances are propitious, active impression management is

necessary, and all that entails will ensue (i.e., impression motivation, impression construction, self-presentation); if not, the individual has more attention for other tasks within the situation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). There has been a distinct lack of research into the concept of *impression monitoring*, and none in sport contexts, despite its position as a key component of the overall process of impression management (Leary, 1995). Hence, the examples used here to apply Leary's theoretical propositions to sport are themselves contentions drawn from social psychology research evidence.

Leary (1995) acknowledges that it is a rare individual who *constantly* monitors *all* their social environments for opportunities to self-present. Indeed, interactions often take place with people who know what to expect of us, in situations that require habitual behaviours, or that contain little need for self-enhancing behaviour. However: "For people to engage in self-presentation, they must monitor, at one level or another, how they are being perceived and evaluated by others" (Leary, 1995, p. 47). Leary (1995) explains that while it is simpler to conceive of impression monitoring as occurring at incremental levels, the cognition is actually best represented on a continuum, anchored at four points: *impression oblivion*, *pre-attentive impression scanning*, *impression awareness*, and *impression focus*. Thus, moving along the continuum illustrates the changing amount of conscious thought that is being devoted to how we are being perceived and evaluated (Figure 2.1).

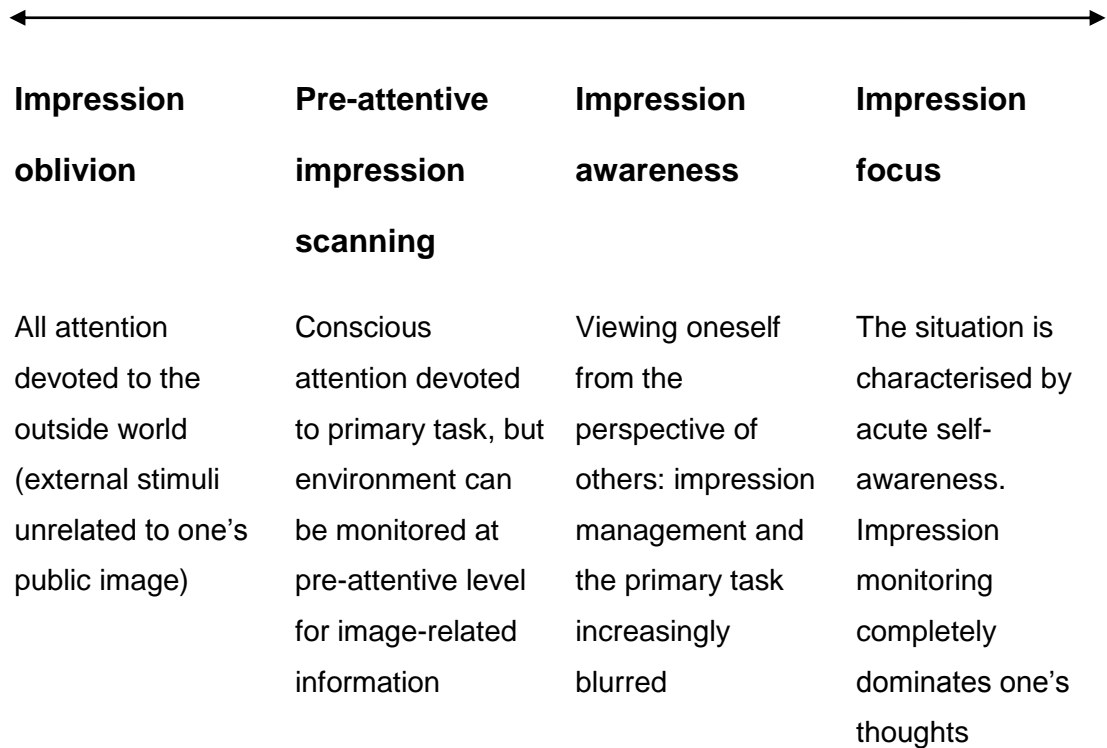


Figure 2.1. *Continuum of impression monitoring*

'Impression oblivion' is of literal meaning – it describes a situation in which the individual is oblivious to the self-presentational implications of their behaviour, or even that they are the focus of another's attention at all. The individual is not processing information in a self-relevant fashion; environmental stimuli are drawing attention away from themselves. For example, one's attention might be dominated by the complexities of the situation and how to deal with it, rather than any self-presentation concerns. In such circumstances, the individual is said to be in a state of *subjective self-awareness*, a transient feeling characterised by a complete lack of attention being paid to how one is being perceived; the individual may not even be aware that there is someone else present (Duval & Wicklund, 1972).

Accordingly, in sport, impression oblivion may be especially likely when performing under adverse or unanticipated situational conditions, such as when playing football in the snow or in high-risk sports such as rock climbing.

Alternatively, athletes participating in continuous-action as opposed to intermittent-action sports (e.g., field hockey, volleyball) may have little opportunity for impression-related thought – the unfolding action is too pressing. Impression oblivion may also be concomitant with achieving *peak performance* or a *flow state* (cf. Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), wherein the euphoric feelings associated with effortless and automatic performance will overshadow interfering or unpleasant cognitions (Loehr, 1982). However, in most sports there are breaks in action, and in all sports there are periods immediately before and after when the athlete could attend to impression related thoughts, including self-presentational doubts or worries.

Intense emotions (anger, joy, ecstasy, fear, sadness, etc.) also act to suppress impression monitoring (Leary, 1995); however, they can, of course, stem from self-presentational sources. The negative emotions of anger, fear and sadness are examples of emotions that result from harm, loss, or threat appraisals of a stressor (Lazarus, 1991). Alternatively, joy and ecstasy are benefit-related emotions, elicited when a goal is attained or reasonable progress is made in striving for it (Lazarus, 1991). Participation in sport clearly provides the potential for these emotions to be elicited. Therefore, whether in a state of subjective self-awareness, or experiencing a pronounced emotional response to impression-unrelated stressors, the individual will be ‘deindividuated’ and does not impression-monitor (Diener, 1980). That is, the athlete may have entered the competition with self-presentational motives in mind, but their impression motivation is not heightened because their emotions are blocking impression monitoring (please refer to Leary’s quote, cited in the second paragraph of this section: “For people to engage in self-presentation, they must monitor, at one level or another, how they are being perceived and evaluated by others”). Leary (1995) asserts that impression oblivion is a rare state to be in, given the importance of impressions in everyday life, but no research has been conducted that assesses impression monitoring in sportspersons.

Impression monitoring can also occur at a preattentive, or non-conscious, level (*preattentive impression scanning*). Around this point on the continuum, the primary task assumes attentional priority, while the individual non-consciously scans the environment for cues regarding the status of their public image (Leary, 1995). Over-learned or habitual self-presentation behaviours can occur at this stage without conscious attention from the individual; this type of behaviour is so automatic that the individual may not be aware of its motivational basis (Hogan, 1982). However, if something in the situation alters, and personally-relevant information is detected suggesting that the individual's social image is jeopardised, conscious attention must then be directed to self-presentation (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). In the case of a disrupted image, the individual may perceive a need to attempt a recovery, and *their impressions will become more goal-relevant*. This is a precursor to impression motivation.

Theoretically, team-sport athletes who have a secure place in the team may attend practice or training and impression-monitor at a preattentive level. That is, they feel no reason to be concerned about the possibility of conveying an impression that will see them 'benched' for an upcoming competition. However, rarely is the athlete's position so secure, and any niggling doubt may shift the individual along the impression monitoring continuum, during practice, but especially during competition (i.e., competitive performances offer a limited window to make the desired impression, thus increasing their goal-relevance). Alternatively, the athlete may be scanning the environment for opportunities to enhance their image in the eyes of significant people (partners, friends, parents) other than their coaches and team-mates, while primarily attending to skill execution. At this point on the continuum, impression motivation and subsequent conscious self-presentation is merely hinted at, and a shift on the impression monitoring continuum to *impression awareness* is required to activate goal-directed behaviour.

Impression awareness is identified as the level of impression monitoring when most deliberate self-presentation occurs (i.e., the next level, *impression focus*, is less frequently experienced; Leary, 1995). As opposed to the concept of 'subjective self-awareness,' used to describe impression oblivion, impression awareness is characterised by *focal-self awareness*, or the state wherein we view ourselves from the perspective of others (Wegner & Giuliano, 1982). This level of impression consciousness is a necessity if we are to realise our self-presentational objectives. Consider the example of a footballer who is playing her first match for a new club. At first she 'lets the game come to her,' and monitors the environment at a preattentive level for opportunities to bolster her impression in the eyes of her coaches and teammates. After a bad pass that leads to the opposition scoring, she now worries that the error will foster the impression of a lack of ability – which conflicts with her self-image as an able player. Through experience, this player also knows that this may cause her to be dropped for the next match. Her impression monitoring shifts to impression awareness, as she is acutely aware that her subsequent impressions are much more goal-relevant (being able to play in the next match): she sets about restoring her public image through self-presentation. Impression awareness does, however, leave *some* attentional capacity for the task at hand (Leary, 1995).

At the opposite end of the continuum to impression oblivion is the complete domination of our thoughts by impression-related cognition. 'Impression focus' severely diminishes our attentional capacity for task-relevant cues, making performance in any life domain much more difficult (Leary, 1995). Indeed, when impression focus leads to single-minded self-presentational behaviour, we often exclude other important factors, and ironically risk conveying an undesired impression (Leary, 1995). In competitive sport, where decisions must often be made in a split-second, concentration is at a premium (Nideffer & Sagal, 1998). Impression focus in itself may therefore be disruptive to performance, and in turn lead to undesired impressions being conveyed. While this possibility has yet to be empirically tested in

sport, it has been clearly established that task-irrelevant cues or distractors impair performance, and limit the performer's chances of progressing at a pace in line with their ability (Orlick, 1992).

#### 2.1.4. *Situational Antecedents of Impression Motivation*

Impression motivation is: "the degree to which people desire to create certain impressions in others' minds in a particular situation" (Leary, 1995, p. 47).

The three primary motives for self-presentation may often be relevant for the individual – indeed, individuals can even become conditioned to associate effective self-presentation with the attainment of their desired outcomes – but people are not *always* motivated to self-present (Leary, 1995). Not all situations offer a self-presentational opportunity, and not all goals are impression-relevant (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985): impression motivation fluctuates depending on the situation, with particular circumstances heightening the availability of potential rewards. Further, an individual may be impression-motivated but not act on it, with impression efficacy and impression construction constraining one's self-presentational repertoire (reviewed in upcoming chapters). However, there are three main situation-specific factors that impact upon an individual's strength of impression motivation: (i) the *goal-relevance of the impressions to be made*, (ii) the *value placed on the desired goals*, and (iii) the *discrepancy between the desired and (perceived) current image* (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

When these factors converge, conscious self-presentation is necessary in striving to reach one's interpersonal objectives (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). An 'unfavourable' combination of these factors can result in extremely high impression motivation in a given social scenario. For example, impression motivation will gain increasing strength if an individual has placed great importance on their goals for a social interaction, they believe that conveying

a certain impression will fulfil their interpersonal objectives, and they perceive a discrepancy between the impression they want to convey and that which they are currently making (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Therefore, impression motivation is especially high when the characteristics of the context stimulate self-presentation. The different situational antecedents of impression motivation will be described in this section.

#### 2.1.4.1. *Goal-Relevance of Impressions*

The characteristics of a situation are major determinants of the *goal-relevance of impressions*. If one's task when in the presence of others is to fulfil a self-presentational motive, be that the primary task or an objective that is concurrently active alongside a more pressing task, impression motivation will be high (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Conversely, if one's impression will have no bearing on the achievement of a task, then impression motivation will be low. Leary and Kowalski (1990) identified three factors that influence the extent to which our *impressions are goal-relevant*.

First, when the behaviour gains *publicity* – be it through observation or second-hand accounts – it holds much more relevance for the individual's *public* image, thus making impressions more goal-relevant in that situation (Arkin, Appelman, & Berger, 1980; Baumgardner & Levy, 1987). The three primary functions of self-presentation (interpersonal influence, development of self, emotion regulation) are more easily fulfilled under public conditions. Baumeister and Jones (1978) investigated some of the conditions which influence the tone and content of our self-descriptions – a potential self-presentational strategy to convey pertinent information to others. They found that the motivation for compensatory self-enhancement (via self-description) is increased when an unfavourable evaluation of the individual has been made public.



In an investigation of identity bargaining in social interactions, participants attempted to get a date from a female confederate by displaying certain identity-relevant characteristics. However, half the sample were altercast in an identity incompatible with their private self (self-concept). In public conditions, participants' self-presentational strategies were not distinguishable based on the altercasting versus non-altercasting; but in private, the confederate's 'attacks' on the participant's self-concept led to greater defensiveness and derogation toward the role-play partner (Blumstein, 1975). This suggests that publicity is a boundary condition that can override one's natural response to demands on the self-concept. Other self-focused tactics, such as presenting oneself as friendly, are a means of avoiding negative evaluations from important others. Participants who were impression-motivated by the degree of publicity and contact with their university lecturers/tutors reported using this form of self-presentation most frequently (Valerius & Parr, 1997).

The public-private distinction is at the heart of the entire impression management/self-presentation literature. Early research in the area was prompted by the assertion that self-presentational motives may explain many of the findings previously attributed purely to intrapsychic phenomena. Accordingly, investigations were designed that provided evidence for an interpersonal explanation of cognitive dissonance (Gaes, Kalle, & Tedeschi, 1978; Schlenker, Forsyth, Leary, & Miller, 1980) and reactance (Baer, Hinkle, Smith, & Fenton, 1981), for example. The theme in this research was that dissonance effects and reactance phenomena were observed in heightened impression management conditions, rendering the intrapsychic explanation less tenable. Baumeister and Tice (1986) admit that this led to competing explanations between different theorists, and they proceeded to reconcile the conflict by suggesting that: "The same behavioral (sic) pattern may in fact derive in different circumstances from different causal processes. Self-presentation and intrapsychic motives may often be just alternative causal pathways" (p. 69). Hence, publicity, or *publicness*, is a major contributor to

impression motivation when the underlying motive is self-presentational (Leary, 1995).

By its very nature, sport entails public behaviour, especially at higher standards where details of team and individual performances are more widely publicised. But at all standards of competition there will be a between-events variation in publicity, perhaps a function of the popularity of the opponent. Therefore, it can be assumed that this motivating factor is especially transient for athletes. Other factors which potentially alter the pertinence of publicity for the athletes' self-presentation include the sport that one competes in (i.e., some sports are followed by a larger audience), region in which one competes (i.e., certain sports are especially popular in specific geographical locations), and the available forums for their exploits to be publicised (i.e., bulletin boards, internet chatrooms, social networking sites, local papers, newsletters, etc.). In their qualitative investigation of self-presentational stress, James and Collins (1997) found publicity to be a major contributor to athletes' impression motivation. For example, a female dressage rider was quoted as saying "At the national championships, you've got the press there, the best in the country there, the international selectors there, all the best horses...someone taking your photo, someone looking for the next young rider championship squad there, and you make one mistake and that's it!" (p. 29). Aside from "nature of competition," other stress sources that had publicity and heightened impression motivation at their centre were "significant other stressors," and "competitive anxiety and doubts."

*Dependency* is perhaps more important to the athlete than overall publicity. In self-presentation terms, dependency: "refers to the degree to which a person's outcomes are contingent on the behavior (sic) of another person' (Leary, 1995, p. 56). Team sports in particular require close cooperation between members, and the individual's self-presentational goals may be thwarted by uncoordinated and selfish play from a team lacking cohesion. Individual-based sportspeople also require assistance from coaches,

trainers, and squad-mates, and are motivated to manage their impressions accordingly. Athletes may also be more impression-motivated when in the presence of a small group of people on whom they are dependent for desired outcomes (e.g., a selection committee), than to a much larger group of 'less important' observers (e.g., spectators; Stires & Jones, 1969). Of course, impression motivation is a highly subjective cognition, and one person may value the adulation of a large crowd over praise from a select few. As with increased publicity of performance, dependency on significant others emerged as a determinant of heightened impression motivation in athletes experiencing competitive stress (James & Collins, 1997).

A third factor that is proposed to alter the goal-relevance of impressions, and is inextricably tied to both the publicity and dependency of self-presentation, is expected *future interaction* with the target. Leary (1995) suggests that 'one-shot interactions' generally carry less self-presentational value than when future interaction will be required. Anticipated future interaction thus motivates self-presentation, as it is not preferable to have to coexist with a person of whom you have developed a negative impression, and vice-versa (Gergen & Wishnov, 1965). Although such 'one-shot interactions' in sport are rare (e.g., pre-season trials), they accordingly increase the athlete's dependency, thus making their goals more impression-relevant. While it may not be as powerful, the 'expected future interaction' motivator is more prevalent in sport. Indeed, anticipation of failure or embarrassment in front of teammates and coaches sensitised athletes to the importance of impression management because of the inevitability of future interactions (James & Collins, 1997). If an athlete wishes to be instructed by a highly-respected coach, they will need to ensure that they 'audition' in a manner befitting being the future recipient of that person's expertise (cf. James & Collins, 1995). The initial positive impressions formed of the athlete will need to be maintained, but impression motivation will often gradually decline as the athlete and coach get to know each other over time, and their mutual impressions strengthen. In sum, it is clear that the three preceding situational

factors – *publicity, dependency, and expected future interaction* – alter the degree to which an individual believes their impressions are goal-relevant (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

#### 2.1.4.2. *Value Placed on Desired Goals*

When one's interpersonal goals are impression-relevant the value one places on those objectives in a given situation alters the strength of impression motivation elicited (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This is, of course, highly subjective – two individuals will apply different value judgements to the same impression-relevant goal. Three main elements contribute to situation-to-situation variability in *the value placed on desired goals*.

First, if the availability of a resource is lessened for whatever reason, its value rises. Selection procedures in organisational and sport settings are obvious examples, with a limited number of places often attracting many candidates for a position. If an interpersonal goal (resource) is objectively or subjectively scarce, self-presentational behaviours designed to attain the goal are motivated (Leary, 1995). James and Collins (1997) observed that when sporting rewards are scarce, due to the nature of the competition that they have entered (i.e., in terms of importance and difficulty), athletes experience heightened impression motivation. When the self-presentational motive is interpersonal influence, suitably esteemed targets may not always be available, certain audiences are harder to please and/or do not display their satisfaction readily; similarly, development of self is more difficult when the opportunity for identity- or esteem-relevant feedback is limited; and in terms of emotion regulation, certain situations compel forms of self-presentation that override the desire to present one's emotions more expressively (Finkel & Campbell, 2001). In all of these cases, impression motivation will be strong because they increase the value of goals for which one's impressions have been deemed relevant. And these contentions would

seem to be valid in all domains where conditions contrive to hamper the attainment of desired outcomes.

Second, the characteristics of the target can also strengthen one's impression motivation (the target's value and characteristics are also an important consideration in impression construction, section 2.2, but here they relate to strength of impression motivation). If the target possesses attractive qualities – often the same attributes that we wish others to believe we hold – one's impression motivation will rise when in their presence (Forsyth, Riess, & Schlenker, 1977). Leary (1995) clearly articulates this when asking: “Who are you most likely to want to impress?” (p. 58): would you be more impression-motivated toward a physically attractive person or an unattractive one, someone who is likeable or not, a person who is bright and intelligent or dull and dim-witted? The politically correct response would be the non-discriminatory one, but in truth it is likely to be the former in each pair. Equally, the sportsperson would be more likely to perceive a need to impression-manage to a highly competent, knowledgeable target, *especially* when this ‘high-strength other’ can dispense a desired reward (James & Collins, 1997).

As mentioned, attractiveness itself is an attractive quality that might influence impression motivation. When combined with expertise, physical attraction toward the counselor holds a powerful influence in the effectiveness of therapeutic relationships (Strong & Dixon, 1971), and a client's first impressions of the helping professional – of which attractiveness is an unavoidable component – contributes to an expectation regarding the likelihood of continued involvement with them (Lubker, Visek, Geer, & Watson, 2008). In general, too, self-presentational effort is motivated in cross-sex heterosexual relationships because such couplings are perceived as more important and more tenuous than same-sex relationships (Leary *et al.*, 1994; Nezlek, 1993). In many sports, females still have male coaches, and while they may or may not be sexually attracted to them, they may

perceive the relationship as more tenuous than they would with a same-sex coach. And of course, homosexual attraction may raise an athlete's impression motivation to some teammates over others. The same argument extends to other team personnel besides the coach and teammates (e.g., training staff, medical, management). Such interpersonal nuances would *potentially* impact the effectiveness of these relationships, with undesired performance consequences.

Third, an individual will feel a heightened desire to impression-manage when they fear disapproval and/or need approval from others. While the need for approval is an enduring trait (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), this is an unstable factor in impression management terms as certain events alter its primacy. Recently damaged self-esteem can heighten an individual's desire to gain approval, thus motivating self-presentation (Miller & Leary, 1992). This factor may fluctuate in athletes who compete frequently and are currently performing inconsistently. James and Collins (1997) quote the following sentiments from their interviewees, all of which imply heightened impression motivation to counteract the distress they have obviously experienced: "All your players look at you and think, 'I can't believe you did that'..." "I think that I'm going to let my team down"; and "They [will] be thinking, 'She's not good enough. She shouldn't be in the team'" (p. 28). A sportsperson who is not experienced enough to have fully solidified their public image may also seek approval at every opportunity, to bolster their fledgling athletic identity. By inference, the value of approval will become less important the more secure the athlete's status becomes (Leary, 1992).

#### 2.1.4.3. *Discrepancy Between Desired & (Perceived) Current Social Image*

Having been on the NFL beat for 20 years now, I'm well versed in the conflict that arises at times between a player's public image and his private life. I've covered numerous star players who talked the talk, but

came nowhere near walking the walk. Sterling reputations can look gleaming on the outside but appear considerably less shiny in other lights. The public image is not necessarily the private reality. The hard-earned reputation may not be backed up by all their words or deeds (Banks, 2009, paras. 9-10).

Another extremely important determinant of the strength of one's impression motivation is the discrepancy one perceives between how one is, and one may, be perceived in the future (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). An individual may enter a social encounter with such a discrepancy in mind, or something might happen in the situation to create this perception. In both cases, their impression motivation will be stronger than if they believed that their current and desired images were matching (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). These thoughts are clearly subjective, but occasionally the individual will receive convincing feedback that a prior, or indeed current, event has impaired their public image; thus, greater importance is placed on subsequent opportunities to self-present (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Baumgardner, Lake, & Arkin, 1985).

Impression motivation may also fluctuate *during* an interaction or other form of social 'performance,' when an unanticipated contingency arises (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). That is, while the performer can hope to predict possible problems – such as difficult-to-answer questions in a job interview – and ways to cope with them, they will not be able to anticipate every problematic scenario. Research suggests that numerous 'self-presentational tactics' are employed to counter a negative discrepancy between desired and perceived-current social images (Apsler, 1975; Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Frey, 1978; Schneider, 1969; Weary & Arkin, 1981). When an individual believes their public identity has been damaged and needs to be restored, they might be compelled into assertive self-presentational action (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Lindskold, 1976; see Table 2.1). Conversely, if the individual lacks impression efficacy for self-promotion or exemplification (assertive) tactics,

perhaps because of the magnitude of discrepancy between their perceived current and desired image, supplication strategies that engender perceptions of helplessness and a need for nurturance might be preferred (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

It has been theorised that self-presentation *by association* is motivated when a recent event has caused a discrepancy between one's perceived and preferred public image (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976). Individuals tended to associate themselves with a positive source – a 'boasting' tactic, and were less likely to associate with a negative source, after suffering a personal failure experience. This pattern was mediated by the audience's connection with the object of the individual's association: if the audience does not share one's association with the source of the boasting, your bond to them has greater prestige (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976).

Leary and Kowalski (1990) assert that over time people develop a 'latitude of acceptable images' in a life domain. Consider the film director who, after making four or five quality movies, releases a widely criticised motion picture. The quality of their previous work means that their image can withstand a temporary setback. However, an individual with a narrow 'latitude of acceptable images' will have their impression motivation heightened when a situation arises demanding that an impression is conveyed that falls outside of their boundaries in that context (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Therefore, an athlete may be able to use forums other than the competitive arena, such as the clubhouse, training ground, and social events, to create and maintain a wide latitude of images that protects them against the negative consequences of a self-presentational setback during competition. An example of this was provided by a basketball player in Payne's (2004) qualitative investigation of competitive distress in collegiate basketball:



I get...coz I'm so competitive I need the ball and I need to score coz I know that if I score we're gonna get points on the board and it might help us win. But when I see them, they're like, they're not even looking at me or they're dribbling around like, I take it personally, like I think, "Why aren't you giving me the ball?!" – I get so frustrated and I shout at 'em, which is terrible, I know, but I can't help it. I apologise to them after but then I think on the bus afterwards, "Well, they don't play as much as me, and I know they're trying, they're trying real hard, they just...don't see it. So I do know what it's like coz I've been there before, I've played at a level where I played real good people and they get on your case because, you know, you're not giving them the ball and stuff...But it's tough... (*unpublished Bachelors dissertation*)

The basketballer in question clearly articulated how different personas, or phenomenal selves, are active during a game and after. And sometimes self-presentational behaviours, such as the apologising he cites, are necessary to reconcile the incongruent images that can appear between the sub-domains of sport.

In their investigation of trampolinists' experiences of lost move syndrome, Day, Thatcher, Greenlees, and Woods (2006) found that some of the sources of pressure that contribute to the phenomenon may be self-presentational. In particular, participants chose not to discuss their problem with teammates or parents because it would make them look "wimpy," "stupid," lacking courage, or that it would appear a cry for attention; thereby creating a discrepancy between their desired and actual public image. Trampolinists also disclosed concerns that not being able to overcome the condition would disappoint their coach and make them feel like all the training was wasted time; for example: "She'd spent ages with me trying to get me to do things well and now I felt like I was losing it totally" (p. 159). Although the data did not suggest that heightened impression motivation was *causing* the syndrome, it made a convincing case that barriers to performance are related to the athletes' impression management cognitions. The literature on self-presentation concerns in sport may also be relevant here, with concerns about appearing untalented, lacking form, unable to cope with pressure, etc. (Williams *et al.*, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998),

perhaps indicating a perceived discrepancy between one's current public image and a preferred alternative. Finally, James and Collins (1997) provided exemplar quotes from athletes that described how making mistakes during performance, perceived lack of readiness, and adverse environmental demands (e.g., extreme cold) can increase impression motivation to re-stabilise the balance between their desired and currently damaged public image.

#### *2.1.5. Summary: The self-presentational motive in sport: Evidence for the model and future research directions*

Theoretically, the self-presentational motive is very important in sport because it underpins a range of behaviours, has consequences for individual and team-level functioning, and may be implicated in affective responses which also carry over to performance (Leary, 1992). These possibilities need to be examined because until they are, a potentially insightful route to understanding the athlete is left unopened. First generation research has associated a variety of behaviours with self-presentational motives, but not investigated the motives explicitly. For example, Wann and Porcher (1998) theorised that having their names on their uniform increased the identifiability of ice hockey and American football players, and led them to use aggression as an impression construction strategy to create valued identities. Similarly, a number of first generation studies have merely implied self-presentational motives and the frequency of heightened impression motivation by assessing self-presentation concerns and sources of competitive stress. Based on the available literature, it is difficult to accurately assess the feasibility of the impression management model in sport, but examples of first, second, and third generation research questions can be postulated nevertheless.

Perhaps due to the focus on self-presentational anxiety in sport, and the ability of self-presentation concerns to predict competitive anxiety, impression management may *appear* a maladaptive process; or at least one that has not yet received attention with a positive slant. Dig deeper, however, and self-presentation concerns research has painted a promising picture of athletes as mostly confident in how they are perceived by others. This should prompt a line of enquiry focused on the notion of impression motivation as a potentially healthy construct in sport: for example, the intrapsychic and interpersonal benefits a person derives from self-presentational motive fulfilment (cf. Grove & Dodder, 1982; Leary *et al.*, 1986) and beneficial group-level outcomes associated with effective self-presentation of its members (what are they, when are they elicited, and how). Further, does the collective sum of impression motivation of a team of individuals contribute to positive or negative group-level dynamics, such as the different facets of motivational climate, cohesion, and collective efficacy?

To facilitate this type of research, measures of impression motivation for sport populations are required. As well as answering first generation “Is” questions, scales that assess self-presentational motives (trait strength of...) and impression motivation (state strength of...) will enable second and third generation research. For example, do different self-presentational motives predict related behaviours, under what conditions does the effect occur, to what extent is the effect mediated by state impression motivation, and do the team sport versus individual sport contexts provide different self-presentational opportunities (cf. Carron *et al.*, 2004; Wong *et al.*, 1993)? Publicly associating oneself with successful, attractive, powerful, popular, or otherwise esteemed persons is an indirect form of impression management (Cialdini, 1989). Hence, athletes may ingratiate themselves with ‘key’ team members in the lead up to trials, for example, in the hope that they will have a better chance of being selected because of the association – a pre-emptive self-presentation tactic in case of a poor showing at the trials, perhaps. Desired sporting outcomes may also elicit ‘basking in reflected glory’ or

'burnishing' social association behaviours designed to impress team selectors, coaches, and/or captains; as in, we *must* hold certain desirable attributes simply because we have a prior association with a person of public esteem. Impression motivation is a central process in a constellation of cognitions that manifest behaviourally as self-presentation, but the magnitude of its role in relation to impression efficacy and impression construction is less clear, no matter the branch of psychology in which it has received attention.

Knowledge of longitudinal changes in self-presentation motives and impression motivation, and what brought about such changes, would be helpful in understanding an individual's behaviour. In sport and physical activity contexts, health-damaging behaviours such as playing through pain, risking re-injury, disordered eating, and substance abuse can arise from a subjective pressure to create a certain image (Martin Ginis & Leary, 2004; Miller, 2008). Indeed, after having put themselves forward for selection the athlete soon realises that making the team, being given the opportunity to play once in the squad, and maintaining effective relationships with their team-mates and coaches largely relies on careful management of the impression others are forming of them (Payne, 2004, *unpublished Bachelors dissertation*). Hence, self-presentation can alter with time and situational inducements, and a better understanding of fluctuations in motives and impression motivation would assist in the design of interventions to attenuate the possibility of athletes engaging in risky behaviours.

Research has investigated the inferences we make of people based on the sport that they play (Linder, Farrar, Sadalla, Sheets, & Bartholomew, 1992; Sadalla *et al.*, 1988), and how opponents' appearance and body language can influence our outcome expectancies (Greenlees, Bradley, Holder, & Thelwell, 2005; Greenlees *et al.*, 2005; Greenlees, Leyland, Thelwell, & Filby, 2008; Grove, Hanrahan, & McInman, 1991), but not our self-presentational responses (affective, motivational) to these stimuli. It may be

possible to ask athletes how they feel about the prospect of playing against the athlete about whom they have formed an impression, in terms of how this shapes or otherwise alters their own self-presentational cognitions (goals, motivation, impression construction, impression efficacy). Such research would enhance our understanding of the boundary conditions (second generation research) for self-presentation in sport, including the temporality of impression management cognitions; i.e., in what order do athletes report experiencing the cognitions?

It would be interesting to observe how those athletes high and low in impression motivation (and impression efficacy) attribute both the actual result and self-presentational goal-related outcomes in different ways; and how these compare to findings of attribution research already available. Athletes at all standards often place great emphasis on their sporting involvement (Lamont-Mills & Christensen, 2006), and may thus act on self-presentational opportunities to develop the athletic component of their identity. Athletes often behave in ways which will improve their perceived social regard, and leader athletes in particular are keen to maintain their status through demonstrating a strong work ethic (Wright & Côté, 2003). Research has investigated the experiences of and self-presentational implications for soccer players recently demoted to a substitute role (Woods & Thatcher, 2009). Do those high or low in athletic identity, leaders in sport versus 'regular' squad members, and starters versus bench players – all variables of interest to impression management researchers – attribute events differently according to their impression motivation?

Ultimately, convincing others that one possesses desirable characteristics, and are thus worthy of some reward (i.e., demonstrating social influence), is an inherent aspect of sport (James & Collins, 1995, 1997). Athletes desire to play and to be given the chance to display their talent, but this ambition can be stifled if a higher-status agent holds an image of the athlete that is discrepant from that which they desire. Research must address the

possibility that impression motivation is involved in athletes: having a fulfilling versus unsatisfying sporting experience; making career progress or being held back; being seen as a positive member of the team versus a destructive one, and the consequences of this; and experiencing distracting or task-focusing thoughts related to their image. The impression management model requires much research if it is to be updated and made specific to the sport domain.

## *2.2. Determinants of Impression Content: Impression Construction*

Individuals may maintain a general awareness of, and motivation toward, their impression-related goals, without actually acting on them. As discussed above, the strength of their impression motivation depends on the characteristics of the situation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990); when a person is motivated to create a certain impression, they may alter their behaviour to be more impression-relevant: they will have to choose what impression to create and precisely how to do so. This cognitive process is termed impression construction and, like impression motivation, is influenced by both transient and enduring intra- and interpersonal variables and dispositions which determine the content of our self-presentations (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Indeed, impression construction is an all-encompassing task, as: 'People attempt to create impressions not only of their personal attributes, but also of their attitudes, moods, roles, status, physical states, interests, beliefs, and so on' (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 39). Impression construction helps explain why people choose one self-presentational tactic over another. The specifics of the impression to be conveyed are determined through the interplay of five primary influences: two of which pertain to the individual's private image (self-concept, desired and undesired identity images), and three rely on continuously unfolding situational factors (constraints imposed by the role,

the values of the target audience, one's current or potential social image; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

### 2.2.1 *Self-Concept*

The self-concept, otherwise known as *self-image* or *self-theory* reflects how an individual conceptually represents him- or herself (Wang, 2006); it is the 'Me' as known by the 'I.' Self-concept is a psychological construct of significant import, and has social, interpersonal, and societal determinants; it is reciprocally determined and acted out by and in the interplay between the groups one occupies (family, workplace, sports, religion), the behaviours demanded of oneself in those groups, and the macro level social pressures that impact on such groups (Bem, 1972; Gergen, 1977). In essence, one's self-concept holds descriptions of oneself, in the form of 'facts' – 'proven' through experience - and untested hypotheses (hence, 'self-theory'; Epstein, 1973). The facts of one's self-concept are often powerful and stable enough to resist change or fluctuations (Sullivan, 1953; Swann, 1983, 1987; Swann & Read, 1981), but life experiences provide a testing ground which often modifies how we conceptualise ourselves. Further, self-concept is not a unidimensional construct, but instead has a hierarchical structure (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976); one's overall self-concept has sub-areas, or components, that include our physical bodies (e.g., the physical self), personal characteristics, social relationships (e.g., the family self), biographies, and even our personal possessions, but also the roles we play and the beliefs we consciously hold (Leary, 1995). In turn, these components have unique contents and structure, and each is accorded different importance between individuals (Epstein, 1973).

The self-concept is a complex, multi-faceted construct, but it is easier to comprehend when we realise that a global self-conception is not always on display – our possible dimensions are not *all* 'active' at any one time (Leary,

1995). The 'phenomenal self' represents the portion or sub-category(ies) of the self-concept that is(are) present in conscious awareness in a given situation (Rhodewalt, 1986); thus, those available for self-presentation. Activation of a particular phenomenal self is motivated by situational inducements as to which of one's self-conceptions are currently desired, and this explains why people self-present to obtain feedback for their desired selves (Byrne, 1984; Kunda & Santioso, 1989). The presentable aspects of the self-concept are otherwise known as self-schemata (Markus & Sentic, 1982), and: "are responded to faster, held with greater confidence, and are more resistant to persuasion than are other descriptors of self that could be, but are not, self-schematic" (Tesser & Moore, 1986, p. 109). As such, it is the situation and the person's underlying variety of self-concepts (i.e. their self-schemata) that interact to determine which component(s) will be most salient given the circumstances, and thus constrain self-presentation (Bargh, 1982; Bem & Allen, 1974; Higgins, King, & Mavin, 1982; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1980; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

An athlete who has much invested in their role and defines themselves in terms of similarities and differences with other athletes (a strong 'athletic identity'; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993), will likely enact behaviours that are representative of their physical and sporting self-concepts and their status within their sporting subculture (Stryker, 1968). It is the working body that provides an interface between the athlete's personality and cognitions, and their sporting environment (Fox, 2000). Hence, athletes often call on their most automatic self-schemata, and their phenomenal self may thus emphasise their physical and athletic selves. Grove *et al.* (2004) assessed athletic identity prior to, and at two time points after, selection for state all-star teams was announced. For those athletes who made the team, athletic identity scores remained stable over time, but for the unsuccessful candidates, athletic identity scores significantly decreased post-non-selection (Grove *et al.*, 2004). Grove *et al.* interpreted the latter group's reported changes in identity as a self-protection strategy to dampen the negative



impact of non-selection on their self-concept. Further, the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer *et al.*, 1993) invoked these thoughts *and* publicised them (to the researchers), thus the responses can be seen as protective self-presentation to an internal (private self/self-concept) and external (public self/desired identity image) audience.

One's self-concept may impact how we self-present primarily by exerting an influence on our impression efficacy. That is, the view an individual has of themselves determines their perception of whether or not a particular impression will be successful, and thus whether it should be constructed (Gergen, 1968). Indeed, self-presentation 'believability' is very important when constructing one's social identities (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Research with undergraduates has demonstrated that those with strong impression efficacy prefer to be seen as they see themselves, and this is supported by the finding that judges accurately perceived the presenter (i.e., consistent with the presenter's self-concept; Nave & Furr, 2007); their high impression efficacy gives them the confidence to display aspects of their self-concept that a low impression efficacy individual would be unsure about. Those low in impression efficacy also seek to ensure congruence between their self-presentation and self-concept, but it may not be facets of their self-concept that will help them *enhance* their public image (Maddux *et al.*, 1988). In any case, most people would choose to display *appropriate* aspects of self at *opportune* moments, rather than attempting to convey an unrealistic impression (Goffman, 1959); a disposition Leary and Kowalski (1990) termed an 'internalised ethic against lying.' In the majority of individuals, interpersonal behaviour is strategic, but not deceitful. If an individual does not believe that they hold certain desirable characteristics then they will generally not claim them. It is only the minority whose internalised ethic against lying is not so well developed, and these people are likely to be 'caught out' anyway if they are not who they seem to be (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

### 2.2.2 *Desired and Undesired Identity Images*

[At the pre-fight weigh-in and physical] “You’re too ugly!” [Cassius] Clay shouted [at opponent Sonny Liston]. “You are a bear! I’m going to whup you so baaad. You’re a chump, a chump, a chump...” Clay’s voice was shrill, his eyes were bugging out, and he was lunging around like a mental patient.....[Then later, back at Clay’s house]...“Why did you do that?” [Clay’s physician, Dr. Ferdie Pacheco] asked Clay. “Why did you act so nutty up there in front of all those people?” Clay leaned forward and said, “Because Liston thinks I’m a nut. He is scared of no man, but he is scared of a nut. Now he doesn’t know what I’m going to do” (Remnick, 1998, pp. 179-180).

Self-presentation is often motivated by the belief that others can verify one’s desired identities (Hogan & Briggs, 1986). Therefore, impressions are constructed that will convey a *desired identity image* and subsequently, impressions are managed so as not to be consistent with *undesired* identity images (Gergen & Taylor, 1969; Ogilvie, 1987; Schlenker, 1985). Identities can be desired for the private self or public self, and Leary and Kowalski’s (1990) model highlights three important points of connection between impression management of a public self and the private self. These include: (1) “one’s standards for self-evaluation are implicated both in motivating impression-relevant behavior (sic) and in determining the form that impression management takes”; (2) “one’s private self-concept has an impact on one’s self-presentational choices”; and (3) “one’s desired and undesired selves channel the impressions one attempts to convey” (pp. 43-44).

The self-concept, discussed above, biases an individual’s impression construction toward the person they are, while their desired identity images influence them to construct according to who they would like to be (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1985). Hence, if a person’s desired selves reflect their values and ideals, they will want to convey these characteristics to others and gain self-verification. However, when the audience has the

influence to dispense a highly desired reward (i.e., a material outcome), and the individual *knows* that they have a contrasting moral stance on a pertinent issue, they will be faced by a self-presentational dilemma (Leary, 1995). The choice made by the individual is important, as it has been shown that people often begin to internalise the image that they present to others. Therefore, presenting oneself as possessing one's own desired attributes, or that of others, may actually lead the individual to his or her desired self or the public self dictated as appropriate by the situation (Fazio, Effrein & Falender, 1981; Pin & Turndorf, 1990; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985; Tice, 1992).

Using survey methodology, in a sample of 314 competitive athletes males reported being aware of the need to convey impressions related to specific fitness factors (e.g., strength), competence, aggression, and honed mental attributes; whereas females emphasised competence, specific fitness factors, determination, and sport specific skills (James & Collins, 1995). Follow-up interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of participants, and the identities cited as important to hold were also perceived to facilitate career progression in sport. Thus, this study provided evidence for the connection between self-presentational motives (development of self, social and material outcomes), impression construction (desired identity images), and behaviours that tie them together (e.g., strength work). A further investigation would be to ask participants whether they perceive control over some desired impressions and not others, or are more efficacious towards some. It was unclear from the study abstract (a NASPSPA conference presentation; the authors could not be contacted for further information) whether James and Collins created a list of desired impressions and had participants check the ones that applied to them, or solicited open-ended responses and subsequently categorised these. This is important, because if it was the latter, participants may have been biased toward, and thus listed, those impressions for which they felt most efficacious; of course, this would limit the implications that can be inferred from the results.

The findings of James and Collins (1995) are perhaps not surprising, as anecdotal evidence attests to the contingency between desired outcomes such as sponsorship, captaincy, playing opportunities, even squad places and post-playing sport-related career prospects, and others having formed positive impressions of the athlete. For example, football player John Terry was stripped of his England captaincy by coach Fabio Capello as a direct result of allegations about his private life. Capello said this at the time: "I ask the captain to set an example for young people. What he did was not good. I told him this, he understood" ("Capello will not reappoint Terry as England Captain," BBC Sport, 28 February, 2010). Similarly, the self-presentation concerns in sport literature has explored the types of impressions that athletes are worried about or fear that others will form of them, and by implication, speak to the types of identities that athletes want to hold. By this logic, athletes would attempt to construct impressions that counter the possibility of appearing athletically untalented or unable to cope with pressure; lacking form or otherwise not able to meet others' performance expectations; appearing fatigued or lacking energy; and having a poor general appearance or physical self-presentation (Williams *et al.*, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). With much invested in their athletic identity, feedback from important others that suggests the possession of undesirable impressions would deter certain deleterious self-presentational behaviours. Hence, the desired identity image impression construction factor constrains self-presentation.

While it may be possible to develop desired identities when participating in sport (fit, healthy, attractive, composed) – or that these identities will facilitate other desired outcomes (selection, significant role in the play) – it is possible that certain sports are selected for involvement on the basis that they will aid the development of a desired identity. The research of Sadalla *et al.* (1988) indicates that people attribute different qualities and personality characteristics to athletes according to their sport. Specifically, golfers were perceived as most cultured, calm, and honest; skiers as most attractive;

motocross riders as most active, and least cultured, calm, and honest; and ten-pin bowlers as least active and least attractive. Research is still needed that extends this line of enquiry to see if similar impressions are formed by populations other than college students. But Sadalla *et al.* (1988) cite Tversky and Kahneman (1974) in speculating that these types of stereotypes are highly accessible, and so the individual who engages in sport is presumably aware of them. Hence, the question remains, are people drawn to certain sports because it will help them fulfil identity development self-presentational motives? On this topic, Weiss (2001) suggests that sport has features that: “can make it an excellent way of satisfying the human need for identity reinforcement. This sort of motivation is based on external satisfactions associated mainly with displaying special skills in sports and receiving approval, status, or material rewards for performing well” (p. 393).

Arguably the most desired identity image in sport is a global one – athletic ability. This might be a higher order factor that subsumes the desired impressions of athletes uncovered by James and Collins (1995). And although the self-presentation concern of ‘appearing athletically untalented’ has consistently rated lower than the other self-presentation concerns (Eklund *et al.*, 1999; Payne & Greenlees, 2007; Wilson & Eklund, 1998), this might be because athletes in these samples had high sport efficacy that protects them from worry about their talent-related self-presentations. In fact, athletes’ strongest self-presentation concern in each of these studies was the appearance of current performance/composure inadequacies. Hence, it is possible to speculate that athletes are not worried about people believing that they lack talent, but they recognise that ‘form’ is more transient, and an observer might “catch them on a bad day.”

For those athletes who perceive an absence of outstanding talent in themselves, desired outcomes may still be attainable through the self-presentation of other important characteristics (namely, attitude-related qualities). This view is at least partly justified, as many coaches report that:

“they would choose an athlete with good behavior (sic) and favorable (sic) personality over an athlete with better sports skills, if the system allowed for such alternatives” (Johansson, 2010, p. 3). For these athletes, desired impressions may not revolve around athletic ability, and the behaviours required to achieve them may thus differ from ‘simple’ displays of athletic prowess. An interesting line of enquiry would be to take the quote from Johansson (2010) as a basis, and investigate whether the self-presentational motives of athletes who fit the above description are fulfilled or constrained by the status conferred on them through the impressions formed by others.

### 2.2.3 *Role Constraints*

In each role that we assume in life, certain constraints exist that alter the types of impressions that are deemed appropriate for that role. These constraints are specific to cultures and time periods. For example, UK governmental policy is now in place that prohibits acts of homophobia, sexism, ageism, and racism in most forums of life ([www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)). However, overtly discriminatory acts were, and unfortunately still are, commonplace in patriarchal, post-colonial societies, and such behaviours seemingly confirm(ed) the ‘superior’ identity of the protagonist (cf. Kapoor, 2008; McClintock, 1995; Racine, 2009). Such cultural prescriptions for behaviour are especially evident in the workplace, wherein a hierarchical ‘climate’ typically exists, which the new employee must willingly enter into to be accepted (Leary, Robertson, Barnes, & Miller, 1986). Indeed, role constraints also act as success criteria for impression management attempts (Jones, Gergen, & Jones, 1963). That is, if the individual does not live up to the expectations of others regarding their performance in a role, it will to a large extent represent a self-presentational failure on their part (Jones *et al.*, 1963; Piliavin, 1976).

Gender and gender role stereotypes also influence how males and females describe themselves (an often self-presentational behaviour). These stereotypes include not only traits, but role behaviours, physical characteristics, and occupational status (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Athenstaedt (2003) believes that gender is incorporated *into* the self, and used structural equation modelling to explore the structure of gender role self-concept. Apparently, women may perceive pressure to incorporate masculine role aspects – which are assigned higher value in society – into their self-concept. This is supported by evidence pointing to higher socially desirable responding in females than males when they admit to or deny socially undesirable characteristics (Athenstaedt, 2003). ‘Gender,’ and ‘gender roles,’ apparently hold different meanings for males and females, and this partly explains the different behaviours they respond with to the same stimulus.

Group norms – an extension of or precursor to role constraints – exert massive influence on the construction of suitable impressions in a context. Rejection from the group often results from an individual’s unwillingness to conform to social pressures (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950), thus robbing the individual of the self-presentational opportunities membership in the group brings. More specifically, if the individual has a social self-presentational motive (e.g., friendship), and is in a group with strong *normative social pressure*, they are more likely to conform to group influence (Kelley, 1952; Carron *et al.*, 2004). In an investigation of self-presentational sources of distress in a sixth-form college basketball squad, one player recounted a story of his joining a large external team:

...when I started playing basketball for [Big City team] there was a guy there called [Mr. X], and, umm, he played in the NBA, he played for the Dallas Mavericks, and when I went to this training session with the [Big City] team he was there and I just admired the guy straight away. He’s like, telling us what he did as a child, how much he practiced, what we have to do if we wanna be good; one training session he told me, the first session I went, actually, he said, “If you wanna be good you have to practice 3 hours a day... you can’t date, you can’t go to

parties” – I went home that day and I dumped my girlfriend and I started, I just changed my life completely...I admire the man (Payne, 2004; *unpublished Bachelors dissertation*).

This quote implies the player’s desire to gain recognition from the coach for employing a similar philosophy to him – in other words, conforming to squad-level pressures emanating from the coach. It would be informative to explicitly investigate the self-presentational underpinnings (motives) of conformity in sport; and how it differs with sport type, competitive standard, gender, and time spent with a particular squad of players.

An alternative stance on the issue of group norms is that certain sports may attract players precisely because they – and the associated norms – are different or ‘better.’ As told to Payne (2004, *unpublished Bachelors dissertation*):

...it’s quite a nice position to be in – whereas the rugby team are very much ‘in-your-face’ and that’s quite a big thing at [Big Town College], the basketball team, people will come up and ask you how you are getting on and stuff like that; people wanna know, which is nice. But people...I don’t think we’re seen as, we’re held up in the same way as the football or rugby team – I think there it is much more, I think it’s much more of an image thing there...I’d like to think that our basketball team is quite...coz we’re made up of quite a lot of different, very different people, in like our attitudes and how we’d like to be seen and stuff like that, *but I think that’s what makes us good...* (*emphases added*; unpublished Bachelors dissertation).

This sentiment may be a reflection of the cultural conventions available to storytellers within their sporting culture (Sparkes, 1997), and of their status within the squad: as a second year starter this player’s stories indicated that he had long since gained the acceptance of his peers and was in a position to articulate the values of the entire group (Donnelly & Young, 1988). Telling stories such as this may reflect a self-presentational tactic to aid the



development of an individual or group identity, which is constrained by the subculture and one's roles in this subculture (Sparkes & Partington, 2003).

#### 2.2.4 Target Values

The second situation-specific determinant of one's constructed impression relates to the perceived values of the intended audience. Of course, certain targets will not approve of behaviours (verbal, nonverbal) that may be entirely appropriate for a different audience. Selectively conveying impressions that will satisfy the value system of the targeted significant other is thus a primary determinant of impression content (Gaes & Tedeschi, 1978; Mori, Chaiken, & Pilner, 1987). Research has shown that, in preparation for an upcoming social encounter, some individuals (high self-monitors) are willing to incur a cost in order to obtain information about their interaction partner (Elliott, 1979). Clearly, the more one knows about the audience the better placed one is to tailor one's self-presentation to their value system.

Additional self-relevant information is involved in impression construction. For example, gender differences have been observed in the extent to which people consider the target's characteristics and perceived values when constructing an impression (Brown, Uebelacker, & Heatherington, 1998). Brown *et al.* (1998) investigated the impression construction process of people interacting with either a boastful, moderate, or self-deprecating study confederate. Male and female first-year undergraduates expected to discuss their academic achievements with an individual they thought was a peer, gave descriptions of their academic career to that point, and made predictions about their grade point average (GPA) for that semester. Male participants responded to the target's own self-presentational style by inflating their predicted GPAs most for the boastful 'peer,' and least in the self-deprecating condition. Females, on the other hand, did not inflate their GPAs for any target, and were actually less comfortable in providing a

prediction than the males. These findings indicate gender of the self-presenter as a potential moderator in the impact of target or audience characteristics and impression construction.

'The audience' can be broken down further according to different criteria. These include status of the audience and familiarity with the audience (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). The workplace exemplar is especially applicable to a consideration of the status of the audience in influencing impression construction: promotion chances would seem to hinge on those who make personnel decisions perceiving a combination of task ability and acceptance (von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981). The likelihood of acceptance can be boosted with the use of ingratiation self-presentation tactics, such as self-enhancement and flattery; indeed, these are more prevalent when in contact with high-status audiences than low-status audiences (Jones *et al.*, 1963; Kipnis & Vanderveer, 1971; Ralston, 1985). This motive is often so powerful that in some contexts the individual can be led to partake in risky behaviours, and/or behaviours which they are not qualified or experienced enough to perform, even when the target's values are erroneous (Leary, 1995).

Female boxers reported a pronounced difference in the responses they received from males involved in the sport – who often subjected them to sex discrimination and sexual harassment – and boxing crowds – also comprised mostly of males (Halbert, 1997). So, in the gym female boxers may self-present to gain recognition and respect from their male trainers, promoters, and counterparts, but their self-presentation when in the ring in front of a curious or surprised crowd may strive to promote the image of heart, courage, an active style, and ultimately, dispel stereotypes (Halbert, 1997). However, marketability – a material self-presentational motive that is theoretically discernable from, but often entwined with, identity development and social motives – often impedes or more tightly constrains the boxers' self-presentations to male promoters. A quote from one female boxer clearly exposes the dilemma they face between challenging sexist structural

constraints and retaining marketability: “What makes it work [for me] is that I’m 100% woman. I notice when I go to like the weigh-in, I notice how I’m treated by the men, and how my opponents are treated by the men. It’s different. I always dress very nice – of course, makeup, and my hair’s done, and everything” (p. 23).

First impressions are very important because they are relatively stable and tend to resist subsequent indications that they should be modified (Kleinke, 1975). Hence, impression construction is differentially affected by one’s familiarity with the target: if the audience does not know the self-presenter, and vice-versa, and yet self-presentational goals are relevant in the situation, one’s self-presentation will be consciously influenced by their perceived characteristics and values to a greater extent than with familiar interaction partners; especially as it relates to self-enhancement tactics to strangers (Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995), and gender of the target (Leary *et al.*, 1994). Similarity is implicated in impression construction too. Perceived similarity of the target to oneself foregrounds one’s self-concept, with strong similarities motivating self-presentational congruence between one’s private self and public self (Tesser & Moore, 1986). This phenomenon is magnified by the tendency of people to assume others are similar to them (the ‘false consensus effect’), and *when* the self-presentational motive is attraction (a social reward). When the target is perceived as dissimilar to oneself, but social motives are active nevertheless, individuals are capable of presenting a self that is discrepant from the self-concept (termed ‘projection’). Self-consciousness and closeness to the target mediate the relationship between self-concept and self-presentation: higher self-consciousness constrains the possibility of projecting to a dissimilar other, as does one’s closeness to that person (Byrne, 1971; Ross, Greene, & House, 1977; Sherwood, 1981). In sport, James and Collins (1995) found that athletes’ impression management attempts were aimed at those significant others who can mediate athletic rewards, but perceived familiarity and similarity with those individuals was not assessed.

Impression management research in group contexts suggests that size of the audience and “internal versus external audiences” are characteristics that influence impression construction. Gardner and Martinko (1988) cite research that displays how increases in group size alters the number of channels of communication that are open at any one time, and thus the cues for impression management each individual in the group receives (Bostrom, 1970). These contextual factors may increase impression motivation – depending on the perceived status of the other group members, for example – but it invariably shifts impression construction to more of a focus on verbal self-presentational tactics. Group size and its relation to impression management in sport has only been implied in group dynamics research on behaviours such as social loafing (e.g., Ingham, Levinger, Graves, & Peckham, 1974). The internal versus external audience influence on impression construction refers to whether self-presentation is aimed at an audience that is internal (e.g., co-workers) or external (e.g., visitors to one’s workplace) to the immediate group. Gardner and Martinko’s results suggest that individuals use more frequent self-description tactics to high-status external audiences than low-status external or internal audiences. Differential impression construction processes that occur as a function of the internality versus externality of the audience have not been investigated in sport.

### *2.2.5 Current and Potential Social Image*

The third situational factor that acts to constrain the impressions people attempt to construct is their perception of how they are currently regarded and how they may be perceived in the future, (presumably) as a result of their constructed impression (Ackerman & Schlenker, 1975). For example, in the case of self-description as a self-presentation tactic: “the potential for present or future invalidation of individuals’ self-presentation tends to make them more modest about their own abilities and attributes” (Bradley, 1978, p.

66). Indeed, self-presentation believability is important when constructing a social identity, and the target's knowledge of the individual constrains their potential public image (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). However, research shows that receiving a negative evaluation can sometimes convince an individual that dishonest or deceptive behaviour is justifiable, in order to re-stabilise their image (Aronson & Mettee, 1968; Baumeister, Cooper, & Skib, 1979; Baumeister & Jones, 1978).

Public attributions can influence a target's formation of an opinion regarding one's role in an event. The individual will be forced to decide whether the size of discrepancy between their current and potential social image is worth making defensive or self-enhancing attributions – which are acquisitive and bring some risk of embarrassment and/or refutation – versus counter-defensive attributions, which infer modesty or concern for others but are not so acquisitive (Bradley, 1978; Schlenker, 1980; Tetlock, 1980). In the context of self-descriptions, self-enhancers were disliked more than those who gave balanced self-descriptions because they were perceived as less honest; and self-deprecators were disliked more than those who gave balanced self-statements because they were judged to lack knowledge of themselves (Robinson, Johnson, & Shields, 1995). Overall, balanced self-presentations were associated with greater ratings of likeability and authenticity.

Ritual activity on the opening day of the sporting season has been examined from an impression management perspective (Ward, 1998). Based on archival data of 30 seasons (opening day games) of Major League Baseball, results confirmed that the home team won more on opening day than it did in must-win World Series home games (or the prior rounds of the league playoffs). This was transposed onto an analysis of the literature on ritualistic behaviours undertaken by players, coaches, and management on opening day, leading Ward (1998) to suggest that ritual behaviours are motivated to enhance the social image of the players and team.

Interviews with 47 present or former professional footballers uncovered the extensive use of humour and 'good banter' as self-presentation tactics that must accompany enthusiasm and hard work to regain lost status within the team context (Roderick, 2006). The rejection experienced by players can stem from: uncertainty regarding one's place in the team, perhaps due to the emergence of younger (and cheaper) talent; actual, rather than potential, demotion; injury; and most alarmingly, outright treatment as a 'non-person' by an incoming coach. Thus, these threats to their core identity as a footballer promote behaviours that will help them at least maintain the outward appearance, or social image, of a player who is devoted to the first-team and goals of management (Kunda, 1992; Roderick, 2006).

#### *2.2.6. Impression construction in sport: Evidence for the model and future research directions*

Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model forwards five factors that determine the content of one's constructed impression: two dispositional and three situation-specific. First, the self-concept is a particularly powerful dispositional influence because: it promotes a truthful presentation of accurate aspects of self; it evaluates the believability of the constructed impression before allowing it to be presented; and it evokes the internalised ethic against lying that most individuals rely on to maintain congruence between private and public selves (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Buss & Briggs, 1984; DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985; Gergen, 1968; Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980). The link between self-concept and impression management has been investigated in sport via the athletic identity construct (Grove *et al.*, 2004). Grove *et al.*'s findings suggest that athletes may distance themselves from the athlete role (i.e., lowered athletic identity scores) after failure as a self-protection mechanism. Similarly, the impression

management perspective on desired identity images has received a lack of research attention. Research suggests that athletes would prefer to create certain impressions (James & Collins, 1995), and that sport preference might serve an identity development objective (Leary *et al.*, 1986; Sadalla *et al.*, 1988).

The situational antecedents of impression construction interact with the self-concept and desired identities to influence the chosen self-presentation. Research on role constraints, including group norms, sex role expectancies, and those that reflect hierarchical structure, have provided only indirect evidence for the model of impression management in sport (i.e., Payne's 2004 investigation was of self-presentational distress in collegiate basketball, but inductive content emerged on group norms). In sport contexts, the values of pertinent targets of one's self-presentation may have to be assumed, and presumably this makes impression construction more difficult. Athletes may therefore find impression construction more challenging when the target is a coach or high-esteem captain, rather than one of their team-mates. Finally, one's current and/or potential social image – especially, the information a target has or may have about you – influences impression construction attempts (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Ward's (1998) take on rituals in elite sport, and Roderick's (2006) interviews with former professional footballers provide some insight into the strategies that athletes might adopt to maintain or bolster their public image.

In summary, research is required that acquires evidence for all aspects of the impression construction component of the model. With regards self-concept, a wider breadth of sporting successes and failures that have self-presentational implications could be investigated for their potential impact on the self-concept; under what conditions is the effect greatest and not so pronounced (Grove *et al.*, 2004)? Who athletes are and who they would like to be is invariably a self-presentational issue, and has clear implications for their well-being and satisfaction in sport; hence, there are links to be made

with other areas of sport psychology, such as, again, athletic identity, but also career transitions and the potential development of maladaptive coping strategies to cope with threats to self and identity inherent in the sport domain (cf. Anshel, Kang, & Miesner, 2010). With regards role constraints and target values: how does one's position in the club hierarchy constrain the self-presentations one proffers; what are examples of especially powerful group norms, and how do they exert an influence of impression construction; how do athletes judge the values of the target, and which do they prioritise when constructing an impression; and if they do not think they can satisfy the person's values, what self-presentational tactics do they employ then? Finally, the model would be boosted by research that identifies the circumstances under which athletes feel they have to repair a damaged image, how they go about doing so, and how they assess whether their plan has worked; conversely, what factors into athletes' decision to engage in off-field self-presentations, and what benefits do they anticipate deriving from this?

