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ANNE-MARIE
SASSENBERG

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Effects of Sport Celebrity Transgressions in
the Sport Industry

University of Southern Queensland

Certificate of Thesis

I certify that the ideas, analyses, and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signature of Candidate and Date

ENDORSEMENT

Signature of Supervisor/s and Date

Signature of Supervisor/s and Date

Contact Details

Anne-Marie Sassenberg: anne-marie.sassenberg@usq.edu.au

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2. Sassenberg, Anne-Marie and Verreynne, Martie-Louise and Johnson Morgan, Melissa (2012), 'A sport celebrity brand image: A Conceptual Model', *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, vol. 17, no.2, pp. 108-121.
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4. Sassenberg, Anne-Marie and Johnson Morgan, Melissa (2010), 'Scandals, sports and sponsors: What impact do sport celebrity transgressions have on consumer's perceptions of the celebrity's brand image and the brand image of their sponsors?', In: 8th Annual Sports Marketing Association Conference: Sport Marketing Strategies in Hard Times (SMA 2010), 26-29 Oct 2010, New Orleans, LA, USA.

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5. Johnson Morgan, Melissa, Summers, Jane and Sassenberg, Anne-Marie (2008), 'The impact of negative publicity on: an individual sporting celebrity's brand DNA; the brand DNA of their associated team and/or sport; and attitudes of their sponsors and partners', In: 6th Annual Sport Marketing Association Conference: Bridging the Gap: Bringing the World Down Under 6th Annual Sport Marketing Association Conference (SMA 2008), 16-19 July 2008, Gold Coast, Australia

Abstract

The importance of the brand image of sport celebrities is a growing research topic in marketing communication and sponsorship programmes. However, there is a dearth of research focus on the impact of different types of sport celebrity transgressions on the sporting celebrity brand image in a sponsorship and sport context. Limited empirical research and scarcity in assessment, or exploration, of the impact of a sport celebrity transgression on the sport celebrity brand image have resulted in a theoretical gap, which this study seeks to address. Although it is well noted in sponsorship theory how the positive sport celebrity brand image enhances the brand image of the associated sponsors, few studies have included the potentially negative brand image transfer associated with different types of sport celebrity transgressions. Even fewer studies investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the brand image of the celebrity's associated sport.

Because the sport celebrities brand image is in association with the brand image of their associated sponsors and sport, the sport celebrity brand image is the central focus of this research. Since brand image is dependent upon the perceptions held in consumer memory, the perceptions of consumers need to be investigated in this study. In this context, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate the impact of real sport celebrity transgression scenarios on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. The present research consolidates a range of theory-guided models used by previous researchers, and adds to sponsorship and sport literature by outlining how consumers respond to different types of sport celebrity transgressions. In the context of sponsorship portfolio, the associative network theory, brand image transfer theory, balance theory, identification and social identity theory are considered collectively and integrated into a conceptual model to guide the development of the propositions.

Evidence for this study was gathered through the use of a qualitative research approach, by applying focus groups and social media data collection methods. This study investigated 16 sport celebrity transgression scenarios by analysing 8280 comments of online consumers. Multiple data analysis methods were incorporated, including qualitative content analysis and NVivo analysis. Triangulation has been applied to compare the results obtained from the different methodologies, in order to seek out similarities and to integrate the different sets of results.

Proposition 1 aims to investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the sport celebrity brand image. Three key findings emerged from this proposition. First, inferences about the sport celebrity brand image, following a sport celebrity transgression are made in accordance with the celebrity's sport related brand attributes (expertise) and personal related brand attributes (role model ability). The findings showed that consumers still valued the expertise of the sport celebrity after the occurrence of sport celebrity transgressions, but questioned the role model ability of the sport celebrity. Second, when the celebrity is involved in a sport celebrity transgression, the transgression is found to have a negative impact on the symbolic brand benefits (admiration) of the consumer with regard to the sport celebrity, and resulted in intense emotive responses. Third, the intense positive, negative and neutral emotive responses towards the sport celebrity brand image, following sport celebrity transgressions, are based on the core values and norms of consumers.

Proposition 2 was developed to investigate whether and how the different characteristics of sport celebrity transgressions impact on consumer's' perceptions. Results provided insight into grouping the different characteristics of sport celebrity transgressions into five new groups, representing different types of sport celebrity transgressions, including: Recreational drug use and Sexting; Spontaneous On-field Transgressions; On-field Brawl; Disrespect towards the Team; and Doping and Sexual Misbehaviour. Results replicate the findings of previous studies where inferences of a brand image are determined based on the culturally legitimacy of the brand, where the morals and values of the brand match-up with the morals and values of a community (Kates 2004). Specifically, Doping and Sexual Misbehaviour were found to be inconsistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. For this reason consumers offered negative emotive responses such as disgust and disappointment. These sport celebrity transgressions were found to impact negatively on the social fit between the brand and the community. The actions of the sport celebrity were not desirable within the socially constructed community of online sport consumers, and these actions seemed to affect the brand's cultural meaning.

Recreational drug use, Spontaneous On-field sport celebrity transgressions and the On-field Brawl, were consistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand image. However, Recreational drug use was found to be inconsistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport brand image, while Spontaneous on-field sport celebrity transgressions and the On-field Brawl were found to be consistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport brand image.

Consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following a sport celebrity transgression, have important implications in terms of gauging the effectiveness of the sport celebrity brand image in the sport industry. A unique association between the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the sponsors and sport are created through the process of association. Using the associative network theory as an explanation of how consumers re-evaluated the sport celebrities brand image and sport brand image, it was conceivable that consumer's' responses can be developed on the basis of the value they attributed to the match-up between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image. This study found that when the sport celebrity transgression had the ability to impact on the match-up brand attribute of the sport celebrity brand image with the sponsor brand image, there might be a correspondingly negative impact on the sponsor brand image. Perceptions of the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the sponsor brand image might have been formed depending on whether and how consumers valued the match-up brand attribute between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image. Theoretically, this research adds to current understanding of sport celebrity transgression effects by moving beyond simple pairing of the sport celebrity transgression and sponsors, to consider the relationship between different characteristics of sport celebrity transgression and how they impact on the brand images of the sport celebrity, the sponsors and sport. Practically, this research assists managers in the event of sport celebrity transgressions. The conceptual model developed in this thesis offers useful guidelines in providing output into the management of the sport celebrity brand image, the sponsor brand image and the sport brand image, after the occurrence of sport celebrity transgressions.

Finally, the challenge for sport celebrities, sport managers and brand managers is to acknowledge the importance of aligning the sport celebrity brand image with the interests of consumers in the sport industry. It is important that the sport celebrity brand image matches-up with the value that consumers attribute to the sponsor and sport brand image. Good brand citizenship depends on incorporating the legitimate meaning of the community and aligning themselves with the interests of consumers and thereby become culturally authentic (Kates 2004). Only then can the different sports achieve thier main purpose – to serve the customer through the maintenance of a culturally authentic acceptable sport celebrity brand image and a sport brand image.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and justifies the research programme, including the purpose for the research and its specific objectives. The chapter proposes both academic and managerial contributions for the research, as part of the rationale for the work. The discussion is followed by an explanation of the research methodology, the limitations and scope of the research, and an outline of the thesis. A discussion of the research paradigm that underpins the study is also presented.

1.1 Sponsorship as a marketing communication tool: An overview

In the last decade sponsorship has become one of the fastest growing tools of the marketing communication mix, and in North America, sponsorship spending has surpassed traditional advertising spending (Sola 2012). Advertising spending increased by 2.6 percent in 2012, while sponsorship spending increased by 5 percent (International Events Group 2012). With this increase in global sponsorship spending, sponsorship has become a crucial strategic tool, used by organisations in their marketing communications programmes. The significance of sponsorship has increased in recent years, owing to the increased emphasis on building brand equity (Kitchen, Brignell & Spickett 2004; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). To achieve brand equity, sponsorship relies on the exchange between a sponsor and a sponsee, whereby the sponsee receives a fee and the sponsor obtains the right to associate with the sponsee (White 2012). Researchers agree that sponsorship aids in building brand equity, by generating favourable sponsors' brand images (Cliffe & Motion 2005; Gwinner & Eaton 1999; Javalgi et al. 1994). Favourable sponsor brand images are being achieved through the process of brand image transfer (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009; Hung, Chan & Tse 2011).

Current sponsorship research has focused more on how the positive brand image transfer between a sponsee and a sponsor influences brand evaluations (Chien, Cornwell & Stokes 2005; Grohs & Reisinger 2005; Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka 2004; Gwinner & Eaton 1999). These studies emphasise the transfer of positive brand images between the sponsee and the sponsors (Sola 2012). By reviewing these theoretically grounded works, McCracken (1989) unveiled the "brand image transfer process" of sponsorship information processing, highlighting the importance of the positive sport celebrity brand image.

Despite the escalating and popular use of celebrities in sponsorship arrangements (Dix, Phau, & Pougnet 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez, & Haytko 2009; Van der Veen & Haiyan 2010; White 2012), there is evidence to suggest that many organisations have taken a more negative attitude towards the sport celebrity as part of a sponsorship programme (Hughes & Shank 2005; Westberg, Stavros, & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg 2008). The negative attitude towards sport celebrities in sponsorship arrangements can be attributed to the occurrence of sport celebrity transgressions (SCTs) and the accompanying impact on their associated sponsors (Bailey 2007; Dimitrov 2008; Hill 2010; Hughes & Shank 2005; Mazanov & Connor 2010; Miller & Laczniak 2011) and, therefore, warrant further investigation.

An SCT is defined here as any immoral, illegal or anti-social act or behaviour undertaken by a sport celebrity. Whilst it is relatively simple to determine whether an action or behaviour of a sport celebrity could be defined as an SCT, it is less simple to allocate a degree of judgment to the potential magnitude of the impact of that act or behaviour on consumer's' perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity, and the associated sponsors. Research has shown that when the actions of a brand are desirable within the values of consumers, the brand is perceived as legitimate, and accepted by the community (Suchman 1995). The impact of SCTs on consumer's' perceptions may thus be culturally conditioned, where the impact of SCTs may depend on consumer's' core values and norms. It may thus be possible that consumers value various types of SCTs differently. Consumers have been reported as having varying expectations and levels of acceptance of SCTs, depending on whether or not the transgression was related to the sport (on-field) or not (Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008). What is not known is whether consumers will react differently based on the type of transgression and further just what will be the corresponding impact (if any) on the sport celebrity brand image as it relates to their sponsorship.

In practice, brands increasingly link their sport sponsorships with the brand associations of the sport celebrity brand image (Gurel-Atay & Kahle 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt 2010). Previous research in associative network theory states that the process of brand image transfer is founded on the basis of associative learning theory (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009). Associative network theory illustrates that different brands represent different nodes in the mind of the consumer, and these brands are all connected with an established cognitive network (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009; Till & Busler 1998). When the sport celebrity brand image transfers through association, onto the sponsor brand image, it is possible that the sport celebrity brand image also transfers to other brand partners, such as the sport brand image, following SCTs. An area that has received less attention by sponsorship researchers is the influence that an SCT may have on consumer perceptions of the sport with which the celebrity associates. The predisposition towards investigating the impact of an SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport, with the exclusion of the perceptions of consumers, is somewhat counterintuitive, given the theoretical relationship between the consumer perception and brand image (Keller 1993) and its strategic importance in sport marketing (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

Although emerging themes in research suggest that attention to the potential impact of SCT issues is increasing (Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk 2013; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008), studies investigating the potential impact on consumer's' perceptions, have received strikingly less attention. Previous research investigating the potentially negative brand image transfer, as a result of an SCT, has shown that negative images impact on the endorsed product brand, the ethical considerations of the organisation, and the effectiveness of the associated advertising campaign (Miller & Lacznik 2011; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009; White 2012; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008). However, the essence of these studies was based on the perspectives of sponsors, sport managers and/or advertising executives, rather than investigating the perceptions of the sport consumer. To consider sponsorship effects from these perspectives is to examine only the manifestations of an underlying process. Weaknesses associated with such research include a lack of consideration of

the sport celebrity brand image, and the strong emotions of the sport consumer, following an SCT. Therefore, while we know how sponsors, sport managers, and advertising executives perceive the impact of SCTs, it is still not clear how consumer's' perceive the effects of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, and the accompanying sponsors and sport.

This lack of research represents a gap in sponsorship literature, where there is little evidence to guide sport and brand managers in developing sponsorship strategies, in the aftermath of an SCT. Marketers worldwide spend great sums of money each year on sport celebrity sponsorship (Croft 2013). For example, Toyota had spent an estimated AUS\$8 million annually on a new deal reached with the Australian Football League, representing one of the largest ever deals in the Asia Pacific region (Croft 2013). Thus, in concrete terms, sponsorship without careful consideration could mean millions of dollars being spent on sponsorship arrangements, which may not convey the correct message to consumers. This lack of understanding then makes the marketing decisions about whether or not to invest in sport celebrity sponsorship all the more challenging. The goal of this thesis is to extend the current sponsorship literature, by investigating the impact of SCTs on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport.

1.2 Purpose of the research

The reliance on the use of celebrities in the worldwide sponsorship industry (Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Van der Veen & Haiyan 2010; White 2012) and the level of risk involved in using sport celebrity endorsers (Hughes & Shank 2005; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010) provide support for the importance of this research. In sport sponsorship, it is proposed that an SCT will introduce a catalyst of potential change to consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image themselves, their brand image and any brands with which they associate.

The elements of the sport celebrity brand image model that might be affected will depend upon consumer's' prevailing expectations and perceptions about the sport celebrity brand image, and whether the SCT violated these expectations and perceptions. This programme of research addresses these gaps in the known body of literature relating to celebrity sponsorship, branding, sport marketing and consumer behaviour, by investigating the elements of brand image and the brand image transfer process. The research question developed for this purpose is:

“How and why do sport celebrity transgressions impact on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, and their associated brand partners?”

The purpose of this programme of research is to develop a conceptual model that captures the themes to investigate the impact of an SCT on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image during sport celebrity sponsorship. This research will further explore the order in which these themes interact in the process. Future researchers will be able to take this conceptual model, and to test empirically these relationships and pathways suggested by this exploratory work. Specific objectives to be addressed in this programme of research are:

1. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the sport celebrity brand image.
2. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the celebrity's associated sponsor brand image.
3. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the celebrity's associated sport brand image.

In order to address the research objectives, and ultimately the research question, the following research propositions will be addressed:

- P1:** A Sport Celebrity Transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an a priori state.
- P2:** The Characteristics (off-field or on-field) of the Sport Celebrity Transgression will impact on whether and how consumers adjust their perceptions of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image following that transgression.
- P3:** The consumer's' perceptions of the Type of Sport, will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.
- P4:** When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the:
- P4a:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors.
- P4b:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sport.

These issues form the basis of this research study and are further addressed in the literature review in Chapter 2.

1.3 Justification for the research

This research can be justified on two levels. First, in terms of the academic contributions of the research, it contributes to a greater understanding of consumer behaviour, brand image and celebrity sponsorship, particularly, in the sport context. Second, in terms of its contributions to marketing practice, the research provides a theoretical framework for the management of SCTs. Each contribution is now examined in more detail.

1.3.1 Academic contributions

This research will make two contributions to the literature on brand image, sport celebrity sponsorship and SCTs. First, this study brings together areas of study not normally considered, namely; branding, sport celebrity brand image, sport celebrity sponsorship and SCTs. Sport celebrity transgressions commonly occur in today's sport industry (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008), yet, have received little research attention from a brand image perspective. Since little research has attempted to address the potentially negative effects of the sport celebrity brand image in combination with sponsorship, this research combines these areas into a broader framework, demonstrating how

elements of branding, sports celebrity brand image, sports celebrity sponsorship, and different types of SCTs interrelate. This study provides greater understanding of the sport celebrity brand image and investigates the relationships among the key themes impacting on consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following different types of transgressions.

Second, whilst previous research has advanced our understanding of the effects of positive sport celebrity brand associations on a sponsorship arrangement, and the effects of these brand associations on consumer's' experience of sport, this study investigates the specific set of brand associations that can be linked to an a priori sport celebrity. After successfully linking the sport celebrity's' brand associations with the brand image concept, this thesis investigates the impact of different types of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image. This research determines whether or not the SCTs have the capacity to influence consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport. Such knowledge will help to generate academic research and discourse, and furthermore, assist sponsors and sport managers to realise fully the business threats and opportunities from SCTs.

1.3.2 Managerial contributions

This research stems from calls within the marketing literature for theoretically grounded, consumer-focused sponsorship research (Cornwell 2008). Developing further insights into sports celebrity transgressions' effects on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of their partners is important for sport marketing practitioners in the face of the prominence of brand equity. Brand equity facilitates the development of a sustainable competitive advantage if consumers perceive a particular brand as having a high level of brand equity (Boisvert 2010; Jaiprahash 2009; Sola 2012; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). Sponsorship can serve as a brand equity tool not only by increasing brand image but also by being effective in associating a brand with a sport celebrity (Jaiprahash 2009; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). These associations allow a brand to transcend its associations and install additional meaning and value, which in turn, can enhance brand equity (Boisvert 2010).

This research makes two major contributions to the practice of sport marketing management. The first, is the provision of a conceptual theoretical model for describing consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT. This finding can assist managers in managing the SCT in the sport environment. The second is the provision of a more detailed understanding of consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport.

Given the current trend for the increasing use of sport celebrities in sponsorship (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008), it is becoming increasingly important for organisations to establish how transgressions by sporting celebrities are affecting their brand image. The findings from this study will help to inform management decisions in relation to the use of sport celebrity endorsements. It will focus on explaining the way that consumers perceive which characteristics of an SCT have the ability to impact on the sport celebrity brand image. This information allows marketers to design their strategies and tactics more effectively in order to justify continued spending on sport celebrity sponsorship. This finding will assist sponsor

and sport management to choose sport celebrities who fit their brand image. It is necessary for sport managers to consider the match-up of the sport celebrity brand image with that of the brand image of the sponsors and sport. It may be helpful for managers to know which transgressions or behaviours of the sport celebrity match-up with the values of their specific consumers. Therefore, this study contributes to the management and fostering of the sport brand image in the future.

1.4 Methodology

This programme of research was conducted in two stages. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the research programme. The research programme starts with an intensive literature study, which aimed to identify a specific set of brand associations pertaining to the sport celebrity brand image during sport sponsorship.

Following the literature study, Stage 1 of the research comprised a series of focus groups, designed to enrich the current knowledge regarding the consumer’s’ perceptions of the effects of SCTs. In particular, the focus groups confirmed that the specific set of brand associations contributing to an a priori sport celebrity brand image, could mitigate negative perceptions when an SCT occurs.

The focus groups also aimed to explore the relationships between these themes, allowing the researcher to propose a number of research propositions, which were further explored in Stage 2. This stage was designed to collect social media data to investigate the propositions and conceptual themes identified at the conclusion of Stage 1. Each of these stages is now discussed.

	Research Method	Sample	Objective
Stage 1	Focus groups	24 members	Explore consumer’s’ perceptions on the impact on an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport.
Stage 2	Social media data collection	16 scenarios	To investigate the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport.

Table 1-1 Summary of the research programme

(Source: developed for this study)

1.4.1 Stage one: Focus groups

The first stage was used to explore the themes proposed in the initial conceptual model provided at the conclusion of the literature review. Four focus groups were conducted, and in the course of these focus group discussions, the effects of SCTs were explored. More specifically, the focus groups confirmed the following:

- The sport celebrity brand image consists of a specific set of brand associations, which may include associations such as; credibility, attractiveness, trust, expertise, and role model ability.

- The sport consumer experienced some benefits when associating with the sport celebrity brand image. These brand associations may include benefits such as; admiration, identification, positive emotions, entertainment, excitement and involvement.
- The focus groups confirmed that consumers with high levels of identification lessened the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport.
- The focus groups confirmed that an SCT could have a negative impact on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression, with a flow-on affect onto the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport.

The results of Stage 1 were used to assist the development of the final research propositions and themes. This stage is further explained in detail in Chapter 3.

1.4.2 Stage two: Social media data collection

The second stage of the research conducted social media data collection, by investigating online discussion boards. The discussion boards were found on social media, such as; websites, fan forums and You-Tube videos. Consumers expressed their opinions on fan forums, by raising their opinions as part of a social dialogue between online consumers. Stage 2 focuses on exploring the propositions identified at the end of the focus group studies, at the end of Chapter 3. Social media data collection was chosen as this approach allowed the impact of real-life SCTs to be investigated in depth. This method allowed the researcher to gain authentic and emotive responses of consumers, in real time, as the transgressions occurred, without the interference of the researcher. Further, this design had the advantage of using real celebrities and their transgressions to ensure that results were more accurate (Till & Busler 1998). The online discussions were recorded and therefore were available for future referencing. Further advantages of using social media data collection were that participants offered their opinions more freely online, and offered their opinions anonymously (Mungeam 2011). This stage is further discussed in Chapter 4. The next section focuses on the delimitations of the scope and definitions.

1.5 Delimitations of scope and definitions

This research operated with the following parameters. First, the sample for Stage 2, the social media data collection, was drawn from online consumers. As this study focused on consumer's' perceptions, the sample was limited to those people who engaged in online discussions, regarding SCTs. Given the unique nature of online discussions, it was not possible to apply the conclusions of the study to sport consumer's' demographic characteristics. Therefore, no assumption can be made about the representative nature of the population participating in online discussion boards (Poria & Oppewal 2003). Second, as the researcher did not intervene in discussions, there was no control over the themes of discussion in the online discussion boards (Poria & Oppewal 2003). Third, the scenarios chosen for analysis were based on their availability in online discussion forums. During the research it was evident that case scenarios that were in the media from 2009 were more prone to be discussed online, and, had a higher probability to be included in this study.

With regard to defining common terms used in this research, two concepts are defined here, sport celebrity brand image and SCT. There is general consensus among scholars that brand image is a specific set of brand associations that consists of product related and non-product related brand attributes and brand benefits, that are fostered in the consumer's memory' (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Keller 1993). With the intention to base this study on Bauer's et al. (2008) and Keller (1993) definitions, the sport celebrity brand image is defined for the purpose of this study as follows: "The sport celebrity brand image consists of a specific set of brand associations that are fostered in the consumer's memory, and can be grouped according to the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits."

Second, SCTs involve three concepts: a particular sport; a celebrity; and a transgression. In the literature the celebrity is known as any individual who savours public acknowledgement and who uses this acknowledgement on behalf of a product, service, company or message by appearing with the product, service, company or message in the advertisement (McCracken 1989). For the purpose of this research, the term 'Sport Celebrity Transgression' or SCT is used to present a celebrity who is part of a specific type of sport, and who is further engaged in a transgression, and, the transgression plays out in the social media. As the main study, stage 2 of this research programme, consisted of social media data collection, it was important that the SCT is reported through social media.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is presented in 6 chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 represent the research outline and literature study of the research. These chapters provide an outline of the research programme and identify the key literature that was used in this thesis. Chapter 3 reports the methodology and the findings of the focus groups, and Chapter 4 explains the methodology of the social media data collection. Chapter 5 presents the results of the social media data collection. Finally, Chapter 6 draws conclusions from the entire research process and discusses academic, practical and methodological contributions. This chapter also highlights implications for future research and limitations of the current study.

1.7 Conclusion

Prior research has found that sport consumer's' negative perceptions of sport celebrities can lead to negative perceptions toward brands associated with the sport celebrity (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010). However, little is known about how or why transgressions by sponsored celebrities may impact their brand image. As the value of a sport celebrity is defined by consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, it seems fitting that research in this area should look to consumer research, branding research, sponsorship research, and transgression research to extend our understanding in this area.

This chapter has laid the foundation for this thesis. It has presented the research purpose and the research objectives. Justification for the research was provided and a brief outline of the methodology and layout of the thesis were given. The delimitations of the research were outlined to ensure that the reader understands the parameters of the work. The next chapter will present the key literature, that guided the research programme.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the background of the research and provided an overview and justification for the research problem. This chapter presents a theoretically grounded conceptual framework to guide this research, starting with a discussion of the parent discipline of sponsorship. The discussion is followed by the exploration of the known research on brand image transfer, from a sport celebrity sponsorship perspective. The brand image transfer process is investigated from both a positive and a negative context. The chapter will then examine how the theory of brand image transfer can be applied to sport celebrities and SCTs, before concluding with an initial conceptual model. This literature reviews aimed at addressing the research question of:

“How and why do sport celebrity transgressions impact on consumer’s perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, and their associated brand partners?”

2.2 Sponsorship

In trying to investigate the effects of a sport celebrity transgression (SCT) on the sponsorship process, it is important first to consider what sponsorship entails. Numerous definitions of sponsorship have been offered in the literature, most have fundamentally the same meaning although they vary in range and focus (Cornwell 2008). The International Events Group defines sponsorship as a cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with the property (International Events Group 2012). A similar definition has also been offered by Meenaghan (2001) who describes sponsorship as an investment in an activity, person or event (sponsee), for access to the commercial potential associated with the activity, person or event by the sponsor. Both of these definitions consider sponsorship as an investment for commercial benefits. As such, sponsorship affects consumers by enhancing the importance of the brand (Boisvert 2010; Cornwell 2008).

These definitions highlight the importance of association during sponsorship. Sponsorship provides the sponsors with the opportunity to exploit the associations derived from the sponsee (Cornwell & Coote 2005). For this reason, sponsorship should provide mutual benefits for both the sponsor and the sponsee (Materman 2007). Mutual benefits occur, for both parties, when the sponsor provides resources to the sponsee, and in turn, the sponsor associates with the celebrity brand image (Cornwell 2008). For sponsorship to be effective, the right of association with the sponsee should result in commercial potential for the sponsors.

Commercial potential is achieved through the “orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association (link) to a sponsorship” (Cornwell 1995, p. 15). To the extent that sponsorship can be considered as part of a brand’s integrated marketing communication (Cornwell 2008) – the primary motivation for sponsorship is to seek improvement in consumer response (Meenaghan 2001) – the celebrity brand image needs to be favourable (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Miller & Allen 2012). The present research focuses on the favourable brand image of a highly visible celebrity.

A celebrity has previously been defined as an individual whose name is already valued through high levels of attention, interest and profit generation (Gupta 2009).

Since celebrity sponsorship is also referred to as a brand alliance (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010), the behaviour of one brand partner impacts on the image of the other brand partners (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010). Both the celebrity and the sponsors are brand partners in a celebrity sponsorship arrangement. White (2012) indicates that celebrity sponsorship has a great impact on creating meaning for the sponsored brand and is used by marketers to enhance brand appeal for consumers (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Erdogan 1999; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009). In particular, it is found that celebrity sponsorship increase brand awareness and builds brand image (Cornwell & Coote 2005; Cornwell & Maignan 1998; Gwinner, Larson & Swanson 2009; Meenaghan 2001). The celebrity brand image is also found to influence the advertising campaign itself and the endorsed product (Till, Stanley & Priluck 2008). Reserach shows that the pairing of a well-liked celebrity with a brand will affect the brand image of the sponsored product (Till, Stanley & Priluck 2008), and increase the effectiveness of the advertising campaign (Ruihley, Runyan & Lear 2010; Seno & Lukas 2007).

During celebrity sponsorship, celebrities enter the sponsorship agreement with an already attained favourable brand image (Miller & Laczniak 2011). The already attained brand image of the celebrity, during sponsorship, will be referred to in this study as the a priori brand image. Previous studies show that the celebrity endorser scored predominantly well on dimensions such as credibility, trustworthiness, likeability and role model ability (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009; White 2012). For example, it has been found that a credible celebrity was more effective in sponsorship than a moderately credible celebrity (Seno & Lukas 2007; Sola 2012; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). The role model dimension of the celebrity is found to be especially important in the sport industry (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010). The importance of the sport industry is illustrated in Table 2.1.

Category	2012 spending Billion	Projected 2013 spending Billion	Projected increase in sponsorship spend for 2014 %
Sport	US\$ 13.01 billion	US\$ 13.79 billion	69%
Entertainment	US\$ 1.93 billion	US\$ 2.03 billion	10%
Causes	US\$ 1.70 billion	US\$ 1.78 billion	9%
Arts	US\$ 891 million	US\$ 920 million	5%
Festivals, fairs and annual events	US\$ 825 million	US\$ 849 million	4%
Associations and membership organization	US\$ 550 million	US\$ 572 million	3%

Table 2-1 Sponsorship spending by category in North America

(Source: IEG Report 2012)

In addition, sport sponsorship spending is increasingly growing in comparison with other categories of sponsorship (IEG 2012). Table 2.1, illustrates sponsorship spending in North America, listed according to the type of sponsorship category.

The table further shows that sport sponsorship spending was the highest at US\$13.01 billion; followed by entertainment at US\$1.93 billion, which indicates a growing trend in sport sponsorship. The growing trend in sport sponsorship warrants further investigation of the variables known to impact on the effectiveness of sponsorship. Although sport sponsorship has the ability to engage the consumer in a passionate manner (Donahay & Rosenberger 2007; Funk & James 2006; Grohs & Reisinger 2005); it is not clear how a transgression can impact on consumer's' perceptions of the dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image.

Transgression refers to “a violation of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation” (Asker 2004, p. 2). The current study describes an SCT as any immoral, illegal or anti-social act of behaviour undertaken by a sport celebrity. This definition suggests that an SCT has the ability to affect the sport celebrity's relationship with their associated brand partners during sport celebrity sponsorship. Given that the brand image transfer occurs during positive conditions of sport celebrity sponsorship, the SCT may also have the ability to change consumer's' attitudes towards the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated brand partners. Such strategy highlights the need for further investigation into what happened during sponsorship when SCTs occurred. In an attempt to investigate how attitudes may be formed during a sponsorship arrangement, the next section explains different mechanisms of sponsorship.

2.3 Sponsorship Mechanisms

The mechanisms responsible for attitude change during sponsorship include: the brand image transfer model, balance theory, identification theory and social identity theory (Fink et al. 2009).

2.3.1 Brand image transfer

Brand image transfer literature is dominated by discussions of the transfer of positive brand images between the endorsed sponsee and the sponsor (Gwinner, Larson & Swanson 2009; McCracken 1989; Miller & Laczniak 2011; Pope, Voges & Brown 2009). The brand image transfer process, as described in these theories, is the transfer of positive images between two brands (McCracken 1989). In particular, during sport celebrity sponsorship, the positive brand image of the sport celebrity transfers to the sponsored product brand image (McCracken 1989). Figure 2.1 illustrates the process of brand image transfer, as explained by McCracken (1989). The figure shows that, in Stage 1, the previous achievements and success of the sport celebrity transfer to their brand image, and the brand image then resides with the celebrity. During Stage 2, the brand image of the sport celebrity (sponsee) is transferred to the brand image of the sponsored product through association, and through marketing communication activity. Consequently, the brand image of the sport celebrity now resides in the sponsored product. Stage 3 illustrates that the brand image transfers to the consumer during consumption of the sponsored product. The brand image transfer process, as described by McCracken (1989), explains how a brand image transfers from the sport celebrity, as sponsee, to the sponsored product.

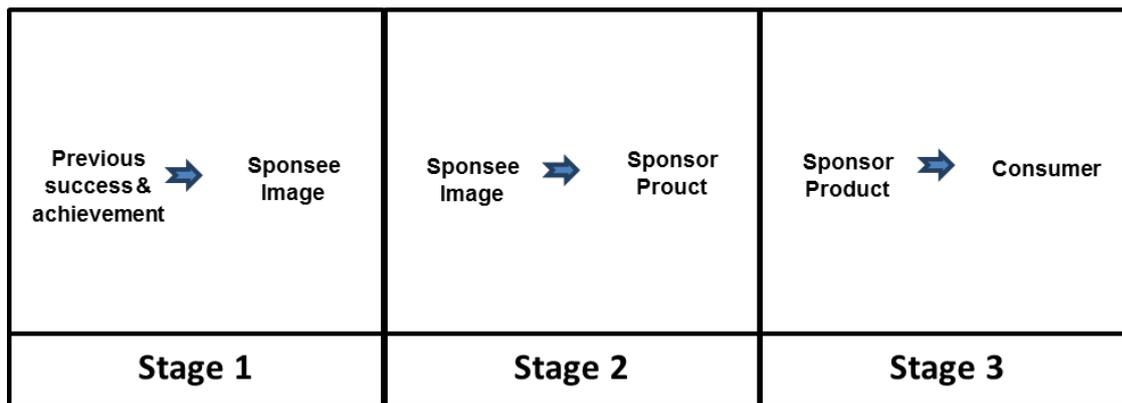


Figure 2-1 The brand image process

(Source: McCracken 1989)

The transfer of images is consistent with Keller's (1993) conceptualisation of the sources of brand associations, which is explained in terms of an associated network memory model. In other words, image formation occurs when there is a link between the celebrity's associations and the brand concepts of the associated brand partners.

In addition, the process of brand image transfer can further be described by the associative learning theory, which explains the connectivity between the sponsee brand image and the sponsor brand image. Both brand images represent nodes, connected in a cognitive network in the consumer's mind, whose connectivity can be altered according to an external experience (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009; Till & Busler 1998), such as an SCT. The various nodes are stored information that varies in strength, and a node can be activated by any information in the consumer's environment (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009). The connectivity between the sport celebrity, as sponsee, and the sponsor, means that the information between the nodes in the minds of the consumer can be spread from one node to the other (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009; Rossiter & Bellman 2005).

Consistent with this theory, a brand image can be viewed as a node in the individual's memory that includes some linked associations and connectivity with other experiences and entities (Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede 2009). In line with this reasoning, it is possible to suggest that, during sport celebrity sponsorship, the sport celebrity brand image, the associated sponsor brand image and the associated sport brand image, represent different nodes in the minds of the consumer. The connectivity between the sport celebrity, the sponsor and the sport means that the behaviour and images of the sport celebrity, the sponsor and the sport affect one another. Figure 2.2 provides an illustration of the brand image transfer during sport celebrity sponsorship. Therefore, when an SCT impacts on the sport celebrity brand image, it has potential to impact on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport.