### 2.3. *Impression Efficacy*

From the outset it is necessary to delineate the appropriation of *impression efficacy* in preference over other terms that are offered in the literature. The term 'self-presentational efficacy' (Leary, 1983a) pre-dates impression efficacy (Leary, 1995), but the latter better captures, semantically, the interrelations between state impression motivation, impression construction, and efficacy for an attempted self-presentation. Further, it was preferred by Leary (1995) in a review of the literature which postdates his coining of the original term. An individual's impression efficacy judgement is influenced by two factors: presentational efficacy expectancy and presentational outcome expectancy. Presentational efficacy expectancy refers to whether or not the individual is sure they can execute behaviour(s) that will convey the desired



impressions; and presentational outcome expectancy refers to whether they think performing that behaviour(s) will lead to their social goal for the situation (Leary & Atherton, 1986; Maddux *et al.*, 1988); both factors are guided by experiences of past self-presentational successes and failures (Leary, 1983a,b; Leary & Atherton, 1986; Maddux *et al.*, 1988).

Hence, this perspective is greatly influenced by Bandura's (1977, 1997) social learning theory: when one is motivated to achieve a task – in this case the fulfilment of self-presentational motives – there is invariably an accompanying appraisal of: "one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required" (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Impression efficacy differs from self-presentational confidence, in that it is situation and task specific, rather than a global appraisal of one's self-presentational capabilities (Leary, 1995). The concept of impression efficacy must be a central component in any formulation of impression management, because self-presentational attempts are constrained by the individual's subjective probability of being successful (i.e., their impression efficacy); if impression management is an attempt to maximise one's reward:cost balance in social encounters (Schlenker, 1980), low impression efficacy tips the balance in an unfavourable direction.

There are many situational factors that influence one's perceived presentational efficacy expectancy and presentational outcome expectancy. Negative influences include: not knowing what impression to make or how to do so effectively; situations that involve ambiguous, contradictory, or novel roles, and when events unravel that are beyond the individual's control; a perception that the target is so esteemed that they will be very difficult to please; feelings of inadequacy due to unfavourable social comparison with the audience; and lack of knowledge about the target of one's self-presentation (Leary, 1980, 1995; Leary, Kowalski, & Bergen, 1988; Morse & Gergen, 1970; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1973). Positive influences include the converse of the above, and: knowing as much

as possible about what is likely to happen and how to act; situational impediments that are already in place for which self-presentational difficulties can be attributed (however, this implies a shift in the 'desired' impression, from 'truly desirable' to 'adequate given the circumstances'); and the ability to define a social encounter and one's role in it (Cast, 2003; Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1980, 1986, 1995; Leary *et al.*, 1988).

Trait influences are also involved in impression efficacy judgements. Snyder and Campbell (1982) suggest that low self-monitors will always self-present in accord with their self-concept (i.e., "being themselves") because their lack of impression efficacy halts efforts to the contrary. Also, compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors: tend to attempt to accumulate information about their partners in upcoming interactions; are better able to notice and accurately remember that information; like to anticipate how the interaction will unfold; and are good at influencing the behaviour of others in social situations (Geizer, Rarick, & Soldow, 1977; Jones & Baumeister, 1976; Krauss, Geller, & Olson, 1976; Kulik & Taylor, 1981); that is, they turn some of the potentially negative influences on impression efficacy (e.g., lack of information about the upcoming encounter, perceived inability to influence the target) into positives. Hence, it follows that low self-monitors, who do not do these things, would find novel and/or ambiguous situations more threatening than would high self-monitors.

Impression efficacy is posited as the moderating variable in the impression motivation-social anxiety relationship: when impression motivation is strong, different levels of impression efficacy are associated with varying degrees of felt anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Conversely, when impression motivation is *not* heightened by situational characteristics anxiety experienced by the individual would not have impression management as its source (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Anxiety is not the only consequence of impression efficacy, however: as it is a limiting factor in self-presentation the fulfilment of personally important goals is also at stake – especially if low

impression efficacy compels the person to completely avoid certain situations (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). This is identified as a barrier to exercise; impression efficacy *has* been assessed in exercise contexts – primarily in relation to social anxiety and social physique anxiety (Angove, Martin Ginis, & Sinden, 2003; Fleming & Martin Ginis, 2004; Gammage, Hall, & Martin Ginis, 2004; Gammage, Martin Ginis, & Hall, 2004; Lamarche, Gammage, & Strong, 2009) – but it has not in sport.

Infrequent self-presentation concerns during competition, as conceptualised by the developers of the Self-Presentation in Sport Questionnaire (SPSQ; Wilson & Eklund, 1998), implies either enduringly high impression motivation and high impression efficacy, or enduringly low impression motivation. Payne and Greenlees (2007) investigated the ability of dispositional self-presentation concerns to predict competitive state anxiety. A heterogeneous sample of team and individual sport athletes completed the SPSQ and revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2R; Cox, Martens, & Russell, 2003) before a competition. Of particular interest, athletes reported infrequent trait self-presentation concern and fairly high pre-competition self-confidence (Payne & Greenlees, 2007). Self-presentation concerns accounted for 31.7% of the intensity of self-confidence, but the only significant negative predictor was self-presentation concerns about appearing athletically untalented. Thus, state self-confidence for that competition in particular was closely allied with an overall lack of concern about appearing untalented. This suggests that, for that competition at least, participants were low in impression motivation or had matching perceived impression efficacy. However, impression efficacy was not measured, so there remains a need to do so if a fuller understanding of impression management is to be achieved.

### 2.3.1 Summary: Impression efficacy in sport: Evidence for the model and future research directions

There is indirect evidence only that the construct of impression efficacy is relevant for sportspeople. Impression efficacy is apparent from James and Collins' (1997) exploration of self-presentational sources of competitive stress, and the self-presentation concerns in sport literature implies impression efficacy but does not directly measure it. Hence, first generation impression efficacy research questions have yet to be fully and directly investigated in sport; for instance, we assume that impression efficacy is implicated in self-presentation concerns, but we can only infer that it interacts with impression motivation to elicit self-presentational competitive stress. Of course, the lack of an available measure of efficacy for self-presentational outcomes or presentational efficacy expectancy has not helped. Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007) implore sport psychologists to more fully and carefully consider impression efficacy in their research designs when saying:

Although research on [self-presentational efficacy] is still in its infancy, we suspect that like the broader self-efficacy construct from which it was derived (cf. Bandura, 1997), [self-presentational efficacy] will emerge as an important construct in second- and third-generation research...For example, [self-presentational efficacy] could moderate the effects of fear of negative evaluation on sport competition anxiety (pp. 146-7).

With Martin Ginis *et al.*'s suggestion as impetus, additional research directions will now be forwarded.

First, study participants need to be asked – via qualitative interviewing and/or psychometric assessment – how efficacious they are about their ability to self-present in desired ways and whether their self-presentations will have the desired effect; what influences these judgements; and if they perceive any consequences to be derived from their impression efficacy. In fact,

qualitative interviews with this type of guide could precede the development of an impression efficacy scale. If impression efficacy – like self-efficacy – predicts effort and persistence in striving for a goal, valid measures like those available for various other self-efficacies will be extremely useful in impression management research in sport. For example, “when” (“when is the athlete most and least impression-efficacious?”) and “how” (“does the relationship between impression motivation and self-presentational success depend on impression efficacy?”) questions could be addressed. Physical self-presentation confidence – a specific form of sport or physical activity-related trait self-presentational confidence – was higher in team sport athletes than individual-based sport participants; and trait competition anxiety was lower, despite perceived ability being equal in both sub-samples (Wong *et al.*, 1993). Despite its flaws (small sample, definitional and measurement issues, presentation of results could have been clearer), these findings shed light on the potential for sport context (team versus individual) to be a moderating variable in the relations between impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect.

Self-efficacy for skill-based objectives has been studied widely in sport psychology (cf. Moritz, Feltz, Fahrback, & Mack, 2000), and because of the social learning theory basis of impression efficacy, it is pertinent to further validate, with athlete populations, theoretical tenets that link the two together. In particular, impression-efficacy beliefs should be assessed across sporting situations with objectively different characteristics, self-presentational goal opportunities and requirements (i.e., difficulty and associated coping and effort demands), and for its ability to predict different self-presentational tactics (as it interacts with impression motivation and construction; Bandura, 1977, 1996, 1997).

The temporality of impression efficacy in the impression management process could be better understood. It is acknowledged to be an efficacy judgement regarding the subjective probability of achieving one’s self-

presentational goals, but in the literature it is referred to as accompanying impression motivation, and not mentioned in relation to impression construction. The central question to arise from this statement is thus: does the impression efficacy judgement influence impression construction, or do impression construction factors (self-concept, desired identity images, role constraints, etc.) help shape the perceived probability that one's impression motivation will be successfully harnessed; or is it a concurrent, reciprocal relationship, as between impression motivation and impression efficacy? If the latter two it would imply that impression construction is as important to impression efficacy as strength of impression motivation in the resultant affective response to these cognitions. These are important theoretical questions that can be targeted in future research looking into the impression efficacy of athletes.

#### *2.4. Impression Management Cognitions, Self-Presentation, and Task Performance*

Vic Raschi was confident that he was ready to pitch. His last few starts had been good, and he felt as if he had worked through his dry spot...After the Yankees came from behind to beat Boston, Raschi was determined to stay calm. He never had trouble sleeping before a big game, and this one was no exception...He was not nervous. The previous day he had been nervous because events were beyond his control. Now he was not bothered by the crowd and the thunderous noise. Even as the players were dressing in the locker room before noon, they could hear the crowd's excitement. The key to pitching in this game, Raschi thought, was to concentrate, to cut out the crowd and noise, to think of only one thing: what to do on each pitch (Halberstam, 1989, p. 275).

Impression management can be 'simple' in the sense that the prevailing conditions do not call for cognitively demanding impression related thoughts before a self-presentation is proffered. Impression construction is the pivotal variable in this equation: "When the person's self-concept and desired self,

the roles and norms operating in the immediate situation, the target's values, and the person's existing image in others' eyes all converge toward the same image, the person's self-presentational task is easy" (Leary, 1995, p. 168). In such cases, impression efficacy is also likely to be strong, because the individual's self-presentational efficacy expectancy and self-presentational outcome expectancy will be positively influenced by the simplicity of the conditions (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Over-learned, habitual self-presentations are 'simple' precisely because they are known to satisfy a regularly occurring self-presentational opportunity (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003).

In contrast, even with equally high levels of impression motivation, a 'challenging' impression management opportunity may require the individual to access self-relevant information that they had not considered for a long time (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987); and to paraphrase Leary (1995) as cited in the previous paragraph, if the person's self-concept and desired self, the roles and norms operating in the immediate situation, the target's values, and the person's existing image *diverge* away from a single image, impression management is exponentially more demanding. With each factor that makes impression construction more complex, and self-presentational outcome success less assured, impression efficacy is negatively impacted (Leary, 1995). Novel or especially pressured situations, high-strength audiences, lack of knowledge regarding the target's values, scarcity of the desired reward, and insecurity regarding one's self-presentational ability are all contributing factors to a cognitively challenging impression management attempt (Cast, 2003; Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1980, 1986; Leary *et al.*, 1988; Morse & Gergen, 1970; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi *et al.*, 1973). To reiterate, impression management is often automatic or non-conscious, but the self-presentation which does require volitional control and planning is likely to be very important to the individual's short- and long-term happiness and success (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998).

Self-presentation has a performative element, a fact recognised by Goffman with his use of the dramaturgical metaphor for impression management. However, in whatever context impression management is attempted, it usually accompanies a primary task – self-presentational motives are typically not the main objective to be fulfilled in the situation. Hence, self-presentation and the primary task-at-hand must be carefully managed by the individual, as failure in one can thwart success in the other, and vice-versa (cf. Baumeister, 1982). Unfortunately, when one task or the other is cognitively demanding, the chances of performing both well are diminished (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). This section explores some of the forms of performance that might be affected by self-presentation, and the mechanisms by which observed effects can be explained.

#### *2.4.1. Social, cognitive, and physical/motor performance*

Yet even before [Michael Jordan's freshman season at the University of North Carolina] began, there had been a sense of his raw talent and his great cockiness. Barely enrolled in school, he was telling upperclassmen in team pickup games that he was going to dunk on them...members of a team that had gone to the NCAA Semifinals the year before. At first there was a certain irritation with his brashness, but gradually that began to disappear, first because the boasting was of a sweet kind, more joyous and ebullient than arrogant and mean-spirited, the talk of a bubbly kid rather than an ugly, conceited one; second because he could almost always back up his words with his play. His boasting...was part of his game. He used it as a motivational tool to push himself (Halberstam, 1999, p. 86).

Performance when in social situations, carrying out cognitive or perceptual tasks, and the sporting domain are similar to the extent that there is (presumably) a desired goal – a motivation to perform these tasks to the best of one's ability. However, research on impression management and performance, be it social, cognitive, or physical, is often carried out in laboratory settings, where the motives and motivation to perform well are



arguably limited in range and strength, respectively. Of course, it is difficult to capture these variables in naturalistic contexts without accepting large amounts of uncontrollable variance (or ‘noise’) and equally confounding demand characteristics (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). A second general limitation is that there is more focused research evidence available on the performance effects of associated constructs, such as public self-consciousness (e.g., Baumeister, 1984; Beilock & Carr, 2001; Heaton & Sigall, 1991; Wang, Marchant, Morris, & Gibbs, 2004), and it seems that self-presentation research could learn from this knowledge base. In any case, it is interesting to review literature that has examined the potential for impression management constructs to interfere with task performance.

#### *2.4.2. Mechanisms of Performance Disruption and Enhancement*

“If it wasn’t the Superbowl, would he have caught that?!” (American network television commentator, Superbowl 2010).

The simple-challenging self-presentation distinction, and the mental processes that determine when each is appraised as such, explains one mechanism of performance disruption: if one is devoting cognitive resources to impression-related thoughts – and away from the primary task, be it social, cognitive, or sporting – a limited capacity is being depleted and a corresponding drop-off in primary task performance can be expected (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). In contrast, the negative self-preoccupation that is often elicited in constructing an impression can be alleviated when the primary task exerts an extra cognitive load. Pontari and Schlenker’s (2000) results demonstrated that for introverts – who are more susceptible to social anxiety (i.e. self-presentational anxiety) – cognitive busyness aided their attempts to appear extraverted, and reduced the number of negative self-focused thoughts they had. Interestingly, the same was not true for extraverts who tried to appear introverted, and their self-presentational effectiveness was decreased. However, the success of such strategies,

regardless of their motives, is often determined by the cognitive busyness of the target: extra cognitive load interferes with person perception (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991; Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988; Trope & Alfieri, 1997).

Unfortunately, this line of investigation has not been taken further to consider the effect of cognitive busyness on simpler self-presentations – that is, when the person’s self-concept and the desired impression are convergent, not oppositional.

Impression management attempts can also disrupt performance indirectly, through state anxiety that they generate (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Being in a state of impression focus and worrying that one’s public image is in jeopardy can lead to self-castigation over self-presentational mistakes, planning how to improve one’s image, or agonising over how bad the situation is – all pointing to an anxiety response and attentional diversions that may impair performance (Baumeister, 1989; Baumeister, Hutton, & Tice, 1989; Bond & Omar, 1990; Kimble & Zehr, 1982; Lord, Saenz, & Godfrey, 1987). Self-presentational worry is preceded by low impression efficacy:

From our perspective, people who are experiencing social anxiety have low expectations regarding their ability to produce preferred impression-relevant reactions from others. These expectations usually produce an avoidance of relevant social situations and a lack of effective behavior in such situations. Any arousal experienced as a consequence of threats to one's identity can intensify perceptions of low self-efficacy, since such internal states might support or intensify beliefs in one's own deficiencies. Thus, we view the arousal and affect that can accompany social anxiety and the behaviors that are associated with social anxiety as mediated by cognitive activities (Schlenker & Leary, 1982, p. 655).

In terms of cognitive-behavioural consequences, impression-related anxiety can: draw conscious attention to movement patterns and techniques that are usually performed with automaticity – contributing to “choking under pressure” and impaired performance; and increased physical tension which increases the difficulty of performing fine motor tasks (Baumeister, 1984;

Baumeister & Showers, 1986; Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984; Martens & Landers, 1972). These studies also exhibit the difficulty faced by researchers in teasing apart the effects of impression management cognitions and anxiety, eliciting one without the other in experimental manipulations, and inferring causality from results. Is it state anxiety, often self-presentational, that impacts performance through mechanism that are well known (e.g., attentional narrowing, perceptual bias, etc.), or distracting impression management thoughts?

In a sample of male undergraduate psychology students ( $n = 29$ ), participants' physiological and affective response to conditions of varying impression management demand were investigated alongside their social competence (Sheffer, Penn, & Cassisi, 2001). Although this study is another example of impression management 'demand' being merely anticipated – measures of impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression construction were not taken, only their theoretical correlates – the results were interesting nonetheless. In the low impression management demand condition, the social performance of participants – measured in terms of verbal, nonverbal, paralinguistic, and global social competence – was seemingly inhibited by heightened physiological arousal and social anxiety from baseline. In the high impression management demand condition participants' heart rate *did* greatly increase, but contrary to the hypotheses of Sheffer *et al.*, they were rated as *more* socially competent, and these ratings were *not* associated with self-reported social anxiety. Thus, it appears that increases in social anxiety and corresponding somatic changes facilitated their ability to interact and convey meaning during speech tasks. Whether this would have occurred in a more ecologically valid context is an important question. Participants seemingly experienced the intended interpersonal demand, but it is doubtful that the test protocol – being, versus not being, the evaluative focus of a videotaped conversation with a confederate – matches the demand people experience in truly meaningful interpersonal encounters;

there may be a 'tipping point' at which social facilitation effects impair rather than facilitate performance (Bond, 1982; Sanders, 1984).

*2.4.3. Summary: Impression management cognitions, self-presentation, and task performance in the sport context: Evidence for the model and future research directions*

The impression management constructs that form the basis of the model driving this research have not been investigated in relation to sport performance. This is unfortunate from two perspectives: first, as Leary (1992) stated, failure is an unavoidable aspect of sport competition, and research should investigate the potential self-presentational contributors to failure as described above; second, it is theorised that in certain circumstances ineffective task performance can have a damaging effect on the athlete's public image (Leary, 1992), and this possibility should also be examined in more detail. Self-presentational failures, even in situations that might not seem important, can still diminish the individual's self-esteem, and elicit aversive reactions that come to be associated with this type of failure (Zimbardo, 1977; Leary, 1995). Hence, athletes may seek to maintain a positive cumulative impression in the eyes of others by successfully repairing the damaged image in front of subsequent audiences (cf. Baumeister, 1982).

Using Zanna and Fazio's (1982) blueprint, first generation research is required that investigates whether impression management cognitions are in fact implicated in performance changes in sport. If so, which ones (i.e., impression monitoring, impression motivation, impression construction, impression efficacy) are associated with the largest facilitation/hindrance effects? Subsequent first generation research could examine what consequences the athlete attributes to self-presentational failures and successes, and the impact these consequences have for their private and public selves. Second generation questions would focus on the boundary

conditions for effects uncovered by first generation research; for example, under what circumstances are especially strong impression management cognitions elicited, and at what strength does the performance relationship hold (whether facilitative or debilitating)? Third generation questions would then determine mediators of the impression management cognitions and performance relationship. This would help researchers quantify the amount of performance variance that can be attributed to impression management sources, over-and-above other contributors.

## *2.5. Social Anxiety and Impression Management*

By virtue of their heightened impression motivation in a given social encounter, an individual has much at stake (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Accordingly, the likelihood of them experiencing a corresponding affective response is high; be it positive or negative (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). However, the self-presentational conditions which elicit undesirable affective responses – and the form such responses take – has received more research attention than their positive counterpart. Further, emotion regulation is a primary function of self-presentation, attesting to the role of affect in the impression management process (Leary, 1995). Indeed, the self-presentational underpinnings of social anxiety are well understood, and this knowledge influences treatment of said condition (cf. Hofmann, 2007).

### *2.5.1. Social anxiety*

Social anxiety – the emotional component of social discomfort (Leary, 1983c) – has a long history: Hippocrates described the sufferer nearly 2500 years ago, and it remains an oft-cited definition:

...through bashfulness, suspicion, and timorousness, will not be seen abroad; loves darkness as life and cannot endure the light or to sit in lightsome places; his hat still in his eyes, he will neither see, nor be seen by his good will. He dare not come in company for fear he should be misused, disgraced, overshoot himself in gesture or speeches, or be sick; he thinks every man observes him.

This eloquent portrayal is captured in most contemporary definitions of social anxiety too; for example: "...feelings of apprehension [“bashfulness, timorousness”], self-consciousness [“he thinks every man observes him”], and emotional distress in anticipated or actual social-evaluative situations [“He dare not come in company for fear he should be misused, disgraced, overshoot himself in gesture or speeches, or be sick”]” (Leitenberg, 1990, p. 1). The self-consciousness facet in particular was pinpointed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975), who posited social anxiety as a discomforting reaction to the process of self-focused attention when in the presence of others. They suggest that: “When attention is turned inward, a person may find something to be anxious about” (p. 523). The self-presentation perspective asserts that it is a lack of impression efficacy that the person will “find to be anxious about” when they turn their attention inward to construct an impression that capitalises on their impression motivation (Schlenker & Leary, 1982).

Individuals high in trait social anxiety tend to also be high in trait self-consciousness; that is, they maintain a dispositional awareness of others' impressions of them (Ingram, 1990; Mor & Winquist, 2002). Reciprocally, individuals who become state socially anxious often experience increased self-focus (i.e. state self-consciousness; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). When an individual is struggling to construct an optimal impression because their impression motivation is not supported by impression efficacy (they are self-focused), 'protective' claims of ability, that is, not making boastful claims prior to performance or even predicting failure, should result in diminished

humiliation if one is in fact, unsuccessful (Baumeister, Hamilton, & Tice, 1985; Bradley, 1978; Weary & Arkin, 1981). Thus, pressure is decreased, and a protective impression construction strategy should decrease a social anxiety response to the situation. Similarly, if the individual lacks trait self-presentational confidence or state impression efficacy, but find themselves in a situation where self-relevant information *must* be disclosed, protective self-presentation may be necessary then too. This may take the form of conveying as little information about oneself as possible, or presenting oneself as 'typical.' However, the self-presentational anxiety might not completely dissipate, and lead to behaviours that cause others to form *less* positive impressions, rather than maintaining average ones (Arkin, 1981; Arkin & Shepperd, 1990; Leary, 1986; Meleshko & Alden, 1993).

With further reference to self-presentational motives, impression construction, and specific self-presentation tactics, social anxiety in the everyday social interactions of university students was investigated (Nezlek & Leary, 2002). High scores on a factor termed 'impression construction positivity' – incorporating measures of ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification styles – were related to a lack of nervousness in social interactions and more enjoyment in these encounters (Nezlek & Leary, 2002). Impression construction positivity was significantly related only to the self-presentational motive to be seen as ethical (coefficient = .64;  $p > .01$ ), and not the motives to be seen as likeable (.18), competent (.20), and attractive (.15). Conversely, strong 'impression motivation' – a factor combining public self-consciousness, fear of negative evaluation, social anxiety, and embarrassability – was related to heightened nervousness in social interactions. Interestingly, the self-presentational motives to be seen as likeable and attractive were significantly related to the impression motivation factor, whereas the self-presentational motives to be seen as competent and ethical were not. These results suggest that students who report having an acquisitive self-presentational style (ingratiatory, self-promoting, exemplifying) to be perceived as ethical are less likely to suffer

from self-presentational anxiety than those who are motivated to be perceived as likeable and attractive but do not employ such tactics (Nezlek & Leary, 2002). Hence, if the latter group had efficacy for their ability to ingratiate, self-promote, and/or exemplify successfully, they might be spared social anxiety.

### 2.5.2. *Social anxiety in sport*

With social anxiety established as self-presentational, the next step is to examine the tenability of competitive sport anxiety as a form of social anxiety, before moving on the relationship between self-presentation and sport anxiety (James & Collins, 1997). Anxiety has distinct cognitive and somatic components (Davidson & Schwartz, 1976; Hamilton, 1959; Liebert & Morris, 1967; Morris, Davis, & Hutchings, 1981): cognitive anxiety is characterised by worry, lowered outcome expectations, and self-doubt, whereas somatic anxiety is a negative interpretation of how one's body feels when autonomically aroused (Morris *et al*, 1981). Clearly, anxiety is assumed to be a negative, unwanted emotion. However, further conceptual progress was seemingly achieved with Jones' (1991, 1995) contention that anxiety *may not always* adversely affect performance in sport. The important distinction between 'facilitative' and 'debilitative' anxiety has proved to be a rich area of debate. On one hand, anxiety is conceptualised as a threat-related emotion, so that without fear or threat-related reaction, the emotional response is not anxiety *per se* (Cerin, 2003). With this view, cognitive or somatic symptoms of any intensity, if perceived as a consequence of non-threatening cognitions, in fact represent a positive bio-psychological state such as 'excited' or 'psyched up' (Jones & Swain, 1995). But if the individual feels threatened by, for instance, the possibility of negative evaluation, and especially if the disapproval would jeopardise their self-presentational objectives, debilitative anxiety would prevail (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). In short, anxiety can only be considered debilitative if the athlete perceives the



symptoms as an unwanted hindrance to their mental preparation (Jones, 1995).

There are many psycho-physiological responses to debilitating anxiety that may hinder performance, including increased muscle tension, peripheral narrowing, diminished manual dexterity and reaction time, impaired concentration and working memory, an inability to logically reason, and an overall bias towards negative cognition (Baddeley, Figuerdo, Hawkswell Curtis, & Williams, 1968; Eysenck, 1992; Idzikowski & Baddeley, 1983, 1987; Levine & Ursin, 1991; Parfitt & Hardy, 1993). Athletes experiencing these symptoms would be unlikely to report feeling 'facilitative anxiety,' although it does depend on their event. The symptoms of debilitating competitive anxiety mirror the 'physiological-affective' response to social anxiety, as classified by the American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV; 1994). Therefore, debilitating competitive anxiety, if stemming from self-presentational sources, is indicative of a sport-specific form of social anxiety (James & Collins, 1997).

### *2.5.3. Sport competition anxiety and impression management*

The link between sport competition anxiety and impression management has been made through the concept of self-presentation concerns. In Section 2.1.1 self-presentation concerns were operationally defined as: "those things which an individual thinks about...be it enduringly or quite infrequently, in relation to how they are perceived by others." And more specifically, being self-presentationally concerned represents: "conditions with the *potential* to engender social anxiety; whether or not this potential is actualised depends on subsequent mental processes: in particular, the individual's impression motivation-imperson efficacy balance in a given social encounter (Schlenker & Leary, 1982)." As mentioned previously, impression motivation and impression efficacy have not been measured in athlete populations, but

self-presentation concerns have. Athletes concern themselves, to varying degrees, about current form and performance inadequacies, appearing to lack energy, their physical self-presentation, appearing athletically untalented, appearing unable to cope with pressure, and generally, others' impressions (Williams *et al.*, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). Prior to these self-presentation concerns studies, James and Collins (1997) took a step back and used interview methodology to probe a diverse sample of athletes to verbalise sources of stress experienced *during* competition. James and Collins (1997) determined that 67.3% of stress source statements not initially labelled as 'social evaluation and self-presentational concerns' actually *did* contain a component that the self-presentation approach would posit as stressful. They interpreted the stressors as self-presentational because they fulfilled Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model criteria for heightened impression motivation and/or lowered impression efficacy. Unfortunately, similar rich qualitative data has not been forthcoming in the literature since then.

Research then sought to determine how well self-presentation concerns predict competitive trait and state anxiety. A significant proportion of competitive anxiety stems from the concerns that athletes have about the impressions they convey to others (Eklund *et al.*, 1999; Hudson & Williams, 2001; McGowan *et al.*, 2008; Payne & Greenlees, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 2001; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). Self-presentation concerns, while lacking a clear definition, have been identified as the most common precursor to social anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Given the preceding argument for a sport-specific form of social anxiety, self-presentation concerns as operationalised in the research cited above should indeed precipitate competitive anxiety. For example, Passer (1983) found that for 10-15 year old male soccer players, fear of failure and fear of evaluation were significant predictors of competitive trait anxiety. The "high competitive-trait-anxious" children anticipated more frequent parental disapproval, and it was this factor that best discriminated them from the low competitive-trait-anxious players. Passer's (1983) study was not an investigation of self-presentation concerns

in youth soccer, but it is conceivable that impression motivation to avoid disapproval (and gain approval) with parents as the target, and a lack of impression efficacy, were involved in the pattern of results observed.

In a sample of youth sport camp participants, peer relationship profiles were drawn from a battery of measured variables including perceived peer acceptance, perceived friendship quality, self-presentation concerns and more (Smith *et al.*, 2006). Results with this unique population suggested that self-presentation concerns – assessed with a modified version of the SPSQ, and trait competition anxiety – assessed with the Sport Anxiety Scale (SAS; Smith *et al.*, 1990), shared a strong positive relationship ( $r = .67$ ; significant at  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). Perceived competence shared a significant negative relationship with self-presentation concerns ( $r = -.32$ ) and anxiety ( $r = -.36$ ). These results are very interesting from a theoretical perspective: as a whole, youth sportspersons who had high competence perceptions (mean score of 2.89 on the six-item athletic competence subscale of the Self-Perception Profile for Children, which ranges from 1 to 4; Harter, 1985) were not very anxious (SAS mean score between “Not at all” and “Somewhat”), nor particularly concerned about their public image (modified SPSQ mean score between “Never” and “Rarely”).

Perceptions of competence imply high sporting self-esteem and/or self-efficacy (Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996), so it appears that these constructs deter or buffer against any potential worry appraisals that can accompany impression motivation and impression efficacy. Hence, the results of Smith *et al.* (2006) with youth athletes aid a new interpretation of previous studies of self-presentation concern with adults. Although self-presentation concerns predict a good amount of variance in trait and state competition anxiety, participants have consistently reported weak self-presentation concerns and fairly weak competitive anxiety (Eklund *et al.*, 1999; Hudson & Williams, 2001; McGowan *et al.*, 2008; Payne & Greenlees, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 1999; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). Taking a wide view *a la* Smith *et al.* (2006),

and also measuring variables such as perceived ability, could gain data that explains the weak self-presentation concerns of adult athletes. Clearly, this is a direction for future research to take; in addition to mapping the longitudinal changes in impression management cognitions over time. However, if self-presentation concerns fail to differentiate participants on other important variables (such as perceived ability), different impression management constructs will need to be explored.

*2.5.4. Summary: Social anxiety and impression management in sport: Evidence for the model and future research directions*

Of the possible affective responses to impression management cognitions, only anxiety has been targeted in sport psychology research. Competitive trait and state anxiety have been associated with self-presentation concerns only, as measures of other impression management variables specifically for use with athletes are not yet available (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007). Thus, in the continued absence of such measures qualitative research is an avenue for further investigation of second and third generation questions on impression management and affect (Zanna & Fazio, 1982). First generation research could explore the full variety of affective responses that can be feasibly attributed to impression-related thoughts. In turn, this promotes a fuller investigation of the interaction of impression management constructs in eliciting the various affective responses. Second generation research in this area could focus on the precise situational characteristics that induce different ways of appraising impression-related thoughts, and the impression construction processes that restrain or compel self-presentation in those situations. Third generation *How* questions will probably have to await the development of new scales, because questions of statistical mediation rely on quantitative measures.

## 2.6. Summary of literature review

The preceding literature review has brought together the social psychology and sport psychology literature on impression management and self-presentation. This area is still in its infancy, and researchers have yet to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the intuitive relevance of impression management in sport contexts. The current thesis was an attempt to test whether this apparent relevance translated into meaningful research findings.

### 2.6.1. Evaluation of Leary's (1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990) framework in sport psychology

Figure 2.2 exhibits the research attention each component of the model of impression management has received in sport psychology. Only negative affective responses to impression management cognitions (e.g., competitive anxiety and self-presentation concerns) and certain self-presentation behaviours (e.g., self-handicapping) have prompted research that goes past first generation "Is" questions. In fact, many of the components have not even received first generation investigation, but have accrued indirect or incidental support. Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007) emphasised the need for theory development in this area, driven by second and third generation research that moves beyond assessing correlation coefficients between associated variables. The model displayed in Figure 2.2 represents an attempt to form the basis for a programme of research that addresses the issues raised by Martin Ginis *et al.*

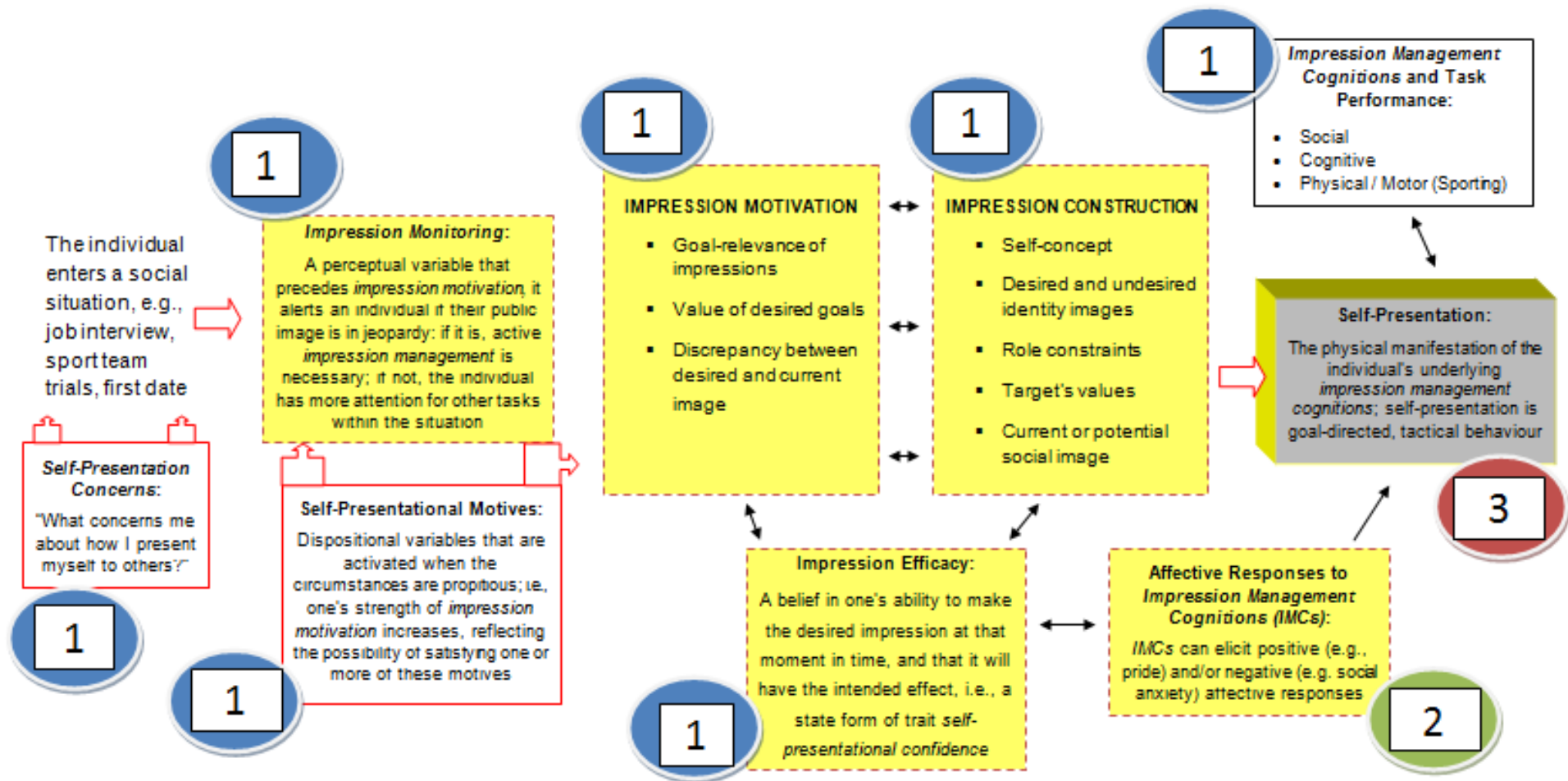


Figure 2.2. *The adapted model of impression management with indicators of the generation research questions that have addressed each of its components (Note. 1 = first generation “Is” questions; 2 = second generation “When” questions; 3 = third generation “How” questions; Zanna & Fazio, 1982).*

### *2.6.2. Summary of the rationale for the present research programme*

Individuals scan their social environments at a preattentive level until an impression-relevant stimulus turns their attention inwards, at which point they appraise the congruence between their desired and current public image (Leary, 1995). If the individual perceives their self-presentational motives to be in jeopardy because their image will not help them fulfil their goals, they become impression-motivated to address the problem (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The strength of their impression motivation depends on the objective and subjective characteristics of the prevailing situation, with increased publicity, dependency on the target, scarcity of desired rewards and more being especially potent factors. Hence, some situations offer the chance to maintain or enhance one's public image whereas others do not. Similarly, the impression one constructs from a myriad options is constrained by dispositional and situational factors, rendering some self-presentational opportunities impossible to maximise (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Increased impression motivation is invariably accompanied by an efficacy judgement: "Do I believe I can convey the most appropriate impression, and if so, will this have the desired effect?" Thus, a complex cognitive process is traversed, and that is even before a self-presentation is proffered, which brings with it numerous pitfalls and possibilities (Baumeister, 1982; Schlenker, 1980, 1986). This description could just as readily apply to the athlete, given the importance of others' perceptions of them in mediating the quality of their sporting experience, and that was the impetus behind the present programme of research (Leary, 1992).

## Chapter Three

### Study One

#### Development and Initial Validation of the Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire - Team

##### 3.1. Introduction

Athletes are often concerned about the attributes others perceive they possess, or the characteristics an audience believes they *do not* possess (James & Collins, 1995, 1997). Indeed, they may believe that desired rewards are contingent on important others forming a particular impression of them (Leary, 1992; Leary *et al.*, 1986). The outcomes that might be attained via the management of one's impressions, or the damage incurred when an undesirable impression is conveyed are both inter- (e.g., friendship) and intra-personal (e.g., development of a desired identity; Leary, 1995; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Hence, given the role of high status others (e.g., coaches, selectors, captain) and peers (e.g., teammates) in mediating an athlete's progress in and satisfaction with their sport, effective impression management in sport is clearly important (Leary, 1992).

To date, research has focused on self-presentation concerns – or worry – and not the impression management constructs that precede them. Although self-presentation concerns are related to impression motivation and impression efficacy (i.e., they are a consequence of the two), they are conceptually distinct. Indeed, while the self-presentation concerns literature has added to what is known about impression management processes in athletes, it is necessary to retroactively consider the basis for self-presentation (and worry), impression motivation. The team-sport context fulfils many of the preconditions for impression motivation, thus providing



frequent opportunities to strive for self-presentational motives. For example, constant competition for desired rewards, through the risk of being substituted or dropped; dependency on a high-strength audience for these desired rewards; high likelihood of future interaction with this audience; and publicity of performance, whether to those present or those who will hear about it second hand. Further, undesirable consequences associated with 'self-presentational failures' (i.e., non-attainment of self-presentational goals) – lowered self-esteem, negative emotional reactions (e.g., embarrassment, anxiety) and their physiological concomitants, damaged identity and self-concept, task-avoidance and other self-handicapping behaviors (Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 1980) – make impression motivation a pertinent avenue of investigation in sport psychology.

Measures of self-presentation concerns – the CSPCI and SPSQ – stimulated inquiry into this area, but more information is required. For example, knowing that athletes are concerned or worried about facets of their public image does not tell us their reasons for wanting to create these impressions, how strong this motivation is, their efficacy to present the particular impression, and the athlete's affective response. The advancement of knowledge past first-generation questions (i.e., descriptive and exploratory) requires further theory development (Zanna & Fazio, 1982), but there is currently no known scale that assesses impression motives in sport contexts (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007). Such a scale could be used to further knowledge of the sources of athletes' impression motivation, and the tenability in sport of the self-presentation motives consistently supported in other life domains. A scale may also illuminate theoretical reasons for athletes' behaviors as they interact with coaches and other support staff, potentially enhancing the quality of service provided and received (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007). Examining the link between impression motivation, impression efficacy, affective responses to these cognitions, and their relationships with other psychological variables could subsequently contribute to theory (Leary, 1995).

The dynamics of an interdependent group brought together for a common purpose contrasts with that of a collection of individuals (coactors, or a social aggregate), as do the different personalities that are attracted to sports with these alternative characteristics (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998). In turn, the self-presentational characteristics and opportunities associated with the team-sport environment – especially with regard to motives for behaviour, tactics used to impression-manage, and the social impact of these – are inherently different from the individual sport context (Carron *et al.*, 2004; Sadalla *et al.*, 1988; Wong *et al.*, 1993). Accordingly, psychological measures may not be relevant to both sub-populations. The self-presentation concerns measures have not been used to investigate this possibility; scores from team and individual sport athletes were not separated in previous analyses, but it would have been interesting to observe any changes in raw scores and factor structure that emerged from doing so. Hence, the aim of the current study was to develop and provide initial validation for a measure of the dispositional strength of impression motivation in team-sport athletes.

### 3.2. *Stage One: Development of Questionnaire Items*

#### 3.2.1. Introduction and Rationale

A thorough literature review aided the development of an initial pool of items designed to tap dispositional motivation to impression-manage. This review included existing questionnaires, such as the CSPSCI and SPSQ. For example, the self-presentation concern “During competition I worry that other people may perceive me as appearing nervous under pressure” (SPSQ item 23) influenced the item, “I am motivated to appear to be able to deal with pressure”; and the CSPSCI item “When competing I am concerned with others seeing me make mistakes” (CSPSCI item 2) influenced the item, “I am motivated to create a skilful impression on the opposition so that they lose

confidence against me/us.” James and Collins’ (1997) interview data also helped in this undertaking: especially the quotes they provided to illustrate how their categories of stress could be self-presentational. For example: “All your players look at you and think, ‘I can’t believe you did that,’” and, “It’s just embarrassing to be honest,” were incorporated into items such as, “I am motivated to perform to the best of my ability because I don’t want to be ridiculed at the next practice,” and, “I am motivated to create a good impression to avoid embarrassment.”

Leary’s (1995) self-presentational motives and Leary and Kowalski’s (1990) model component of impression motivation were also consulted. The self-presentational motives of interpersonal influence (social and material outcomes), development of self (desired identities and self-esteem maintenance), and emotion regulation (self-regulative and social-regulative functions) were central in this process. Also, however, literature on the antecedents of heightened impression motivation – goal-relevance of impressions (publicity, dependence, expected future interaction), value placed on desired goals (availability, target characteristics, fear of disapproval), and discrepancy between desired and current public image – were adapted to reflect the types of motives that would activate such motivation (e.g., “I am motivated to always be fully prepared, as I don’t want to be seen as less able than I am,” and, “I am motivated to create a good impression when everything in the situation suggests that I will not be able to do so”).

However, to supplement the social psychology literature base and limited direct evidence of self-presentational motives in sport psychology, additional information was required. Stage one of the first study was survey-based, designed to elicit responses that would facilitate development of additional items for the questionnaire under development.

### 3.2.2. Method

#### Participants

Student-athletes ( $n = 21$ ) from a United Kingdom university contributed to stage one of study one. The mean age of the athletes was 20.1 years ( $SD = 1.2$ ), and twelve sports were represented, including: soccer ( $n = 7$ ), rugby ( $n = 4$ ), dressage, volleyball, basketball, trampolining, athletics, table tennis, hockey, American football, wrestling, and judo ( $n = 1$  each). At the time of participating, the athletes were competing at various standards, ranging from recreational to National.

#### Measures

*Self-presentation in sport.* A short survey was constructed that assessed demographic characteristics (age, primary sport, current and highest former playing standard), and asked respondents to list the five impressions they most wanted to convey in their sport; indicating how confident they are in making these impressions (from 0 “No confidence” to 100 “Extremely confident”), who the target would usually be (they were asked to list three), and the reasons for wanting to make the desired impressions (i.e., how would it benefit them, what were their motives; see Appendix One for this survey).

#### Procedure

Participants were enrolled on a Bachelors degree programme in Sport and Exercise Science and attended a short-course on “Impression Management in Sport” run by the current author. Upon arrival at the course venue, the student-athletes provided verbal consent to participate in the study. They completed the survey prior to the teaching component of the short course, so that their responses were not influenced by prior knowledge of the subject. Participants were informed that the information they provided would be kept

anonymous and confidential, and would be part of a larger investigation on motivation in sport. The investigator was present to provide clarification or answer questions if they arose. The short course then commenced, during which the survey was mentioned, thus providing context to their responses and serving as a debrief.

### 3.2.3. Results

Three questions from the survey elicited responses for analysis. Specifically, these pertained to the impressions that respondents wanted to make, who the target would typically be, and their reasons for wanting to make the cited impressions. Content analysis identified responses that had potential to be transformed into, or at least inform, questionnaire items.

Question One: *“What are the ‘Top 5’ most desirable impressions you want to convey of yourself in your sport?”*

The key impressions that participants wanted to convey to others in their sport centred on *technical abilities*, *intangible qualities*, and *physical attributes*. The label ‘technical abilities’ incorporated impressions related to skills/athleticism (e.g., skilled, technically competent, and an excellent shot-stopper), cognitive assets (e.g., a good decision-maker and a quick-thinker), and miscellaneous factors (e.g., having flair and being seen as a neat performer). ‘Intangible qualities’ referred to motivations (e.g., the desire to be seen as hard working, reliable, passionate, and highly motivated), dispositional characteristics (e.g., confident, knowledgeable, and having leadership qualities), and team-building attributes (e.g., a team-player, good communicator, fun/happy/sociable, and highly professional). Finally, ‘physical attributes’ included impressions such as physically fit (i.e., not wanting to be seen as out-of-breath), powerful/strong, quick/fast, and athletically flexible.

Question Two: *“Who, in particular, would you like to view you as possessing these characteristics?”*

The intended targets of participants’ reported self-presentation attempts were those *within one’s squad or club, within the sport but not necessarily linked to the individual, and external ‘high-strength’ others*. Targets ‘within the squad or club’ included team-mates, coach(es), and the team captain. Possible self-presentational targets within the sport but not necessarily linked to or known by the individual included knowledgeable other competitors, the opposition, and selectors. Finally, targeted ‘external high-strength others’ included parents/family, friends/peers, spectators, and the opposite sex.

Question Three: *“What are your reasons for wanting to make these impressions?”*

Participants indicated that the three most pertinent reasons for wanting to make such impressions were *personal gains, achievement, and to exert an influence on others*. The notion of ‘personal gains’ incorporated personal satisfaction (e.g., personal satisfaction and feeling proud), enhanced mental state (e.g., improved confidence/self-belief as a player and to make one feel better whilst playing), and two reasons were given that indicated a desire for personal development. ‘Achievement’ referred closely to achievement in a pure sense (e.g., to win, to excel, and to learn new skills and develop existing ones) and career advancement (e.g., open up opportunities for sponsorship and/or coaching, and to reach the highest possible standard). Finally, participants cited a reason that itself represents a central tenet of impression management theory, that is, wanting to make certain impressions on others in order to influence them in some way (‘to exert an influence on others’); this included: “so that they believe I possess certain characteristics” (e.g., to be seen as a mentor), “to increase my importance to the squad” (e.g., to maintain current, privileged position in club, and solidify place in team or become important to team), and the most frequently cited cluster of

reasons for wanting to make certain impressions was “to influence their opinion of me” (e.g., earning respect, gaining praise from, and impressing, others).

#### 3.2.4. Discussion: Stage One

Responses to the questions posed to participants in this study added to that known from the literature about impression motivation in sport. The impressions that participants most wanted to convey displayed considerable similarity regardless of sport and gender, and are consistent with those reported by James and Collins (1995; competence, aggression, determination, honed mental attributes, and specific fitness factors). Future research with larger samples could determine if these desired images are in fact invariant across sports and between genders, or differ according to these variables.

The most oft-cited self-presentational targets for participants were individuals within their club or squad – which is in accordance with theory: publicity of behaviour and expected future interaction are greater, and dependency on others for valued outcomes is increased, when squad members and club officials are the target. Also, the results support the notion that impression management can serve both intra- (e.g., esteem) and inter-personal (e.g., social) purposes (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985) for the athlete as in other populations. These findings aided the development of a pool of items geared to tap the psychological construct of impression motivation. Indeed, the precise wording that participants used to answer the questions was retained where possible, and if not, these were re-worded as minimally as possible. With re-phrasing and re-structuring, these were transformed into potential questionnaire items; when added to those already developed via literature review this totalled 101 items.

### 3.3. *Stage Two: Development of Questionnaire Structure and Format*

#### 3.3.1. Introduction

Stage two of study one sought to finalise decisions pertaining to the response scales, scoring system, and what demographic details would be required of the participant. The primary investigator drafted ideas for each aspect of the scale then presented the strengths and weaknesses of each to his supervisors, and a consensus was reached on which was the most appropriate for each purpose.

#### 3.3.2. Results

##### *Response scales*

Three response scales were created for each item (see Figure 3.1): these assess the respondent's strength of motivation to use self-presentation to aid their interpersonal goal-striving (part A); their corresponding strength of impression efficacy (part B), and an appraisal of the strength of their affective response to the preceding cognitions, along a threat/anxiety – challenge/excitement continuum (part C).

*Impression motivation.* The first part of each item asks the respondent to indicate from 0 (“This isn’t at all true of me”) to 100 (“This is extremely true of me”) how indicative each statement is of them on a visual analogue scale (VAS; see next section: *Scoring system*). For example, if the participant responds to the statement, “I am motivated to create a good impression because I wish to be respected by my team-mates,” by placing a vertical pen-stroke through the 100 millimetre (mm) horizontal scale at 78mm, they are indicating a magnitude of agreement with the statement that the researcher can quantify at 78%, or that they have 78% strength of motivation to attain the outcome identified in the item.



2. I am motivated to create a good impression because...

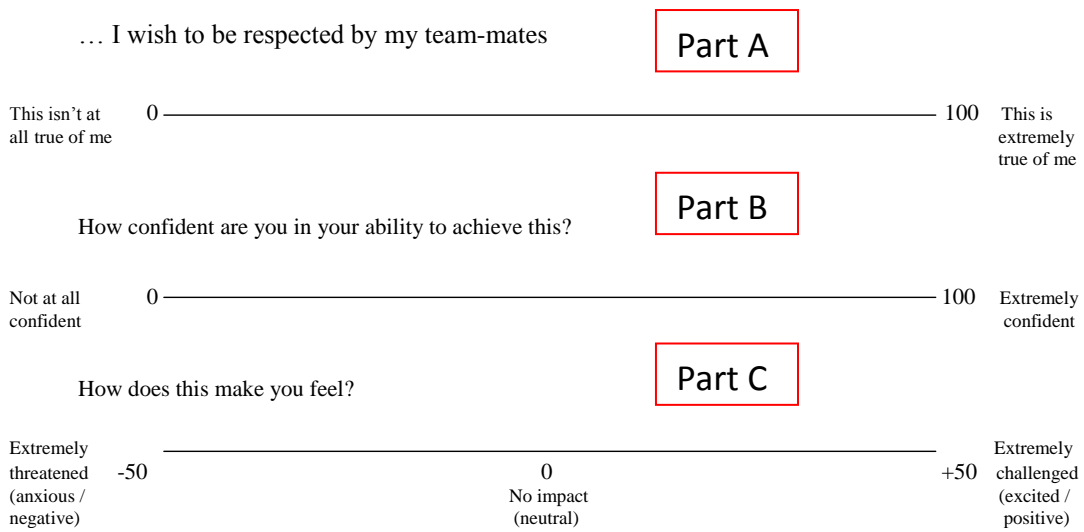


Figure 3.1. Example item from the new scale

*Impression efficacy.* Part B of the item asks respondents to rate how confident they are in making the impression that is alluded to in part A of the item. Again, they mark the scale at the point between 0 (“Not at all confident”) and 100 (“Extremely confident”) that best reflects their confidence in reaching their goal – in this case, making the desired impression.

*Impression affect.* The final part of each item asks the respondent to report the affective response that is elicited by the preceding combination of cognitions (strength of impression motivation and impression efficacy). The same 100mm VAS is used, but this time it ranges from -50 (0mm; “Extremely threatened (anxious/negative)”) to +50 (100mm; “Extremely challenged (excited/positive)”), passing through 0 - “No impact (neutral)” - at 50mm. Theory suggests that a negative discrepancy between one’s impression motivation and impression efficacy will elicit an anxiety response, hence the inclusion of a response scale to assess the tenability of this formula in sportspersons (Leary, 1995).

If the individual lacks motivation to make the impression that a particular item specifies, i.e., they score part A (impression motivation) with a zero or near-zero, then their response to part B (impression efficacy) is inconsequential, as without impression motivation there is no need for an efficacy judgement (Figure 3.1). However, whether a lack of impression motivation precludes an impression-related affective response is less clear. Logic suggests that participants would not experience a threat-challenge appraisal from a lack of impression motivation (part C), but it remains to be seen what patterns emerge in the data.

### *Scoring system: Visual Analogue Scale*

When developing a self-report instrument it is important to devise a response scale that will be sensitive to the variable being measured. Numerous response scales have been developed and tested, resulting in a range to choose from in matching them to the variable(s) to be investigated.

Perhaps the most common response format in gathering opinions and attitudes is the Likert scale. Originating from a publication authored by its namesake, Rensis Likert (1932), the Likert scale asks for the respondent's viewpoint on a subjective topic. Typically this has the respondent decide on their level of agreement with a statement: the respondent indicates which semantically differentiated descriptor best describes their opinion on the Likert item. Hence, Likert scales can have four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten points, with the anchor points representing opposing extremes on a continuum (e.g., *"I completely disagree"* versus *"I completely agree"*).

Further, an even number of points effectively 'forces' the respondent to make a decision as there is no 'neutral' (*"I neither agree nor disagree"*) point on the scale. This 'forced response' strategy is contentious because it can cause difficulty for those participants who are truly undecided or doubtful (Matell & Jacoby, 1972). However, when a forced response is considered

inappropriate, there is still some confusion to be resolved over the optimal number of categorical points to offer the respondent.

The decision to offer a certain number of Likert points may be a practical one. A large total number of questionnaire items could convince the scale's creator to limit the respondent's options, thus saving time on questionnaire completion for respondents. However, it has been suggested that a 'coarse' scale (with few points) can limit the sensitivity of a questionnaire, as well as increasing the likelihood of respondents choosing the uncertain option (because they do not see a point on the scale which best reflects their attitude; Riker, 1944). A review article by Matell and Jacoby (1972) drew together research showing how internal consistency, test-retest stability, concurrent validity, predictive validity, and the proportion of the scale used do not vary with the number of response categories provided. Hence, Riker's (1944) contention was not supported. Nevertheless, as the number of response options increases the use of the uncertain option decreases (Matell & Jacoby, 1972).

In sport psychology, Likert has been the response scale of choice for the developers of many influential questionnaires, including the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2; Martens, Burton, Vealey, Bump, & Smith, 1990), Sport Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Sport-MPS; Dunn, Causgrove Dunn, & Syrotuik, 2002), Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ; Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985), Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire (PMCSQ; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992), and the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (Duda, 1989).

Despite their popularity, Likert response scales are not always the most sensitive means of tapping a psychological construct. For instance, under certain conditions some participants may not have the cognitive capacity to process the options presented by a multiple-point Likert scale; this may occur

when the individual is in severe pain, for example (Chlan, 2004). It is also possible to contend that certain populations (i.e., undergraduate student-athletes, psychology students) are accustomed to Likert scales, so a different response scale may encourage them to think slightly more about their responses, thereby removing some bias attributable to automatic response tendencies to the extremes of the scale.

Visual analogue scales have displayed sensitivity to experimental manipulations of pain (Bruehl, Carlson, & McCubbin, 1993), and have been successfully employed in investigations of altered states of consciousness and the relaxation response (Bood, Sundequist, Kjellgren, & Norlander, 2006), emotional reactivity (Bruehl, Burns, Chung, & Quartana, 2008), task-induced mood states and subjective stressfulness (Clark, 2006), insomnia symptoms (Edinger *et al.*, 2000), pain intensity (Forys & Dahlquist, 2007; Price, Bush, Long, & Harkins, 1994), changes in pain intensity (Jensen, Turner, & Romano, 1992), pain intensity and affect (Jensen & Karoly, 2001), posttraumatic distress (McDonagh *et al.*, 2005), subjective fear of animals (Lipp & Waters, 2007), and current mood state (Pusch, Dobson, Ardo, & Murphy, 1998); although, it has been demonstrated that the freedom a VAS provides does not offer an advantage over collapsed scales when indicating certain variables, such as customer sentiment (Dawes, 2008; Munshi, 1990). Hence, VAS are arguably preferable to Likert scales when attempting to assess magnitude of internal states and cognitions, such as motivation and affective responses.

### *Demographics*

Table 3.1 displays the rationale behind asking participants for certain information before they completed the new scale. Subsequent exploratory analyses would determine the relationship these variables have with the primary measures of interest – the impression management constructs.

Table 3.1. *Rationale for inclusion of different demographic measures*

<b>Demographic Question</b>	<b>Reason for Inclusion</b>
(wording as it appears on the questionnaire)	
Gender (Male or Female)	Different behavioural norms exist for males and females, and this differentially influences what impressions the sexes would prefer to convey (Deaux & Major, 1987). The same applies to sport contexts (Matteo, 1988). By extension, constructs such as impression motivation may also be experienced differently by males and females. It is important therefore to observe whether, and to what extent, strength of impression motivation and impression efficacy differ as a function of gender.
Age (years and months)	Many psychological variables, especially interpersonal ones, evolve alongside an individual's overall maturation (cf. Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997). Therefore, the motives and efficacy for self-presentational behaviours may co-vary with age.
Your current team sport (you may play two or more, but which is most important to you, and that you'll be responding with in mind?)	Findings from studies examining the moral development of young high-contact sport athletes (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1986), and the advocacy of rule-violating behaviours in high-collision sports (Silva, 1983), would suggest that competing in certain sports socialises similar ways of thinking in athletes (Endler, 1981). Hence, if impression motivation and impression efficacy are markedly different between sports, it will allow proposals to be made about the perceived importance of effective impression management in certain sports.
How long has it been since you started learning this sport (years and months)? <u>and</u> How long have you been playing this sport competitively (years and months)?	Years of experience has been found to be a strong predictor of cognitive anxiety – more playing experience is associated with lower anxiety or more facilitative interpretations of anxiety symptoms (Gould, Petchlikoff, & Weinberg, 1984). Social anxiety is cognitive in nature, and stems from self-presentational sources (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Also, self-presentation concerns predict more variance in cognitive anxiety than somatic anxiety or self-confidence (Payne & Greenlees, 2007). Hence, impression efficacy may be higher in more experienced athletes, thus protecting them from cognitive anxiety.

<p>How many hours per week do you spend training your body/fitness (i.e., not playing)? <u>and</u> How many hours per week do you spend practicing your skills/technique for this sport?</p>	<p>These variables may reflect behavioural tendencies that are associated with impression motivation. It will be interesting to observe whether those who spend more time practicing, and in particular, more time training their body, are also more impression-motivated. Also, these types of self-report details are especially susceptible to socially desirable responding, as they are difficult for the investigator to verify (if they should so wish). Hence, the relation between self-reported hours training the body and technique <i>may</i> be significantly positively correlated with socially desirable responding and impression motivation.</p>
<p>Time spent training and playing with your current team (years and months)</p>	<p>Research suggests that peoples impression management cognitions are likely to change as they grow more comfortable in a context (or less, depending on the circumstances), which of course, occurs with time spent there (Nezlek &amp; Leary, 2002). Hence, time spent training and playing with one's current team may relate to participants' responses to the scale.</p>
<p>Competitive standard that you currently play at <u>and</u> Time spent competing at this current level (years and months) <u>and</u> Highest standard you have reached in your playing career (if different from above; please be as specific as possible)</p>	<p>Because of their anticipated age range, athletes in this study are likely to be competing at their highest standard to that point. As with the contention above, this could either make them less impression-motivated and impression-efficacious (reflecting stability), or vice-versa, because they may not feel they have reached their potential; they still have something to prove and promotion to gain. The demographic questions will not uncover their career plans, but it will allow a test of association between these variables.</p>
<p>Is your main coach at the moment male or female?</p>	<p>Many team-sport athletes, especially males, are coached by someone of their own gender; although this is probably less true for females in sports such as rugby and soccer. For the minority who are not, it may be the case that this is associated with a different pattern of questionnaire responses to those that are.</p>

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### *Social desirability*

The literature review presented research that suggests there may be a self-presentational motive (i.e., interpersonal influence or maintenance of self-esteem) for socially desirable responding (SDR; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Reynolds, 1982; Snyder, 1974). Debate still persists regarding whether SDR

reflects, or is a manifestation of, 'genuine' self-presentation concerns, unconscious self-enhancement, self-deceptive positivity, conscious dissimulation, or defensiveness (Arkin & Lake, 1983; Crowne, 1979; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Evans, 1982; Fritz, Spirito, & Yeung, 1994; McCrae & Costa, 1983; Nordholm, 1974; Paulhus, 1984; Wiechman, Smith, Smoll, & Ptacek, 2000; Wiesensthal, 1974). However, SDR can both depress self-report scores and introduce a source of error variance (Wiechman *et al.*, 2000).

Intuitively, it depends on what is being measured: for example, on measures of affect – such as part C of the scale – the 'self-deceptive positivity' explanation may reveal a ploy on the part of the respondent to denigrate the importance of anxiety symptoms, and make the athlete feel slightly more confident. If this strategy is successful, it is worthwhile, and would seem to be the self-presentational motive for emotion regulation via self-description tactics. Regardless of whether or not SDR stems from impression motivation, it may influence other responses in a test battery, thus it is pertinent to assess the relationship between the two variables.

### 3.4. *Stage Three: Content Validity of Items*

#### 3.4.1. Introduction

The global categories of motive for self-presentation and broad situational antecedents of impression motivation tend to overlap considerably; in interpersonal contexts the individual may be influenced by more than one simultaneously (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Further, it is possible for more than one self-presentation motive to be fulfilled during a single self-presentation. For example, a self-presentation that garners esteem-enhancing reactions from others may also boost one's development of a particular identity and earn the individual desired material outcomes. Therefore, unless

questionnaire items are semantically unambiguous, there is a possibility that respondents could interpret items as tapping multiple motives, or struggle to differentiate between what they perceive to be competing components of an item. Further, questionnaire developers must ensure that their items are adequate operationalizations of the variables they seek to measure; not doing so would diminish the theoretical validity of the measurement model (to be assessed in later stages; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Although items were worded in an attempt to eliminate this possibility, further checks were required.

### 3.4.2. Method

#### Participants and Procedure

To rule out items with an indistinct conceptual basis, a consensus was first reached between the current author and his supervisors concerning which of the self-presentational motives and antecedents of heightened impression motivation each item was most strongly related. Next, a panel of four advisors external to the study (an exercise physiologist, a PhD student in the field of psychophysiology, a sport psychologist with knowledge of the area, and a sport and exercise psychologist with no knowledge of the area) were provided with a description of each of the impression motivation variables, including examples, and asked to match individual items to the six variables (Appendix Two). Agreement between three of the five contributors (four advisors; the student and his supervisors count as one contribution because of the lengthy discussions involved in them reaching a consensus) was deemed acceptable to retain an item in the first version of the questionnaire. This criterion could have been more strict (i.e., agreement between four of the five advisors), but it is considered preferable to save more rather than less items for the subsequent statistical stages of the process (i.e., exploratory factor analysis; cf. Velicer & Fava, 1998).



### 3.4.3. Results

Of the initial 101 items, 82 reached consensus and were retained for the next stage of questionnaire development.

## 3.5. *Stage Four: Respondents' Perceptions of Questionnaire Items and Format*

### 3.5.1. Introduction

Items on version 1 of the newly developed scale – the Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire-Team (IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub>) – were preceded by one of four statement stems. Each IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> item includes three response scales which assess the respondent's strength of impression motivation, impression efficacy, and their affective response to these cognitions. All response scales employ a visual analogue scale. The purpose of stage four of study one was to examine respondents' perceptions of the scale's format and its constituent items.

### 3.5.2. Method

#### Participants

Four male and five female athletes ( $\bar{x}$  age = 25.7 years,  $SD = 6.8$ ) took part in this stage of study one. Participants were representatives of eight different sporting disciplines, including boxing, field hockey, horse-riding/show jumping, trampolining, volleyball, rugby union, karate, and soccer.

#### Procedure

The IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> was administered on an *ad hoc* basis: participants had previously agreed to assist with the research, and they did so at their convenience. Participants completed the standard IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> with an

additional form at the end on which they were instructed to make comments relevant to refinement of the scale (see Appendix Three). The IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> was completed in a private room, informed consent was gained (see Appendix Four), anti social desirability statements made, confidentiality assured, and the experimenter was present throughout to answer any questions as they arose or discuss respondents' thoughts and help them formulate their responses. Participants scrutinized the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub>, and commented on: the layout of the questionnaire; item response scale relevance; meaning, relevance, and comprehensibility of specific items; potential variation in interpreting certain questions, and whether or not to even answer them; and they highlighted grammatical, semantic, and practical issues, as well as raising questions relating to the demographic section.

### 3.5.3. Results

#### *Readability, comprehensibility, ecological validity and face validity.*

In terms of the underpinnings of the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> design, one participant wondered whether the question, "How confident are you in your ability to achieve this?," refers to the impression to be made *or the goal of making the impression*. The same participant also questioned whether the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> asks the respondent to rate how the impression motivation makes them feel, or if it is asking how their confidence, or lack thereof, makes them feel about the goal (or motive) of making the impression. A third concern was raised by the same individual. According to him, questions with two parts, such as "I am motivated to create a good impression and gain praise, because this makes me proud," could create confusion in some respondents – it was unclear whether the motivation was to 'make a good impression,' 'gain praise,' or to 'feel proud.' In turn, this would influence efficacy judgements in a potentially unintended direction. If many participants had experienced such confusion, the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub> would lack face validity and content validity, and the results of subsequent statistical tests would be questionable.

These issues were targeted systematically and remedied by making the introductory statements more explicit. Also, a participant identified that similarly worded questions, included to enable the researcher to measure responder consistency, should be separated further apart.

#### 3.5.4. Discussion: Stage Four

This relatively heterogeneous sample was comprised of athletes who had both reached, and were currently competing at, differing standards of competition. The diversity in competitive standard included recreational, beginner-competitive, county, regional, and international. With an average of 11.6 years experience, these individuals were recruited specifically for their extent of sporting experience, in the hope that they would be particularly knowledgeable and open to sharing their opinion of the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub>. This was achieved, and the process resulted in the re-phrasing or deletion of numerous items, and the 68-item IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> (Appendix Five).

### 3.6. *Stage Five: Exploratory Factor Analysis of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub>*

#### 3.6.1. Introduction

Unlike for example physiological parameters or health-related body characteristics, personal opinions, feeling-states, and thoughts cannot be measured directly, and so questionnaires are relied upon to indirectly assess these psychological variables. Accordingly, questionnaire items are often referred to as 'manifest variables' and it is assumed that, if of sound design, they will group together to represent a smaller set of theoretically meaningful 'latent variables,' or *constructs*. Thus, factor analysis is used to examine the interrelationships among items in uncovering the underlying structure and internal reliability of the questionnaire (Gorsuch, 1983). While it is inevitable that prior knowledge of theory will give rise to expectations regarding the

factor structure of a measure (Mulaik, 1986), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used when *not enough* is known to make confident predictions. When no *a priori* constraints are imposed, all questionnaire items – the observed variables – are free to form together as they will, and the resultant factors, derived statistically, are interpreted from a theoretical perspective. Therefore, EFA is data-driven and theory-generating in nature (Stevens, 1996).

EFA is not without its detractors, but this has not stopped its widespread use, historically and contemporarily. One of the key limitations of EFA as a statistical ‘tool,’ ironically, lies within the hands of the researcher. That is, the lack of theoretical knowledge that often drives EFA can lead to a limited, if not completely inaccurate, interpretation of the results (Mulaik, 1972). However, if utilised as described in the previous paragraph - by the researcher with enough knowledge of theory to make tentative predictions, EFA can be an important precursor to more confirmatory statistical procedures and to suggest hypotheses for future research (Mulaik, 1972). In the case of the present investigation into impression motivation, enough is known from the social psychology literature to anticipate a certain pattern of responses, but no prior analyses have been conducted in sports contexts. These are precisely the circumstances for which Gorsuch (1983) recommends EFA be reserved. Hence, the aim of stage five was to uncover the factors which underpin the impression motivation response scale of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub>.

### 3.6.2. Method

#### Participants

For the purpose of EFA, the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> was administered to 310 athletes (209 male = 67.4%; 100 female = 32.3%; 1 undisclosed = 0.3%), with an average age of 21.4 years ( $SD = 4.6$ ; range 18 - 63.3 years). A variety of team sports were represented, including soccer ( $n = 115$ ), rugby union ( $n = 44$ ), netball ( $n$

= 29), cricket ( $n = 29$ ), field hockey ( $n = 25$ ), rugby league ( $n = 23$ ), ultimate frisbee ( $n = 20$ ), basketball ( $n = 21$ ), volleyball ( $n = 2$ ), American Football and Gaelic Football (1 participant each). The vast majority of participants were currently competing at inter-university (i.e., British Universities & Colleges Sport; BUCS) and/or semi-professional standard.

## Measures

*The Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire-Team.* The 68-item IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> was employed to assess impression motivation, impression efficacy, and affective response.

*The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) Short Form C* (Reynolds, 1982; Appendix Six). This is a 13-item shortened version of the original MCSDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Participants indicate whether each statement is *true* or *false* of them, for example, "It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged," and receive one point for each socially desirable response, and zero for each non-socially desirable response. Hence, scores on the MCSDS-C range from 0 (no social desirability) to 13 (all socially desirable responses). The MCSDS-C was included to ascertain if participants displayed a socially desirable response bias, thus implying whether or not the impression management data collected in this study were influenced by this self-report tendency. The strength of association between impression motivation and socially desirable responding can also be determined, given the theoretical relationship between the two.

## Procedure

An exhaustive list of local sports clubs was compiled based on sports development databases and publicly available internet sources. Initial contact was made with team representatives via email, letter, or telephone. Each mode of correspondence took a similar approach to recruitment, outlining the potential benefits of their team's participation. In all cases, the

team contact was either in a position to decide for the team, or they contacted the necessary individual within the squad hierarchy. Permission to access the team was granted, and a date and time set for IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> administration.

On arrival at the designated location, usually a training ground or clubhouse, the participants were gathered, and a standardised introductory statement was provided. These opening remarks included: an introduction as to the purpose of the study; assurance of anonymity and confidentiality in any subsequent use of their data; discouragement of discussion during completion; the offer of assistance if required; and a statement to counteract socially desirable responding (i.e., urging honesty and integrity). Participants provided written informed consent (Appendix Four) before completing the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> and the MCSDS-C, which took 15-20 minutes.

#### Data Treatment

*Sample size requirements.* There is no universally accepted way of determining adequate or optimal sample size in questionnaire development research. For example, an absolute value can be employed as the criterion for sample size requirements, or an adequate sample size can be calculated as a function of the measured variables or parameter estimates (Marsh, Bar-Eli, Zach, & Richards, 2006). Statisticians seem to differ in opinion on this potentially key component of research design, making it difficult for investigators to establish a benchmark to attain. The issue is further clouded because power analysis – a traditional approach in sample-size determination – is not appropriate with psychometric measurement (Sapnas & Zeller, 2002). In synthesizing the various positions taken on this issue, Marsh *et al.* (2006) assert that: “The only clear guideline is that the sample size must be larger than the number of measured variables” (p. 317). Hence, the current sample of 310 satisfies this criterion; in addition to an absolute criterion of 100-200 (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988), and a relative criterion of

200, *when* the solutions display overdetermination of factors and communalities of .40-.70 (reported subsequently; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999).

*Treatment of missing data.* Of the current sample ( $n = 310$ ), 15.5% provided incomplete impression motivation datasets. The number of items missed varied, but generally did not exceed four. There were no more missing data at the end of the scale than throughout, and 97.1% completed the MCSDS, which was located after the main scale. This suggests that participants accidentally, or purposely, skipped a page here-and-there (i.e., four items per side) rather than 'giving up' prior to reaching the end of the questionnaire.

Despite the contentions surrounding optimal sample size for factor analysis, once data have been collected it is advisable to retain as much information as possible for the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). An inspection of the dataset revealed no discernable pattern in the missing data – it seemingly occurred at random. With relatively large amounts (i.e., 15.5%) of random missing data (and non-normal distributional properties; see section below), maximum likelihood estimation procedures are the prerequisite (Myung, 2003). Maximum likelihood factor analysis with pairwise estimation of missing data was selected for the current analyses as it is sympathetic to the need to retain data; pairwise estimation also avoids some of the undesirable consequences associated with listwise deletion of missing cases and expectation-maximization replacements.

*Exploratory factor analyses.* Analyses were conducted using SPSS<sup>®</sup> version 16 and Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup>. The IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> impression motivation response scale underwent an EFA with maximum likelihood factor extraction, followed by oblique (direct oblimin;  $\delta = 0$ ) rotation of the resultant factor loadings. Oblique rotation was preferred to orthogonal, because theoretically the factors were expected to be related, not opposed. The univariate data were

not normally distributed but the departure was not so extreme as to invalidate a maximum likelihood factor analysis (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995), which is reasonably robust with non-severe violations of normality (Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Appendix Seven).

In the first EFA, items were free to load on any factor. The pattern matrix was inspected as it is more conservative in estimating factor loadings and the number of items that load on each factor, making the solution more distinct and thus easier to interpret (Rummel, 1970). In determining how many factors to retain, the interpretability of factor loadings on the pattern matrix, eigenvalues greater than 1 (the 'Kaiser-Guttman rule'; Kaiser, 1961; Guttman, 1954), and marked scree-plot cut-off points (Catell, 1966, 1978) were used. Factors were retained if they had high loadings ( $>.40$ ) on their primary factor only (Thurstone, 1947), but not if they contained only one or two items, regardless of the strength of their loadings (Fabrigar *et al.*, 1999). Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest a minimum loading of  $.32$ , but better practice is to consider clusters of items with loadings of  $>.40$  and no cross-loadings within  $.10$  (Comrey, 1978; Kline, 1994). Revisions were made to the original model based on statistical, theoretical, and research grounds, and each of the 5 subsequent rotated solutions was examined in light of the interpretability and plausibility of the given factor solution (Fabrigar *et al.*, 1999). An alpha level of  $.05$  was used for all statistical tests.

*Supplementary data analyses.* To examine differences in the tendency to provide socially desirable responses, MCSDS-C data were split into two groups and subjected to an independent samples t-test. If participants scoring at the higher versus lower end of the MCSDS-C range had significantly different impression motivation scores, the veracity of IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> responses would be questioned. Analysis of variance determined whether socially desirable responding was different across sports. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in the impression management variables. Pearson's correlation tests enabled an



investigation of the strength of association between impression management cognitions, but also between MCSDS-C scores and these variables.

Descriptive and supplementary analyses began with  $n = 310$  and, with missing data deleted listwise, were subsequently not always based on this, or the same, number of datapoints. Sample sizes are clearly stated for each analysis.

### 3.6.3. Results

#### 3.6.3.1. Descriptive Statistics

*Demographic variables.* Participants reported an average of 10 years ( $SD = 6.50$ ;  $n = 306$ ) since they began their primary sport, of which they had spent 7.41 years ( $SD = 5.81$ ;  $n = 307$ ) playing competitively. They had played at their current standard for 2.59 years ( $SD = 3.65$ ;  $n = 296$ ), and had been with their current team for nearly 2 years ( $\bar{x} = 1.96$ ,  $SD = 3.00$ ;  $n = 302$ ). In terms of their current practice and training habits, participants reported spending an average of 4.43 hours ( $SD = 2.58$ ;  $n = 309$ ) practicing their skills, and 4.27 hours ( $SD = 3.45$ ;  $n = 305$ ) training their body/fitness.

While not ideal, the observed gender divide (male = 67.4%, female = 32.3%) roughly approximated the difference in the number of male and female clubs that were listed in information documents located in the public domain.

Further, Lane, Sewell, Terry, Bartram, and Nesti (1999) argue that gender discrepancies in study samples are inevitable given the historic proportional dominance of males in sport. When split according to reported gender, the male sub-sample had an average age of 21.50 years ( $SD = 4.98$ ), and the female sub-sample had an average age of 21.82 years ( $SD = 4.16$ ); this difference was non-significant at  $p = .05$ . Subsequent analyses determined whether the central variable, impression motivation, differed according to gender. Exploration of the relationship between these demographic measures (other than gender) and the impression management measures

were undertaken once a more 'final' version measurement device had been constructed.

*Impression management variables.* Whole scale (68-item) averages from the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> indicated that the participants reported an average impression motivation strength of 71.31 ( $SD = 11.30$ ;  $n = 262$ ). Impression efficacy very closely matched this impression motivation, in displaying an average of 70.36 ( $SD = 12.11$ ;  $n = 251$ ), and impression affect of 14.55 ( $SD = 12.15$ ;  $n = 257$ ). Impression motivation was analysed by gender to determine whether males and females reported significantly different strengths of impression motivation. All 68 items were included in the analysis; any cases with missing data were deleted, resulting in a sample size of 262 participants. An independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene's test statistic – suggested that the difference in average (whole IMSQ-T) impression motivation between males and females was non-significant at  $p = 0.05$  ( $t_{(260)} = 1.36$ ,  $p = .175$ ; male  $\bar{x} = 72.00$ ;  $SD = 12.10$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 70.01$ ;  $SD = 9.54$ ). Thus, subsequent analyses with impression motivation did not need to account for gender as a factor.

However, when the impression efficacy data was analysed by gender, an independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene's test statistic – suggested that males were significantly more impression efficacious than females ( $t_{(249)} = 5.36$ ,  $p < .001$ , two-tailed; male  $\bar{x} = 73.21$ ;  $SD = 11.52$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 65.06$ ;  $SD = 11.44$ ;  $n = 251$ ). Similarly, an independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene's test statistic – suggested that males interpret their impression motivation-impersonation efficacy combination as significantly more positive (challenging, exciting) than females ( $t_{(255)} = 3.63$ ,  $p < .001$ , two-tailed; male  $\bar{x} = 16.48$ ;  $SD = 11.80$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 10.83$ ;  $SD = 12.02$ ;  $n = 257$ ); although both genders did give a positive appraisal. Therefore, similar

analyses were conducted with data from an independent sample to see if these results are replicated (see stage six).

On average, impression motivation shared a significant positive relationship with impression efficacy ( $r = .481, p < .01$ ) and impression affect ( $r = .398, p < .01$ ). Impression efficacy and impression affect displayed a strong and significant positive relationship ( $r = .687, p < .01; n = 257$  in all analyses). After controlling for gender, the correlations were almost identical (within .022 of the above  $r$  statistic in all cases). Thus, athletes in the present sample exhibited a linear relationship between the three impression management variables: impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect rise and fall together in a fairly consistent manner.

Further examination of the affective component provides additional perspective on the impact of impression motivation and impression efficacy for athletes. As discussed above, impression motivation and impression efficacy scores were almost identical in this sample ( $\bar{x} = 71.31$  and  $70.36$ , respectively), and impression affect had a strong positive relationship with both. However, not all participants reported matching impression motivation and impression efficacy. In fact, more than half the sample reported impression efficacy that was lower than their impression motivation ( $n = 133$ ). Nevertheless, 88.2% ( $n = 231$ ) of the sample appraised their impression motivation-impression efficacy combination as a challenge. This result is counter to social psychology theory, which suggests that high impression motivation and low impression efficacy *per se*, is enough to elicit an anxiety response (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Therefore, data from a subsequent independent sample underwent similar analyses (stage six), before implications were drawn from this provisional result.

### 3.6.3.2. Exploratory Factor Analyses

Bartlett's test statistic was significant ( $\chi^2_{(2278)} = 11037.32, p < .05$ ), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO; the degree of correlation among the questionnaire items) measure of sampling adequacy was .90, and the majority of off-diagonal elements on the anti-image covariance matrix were  $< .1$ , suggesting that the impression motivation correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis (Dziuban & Shirkey, 1974; Appendix Eight).

Initial EFA of the impression motivation response scale of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> extracted 15 factors with eigenvalues  $> 1.0$ , accounting for 64.9% of the variance. Detailed inspection of item communalities, standardised factor loadings on the pattern matrix, and identification of those factors with only 1 or 2 items, exposed 14 problematic items. These were deleted, and a second EFA run with 5 factors specified, as was suggested after the initial EFA by pronounced eigenvalues, the scree plot, and which were confirmed by the interpretability of the pattern matrix. The resultant 5-factor solution accounted for 50.3% of the variance in the remaining 54 items. Thirteen further items were deleted owing to a low standardised loading on their primary factor ( $< .40$ ) and/or cross-loading (i.e., dual factor loadings within  $.10$ ). The third 5-factor EFA accounted for 53.1% of the variance in the remaining 41 items.

The third pattern matrix uncovered 13 problematic items. Four items were retained for theoretical reasons: for example, item 11 ("I am motivated to create a good impression because if others have confidence in me, so will I"), and item 45 ("I am motivated to create a good impression to ensure that my opportunities to progress in my sport are maximised") were especially pertinent self-presentational motives for athletes who were surveyed in stage one of this study. Thus, 9 items were deleted – for example, "I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who can perform under pressure" (item 15) and "I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who is extremely motivated" (item 25) – because they displayed low loadings

relative to their factor counterparts and were made redundant by items with better statistical properties.

Table 3.2. *IMSQ-T subscales and items, including means, standard deviations, and stems*

	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
	(0-100)	
<b>I. Development of Self</b>		
9. is fearless *	67.6	26.9
11. is quick-thinking, and always makes the right decision *	74.5	19.5
21. to ensure that my opportunities to progress in my sport are maximised **	77.2	21.0
24. appear to be able to deal with pressure ***	79.7	16.9
27. appear to have my performance under control at all times ***	73.0	21.9
Subscale item mean	74.4	21.3
<b>II. Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions</b>		
16. so that others within the club don't have anything bad to say about me **	65.1	28.4
17. to avoid embarrassment **	59.3	31.9
23. avoid being criticised by my coach, as this will create a bad impression in the eyes of my team-mates ***	65.1	29.3
25. give reasonable excuses for <i>poor</i> performance, so that my coach doesn't view me negatively ***	51.2	30.2
26. perform to the best of my ability, because I don't want to be ridiculed at the next practice ***	55.6	31.8
28. give reasonable excuses for <i>poor</i> performance, so that my team-mates don't view me negatively ***	50.4	30.0
Subscale item mean	57.8	30.3
<b>III. Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes</b>		
15. on my coach, so that he/she doesn't demote me to a lower team **	71.5	27.7
18. so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making silly mistakes **	67.0	28.6
19. when I am competing for selection **	82.8	19.2
20. so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making <i>one</i> silly mistake **	58.6	31.1
22. on my coach, so that he/she doesn't sub me out of the game in crucial situations **	70.7	27.8
Subscale item mean	70.1	26.9
<b>IV. Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions</b>		
1. then other people's impressions of me will match how I'd like to be thought of ****	64.1	23.3
2. I wish to be respected by my team-mates ****	77.5	17.6
3. the positive feedback I'll get makes me feel good ****	75.8	20.0
4. if others have confidence in me, so will I ****	68.8	26.8
5. is a reliable member of the team/squad *	82.8	16.9
Subscale item mean	73.8	20.9
<b>V. Development of a Social Identity</b>		
6. has a good attitude *	83.6	16.2
7. is enthusiastic *	80.8	17.2
8. is constantly willing to learn *	81.4	18.2
10. is committed to the team *	86.4	14.1
12. is professional in their conduct *	74.1	21.9
13. is fair and a 'good sport' *	79.7	20.1
14. is professional in their play *	78.6	19.4
Subscale item mean	80.7	18.2

Item stems:

\* "I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who..."

\*\* "I am motivated to create a good impression..."

\*\*\* "I am motivated to..."

\*\*\*\* "I am motivated to create a good impression because..."

*Note.* The item numbers in this table are from the 28-item IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>, not the 68-item IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub>, in order for them to correspond with items mentioned in the text and tables of Stage Six. The IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> can be found in Appendix Five for cross-reference of the items deleted in Stage Five (i.e., when they are mentioned by item number in the present stage).

The resultant solution accounted for 55.6% of the variance in the 32 items, and these were taken forward to the fourth EFA.

A further 4 items (item 6 from factor 4; items 17, 61, and 63 from factor 1) were removed as they either did not 'fit' well with other factor items, or their content was equally well-represented by other items on their factor. This also more closely aligned the number of items on each factor. For example, item 6 – "I am motivated to create a good impression because it will win me the recognition I feel I deserve" – was felt to be subsumed by the combination of items 1 (congruence between public- and self-image), 2 ("respect"), 3 ("feedback makes me feel good"), 4 (gaining others' confidence), and 5 ("reliable"). The final EFA (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3) resulted in a 28-item 5-factor solution (IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>) accounting for 57.8% of the observed variance in the items. Eigenvalues ranged from 7.49 (factor 1) to 1.35 (factor 5), and the majority of item communalities were above .4 (24 of 28; see Appendix Nine for SPSS output of all of these EFAs).

Table 3.3. *IMSQ-T standardized factor loadings and mean item loading for each primary factor*

Subscale and item	Factor	I	II	III	IV	V
<b>I. Development of Self</b>						
9. is fearless	<b>.453</b>	-.058	-.018	-.018	-.005	
11. is quick-thinking, and always makes the right decision	<b>.620</b>	.172	-.004	-.027	.141	
21. to ensure that my opportunities to progress in my sport are maximised	<b>.433</b>	-.069	-.231	.164	.033	
24. appear to be able to deal with pressure	<b>.504</b>	-.001	-.025	.068	.217	
27. appear to have my performance under control at all times	<b>.688</b>	.227	.006	.045	.020	
Mean loading on primary factor	<b>.540</b>					
<b>II. Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions</b>						
16. so that others within the club don't have anything bad to say about me	-.014	<b>.484</b>	-.078	.216	.112	
17. to avoid embarrassment	-.215	<b>.619</b>	-.181	-.003	.108	
23. avoid being criticised by my coach, as this will...	.091	<b>.504</b>	-.171	.181	-.010	
25. give reasonable excuses for <i>poor</i> performance, so that...	.078	<b>.752</b>	.006	-.014	.029	
26. perform to the best of my ability, because I don't want...	.089	<b>.579</b>	-.171	.026	-.055	
28. give reasonable excuses for <i>poor</i> performance, so that...	.165	<b>.771</b>	.094	.039	-.083	
Mean loading on primary factor		<b>.618</b>				
<b>III. Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes</b>						
15. on my coach, so that he/she doesn't demote me to a lower team	.045	.023	<b>-.546</b>	.144	-.032	
18. so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making silly mistakes	-.005	.088	<b>-.807</b>	-.029	-.082	
19. when I am competing for selection	.214	-.187	<b>-.507</b>	.167	.093	
20. so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making <i>one</i> silly mistake	-.038	.190	<b>-.784</b>	-.160	-.017	
22. on my coach, so that he/she doesn't sub me out of the game in crucial situations	-.007	-.023	<b>-.769</b>	-.029	.059	
Mean loading on primary factor			<b>-.683</b>			
<b>IV. Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions</b>						
1. then other people's impressions of me will match how I'd like to be thought of	.030	.174	.085	<b>.616</b>	-.049	
2. I wish to be respected by my team-mates	.045	-.096	-.070	<b>.522</b>	.167	
3. the positive feedback I'll get makes me feel good	-.020	.210	-.093	<b>.451</b>	.045	
4. if others have confidence in me, so will I	.174	.147	-.178	<b>.392</b>	-.124	
5. is a reliable member of the team/squad	.028	-.175	-.121	<b>.463</b>	.361	
Mean loading on primary factor				<b>.489</b>		
<b>V. Development of a Social Identity</b>						
6. has a good attitude	-.062	-.144	-.025	.232	<b>.680</b>	
7. is enthusiastic	-.008	-.050	-.003	.165	<b>.642</b>	
8. is constantly willing to learn	.062	.053	.013	.085	<b>.625</b>	
10. is committed to the team	.256	-.196	-.100	.253	<b>.447</b>	
12. is professional in their conduct	.248	.026	-.040	-.211	<b>.670</b>	
13. is fair and a 'good sport'	-.026	.138	.055	-.101	<b>.699</b>	
14. is professional in their play	.282	.017	-.090	-.135	<b>.554</b>	
Mean loading on primary factor					<b>.617</b>	

Note. Primary factor loadings are in bold print; all standardized factor loadings are significant at  $p < .05$



Mean standardised factor loadings for the 5 factors ranged, in terms of magnitude of difference from zero, from .49 to -.68, suggesting that the manifest variables are good indicators of their factor (Table 3.3). Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was .89 ( $n = 278$ ), and alpha coefficients ranged from .70 to .86 for the 5 factors, suggesting adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978; Table 3.4). Inter-factor correlations ranged from -.36 to .44 (average difference from zero = .26), thus supporting the theoretical notion that self-presentational motives are related but largely independent (Table 3.4), and justifying the confirmatory factor analytic approach used in the next stage.

Table 3.4. *Inter-factor correlations and internal consistency: EFA sample data*

	Factor				
	I	II	III	IV	V
I. Development of Self	.728				
II. Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions	.135	.837			
III. Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes	-.361	-.330	.828		
IV. Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions	.260	.162	-.359	.701	
V. Development of a Social Identity	.437	-.049	-.217	.270	.856

*Note.* Cronbach's alpha coefficients on the principal diagonal of the factor correlation matrix.

*Socially Desirable Responding (SDR).* Scores ranged from 0-13, with a mean of 6.93 ( $SD = 2.67$ ). When split by gender, an independent samples t-test with equal variances assumed (based on a non-significant Levene statistic) suggested that males and females had comparable social desirability scores ( $t_{(254)} = -1.67, p = .096$ ). On average, males scored just below the total-sample mean (6.78,  $SD = 2.73; n = 167$ ), and females just above (7.37,  $SD = 2.66; n = 89$ ). Similarly, a one-way ANOVA with sport as the dependent variable suggested that social desirability did not differ with the sport that participants played ( $F_{(10)} = 1.160, p = .318$ ).

Total-scale average impression motivation shared a non-significant weak relationship with SDR ( $r = -.083$ ; two-tailed  $p = .186$ ; listwise  $n = 256$ ). Next, participants were grouped according to their MCSDS-C score (low SDR = 0-4, moderate SDR = 5-9, high SDR = 10-13; see Table 3.5). The moderate SDR group included the most participants, and the low and high SDR groups comprised almost identical size sub-samples (see Table 3.5). An independent samples t-test revealed no significant differences in impression motivation between the extreme groups (low and high SDR groups;  $t_{(95)} = 1.90$ ,  $p > .05$ ; based on overall IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> score). These results therefore alleviate concern that SDR influenced participants' IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> impression motivation responses, and suggest that impression motivation and SDR are distinct variables; at least within the present sample.

Table 3.5. *Impression motivation (IMO) scores in relation to socially desirable response score grouping (MCSDS-C)*

	MCSDS-C score (0-13)		
	0-4	5-9	10-13
<i>n</i>	48	159	49
MCSDS-C $\bar{x}$ ( <i>SD</i> )	2.83 (1.19)	7.11 (1.36)	10.63 (0.81)
IMO $\bar{x}$ ( <i>SD</i> )	72.82 (10.28)	71.77 (11.78)	68.77 (10.66)

#### 3.6.4. Discussion: Stage Five

The purpose of stage five was to identify the latent factor structure of the impression motivation response scale of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> and its most parsimonious factorial solution. EFA provided support for a 28-item, 5-factor measurement model (IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>; Appendix Ten). Each decision during the five exploratory factor analyses (described above) was made to improve the

statistical and conceptual integrity of the scale. The result is a measurement device that has simple structure (Table 3.3), and is readily interpretable from a theoretical standpoint.

The IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> factors reflect motivation to use self-presentation in striving for five interpersonal objectives: development of self, avoidance of impression-damaging reactions, avoidance of negative sporting outcomes, seeking esteem-enhancing reactions, and development of a social identity. The factors and its items are closely aligned with the self-presentational motives summarised in Leary's (1995) review (interpersonal influence, in terms of desired social and/or material outcomes; development of desired identities and self-esteem; emotion regulation). However, these five factors are themselves theoretical hypotheses which warrant testing with data from an independent sample (Stevens, 1996); this will help answer the fundamental question: "does [the] instrument have the same structure across certain population subgroups?" (Costello & Osborne, 2005, p. 8).

Interestingly, the avoidance of negative sporting outcomes (factor 3) was negatively correlated with all other factors, whereas factor 2 (avoidance of impression-damaging reactions), despite being similarly toned, was not (see Table 3.4). Further, factors 2 and 3 were negatively correlated despite their seemingly congruent functions (using self-presentation to avoid undesired outcomes). Verification of this interesting observation will be sought in a subsequent sample, at which point potential explanations can be forwarded. The development motives (factors 1 and 5) share the strongest relationship (.437), and the use of self-presentation to avoid negative sporting consequences (factor 3) – a more global motive – has the most consistent and strongest relationship with other factors. Avoidance of impression-damaging reactions (factor 2) shares consistently lower relationships with all other factors (average correlation = .169).

### 3.7. Stage Six: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>

#### 3.7.1. Introduction

EFA of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub> suggested a 28-item 5-factor solution; hence, the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> displayed 'simple structure.' Simple structure refers to a desirable solution, whereby each factor has: a subset of measured variables with high loadings relative to the other items on the factor; and a subset of measured variables that each load only on a subset of the common factors (Thurstone, 1947). 'Confirmatory' Factor Analysis (CFA) is employed by researchers who wish to further verify the construct validity and factor structure of a measure that had been previously uncovered by exploratory analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The aim of stage six was to determine whether data from a new sample of team-sport athletes fit the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> measurement model.

#### 3.7.2. Method

##### Participants

Participants were 406 team-sport athletes (316 male = 77.8%; 88 female = 21.7%; 2 undisclosed = 0.5%), with an average age of 23.4 years ( $SD = 6.3$ ; range 18 – 59.7 years). Participants represented 11 different team sports: rugby union ( $n = 156$ ), soccer ( $n = 79$ ), field hockey ( $n = 62$ ), lacrosse ( $n = 33$ ), basketball ( $n = 25$ ), American Football ( $n = 24$ ), cricket ( $n = 11$ ), netball ( $n = 9$ ), rugby league ( $n = 3$ ), volleyball and canoe polo (1 participant each); 2 participants did not disclose their sport. The vast majority of participants were currently competing at inter-university (i.e., British Universities & Colleges Sport; BUCS) and/or semi-professional standard.

##### Measures

*The Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire-Team.* The 28-item IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> was employed to assess the respondents' impression motivation, efficacy judgements, and affective appraisals.

*The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) Short Form C.* The 13-item short form (Reynolds, 1982) of the original MCSDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) was used, as described in stage five.

## Procedure

Sampling and data collection procedures were the same as in stage five. Due to the much shorter scale, completion of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> took 10-15 minutes.

## Data Treatment

*Sample size requirements.* The sample principles mentioned with regard to EFA also apply to confirmatory factor analytic procedures. Therefore, the present sample is appropriate for CFA.

*Treatment of missing data.* A total of 432 participants completed the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>, but CFA was conducted using the 406 complete impression motivation datasets. In contrast to the EFA sample, this substantially smaller number of cases with missing data (26 respondents = 6%) was deemed small enough to delete outright without losing too much information. However, descriptive and supplementary analyses began with  $n = 406$  and, with missing data deleted listwise, are not always based on this, or the same, number of datapoints. Sample sizes are clearly stated for each analysis.

*Confirmatory factor analyses.* Data were analysed using SPSS<sup>®</sup> version 16, Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup>, and version 17 of Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS<sup>®</sup>; Arbuckle, 2008). Whereas EFA is data-driven, CFA is guided by the theoretical foundation on which the interpretation of the EFA model was based (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Hence, CFA was used to specify *a priori* which observed variables theoretically comprise each latent factor, to acknowledge the measurement error in the observed variables and indicate

whether or not the error terms were correlated (the 'measurement model'; Byrne, 2009). Specification was also made of the 'structural model' – the variables which were hypothesized to be the causal predictors in the model, how both the items and factors were anticipated to covary, and to what extent these parameters were free to be estimated in the analysis (Kenny, 1998).

The initial model specified 5 correlated factors, each comprised of 5 to 7 items. Each factor had its measurement scale 'set' with the fixing of the loading of one indicator variable per factor (a 'reference variable') to equal 1 (Hoyle, 1991). Additionally, the loading of each manifest variable's error term was fixed at 1. Regression weights for the remaining 23 items were to be estimated in the analysis, as were item and factor variances, and finally, the strength of correlation between latent variables (i.e., 10 covariances between the 5 factors). Hence, the specified model was over-identified as required for CFA – the number of parameters to be estimated was less than the number of known parameters (Bollen, 1989). An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Data deviated slightly from univariate normality, and this effect was magnified when the data were analysed at the multivariate level, as indicated by a Mardia's coefficient of multivariate kurtosis (293.77) that was significantly different from zero (critical ratio  $\geq 1.96$ ). Although it slightly improved the distributional characteristics of the dataset, deletion of outliers, as suggested by Mahalanobis distances, adversely affected subsequent parameter estimates and model fit. Hence, maximum likelihood parameter estimation (MLE) was selected instead, to combat the non-normality in the data (Benson & Fleishman, 1994; Bentler & Wu, 2002; Myung, 2003).

As the  $\chi^2$  statistic produced by MLE is over-sensitive to larger sample sizes and multivariate non-normality (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988), the

reduced  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2/df$ ) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980), including its 90% confidence intervals, were used to assess the model's fit (Campbell, Gillaspay, & Thompson, 1995). Thresholds of acceptable fit for these indices are  $< 2.0$  ( $\chi^2/df = 1.0$  indicates perfect fit; Byrne, 1989) and  $\leq .06$  (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Comparative fit indices were inspected in conjunction with the absolute indices, including (with thresholds): Comparative Fit Index (CFI;  $>.90$ ; Bentler, 1990); Incremental Fit Index (IFI;  $> .90$ ; Bollen, 1989); and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI;  $>.90$ ; Tucker & Lewis, 1973). To attain optimal fit, respecification of the model took the form of item deletion based on empirical tests (e.g., standardised residual covariances and modification indices, which suggest cross-loaders and covariances between measurement errors; cf. Hagger *et al.*, 2007), or an alteration of the parameters that are "fixed" in the analysis. These were kept to a minimum to avoid capitalization on nuances in the data, and were theoretically justified (Kenny, 1999).

*Supplementary data analyses.* To check whether IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> responses were influenced by social desirability, MCSDS-C data were examined with independent samples (high versus low SDR groups) t-tests. If MCSDS-C scores at the higher versus lower end of the range were associated with significantly different impression motivation scores, the veracity of IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> responses would be questioned. SDR was also correlated with each of the impression management cognitions, and demographic measures, using Pearson's tests. Independent samples t-tests were used to test for differences in age, impression management cognitions, and SDR between males and females. Pearson's correlation tests were employed to assess the strength of association between the impression management cognitions, and between these measures and age. Finally, ANOVA tested whether SDR is different across sports.

### 3.7.3. Results

At this stage, results from CFA of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> take precedence over a presentation of descriptive statistics: it seems counterintuitive to present descriptive statistics from the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>, followed by the results of CFA, when the CFA could in fact question its 5-factor structure. If the structure *is* 'confirmed', the factors can be used in, and to illuminate, analyses of descriptive statistics and demographic variables with the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> data. Any modifications made in arriving at a final model as part of the CFA process (e.g., item deletion) will thus necessitate data from an independent sample.

#### 3.7.3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analyses

An initial CFA revealed that, while overidentified as required, the hypothesised 5-factor model did not satisfy the chosen criteria for fit evaluation ( $\chi^2_{(340)} = 1175.868$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 3.458$ ; RMSEA = .078, 90% CI = .073 to .083; CFI = .796; IFI = .797; TLI = .773). Therefore, diagnostic output specific to each item on all 5 factors was inspected for information relevant to model re-specification. For example, in comparison to the other items on its factor, item 9 ("I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who is fearless"; factor 1) displayed: substantially lower standardized factor loading and squared multiple correlation, weaker correlations ( $r$ ) with its factor counterparts, more suggested correlated measurement error terms and potential cross-loadings (revealed by Modification Indices), and more values  $\geq \pm 1.96$  on the standardized residual covariance (SRC) matrix (cf. Markland & Oliver, 2008).

Numerous items exhibited similar characteristics; this indicated potential avenues for model re-specification, involving modification of the number of error terms allowed to covary, and deletion of items based on theoretical considerations (Kenny, 1999). Specifically, the benefits of deleting items 5 ("is a reliable member of the team/squad"), 9 ("is fearless"), 13 ("is fair and a 'good sport'"), 16 ("so that others within the club don't have anything bad to



say about me”), 19 (“when I am competing for selection”), 25 (“give reasonable excuses for poor performance, so that my coach doesn’t view me negatively ”), and 28 (“give reasonable excuses for poor performance, so that my team-mates don’t view me negatively”; Table 3.2) were in turn evaluated in relation to its potential theoretical impact, as these items were signalled as problematic based on the statistical diagnostic check discussed above. Hence, a series of CFAs were run to determine the model which best fit the data whilst retaining theoretical plausibility and meaningfulness. Table 3.6 shows the fit indices associated with the minor modifications – including deletion of each of these items – made prior to each analysis.

Table 3.6. *Comparison of competing models*

Change from original model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	IFI	TLI	# SRC $\geq \pm$ 1.96
Original	1175.868*	3.458	.078 (.073 to .083)	.796	.797	.773	59
Original plus 7 error terms specified to covary	856.117*	2.571	.062 (.057 to .067)	.872	.873	.855	58
Deletion of one item at-a-time, from items 5, 9, 13, 16, 19, 25, 28	943.508 – 1098.931*	3.387 – 3.500	.075 - .079	.823 - .803	.825 - .805	.801 - .780	41 - 56
Deletion of 5 items (5, 9, 13, 16, & 19)	621.569*	2.825	.067 (.061 to .073)	.872	.873	.852	18
Deletion of 7 items (5, 9, 13, 16, 19, 25, & 28)	433.597*	2.422	.059 (.052 to .066)	.907	.908	.891	12
Final model: Deletion of 6 items (5, 9, 13, 19, 25, & 28), plus 10 error terms specified to covary	322.646*	1.707	.042 (.034 to .049)	.956	.956	.946	8

*Note.* More models were compared, but for parsimony of presentation only the six central iterations are displayed. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CI = confidence interval for relevant point estimates, CFI = comparative fit index, IFI = incremental fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, SRC = standardized residual covariance.

\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Each iteration of the analysis resulted in improvements in model fit. As displayed in Table 3.6, the final model omitted items 5, 9, 13, 19, 25, and 28; these decisions were justified by carefully inspecting the content of each item for potential redundancy on its factor and/or other theoretical considerations.

For example, the ‘Development of Self’ item, “I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who is fearless” (item 9) was deemed too sport-specific – i.e., fearlessness might not be a desirable characteristic in many sports – and did not seem to coalesce with the other items on factor 1. The ‘Avoidance of Impression-Damaging’ item(s), “I am motivated to give reasonable excuses for *poor* performance, so that my coach [item 25]/teammates [item 28]...don’t view me negatively,” was statistically problematic, but it was also decided that they more accurately capture self-presentational behaviours that may or may not produce the desired outcome, as opposed to the motive itself.

Table 3.7. *Standardised factor loadings and uniqueness of items comprising the final CFA solution*

Factor	Item and description (number corresponds to Tables 3.2. and 3.3)	Standardised factor loading	Item uniqueness
<b>I. Development of Self</b>			
	11. * is quick-thinking, and always makes the right decision	.505	.745
	21. ** to ensure that my opportunities to progress in my sport are maximised	.671	.549
	24. *** appear to be able to deal with pressure	.572	.673
	27. *** appear to have my performance under control at all times	.575	.669
<b>II. Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions</b>			
	16. ** so that others within the club don’t have anything bad to say about me	.696	.516
	17. ** to avoid embarrassment	.722	.478
	23. *** avoid being criticised by coach, as this will create a bad impression in the eyes of my teammates	.682	.534
	26. *** perform to the best of my ability, because I don’t want to be ridiculed at the next practice	.686	.529

### III. Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes

15. ** on my coach, so that he/she doesn't demote me to a lower team	.681	.537
18. ** so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making silly mistakes	.790	.377
20. ** so that my coach is less likely to sub me after making <i>one</i> silly mistake	.787	.380
22. ** on my coach, so that he/she doesn't sub me out of the game in crucial situations	.745	.445

### IV. Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions

1. **** then other people's impressions of me will match how I'd like to be thought of	.516	.733
2. **** I wish to be respected by my team-mates	.503	.747
3. **** the positive feedback I'll get makes me feel good	.557	.689
4. **** if others have confidence in me, so will I	.581	.662

### V. Development of a Social Identity

6. * has a good attitude	.678	.541
7. * is enthusiastic	.673	.547
8. * is constantly willing to learn	.659	.565
10. * is committed to the team	.647	.581
12. * is professional in their conduct	.558	.689
14. * is professional in their play	.570	.675

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*Note.* Item uniqueness = 1 – squared multiple correlation of the item; it represents the variance of an item not shared with other items on the measure.

Item stems:

\* "I am motivated to create an impression of an athlete who..."

\*\* "I am motivated to create a good impression..."

\*\*\* "I am motivated to..."

\*\*\*\* "I am motivated to create a good impression because..."

The 'final' 22-item 5-factor solution displays a good overall fit to the data ( $\chi^2_{(189)} = 322.646$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.707$ ; RMSEA = .042, 90% CI = .034 to .049; CFI = .956; IFI = .956; TLI = .946; Table 3.6). The majority of these statistics closely approach, or satisfy, the stricter criteria indicative of 'excellent' fit ( $\geq .95$  for the comparative fit indices,  $\leq .06$  for RMSEA). Standardized factor loadings ranged from .50 to .79 (all significant at  $p < .05$ ), suggesting that each indicator was significantly explained by its factor (Table 3.7). Inter-factor correlations ranged from .29 to .85 ( $\bar{x} = .57$ ; Table 3.8). However, inspection of Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated that factors 1 and 4 failed to reach the widely accepted cut-off point of .7 (Nunnally, 1978; Table 3.8). This apparent lack of internal consistency on two of the five factors may have been caused by items displaying low intra-factor item correlations, but deletion of such an item on each factor reduced the alpha coefficient further and effected a corresponding decrease in model fit. Similarly, reinstating an item on each factor that had previously been removed did not improve internal consistency of the subscale and negatively influenced fit.

Table 3.8. *Descriptive statistics, factor correlations, and internal consistency following CFA*

Factor	$\bar{x}$ SFL	$\bar{x}$ SMC	Item $\bar{x}$ (SD)	$\bar{x}$ within- factor item correlations	Factor correlations				
					I	II	III	IV	V
I. Development of Self	.581	.341	73.6 (21.0)	.338	.671	.589	.657	.623	.640
II. Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions	.696	.485	60.6 (20.7)	.486		.790	.846	.590	.293
III. Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes	.750	.565	71.1 (16.7)	.539			.822	.554	.346
IV. Seeking Esteem- Enhancing Reactions	.539	.292	74.6 (15.8)	.336				.655	.579
V. Development of a Social Identity	.630	.400	80.0 (12.5)	.415					.805

*Note.* SFL = Standardized Factor Loading; SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation; Cronbach's alpha coefficients on the principal diagonal of the factor correlation matrix.

On the basis of the current data it would not be prudent to rule out these subscales prematurely, especially as there is some debate concerning the practical necessity for subscales to absolutely meet the internal consistency criterion of .7 (Schmitt, 1996). For example, it is sometimes the case that items can be *too* similar on a scale, and their semantic overlap contributes to inflated inter-item correlations and thus higher alpha coefficients (Boyle, 1991). This would not seem to be the case with factors 1 and 4 of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> (see Appendix Ten). Indeed, the whole scale's structural and conceptual integrity would be compromised with the removal of such meaningful factors. Ultimately, if the internal consistency 'problem' exhibited by factors 1 and 4 is replicated in an independent sample – i.e., it is more than a measurement artifact of the present data – then items with lower squared multiple correlations (SMC) may have to be replaced (Churchill, 1979). The new

items should be designed to coalesce with the existing items on the factor, but remain semantically distinct from those that they substitute.

### 3.7.3.2. Descriptive Statistics

*Demographic variables.* Participants reported an average of 10.76 years ( $SD = 8.04$ ) since they began learning their primary sport, of which they had spent 8.93 years ( $SD = 7.38$ ) playing competitively. They had played at their current standard for 3.94 years ( $SD = 4.59$ ), and been with their current team for more than 3 years ( $\bar{x} = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ). In terms of their current practice and training habits, participants reported spending an average of 3.47 hours ( $SD = 2.43$ ) practicing their skills, and 5 hours ( $SD = 3.28$ ) training their body/fitness. The average age of the male sub-sample was 24.00 years ( $SD = 6.74$ ;  $n = 316$ ), and the female sub-sample had an average age of 21.04 years ( $SD = 3.76$ ;  $n = 88$ ); a difference that was statistically significant ( $t_{(402)} = 5.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ; equal variances not assumed; missing data deleted listwise). Subsequent tests will determine if this age difference is reflected in between-gender differences in the impression management variables.

Table 3.9. *Correlations between demographic and impression management measures*

	Years learning sport	Years playing competitively	Hours per week training body	Hours per week practicing	Time at current level (years)	Time with current team (years)
$\bar{x}$ IMO	-.114*	-.102*	.094	.084	.009	.000
$\bar{x}$ IEFF	.155**	.180**	.135**	.084	.195**	.091
$\bar{x}$ IAFF	.175**	.188**	.102*	.044	.185**	.121**

*Note.* IMO = impression motivation; IEFF = impression efficacy; IAFF = impression affect; \* correlation significant at the .05 level (two-tailed); \*\* correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed); *n* ranges from 363 - 404 for these analyses.

The results displayed in Table 3.9 provide interesting theoretical information. It appears that amount of experience learning and playing a sport competitively has only a weak negative association with impression motivation, and time at current level and with current team even less so. Impression motivation and self-reported hours per week spent training the body and practicing the sport also had a weak positive relationship; these variables in particular might draw socially desirable responses (i.e., it is socially desirable to spend more time in the gym or on the practice field), but the negligible relationships observed here suggest that the impression-motivated athlete is not susceptible to this temptation. The same broad pattern was observed in the relationship between these variables and both impression efficacy and impression affect; with the exception that years learning sport and playing competitively were positively related to these variables rather than negatively. The relationship was stronger also; hence, more experience is associated with stronger impression efficacy and a more positive affective response.



*Impression management variables.* When cases are deleted due to missing data on each of the key impression management variables, whole scale (28-item) averages from the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> indicate that participants reported an average impression motivation strength of 72.15 ( $SD = 20.98$ ), impression efficacy of 71.50 ( $SD = 17.10$ ), and impression affect of 15.86 ( $SD = 16.43$ ). Descriptive statistics for individual factors of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> are displayed in Table 3.10. Participants scored highest on the Development of a Social Identity factor, and lowest on the Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions; with the latter being substantially lower than the other four. It is also apparent that as the motivation for these outcomes grew stronger, the variability in responding narrowed.

In relation to impression efficacy, as impression motivation scores increased, a slight negative discrepancy in impression efficacy emerged, although the difference is small on the VAS. Perhaps most interesting, however, is the tendency for impression affect to be stronger when impression motivation was higher. This clearly indicates that the more important an athlete's self-presentational goals, the more challenging or exciting they perceive them. Indeed, impression motivation and impression affect displayed a moderate positive correlation ( $r = .477, p < .01$ ), as did impression motivation and impression efficacy ( $r = .538, p < .01$ ). The relationship between impression efficacy and impression affect was also significant and positive ( $r = .661, p < .01$ ;  $n = 392$  in all analyses). After controlling for gender, the correlations were almost identical (within .034 of the above  $r$  statistic in all cases). Thus, athletes in the present sample – as with the EFA sample – exhibited a linear relationship between the three impression management variables: impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect rise and fall together in a fairly consistent manner.

Table 3.10. *Descriptive statistics for individual factors of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>*

	Average Impression Motivation ( <i>SD</i> ; <i>n</i> = 406)	Average Impression Efficacy ( <i>SD</i> ; <i>n</i> = 400)	Average Impression Affect ( <i>SD</i> ; <i>n</i> = 397)
Total IMSQ-T	72.15 (20.98)	71.50 (17.10)	15.86 (16.43)
Factor 1 Development of Self	73.62 (16.36)	67.58 (15.78)	14.49 (15.07)
Factor 2 Avoidance of Impression- Damaging Reactions	60.59 (20.65)	66.94 (16.32)	8.99 (13.98)
Factor 3 Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes	71.12 (16.67)	71.47 (12.52)	13.12 (13.35)
Factor 4 Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions	74.57 (15.77)	72.42 (12.82)	19.41 (12.28)
Factor 5 Development of a Social Identity	80.00 (12.45)	77.57 (12.93)	22.13 (12.26)

Impression motivation was again analysed by gender to determine whether males and females in the present sample reported significantly different strengths of this variable. All 28 items were included in the analyses; any cases with missing data were deleted, resulting in a sample size of 406. An independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene’s test statistic – suggested that the difference in average (whole IMSQ-T) impression motivation between males and females was non-significant at  $p = .05$  ( $t_{(404)} = -1.65$ ,  $p = .101$ ; male  $\bar{x} = 71.62$ ;  $SD = 12.73$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 74.06$ ;  $SD = 10.78$ ). Thus, subsequent analyses on the impression motivation variable did not need to account for gender as a factor.

When split by gender, the EFA sample impression motivation data also displayed non-significant differences. However, in the EFA sample males were significantly more impression-efficacious than females (male  $\bar{x} = 73.21$  versus female  $\bar{x} = 65.06$ ), and appraised their impression motivation-imperson efficacy combination as significantly more positive (challenging, exciting; male  $\bar{x} = 16.48$  versus female  $\bar{x} = 10.83$ ). Hence, similar analyses were conducted with the CFA sample data, to assess the consistency of this pattern. An independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene’s test statistic – again suggested that males are significantly more impression-efficacious than females ( $t_{(398)} = 4.55, p < .001$ , two-tailed; male  $\bar{x} = 72.91$ ;  $SD = 11.79$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 66.42$ ;  $SD = 11.66$ ;  $n = 400$ ). The next independent samples t-test – with equality of variances between groups assumed, as indicated by a non-significant Levene’s test statistic – again suggested that males interpret their impression motivation-imperson efficacy combination as significantly more positive (challenging, exciting) than females ( $t_{(395)} = 2.95, p < .01$ , two-tailed; male  $\bar{x} = 16.82$ ;  $SD = 12.00$ ; female  $\bar{x} = 12.41$ ;  $SD = 13.47$ ;  $n = 397$ ); although both genders did give a positive appraisal.

The differences between genders in impression efficacy and impression affect prompted an additional set of analyses to test whether significant between-gender difference in age may be implicated. Thus, a tentative hypothesis was forwarded that the males being older would be associated with their higher scores on these measures. First, correlations between age and impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect were calculated for the whole sample (two-tailed tests). Impression motivation and age were significantly ( $p < .01$ ), albeit weakly, negatively correlated ( $r = -.185$ ;  $n = 404$ ); impression efficacy and age were uncorrelated ( $r = .083$ ;  $p = .097$ ;  $n = 398$ ); and impression affect and age were significantly ( $p < .05$ ), albeit weakly, positively correlated ( $r = .126$ ;  $n = 395$ ). Therefore, when gender is not controlled, these results suggest that older athletes experience

slightly less impression motivation, equivalent impression efficacy, and a slightly more positive affective response, than their younger counterparts.

Next, correlations between age and the three impression management measures were calculated when controlling for gender (two-tailed tests). The same pattern emerged, but the associations were attenuated: impression motivation and age were significantly ( $p < .01$ ), albeit weakly, negatively correlated ( $r = -.173$ ;  $n = 401$ ); impression efficacy and age were uncorrelated ( $r = .042$ ;  $p = .400$ ;  $n = 395$ ); and impression affect and age were significantly ( $p < .05$ ), albeit weakly, positively correlated ( $r = .101$ ;  $n = 392$ ). Thus, the hypothesis put forward (above) gained partial support: gender has a small influence on the effect of age on the impression management cognitions – the male sub-sample's higher impression efficacy and impression affect might be at least partly influenced by their advanced age. Post-hoc inspection of the descriptive statistics shed new light on this analysis, however: because of the slight age gap, males had more experience, more time at their current standard, and more time with their present squad. Hence, it is likely a combination of these elements contributed to the result discussed above (Appendix Eleven).

Again, prompted by results with the EFA sample, consistency was observed with regards the way that athletes appraised their impression motivation and impression efficacy. Average impression motivation and impression efficacy scores were almost identical (a difference of .65 on the 100-pt VAS), and participants reported this as a challenge (Table 3.11). This result is comprehensible from a theoretical standpoint – participants will need to mobilise their efforts to fulfil their interpersonal objectives, hence the slight degree of challenge that they perceived ( $\bar{x} = 15.86$ ; with gradations of “challenge” ranging from zero to 50). In contrast, despite 53.7% of the sample reporting a negative discrepancy between their impression motivation and impression efficacy, only 8.1% of the sample perceived this to be threatening to their interpersonal objectives (Table 3.11). A caveat to

interpretations of this pattern is that given how close the average impression motivation and impression efficacy scores were, the negative discrepancy may not have been large enough to elicit a threat appraisal. A counterpoint, however, can be observed in the mean impression affect scores: the minority who reported a threat appraisal scored considerably lower ( $\bar{x} = -5.5$ ) than those who had a negative impression motivation-impression discrepancy before the sample was split according to these appraisals ( $\bar{x} = 14.3$ ). Also, one standard deviation around mean impression affect for those reporting a challenge was not close to zero.

Table 3.11. *Participants' appraisals of their impression management cognitions*

Impression management variables	EFA sample $\bar{x}$ (SD)	CFA sample $\bar{x}$ (SD)
IMO (0-100)	71.31 (11.30)	72.15 (20.98)
IEFF (0-100)	70.36 (12.11)	71.50 (17.10)
IAFF (-50 to +50)	14.55 (12.15)	15.86 (16.43)
Number of participants whose IEFF matched or exceeded their IMO ( $\bar{x}$ IAFF; SD)	129 = 49.2% (18.7; 10.5)	188 = 46.3% (17.5; 11.2)
Number of participants whose IEFF was less than their IMO ( $\bar{x}$ IAFF; SD)	133 = 50.8% (10.4; 12.3)	218 = 53.7% (14.3; 13.3)
Number of participants reporting a challenge appraisal ( $\bar{x}$ IAFF; SD)	231 = 88.2% (17.2; 10.1)	373 = 91.9% (17.7; 11.0)
Number of participants reporting a threat appraisal ( $\bar{x}$ IAFF; SD)	31 = 11.8% (-5.7; 5.8)	33 = 8.1% (-5.5; 5.4)

*Note.* IMO = Impression Motivation; IEFF = Impression Efficacy; IAFF = Impression Affect

*Socially desirable responding* (SDR). Of the 406 participants comprising the main sample, a total of 397 completed the 13-item social desirability scale, producing a 97.8% completion rate; this ratio is very similar to the EFA sample (97.1%). The mean score was 6.82 ( $SD = 2.66$ ). When split by gender, an independent samples t-test with equal variances assumed suggested that males and females had comparable social desirability scores ( $t_{(395)} = -.63, p = .531$ ). On average, males scored just below the total-sample mean (6.77,  $SD = 2.66$ ;  $n = 310$ ), and females just above (6.98,  $SD = 2.66$ ;  $n = 87$ ). Similarly, a one-way ANOVA with sport as the dependent variable suggested that social desirability did not differ with the sport that participants played ( $F_{(10)} = 1.32, p = .215$ ).

Table 3.12. *Impression motivation (IMO) scores in relation to socially desirable response score grouping (MCSDS-C)*

	MCSDS-C score (0-13)		
	0-4	5-9	10-13
<i>n</i>	87	244	66
MCSDS-C $\bar{x}$ ( $SD$ )	3.24 (0.94)	7.00 (1.37)	10.88 (0.97)
IMO $\bar{x}$ ( $SD$ )	72.60 (11.99)	72.13 (12.08)	72.41 (13.77)

Importantly, total-scale average impression motivation shared a non-significant weak relationship with SDR ( $r = -.018$ ; two-tailed  $p = .721$ ; listwise  $n = 397$ ), as it did in the previous sample. SDR was not correlated with impression efficacy ( $r = .078$ ;  $p = .122$ ; two-tailed) or impression affect ( $r = .089$ ;  $p = .079$ ; two-tailed). Next, participants were grouped according to their MCSDS score (low SDR = 0-4, moderate SDR = 5-9, high SDR = 10-13; Table 3.12). The moderate group included the most participants overall, followed by the low SDR group and the high SDR group. An independent samples t-test comparison of the low and high SDR groups revealed a non-significant difference in impression motivation scores ( $t_{(151)} = .09, p > .05$ ).