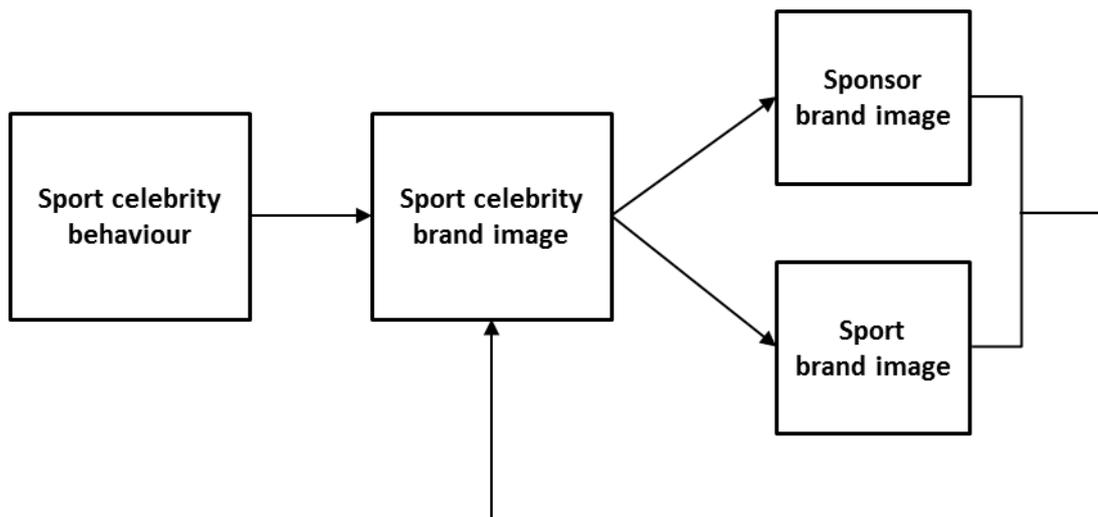


Figure 2-2 The brand image transfer process during sport celebrity sponsorship

While McCracken’s (1989) work offers a foundation to investigate the image transfer effect, nevertheless, the result did not demonstrate what happens when SCTs occurs. In other words, since the study used positive sport celebrity behaviour, it is not clear whether SCTs transfer to the sport celebrity’s associated brand partners, such as the sponsors and sport.

Research in brand image transfer, in a sport context, has focused on the brand images of teams, events and celebrities, and their importance in the sport sponsorship relationship (Donahay & Rosenberger 2007; Kim & Kim 2009; McCracken 1989; Miller & Laczniak 2011; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). Gwinner, Larson and Swanson (1997) and Kim and Kim (2009), explain a mechanism by which brand image is affected through sponsorship activities. They indicate that the brand image of the event may extend to the brand image of the product (Gwinner 1997). Also, in the event of sport team sponsorship, the brand image of the sport team is found to impact positively on the sponsor brand image (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Donahay & Rosenberger 2007; Pope & Voges 2000). Additionally, in order to increase the effectiveness of the process of brand image transfer, it is important that the brand image of the sponsee is similar to the brand image of the sponsor (Boisvert 2010; Chien, Cornwell & Pappu 2008; Gwinner 1997; Gwinner & Eaton 1999).

Researchers in sponsorship have found that the similarity between the brand images of the brand partners during brand image transfer is the principal feature of a successful sponsorship campaign (Boisvert 2010; Park, Jun & Schocker 1996). Table 2.2 summarises studies of the role of similarity in the brand image transfer process. The similarity between the two brand images results in an increased perceived sponsor-property fit, and an improvement in the brand image transfer process (Boisvert 2010; Ginner & Eaton 1999; Ginner, Larson & Swanson 2009; Park, Jun & Schocker 1996). These studies focus on the similarity between the sponsor image and the event image (Boisvert 2010; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010).

Following this logic, it could be assumed that when the sport celebrity brand image is similar to the sponsor brand image and sport brand image, it will improve the effectiveness of the sport celebrity sponsorship. If similarity occurs between the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport, it can result in more effective brand image transfer. However, it is still unclear how an SCT can impact on the effectiveness of the brand image transfer process. When an SCT has the ability to impact on the dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image – and the sponsor brand image is aligned with that specific dimension – the SCTs may have a further negative impact on the sponsor brand image. Such strategy highlights the need to investigate the impact of an SCT on consumer’s’ perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image.

Author/ Year	Findings of Study
Boisvert 2010	Findings indicate that similarity and familiarity of the sponsored brand moderate transfer of images. Less familiar brands had fewer salient common features, which prevented their assignment of the same categories, and therefore limited image transfer between them. Less familiar brands had fewer salient common features, which prevented their assignment of the same categories, and therefore limited image transfer between them.
Chien, Cornwell & Pappu 2008	Perceived sponsor-property fit may arise from the similarity between images that enhances the brand image transfer process.
Gwinner & Eaton 1999	Findings indicate that when events and brands are matched on their image the transfer process is enhanced.
Gwinner 1997	This strength of the transfer between event image and the image of a sponsoring brand depends on how they are similar.

Table 2-2 The role of similarity in the brand image transfer process

(Source: developed for this study)

2.3.2 Balance theory

In the investigation of attitude change through the mechanisms of sponsorship, several scholars have applied balance theory (Basil & Herr 2006; Crimmins & Horn 1996; Dean 1999, 2002; Pracejus, Olsen & Brown 2004; Rifon et al. 2004). The original balance theory states that consumers perceive elements in their environment as appearing in groups of three, in a triangular relationship among the three elements (Heider 1958). The theory is based on the notion that consumers value harmony among the three elements, and desire the relationship among the elements in the triad to be in balance (Dean 2002). The balance among the three elements may be determined by multiplying the signs in the triad relationship; a positive result indicates balance (Basil & Herr 2006).

Balance theory in celebrity sponsorship is further used to describe the incentive of an individual to develop a positive attitude towards the sponsor (Cornwell & Coote 2005). In such case, the consumer seeks balance relationships by adjusting the evaluation of the celebrity or reconsidering the attitudes towards the sponsor (Basil & Herr 2006). Furthermore, when the pre-existing attitudes towards the two entities are positive, the attitudes in the triad will be further enhanced towards the triad (Basil & Herr 2006). The perceived fit between the elements in the triad also enhances perceptions of the strength of the relationship. Therefore, by

sponsoring a highly visible sport celebrity, the sponsor believes that consumer's positive perceptions regarding the sponsored celebrity will create a "halo effect". The consumers may thus seek balance, by re-examining their pre-existing attitudes towards the sponsor in a positive direction, in order to strive for consistency and resolve incongruent thoughts (Cornwell & Coote 2005). Consequently, these adjustments may then result in the creation of goodwill towards sponsors (Dean 1999, 2002).

The notion of goodwill in sponsorship refers to consumer's perceptions of the sponsor, as providing benefits to the community (Meenaghan 2001). "Consumers appear to receive sponsorship communication in a halo of goodwill" (Meenaghan 2001, p.101), and the perceived benefit generates a goodwill effect that acts as an emotional trigger that facilitates the achievement of particular consumer effects. Consumer response to sponsorship is fundamentally driven by the consumer's degree of involvement with the sponsee and knowledge about the sponsee (Cornwell & Coote 2005). Balance theory derives from the cognitive consistency theories, and argues that a consumer maintains consistency in judgement by reducing dissonance (Peeters 1971). A consumer reduces dissonance by striving to avoid the discomfort that might occur from engaging in counter-attitudinal behaviours (Gawronski & Strack 2004). The balance theory, therefore, explains that consumers prefer to maintain cognitive balance in their relationships.

Thus, according to the balance theory, when an SCT occurs, and consumer's attitudes change negatively towards the sport celebrity brand image, consumers may seek balance by re-examining their pre-existing attitudes towards the sponsors in a negative direction, in order to strive for consistency in their thoughts. Furthermore, in examining consumer's attitudes towards SCTs, researchers found consumers level of identification with the sport to impact on their perceptions of the transgression (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010).

2.3.3 Identification

In the investigation of how sponsorship works, identification is reviewed because of its importance in sports marketing and sponsorship research. Identification is also based on social identity theory, and states that the consumer's self-identity is based on a personal and a social identity (Abrams & Hogg 1988; Ashforth & Mael 1989; Van Leeuwen, Quick & Daniel 2002). Personal identity refers to what the consumer thinks or feels about himself/herself, while social identity relates to the group with which one identifies (Van Leeuwen, Quick & Daniel 2002). Ashforth and Mael (1989) define identification with the team as the feeling of oneness that a consumer feels towards the team. Identification is also found to result in benefits such as belonging, diversion, stimulation, aggression release, entertainment and vicarious achievements (Fink et al. 2009; Mael & Ashforth 1992).

Consumer involvement, in a sponsorship context, is also regarded as a principal objective of sponsorship (Cornwell & Coote 2005; Meenaghan 2001). Consumer involvement is the extent to which consumer's identify with, and are motivated by, their engagement and affiliation with a sponsee (Meenaghan 2001, p.104). Consumers with high levels of identification respond positively towards sponsors, which increases sponsor recognition, and results in more positive attitudes towards the sponsor (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Kim & Kim 2009). These studies

note that consumer's' involvement and identification contribute to positive sponsorship outcomes (Meenaghan 2001).

However, studies of sport marketing show that high levels of identification have a moderating effect on consumer's' perceptions of negative information (Ahluwalia, Burnkant & Unnava 2000; Bruce & Tini 2008; Frizzell 2011; Lake, Reece & Rifon 2010; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010). Existing articles in psychology indicate that individual's' reluctance to change their perceptions may be attributed to a complex cognitive structure in the minds of consumers. The higher the individual's' level of commitment to an object, the more complex this cognitive structure, and the higher the psychological cost will be to change the structure (Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999). Any deviation from these cognitive structures results in high psychological costs to an individual (Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999), and it becomes difficult to change the individual's' mind (Millar & Tesser 1986). Indeed, much of individual's' unwillingness to change their perceptions may be owing to their desire to avoid the cost of dissonance and the disruption that it brings to one's complex cognitive structure (Crosby & Taylor 1983; Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999).

In linking these findings to a sport celebrity, this study suggests that consumers, who experience high levels of identification with a sport celebrity, will be eager to accumulate and process consistent information about that sport celebrity and, as a result, will form a complex cognitive structure around that sport celebrity's brand image. Any contrary information to this complex, cognitive structure, would involve a high psychological cost to that individual (Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999). This suggests that consumers, who experience high levels of identification with the sport celebrity and who receive negative information regarding that sport celebrity, may experience high psychological cost to change their perceptions. This consumer may even deny the negative information regarding the SCT. According to this reasoning, identification has the ability to influence the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity's brand image and the brand image of their associated sponsors and sport. Identification stems from social identity theory (Fink et al. 2009), and is investigated next.

2.3.4 Social identity theory

Consumer's' social identity develops primarily from important group membership (Hogg & Terry 2000). A consumer can hold membership in different groups, and the group membership can evolve from various classifications, such as age, religion and team affiliation (Hogg & Terry 2000). A consumer can, thus, hold multiple social identities (Brewer 2001), and the identities are enacted according to their importance to the individual (Turner 1999). A group based on a particular system of values, to which the consumer is susceptible, is likely to be a group of enduring importance to the individual (Ashforth & Mael 1989).

Additionally, scholars of social identity theory classify group members in terms of in-groups and out-groups (Hogg, Turner & Davidson 1990). In-groups refer to people who are members of a specific group, while out-groups represent people who are not considered members of that group. As positive self-esteem is derived from group membership (Hogg, Turner & Davidson 1990), people compare others on the bases of group membership. Often, people classify members of an out-group as lesser than members of an in-group (Hogg & Terry 2000).

These findings may have consequences for how consumers perceive the impact of an SCT. For example, when the consumer perceives himself/herself, and the sport celebrity as part of a team (i.e. as in-group members) and the sport celebrity is involved in an SCT, the consumer must reconcile the positive feelings about the sponsor with the transgression. It is also possible that a consumer may perceive himself/herself, and the sport celebrity, as part of the in-group members of a particular sport. When the sport celebrity is involved in an SCT, the consumer must again reconcile the positive feelings about the sport with the SCT.

An in-group bias effect may occur, which refers to the fact that group members often maintain allegiance to the group, even when provided with information that a group member has failed (Dietz-Uhler et al. 2000). The failure of the group member is a threat to the group's identity. On the other hand, the "black sheep" effect occurs when group members denigrate the guilty in-group member (sport celebrity) and label him/her as different from the rest of the group (Marques, Yzerbyt & Leyens 1988). The literature on social identity theory indicates that sport consumers, as social individuals, may experience dissonance from the sport celebrity brand image as a result of the SCT. This dissonance may then further affect the sport celebrities associated brand partners, such as their sponsors and sport.

This section indicated that the sport celebrity enters a sponsorship arrangement with an already attained brand image (McCracken 1989), or an a priori sport celebrity brand image. According to sponsorship mechanisms, the attitudes of consumers can change when an SCT occurs. The brand image transfer process indicated that an SCT may impact on the similarity between the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. The balance theory showed that consumers desire relationships to be in a triad and in balance (Dean 2002). According to the balance theory, when an SCT occurs, and consumer's attitudes towards the sport celebrity brand image changed, consumers may re-evaluate their attitudes towards the brand image of the sponsors and sport. Theory of identification showed that highly identified consumers may be reluctant to change their attitudes because of transgressions (Bruce & Tini 2008). The social identity theory indicated that, when a consumer perceived the sport celebrity and the sponsors to be part of an in-group, and when an SCT occurs, consumers may label the sport celebrity as different from the rest of the group, and as a result the consumer's attitude towards the sport celebrity brand image may change (Ashforth & Mael 1989). In order to investigate this phenomenon further, it is necessary to determine what consumers value in their sport celebrity brand image.

2.4 The sport celebrity brand image from a consumer perspective

This section investigates what consumer's value when associating with the sport celebrity brand image. The first part of this section focuses on how consumers perceive the value of a brand, followed by a discussion of the brand image concept. This discussion focuses on the various dimensions of the sport celebrity brand associations that contribute to the sport celebrity brand image.

2.4.1 The brand value concept

The branding literature explains the value of a brand in terms of brand equity (Ross, Hyejin & Seungum 2007; Ross, James & Vargas 2006; Ross, Russell & Bang 2008; Widing et al. 2003). Scholars argue that the majority of the marketing strategies established for a brand can be explained as an attempt to construct, manage, and use brand equity (Aaker 1996; Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Ross, James & Vargas 2006; Ross, Russell & Bang 2008). By maintaining a high level of brand equity, sport brands may incorporate benefits such as; increasing the likelihood of brand choice, inclination to pay higher prices, effectiveness of market communication and spreading of positive word-of-mouth messages (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

Previous studies in branding indicate that brand equity can be considered from both a financial approach and a consumer based approach (Ross, Russell & Bang 2008; Widing et al. 2003). The financial approach refers to the brand value, measured according to the financial worth of the brand, while the consumer based approach focuses on the consumer's perception of the values of a brand (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu 1995; Ross 2006; Ross, Russell & Bang 2008). The most common models, used to explain brand equity, from the consumer's perspective, were proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993).

Keller (1993) built on Aaker's (1991) framework and proposed a customer-based brand equity model that included customer knowledge as the central driver of brand equity. Keller's (1993) model is one of the most widely used conceptual frameworks to measure or investigate brand equity. In this conceptualisation, brand equity consists of two components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness relates to a consumer's ability to recognise and recall a brand, and is the vital first step in building brand associations attached to the brand node in the consumer's memory (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). Previous studies indicate that unless brand awareness has occurred, brand image cannot be formed, and intentions to buy cannot occur (Aaker 1996; Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Keller & Richey 2006).

Keller's (1993) consumer-based brand image concept is a useful tool to investigate the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, because the concept provides useful insights into the dimensions of consumer's knowledge. The concept is thus based on consumer's perceptions of the brand. Any study investigating the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image should, thus, include the perceptions of consumers. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the perceptions of consumers when investigating this issue. The customer-based brand equity model has been previously successfully adapted to sport, and has been used to measure the sport team brand image (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). This thesis investigates the brand image as a value indicator of the sport celebrity, rather than brand awareness. Because the sport celebrity has high levels of visibility and popularity, the brand awareness of the sport celebrity is assumed to be already high. In order to investigate what an a priori sport celebrity brand image may consist of, it is necessary to explore the brand image concept further.

2.4.2 The brand image concept

The value the consumer derives from associating with the sport celebrity brand image is found in various dimensions of brand associations. Brand image is defined as the cumulative set of specific brand associations, fostered in the minds of the consumer about a specific brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Chen 2001). The brand image concept can further be grouped into brand attributes, brand benefits and brand attitudes. The brand attributes relate to the intrinsic properties of the brand that characterise the product or service, and can be grouped into product-related and non-product related brand attributes (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). Product-related attributes refer to a product's physical composition or a service's fundamental requirements. Applied to a sport context, this translates to attributes that contribute to the performance of a sport team (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002). External aspects of the product or service that relate to its purchase and consumption are defined as non-product-related attributes (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). In sport marketing, the non-product related brand attributes are those characteristics relevant to the consumption of the product, but are external to the performance of the sport team, such as the team logo and traditions (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). As brand attributes are found to be an integral part of the brand image concept, it is possible that these product and non-product related brand attributes are valuable celebrity brand associations, and will be further investigated in Section 2.4.3.

In addition, when consumers consider the brand attributes of the sport entity as valuable, it results in some positive consequences for the consumer, which can also be referred to as brand benefits (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). Brand benefits are described as the "personal values consumers attach to the product attributes" that satisfy the underlying needs and motives of the consumer (Keller 1993, p.4). In a sport context, these benefits consist of symbolic and experiential brand benefits (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Gladden & Funk 2002; Kamins 1990; Madrigal 2000).

Symbolic brand benefits refer to the consumer's attachment to the sport object, such as their level of identification and internalisation with the sport (Maddux & Rogers 1980; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010). Existing literature on the symbolic brand benefits within the sport setting suggests that consumers find benefits such as; identification, peer-group acceptance, escape, nostalgia, pride in place, commitment, rivalry and social interaction, important when associating with the sport team (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002; Ross 2006). The second group of brand benefits, that consumers attach to the sport team brand's attributes, is called experiential brand benefits (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

Experiential brand benefits relate to feelings that consumers experience when associating with the sport team. Feelings such as excitement and entertainment are found to be important in the sport environment (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). Since brand benefits are found to be an integral part of the brand image concept, it is possible that the benefits that consumers experience, when associating with the sport entity, are valuable sport celebrity brand associations.

Applying this information to the a priori sport celebrity brand, it is possible to suggest that the a priori sport celebrity brand image may consist of a specific set of brand associations. The specific set of brand associations may be grouped in terms of the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity. The brand attributes of the sport celebrity can be defined as the brand associations that relate to the intrinsic properties of the brand that characterise the brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). The underlying needs and motives of the consumer, in relation to the brand attributes, are referred to as the brand benefits (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). This thesis suggests that during sport celebrity sponsorship, a priori sport celebrity brand image may consist of various brand associations, including brand attributes and brand benefits. Next, the specific set of brand attributes and brand benefits that contribute to a sport celebrity brand image will be investigated.

2.4.3 A specific set of brand associations

This sub-section describes the particular set of brand attributes that relate to a highly visible sport celebrity brand image. In order to identify a specific set of celebrity brand attributes that contribute to a highly visible sport celebrity brand image, this sub-section investigates literature in the field of marketing communication. Table 2.3 shows a summary of research relating to the brand attributes of the celebrity.

The studies in Table 2.3 indicate that the positive brand attributes of the celebrity contribute to an effective advertising campaign (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009; White 2012). The marketing communication literature is dominated by studies that evaluate which celebrity attributes correlate with successful celebrity endorsements (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Eisend & Langner 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; White 2012). These studies show that distinctive celebrity brand attributes consist of dimensions such as the celebrity's; credibility, expertise, attractiveness, trust, and role model ability (Eisend & Langner 2010; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Ohanian 1990, 1991; Rossiter & Smidts 2012; Van der Veen & Haiyan 2010; White 2012).

Author/ Year	Findings	Brand attributes
Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010	<i>Focus on celebrity in sport. Find that celebrity role model has a positive influence on young adults switching behaviour, complaint behaviour, positive-word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty.</i>	Role model
Simmers, et al. 2009	<i>Focus on celebrity in sport. Find that the expertise and likeability of the celebrity as important.</i>	Expertise, likeability
White 2012	<i>Focus on celebrity in general. Find that the role of liking the celebrity is critical during celebrity endorsement.</i>	Likeability
Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt 2010	<i>Identifying the attributes of an effective restaurant chain endorser. Find that celebrity power scored highest, followed by power and identification, and then physical attractiveness and expertise follow. Expertise was listed fifth in order and trustworthiness was listed even lower than expertise</i>	Celebrity power, identification, physical attractiveness.

Author/ Year	Findings	Brand attributes
Eisend & Langner 2010	<i>Focus on celebrity in general. Find attractiveness and expertise as important.</i>	Attractiveness, expertise
Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001	<i>Focus on celebrity in general. Investigates British advertising agency managers' consideration of important celebrity attributes, and find attractiveness, likeability, trustworthiness, expertise and credibility important.</i>	Attractiveness, likeability, trust, expertise, credibility
Van der Veen & Song 2010	<i>Focus on scales used to measure the perceived image and advertising effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in a tourism context. Find the dimension of trustworthiness is not as distinct as has been proposed.</i>	Trust not that important
Ohanian 1990	<i>Credible source is more effective than less credible source in marketing communication. Credibility consists of expertise, physical attractiveness and trust and it impacts on the intention to purchase.</i>	Credibility, expertise, attractiveness, trust

Table 2-3 Research on celebrity brand attributes in marketing communication

Credibility

Credibility is defined as the “extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and [can] be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject” (Belch & Belch 1994, p. 189). Ohanian (1990, 1991) introduces a Source Credibility Scale to measure the celebrity image in terms of credibility. The results indicate that respondents evaluate the credibility of the celebrity in terms of attributes such as: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. Reserach conducted by Pornpitakpan (2003) verified the Ohanian scale with Chinese and Singaporean undergraduate students. Premeaux (2005) also found that men were more influenced by a highly credible spokesperson in sponsorship than women. Previous research provides evidence that the more credible a source is, the more persuasive the celebrity will be (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Harmon & Coney 1982; Powell 1965). Consequently, the more credible the sport celebrity’s brand appears the more persuasive thier message will be, and the more influence they will have on the consumers. When an SCT impacts on the credibility of the sport celebrity brand image, it may further influence the persuasiveness of the advertising message. It is further possible that different genders may perceive this impact differently.

Expertise

Expertise is defined as the degree to which the celebrity is perceived to possess knowledge, experience or skills (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell 2000; Ohanian 1990, 1991; Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer 1992). In the sport context expertise refers to the performance and success of the sport brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Till & Shimp 1998). A celebrity who is considered to be an expert has been found to be more persuasive in an advertising campaign (Atkin & Block 1983; Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Premeaux 2005; Till & Busler 1998), and has a positive influence on attitude change (Maddux & Rogers 1980; Mills & Harvey 1972; Ohanian 1990; Ross 1973). Furthermore, there may be a higher association between expertise and the intention to purchase a product than the

dimensions of trustworthiness and attractiveness (Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001, Premeaux 2005, Till & Busler 2000). Therefore, an SCT may have significant impact on the intention to purchase, when the SCT negatively impacts on the expertise dimension.

Furthermore, when the celebrity is perceived to be an expert the process of mediation occurs through internalisation (Kamins et al. 1989; Kelman 1961; Maddux & Rogers 1980). This is true because internalisation is based on the content of the communication (Maddux & Rogers 1980). Thus, when the sport fan perceives the sport celebrity as an expert, it may impact directly on attitude change through the process of internalisation. Therefore, when the dimension expertise is negatively affected by an SCT, it may have further consequences for the consumer's level of internalisation.

Expertise is furthermore an important match-up dimension in sport celebrity sponsorship. Premeaux (2005) analyses the perceptions of consumers regarding their effectiveness in relation to the AIDA framework and the match-up hypothesis. Expertise is found to be a better match-up attribute than physical attractiveness (Premeaux 2005; Till & Busler 2000). When sponsors match-up with the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image and the SCT impact on expertise, the SCT may then have a significant impact on the sponsors. However, the expertise dimension is easily manipulated. According to Premeaux (2005), the celebrity's expertise is one of the dimensions that may overcome certain flaws in the image of the celebrity, flaws such as a lack of trustworthiness and likeability (Premeaux 2005). The study shows that a scandal did not have a negative impact on the expertise of the celebrity chef Martha Stewart the scandal affected only the celebrity's trustworthiness and likeability (Premeaux 2005). However, this study investigates one type of transgression, and it is still unclear whether different types of SCTs may have similar outcomes. It is thus possible that consumers may still perceive the sport celebrity brand image as possessing low levels of expertise, depending on the type of SCT.

Attractiveness

The Source Attractive Model proposes that the effectiveness of communicators relies on their similarity, familiarity and likeability (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Maddux & Rogers 1980; McGuire 1985). Similarity refers to the apparent conformity between the sport celebrity and the receiver of the message – the sport consumer. Celebrity endorsers who are perceived to be similar to their audience have a much stronger impact on the customers' attitude than dissimilar celebrities (Simons, Berkowitz & Moyer 1970). Also, similar sources are perceived to be more credible, which leads to trust and respect (Simons, Berkowitz & Moyer 1970). Familiarity refers to the knowledge of the sport celebrity through repeated media exposure. Likeability is defined as fondness for the sport celebrity owing to the celebrity's physical appearance, behaviour and personality (Charbonneau & Garland 2005; Erdogan 1999; McCracken 1989; Ohanian 1990). A few previous studies indicate that attractiveness may also include characteristics such as intellectual skills, personality properties and lifestyles (Erdogan 1999; Kahle & Homer 1985; Ohanian 1990). Previous research provides evidence that the more attractive a celebrity is, the more effective the sport celebrity will be as a spokesperson for sponsor organisations (Erdogan 1999; Kahle & Homer 1985; Ohanian 1990). Ohanian (1990) develops a celebrity endorsement scale and uses the following scales for measuring attractiveness; attractiveness-unattractiveness, classy-

not classy, beautiful-ugly, elegant-plain, sexy-not sexy. Attractiveness further impacts directly on attitude change through the process of identification (Kamins et al. 1989; Kelman 1961; Maddux & Rogers 1980). Therefore, when an SCT impacts negatively on the attractive dimension of the sport celebrity, the SCT may further impact on the identification level of the consumer with the sport celebrity.

Trust

Trust is defined as the “expectation... of ethically justifiable behaviour that is, morally correct decisions and actions based upon ethical principles of analysis” (Hosmer 1995, p.399). When a sport celebrity gets caught up in a scandal, the sport fan may experience the celebrity’s actions as immoral and unethical, which may impact on the sport celebrity’s level of trustworthiness. Trust may also include a person’s “expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another’s future actions will be beneficial, favourable or at least not detrimental to one’s interests” (Robinson 1996, p. 576). In the sports marketing context, trust may, therefore, include the expectation of the sport consumer that the sport celebrity’s actions should be ethically justifiable, and not detrimental to the sport consumer’s own image. Previous research (Hardin 1992, cited in Kramer et al. 1999) indicates that a person’s trust includes two important components: First, the knowledge about a person that enables trust, and, second, the incentives of the trusted person to fulfil the trust. This means that the sport consumer should have attained knowledge about their favourite celebrity in order to trust the celebrity, and the sport celebrity should have incentives to fulfil the trust.

Past studies investigate trust in relation to sports marketing (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Friedman & Friedman 1979; Friedman, Termini & Washington 1976; Ohanian 1990, 1991), and define trustworthiness as the “degree of confidence that the respondent has in the communicator’s intentions and ability to make valid assertions” (Ohanian 1990, p. 41). Trustworthiness also indicates the perceived honesty, integrity and believability of the celebrity as endorser (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Friedman & Friedman 1979; Friedman, Termini & Washington 1976; Kahle & Homer 1985; Kertz & Ohanian 1992; Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell 2002; Miciak & Shanklin 1994; Ohanian 1990, 1991; Premeaux 2005; Sternthal, Phillips & Dholakia 1978). The importance of trust is emphasised in a study that notes the importance of trust in consumer’s expectations of relationship continuity with the endorsed celebrity, which ultimately leads to an increase in brand equity (Dwivedi & Johnson 2013).

Role model ability

Studies that focus especially on the sport industry conclude that the role model ability and expertise of the sport celebrity have a positive influence on young adults’ product switching behaviour, word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009). Following an SCT, consumers may perceive the celebrity as not being a role model, and this may have a negative impact on young’ adults consumer behaviour.

This sub-section described the brand attributes that may contribute to an a priori sport celebrity brand image as the sport celebrity’s: credibility, attractiveness, trust, expertise and role model ability (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt 2010). Since these brand attributes relate to the intrinsic properties that characterise the brand, they can be referred to as the sport celebrity’s brand

attributes. When applied to the sport celebrity, the expertise of the celebrity, can translate to the product related brand attributes of the sport celebrity, because the celebrity’s expertise contributes to the performance of the sport celebrity in the sport context. The celebrity’s credibility, attractiveness, trust and role model ability relate to the characteristics that are external to the performance of the sport celebrity, and can be referred to as the sport celebrity’s non-product related brand attributes.

Section 2.4.2 indicated that the sport consumer considers some brand benefits when evaluating the brand image of a sport entity (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). This caused this study to investigate whether there may be an additional set of brand benefits that may be relevant to a consumer in sport. In an attempt to indicate what benefits consumers experience when associated with a sport entity, scholars find that consumers value symbolic and experiential brand benefits when they associate with the sport celebrity brand image (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Funk & Pastore 2000; Mahony, Madrigal & Howard 2000). Table 2.4 presents a summary of research concerning the brand benefits consumer’s’ value when associating with a sport entity.

Authors/ Date	Brand benefits	Findings
Bauer et al. 2008	Symbolic benefits (e.g. identification). Experiential benefits (e.g. entertainment)	Find symbolic and experiential brand benefits to contribute to the sport team brand image.
Madrigal 2000; Funk & Pastore 2000; Gladden & Funk 2002	Identification	Finding shows that favourable purchase intentions are more likely to occur as identification with the team increases and when such intentions are perceived as a group norm.
Mahony et al. 2000;	Commitment	Positive word of mouth.
Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger 2002	Excitement, drama, entertainment, interest in player.	Excitement, drama, wholesome environment, aesthetics, entertainment

Table 2-4 Brand benefits consumer’s’ value when associating with a sport entity

(Source: developed for this study)

The studies in Table 2.4 indicate that the brand associations that consumers value when associating with a sport entity, include: admiration, identification (the ability to relate), internalisation (value-match), escape, nostalgia, pride in place, commitment, rivalry, socialising, positive emotions, negative emotions, entertainment, excitement and social value (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Funk, Mahony & Ridinger 2002). These brand benefits are important in sport marketing, as they are found to result in positive consumer attitudes and behaviours in sport (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

Symbolic brand benefits

Symbolic benefits relate to the more external benefits of product or service construction (Keller 1993, p. 100). A brand with a symbolic concept is “designed to associate the individual with a desired group, role and self-image (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986, p. 136). Bauer et al. (2008) argue that symbolic brand benefits consist of the identification and internalisation of consumers with the sport brand

image. Section 2.3.3 discussed the importance of identification in sport sponsorship in relation to an SCT. Internalisation takes place when an individual embraces the attitudes and behaviours of other individuals because of conformity in the values of the individuals (Bailey 2007; Erdogan 1999; Friedman & Friedman 1979; Kamins et al. 1989; Kelman 1961; Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell 2002; Premeaux 2005). The consumers, therefore, internalise the attitudes of the sport celebrities, sponsors and sport only because they conform to the values of the sport celebrity, sponsors and sport. When the sport celebrity gets caught up in an SCT, it may impact on the value system of the celebrity and may, as a result, not match-up with the value system of the sport consumer. The level of internalisation directly influences the behavioural loyalty of the sport consumer in terms of past game attendance (Kahle & Homer 1985; Trail, Anderson & Fink 2005). A negative impact on the internalisation of the consumer with the sport celebrity, sponsors and sport, may further influence game attendance. This means that an SCT may have a rippling effect on game attendance.

Experiential brand benefits

Experiential benefits refer to what it feels like to use a product or service, and it includes the emotions of the consumer (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Ross, James & Vargas 2006; Ross, Russell & Bang 2008). These studies find the following experiential benefits to be relevant in the sport setting: nostalgia, escape, socialising, emotions, and entertainment (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). Sports elicit strong emotions such as joy, pride, ecstasy, anger, frustration, worry or shame (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). In the sport industry consumers feel less restraint to act out these emotions, compared with other social surroundings. Furthermore, Berry (2000) finds that great brands always make an emotional connection with the consumers. Emotional branding ensures enduring affective bonds between the sport consumer and the brands in the brand alliance (Roberts 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). A case analysis done by Thompson et al. (2006) indicates that emotional branding strategies are rewarded with intensely loyal customers with accompanying high profits and a competitive advantage (Thompson et al. 2006). In other words, when sport consumers are emotionally connected to the sport celebrity brand image, it may lead to extensively loyal sport consumers. The consequence of passionate consumer-brand relationships is enthusiastic customers who engage in intimate dialogues with other brand users and brand managers to create mutually beneficial, identity-enhancing, and loyalty-sustaining meanings (Atkin & Block 1983; Roberts 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). The authors explain that these emotional branding strategies invariably carry the potential risk of brands falling from their former glory (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). When a brand is viewed as transgressing or abandoning its emotional-branding promises, formerly loyal consumers can create a significant backlash (Thompson et al. 2006), which may include abandoning the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT.

This sub-section indicated that consumers found a specific set of brand attributes and brand benefits valuable when considering the sport celebrity brand image from a priori perspective. The brand benefits found in sport marketing indicated that consumers experienced symbolic and experiential brand benefits when associating with the sport brand image (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). Figure 2.3 provides an illustration of the a priori sport celebrity brand image during sport celebrity sponsorship.