Hence, despite significantly different MCSDS-C scores ( $t_{(151)} = -49.13, p < .01$ ), respondents in the two extreme SDR groups did not differ in strength of impression motivation. Further, SDR was only weakly associated with all demographic variables (range of  $r$ :  $-.033 - .114$ ), including those that might attract this type of response bias (e.g., “Yeah, I spend 10 hours a week training in the gym!”).

This result alleviates concern generated when the EFA sample displayed a marginally significant difference in impression motivation between its low and high SDR groups. In summary, data from the two samples corroborate one another in suggesting that impression motivation and SDR are distinct variables, and impression motivation is not unduly influenced by socially desirable response tendencies.

#### 3.7.4. Discussion: Stage Six

The purpose of stage six was to further examine the factorial validity of the IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub>, and confirm its structure with an independent sample. The final model displayed satisfactory fit between the observed and implied covariance matrices. In arriving at the 22-item version of the IMSQ-T<sub>4</sub> the 28-item model required minor re-specification. Items were considered for deletion based on statistical criteria, but decisions were theoretically substantiated prior to item deletion, and capitalisation on sample-specific suggestions from modification indices was minimized (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). After initial development and validation procedures, the IMSQ-T<sub>4</sub> is forwarded as a sufficiently conceptually, theoretically, and statistically robust measurement device (now in its final incarnation, hereafter the scale is titled the ‘IMSQ-T’).

### 3.8. Discussion: Study One

The purpose of this study was: first, to develop a measure of impression motivation in team-sports; next, determine its factor structure and composition; and finally, provide initial evidence of its construct validity. A six-stage research strategy, aimed at developing the IMSQ-T, resulted in a 22-item, 5-factor inventory, which is forwarded as a viable tool for use in future research to investigate impression motivation in team sport athletes. The current study confirms the notion that athletes are aware of the opportunity to fulfil self-presentational motives that is offered by their participation in a team-sport. Athletes in the current sample, regardless of gender and sport type, had an average strength of impression motivation that is high on the IMSQ-T's response scale (EFA sample  $\bar{x}$  = 71.31; CFA sample  $\bar{x}$  = 72.15).

There exists interesting qualitative data related to: self-presentational anxiety in sport (James & Collins, 1997), the impression motivation of soccer players recently having experienced 'demotion' to a substitute role (Woods & Thatcher, 2009), self-presentation and coaching (Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones, 2010; Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002), and impression management processes in female boxing (Halbert, 1997). However, gaining an appreciation of impression motivation and self-presentational constructs has not been the *primary* purpose of these studies (i.e., sport anxiety, substitutes' experiences, coaching effectiveness, female boxers' struggles in a male-dominated subculture, respectively). In conjunction with the extant literature on impression management in sport (Carron *et al.*, 2004; Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007; Prapavessis *et al.*, 2004), the high strength of impression motivation reported by athletes in the present studies confirm that the phenomenon exists in sport and that there are associated consequences (thereby answering first generation research questions).



The first factor on the IMSQ-T, labelled 'Development of Self,' contains 4 items that represent a motive to self-present to strengthen more private aspects of one's identity, including, for example, being able to deal with pressure and make quick decisions. Factor 2, labelled 'Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions,' contains 4 items that reflect a motive to impression-manage to avoid harmful reactions from important others. Factor 3 contains 4 items under the label 'Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes.' This factor represents an acknowledgement that creating an undesirable impression may lead to adverse consequences in sport, for instance, demotion to a lower team (cf. James & Collins, 1995, 1997). As does factor 2 – and 1 and 5 but in a less explicit sense – factor 4 reflects the awareness that other people's reactions to our self-presentations may impact how we view ourselves (Tice, 1992). However, this factor is labelled 'Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions' because its 4 items represent the motive to seek favourable reactions, rather than avoid negative ones (factor 2). The fifth factor contains 6 items that tap the athlete's 'Development of a Social Identity' via their self-presentation; for example, of an athlete who is enthusiastic, constantly willing to learn, and committed to the team. Factor 1 was considered conceptually distinct from factor 5 because not all identities are other-focused (i.e., the team; Hogan & Briggs, 1986); developing aspects of one's private identity (self-concept) may involve less overt or perhaps controllable behaviours (Leary, 1995), and the outcomes are arguably less associated with what the layperson (or lay-athlete) knows as impression management.

Team-sport athletes were most strongly motivated to use self-presentation to aid the development of a desired social identity (factor 5), and least motivated to employ self-presentation in avoiding impression-damaging reactions from important others (factor 2; see Table 3.10). In fact, the three factors with positive labels – Development of a Social Identity (factor 5), Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions (factor 4), and Development of Self

(factor 1) – ranked the highest on average, with Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes (factor 3) and Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions (factor 2) ranking fourth and fifth. Given that their impression efficacy closely matched their impression motivation, and their impression affect was higher for the impression motivation factors on which they scored highest, a theoretical pattern has clearly emerged. It appears that team-sport athletes, in broad terms, have an acquisitive approach to self-presentation, whereby they would prefer to develop or enhance their interpersonal sporting experience rather than engage in ‘damage limitation’ (i.e., image protection behaviours; Baumeister, 1999). A methodology needs to be devised that uncovers the outcomes that are associated with different strengths of impression motivation – a further test of the construct and predictive validity of the IMSQ-T.

As reported above, 53.7% of the CFA sample perceived a negative discrepancy between their impression motivation and impression efficacy, but only 8.1% appraised this to be threatening to their interpersonal objectives. Hence, an alternative interpretation is that participants responded to the third response scale in a self-enhancing way; it provided an opportunity to re-stabilise a positive self- or public-image after having displayed modesty or self-deprecation (subjective aspects of the ‘truth’) on response scale B. Modesty or self-deprecation *per se* might not be detected by the MCSDS-C, but SDR is, and was not associated with impression motivation, impression efficacy, or impression affect. Thus, a further alternative explanation is that participants were truthful in reporting a negative discrepancy between impression motivation and impression efficacy, and the impression affect response scale gave them a chance to control their affect in a positive way. Finally, high sporting self-efficacy and a lack of trait social anxiety may help explain the pattern that emerged in the impression affect appraisals; these constructs may mediate the impression motivation-impression efficacy-impression affective model (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). These first generation findings (i.e., effects that follow on from

impression motivation), have implications for subsequent second and third generation questions (below).

The structure of the IMSQ-T almost parallels Leary's (1995) social psychology research-driven categorization of self-presentational motives, suggesting that they are similar regardless of the social context under investigation. Thus, while the resultant self-presentational *behaviours* may differ between sport settings, romantic couplings, and the workplace, for example, theoretically they are activated by similar *motivational* processes (asserting interpersonal influence, constructing personal identity and maintaining self-esteem, and promoting positive emotions; Leary, 1995). Further research evidence is needed to support this claim; the IMSQ-T could be used to investigate what self-presentational behaviours the different motives are most strongly associated with, how well the IMSQ-T predicts them and indeed, whether the behaviours have the desired effect. As mentioned above, it is now possible to test specific hypotheses in this regard: second generation research could explore the boundary conditions (situations) under which athletes construct and enact acquisitive self-presentations; and an example third generation question could be: "To what extent is the relationship between trait impression motivation and acquisitive behaviours mediated by state self-esteem?" (Zanna & Fazio, 1982).

It would also be interesting to examine if certain dispositional self-presentation motives are more strongly associated with positive emotional states than others. For example, the Sport Emotion Questionnaire (Jones, Lane, Bray, Uphill, & Catlin, 2005) could be employed to see how well the different IMSQ-T factors predict pre-competition emotions including anger, anxiety, dejection, excitement, and happiness; and whether impression efficacy and/or impression affect act as mediators in this equation. Previous, preliminary studies in sport psychology have had to avoid tackling important issues such as gender and cultural differences, but the present study goes

some way in rectifying the first point by exhibiting that males and females have similar strength of motivation for the motives that the IMSQ-T taps.

Demographic variables displayed a remarkable lack of association with all three impression management cognitions. This also addresses certain first generation questions: it goes some way in ruling out that certain demographic characteristics (time spent with a team, playing experience, etc.) are associated with different strengths of dispositional impression motivation. Gender, however, did have a small influence on the effect of age on impression efficacy and impression affect, with the older males having more positive scores on these variables. The average gender difference may not have been great, but if female athletes report significantly lower impression efficacy/affect on just one or two items, it could be practically meaningful. Lewthwaite (1990) levelled this criticism at anxiety scales such as the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT; Martens, 1977), but it can equally be applied to any scale that obtains a cumulative or aggregate score. That is, those athletes that report strong impression efficacy or impression affect for *most* impression motivation items are likely to appear to be highly impression-eficacious; but to paraphrase Lewthwaite (1990), they may be underrepresented in the ranks of the highly self-presentationally anxious, even though their highly specified lack of efficacy might have intense affective and performance consequences. In terms of research methods that could take this line of enquiry further, the IMSQ-T could be administered to athletes with a much wider age range, and gender could be controlled for in a mediational model with age as initial variable and impression management cognitions as outcome variables. If substantive gender differences do exist in the tendency to appraise impression motivation as a challenge or threat, interventions to tackle social anxiety in sport will be informed.

A limitation of the IMSQ-T is its focus only on team-sports. However, depending on the outcome of further validation attempts, the IMSQ-T could be adapted to reflect the different context and tested with those athletes.

Also, we cannot *assume* a measure of impression motivation for professional athletes, youth or Masters athletes, and participants in less traditional or 'mainstream' sports (e.g., 'extreme' and contact sports, martial arts) or from different cultures would have the same structure as the IMSQ-T. Specifically, in this study the IMSQ-T was developed and validated with athletes from sports with the most widespread participation rates ([www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)). However, we know that there are sociological, psychological, and psychosocial reasons why people take up certain sports and avoid others. For example, in an ethnographic observation piece on BMX riders – ranked 126<sup>th</sup> on Sport England's spreadsheet of participation rates – Browne (2004) found that: "something about that traditional world – its game and practice schedules, its coaches, its uniformity, its *uniforms* – did not speak to them" (p. 2). Hence, the inherent differences in personality and (sub)culture across sports might result in different motives and strength of motivation for self-presentation. Given the consistency between the IMSQ-T factors and impression motivation factors identified previously it is possible that a similar factor structure would emerge with different populations. However, it would be prudent to cross-validate the IMSQ-T with different sporting sub-populations and develop a scale for use with individual-based athletes.

Further validation procedures should include a check of the test-retest stability of the IMSQ-T. In the present CFA sample, "time spent with one's current team" and all three impression management cognitions were not strongly correlated. But if one-month test-retest reliability is established, the IMSQ-T variables could be examined at various times throughout a competitive season. This would better test the hypothesis that impression management cognitions alter with time spent in a particular context or with a certain audience (i.e., impression motivation diminishes; Leary *et al.*, 1994). It would also allow a test of whether impression management cognitions add to the prediction of an athlete's successful (or otherwise) season (i.e., as judged by themselves, coaches, and objective measures). Bringing some of these ideas together – the current IMSQ-T, or a modified version, that

displays test-retest reliability with youth athletes could be useful in tracking developmental changes in the importance placed on certain self-presentational motives and strength of impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect. If it could be mapped that these cognitions evolve with athletes' age and experience, they could be cross-referenced with long-term indicators of success and well-being and provide insight for applied practitioners working with young and adult sportspeople.

Construct validity could be further determined by placing the impression management constructs in a nomological network, through the modelling of their relation to theoretically convergent and discriminant constructs (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Concepts theoretically related to impression motivation include self-presentation concerns, self-monitoring, public-self consciousness, need for approval, and fear of negative evaluation; and social anxiety and self-esteem are very much involved in impression efficacy and impression affect (Arkin *et al.*, 1980; Leary, 1995). There are only a few examples of sport-domain measures of these phenomena (e.g., CSPCI, SPSQ), meaning that evidence of the convergent validity of the IMSQ-T will be difficult to ascertain. However, there are sport measures of variables *associated* with impression management constructs that would aid evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity, for example, trait sport anxiety (e.g., Sport Anxiety Scale-2; Smith, Smoll, Cumming, & Grossbard, 2006). Constructs presumed to be weakly associated with impression motivation should also be placed on the nomological net, and discriminant validity of the IMSQ-T would be demonstrated if these relationships produced substantially lower correlation scores than with theoretically convergent constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Self-presentational anxiety stems from a perceived inability to predict, control, or attain desired interpersonal outcomes; i.e., low impression efficacy (Sarason, 1978; Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Seligman, 1975). The current sample's high impression affect scores suggest that they perceive self-

presentational *control* over their impression motivation (cf. Sarason, 1978; Schlenker & Leary, 1982); but even those athletes whose impression efficacy does not match their impression motivation tend to appraise this as a challenge. Previous research with sports officials found that certain stressors were perceived as a challenge not a threat *because* of their impression management connotations (Thatcher, 2005), so the current findings are not completely without precedent. Construct validation procedures could attempt to untangle this conundrum going forward. However, some response profiles do exhibit the classic social anxiety profile (high impression motivation, low impression efficacy, threat appraisal). It would be worthwhile to identify these participants and investigate their perceptions of the IMSQ-T; do they not see it as other respondents do, or are most athletes just able to functionally appraise these cognitions? Third generation research could investigate the mechanisms through which athletes experience a positive affective response to high impression motivation and low impression efficacy – a combination typically associated with negative responses (Schlenker & Leary, 1982); i.e., what other psychological constructs are involved as mediators and moderators of these relationships? Structural equation modelling would thus be a useful aid to ongoing investigation of the construct validity of the IMSQ-T.

An attempt to integrate the self-presentation literature with the stress and coping framework of Lazarus and Folkman (1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Lazarus, 1982, 1991, 1999), and Jones' (1995) control model of competitive anxiety, would be a worthwhile undertaking (cf. Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007). This strategy might add to the explanatory power of the overall impression management model in sport. Locating the points of connection between impression management constructs and well-established frameworks of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, sport confidence, and achievement motivation would be of similar benefit to the model. For example, Vealey and colleagues (1986, 1988; Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman, & Giacobbi, 1998) uncovered physical self-presentation confidence as a source or

constituent of global sport confidence, but no mention, explicitly at least, of more general impression-related confidence. Thus, it would be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between the IMSQ-T measures and the sources of confidence in their model.

### 3.8.1. *Summary and evidence for the impression management model in sport*

The importance of effective impression management in sport is clearer now: the sheer amount of evidence that underpins Leary's (1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990) review attests to the construct validity of the IMSQ-T; its structure clearly reflects theorising in social psychology. The current studies have provided support for the factorial validity of the IMSQ-T, and it is forwarded as a psychometrically sound instrument for use in impression motivation research with team-sport athletes. As the first known measure of its kind – a shortcoming that has potentially hindered progression of the area past first-generation questions (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007), it is hoped that the scale will facilitate a surge in sport research aimed at filling the many theoretical gaps that still exist. In the meantime, however, there now exists substantial data related to: the strength of dispositional impression motivation and impression efficacy of team-sport athletes, and some of the different affective responses these constructs elicit; the categories under which self-presentation motives in sport fall; the relationship of demographic variables to impression management variables; and the relationship between socially desirable responding and impression management constructs. Thus, evidence has been built into the corresponding sections of the model of impression management in sport (Figure 2.2).



## Chapter Four

### Study Two

#### Does Impression Management in the Sporting Domain Impair Cognitive Performance?

##### 4.1. Introduction

Even after a good day [with the bat], three-for-four, he'd sit alone in the hotel with the canker of one failure eating at him. If he screwed up, or looked bad, the awkwardness turned to shame, the shame to rage.....When he struck out in the eighth, he went to right field seething. Then a pop-up twisted toward his foul line. He ran and ran, dropped the ball, then booted it trying to pick it up. Rage was pounding in him. He grabbed the ball and fired it over those right-field walls. By the time the ball hit Ponce de Leon Avenue and bounced up at a Sears store, Cronin had yanked Ted [Williams, *Boston Red Sox* and baseball Hall-of Fame] from the game (Cramer, 1986, in Halberstam, 1999, p. 66).

Critical moments during sporting performance – such as chasing a baseball into the outfield to catch out the hitter – require optimal concentration; distractions, if they enter the athlete's attentional focus and cannot be removed, are an unwanted hindrance. Such distractions may stem from within (e.g., worry) or without (e.g., an abusive crowd); be forgotten almost immediately, or not so easily. And some athletes are better able than others to block the distraction out altogether or alter its meaning for the better (cf. Janelle, Singer, & Williams, 1999). Impression related thoughts, be they relatively enduring or only heightened under very specific conditions, are an example of a potentially distracting (cognitive) agent (Baumeister, 1984; Baumeister & Showers, 1986; Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984).

Over-learned or habitual self-presentations require little conscious thought – even in the presence of strong impression motivation – and impression efficacy is likely to be strong in such conditions (Leary, 1995). But, self-presentationally novel and/or pressured situations – those that activate a self-presentational motive, elicit heightened impression motivation and more in-depth impression construction cognitions – ensure that impression management attempts are cognitively demanding (Baumeister, 1989; Baumeister *et al.*, 1998; Baumeister *et al.*, 1989; Bond & Omar, 1990; Kimble & Zehr, 1982; Lord *et al.*, 1987). Therefore, in certain circumstances, the impression management process may deplete cognitive resources needed for performance of the primary task by diverting attention to task-irrelevant stimuli – impression management thoughts and affective responses (cf. Vohs & Baumeister, 2004; Vohs *et al.*, 2005). It is here that the individual's self-regulatory ability will mediate the effect of the distraction: “Self-regulation is essentially the ability to alter the self's responses. Self-presentation consists of behaviors (sic) designed to make a desired impression on others. Self-regulation is thus more needed for some acts of self-presentation than others” (Vohs *et al.*, 2005, p. 633).

According to Attentional Control Theory – a development and extension of Processing Efficiency Theory (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992) – performance *effectiveness* refers to the quality of task performance (e.g., response accuracy), whereas performance *efficiency*: “refers to the relationship between the effectiveness of performance and the effort or resources spent in task performance” (Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007, p. 336). The individual can employ self-regulation (exercising control over oneself; bringing the domains into line with a preferred state; Baumeister *et al.*, 1998) to attempt to alter task performance and attentional processes. Self-regulation of skill execution and attention necessary for performance must be motivated by the presence of a desired goal(s) (e.g., self-presentational motives): the individual must want to succeed and perceive goal-attainment

to be under their control to engage in self-regulation of attention and task persistence/performance (Vohs *et al.*, 2005).

Self-regulation requires cognitive resources, and as these resources are theorised to be finite (cf. Baumeister *et al.*, 1998; Muraven *et al.*, 1998): “if a person attempts to engage in several demanding self-regulatory tasks simultaneously or consecutively, the chance of success at any one of them is significantly reduced” (Vohs *et al.*, 2005, p. 633). Therefore, it is possible to hypothesise that self-regulating one’s attention and performance on a cognitive task would be harder when there are overt self-presentational implications than when there is not. This is especially true if the task or context is novel or pressured, as with the current study. Attentional control theory predominantly explains the effect of anxiety on the working memory system, but is equally relevant with other task-irrelevant thoughts such as impression motivation, impression construction, impression efficacy, and impression affect. Strong impression motivation energises the other cognitive and behavioural processes of impression management, thus depleting cognitive resources necessary for primary task performance.

The implications for sporting performance are explicit. As illustrated in Section 2.4, impression management can impact performance through various routes and mechanisms. Sportspersons rely on their ability to execute certain skills and patterns of movement within a split-second of a stimulus presenting itself. This requires excellent attention and concentration capabilities, which often develop concurrently with the technical aspects of performance, as the individual learns to attend to relevant cues and discard less useful information (Moran, 2000). However, the importance of a cue in part depends upon the goals the athlete has within that event; with certain information requiring conscious processing, i.e., that which relates to the current state of their public image. There is a long history of research that has focused on uncovering barriers to optimal functioning, and a recent trend has shown how subjective appraisals of the competitive situation can lead to

impaired performance (Jones, 2003). One such situation-specific appraisal relates to the self-presentational implications of the performance.

In study one of this thesis it was determined that, on average, athletes have a strong tendency to experience impression motivation to achieve self-presentational outcomes. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to examine if impression motivation disrupts attention and is associated with decrements in task performance. Indeed, competition performance may be limited by impression related distractions *during practice*, and sub-par practice performance may lead to the athlete losing the opportunity to play. Clearly then, while successful impression management may serve important functions for the athlete (e.g., development of self, avoidance of impression-damaging reactions, avoidance of negative sporting outcomes, seeking esteem-enhancing reactions, and development of a social identity; see Chapter 3), ineffective or erroneous self-presentations may be detrimental.

#### 4.1.1. Aims, Research Questions, and Hypotheses

This exploratory study involved experimental manipulations of impression motivation to determine its effects on cognitive functioning during task performance. A secondary purpose was to explore whether self-presentational motives can be activated in a laboratory setting; a methodological question that further tests the predictive validity of the IMSQ-T. Accordingly, two sets of hypotheses were forwarded: one set related to the experimental manipulation and corresponding self-report data, and the other regarding task performance.

The following broad manipulation check analyses and experimental hypotheses were to be tested in the present investigation:

*Related to the experimental manipulation*

1. a) After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly higher impression monitoring, impression motivation, and cognitive anxiety intensity in the two manipulated conditions compared to baseline  
b) After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly higher impression monitoring, impression motivation, and cognitive anxiety intensity in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong levels of these variables than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-high levels
2. a) There will be a significant difference between each manipulated condition and the baseline condition in post-instruction impression efficacy and impression affect (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made)  
b) There will be a significant difference in post-instruction impression efficacy and impression affect between the two manipulated conditions (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made)
3. Participants will report non-significant differences in somatic anxiety intensity across all three conditions
4. a) After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly stronger impression monitoring and impression motivation than before reading the instructions in the two manipulated conditions but not at baseline  
b) After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly stronger impression monitoring and impression motivation than before reading the instructions in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong levels of these variables than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-high levels  
c) The *difference* in impression motivation from pre-test to post-instruction will be significantly larger in the in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong impression management cognitions than in the manipulated condition that was

designed to elicit not-so-strong impression motivation and the baseline condition

d) After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly different impression efficacy and impression affect scores than before reading the instructions in the two manipulated conditions but not at baseline (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made).

e) The *difference* in impression efficacy and impression affect from pre-test to post-instruction will be significantly larger in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit more intense impression management cognitions than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-strong impression management cognitions, and the baseline condition

5. Post-instruction impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation scores will be significantly positively correlated in the two manipulated conditions, but not in the Baseline condition
6. Post-instruction impression motivation will be significantly positively correlated to post-test (retrospective) measures of “motivation to do well in the test” and “effort during the test” in the two manipulated conditions, but not at baseline
7. a) Participants will perceive themselves to have devoted significantly less concentration to the task in the manipulated conditions compared to the baseline condition  
b) Participants will perceive themselves to have devoted significantly less concentration to the task in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong impression management cognitions than the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-strong impression management cognitions
8. There will be significant differences between the two manipulated conditions on post-test measures of nerves intensity, nerves interpretation, attributions of nerves to impression management cognitions, and satisfaction with performance (two-tailed; no directional assumptions made)

9. a) Post-test retrospective measures will indicate that participants perceived the instructions to elicit significantly stronger impression management cognitions in the two manipulated conditions compared to the baseline condition
- b) Post-test retrospective measures will indicate that participants perceived the instructions to elicit significantly stronger impression management cognitions in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong impression management cognitions than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-strong levels of these measures
10. a) Retrospectively, participants will report experiencing significantly stronger impression management cognitions when performing in the manipulated conditions than during the baseline condition
- b) Retrospectively, participants will report experiencing significantly stronger impression management cognitions when performing in the in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong impression management cognitions than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-strong levels of these measures

*Regarding task performance*

- A. Participants will perform significantly better on tests of cognitive functioning in the baseline condition than in the two manipulated conditions
- B. Participants will perform significantly worse on tests of cognitive functioning in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong impression motivation than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-strong impression motivation
- C. When grouped according to post-instruction impression motivation score, participants in the low impression motivation group will perform significantly better than those in the high impression motivation group

## 4.2. Method

### Recruitment and Participant Group Allocation

Participants were recruited purposively from the university sports teams that were involved in stage six of study one. To determine an individual's potential suitability for study two their mean item scores and standard deviations for each of the five IMSQ-T factors were consulted, as calculated from their responses in study one. A multi-step process was undertaken with this as the basis. First, individuals were placed into one of five groups depending on which factor they scored most strongly. Next, each individual's standard deviation around their *strongest* factor item mean score was calculated and doubled. If the mean item score on their *weakest* factor fell outside the lower bound of the resultant value, their first and fifth factor scores were considered distinct. The aim of this process was to identify individuals who clearly endorsed one self-presentational motive more strongly than another; essential if the experimental manipulation was to elicit differentiated strengths of impression motivation according to condition (see *Procedure > Instructions* below).

Originally it had been planned to recruit participants based on the above criterion but looking for distinct scores between their strongest and second-strongest impression motivation factors. However, it transpired that these scores were invariably too close, and participants were instead recruited based on a substantial difference between their strongest and least strong IMSQ-T factors (as above). In fact, this is preferable – it allows for a test of the differential impact on performance of the two most distal factors (in terms of mean impression motivation), rather than two factors that might be distinct according to the chosen criterion but still much stronger than the other three factors.



Of the 173 potential participants, 37 (21.4%) were eliminated in this process. Next, within their factor grouping, individuals were ranked from largest to smallest difference between their strongest and weakest factor mean item scores. They were also ranked from smallest to largest standard deviation around the mean of their strong factor impression motivation score; the rationale for this was that it would likely be easier to elicit impression motivation in athletes with little variability in item scores on the factor being manipulated. The two ranks were combined to provide an overall rank, and potential participants were sent a recruitment email from the top of the ranking list down. To boost numbers, a recruitment flyer (see Appendix Twelve) was put up in appropriate locations on campus, and the recruitment pitch was circulated on the University's weekly intranet email.

Email addresses of the 136 suitable individuals were obtained using the University's contact list. Subsequently, these people received a recruitment pitch that sought their participation, and individualised feedback was offered in exchange for their time; "...you will complete 4 tests of 'cognitive functioning' (e.g., reaction and movement time, concentration), on specially designed computer software. This programme assesses the types of mental skills that are essential for smooth and efficient sporting performance. Therefore, your results will provide you with an idea of your strengths and weaknesses (i.e., you may make extremely quick decisions but not always the most accurate); information that you may find interesting and useful". The individuals who agreed to participate were screened for colour-blindness and hearing difficulties – problematic given the test system, had their visits scheduled, and in the 24 hours prior to each visit received a reminder email that also gave them further instructions (e.g., please bring reading glasses if required).

Whilst recruitment for the full study was underway, pilot testing took place. Eight volunteers were included at this stage, including the primary investigator, who benefitted greatly from having been exposed to the

performance tests and experimental conditions. Of interest during piloting of the study design were the following topics: timing – length of participation (for recruitment/study information details) and its effect on overall concentration; appropriateness of tests – if the selected tests capture the elements of cognitive functioning that were targeted, and best apply to sportspersons as a population; suitability of chosen method of IMC questioning – i.e., administering questions from participants' strong IMSQ-T factor, altered to be state-relevant, was ruled out in favour of the questions that were used in the main study (see Measures > *State impression management cognitions*, below); whether any fluctuation in the self-report data and performance between conditions was emerging; and how best to measure performance (see Data Treatment > *Data transformation*, below). Ultimately, the pilot testing period helped finalise the study design, and fed back into the recruitment process (i.e., more comprehensive information could be provided to interested athletes).

## Participants

Twenty-seven student-athletes participated in study two. Both genders were evenly represented (14 females, 13 males), and the average age was 19 years 10 months ( $SD = 1.66$ ). Participants came from ten different team-sports, including American football, basketball, cricket, field hockey, lacrosse, netball, rugby league, rugby union, soccer, and volleyball. Each IMSQ-T factor had the following number of *potential* participants: factor 1 = 13 (9.6%); factor 2 = 24 (17.6%); factor 3 = 28 (20.6%); factor 4 = 17 (12.5%); factor 5 = 54 (39.7%); and in the final sample of 27, participants were spread amongst the IMSQ-T factors as follows: factor 1 = 3 (11.1%); factor 2 = 7 (25.9%); factor 3 = 4 (14.8%); factor 4 = 2 (7.4%); factor 5 = 11 (40.7%). Thus, the distribution of participants among the factors was similar in the participating sample to the population from which they were drawn.

## Measures

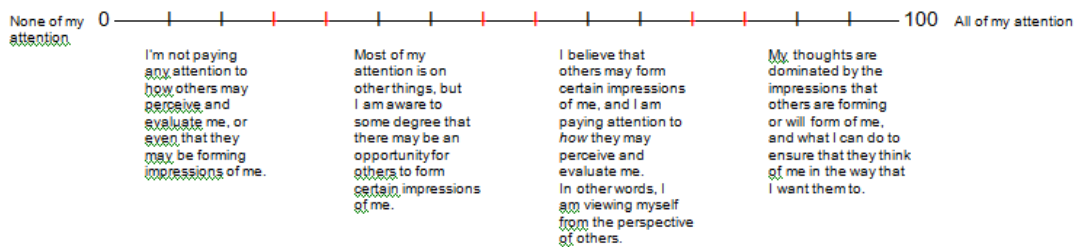
*Impression Motivation in Sport Questionnaire – Team (IMSQ-T)*. Participants completed the IMSQ-T as part of study one; see chapter three for details of this measure.

*State Impression Management Cognitions*. Single item measures were constructed to assess state impression monitoring, impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression-related affect (see Figure 4.1).

Participants indicated the proportion of their attention they felt was focussed on impression-related thoughts, their strength of motivation to influence others' impression of them, their confidence in making the desired impression, and how the motivation-efficacy combination makes them feel.

### Pre-test Questions

1. Can you please indicate how much you are thinking, *right now*, about the impressions of you that others are forming or may form. Please use the descriptions below the line as a guide, and note that there are more points on the line than descriptors so that you can show the true degree of impression-related thought that you are currently experiencing. Circle the mark that best describes you *right now*. Please ask if this is still not clear after reading the descriptors:

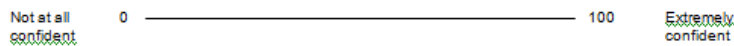


The following scales allow you to indicate the precise strength of your response, with each scale being anchored at each end by opposing extremes. Please use the entire length of the line to exhibit the true degree of your response to the item.

2. Now that you have indicated where your attention is currently directed, please use the line below to indicate how *strongly* you are motivated *right now* to influence how others perceive you:



3. How confident are you that others will view you in the way that you wish to be perceived?



4. When you consider your motivation to influence how others perceive you (Q2), and your confidence in doing so (Q3), how does this make you feel?

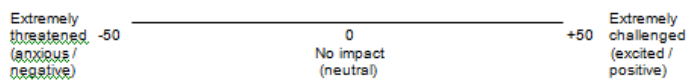


Figure 4.1. *Pre-test questions assessing impression monitoring, impression motivation, impression efficacy, and the respondent's affective response to these cognitions*

*State Anxiety.* A modified version of the revised Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 was used in the present study (CSAI-2R; Cox *et al.*, 2003). Cox *et al.* provided support for a shorter form of the original scale that retains its theoretical strengths while removing its statistical flaws. The CSAI-2R is a 17-item scale that assesses pre-performance cognitive anxiety (5 items), somatic anxiety (7 items), and self-confidence (5 items), in terms of their intensity and interpretation. Respondents rate how they feel *right now* in relation to various statements reflecting feeling states, on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Not at all”) to 4 (“Very much so”). The scores for each subscale are summed, divided by the number of items on that subscale, and multiplied by 10. Hence, intensity scores range from 10 to 40 on all three subscales, regardless of whether they have 5 or 7 items. After the first part of

each item the individual rates their interpretation of this feeling on a 7-point Likert scale, anchored by –3 (“Very negative”) and +3 (“Very positive”), through 0 (“Undecided”). This directional subscale is also summed for each component of anxiety and self-confidence, and divided by the number of items, thus producing an *average* interpretation score for the *total* intensity score, ranging from –3 to +3. In this way it is possible to deduce whether the athlete perceives the intensity of his/her pre-competition feelings to be ‘facilitative’ or ‘debilitative.’ The CSAI-2R demonstrated similar internal consistency to the original scale, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of .81, .81, and .86 for cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence, respectively.

For the purposes of the present research, the CSAI-2R was adapted slightly to reflect test performance anxiety. In particular, the scale’s instructions were re-worded to reflect the performance test rather than sporting performance. In addition, the self-confidence subscale was omitted in order to reduce the already large number of variables to be measured and assessed, and the time taken to complete the scale (see Appendix Thirteen).

*Performance Measures.* Cognitive performance was assessed using four tests from the Vienna Test System<sup>®</sup> (VTS; Schuhfried GmbH, Moedling, Austria). The VTS is marketed as an objective, efficient, accurate, and: “reliable means of measuring ability and personality traits in the context of psychological assessment” ([www.schuhfried.com/vienna-test-system-vts/](http://www.schuhfried.com/vienna-test-system-vts/)). Each test has been extensively validated with the target population for its intended use, including clinical neuropsychological assessment, personnel selection, traffic psychology, civil and military aviation psychology, educational psychology assessment, and ability and personality factors in sport psychology. The four tests selected for the current study were the “Determination Test” (test form S2 – adaptive), “Reaction Test (test form S7), “Cognitrone (test form S5),” and “Visual Pursuit Test” (test form S1 – long form; see Appendix Fourteen); they each assess facets of cognitive

functioning that transfer to the 'playing field' as important for effective sporting performance.

The Determination Test (test duration 8 minutes) confronts participants with rapidly changing acoustic and visual stimuli that each demand a different response, either on a panel of buttons for the hands or on foot pedals located on the floor. As such, it assesses performance: "under different levels of psychological and physiological stress, since the high frequency of signals puts almost everyone into an overcharge situation" (Kisser, Krafack, & Vaughahn, 1986, p. 226). The ability to discriminate between and react quickly to colours and acoustic stimuli is relevant to sport, i.e., a team-mate's uniform not the opponent's, and a variety of voices being projected toward you at once. Further, the test rules must be memorised (during the familiarisation period at the beginning of the test) and then adhered to, which is akin to learning set plays in sport and the need for repetitive practice. As in sport, the participant must maintain concentration and focus on executing these rules despite continuously changing perceptual demands (Neuwirth & Benesch, 2003, p. 5).

The Reaction Test (test duration approximately 8 minutes) measures reaction time and motor time in milliseconds, selective alertness, and the ability to repress an inadequate reaction. The relatively simple patterns of stimuli – thus, the amount of information that must be stored in the working memory – means that it is sustained attentional ability that is measured across participants, and not memory capacity. In sport, one's attention must be tuned to receiving certain stimuli and making the appropriate action, as in the case of interceptive actions in ball and racquet sports. Hence, the Reaction Test, which quickly provides the next stimulus whether or not the respondent has reacted, is representative of a basic component of sporting skill.

Cognitrone (test duration approximately 8 minutes) assesses “attention and concentration through the comparison of figures concerning their congruence,” with added time pressure – participants have only 1.8secs to respond before the next item is presented (Wagner & Karner, 2003, p. 3). Participants often know that they’ve made an incorrect choice; they then have to self-regulate their attentional response to that mistake in time to accurately respond to the next figure. Again, this is representative of real sporting performance, and was why this test was selected.

The Visual Pursuit Test (test duration is self-determined, depending on time taken to respond to 80 pursuits; approximately 6-8 minutes) assesses: “visual orientation performance... which consists in pursuing simple visual structures in a relatively complex environment, in a target-oriented way, under time pressure and ignoring distractions” (Biehl, 2004, p. 3). Athletes constantly face relatively “simple visual structures,” but the pressures exerted on them by the opposition – for example, when they are on the ball, and must quickly decide what to do – and distractions from the crowd and demonstrative opponents, make visual-selective perception a key skill.

Instructions: Experimental conditions

Microsoft PowerPoint™ was employed as a tool to deliver standardised instructions (see Figure 4.2). A check was included to assess the success of this strategy; participants were asked: “To what degree did the instructions make you pay attention to your public image, and the implications of your performance for your public image?” – and responded on a VAS, ranging from 0 (“Not at all”) to 100 (“Very much so”).

Procedure

Participants visited the test location on three occasions. In visit 1 (baseline), they were given a brief verbal description of their involvement by the experimenter, which consolidated the information they received during

recruitment. They then had the opportunity to ask questions, and completed an informed consent form. Participants completed the VTS after reading instructions as follows: “Your ability to concentrate and attend to quickly changing stimuli, and persist under difficult conditions, will be assessed using specially developed computer software. These are also the types of cognitive abilities that are essential for smooth and efficient sporting performance.” In visits 2 and 3, each participant received a set of instructions tailored to their strongest and weakest IMSQ-T factors (the order of the experimental group’s factor-dependent instructions were counterbalanced between participants; i.e., strongest factor instructions in visit 2 followed by weakest factor instructions in visit 3, or vice-versa; hereafter referred to ‘Strong’ and ‘Weak’ conditions).

In each visit, on entering the test location, participants sequentially:

- 1) Responded to pre-test state impression management questions (see Figure 4.1)
- 2) Read instructions for that condition (the study’s experimental manipulation of impression motivation; Figure 4.2)
- 3) Responded to post-instruction state impression management (the same as number 1, above; see Figure 4.1) and state anxiety questions (the order of these two sets of questions was counterbalanced between participants to minimise the chance of a presentation-order effect; Davison, 1983; Dunn & Nielsen, 1993; Torgerson, 1958; Tversky, 1977)
- 4) Immediately completed four tests of cognitive functioning (randomised order of test presentation across all three visits), with an enforced break of 2 minutes between each to alleviate the possibility, however slim, of eye strain
- 5) Answered a battery of post-test questions (see Table 4.1).



After their final visit participants were thoroughly debriefed, and the offer of personalised performance feedback reiterated. Not many participants took up this offer, however, but many did stay for an extensive discussion of their overall experience during debrief. Participants were told that the league table was not real, and their performance feedback depicted in the webpage was not accurate (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3). To counter this, participants were given the opportunity to obtain their actual results across the 3 visits, including norm comparisons (mentioned above). A full exposition of the aims of the study was given, including a description of how their performance data aided the testing of the experimental hypotheses.

For example, an American footballer whose strongest IMSQ-T factor was *Avoidance of impression-damaging reactions* (factor 2) received very specific instructions via PowerPoint™ (see Figure 4.2 for a full exemplar).

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Department of Sport and Exercise Science

Much research with coaches and leading players from American Football suggests that they believe performance on today's test to be a good indicator of some of the key mental abilities that go towards making a good Football player. Further, team-mates, coaches, and other observers can be *convinced* that we possess these characteristics through how we conduct ourselves in training and competition, and how we perform in sport-specific scientific testing.

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However, formal observations of sports teams also tells us that when people high in status (e.g., coaches, captains and influential team-members, sponsors, parents and other personally-important observers, etc.) form negative impressions of us, it biases their opinions. This may then result in criticism and ridicule, which is often undeserved, and this may lead us to feelings of embarrassment in our own performance.

BASES The British Psychological Society The Division of Sport & Exercise Psychology Press Enter to advance

BASES The British Psychological Society The Division of Sport & Exercise Psychology Press Enter to advance

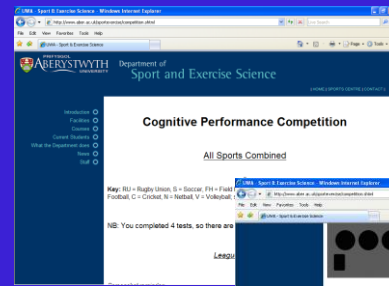
The test you are here to take thus provides you with an opportunity, off the field, to bolster your impression on those important persons in your sporting experience. To aid this your results, and those of the many other volunteer athletes from Aberystwyth University and local and nationwide teams, will be posted in a 'league table' on a specially designed webpage

[[www.aber.ac.uk/sportexercise/competition.shtml](http://www.aber.ac.uk/sportexercise/competition.shtml)].



The Division of  
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Press Enter to advance



This is what the webpage looks like

Performance on the test of:  
Complex multiple-stimuli multiple-choice reaction time

Measured variables:

Rank#	Codename	Number of 'correct reactions'	Number of 'incorrect reactions'	Average reaction time (secs)
1	11.1.10	692	18	46
2	AF10	692	18	46
3	207	692	19	47
4	111	693	19	47
5	312	692	19	47
6	1048	691	19	47
7	RL691	691	20	47
8	1017	690	20	48

Press Enter to advance

You will be able to see how you rank in comparison to dozens of athletes from many different sports, some of whom you are likely to know personally. Each participant's name (including yours) will be attached to their results *after their final visit* to the laboratory, but in the meantime the results will be uploaded and yours can be found under the codename "AF10".



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Press Enter to advance

When you perform well on the test you will be able to feedback your results to your coach, captain, team-mates, or whomever. And as mentioned, this will provide them with supporting evidence of your capabilities as a mentally skilled, praiseworthy athlete - one who is willing to participate in research to help the team.



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Press Enter to advance

Please perform to the absolute best of your ability, as the results will be made public and may help your coach/captain devise new practice drills and strategies to improve the team's performance. And remember that milliseconds make all the difference in sport. However, please be aware that your performance in your previous visit to the laboratory currently places you below the average for athletes in general, and quite a bit below university Football players in particular.



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Press Enter to advance

Therefore, effortful concentration today will give you control over your performance and thus your place in the standings.

For details please visit the webpage when you leave the laboratory.



The Division of  
Sport & Exercise Psychology

Press Enter to advance

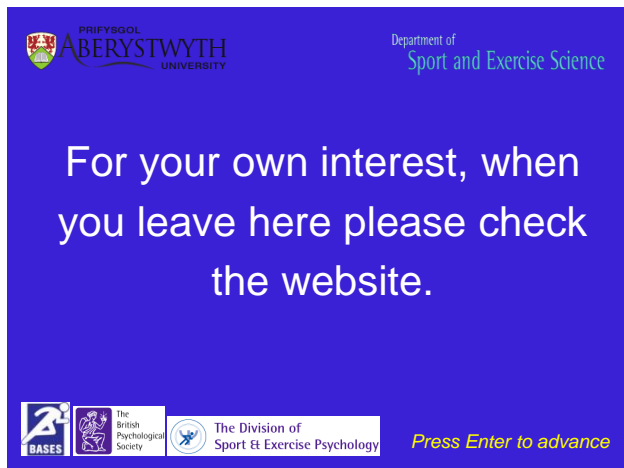


Figure 4.2. Example instructions delivered via PowerPoint™ – visit 2 (strong IMSQ-T factor in this case)

Participants were given a slip to take away with them with a screenshot of the webpage and its address, and their unique identifying codename, to reinforce the final slide's message. The webpage was designed, constructed and placed on the internet at a site linked to the Department of Sport and Exercise Science homepage. On this webpage, participants' codenames had been placed next to bogus negative results for each test in a league table (see Appendix Fifteen), comparing them to other (fabricated) participants. This reinforced what they had been told about their current standing (Slide 7, Figure 4.2, above). Returning to the American footballer example, when this participant came back for their final visit, they received instructions designed to tap their weakest IMSQ-T factor, in this case factor 1 (*Development of Self*). See Figure 4.3 for details of this participant's third visit differed from the first and second, and how the website contrivance was re-visited.

American Football has been the focus of much recent research suggesting that being quick-thinking, able to deal with pressure, and having one's performance under control are key qualities that coaches and leading players look for when offering playing opportunities and the chance to make progress in Football. Performance in today's test is a good indicator of the mental abilities that influence their decision.



Press Enter to advance

Importantly, formal observations of sports teams tells us that people high in status (e.g., coaches, captains and influential team-members, sponsors, parents and other personally-important observers, etc.) can be *led to believe* that we possess these characteristics through how we conduct ourselves in training and competition, and how we perform in sport-specific scientific testing.



Press Enter to advance

The test you are here to take will provide you - and those important persons in your sporting experience - with additional evidence, off the field, of your capacity to concentrate and attend to quickly changing stimuli and persist under difficult conditions. To aid this today's results will be placed on the league table that was mentioned in your previous visit. Maybe you had a chance to visit the webpage

[\[www.aber.ac.uk/sportexercise/competition.shtml\]](http://www.aber.ac.uk/sportexercise/competition.shtml)?



Press Enter to advance

This is what the webpage looks like

Rank	Codename	Measured variables		
		Number of 'correct reactions'	Number of 'incorrect reactions'	Average reaction time (sec)
1)	L10	992	19	45
2)	AF10	992	19	45
3)	S21	992	19	45
4)	L11	993	19	47
5)	S22	992	19	47
6)	PH08	991	19	47
7)	R008	991	20	47
8)	S01	990	20	48

Press Enter to advance

If you remember, your codename "AF10" has up-until-now appeared next to your test results. But upon leaving today, your real name will appear instead of the codename. Each day sees more participants complete their testing, and thus more-and-more names are being published on the site, and the league table nears completion. You will be able to see how you fared in comparison to athletes from many different sports, some of whom you may know personally.



Press Enter to advance

When you perform well on the test you will be able to feedback your results to your coach, captain, team-mates, or whomever. And as mentioned, this will provide them with supporting evidence of your capabilities as a mentally skilled, praise-worthy athlete - one who is willing to participate in research to help the team.



Press Enter to advance

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Please perform to the absolute best of your ability, as the results will be made public and may help your coach/captain devise new practice drills and strategies to improve the team's performance. And remember that milliseconds make all the difference in sport. However, please be aware that your performance in your previous visits to the laboratory still place you below the average for athletes in general, and quite a bit below university American Footballers in particular.

Therefore, effortful concentration today will give you control over your performance and thus your place in the standings. For details please visit the webpage when you leave the laboratory.

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For your own interest, when you leave here please check the website.

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Figure 4.3. Example instructions delivered via PowerPoint™ – visit 3 (weak IMSQ-T factor, in this case)

Hence, in their third visit (either Strong or Weak condition) participants were given a subtly different set of instructions, reminded that they were still performing ‘below par,’ and again encouraged to rectify this situation. As mentioned in the opening paragraph to this sub-section, this study – through participants’ IMSQ-T scores and these instructions – was designed to heighten state impression motivation, and prompt participants to consider their corresponding self-presentational efficacy and affective response to the situation.

*Manipulation Check.* After visits one and two, participants completed a number of post-test questions that referred to motivation, concentration, effort, impression management, anxiety, and satisfaction (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. *Post-test questions for the manipulation check*

Question	Response format and scale
1) How motivated were you to do well today?	0 = not at all motivated, to 100 = extremely motivated
2) How much concentration were you able to put in to your performance today?	0 = none at all, to 100 = maximum possible
3) How much effort did you put into your performance today?	0 = none at all, to 100 = maximum possible
4) a) To what degree did the instructions make you pay attention to your public image, and the implications of your performance for your public image?	a) 0 = not at all, to 100 = very much so
b) How <i>much</i> did you think about your public image <i>during</i> the test?"	b) 0 = very little/almost not at all, to 100 = completely/almost all of my thoughts
5) a) Can you now indicate whether your nervousness changed <i>during</i> the test?	As the test progressed, my nervousness: -3 = disappeared completely, to +3 = became extremely intense (through 0 = remained stable)
b) How nervous were you during the test?	b) 0 = not at all nervous, to 100 = extremely nervous
c) Do you believe that your nerves helped or hindered your performance?	c) -50 = not at all helpful (they were bad/negative), to +50 = extremely helpful (they were good/positive); through 0 = no impact (neutral)
6) Given how nervous you were during today's test, was this because you were thinking about your desired public image as you performed?	0 = not at all due to image-related thoughts, to 100 = completely due to image-related thoughts
7) How satisfied are you with your performance today?	0 = not at all satisfied, to 100 = extremely satisfied

After their third visit, participants completed two additional questions. With a Yes/No response option, the first asked: “If you are completely honest, did you visit the website between your last visit and today?” And the second: “If you did, how long did you spend looking at the information contained therein?” A space was provided for them to indicate how many minutes.

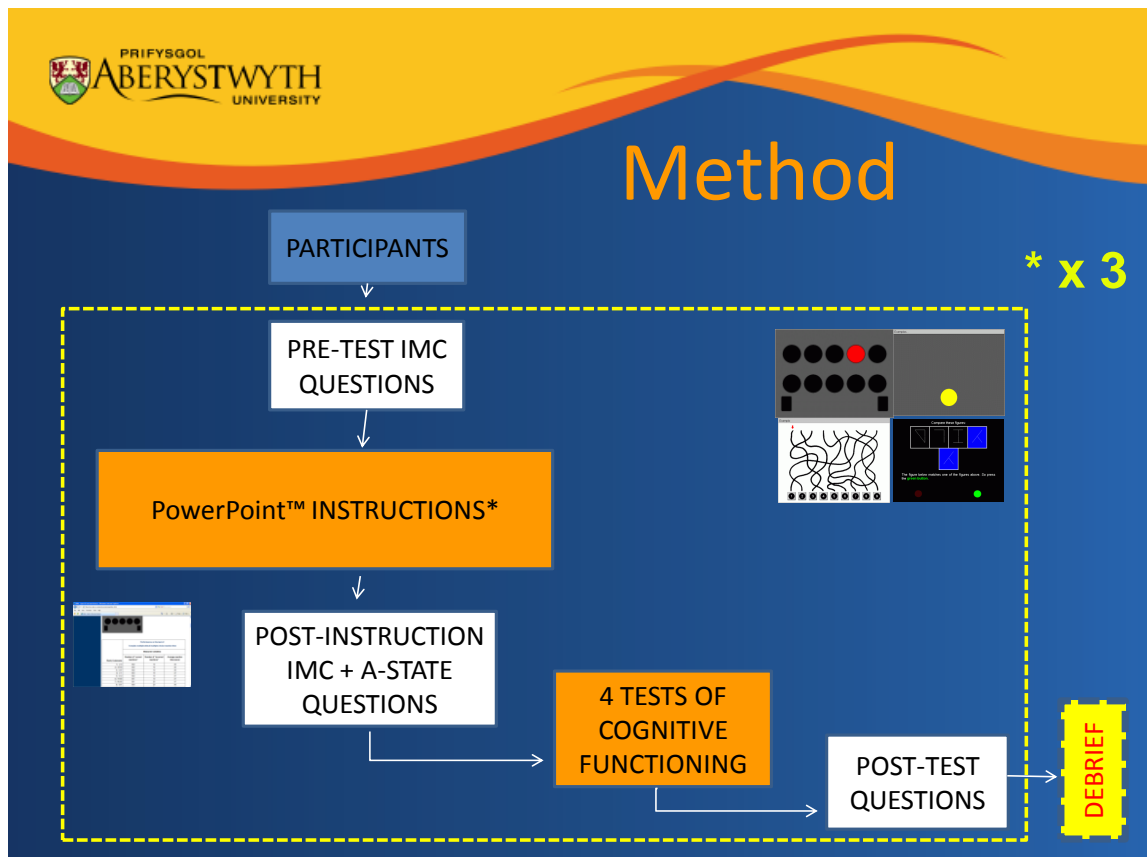


Figure 4.4. Visual representation of the study protocol

## Data Treatment

*Data Transformation.* For each test the VTS output provides many different indicators of performance, some with different scales of measurement. For example, the Reaction Test output includes 12 different ‘raw’ scores, as well as standardized scores and percentile ranking in comparison to a relevant norm sample (see Figure 4.5). Therefore, to retain as much of this

performance data as possible while simplifying the analyses it was necessary to formulate a way of capturing overall performance effectiveness and efficiency for each of the four VTS tests.

## Reaction Test (RT)

Test for the assessment of reaction time for audible and visual stimuli.

**Test form S7 - Measure of alertness, simple reaction yellow (with audible warning signal)**

Test administration: 25/05/2009 - 12:47...12:54, Duration: 7 min.

### Test results - Norm sample:

Test variable	Raw score <sup>1</sup>	PR	T
Difference mean reaction time with and without warning signal	12	21	42
Difference mean motor time with and without warning signal	21	80	58
<b>Additional results</b>			
Mean reaction time without warning signal <sup>2</sup>	220	92 (85-96)	64 (60-68)
Mean reaction time with warning signal <sup>2</sup>	207	85 (69-94)	60 (55-66)
Mean motor time without warning signal <sup>2</sup>	115	69 (55-81)	55 (51-59)
Mean motor time with warning signal <sup>2</sup>	93	82 (73-89)	59 (56-62)
Correct reaction without warning signal	28		
Correct reaction with warning signal	28		
No reaction without warning signal	0		
No reaction with warning signal	0		
Incomplete reaction without warning signal	0		
Incomplete reaction with warning signal	0		

*Comment(s)*: Percentile rank (PR) and T-score (T) result from a comparison with the entire comparative sample 'Norm sample'. The confidence intervals given in parentheses next to the comparison scores have a 5% probability of error.

<sup>1</sup>All time entries in milliseconds

<sup>2</sup>Mean time = geometrical average

Figure 4.5. Example of VTS output for the Reaction Test (RT)



For example, scores on the Determination Test were expressed using the following formulae (see Appendix Nineteen for the formulae for each of the other VTS performance measures):

Effectiveness:

$$\left( \left( \frac{\text{number of correct responses}}{\text{total number of presented stimuli}} \right) - \left( \frac{\text{number of incorrect responses}}{\text{total number of presented stimuli}} \right) - \left( \frac{\text{number of omitted responses}}{\text{total number of presented stimuli}} \right) \right) * 100$$

Efficiency:

$$\left( \text{Determination Test effectiveness score} * \left( 2 - \frac{\text{median RT of correct responses}}{\text{secs}} \right) \right)$$

In arriving at these formulae, countless other possibilities were tested and ultimately discarded. This process was systematic: simulation calculations were run for each equation with multiple performance scores, and their ability to capture the desired facets of performance was evaluated. That is, they adequately distinguished good and bad performance (effectiveness), and were responsive to time taken to provide accurate responses (efficiency; Table 4.2). Further, the correlations displayed by effectiveness and efficiency across visits and with the other dependent variables were comparable to the correlations among the raw data. The final solutions were considered by two sport psychologists with knowledge of attentional control theory and the VTS, and deemed appropriate.

Table 4.2. *Example effectiveness and efficiency scores on the Determination Test, using the chosen formulae*

Example	Performance effectiveness	Performance efficiency
1	$((571 \text{ correct responses} * .8936 \text{ correct responses}) - (68 \text{ incorrect responses} * .1064)) - ((16 \text{ omitted responses}/609 \text{ total stimuli}) * 100) = 500.37$	$(500.37 \text{ effectiveness} * (2 - 0.68 \text{ median RT of correct responses})) = 660.49$
2	$((515 \text{ correct responses} * .8201 \text{ correct responses}) - (113 \text{ incorrect responses} * .1799)) - ((25 \text{ omitted responses}/605 \text{ total stimuli}) * 100) = 397.87$	$(397.87 \text{ effectiveness} * (2 - 0.63 \text{ median RT of correct responses})) = 545.08$

*Data Analysis.* SPSS<sup>®</sup> version 16 and Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> were used to conduct statistical analyses. This included: one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test for significant differences between Baseline, Weak, and Strong conditions on numerous dependent variables (e.g., post-instruction impression motivation, impression efficacy, impression affect; retrospective “Amount of attention spent on image-related thoughts” during the test); paired-samples t-tests of significant difference between constructs measured pre- and post-instruction (e.g., impression motivation, impression efficacy, impression affect), and tests of between-condition difference in the pre-to-post-instruction *difference* on these same measures; paired-samples t-tests of significant difference between the manipulated conditions on retrospective measures of nerves intensity, nerves interpretation, nerves due to image-related thoughts, and satisfaction; Pearson’s correlational tests of the strength of association between post-instruction impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation across conditions; Kendall’s tau-b correlational tests of the strength of association between post-instruction impression motivation and retrospective measures of motivation and effort across conditions; Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to test for significant differences in performance between groups formed according to impression motivation scores; repeated-measures MANOVA (RM-MANOVA)

to test the hypothesis that performance will be affected by experimental condition; Friedman's multivariate test of difference between conditions of various dependent variables (e.g., post-instruction impression monitoring, cognitive anxiety intensity, somatic anxiety intensity, retrospective measure of concentration, and attention directed to one's image by the instructions), including *post-hoc* Wilcoxon's signed rank sum test of difference where required; and Wilcoxon's tests of significant difference between post-instruction impression motivation across conditions, and pre-to-post-instruction impression monitoring.

Each of these tests assumes that the data displays certain characteristics. T-tests, correlation tests, and repeated-measures analyses (one-way ANOVA, RM-MANOVA, RM-MANCOVA) require normally distributed data, although they are all robust to varying degrees of violation of this assumption. Repeated-measures analyses impose further restrictions on the suitability of data, and these will be described in relation to the present data at the start of the results section below.

*Prospective Power Analyses.* G\*Power 3 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) was employed *a priori* to calculate required sample sizes to achieve a strong effect size for each type of analysis (i.e., 0.8; Cohen, 1988). For example, with regards performance hypothesis 1b – “Participants will perform significantly better on tests of cognitive functioning in the baseline condition than in the two manipulated conditions” – for a desired effect size of 0.8 and power of 0.95, and with an estimated correlation between dependent variables of .3, a repeated measures (3 conditions) multivariate analysis of variance (RM-MANOVA) with 8 performance measures in each condition (= 24 measures), suggested a sample size of 26. A one-tailed Pearson's correlation test to determine whether “impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation scores were significantly positively correlated in all three conditions,” with 0.95 power to detect a desired correlation of .6 requires a sample size of 25. This process was repeated for

each of the other tests to be conducted (as above) and a sample size of 26 was confirmed as adequate for the present purposes. Thus, the actual sample of 27 was sufficient.

#### 4.3. Results

The full dataset (self-report and performance measures) was inspected for the assumption of normal distribution that underpins each of the tests used (see Appendix Sixteen for all output pertaining to these checks). The distribution of data in small samples can be influenced by outliers, so histograms, normal and de-trended Q-Q plots were inspected to locate offending cases. In each of the study conditions (baseline, strongest factor, least strong factor) there were variables that contained one or two outlying scores. However, no participant consistently deviated from the normal distribution – outliers seemingly occurred at random, and in each condition it was not the same measures that attracted the outlying responses. Hence, it was deemed unnecessary to remove individual participants based on their self-report scores. Univariate skewness and kurtosis values for each of the self-report dependent measures in each of the conditions were then inspected for those that fell outside the widely adopted cut-off of  $\pm 2$  standard errors of skew/kurtosis. A minority of measures emerged as problematic; but some did exhibit troublesome skew and/or kurtosis values in one, two, or three conditions; retrospective assessments of motivation and concentration were the only 2 out of 22 to do so in all three.

Next, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic was consulted and cross-referenced with the prior checks. Three measures (of the 22) had a significant *W* statistic in all 3 conditions: post-instruction impression motivation, somatic anxiety intensity, and 'change in nerves intensity during the test.' Thus, the 2 methods of determining threats to the assumptions of normality did not conjointly indicate

any one variable that always violated the assumption of univariate normality. Further, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic is very sensitive to deviation from normality, to the extent that the deviation it detects as significant may not adversely affect the test statistic which assumes normality (Wuensch, 2005). Further still, for tests that include multiple dependent measures it is multivariate normality that is the crucial assumption. This is assessed *post-hoc*, and aids interpretation of the results. Therefore, the decision was taken to treat the inconsistencies alluded to above as reason enough to proceed with the planned tests of difference, association, and prediction, and to re-visit these issues when analysing and interpreting the results.

Performance data was next inspected for the same reasons (Appendix Seventeen). Again, the data was checked for possible outliers: histograms, normal and de-trended Q-Q plots showed that on the whole, no participants consistently provided outlying performance scores; and those who did have 3 or 4 outlying performances did so on different tests each time and not in the same condition. Thus, it was concluded that outliers occurred at random and too much information would be lost by excluding those who more frequently deviated from the norm (above). Skewness and kurtosis values, in conjunction with output from a Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, indicated that scores on 3 of the 8 performance dependent measures deviated from normal distribution in 2 or 3 conditions. Of the 3 that were identified, only 1 was non-normally distributed according to both criteria. To address the study's hypotheses the performance data underwent various multivariate analyses, hence the assumptions for that form of analysis are perhaps more important than the underlying univariate normality of the data (i.e., multivariate normality, homogeneity of covariances, sphericity). Nevertheless, a repeated-measures MANOVA was conducted to observe the effect of condition on multivariate indication of performance, after omitting the offending performance variables; the *F* statistic was equivalent and effect size was in fact diminished with the loss of performance information. In light

of these arguments, all data were retained for the main study, and the findings of each test appraised in light of this.

#### 4.3.1. Related to the experimental manipulation

Table 4.3 displays the self-report data that allowed for tests of the success of the experimental manipulation. As can be seen from the table, the data can be broken down into broader categories as follows: pre-test (pre- and post-instruction) and post-test impression management cognitions; intensity and interpretation of cognitive and somatic state anxiety, and retrospective nervousness measures; and retrospective assessments of motivation, concentration, effort, and satisfaction. See Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 in the method section of this chapter for fuller details on the scales used to obtain these measures.

Table 4.3. Average scores for pre- and post-test self-report measures

Measure	Baseline condition	Weak condition	Strong condition
Pre-test IMON (15-pt ordinal VAS)	7.13 (2.95)	8.02 (3.73)	7.67 (3.41)
Pre-test IMO (100mm VAS)	48.44 (19.34)	52.74 (24.01)	54.89 (22.32)
Pre-test IEFF (100mm VAS)	60.52 (16.61)	57.35 (18.68)	59.88 (17.95)
Pre-test IAFF (100mm VAS; -50 to +50, through 0)	8.33 (15.46)	7.85 (14.16)	9.07 (13.34)
Post-instruction IMON	8.08 (2.76)	10.44 (3.36)	9.41 (3.87)
Post-instruction IMO	54.85 (20.48)	64.59 (25.57)	65.37 (23.83)
Post-instruction IEFF	57.44 (16.54)	50.73 (21.22)	51.15 (21.92)
Post-instruction IAFF	10.70 (17.12)	6.44 (22.55)	3.93 (21.34)
Attention directed to one's image by the instructions (100mm VAS)	43.00 (23.87)	62.44 (28.41)	69.59 (25.41)
Amount of attention spent on image-related thoughts (100mm VAS)	30.81 (27.04)	50.89 (30.66)	60.56 (25.80)

Cognitive anxiety intensity	19.70 (5.20)	25.26 (8.00)	25.04 (7.75)
Cognitive anxiety interpretation	-.20 (.97)	-.70 (.99)	-.67 (1.13)
Somatic anxiety intensity	13.44 (3.57)	13.99 (4.62)	13.97 (4.84)
Somatic anxiety interpretation	.45 (.93)	.17 (.76)	.18 (.96)
Extent to which one's nervousness changed as the test progressed (7-pt Likert; -3 to +3, through 0)	-.19 (1.44)	.11 (1.09)	.26 (1.16)
Nerves intensity (100mm VAS)	37.22 (26.01)	37.96 (26.95)	42.33 (26.72)
Nerves interpretation (-50 to +50, through 0)	-3.07 (16.82)	-2.11 (19.41)	-.04 (16.94)
Nerves due to image-related thoughts (100mm VAS)	38.33 (25.99)	48.22 (24.18)	56.19 (24.56)
Retrospective motivation (100mm VAS)	65.81 (20.38)	69.93 (18.16)	69.19 (23.27)
Retrospective concentration (100mm VAS)	74.00 (17.24)	68.00 (17.13)	65.81 (19.45)
Retrospective effort (100mm VAS)	85.30 (12.54)	82.78 (12.55)	76.70 (18.88)
Satisfaction (100mm VAS)	49.81 (15.78)	49.96 (19.94)	46.48 (22.36)

*Manipulation check 1a: "After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly higher impression monitoring, impression motivation, and cognitive anxiety intensity in the two manipulated conditions compared to baseline."*

*Manipulation check 1b: "After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly higher impression monitoring, impression motivation, and cognitive anxiety intensity in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit very strong levels of these variables than in the manipulated condition that was designed to elicit not-so-high levels."*

Friedman's statistic – a non-parametric test of difference between related samples (impression monitoring is ordinal level data) – suggested a non-significant difference in impression monitoring between conditions ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 4.472$ ;  $p = .11$ ). Follow-up two-related-samples Wilcoxon tests were

conducted to see if they had more power to detect the seemingly large difference observed between the means (Table 4.3). Indeed, significant differences were found between baseline and the least strong factor condition (hereafter referred to as the 'Weak condition';  $Z = -2.479$ , one-tailed  $p < .01$ ), and baseline and the strongest factor condition (hereafter referred to as the 'Strong condition';  $Z = -1.693$ , one-tailed  $p < .05$ ). A non-significant difference was found between the Weak and Strong conditions ( $Z = -.954$ , one-tailed  $p > .05$ ). Thus, participants did report stronger impression monitoring in the manipulated conditions than in the baseline condition, providing partial support for the efficacy of the experimental manipulation.

RM-ANOVA suggested a non-significant effect of condition on post-instruction impression motivation scores ( $F_{(2)} = 1.67$ ,  $p = .20$ ; Mauchly's  $W_{(2)} = .927$ ,  $p = .39$ ; partial eta squared = .060; observed power = .337). However, this measure demonstrated departure from normality, which may have contributed to the RM-ANOVA's inability to detect what looked like large differences between Baseline and both Weak and Strong conditions (Table 4.3), and the low observed power of the test. Follow-up Wilcoxon tests suggested that the 17.8% difference in impression motivation between Baseline and Weak condition ( $Z = -1.537$ ; one-tailed  $p = .06$ ), and 19.2% difference between Baseline and Strong condition ( $Z = -1.511$ ; one-tailed  $p = .07$ ) were marginally significant. Therefore, partial support was provided for the efficacy of the experimental manipulation: instructions received in the manipulated conditions heightened participants' impression motivation over Baseline.

Friedman's test suggested a significant difference in cognitive state anxiety between conditions ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 6.305$ ;  $p < .05$ ). *Post-hoc* Wilcoxon tests confirm that this multivariate difference stemmed from significant differences between Baseline and Weak condition ( $Z = -2.367$ ; one-tailed  $p < .01$ ), and Baseline & Strong condition ( $Z = -2.780$ ; one-tailed  $p < .01$ ); but not between the Weak and Strong condition. Thus, participants were more cognitively



anxious in the manipulated conditions than at Baseline, providing partial support for the efficacy of the manipulation. In summary, the experimental manipulation raised impression monitoring, impression motivation, and cognitive anxiety intensity as hypothesised, but the two manipulated conditions did not elicit significantly different scores on these variables.

*Manipulation check 2a: “There will be a significant difference between each manipulated condition and the baseline condition in post-instruction impression efficacy and impression affect (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made).”*

*Manipulation check 2b: “There will be a significant difference in post-instruction impression efficacy and impression affect between the two manipulated conditions (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made).”*

RM-ANOVAs suggested that there was no significant difference in impression efficacy ( $F_{(2)} = .706$ ;  $p > .05$ ; Mauchly's  $W_{(2)} = .904$ ,  $p > .05$ ; partial eta squared = .029; observed power = .162) or impression affect ( $F_{(2)} = .70$ ;  $p > .05$ ; Mauchly's  $W_{(2)} = .995$ ,  $p > .05$ ; partial eta squared = .026; observed power = .161) between the three conditions. Participants reported a reduction in impression efficacy from baseline in the weak (11.7%) and strong (10.3%) conditions, and a reduction in impression affect from baseline in the weak (39.8%) and strong (63.3%) conditions (Table 4.3), but this was not detected as significant by RM-ANOVA. Thus, the expectations forwarded for manipulation check 2 were not supported.

*Manipulation check 3: “Participants will report non-significant differences in somatic anxiety intensity across all three conditions.”*

A non-significant Friedman's statistic ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = .429$ ;  $p = .81$ ) supported the hypothesis that somatic anxiety intensity would be similar in each condition.

*Manipulation check 4a: “After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly stronger impression monitoring and impression motivation than before reading the instructions in the two manipulated conditions but not at baseline.”*

*Manipulation check 4b: “After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly stronger impression monitoring and impression motivation than before reading the instructions in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition.”*

*Manipulation check 4c: “The difference in impression motivation from pre-test to post-instruction will be significantly larger in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition and the Baseline condition.”*

*Manipulation check 4d: “After reading the instructions, participants will report significantly different impression efficacy and impression affect scores than before reading the instructions in the Weak and Strong manipulated conditions but not in the Baseline condition (two-tailed – no directional assumptions made).”*

*Manipulation check 4e: “The difference in impression efficacy and impression affect from pre-test to post-instruction will be significantly larger in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition and the Baseline condition.”*

One-tailed Wilcoxon tests suggested that the increase in impression monitoring reported by participants after having read the instructions was significant in all three conditions: Baseline ( $Z = -2.211$ ;  $p < .05$ ); Weak ( $Z = -4.042$ ;  $p < .001$ ); Strong ( $Z = -3.374$ ;  $p < .001$ ). One-tailed paired-samples t-tests suggested that the increase in impression motivation reported by participants after having read the instructions was also significant in all three conditions: Baseline ( $t_{(26)} = -1.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ); Weak ( $t_{(26)} = -4.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ); Strong ( $t_{(26)} = -3.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Next, average *difference* in impression

motivation from pre- to post-instruction was calculated in the Weak ( $\bar{x} = 11.85$ ) and Strong ( $\bar{x} = 10.48$ ) conditions; the hypothesis that this difference would be significantly larger in the Strong condition was not supported (paired-samples t-test:  $t_{(26)} = .35$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Impression motivation was increased to a similar extent in both conditions. Thus, partial support was gained for the efficacy of the manipulation: reading the instructions did contribute to a rise in impression monitoring and impression motivation in the two manipulated conditions; but it also did in the baseline condition, even though no explicit self-presentational implications were built into those instructions. Further, the instructions had a comparable impact in both manipulated conditions, suggesting that they were not able to elicit differentiated impression management cognitions. The impression motivation results should be interpreted with caution, however, as the post-instruction half of each pair of measures was non-normally distributed.

For manipulation check 4d, a set of two-tailed paired-samples t-tests supported the hypothesis that participants' impression efficacy ( $t_{(26)} = 1.72$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and impression affect ( $t_{(26)} = -1.25$ ;  $p > .05$ ) scores would not be significantly altered by reading the Baseline condition instructions. In the Weak condition, participants' impression efficacy was significantly lower after reading the instructions ( $t_{(25)} = 2.19$ ;  $p < .05$ ), but their impression affect was not significantly different ( $t_{(26)} = .53$ ;  $p > .05$ ). In the Strong condition, participants' impression efficacy was significantly lower after reading the instructions ( $t_{(25)} = 2.86$ ;  $p < .01$ ), but their impression affect was not significantly different ( $t_{(26)} = 1.65$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Next, average *difference* in impression efficacy from pre- to post-instruction was calculated in the Weak ( $\bar{x} = -6.37$ ) and Strong ( $\bar{x} = -8.73$ ) conditions; the hypothesis that this difference would be significantly larger in the Strong condition was not supported (paired-samples t-test:  $t_{(25)} = .74$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Impression efficacy was decreased to a similar extent in both conditions. However, the difference in pre-to-post-instruction impression efficacy was significantly larger in the

Strong condition than at Baseline ( $t_{(25)} = 1.91$ ; one-tailed  $p < .05$ ), and not significantly different between the Baseline and Weak conditions.

The same process was carried out for the impression affect difference. Impression affect decreased after reading the instructions in the Weak condition (-1.41), and Strong condition (-5.15), but the magnitude of difference was similar in both (paired-samples t-test:  $t_{(26)} = 1.06$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Impression affect was decreased to a similar extent in both conditions. However, the difference in pre-to-post-instruction impression affect was significantly larger in the Strong condition than at Baseline ( $t_{(26)} = 2.14$ ; one-tailed  $p < .05$ ), and not significantly different between the Baseline and Weak conditions. Thus, this combination of tests provided partial support for the efficacy of the manipulation: reading the instructions did contribute to a change in impression efficacy in the two manipulated conditions and not at Baseline; and the size of this difference was significantly larger when comparing Strong and Baseline conditions, but not Weak and Baseline. Although participants did not report significantly altered levels of impression affect after reading the experimental instructions, the observation that the size of the difference was larger between Baseline-Strong than Baseline-Weak does suggest that the instructions had the intended effect in this regard.

*Manipulation check 5: "Post-instruction impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation scores will be significantly positively correlated in the two manipulated conditions, but not in the Baseline condition."*

Post-instruction impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation were significantly positively correlated in the Weak condition ( $r = .42$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and the Strong condition ( $r = .43$ ;  $p < .05$ ). In the Baseline condition they shared no relationship ( $r = -.02$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Hence, this check provided indirect support for the efficacy of the manipulation: the Baseline condition

did not elicit a relationship between these measures, whereas the increased importance of the experimental manipulation did result in a significant positive relationship. Therefore, positive impression affect scores (i.e., a challenge/excitement appraisal) were associated with facilitative interpretations of cognitive anxiety.

*Manipulation check 6: "Post-instruction impression motivation will be significantly positively correlated to post-test (retrospective) measures of "motivation to do well in the test" and "effort during the test" in the two manipulated conditions, but not in the Baseline condition."*

Kendall's tau-b correlation test indicated a weak non-significant relationship between pre-test impression motivation and post-test motivation ( $\tau = .18$ ; one-tailed  $p > .05$ ), and pre-test impression motivation and post-test effort ( $\tau = -.003$ ; one-tailed  $p > .05$ ), in the Baseline condition. This supported the expectation, above. In the Weak condition, Kendall's tau-b correlations indicated a significant positive correlation between pre-test impression motivation and post-test motivation ( $\tau = .37$ ; one-tailed  $p < .01$ ), but a weak non-significant correlation between impression motivation and effort ( $\tau = -.12$ ; one-tailed  $p > .05$ ). In the Strong condition, impression motivation was significantly positively correlated with motivation ( $\tau = .31$ ; one-tailed  $p < .05$ ) and effort ( $\tau = .32$ ; one-tailed  $p < .01$ ). Thus, the expectations forwarded for manipulation check 6 were almost completely supported. Impression motivation, motivation, and effort were not associated in the baseline condition, but were in the two manipulated conditions (except impression motivation and effort in the weak condition, which seems anomalous).

*Manipulation check 7a: "Participants will perceive themselves to have devoted significantly less concentration to the task in the manipulated conditions compared to the baseline condition."*

*Manipulation check 7b: “Participants will perceive themselves to have devoted significantly less concentration to the task in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition.”*

Friedman’s test statistic ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 3.792$ ;  $p > .05$ ) suggested that there was no significant main effect of condition on concentration, although mean scores were in the hypothesised direction (Baseline = 74.00, Weak condition = 68.00, Strong condition = 65.81); i.e., participants reported less concentration in the manipulated conditions. Thus, support was not obtained for the prediction that participants would report being able to concentrate significantly less on the task in the manipulated conditions; nor that the Strong condition would influence them to report less concentration than the Weak condition.

*Manipulation check 8: “There will be significant differences between the two manipulated conditions on post-test measures of nerves intensity, nerves interpretation, attributions of nerves to impression management cognitions, and satisfaction with performance (two-tailed; no directional assumptions made).”*

A series of individual paired-samples t-tests were employed to test this multi-faceted manipulation check. All four tests disconfirmed the expectation that the instructions in each of the manipulated conditions would elicit different strengths of these thoughts and affective responses. To test whether scores in the manipulated conditions were at least different from Baseline, paired-samples t-tests between Baseline and Weak, and Baseline and Strong conditions were run for each of the four dependent variables (post-test measures of nerves intensity, nerves interpretation, attributions of nerves to impression management cognitions, and satisfaction with performance). Of the eight tests, the only significant difference was observed for the attribution of nerves to impression management cognitions between the Baseline and

Strong conditions ( $t_{(26)} = -3.01$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Thus, support was not found for this aspect of the manipulation; the instructions were not able to elicit differentiated scores, albeit retrospective, on measures of in-test nerves, nerves interpretation, and satisfaction.

*Manipulation check 9a: "Post-test retrospective measures will indicate that participants perceived the instructions to elicit significantly stronger impression management cognitions in the two manipulated conditions compared to the Baseline condition."*

*Manipulation check 9b: "Post-test retrospective measures will indicate that participants perceived the instructions to elicit significantly stronger impression management cognitions in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition."*

A significant Friedman's statistic ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.019$ ;  $p < .05$ ) supported the hypothesis that condition would affect the degree to which the instructions elicited impression-related thoughts. *Post-hoc* Wilcoxon tests clarified that the result was underpinned by significant differences between Baseline and Weak ( $Z = -2.523$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and Baseline and Strong conditions ( $Z = -3.472$ ;  $p < .001$ ), but not between Weak and Strong conditions ( $Z = -.794$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Participants reported that the instructions made them think significantly more about their public image in the manipulated conditions (Weak  $\bar{x} = 62.44$ ; Strong  $\bar{x} = 69.59$ ) than in the Baseline condition ( $\bar{x} = 43.00$ ).

*Manipulation check 10a: "Retrospectively, participants will report experiencing significantly stronger impression management cognitions when performing in the manipulated conditions than during the baseline condition."*

*Manipulation check 10b: "Retrospectively, participants will report experiencing significantly stronger impression management cognitions when performing in the in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition."*

RM-ANOVA suggested a significant main effect of condition on strength of impression management cognitions when performing the task ( $F_{(2)} = 9.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Mauchly's  $W_{(2)} = .973$ ,  $p > .05$ ; partial eta squared = .272; observed power = .977). *Post-hoc* comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment indicated significant differences between Baseline and Weak ( $p < .05$ ), and Baseline and Strong ( $p < .001$ ), but not between Weak and Strong conditions. Thus, partial support was obtained for the efficacy of the manipulation: the amount of attention participants spent on image-related thoughts increased from Baseline levels ( $\bar{x} = 30.81$ ) to the Weak condition ( $\bar{x} = 50.89$ ), and again to the Strong condition ( $\bar{x} = 60.56$ ). Low effect size suggests that while significant, the actual effect of condition on strength of impression management cognitions may be small. However, the means displayed above indicate a large difference on the visual analogue scale.

#### 4.3.2. Task performance

Table 4.4 displays the descriptive performance data that were used to test the hypotheses that follow.



Table 4.4. *Participant task performance by condition*

Dependent Variable (range of scores across conditions; worst-best performance)	Baseline	'Weak'	'Strong'
DT effectiveness (370.26 - 727.21)	455.77	546.73	542.43
DT efficiency (383.13 - 1039.91)	603.61	768.34	761.76
RT effectiveness (.946 – 1.00)	.991	.994	.997
RT efficiency (.965 - .456)	.715	.649	.633
VPT effectiveness (.863 – 1.00)	.961	.964	.953
VPT efficiency (17 – 80)	64.48	70.56	71.22
COG effectiveness (-.082 – 53.056)	18.63	33.17	28.95
COG efficiency (-.071 – 45.405)	15.43	28.12	24.36

*Note.* DT = Determination Test; RT = Reaction Test; VPT = Visual Pursuit Test; COG = Cognitrone.

*Hypothesis A: “Participants will perform significantly better on tests of cognitive functioning in the Baseline condition than in the two manipulated conditions.”*

*Hypothesis B: “Participants will perform significantly worse on tests of cognitive functioning in the Strong manipulated condition than in the Weak manipulated condition.”*

*Hypothesis C: “When grouped according to post-instruction impression motivation score, participants in the low impression motivation group will perform significantly better than those in the high impression motivation group.”*

RM-MANOVA suggested a significant main effect of condition on multivariate performance (Wilks'  $\lambda = .29$ ,  $F_{(16,90)} = 4.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ; partial eta squared = .459; observed power = 1.00). However, significant Mauchly's  $W$  statistics for the test of sphericity indicated that the Reaction Test effectiveness measure ( $W_{(2)} = .720$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the Visual Pursuit Test efficiency measure ( $W_{(2)} = .626$ ;  $p < .01$ ) violated this assumption. The RM-MANOVA result reported above is corrected for this violation, but univariate test output for each dependent variable was consulted – and for those with a significant Mauchly statistic in particular, the Huynh-Feldt correction rather than the 'sphericity assumed'  $F$  statistic – and DT effectiveness, DT efficiency, RT efficiency, VPT efficiency, COG effectiveness, and COG efficiency contributed to the significant RM-MANOVA result.

Returning to the main hypothesis (A, above), *post-hoc* pairwise comparisons of mean differences between conditions – with Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons – were investigated to determine where the significant differences resided. For DT effectiveness, performance was significantly better in the Weak condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ), and in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ); DT efficiency scores were significantly better in the Weak condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ), and in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ); no significant differences were observed between conditions for RT effectiveness; RT efficiency was significantly better in the Weak condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .05$ ), and approached significance in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p = .06$ ); no significant differences were observed between conditions for VPT effectiveness; efficiency of VPT performance was significantly better in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .05$ ); COG effectiveness was significantly better in the Weak condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ), and in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .01$ ); finally, COG efficiency scores were significantly better in the Weak condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .001$ ), and in the Strong condition compared to Baseline ( $p < .01$ ).

To test hypothesis C, the average impression motivation score and its standard deviation was calculated for each condition. Participants were categorised as “low impression motivation” if their post-instruction score on this measure was  $< \frac{1}{2}$  one *SD* of the group mean for that condition; “moderate” if their impression motivation fell within  $\frac{1}{2}$  *SD* either side of the group mean; and “high” if their impression motivation was  $> \frac{1}{2}$  *SD* of the group mean. This resulted in the following sub-samples: for the Baseline condition: low = 8 (impression motivation  $\bar{x}$  = 27.38); moderate = 11 ( $\bar{x}$  = 60.27); high = 8 ( $\bar{x}$  = 74.88). For the Weak condition: low = 6 (impression motivation  $\bar{x}$  = 25.00); moderate = 12 ( $\bar{x}$  = 66.08); high = 9 ( $\bar{x}$  = 89.00). For the Strong condition: low = 7 (impression motivation  $\bar{x}$  = 31.71); moderate = 9 ( $\bar{x}$  = 67.00); high = 11 ( $\bar{x}$  = 85.45). The moderate groups from each condition were omitted from subsequent analyses.

Next, a MANOVA was performed for each condition, to test the hypothesis that participants with relatively low impression motivation would perform better than those with high impression motivation. In the baseline condition there was no significant effect of impression motivation on overall performance (Hotelling’s T-square = 23.18,  $F_{(8, 7)} = .81$ ,  $p > .05$ ; partial eta squared = .481; observed power = .176); although this result is clouded by a lack of statistical power. Low impression motivation participants performed marginally better on 6 of the 8 performance measures. In the Weak experimental condition, there was a significant effect of impression motivation on overall performance (Hotelling’s T-square = 157.35,  $F_{(8, 6)} = 4.72$ ,  $p < .05$ ; partial eta squared = .863; observed power = .738); but this result is inconclusive because the low and high group performed marginally better than the other in four tests each. In the Strong condition, there was no significant difference in overall performance between the two impression motivation groups (Hotelling’s T-square = 13.05,  $F_{(8, 9)} = .59$ ,  $p > .05$ ; partial eta squared = .343; observed power = .152); although, again, this result is hampered by a lack of statistical power. And again, each of the two groups

performed slightly better than the other on four of the eight performance measures. In these tests, Levene's test statistic consistently demonstrated that the data upheld the assumption of homogeneity of error variances among the groups. However, SPSS<sup>®</sup> was unable to compute Box's M test of the equality of cell covariance matrices, because "there [was] fewer than two nonsingular cell covariance matrices." Box's M also indicates multivariate normality, so it may be that the small samples in these analyses interacted with any underlying non-normality to reduce the power to detect significant differences. The same analyses were conducted *post-hoc* with high and low groupings based on impression efficacy and impression affect scores, and similarly inconsistent results were observed.

In summary, hypothesis A was not supported: participants performed *better* in the manipulated conditions than at baseline, not worse. Hypothesis B was also unsupported: there was no significant difference in overall performance between the Strong manipulated condition and the Weak manipulated condition; participants' performance effectiveness and efficiency was comparable in the two conditions. Controlling for Baseline performance (i.e., as a covariate) and comparing only the two manipulated conditions did not alter this pattern of results. Similarly, calculating "difference from Baseline" scores for the two conditions and comparing these data instead indicated a non-significant difference in the performance change from Baseline. Finally, grouping the participants according to their impression motivation score failed to provide additional insight into performance. Therefore, the main finding to emerge from this battery of tests is that performance was equally improved over Baseline in both manipulated conditions, so the manipulation did have an effect, albeit not the anticipated one.

#### 4.4. Discussion: Study Two

The potential for heightened impression motivation to disrupt cognitive performance was investigated in this study. Previous research has demonstrated that engaging in challenging self-presentations impaired subsequent self-regulation, and prior acts of self-control influenced a drift towards ineffective subsequent self-presentation (Vohs *et al.*, 2005). Self-regulation of thoughts, emotions, and attentional processes therefore, seem to place a cognitive demand on the individual that can negatively impact performance (Baumeister *et al.*, 1998). In the present study, participants received instructions that were designed to heighten their impression motivation by providing them an opportunity to enhance their public image. Specifically, the purpose of the experimental manipulation was to make their impressions goal-relevant, attach additional self-presentational value to their goals, and lead them to believe that there was a discrepancy between their desired and current image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

There was considerable evidence that the manipulation altered participants' mindset. In the manipulated conditions, participants reported significantly higher impression monitoring and impression motivation after reading the instructions than before reading them. Further, post-instruction impression monitoring and cognitive anxiety intensity was significantly higher in the manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition. Post-instruction impression motivation was higher in the manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition, but significant only at  $p = .06$  (between Baseline and Weak condition) and  $p = .07$  (between Baseline and Strong condition). Somatic anxiety intensity – hypothesised to be unchanged by the experimental manipulation – was statistically equivalent in all three conditions. In the manipulated conditions, participants reported significantly lower impression efficacy after reading the instructions than before reading them; impression affect decreased also, but this difference was not significant. In addition, the difference in pre-to-post-instruction impression

efficacy was significantly larger in the Strong condition than the Weak (i.e., impression efficacy was reduced more by the Strong condition instructions). Post-instruction impression efficacy and impression affect were considerably lower in the manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition, but the differences were not significant.

Additional analyses provided further support for the efficacy of the manipulation. First, there was a significant positive relationship between post-instruction impression affect and cognitive state anxiety interpretation in the manipulated conditions but not in the Baseline condition. This suggests that, as anticipated, the Baseline instructions did not elicit a relationship between these variables, whereas the increased performance pressure of the manipulated conditions did. Second, post-instruction impression motivation was significantly correlated with retrospective measures of motivation and effort in the manipulated conditions (except impression motivation and effort in the Weak condition), but not in the Baseline condition. This suggests that, as anticipated, impression motivation would be positively associated with general motivation and effort expended in the manipulated conditions but in the Baseline condition. Third, contrary to expectations, there was no significant difference in reported concentration between conditions. However, concentration did decrease in the hypothesised direction (Baseline = 74.00, Weak condition = 68.00, Strong condition = 65.81). Fourth, participants believed that the manipulated condition instructions made them think significantly more about their public image than the Baseline condition instructions. Fifth, participants reported having experienced significantly stronger impression management cognitions *during the test* in the manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition.

From one aspect these results indicate that the manipulation was successful: participants' overall perception of the manipulated conditions was very different from their thoughts and feelings when in the Baseline condition. However, the aims of the study were not fully achieved because the Weak

and Strong condition instructions were unable to elicit different strengths of the various impression management and associated cognitions. The instructions were based on IMSQ-T item responses (i.e., factor item means), which have various aspects of sporting involvement as frames of reference (e.g., practice, competition, social). When adapted to inform the manipulation, thereby taken out of context, these items may have been unable to form the basis of distinct experimental instruction sets. There is also the possibility – without knowledge of the test-retest reliability of the IMSQ-T – that participants' self-presentational motives had changed since they completed the questionnaire in study one; thus, their factor ranks used for the present manipulation no longer apply. An additional caveat is that during debrief, 3 or 4 participants voiced scepticism about the truthfulness of the public manipulation. However, these individuals also maintained that they had not ruled it out, and did compete as if it were real, "just in case." Of course, 3 or 4 participants represents a minority; but despite thorough debriefing during which most participants seemed engaged and open to sharing an honest opinion, more may have been sceptical and not wanted to offend the researcher by admitting this.

In this study impression monitoring was assessed as the amount of attention the participant reported devoting to impression-related thoughts (Leary, 1995). Post-instruction impression monitoring was significantly higher in the manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition. The difference was not as pronounced for impression motivation, however, and there were non-significant differences between conditions for impression efficacy and impression affect. It is arguable, therefore, that while participants were aware of themselves as the focal point of the test – and that there might be *some eventual* implications for their public image – the experimental manipulation was not powerful or immediate enough to significantly raise their impression motivation and/or lower their impression efficacy or affect. This interpretation follows from Chen, Schechter, and Chaiken's (1996) assertion that: "impression-motivated processing is marked by a selective bias aimed at

satisfying immediate social goals” (p. 263). Hence, in the absence of immediate feedback from an important other (coach, teammate) it is likely that the athlete’s stimulus-driven attentional system was activated rather than their goal-driven attentional system, and this was better able to overcome distracting thoughts (Eysenck & Keane, 2000).

With this backdrop, results from tests on the performance data gain clarity. Participants performed better in both manipulated conditions than in the Baseline condition on seven of the eight measures (the divergent measure, VPT effectiveness: Baseline  $\bar{x} = .961$ , Weak  $\bar{x} = .964$ , Strong  $\bar{x} = .953$ ). The performance difference between Baseline and Weak and/or Baseline and Strong was significant on six of the eight tests. In contrast, the difference in performance between the Weak and Strong conditions was non-significant on seven of the eight measures (COG effectiveness was significantly worse in the Strong condition at  $p = .05$ ); participants did perform slightly worse on five of the eight measures in the Strong condition, however. Thus, the hypothesis that participants would perform better in the Baseline condition than in the two manipulated conditions, and better in the Weak condition than the Strong condition, was not supported. We see instead that the two manipulated conditions elicited a similar pattern of self-report responses compared to the Baseline condition, and performance was improved over Baseline to a very similar extent in both manipulated conditions. Hence, the largely successful experimental manipulation *did* have a significant effect – it was associated with better performance, not worse.

The increased impression monitoring and impression motivation reported by participants seemed to enable them to overcome their increased cognitive state anxiety. Specifically, participants appraised their cognitive state anxiety as slightly debilitating, but their negative discrepancy between impression motivation and impression efficacy as a challenge. Challenge appraisals can be distracting, but according to theory, self-regulation of a threat appraisal depletes cognitive resources to a greater extent than do challenge appraisals



(Jones & Lavalley, 2010). Hence, given the foregrounding of impression management in this study, participants' positive impression affect may have focused their attention for the task, and facilitated an overall improvement in performance (cf. Carver, 1979; Eysenck & Calvo, 1992; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Indeed, during debrief many participants described devoting more attentional resources to the task in the Weak and Strong conditions due to the added (manipulated) incentives; although, interestingly, they did not report this when given the chance – they reported non-significantly diminished concentration in the manipulated conditions. Participants seemed able to self-regulate their impression management cognitions and harness them for the short-term enhancement of learning, performance, and sustained task involvement (Crews, Lochbaum, & Karoly, 2002). In study one of this thesis a dispositional tendency to perceive a negative discrepancy between impression motivation and impression efficacy was almost always appraised as a challenge. Therefore, if this pattern of trait profiles predicts a similar state-like response among athletes, it follows that performance would be facilitated rather than hindered by heightened impression motivation.

There is a possibility that individuals low in sporting – or physical/psychomotor task – self-efficacy would not have volunteered. The recruitment pitch mentioned that they would complete tests that assess “the types of mental skills that are essential for smooth and efficient sporting performance.” Once the competitive element was introduced in their second visit, participants had already performed in the Baseline condition, may have anticipated what was expected of them in visits 2 and 3, and decided that they were “up for the challenge.” Indeed, participants reported a similar motivation to do well in all three conditions. Hence, despite the accompanying changes in impression management cognitions: “Stressors that do not interfere with the athlete’s progress towards a goal will not be considered as great a threat as those stressors that do provide such obstacles” (Tenenbaum, Jones, Kitsantas, Sacks, & Berwick, 2003, p. 14); high task self-efficacious participants would have exerted more effort and

persistence in the pursuit of their performance goals (Bandura, 1986, 1997). For example, a cricketer who had displayed signs of anxiety (e.g., quickened speech; trying to engage in conversation about their performance during the break between each test despite being asked not to) mentioned trying a new strategy for the Reaction Test in his second visit as a conscious effort to correct previous mistakes – a coping strategy. This explanation supports the interpretation that despite the high individuality of impression management cognitions, the manipulation's lack of immediate self-presentational feedback and potential embarrassment made it *not threatening enough*.

The present study was exploratory in nature, and as such we can only speculate as to what caused the observed performance effects. For example, the presence of an investigator – alien to participants' everyday sporting life – may have been a source of variance in impression management cognitions, anxiety, and performance. Indeed, inconsistent results were obtained for the hypothesis (C, above) that low impression motivation participants would perform better than high impression motivation participants. This suggests that additional psychological factors, such as self-efficacy (mentioned above), were almost certainly involved in determining performance effectiveness and efficiency in the manipulated conditions. In turn, this highlights the need for correlational research that connects impression management to other psychological constructs, as mentioned in more detail in the discussion of study one (chapter three).

The importance of thorough debrief was highlighted by an incident that occurred with a rugby league player. The experimental manipulation – particularly, the website feedback – had brought to the fore his self-doubt regarding his decision-making ability on the pitch. During debrief he expressed anguish at his position in the league table because it proved to him that his concerns were well-founded. The debriefing appeared to completely alleviate his distress – his relief was tangible – and we looked at his actual results, which fortunately were good. However, he had

experienced unwanted negative affect as a result of his participation and not voiced this. Clearly, researchers – and the present researcher in particular – must ensure there are safeguards against this potential consequence of their research: the debriefing is but one. An additional perspective that this provides leads to the following question: what would the effect on self-report and performance data have been if participants had been told they were at or near the top of the league tables? This line of inquiry would test important theoretical propositions regarding the self-enhancement motives for self-presentation, and the role of impression management in the desire to maintain performance when “leading from the front.”

Another limitation was that, despite screening for colour-blindness and hearing difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia were not screened for. One participant expressed difficulty with the test system, especially the Determination Test, which they attributed to dyslexia. Hence, future studies with the Vienna Test System and similar devices should heed this notice and better anticipate such issues. A concern could also be raised about how experimental manipulations such as this may have knock-on effects for fellow researchers in one’s department. Many of the current sample were third years – and thus leaving soon – but many were not, and were students in the Department of Sport and Exercise Science. As with all sport and exercise science degree programmes students are encouraged to participate in studies when asked, to aid their own development. Hence, future psychology research that seeks to manipulate participants into a certain way of thinking may be adversely affected by studies such as this; participation may be an important learning tool, but carry unanticipated consequences.

Future research should attempt to build on the strengths of this study. Second generation questions that investigate at what point and under what conditions impression-related thoughts *do* interrupt performance would illuminate the present results. To do so, studies must be designed that induce more intense and/or more threatening impression management

cognitions; perhaps the impression motivation elicited in this study, although increased over Baseline, still was not enough. Indeed, the average post-instruction impression motivation (Weak condition  $\bar{x} = 64.59$ , Strong condition  $\bar{x} = 65.37$ ) was below the dispositional scores observed in study one (CFA sample  $\bar{x} = 72.15$ ); although impression efficacy was inordinately lower than in study one (Weak condition  $\bar{x} = 50.73$ , Strong condition  $\bar{x} = 51.15$ , CFA sample  $\bar{x} = 71.50$ ), and it is the discrepancy between impression motivation and impression efficacy that is particularly important.

Two possible options in this regard: assess physical sporting skill execution as the dependent variable with a manipulation that elicits increased impression monitoring and impression motivation, as did the present study; and/or determine a way to accurately capture performance during a 'real' sporting encounter, and somehow assess impression management variables as the independent variables, potentially in multiple contests to ensure a wide range of scenarios. Such possibilities were ruled out for the present exploratory study, but with the results it has obtained, these more ecologically valid methods are justified. Indeed, a basketball player commented that, in spite of his low scores on the website, he was still confident of his ability to perform on the court. Maybe in the 'real-world' of competitive sport even similar impression motivation levels found in the present study would have negatively impacted performance. Finally, the involvement of team-sport athletes only is a delimitation of the present study that future research can now rectify.

#### *4.4.1. Summary and evidence for the impression management model in sport*

The present study has made an original and important contribution to the impression management programme of research in sport psychology. The method employed has shown that classic social psychology research

paradigms used to investigate impression management variables can be made relevant to athlete populations. Counter to expectations, performance was facilitated when greater self-presentational implications were introduced (first-generation findings), and this has important theoretical implications. James and Collins' (1995) research showed that athletes are often impression-motivated because they see it as an opportunity to further their career; study one of this thesis provided evidence that athletes have personal and social motives that are impression-relevant, and they perceive striving for these goals as a challenge; and the current study contributes in suggesting that performance can be focussed by impression management cognitions. If the current findings extend outside the laboratory, it points to the intra- and interpersonal benefits of effective self-presentation in sport. Other areas of the model are purported to be impacted by performance, such as impression assessment; and self-presentation in sport involves aspects of behaviour other than performance. Hence, future research might investigate the conjoint impact of athletes' multi-faceted self-presentations on how they assess their own self-presentational performance, and how they are perceived by important others in their sport.

## Chapter Five

### Study Three

#### A Qualitative Exploration of Impression Management Processes in Sport

##### 5.1.1. Introduction

Things come to matter and continue to matter insofar as they instigate stories that affirm those things in relation to how lives are lived (p. 9)... Stories are attempts of a self to find identity in terms outside itself (Frank, 2002, p. 15).

Impression management is an interpersonal phenomenon; even the intrapsychic benefits of effective impression management – development of self-esteem and desired identities, emotion regulation – require the recognition and feedback of others (Baumeister & Tice, 1986). While individuals sometimes engage in self-presentational behaviours when alone (e.g., grooming before venturing out in public), and privately practice certain behavioural routines for later presentation to an audience (e.g., the telling of jokes in preparation for a dinner party), *most* deliberate self-presentation occurs in the presence of important others (Schlenker, 1986). However, self-presentational motives – a foundation of social behaviour according to this perspective – are an individualised/personal phenomenon, as is the perceptual process which sees each individual appraise social scenarios differently.

Social psychology research has provided an impression management explanation for various social behaviours, including social facilitation (Bond, 1982; Sanders, 1984); perceived exertion (Hardy, Hall, & Prestholdt, 1986); self-serving attributions (Weary & Arkin, 1981); aggression (Felson, 1978;

Tedeschi, Smith, & Brown, 1974); social anxiety and inhibition (Schlenker & Leary, 1982); counselling processes (Friedlander & Schwartz, 1985); psychotic symptoms (Braginsky, Braginsky, & Ring, 1969); and attitude change (Schlenker *et al.*, 1980); while rarely examining the motives and motivations that promote such self-presentational tactics in the first instance. The same criticism can be levelled at the sport psychology literature: affective responses (i.e., competitive anxiety; Payne & Greenlees, 2007) and behaviours (i.e., self-handicapping; Maddison & Prapavessis, 2007) have been associated with impression management variables (i.e., self-presentation concerns), but there is limited evidence beyond that.

To paraphrase Frank (2002), self-presentational concerns and impression-related anxiety, the behaviours that they encourage, and the possible consequences associated with them, *matter* to athletes: “insofar as they instigate stories that affirm those things in relation to how [sporting] lives are lived” (p. 9; parentheses added). And if they do matter to the athlete it is probably because there are strong motives involved, which can be pursued in a goal-directed manner via self-presentation. In study one of the present thesis, athletes attested to the importance of self-presentation in developing a desired social identity, self-esteem enhancement, and development of self. These self-relevant motives may evoke storyable narratives from participants, as the athlete’s ‘self’ attempts to “find identity in terms outside itself” (i.e., beyond their self-report responses). During debrief in study two of the present thesis, many participants described the increased importance they placed on performance when there was self-presentational implications. Hence, the primary aim of study three was to elicit stories of impression management ‘in action’ – that is, as it occurs in the ‘real world’ of competitive sport; where numerous high-strength audience members cast a critical eye on the individual’s actions, and the athlete is (presumably) acutely aware of it.

Impression management phenomena *as they occur in everyday situations* have been investigated in university-age adults (Nezlek & Leary, 2002; Nezlek, Schütz, Schröder-Abé, & Smith, in press; Nezlek, Schütz, & Sellin, 2007; Nezlek, & Smith, 2005), but other populations have not received sustained research attention in this regard. Impression management is a dynamic and recursive process that evolves over time and changes with the context in which it occurs (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In light of this, experimental studies that capture a snapshot of impression management variables only offer so much explanatory power. William Shakespeare wrote, in *As You Like It*, “All the world’s a stage”; well, in sport, everybody is an audience, and the everyday self-presentation of athletes is an important line of enquiry to pursue.

Previous research on impression management in athlete populations has typically been of the self-report variety, and of course, study one (and to a lesser extent, study two) of this thesis has added to this. Whilst useful, this approach does delimit the types of questions that can be asked in the research. At the outset of the current research programme it was clear that a valid measure of dispositional impression motivation was required. Such a scale makes future impression management research more focused, theoretically sound, and possible in a practical sense (e.g., there is a tool available for use in these studies). Given that study one uncovered information on impression management as it occurs in athletes, and added to our appreciation of what a model of impression management may look like in sport psychology, the model was explicitly re-visited. In contrast to study one (questionnaire design and validation), and study two (experimental, laboratory-based), study three employed qualitative enquiry methods.

### *5.1.2. Aims/Purpose(s)*

As Nezlek and Leary (2002) assert: “...for phenomena such as self-presentation that are inherently embedded within social contexts, it seems



particularly important to examine their workings in naturally occurring social contexts” (p. 211); in order to understand the psychological dimensions of sport, one must attempt to uncover the broader social and cultural influences acting upon individual behaviour (Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997; Gergen, 1987; Gill, 1992; Vealey, 1994). However, the thoughts which stimulate self-presentation are not confined to the public arena, although that may be when they are most conspicuous to the individual (Hogan & Briggs, 1986).

Accordingly, the present study employed video-based stimulated-recall interview methodology to investigate the influence of both dispositional and state factors implicated in impression management in sport. In doing so it targeted and tested the tenability of the impression management model in athlete populations, and answered second- and third-generation research questions (Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007). For example: can athletes fulfil their interpersonal motives via the feedback their self-presentations generate; is self-presentation a skill to be mastered to ensure that the athlete benefits fully from their involvement in sport; what situational characteristics elicit especially strong impression motivation; what degree of control do athletes perceive over their various desired impressions; and how does knowing they've made a desired or undesired impression on others impact on their preparation for, and performance in, subsequent contests? In this way, the study's method was selected to produce data that will allow many facets and suppositions of the underlying theory to be explored.

### 5.1.3. *Rationale*

The topic of impression management lends itself to discussion, and interview methodology offers a forum for such research. Narrative inquiry is a mode of qualitative research, or methodology, which is underpinned by an *interpretivist* philosophy of knowledge. Interpretivists, including the current author, do not claim that knowledge is a fixed entity to be accessed only by experimental methods that tease apart variables and provide evidence of causality; that the researcher is only a passive conduit to knowledge. Rather,

“Realities are multiple, created, and mind-dependent,” and knowledge is, “socially constructed, fallible, and subjective” (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, p. 3). People’s narrative accounts of experience are thus co-created *by* and *for* the narrator *and* the audience as a route to knowledge or knowing (Bruner, 1990). Narrative inquiry does not assume that what is discussed at interview is a static representation of reality, but rather that it is true for the interviewee at that moment in time, in terms of whom they are and who they would like to become (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Frank, 1997).

Qualitative research methods associated with interpretivism are gaining credibility in the gradual move away from (post)positivistic or (neo)realist thinking in sport psychology (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). However, narrative inquiry has been slow to ‘catch on’ to this trend, and so there remains a paucity of narrative research in this domain of psychology; this despite it being championed by numerous leading qualitative researchers (e.g., Jowett, Partington, Smith, Sparkes). A principle of narrative inquiry that points to it being especially valuable to impression management research is that: “Selves and identities are constituted through narratives, and people do and perform storied selves and narrative identities relationally” (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, p. 3). Of course, a primary purpose of impression management is maintenance or development of desired identities based on the reactions of others (i.e., *relational*). The current study did not seek to determine *how* people *use* narrative to construct their identities; but given that they do, their stories provided insight into desired identities and thus self-presentation motives, impression construction processes, and resultant behaviours – and uncovering this type of information *was* an aim of the study. Accordingly, the interview guide prepared for the present study leaned away from the traditional structured interview format, and toward promoting full narrative accounts of impression management in action (cf. Murray, 2003).

Interpretivist thinking shares common ground with, and is certainly influenced by, *symbolic interactionism* (cf. Vrasidas, 2001). A theory predominantly

espoused by sociologists, symbolic interactionism has been appropriated by social psychologists interested in self and identity:

Symbolic interaction rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them...The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

One's self-concept – a major determinant of one's constructed impressions – influences the inferences an audience draws from one's self-presentation, and thus whether it is successful (i.e., “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them,” Blumer). Hence, due to the reaction of the audience, the self-concept is an evolving product of social interaction and interpersonal relationships (i.e., the meaning one places on the self is “handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the [people] he encounters”; Snyder & Campbell, 1982). A symbolic interactionist, Goffman (1959) described how individuals are able to define a situation in the minds of others and thereby control how the audience approaches the situation and the actors in it; a goal of many self-presentations.

In turn, symbolic interactionism (and interpretivism) has parallels with interactional psychology, in its dual focus on dispositional and situational influences on behaviour. Knowledge from previous encounters with similar situations, immediate informational input available from the situation, and the types of environmental stimuli (i.e., different situational contingencies), are the basis for an individual's perception of the situation, and this perception influences an individual's behaviour in the situation (Endler, 1981; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Higgins, 1990; Magnusson, 1990; Ross & Nisbett, 1991). As goal-directed behaviour, self-presentation too is determined by the

interplay between past experiences and context; hence, impression management research would do well to adopt interpretivist research methods informed by symbolic interactionism and interactional psychology, allowing the participant to become a 'meaning maker' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Therefore, to paraphrase Blumer, using narrative inquiry, the purpose of study three was to learn more about the meaning athletes attach to things (practice, competition, team-mates, club structure, leadership and social norms within the club, etc.) and how this influences their self-presentational thoughts, feelings, and behaviour in the context. Trait x state stimulated-recall interview methodology in particular, was chosen because it helps fulfil the above aim: it encourages discussion of both dispositional tendencies and situational experiences, and how they interact to prompt impression-related behaviours, cognition, and affect (Bloom, 1953). Indeed: "Self-presentational difficulties are an inherently interpersonal problem, so the context of the situation and the characteristics of the audience should interact with personal characteristics to affect situational reactions" (Schlenker & Leary, 1982, p. 653).

## 5.2. Method

### Participants

Eight males and seven females participated in this study, with an average age of 23 years 7 months ( $SD = 12$  years; range = 19 – 66). Eleven team sports were represented, including netball ( $n = 5$ ), rugby union ( $n = 4$ ), field hockey, and Rugby League (1 participant each); and three individual-based sports, including fencing ( $n = 2$ ), golf, and tennis (1 participant each).

Participants reported an average of 8 years 3 months ( $SD = 4$  years 9 months; range = 7 months – 15 years) since they began their primary sport, which they had spent 5 years 11 months ( $SD = 3$  years 8 months; range = 3

months – 12 years) playing competitively. On average, participants reported spending 4.08 ( $SD = 2.52$ ) hours per week practicing their sport, with an additional 5.88 ( $SD = 3.14$ ) hours per week of fitness work.

## Procedure

*Recruitment and sampling.* Recruitment for this study was three-pronged: (1) an email was sent to all students in the Department of Sport and Exercise Science at the author's host institution; (2) an 'advertisement' was placed on the institution's centrally-managed weekly email, which is delivered to all students and staff at the university; and (3) email contact was made with university sport club representatives (details are available at the Athletic Union website), and in many cases, these individuals agreed to forward study details to their membership.

The recruitment email/advertisement explained the purpose of the research as follows:

My research looks at the types of impressions that athletes desire to have others form of them when they train and compete (and socialise with their team-mates), their motives for this, and the strategies they adopt to ensure that important others form a particular impression of them. Therefore, during the 'interview,' we will be discussing topics of this nature.

The procedure to be followed during their involvement, which made sense in the context of the above excerpt, was also briefly detailed. Many athletes responded positively to these calls for interest, some even volunteering to help with further recruitment. All queries that they had were clarified, and concerns allayed. Due to the large number of potential participants, a purposive selection process was possible. In particular, the ways by which athletes communicated to the researcher during these initial correspondences influenced the decision of whether or not to take them up

on their offer. Also, many of the participant pool were known to him in his role as teaching assistant on various modules, and so he had knowledge of their general ability to verbalise and elaborate on their thoughts, and of their sporting background. This process was guided by the belief that: “If the data are to be produced through an interview, then one would have to choose people who are willing to describe their experience to a researcher...In addition, one would choose participants who can adequately reflect on their experience and verbally describe it” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140).

Hence, recruitment was of the purposive variety, with an added element of snowball sampling to increase the pool of potential participants. It was cautiously assumed that by providing the above information (indented excerpt) the study would attract volunteers who would be open to discussing their experiences. This follows Polkinghorne (2005), who maintains that: “Individuals who can provide relevant descriptions of an experience are primarily those who have had or are having the experience...In this sense, multiple participants serve as a kind of triangulation on the experience, locating its core meaning by approaching it through different accounts” (p. 140).

*Data collection procedure.* Volunteers selected a competitive event that they would like to be video-taped, and then worked with the researcher to schedule the corresponding interview. For most participants this was a single match/game, but for the fencers it was an entire club competition and all their bouts therein, and for the golfer it was an 18-hole round. Upon arrival at the contest location the investigator sought written permission to make a video record (using a Sony Handycam<sup>®</sup>) for research purposes from all parties involved in the upcoming contest (i.e., if an individual-based sport, the opponent, and if a team-sport, the participant’s team-mates and all of the opponents). By filming them during competition – and forming part of the audience, in that respect – a context for sociability was built, rather than purely one of data gathering (Warren, 1987). The video record of their

performance was a major incentive for participation, owing to the anticipated benefits to be derived from replaying and reflecting on their performance. Hence, participants were asked from which angle/distance they would prefer to be captured.

Participants came to the Department of Sport and Exercise Science within 48 hours of the contest, and the interview took place in a suitable room. At this point, the purpose of the research was reiterated, the procedure explained once more, an anti social-desirability statement read to participants, anonymity and confidentiality assured, and ultimately, written informed consent was gained (see Appendix Eighteen). The words 'impression,' 'impression management,' 'self-presentation,' and 'public image' were defined for the participants, in the context of the study, and elucidated further where necessary.

An interview guide was designed with the aim of inviting stories from participants; for example, the opening question, "Starting at the beginning, can you please tell me about your history in [Sport A]?" The first portion of the interview comprised general questions related to the athlete's sporting career and their impression management in everyday life and sport. The researcher aimed to identify stories which represented dispositional tendencies, and follow-up probing questions were used to differentiate these from elements that might have occurred only in single situations. The second portion of the interview involved watching the video, during which the participant had been prompted to provide a running commentary of psychological factors as they were experienced at the time. Some were more willing and able to do this than others, but in both cases the researcher facilitated the process through appropriate probing. Again, the aim was to differentiate state-like responses from their 'typical' ways of thinking and acting.

The Handycam® had been connected to a projector for playback onto a large screen, and participants were asked to take charge of the remote control in order to commentate. The interview was recorded with a digital dictaphone (Zoom H2 Handy Recorder®), and the resultant file was kept under a codename that corresponded to the participant, which itself was stored apart from the data. All participants' identities were coded such that only the investigator was able to identify specific individuals within the collection of interview recordings. Participants disclosed their identities just once – on the informed consent form, which itself was kept in a locked drawer in a private office, away from the video tape, interview recordings, and subsequent transcripts. Also, participants provided a preferred pseudonym that their comments appear under in the results section of the study. Following this, a debriefing occurred, during which participants were given the opportunity to voice any issues they had as a consequence of their involvement. At this point, the investigator prospectively offered participants the chance to read their interview data (“once they are transcribed”), to ensure that they were comfortable with the information they provided being taken forward. All participants declined this opportunity, and were happy for their stories to be disseminated as necessary.

### Data Analysis

The above procedure resulted in 42.3 hours of interview tape: the pre-video component of the interview had an average duration of 1 hour 48 minutes, and the video portion 1 hour 5 minutes; thus, the total average interview duration was 2 hours and 53 minutes, not including comfort and hydration breaks. Thirteen of the fifteen interviews were transcribed verbatim, for a total of 1367 pages (1” margins; approximately 343650 words). The final two interviews were used to check for theoretical saturation within the data, and this does not require that they are transcribed in their entirety; rather, a summary of the key points and stories of each was produced while listening and re-listening to the audio tapes and these were compared with the previous thirteen (Glaser, 1965; Lingard, Albert, & Levinson, 2008).



Interviews were transcribed in the naturalised style to include paralinguistic utterances, gestures, laughter, and any such information that might convey the feeling and meaning behind participants' stories (Billig, 1999). An example passage is provided in Figure 5.1.

- 
- P: Umm, I never played full-time, coz my parents didn't want me to do *just* the academies....
- R: Yeah
- P: ...so I did, umm, part-time tennis, which is about 4hours a day...
- R: [laughing, as if to say, "That's still a lot of tennis!"]...Oh, not much then!
- P: ...Not much, no...
- R: 'Only' part-time...
- P: Full-time you do about 8 or 9 hours a day, solid tennis.
- R: What, instead of school? [incredulously]
- P: Yeah. And you do 3 hours of school, after that...
- R: Oh, I see...
- P: ...if you're a full-time tennis player. So I did, school in the morning, until about half-11, and then I did two hours of tennis, then went back to school in the afternoon. And then 2 hours tennis after school as well.
- R: Awesome.
- P: So that was my life from 12 'til 15, I did 3 years of that.
- R: [exhalation, as if to say "Phhhhewww"]
- P: And then every weekend was tournaments, and travelling around the country, which was great fun.
- 

Figure 5.1. *Excerpt from interview with tennis player Eric (Note. P = participant; R = researcher)*

The researcher re-watched the video-taped events when listening (and re-listening) to the audio-taped interviews, in seeking an increased sensitivity to

the teller's situation and an enhanced ability to detect the underlying mechanisms behind the stories told (Duncan & Messner, 1998). In keeping with the interpretivist tradition and the aims of the study, transcribed data were analysed using a thematic narrative approach. This method is useful for finding common thematic elements across participants, whilst not losing the participants' voice or downplaying the importance of contextual details (Riessman, 2002). This form of narrative analysis lends itself to elaboration and illustration when exploring theoretical models (Mishler, 1995) – a secondary aim of the present study.

A 'story' is the telling of the tale (hence, 'story-telling'), or "transmitting of a message" (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a), and to take form it relies on a narrative structure. A 'narrative': "contains a *point* and *characters* along with a *plot* connecting events that unfold *sequentially* over *time* and in *space* to provide an overarching *explanation* or *consequence*" (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, p. 2; emphases in original). Sections of interview transcript about a particular topic are thus the *story*, and *narrative* refers to all the properties of that story (e.g., context, tellability, consequences). The task of the present narrative researcher was therefore to collect and (re-)tell participants' stories, thereby producing a 'narrative of experience' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Narrative analysis is thus the systematic study of the 'whats' and 'hows' of stories that contain narratological properties. The 'whats' of a narrative account – otherwise labelled 'fabula' (Hiles & Čermák, 2007) – refer to its raw material: structure, thematic content (i.e., characters, plotlines and events that unfold sequentially in time and space, an overarching explanation or consequence), and linkages between specific content and the story as a whole (Pentland, 1999; Riessman, 2003). The 'hows' of a narrative account – otherwise known as 'sjuzet' (Hiles & Čermák, 2007) – represent the performative element, or the way the story is told and whether it coheres – "the artful components of reality construction" (Sparkes & Partington, 2003, p. 294).

In sport psychology to date, either the *whats* or *hows* of narratives have been analysed, and on those occasions where both forms of analysis were undertaken, one or the other is presented, or they have been published separately (e.g., Smith & Sparkes, 2002, and Sparkes & Smith, 2002). However, it is believed that the *whats* and *hows* of narrative are complimentary, and studies should attempt to develop them in tandem (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). A means of doing so has been termed 'analytic bracketing' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000), which:

amounts to an orientating procedure for alternately focusing on the *whats* and then the *hows* of interpretive practice (or vice versa) in order to assemble both a contextually scenic and a contextually constructive picture of everyday language-in-use. The objective is to move back and forth between discursive practice and discourse-in-practice, documenting each in turn and making informative references to the other in the process. Either discursive machinery or available discourses become the provisional phenomenon, while interest in the other is temporarily deferred, but not forgotten (p. 500).

The present study indeed alternately focuses on the *whats* and *hows* of the impression management process as described by athletes. It was anticipated that this combination of narrative questioning, content analysis, and performative analysis (Riessman, 2003; Smith & Sparkes, 2009b) would help the researcher discover what matters to the participant about impression management (cf. Frank, 2002).

Practically speaking, the above process involved the researcher first familiarising himself with the concept of a story's *whats* and *hows* and their manifestation in sporting stories (Smith & Sparkes, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, b; Sparkes & Partington, 2003; and Sparkes & Smith, 2002, were especially helpful in this regard). Three pilot interviews (including video-taped footage) had been conducted to check the feasibility of the study design. These data allowed the researcher to hone his ability to identify *whats* and *hows* of a story, and to practice Gubrium and Holstein's analytic bracketing.

Once the full study's interviews were conducted, during transcription, passages were highlighted and theoretical notes were made using the Microsoft Word facility (Figure 5.2).

### Excerpt A)

M: Mmm

P: ... But I've always been the nervous one. I got bullied at primary school though, so that's kind of added to it. Umm... yeah, so... I just... with my hockey I think it's just, like, not being good enough I feel like sometimes, for the team; I don't want to let... because it's a full team I don't want to let them down...

M: Mmm

P: ... Whereas, if it's an individual sport I feel like you don't have that on you...

M: Mmm

P: ... letting the rest of the team down...

M: Yeah, yeah

P: ... if you're not good enough, so [end]

Comment [S19]: I was going to ask where she thinks it came from if not her parents, so this explains it somewhat.

Comment [S20]: Or was the cause

Comment [S21]: Self-presentational?

### Excerpt B)

P: ... She's helped me the most. Umm, she's a good friend, but also she's got kind of a little bit of err... I really enjoy her company because she's got a little bit of a secretive side to her, so you don't know what she's thinking – you can never tell what she's thinking...

M: Yeah

P: ... So when she says something really good about you, like if you've done something good, it really means something; because she doesn't often... She does say, "Oh, the team's done well," but as an individual she doesn't really select people and say, "Oh, you've played amazing today." We have had Dame of the Game and stuff, but umm, she doesn't say, "Oh, you did this skill really good," so... [end]

M: Yeah

P: ... Like, I think when she says that to me it means more than if someone else says it, because... [end]

Comment [S31]: Linked to need for approval or FNE; if this person doesn't give praise often, it's a limited resource, and so maybe it heightens her IMOP? And then if her IEFF is low, it can't be good... unless she sees it as a challenge, which may be the case with H1 (see her earlier statement about challenges and exposure)

Figure 5.2. Two excerpts from the interview with Laurie

The constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis was appropriated from the Grounded Theory approach, in which: “the analyst, in direct pursuit of his purpose, is constantly redesigning and reintegrating his theoretical notions as he reviews his material” (Glaser, 1965, p. 437). In this manner, each interview built on the previous and informed the subsequent, and common narrative themes were identified as well as those which were unique but no less important. Tellable stories were identified as those that contained substantive content and an element of performance – in that they conveyed the feeling tone of the participant’s memories and (restructured) reality (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995).

*Issues of quality and trustworthiness.* Qualitative interviews that promote narrated descriptions and explanations of experience are a valid form of psychological inquiry in sport (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). The narrative approach was adopted due to the present researcher’s empathy with Wolcott (1994), who stated: “What I seek is something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations from them, something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the Truth...” (p. 366). In the present study, “plausible interpretations” and quality were sought through various routes. For example, iterative steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness, rather than evaluating whether it was obtained in a *post-hoc* fashion (cf. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). The aims of the study were constantly re-visited; those being the question of what impression management ‘looks like’ in sport, model development, and hypothesis generation. Each interview was evaluated by reflecting back on the content of notes made during transcription and their coherence with theory. This also influenced subsequent interviews, in terms of identification of questions to avoid or modify because of the responses they generated in previous attempts (e.g., bewilderment, discomfort). Further, *in-situ* member-checking was carried out – as originally intended by Guba and Lincoln (1981) – *within* each interview. This involved frequent discussions, at the time, regarding the

interviewer's interpretation of the interviewee's stories. The outcome of this strategy was often agreement, but equally, slight modification of or additions to their responses, or complete disagreement with the interpretation and a resultant attempt on their part to clarify their meaning. Thus, the researcher displayed sensitivity and an ability to summarise and probe when necessary, in an effort to attain trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This responsive approach undoubtedly contributed to the length of the interviews.