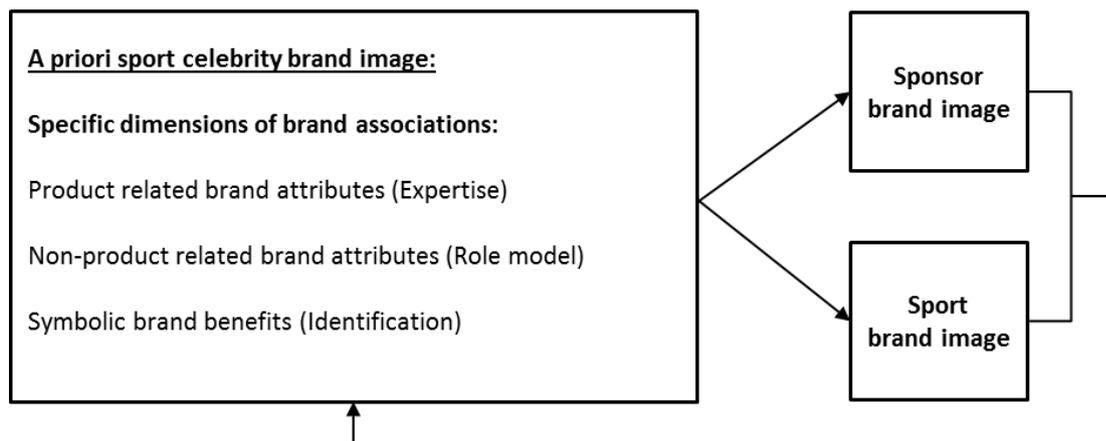


Figure 2-3 Illustration of an a priori sport celebrity brand image

(Source: developed for this study)

Figure 2.3 indicates that the specific set of brand attributes and benefits that contribute to an a priori sport celebrity brand image impact positively on consumer attitudes and behaviours in sport. The brand attributes (product related and non-product related) and brand benefits (symbolic and experiential) of the sport celebrity contribute to the specific set of brand associations, which impact on the a priori sport celebrity brand image. Yet, it is still unknown how an SCT impacts on consumer's' perceptions of the a priori sport celebrity brand image. Further, it is still not clear whether consumer's' re-evaluate the a priori sport celebrity brand image from a positive or a negative perspective, following an SCT. Therefore this study suggests the following proposition:

P1: A sport celebrity transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an a priori state.

Further connections can be made between findings from the transgression literature, and the question of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The transgression literature shows that the impact of an SCT may be influenced by the characteristics of the transgression (Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008). Characteristics of an SCT include questions about whether the transgression occurs off the field of play, or on the field of play, and are discussed in the following section.

2.5 The characteristics of a sport celebrity transgression (SCT)

This section investigates whether consumers may perceive the various characteristics of SCTs to have a different impact on the sport celebrity brand image. Section 2.4 indicated that sport elicits strong emotions (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008), and emotional branding ensures enduring bonds between the sport consumer and the brands (Roberts 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). The consumer may even experience the brand as a relationship partner, where the relationship is characterised by passion, commitment and trust (Fournier 1988), which is essential in building brand equity (Berry 2000). Within this context, when an emotionally based relationship exists between the sport consumer and the sport celebrity brand image, meanings such as passion, commitment and trust may emerge.

However, these emotionally based relationships are based on the core values and norms of consumers (Berry 2000). Emotional branding further involved good brands citizenship where brands are “held morally accountable for actions that affect diverse communities” (Kates 2004, p. 462). When brands adhere to the core values and norms of the consumer the brand obtains a social fit between the brand and a community, and thus becomes a legitimate brand (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Suchman 1995; Kates 2004). In other words, the norms of the sport celebrity brand image should correspond with the morals of the sport consumer. The study also states that without the legitimate components of brands, brands will be merely a means of “individualistic pleasure for economically privileged consumers” (Kates 2004, p. 462).

In the branding literature the brand’s legitimacy refers to the perceptions that the actions of a specific brand are desirable within a socially constructed community (Suchman 1995), and these actions affect the brand’s cultural meaning. The sport brand is therefore legitimate when there is a social fit between the norms and values of the sport consumers and the norms and values of the sport celebrity brand image. Brand citizenship depends on incorporating the legitimate meaning of the community and aligning themselves with the interests of the consumers and thereby become culturally authentic (Kates 2004, p. 462).

Section 2.2 indicated that transgression refers to “a violation of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation” (Aaker 2004, p. 2). This definition suggests that consumer’s’ perceptions of SCTs’ effects can vary depending on that consumer’s’ “implicit or explicit rules”. These implicit and explicit rules refer to consumer’s’ core values and norms that they shared with their community (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Suchman 1995). It is therefore possible that when a specific characteristic of an SCT fits with the core values and norms of consumers, the sport celebrity brand image will still be legitimate, and the effects of the SCT minimal. However, it is also possible that, when a specific characteristic of an SCT does not fit with the core values and norms of consumers, the sport celebrity brand image will be illegitimate, and the effects of the SCT significant.

In addition, when a brand is viewed as transgressing or abandoning its emotional-branding promises, formerly loyal customers can create a significant backlash (Thompson et al. 2006). In other words when an SCT occurs, the formerly loyal sport consumers may also create a significant backlash, resulting in abandoning the sport celebrity brand image. The impact of the SCT may thus depend on whether the characteristic of the SCT impacts on the legitimacy of the sport celebrity brand image, and whether the characteristics of the SCT are in conflict with the consumer’s core value and norms. In order to establish whether consumers perceive a fit between the different characteristics of SCTs and their core values and norms, this thesis groups the SCTs in off-field and on-field SCTs. Previous studies investigating different characteristics of SCTs show that whether the SCT is off-field or on-field may impact on consumer’s’ perceptions of the transgression effects (Bailey 2007; Dimitrov 2008; Hill 2010; Hughes & Shank 2005; Mazanov & Connor 2010; Tinney 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; White 2012).

Off-field SCTs will be defined, for the purpose of this study, as transgressions, related to the celebrities' personal lives and not related to their sport. The focus of this thesis is not so much on the motivation of the SCT, but rather on the occurrence of the SCT. According to Westberg et al. (2008) and Wilson et al. (2008), off-field SCTs are more difficult to manage. As these studies focus on viewpoints of managers and sponsors, it is still not clear how these characteristics of SCTs fit with the norms and values of the community. Furthermore, off-field SCTs attract more media attention than on-field SCTs (Hill 2010; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008). Off-field SCTs, investigated in previous studies include drinking, aggressive masculinity, violence against women and inappropriate team bonding acts (Bailey 2007; Connor & Mazanov 2010; Dimitrov 2008).

On-field SCTs will be defined, for the purpose of this study, as transgressions that relate to the sport of which the celebrity is part. On-field SCTs are easier to handle and manage, according to sport managers (Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008), but are still regarded as having a potentially negative impact on sponsors and sport (Hill 2010; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Till & Shimp 1998). On-field SCTs investigated include transgressions such as doping and match fixing (Hill 2010; Hughes & Shank 2005; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Till & Shimp 1998). Studies focusing on doping indicate that stakeholders in sport are reluctant to associate with sports involved in doping, and it further results in a decline in consumer's' perceptions towards the endorsed brand (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Till & Shimp 1998). The study conducted by Solberg, Hanstad, and Thoring (2010) shows that doping impacts on the perceptions of consumers, but failed to investigate how doping may have an impact on the sport celebrity brand image.

This section indicated that consumers may perceive the off-field and on-field SCTs to have different impacts on the sport celebrity brand image, depending on the community's core norms and values. However, there was no indication whether consumers consider the impact of these characteristics from a positive or a negative perspective, and whether the characteristics may have further effects on the sport celebrity's associated brand partners. Therefore, this study suggests the following proposition:

P2: The characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression will impact on whether and how consumers adjust their perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image following that transgression.

Further investigation into sport management literature reveals that the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs can further influence the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The behaviour of the sport celebrity in a specific type of sport may contribute to the brand image of that sport (Connor & Mazanov 2010). Therefore the next section investigates the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs in relation to consumer's' perceptions of the effects of an SCT.

2.6 Type of sport to which the celebrity belongs

Research in sport management literature shows that the image of sport varies from one type of sport to another (Croft 2013). For example, the brand image of golf is perceived as a gentleman's game, and the Australian Rugby Union is described as having a top end reputation (Croft 2013). It is found that the different types of brand images are based on the behaviour of the individual sport celebrities within the type of sport (Connor & Mazanov 2010). For example, the National Rugby League and

the Australian Football League are described as having a negative brand image, because of the recent incidents of transgression among their individual players (Croft 2013). These different brand images of sport may create different consumer expectations of the sport and the celebrities within that sport.

The re-occurrence of a specific transgression in a specific sport results in that sport portraying a certain brand image. The brand image of the sport is described according to the behaviour or misbehaviour of well-known celebrities in that sport. For example, the brand image of the National Rugby League (NRL) is often described as consisting of ‘aggressive masculinity’; ‘mateship’; ‘drinking’, ‘violence towards women’; and being ‘sexist’ (Connor & Mazanov 2010; Dimitrov 2008). These studies show that the aggressive behaviour towards women has become part of the brand image of the National Rugby League and Australian Football League (Connor & Mazanov 2010). The high occurrence of a particular type of transgression in a particular sport invades the sport brand image to such an extent, that the type of transgression becomes part of the brand image of the sport. It seems that consumers become normalised by the transgressions in a particular sport, so that when there is an SCT in that sport, that is common and regularly reported, then consumers are less likely to consider the type of transgression in a negative context. This may have repercussions for the brand image of sport and the brand image of the sport celebrity’s associated sponsors.

Another type of sport brand image that is described as having a negative brand image, owing to celebrities’ behaviour, is that of cycling. The brand image of cycling is often linked with doping. A previous study indicates that cycling has become increasingly synonymous in the mind of the consumer with taking performance enhancement drugs (Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008). After 1998, more than a third of the top cyclists in the Tour de France have admitted using performance enhancement drugs during the race. Winners of the Tour de France, including cyclists such as Lance Armstrong from 1999-2005; Floyd Landis in 2006; and Alberto Contador during the years 2007, 2009 and 2010, have all lost their titles owing to evidence of doping.

This section indicated that the type of the sport to which celebrity belongs, can impact on consumer’s’ perceptions of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. It was found that the brand image of a specific sport created consumer expectations of SCTs. Therefore this thesis suggests the following proposition:

P3: The consumer’s’ perceptions of the type of sport will moderate the relationship between a sport celebrity transgression and the sport celebrity brand image.

In order to investigate whether consumer’s’ perceptions of the different types of sport influence their perceptions of the effects of an SCT, this thesis investigates the following types of sport: Australian Football League, Australian Rugby Union, Boxing, Cricket, Cycling, Golf, National Football League, National Rugby League, Swimming and Tennis.

2.7 REview

Section 2.4 indicated that the a priori sport celebrity brand image consisted of a specific set of brand attributes and brand benefits. The specific set of sport celebrity brand attributes was identified as dimensions such as the celebrity's credibility, attractiveness, trust, expertise, admiration, and identification. When an SCT occurs, it may impact on the credibility, expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image. The SCT may further impact on the sport celebrity brand benefits, including the symbolic (identification, internalisations) and experiential (excitement, entertainment, emotions) brand benefits.

Furthermore, Section 2.5 indicated that it is possible that the off-field and on-field characteristics of the SCT may influence consumer's' perceptions of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. Section 2.6 further showed that the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs may create certain expectations of SCTs in a specific type of sport. Section 2.3 indicated that through sponsorship mechanisms, the sport celebrity brand image transfer to the associated sponsor brand image and the sport brand image. It is therefore possible that after an SCT has occurred, a negative brand image transfer may occur onto the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport. The conventional academic approach to studying brand image transfer has largely focused on the positive transfer of brand images during sponsorship association (Caruso 2006; Dickinson & Heath 2006; Pope, Voges & Brown 2009; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009; Till & Busler 2000; Till, Stanley & Priluck 2008). However, it would stand to reason that if a positive transfer can occur in a sponsorship setting, then negative brand image effects could also be transferred. This would mean that when an SCT occurs, any negative brand images of the sport celebrity could transfer to the other partners' brand images, through the process of association. The occurrence of negative image transfer is further supported by studies conducted in a sponsorship setting that have suggested that negative images do transfer from the sponsee brand image to the sponsor brand image (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Jaiprahash 2009; Votolato & Unnava 2006).

The brand image transfer model, during sport celebrity sponsorship, can be used to provide a conceptual model for the investigation of SCT effects. These theories shed light on how a sport celebrity brand image may impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport, following an SCT. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the next section investigates how an SCT relates to the negative brand image transfer process.

2.8 Negative brand image transfer

Consumers may perceive a more negative attitude towards the co-brands in a sponsorship arrangement, when an SCT occurs. Despite the increased focus on celebrity sponsorship (White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009), few studies have attempted to address the possibly negative effect of an SCT, during sport celebrity sponsorship. As Solberg et al. (2010) note, during the past few years several sponsors have withdrawn their support owing to the many SCTs occurring in sport. The fear of possible transgressions has led two public service broadcasters to pull out of the Tour de France (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010). More recent examples of sponsors' response to a transgression in Australia, showed sponsor organisations' attempt to withdraw from their sponsorship agreements based on SCTs. M&C Saatchi Sports & Entertainment's head of Public Relations and events, Jack Lamacraft, indicated that

many of their clients, which include Pepsi, IAG Insurance and Qantas, are assessing their options regarding celebrity sponsorship (Croft 2013). Research on the transfer of negative images is summarised in Table 2.5 (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010; Louie, Kulik & Jacobson 2001).

Author/Year	Findings	Negative Image Impact on
Miciak & Shanklin 1994	Results indicate a negative transference onto the advertising effectiveness.	Advertising campaign
Till & Shimp 1998	Results indicate a negative transference onto the endorsed product brand, for the fictitious celebrity.	Sponsors' product
Louie & Obermiller 2002/2001	Findings show that companies fared better when dismissing existing endorsers with high blame and keeping those with low blame.	Sponsors' financial value
Hughes & Shank 2005	Findings show that when the SCT affects the integrity of the sport then the act is viewed as more scandalous. Association with a particular sport or entity does appear to influence perception of whether an event is scandalous or not	Event Sponsors' products Sport entity
Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008	Findings show that the sponsor's response to the SCT is likely to depend on the nature of the incident. Off-field scandals are more difficult to handle. Increased media scrutiny was of notable concern to most participants.	Sponsors Sport
Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008	SCTs in sport relate to on-or off-field incidents that are out of the ordinary and may bring negative repercussions for stakeholders, as a result of their association with the team, athlete or sport.	Sponsors Sport
Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008	Negative meanings were transferred from the celebrity to the advertising campaign.	Advertising campaign
White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009	When SCT occurs, a negative transference of affect in the endorsement relationship occurs.	Sponsors' new product
Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring, 2010,	Findings show that majority of respondents were in favour of tough responses to athletes and sports involved in doping. Sponsors should reduce the support to athletes who are exposed in doping.	Sponsors
Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010	Findings show negative brand image transfer from the sponsor (Sainsbury Supermarkets) to the celebrity brand image.	Sponsor to celebrity
Connor & Mazanov 2010	A case study of the Australian Rugby League competition and its long-running series of scandals find that an SCT can threaten viability of sponsors and sport.	Sponsors sport
Miller & Laczniak 2011	Findings show that SCTs can impact on the sponsors' brand. Investigate scandals of Michael Phelps, Tiger Woods and Koby Bryant.	Sponsors
Bartz, Molchanov &	Show that transgressions can impact on the value of the firm (measured by abnormal stock returns)	Sponsors

Author/Year	Findings	Negative Image Impact on
Stork 2013		
Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk 2013	This study finds that brand familiarity has an effect on the associated sponsor and event brand attitudes following negative celebrity endorser publicity.	Sponsors events

Table 2-5 Transfer of negative images during celebrity sponsorship

The studies summarised in Table 2.5 confirm the notion, that, negative information that occurs, as a result of an SCT, can transfer to the celebrity’s associated partners (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010; Louie, Kulik & Jacobson 2001). Negative information is found to impact negatively on the sport celebrity’s associated advertising campaign (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Miciak & Shanklin 1994). Scholars also found that SCTs impact negatively on the sport celebrity’s endorsed product/brand (Hughes & Shank 2005; Till & Shimp 1998; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009). The SCT may furthermore impact negatively on the sponsor organisations financial value (Louie and Obermiller 2001). The study conducted by Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) indicates that negative information about the sponsor may transfer to the brand image of the celebrity endorser. These studies confirm the transfer of negative brand images, but fail to show whether negative brand image transfer occurs from sport celebrities to their associated sponsors and sports.

Several studies contribute to the literature on negative brand image transfer by showing a negative impact on the image of the sport celebrity’s associated sponsors and sport. These studies indicate that SCTs impact negatively on the sport celebrity’s associated sponsors (Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk 2013; Miller & Lacznia 2011; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008). However, it is still unclear how consumers perceive the celebrity’s associated sponsors, when highly visible sport celebrities are involved in off or on-field SCTs. These gaps will now be discussed in more depth.

As indicated in Section 2.4.1, when investigating the impact of an SCT on the brand image concept, it is important to focus on consumer’s’ perceptions (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010). Overall, studies contributing to the research on SCTs fail to investigate the impact of an SCT in terms of the consumer-based approach (Miller & Lacznia 2011; Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008). The aim of these studies was to investigate perceptions conducted done by Westberg et al. (2008), Wilson et al. (2008), and Hugh and Shank (2005), has advanced support for the assumption that an SCT impacts on their sponsors and sport. In doing so, they note the link between the SCT and the sponsor by investigating the perceptions of managers and sponsors, while the study conducted by Miller and Lacznia (2011) was a theoretical investigation.

Previous studies investigating the impact of SCTs on consumer's perceptions are important here (Till & Shimp 1998; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009). Both studies indicate how negative information about a sport celebrity can negatively affect the brand that the celebrity endorsed, but fail to show how the SCT can impact on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors. White, Goddard and Wilbur's (2008) study includes the highly visible NFL player, Jamal Lewis sponsoring L&N Shoes and being involved in a drug deal. Till and Shimp's (1998) study shows a highly visible France Olympic cyclist, Pierre Varnay who endorses Avenix racing bicycles, being involved in two separate SCT scenarios. There is no indication of whether the SCT impacts on the brand image of Avenix or the brand image of L&N Shoes.

Furthermore, Till and Shimp's (1998) study does not include a real SCT scenario, but rather included two made-up SCT scenarios, and does not indicate how these scenarios impact on the sponsored product. Failure to include a real SCT scenario in the investigation into the effects of SCTs may result in the exclusion of consumer's emotions. Sport consumers were found to be emotionally involved in sport (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008), and these emotions ensure enduring relationships between the consumer and the sport celebrity brand (Berry 2000). Furthermore, these studies fail to include the characteristics of an SCT, and how the type of sport may impact on consumer's perceptions about the associated brand image of the sponsors.

As indicated in Section 2.4.3, the highly visible sport celebrity consists of a specific set of brand attributes and benefits. Failure to include highly visible sport celebrities in the investigation into the effects of an SCT, may lead to the exclusion of certain favourable brand attributes, such as the celebrities' expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness. Studies including highly visible sport celebrities (Miller & Allen 2012; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008) fail to investigate consumer's perceptions of the effects of SCTs. Miller and Laczniak (2011) present a conceptual framework of the retention of tainted celebrity affiliates, by examining the ethical implications for a firm. Research conducted by Doyle, Pentecoste and Funk (2013) indicates that an SCT impacts on consumer's attitudes towards the sponsor brand, but fails to include a highly visible sport celebrity in their experimental study. The study uses a fictitious sport celebrity, by referring to a 'champion in sport' (Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk (2013). Another study conducted by Solberg, Hanstad and Thoring (2010) includes perceptions of consumers but focuses on the transgression without including a highly visible sport celebrity. The scholars investigate consumer's perceptions of doping and how the act of doping impacts on sponsors. Bartz, Molchanov and Stork (2013) show that SCTs impact negatively on the stock returns of sponsor organisations.

The two studies that include highly visible sport celebrities, failed to include consumer's perceptions (Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008). Westberg, Stavros and Wilson (2008) conducted in-depth interviews with sport administrators, and found that participants distinguish between off-field and on-field SCTs. The conducted done by Wilson, Stavros and Westberg (2008), conducts a series of in-depth interviews and showed that on-field or off-field SCTs can have effects on sponsors.

Research conducted by Hugh and Shank (2005) includes perceptions of consumers, and includes highly visible sport celebrities, but fails to show how the various characteristics of an SCT, and the type of sport, can impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsor brand image. Therefore, it is still unclear whether the characteristics of SCTs impact on consumer's perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport. As indicated in Section 2.2, the principal thrust of this thesis is focused on a consumer-based approach, which includes a highly visible sport celebrity who was involved in a real SCT incident.

As indicated in Section 2.4, consumers may perceive the specific set of sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits differently from that of management and sponsors. Consumers may perceive the SCT to impact on some sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits differently. It may further be possible that only some affected sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits transfer onto the celebrity's associated partners. By taking the brand image perspective of consumers into account, this thesis will explore new themes that will add to the body of knowledge of sport celebrity sponsorship. Therefore, this thesis suggests the following proposition:

P4: When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect on the:

P4(a): Consumer's' perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors.

P4(b): Consumer's' perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sport.

The next section proposes a conceptual model, of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport.

2.9 Preliminary conceptual model

The components of a conceptual model about the impact of an SCT on consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport are now discussed. The discussion combines research in the field of marketing communication, sponsorship, brand image transfer, branding, sport marketing, transgression and literature in the field of psychology. This is followed by a series of propositions that will guide the next stage of this research. Several dimensions have been shown to contribute to the understanding of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsor and of the sport. These are: A Priori Sport Celebrity Brand Image; Characteristics of an SCT; Type of Sport to which the celebrity belongs; the Brand Image Transfer of the re-evaluated Sport Celebrity Brand Image on the Associated Sponsor Brand Image and Sport Brand Image. Figure 2.4 provides an illustration of the conceptual model of this study.

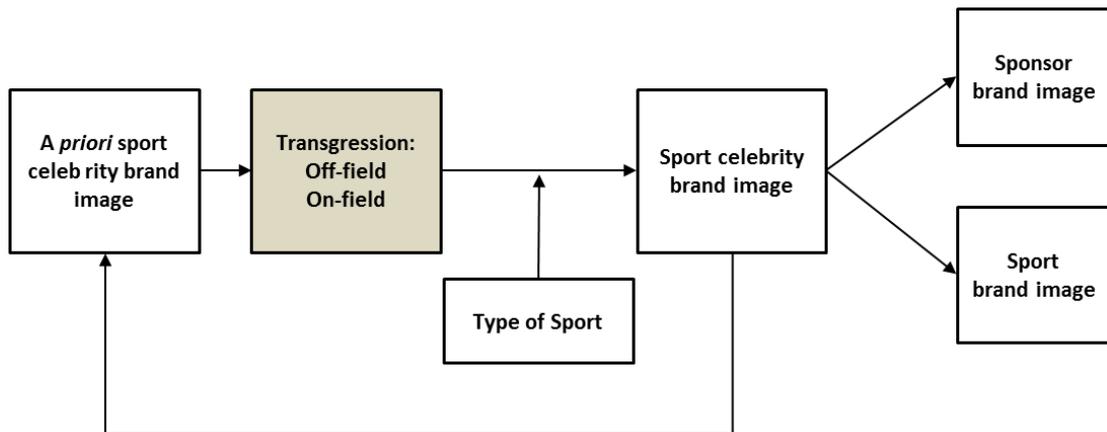


Figure 2-4 A conceptual model on the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport

(Source: developed for this study)

The components of the proposed conceptual model will now be discussed in turn. The conceptual model indicates that the celebrity enters the sponsorship arrangement with an already established a priori sport celebrity brand image (McCracken 1989). The literature study indicates that an a priori sport celebrity brand image consists of a specific set of brand attributes and benefits. Brand attributes such as product related (i.e. expertise), and non-product related (i.e. credibility, attractiveness, trust, expertise, role model ability) brand attributes were found to increase the effectiveness of the marketing communication campaign (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009). The sport celebrity's brand benefits were identified as symbolic brand benefits (i.e. admiration, identification, internalisation) and experiential brand benefits (i.e. positive emotions, entertainment, excitement) (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

The conceptual model indicates when an SCT occurs the transgression may impact on the sport celebrity brand image. The characteristics (off-field and on-field) of the SCT itself may also impact on consumer's' perceptions of the effects of an SCT. That is, whether the sport celebrity transgression occurred in the private non-sport part of the celebrity's life (off-field), or whether the transgression occurred as part of their on-field sporting performance, may impact on consumer's' perceptions of transgression (Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008).

Further investigation found that the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs might also influence consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. It was further found that the image of a specific sport causes consumers to expect certain behaviour or misbehaviour of a sport celebrity (Croft 2013). The type of sport will moderate the relationship between transgression and the sport celebrity brand image. As was noted above this study investigates the following types of sport in relation to this study's research objective: Australian Football League, Australian Rugby Union, boxing, cricket, cycling, golf, National Football League, swimming and tennis.

Given that the sport celebrity brand image transfers to the brand image of the associated partners during sport celebrity sponsorship (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010; McCracken 1989), it is possible that a negative brand image transfer occurs during sport celebrity sponsorship. The sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT may transfers to the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport, resulting in a negative brand image transfer.

Overall, the literature reviewed here enables some research propositions to be formulated. The propositions are:

- P1:** A Sport Celebrity Transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an a priori state.
- P2:** The Characteristics (off-field or on-field) of the Sport Celebrity Transgression will impact on whether and how the consumers adjust their perceptions of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image following that transgression.
- P3:** The consumer's' perceptions of the Type of Sport will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.
- P4:** When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the:
 - P4a:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors.
 - P4b:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sport.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter a conceptual framework for the consumer's' perceptions of SCTs has been proposed. The brand image transfer model, the associative network theory, balance theory, identity theory, and social identity theory provided understanding of this sparsely researched sport marketing theory. The literature suggested that consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image might be affected by a priori sport celebrity brand image. The impact may further be mitigated by the type of sport, and whether the SCT is characterised as off-field or on-field. The next chapter considers the design, implementation and findings of Stage 1 of the research programme.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the current literature and research in the area of SCTs and the impact of the SCT on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. Having established the underlying purpose of the study, this chapter commences with a discussion on the appropriate research paradigm. Based on the realism paradigm, the rationale and objectives for the study, a qualitative research design is explained. The qualitative research design consisted of two stages. Stage one constituted focus groups and stage two consisted of social media data collection. The methodology and findings of stage one are discussed in Chapter 3, while the methodology of the main study is discussed in Chapter 4. The first section focuses on the research paradigm for this study.

3.2 The research paradigm

A paradigm has been described as a basic orientation to theory and research (Neuman 2003). The two approaches relevant to the social sciences are positivism and interpretivism. The positivist perspective is to test theory that has been developed based on reviewing existing theory: i.e. a deductive approach which relies on objective facts and includes quantitative methodologies such as surveys and experiments (Carson et al. 2001).

In contrast, interpretivism takes more than one reality into account (Carson et al. 2001), and the main goal of this approach is to seek out an understanding of a phenomenon, and it generally prefers qualitative methods (Neuman 2003). The qualitative approach views the "objectivity of the world as a subjectively lived phenomenon" (Nicholls 2009, p. 530). Questions such as, how the consumer perceived an SCT is at the heart of this approach. Consumer perceptions were investigated by talking to consumers, conducting interviews, and analysing and classifying data (Nicholls 2009). Table 3.1 explains a range of research paradigms, including: positivism, realism, critical theory and constructivism.

	Positivism	Realism	Critical theory	Constructivism
Ontology	<i>Naïve realism:</i> reality is real and apprehensible	<i>Critical realism:</i> reality is "real" but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it	<i>Historical realism:</i> "virtual" reality shaped by social, economic, ethnic, political, cultural, and gender values, crystallised over time	<i>Critical relativism:</i> multiple local and specific "constructed" realities
Epistemology	<i>Objectivist:</i> findings true	<i>Modified objectivist:</i> findings probably true	<i>Subjectivist:</i> value mediated findings	<i>Subjectivist:</i> created findings

	Positivism	Realism	Critical theory	Constructivism
Methodology	<i>Experiments/surveys:</i> verification of hypotheses: chiefly quantitative methods	<i>Case studies/convergent interviews:</i> triangulation, interpretation of research issues by qualitative and quantitative methods such as structural equation modelling	<i>Dialogic/dialectical:</i> researcher is a “transformative intellectual” who changes the social world within which participants live	<i>Hermeneutical / dialectical:</i> researcher is a “passionate participant” within the world being investigated

Table 3-1 Research paradigms

(Source: Perry, Alizadeh and Riege, (1996, p. 547) based on Guba and Lincoln (1994)).

One paradigm that stands out as being particularly relevant to the purpose of this research programme is the realism paradigm. Realism believes there is a “real world to discover even though it is only imperfectly apprehensible” (Healy & Perry 2000, p. 120). In the realism paradigm consumer’s’ perceptions are studied because they provided a window to reality (Guba & Lincoln 1994), and, within this paradigm, the case of the SCT was further investigated.

Considering the nature of the realism approach, the realism paradigm was determined to be the appropriate philosophical framework for this study for two reasons. First, realism research emphasises the building of theory rather than the statistical testing of theory (Healy & Perry 2000). Second, the ontology of realism assumes that the study investigates specific social phenomena such as an SCT. This, therefore, created the possibility of multiple realities, and, thus the argument for a qualitative study. The qualitative study conducted in this thesis consisted of a two stage research programme; including, focus groups and social media data collection. Given the purpose of this programme of research, the realism paradigm was determined to be an appropriate paradigm for this research. After discussing the research paradigm, the next section describes the rationale and objectives of the study.

3.3 Rationale and objectives of the study

Calls for more investigation into the impact of transgressions in sport have been made for some years (Hill 2010; Mazanov & Connor 2010). Nonetheless, theoretical models have been used to explain the celebrity brand image (Bickman & Rog 2009; Miciak & Shanklin 1994; Ohanian 1990), by focusing on the transfer of positive brand associations of the celebrity brand image (Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011). However, there were no indication (which we were aware off), of how SCTs might have affected on these positive brand associations. The gaps in the literature only allowed us to conceptually propose how the constructs were likely to behave. Figure 2.4 provides a conceptual model of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport. Therefore, it was important, before moving to a comprehensive research programme, to test the preliminary conceptual model so that more was known about how the sport celebrity brand images likely to be perceived when an SCT occurs. After discussing the rationale and objectives of the study, the next section focuses on the research design for this study.

3.4 Research design for this study

As noted in Section 3.2 the research design consisted of a two stage qualitative research programme. Rich data was elicited through qualitative research by using relatively few people (Ticehurst & Veal 1999) in the focus group discussions. Normally, the aim of qualitative research is to explore how consumers construct meaning in their contextual settings (Poria & Oppewal 2003). The qualitative approach allowed, further, for exploration of the thoughts and behaviours of consumers and revealed consumer's interpretative schemes and belief systems (Poria & Oppewal 2003). Given the research questions of this study, the qualitative approach was well suited as the primary research approach.

According to Nicholls (2009), qualitative research favours inductive reasoning. As stated in Section 3.2, inductive reasoning of theory begins with a problem and is related to theory building, whereas deductive reasoning entails theory testing (Chien, Cornwell & Pappu 2008). The ultimate goal of this study's inductive reasoning was to offer some theoretical understanding of the impact of an SCT on consumer's perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport. Next, the first stage of this study is discussed in more depth.

3.5 Stage 1: Focus group methodology

Four focus groups were conducted to investigate the research questions. Focus groups were chosen as this approach is consistent with other research in the field of sport marketing (Hughes & Shank, 2005; Westberg et al. 2008), and focus groups encourage a greater degree of spontaneity in the expression of consumer's viewpoints (Butler 1996; Sim 1998). Furthermore, it was important that the focus groups provided information about the dynamics of opinions in the context of the interaction that occurred between participants (Morgan 1988; Sim 1998). Within the focus groups, participants also felt supported and empowered by a sense of group membership and cohesiveness (Goldman 1962; Peters 1993).

Previous research has shown that when participants are acquainted with one another it resulted in a cohesive group composition which ensured a high level of detail in the discussion (Hennink 2007). Focus group participants were recruited through convenience sampling using a group of sport consumers who were selected using the moderator's personal contacts in Brisbane, Australia. As the depth and richness of the information was the primary goal, randomisation was not considered to be a critical component of the sample design. Convenience sampling is regarded as acceptable when additional follow-up research is conducted (Hagtvedt & Patrick 2008).

To target a cross section of "sport enthusiasts living in Australia", the study's participants were selected according to demographic factors and their commitment towards sport. A total of 24 respondents were recruited and placed into four focus groups. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the focus group profiles. Previous research found that a moderating size group of between 6 and 10 participants was appropriate (Morgan 1988; Sim 1998).

	Focus group 1	Focus group 2	Focus group 3	Focus group 4
No. of subjects	6	6	6	6
Females (%)	50	50	50	50
Males (%)	50	50	50	50
Age range (years)	18-24	25-35	36-45	40-60

Table 3-2 Focus group profiles

Participants were grouped according to their age, into four categories: 18–24 years, 24–35 years, 36–45 years and 40–60 years. Grouping participants according to age was important, as a previous study has shown that age may impact on consumer’s perceptions of the celebrity’s attributes (Magnini et al. 2010). Age was also found to impact on consumer’s perceptions of SCTs, when Solberg, Hanstad and Thoring (2010) concluded that older participants held more negative attitudes toward doping in sport. It is interesting to note that younger people placed higher values on some brand attributes, such as attractiveness (Magnini et al. 2010), and the role model ability of the celebrity (Solberg et al. 2010). Therefore, age may impact on consumer’s perceptions of the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, following SCTs. Participants were further grouped according to their gender. Previous studies indicated that women respond more to some brand attributes, such as the celebrity’s attractiveness than do men (Magnini et al. 2010). It was therefore possible to assume that gender may further impact on the consumer’s perceptions regarding some of the celebrity’s brand attributes, following SCTs.

The level of commitment towards the sport celebrity and their sport was gauged by whether consumers actively attended sporting events or followed sport on television. Grouping consumers according to their commitment to sport had been previously undertaken in a study investigating consumer’s attitudes towards doping (Solberg et al., 2010). This study finds that the level of consumer’s commitment towards the sport influenced their perceptions of doping (Solberg et al. 2010). Therefore, the level of commitment was regarded as important for this study. The planning of the focus groups started with the translation of the research propositions into the following two focus group objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To investigate what consumer’s value about their favourite sport celebrity.
- **Objective 2:** To investigate consumer’s perceptions about the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT.

Following on from this a ‘Focus Group Guide’ was developed to provide general direction to the moderator during the focus group discussions. Figure 3.1 illustrates the focus group guide used during the focus group discussions.