Each participant retained prominence in the analyses, rather than their data being transferred to the researcher to consider as somehow divorced from its source. Knowledge of context, too, is crucial for interpretative purposes; the present research method was selected partly because the researcher expected to learn from being present, even if just for one match. Visiting a competitive event to make the video-tape, including travelling with the participant in a couple of cases, provided background information which was considered when analysing the data. Simply by being there – by introducing himself to the team and opposition for informed consent purposes – the researcher was *involved*, to some extent, and saw the participant in action at their favoured pastime. Many participants mentioned this as “a nice touch” when expressing gratitude for the video of their performance they were given. Although it is inevitable that these forums provided opportunities for the athletes to self-present, inconsistencies and ambiguities between what occurred and what was said at interview were closely monitored. Further, it was anticipated that the video session would help in this respect, for participants may have been compelled to avoid socially desirable responding in case they would be “found out” by something that happened on the video (fortunately, there was little evidence of this).

In summary, it is acknowledged that the researcher's voice will be present throughout the analyses – he was there in the interviews as well, after all. However, his role was to ask story-able questions, and then be cognisant of his biases when analysing the data. The former task was aided by his

attempts to be involved in the “joint production” of trustworthy stories through how he listened, attended, encouraged, interrupted, digressed, initiated topics, and terminated responses at opportune moments (Mishler, 1986). The latter is discussed below, in a section that emerged from the data and demanded attention – entitled *Retrospective ‘evidence’ of trustworthiness or quality*. Ultimately, it is left to the reader to be the judge of the veracity of the author’s interpretations and conclusions drawn from the extensive qualitative data contained herein (cf. Sparkes & Smith, 2009a, b).

### 5.3 *Analyses and Discussion*

The aim of study three of this thesis was to ask sportspeople why (self-presentational motives), when (impression motivation), and how (impression construction) they engage in self-presentation. Further, athletes spoke to other components of the impression management model, especially when telling stories about: the factors which constrain or facilitate their impression management attempts (e.g., impression efficacy); the affective responses they experience as a result of or prior to self-presenting; and the impact of impression management cognitions and actions on their sporting performance. In addition to these deductive categories of response, numerous inductive themes emerged and will be presented clearly as such. This reflects the true nature of research with interview data – a blend of the anticipated, semi-anticipated, and altogether unexpected (Madill & Gough, 2008). The results and discussion section of the present study will draw together interpretations of the data, theoretical and practical discussion, and suggestions for future research. It will then conclude by reflecting on what has been added to the impression management model in sport.

### 5.3.1 *Deductive approach*

#### 5.3.1.1. *The self-presentational motive*

##### Self-presentation concerns

General self-presentation concerns might impose a limit on the aspirations of the athlete. Leo, a first-team rugby player who also plays for his home town side (a higher standard), had learned that his chances were very good if he put himself forward for captaincy next season. However, he decided not to because he did not want to lose friends over his decisions for team places. He believed that team members would talk about him behind his back – “even more than they do already” – and he would be very conscious of this. Hence, Leo’s social insecurities, perhaps reflecting the high trait self-consciousness symptom of sensitivity to rejection (Fenigstein, 1979), seemed to remove an opportunity for further social-identity development. Whether or not this is an active self-presentational motive for Leo might also help explain his decision. In any case, self-consciousness is often associated with positive social outcomes, as the following story depicts.

Randy, an épée fencer, gave a detailed account of how self-presentation concerns tend to change with time and status in a club context. He remembered “starting at the bottom,” before progressing up the club hierarchy to where he now resides at the top, as club president. On entering the club in his first semester of university, Randy’s aspirations saw him quickly adopt self-presentational strategies that he felt would help his ascent. He distinctly remembers “latching on to the more advanced fencers,” and becoming a three-weapon fencer (épée, foil, sabre) earlier than typically allowed. This, in turn, “meant that [he] could attend the extra competitive [training] sessions, which meant that [he] got to put in a lot more time into the fencing.” Randy admits that he: “very consciously tried to sort of mould myself into part of the club.” During this journey of almost three years, Randy



likened his self-presentation concerns and social aspirations to effort, and this has evolved or shifted: “I still work in the social aspect of things, and the fencing aspect of things, and we’re always having new people turn up. But [coughs]...rather than trying to climb up, I’m just sortof, uhh, trying to sortof sit at the top and stay steady.” Randy’s story is a clear example of how public-self-conscious athletes employ impression management to ‘climb the ladder,’ and implicitly, if he had not have been so well received by the senior club members, his career would have looked much different.

Public self-consciousness is also implicated in negative body image perceptions (Ackard, Kearney-Cooke, & Peterson, 2000; Lavin & Cash, 2000; Wiederman & Pryor, 2000), a topic brought up by a female rugby player during a conversation about more general self-presentation concerns. When asked what had alerted her that these teammates were experiencing such problems, Midge said: “you know, [they are] constantly clinging onto themselves. Like, you know, having a feel, and umm, you know, measuring themselves, comparing themselves to other people.” Midge then said something of theoretical importance: “Yeah, and not so much in the forwards; definitely in my team – I think they’ve kindof accepted, you know, they’re built differently, and you know, that’s fine. But I think the backline is much more...like, body image is a problem.” It is not possible to cross-reference this revelation with the experiences of other participants, as Midge was the only person to mention it; body dissatisfaction was outside of the scope of the study, thus it was not included in the broad interview schedule. However, as a form of self-presentation concern (cf. Leary *et al.*, 1994), that body image issues might differ according to playing position is potentially important, and might imply micro-level (within sport) differences in other impression management variables. Contextual variables outside sport were also mentioned by Midge as possible mediators: “I think maybe if they had, you know, weight issues before they came to Uni. and then they struggled with them, but they’ve now got it set; you know, at a set weight, and they try to maintain it. Or...umm...you know, if they’re not very confident with the

opposite sex, umm, you know, that's an issue that brings about things like that." These contentions should be part of a push toward second and third generation research on self-presentation concerns in sport psychology.

The stories of several participants suggested that self-presentation concerns can be engendered by a lack of integration of newcomers to the squad. Casey, a fencer coming to the end of his first year with the university club, recalled feeling like he had to "work really hard to be accepted"; and he supposed that it was *easier* for him than the other novices because he already knew several people in the club. From his vantage point somewhere between being a 'typical' neophyte and one of the veterans, Casey tried to encourage the other novices to take part more. However, he perceived two main challenges: a lack of integrative activities organised by the senior club members and committee, and his status as a fellow novice – i.e., he lacked influence. It is well-known that many first-year university students take up sport to fulfil social motives (e.g., Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005; Mathes & Battista, 1985); indeed, Laurie in the present sample said this of her decision to join the hockey team: "I didn't wanna be sat in my room doing nothing...[It's] a way of not being lonely as well...It's not easy being away from home." Theoretically, impression motivation is heightened when desired rewards are scarce, as when one has little contact with the target or they are difficult to please (Schlenker, 1980). Therefore, Casey's story suggests that novice fencers with social self-presentational motives would struggle to attain their goals, and this could have contributed to the high drop-out rates he mentioned. Nezelek and Leary's (2002) study on self-presentation in the daily interactions of college students suggests that this may be especially true for individuals with negative self-evaluations to begin with. Thus, unsociable actions of the club's senior members – creating a self-presentationally concerning atmosphere – may have limited the club's membership and incurred a personal cost to new members. Future research could investigate the potential for non-fulfilment of self-presentational motives to be associated with dropout in sport.

## Self-presentational motives

*Interpersonal influence.* In sport, it is unavoidable that ability will be the main component of any impression others form of an athlete. But there are caveats to this generality: an athlete's ability is unlikely to be appraised in positive tones if the evaluator has an otherwise negative impression of the athlete; journalists, commentators, and the general public may not believe or accept the apologies of an athlete's misdeeds when they had a previously low opinion of them and/or their ability. For example: Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant was accused of sexually assaulting a 19-year old woman in a Denver hotel room. Had he not been of such great financial value to his sponsors, perhaps they would have responded with more than: "Brief, carefully worded statements...corporate spokesmen offered support that neither distances nor draws itself closer to their high-paid pitchman" (Rovell, 2003, *paragraph 5*). Further, any hit that his reputation suffered was short-lived, as he has been the leading vote-getter for each of the eight NBA All-Star Games since the allegation was made (the general public vote for their favourite players to appear in this mid-season showcase game). Hence, ability is extremely important to the impression of an athlete that will be formed. As the current data shows, this applies to university sport as well as professional sport, and athletes are acutely cognisant of the fact.

Kitty, a 21-year old netballer, very clearly relayed the above message:

I think, umm...within netball particularly, I think your ability umm, your ability kindof makes the impressions for you. And then so...[exhales] ...oh, it's really hard to describe...in the sense that, [Kitty's captain is] a very good *player*, so the impressions of her are already up there [gestures up high]. And so she hasn't really got to do that much more work off-court to make...d'ya know [what I mean?] – she's very sociable, and she's very chatty, and very, you know, lovely girl, and gets stuck in with everything. But, I think, perhaps, if your ability was down here [gestures, lower than last one], you'd have far far much...[more to do].

It is interesting to note that ability, sociability, and other interpersonal characteristics (“gets stuck in with everything”) are intertwined, but that ability is the defining factor. Kitty was talking about her captain, and the following quote further elucidates the behaviours that are required of a good captain:

Club captain’s a very serious role, so you couldn’t, you know, have your ability down here and then just joke around and do this and do that...you know, go out and be the one that gets the most steaming every week and this-that-and-the-other, and think that that’s gonna get you votes; coz it won’t; coz the girls don’t want that – when they go to training they’re there to train and not go out and get drunk. So I think a high impression on, from your ability to play on-court, is vital if you want, you know, that position of example.

As with the previous quote, Kitty suggests that while ability is central to the captain’s social identity and others’ perception of their effectiveness in the role, they must also maintain control of ‘regular’ aspects of their image. On-pitch/court leaders in sport might thus have an additional self-presentational burden compared to their subordinates, and this possibility and its consequences should be part of the larger impression management research programme. Research with off-pitch leaders (coaches) has certainly demonstrated the varied pressures and dilemmas that they face (Jones, 2006; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). However, these studies have typically involved semi-professional or professional coaches, and the inclusion of financial matters differentiates them from those involved in amateur contexts.

From a personal perspective, rugby player Angie described her in-game tactics for managing the impression of a quality player. By doing so, the “Whats” of Angie’s story clearly demonstrates that to an extent, sporting ability is an image to be constructed and maintained like any other, and that there are regular opportunities to do so:

Yeah...there's areas of my game which I know are weak. Umm, and so every, with every match that comes, umm, I'm trying to prove to my team-mates and my coach that...like, coz my tackling is fairly weak, umm, and every game I try and prove that, actually, I am a good tackler. Umm, and to do that, initially, you have to hit that player, within the first sort of five minutes of the game. And once you've done that once they'll sort of, step off, and realise, you know, you're...You are better than them [chuckles], and they're not gonna be able to 'take you down,' type thing...Proving that I'm good enough to be picked, and put at 10, and there is no one better than me for it.

Angie's use of words/phrases such as "*prove* to my team-mates and coach," "they'll *realise*," "*proving* that I'm good enough to be picked...*there is no one better*" – the "Hows" of her story – signify her acknowledgement that demonstrating one's ability is a form of interpersonal influence in sport as it is in social situations, the workplace, and any other domain where certain characteristics are desirable (Leary, 1995). Angie's attitude towards managing her impressions of ability would also seem to be highly functional or adaptive: she admits skill deficits, but is assured in her approach to rectifying the situation. This implies that sporting self-efficacy influences the adoption of acquisitive self-presentation tactics – presumably because of strong impression efficacy, and the relationship between the three warrants investigation; i.e., in Angie's case, rugby task efficacy might moderate the relationship between her interpersonal influence motive and impression efficacy (a third generation question).

Interpersonal influence is not constrained to on-pitch displays of ability, however: almost all participants provided detailed descriptions of either themselves or teammates displaying self-presentational behaviours to enhance their overall social currency. These tactics were exerted in forums other than the sporting field. A netballer described her changeable goal-directed behaviour as such:

I wanna be, like, known throughout the club, because if you're not known you'll never get a good place in a team, if that makes sense. So you kindof...Like sometimes it's like, "Oooh, I'd best hold back," but then sometimes it's like, "Ooh, just make sure they hear your view on whatever"...Just so you get known, kindof thing (Jacqui).

Building a social identity that aids the chances of playing regularly highlights the interrelation of the self-presentational motives; in this example, the athlete is willing to stretch to the limits of their typical self-presentational style for the 'greater good.' Jacqui's teammate, Donna, was more specific when she stated that: "Quite a lot of players are overlooked [for selection], I think, because they're not *loud* and they're not *in your face* sort of thing." Being loud enough to "get yourself known" is an example of the athlete using their 'front' and 'manner' to define the situation to others in ways that suits their own interests (Goffman, 1959). To do so, one's self-esteem would have to be willing to allow the 'stretch' mentioned before – the stepping outside of one's comfort zone – and this is a limiting factor in the quest for interpersonal influence (Crocker, Brook, Niiya, & Villacorta, 2006). Leo exemplifies this theoretical postulate when describing his self-presentational dilemma – choosing between a desired image and his self-concept:

I keep quiet really, in trials, like...you get the loud ones, but I just keep quiet, and just do the training really, then hope for the best. But sometimes I feel, "Shall I be loud?," you know, like, I'm...Ahhhh, God! [Leo, possibly expressing the conflict he has with this decision]... "Or shall I just be quiet and stay in my own...in my own game-plan, like?"

And when asked what helps him make the decision, Leo admitted that he "hasn't got the balls." He reiterated his desire to be louder, but his worries oscillated between, "What an idiot; look at him!" (if he "went loud") and, "Ah, you're quiet...He doesn't get involved, does he?!" Leo's 'exit talk' from this story was to say "And it's like, Oh God, thinking like that all the time, like!" Leo's story clearly and comprehensively demonstrates the psychology behind his not running for club captain (described previously); it is also an

example of perceived believability being perhaps the deciding factor prior to self-presentation (Schlenker, 1980, 1986). Social psychology research has uncovered some of the conditions that compel people to attempt such tactics, but third generation impression motivation research in sport does not yet exist.

Interpersonal influence need not be so explicit as to “get in people’s faces.” Simply being friends with the team captain often suffices. Netballer Joanne believed that in her team there were: “probably three really good friends and they’ve probably got into the team mainly because they’re friends with the Captain.” Most participants conveyed this sentiment, but interestingly, none of them admitted to being the friend-of-the-captain that they were talking about in what was effectively a derogatory (or jealous?) way. Participants had no problem, however, admitting that the captain was often the target of their self-presentational behaviours; but ingratiating tactics – thought to be useful for “getting in with the boss” (Jones & Pittman, 1982) – were not cited explicitly by participants in this sample. Netball player Kitty ruled this option out when saying:

...you can’t really do anything to up your game *on* the court, do you know what I mean?...Like, there’s no point me going and...for example, my captain last year, uhh [Name]...umm, there’s no point me going to chat to her before – an hour, or two hours, three hours – to try and “butter her up” to get me on the team – if I’m not good enough I’m not good enough, if you get what I mean.

Self-presentation believability is again invoked here; as is the ‘internalised ethic against lying’ that Leary and Kowalski (1990) believe ensures consistency between people’s self-presentational claims and their self-concepts. Hence, the athletic self-concept possibly convinces sportspeople to avoid deceptive claims, and instead to maintain interpersonal influence through increased effort, persistence, and being a positive influence on the team’s culture. Presumably these are impressions that elicit greater

perceptions of control in the athlete, especially compared to the impression of ability. Indeed, this motive is represented by items on factor 5 of the IMSQ-T (study one), “Development of a Social Identity” (the notion of control is discussed later under the heading, *Impression efficacy*), for which participants’ impression efficacy almost matched their impression motivation, and their impression affect was most positive for this factor (Table 3.10).

Respect was often mentioned as a desired form of interpersonal influence, and no story illustrated this better than Kelso’s apparent dilemma regarding how to develop respect. Kelso cited respect as particularly important to him – “It doesn’t bother me if I’m liked or not, but I’d like to think I’m respected...if people respect you they’d believe in you as well...so long as I’ve got that then...nothing else really matters” – and acknowledged that joining the rugby league club committee would increase the respect he commands. However, he stated that he has no interest in being in a position of power, and that he does not think “anyone would gain anything by me being on a committee position either.” This topic was revisited several times during the interview as it intersected at various junctures, and the lasting impression was that Kelso would not be convinced by teammates to run for a position. Kelso’s narrative indicated that he would seek to attain respect by alternative means, such as being selected for the Welsh Universities rugby league squad. Hence, his story stands in stark contrast to that of the majority of participants who desired respect and had the personality to go after it in ways that Kelso would not. The narrative theme that emerged across participants, of similar self-presentational motives being sought by different behavioural means, warrants research attention in sport psychology because it would increase the explanatory power of the impression management model.

Further examples of desired social and sporting outcomes cited as achievable via effective impression management include: having “people look up to you” (Angie); it helps you “form stronger relationships,” “avoid undue hostility,” “eliminate tension in everyday life,” “avoid antagonising



people,” and “gain approval” (Casey); intimidation of sorts (“especially for a team that are aggressive; like, a few elbows here and there, I know you’re not supposed to, but if a team’s being pushy you’ve gotta show them you’re not scared of them because otherwise they’ll walk all over you,”) and trust (“Umm, and like, especially in a team situation, like I can be trusted, because if you’ve got trust from the outside as well, you need...you have trust on the team; like, when you’re playing, the people that have less trust for you...will not...they won’t pass the ball to you, they won’t [definitive]...I know there’s certain people who you play with who you don’t trust – you just don’t want to pass to them”; Laurie); at trials, Joanne described wanting to influence selectors, club captain, and the captain of team she wanted to play for, by indicating to them that she was willing to “give any position a go” (even though her preference was Centre) – that she was flexible and had diverse skills – to gain more chance of making a team; and Casey linked the establishment of an image of a fair fencer who is respectful to the rules and the opposition to being: “more respected in the ref’s decisions and things like that; and people are gonna be more willing to fence you, coz you’re not gonna argue every point, and you’re not going to...uhhh, and you’re not gonna dispute their decisions or anything like that.”

*Development of self.* In contrast to interpersonal influence, fewer participants seemed to make a conscious link between their public image and development of self. This is not surprising, as the connection may not be obvious to the layperson, but it did not stop participants from telling stories that were readily interpretable from this perspective. One such narrative theme relates to feedback, be it overly positive, constructive criticism, or a complete lack thereof. The positivity or tone of feedback provided by others to the athlete is likely to be tempered by the impression they hold of the athlete (cf. Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Hence, participants’ descriptions of the feedback they receive and its effect is an indirect assessment of the self-presentational motive, development of self. Many participants *did* tell this type of story. Casey talked of his improvement in fencing proficiency:

Umm, I think you...you...in any sport you're gonna improve drastically in your opinion at the beginning because you're gonna get used to the sport...After that, yeah it does slow down, because it's more to do with actually learning...like it's the old saying isn't it, it's...umm...“Quick to learn...” or “Easy to learn and then impossible to master”...So you're working towards that second phase. Uh, yeah, umm, in terms of massive strides, I only have the other fencers' words for it, like they're comparing my performance as a novice with the previous year's crop of novices and I'm...apparently [said guardedly, modestly] getting much better results and doing much better in competitions than they have seen for a *while* [emphasis]...So that's encouraging. But then, I'm also going to far more sessions than any novice they've ever seen [laughs].

Casey's story includes characters, a plot, temporal qualities, an evaluative frame of reference, consequences, an overarching explanation (the “exit talk” – “But then, I'm also going to far more sessions than any novice they've ever seen”), and an indication of who he is and who he may become: all examples of the “Hows” and “Whats” of storytelling (Pentland, 1999; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a; these characteristics were evident in most of the stories presented in this study, but to avoid repetition the above point is not always re-stated). If athletes value feedback as a way of knowing their own progress, then it is certainly a valued (sub-) cultural resource (cf. Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Effective impression management can help ensure feedback is given to the individual. Casey's story, and others like it provided by the present sample, illustrate the often subtle impact impression management can have on an individual's personal development. Raised awareness of the self-presentational implications of our behaviour could therefore be an aid to the development of self; although this may contribute to increased public self-consciousness, which does not always bring with it positive social consequences. For example, highly publicly self-conscious women were more sensitive and reacted more negatively to rejection than those lower on this personality trait (Fenigstein, 1979).

The opposite is also true: the self-presenter's perception of the provider of feedback influences the impact it has on their self-image and development of

self goals. In general terms, most participants were willing to accept criticism from “people who’ve got experience and who know what they’re talking about” (Midge). Laurie definitively stated that she does not like being told what to do, *unless* she sees them as an authority figure or “higher than me.” Rugby league player Kelso furthered this sentiment, when describing the interaction of personality, situation, and feedback-giver:

Well, sometimes I could do without it like! If you know you screw up, you screw up, don't you; it doesn't always need someone like down your throat about it...I dunno, I think it depends who it's off, really; if it's off someone who I think's a bit like...not as...well, lesser...well, not as good a player as me, then I just think it's a bit rich, from someone to tell you that. But if it's from someone who you like respect, then fair...and who's playing just as well as you are, then I've got no problem with it like.

Netballer Jacqui distinguished between categories of individual within her team in saying: “You’re like, “Ahh, I don’t want them talking about me,” or whatever. But then at the same time if that’s what they think then...it’s not my team Captain or anything that thinks that, so...I’m not too bothered.” And hockey player Laurie suggested that when the athlete is friends with the captain, they need to remember that: “when she’s training and coaching you she’s not your friend,” and not be offended by their evaluation and feedback. An overarching theme that emerged was that when a team has a designated coach, as opposed to a player or captain who has the dual-role of coach, it certainly clarifies the feedback process. Therefore, the status of the person providing the feedback is an important general factor.

More specifically, individual differences mediate the impact of feedback. Certain athletes in the present sample perceived criticism as a challenge to bolster their athletic identity (i.e., development of their *athletic* self), whereas others reacted to it as if it was a threat to their self-esteem. Angie provided an example of the former:

Umm, I don't tend to mind it; it sort of fuels me on really, because I then turn round and think "Well actually, I know I can do it, and I'll prove to you I can do it. Because I want to be a good player." Err, but, it's tough when you, when you've been told you're not good at something, you work really hard to improve it, and he turns around and says you're still rubbish at it...It's sort of a bit demoralising. But, I dunno, if you're the sort of person that will say to him "Well, fine then, tell me what I need to do then, rather than just telling me I'm rubbish. Tell me how to improve" – he will, and he'll appreciate that you're making the effort, and it sort of works both ways.

Angie's story-telling style is consistent across narrative themes, in terms of meeting challenges, overcoming negative affective responses, proving that "she can do it," and gaining approval of important others. Her stories clearly depicted "things that matter to her," and seemed to be made real in the telling (Frank, 2002). Thus, the "Hows" of her narrative accounts made good use of the "Whats" (especially focal actors). In contrast, hockey player Laurie described occasions when her captain had been angry or frustrated with her, and even shouted at her, and it had brought out her lack of confidence, put her down "big time," and made her play worse because it "knocked" her. Future research may investigate whether contextual influences – such as the feedback style of captains and coaches – interact with the athlete's personality to increase or suppress impression motivation and the attainment of development of self motives.

There are also team-level consequences associated with the above stories. University first-team and Town rugby player, Hyde, talked about how he and his Town team-mates have lost respect for their coach. Apparently, this individual attempts to give advice for positions that are not his own – "he's told, even one senior player, how to hit an angle off centre, when he doesn't play centre, like I said earlier. And we were just...I could see some players shaking their heads when he was telling them [chuckles]" – and does not balance his feedback between positive and negative. This, in turn, has resulted in the players not listening and even talking back, with a concurrent

disruption in training. That they “don’t tend to take his opinion on,” and desire a new coach, are consequences of his purportedly ineffective self-presentation as a leader. This is an example, from the players’ perspectives, of the impression management difficulties that coaches face in developing respect for their professional knowledge and personal manner (Potrac *et al.*, 2002). A coach may not have the best technical knowledge or be able to demonstrate tactics him/herself, but they may still be perceived positively by those in their charge because of their interpersonal manner, for example. Thus, leader characteristics as described by Hyde would moderate the influence of their feedback on the athlete’s development of self goals.

Development of self, with particular reference to the development of a social identity, identified by the IMSQ-T as important to athletes, was cited as especially pertinent. Joanne benefits from her position as netball club captain in that it gives her confidence to talk to members of the wider club (i.e., outside her own team); she directly attributes this confidence to her role and social identity as senior in the club hierarchy. Angie described the need to go out on club socials in order to make friends and become “a bigger part of the club.” Midge even admitted that: “they might think a little bit more of me if I get up and have a laugh and show everybody that I can do...you know, this thing...stupid thing.” Participants’ stories depicted Burke’s (2004) suggestion that: “verifying the self as a group member involved being like the others and receiving recognition, approval, and acceptance from those others” (p. 10). The idea that “silly” behaviours may be enacted despite opposing internal forces acting on the individual was frequently mentioned; University standard athletes perceive a need to bolster their social identity – the impressions others in the club have of them as social beings as well as players – and the social side of involvement provides the forum to do so (Goffman, 1959).

*Emotion regulation.* For the self-presentational motive section of the interview guide, participants were asked about the benefits they experience as a result of (perceived) effective impression management. The emotion

regulation function of self-presentation was cited in a remarkable number of evocative stories in this regard. In the social situations mentioned above, Midge discussed “acting like a joker” to boost her affective state; specifically, to give the image that she’s more confident than she actually is. Participants described “being loud” as a self-presentation tactic to be recognised and secure their place in the team, even if like Midge, they do not feel secure in the group. This tactic is quite a generic one however, as it was mentioned in relation to other discomforting situations, such as when they first arrived at University. Paradoxically, Angie described her approach as follows:

I am a confident person, but I think I almost perceive under-confidence as being confident, if that...if you...if you understand that? So I’ll be under-confident but I’ll come across as being confident because I’ll be really chatty...Umm [exhales]...it also, it sortof almost boosts your confidence, as well. Because you sortof think “Okay, well this is working for me, it’s you know, getting me friends and it’s doing what I want it to do.” So you continue to, continue to *be that* person. Whereas if you’re portraying negative things you know, you try and change it, and it knocks your confidence, and...[end].

This story perhaps represents an impression-specific form of “doubting one’s doubt” (Wichman *et al.*, 2010): Angie is uncertain about her dispositional confidence – or her ability to project an image of confidence – and these niggling doubts have seemingly led to repeated emotion-presentations and heightened impression efficacy of confidence.

Performance can also be impacted by an inability to self-regulate one’s emotions. This line of thinking is not new, of course (cf. Gould & Udry, 1994; Williams & Harris, 2001; Zaichkowsky & Baltzell, 2001), but the use of emotion-presentation as a mechanism of emotion regulation, from an impression management perspective, *is* in sport. Only a few articles have been devoted to the role of emotion-presentation in impression management in sport (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 1991, 2002, 2005). Casey exemplified the reasons for better emotion regulation when he said: “You know, the amount

of times I've seen people come off on a break at a fencing match, and stamp and kick their mask and then they've just gone on and completely lost it because they're annoyed." Casey also mentioned that a female fencer had been dropped from the team *because* of an inability to regulate her anger. It seems that these individuals would have avoided such negative outcomes had they been better able to present a desired emotional state. Unfortunately, self-regulation of emotions is 'easier-said-than-done,' and can deplete a limited resource that is required for skill execution (Muraven *et al.*, 1998). Eric, the tennis first-team captain, discussed this theoretical tenet in the following way:

You have to stay composed; like, when you're winning you can show all the emotion you want, but it's sortof, when you're losing you have to sortof keep it inside. So you can't throw your racquet...You can hit a ball against the back fence and things like that, but that doesn't really take much annoyance out of you. And so, it's sortof harder when you're losing to come back, because you can't release the rage...Coz obviously if you do the Umpire goes, "Oh, you've been docked a game." Which makes you even more annoyed. So it doesn't help!  
[laughs]

Eric's story suggests that suppression of expressive behaviours can have negative performance consequences (cf. Richards & Gross, 1999). This proposition is extended by Randy, the fencing club President. Randy described his use of the video-taped competition as preparation for an inter-county tournament the club was sending a few fencers to the following weekend. Randy was consciously aware of a desire to fence well and to fence confidently (i.e., an emotion-presentation), not because it would change his club-mate's perception of his ability – which is well-established by now, but because it would "make a significant difference" to him going into the next competition. Hence, if this is generalisable, emotion-presentation can help athletes to align their felt and desired emotions, and externally-imposed suppression of emotive presentations can hinder athletes' emotion regulation.

Participants reported the belief that their own emotion-presentations have the power to influence the thoughts and affect of others too. For example, Kelso, a first-team rugby league scrum-half, described his role in a key decision-making position on the field as requiring he be vocal, and that he: “act confident so that other people have confidence in you, who are playing with you.” He maintained that not being vocal would be “of no use to anybody.” Joanne cited preparation as the central factor in her being able to maintain at least a semblance of confidence in her role as Club Captain. This committee position brings with it the responsibility of leading training for the whole club, so it foregrounds Joanne’s impression motivation to each of the team’s captains. In particular, Joanne – who plays centre for the second team – values the opinion of the first-team captain, and would like to gain her respect. Without preparation and the emotion-presentation of confidence this facilitates, Joanne doubts this social and esteem-building outcome.

A further desired social-regulative function of emotion-presentation is to affect the expectations and emotional experiences of the opponent (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 2005). Eric provided a story that integrates social-regulative emotion-presentation, the precise behaviours that can bring about the desired effect, and his means of assessing its success:

I’ll always try, within the first set, I’ll try and break their first game. And then, if I do, I’ll give a, a massive “Come on,” or some sort of show of, like, “Ha,” you know, show them glee within myself. And you see the other person get a little bit more down about themselves because of that; if I just like walk to the net. I’ve done it a couple of times, actually. When I was younger, I’ve seen what a difference it made, and my coach told me to just, like one time he said, “When you get the break, just walk to the net, and I’ll see what the opponent does. And the other time, do a massive “Come on.”” And the two times I did it the other player dropped his head a bit more, and umm, either whacked a ball to the back of the court, or showed some sign of annoyance than when I just walked to the net. So that’s why I do that now, coz it, I’ve found that it does affect...like how the other person thinks and feels on the court.



The casual fan and recreational tennis player will attest to the efficacy of Eric's strategies, but to hear it described so vividly from a player with 11 years County and Academy experience is beneficial to theory development. The applied consultant could also use this information as a basis to create video montages of players using emotion-presentation to their advantage, or conversely, to show the client that it is merely a behavioural strategy opponents use to intimidate them. These general principles would certainly seem to apply across sports. Donna, second team netball captain, told a story of how the video-taped game was effectively a re-match of an earlier contest in which the opponent was "violent and vicious." Donna's 'redemption tale' nicely tied together social-regulative emotion-presentation and team performance. She was happy that the opposition did not "beat them up" this time, and attributed it to her team "keeping their cool a lot better"; they "put it aside" and "just ignored them," and in doing so, concentrated better and won the game.

The self-regulative and social-regulative functions of emotion-presentation discussed above were combined in numerous examples provided by participants. The following story from Angie captures Hackfort and Schlattmann's (2005) emphasis on the functional aspects of emotion-presentation:

...well first of all the warming up bit, that we do – the exercises that we do to warm up in front of the other team. We try and portray a, you know, "Look at us – isn't our handling and everything really good"...Umm, and then our, obviously we do the chant and 'team squeeze.' I think there's two purposes, really. One to get everyone in the same mindset and make sure that people are switched on and actually aware that we've got, you know, "This is it now, we've gotta play." And umm, it also, like the err, you know New Zealand do the Haka, and it's a bit extreme but it's a similar thing – if it, it almost puts fear into the other team; or it's supposed to, anyway – if they see how worked up you are, and how much you want to win it.

It would be interesting to investigate whether such strategies do “put fear into the other team,” and hinders their performance, or whether the perception that it *might* is enough on its own. A particularly expansive and revealing narrative was offered by Randy, the fencing club President, on the topic of ritual. To “bring himself into the mindset” he prefers for performance, Randy undergoes a rigorous pre-performance routine which he agreed is ritualistic, and that he dislikes anything to get in the way of. Once he steps onto the piste (the small rectangular area that they fence in), this is how he describes his ritual:

I cough before I pull my mask down, usually touch my nose as well, pull my mask down, hit it three times on the top, and then wipe the dust off the bottom of my shoes on my socks. I wipe the dust off the shoes before I fence, every bout...And also, I try to score a flick-hit on my foot before I fence; I try to get a valid flick-hit before I do anything. Umm, they're quite hard to score – makes you feel a bit better [laughs], before you go on.

Hence, Randy's behaviour sounded like a self-presentation tactic for the regulation of his own emotions as part of his performance preparation. Randy perceived routine to be invaluable to him – it is how he exerts control over mind and body, allowing him to “click-up a couple of mental gears” when he has to go on piste: “Uhh, once I've hit my mask, that's it, I'm fencing.”

When probed further regarding the possible social-regulative functions of his pre-bout and pre-point ritual, Randy forwarded a highly convergent perspective:

I like to be first on piste, and I like to be there at the centre waiting to test weapons before the other person, try to make them rush, and to feel that, “Okay,...,” they've gotta get there. And if I'm second on piste I like to waste the other person's time, umm...which, it's just a little bit of, you know, if you're there and then they're waiting and you just sortof stroll around [gesturing]...Just about everybody does it, umm...If

you're first on piste and you're there waiting, then it almost certainly will happen that the other person will wait around and try to waste a bit of time; but sometimes they'll just panic and rush, and then they're like, "Oooh...I can't get this...I can't plug this in right [their spool]...Oooh, where's my mask, where's my glove?! Okay, right, errr, need to test weapons [speeding up his speech to represent the frantic pace of their thoughts]..." get to the middle and they're flustered before you've even started fencing, and you're just there, standing, waiting, looking at them. And then, as soon as you start fencing you go down into, into your en garde stance, and then you start: if they're flustered, just keep really calm, keep really calm, wait, wait, and then it's err, a lot of fencing, again, is about change of rhythm, err, which is err, a big part of rugby [Randy used to play rugby too, so he's drawing on his past experiences in making a comparison]...it's not your pace, your pace only benefits you once you're on the other side of the defence, err, but change of pace is what gets you through...Umm...so, again, it's a lot of change of pace – if you can come on looking just really calm, really slow, take it really easy, and then just explode out and catch them off guard, then I've think you've got far more chance of doing that if they're flustered before you've even started; if you can get their minds on other things, like.

Therefore, the ritualistic behaviour does have social as well as personal significance – it is, in essence, a self-presentation constructed to affect both his and his opponent's concentration, expectation, and affect. In this regard, Randy's story sits as a sport-specific example of the content of Goffman's (1967) *Interaction Ritual*, which emphasised the importance of well-established patterns of behaviour to enable the individual's social functioning (cf. Birrell, 1981). This prompts a future research opportunity: under what conditions do the beneficial effects of ritualistic behaviour hold, and what are the consequences to the individual of situational impediments to their rituals. As Randy said, "I don't like anything to get in the way of that."

The self-presentational interpretation of Randy's ritual was verified with further probing. Also, later in the interview Randy was asked how the filmed competition would have influenced his public image, and he expressed concern that his routines could come across as "a bit obsessive compulsive." This brought up a very interesting anecdote about how he feels that the compulsivity is specific to his fencing self, and does not span life domain

boundaries. Further to this, Randy was certain that routines and rituals are especially prevalent in fencing (and, he ventured, individual-based sports in general), and so the above arguments on the self-presentational motives underpinning rituals in sport could be analysed by sport type. Finally, on this story, research has shown that high self-monitors tend to talk first, commence new conversation threads when possible, and generally direct the course of the interaction. Further, their interaction partner believed that the high self-monitors had a greater need to talk (Ickes & Barnes, 1977). This came across in Randy's interview, and manifest in his detailed storytelling ability. Indeed, Randy's interview had a longer duration than the average, by 30 minutes. There were other examples in his narrative of self-monitoring tendencies and public self-consciousness, and he has aspirations for a career in show-business, which probably would not be the case if he wasn't a self-confident person; presumably with high impression efficacy, task self-efficacy, and positive self-consciousness characteristics. In fact, at the conclusion of the interview many participants apologised for "going on for so long," and had to be reassured that they had 'performed well.' These details go some way toward suggesting that the study's method had been successful in its aim to recruit 'storytelling animals' (MacIntyre, 1981).

### Impression monitoring

Stories that described impression monitoring were difficult to discern from stories of public self-consciousness, self-presentation concerns, self-presentational motives, and situational antecedents of impression motivation. This perhaps reflects the reasoning behind the lack of research the topic has received: it is simply too challenging to distinguish the temporal and qualitative characteristics of impression monitoring from the other constructs. It too may be a by-product of the researcher's inability to ask questions conducive to extracting relevant information; or, indeed, a bias that affected the reading of participants' stories. Impression monitoring is an important variable in the model, however, as it reconciles the disagreement that exists regarding the pervasiveness of impression management (Leary, 1995);

individuals proffer conscious goal-directed self-presentations only when the circumstances are propitious, but they impression-monitor much more frequently, at a non-conscious level. As mentioned in the literature review, impression monitoring is a perceptual variable that affects a shift in conscious thought to the 'health' or 'status' of one's public image (Leary, 1995). In addition, people high in public self-consciousness more often impression-monitor or are more watchful over their impressions than others (Carver & Scheier, 1985). Therefore, it may be the case that impression monitoring should be investigated with experimental methods that somehow target shifts in conscious attention to impression-relevant stimuli (e.g., using an eye-gaze tracking paradigm).

Netball player Jacqui told a story that exemplifies aspects of the impression monitoring process, in terms of boundary conditions and situational shifts:

If you're around people you're comfortable with then...well, if you're doing something wrong, you know that they'll tell you, and umm, or they'll laugh at you or something. And if, like, say I did something funny but stupid, and they, my comfortable friends laughed at me, then I'd be absolutely fine...

Jacqui was asked whether she would consider herself a good judge of what people want to see from her in social situations, to which she responded:

I hope so [laughs]. Umm, with my friends I don't really need to do that. But I think...Yeah, I might hold back a little bit too much...like in netball they're all quite confident. So if I was over-confident they probably wouldn't, it probably wouldn't annoy anyone because that's how everyone else is...But then at the same time I don't want to annoy those that are already like the leaders, because...Yeah, they might get a bit...snooty...

Her story suggests that athletes' perception of high 'comfort levels' and closeness with their team may contribute to less frequent shifts to the right

on the impression monitoring continuum (i.e., to *impression awareness* or *impression focus*). Hence, they may have strong underlying self-presentational motives, but the positive group dynamics they experience result in less frequently strengthened impression motivation. Indeed, perhaps these contextual influences contributed to self-presentational goal fulfilment in the early stages of the athlete's involvement, and so acquisitive impression management is less pertinent now. These contentions speak to the dynamic and recursive nature of impression management in everyday (sporting) life (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

#### Situational antecedents of impression motivation

For people to strive for self-presentational outcomes appropriate conditions must prevail. Hence, self-presentational motives remain inactive until a social encounter is entered in which impression monitoring detects an impression-related opportunity. Impression motivation is then heightened to varying degrees depending on characteristics of the situation. Donna, second team netball captain, described a contextual influence in sport that would ensure her impression motivation was *not* heightened:

...if we are completely separate, like, I don't have to see you, like see them outside of training, so I can say "Hi," I can, you know, I'll be civil and say "Hi" and everything, but I wouldn't purposefully go 'buddy up' with them and be pairs playing netball. Coz I think...that they've got this impression of me, and I have an impression of them, umm, and we're just completely conflicting people – we're just not the same, have different interests, different values, different beliefs, and you can get on with people that are completely different from you, but I just think that, I think that some people just need to be left [alone]...

In contrast, Angie recalled a situation that fulfils many of the situational antecedents of heightened impression motivation:

Umm, so even just training actually, beforehand, there's always people...you know, at County there's always regional selectors wandering around, at regional there's always international selectors wandering around. Umm, so there's always the sense, like in a club game you could, you could have a good ten minutes and then sort of, once you've done your bit, walk around the pitch. You *can't* do that [at regional] – it's almost like, you know, you feel like you're being on TV the whole time. And so you've got eighty minutes of constant "I'm being watched here and I need to, I need to make a good impression – everything I do needs to be exact and perfect and there is no space for human error." Umm, so I think maybe, yeah, the higher, the higher level you get, the more you wanna impress people.

Higher competitive standards – and the concomitant increase in competition for places that this brings – are therefore associated with heightened impression motivation. Theoretically, this is because of increased publicity of performance, the scarcity of desired rewards (e.g., selection), the high esteem of the observers and one's dependency on them, and public self-consciousness that accompanies these factors ("you feel like you're on TV the whole time"; James & Collins, 1997; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

In addition to displays of ability, the emotion regulation discussed above came in to Eric's story about an occasion when he was especially impression-motivated:

And so if I'd blown up then, I wouldn't have been able to play in the same tournament level as I would like to this summer. And things like that. So these guys, basically have control of my summer, like, life, so to speak...during just, during just an hour-and-a-half of tennis. So it was quite tough. And then there's also umm sponsorship - so they're in charge of what money you get from the LTA. So there was just, there is a massive, it was "all or nothing." It was like, go again, go and play like, play club tennis again for a year, or go and play some really high level competitive tennis for the summer. And get paid to do it, yeah.

Hence, Eric's story evidenced the same antecedents of impression motivation that did Angie's, but added an element of expected future

interaction that is also known to heighten impression motivation (Gergen & Wishnov, 1965; Schneider, 1969). Eric talked about having an hour-and-a-half of tennis to convince the important others of his worthiness for access to a financially rewarding summer – a summer throughout which he would interact with them many times (cf. James & Collins, 1997). It is important to note, however, that impression motivation is a subjective appraisal of the self-presentational opportunities and constraints inherent in a situation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Thus, even at lower standards of sport, impression management is equally pertinent, and although impression motivation factors may look different they often fit the categories outlined in Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model nonetheless. The stories presented below and displayed in Table 5.1 indicate that this is the case.

At the time of interview, Randy's career in the fencing club was coming to an end. Aside from an external competition that he had been invited to, the video-taped intra-club competition was the last time many of his squad-mates would see him fence. These conditions raised Randy's impression motivation in the lead-in to the competition because they decreased the availability of his desired reward – “this was sort of the last time where you establish your sort of skill position in the club.” Further, an “End of [Year]” meal was to follow soon after the competition – at which he would hand-over his presidency to the President-elect – and he wanted to be able to do so from a top position. Indeed, he had just won an épée tournament involving the university club and the town club, so the top slot was his to lose. During the build-up he told himself: “This is like my final standing. If it was a league, this is where I finish up overall in the club, just before I leave it.” Thus, the rarity of such an occasion was an important contributor to his impression motivation, and his long-term reputation on departure too (at least in his mind).

*Availability* of desired outcomes was also discussed by Eric as an antecedent of impression motivation, this time in the context of the university



club as well as the academy for which he had just won a summer place (in the scenario described above). For example, the university club has an annual “Most Sportsmanlike” award, and the winner of that will have had to create an appropriate impression on Eric to win (Eric being the first-team captain). Within the academy: “if you’re friendly and people like you, you’re gonna be able to play in like higher quality tennis tournaments, coz you get invited to them. So, yeah, that would be, that’d be the main outcome of portraying yourself in a better light than perhaps you are naturally.” It was apparent that Eric chose the word *naturally* in his story because of the number of his peers and friends he has seen “completely flip when they meet a tournament organiser.” In particular: “It’s like they go from being quite confident and things like that, to just agreeing with whatever the other guy says, and just...There’s a lot of arse-kissing in tennis!” Ingratiation like this is a self-presentational tactic to ensure approval, and can lead to the self-presenter being liked and/or having their work performance rated as effective by the target, or being branded a sycophant (Gordon, 1996; Jones & Pittman, 1982). James and Collins (1995) discovered that athletes are impression-motivated for career-progression goals, but unfortunately, no research has looked at the consequences of specific self-presentational strategies in sport.

The sheer number of ‘storyable’ narratives provided by participants is a testament to the prevalence of impression motivation in sport, and the variety of situational factors that it is affected by (Table 5.1). The many stories cited in this section represent the “tip of the iceberg,” and yet the point is clear. Leary and Kowalski’s (1990) model of impression management includes three situational antecedents of impression motivation, and the present data fit these well, attesting to the construct validity of that portion of the model in sport. Findings from James and Collins’ (1997) investigation into self-presentational sources of stress have largely been supported here. Publicity of performance, dependency on powerful others, expected future interaction, scarcity of desired outcomes due to the nature of the competition, target

characteristics (e.g., competent, knowledgeable), and need for approval, were all cited as self-presentational stressors in their study because they were interpreted as increasing impression motivation and/or decreasing impression efficacy. These factors were all mentioned as *whats* of participants' stories in the present sample, and performed with the type of artfulness that suggests participants were constructing reality in their telling (Sparkes & Partington, 2003).

Situational antecedent(s) of impression motivation	Description and interpretation (when necessary; including the participant's chosen self-presentational tactics and consequences where appropriate)
<p><i>Goal-relevance of impressions: dependency</i></p> <p><i>Value of desired goals: scarcity, characteristics of target</i></p>	<p>"The trials, like, you know – no one knows each other...District, for example – no one knows each other, it's...<i>people will get first impressions</i>...coaches. It's really important, like, to be <i>brown-nosing</i>, really...You know, like...I've got a kit that I wear for trials [laughs] – <i>you've gotta look good</i>, you have to look good, like. And it's a bit stupid, but <i>people will notice you</i>. One of my friends, he used to wear pink socks in trials...because he'd stand out more [chuckling]" (Leo)</p>
<p><i>Goal-relevance of impressions: dependency</i></p> <p><i>Value of desired goals: characteristics of target</i></p> <p><i>Discrepancy between desired and current image: latitude of acceptable images</i></p>	<p>"I think umm, I think obviously, if you're splitting backs and forwards you're gonna get on better... I'm a back so I get on, I get on with everyone, but I have <i>closer bonds with the backs</i>, because I spend my time in training as well as socially, working on moves with them. <i>And you have to have a special bond</i>, just like the forwards have to be able to work together. Umm, I think that shows sometimes in matches, when you know, either the backs have a good game and the forwards play crap, or the forwards have a good game and the backs play crap..." (Angie).</p> <p>Angie's story suggests that her impression motivation might be higher toward her fellow backs, to facilitate development of the bond that "you have to have." Without this bond, or social cohesion, Angie perceives performance to be negatively impacted. Hyde also mentioned the importance of getting along with team-mates in a general sense: "You're always together as a team – Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday...so you need to get along, to an extent, at that level, to make it easier." These quotes imply that the deleterious self-presentation of a few team members could disrupt the attempts of others to create a positive team climate. Impression motivation may remain strong until members have developed a wide enough 'latitude of acceptable images' (Leary &amp; Kowalski, 1990) to concern themselves less about their public image in the team. A story from Hyde describes how this might occur, and what it "looks like" in real terms:</p> <p>"Well, we, as a team, we tend to know each other quite well, because we've come [indecipherable]...we're all from Aberystwyth, mainly, and we're all coming through the age level, like youth, a lot of us have...and umm, we're used to training together, so in training, training there's no problems, and games <i>we try and be positive, talk, don't criticise when we're on the field</i>. Give positive, you know, err, feedback, you know...and say "Next time..." you know, "...let's not make the same mistake," you know, "Pick yourself up and" you know, not try and argue with each other when we're on the field."</p>

*Goal-relevance of impressions: publicity*

In the box above, Hyde was talking about his Town team-mates; he said this when asked whether his university team-mates tend to be concerned with their public image: "I'd say not so much because...there's not so much...there's *less of a crowd* there like, and there's *no coach* in particular...and umm....*players know each other so well* I think they don't...they don't, you know, put so much pressure on each other." This quote also strengthens the above proposition that impression motivation is not as high when a team has had the opportunity to bond and is socially cohesive. Future research should therefore focus on the links between social and task cohesion and impression management constructs.

*Goal-relevance of impressions: dependency*

Randy cited those people "who are able to pick up on my faults and tell me what they are" as the ones whose opinion he values most. He agreed that this heightens his impression motivation when in their presence, because it raises the degree to which his goal (skill development) is impression-relevant (the coaches are more likely to devote time to fencers of whom they have a good impression).

*Value of desired goals: characteristics of target*

Especially impression-motivated toward (and why):

*Value of desired goals: characteristics of target*

*The coach...*

*Goal-relevance of impressions: expected future interaction*

"Because, like I've said before, it takes a *lot to get a compliment out of him*. So you know you've done right if umm, if you get a compliment out of him" (Angie).

Casey values the coaches' opinions more than his club-mates,' and one coach in particular because he has *more contact* with him than the other.

*Those who have played to a high standard...*

And I think as well, because I've played at quite a high level, it, you know, *it's always someone that you look up to that's played better than you, that you'd appreciate the opinion of*. And because I'm one of the ones that's played, one of the higher levels, there's not really anyone, if that makes sense? So yeah, I think it would be the coach, definitely" (Angie)

"Umm...uhh, one of the freshers as well, she's the sweeper, and she's played hockey at a high level...*Like, the people who've played hockey at high levels I look up to more*, I feel,...in the way that...I feel that like their opinion's more...they've got more knowledge on the sports, so they've *more knowledge to give you*" (Laurie).

*Older (more senior) players...*

“Yeah...I worry more about older people than me, for some reason, like. You know, I wanna, I wanna, like impress them. Freshers – I’m like more relaxed, coz I don’t mind, like. But *I’m trying to impress the older lads*...umm...as in, I don’t mind what the freshers think, for some reason...I do a bit, but not as much as the older boys. I think uhh, the third years” (Leo).

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

“Err... maybe a few err, *players who haven’t played as much for the first team...more motivated*...And it depends who you’re playing against: if you’re playing against an opposite number who’s their star player, you know...You know, *you get more motivated if you play against one of their star players*” (Hyde). The motivation Hyde talks of here is impression-related, as we were discussing that topic explicitly at the time.

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

“See, stuff like that [he sees himself shout at a team-mate on the video], I wonder *what the people think*, like, “[Player E], you fucking tit!”...Ohhh...*I do apologise a lot*; if I do something wrong I go, “Sorry, boys, sorry sorry sorry” – they get fed up with it! [chuckles]” (Leo). Leo talked of how his impression motivation is increased when he’s done something on the pitch that contradicts his off-field persona – like shouting at a teammate. He then engages in apologising tactics to restore his desired image (cf. Schlenker & Darby, 1981).

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

Midge was asked whether the filmed match provided an opportunity for her to make a certain impression: “Yes, I did. But on the other hand we were unsure what Warwick were like, and what kindof game it would be; coz they’re not in our league...you know, our region, at all. Umm, so, yeah, on one side I thought, “Oh, this could be an easy game where I’d have a bit of a chance to shine,” you know, I’d have a bit more ball-play...Which, you know, *could create a better impression of myself* – skill-wise. Umm, but on the other hand, it was like, “Oh, well you know, it could be a really tough game and my performance would just be awful.” *And then they’d think, you know, terrible things of me*. So it was a bit 50-50 with this game.”

Thus, Midge’s impression motivation was strong for this game, and speaks to second generation “When” questions regarding the game-day conditions which elicit impression motivation. Midge’s opportunity to bolster her social identity and increase her latitude of acceptable images was constrained by her impression efficacy, itself a function of situational contingencies (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

The notion that athletes can build a wide “latitude of acceptable images” is also apparent in Laurie’s story about the perceived tenuousness of her position in the team: “I feel like sometimes the players who are known to be the best players never have to – if they have a bad game – they never have to feel like, “Arrgh, now I’m gonna be judged for it,” like, as in, could be dropped. But if, like, *players who are still trying to like fight to be better, like me, have to work a lot harder to, like, keep that, you know, keep that impression that you are good enough to be on the team*” (Laurie). Such negative thoughts and performance pressures may make Laurie experience frequently heightened impression motivation.

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

“Well, I don’t play goal defence, so having played goal defence for a season without any you know, having personal coaching on it, I think I would hate for someone to be like “*Why is she playing that position, she can’t play it,*” sortof thing. *I think that would be a bad impression,* I think. Umm, I think as well, if some of the firsts watched me play...and I didn’t have a good shooting game, and they were like “*Why did we want her on the team?!*” I think that would be a bad impression as well” (Donna).

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

“But that anno...like, the impression I thought of myself then, was kindof like, “*Well, I’m not gonna let her make me look stupid.*” And I almost wanted to rise to it, and think, “*Well I’m not gonna look stupid: you’re not gonna make me look ridiculous and walk over me.*” But, you know...[at her image on the screen] See, now, I’m...now I’m annoyed! I’m walking off and I’m thinking, “I do not wanna play in this match.” And I said to [captain], I was like, “Mate, to be honest, you’ve gotta take me off....” Just look at my face, I’m so annoyed! [laughs a lot] But I think, yeah, coz I got the...*I was worried that sortof people were thinking, “Oh, she’s gonna be a, sortof, walkover...,”* and, maybe, you know...Coz I didn’t rise to it. And it was obviously the best decision at the time, but...And it still is the best decision now, I don’t regret, I think I coped with it well” (Kitty).

This story highlights how impression motivation is constantly in flux: a factor that impression-motivates in one game may not be present in the next, and the opportunities to fulfil self-presentational motives are transient.

*Discrepancy between desired and current image*

Rugby league scrum-half Kelso described the need to control his tongue and temper, because in rugby an emotional outburst will see the player penalised (“sin-binned”). This, in turn, would create work for one’s team-mates, and therefore may affect their impression of you, “if only in the short-term.” However, following Kelso’s logic, if an athlete frequently displayed a lack of emotion self-regulation, they may find themselves isolated from their team-mates because of the annoyance it causes them.

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Table 5.1. *Situational antecedents of impression motivation in sport*

### 5.3.1.2. Impression construction

*Self-concept.* Self-descriptions provide insight to a person's self-concept (Marsh, 1985, 1988, 1994). When asked to describe what qualities she would like other people to believe she possesses, netball club captain Joanne listed the following:

(1) I want people to believe I have confidence; even though I don't...; (2) Umm...I want people to believe that I could keep going for ages, like, fitness-wise – although I couldn't necessarily; (3) Umm...I want people to believe...that I'm good...good at netball. Although I'm not necessarily! [laughs]; (4) Umm...I want people to think I'm organised, but I don't think many of the people in the club think I'm that organised...Coz within the club...it's organised [emphasis], but I just forget things, until the last minute; (5) I wouldn't...ummm...I 'spose I wouldn't want them to think – in the social side – I wouldn't want them to think that...I'm rude and just don't talk to everyone. And I wouldn't want them to think that I...ummm...that I always go out and get drunk, kindof thing. I would want them to think that of me.

Thus, if the veracity of Joanne's self-description is taken for granted, her desired impressions are manifold but her impression construction will be impinged on by her self-concept and a perception that her self-presentations will lack believability (Schlenker, 1980). Joanne provided a negative caveat to each of her desired impressions which, if they held true, would stop her achieving the following goal: "Feel better about myself, I 'spose...Which means I'd give myself more confidence to know that I can do stuff. Coz if other people think that I can do it, then there must be something about it that I can actually do." This story – and the many like it told by athletes in the present sample – reflects the notion that self-concept change is more likely when people internalise public behaviours than behaviours lacking interpersonal context (Tice, 1992). When asked, Joanne was hard-pushed to provide ways in which she might go about ensuring others formed each of her desired impressions, but she did so nevertheless. Accordingly, Joanne's story-telling may have held a function for her – it may have allowed her to

restore a sense of order over her constraining self-concept (cf. Murray, 2003).

As did Joanne, Casey invoked Cooley's (1902) metaphor of the 'looking-glass self,' when talking about how his self-conception involves arrogance. Casey conceded that his confidence "can occasionally stray into what might be perceived as arrogance...And I don't...really want people to think that I'm arrogant." Casey was asked what consequences there would be if others viewed him as arrogant, and he said, somewhat defensively, that he would first want to know why they had formed that impression. His constructed impression would then involve trying to address the situation, and: "Umm, you know [chuckles], assure the person that I wasn't trying to antagonise them or show them up or anything like that...And generally try and deal with it, contain it, uhh, and if needed, maybe modify my behaviour a bit to ensure that I wasn't *being* arrogant." Interestingly, his prospective self-presentational tactics differed from those he would adopt when he thought people were *wrong* to form a bad impression of him. In those instances, Casey described that he "goes on the offensive, shows them up with quick wit," so it seems that he sees their view of him as arrogant as accurate, and it compels him to react differently. In sport, Casey avoids asking his coach for normative feedback – even though that he wants to compare his progress to that of others – because he feels it would convey egotism and arrogance. Casey's story, like Joanne's, and many others that could have contributed to this section, was revealing of their identity, and the relatedness between themselves and the other actors in their sporting contexts (Bamberg & McCabe, 1998; Gee, 1991; Michaels, 1981; Riessman, 1987).

The self-concept also constrains impression construction because of people's internalised ethic against lying (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This ethic goes hand-in-hand with the perceived believability of one's self-presentations, as Angie described: "You are who you are, and you can't change that. So as long as you're trying to portray yourself in a positive way,



rather than trying to be someone else...then you know, it works, but...[exhales]...I dunno, I don't, I think it's almost easy to like portray who you *are* to other people." The stories of participants suggested that in sport there may not be many opportunities to push the boundaries with impression construction. For example, netball player Jacqui discussed what influences her impression construction:

Umm...well, like, my ability - I don't have much control over that; apart from going to training every day. But only so quickly can you like get better, can't you. Whereas, umm...what else did I say? Like, being reliable and stuff like that: you can either be reliable or not, can't you. And umm, if you don't really have a good excuse, "Aww, I can't be bothered to go today; I'm not feeling very well," or "I'm feeling a bit tired, I'm gonna go"...that's not being reliable, is it. So, like, if I feel tired I will go to training coz I don't really have a proper excuse not to go. So, I think I def, I have control over that. But again, my ability I don't have that much control apart from, what I can do is go to training.

Thus, certain impressions are more believable than others and the internalised ethic against lying – and the risk of being exposed as fraudulent – constrains impression construction. The social environment has been discussed above as perhaps a more amenable forum for acquisitive self-presentational tactics in sport, and Angie concurs: "I think maybe I exaggerate myself to other people a little bit so that they can perceive me the way I want to be perceived, or the way I perceive myself." Her exit talk, "the way I perceive myself," sums up many of the stories told by athletes regarding impression construction.

The phenomenal self was described in the literature review as that aspect of the self-concept that is active in a given situation, and therefore in sport it is presumably one's athletic identity that influences self-presentation (Stryker, 1968). Participants in the present study clearly supported this theoretical proposition. For example, Donna, netball second team captain, maintains that netball is: "the part of my personality that gives me a chance to be quite

confident because I'm quite, not the best, but I'm quite able I 'spose [seems uncomfortable admitting that she's good]. I can catch [laughs]!" Hence, her self-esteem – the evaluative component of her self-concept – is enhanced when playing sport to a good standard, and she conveys an impression of a confident player which she is less sure of in everyday life (i.e., when other phenomenal selves are active); she would seem to have a strong athletic identity (Brewer *et al.*, 1993).

Jacqui described being "not such a big character" when around her club-mates compared to course-mates or house-mates. Jacqui came across as a confident person in her interview, more so than Donna, but her phenomenal self as a netball player was not as secure as Donna's. Accordingly, Jacqui's constructed impression to achieve sport-related motives and a desired public image had to be modified:

Like I think...umm...because it's netball and I want to look good, and I want to be like, a good important part of the team, I won't be like, over-cocky and stuff. Umm...whereas...I don't give as much banter and stuff in netball. Whereas at home I might be a bit like spoiled, and "Awww, shut up!" or whatever...so...But if I'm...in netball, a bit more uncomfortable – don't wanna upset anyone – coz I like where I am at the moment...then yeah, I'll be a bit less...like, held back a little bit.

Jacqui's impression construction is constrained by a state x trait interaction of what is appropriate, believable, and facilitated by her prevailing phenomenal self. An especially illuminating external perspective on the same topic was provided by Donna:

"If I like you, I like you; if I don't, I don't have to pass you the ball," you know, "I can work around without you, so it doesn't matter," sort of thing...But that's, you know, that's just how it works, you know. They're really like: "I want the ball now, give me the ball." Whereas we're: [in a timid voice] "I'm here if you want me!" So, [laughing] I think there's a *huge* difference [between the first and second team], umm. And it's nothing against the girls, coz they're really good players and

they're really nice people off the court, so...It's just in the, in the game, they're really competitive. They're "in-it-to-win-it," sort of thing.

Thus, Donna perceived those at high standards of netball – both within her club and at regional trials she attended – to be very self-confident individuals. However, this assuredness leads to different behavioural manifestations when on court compared to off. The athletic phenomenal self would seem to be implicated in cross-situational inconsistencies in self-presentational behaviour (cf. Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986).

*Desired and undesired identity images.* One of the most pertinent functions of impression management is to make one's public selves consistent with one's ideal selves (Baumeister & Tice, 1986). Desired identity images can be claimed by behaving in a way that suggests one is who one would like to be, and not whom one would prefer to avoid (Schlenker, 1985). Impression construction in a given situation is therefore strongly influenced by people's enduring desired identities. Previous research in sport has demonstrated that athletes desired identities include specific fitness characteristics, competence, aggression, honed mental attributes, determination, and sport specific skills (James & Collins, 1995). Less is known about undesired identity images and the constructed impressions and self-presentations they both result in. Table 5.2 displays these factors and the intra- and interpersonal goals they are designed to help achieve.

Participant & Sport	Target	Desired and/or undesired identity image	Accompanying/associated self-presentational tactics	Anticipated benefit
Leo First team rugby union and his hometown team	Team-mates	“Class player,” honest, reliable	When asked whether he actively pursues his desired images: “Oh, yeah, definite, yeah yeah, definite. On and off the pitch really. Off the pitch: I like to [indecipherable couple words]... Tour – I think it’s important to go on tour with them; uhh, go on socials, even if you’re not drinking, just turn up; you know, turn up to training. You know, it does make a difference of what people think of you...”	“I wanna get along with everyone, like, that’s my goal really.”
Hyde First team rugby union and his hometown team	Manager	“A quality player; a good player, you know; team player; good toughness; a hard-worker, on and off the field; and a nice person, you know... doesn’t get in trouble... A team player, yeah”	When asked how he pursues his desired images: “Stay on the field when you’ve been hurt, sometimes, you know”; “Playing every game hard”; “Giving 100%”; “Doing what’s best for the team, you know, on the field. Not giving away silly penalties, especially in the last few minutes to lose the game, and... [chuckles, related to the filmed game]” “Err... and just, umm, yeah just playing as hard as I can, that’s all you can do really”	“Oh, it would make me feel, you know...just...give me confidence; probably make me more confident on the field”; “...but like, sometimes when you get a bit of...like, negative, you know, it makes you sometimes train harder...I find when you get positive you can get a bit more relaxed sometimes, I dunno; I may do...Whereas sometimes losing a close game makes me work harder
Donna Second team netball captain	‘Her’ team members	Approachable; “the things that I’ve been trying to get them to improve are actually valid, and the ways that I’ve tried to get them to improve are working effectively and that they actually see them as effective and improving <i>them</i> ”	“...they can say whatever they want to me as long as it’s not you know, horrifically rude [laughs].” “I’d like them to think I was approachable and that they could you know, I can say things to them and they can say it back, you know, they can give me criticism, and if they don’t agree with the criticism I’ve given them, I’d like them to be able to say it back.”	“If they had a bad impression of me I think I wouldn’t be able to play to the standard that I play, coz I’d be constantly focusing on the things I did wrong. Whereas, if they had, you know, good impression of me I’d be able to relax, and instead of focusing on the pass I could focus on the whole game, instead of just, “Okay, I’ve got the ball, oohhhh no!” you know?”

Midge First team rugby union	Team-mates	Capable; "A bit stronger, a bit harder than I come across";	"...coz, you know, I can take the ball into contact pretty well"; "I've been in the gym, pumping the guns! You know, I've been trying to improve my strength. I've been practicing, you know, ball skills, actually aerobic training, sprint training – I do try!"	"to have a bit more confidence in me... and then I'd have a bit more confidence in myself"
Kelso First team rugby league	Team-mates	"I try and like make an effort to think that...you know, they're playing with a decent player, like...and that, they can give me the ball in like a situation that we need to get [a score]...dunno like, in a difficult situation they'd, if there was like...we were on the outside of them, you know, they'd feel confident to give me the ball really, that's..Yeah, just like, when the heat's on that I could be counted for, that's probably the best impression I could think of giving..."	"Just be consistent and reliable"; "...try and make as few mistakes as possible [chuckles]; "...just like, try and communicate as well as possible to them, like, you know, just clear calls like, try and make like clear decisions, like not try and confuse people"; "...just try and have a good attitude, I think, just try and be positive"; "I think also like, coz I think people know that I do do like extra gym work and stuff outside of training and stuff. I think, you know, people think that I'm quite serious about it"; "I wouldn't want people to think I cheat, or anything like that"; "Well, it'd be bad if they thought I was not very good at rugby"; "I wouldn't like to think people...I got...got where I am through like favours off friends or something; I couldn't stand that, like...I'd rather get there off my own back than like being friends with anyone or like, you know...Like, if next year, if someone better turns up...if a better player turns up who can play my position then I'll, you know, I'd rather let them play and I'll find another position than err, me like holding the team back in any way; I'd never...I wouldn't like to think that coz of my own selfishness I'd be holding the team back like; if there was somebody better I'd definitely, you know, step aside for them"	"Aww, pretty good. I think...yeah, it would make me feel quite good inside, and I think it'd make me more confident about my ability and that, and... [end] Like, I like to try and think: if I was at that Uni would I get into that team? And I think a lot of the time I think I would get into quite a few of those teams, so... [End]...That's what I try and think about like. And then...it says a lot if...like, coz I've got 4 or 5 Man of the Match's this year, I think it's nice to think that the opposition like regard you as a threat, and respect you as an opponent. Umm, yeah, I 'spose that's like...apart from your own team that's the biggest honour you can get really. It's like...I find that quite...[End]"

Jacqui Second team netball	Team-mates	Reliable; a good listener (“so I can, like, listen to, take in feedback and stuff”); not an angry person; open and inviting; approachable; nice; not intimidating; not a doormat, but “I’ll upset someone if I really need to”	Make friends;  “Have an opinion – like, people will come to me for feedback; but then people won’t feel bad about telling me, giving me feedback. So that would really help my netball as well, wouldn’t it...because, like, I’d be an important part of the team, but then, I wouldn’t be...unchangeable...Yeah...un-teachable, or whatever”	“Umm... like being approachable and stuff – you obviously, people feel they can come to you, talk to you and kindof, say there’s a big group of you someone would walk to me to come and have a chat or something, instead of choosing someone else”  “Umm...good and probably feel like I could, almost, step it up a bit. Like, I could be a bit more confident and loud and umm...I dunno, maybe, maybe go for Captain or something next year...Coz I know that people would actually like...I dunno...feel like they could listen to me and talk to me about, you know...Coz that’s what a Captain is needed for, isn’t it. Like, knowing about netball, but then also being able to be approachable and give feedback, really”
Laurie First team hockey	Team-mates	Committed          <u>Not a social loafer</u>	“I’ve only missed one game this semester...and umm, training I’ve only missed a couple because of work, and once I was ill...I’ve even had stuff from home, been rung up, and not wanted to go because I just didn’t wanna face people and I still turned up, just...[End]”  Not somebody: “who just sits there and does nothing. So I like to get involved in as much as I can. Like recently I’ve been playing quite a few midfield games – I am actually a forward player – but I feel like you get more involved when you play midfield, so I enjoy it in that way, like, you’re all over the pitch, you can pull the ball out of areas and get rid of it. So I like to be seen as someone who’s, you know, willing to work hard and...[end]”	“Yeah, umm...committed as well, because if you’re committed it influences a lot of people; a lot of people who’ve seen not-so-committed players are like, “Oh, she can’t be bothered.””

Table 5.2. *Athlete’s desired and undesired identity images*

The stories presented in truncated form in Table 5.2 clearly demonstrate that impressions are constructed in the hope of maximising desired rewards (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Behaviours designed to influence the audience – in these examples it was most often one’s team-mates – are fairly consistent across participants, but a diverse range is presented in Table 5.2 for illustration purposes. The impression management process may involve developing certain social identity images, but the outcome is often more personal, such as esteem enhancement (Leary, 1995). Thus, it is clear from these stories that important outcomes are perceived to be contingent on audiences forming particular impressions of the athlete. As such, the data speaks to the sections on self-presentational motives and impression motivation as much as it does impression construction; evidence of the dynamic and interrelated nature of the impression management constructs (Leary, 1995).

*Role constraints.* To develop the social identity of a fencer, for example, and acquire desired outcomes that this may bring, you may be required to adhere to group norms (cf. Jones *et al.*, 1963; Piliavin, 1976). General fencing club expectations cited by Randy and Casey include: members must show up to *at least* one session a week; be available for matches, both home and away; “when you finish fencing you walk the wire back to the box coz if you drop it can end up breaking springs”; donate kit to novice members who do not have their own (it is very expensive) so that they can attend competitions; and generally participate as well as you can in the club. On competition day, everybody is expected to: warm-up together; bring the kit and apparatus to the venue and take it away after; generally keep the area the team occupies neat and tidy; the men’s first team are expected to wear shirt and tie to away games; and there is general fencing etiquette to observe, such as: “you have to salute before and after a match, your opponent and your referee. Umm, and then if it’s a higher match then you’ll both shake hands with your opponent and the referee when it’s finished, err, lower level you’ll just shake hands with your opponent.” Another unwritten rule is that you all attend “kit-fix nights” before competitions, “where you all come in and...fix kit in front of

a film or something.” Similar stories were told by performers of other sports; it was certainly not limited to individual-based sports or more ‘romantic’ sports such as fencing.

With such all-encompassing socially prescribed norms in place, it is fair to assume that athletes will feel a motivation to conform that is akin to impression motivation because it requires performative behavioural responses too. The athletes who described role constraints and social norms also provided storied accounts of individuals who had failed to impression manage in this way, and who subsequently suffered sanctions of one sort or another (cf. Festinger *et al.*, 1950). Further, all of these contextual nuances are set against a backdrop of intra-squad competition: “But there is a saying, that “There’s no friends on piste...” Erm, once you’re on piste that person you’re fencing is your opponent – no concessions, no nothing – coz you can’t afford it” (Casey). Competition for team places is a general characteristic of sport at all standards, and yet team members must “buddy-up” with their rivals and enact the behaviours described above regardless (Roderick, 2006). Hence, self-presentational ability in the dramaturgical sense discussed by Goffman (1959) emerged as important in the current sample.

The impact of role constraints on impression construction can also be studied through the lens of a sporting leader. Self-presentational constraints imposed by the leader role was a common theme across participants in such positions. First team tennis captain Eric provided an exemplary account of this in action:

Well, I’m usually, I have been a person in the past year or so, the past two years even, I’ve changed sortof being...I speak my mind. And so, if someone’s played bad, I’ll tell them. But obviously, being captain, I can’t do that. Coz then it would reduce that player’s like self-esteem and everything, and confidence will just go. And so, yeah, it sortof going against my nature now, to go, “Oh, don’t worry about it, you



played really well.” Whereas I wanna say, umm, “You didn’t play well. This is what you did wrong. And that, and that, and that.”

Eric’s story is a good example of the candidness and lack of social desirability that participants exhibited in the present study. In essence, he is saying that he would almost prefer to damage his player’s self-esteem if it meant he could tell the truth, but has been able to rein this temptation in “over the past two years.” In this way, Eric’s counter-attitudinal self-presentation of a compassionate leader seems to have led to positive changes in his self-concept (cf. Baumeister, 1999). Further examples of the leader role constraining or otherwise impacting impression construction include: Kitty’s observation that her captain once showed restraint when being “started on” because “rising to the bait” would have been unbecoming of a leader; Joanne’s perception that “people think the wrong way” about her because she rarely attends club socials, and “being the Club Captain I should probably go”; and Kitty’s admission that when she was not getting much playing time earlier in the season, her immediate response to “stomp her feet” and say “Well I’m not coming to training, and I’m not playing in your team coz you’re not playing me,” was tempered partly by her role as treasurer of the club.

*Target values.* Previous sections of this discussion have alluded to how desired identity images can be conceived with particular targets in mind, and how impression motivation is heightened (or lowered) depending on the characteristics of the target (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Impression construction also takes the target into account, but more specifically, their perceived values and preferences (Gaes & Tedeschi, 1978; von Baeyer *et al.*, 1981). As for workers in organisational settings, it follows that the athlete would seek to satisfy the esteemed target’s value system and preferences, rather than self-presenting counter to it. Table 5.3 displays the most illustrative stories told by athletes in the present study.

Participant	Target and their perceived values/preferences	How it impacts impression construction (the chosen self-presentational tactics)
Fez First team rugby union	Match officials; Unknown; but in certain sports officials are highly regarded, and that seems to be the case in rugby football (league and union). As such, it is a 'safe' self-presentational ploy to just be nice to them	"In rugby you respect the ref coz they're there to help. Sortof get the ref on your side...So you treat them nice and then they tend to give you little things that shouldn't have gone [your way]." To which Fez was asked: "It works like that, does it; I mean, they're only human, aren't they?" And he responded with: "Yeah, you can be nice to them and [all of a sudden] little tiny decisions they will start to put in your favour...Does work sometimes, with some people...Call them sir, always get the captain to speak to them rather than attempting to yourself"
Leo First team rugby union	As above	"It's always good to brown-nose the referee, you know [laughs]...Get on their good side always, always. That's what my brother used to tell me, anyway [laughs]. He referees. Well, my brother referees, and he told me, he said, like "Yeah, okay, some decisions – knock-ons and stuff like that – if one side's nicer, you know, it does happen." I'm like, "Okay, yeah." I've learned that, like, brown-nose the referee...from my brother, like...who knows the game and refereed it, so...Yeah. Even if the referee is a [chuckles]...is a total arsehole!"
Jacqui Second team netball	Captain of a higher team; Unknown	"Like, there's meeting new people – that's easy, isn't it. But then, like, meeting new people and maybe finding that they're someone you don't wanna upset; like a...like, the first team Captain or something...You know, like...they're kindof in control, and you don't wanna upset them, so...umm...things like that make me uncomfortable...So I would kindof like keep my mouth shut or something. Or, just kindof, stay out of her way, or something." Jacqui's short story describes how her impression construction is constrained by a global perception of the target, and incorporates impression motivation (dependency) and low impression efficacy.
Midge First team rugby union	Team selectors = head coach	When asked if her behaviour is influenced by those whose opinion she most values: "Umm, sometimes – now and then. When I'm...like, say if it's a Monday night training and I'm trying to impress coz I wanna be in the squad on Wednesday. I do tend to be a bit more reserved with my chatting, and you know, joking around. So I do try a bit harder"

<p>Eric</p> <p>First team tennis club captain and prestigious tennis academy in home county</p>	<p>Academy selection committee</p>	<p>“I was confident. Like, I was trying, like, whenever I hit a good shot I wanted them to notice, so I would, I’d do an action, I’d pump my fist or I’d do something to make them show that that was a good shot, and I think they should’ve noticed that. And at change of ends I’d sit down and just be totally relaxed; even if I was down in the set I’d try and not show any negative emotion. So I was very aware of why I was portraying myself, rather than just playing tennis.”</p> <p>Eric had spoken to peers who had already made the squad and thus had some idea of the values and preferences of the target.</p>
<p>Casey</p> <p>Second team fencer and captain-elect for next year</p>	<p>Coaches</p>	<p>“I am much more approvalistic (sic) around the coaches...than I am with the fencers...Because...I guess, coz partly we don’t have them in the social context. Like, they occasionally come out for a drink, but not...very rarely. And they seem, uhh...like, you look at the coaches and they will happily engage certain members of the fencing club in conversation, uhh, and not with others. So...or whether that’s the, you know...they tend to talk to the people who come for most lessons often.....I’m much...I guess I’m much more formal, to a certain extent, with [Coach O]. Umm...and I...I only discuss things to do with fencing, and ask him questions to do with technique and stuff. Rather than with the fencers, I’m generally a bit more, you know, we talk about more social and personal things...I ask him for advice and things like that...about technique and performance. And questions like...you know, recently I was asking him about uhh, what kind of blades to purchase, and things like that.</p> <p>Uhh, I try and keep my conversation with him technically-slanted.”</p> <p>Casey’s story exemplifies many theoretical propositions (Need for approval? Social and/or esteem-enhancing self-presentational motives?), but at its core it shows how his impression construction alters according to the target and his perception of what the coaches want to see from the fencers in their charge.</p>

Table 5.3. *Target values that were cited as especially relevant to impression construction*

It appears that university athletes can assume, to a large degree, what their teammates – their peers – expect from them, but this is not as easy with coaches and team selectors. Perceived familiarity and similarity with the target do influence impression construction (Tesser & Moore, 1986; Tice *et al.*, 1995), so the above point is intuitively accurate. It was not possible to assess whether gender of the target mediated the relationship between impression construction and reported self-presentation tactics. Future research could investigate the impression construction differences of female athletes with male versus female coaches, for example.

*Current and potential social image.* A story from Randy supports Leary's (1992) statement that simply by competing athletes risk conveying a negative impression. Randy said that: "if they only ever see me when I'm competing against them then [arrogance is] certainly something which could come across," although, "I'd really not like to think of myself as arrogant in everyday life." This is another example, like Randy's club-mate Casey, of different phenomenal selves being active in separate life domains. Although we can only assume that Randy is not in fact arrogant in everyday life, he seemed confident but not excessively so during the interview – a likely opportunity for people to pander to their self-importance if they so wish. It is also insightful that Randy said, "I'd really not like to think of myself as arrogant in everyday life" – as if he is not concerned about being perceived as arrogant in his sport. Perhaps he had built up enough "idiosyncrasy credits" in his three years in the club to not worry about arrogance there as much as he might in other domains (cf. Hollander, 1958); he was the club President, after all. Further, he was asked to recall a competitive occasion when he felt that someone had formed a negative impression of him, and he responded by defending against the enduring possibility of portraying arrogance in everyday life. Perhaps this was a real concern of Randy, and thus representative of him "re-imagining his life" as he would prefer *his* story to read (Riessman, 2003).

Randy's story is an example of how impression construction might be restrained or compelled by the information an audience has of the self-presenter (Schlenker, 1975). Alternatively, Kelso discussed his impression construction dilemma of being *associated* with a team that frequently plays poorly:

And also, like, because the team isn't that good, I feel I have to lift my performance more to not be associated with the poor team like, d'ya know what I mean? I almost, like...I know it sounds bad, but I almost want the impression, "Ahhh...", you know, "what a crap team, but they have got a couple of decent players"! [he chuckles whilst saying this]. And I'd like to be thought of like that. So...like I almost...well, I know it's a team game, but I'd almost like not to be included in the mess that is the team like [chuckles]."

The information he has of the team, and that the opposition *will* have compels him to play even better so as to disassociate from them; the quality of his potential social image is reduced by the lackadaisical play of his teammates, so he engages in strategies to solve the problem. Indeed, denigrating others and role-distancing for similar reasons to Kelso's have been interpreted as self-presentational tactics (Archibald & Cohen, 1971; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). And again, like Randy, Kelso's good play this season ("I've got 4 or 5 Man of the Matches") may have earned him "idiosyncrasy credits." Hollander's (1958) proposition again occurring in sport was provided by Angie. Rugby player Angie described herself as a "big personality," "quite a mouthy person, on and off the pitch," and somebody who "likes being centre of attention!" The link to so-called idiosyncrasy credits is her contention that: "I think personally your character off the pitch and on the pitch is sortof interlinked...And because, I used to play 12 but now I play 10, 10's got to be a gobby person on the pitch, so it just goes with your character – if you're natural at it then it works well doesn't it [laughs]." Angie has used the field of play and off-field forums to repeatedly demonstrate her "big personality" (Goffman, 1959), and in doing so has slowly accumulated credit to deviate from group norms in the future. This is a worthwhile line of enquiry

for future research, because it would help explain the punishments that some athletes face for seemingly minor infringements.

A final story regarding the desire to avoid a negative future social image was provided by Eric. In the tennis match that was video-taped, Eric had an objectively and subjectively easy contest. This in itself brought about the opportunity to construct two very different impressions – someone who destroys a weak opponent versus a player that despatches them with a modicum of compassion:

I think I probably felt a bit bad for him as well [said in a tone that reflects this]...Coz like, I wasn't gonna let up on the tennis front, but I thought: "Let's not, let's not be a bit of a dick about it, let's just play the match, win the match, and then just... [End]" – little things like that. Coz I thought it'd be a bit harsh to do massive: "Come ons!" and things like that, when you're absolutely destroying an opponent like this.

When watching the match during the interview however, Eric expressed regret and a self-presentational dilemma that was prompted by the video:

But I'd say my actual personality was *none*. Like, on the court, compared to what it usually is...It just wasn't there. It just seemed to be like as if I were typing in numbers, that's what it looked like to me. Whereas, it just seemed like another...whereas usually it's a lot more fist-pumps, "Come ons!" – jumping around, things like that. So it might of, it might've, coming back to the earlier point of modesty, it might have shown a bit of that. A bit of modesty and a little bit of erm like compassion...The fact that I didn't want to do that while destroying this person, coz it would've felt, portrayed me in a bad light if I was doing that, and a bit of a, well, stupidly arrogant, if you're playing a player who's obviously not as good as you and still behaving like you would when you're playing in a really close contest.

Thus, Eric might have preferred to maintain his usual in-match behavioural style, in preparation for more challenging contests, but countered potential

damage to his public image by constructing an impression of modesty (cf. Ackerman & Schlenker, 1975). Eric came across as quite proud that he had been able to do this, as if it was a sign of progress for him (as with the earlier story about his giving false-positive feedback to a team member to avoid harm to their self-esteem; Murray, 2003).

#### 5.3.1.3. Impression efficacy

When it was described to them and they were asked to comment, some athletes were able to distinguish between sport efficacy and impression efficacy, whereas others struggled to differentiate the two concepts. Additionally, some expressed confidence in their sporting ability but not their ability to make a desired impression. For an example of the latter, when asked whether he would make the desired impressions he listed for a tennis academy selection test, Eric replied: “I wasn’t confident that I could make those impressions, but I was confident that I could make the team, just coz of umm my tennis exploits, and I hoped that’d be enough.” Netball captain Donna, expanded on this theme when expressing her belief that it would be: “easier to be distracted [by impression-related thoughts] the less able you are,” and/or, “I think if you are confident [sport-wise], you know, your image is that you know, you can [make the desired impression].” Rugby player Angie provided perhaps the most comprehensive response to my probing about the differences between sport confidence and impression efficacy:

I think it’s down to natural ability. So I know, I *know* that I portray that I’m a good passer because I *know* that I can pass. And I can pass well. Umm, it’s harder for things like tackling, or, like initially, kicking, coz I’m not a consistent kicker. Umm, if you’re naturally good at something it’s easier to portray that to other people. Umm, and you’re more confident at portraying that to other people. Whereas if you know it’s a weakness in yourself, you’re, people will pick that up, and umm, yeah, that’s the image you will portray to them. But if you’re not good at something people aren’t gonna think you are good at it, are they?! [laughs]”

These stories speak to a discussion point in study two – and to some degree the challenge appraisals seen in study one – that forwarded the need for second and third generation research that investigates potential moderators and mediators of the relationship between impression management variables. It is possible that sport efficacy might help explain why heightened impression monitoring and impression motivation did not interrupt performance in study two, and why a negative impression motivation:impression efficacy discrepancy was challenging in study one. Therefore, sport self-efficacy or confidence might interfere with researcher's attempts to tap impression efficacy and possibly impression affect, and this must be explored more fully.

The stories displayed in Table 5.4, and the many like them told by the other participants not cited therein, provide a comprehensive picture of impression efficacy in sport. There are numerous factors that could heighten or detract from impression efficacy, and athletes even experience fluctuating strength of impression efficacy *across* sporting situations. This mirrors findings in social psychology, which also highlight the situational contingencies that can impinge on impression efficacy (Leary, 1980; Leary, Kowalski, & Campbell, 1988; Morse & Gergen, 1970; Tedeschi *et al.*, 1973). However, participants' stories suggest that impression efficacy may interfere with their desire to enact certain behaviours that are especially important to them ("*I'm too quiet within the team*"; "*Just coz I'm not confident enough in...like...my ability to tell where people are going wrong*"). These behaviours may be especially valued in university sport, and so low impression efficacy can constrain the athlete's self-presentational opportunities; desired identities may not be claimed (Maddux *et al.*, 1988).



Table 5.4. *Examples of experientially-derived contributors to impression efficacy*

Positive influences on impression efficacy	Negative influences on impression efficacy
<p>““I can always tell when I’m gonna be taken off, because, I know when I’m playing badly and when I’m playing well. Umm...errr...I don’t know how important she’d perceive me. Like...<i>when I’m playing well she’d probably think I was quite important. But when I’m not playing well, as long as I’m, like...if I’m on the sideline I’ll still shout encouragement. So, in that sense I’m probably quite good to have around...And also I give feedback when I know it’s needed...</i>But then I can get like, agitated or something; if I know I’m playing badly then I’ll only get worse because I’m getting like more and more annoyed with myself. <i>So, she’d probably see that in me...</i>But then, if I’m playing well I’ll only get better, because I kindof start buzzing, and I’m like, “Oooh [surprised noise], I’m doing this well!”” (Jacqui, netball)</p>	<p>“I’m constantly improving my fitness and trying to improve my skill levels. In every training session I’m trying to improve myself...but I know myself, <i>I’m too quiet within the team</i>, to, I’ll, I would never say to my coach, “Ahh, I wanna play there [certain number], I want the opportunity to play there,” – I never will” (Midge, rugby union)</p>
<p>“...that varies from day-to-day...<i>Some days, if I feel I’m playing well then I’ll feel I have more confidence to show people that I’m playing better.</i> Then if some days I’m playing really badly then I’ll just be like, “There’s no point [laughs] in playing!” kindof thing” (Joanne, netball)</p>	<p>“I don’t think like I’m a hugely important role, coz I’m still learning. <i>So until I know it all I can’t really help other people...</i>But, umm, at the same time like during a game, I can, I’m at the back so I can watch it. And so like I can shout encouragement, or if we come off I’ll be like...someone will be like “Oh, am I doing this wrong?,” and I’ll be like “Yeah, I’ve seen you do that,” or “No, I haven’t.” So I can help answer those questions. But that’s only really during a game, like...during training I don’t...Umm...I think, well, sometimes I’ll go in and say something coz it just needs to be said. But then umm, at the same time like I said, I’m not, <i>I’m still learning so I can’t just, I don’t feel like I can just, be forceful</i>” (Jacqui, netball)</p>
<p>“<i>I think too much into too many things.</i> So, I think I get over-worried about things. So if I was a bit more relaxed then I’d be like...hmm...I think it would be better if I was a bit more relaxed to think of what people think of me, if that makes sense...<i>I’d probably have been more confident in various situations if I hadn’t thought that people would be judging me in this way, but only because I worry about it too much</i>” (Joanne, netball)</p>	<p>“I should probably give a bit of feedback out for individual teams, like “Aw, you played really well,” or “You should change this” – coz I do kindof watch all the games mostly...<i>But I don’t as much. Just coz I’m not confident enough in...like...my ability to tell where people are going wrong...Coz I know they’re better than me, so [nervous laughter].</i>” (Joanne, netball)</p>

“I think it’s probably a product of trying to ensure that I sort of have that quality...*I think the aspiration to the quality probably came first [before impression efficacy]*, because it was...it’s been there that I’ve always tried to spend time working on the things that I’ve wanted to do. Umm, and because *I’ve always thought of myself as quite good* at it, that’s what...I definitely want people to think that...Yeah, I think there are probably times when I might think, “Ohhh, I don’t wanna go fencing,” and then I might think, “But actually, if I wanna get...if I wanna get a better spot on the team then I’d best be there. Or...*if I want the coach to take time out and give me lessons when he could be giving other people lessons I’d better be there, I’d better show my commitment.*” So as far as that goes, yeah, I think I probably...err...there are some times when I’d probably prefer to, you know, stick a movie on and have a pizza, but that I’d go to fencing, not necessarily just because...Yeah, *I think it’s certainly a contributing factor that I think that I should be seen at fencing by the people who err, who it matters to be seen by*” (Randy, fencing)

“Yeah. I think I’d go with a more positive frame of mind than I did last time; last time it was...like, questioning myself a bit, whereas I didn’t feel...I feel *this time I wouldn’t be questioning why I’m here, I think I’d be more focused on err, performing well and trying to impress*” (Kelso, rugby league)

“I wouldn’t say I was perhaps confident that they would [perceive her in the desired way]. Umm, I think...I think they do. But I think *I would be more confident if we spent more time together as a team*” (Kitty, netball)

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“Say if we’re against a big side, I’d probably go quiet, and then people will look at me, “Oh, he’s a bit quiet today – he’s not his usual self,” like. So that’s a key thing as well – *who we play makes a massive difference...The size, yeah...If I haven’t played them before...If I’ve played them I know what to expect, and then I’m like, “Right, I’ll do this, I’ll do that.”* If I’ve never played a team before I’m a bit shit-scared really, coz like, “Oh, my God, they’re gonna bounce me, like they’re stronger than me,” and stuff like that...But at the same time I want to, like, “Yeah, I’m better than you”...you know, like, *impress them, as well* – the other side...” (Leo, rugby union)

“So I think the level, the lesser, the less advanced you are, I think the less communication there is. Which is probably where the more communication is needed...*Umm, the higher up you go, the more confident you are, the more you can say. You know: “I don’t like what you did there, maybe you should do something else.”*” (Donna, netball)

Just as the possibility was raised above that sport efficacy and confidence are implicated, it is equally likely that global personality variables impact on impression efficacy judgements in sport (Schneider, 1969). Trait self-esteem, self-consciousness, self-monitoring, and social anxiety were alluded to as possible mediators of the impression motivation-impression efficacy-self-presentation relationship; indicators that these constructs were problematic in a global sense for individuals sometimes spanned boundaries and was mentioned when discussing impression efficacy in sport (e.g., Laurie, Donna, Joanne, Leo). A study by Thatcher and Hagger (2008) explored dispositional social physique anxiety, self-handicapping, athletic identity, and perfectionism in relation to self-presentation concerns; future research could adopt a similar strategy in examining links between other impression management variables (e.g., impression efficacy) and additional personality constructs (e.g., self-esteem).

In summary, Laurie stated that she perceives more control over those desired impressions that she can tell she is being judged on, whereas the ones that are not as obvious engender more doubt. It is conceivable that the latter might be more threatening to her, and the former more of a challenge. Thus, research that focuses on impression efficacy at this level of abstraction could prove illuminating. Similarly, Joanne distinguished between self-presentational efficacy expectancies and self-presentational outcome expectancies (Leary & Atherton, 1986; Maddux *et al.*, 1988); apparently, she could be confident in her ability to convey a positive impression of ability, for example (high self-presentational efficacy expectancy), but less sure that it would be evaluated in the way she intended (low self-presentational outcome expectancy). When appraised according to this logic, some of the stories discussed earlier could be re-interpreted in this way. The relative influence of the two subtly different facets of impression efficacy may warrant investigation, in case one or the other can be determined to have more explanatory and predictive power. Dispositional influences can constrain impression construction (self-concept, desired and undesired identity

images, internalised ethic against lying), and impression efficacy has a similar restrain-or-compel effect on self-presentation (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). University athletes seem to place a great deal of importance of their participation in sport, and if low impression efficacy is a hindrance to them attaining their self-presentational motives, it is worthy of study. The present data has generated numerous hypotheses going forward.

#### 5.3.1.4. Impression management cognitions and task performance

The relationship between impression management cognitions and performance was the focus of study two of this thesis. The results of that investigation indicated that increases in impression monitoring and impression motivation were associated with improved performance. In addition, it seemed that at moderate-to-high levels of self-reported impression motivation, lowered impression efficacy and reduced impression affect positivity can be overcome with a renewed focus on the psychomotor task. It was suggested that a similar investigation be conducted with more ecologically valid independent and dependent variables (i.e., real sporting skills to be performed in front of a high-status audience). Study three also attempted to provide further evidence as to the practical implications of the athlete experiencing impression-related thoughts during competition. Participants talked about sporting performance in light of their self-presentational motives, factors that heighten impression motivation and impact their impression construction, and self-presentational tactics.

Table 5.5. *Example stories that link impression management cognitions to performance effects and consequences*

Participant	Impression-related thoughts, feelings, motivation	Perceived effect – positive	Associated consequences
Leo First team rugby union	“I got called from...like, the coach called me for the District Captain – he used to phone me up on the Friday and say, “You’re Captain tomorrow.” And that would motivate me a hell of a lot to...I was like, “ <i>Right then, I’m gonna show what I can do</i> ””	“ <i>And it was really...boost...I remember that...It was like...what an honour like, as a district captain - I was well-chuffed like. And then...I don’t wanna be big-headed, but I played alright... Really, coz of that like, coz of that umm, motivation to... I feel I get motivated if I’m captain. As in, like say if I umm... if I’m captain, I want to do like [current captain], I want to lead by example. So I probably will try harder if I was Captain, probably</i> ”	“I played well, and then after that I <i>got the Captaincy for the rest of the season</i> , like. I scored a hat-trick in that game! You know, and for a back-row to score a hat-trick is...Ahhh, it was nuts, like. Ahh, unbelievable, it was nuts [clearly revelling in the memory]...I enjoyed it”
Casey Second team fencing	“If you look around/away, you lose a point, basically. You concentrate completely on your opponent...”  When asked if image-related thoughts are present prior to arriving on piste:  “Yeah, yeah, it does, before, but once you’re on piste, you can’t concentrate on anyone else really”	“ <i>It encourages you to do well if people you care about are there. Like, if my parents watch me, like they did with [a specific competition], I’m more like, probably more aggressive, and more, umm, tactful, maybe, because they’re there</i> ”	
Randy First team fencing	When asked how he tends to feel when he’s being evaluated, or someone is otherwise forming an opinion of him:  “Uhh, oooh [exhales], I suppose as much with the sport there’s a bit of pressure to perform. Umm, I think I’m probably a bit of a performer when it comes to things...”	“Umm....yeah... <i>When I get particularly self-conscious I suppose, I think I’m probably quite a bit of a show-off. Yeah, I think that’s probably the most valid explanation of that [laughs]...I suppose...the more pressure that’s on, in any situation, I think probably the better I perform...Err, I ‘spose socially as well [laughs]...or the more I perform socially, but the better I perform sports-wise, I think</i> ”	

Participant	Impression-related thoughts, feelings, motivation	Perceived effect – negative	Associated consequences
Jacqui Second team netball	<p>“I wasn’t playing very well, and it was a home game, so there was like, <i>most of the firsts were watching. Which kindof put me off anyway.</i> And then I did a really bad shot and it went straight over the top of the net and into like another player’s hands! And umm, like, I heard like the first team Captain like, “Oh, good pass [sarcastic],” kindof thing. It’s like “Yeah, alright [defensive to counter the sarcasm]. Like, that was an awful shot.”</p>	<p>“And then like, the next time you shoot again you’re like, “This has to go in coz <i>otherwise they’re gonna think I’m rubbish!</i>” And then you miss again...And you’re like, “Oh, no, <i>all the firsts are gonna think I’m so awful...</i>”</p> <p>When asked how it would make her feel, knowing that they thought she was awful:</p> <p>“I think that just made my game worse...it didn’t help me at all.”</p> <p>Did Jacqui dwell on those thoughts?</p> <p>“Yeah, it was like...I...well, [me asking the question] just triggered it straight away, so it kindof, it’s still there a little bit, like...Umm...It’s almost like, if I’m playing just in training or something, and we’re playing against the firsts, I’ll still want to play good even though it’s just a fun game. Because, if they, like, see that I’m playing really badly then it’ll just affect any chances I have of going up or anything”</p>	<p>“...<i>And I’m never gonna get a chance...</i>” Like, even though I don’t really care about playing for the firsts, <i>it would feel good to be asked.</i>”</p> <p>When asked if that game damaged her public image:</p> <p>“Yeah, maybe. Coz, like, quite a few of the away games I’ve played quite well in. But umm...like...we haven’t had that many good...like, that many home games recently. So, umm, you play <i>one</i> bad home game out of three home games or something, <i>and that’s the one they’ll remember – or that’s what I think, anyway.</i> So it’s like, “Ahhhhh [exhales], they’re just gonna think I’m awful”</p>

Donna Second team netball captain	Thinking that the first team players had formed a negative impression of her	“...if they had a bad impression of me I think <i>I wouldn't be able to play to the standard that I play, coz I'd be constantly focusing on the things I did wrong.</i> Whereas, if they had, you know, good impression of me I'd be able to relax, and instead of focusing on the pass I could focus on the whole game, instead of just, “Okay, I've got the ball, oohhhh no!” you know? Umm, “Don't pass me the ball coz I don't know what to do with it!”; I'd be able to be like “Yeah, I can have this...”, and you know, I know that the pass I'm gonna make next is gonna be on”	“Umm, I'd know that I can get the ball in the goal because everyone thinks I can...Umm, I think, you know, if you've got someone you know who has an issue with you, watching you play, really has an effect on how I play. Coz it will make me want to play really well. Umm, but if I make a mistake...it has, you know, it has bad effects on me”
Angie First team rugby union	Impression formation of opponent and expectation of success:  “Uhh, they did their ‘squeeze’ like we did, before the game. Umm, that, that doesn't tend to phase us...uhh, I think we thought, coz our, they were a very good, they had very good catching; they weren't very good defence; they had a few good runners; umm, their catching was very good, and uh, that's not something you tend to see. That's, you know, quite a hard skill. So for them to be good at that and not anything else is, is quite odd.”  “Things like being able to catch the...these balls from the kickoff as well. All like, all go towards our, like the impression we put on them. And we, half, in fact more than half – the majority of our team can't catch a bloody ball, so...that, you know, to them that just looks like [laughs] “[snorts through nose] <i>Easy match, really</i> ” doesn't it”	“ <i>And I think, that sortof, shocked our forwards a bit, coz our forwards had a terrible game</i> ”	Her perception of the opponent's impression of the team rubs off on her self-image: “...essentially, you know, you're all part of the same team. Not individual”  “Umm, something else that we don't do which <i>really</i> winds me up, is umm, you know, jogging up for the kickoff. Coz it, you know, it makes them think...[that you're ready for them]...And [her team-mates] dawdle up behind. And you...you're allowed to kickoff as soon as you're ready. So if we jogged up and they weren't ready you could kickoff and...”

Laurie  
First team  
field hockey

Laurie was playing for the second team as a favour, and was nominated to take a penalty flick they had been awarded:

“Like, *I was really nervous going up to doing it as it was, because everybody was watching me.* Like, the...your team don't tend to watch as much, they go away to give you space, but it's like, everything's on you then, and I've never done one before in a game – I've practiced...and every one that I'd practiced had gone in. But...”

She missed the penalty.

“Like, every time you get close to the goal I suppose, when you're playing, you kindof get nervous coz you really want it to go in; there's a determination, but...I dunno. Yeah, kindof, I just wanted it to go in and it didn't, so... [end]”

“And also for the seconds I'm seen as umm, a strong player. *And so you kindof don't want to let them down, and let them change how they see you.....*Like, we were losing anyway – one shot wouldn't have changed it, but...*I kindof just wanted to show them that, you know, just keep that image, and give them some hope as well”*

“Like, [Player H] was stood there saying, apparently she was saying to [boyfriend], “Oh, she's really good at this, she'll get it in, she'll get it in!” [laughs] And err...I 'spose that affects [their impression of you] as well, like, people thinking, “Oh, I'll get it in.” And if you don't it's like, “Oh, dear!” [sheepish chuckle]”



Table 5.5 presents data which exhibit the notion that impression-related thoughts are associated with both performance facilitation and inhibition. In this way they provide inconclusive evidence either way, but on close inspection certain characteristics distinguish the boundary conditions for these effects (a second generation question; Zanna & Fazio, 1982). In particular, impression management cognitions seem to motivate focus and effort when the target is someone that the athlete does not have ambivalent feelings toward; unconditional positive regard, almost; for example, Casey's parents and the coach of Leo's district team. In contrast however, a prominent narrative theme that emerged from the netball players in particular, but also Laurie the hockey player and Midge the rugby player, was that impression management cognitions are more distracting – or appraised as a potential distraction – when the target is a peer who has higher public esteem in their eyes. Not just a more elevated status though, as with the first team netballers compared to the seconds, but that *and* the self-assuredness that typifies better players (described in stories presented previously). It would seem that participants to whom this applied were motivated to tell stories that counteracted the threat to their social identity in the club provided by certain others. More accurately, perhaps, it may have been a threat to their self-esteem prompted by upward social comparison that made them defensive when talking about first team players (cf. Vohs & Heatherton, 2004). Indeed, lower team or less senior players were not described in the same way as their more prominent peers. These seem to be interesting social psychological questions that future research could address.

Individual differences obviously play a part in the relationship: the tendency to appraise impression management cognitions as a challenge or threat as investigated in study one, would be one such personal variable. General ability to maintain focus during performance might also protect the athlete from distracting impression management cognitions (Smith, 1996). As alluded to previously however, state influences can interfere with an athlete's dispositional concentration ability, and characteristics of the audience might

be an important variable in this respect. When asked if he thinks about his image during games, rugby player Fez stated: “I wouldn’t say when I’m playing, coz I don’t tend to think about it, but err, before the game, if you’ve got a nice big crowd there, you want to play well, you don’t wanna show yourself up in front of the crowd.” When there are periods during which he is not so involved, he thinks about how to get involved, rather than anything else. When asked about his teammates, Hyde said: “Umm, they probably would be, some of them would be, but like, but sometimes you’re concentrating on the goal so much, like you forget sometimes, when you’re on the field.” On the other hand, Midge described an in-game situation thus: “I’d say if, you know, I dunno – [Player A’s] got the ball and she’s running with it and I’m supporting her, and [Player E’s] alongside her, I think they’re all thinking that I won’t be able to catch it. So that’s why I’m thinking it, and that’s why do miss it.” The quotes in this section suggest that applied practitioners should ensure they listen to the idiographic temporal nature of their client’s impression management cognitions if they suspect self-presentational sources of distraction.

A methodological note: prior to watching the video, at the start of the second portion of the interview, many participants said that they could not remember experiencing impression-related thoughts during the game. Sometimes these were the same participants who *had* reported pre-competition thoughts of this nature. However, almost to a person, once the video was active they did recollect thinking about their public image at various points throughout the game – the stimulated-recall method was successful in this respect. Further, some athletes were adamant that their preparation for competition does not involve thoughts about the self-presentational opportunities that the contest offers; but again, the video prompted their memory of relevant information. Thus, situations can unfold within a sporting competition that direct the athlete’s attention to their image – a shift on the continuum of impression monitoring – and their underlying impression motivation “kicks in.” This then requires impression construction, and if the circumstances are propitious,

appropriate self-presentation tactics (Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Similarly, in study two, participants may not have been thinking about the test's implications for their image, and their pre-test self-report scores would therefore have been low. However, during the test, or during the break between sub-tests, their impression monitoring might have alerted them to the (supposed) benefits afforded by performing well.

#### 5.3.1.5. Affective responses to impression management cognitions

Many participants cited the prospect of “feeling really good” knowing that they had made their desired impression or fulfilled a self-presentational motive. The initial response was often then associated with other outcomes. Kelso, for example, stated that he would feel more confident about his ability if he knew that others had formed a positive impression. Kelso also liked to reflect after a match on the possibility that he would be selected for that day's opponent, and his getting “4 or 5 Man of the Match's this year” suggests to him that they regard him as a threat and respect him as an opponent (i.e., they had formed the impression he desired). Positive affective responses can also be elicited by effective self-presentations in non-playing forums. Casey recalled his response – “I was quite happy with that...I was quite elated to be honest” – to being unanimously voted for second team captaincy for the following year; a reward he attributed to hard work in creating a positive impression within the club. Jacqui made an interesting connection between her social status in the club and performance pressure. When telling a story about how, although she started for the netball club in her first year as she does now in her second, “I felt more pressure last year – now I'm relaxed more I think. Coz as a fresher you think like, “Oh, God, they don't know who I am”. But I've got a name now, so it's good, like.” The preceding stories demonstrate the positive affective outcomes that can accompany self-presentational success. The following stories, however, represent just a few of many that elucidated the boundary conditions for negative affective

responses to impression management cognitions and self-presentation attempts.

Laurie's was one of numerous stories that made the connection between self-presentational anxiety and performance decrements. She discussed her tendency to "break down" after being negatively evaluated or criticised. Interestingly, the breakdown would occur once away from the evaluator (captain or coach), and at the time her response would be to allow her increased nervousness and decreased confidence to impair her performance (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Midge becomes especially anxious when attention is focussed on her, the expectations of others have been forcefully verbalised, and she "has to do it in front of everybody." When in group scenarios in rugby she does not feel threatened, but when an outcome is her responsibility, her anxiety increases and she imagines herself making a mistake and then often does. Midge particularly disliked the idea of people thinking it was "all her fault" – a fact that would jeopardise her burgeoning public image of a capable rugby player.

Kitty told an emotive story that evidenced various theoretical propositions. The contest that was filmed for the interview represented "a bit of a grudge match," because of events that occurred during the last game they and the opponent contested. Accordingly, she was nervous that they were evaluating her from the very start, but about five minutes in, "I got my 'game face' on and forgot about it." Kitty really wanted to play well because they were "so awful" to her last time, for no apparent reason – threatening, maintaining ultra-close proximity, and aggressive – "so I think going into this game I was very like, yeah, I was anxious, and I was like, "Well, actually, I wanna make a good impression, I wanna show you that I am a good player, and that," you know," you're...you've just," [chuckles] d'ya know what I mean, "you've got the wrong impression of me." Thus, Kitty's impression motivation was heightened for this match, she was experiencing anxiety not because of low

impression efficacy *per se* but for other reasons (cf. James & Collins, 1997), and she was ultimately able to cope:

...for me, I wanted to prove to myself that I didn't want them to get to me, like, I didn't want *them*, you know, doing whatever techniques they were doing throughout the match to put me off my game: I didn't want it to bring my game down; you know, I'm better than that. So that's...yeah, I think I had an impression *to myself* to maintain, you know...And I think part of the reason they probably gave me Man of the Match was because I *didn't* lose it...you know.

Kitty's impression construction was constrained to some extent by the impression she perceived they had already formed of her, but because of the previous game she had a clear frame of reference for how to self-present – composed and competent. Presumably these conditions focused her attention and enabled her to overcome the potential distractions inherent in the circumstances.

Boundary conditions for embarrassment included one's level of comfort within the team; as discussed previously, there seems to be potential for positive group dynamics to ameliorate the impact of self-presentational dilemmas. Donna described an occasion that would typically have made her extremely uncomfortable and embarrassed – a “massive collision with a teammate” – but after considering, in the moment, how to react, her comfort with the people she was around deterred a negative response. Indeed, public failure or negatively toned events lead to greater embarrassment when they garner scathing remarks, rather than the laughter the above collision caused (Archibald & Cohen, 1971). In a somewhat related story, Joanne described sometimes feeling restrained by the behaviour of her club-mates. In particular, she often avoids going out on the club socials – a behaviour she would prefer to adopt because of the associated social benefits – because she anticipates feeling anxious around certain people (“...the social secs are loud and confident..And if there's people that are more confident, like that will

just talk lots, then I'll feel uncomfortable"). Novel situations can also accentuate the potential for self-presentational embarrassment, as Casey described: "I can remember thinking, "I must look like an absolute pillock actually," ummm, "coz I'm doing [sabre] for the first time, and my footwork and everything is all...foil..." And I can actually remember thinking, while I was on piste, "Oh, I'm gonna look like a...spanner." Anticipating negative reactions to real and imagined self-presentational difficulties in front of real or imagined audiences is a powerful precursor of social anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982), of which sport competition is representative when described as the participants in this study did (James & Collins, 1995, 1997).

### *5.3.2. Inductive narrative themes that emerged during interviews*

The preceding analyses pertained to data that supported the application of the impression management model to sport. Hence, the data were deduced to fit the model components based on knowledge gained of each concept from the earlier literature review. In contrast, much data emerged from the interviews that did not fit in preconceived 'boxes,' or represented a reflection on the chosen method of research. These included: impression management of individuals for positive group consequences; the impressions participants formed of others, and associated outcomes; and the interview as a self-presentational opportunity.

#### *5.3.2.1. Impression management of individuals for positive group consequences*

Athletes may seek to exert their influence on the group or the group's leaders to avoid impression-damaging reactions or negative sporting outcomes (IMSQ-T factor 2 and 3, respectively). For example, Randy recounted the

story of a fencer who “was known to be pretty argumentative,” and on not being picked for the second team, started harassing the captain. The player in question typifies the fact that a negative public image can have an impression-damaging and negative sporting outcomes; as Randy continued: “And umm, it is in Club Constitution that we’re supposed to err, base our team selection on quality of fencing,...but your quality of fencing in a team relies on you being able to be part of a team, and that was the argument that I put across as to why he didn’t have to be picked.” In certain sports more than others, the impression management of individuals and overall group dynamics are very closely enmeshed.

Many participants who were not themselves in a position of leadership, identified their captains/coaches as especially impression motivated. Those who were captains or held committee posts (Joanne, Kitty, Donna, Eric, Angie, Randy) have also provided the majority of stories for this study, so it appears that their subordinate’s perceptions of their impression management might be accurate. Perhaps coaching behaviour is a self-presentation (cf. Potrac *et al.*, 2002), and like any other, could be improved. For example, Angie and Midge both described their impression of their coach, and that was that his interpersonal style leaves a lot to be desired, regardless of his technical expertise. By inference, their stories suggested that if he provided more of what the team was looking for from a coach, they would exert more concentration, effort, and perhaps play better as a result. There is an opportunity here to link impression management with other theories of leadership, and also investigate how the self-presentation of leaders (including captains, influential team members) can impact motivational climate. What self-presentational motives do coaches with different self-presentational and leadership styles have, and are they fulfilled? If not, what are the consequences? And reverting back to the player perspective, Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007) suggested that the self-presentational style of an athlete might impact the quality of service that they receive from support personnel

(e.g., physiotherapists), so it is an applied direction for future research (Ford & Gordon, 1997).

#### 5.3.2.2. Impressions participants formed of others, and associated outcomes

Eric described how he often picks certain players for the team based partly on their personality, because “they don’t wanna spend 6 hours in a minibus with a dick!” Also, when he was younger and playing tennis for an academy, his roommate was “insanely outspoken,” and caused controversy at tournaments. Because of this, the player never advanced as far as his talent would have projected; “tournament selectors thought he was a nightmare.” Fez recalled a player who “was always in the gym, so he *looked* the part, he talked the part, but he couldn’t play the game...He was really, really obsessed with self-image, coz that’s all he had, was to try and get big, or try to look the part and talk his way into a team.” Angie believed that teammates who “mope around” and do not help themselves are not worthy of her help, so their self-presentational style of helplessness (cf. Jones & Pitman, 1982) might lead to a lack of social support and have implications for their satisfaction and likelihood of dropout. Kelso described a player who was one of their better talents, and had been playing really well in training, “then absolutely awful in games.” Kelso felt that this player had “gone missing,” and in so doing, had been “found out” as someone who cannot perform when the pressure is on. Kelso concluded by saying that: “I just...I think, err, I just think people find that unimpressive like.” This narrative theme clearly suggests that athletes and other people involved in sport are quick to form opinions of players, and it may affect how likely they are to help them progress. Focused research along these lines would be worthwhile.



### 5.3.2.3. The interview as a self-presentational opportunity and associated reflections

Riessman (2003) believes that: “Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was” (p. 6). A part of the teller’s story is often a re-interpretation of past events in a way that helps them make sense of what occurred as it impacted and continues to impact their selves (Murray, 2003). In this way the interview can be a self-presentational opportunity to forge a more coherent identity. For example, when coaxed to describe herself, Donna “came out of her shell” in a sense, and provided a detailed list of characteristics including, but not limited to, the following: sporty; likes to work in teams and believes it is important to be able to coordinate and cooperate with others; kind; honest; tries not to be two-faced; open to new experiences; shyness gets in the way a little bit; aware of her limitations; considerate; organised; punctual; friendly and approachable; she does not like asking for help – she likes to be independent; and she would hate to come across as stupid or ignorant. In fact, after completing this ‘exercise,’ Donna seemed to shed some of her self-consciousness and relax more into her role as interviewee. It is conceivable that she was anxious about her ‘part to play’ as an interviewee, and the simple act of introspection and subsequent self-description allowed her to gain a sense of control over the proceedings thus reducing her discomfort (Goleman, 1995). Alternatively, she may have felt like she would do in a job interview until a certain cluster of questions convinced her that the context for a sharing of personal information had been established; i.e., it was not a test (cf. Huffcutt, 2011, for a recent review of the impression management in employee selection interviews literature).

Casey, also, seemed to develop impression efficacy at a particular juncture in the interview, and the tone of his responses differed from that point forward. In a similar vein, Donna seemed to treat certain questions like an invitation to confessional (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). Laurie and Casey

provided stories that differentiated them from certain members of their clubs and in doing so, bolstered their own desired identities. Hence, the interviews – or specific questions contained therein – cannot and should not be assumed to be a simple, unbiased sharing of information (cf. Dean & Whyte, 1958). Despite the interviewer's temptation to try to neutralise the interview atmosphere and ensure unfiltered responses to their questions, impression management by the interviewee is considered all-but unavoidable (Kvale, 1996). However, nothing in the current sample's stories implied deception or confabulation. Ultimately, everything was done to allow the interviewee to ease into the discussion, and other safeguards were in place (see section 5.4 below), so the identity-development self-presentational interview tactic can be harnessed for the insight it provides to the interviewee's personality. Indeed, storytelling may help athletes wrest order or control over their constraining self-concept (refer to Joanne's story on page 282), in the vein of the narrative therapy approach to treating mental health issues (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997).

The aim of study three of this thesis was to listen to participants' stories and try to *hear* the meaning behind them: constructivism-interpretivism seeks understanding from the point of view of those who live it; reality is socially constructed (Ponterotto, 2005). Hence, the spontaneity of participants' words was retained, the interviewer trusted his instincts and interpretive abilities, and the tenets of their stories are to be verified with future research. Indeed, the current study was exploratory, and the amount of information that was gathered has yielded dozens of worthwhile research directions (to be discussed further in chapter 6). In future studies that build on this first-of-its-kind example, it is not crucial that the ideas stemming from participants' stories are 'proven' – disconfirmation of possibilities can be equally useful for the continued refinement of the model. However, because these studies will be more focussed and theory-testing, the issue of interviewee recall accuracy might be more pressing; for example, although recall accuracy of anxiety for *recent* events tends to be acceptable (Harger & Raglin, 1994), the

competitive outcome may confound recall accuracy (Gould, Tuffey, Hardy, & Lochbaum, 1993). The stimulated-recall method used in the current study seemed to aid memory recall, but recall accuracy was not assessed systematically. It may be worthwhile to modify Raglin and Hanin's (2000) suggestions in this regard. Member-checking might also be useful as the research questions opened up by this study are taken forward, and the impression management research programme in sport gains traction (Koro-Ljunberg, 2008; Manning, 1997); that is to say that member-checking is more compatible with theory-testing methods and philosophies that are not as *interpretative* as the current study (Angen, 2000). Hence, subsequent studies, if they adopt qualitative methods, might seek to obtain evidence for Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four elements of trustworthiness: credibility (e.g., by cross-validating interview data with IMSQ-T responses and systematic observation of impression management 'in action' in the participant's sporting environment), transferability (e.g., by investigating cross-situational (in)consistency of impression motivation and self-presentational behaviours, or the similarities and differences in these measures between sports with alternate participation philosophies), dependability (e.g., by further refining the stimulated-recall methodology used in the current study to evidence its utility in examining a narrower range of impression management constructs), and confirmability (e.g., using a *post-hoc* member-checking procedure to assess participants' level of agreement with researcher interpretations).

#### 5.4. Strengths, limitations, and retrospective 'evidence' of trustworthiness

Almost without exception, the interviews were perceived by the researcher to have gone very well. It seemed extraordinary that of the fifteen interviewees, only one or two did not fit the prototypical good participant, described by Morse (1994) as the: "one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be

interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study” (p. 228). The interviewer felt that a rapport was evident with each participant, and that this was influenced by his video-taping a game and providing a copy for them. Some examples of information disclosed which hint at rapport having been developed between interviewer and interviewee include: Randy talking about a heart condition he has, and how similar ailments have harshly affected his family (Randy also divulged having been unfaithful to his previous girlfriend with his current girlfriend); Laurie described how she failed A-level Biology and got an E in music, and also that she had “drunk way too much in her first year and did things which she regrets”; and Kelso admitted to lacking patience and not being good enough with people to run for captancy. Demand characteristics are perceived pressures inherent in any situation that seem to demand certain types of behavior (Orne, 1962); the study as planned by the investigator or the study as perceived by the participants (Adair, 1984). Demand characteristics are usually manifest as socially desirable responding, so the present evidence of minimal social desirability suggest that the data is reliable.

However, a danger of having interviewees who tell great stories and are willing to talk at length is that they can lull the researcher into a false sense of security. If the researcher feels like they are doing a good job then they may not reflect as thoroughly on what needs to be done better in subsequent interviews. In the present study, this possibility was caught early, and if anything, made the researcher hypersensitive to not “coasting.” Despite this, it is inevitable that all participants did not get the same experience. First, the interview guide was not rigid enough to ensure this, and the order and extent of content discussion was guided by the participant; the interviews were, in some cases, very lengthy and it was sometimes difficult to keep track of which scheduled items had been covered, so some may have been missed. This arguably represents a strength, however, as the conversations were somewhat organic and not overly structured or constrained (Wolfson, 1976). Second, the interviewing technique might have (a) improved over time; and/or

(b) exhibited fluctuation between participants (i.e., the researcher's performance was better on some days than others). Finally, as a counter to these possible limitations, it was acknowledged that: "truth – or what we come to accept as true in terms of intentions, purposes, and meanings – is the result of socially conditioned agreement, arising from dialogue and reasoned discourse" (Smith, 1989, p. 171). The present interviewer engaged in reasoned dialogue with his participants throughout the discussions they shared, and this led him to the conclusion that his interpretations, if not "true" in an absolute sense, are certainly valid, plausible, and capture the meaning behind participant's stories (Warren, 2002).

#### *5.5. Summary and evidence for the impression management model in sport*

The purpose of this study was to invite stories from participants that added to our appreciation of the impression management process in sport. With the new model of impression management as a guide (Figure 6.1, below), the key findings that emerged from the interviews include:

- *Self-presentation concerns* – operationally defined as those things that individuals think about with regards their public image and its status – might limit the aspirations of an athlete, e.g., the self-presentationally concerned rugby player who does not put themselves forward for captaincy despite desiring the upgraded social status it would bring. Alternatively, self-presentation concerns may facilitate interpersonal goal-directed behaviours, such as proactive integration with one's new team-mates. The distinction would thus seem to depend on the tone of the concerns – i.e., whether negative, such as worry (as assessed by the SPSQ and CSPCI), and avoidance-motivating, or positive and consequently approach-motivating (cf. Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006) – and their interaction with other personality constructs, including public

self-consciousness and self-monitoring, and contextual nuances, such as club hierarchy and existing social climate. For example, James and Collins (1997) linked negatively toned self-presentation concerns (pressure to attain external standards, significant-other-directed concerns, and implied and overt criticism from others) to sport competition anxiety.

- *Self-presentational motives*
  - *Interpersonal influence.* Participants made a strong connection between their behaviour, the impressions others form of them based on their behaviour, and the interpersonal influence this can engender. A global outcome associated with effective impression management was, simply, a pleasant sporting experience, as participants' exerted social influence to build strong relationships, gain praise and respect, and avoid interpersonal tension. However, fundamentally, selection itself was seen by some players to be swayed by self-presentation tactics at this standard of sport; participants acknowledged that the general impression others form of an athlete can impact how their sporting and team-contributing abilities are perceived. Similarly, Roderick (2006) observed that professional footballers seek to enact socially acceptable self-presentations in order to "take the edge off" the competition for places they are in with their teammates. Finally, those athletes in positions of leadership were especially aware of the opportunity to maintain influence via impression management, and were also the target of self-presentation tactics in stories told by 'regular' team members. Previous research with coaches supports the importance of effective impression management for sport leaders (e.g., Jones, 2006; Potrac *et al.*, 2002).
  - *Development of self,* with particular reference to the development of a desired social identity, was frequently cited as a motive for self-presentation. Participants described the many ways that they benefit from being a member of a sport club (and often a

committee), and the corresponding impressions that help them integrate closely matched those that comprise factor 5 of the IMSQ-T ('Development of a social identity') – which had the highest mean impression motivation score. Participants also attested to the importance of “getting stuck in” with the social side of the sport in order to augment or enhance the benefits they derive from playing on the court/pitch/piste/course. These findings support those of Grove and Dodder (1982) and Leary *et al.* (1986), which suggest that people enter sports to claim the social identity of an athlete and/or fulfil social identity motives. In addition, participants verbalized a clear link between their self-presentations and the form and type of feedback they received in sport, and this helped them to appraise their progress towards fulfillment of their *development of self* motives.