Focus Group Guide
<p>Before each focus group discussion the moderator perform the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked permission to record session • Laid down basic ground rules • Introduce ice breakers
<p>The following questions guided focus group discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a favourite sports person? Tell me about them.... What is it about the person that you like? • Sports people are sometimes involved in scandals that can create negative publicity. Sometimes this is about their sporting behaviour, or it could be about their personal lives and bad or even illegal behaviour outside of sport. What do you think about that? • How does it make you feel about the person? • How do you think the transgression affects the sport celebrity?

Figure 3-1 Focus group guide

(Source: developed for this study)

Figure 3.1 indicates the three questions probed by the moderator. Question one linked back to objective one, and provided a deeper understanding on why consumers like their sport celebrity. Question two linked back to objective two, and provided insight into how the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity will be affected by an SCT. Question three linked back to objective 2 and indicated some insight into the impact of an SCT on the brand image of the celebrity's associated sponsors and sport.

The topics during the focus group discussions began with general viewpoints, such as how did respondents identify their favourite sport persons. The discussion then moved on to more specifics such as how did a scandal influence their perceptions of the sport celebrity. Because participants find greater ease in reacting to a specific question that follows a general question (Aaker, Kumar, & Day 2006), the questions were selected to clarify general reactions to their favourite sport celebrity before introducing the SCT and its impact from an *a priori* perspective.

The moderator's level of involvement ranged from a directive to a more non-directive approach (Hennink 2007). For example, in the early stages of discussion in Group 2 the participants' viewpoints concentrated for too long on the Tiger Woods' adultery scenario. As a result, the moderator was forced to apply a more directive approach to ensure that participants did not deviate too far from the research issues under discussion. During this more directive approach stage, a probing technique was applied to ensure that a more comprehensive discussion of different types of SCT scenarios were included. This probing technique had been successfully used to gain clarity, and to manage group discussions (Hennink 2007).

During the middle stages of the discussion, the moderator used a non-directive approach (Hennink 2007). This non-directive approach included pitting one participant against the other to compare and contrast each participant's viewpoints (Hennink 2007). This helped to create spontaneous discussions between focus group participants. This was especially true in the interaction between participants in Group 2, where dissonant views between the female and male participants regarding the Tiger Woods' adultery scenario were aired. These 'argumentative interactions' helped to contribute to the richness of the focus group data (Sim 1998). After the focus groups concluded, participants were probed about their opinions of SCTs and their impact on the sport celebrity brand image. Participants spontaneously applied their own examples of different types of SCTs to illustrate their viewpoints. This indicated that the study was moving towards more useful data on the impact of SCT on participant perceptions of sport celebrity brand image.

Data were tape recorded during the focus group discussions with another researcher taking notes. Each focus group discussion was individually recorded and directly transcribed after each session to ensure the accuracy of the data. The transcribed comments represented an explanation of the direct quotes participants made during the focus group discussions. The transcribed comments were then coded and analysed. Coding of the data was made in the left margin with remarks inserted in the right margin (Miles & Huberman 1994). The content of the focus group data was then content analyzed (Krippendorff 2004; Stewart et al. 2007), where the range of expressions on each topic were grouped into specific themes. The themes were chosen based on the literature review in Chapter 2. Figure 3.2 shows the themes identified in the literature.

Figure 3.2 indicates that the themes identified in the literature could be grouped according to consumer's' perceptions of favourable celebrity attributes, such as attractiveness, expertise, trust and role model ability (Dix, Phau & Paugnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycut 2010; Van der Veen & Song 2010).

Focus Group Guide	
The following themes were identified in the literature study:	
1	Brand attributes of the celebrity (Van der Veen 2010), for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness • Expertise • Trust • Role model ability
Brand benefits experienced by the sport consumer (Bauer et al. 2008):	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic brand benefits, for example: • Identification • Internalisation
Experiential brand benefits, for example:	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions • Entertainment • Excitement
Characteristics of transgression, for example	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-field • On-field

Figure 3-2 Themes identified in the literature study

(Source: developed for this study)

The figure further shows that consumers experienced benefits when associating with the sport celebrity brand image. Brand benefits such as; symbolic brand benefits (identification, internalisation) and experiential brand benefits (emotions, entertainment, and excitement) were experienced when SCTs occurred. The brand attributes and brand benefits considered by sport consumers were used as themes in the focus group discussions. Appendix A indicates the coding of comments into themes, according to the characteristics of the on-field and off-field SCTs. The results of the coding process were presented to three colleagues, including two Associate Professors and one practitioner in the field of marketing communication. The findings are provided in the following section.

3.6 Focus group findings

This section presents the results from the four focus group sessions organised according to the two focus group objectives.

3.6.1 Objective 1

Objective 1 investigated what it was that consumers valued about their favourite sport celebrity. Previous research indicates that the value of a brand, from a consumer-based approach, is found in the equity of the brand. As explained in Section 2.4, the brand equity of the sport celebrity is found in brand attributes such as credibility, expertise, physical attractiveness, trust, and role model ability (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Spy, Pappu & Cornwell 2011; Van der Veen & Haiyan 2010), and brand benefits, such as: admiration, identification, internalisation, positive emotions, negative emotions, entertainment, and excitement (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008).

Therefore, the themes for objective 1 were presented in terms of the consumer response to the attributes associated with the sport celebrity brand image, and the consumer response to the benefits associated with the sport celebrity brand image.

a) Consumer response to the attributes associated with the sport celebrity brand image

Data related to this research theme were obtained from interview questions such as “Do you have a favourite sports person? Tell me about them...” and “what is it about the person that you like?” These open-ended questions provided the opportunity for participants to explain their personal understanding of the sport celebrity’s brand associations. Whilst comments were used to provide evidence of analysis in this section individual identification of responses was not possible. When discussing their favourite sport celebrity and reasons why they like them, most respondents began by describing their favourite sport celebrity in terms of their sporting ability and performance, before moving on to comments that related more to the celebrity’s physical appearance or personality.

These comments provided some insight into how consumers generally perceived sporting celebrities and allowed the researchers to identify key themes in their understanding of a sport celebrity brand image. The literature on brand image in a sport setting suggests that there are two key themes to consider in understanding consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity’s brand associations. These are the product and non-product related brand attributes (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). In this context then, a consumer’s perception of the sport celebrity brand image would have both a sport (or product) dimension and a personal or non-sport (or non-product) dimension. This perspective was clearly evident in the comments made by focus group participants where they were able to categorise and described their favourite sport celebrities both in terms of their sporting excellence (product related brand attributes) and their personal qualities (non-product related brand attributes). Comments are provided in Table 3.3 and are grouped according to their sport and personal (or non-sport) dimensions.

On the basis of these focus group comments it was evident that consumers considered both the sport (product) and non-sport or personal (non-product) related brand attributes of the sport celebrity when assessing the value of the sport celebrity brand image. Attributes such as: ‘good player’, ‘strong player’, ‘successful’, ‘best player’, ‘performance’ and ‘brilliance’ were all descriptive terms used by participants in the focus group meetings, as were personal attribute terms such as ‘physical attractiveness’, ‘likeability’ and ‘role model’. It was evident that consumers valued and liked the sport celebrity because of the celebrity’s sporting abilities and their more personal abilities.

Sport dimensions	Non-Sport dimensions
<p><i>“My sport star is Rafael Nadal, I like him because... he is a good tennis player” (Female, 18-24years)</i></p>	<p><i>Mine have to be Michael Clark because he is very good looking” (Female, 18-24years) “</i></p>
<p><i>“My favourite player is Steve Warn...he is a very good player” (Female, 18-24years)</i></p>	<p><i>“Roger Federer is my favourite sport star because he is...handsome” (Female, 40-60 years).</i></p>
<p><i>“I really like Serena Williams, because she is...such a strong player, she never gives up” (Female, 18-24years)</i></p>	<p><i>“My favourite sport star is Rafael Nadal, his appearance attract me...and even though he is not the best player I still like him” (Female, 36-45 years)</i></p>
<p><i>“I like Novak Djokovic, the reason is that he is successful...” (Male, 18-24years)</i></p>	<p><i>Michael Schumacher is my favourite sport celebrity...good image and he is very likeable” (Male, 36-45 years).</i></p>

Sport dimensions	Non-Sport dimensions
<i>"My favourite sport star is Jonty Rhodes and primarily I think it is because he is really one of the best cricket players that South Africa ever had. His performance is always brilliant" (Female, 25-35 years).</i>	<i>"Roger Federer is my favourite sport star because he is a good role model" (Female, 36-45 years).</i>
<i>"Tiger Woods is a great person, after all I am watching him for his talent" (Male, 18-24years).</i>	<i>"....he is a good player....and you could look up to him" (Female, 25-35 years).</i>

Table 3-3 Comments organised into sport and non-sport dimensions

(Source: developed for this study)

b) Consumer response to the benefits associated with the sport celebrity brand image

Another consideration when exploring consumer perceptions of sport celebrity brand image was to consider whether there was evidence of consumers that evaluated the sport celebrity brand image in terms of symbolic and/or experiential brand benefits. Symbolic brand benefits relate to a consumer's desire to associate with a person, role or self-image (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986), and consisted of themes such as 'identification' (admiration) and 'internalisation' (value match) (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002). Experiential brand benefits are more related to what it feels like to associate with the person, and include expressions that are emotive such as 'excitement' and 'entertaining' (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002).

In this study, focus group participants' comments about their favourite sport celebrity did include evidence of both symbolic and experiential brand benefits. Participants talked about sport celebrities they admired and identified with. Table 3.4 provides a sample of comments to illustrate this point. The focus group comments indicated that consumers experienced 'admiration', 'identification', and 'value match' as well as 'excitement' and 'entertainment' when assessing the sport celebrity brand image.

Symbolic brand benefit statements	Experiential brand benefit statements
<i>"My favourite sport was basketball and my favourite player was Koby Bryant. I admire the player because you want to identify with somebody's skills that you want to have" (Male 25-35 years)</i>	<i>"He (Novak Djokovic) is also very entertaining to watch" (Male, 18-24 years)</i>
<i>"I really admire her (Serena Williams) aggressiveness". (Female, 18-24 years)</i>	<i>"I admire Michael Clark, he is entertaining to watch" (Female, 18-24 years)</i>
<i>"I enjoy watching my celebrity he has a good set of morals and beliefs..." (Male, 25-35 years)</i>	<i>"My favourite sport star is Jonty Rhodeshe made the game exciting to watch" (Female, 25-35 years)</i>
<i>"If a sports star performs well but he's got a bad attitude he won't stay on top.... Attitude means that you approach sport with a certain set of values" (Male, 36-45 years)</i>	

Table 3-4 Comments organised into symbolic and experiential dimensions

(Source: developed for this study)

In short, the results from the data obtained from the four focus groups pertaining to the value of the sport celebrity have now been presented in relation to the first objective of this research programme. The comments indicated that consumers considered both a sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits when assessing the value of that sport celebrity's specific set of brand associations. More specifically, consumers considered both sport (product) related brand attributes and non-sport or personal (non-product) brand attributes when assessing the sport celebrity brand attributes. Sport related brand attributes were considered in terms of constructs such as: 'expertise', 'performance' and 'sport ability', while personal or non-sport related brand attributes were considered in terms of constructs such as 'credibility', 'physical attractiveness', trust, and 'role model ability'. The focus group results further indicated that symbolic brand benefits valued by the consumer consisted of themes such as the 'match in values' and 'admiration', while the experiential brand benefits were valued in terms of: 'positive emotions', 'negative emotions', 'entertainment' and 'excitement'.

The results of Objective 1 indicated that consumers valued a specific set of brand associations when assessing the value of the *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. Consumer-based value about a brand, was based on the consumer knowledge about that brand, and was the central driver of brand image, as explained in Section 2.4. The brand attributes and benefits identified by the consumer represent the brand knowledge of the brand, or the brand image (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). This study argues that the specific set of sport celebrity brand attributes and brand benefits contribute to an *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. Based on the findings of Objective 1, the value or brand image of the sport celebrity is defined for the purpose of this study as follows:

The value or the brand image of the sport celebrity is the brand knowledge effect on the consumer, and the knowledge about the sport celebrity brand is embedded in a specific set of brand associations, that can be grouped into the sport celebrity's brand attributes (sport and personal) and brand benefits (symbolic and experiential).

3.6.2 Objective 2

Objective 2 investigated consumer perceptions of sport celebrities following an SCT. The focus group data were thematically analysed. That is, the data were reviewed and coded into discrete descriptive themes. The themes were chosen based on the literature and the findings of the first objective. Each theme is presented in turn: Consumer Response to the Sport Celebrity's Brand Attributes; Consumer Response to the Sport Celebrity's Brand Benefits; Consumer Response to the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors; and Consumer Response to the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity Associated Sport. The results are now discussed.

a) Consumer response to the sport celebrity's brand attributes, following a transgression

Respondents in the focus group were asked questions such as, "Sport stars are sometimes involved in a transgression, how do you feel when this happens?" and "How do you think the transgression affects the sport celebrity?" These open-ended questions offered the opportunity for respondents to provide their personal opinion of SCTs and the impact on their perceptions of that sport celebrity brand image. Table 3.5 provides a sample of comments that highlight this result.

Sport related brand attribute statements	Non-sport related brand attribute statements
<p><i>“Tiger Woods is still a good player. He still got talent he just has to sort out his personal life. I don’t think his personal life has anything to do with the public” (Male, 25-35 years)</i></p>	<p><i>“Tiger said in an interview that his family comes first and it is important for him to keep up a very clean image, thus he is a liar.... I cannot trust him” (Female, 36-45 years)</i></p>
<p><i>“That is why he (Tiger) is playing, he is playing for us to see his golf not his personal life” (Female, 18-24 years)</i></p>	<p><i>“Most important characteristic of players are they play honesty, not cheating. For example the French qualifier soccer game in 2011 the player deliberately handle the ball, should have been overruled...” (Male, 40–60 years)</i></p>
<p><i>“Tiger Woods is a good sports man...will keep on watching the game while he is participating in the sport” (Male, 40–60 years)</i></p>	<p><i>“Because the scandal doesn’t affect his performance I will still watch him playing, but I won’t believe his message when his is part of an advertisement” (Female, 40–60 years)</i></p>

Table 3-5 Comments organised into themes of brand attributes, following an SCT

(Source: developed for this study)

When discussing SCTs, it became evident that the type of transgression was important in the focus group participant reactions and that participants were able to clearly differentiated their perception of that sport celebrity brand image in terms of their athletic skills (product related brand attributes) and their personal characteristics (non-sport related brand attributes). Comments indicated the SCT was part of the sport celebrity’s “private” life and, therefore, none of the public’s business. In contrast, consumers also perceived a personal transgression (for example Tiger Woods adultery) as a violation of trust in him as a person. Overall, focus group participants indicated a positive attitude towards the sport related brand attributes, and a negative attitude towards the non-sport related brand attributes, following an SCT. When an off-field SCT occurred (such as Tiger Woods’ adultery), participants indicated they would still like and support the sport celebrity because of their professionalism and high level of sport skills.

“He is still a good sports person, it is a bit unfair that we focus on his personal life instead of his talent” (Female, 18-24 years).

One participant expressed a negative response towards the sport related brand attributes of the SCBI when an on-field SCT occurred by commenting,

“On-field (enhancement drugs) scandal is really, bad I wouldn’t watch the game then, because it does not reflect pure talent” (Male, 25-35 years).

It was also noted that a more negative response was common towards the personal brand attributes when an off-field SCT occurred, such as,

“Tiger Woods was a good role model he even has a church named after him. He should live up to those standards” (Male, 18-24 years).

These findings indicated that when an SCT occurred, participants may have different attitudes towards the sport related brand attributes and personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, depending on the type of SCT. After further analysis, it became evident that both the off-field and on-field type of SCT can impact on the response of consumers toward the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, following that type of SCT.

During the focus group discussions, participants spontaneously gave examples of the following SCTs: Tiger Woods adultery scandal; Andre Agassi's cocaine abuse; Serena Williams' on-court outbursts; rape and doping (participants did not mention celebrities' names in relation to this). In order to distinguish between the off-field and on-field type of SCTs, Tiger Woods' adultery scandal, Andre Agassi's cocaine use, and the rape incident were grouped as off-field SCTs. Serena Williams' on-court outburst, and doping were grouped as on-field SCTs.

The comments showed consumers expressed more positive responses towards sport related brand attributes when off-field SCTs occurred, as seen by the following comments,

"It doesn't matter; Tiger is still good (Male, 18-24 years) and

"When the scandal is not sport related the celebrity is still a good player"
(Male, 25-35 years).

The comments also indicated negative responses towards the sport related brand attributes when an on-field SCT occurred. For example:

"On-field (enhancement drug use) is really bad I wouldn't watch the game then, because it does not reflect on pure talent (Male, 25-35 years).

These responses suggested that off-field SCTs resulted in positive responses toward the sport related brand attributes, while some of the on-field SCTs may led to negative responses toward the sport related brand attributes. The comments further indicated that off-field and on-field SCTs may result in negative responses toward the non-sport related brand attributes. This was evident in comments such as:

"Tiger Woods was a good role model he even has a church named after him. He should live up to those standards (Male, 18-24 years).

a) Consumer response to the sport celebrity's brand benefits, following a transgression

The same ability to disassociate the athletic skills from the personal characteristics of a sport celebrity following a transgression, was noted in relation to the focus group participant's comments on the symbolic and experiential dimensions of their brand image. Participants were able to still admire the skill of a sport celebrity even if they didn't "like" them as a person. As discussed earlier, symbolic benefits relate to a consumer's desire to associate with a desired person, role and self-image (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986). Comments from focus group participants referred to the concept of identification, by admitting 'admiration' for the sport celebrity's athletic skill in spite of their transgression and the impact it might have had on them personally. Words like betrayal, disappointment, excitement and violation of values were voiced by participants, as were both positive and negative emotive statements. Overall, participants had negative feelings about the symbolic and experiential brand benefits following an SCT.

Symbolic brand benefits

Participants noted the symbolic brand benefits (i.e. dimensions): *admiration* and *value matched* when an SCT occurred. Any reference to the symbolic brand benefits were expressed negatively; such as,

"...because they are celebrities they are expected to behave to a higher standard" (Female, 40-60 years).

Another participant linked the celebrity's performance with their symbolic brand benefits when he stated,

"I believe the personal value system of a sport star is closely linked to his ability" (Male, 36-45 years).

Another argued that sport should be associated with higher values,

"Sport is a clean image and therefore should uphold the good values that come with it" (Female, 25-35 years).

The comments indicated the off-field SCTs may cause negative responses toward the symbolic brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. This was reflected in the following statement,

"But young people look up to the sports star. Young people will start to act like these role models. I wouldn't watch a game if somebody was charged with rape, it would show your support for the scandal" (Female, 25-35 years).

These findings suggested that off-field SCTs created negative responses towards symbolic brand benefits. As a result, different types of SCTs may have affected on consumer's responses toward the symbolic brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Furthermore, while SCTs affected negatively on consumer's responses towards the symbolic brand benefits, SCTs may affected positively and negatively on consumer's responses towards the experiential brand benefits.

Experiential Brand Benefits

Consumer responses towards the type of SCT in relation with the experiential brand benefits varied among participants. Consumers expressed both negative and positive comments toward off-field SCTs and experiential brand benefits. The following comments supported these conflicting responses,

"That is why he (Woods) is playing golf ...for us to see his golf and not his personal life; he is playing to give us entertainment" (Male, 18-24 years).

While the opposite viewpoint was expressed by a female in Group 1 as,

"I am very disappointed but I will still watch Tiger but in the back of my mind I will still be upset" (Female, 18-24 years).

Because these comments referred to Woods' adultery, it is possible that other socio-demographic factors such as gender, age and consumer commitment may also have an impact on consumer's responses toward the sport celebrity brand image after an SCT. For example, the experiential brand benefits associated with the two comments about Woods' adultery may have been owing to a person's gender and commitment. While the male participant felt he was still experiencing entertainment, the female participant felt disappointed in the sport celebrity. Similarly, the male was more committed to following golf on television than the female.

With respect to the age group, no difference was found between off-field and on-field SCTs in the 36–45 year old demographic. This age group indicated that sport should uphold a high standard without any SCTs; as was stated,

"To me there is no distinction between the type of scandal, whether it is on the field of play or in the person's private life, it is still a scandal and would in my mind affect the image of the star" (Male, 36-45 years).

This finding was supported by research by Solberg, Hanstad and Thoring (2010) who found that older people perceived an SCT different from younger people. Furthermore, on-field SCTs seemed to elicit both negative and positive emotional responses. For example, the following examples showed a negative response, followed by a positive response towards the experiential brand benefits when an on-field SCT occurred,

“If Serena Williams used enhancement drugs, for example, I would feel betrayed, but I would still buy the product but wouldn’t watch the game (Female, 18-24 years); and “But I don’t agree, she (Serena Williams) was entertaining, and it can be frustrating to play at such a high level” (Female, 18-24 years).

The first comment referred to doping, while the second referred to the incident where Serena Williams displayed on-court aggression. This study suggests that doping elicited negative responses towards the experiential brand benefits, while an on-court outburst elicited positive responses towards experiential brand benefits. These findings suggest that various on-field SCTs may impact on the sport celebrity brand image differently. Table 3.6 provided a summary of comments organised into themes of brand benefits, following an SCT.

Symbolic brand benefit statements	Experiential brand benefit statements
<i>“To loose respect for them as a person but you may still have admiration for them as a sports person....it depends on what they have done....like raping that would affect me” (Female, 18-24 years)</i>	<i>“When he (Tiger Woods) does something wrong that is shocking to most people because they feel personally betrayed by him.....I would feel betrayed if Serena do drugs” (Female, 18-24 years)</i>
<i>“I believe the personal value system of a sport star is closely linked to his ability” (Male Group 3)</i>	<i>“I am very disappointed in Tiger Woods” (Female, 18-24 years)</i>
<i>“...because they are celebrities they are expected to behave to a higher standard” (Women, 40-60 years)</i>	<i>“you would lose your passion towards the person if someone betrayed you” (Female, 18-24 years)</i>
<i>“If the sport person was involved in a scandal that involved doping ... then it will be a really strong feeling of betrayal and I would not feel to support them or watch them”.</i>	<i>“I am still disgusted but will watch him (Tiger Woods)” (Female, 25-35 years)</i>
<i>“I watch the Tour de France a couple of years ago and I was so into it and the guy won ... and then a week later he was blood doping, and it pretty much ruined watching the entire TDF for me” (Female, 18-24 years)</i>	<i>“That is why he (Tiger Woods) is playing golf, he is playing for use to see his golf and not his personal life, he is playing to give us entertaining” (Male, 18-24 years)</i>

Table 3-6 Comments organised into themes of brand benefits, following an SCT

(Source: developed for this study)

The comments in Table 3.6 showed that sport consumers experienced some negative emotional responses when assessing the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT. In addition, specific transgressions such as Doping and Match-fixing were connected with highly negative feelings such as ‘betrayal’, whilst others were more interested in the ‘entertainment’ value of the sport celebrity and their ability to be ‘exciting’ for them. Findings indicated that consumers experienced both positive and negative emotions when an SCT occurred, depending on the type of transgression. Participants indicated that they experienced positive emotions such as ‘entertainment’ and ‘excitement’, and negative emotions such as ‘disgust’ and ‘disappointment’.

In summary, the findings from the focus group meetings indicated that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT. The findings further indicated that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand image in terms of sport related brand attributes, personal related brand attributes, symbolic brand benefits and experiential brand benefits, depending on the characteristics of the SCT.

b) Consumer response to the impact of the SCT on the celebrity's associated sponsors

Focus group participants were asked questions such as: "Sports people are sometimes involved in scandals which can create negative publicity. What do you think their sponsors think? Do you think it damages their relationship?" The questions provided the focus group member the opportunity to discuss their understanding of the impact of an SCT on their associated sponsors.

Participants' responses varied significantly among the different focus groups. One group of participants indicated that sponsors should discontinue their support to the sport celebrity after a transgression occurred, and the other group showed that sponsors should keep on supporting the sport celebrity. When focusing on participants that felt the sponsors should discontinue their financial support to the celebrity, the following examples illustrate their viewpoints. One participant indicated that the celebrity is financially dependable on the sponsors and therefore has to behave according to sponsors' standards. For example;

"All his (celebrity) comes from the sponsors, the competition money he wins is much less than the sponsor money. The sponsors are the ones that make him financially who he is ...sponsors have the right to make demands on the way he lives his life" (Male, 18-24 years).

Another participant felt, that, when sponsors supported the celebrity's misbehaviour, the participant would not support the endorsed brand. He suggested as follows;

"If they (sport celebrities) continue to sponsor someone that you know has step out of the boundaries...if they continue to support him...then I sort of wouldn't want to support that brand if they are supporting that sort of thing" (Male, 18-24 years).

Some participants referred to the social values of the community, and felt that celebrities and the associated sponsors should respect and upheld these values. For example;

"When I will blame Nike is when it (the transgression) is something that the whole society did not endorse, for example rape, and Nike keeps on supporting the sport star. That will mean they (the sponsors) endorse their behaviour (sport celebrity). (Male, 40-60 years)

Another group of participants indicated that sponsors should continue supporting the sport celebrity after a transgression occurred, especially when the SCT is related to an off-field incident. For example:

"I would find it really unfair if you were a spokesperson having a contract with an organisation and you did something wrong and they dropped you. I would find that unfair if it was a personal thing, if you were caught up in a personal scandal. Not everybody wants to become a role model. I think it is unfair of the public and sponsors to place all of these expectations on one person. Like Gillette razors say for Tiger Woods, just because....it works well and the guy has an affair and therefore the razor does not work that well anymore..." (Female, 18-24 years)

In summary, these focus group findings demonstrated that consumers assessed the impact of the SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors, in terms of whether the sponsors should continue or discontinue their financial support to the sport celebrity. The focus group findings indicated that there was equal support amongst the perceptions of the focus group participants. The impact of an SCT on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors is therefore, investigated in terms of the two themes: sponsors should continue to support the sport celebrity; and sponsors should discontinue the support to the sport celebrity.

c) Consumer response to the impact of the SCT on the celebrity's associated sport

During the focus group discussions it was evident that participants factored in the sport the celebrity plays when considering the impact of an SCT. Several comments included reference to the impact of the SCT on the image of the sport the celebrity associated with. Comments showed that SCTs are considered common and almost the "norm" in some sports, resulting in a specific sport to have a specific brand image. This can further result in consumers to expect certain types of SCTs in a specific type of sport, for example:

"It is as if some customers do not care about the negative publicity. For example Andrew Johns was offered a job at Channel 9 after his scandal for millions of dollars. I thus think the market he is playing in approve of his behaviour and therefore accept his scandal. It therefore depends on the image of the celebrity and if the image fit with the target audience's image" (Male, 35-45)

The image of the sport seemed to have a halo effect on the management of the players. Participants indicated that management that kept quiet about SCTs showed to have lower standards. For example;

"Management of footy players try to keep scandals quite, but it gets out anyway...it shows low standards, and I feel action should be taken more seriously" (Male, 18-24 years).

It was as if participants expected higher standard from sport. For example, one participant indicated as follows:

I think sport is a clean image and therefore should uphold the good values that come with it. It is therefore against the image of sports people to do drugs and to indulge in adultery, good values count (Female, 25-35 years).

Understanding of the sport image can assist in predicting what forms of transgressions are more likely to have negative consequences for the sport celebrity brand image. It was evident that the previous occurrence of SCTs, created an expectation of SCTs in the future. For example a participant quoted as follows:

"Footy players are weekly in trouble but it is still a very popular game. It is like you expect it....as if in football it is expected" (Female, 18-24 years)

These comments indicated that SCTs may have a negative impact on the brand image of the celebrity's associated sport.

3.7 Discussion of results from study

The focus group results indicated that the sport celebrity's product (sport) and non-product (personal) related brand attributes affected on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, when an SCT occurred. The themes of the sport celebrity brand image, highlighted as important, were the sport celebrity's level of 'expertise' and 'trustworthiness'. It seemed, as long as the sport celebrity was still able to perform at a high level, with a high degree of skill, then most transgressions could be overlooked. However, when the transgression violated the basic tenants of sport – fair play and sportsmanship – such as cheating, consumers expressed strong negative emotions. Furthermore, when a sport celebrity's brand image was portrayed as a role model, their personal characteristics, such as their role model ability and trustworthiness, were more important to consumers than just their sporting expertise. These findings linked with research done by Dwivedi and Johnson (2013) who indicated the trust construct as an important indicator of the credibility of the celebrity during sponsorship. Participants further indicated that sport celebrities that served as spokesperson in marketing communication have a responsibility, especially towards young adults. Participants argued that these sport celebrities visited schools and became role models through marketing communication strategies. It was as if the sport celebrity agreed to be a spokesperson, they also agreed to be a role model. Overall the findings indicated consumers perceived SCTs to impact negatively on the symbolic brand benefits and the experiential brand benefits. Experiential brand benefits such as 'emotions', 'entertainment' and 'excitement' were noted as important. The focus group findings further indicated that the 'characteristics' of an SCT affected on the consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT. Characteristics such as whether the transgression was off-field or on-field, were found to be important to the consumer. This linked to research that indicated that the off-field and on-field characteristics of transgression impact on consumer perceptions of transgressions (Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008).

Based on the results reported in the previous sections, an SCT can have a negative impact on consumer's' perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and the sport. These results are supported by studies that indicated that an SCT can have an impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors (Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk 2013; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008).

When the results of the different groups were analysed in relation with each other, it was evident that gender and age may impact on consumer's' perceptions. Overall, men felt more inclined to focus on the expertise (sport related brand attributes) of the sport celebrity brand image, while women focused more on the role model ability (personal brand attributes), when an SCT occurred. Particularly, men felt the sport celebrity was still a good athlete, and consumers should focused more on the celebrity's sport skills instead of the SCT, while women felt the sport celebrity was no role model and should not be allowed to be a spokesperson in marketing communication. Overall, older people (both men and women) indicated that there was no excuse for sport celebrities who were involved in SCTs. The older group was also more concerned about the values of the sport celebrity and how the sport celebrity's values fit with the values of the community. This finding linked with research that indicates age impact on consumer's' perceptions of one type of SCT, namely doping (Solberg et al. 2010).

The information gleaned from these focus groups added to our understanding of the two focus group objectives, and to the proposed conceptual model in Chapter 2. On the basis of the focus group findings some research propositions were proposed in an attempt to answer the main research question of this study. Table 3.7 provides a summary of the two research objectives and the proposed propositions. The first research objective was used to identify the specific set of brand associations of the sport celebrity brand image, and was further applied in the second objective. The second research objective was applied to investigate how consumers felt towards the sport celebrity brand image, following SCTs, and the research objective resulted in four research propositions. Yet there is a need for further research to determine the extent of the influence of these constructs on the consumer's' perceptions of a sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport, following an SCT.

Focus group objectives	Research propositions	
Objective 1: Investigate what consumer's' value about their sport celebrity.	P1	A sport celebrity transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an a priori state.
	P2	The characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression.
Objective 2: Investigate consumer's' perceptions of a sport celebrity brand image following an SCT.	P3	The consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport, will moderate the relationship between a sport celebrity transgression and the sport celebrity brand image.
	P4	When a sport celebrity transgression causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity's brand image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors. • Perceptions of the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sport.

Table 3-7 Objectives and research propositions

(Source: developed for this study)

The next section discusses the methodology for stage 2, the main study of this research programme.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology: Stage 2

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the methodology of the main study, namely social media data collection. Social media is transforming society - Google+, Facebook and LinkedIn is transferring the interactions, arguments and views of people, into a new kind of public and private sphere (Omand et al. 2012). This vast digital social commons is growing on an unprecedented scale; 250 million photos are added on Facebook per day, 200 million tweets on Twitter per day, and there are 4 billion video views per day on YouTube (Ormand et al. 2012). Social media are increasingly subject to collection and analysis of this growing size of data, proof to be of great value to organisations (Ormand et al. 2012). The main study of this thesis tapped into this fast growing data base of consumer generated content. Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks (Kaplan 2010). Particularly, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify consumer-generated content (Kaplan 2010).

Since the early 2000s consumer generated content became increasingly popular on the Internet, where more consumers participate in content creation, rather than content consumption (Agichtein et al. 2008). Social media constitutes different forms of consumer generated content such as social media websites, consumer forums and You-Tube videos (Xian & Gretzel 2010). These consumer generated content encompasses comments created by consumers, typically information by relevant experience and shared online for access by other consumers (Blackshaw 2006 Xian & Gretzel 2010). Consumer generated content in the form of consumer's' opinions regarding the effects of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image were particularly sourced on discussion boards. A discussion board is a service where participants can exchange messages with one another (Xian & Gretzel 2010). The content is shared among consumers with the intent of educating one another about brands (Blackshaw & Nazzaro 2006, Xian & Gretzel 2010). The main study of this thesis investigates consumer generated content on social media in order to better understand effects of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image. After addressing the limitations and advantages of social media research, this chapter provides a discussion on the data sampling, data collection and data analysis applied in this study. These sections are followed by a detailed discussion on the steps followed in the social media data collection.

Previous studies show that there are a few limitations regarding social media collection (Smith & Leigh 1997). Such limitations are highlighted as; the possibility of multiple submissions, recruitment, informed consent, subject anonymity and data security (Birnbaum 2000; Reipts 2002; Schmidt 2000; Birnbaum 2004). One big concern of online researchers is the possibility of multiple submissions by subjects (Birnbaum 2000; Reipts 2002). Multiple submissions are possible on social media when subjects offered more than one comment on discussion boards. In most cases, when it was noted that one subject offered more than one comment, the comment was discarded. Research argues that informed consent methods should be in place during social media research (Smith & Leigh 1997). The study indicates that subjects should sign a consent form to show their willingness to participate in the study. However, the study conducted in this thesis used comments that were already made public in the social media. Also, subject anonymity and data security is particularly important in an online environment (Smith & Leigh 1997). Linking this ethical

guideline to consumer's' comments in social media, subjects rarely identified themselves, and, for that reason subjects stayed anonymous throughout the study. In some cases, when names were used, it was not included in the study. Also, the data were secured and were only used in academic research. None of the names of the subjects were published.

Social media data collection in the form of discussion boards provided particular advantages to a qualitative study (Smith & Leigh 1997). These advantages were particularly important in this study, as this method produced a faster, convenient, cost effective opportunity for researchers to grasp the viewpoints of consumers (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Fridler et al 2002; Smith & Leigh 1997). A further advantage is the broad connectivity of the internet, and the highly accessibility of social media (Smith & Leigh 1997). Lastly, social media also served as a passive source of data, where researchers can search and analyse archival material (Borda 1996; Smith & Leigh 1997). The data used in this thesis can also be referred to as archival material, as SCT scenarios as late as 1996 were investigated. Furthermore, research comparing social media data collection with experiential research methods showed that using real-world data has much higher external validity than attempting to simulate the full context of the experimental setting (Mungeam 2011). A laboratory experiment can, furthermore include unrepresentative samples of the population. In this case, the sample population was highly representative of the target population because it consisted of those consumers who actually expressed their interest in sport by participating in online discussions on SCTs.

4.2 Data sampling

People that use social media websites are mostly teens and young adults, with a high level of education. Research conducted by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) indicate that the growth in social media is evident in teenagers and young adults (generation Z, now 35-44 years) (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). The study was done among the American population, and showed; 73 percent of wired teens, 72 percent of young adults aged 18-29 years; and 47 percent of online adults use social networking sites (Lenhart et al. 2010). Furthermore, over the past ten years, teens and young adults have been consistently the two groups most likely to go online, following by adults 65 years and older (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Among online consumers, both men and women are equally likely to go online. Consumers that go online consist of: 93 percent of teens 12-17 years; 93 percent of young adults 18-29 years; 81 percent adults 30-49 years; 70 percent adults 50-64 years; and 38 percent adults 65 years and older (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). The family income of consumers that go online consist of: 59 percent earned less than \$30k; 76 percent between \$30-50k; 73 percent between \$50-75k; and 87 percent more than \$75k annually (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

In addition, posting comments on websites has become more common among adults – 26 percent of online adults posted comments online as of September 2009, up from 22 percent in 2007 (Xian & Gretzel 2010). There is little variation in online commenting by adults based on gender or income. The only important variable seems to be educational level – 31 percent of adult internet users at least obtained a college degree, and 20 percent obtained a high school degree or less. A study that focused specifically on how many internet users share content, showed that the sharing of content among consumers are increasing, and two-thirds (64 percent) of online consumers use search engines (Xian & Gretzel 2010). It is evident that the use of social media is increasing among teens, young adults, and adults 65 years and older, especially those with higher levels of education.

4.3 Data Collection

To ensure transparency and validity, this thesis tabled the steps and the dates of the social media data collection. Table 4.1, provides a summary of the steps and dates that were followed during the social media data collection stage. The data collection was done from 1st August 2011 to the 30th September 2011. Table 4.1 provides the dates when online websites were identified; when a summary of the different websites were made; the dates when the files were saved as PDF files and uploaded on NVivo, and the dates on which the articles and comments were content analysed. The summary further provided the dates on which NVivo coding were done, and the dates on which content analysis were done on the NVivo software. The first seven scenarios in the table is off-field SCTs, while the last nine scenarios were on-field SCTs.

During Stage 2 nominal data was collected that consisted of consumer's' comments relating to the impact of SCTs on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Data can be classified as nominal when the data can be categorical grouped into different themes (Selvanathan et al. 2010). As the data was retrieved, it was necessary to evaluate the content quality of the comments on social media. The approach used in this thesis was to exploit features of social media that are intuitively correlated with quality. The quality of the content of each item used in this thesis was text-related, given that the social media items evaluated are primarily textual in nature. As a baseline, rude language and inappropriate comments were excluded from the study.

Also, text that portrays poor quality was often marked with low conformance to common writing practices, such as irregular spacing, misspellings, and excessive punctuation (Agichtein et al. 2008). Further, semantic complexity that related to the readability of the comments was also used as a guideline to evaluate the quality of the content (McLaughlin 1969). Online comments that did not adhere to these content quality measures were not included in this study.

Scenario description	Date on website identification	Date fill in of contact summary sheet	Date of website summary	Date upload on NVivo	Date of print, read & allocate to themes	Date of NVivo Coding	Date of NVivo analysis
Matthew Johns	3 Aug	4-5 Aug	2 Aug	9 Sept	6 Aug	5-17 -09	26-30 Sept
Brett Favre	22 Aug	22 Aug	6 Sept	9 Sept	15 Sept	5-17 -09	26-30 Sept
Andrew Johns	22 Aug	22 Aug	6 Sept	9 Sept	16 Sept	5-17 -09	26-30 Sept
Tiger Woods	6 June	15 June	16 July	18 Aug	7-30 June	5-17-09	26-30 Sept
Michael Phelps	11 Aug	11 Aug	6 Sept	9 Sept	1-15 Sept	5-17-09	26-30 Sept
Ben Cousins	2 Aug	3-6 Aug	4 Aug	9 Sept	16 Sept	5-17-09	26-30 Sept
Nick D'Arcy	29 July	2-8 Aug	4 Aug	9 Sept	17 Sept	5-17-09	26-30 Sept
Adam & Glenn	30 Aug	30 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	18-19 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
Quade Cooper	30 Aug	30 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	20 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
Alberto Contador	25 Aug	28 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	21 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept

Scenario description	Date on website identification	Date fill in of contact summary sheet	Date of website summary	Date upload on NVivo	Date of print, read & allocate to themes	Date of NVivo Coding	Date of NVivo analysis
Serena Williams	9 Aug	9 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	23 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
Floyd Landis	24 Aug	26 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	24 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
James O' Connor	25 Aug	29 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	24 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
Mike Tyson	26 Aug	26 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	24 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
John Hopper Hopoate	26 Aug	26 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	24 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept
Hansie Cronje	11 Aug	11 Aug	2 Sept	19 Sept	24 Sept	19-30-09	26-30 Sept

Table 4-1 Steps and dates followed in the social media data collection in 2011

(Source: developed for this study)

The next section illustrates how the data were analysed.

4.4 Data analysis

As in the focus group analysis, the data analysis was done through marginal remarks (Miles & Haubermann 1994). Coding was done in two stages; first the comments of the first SCT scenario were manually grouped in themes, while the rest of the scenarios were grouped with the support of NVivo software. Manual coding of the first scenario was necessary to confirm themes. In order to analyse, arrange, summarise and present the data used in this thesis, frequency distribution and relative frequency distribution techniques were applied. Frequency distribution is a method used to present nominal data and their counts in groups, while relative frequency distribution provided the percentage each class represent of the total (Selvanathan et al. 2014). As the data were nominal, the number of observations in each theme was counted, and the proportion or percentage of all observations that fall into each theme was calculated (Selvanathan et al. 2014). Each theme was furthermore labelled, such as the brand attributes theme was labelled as: sport brand attributes and personal attributes. This was also done for the brand benefits.

A comparison of two breakdowns was necessary (Selvanathan et al. 2014) to observe whether consumer's' expressed negative or positive perceptions towards the specific brand attributes and brand benefits – following an SCT. To observe the likelihood of the most popular brand attributes perceived as positive or negative, following SCTs, the comments of consumers were grouped according to an additional positive and negative category. This was done for the brand benefits as well. Table 4.2 presents the percentage breakdown of the brand attributes of the SCBI and their level of likelihood of being positive and negative.

Brand attributes	Frequency (positive)	Frequency (negative)	Total
Sport brand attributes	69	16	85
Personal attributes	32	163	195
TOTAL	101	179	280

Table 4-2 Components of likelihood of most popular brand attributes perceived as positive or negative, following SCTs

When describing the relationship between two nominal variables the data could be tabulated (Selvanathan et al. 2014). For proposition two this thesis analysed the relationship between the sport celebrity brand image (brand attributes and brand benefits), and the characteristics (off-field and on-field) of SCTs. This thesis furthermore tabulated the relationship between these two nominal variables in Table 4.3. As a first step, a cross-classification table was produced that listed the frequency of each combination of the values of the two variables. The tabular method was used to investigate whether there was a relationship between the brands attributes of the SCBI, and the characteristic of SCTs. If brand attributes and the characteristics of SCTs were related, there will be a difference in the brand attributes among the off-field and on-field characteristic of SCT. An easy way to see this is to convert the frequencies in each row (or column) to relative frequencies in each row (or column) (Selvanathan et al. 2014). This was also done for the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Table 4.3 presents that percentage breakdown of the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image in relation with off-field and on-field SCTs and their likelihood of being positive and negative.

Transgressions	Frequency positive comments	Frequency negative comments	Total
Off-field	82	128	210
On-field	18	48	66
TOTAL	100	176	276

Table 4-3 Components of likelihood of most popular brand attributes (in percentage) perceived as positive or negative, following off-field and on-field SCTs

4.5 Steps in social media data collection

The social media data collection comprised eight steps. The first step consisted of the selection of various SCTs for inclusion in this study. This was followed by step 2 that involved the identification and selection of social media sites for further investigation. In order to capture the social media data it was necessary to develop a contact summary sheet during step 3. This contact summary sheet was tested in step 4, by using a pre-selected SCT scenario. After the contact summary sheet was tested and changes were made, it was used to capture the social media data on discussion boards. During step 5, the data on the discussion boards was uploaded on the NVivo software, and in step 6 a summary of the collected social media sites was recorded in order to ensure validity and transparency in this study. The uploaded comments were grouped in the NVivo software according to the literature and focus group findings, and analysed during Step 7. During step 8 a summary of each SCT scenario was made. The next section explains these steps in more detail.

4.5.1 Step 1: Selection of SCT scenarios

During the first step in the social media data collection, the researcher described how and which SCT scenarios were selected. This step concluded with a description of the different SCT scenarios selected for further investigation. Table 4.4, provides a summary of the SCT scenarios selected for Stage 2. The selection of the SCTs were based on the following five criteria: inclusion of a highly visible sport celebrity; transgressions that represent different types of sports; an actual transgression, transgressions that represent the different characteristics of a transgression, and the presence of the transgression in social media.

The first selection criteria of a transgression scenario were the inclusion of a sport celebrity with a high level of visibility and awareness. According to the literature the main attraction of using celebrities in sponsorship are their unique favourable attributes, such as their credibility, their unique expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness (Eisend & Langner 2010; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Ohanian 1990; Van der Veen & Haiyan 2010; White, Goddard & Wilbur 2009). Based on the first criteria the following sport celebrities were regarded as having high levels of visibility and awareness, listed alphabetically: Adam Blair, Glenn Stewart, Alberto Contador, Andrew Johns, Ben Cousins, Brett Favre, Floyd Landis, Hansie Cronje, James O'Connor, John Hopoate, Matthew Johns, Michael Phelps, Mike Tyson, Nick D'Arcy, Quade Cooper, Serena Williams and Tiger Woods.

The second selection criteria of SCTs were to select transgressions that represented different types of sport. Based on the second criteria the following ten types of sport were represented in this study, listed in alphabetical order: Australian Rugby Union, Australian Football League, Boxing, Cricket, Cycling, Golf, National Football League, National Rugby League, Swimming and Tennis.

Based on the third selection criteria the following actual SCT scenarios were selected: Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl, Alberto Contador's doping, Andrew Johns' drug use, Ben Cousins' drug use, Brett Favre's 'sexting', Floyd Landis' doping, Hansie Cronje's match-fixing, James O'Connor's disrespect towards team announcement, John Hopoate on-field foul play, Matthew Johns' alleged group rape, Michael Phelps' marijuana use, Mike Tyson's on-field foul play, Nick D'Arcy's assault, Quade Cooper's on-field foul play, Serena Williams on-court outburst and Tiger Woods' adultery.

First selection criteria:	Second selection criteria:	Third selection criteria:	Fourth selection criteria:
A visible sport celebrity	Different sport types	An actual SCT	On /Off-field
Adam & Glenn Stewart	National Rugby League	Brawl	On-field
Alberto Contador	Cycling	Doping	On-field
Andrew Johns	National Rugby League	Drug use	Off-field
Ben Cousins	Australian Football League	Drug use	Off-field
Brett Favre	National Football League	Sexting	Off-field
Floyd Landis	Cycling	Doping	On-field

First selection criteria:	Second selection criteria:	Third selection criteria:	Fourth selection criteria:
A visible sport celebrity	Different sport types	An actual SCT	On /Off-field
Hansie Cronje	Cricket	Match fixing	On-field
James O' Connor	Australian Rugby Union	Disrespect towards team	On-field
John Hoppa Hopoate	National Rugby League	Foul play	On-field
Matthew Johns	National Rugby League	Alleged group rape	Off-field
Michael Phelps	Swimming	Marijuana use	Off-field
Mike Tyson	Boxing	On-field foul play	On-field
Nick D'Arcy	Swimming	Assault	Off-field
Quade Cooper	Australian Rugby Union	On-field foul play	On-field
Serena Williams	Tennis	On-court outburst	On-field
Tiger Woods	Golf	Adultery	Off-field

Table 4-4 Summary of the selection of SCT scenarios

(Source: developed for this study)

The fourth selection criteria of SCTs were the inclusion of a transgression that represents the different characteristics of a transgression. The following SCTs were regarded as off-field: drug use; 'sexting'; alleged group rape; marijuana use; assault and adultery; and the following as on-field: brawl; doping; match-fixing; disrespect towards team; foul play; on-court outburst. The fourth selection criteria of SCTs, relevant to this study, were that the SCT should be played out in social media, especially on discussion boards of websites, online forums and You-Tube videos. The sixteen SCT scenarios fulfil in this study's selection criteria and were included in this study. The chosen scenarios are described in Appendix B. Given the identification and selection of the different transgression scenarios, it is now necessary to identify and select websites for these scenarios.

4.5.2 Step 2: Identification and selection of social media site

During this step the researcher identified and selected social media sites for inclusion in this study's research programme. The discussion boards on social media were found in the end of each website, forum and You-Tube video and contained consumer's' real-time responses to an SCT. Websites, fan-forums and You-Tube videos that contained no comments were discarded. Online discussion boards are defined as "A thread of messages that have been sent as public comments on online news items concerning recent happenings" (Poria & Oppewal 2003, p. 233).

As soon as all the SCT scenarios were summarised, it was evident that different numbers of comments were received for different scenarios. Table 4.5 illustrates a summary of the social media sites and the number of comments found on each scenario. A total number of 146 sites were included in this study. Table 4.5 also indicates that the SCTs that played out in the media from 2009 to 2011 received the highest amount of comments. This high number of comments may be attributed to the unavailability of online discussion boards before 2009. Table 4.5 further illustrates that Matthew Johns alleged group rape incident received the

highest number of consumer's' comments, followed by Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl.

The website articles included in this thesis were news articles, tabloid articles and academic articles, while forums were found on fan forums, club forums, and video sites. The criteria for the selection of online discussion boards were as follows: discussion boards should contained consumer's' comments referring to SCTs, and comments should be without coarse language and personal degrading remarks.

Sport celebrity	Year	Sport	Transgression	No of sites	Number of comments
Matthew Johns	2009	NRL	Alleged group rape	24	2374
Adam & Glenn	2011	NRL	On-field brawl	12	1314
Brett Favre	2010	NFL	Sexting	21	1023
Andrew Johns	2007	NRL	Drug use	7	703
Tiger Woods	2009	Golf	Adultery	18	624
Quade Cooper	2011	ARU	On-field foul play	7	470
Alberto Contador	2010	Cycling	Doping	10	375
James O' Connor	2011	ARU	Disrespect towards team	9	267
Serena Williams	2009	Tennis	On-court outburst	3	226
Michael Phelps	2009	Swimming	Marijuana use	7	215
Ben Cousins	2007	AFL	Drug use	7	192
Floyd Landis	2006	Cycling	Doping	9	174
Nick D'Arcy	2008	Swimming	Assault	5	162
Mike Tyson	1998	Boxing	On-field foul play	2	111
John Hopoate	2001	NRL	On-field foul play	3	45
Hansie Cronje	2000	Cricket	Match fixing	3	5
TOTAL COMMENTS				146	8280

Table 4-5 Summary of social media sites used and their number of comments

(Source: developed for this study; NRL=National Rugby League; NFL=National Football League; ARU=Australian Rugby Union; AFL=Australian Football League)

The next step discusses how this study captures the online data.

4.5.3 Step 3: Develop contact summary sheet for capturing data

During this step the researcher developed a tool for capturing and generating the data from social media sites. The contact summary sheet was developed to capture consumer's real-time response, in the form of their comments, to an SCT. This study amended the manual contact summary sheet, designed for qualitative studies by Miles and Huberman (1994), for application in social media data collection. A manual contact summary sheet, in this study, referred to the sheet that was used to manually group the comments pertaining to the first SCT scenario. These comments were grouped according to themes in a table on the manual contact summary sheet. The rest of the SCT scenarios were analysed by using NVivo software, where the comments were grouped using the software. Figure 4.1 illustrates an example of a manual contact summary sheet.

Manual Contact Summary for first scenario	
Introduction	
Case:	
Site:	
Contact date:	
Today's date:	
Website information	
Date of article in site:	
Title of article:	
Number of comments:	
Describe site:	
Summarise the information you got (or failed to get) on each of the research propositions (and themes) you had for this contact:	
Table: Research propositions, themes, and consumer's' comments	
Research propositions 1: An SCT causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from a priori state	
Theme 1: Personal brand attributes e.g. trust	<i>"The celebrity cannot be trusted"</i>
Theme 2: Sport brand attributes e.g. expertise	<i>"He is still a good golf player"</i>

Figure 4-1 Example of a manual contact summary sheet

(Source: developed for this study)

The information on the contact summary sheet was grouped in the following sections: the introduction; website information; the study's research propositions, and the pre-selected themes (Miles & Huberman 1994). The 'introduction' section included the name of the case, the website address, the contact date and the date the contact summary sheet was completed. The 'website information' section included: the name of the scandal scenario, the site address, contact date, and the date of completion, the date of the article, title of article, number of comments made by consumers; and a description of the website (e.g. newspaper article, tabloid page, academic article). The three propositions were placed in a table with each proposition's selected themes. However, it was necessary to test the contact summary sheet's appropriateness in this study.

4.5.4 Step 4: Testing the contact summary sheet

This step describes how the researcher tested the contact summary sheet and proposed an amended contact summary sheet for the use in social media data collection. The contact summary sheet was tested on a specific SCT. The Tiger Woods' scenario was chosen owing to the celebrity's high level of credibility, the case's popularity in social media, the overwhelming response towards Wood's sponsors, and the large number of comments available for analysis. The social media data on the Tiger Woods' scenario was captured manually. That is: all consumer's' comments on discussion boards were printed and manually analysed through content analysis. The research propositions were included as guides to group the data into different themes. This consistency and transparency of data management helped to address the validity in the research programme (Gummesson 2005). The manual analysis of the first scenario enabled this study to confirm research propositions and themes. It was apparent that consumer's' comments were expressed in a negative, positive and neutral way. These dimensions were included as new emerging themes, and used to develop the codes in the qualitative software programme. The contact summary sheet was now amended after the manual analysis to incorporate the scenario's article and all comments.

The information on the amended contact summary sheet was now grouped in the following sections: the introduction; website information; the article of the website; and consumer's' comments. The research propositions on the contact summary sheet were removed, as they were incorporated within the themes. The contact summary sheet captured the article of the website and the accompanied comments to ensure transparency. A contact summary sheet was completed for every online contact made. The layout was as follows: the introduction and website information were now followed by the article of the website and the consumer's' comments. This amended contact summary sheet was now ready to be used for all the SCT scenarios included in this study. A contact summary sheet was completed for every social media contact. As soon as all the contact summary sheets were completed for each SCT, it was necessary to upload the contact summary sheets on NVivo software. Figure 4.2 illustrates an example of the contact summary sheet used in the social media data collection.

Contact Summary Sheet used in Social Media

Introduction

Case: *Tiger Woods adultery*
Site: *www.newlimited.com.au*
Contact date: *12 January 2010*
Today's date: *1 February 2010*

Website information

Date of article in site: *8 December 2009*

Title of article: *Tiger in trouble*

Number of comments: *55*

Describe site: *News*

Website article:

The news article indicated that Tiger Woods was caught

Consumer's' comments on website:

Angie: I feel that Tiger Woods is still a good player.....

Tom: I do agree, but after this last incident the player

Figure 4-2 Example of contact summary sheet in social media

(Source: developed for this study)

4.5.5 Step 5: Uploading contact summary sheets on NVivo software

Step 5 explains how the researcher uploaded all the contact summary sheets of every SCT scenarios on NVivo software. This step was only completed when all the contact summary sheets were uploaded. This step concludes with a new list of emerging themes. Each SCT scenario was uploaded on the NVivo software, and the comments were then, through the help of NVivo, grouped according to the final list of themes and dimensions. NVivo analysis is a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) and is widely used in social science research to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data (Dean & Sharp 2006).

In this study the NVivo programme assisted in the capturing of the online consumer's' comments by disaggregation of data into text units that can be categorised into several themes, and supporting the finer-grading coding alternatives, such as the line-by-line coding option offered by NVivo (Woods & Wickham 2006), and ensured coding consistency and high accessibility to the data (MacLaren & Catterall 2002). Text was coded-from-browser from the contact summary sheets of each scenario. After completion of the entire contact summary sheets it was evident that new themes emerged, especially after completion of the Matthew Johns and Adam Blair and Glenn Stewarts' scenarios. Figure 4.3 illustrates the new emerging themes during the social media data collection.

New emerging themes
Cycling is full of doping: e.g. “all athletes in cycling use enhancement drugs”
Disrespect towards women: e.g. “footy players have no respect for women”
Positive impact on sport: e.g. “that is why we watch footy, to see an on-field brawl”
Negative impact on sport: e.g. “ <i>my son will not play this sport</i> ”
Emotions: Positive: e.g. “Williams on-court outburst was entertaining”
Emotions: Negative: e.g. “Matthew Johns’ actions was disgusting”
Emotions: Neutral: e.g. “who cares what he did in his private life”

Figure 4-3 List of new emerging themes during the social media data collection

(Source: developed for this study)

During the capturing of social media data, the researcher noted that consumers expressed their experiential benefits, or emotional responses within a positive, negative or neutral context. These different dimensions were added as new emerging themes. In addition, consumer’s comments indicated that an SCT might have a further impact on the sport the celebrity is part of. Consumer’s comments directly referred to a specific type of sport. For example, cycling was perceived as ‘full of doping’, while the National Rugby League was accused of ‘disrespect towards women’. The on-field brawl received many positive comments referring to the sport the celebrity is part of. Therefore, consumer’s comments were grouped according to a ‘positive impact on sport’ and a ‘negative impact on sport’. It was thus necessary to add these new themes to the current list of themes.

Consumers, furthermore, value judgments regarding the morals and values of society and the sport celebrities. These comments revealed that consumer value does not match that of the celebrity value. The match-up between the values of the celebrity and consumers is also referred to as internalisation, which is described in Chapter 2 as a brand benefit of the sport celebrity brand image. Therefore, the match-up between the values will be grouped as part of the impact of the transgression on symbolic brand benefits, specifically within the ‘internalisation’ theme. These new themes and dimensions were added to the current list of themes. After the contact summary sheets were uploaded on NVivo the researcher recorded a list of all the social media contacts made. The next step illustrates this process.

4.5.6 Step 6: Summarise the list of contacts made for each scenario

This step illustrates how the researcher has summarised the social media used (websites, fan forums and You-Tube videos) for each scenario in this study. The summary of the social media used for each scenario was necessary to ensure reliability and transparency of the data. Each summary consisted of: the analysis number allocated to the site; the URL address, the date of the occurrence of the social media; the title of the social media’s article, the type of social media and the total number of consumer comments found on the social media. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the social media sites used in the Andrew Johns’ scenario.

Table 4.6 highlights that in the Andrew Johns' case 8 websites were used and these websites generated 703 comments. Most of the websites were forums with one news article, and the websites dated from March to November 2007. Table 4.6 further illustrates that most of the website articles referred to Andrew Johns' drug scandal and how he was arrested in London for drug possession. One website highlighted the sponsors' reactions to Johns' transgression. Most of the data was captured from online forums, and only one website contained an article with accompanying comments.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
AJ1	03/03/07	Andrew John's drug scandal	Forum	10
AJ2	14/06/10	Buzz on the Andrew Johns race scandal	Newspaper	61
AJ3	31/08/07	Sponsors may scrap Johns' deals	Forum	4
AJ4	30/08/07	Rugby league great Andrew Johns has been arrested for drug possession in London	Forum	584
AJ5	11/05/07	Fallen Australian League idol Andrew Johns has revealed he considered taking his own life on more than one occasion	Forum	24
AJ6	11/06/07	Andrew Johns arrested in drug bust	Rugby Forum	24
AJ7	31/08/07	NH – Andrew Johns – Drops bombshell	Hoops Forum	28
AJ8	4/11/07	Andrew Johns: I Thought Of Suicide	Forum	29
TOTAL COMMENTS				703

Table 4-6 Summary on Andrew Johns' social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.7 provides a summary of the data that relates to Brett Favre's transgression. The data was sourced from 21 websites, posted during 2010 to 2011. The sites mainly consisted of newspaper articles and they generated 1023 comments from participants. The articles focused on Favre's sexting scandal that involves Jenn Sterger. The table further shows that most of the articles referred to the transgression with one forum referring to Favre's sponsors' response to the scandal.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
BF1	12/04/11	Jenn Sterger: I've never met him, 'Former Jets Game Day Hostess says of Brett Favre	News	29
BF2	7/10/10	Brett Favre's cell phone seduction of Jenn Sterger (Update)	News	30
BF3	22/10/10	Jenn Sterger: Brett Favre scandal investigated by NFL	News	11
BF4	8/10/10	Jenn Sterger Pictures, Brett Favre Scandal Prompt NFL Investigation	Tabloid	25
BF5	10/4/11	Brett Favre Scandal Turned Life 'Upside Down'	News	6
BF6	4/11/11	Sterger: I haven't profited off scandal	News	126
BF7	17/10/10	Brett Favre Scandal: Latest on Jenn Sterger and the Alleged Meeting	News	18
BF8	4/10/11	Jenn Sterger On Brett Favre Scandal: 'I Haven't Made A Dime'	News	320
BF9	4/11/11	Jenn Sterger to talk Brett Favre scandal on 'Good Morning America'	News	33
BF10	7/10/10	Brett Favre scandal takes Lewd turn	News	43
BF11	11/10/10	NFL investigates Brett Favre scandal involving Hoboken's Sterger	News	7
BF12	4/01/11	Favre Scandal Expands	News	8
BF13	5/08/10	Brett Favre, Jenn Sterger scandal	News	26
BF14	11/10/10	Brett Favre's sexting scandal	News	12
BF15	4/11/10	Favre's alleged sextee – Another Unwanted Advance	Forum	15
BF16	24/10/10	Brett Favre admits leaving voicemails, denies sending nude pics	News	7
BF17	7/10/10	Favre photo scandal: It's junk!	Tabloid	10
BF18	22/10/10	Brett Favre scandal: NFL commissioner says investigation is about 'workplace conduct'.	News	4
BF19	10/11/10	For sports media, there's no ignoring Brett Favre	News	273
BF20	2/12/10	Brett Favre scandal latest on Jenn Sterger	News	15
BF21	11/10/10	Brett Favre's sexting scandal	News	5
TOTAL COMMENTS				1023

Table 4-7 Summary of Brett Favre's social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
MJ1	15-05-09	Sex scandal woman 'bragged about it'	News	122
MJ2	8-05-09	Johns in group sex scandal	News	85
MJ3	15-05-09	Matthew John scandal	News	2
MJ4	15-05-09	John's scandal a 'whole shebang' says Paul Vautin	News	44
MJ5	11-05-09	Sportal forum	Forum	80
MJ6	12-05-09	Virtual forum	Forum	568
MJ7	18-05-09	Matthew Johns sex girl 'Clare' new life with footballer	Tabloid	4
MJ8	14-05-09	The Matthew Johns scandal: blaming the victim	News	6
MJ9	7-05-09	Sportal Forum	Forum	31
MJ10	16-05-09	Forum	Forum	172
MJ11	3-05-09	When Matthew Johns was on Channel 9s	News	4
MJ12	13-05-09	Nine set to boot Matt Johns over sex act	News	839
MJ13	13-05-09	Big Footy Forum	Forum	99
MJ14	13-05-09	Matthew Johns stood down over sex scandal	News	57
MJ15	13-05-09	Australia Abuzz Over Rugby League "Group Sex" Scandal	News	16
MJ16	26-03-10	Matthew Johns has revealed today...	News	14
MJ17	13-05-09	MJ suspended from Footy Show after sex scandal	News	51
MJ18	7-05-09	Matthew Johns speaks out about group sex scandal	Tabloid	50
MJ19	14-05-09	Former colleague Tanya Boyd says woman "Clare" was a willing participant in Matt Johns incident	Tabloid	26
MJ20	14-05-09	Rugby sex scandal hits Australian rugby league star MJ	News	6
MJ21	14-02-09	What is channel seven thinking? MJs comeback to Ch. 7	News	7
MJ22	19-05-09	Matthew Johns interview with Tracy Grimshaw	News	8
MJ23	15-05-09	Clare bragged about Johns romp: friend	News	15
MJ24	9-05-09	Woman tells of Matthew Johns incident	News	68
TOTAL COMMENTS				2374

Table 4-8 Summary of Matthew Johns' social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.8 shows a summary of the data that relates to Matthew Johns' transgression. The data was scanned from 24 websites, with 2374 comments during 2009. Most of these websites were forums with one newspaper article and one tabloid article. The articles focused mainly on the alleged group rape of Matthew Johns.

Table 4.9 provides a summary of the social media sites used in the Michael Phelps’ scenario. Table 4.9 shows that Michael Phelps was caught with illegal marijuana use during 2009, and the data relating to this transgression was sourced from 7 websites. The sites mainly contained forums, newspaper articles, tabloids and blogs and it generated 215 comments. Most of the articles on the sites referred to Phelps’ marijuana scandal, and none of the websites included a reference to the sponsors’ response.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
MP1	13 Feb 09	Six reasons why the Michael Phelps scandal is uniquely American	News	11
MP2	6 Feb 2009	Is the Michael Phelps scandal still smoking	Blog	85
MP3	1 May 2009	Is the Michael Phelps Post Scandal Justified?	News	24
MP4	5 Feb 2009	Michael Phelps ‘scandal’	Forum	31
MP5	2 Feb 2009	Michael Phelps scandal forum	Forum	12
MP6	2 Feb 2009	How Michael Phelps screwed up his Google reputation in just 24 hours	News	49
MP7	10 Feb 09	Really? Michael Phelps episode sums up scandal	Tabloid	3
TOTAL				215

Table 4-9 Summary of Michael Phelps’ social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.10 illustrates the social media used in the analysis of Tiger Woods’ adultery scenario. The well-published adultery transgression of Tiger Woods occurred during 2009 to 2010. The data related to Tiger Woods’ transgression were extracted from 18 websites. The sites consisted of mainly academic sites, forums, newspaper and tabloid sites, and they generated 624 comments from consumers. The issue of the 7 websites related directly to Woods’ adultery, and 2 websites referred to the sponsors’ response to the transgression. One website article referred directly to the moral clauses that should be included in sponsorship contracts.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
TW1	19/12/2009	Adam Lambert and Tiger Woods tale of two American idol scandals	Academic	29
TW2	5/12/2009	Gillette shaves Tiger Woods from its ads	News	23
TW3	23/8/2010	Tiger Woods Divorce is final	News	3
TW4	19/5/2010	Shattering the Image: Tiger Woods and Star Scandal	Tabloid	3
TW5	6/12/2009	The Tiger Woods Scandal: Spraying to All Fields	News	3
TW6	28/11/2009	Tiger's Cougar – Repeated Mistress No 14 – More news: Sponsor Trouble	Tabloid	149
TW7	13/1/2010	Tiger Woods has been reported as having entered an up-,market American clinic	Tabloid	37
TW8	2/1/2010	Tiger Woods checks into rehab for sex addiction	Tabloid	28
TW9	28/12/2009	Tiger Woods' website forums shut down after abusive fans strike	News	14
TW10	24/8/2010	Tiger Woods divorce: Golf phenomenon Already Getting Propositioned	News	68
TW11	1/9/2010	The Impact of Tiger Woods Scandal on Moral Clauses in Endorsement Contracts	News	2
TW12	6/6/2010	Tiger Woods Scandal update: Fans on Woods Website leave comments of disapproval	Tabloid	25
TW13	2/12/2009	Tiger Woods "dirty" text messages released "I will wear you out"	Tabloid	99
TW14	24/2/2010	Tiger Woods Finally Speaks to the Public	News	5
TW15	6/6/2010	Tiger Woods mother law says I'm praying for everyone	Tabloid	3
TW16	6/6/2010	Donald Trump talks Tiger Woods scandal	Tabloid	39
TW17	3/12/2009	The Tiger Woods Scandal	Fan Forum	14
TW18	5/12/2009	Tiger Woods 4 th mistress alleged – Woods scandal heats up	Tabloid	80
TOTAL				624

Table 4-10 Summary of Tiger Woods' social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.11 shows that the data referring to Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl were obtained from 18 websites during 2011. The sites consisted of forums; newspaper and tabloid articles and they generated 624 comments from participants. The content of the articles referred to Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl and the involvement of the other players in the two teams. Furthermore, no website referred to sponsors' response to the transgression.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
AB1	27-08-2011	Manly Sea Eagles vs Melbourne Storm Fight	You tube	167
AB2	26-08-2011	Melbourne storm vs Manly Sear Eagle Fight	You tube	111
AB3	27-08-2011	Glenn Stewart vs Adam Blair- You tube	You tube	383
AB4	28-08-2011	Title of article: Glenn Stewart vs Adam Blair	You tube	27
AB5	27-08-2011	How good were Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart last night?	Forum	11
AB6	28-08-2011	Adam Blair's taunt tipped Manly's Glenn Stewart over the	News	4
AB7	28-08-2011	Melbourne Storm forward Adam Blair apologies for his role	News	85
AB8	26-08-2011	Manly beat Storm as brawls erupt	Forum	106
AB9	28-08-2011	Blair apologies for role in NRL brawl	News	1
AB10	28-08-2011	Rugby video: Best fight ever	You tube	2
AB11	28-08-2011	Adam Blair remorseful over brawl blow—up	News	18
AB12	28-08-2011	Mark Geyer says media have overreacted to all-in brawl at Brookvale Oval; Wayne Bennett calls for action	News	108
AB13	29-08-2011	Glenn Stewart, Adam Blair show their remorse	News	10
AB14	28-08-2011	Glenn Stewart vs Adam Blair Fight during the Game	You Tube	88
AB15	30-08-2011	Tallis slams Sea Eagles players for intervening in fight	News	55
AB16	29-08-2011	Fight night not a good look, but get on with it	News	71
AB17	1-09- 2011	NRL season over for Adam Blair as he gets five week suspension from judiciary	News	60
AB18	2-09-2011	Why was Adam Blair suspended?	Yahoo	7
TOTAL				1314

Table 4-11 Summary of Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart's social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.12 provides a summary of the social media sites that related to the Alberto Contador scenario. In the Alberto Contador's scenario 10 websites were used to obtain data during 2010-2011. The websites contained mainly forums, newspaper articles and blogs and they generated 375 comments from participants. The majority of the articles referred to Contador's doping scandal during the Tour de France in 2009. No website referred to the reactions of the sponsors to Contador's doping.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
AC1	12 Oct 2010	Contador considers quitting cycling owing to doping scandal	News	12
AC2	30 Sept 2010	Contador case means hard choices for anti-doping	Blog	38
AC3	20 July 2009	Alberto Contador doped?	Forum	135
AC4	1 Oct 2010	Doping scandal: Alberto Contador	Forum	4
AC5	16 Feb 2011	International community reacts with dismay at Contador decision	News	43
AC6	30 Sept 2010	Alberto Contador positive for Clenbuterol	News	17
AC7	24 May 2011	Updated: Alberto Contador's doping timeline	News	70
AC8	29 Sept 2010	The Sports Blog	Blog	49
AC9	1 Oct 2010	Spanish three Alberto Contador, David Garcia, Ezequiele Mosquera return positive tests....is Spain dirtiest cycling nation?	News	3
AC10	30 Jan 2011	Contador banned for one year over doping test	News	8
TOTAL				375

Table 4-12 Summary of Alberto Contador's social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.13 shows that the data relating to James O'Connor's disrespect towards his team were scanned from 9 websites during 2011. Most of these sites consisted of newspaper articles and it generated 267 comments from participants. Most articles referred directly to James O'Connor's failure to attend an important sport event. No website referred to the response of O'Connor's sponsors.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
JC1	21 Aug 2011	James O'Connor incurs wrath of wallabies Coach Robbie Deans; likely to miss tri-nations decider	News	73
JC3	23 Aug 2011	Quade Cooper; Kurtley Beale tackle rumour of fracas involving fellow Wallaby James O'Connor and kick it into touch	News	4
JC4	20 Aug 2011	O'Connor in hot water	News	10
JC5	22 Aug 2011	James O'Connor will miss Australia's Tri Nations decider against New Zealand in Brisbane	News	22
JC6	22 Aug 2011	Australian Rugby Union investigating drunken fight between several Wallabies backs in Paris last year	News	62
JC7	22 Aug 2011	O'Connor set to be punished for no-show	News	3
JC8	22 Aug 2011	O'Connor suspended	News	2
JC9	23 Aug 2011	Wallabies trio off the hook	News	7
TOTAL				267

Table 4-13 Summary of James O'Connor's social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study) Note: JC2 contact summary sheet was lost when website was corrupt.