- The *emotion regulation* motive for self-presentation was discussed largely in terms of how participants can bring their affect and performance expectations more in line with their desired state prior to and during competition (cf. Leary, 1995, who reviews literature showing that self-presentation can make the individual *feel better*). In this way, self-confidence was frequently cited; while not an emotion *per se*, participants often described a combination of heightened self-confidence and lowered debilitating anxiety (cf. Hanton, Mellalieu, & Hall, 2004), so their comments fell within the same theoretical discussion described by Leary (1995). Numerous self-presentation tactics were disclosed by participants as a way of boosting how they feel in sporting and (sporting) social situations. *Emotion-presentation* helps emotion regulation and has performance implications: that is, an inability to suppress presenting negative emotions such as anger, or a lack of expression of positive felt states, can have knock-on effects in terms of how it makes you and the opponent feel about the contest. Participants perceived their emotion-presentations to influence the thoughts and affect of teammates too. For example, presenting oneself as confident so

that they have confidence in you, and ensuring one's preparedness as this can evoke an impression of confidence. Hence, emotion-presentation can serve social-regulative functions as well as self-regulative, and sometimes both in conjunction (Hackfort & Schlattmann, 1991, 2002, 2005).

- *Impression monitoring.* Stories told by participants suggested that their impression monitoring perceptual system is less likely to alert them to a self-presentational opportunity – thereby heightening impression motivation – when they feel comfortable with their team/squad-mates and the context as a whole. This may be because the athlete's public self-consciousness is decreased in such conditions, whereas it is heightened when something within the context makes them feel uncomfortable and doubtful as to the 'health' of their public image (Carver & Scheier, 1985).
- *Situational antecedents of impression motivation.* Athletes were able to vividly recall circumstances that had heightened their motivation to create a desired impression. For example: team trials were cited as impression-relevant due to the importance of first impressions, dependency on the selectors for rewards, and scarcity of the opportunity to make a good impression; for similar reasons, higher competitive standards elicited heightened impression motivation; proximity to one's teammates on the field-of-play might increase impression motivation to those you must co-act with more directly; the status and knowledgability of the audience, i.e., certain coaches and teammates are more respected due to their experience, and impression motivation is higher when in their presence; when a previous match with an opponent has made the athlete perceive a discrepancy between their current and desired public image; and impression motivation is often higher when one's status within the team is (apparently) not yet secure. Hence, the data in this study very closely resemble some of the antecedents of self-presentational anxiety, identified as such by James and Collins (1997) because they raise impression motivation.



- *Impression construction*
  - *Self-concept.* Participants' stories clearly indicated that different self-concepts are active when playing and when socialising with their teammates. The athletic self-concept, or phenomenal self, is a powerful determinant of one's constructed impression in the build-up to and during a competitive event; once competition is over, the athlete's self-presentation is perhaps more representative of their social selves. In addition, participants indicated a willingness to 'stretch' their self-presentation to fit the social situation, but similar flexibility was not evident in terms of their self-descriptions of ability. However, in university sport there seems to be benefits available to louder, more acquisitive self-presenters that transfer from the social side *on to* the field of play. These findings are without precedent in the sport psychology literature
  - *Desired identity images* in sport were as anticipated, and included: skillful, honest, reliable, approachable, effective leader, tough, trustworthy under pressure, and committed (cf. James & Collins, 1995). A vast range of accompanying self-presentational tactics were cited; again, nothing groundbreaking, but this is the first study to have explicitly gathered this information. The key finding was that participants were aware that other people can confer upon them many of their desired identity images, and so impression management is a necessary skill in this respect.
  - *Role constraints*, especially as imposed by group norms and club expectations, were important determinants of participants' constructed impressions. Similarly, behavioural norms within each sporting subculture that were easily recognizable as self-presentational were powerful influences to participants (cf. Roderick, 2006; Ward, 1998).

- Cited self-presentational targets included match officials, captains, captains of higher teams, coaches and head coaches, team selectors, teammates, spectators, and academy selection committees. The target and the *target's values*, as perceived by participants, influenced their chosen impressions in various ways: generally showing respect to the referee (being nice, call them Sir, “brown-nose them”); staying out of the way of, or being quiet around, captains of higher teams; not joking around and trying a bit harder when coaches are near; acquisitive behaviours such as demonstrative fist pumps and not showing negative emotions when performing for selection committees; and avoiding certain topics of conversation with particular teammates. Again, this is the first known study to explore such questions, but many coaches in Johansson (2010) reported that:: “they would choose an athlete with good behavior (sic) and favorable (sic) personality over an athlete with better sports skills, if the system allowed for such alternatives” (p. 3). Presumably then, athletes are intuitively aware that this is the case, so they construct appropriate impressions when possible.
- Participants provided examples of their having accumulated idiosyncrasy credits through good play and effective impression management in the social setting. This, in turn, often ensures that a negative discrepancy between *current and potential social image* is not overly concerning to them.
- *Impression efficacy*. Some participants were, and some were not, able to distinguish between general sport efficacy and sporting impression efficacy; some participants expressed confidence in their sporting ability but not their ability to make a desired impression; some felt that their sporting achievements would “take care of their public image,” and some felt their sporting self-confidence would do the same. Despite these individual differences in conceptualising the construct, participants were

each able to give examples of factors that heighten or diminish their impression efficacy. Also, impression efficacy seems to fluctuate both *between* sporting situations and *within* single scenarios. Hence, impression efficacy is especially in need of future research attention (cf. Martin Ginis *et al.*, 2007).

- *Impression management cognitions and task performance.* Stories from Leo, Casey, and Randy exemplified ways that impression-related thoughts, feelings, and motivation can have positive perceived effects on performance; through mechanisms including increased motivation, focus, and encouragement, *a la* Study 2. Conversely, stories from Jacqui, Donna, Angie, and Laurie exemplified ways that impression-related thoughts, feelings, and motivation can have negative perceived effects on performance; through mechanisms such as increased performance pressure and associated ‘choking,’ and unwanted additional mental distractions. The latter are presumably the conditions under which impression management cognitions *do* have the power to interfere with performance, and that the manipulation in Study 2 of this thesis could not elicit. Threat versus challenge appraisals of impression management cognitions and affective responses may be the defining factor in this conundrum.
- *Affective responses to impression management cognitions.* The prospect of “feeling really good” accompanied the expectation of self-presentational success; this initial response was often then associated with other positive outcomes: increased confidence in ability, knowing that you’d be selected for the opponent’s team, winning man of the match, being respected, etc (see also Stage 1 of Study 1 of this thesis). Positive affective responses can also be elicited by effective self-presentations in non-playing forums, e.g., being selected for captaincy (Casey), and “getting yourself known” can have cross-over benefits too (Jacqui). Further, impression management cognitions can affect performance indirectly through self-presentational state competition anxiety. At times, criticism or negative evaluation made Laurie’s

performance break down; when others' attention is focussed on Midge she imagines herself making mistakes and then invariably does ("it would be all my fault"), and this disrupts her impression management attempts. There was also evidence of the potential for positive group dynamics to ameliorate the impact of self-presentational dilemmas; although feeling nervous around certain teammates can deprive people of possible social benefits; novel situations can also accentuate the potential for self-presentational embarrassment.

From this snapshot of a much larger amount of data – which covers all components of the burgeoning impression management model in sport, as well as various inductive themes – numerous research possibilities have been identified and discussed throughout the *Results and Discussion* section, above. Those research questions deemed most pertinent will receive renewed and additional attention in the general discussion of this thesis.

## Chapter Six

### General Discussion

#### *Overview of the thesis*

The impetus for this thesis was the premise that impression management – in its cognitive, motivational, affective, and behavioural guises – is especially relevant in the interpersonally evaluative domain of sport (Leary, 1992). To build on existing knowledge the thesis first identified areas of a model of impression management in sport that (a) had received little prior research attention, and (b) would facilitate particularly informative research. On the basis of these investigations, previously unanswered yet fundamental questions were pinpointed: are athletes impression-motivated, and what are their motives for self-presentation; do impression management cognitions and self-presentation attempts divert attention from task performance (i.e., first and second generation questions); and how do athletes describe the impression management process, from the initial motive through to affective and behavioural consequences, as well as more long-term personal and team-level ramifications? Three studies were designed and implemented and subsequently contributed to the fulfilment of the aims of the research programme. Study one (chapter three) created and provided initial validation of a measure of impression motivation in team-sport athletes. Study two (chapter four) investigated the implications for cognitive performance when athletes are impression-motivated. Study three (chapter five) gained the athlete's perspective on a vast range of theoretical and practical propositions which emanate from the impression management model in sport. Thus, each study contributed to the broad aim of the thesis, and as a whole, addressed first, second, and third generation questions that had been hitherto unanswered (cf. Zanna & Fazio, 1982).

### *Main findings of the thesis*

Study one asked first generation “Is” questions: the answer was that the phenomenon of impression motivation does indeed exist in team-sport athletes, regardless of sport, gender, and age. Athletes’ responses indicated that they have varying degrees of dispositional motivation to achieve five inter-related but independent goals (range of  $\bar{x}$  factor scores = 60.59 to 80.00 on a 100-pt visual analogue scale). The categories formed by their responses (Development of Self, Avoidance of Impression-Damaging Reactions, Avoidance of Negative Sporting Outcomes, Seeking Esteem-Enhancing Reactions, Development of a Social Identity) suggest that self-presentation can serve both intra- and inter-personal purposes, or perhaps both simultaneously (Leary, 1995). Study two extended these findings by asking follow-up first generation “Is” questions: the answer was that there would certainly appear to be performance consequences when the situation elicits athletes’ heightened impression motivation. Study two suggests that athletes may be able to counter potential distraction stemming from the increased impression motivation that they are consciously aware of. Brief post-final-visit interviews suggested that participants perceived added incentive in the manipulated conditions to have focused their attention on the assessed task. Study three uncovered evidence that elucidates and augments knowledge gained from the extant literature and the previous two studies. For example, until now not much was known about the impression management cognitions that athletes experience during performance. Study three’s stimulated-recall interview methodology helped address this limitation. The ways in which athletes assess the effectiveness of their self-presentation tactics, and how this feeds back to their impression motivation in subsequent encounters, is now better understood also.

### *Theoretical advancements made by the thesis*

According to Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007): “[Leary and Kowalski’s model] does not yet provide (nor does it claim to provide) the predictive and explanatory powers associated with more fully developed and delineated theories” (p.

152). The present thesis combined Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model of situational impression motivation and impression construction with the complimentary framework of self-presentational motives offered by Leary (1995). With this core as the basis, the model was expanded to include additional variables implicated in the impression management process as a whole. Each study made theoretical advancements specific to certain components of the model (Figure 6.1).

Study one advanced theory by providing compelling evidence that self-presentational motives in sport are remarkably convergent with those cited by humans in other walks of life (Leary, 1995). This immediately strengthens the foundations of the model in sport, because it suggests that social psychology research on impression motivation can in fact be applied to the sport context (cf. Leary, 1992). Thus, confident predictions can be made of the IMSQ-T based on outcomes that have been associated with the different motives in previous social psychology research. However, the outcomes may be quite different for athletes because of their apparent ability to overcome potentially threatening antecedents; in particular, a negative discrepancy between their strength of motivation to make certain impressions and their perceived ability to do so (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). The tendency of athletes to make functional appraisals of this combination was further verified by the minority who did perceive it to be threatening ("the exceptions who proved the rule"). Therefore, study one targeted self-presentational motives, impression motivation, impression efficacy, and impression affect, and evidenced their theoretical reciprocity.

In study two, cognitive performance was markedly better when participants were manipulated to believe there was self-presentational implications of their performance (a first generation "Is" question). Participants impression-monitored during the test, and their impression motivation was raised by the experimental manipulation. Thus, it would appear that they had active self-presentational motives – an explicit aim of the study. Study two also asked a

*post-hoc* second generation “What” question: under what conditions does the performance-facilitation effect of heightened impression motivation hold? In this respect it appears that the combination of increased impression monitoring, impression motivation, and positive appraisals of one’s impression management cognitions enhances performance. Further, a tentative suggestion can be made that posits increased effort and concentration during performance itself as a crucial self-presentational tactic that is available to athletes regardless of their impression efficacy.

Qualitative data gathered in study three was successfully able to address first and second generation questions for all components of the model; it made the link between theoretical propositions and ‘real’ outcomes including sporting performance, career progression, and psychosocial wellbeing. Athletes spoke in detail of: the impressions they would prefer to convey; their reasons for wanting to do so; the situational factors that facilitate self-presentation and compel or restrain impression construction; the sources of their impression efficacy; tactics they adopt in order to attain certain goals; performance effects that they’ve experienced as a result of these thoughts and motivations; and more. In telling these stories, participants provided second generation data on, for example: *when* they become self-presentationally anxious; *when* their impression motivation is heightened and *why*; and *what* audience characteristics are particularly important in determining the form their self-presentation takes. In addition, participants claimed that impression-related thoughts do not distract them during performance – an admission that supports the experimental results of study two, and is implied in the self-report data from study one (majority of challenge appraisals, less distracting than threats).



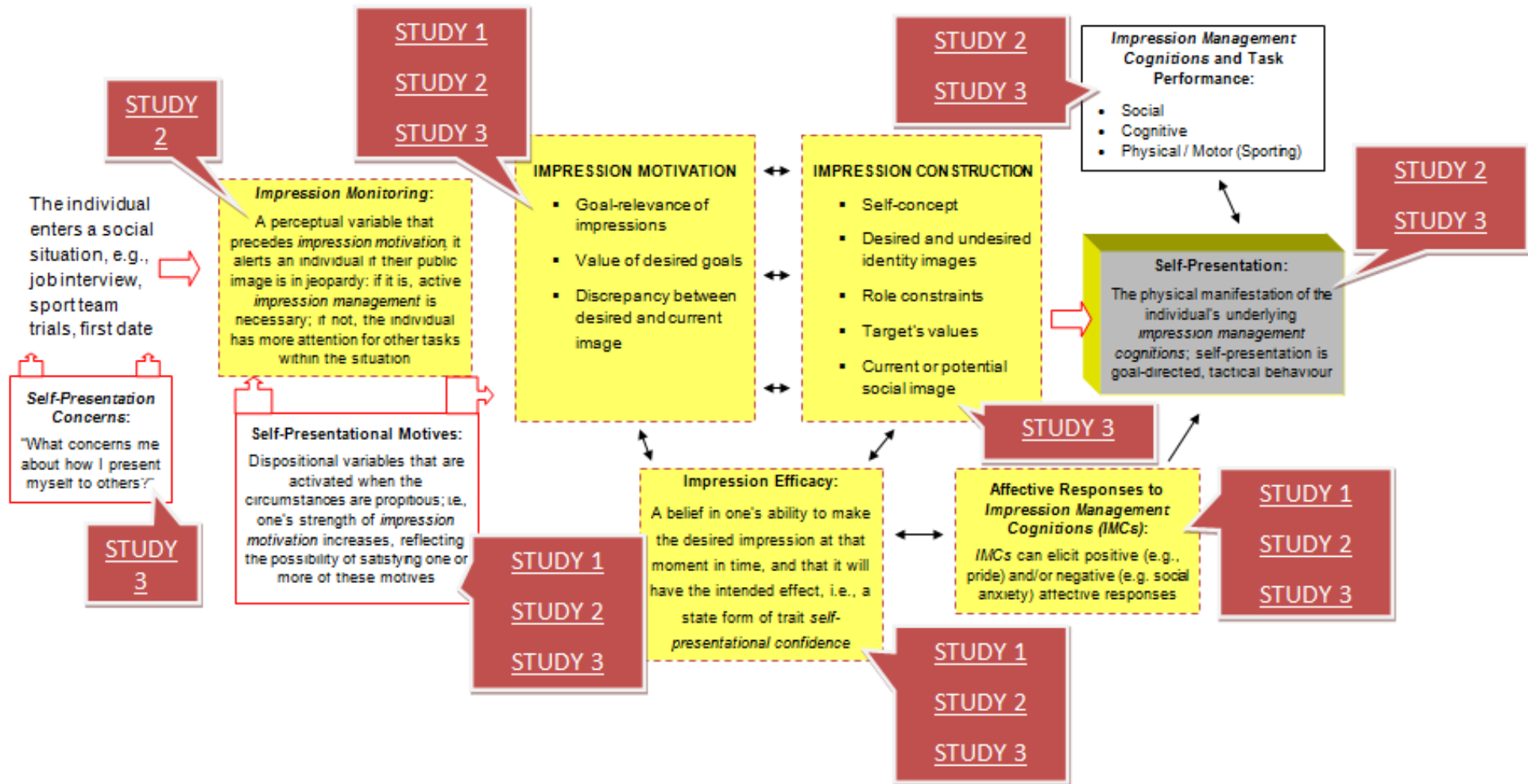


Figure 6.1. The model of impression management in sport with areas highlighted that gained support in this thesis

### *Methodological advancements made by the thesis*

Each study comprising this programme of research made methodological contributions that are worthy of note. Study one has developed a means of assessing impression motivation and related constructs that was not possible previously. As such, study one fulfilled one of Martin Ginis *et al.*'s (2007) primary "building plans for the future," that being: "the continued development and assessment of sport- and exercise-relevant measures of self-presentation [which] is crucial to the advancement of knowledge" (p. 153). Study two represented a worthy attempt to manipulate impression management cognitions, and the results suggest that interesting data will be forthcoming when the assessed variables are more ecologically valid. Study three made use of stimulated recall methods and a story-telling approach that are both underused in sport psychology (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, b); the combination fulfilled considerable descriptive and analytical potential that other researchers may want to tap when seeking to answer questions amenable to these methods.

### *Strengths, delimitations, and limitations of the thesis*

The main strength of this thesis is the conceptual clarity and comprehensiveness of the theoretical framework on which it is based (as discussed in the previous section). Adoption of Leary's (1995; Leary and Kowalski, 1990) principles has been justified by the support afforded them by the current results. The eclectic mix of studies was selected because, in the author's opinion, it represented the best chance of addressing the most pertinent research questions (cf. Morgan, 2007). To paraphrase Sparkes and Partington (2003), the thesis has played an important role in exploring the *whats* of impression management in sport (describing the phenomenon and its facets, identifying consequences associated with it). In addition, study three explored the *hows* of impression management in sport (self-presentational behaviours that result from the preceding impression management cognitions, and the impact they have on the self and others). The model displayed below (Figure 6.1) attests to the amount of evidence

that has been gathered using these means. The novelty of the research programme is both a strength and a weakness, in that there is little evidence in sport for cross-referencing to confirm or refute the claims made herein. However, it is hoped that the studies speak for themselves in this respect. Limitations of each study were discussed in some detail in the chapter in which they are presented.

A delimitation of the thesis was its focus in studies one and two on team sport athletes only. The impact on performance of unregulated impression management cognitions, and associated emotions, may be greatest in individual-based subjectively scored athletic pursuits, such as gymnastics, dance, diving, even the martial arts. In such endeavours, without the immediate presence of teammates to diffuse or disperse the evaluative focus of the audience, distracting thoughts may be more of a hindrance. As noted by Hackfort and Schlattmann (2005), in such sports: “presentation of the self to others is a main aspect of the performance” (p. 148). That is not to say that these athletes have greater impression motivation than team-sport proponents; but it appears that teammates, rather than being a threat to the athlete’s self-presentational motives, assist in the challenge. Therefore, future research with individual-based sport performers, and individual-based subjectively scored sportspeople, will need to test this possibility. Also, the athletes sampled in this thesis were predominantly university student-athletes and competitive (often semi-professional) local league squad members. Similar populations were used in the majority of the self-presentation concerns studies, and as discussed, they have tended to be low in self-presentation concerns; except Eklund *et al.*’s (1999) Commonwealth Games participants, who were similarly low in self-presentation concerns. It remains a possibility that athletes from higher standards will exhibit self-presentational threat appraisals because their position is more tenuous and ineffective performance is less likely to be tolerated (cf. Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009). Indeed, in study three the participants who had reached a higher standard (regional, academy, Welsh schools) or were still

competing at that level shared more stories that would support this contention.

### *Future research*

With the evidence provided by the current programme of research, aspects of the impression management model are poised to be tested for predictive and explanatory power. However, and in light of the relative infancy of this area in sport psychology, it is prudent to adopt guidelines for choosing the most appropriate research questions rather than forging ahead untethered. Hardy *et al.* (1996) provide excellent advice in this regard, starting with the notion that researchers should target topics based on personal interest and: “the time, research experience, and resource constraints that operate on them” (p. 255). Armed with this self-knowledge, researchers must strive to conduct research which: asks important questions and closely matches the chosen method to these; is part of a line of systematic research; and strives for, develops, and is guided by theory (Hardy *et al.*, 1996). The theoretical basis for future research on impression management in sport has been strengthened with this thesis, but further work is required nonetheless.

With the suggestions of Hardy *et al.* (1996) in mind, the following avenues of investigation are forwarded as most urgent if theoretical and practical advancements are to be made in the area of impression management in sport (NB: the reader is reminded that each study included a comprehensive discussion of the possible research directions to be prompted by the specific findings of each; what follows is the author’s selection and summary of the most pressing opportunities):

### *Theoretical research directions:*

- Further validation and refinement of the IMSQ-T is required. The former should include a closer inspection of the impression efficacy and impression affect response scales, as these constructs might be more

important than first anticipated (discussed further below; it was a delimitation of study one to focus factor analyses on the impression motivation response scale). A state version of the IMSQ-T would also be useful; rather than assessing impression management variables at the dispositional level, this scale could account for different self-presentational targets *within the same event* (e.g., coach, captain, teammate, spectators), while tapping state impression motivation for various self-presentational motives, impression efficacy and impression affect associated with each target, across a variety of sporting scenarios using a within-subjects design (e.g., trials, competitions of contrasting subjective importance, etc.). This study design would address first, second, and third generation theoretical questions as well as providing a detailed picture of how the constructs manifest in a practical sense.

- As discussed in the discussion for study one, once the psychometric properties of the IMSQ-T have gained additional support, numerous research directions will be available. For example, it will be possible to: (1) assess the strength of association *between* impression management variables and their ability to predict one another; (2) construct a structural equation model of the relationship between the impression management variables and their theoretical correlates; and (3) address questions of mediation and moderation, both between impression management variables and *with* additional constructs inserted into the equation.
- With reference to points 2 and 3 in the above paragraph, knowledge of the causal relations between constructs will enhance the construct validity and predictive capability of impression management phenomena. Study one's discussion alluded to the pertinence of including measures of sport- and task-specific self-efficacy, social anxiety, self-esteem, athletic identity, sport confidence, and sport motivation in the structural equation model (or nomological network; cf. Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Thatcher & Hagger, 2008). The reasoning behind these suggestions was only strengthened with the data collected in study three: participants' stories exemplified the potential for impression management constructs

to be superseded by a more global alternative, e.g., impression efficacy as a component of sport efficacy, and impression motivation as a part of overall sporting motivation. Indeed, impression efficacy emerged as an elusive concept in this thesis, while hinting at its own importance – as predicted by Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007). Future research will tease out answers to these conundrums, and a structural equation model in particular would estimate the amount of variance in intrinsic motivation that was explained by impression motivation, for example.

- Next, one can presume that in the “real world” of sport the strength of impression motivation elicited in study two is frequently present (Leary, 1992). This interpretation is partly supported by the comparable levels of dispositional impression motivation observed in study one. Therefore, it is feasible that impression motivation is part of an athlete’s overall motivation to do well and improve in their sport (as mentioned above); i.e., impression management of ability to self and others – often described as important in study three – may contribute to persistence and self-determination in training and competition. Hence, research targeting the link between impression motivation and measures of motivation that have established predictive validity (e.g., Pelletier & Sarrazin, 2007) could enhance the explanatory power of the impression management model. The same could be said of sport confidence and self-efficacy: in study three athletes explicitly connected their efficacy to *present* themselves as an able sportsperson to their global sport confidence; therefore, the interconnectedness of these variables could be explored in the same way as the above motivation proposition (e.g., using Vealey *et al.*'s (1998) Sources of Sport Confidence Questionnaire).
- Valid measures of impression management constructs allows for multiple methods to be employed, e.g., combining psychometric assessment with interviews and observation (Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996; Gould, Udry, Tuffey, & Loehr, 1996). The impression management-sport performance relationship could benefit from an investigation that combines the strengths of these different epistemological approaches, as

study two suggested that the relationship is more complex than anticipated (cf. Hardy & Hutchinson, 2007, for an example of multifaceted theoretical and practical relationships being explored with complimentary methods). Indeed, study three data implied that some participants are able to identify temporal characteristics of their self-presentational distractions, which would be useful to the applied practitioner. Finally, impression management cognitions may be involved in performance impairments because they can accompany another presenting problem, such as lost movement syndrome (Day *et al.*, 2006).

- In terms of the study one result regarding the preponderance of challenge appraisals of antecedent impression management cognitions: the manner in which this result diverged from Schlenker and Leary's (1982) theory of social anxiety should prompt investigations to identify why and how athletes are different from other populations. Such a study could form part of a systematic line of inquiry to refine the IMSQ-T impression efficacy and impression affect response scales; i.e., are these scales accurately tapping the intended constructs as operationally defined according to theory? Future research could also ascertain what consequences are experienced by the minority of athletes who do find low impression efficacy to be threatening (Table 3.11), and how this sub-population differs *per se* from those who report a challenge appraisal of the same levels of impression motivation and impression efficacy. Finally, threat and challenge appraisals, and the anxiety or excitement that they typically precede, are not purported to be the only affective/emotional responses to impression-related thoughts, feelings, and expectations. An example of how to identify a wide range of affective responses to impression management cognitions is to ask sportspeople themselves, as did Jones *et al.* (2005) in developing the Sport Emotion Questionnaire.
- The researcher could also use the IMSQ-T to empirically examine to what extent the strength of different self-presentational motives predicts related behaviours. For example, measures derived from Jones and

Pittman's (1982) taxonomy of self-presentational strategies – *ingratiation*, *intimidation*, *self-promotion*, *exemplification*, and *supplication* – could be applied to sport. Specifically, the IMSQ-T factors may be differentially associated with alternative self-presentational tactics: e.g., the 'Seeking esteem-enhancing reactions' motive (factor 4) may be a reliable predictor of Jones and Pittman's self-promotion strategy. A more ecologically valid approach would be to construct an independent taxonomy of self-presentational strategies *in* sport, including motives, desired (and undesired) impressions, and intended outcomes; this would map more specifically than the impression management model, what motives and self-presentations correspond, and under what conditions the effects hold true. Hence, this line of inquiry could supplement the model nicely. Research investigating the self-presentational underpinnings of athlete behaviours could have also practical implications, e.g., in helping the applied consultant who is struggling to understand why the soccer player in their charge is displaying antagonistic or otherwise negative behaviours towards their teammates (i.e., sometimes a seemingly deleterious self-presentation can have the desired social outcomes). Finally, taking the view of sporting-performance-as-self-presentational-behaviour, it would be interesting to observe the relationship between the impression management constructs measured by the IMSQ-T and performance itself; for example: is strong dispositional impression motivation associated with consistently superior sporting performance?; does weak impression efficacy predict inferior performance?; and do others view impression-motivated athletes as successful in their attempts to manage their public image?

- (1) Are there between sport differences in the strength of impression management cognitions and the prevalence of their behavioural manifestations? It would be possible to cross-reference self-report data with observations of athlete behaviour and a critical analysis of characteristics of the sports that might contribute to the differences and similarities that emerged. An example investigation would be the self-presentational underpinnings of conformity (Arkin, 1981; Jones &



Pittman, 1982). (2) Are there within-sport differences in the strength of impression management cognitions and the prevalence of their behavioural manifestations? For example, a similar method could be used to examine whether status within the club hierarchy and/or general seniority is associated with a different pattern of impression management cognitions and behavioural outcomes. Can we predict who will occupy leadership positions by their self-report data, and can we predict success in the roles likewise? These are examples of research that the IMSQ-T could facilitate, and would be useful because it would shed light on the psychosocial benefits that are associated with effective impression management in sport.

- Impression construction received a substantial amount of coverage in the results and discussion section of study three. The amount of data on this topic generated by study three was satisfying because very little was known prior to it. However, the temporal placement of impression construction in the impression management model is no clearer as a result. It appears that impression construction is more difficult when the target is the athlete's coach or a high-status captain – because of their relative dissimilarity to the athlete in comparison to their 'regular' teammates (peers) – and this may reduce impression efficacy. Hence, one's impression efficacy judgement may reflect an appraisal of the impression motivation-imperson construction pairing, rather than be an accompaniment to one's level of impression motivation *per se*. Perhaps impression efficacy impinges on an individual's impression construction attempts. These issues are important because impression construction is heavily influenced by one's desired identity images, and identity development is a major motive for self-presentation (Baumeister, 1982). Hence, if impression construction is involved in the development of an individual's athletic identity, as suggested by the data in study three, such questions need to be resolved.
- One thing that the findings from all three studies point to with regards impression motivation is the need for alternative and complimentary

methods of data collection. Research has shown that the impressions observers form of the self-presenter – i.e., the result of the individual's self-presentation – are largely automatic (Bargh, Chaiken, Raymond, & Hymes, 1996; Cacioppo, Priester, & Berntson, 1993; Dijksterhuis, Spears, & Lépinasse, 2001; Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986; Zajonc, 1980). Given the insistence of some participants in study three that they do not think about impression management during competition – despite contrary evidence when watching the video – it is possible that a proportion of impression motivation is implicit too. Indeed, athletes may have developed ingrained self-presentational habits, as have the majority of us (e.g., checking one's appearance when walking past mirrored glass; Hogan, 1982; Hogan, Jones, & Cheek, 1985; Schlenker, 1980). Therefore, an implicit association test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) could be created that assesses the extent to which athletes are aware of their impression motivation. If impression motivation is the centrepiece in a model of impression management, and explicit measures can capture but a fraction of the construct, perhaps implicit measurement will add to what is known about the importance of impression motivation in sport.

*Applied research directions:*

- A thread that persistently emerged throughout the programme of research was the theoretical relationship between impression management and group dynamic concepts in sport. First, fulfilment of the self-presentational motives discovered in study one require the presence and/or reactions of others: for example, the motivation to create a good impression because “...the positive feedback I'll get makes me feel good,” and to “...avoid being criticised by coach, as this will create a bad impression in the eyes of my team-mates.” Second, participants experienced a social facilitation effect in study two when they perceived an opportunity to bolster their impression through performing well on the task. Third, stories told by participants in study three closely aligned to

each of the following theoretical scenarios: esteem-development self-presentation motives may be thwarted by an unkind coach or captain who “puts an athlete down” in front of the squad; impression motivation could be raised when socialising with the captain of a higher team; when impression construction is undertaken it accounts for many group dynamics (role constraints, target’s value, etc.); dispositional impression efficacy could be heightened because of a praise-giving coach; self-presentational behaviours are an immediate response to situational and contextual influences; the expression of affective responses to impression management cognitions may be tempered by the team culture; and impression assessment is easier when one’s team-mates are approachable and/or provide constructive criticism (cf. Carron *et al.*, 2004; Mulvey, Bowes-Sperry, & Klein, 1998; Payne, 2004, *unpublished Bachelors dissertation*; Rozell & Gundersen, 2003; Schlenker, 1975).

- Therefore, positive and negative aspects of group dynamics – including social cohesion, collective efficacy, effective leadership and role modelling, productive and adaptive team norms, and social support – are potentially implicated in all phases of impression management. Hence, if there is a rift in a team, impression management might help explain why certain members are behaving the way they are in contributing to the problem. For example, a player’s hetero- or homosexual attraction for a teammate, the coach, or a member of the support staff may lead to compensatory or defensive self-presentations that impact the group’s dynamics and effectiveness of the interrelationships within the squad (Krane, 1996).
- The first step on a systematic path of inquiry taking this route could be to compare idiographic profiles of athletes that incorporate group dynamics (e.g., perceptions of team cohesiveness, collective efficacy, motivational climate; Carron *et al.*, 1985; Hodges & Carron, 1992; Newton, Duda, & Yin, 2002) and impression management measures. The results of these

comparisons would inform follow-up research to ascertain whether, at the group level, higher average scores on the group dynamic measures are associated with lower impression motivation and stronger impression efficacy, as suggested by the findings of study three. Further research could assess the role of self-presentationally-underpinned group norms, self-handicapping, and public attributions in perceptions of group dynamics (cf. Festinger *et al.*, 1950; Jones *et al.*, 1963; Piliavin, 1976; Prapavessis *et al.*, 2004; Roderick, 2006; Thatcher & Hagger, 2008).

- A case study approach that triangulates data on the self-presentational motives of players and the impressions formed of them by their teammates and coaches would be particularly illuminating. For example, what happens when there is incompatibility between the two perspectives? Can the coach's/selector's/judge's opinion of the athlete be changed based on the athlete's self-presentation tactics, especially if they have preconceptions of the athlete prior to the event starting? Do athletes believe this to be the case? Do athletes know what others are looking for in them, and how strongly and *how* exactly does this influence their desired and undesired identity images? In study three of this thesis only self-generated examples of desirable images were collected – which is key to impression motivation after all – but it would be good to assess the strength of our perception of others' preferences in comparison, for (mis)matches. If the athlete is impression-efficacious in spite of evidence that the target is biased to their potential detriment, theoretically, is this the essence of impression efficacy? Securing collaboration with an intact team/squad of athletes and their instructors would be an important step towards researching these questions. The findings would, in turn, provide the applied practitioner with information relevant to alleviating self-presentational anxiety.
- What is the role of feedback in the perceived attainment and non-attainment of self-presentational objectives? Research could investigate

the differential impact of the provider of feedback and the form it takes; whether or not the prevailing competitive conditions influence its impact (e.g., leading, or stuck in an aggressive stalemate); and the potential for feedback to deter or compel certain self-presentational tactics, and the length of time that elapses before positive-feedback-generating behaviours are internalised by the athlete and become automatised.

- Finally, for the applied consultant working with elite youth athletes who are expected to “look like they want to be there” (R. Thelwell, personal communication, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011), knowledge of impression management is potentially very important. In the only known impression management research with youth athletes, Smith *et al.* (2006) found that self-presentation concerns were strongly positively correlated with competitive trait anxiety and moderately negatively correlated with perceived competence. On average the children were not particularly concerned about their public image, but this may have been a function of their non-elite status and the possibly non-threatening atmosphere of the youth camp at which they were in attendance. However, at elite standards of youth sport, athletes may need to be cognisant of the image they are portraying, and the key question is thus: do impression monitoring and impression motivation follow a developmental pattern? That is, are youth athletes socialised into an awareness of their public image earlier than non-athlete children? Can career success be predicted based on the impression management profile of athletes and its shifting nature over time? How do children learn what, when, and how to self-present effectively? Related to many of the points raised in this general discussion, is impression motivation involved in athletes: having a fulfilling versus unsatisfying sporting experience; making career progress or being held back; being seen as a positive member of the team versus a destructive one, and the consequences of this; and experiencing distracting or task-focusing thoughts related to their image? And taking this line of thinking right back to individual differences: are personality constructs such as self-consciousness and self-monitoring involved, and what do we know about their developmental facets that

can help us understand the impression management of children and adolescents? A youth sport version of the IMSQ-T would allow the self-presentational motives and dispositional strength of impression motivation of youth athletes to be traced over time, and mapped on to other measures; psychological, behavioural, and social. Undeniably, there are ethical issues associated with educating child athletes to impression-manage before they are mature enough to do so of their own volition. However, returning to the adage that impression management is not deceptive, youths and their parents could be gently sensitised to the need for the athlete to present their desirable characteristics to important people in their sport. This, in turn, could have beneficial transfer effects to the school and family context, as the child comes to associate positive outcomes with proactive self-presentations (Leary, 1995).

### *Concluding remarks*

The relevance of impression management in sporting contexts has been demonstrated through a coherent programme of original research. The challenge appraisals and positive performance consequences associated with heightened impression motivation are a promising avenue of research that will have applied implications. However, there remains much to be investigated in this area, a fact that the current findings have highlighted despite their own considerable merits. In addition to the results of the three studies presented herein, a contemporary model of impression management in sport – and the extensive hypotheses it generates – has been provided (Table 6.1). This model is a work-in-progress, however, and it is assumed that additional components will be added to it in the future (e.g., personality factors). The chosen studies and the model build on suggestions made in the relatively recent reviews of Martin Ginis *et al.* (2007) and Prapavessis *et al.* (2004), while further strengthening the link between social psychology and sport psychology in this particular domain. It is hoped that further research will be stimulated based on the information contained within this thesis.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix One:

Self-presentation in sport survey

(Section 3.2.2; stage one of study one; shrunk for formatting purposes)

Impression Management in Sport

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE HEREIN WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS, AND THAT THE RESULTS WILL BECOME THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH.

I CONSENT TO BE A PART OF THE STUDY:

SIGNED:

---

AGE (Years & Months):

---

PRIMARY SPORT:

---

STANDARD YOU CURRENTLY  
PLAY AT AND ALSO THE  
HIGHEST STANDARD YOU  
HAVE REACHED IN YOUR  
PLAYING CAREER (Complete  
this *only* if it applies to you):

---

**TOP 5 MOST DESIRABLE IMPRESSIONS YOU WANT TO CONVEY OF YOURSELF IN SPORT** 1.  
 (i.e., what attributes do you want people involved with your sport to think that you possess?): 2.  
 3.  
 4.  
 5.

FROM ZERO (No confidence) to 100 (Extremely confident), RATE HOW CONFIDENT YOU ARE THAT OTHERS WILL BELIEVE THAT YOU DO, IN FACT, POSSESS THESE CHARACTERISTICS:

IMPRESSION 1)  
 IMPRESSION 2)  
 IMPRESSION 3)  
 IMPRESSION 4)  
 IMPRESSION 5)

WHO, IN PARTICULAR, WOULD YOU LIKE TO VIEW YOU AS POSSESSING THESE CHARACTERISTICS? 1.  
 2.  
 3.

REASONS FOR WANTING TO MAKE THESE IMPRESSIONS (i.e., how would it benefit you, what are your motives?): 1.  
 2.  
 3.



## Appendix Two:

Description of impression motivation variables for consensus check

(Section 3.4.2; stage three of study one)

# PRIMARY SELF-PRESENTATIONAL MOTIVES

## Social / Material Outcomes (S/MO)

Conveying the correct impression enhances the likelihood of receiving desired social and/or material outcomes. Conversely, the avoidance of undesirable social outcomes or material penalties may be equally important to the individual.

### Examples

- More favourable contractual terms
- Better working conditions
- Respect
- Friendship
- Approval
- Recognition
- 'Power'
- Popularity

## Self-Esteem Development / Maintenance (EST)

Constructive or complimentary feedback and approval can develop or maintain esteem in those who place value on it, whereas negative criticism or disapproval can be esteem-deflating. These motivate the aim of conveying a desired impression.

## Development of Desired Identities (I.D.)

We can create an identity(ies) via self-presentation; that is, by engaging in public behaviours that are known to imply the development of identity-relevant characteristics.

# FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE IMPRESSION- RELEVANT BEHAVIOUR

## The Goal-Relevance of Impressions (REL.)

When conveying a certain impression is especially relevant to the attainment of one's interpersonal goals.

### Examples

- Increased publicity of the 'performance'
- Increased dependency on the target
- Expected future contact

## The Value Placed on Desired Goals (VALUE)

When the value of one's interpersonal goals are especially high, and conveying a certain impression is important, impression motivation will skyrocket.

### Examples

- Limited availability of the outcome
- The target's characteristics are known, or imagined
- Value is placed on approval

## The Discrepancy Between Desired and Current Image (DISC.)

The image we would like others to hold compared to the image we think that they currently hold of us, if discrepant, heightens impression motivation.

THE PRIMARY SELF-PRESENTATIONAL MOTIVES ARE THEREFORE HEIGHTENED BY SITUATIONAL FACTORS. DESPITE THE SUBSTANTIAL OVERLAP BETWEEN THESE MOTIVATING FORCES, THE QUESTIONNAIRE I PROPOSE WILL TREAT THEM AS INDIVIDUAL MOTIVES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. THEREFORE, IN THE WORDING OF EACH ITEM I'VE TRIED TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE REALLY ONLY TAPPING ONE MOTIVE.

WHICH DO YOU THINK EACH ITEM TAPS, AND DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT READABILITY AND COMPREHENSIBILITY?

Appendix Three:

Form on which participants made comments relevant to refinement of the IMSQ-T<sub>1</sub>  
(Section 3.5.2; stage four of study one)

If you could now help make the questionnaire better for future use with other athletes, it would be greatly appreciated. With this in mind...

Were there questions that you found difficult to answer? Was their wording confusing, or do you think that they just weren't relevant to athletes in general? If you remember that there was, please take a look back through the questionnaire to remind yourself of which questions they were, and the reasons why you maybe had to think for longer before answering them. Please be as honest as possible, as you will be making this instrument much more relevant to, and easier to complete for, your sporting counterparts.

<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Reason</b>

## Appendix Four:

Informed consent form for the IMSQ-T (and demographic questions; please note, participants were verbally introduced to the study before completing this form)

(Section 3.5.2; stage four of study one; shrunk for formatting purposes)

### The Aberystwyth 'Impressions in Team Sports' Questionnaire

Please be aware that, by signing below, you are indicating your willingness to participate, and that you understand the information you provide herein will become the intellectual property of the University of Aberystwyth, for use in ways that the researcher and University advocate. However, you may rest assured that the data will remain completely anonymous. You also have the right to withdraw at any time.

Name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (M or F): \_\_\_\_\_ Age (Years & Months): \_\_\_\_\_

Your current most important sport

(that you'll be responding with in mind): \_\_\_\_\_

How long has it been since you started learning this sport (years/months)? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been playing this sport competitively (years/months)? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you spend training **your skills / technique** for this sport? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you spend training **your body / fitness** (i.e., not playing)? \_\_\_\_\_

Competitive standard that you currently play at: \_\_\_\_\_

Time spent competing at this current level (years/months): \_\_\_\_\_

Time spent training and playing with your current team (years/months): \_\_\_\_\_

Is your main coach at the moment male or female (M/F)?: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest standard you have reached in your playing career (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix Five:  
The 68-item IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub>  
(Section 3.5.4; stage four of study one)

Please see attached CD for an electronic version of the IMSQ-T<sub>2</sub>.

It is too large to present here with any clarity.

Appendix Six:

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale short form C

(Reynolds, 1982; Section 3.6.2; stage five of study one)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Please read each item and decide whether the statement is **true** or **false** as it refers to you personally. For each statement, please **delete the response that does not apply to you**.

- |     |   |            |
|-----|---|------------|
| 1.  | It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged  | True/False |
| 2.  | I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way  | True/False |
| 3.  | On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability                  | True/False |
| 4.  | There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right | True/False |
| 5.  | No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener  | True/False |
| 6.  | There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone  | True/False |
| 7.  | I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake  | True/False |
| 8.  | I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget  | True/False |
| 9.  | I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable  | True/False |
| 10. | I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own                                  | True/False |
| 11. | There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others                                    | True/False |
| 12. | I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me  | True/False |
| 13. | I have never deliberately said something that hurts someone's feelings  | True/False |

## APPENDICES SEVEN – ELEVEN

Please locate these on the attached CD.

Distribution characteristics output, correlation matrices, factor analysis output, and the 28-item IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> are too large to be presented here with any clarity.

Appendix Seven: Distribution characteristics of the data for Exploratory Factor Analysis (Section 3.6.2; stage five of study one)

Appendix Eight: Impression motivation correlation matrix prior to Exploratory Factor Analysis (Section 3.6.3.2; stage five of study one)

Appendix Nine: SPSS output from the sequence of EFAs run in study one (Section 3.6.3.2; stage five of study one)

Appendix Ten: The 28-item IMSQ-T<sub>3</sub> (Section 3.6.4; stage five of study one)

Appendix Eleven: SPSS output for descriptive statistics on CFA sample IMSQ-t data (Section 3.7.3.2; stage six of study one)

Appendix Twelve:

Recruitment flyer for study two

(Section 4.2; study two; shrunk for formatting purposes)

Do you participate in a team-sport,  
and are you interested in learning  
how quick your reactions are and  
how efficiently you make decisions?



If so, please contact Simon Payne in the Department of Sport & Exercise Science (Carwyn James Building, Room F13), who can offer an exciting opportunity for you to participate in research looking at attention and concentration in sport. Simon's contact details are:



## Appendix Thirteen:

Modified CSAI-2R for study two

(Section 4.2; study two)

### **Aberystwyth Sport Emotions Questionnaire (ASEQ)**

*Directions:* A number of statements that athletes have used to describe their feelings before testing are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel right now – at this moment, about the test you are to complete. Then on the scale marked –3 to +3 describe how negative/bad/unhelpful or positive/good/helpful to performance you believe this feeling will be. Please do the same for each of the statements. Whilst some of the questions may appear to be similar, it is important that you pay close attention to the exact wording of each individual question so that you may answer each independently of the others. There are no right or wrong answers.

Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but choose the answer that describes your feelings right now.

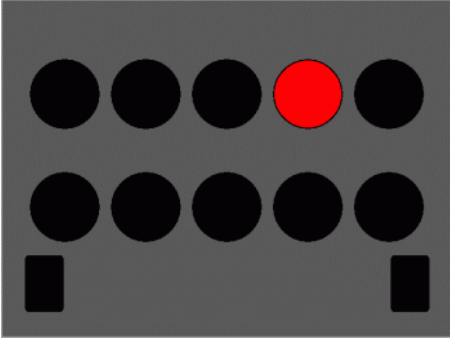
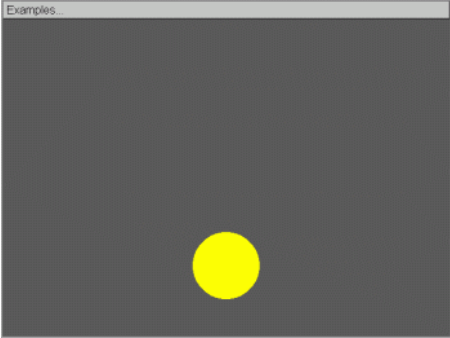
**Please respond across each row, as opposed to down the first column and then the second.**

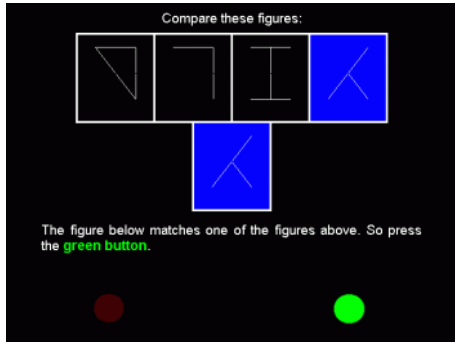
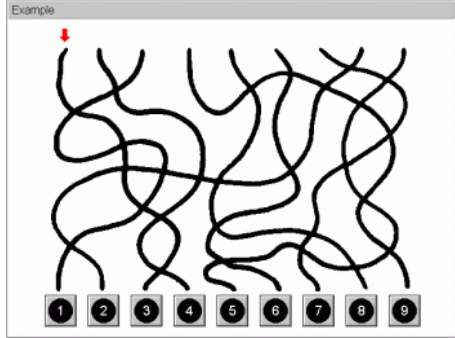
	Not at all	Somewhat so	Moderately	Very much so		Very Negative (Bad)	No impact	Very Positive (Good)				
1. I feel jittery...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
2. I am <b>concerned</b> that I may not do as well in this test as I could...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
3. My body feels tense...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
4. I am <b>concerned</b> about performing worse than others...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
5. I feel tense in my stomach...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
6. I am <b>concerned</b> about choking under pressure...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
7. My heart is racing...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
8. I'm <b>concerned</b> about performing poorly...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
9. I feel my stomach sinking...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
10. I'm <b>concerned</b> that others will be disappointed with my performance...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
11. My hands are clammy...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....
12. My body feels tight...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	This is...	-3.....	-2.....	-1.....	0.....	+1.....	+2.....	+3.....

Appendix Fourteen:

Screenshots of the chosen tests from the Vienna Test System

(Section 4.2; study two)

<b>Test</b>	<b>Description and Purpose</b>
Determination Test (Test form S2 – Adaptive)	 <p>Measures “reactive stress tolerance, attention deficits, and reaction speed in the presence of rapidly changing and continuous optical and acoustic stimuli” (Neuwirth &amp; Benesch,2003, p. 3); test duration 8 minutes</p>
Reaction Test (Test form S7)	 <p>Measures reaction time and motor time down to the millisecond, selective alertness, and the ability to repress an inadequate reaction; test duration approximately 8 minutes</p>

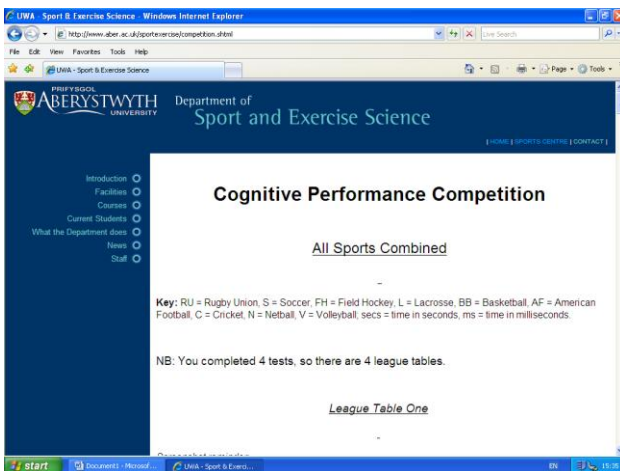
<p>Cognitrone (Test form S5)</p>	 <p>Assesses “attention and concentration through the comparison of figures concerning their congruence,” with added time pressure – participants have only 1.8secs to respond before the next item is presented (see image, above; Wagner &amp; Karner, 2003, p. 3); test duration approximately 8 minutes</p>
<p>Visual Pursuit Test (Test form S1 – Long form)</p>	 <p>“The aspect of visual orientation performance is assessed, which consists in pursuing simple visual structures in a relatively complex environment, in a target-oriented way, under time pressure and ignoring distractions” (Biehl, 2004, p. 3); test duration however long it takes the participant to respond to 80 pursuits – approximately 6-8 minutes</p>

## Appendix Fifteen:

Example of one of the four league tables that correspond to each of the Vienna Test System tests used as part of the experimental manipulation in study three; and the reminder slip they received to reinforce the manipulation

(Section 4.2; study two; shrunk here for formatting purposes; please use the link below to see the full league tables as participants did)

### Study Two reminder slip



Remember to visit the website to see how you rank in comparison to the other athlete participants.

You can access the league tables at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/sportexercise/competition.shtml>

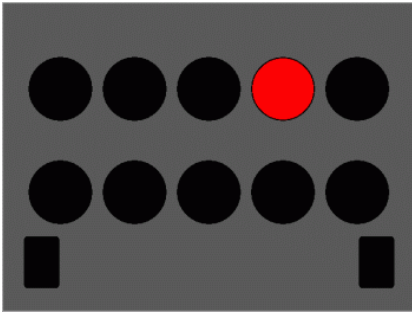
### All Sports Combined

**Key:** RU = Rugby Union, RL = Rugby League, S = Soccer, FH = Field Hockey, L = Lacrosse, BB = Basketball, AF = American Football, C = Cricket, N = Netball, V = Volleyball; secs = time in seconds, ms = time in milliseconds.

NB: You completed 4 tests, so there are 4 league tables.

League Table One

Screenshot reminder:



Rank) Codename	Performance on the test of: Complex multiple-stimuli multiple-choice reaction time		
	Measured variables:		
	Number of "correct reactions"	Number of "incorrect reactions"	Average reaction time (secs)
1) RU04	684	16	.44
2) L10	682	18	.46
3) AF09	682	18	.46
4) C07	682	19	.46
5) L11	683	19	.47
6) S12	682	19	.47
7) FH08	681	19	.47
8) RU08	681	20	.47
9) S07	680	20	.48
10) L08	680	21	.48
11) BB06	680	21	.49
12) N14	679	22	.49
13) RL02	680	20	.50
14) S09	679	23	.49
15) RU12	678	22	.49
16) FH10	677	23	.50
17) AF13	676	23	.50
18) C09	675	24	.50
19) N10	675	24	.51
20) V06	675	25	.51
21) V09	674	25	.51
22) AF12	674	25	.52
23) RU06	674	23	.53
24) FH14	673	25	.52
25) BB10	673	26	.52
26) RU15	672	26	.53
27) S14	672	26	.54
28) V11	670	28	.54
29) N06	670	29	.54

30) C08	670	30	.54
31) BB11	670	30	.55
32) FH07	669	30	.55
33) RL03	670	31	.55
34) L16	669	31	.56
35) RU10	668	31	.56
36) RU09	668	32	.57
37) S17	667	33	.58
38) FH09	667	34	.59
39) AF10	663	37	.59
40) L09	663	38	.59
41) S08	662	38	.60
42) BB09	660	38	.60
43) N07	659	39	.61
44) AF11	658	39	.61
45) L12	658	40	.61
46) C03	657	40	.62
47) S10	657	41	.62
48) RU11	656	42	.62
49) N02	656	43	.62
50) RU13	656	42	.634
51) RU02	656	42	.638
52) S13	655	43	.63
53) AF08	654	44	.64
54) L05	653	44	.64
55) FH06	653	45	.65
56) V04	653	46	.65
57) RU03	653	45	.65
58) FH04	654	47	.66
59) BB07	653	45	.662
60) FH02	653	45	.668
61) RU07	652	46	.66
62) RU14	652	47	.66
63) BB02	651	48	.67
64) S06	650	49	.68
65) AF07	650	50	.681
66) RU17	650	50	.683
67) RL04	650	51	.68
68) N04	651	50	.69
69) S05	650	51	.68
70) FH05	650	52	.68
71) FH11	649	51	.69
72) L04	649	52	.69
73) FH03	650	54	.69
74) S11	648	52	.70
75) RU05	647	52	.71
76) RU16	646	53	.72
77) RU18	646	54	.73

## APPENDICES SIXTEEN & SEVENTEEN

Please locate these on the attached CD.

Distribution characteristics output of the self-report and performance data from study two are too large to be presented here with any clarity.

Appendix Sixteen:

SPSS output of visual and statistical checks/tests of normality of self-report data in study two

(Section 4.3; study two)

Appendix Seventeen:

SPSS output of visual and statistical checks/tests of normality of performance data in study two

(Section 4.3; study two)

Appendix Eighteen:  
Informed consent form for study three  
(Section 5.2; study three)

Informed Consent

I understand that the information I provide today, and the videotape of myself that was made previously, are now the intellectual property of Aberystwyth University, for use as the investigator sees fit. However, in the interests of confidentiality, I may rest assured that all data will be stored under a codename, which itself will be kept separate from the data. Also, if the information I provide herein is used in future publication attempts, nothing in the writing will enable the reader to recognise me as the participant.

No discomfort is anticipated, but I am also aware of my right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason. I understand the purposes of the present research, and provide my written consent to participate.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age (years and months) \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix Nineteen:

Performance effectiveness and efficiency formulae for study two

(Section 4.2; study two)

### Determination Test (DT)

Complex multiple-stimulus multiple-choice reaction experiment

**Test form S2 - Adaptive**

8 minute test duration

Test administration: 09/05/2009 - 13:45...13:55, Duration: 10 min.

#### Test results - Norm sample:

Test variable	Raw score	PR	T
<b>Overall results adaptive mode</b> (test duration: 8 minutes)			
Correct	602	96 (95-97)	68 (66-69)
Incorrect	101	1 (1-1)	27 (25-28)
Omitted	45	7 (5-9)	35 (34-37)
Median reaction time	0.54 <sup>1</sup>		
Number of stimuli	704		
Reactions	703		

*Comment(s):* Percentile rank (PR) and T-score (T) result from a comparison with the entire comparative sample 'Norm sample'. The confidence intervals given in parentheses next to the comparison scores have a 5% probability of error.

<sup>1</sup>Median reaction time in seconds

#### Determination Test effectiveness:

((correct responses\*% correct responses [number of correct responses/total number of presented stimuli; expressed as a proportion of 1]) – (incorrect responses\*% incorrect responses [number of incorrect responses/total number of presented stimuli; expressed as a proportion of 1])) – ((omitted responses/total number of stimuli)\*100))

## Determination Test efficiency:

(Determination Test effectiveness score\*(2 - median RT of correct responses; secs))

## **Reaction Test (RT)**

Test for the assessment of reaction time for audible and visual stimuli.

### **Test form S7 - Measure of alertness, simple reaction yellow (with audible warning signal)**

Test administration: 09/05/2009 - 14:09...14:16, Duration: 7 min.

### **Test results - Norm sample:**

Test variable	Raw score <sup>1</sup>	PR	T
Difference mean reaction time with and without warning signal	55	65	54
Difference mean motor time with and without warning signal	8	55	51
<b>Additional results</b>			
Mean reaction time without warning signal <sup>2</sup>	253	72 (59-83)	56 (52-60)
Mean reaction time with warning signal <sup>2</sup>	197	90 (77-97)	63 (57-68)
Mean motor time without warning signal <sup>2</sup>	92	93 (87-97)	65 (61-68)
Mean motor time with warning signal <sup>2</sup>	83	97 (94-99)	69 (66-72)
Correct reaction without warning signal	28		
Correct reaction with warning signal	28		
No reaction without warning signal	0		
No reaction with warning signal	0		
Incomplete reaction without warning signal	0		
Incomplete reaction with warning signal	0		

*Comment(s):* Percentile rank (PR) and T-score (T) result from a comparison with the entire comparative sample 'Norm sample'. The confidence intervals given in parentheses next to the comparison scores have a 5% probability of error.

<sup>1</sup>All time entries in milliseconds

<sup>2</sup>Mean time = geometrical average

### RT effectiveness:

(number of correct reactions without warning signal [out of 28] + number of correct reactions with warning signal [out of 28]) / 56 [i.e., the total number of possible correct reactions]

Reaction Test efficiency:

(reaction time without signal + movement time without signal + reaction time with signal + movement time with signal) \* (2 – Reaction Test effectiveness score)

**Visual Pursuit Test (LVT)**

Visual perception test for the assessment of concentrated targeted perception

**Test form S1 - Long form (80 items)**

Test administration: 09/05/2009 - 13:59...14:05, Duration: 6 min.

**Test results - Norm sample:**

Test variable	Raw score	PR	T
Median time for correct answers (sec)	3.00	100	80
Score	75	93	65
<b>Additional results:</b>			
Number of correct answers	77		
Number of pictures viewed	80		
Median time for incorrect answers (sec)	2.37		
Working time	04:20 <sup>1</sup>		

*Comment(s):* Percentile rank (PR) and T-score (T) result from a comparison with the entire comparative sample 'Norm sample'.

<sup>1</sup>Working time in minutes:seconds

Visual Pursuit Test effectiveness:

Number of correct answers / 80 [i.e., the total number of patterns displayed]

Visual Pursuit Test efficiency:

Visual Pursuit Test 'score' from the VTS output [above; this is the only example of the VTS taking into account response time in relation to performance effectiveness, and so it was employed in this study]

## Cognitrone (COG)

General performance test for the assessment of attention and concentration

**Test form S5 - Figure set 2, 1.8 sec. working time**

20 samples with 10 stimuli each (=200 stimuli/80 required)

Test administration: 09/05/2009 - 15:34...15:42, Duration: 8 min.

### Test results - Norm sample:

Test variable	Raw score	PR	T
Sum "correct reactions"	69	99	73
Sum "incorrect reactions"	27	23	43
Sum "incorrect non-reactions" <sup>1</sup>	10		
Mean time "correct reactions" (sec)	1.20	66	54
Mean time "incorrect reactions" (sec)	1.32	9	37

*Comment(s):* Percentile rank (PR) and T-score (T) result from a comparison with the entire comparative sample 'Norm sample'.

<sup>1</sup>Incorrect non-reaction = button not pressed at required stimulus

### Cognitrone effectiveness:

$$\left( \frac{\text{number of correct reactions} \times \% \text{ correct reactions}}{\text{number of correct responses} + (\text{number of incorrect reactions} + \text{number of incorrect non-reactions})} \right) - \left( \frac{\text{number of incorrect reactions} \times \% \text{ incorrect reactions}}{(\text{number of incorrect reactions} + \text{number of incorrect non-reactions})} \right) - \left( \frac{\text{'wasted time' [number of incorrect reactions} \times \text{mean reaction time incorrect reactions}]}{\text{'wasted time' + (number of correct reactions} \times \text{mean reaction time correct reactions})} \right)$$

### Cognitrone efficiency:

$$\text{Cognitrone effectiveness score} \times (2 - \text{mean reaction time correct reactions})$$