Table 4.14 provides a summary of the social media sites used for the Quade Cooper scenario. Cooper was involved in on-field foul play during 2011, and the data relating to this transgression was sourced from 11 websites. The websites contained forums, newspaper articles and you tube sites and it generated 470 comments from participants. Most of the articles were covering Quade Cooper’s kneeing of the All Black, Richie McCaw. There were no further references to sponsor’ reactions towards the on-field incident.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
QC1	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper cited over knees to head of Richie McCaw	News	2
QC2	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper cleared of kneeing Richie McCaw	News	107
QC3	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper knee to Richie McCaw's head- You tube	Y Tube	159
QC4	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper cited over knees to head of Richie McCaw	Forum	16
QC5	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper not charged after knee incident	News	12
QC6	27 Aug 11	Cooper cited for knee	News	24
QC7	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper cited then cleared for knee in Richie McCaw's face	News	56
QC8	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper cleared of kneeing Richie McCaw	News	4
QC9	28 Aug 11	Quade Cooper found not guilty of kneeing Richie McCaw	News	38
QC10	29 Aug 11	Quade Cooper’s nigggle-fest with Richie McCaw set to continue	News	12
QC11	29 Aug 11	Quade Cooper-Richie McCaw feud set to erupt in World Cup decider	News	40
TOTAL				470

Table 4-14 Summary of Quade Cooper’s social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 4.15 highlights the social media contacts made referring to the on-field outburst of Serena Williams in the American Open tournament. Williams’ scenario data were sourced from 3 websites during 2009. The articles consisted of newspaper articles, blogs and ‘you tube’ sites and it generated 226 comments from participants. The blogs, news articles and ‘you tube’ videos referred to Serena Williams’ on-court outburst during the US Open in 2009, and no references were made to William’s sponsors’ reactions.

No	Date of website	Title of article	Type of website	Comments
SW1	14 Sept 2009	Serena Williams fined \$10500 for US Open semi-final scandal	News	11
SW2	13 Sept 2009	Scandal! Serena Williams vs Klim Clijsters: 2009 U.S. Open Semifinal	You Tube	143
SW3	13 March 2009	Serena Williams	Blog	72
TOTAL				226

Table 4-15 Summary of Serena William’s social media sites used

(Source: developed for this study)

Once, all the social media data was uploaded on the NVivo software, the analysis could commence. The NVivo software is based on the formulation of nodes for use in the further analysis of the qualitative data. The next step illustrates how the different SCT scenarios were analysed, using NVivo analysis.

4.5.7 Step 7: Data analysis

NVivo qualitative data management software was used to manage the comments obtained from the social media data collection. Consistent with the qualitative inquiry guidelines, data analysis was continually reviewed throughout the process, allowing for emerging categories and themes and new directions for comments made (Pryor, Malshe & Paradise 2013). Each SCT scenario was uploaded on the NVivo software. Each SCT scenario contained different contact summary sheets, depending on the number of social media sites investigated. The comments were then, grouped according to the final list of themes and dimensions. NVivo analysis is a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) and is widely used in social science research to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data (Dean & Sharp 2006). In this study, the NVivo analysis assisted in the analysis of the online discussions. This software assisted in managing and recording the data through the use of coding practices (MacLaren & Catterall 2002). Coding offers several advantages to the researcher, such as the disaggregation of data into text units, and supporting the ‘finer-grading coding options’, such as the ‘line-by-line coding’ option offered by NVivo (Woods & Wickham 2006, p. 164). This software furthermore ensured coding consistency and enhanced the accessibility of the data (MacLaren & Catterall 2002). The software thus helped to improve reliability of the data analysis.

Text was coded-from-browser by reading the contact summary sheets, highlighting relevant text on each contact summary sheet and grouped to the relevant themes. NVivo was further applied for the illustration of analytical themes and for reporting the analytical outcomes. The coding of comments assisted in facilitating possible relationships within the selected themes. Within each research question, themes were created in order to group all the text referring to a specific theme together and to identify possible relationships. The data were analysed and triangulated based on the literature study, focus group findings and the social media data collection results. This conceptual theoretical model assisted in summarising each individual SCT scenario.

4.5.8 Step 8: Summary of each individual SCT

This step explains how the researcher conducted a more in-depth analysis of the social media data collection results. The researcher reached such an understanding by applying the social media data to the proposed conceptual model. The summary included application of the conceptual theoretical model to an SCT scenario. The researcher summarised each transgression scenario according to the model. The individual transgression summaries served as a provisional product to assist in future presentation of results. The interim transgression summaries offered a review of the findings and a look at the quality of the data supporting them, and pulled together what was known about the issue (Miles & Huberman 1994). The individual summaries confirmed the series of themes that represented consumer's' perceptions of the dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image and the possible impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and the sport, following an SCT. It also helped in formulating the core issues in each transgression scenario; – the researcher's' theory of what was happening (Miles & Huberman 1994). The findings of these summaries assisted the researcher in further understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This section indicated the methodology for the social media data collection. The section discussed the eight steps in the social media data collection stage.

4.6 Quality decisions

To ascertain the quality of this qualitative research study, five criteria were applied: reliability, transparency, internal validity and the biased nature of research. Reliability in the social media data collection stage will be addressed by developing a contact summary sheet', see Section 4.5 for an example. The contact summary sheet was used to capture social media data, and each contact summary sheet was used to store website information, the article of the website, and the discussion comments on the website. The discussion on the website consisted of consumer's' comments about the transgression. The contact summary sheet further ensured internal consistency and stability over time. The contact summary sheets were printed as hard copies for further content analysis, and were uploaded on qualitative software. Further evidence of transparency was evident in the recording of all the steps and dates followed, for each SCT scenario explored in this study.

Transparency refers to the way in which evidence is collected in a series of events from the research question to the final findings (Gummesson 2005), and was apparent in the evolution of the proposed conceptual model in Chapter 2. In order to ensure transparency and consistency in the social media data collection, summaries were be made about all the websites contacted. In Step 6 in Section 4.5, the summaries of all the scenarios used in the social media data collection were provided. A website summary was completed for each SCT scenario. Each summary of websites contained information about the: the number of the websites used for each scenario, the date that appeared on the website, the title that appeared on the website, and the type of websites being used. The websites were grouped according to the following types: news; blogs; forums; tabloid and You-Tube videos; and the number of comments found on each discussion boards.

Transparency in this study was further ensured, by uploading all ‘Contact Summary Sheets’ in NVivo software, for further use and reference. Internal validity was ensured in this study by developing themes, based on pre-identified constructs that were applied to all the individual SCT scenarios. The themes were developed on the basis of the literature, and were used as codes in the NVivo software. The list of themes can be found in Section 3.5. It was anticipated that the information obtained from online discussions boards was less biased, because the researcher has no involvement in the data generation process (Poria & Oppewal 2003).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology of the social media data collection conducted in this thesis. The most important benefits generated with this research design were; the capturing of the immediate response of the consumer to the SCT, the ability of the researcher to come close to the data generation process related to real SCT scenarios. The next chapter presented the results of the social media data collection, and Chapter 5 draws conclusions and implications based on the results.

Chapter 5 Results

In Chapter 3 the methodology and results of Stage 1, focus groups, were presented. The aim of Chapter 4 is to present the results of Stage 2, social media data collection. This chapter commences with a discussion of the conceptual model and research propositions, followed by the grouping of the different sports and the preliminary analysis of the various scenarios within which sports celebrity transgressions took place. Then the comments about the sports celebrities and their transgressions are grouped into themes as gathered from the collection of social media data. The results of each of the research propositions are then presented, and the chapter concludes with the final presentation of the proposed revised conceptual model of this study. The results of this chapter are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Development of revised conceptual model and research propositions

Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, the components of a conceptual model were developed along with a series of research propositions. The series of research propositions were used to guide Stage 1 of the study. As suggested in Miles and Huberman (1994), this study's conceptual model laid the groundwork for the development of common themes. The conceptual model first proposed that an SCT caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state. The model further proposes that a sport celebrity brand image is influenced by a specific set of sport celebrity brand associations, which include brand attributes and brand benefits. The conceptual model then goes on to propose that when consumers are re-assessing a sport celebrity's brand image, following a transgression, they consider the brand attributes in terms of its sport related and personal attributes, and the brand benefits in terms of symbolic and experiential benefits. The conceptual model further proposes that the characteristics (off-field or on-field) of transgression itself are also likely to impact on consumer perceptions of a sport celebrity brand image following that transgression. This study continues to suggest that the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport can influence the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. Lastly, the model also suggests that any negative changes to the sport celebrity brand image can have a flow on effect onto the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport. After conducting exploratory focus group research (Stage 1) the model was confirmed for further use during in the social media data collection (Stage 2). The proposed conceptual model is shown in Figure 5.1. The conceptual model assisted in the forming of common themes used in this Chapter.

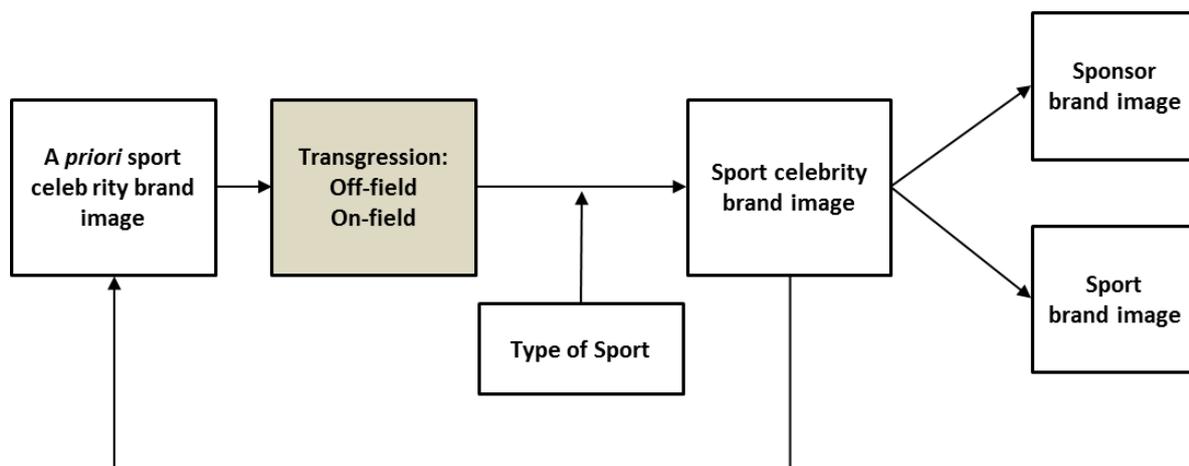


Figure 5-1 A conceptual model on the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 5.1 illustrates this study’s research propositions and accompanying themes. The brand image model indicates that brand attributes and brand benefits are important dimensions of brand image (Keller 1993). The literature study and focus group discussion explained that the sport celebrity’s brand attributes can be grouped into sport related and personal brand attributes, and the brand benefits are grouped into symbolic and experiential brand benefits. These dimensions were applied as themes when presenting the results of the social media data collection. The literature study further suggested that the characteristics of transgressions might be explained in terms of whether that transgression occurred as part of the sport (on-field), or as part of the celebrity’s personal life (off-field). During the analysis of the social media data collection it was evident that consumers considered the type of sport, in relation to the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, from a negative or positive perspective. Therefore, the comments were grouped in terms of: negative comments and positive comments.

No.	Research Propositions and Themes
P1:	A Sport Celebrity Transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an <i>a priori</i> state.
Themes	Sport Related Brand Attributes Non-sport or Personal Brand Attributes Symbolic Brand Benefits Experiential Brand Benefits
P2:	The Characteristics of the Sport Celebrity Transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image, following that transgression.
Themes	Off-field characteristic of the sport celebrity transgression On-field characteristic of the sport celebrity transgression
P3:	The consumer's' perceptions of the Type of Sport, will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.
Themes	Negative comments relating to the Type of Sport and the SCT Positive comments relating to the Type of Sport and the SCT
P4:	When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's associated Sponsors. • Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's associated Sport.
Themes	Comments indicating that sponsors should continue supporting celebrity Comments indicating that sponsors should discontinue supporting celebrity Positive comments relating to the impact on the Brand Image of the Associated Sport Negative comments relating to impact on the Brand Image of the Associated Sport

Table 5-1 Research propositions and themes

(Source: developed for this study)

Having reviewed the conceptual model, research propositions and themes of this study it is now necessary to offer an explanation of how the different sport celebrity transgression scenarios were grouped, according to their characteristics.

5.2 Grouping the different sport celebrity transgression scenarios

In Chapter 4, the sixteen sport celebrity transgression scenarios incorporated in this study were identified and selected. In this Chapter, the analysis was based on sport celebrity transgression scenarios that fit the five criteria identified in Chapter 4. Table 5.2 serves as a summary of the sport celebrity transgression scenarios used in this study, and ranked in order of the number of comments found.

Sport celebrity	Year	Sport	Scandal	No. of sites	No. of comments
Matthew Johns	2009	NRL	Alleged group rape	24	2374
Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart	2011	NRL	On-field brawl	12	1314
Brett Favre	2010	NFL	Sexting	21	1023
Andrew Johns	2007	NRL	Drug use	7	703
Tiger Woods	2009	Golf	Adultery	18	624
Quade Cooper	2011	ARU	On-field foul play	7	470
Alberto Contador	2010	Cycling	Doping	10	375
James O' Connor	2011	ARU	Disrespect towards team	9	267
Serena Williams	2009	Tennis	On-court outburst	3	226
Michael Phelps	2009	Swim	Marijuana use	7	215
Ben Cousins	2007	AFL	Drug use	7	192
Floyd Landis	2006	Cycling	Doping	9	174
Nick D'Arcy	2008	Swim	Assault	5	162
Mike Tyson	1998	Boxing	On-field foul play	2	111
John Hoppa Hoppoate	2001	NRL	On-field foul play	3	45
Hansie Cronje	2000	Cricket	Match fixing	3	5
TOTAL COMMENTS					8280

Table 5-2 List of the sport celebrity transgression scenarios investigated

Source: developed for this study; NRL-National Rugby League; NFL-National Football League; ARU-Australian Rugby Union; Swim-Swimming).

The first selection criteria of SCT scenarios were the selection of an SCT scenario which included a sport celebrity with a high level of visibility. The second selection criteria included scenarios which represented different types of sports. The third selection criteria included scenarios which consisted of real SCTs. The fourth selection criteria referred to transgressions that included the various characteristics of transgression. Finally, the scenarios chosen were also evaluated based on their availability on social media. Table 5.2 also indicates the year in which the sport celebrity transgression appeared in the media, the type of sport the celebrity plays, the characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression, the number of websites used in each scenario, and the final number of comments analysed in each scenario. The total number of comments analysed in the social media data collection were 8,280 comments. The comments of the different sport celebrity transgression scenarios were grouped according to the characteristics of transgressions, that is: whether the sport celebrity transgression took place off-field or on-field. Table 5.3 presents an outline of how these sport celebrity transgression scenarios were grouped.

Off-field transgressions	On-field transgressions
Andrew Johns' drug use	Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl
Ben Cousins' drug use	Alberto Contador's doping
Brett Favre's sexting	Floyd Landis' doping
Matthew Johns' alleged group rape	Hansie Cronje's match-fixing
Michael Phelps' marijuana use	James O'Connor's disrespect towards team
Nick D'Arcy's assault	John Hopoate's on-field foul play
Tiger Woods' adultery	Mike Tyson's ear biting
	Quade Cooper's on-field foul play
	Serena Williams' on-court outburst

Table 5-3 Grouping of SCTs according to the characteristics of transgression

(Source: developed for this study)

Seven of the sixteen scenarios were off-field and nine scenarios were categorised as on-field scenarios. Off-field transgressions related to transgressions that were not sport related and included transgressions such as drug use, sexting, sexual misbehaviour, marijuana use, and adultery. On-field transgressions related to transgressions that were sport related and included an on-field brawl, doping, disrespect towards team, on-field foul play and an on-court outburst. As indicated in Chapter 4, the data related to each sport celebrity transgression scenario was obtained from investigating discussion boards on social media sites. Furthermore, the data from these social media sites were analysed according to the social media data collection methodology. Before the results obtained from the social media data collection are presented, the preliminary analysis of the different sport celebrity transgression scenarios is discussed.

5.3 Preliminary analysis of sport celebrity transgression scenarios

The rationale and general approach to be undertaken in the analysis of the social media data collection referred to the sport celebrity transgression scenarios were outlined in Chapter 4. Therefore, the preliminary analysis focused on the actual outcomes of the development of a list of codes and abbreviations during the manual analysis of Tiger Woods' scenario, and the manual grouping of the Tiger Woods' data into themes.

The social media data on the Tiger Woods' scenario was captured manually. That is: all consumer's' comments on discussion boards were printed and manually analysed through content analysis. The research propositions were included as guides to group the data into different themes. This consistency and transparency of data management helped to address the validity in the research programme (Gummesson 2005). The manual analysis of the Tiger Woods' scenario enabled this study to confirm research propositions and themes. It was apparent that consumer's' comments were expressed in a negative, positive and neutral way. These dimensions were included as new emerging themes, and used to develop the codes in the qualitative software programme. It was thus, necessary to develop a list of new themes and abbreviations for the capture of data in the other scenarios.

5.3.1 Develop a list of codes and abbreviations

This step involved developing of a list of codes and abbreviations during the manual analysis of the Tiger Woods’ scenario. The list of themes used during the content analysis helped to organise the large chunks of data into themes to ensure an overload of information, and to ensure that research follows a selective process (Miles & Huberman 1994). On the basis of Miles and Huberman (1994) this study argued that words rendered more meaning than numbers alone and should be hung onto throughout the analysis. Ignoring the meaning of words leads to the whole notion of “qualities” or “essential characteristics” (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 56). The list of codes further ensured: efficient retrieval of data, retrieving of most of the important data, and that the study stays mindful of the important themes and research propositions of this study (Miles & Huberman 1994). This study’s list of codes and abbreviations are listed in Table 5.4.

Codes	Abbreviation	Codes	Abbreviation
Sport Celebrity Brand Image	SCBI	Brand Benefits	BB
Sport Related Brand Attribute	SBA	Experiential Brand Benefits	EBB
Personal Brand Attribute:	PBA	Negative Emotions	Neg
Attractiveness	Attr	Positive Emotions	Post
Trust	Trust	Neutral Emotions	Neu
Credibility	Cred	Symbolic Brand Benefits	SBB
Role Model	RM	Identification	Iden
Sponsors Continue Support	SC	Internalisation	Intern
Sponsors Discontinue Support	SD	Transgressions	Ts
Impact on sport	IOS	Off-field	Off-T
Type of sport	TOS	On-field	On-T

Table 5-4 List of codes and abbreviations

(Source: developed for this study)

Coding reduces the large amounts of qualitative data into smaller themes and ensures the researcher analyses the data during collection process (Miles & Huberman 1994). Codes are “data-reductive devices for condensing hundreds of pages of text into workable, intellectually coherent unites” (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 178). These units were then grouped into themes, also referred to as pattern coding (Miles & Huberman 1994). Themes or codes were based on the research propositions developed for this study, and the codes that were used in the first manual transgression were illustrated in the above table. The first contact summary sheets related to the first Tiger Woods’ transgression was analysed through content analysis. The content analysis consisted of marginal remarks that included writing themes on the right hand side of the comments and coding on the left hand side (Miles & Huberman 1994). The large chunks of data obtained in the Tiger Woods transgression were grouped into several themes according to the questions on the first contact summary sheet. After completion of the Tiger Woods case, new themes emerged that were then added to the coding list. The next step illustrates the grouping of the first manual Tiger Woods’ comments into the themes.

5.3.2 Grouping of social media data into themes

This step involves the grouping of the data into the research propositions and themes. During this step the first scenario results were summarised in order to offer a bigger picture of the research study results, to offer a validated and reliable contact summary sheet, and to offer new emerging patterns or themes. In organising the synopsis the themes were scanned to look for patterns and to write the summary (Miles & Huberman 1994). Within the tabulation it was evident that the pre-identified themes and the research propositions have been confirmed to be use in the capturing and analysis of the remaining sport celebrity transgression scenarios. Table 5.5 provides an illustration of Tiger Woods’ adultery scenario, and the manual grouping of the comments of consumers into the research propositions and themes.

Research themes	Consumer’s’ comments on websites
Sport related brand attributes	<i>“Tiger is one of few great reputable athletes”; “Still a good golfer though”; “...Tiger Woods is the best golfer in the world...”; “All I care about is his game and how he performs in the game”.</i>
Personal brand attributes	<i>“I can’t look at him without thinking “liar”; “...why would I trust him to tell me what to buy?”; “He obviously can’t rely on a ‘golden boy’ public persona that has now been shown to be false”; “He was a role model to young people all over the world”; “People will never look at Tiger Woods as a role model”.</i>
Symbolic benefits	<i>“Anyone with such low morals deserves no less”; and “...but we can’t help but question his moral values”.</i>
Negative emotions	<i>“That person was an illusion that he created and I think that’s why the world feels betrayed”; “...look at Tiger Woods and the betrayal felt by his fans.”; “A fan base built on false impressions will implode when the day of reckoning arrives, and it always arrives. Tiger Woods built a fake front and now the disappointment over his actions is huge”; “It’s annoying” and “...we are ashamed of him”</i>
Neutral emotions	<i>“Just leave him alone for ... sake”; and “Leave Tiger and his family alone”</i>
Sponsors	<i>Sponsors should discontinue their support to the sport celebrity</i> <i>“If they want me to continue to use their product they better shave him from the payroll”</i> <i>“He has damaged himself and his family and should be held accountable”</i> <i>“We are back to buying Mach 3 razors if Gillette drops tiger. We take this all very seriously and show our disdain with our wallets”</i> <i>“I’ll support Gillette and Tiger’s wife. Golf is a gentlemen sport, something I am sure his Dad taught him. He was a role model to young people all over the world”</i>

Research themes	Consumer's' comments on websites
Sponsors (cont.)	<p><i>"Outside of golf, Tiger previously represented one kind of person. Now he represents another. The only stupidity here is these companies pretending they are not dropping him for exactly this reason"</i></p> <p><i>As for Woods, I want nothing to do with him ever again including anything he endorses because he has proved his is a liar and cheat so why would I trust him to tell me what to buy?</i></p> <p><i>Sponsors should continue their support to the sport celebrity</i></p> <p><i>"These sponsors are short-sighted, within a short period of time, this all blow over and he will be back winning championships...then he will be laugh\$\$\$hang"</i></p> <p><i>"I hope when Tiger is back on top he shuns the Gillette's of the world"</i></p> <p><i>"Let he that is without guilt throw the first stone"</i></p> <p><i>"These companies that have made millions off Tiger now are going to dump him when the going gets a little rough?! What a joke they are!"</i></p> <p><i>"Sorry Tiger...It's just a fact of life...when you're down and out, those you thought were your friends are all standing in line to try to help kick you head in..."</i></p> <p><i>"Everyone boycott any company who is giving Tiger a hard time. Did he murder someone? Did he not pay his taxes? Did he not pay for his children? He is a great man; let him alone!"</i></p> <p><i>"That's why NIKE stands by their man as he symbolizes the Just Do It attitude"</i></p> <p><i>"So ounce all the sponsors have optioned out..."</i></p> <p><i>"..And I doubt he will lose any endorsements..."</i></p>
Type of sport	<p><i>Comments relate to positive attitude towards sport</i></p> <p><i>"You've made golf interesting to a lot of people who thought the game was boring. (Like I did). You made the sport shine with your talent"</i></p> <p><i>"There'll be no golf watching for me until You return"</i></p> <p><i>Golf will never be the same without you we will miss you in the sport"</i></p> <p><i>"You made Golf popular. Golf did not make you popular and the sponsors who have been around you have only been leaching off you"</i></p> <p><i>Comments relate to negative attitude towards sport</i></p>
Type of sport (cont)	<p><i>"The game of golf would be better off without tiger"</i></p> <p><i>"I'll never watch golf again if Tiger Woods is playing"</i></p> <p><i>"...golf is low key not like basketball and certainly not liked entertainment where shock is valuable tool"</i></p>

Table 5-5 Research themes and comments for the first manual scenario

(Source: developed for this study)

Following the identification of the various themes to be used in the capturing and analysis of the remaining scenarios, it was necessary to analyse the different propositions developed for this study. However, before the research propositions can be discussed, it is first necessary to illustrate how consumer's' comments were grouped into pre-identified themes. Therefore, the next section discusses the grouping of comments into themes used in the social media data collection.

5.4 Grouping of comments into themes used in the social media data collection

This section investigates the terms or constructs used to describe the different themes of this study. In order to investigate the research propositions of this study it was important to describe the terms used by consumers to identify the following: terms used to describe the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits; terms used to describe the impact of the type of sport on the transgression effects; terms used to describe the impact of the sport celebrity transgression on the brand image of the associated sponsors, and terms used to describe the impact of the sport celebrity transgression on the brand image of the associated sport.

5.4.1 Terms describing brand attributes and benefits

This section identifies the terms used to describe the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits, following a transgression. The section starts by focusing on the sport related brand attributes followed by the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, following a transgression.

a) Sport related brand attributes

The literature indicated that the product related brand attributes are "ingredients necessary for performing the service" (Keller 1993, p. 4). Applied to a sport marketing context, this translates to attributes that contribute to the performance of the sport team (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). When applied to the sport celebrity, the expertise, skills and performance of the celebrity, can translate to the product related brand attributes of the sport celebrity, as the celebrity's expertise contribute to the performance of the sport celebrity in the sport context. The brand attributes that contribute to the performance of the sport celebrity on the field of play will be referred to as the sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes. All quotes that refer to the sport celebrity's expertise, skills or performance are grouped into the term sport related brand attributes. The comments were used exactly as the consumers posted it on social media.

b) Personal brand attributes

The literature indicates that non-product related brand attributes are the "external aspects of the service that relate to its consumption" (Keller 1993, p. 4), while Bauer et al. (2008) assert that non-product related brand attributes of the sport team refer to those characteristics relevant to the consumption of the product, but are external to the performance of the sport team (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). When applied to the sport celebrity, the celebrity's credibility, attractiveness, trust and role model ability relate to the characteristics that are external to the performance of the sport celebrity, and referred to in this study, as the sport celebrity's personal brand attributes. Table 5.6 indicates that consumers used different terms in this study when referring to the sport related brand attributes and the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity. These comments were then

grouped according to whether they were sport or personal related brand attributes. In addition, these comments were then further grouped into whether they were related to an off-field or on-field SCT. These groupings of comments are illustrated in Table 5.6.

A SCT scenario	Comments posted on social media	Themes	Characteristic of SCT
Andrew Johns	<p><i>'Best player', 'greatest ever player', 'fantastic football player'.</i></p> <p><i>'Impact on millions of young kids', 'massively affect his chances of becoming immortal', 'role model', 'role model for sports not life', 'looked up to him as a hero', 'brain damaged', 'sporting heroes to our kids'.</i></p>	<p>Sport related brand attributes</p> <p>Personal brand attributes</p>	Off-field SCT
Brett Favre	<p><i>'Good quarterback', 'great football player', 'love to watch Brett play football', 'outstanding athlete'.</i></p> <p><i>'Poor excuse for a human being', 'major egomaniac'.</i></p>	<p>Sport related brand attributes:</p> <p>Personal brand attributes:</p>	Off-field SCT
Matthew Johns	<p><i>'Legend of the game'.</i></p> <p><i>Great showman', 'he was the most likeable and entertaining person', 'have to set good example for kids', 'role model', 'arrogant', 'untouchable', 'negative role models', 'just human', 'what about loyalty', 'integrity and trust', 'dishonest', 'liar', 'cheat', 'credibility'.</i></p>	<p>Sport related brand attributes:</p> <p>Personal brand attributes: '</p>	Off-field SCT
Michael Phelps	<p><i>American hero', 'pride we felt for each gold medal', 'tremendous talent', 'athletic superstar', 'great athlete', 'athletic courage', 'most amazing Olympic athlete of all time', 'most gold medals', 'most decorated Olympian', 'superstar'.</i></p> <p><i>'Role model', 'not a mortal human being', 'banked so much public trust'.</i></p>	<p>Sport related brand attributes:</p> <p>Personal brand attributes:</p>	Off-field SCT
Tiger Woods	<p><i>'Talent', 'ability', 'still a golf tiger man', 'great golfer', 'greatest golfer ever to pick up a club', 'there is nobody to take his place', 'crystal clear record with me', 'greatest ever golfer ever work his magic on golf course', 'amazing talent', 'one of few great reputable talents', 'as a golfer superb as a man what a woos', 'still a good golfer though', 'biggest and best', 'still the world's number one', 'the best of the best', 'still the golf champion of the world', 'golf powerhouse'.</i></p> <p><i>'Only human', 'as a man what a woos', 'woman stud magnet', 'Tiger lived a lie', 'betray everything we've come to think of him', 'lied', 'liar'.</i></p>	<p>Sport related brand attributes:</p> <p>Personal brand attributes</p>	Off-field SCT

A SCT scenario	Comments posted on social media	Themes	Characteristic of SCT
Adam & Glenn	<i>'Bring game into disrepute', 'poor example for kids', 'two passionate players', and 'superstars'.</i>	Personal brand attributes	On-field SCT
Alberto Contador	<i>'Good'. 'Credibility'</i>	Sport related brand attributes Personal brand attributes	On-field SCT
James O'Connor	<i>'Most skillful of all the Wallabies', 'contributes to in a big way playing for the Wallabies', 'good footballer', 'good player', 'respect mightily O'Connor's skill'. Role model', 'I hate his attitude', 'boof head footballer', 'great at binge drinking'.</i>	Sport related brand attributes Personal brand attributes	On-field SCT
Quade Cooper	<i>'Marvelous player', 'organizes the backline brilliantly', 'is overrated', 'darn good player', 'talented fella', 'Niggle and provoke McCaw', 'great talent', 'unprofessional'.</i>	Sport related brand attributes Personal brand attributes	On-field SCT
Serena Williams	<i>'Best world player'</i>	Sport related brand attributes	On-field SCT

Table 5-6 Terms used to describe the brand attributes and the characteristics of SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

The findings in the social media data collection supported these previous studies and indicated that the sport celebrity's personal (non-product related) brand attributes consisted of external aspects of the sport celebrity that related to their consumption, and included terms such as: the sport celebrity's level of attractiveness (physical attractiveness, similarity, familiarity and liking), trust (honesty, integrity, believability) and the ability to be a 'role model'. The comments indicated that the sport related brand (product) attributes of the sport celebrity was described by using constructs such as great player and good player. Table 5.7 illustrates the terms used to describe the sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes following a transgression. The terms are listed according to the number of counts made in each scenario.

Constructs	Number of comments
Great player/golfer/athlete	14
Good player/quarterback	9
Athletic superstar	7
Best player/golfer	6
Greatest ever player	4
Amazing talent	3
Best world player	3
World number one	2
Outstanding athlete, Most skillful, Tremendous athlete, Legend of the game, Most genuine sports person, Ability, Golf powerhouse and Performance	1 each
TOTAL	56

Table 5-7 Terms used to describe the sport related brand attributes

(Source: developed for this study)

The findings in the social media data collection link with the findings of Keller (1993) and Bauer et al. (2008) and indicated that the sport related brand attributes consisted of terms that signal the ingredients necessary to perform in sport (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). It further included terms such: as ‘great football player/athlete/golfer’ and ‘best player’. These terms are used in the social media data collection to identify the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrities following a transgression. Table 5.8 illustrates the terms used to describe the sport celebrities personal brand attributes following a transgression. The terms are listed according to the number of counts made in each scenario.

Constructs	Number of comments
Role model ability	77
Trustworthiness	12
Credibility	5
Attractiveness (like)	2
TOTAL	96

Table 5-8 Terms used to describe the personal brand attributes

(Source: developed for this study)

The data in Table 5.8 further show that the term ‘role model ability’ received the highest number of comments, followed by ‘trustworthiness’. This finding links with research that indicates that athlete endorsers have an important influence, as role models, on young adult behaviour (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010). Table 5.9 compared the sport celebrities sport and personal related brand attributes as considered by the consumer’s’ comments following a transgression. Consumer’s’ expressed more comments relating to personal related brand attributes, than sport related brand attributes, following an SCT.

Constructs	Number of comments
Sport related brand attributes (SRBA)	56
Personal related brand attributes (PRBA)	96
TOTAL	152

Table 5-9 The brand attributes of the sport celebrities following an SCT

This section grouped the consumer’s’ comments referring to the brand attributes of the sport celebrity, and their relation to the sport celebrity’s transgression. Next, the grouping of consumer’s’ comments relating to the brand benefits of the sport celebrity and the sport celebrity’s transgression.

c) Sport celebrity’s brand benefits

This section investigates the terms used in this study to describe the sport celebrity’s brand benefits following an SCT. The section starts by focusing on the terms used to describe the symbolic brand benefits of the sport celebrity, followed by an explanation of the terms used to describe the experiential brand benefits. The literature defines brand benefits as the “personal values consumers attach to the service’s attributes” (Keller 1993, p. 4), and symbolic brand benefits refer to the self-enhancement and ego-identification needs of the consumer (Gladden & Funk 2002). A brand with a symbolic concept is designed to associate the consumer with a desired individual or group (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986), while experiential brand benefits refer more to the sensory pleasures experienced by the consumer (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002).

The findings in the social media data collection supported these previous studies and indicated that consumers considered the sport celebrities brand benefits in term of both symbolic and experiential brand benefits. Table 5.10 provides examples of grouping of comments relating to the sport celebrities brand benefits and an SCT. Table 5.10 shows that consumers in this study used terms such: ‘no admiration’; and ‘no conformation to values’ which highlighted the symbolic brand benefits of the sport celebrities. Experiential brand benefits included terms such as: ‘disgusted’; ‘dismayed’; ‘excitement’; and ‘entertainment’ when considering the sport celebrities brand benefits following a transgression. These terms were used in this study to identify the sport celebrities brand benefits. The comments of consumers were further grouped in themes that related to whether they were off-field or on-field SCTs.

SCT Scenarios	Comments posted on social media	Themes	Characteristics of SCTs
Andrew Johns	Disgust, disgrace, care less	Experiential benefits	Off-field SCT
Brett Favre	Disgust, still my hero, who cares	Experiential benefits	Off-field SCT
Matthew Johns	No admiration, no conformation to values of celebrity Disgust, disgrace, disappointed	Symbolic benefits Experiential benefits	Off-field SCT
Michael Phelps	Sad, still your fan, who cares, no big deal	Experiential benefits	Off-field SCT
Tiger Woods	No admiration, no conformation to values Abandoned, annoyed, betrayed, deceived, disappointed, sad, shame, shocked, forgive him, love, still your fan, who cares, none of our business, leave him alone	Symbolic benefits Experiential benefits	Off-field SCT
Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart	Disgrace, disappointed, disgusted, entertainment, passion, word-of-mouth-communication	Experiential benefits	On-field SCT
Alberto Contador	Disappointed, still your fan	Experiential benefits	On-field SCT
James O'Connor	Disappointed, no big deal, who cares, get over it	Experiential benefits	On-field SCT
Quade Cooper	Embarrass, disgrace, disgusted	Experiential benefits	On-field SCT
Serena Williams	Disgusted, dismayed, excitement, makes good TV	Experiential benefits	On-field SCT

Table 5-10 Terms used to describe the brand benefits

(Source: developed for this study)

5.4.2 Terms describing the type of sport and the effects of SCTs

This section identifies the terms used to describe the influence of the type of sport (the celebrity belongs to) on consumer’s’ perceptions, of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. Table 5.11 indicates how the comments were grouped into themes, including, whether the SCT affected negatively or positively on consumer’s’ perceptions. Following that, the comments were further grouped in terms of whether the SCT was off-field or on-field.

Construct	Comments posted on social media	Themes	On or Off-field SCTs
Impact on sport	“Mate it is brutal, physical game. It’s blokes like you that try to soften the game, which nobody else wants” (Adam & Glenn).	Positive perception	On-field SCT
	“Tough game for tough men and all the players from all teams deserve the recognition and support from al the followers of rugby league” (Adam & Glenn).	Positive perception	On-field SCT
	“Now the NRL knows their drug policy is weak as well” (Andrew Johns).	Negative perception	Off-field SCT
	“Personally I would estimate nearly half of all players in the NRL have taken eccies” (Andrew Johns).	Negative perception	Off-field SCT
	“Treat women and the community with respect, I’m sick of so called heroes getting away with anything, grow up, and loose the egos. Rugby league (NRL) sounds finished...I will be watching football” (Matthew Johns)	Negative perception	Off-field SCT
	“Because this is footy culture this is what these men do for fun!!!” (Matthew Johns)	Negative perception	Off-field SCT

Table 5-11 Terms used to describe the impact on the type of sport

This section indicated that consumers perceived the impact of the SCT on the type of sport, from a positive or negative perspective.

5.4.3 Terms describing the impact of SCTs on the brand image of sponsors

This sub-section illustrates the grouping of consumer’s’ comments according to the comments in relation to the impact of the sport celebrities’ transgression on the brand image of the associated sponsors. Table 5.12 illustrates a summary of the consumer’s’ comments relating to the sport celebrities transgression and their associated sponsors. Consumer’s’ comments were divided into whether the sponsors should have continued or discontinued their support to the sport celebrities, and whether the SCT was off-field or on-field.

Comments posted on social media	Themes	Off-field or on-field SCT
<p>“I hope he continues to crash and burn on the links until he loses all his sponsorship”; and “...it is hard to imagine how they can spin this into a positive for their image and products” (Tiger Woods)</p> <p>“Any sponsors that continue to stay with him imply they condone his behaviour” (Tiger Woods); and “If the sponsors don’t stop him, they are just as bad as he is. I too won’t be buying anything he endorses now or in the future” (Tiger Woods)</p>	Discontinue sponsorship	Off-field
<p>“So ounce all the sponsors have optioned out; Take Tiger Inc. public and be the next Opera.”</p> <p>“I think it's kind of ridiculous the big deal people are making over it. He's a kid - he took a hit off a bong. People do it. Would they be as upset if he was seen drunk? I get that pot is illegal, but to me, it's always been as equal an "evil" as alcohol. I think mainly the sponsors are mad because it makes him a bad role model in their minds, but there are PLENTY of professional athletes who've done things way worse than take a bong hit, yet most of them have kept their endorsements and the media has continued to put them in the headlines, for better or worse. And to be fair to everyone, we're all only human. I'm kind of tired of the people who exploit situations for a quick buck - give the guy some privacy. He still won eight gold medals; his performance is no less amazing just because he smokes pot.” (Michael Phelps)</p> <p>“Seriously, and like his sponsors are going to drop him. dude is the most amazing Olympic athlete of all time... seriously calm the hell down” (Michael Phelps)</p> <p>These sponsors are short-sighted, within a short period of time, this all blow over and he will be back winning championships...then he will be laugh\$\$hang” (Tiger Woods)</p>	Continue sponsorship	<p>Off-field</p> <p>Off-field</p> <p>Off-field</p> <p>Off-field</p>

Table 5-12 Terms describing the impact of the SCT on the associated sponsors

The literature indicates that negative brand images transfer from the sponsee brand image to the sponsor brand image (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Jaiprahash 2009; Votolato & Unnava 2006). Studies show that the negative brand image that results from a celebrity transgression transfers to the company’s brand image, and can affect external stakeholders (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Doyle, Pentecoste & Funk 2013; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010; Louie, Kulik & Jacobson 2001; Money, Shimp & Sakano 2006). The findings in the social media data collection added to the body of knowledge on SCTs. That is: which characteristic of SCTs impact on consumer’s’ perceptions relating to the brand image of thier associated sponsors. The comments indicated that the sport celebrities associated sponsors were evaluated in terms of whether the sponsors should continue or discontinue their support to the sport celebrity who was involved in a certain type of SCT.

5.4.4 Terms describing the impact of SCTs on the brand image of the sport

This section investigates whether the sport celebrities transgression translates to the brand image of the sport the celebrity is part of. The sport celebrities brand image may have some brand effects following a transgression. Table 5.13 provides an example of a summary of the comments used by consumers in this study, and indicates the grouping of the comments of consumers in terms of the impact on the brand image of the associated sport.

Table 5-13: Terms describing the impact of the SCT on the associated sport

Comments posted on social media	Themes	Off-field or on-field
'Transgressions degrade the sport', 'corrupt the sport', 'lower morality of sport', 'culture of sport', 'experience negative emotions', 'switch to other sport', 'Entertaining', 'word-of-mouth communication'.	Negative attitude towards sport	Off-field
	Positive attitude towards sport	On-field

Table 5-13 Terms describing the impact of the SCT on the associated sport

When analysing the themes summarised in Table 5.12 and Table 5.13, it was evident that the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT, may result in a flow-on effect onto the brand image of the sponsors and to the sport the celebrity is part of. It is evident that within a sponsorship brand alliance, one brand is presented in the context of the other brand and vice versa, and subsequent judgment about each brand is likely to be affected by the context of the other brand. This finding is in correlation with previous research done in brand alliance literature that indicates that celebrity sponsorship is a type of brand alliance, and brand evaluations have spill over effects on attitudes towards each partner's brand in such an alliance (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010; Simonin & Ruth 1998). This thesis adds to this body of knowledge the impact of the type or characteristics of SCTs, and how they impact on the sport. The next section presents the social media data collection results in terms of the research propositions.

5.5 Results per research proposition

This section presents the results from the social media data collection. The data obtained from online discussion boards are presented for each of the research propositions, using sixteen sport celebrity transgression scenarios. A total of 147 websites were used to investigate the four research propositions, and a total of 8280 comments were analysed. The results of each research proposition are presented next.

5.5.1 Proposition 1: A Sport Celebrity Transgression (SCT) will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an *a priori* state

Data related to proposition 1 consisted of comments from consumers about whether consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state, when an SCT occurred. As explained in Chapter 2, brand image is defined as the consumer perceptions of a brand and is evident by the brand associations stored in consumer's memory (del Rio, Vázquez & Iglesias 2001; Keller 1993). The literature further identifies the dimensions of brand image as consisting of: brand attributes; brand benefits; and brand attitudes (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). When applied to this study, the *a priori* sport celebrity

brand image refers to the sport celebrities already obtained brand image, and consists of a specific set of brand associations. This specific set of brand associations may further be categorised in: sport related brand attributes; personal brand attributes; symbolic brand benefits; and experiential brand benefits (refer to Section 2.4).

A total of 516 online comments were investigated in order to address proposition 1. From these 516 comments, 280 referred specifically to the sport celebrities brand attributes, and 236 comments referred specifically to the sport celebrities brand benefits. For proposition 1, data relating to the sport celebrities brand attributes and brand benefits, are now presented in Table 5.14. Note the numbers are purely a count of the number of comments.

Sport celebrities brand attributes			Sport celebrities brand benefits					Total	
	+ve	-ve	Total		+ve	-ve	Neutral	Total	
Sport attributes	69	16	85	Symbolic benefits	6	51	0	57	
Personal attributes	32	163	195	Experiential benefits	66	62	51	179	
TOTAL	101	179	280	TOTAL	72	113	51	236	516

Table 5-14 Transgressions and the sport celebrity brand image

It is evident from the table above that more consumers provided a negative reaction to an SCT than they did a positive reaction. In particular there were more negative comments relating to the non-sport or personal dimensions of the celebrity’s brand image than the sport related dimensions or their athletic skill. This pattern was also noted in relation to perceived brand benefits where there were more negative comments relating to the negative symbolic dimensions of the celebrity’s brand image (people didn’t want to associate with them) rather than the emotive or experiential dimensions. Indeed there were almost an equal number of positive and negative comments relating to the emotive reactions of consumers to the celebrity transgression. The next sections investigate this phenomenon further.

a) Sport celebrity brand attributes

The 280 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes were analysed, and of these, 85 comments referred to the celebrity’s sport related brand attributes and 195 comments related to the celebrity’s personal brand attributes. Table 5.15 illustrates the distribution of comments related to transgressions and the sport celebrity brand attributes.

Sport attributes			Personal attributes			Total
Positive comments	Negative comments	Total	Positive comments	Negative comments	Total	
69	16	85	32	163	195	280

Table 5-15 Transgressions and the sport celebrity brand attributes

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 5.15 also highlights whether the comments made were positive or negative in relation to the sport celebrity's brand attributes. In particular, 69 comments that related to the sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes were positive (e.g. "...still a good player..."), and 16 comments were negative (e.g. "...XYZ's prior sporting achievements are devalued as a result of the misbehaviour.."). From this data it would appear that transgression involving sport celebrities did not always result in consumers expressing negative comments about that sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes. However, when we examined the comments in relation to a sport celebrity's personal brand attributes following a transgression, 163 comments were likely to be more negative (e.g. "...he/she is no role model..."), and only 32 comments were positive (e.g. "It does not matter, as XYZ does not need to be a role model"). It is therefore possible to suggest that an SCT causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity's brand attributes from an a priori perspective.

Tables 5.16 provides a summary of the comments pertaining to the impact of a transgression on the sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes, while Table 5.17 offers a summary of the comments referring to the impact of a transgressions on the sport celebrity's personal brand attributes. Thus, the data suggested that a sport celebrity involved in a transgression is more likely to have consumers attributing negative consequences to that sport celebrity's personal brand attributes more than they do to the sport related brand attributes. Consumer's' comments relating to consumer's' perceptions of sport celebrity brand benefits following a transgression are discussed next.

Positive comments relating to the SCT and the Sport Related Brand Attributes	Negative comments relating to the SCT and the Sport Related Brand Attributes
<p><i>"His football has nothing to do with his character" (Andrew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>"Bret Favre is a dam good quarterback and that is all we need to know!"</i></p> <p><i>"The media needs to leave sports celebrities alone that are chasing after women or men. It does not matter, it does not affect anything about why they are famous, and it has no bearing on how they play their sport" (Brett Favre).</i></p> <p><i>"He (Michael Phelps) stood tall and made America proud at the Beijing Olympics. This is how America treats its heroes, we forget all of the hard work Michael Phelps did to achieve his task, we forget the pride we felt with the each gold medal, and we forget all of those things and hang a man for smoking glass pipe at a party. That is our shame..."</i></p> <p><i>"All I care about is his (Tiger Woods) game and how he performs in the game"</i></p> <p><i>"Tiger is great because he is a great golfer and that's it"</i></p> <p><i>"Why all the concern here. Does this mean you are not going to watch the greatest golfer ever work his magic on the golf course? If Tiger isn't playing is it worth watching."</i></p>	<p><i>"There is no sporting achievement if he (Alberto Contador) doped, because in a nutshell the man would be a cheat".</i></p> <p><i>"Too many people have invested too much in him (Alberto Contador), financially and emotionally, to accept that their demigod was a cheating...and no better than the rest."</i></p> <p><i>"If he (Alberto Contador) were ever proved to have doped the record would then seem to suggest he was still the best in a field comprised mainly of dopers."</i></p> <p><i>"O'Connor to me is the most skilful of all the Wallabies backline,... but regretfully, this latest incidence has dampened my enthusiasm of this young man in a team sport"</i></p> <p><i>"He's (James O'Connor) a good player, but not good enough to support this sort of attitude"</i></p> <p><i>"As a woman, I have heard a lot of men that say just because he (Tiger Woods) is a great golfer, all his forgiven. This is absurd"</i></p> <p><i>"He's (Tiger Woods) worth a billion dollars owing in large part to the public's intense interest in him as a human being, not just a golfer – it's why he's been so marketable and able to milk his image for almost every single penny that it was worth. He doesn't get to have it both ways, he doesn't get to only take in the benefits and decline any potentially bad that comes with doing that."</i></p>

Positive comments relating to the SCT and the Sport Related Brand Attributes	Negative comments relating to the SCT and the Sport Related Brand Attributes
<p><i>“Tall poppy syndrome...I can't believe the knockers on here, keen to bag him (James O'Connor) now and so quick to forget the great games of rugby he contributed to in a big way playing for the wallabies”</i></p>	

Table 5-16 Comments pertaining to an SCT and the sport related brand attributes

(Source: developed for this study)

Positive comments relating to the SCT and the Personal Brand Attributes	Negative comments relating to the SCT and the Personal Brand Attributes
<p><i>“Teach your kids what you perceive as right and stop blaming the rest of society for your shortcomings and that of your ill-disciplined child” (Andrew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“The role model issue is a non-issue, he is a role model for SPORTS, his desire to succeed, his focus on the game, his mental strength. He is NOT a role model for life, parents are” (Andrew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“Well the media witch hunt has probably worked this time... For the people saying they should be role models, get a life, there football players, it's the job of parents to be role models, not celebrities, sportspeople or anyone else!!!” (Matthew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>“Athletes are not role models. By definition, the only thing that makes star athletes different from the rest of us is their physical prowess. That's the ONLY thing that sets them apart, and we need to squash the idea that they also have to be – role models into the bargain” (Michael Phelps).</i></p> <p><i>“Tiger became one of the biggest and BEST sport celebrities because he was driven, motivated and determined to be one of the best golfer. That is what we want our children to know and to have that same ambition like Tiger”.</i></p> <p><i>“Everyone boycott any company who is giving Tiger a hard time. Did he murder someone? Did he not pay his taxes? Did he not pay for his children? He is a great man; let him alone!”</i></p>	<p><i>“These guys are not being paid megabucks to just play football; in the eyes of kids they are heroes and they need to ensure they set good examples of behaviour for kids” (Matthew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>“Obviously some of you have missed a few points here. Matthew Johns is the Leagues front man for family recruitment. Even if she had consensual sex with him, why would the code want someone with such low morality as him being their face?”</i></p> <p><i>“These guys are supposedly sporting heroes to our kids. They are in the public eye constantly and they know it. So what do I say to my kids if they want a picture of one of these guys up on their wall? What sort of example and what sort of hero are they? Someone who can get away with anything if he apologises?” (Matthew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>“Someone should have told him that whether he likes it or not, he is a role model and in the public eye” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“And as role models, we trust our Olympic athletes to do all their drugging and their boozing and their weird sex stuff and whatever behind closed doors. That's a trust Phelps broke”</i></p> <p><i>“The problem is Tiger lived a lie. You can't live a lie with such a public profile”</i></p> <p><i>“Bottom line: I can't look at him without thinking "liar”</i></p> <p><i>“In my view, rugby is the ultimate team game and when one reaches the pinnacle of their careers in this sport, they become role models. This team announcement was a big deal, it obviously was not for O'Connor”</i></p>

Table 5-17 Comments pertaining to an SCT and personal brand attributes

(Source: developed for this study)

Sport celebrity brand benefits

Data related to this theme consisted of consumer’s comments pertaining to perceptions of the sport celebrity brand benefits following a transgression. Based on the literature, brand benefits represent the personal value consumers attach to the attributes of the brand or what the consumer thinks the brand can do for them (Keller 1993). When applied to the sport celebrity brand benefits, these dimensions are further defined as symbolic and experiential brand benefits (refer to Section 2.4).

The 236 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrities brand benefits were analysed, and of these, 57 comments referred to the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits and 179 comments related to the sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits. Table 5.18 explains the comments pertaining to transgressions and the sport celebrity’s brand benefits.

Symbolic brand benefits (comments)			Experiential brand benefits (comments)				Total
Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total	
6	51	57	66	62	51	179	236

Table 5-18 Transgressions and the sport celebrity’s brand benefits

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 5.18 also highlights whether the comments made were positive or negative or neutral in relation to the sport celebrity’s brand benefits. In particular 6 comments that related to the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits were positive (e.g. “*I admire the celebrity*”) and 51 comments were negative (e.g. “*my admiration for XYZ ended*”). In relation to this dimension, it would appear that transgressions involving sport celebrities resulted in more consumers expressing negative comments about that sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits, than positive comments.

However, when the comments were analysed in relation to a sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits following an SCT, 66 comments indicated a positive emotion (e.g. “*the scandal was entertaining*”), 62 indicated as many negative emotions (e.g. “*the scandal was disgusting*”), and 51 comments indicated a neutral emotion (e.g. “*who cares?*”). The next section, investigates the comments referring to the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits, more closely.

Sport celebrity symbolic brand benefits

Data related to this theme consisted of comments referring to the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits. As explained in Chapter 2, a brand with a symbolic brand benefits is “designed to associate the individual with a desired group, role and on self-image (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986, p. 136). Furthermore, symbolic brand benefits may include constructs such as identification and internalisation (Maddux & Rogers 1980).

The 57 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits were analysed, and of these, 7 comments could be related to identification with that sport celebrity (e.g. *admiration of celebrity*) and 50 comments could be related to a level of internalisation with the sport celebrity (e.g. *conform to the values of that celebrity*). Refer to Table 5.19 for an illustration of the comments referring to transgressions and the sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits.

Table 5-19: Transgressions and the symbolic brand benefits

Symbolic brand benefits	Negative comments	Positive comments	Total
Identification	5	2	7
Internalisation	46	4	50
TOTAL	51	6	57

Table 5-19 Transgressions and the symbolic brand benefits

Table 5.19 also highlights whether the comments made were positive or negative in relation to the consumer’s level of identification and internalisation with a particular sport celebrity following a transgression. Therefore, the data suggests that transgressions involving sport celebrities were more likely to result in consumers expressing negative comments about that sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits than positive comments. This result was consistent regardless of whether the comments were considered in relation to the identification or internalisation dimensions of this construct. Table 5.20 provides a summary of the comments pertaining to the impact of a transgression on consumer’s perceptions of that sport celebrity’s symbolic brand benefits.

Positive comments relating to the SCT and Symbolic Brand Benefits	Negative comments relating to the SCT and Symbolic brand benefits
<p><i>“Tiger is one of few great reputable athletes... admire he can keep as private as he has...let him be” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>“I admire them tremendously as athletes...” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>Internalisation – conformity to values</i></p> <p><i>“While the morality of such behaviour is still questionable, this is trial by media, it is that simple” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“NZ police at that time decreed that no laws were broken, so it comes down to morals, if you sacked everyone who has committed an immoral act, hallo, we would have no politicians, police or captains of industry” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“What Matty did was most definitely morally wrong but he committed no crime” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“This guy did wrong morally and he has been outed. He has been punished through the media” (Matthew Johns).</i></p>	<p><i>“We need to start looking at the bigger picture and stop idolising men that play sport they are not heroes” (Matthew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve watched Tiger since he came on the golf scene and greatly admired his skill with a golf club. BUT that was where my admiration ended”. He was such a role model in so many ways for so many people, but now we are ashamed of him” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>“Johns’ behaviour was immoral, unethical and anti-social... But because it wasn’t deemed to have been illegal doesn’t mean it isn’t wrong. Society has other standards by which we judge behaviour. Johns has failed those standards miserably” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“I hope he continues to crash and burn on the links until he loses all his sponsorships, spokesman ships and fans. Anyone with such low morals deserves no less” (Tiger Woods).</i></p> <p><i>“...a low set of values is not an example for any sport violent women...” (Serena Williams)</i></p>

Positive comments relating to the SCT and Symbolic Brand Benefits	Negative comments relating to the SCT and Symbolic brand benefits
<p>“What crime? From what I can tell he wasn’t charged with anything. Yes I’m sure we’d all agree that morally this wasn’t the smartest of choices for any of the people involved...” (Matthew Johns).</p> <p>“Matty did nothing wrong, group sex is not immoral, and not illegal”</p>	<p>“the fact still remains we hold our public figures to a higher standard...So the price Matt pays is losing that public position” (Matthew Johns)</p> <p>“Absolutely disgraceful, weak decision by the IRB. It just shows exactly where there moral lie. On this occasion, the IRB willingly didn’t live up to their own standards” (Quade Cooper)</p>

Table 5-20 Comments pertaining to an SCT and symbolic brand benefits

(Source: developed for this study)

Celebrity experiential brand benefits

Data related to experiential brand benefits, as explained in Chapter 2, refers to what it feels like to use a product or service and includes factors such as positive emotions, negative emotions, entertainment and excitement (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008; Gladden & Funk 2002; Ross 2006; Ross, Russell & Bang 2008). When applied to this study, comments referring to the sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits were grouped according to positive, negative and neutral emotions.

The 179 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits were analysed, and of these, 66 comments referred to the positive emotions experienced (excitement, fun, entertainment), 62 related to the negative emotions experienced (disappointment, disgust, disgrace), and 51 comments related to neutral emotions experienced (no big deal, who cares?). Table 5.21 illustrates the comments relating to transgressions and the sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits.

Positive emotions (%)	Negative emotions (%)	Neutral emotions (%)	Total
66	62	51	179

Table 5-21 Transgression and the experiential brand benefits

(Source: developed for this study)

In relation to this dimension, it would appear that transgressions involving sport celebrities resulted in consumers expressing positive, negative and neutral emotions in roughly equal proportions when celebrity transgression occurred. Table 5.22 offers a summary of the comments pertaining to the impact of transgression on consumer’s’ perceptions of the sport celebrity’s experiential brand benefits. As Chapter 2 indicated, the experiential brand benefits contribute to an *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. It is therefore possible to suggest that an SCT causes consumers do reconsider the sport celebrity’s brand benefits from an *a priori* perspective.

Positive comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits	Negative comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits	Neutral comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits
<p><i>“Personally. I have nothing but immeasurable sympathy for celebs, living in a fishbowl with a white hot light on you, with people just waiting for you to mess up has to be gruelling” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>“loving whoever is cracking up when the 2 start up again his laugh is priceless” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p> <p><i>“I wonder what percentage of People watching the Game, didn't actually enjoy the... incident??? I certainly heard the crowd roar when it happened, and they loved it... Just let the Game go on and let them all play next week” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p> <p><i>“Bring back the biff! That was awesome to watch everyone I spoken too loved it twitter was trending for 2 days bout it” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p> <p><i>“IT WAS GREAT NO PUNCHES LANDED AND IT WAS FUN OLD STYLE FOOTY SHAKE HANDS AND GET ON WITH IT” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p> <p><i>“Nothing like a bit of biff at the footy” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p>	<p><i>“What crime? From what I can tell he wasn’t charged with anything. Yes I’m sure we’d all agree that morally this wasn’t the smartest of choices for any of the people involved...” (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>“Johns has done allot of damage to the NRL, he is the most respected player in the NRL (was). What he has done is a disgrace and quite frankly he deserves to be banished from the code”.</i></p> <p><i>“I am disgusted and sickened by this story and cannot believe that so many meatheads are condoning this behaviour” (Matthew Johns)</i></p> <p><i>“You’re disgusting Shame on YOU”. Disgrace is illustrated as follows; “It’s a disgrace I won’t be watching the footy show while he (Matthew Johns) is on”.</i></p> <p><i>“I am very saddened by what has transpired in your life and truly has hurt your beautiful wife and adorable children” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>“All this crap. It's annoying” (Tiger Woods)</i></p> <p><i>“was the most disgraceful incident in top level football, and close to anything I saw playing the game for 20 years” (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</i></p>	<p><i>“As personally disgusting as I may find it, it isn't illegal, so why should we care?” (Brett Favre)</i></p> <p><i>“Seriously...who cares?”</i></p> <p><i>“Who cares?” and “Please. Enough already”.</i></p> <p><i>“So what? Michael Phelps burned one, or two, who cares?”</i></p> <p><i>“Honestly who cares that Michael smokes pot”</i></p> <p><i>“I could care less about Michael Phelps smoking pot. It's no big deal”.</i></p> <p><i>“I personally don't see how Tiger's personal life is anyone's business” and “Who cares? You! You googled it! Leave him alone?”</i></p> <p><i>“Who really cares? Don't people have a life of their own to think about?”</i></p> <p><i>“No big deal, I do it all the time. Who'll be kicking the ball through the poles? Maybe Giteau will get a call up” (James O’Connor)</i></p>

Positive comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits	Negative comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits	Neutral comments relating to the SCT and Experiential Brand Benefits
<p><i>"I have not spoken to one person yet who didn't enjoy the biff. Too many do holders crying foul over a punch up in a testosterone duellist game. You stamp that out and the game loses its edge for me"</i> (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</p> <p><i>"Bringing back the Biff, love it"</i> (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</p> <p><i>"As a female rugby league and Parramatta fan, I despise Melbourne and love the rivalry we have with Manly. But I think that it was awesome seeing the game on Friday night. People are still talking about it - good publicity for the NRL"</i> (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</p> <p><i>"Makes people talk and sell newspapers..."</i> (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)</p>	<p><i>"I am disappointed in my Storm boys for giving that smarmy CEO another excuse to hate Melbourne"</i></p> <p><i>"This is a disappointment!!! the O'Connor Brand is tarnished and as much as he would be of benefit in the game this Saturday his lack of respect for the team, the jersey and the country cannot go unpunished"</i> (James O'Connor)</p> <p><i>"They should have banned the Fox "cheap shot, this guy is a disgrace to the country he was born in and the country he now calls his home"</i> (Quade Cooper)</p> <p><i>"Absolutely disgusting!"</i></p>	

Table 5-22 Comments pertaining to an SCT and experiential benefits

(Source: developed for this study)

Conclusion: Proposition 1

The findings from the social media data collection indicated that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand image, from an *a priori* position, when transgressions occurred. Table 5.14 provides a summary of comments pertaining to the impact of an SCT on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits. When analysing the comments further it was evident that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity's brand attributes in terms of both their sport-related and personal brand attributes.

A sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes such as the 'expertise' and 'performance' of the sport celebrity seemed to be largely unaffected by the sport celebrity transgression. However, personal brand attributes received more negative comments compared to the sport related brand attributes, following an SCT. It is clear from these findings that consumers expected more personal character from the sport celebrity, as if they assessed a sport celebrity at a higher standard to other people. It seems that consumers expect their sport celebrities to be 'role models' and 'trustworthy'.

In addition, the comments showed that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity's brand benefits in terms of the symbolic and experiential brand benefits, following an SCT. The findings further indicated that consumers considered the symbolic brand benefits of the Matthew Johns' alleged group rape, more than any other transgression. Matthew Johns' group rape received the highest number of negative comments from consumers referring to the sport celebrity's symbolic brand benefits, such as 'identification' and 'internalisation'. When consumers commented on symbolic brand benefits, it was mainly negative.

The social media data collection indicated that consumers considered the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity more than they considered the symbolic brand benefits, when the celebrity transgressed. Experiential brand benefits, expressed as emotions, were significantly more evident compared to symbolic brand benefits. Negative emotional responses were evident when the sport celebrity's transgression was related to sexual misbehaviour; including: Tiger Woods' adultery and Matthew Johns' alleged group rape. Positive emotion was evident in only the on-field brawl, where a high number of positive emotions were noted.

The findings indicated that consumers considered experiential brand benefits in terms of 'positive emotions', 'negative emotions' and 'neutral emotions' when an SCT occurred. Consumers further considered these three emotions in roughly equal numbers, which means that there are more factors that may impact on the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT than considered here. Factors such as the characteristics of a sport celebrity transgression may extend to impact on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. The findings of proposition 1 showed that when a sport celebrity transgression occurred, consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state. The findings showed that when a sport celebrity transgressed, overall, the sport celebrity brand attributes received more negative comments than positive comments.

5.5.2 Proposition 2: The characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression (SCT) will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image, following that transgression.

Data related to proposition 2 were also obtained from comments made in online discussion boards regarding the characteristics of a sport celebrity transgression. As explained in Chapter 2, certain characteristics of sport celebrity transgression are identified in previous research to impact consumer perceptions of SCTs. In particular, whether the transgression was part of the off-field life of the sport celebrity, or part of the sport celebrity's on-field performance (Hughes & Shank 2005; Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008). This categorisation of transgressions will now be used to analyse the data.

a) Off-field and on-field characteristics of transgression

An off-field sport celebrity transgression is defined for the purpose of this study, as a sport celebrity's misbehaviour that occurs in the sport celebrity's private life. The off-field transgressions in this study referred to the following sport celebrities: Andrew Johns, Brett Favre, Matthew Johns, Michael Phelps, Tiger Woods, Nick D'Arcy and Ben Cousins. The off-field transgressions further included actions such as: drug use, sexting, alleged group rape, marijuana use, assault and adultery. These off-field sport celebrity transgressions further related to the following sports: National Rugby League, National Football League, Swimming, Golf and Australian Football League.

An on-field sport celebrity transgression is defined for the purpose of this study, as a sport celebrity's misbehaviour that occurred either during their performance in their particular sport, or where their behaviour directly affected that sport or team. The on-field transgressions, in this study, referred to the following sport celebrities: Adam Blair, Glenn Stewart, Alberto Contador, James O'Connor, Quade Cooper, Serena Williams and Floyd Landis. The transgressions analysed include: an on-field brawl, doping, disrespect towards the team, on-field foul play and an on-court outburst. The on-field transgressions further consisted of the following sports: National Rugby League, Cycling, Australian Rugby Union and Tennis.

In order to determine the impact of the off-field and on-field nature of the sport celebrity transgression on the sport celebrity's brand image, the findings are presented according to the pre-identified dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image as follows: the sport celebrity's brand attributes and sport celebrity's brand benefits (refer to Section 2.4). The findings are now presented according to the sport celebrity brand attributes and brand benefits in relation to off-field and on-field sport celebrity transgressions. Table 5.23 illustrates the grouping of the sport celebrity transgression in off-field and on-field transgressions.

Sport celebrity	Off-field transgression	Sport celebrity	On-field transgression
Andrew Johns	Drug use	Adam & Glenn	On-field brawl
Ben Cousins	Drug use	Alberto Contador	Doping
Brett Favre	Sexting	Floyd Landis	Doping
Matthew Johns	Alleged group rape	Hansie Cronje	Match-fixing
Michael Phelps	Marijuana use	James O'Connor	Disrespect towards team
Nick D'Arcy	Assault	John Hopoate	On-field foul play
Tiger Woods	Adultery	Mike Tyson	On-field foul play
		Quade Cooper	On-field foul play
		Serena Williams	On-court outburst

Table 5-23 Grouping of SCT scenarios into off-field and on-field characteristics

(Source: developed for this study)

Sport celebrity's brand attributes

The 276 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity's brand attributes were analysed, and of these, 210 comments referred to an off-field sport celebrity transgression, and 66 comments related to an on-field sport celebrity transgression. Table 5.24 illustrates the distribution of comments pertaining to the sport celebrity brand attributes and off-field or on-field characteristics of transgression. The data suggested that the characteristics of transgression resulted in consumers contributing more negative comments relating to the sport celebrity brand attributes, than positive comments.

Transgression	Positive	Negative	Total
Off-field	82	128	210
On-field	18	48	66
TOTAL			276

Table 5-24 Comments relating to brand attributes and the characteristics of SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

This data suggest that a sport celebrity involved in an off-field transgression will be more likely to result in consumers attributing negative comments about the sport celebrity's brand attributes, than they will when the transgression is an on-field one.

Sport celebrity's brand attributes and an off-field transgression

The 210 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity's brand attributes and an off-field sport celebrity transgression were analysed, and of these; 73 comments referred to Tiger Woods' adultery, 58 comments related to Matthew Johns' alleged rape, 34 comments linked to Michael Phelps marijuana use, 22 comments referred to Andrew Johns' drug use, 15 comments related to Brett Favre's sexting, and 8 comments referred to Ben Cousins' drug use. Table 5.25 illustrates the number of comments that referred to the sport celebrity's brand attributes and off-field sport celebrity transgressions

Celebrity	Transgression	Positive	Negative	Total
Tiger Woods	Adultery	29	44	73
Matthew Johns	Alleged group rape	7	51	58
Michael Phelps	Marijuana use	21	13	34
Andrew Johns	Drug use	12	10	22
Brett Favre	Sexting	8	7	15
Ben Cousins	Drug use	5	3	8
TOTAL		82	128	210

Table 5-25 Comments relating to brand attributes and off-field SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

The data in Table 5.25 suggests that the off-field sport celebrity transgression that related to adultery and alleged group rape, resulted in more consumers expressing concern about the sport celebrity’s brand attributes than they did for the drug use transgressions and sexting.

The consumer’s’ comments pertaining to the sport celebrity transgression show two distinct patterns: 1) negative comments referring to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes and 2) positive comments relating to the sport celebrity brand attributes. The findings are now presented according to these patterns.

Negative comments referring to the SCT and sport celebrity’s brand attributes

The two sport celebrity transgressions that were singled out to receive the most negative comments regarding the sport celebrity’s brand attributes were Tiger Woods’ adultery and Matthew Johns’ alleged group rape. The 73 comments that specifically referred to Tiger Woods’ adultery were analysed, and of these 29 were positive, and 44 were negative. The 58 comments that specifically related to Matthew Johns’ alleged rape were analysed, and of these 7 were positive, and 51 were negative. Both these transgressions involved sexual misbehaviour, and did involve a third party.

Positive comments referring to the SCT and sport celebrity’s brand attributes

The two sport celebrity transgressions that received the most positive comments referring to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes were Michael Phelps, Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins’ drug use and Brett Favre’s sexting. The 34 comments that specifically referred to Michael Phelps marijuana use were analysed, and of these 21 were positive, and 13 were negative. The 15 comments that specifically referred to Brett Favre’s sexting were analysed, and of these 8 were positive, and 7 were negative. In relation to this dimension, it would appear that consumer’s’ perceive a sport celebrity’s brand attributes, involved in sexual misbehaviour as more negative than they would a sport celebrity who is using recreational drugs and sexting.

Sport celebrity’s brand attributes and an on-field SCT

The 66 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes and on-field sport celebrity transgressions were analysed, and of these; 25 comments related to Floyd Landis doping, 16 comments referred to Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart’s brawl, 14 comments related to James O’Connor’s disrespect towards team announcement, 8 comments

linked to Quade Cooper’s on-field misbehaviour and 3 comments referred to Serena Williams on-court outburst. Table 5.26 illustrates the number of comments that referred to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes and on-field sport celebrity transgressions.

This data suggested that the on-field sport celebrity transgression that related to doping, the on-field brawl and disrespect towards the team, resulted in more consumers expressing concern about the sport celebrity’s brand attributes, than they did for any other on-field misbehaviour.

Celebrity	Transgression	Positive	Negative	Total
Floyd Landis	Doping	1	24	25
Adam & Glenn	On-field brawl	3	13	16
James O’Connor	Disrespect towards team announcement	5	9	14
Quade Cooper	On-field misbehaviour	7	1	8
Serena Williams	On-field outburst	2	1	3
TOTAL		18	48	66

Table 5-26 Comments relating to brand attributes and on-field SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

Consumer comments pertaining to the sport celebrity transgression, according to Table 5.26 further show two distinct patterns: 1) negative comments referring to the sport celebrity’s brand attributes and 2) positive comments relating to the sport celebrity brand attributes.

Negative comments referring to the SCT and sport celebrity’s brand attributes

The three sport celebrity transgressions that were singled out to receive the most negative comments regarding the sport celebrity’s brand attributes were Floyd Landis’ doping, Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart’s on-field brawl and James O’Connor’s disrespect towards the team.

Floyd Landis’ use of enhancement drugs received the highest number of negative comments, 24 negative comments, compare to 1 positive comment. It seems that doping elicits strong negative emotions against the sport celebrity brand attributes.

Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart’s on-field brawl received a total of 25 comments, and 13 comments were negative. The on-field brawl received more negative comments than any of the other on-field SCTs. The reason for this high number in negative comments can be attributed to the fact that consumers did not expect these behaviours from the sport celebrity brand image.

James O’Connor’s disrespect towards the team received 14 comments, and of those comments 9 were negative, and 5 were positive comments. The reason for this high number of negative comments may be contributed to the fact that James O’Connor had a clean image before the transgression. He was one of the most popular faces in the marketing communication strategy of the Australian Rugby Union.

Positive comments relating to the SCT and sport celebrity's brand attributes

The Quade Cooper and Serena Williams' on-field misbehaviour received more positive comments compared to negative comments. Both these transgressions included an individual sport celebrity who spontaneously misbehaved during their performance on the field of play.

SCT and sport celebrity's brand benefits

The comments referring to the sport celebrity brand benefits and the off-field or on-field characteristics of transgression are presented in Table 5.27. It is evident that consumer's' comments on the sport celebrity brand benefits were polarized. It seems that an on-field transgression was likely to result in more positive comments in relation to the sport celebrity brand benefits, than negative or neutral comments. An off-field transgression caused consumers to comment more negatively or neutrally. These comments were investigated, and of the total 230 comments, 140 comments referred to off-field sport celebrity transgressions, and 90 comments related to on-field sport celebrity transgressions.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Off-field	15	81	44	140
On-field	54	21	15	90
TOTAL				230

Table 5-27 Comments relating to brand benefits and characteristics of SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

The data suggested that a sport celebrity involved in an off-field transgression will be more likely to result in consumers attributing comments about the sport celebrity's brand benefits, than they would when the transgression is an on-field one. Table 5.27 also highlights whether the comments made were positive, negative or neutral in relation to the sport celebrity's brand benefits. In particular, the 140 comments that related to an off-field sport celebrity transgression; were 15 comments were positive, and 81 comments were negative, and 44 comments were neutral. The 90 comments that referred to an on-field sport celebrity transgression; 55 comments were positive, 28 comments were negative, and 7 comments were neutral. It would appear that an off-field sport celebrity transgression resulted in more consumers expressing negative or neutral comments about their sport celebrity's brand benefits, than they would about an on-field sport celebrity transgression. On-field sport celebrity transgressions resulted in more consumers expressing positive comments about that sport celebrity's brand benefits.

Sport celebrity's brand benefits and an off-field SCT

The 140 comments that specifically referred to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and an off-field transgression were analysed, and of these; 60 comments referred to Tiger Woods' adultery, 54 comments related to Matthew Johns' alleged rape, 9 comments linked to Michael Phelps' marijuana use, 5 comments on Andrew Johns' drug use, 9 comments on Brett Favre's sexting, and 3 comments on Ben Cousins' drug use. Table 5.28 illustrates the number of comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and off-field transgressions. This data suggested some off-field sport celebrity transgressions (adultery and alleged group rape) resulted in more consumers expressing concern about the sport celebrity's brand benefits, more than any other off-field SCT (marijuana, drug transgressions and sexting).

Celebrity	Transgression	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Tiger Woods	Adultery	8	24	28	60
Matthew Johns	Alleged group rape	3	51	0	54
Michael Phelps	Marijuana use	2	1	6	9
Andrew Johns	Drug use	0	3	2	5
Brett Favre	Sexting	1	1	7	9
Ben Cousins	Drug use	1	1	1	3
TOTAL		15	81	44	140

Table 5-28 Comments relating to brand benefits and off-field SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

Table 5.28 shows that consumer comments pertaining to the sport celebrity off-field transgression showed two distinct patterns: 1) negative comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and 2) neutral comments relating to the sport celebrity brand benefits.

Negative comments referring to an SCT and the sport celebrity's brand benefits

The only off-field transgression that received a high number of negative comments referring to the sport celebrity brand benefits is the Matthew Johns' alleged group rape. These negative comments included consumer's' negative emotions such as; disgust and disappointment. Matthew Johns' transgression involved an alleged group rape that consisted of violence and aggression against women.

Neutral comments relating to an SCT and the sport celebrity's brand benefits

The three off-field transgressions that received a high number of neutral emotional comments were the Tiger Woods' adultery, Michael Phelps' marijuana use and Brett Favre's sexting. Two of these transgressions were legal (Tiger Woods and Brett Favre), and consumer's' comments indicated that marijuana use should be legalised as well. It is evident that, Matthew Johns' alleged group rape resulted in more consumers expressing negative comments about the sport celebrity brand benefits, than they expressed positive and/or neutral comments.

Sport celebrity's brand benefits and an on-field SCT

Data that specifically referred to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and on-field sport celebrity transgressions consisted of 90 comments. These comments were analysed, and of these; 56 comments referred to Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl, 9 linked to Floyd Landis' doping, 9 comments linked to Quade Cooper's on-field misbehaviour, 7 comments related to James O'Connor's disrespect towards the team announcement, 6 comments referred to Serena Williams' on-court outburst, and 3 comments related to Alberto Contador's doping. Table 5.29 illustrates the number of comments that referred to the sport celebrity's brand attributes and an on-field sport celebrity transgression. This data suggested that the sport celebrity transgression that related to an on-field brawl, received the highest number of consumer's' commenting on the sport celebrity brand benefits, than any other on-field SCT.

Celebrity	Transgression	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Adam & Glenn	On-field brawl	49	7	0	56
Floyd Landis	Doping	2	6	1	9
Quade Cooper	On-field misbehaviours	0	1	8	9
James O'Connor	Disrespect towards team announcement	0	1	6	7
Serena Williams	On-field outburst	2	4	0	6
Alberto Contador	Doping	1	2	0	3
TOTAL					90

Table 5-29 Comments relating to brand benefits and on-field SCTs

(Source: developed for this study)

As illustrated in Table 5.29, consumer's' comments pertaining to the sport celebrity on-field transgression show three distinct patterns: 1) positive comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits, 2) negative comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and 3) neutral comments in relation to the sport celebrity brand benefits.

Positive comments referring to an SCT and the sport celebrity's brand benefits

The only sport celebrity transgression that caused consumers to experience positive emotions (sport celebrity brand benefits) is the on-field brawl between Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart, 88 percent of consumer's' comments were positive. The on-field brawl resulted in positive comments such as; excitement, entertainment and positive-word-of-mouth communication.

Negative comments relating to an SCT and the sport celebrity's brand benefits

The three on-field transgressions that caused more negative comments than positive or neutral comments were the Floyd Landis' doping, Quade Cooper's on-field foul play, and Serena Williams on-court outburst.

Neutral comments in relation to an SCT and the sport celebrity's brand benefits.

James O'Connor's disrespect towards the team received more neutral emotions than positive and/or negative comments.

In relation to this dimension, it would seem that Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl resulted in more consumers expressing positive comments about the sport celebrity brand benefits. Doping and on-field misbehaviour resulted in more consumers voicing negative comments about their sport celebrity brand benefits, more than they were for any other on-field SCT.

Conclusion: Proposition 2

The findings indicated the impact of the various characteristics of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, varied. There were more negative comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand attributes. Also, it seems that on-field SCTs in relation with the brand benefits of the sport celebrity resulted in more positive comments, while off-field SCTs resulted in more negative comments. The SCTs were further analysed according to the findings.

Recreational drug use and sexting resulted in more positive comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand attributes, while receiving more neutral comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Consumers seemed not to be bothered by the sport celebrity's brand attributes and benefits when the sport celebrity indulges in recreational drug use and sexting. It is further clear that consumers expected this kind of behaviour from some sport celebrities and the transgression seemed consistent with the sport celebrity brand image. The recreational drug use and sexting scenarios affected negatively on the sport celebrity's brand attributes, but did not seem to impact on the sport celebrity's brand benefits.

Another two sport celebrity transgressions that do not seem to fit with the consumer's' expectations of the sport were the on-court outburst and on-field foul play. The on-field foul play (Quade Cooper) and the on-court outburst (Serena Williams) resulted in more positive comments regarding their sport celebrity's brand attributes. As these transgressions occurred during the heat of the game it was possible that consumers accepted these behaviours more easily. Consumers further seem to expect these transgressions from these two celebrities, therefore the more positive comments regarding their brand attributes.

However, the on-field foul play (Quade Cooper) and the on-court outburst (Serena Williams) resulted in more negative and neutral comments regarding their sport celebrity's brand benefits. The on-field foul play (Quade Cooper) received more neutral comments relating to his brand benefits, while the on-court outburst (Serena Williams) got more negative comments relating to her brand benefits. The difference in the outcome on their brand benefits could be explained on the basis of consumer expectations of the sport brand image. Cooper was one player of the Australian Rugby Union that is known for his passionate play and his controversial comments. Consumers seem further to expect on-field foul play from this sport brand image, and therefore the more neutral comments regarding Cooper's brand benefits. The consumers within Tennis seem to set higher standards towards their sport brand image. It is clear that Williams' transgression was not consistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport brand image, and this resulted in more negative comments toward the sport celebrity brand benefits. It is thus possible that the brand image of the associated sponsors may impact on the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT.

The on-field brawl (Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart) resulted in more negative comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand attributes, but more positive comments towards the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Consumers indicated that they enjoyed the on-field brawl and they believe it creates further positive word-of-mouth communication. Interestingly, this was the only sport celebrity transgression that resulted in such a high number of positive comments relating to the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand benefits. It seems that consumer's' expectations of the sport brand celebrity brand benefits were consistent with the on-field brawl, but not consistent with the sport celebrity brand attributes.

The disrespect towards the team resulted in more negative comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand attributes, but more positive comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand benefits. This transgression could be perceived as negative towards the sport celebrity because of consumer expectations. Consumers perceived James O'Connor as having a positive image. O'Connor was the face of Wallaby rugby, used as ambassador in most of their advertisements. The sport furthermore underpinned this positive brand image, and it was possible that O'Connor's transgression was not consistent with the consumer's expectations of the sport celebrity brand attributes.

When these transgressions were analysed further it was evident that sexual misbehaviour resulted in the highest number of negative comments referring to sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits. It was clear that in this study, consumers regarded sexual misbehaviour as the most serious type of sport celebrity transgression. Sexual misbehaviour seems to be inconsistent with the consumer's expectations of the sport celebrity brand image. The findings furthermore indicated that doping resulted in more negative comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand attributes and benefits. It is evident that consumers disregarded doping in sport.

On the basis of these findings, it is apparent that sport celebrity transgressions affected both the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits. It is thus possible to suggest that a sport celebrity transgression caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state. The findings were further analysed, and it was apparent that the consumer's reconsideration of the sport celebrity brand image, when a transgression occurs, depends on whether the sport celebrity transgression was consistent with the consumer's expectations of the sport celebrity brand image, therefore, each sport celebrity transgression resulted in different outcomes. It is further possible to suggest that different characteristics of a sport celebrity transgression affected on consumer's perceptions of the effects of SCTs. This result can be seen in Table 5.30, where the consumer's comments about the sport celebrity brand attributes, benefits and the different characteristics of a transgression were grouped as follows: 1) recreational drug use and sexting, 2) spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game, 3) on-field brawl, 4) disrespect towards the team, and 5) doping and sexual misbehaviour.

Sport celebrity	Brand attributes			Brand benefits			
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Recreational drug use and sexting							
Michael Phelps	21	13	34	2	1	6	9
Andrew Johns	12	10	22	0	3	2	5
Ben Cousins	5	3	8	1	1	1	3
Brett Favre	8	7	15	1	1	7	9
Spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game							
Quade Cooper	7	1	8	0	1	8	9
Serena Williams	2	1	3	2	4	0	6
On-field brawl							
Adam B. & Glenn S.	3	13	16	49	7	0	56

Sport celebrity	Brand attributes			Brand benefits			
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Disrespect towards the sport celebrity's team							
James O'Connor	5	9	14	0	1	6	7
Doping and sexual misbehaviour							
Tiger Woods	29	44	73	8	24	28	60
Matthew Johns	7	51	58	3	51	0	54
Floyd Landis	1	24	25	3	8	1	12

Table 5-30 Comments relating to brand attributes, benefits and SCT scenarios

1) Recreational drug use and sexting

The findings indicated that it is evident that in the off-field recreational drug use scenarios (Michael Phelps, Andrew Johns, and Ben Cousins) and sexting (Brett Favre) comments were more positive when consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand attributes. However, the impact on these four scenarios sport celebrity's brand benefits was not that significant.

Table 5.31 shows that, when considering only the recreational drug scenarios, the comments collected showed that consumers offered more positive comments relating to the sport celebrity brand attributes (59%), and more neutral comments referring to the sport celebrity brand benefits (53%), and the number of comments referring to the brand benefits were low. The Michael Phelps marijuana use and Brett Favre's sexting received more neutral comments referring to their brand benefits (e.g. "...who cares...").

Sport celebrity	Brand attributes			Brand benefits			
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Recreational drug use and sexting							
Michael Phelps	21	13	34	2	1	6	9
Andrew Johns	12	10	22	0	3	2	5
Ben Cousins	5	3	8	1	1	1	3
TOTAL	38	26	64	3	5	9	17

Table 5-31 Comments relating to brand attributes, benefits and recreational drug use

(Source: developed for this study)

The table further shows, Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins drug use transgressions received slightly more negative comments than neutral comments regarding their brand benefits. Tiger Woods' adultery also received more neutral comments, but his adultery also received a high number of negative comments relating to his brand benefits. Furthermore, because the transgression also received a high number of negative comments, his transgression was grouped together with that of Matthew Johns into the sexual misbehaviour group. It is therefore possible to suggest that recreational drug use and sexting have a marginal negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image.

2) Spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game

The trend towards these transgressions was almost similar to that of recreational drug use, with more positive comments referring to the sport celebrity brand attributes, and more neutral comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Two on-field transgressions that happened spontaneously during the course of the game were that of Quade Cooper, Serena Williams, Mike Tyson and John Hopoate. These on-field SCTs resulted in consumers commenting more positively in relation to their brand attributes. This might have been because the transgression occurred spontaneously on-field during the course of the game.

When a spontaneous on-field transgression occurs, it seems that consumers reconsidered the sport celebrity brand attributes more positively than neutrally or negatively, as evident in both Quade Cooper's and Serena Williams' scenarios. However, the impact on their brand benefits varied. Spontaneous on-field transgressions caused consumers to offer more negative comments than positive comments regarding Serena Williams' brand benefits, compared to Quade Cooper's brand benefits, which received more neutral brand benefits. This may be attributed to the different types of sport the two celebrities belong to. It seems that consumers considered the brand benefits differently based on the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. It is as if the consumers expect spontaneous outbursts in rugby but not in tennis. The consumer thus expected this type of transgression to link with the sport image of rugby but not tennis. It is thus possible to suggest that the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs may impact on consumer's perceptions of the SCT effects.

3) On-field brawl

The on-field brawl was grouped individually because it was the only transgression that resulted in a high number of positive comments relating to the benefits consumer's experienced. However, the sport celebrity brand attributes received more negative comments than positive comments, when an on-field brawl occurred.

During an on-field brawl consumer's comments indicated that the sport celebrities involved in an on-field brawl cannot be a role model for children. However, when an on-field brawl occurred, consumer's comments expressed, overwhelmingly, more positive comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Consumer's comments indicated enjoyment, excitement and positive word-of-mouth communication. The findings indicated that consumer's expectations of the celebrities did not match with an on-field brawl, but that the on-field brawl did match with consumer's expectations of the sport brand image. Thus, the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs may impact on consumer's perceptions of the impact of the on-field brawl on the sport celebrity brand image.

4) Disrespect towards the sport celebrity's team

This is the only transgression that can be grouped into transgressions that are directly related to their team; that of James O'Connor's un-attendance or disrespect towards the team. The transgression caused consumers to contribute negative comments relating to the individual sport celebrity's brand attributes. However, James O'Connor's displayed of disrespect towards the team resulted in more neutral emotional responses, compared to positive and negative responses. The findings indicated that consumer's expectations of the celebrity did not match with the O'Connor's disrespect towards his sport team.

5) Doping and sexual misbehaviour.

The two transgressions that received the highest frequency of negative comments regarding the sport celebrity brand image were the sexual misbehaviour and doping scenarios. Matthew Johns' alleged group rape and Floyd Landis' doping, each received a high number of negative comments relating to their brand attributes. Matthew Johns' group rape received the highest percentage of negative comments pertaining to his brand benefits compared to all the other transgressions. The Tiger Woods' scenario also received a high number of negative comments relating to his brand benefits, but the neutral comments were equally high. Floyd Landis was the only on-field transgression that received a high number of negative comments that related to his brand benefits. Doping seems to result in consumers offering more negative comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that sexual misbehaviour and doping caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state, and consumers considered the sport celebrity's brand attributes and benefits more negatively when doping and sexual misbehaviour occurred. However, it is not clear what the outcome of these negative considerations may be. Questions such as; when consumers considered the sport celebrity brand image negatively, was there a negative flow-on effect to the brand image of the associated sponsors and to the sport? The next proposition considers this possibility.

5.5.3 Proposition 3: The consumer's' perceptions of the Type of Sport, will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression (SCT) and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.

Data related to proposition 3 were obtained from social media data collection, regarding how consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport related to the effects of SCTs. As indicated in Chapter 2, the image of a certain type of sport may create consumer expectations of sport celebrity transgressions (Connor & Mazanov 2010). When applied to this study, this proposition aims to further understand the impact of consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport on the relationship between an SCT and the sport celebrity brand image.

A total of 118 online comments were investigated in order to address proposition 3. From these 118 comments, 85 comments referred directly to the consumer's' perceptions of the National Rugby League, and 17 related to Cycling. Golf received 11 positive comments relating to consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport and an SCT's impact on the sport celebrity brand image. The National Football League, Swimming, Australian Rugby Union and Tennis received less than 2 positive comments. For proposition 3, data relating to the type of sport and the sport celebrity transgression, are now presented in Table 5.32.

Type of sport	Positive	Negative	Total
National Rugby League	12	73	85
Cycling	0	17	17
Golf	11	0	11
National Football League	2	0	2
Swimming	1	0	1
Australian Rugby Union	1	0	1
Tennis	1	0	1
TOTAL			118

Table 5-32 Transgressions and the type of sport

(Source: developed for this study)

It is evident from the table above that more consumers expressed a more negative perception to the National Rugby League and Cycling in relation to sport celebrity transgressions. The differences on the impact of consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport on the impact of a transgression on the sport celebrity brand image seem to be based on the characteristic of a transgression. The 73 negative comments relating to the impact of the National Rugby League on the sport celebrity brand image, was all attributed to the Matthew Johns' alleged group rape. The 12 positive comments relating to the impact of the National Rugby League on the sport celebrity brand image, was related to the Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl. Doping received only negative comments regarding the sport celebrity brand image. Next, this phenomenon is investigated further, by investigating consumer's' perceptions on each type of sport.

a) National Rugby League (NRL)

The sport that consisted of the highest number of SCT scenarios in this study was the National Rugby League of Australia. Four sport celebrity transgressions occurred in the National Rugby League: Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart, Andrew Johns, Matthew Johns, and John Hopoate. The scenarios are now discussed according to the number of comments received.

During the Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl comments relating to the sport the celebrity is part of mostly explained how physical, brutal and masculine the sport is. It is as if consumers were trying to justify the brawl. They further emphasized that rugby is a game for men and they see the on-field brawl as an essential part of the game.

"Mate it is brutal, physical game. It's blokes like you that try to soften the game, which nobody else wants" (Adam & Glenn).

"Tough game for tough men and all the players from all teams deserve the recognition and support from al the followers of rugby league" (Adam & Glenn).

Based on the comments it is clear that consumers perceived the brand image of the National Rugby League as positive when discussing the on-field brawl. However, within the same Sport, three other sport celebrity transgressions occurred, and it seems that within these scenarios consumers perceived the brand image of the National Rugby League differently.

Within the Andrew Johns’ recreational drug use, consumer’s’ comments indicated that the National Rugby League’s drug policy is weak. Consumers further indicated that more than half of the players in the National Rugby League use drugs.

“Now the NRL knows their drug policy is weak as well” (Andrew Johns).

“Personally I would estimate nearly half of all players in the NRL have taken eccies” (Andrew Johns).

However, some participants tried to defend the drug use of the players, by stating that it is a hard game to play. “There are probably a lot of National Rugby League players who wouldn’t mind going out and having a bender on pills, and escaping from it all for a while. The pressures of the NRL would be hard” (Andrew Johns). These comments indicated that there was a tendency among consumers to perceive the National Rugby League as having a negative brand image when a sport celebrity used recreational drugs.

According to the Matthew Johns’ alleged group rape, consumers took a negative approach when discussing the alleged group rape transgression. Overwhelmingly, consumers indicated that the National Rugby League Sport have a negative culture towards women. Comments were grouped according to the following negative opinions on the National Rugby League: National Rugby League is full of transgressions; National Rugby League is dishonourable, inept, and rotten; consists of men with god complexes; players’ behaviour is unacceptable; has low morals; has a caveman culture; players have a negative attitude towards women; degrades women; turns people away from the sport. Table 5.33 illustrates the different comments grouped according to these themes. It is evident from Table 5.33 that consumers perceived the National Rugby League as presenting a negative brand image. Comments indicated that the National Rugby League is a sport where transgressions are common, especially off-field transgressions. They noted that many players are involved in transgressions and there is not enough news on the sport. It is as if consumers needed more news on the actual game instead of news about off-field transgressions. The National Rugby League administration was further perceived as weak, dishonourable, inept and rotten, and consumers were tired of hearing about the off-field transgressions of players. The players within the National Rugby League were further perceived as having god complexes, who believed they were entitled to commit off-field transgressions.

Comments grouped into the following themes:
Theme: NRL is full of transgressions
<i>“Rugby can’t sink any lower, firstly no one goes to any of the games, and every player is caught up in scandal...”. “I believe that ALL football should be 'stopped, folded up, finished, done with. All we see and hear is ... bad behaviour, injuries, scandal, fights, court cases etc., etc... And hardly any playing. I hate it all!!!” and “...a game that has been stricken with off-field indiscretions over the last five years...”</i>

Comments grouped into the following themes:
<p>Theme: NRL is dishonourable, inept and rotten</p> <p><i>"All I can say is that footy players and the girls that hang out with them are all a bunch of low lives and scum bags"</i></p> <p><i>"I just wish these footballers would just keep it in their pants - I'm quite frankly sick of hearing about their sexual exploits".</i></p> <p><i>"The NRL are spineless cretins. When this story broke in 2002 they were happy to make no inquiry themselves and let the matter die away. When it is thrust into the public arena they are seen wringing their hands and calling peoples futures into question. The only reason is because it became public, not because it happened. Dishonourable, inept and completely without any sense of proper leadership".</i></p> <p><i>"No Decent Gentleman would get into, or allow such a thing to occur. And if it's part of the 'culture' of even a small percentage of NRL players then its part of too many".</i></p>
<p>Theme: NRL consists of men with god complexes</p> <p><i>"I grew up knowing footy players and seeing even then (over 20 years ago) the influence that football culture had on players - the players all had 'god complexes' and girls would willingly throw themselves at these famous footballers".</i></p> <p><i>"The NRL and the clubs themselves have paid out big money in the past to shut-up people who have been affected by the behaviour of these sports people. It seems that once these sports stars become popular, they think they are better than everyone else".</i></p> <p><i>"If you want to feel gaggingly disgusted, just read the absolute drivel this woman is saying! No wonder footballers think they are Greek gods there to be pandered to by women, if this one, and her like, are out there carrying on like this. !"</i></p> <p><i>"how many times does it has to show that these so called "Heroes" are not "Heroes" at all they are just idiots with too much money and too much time on their hands, Matthew Johns should have really know better, footballers are in a culture where they think they can get away with anything and just a slap on the wrist, it is amazing they think they can be a role model to younger people with all the crap they do in public. Bring back the old days where footballers actually had a job when they are not playing football"</i></p>
<p>Theme: NRL players' behaviour is unacceptable</p> <p><i>"You call ya self-Australians. You disgust me. What has happened shouldn't have. Mathew knows that now. It should be stopped. This football mentality. It's been going on too long".</i></p> <p><i>"Rugby league and AFL promote themselves this way as bogan sports, and look how thy treat women, and the egos they have, I call for all to not to go to NRL or AFL games, don't watch the show they involve give the sports a message that its unacceptable behaviour".</i></p>
<p>Theme: NRL has no morals</p> <p><i>"League fans here are clearly saying there is no problem with a married man with kids taking part in group sex. What low morals you have. Your comments are adding to the damage of your already damaged sport".</i></p> <p><i>"Footballers should be used as negative role models, with the caption, you would not want to Grow like one of these".</i></p> <p><i>"It is a story about the disgusting culture of our footballing and television celebrities and how they have no morals when it comes to morals and ethics".</i></p>

Comments grouped into the following themes:
<p>Theme: NRL players have a negative attitude towards women</p> <p><i>"The actions of all the men involved were disgusting. My son looks up to football players and for them to have a culture of just being able to take advantage of a woman and treat her like a piece of meat is disturbing".</i></p> <p><i>"Society needs to start to support women in these situations, not blame them. To say that this culture in NRL (and elsewhere) of women as a 'toy' or 'sex-object', to be used as a bonding tool for the team, is never acceptable. But I won't hold my breath"</i></p> <p><i>".., but the culture of girl groupies and these drunken footy players has been with the NRL for many years".</i></p> <p><i>"...so rugby league apparently encourages loose women, turns a blind eye to the sexual bullying of women, unrestrained drinking, and supports through the code of silence the "boys will be boys" antics that prevent them being judged by societies standards. This is what the sponsors are paying for.....hope you're getting your money's worth"</i></p> <p><i>"About 20 years ahoy I witnessed a shocking group sex incident in a footy club locker room after an afternoon match, later that evening. Walked in looking for my boyfriend at the time. He wasn't one of the men involved thank god, but it just goes to show how much this behaviour is ingrained in footy club culture".</i></p> <p><i>"As a man who has current NRL footballers and QRL footballers as friends and business clients, I believe 2 things need to change here. First is defiantly the attitude toward women by...They are referred to as football groupies"</i></p> <p><i>"I knew this for long time, these footy always get away with sexual assault it making woman leave scarring for life, these guys thinks it ok for sex but wrong you have girlfriend or wife who is at home why would you lied to police you done nothing wrong that TOTALLY BS, IT WAKE UP CALL treat a respect for woman".</i></p>
<p>Theme: NRL degrades women</p> <p><i>"May this be a warning to all you footballers - hope you were all watching this interview because this can ruin your reputation and career. Here and overseas! Society does not support these degrading situations you put women in".</i></p> <p><i>"They are all packs of dogs if you ask me that prey on women with low self-esteem that they have absolutely no respect for in the first place".</i></p> <p><i>"The NRL is to blame for this ,they fuel the sexualisation of women by flaunting almost naked cheerleaders in front of crowds of beer swilling yobbo's! Why??What service do they serve besides being perved at and sending a message to our kids that that's what women are for?"</i></p> <p><i>"From what I've come to understand Johns, along with half a dozen or so team mates all got with the same girl in the one outing. Apparently this is common practice among NRL teams as a "bonding" exercise".</i></p> <p><i>"There might be a rape problem amongst football culture (I'd wager there is to be honest) but that doesn't mean you destroy the life of everyone accused of something".</i></p>
<p>Theme: NRL turns people away from the sport</p> <p><i>"Treat women and the community with respect, I'm sick of so called heroes getting away with anything, grow up, and loose the egos. Rugby league (NRL) sounds finished...I will be watching football".</i></p> <p><i>"Because this is footy culture this is what these men do for fun!!!"</i></p> <p><i>"The root of the problem is culture, which comes from above (managers/ex-players). It needs to be changed dramatically otherwise more people such myself will boycott all NRL. I hope the footy show is axed".</i></p>

Table 5-33 Comments relating to SCTs and the National Rugby League

In addition, consumers also felt that the off-field transgressions of the sport celebrities are going on for too long and it should end. They especially complained about the sport celebrities' attitudes towards women, and further compared the NRL's brand image with the brand image of swimming. Consumers argued that swimming have a positive brand image, especially in regards to their attitude towards women. Overall consumers perceived the National Rugby League as a sport with low morals and as a damaged sport. Interestingly, a few consumers commented about the negative attitude of the National Rugby League towards women. They noted that the National Rugby League players are taking advantage of women and using them as sex objects. They further stated that the sport celebrities in the National Rugby League used women for degrading acts and inappropriate team bonding activities. It is clear that all of the off-field transgressions had a negative impact on consumer's perceptions of the brand image of the sport. A few comments even indicated that the behaviour of players, and the accompanied acceptance by management, turn people away from the sport. It is evident that consumers blamed all of the off-field transgressions on the culture and the management of the National Rugby League. It is therefore possible to suggest that SCTs have a negative impact on the brand image of the associated sport. Especially, sexual misbehaviour have a direct negative impact on the brand image of the National Rugby League. Another type of sport that received a number of comments relating to SCTs and the brand image of the sport was that of cycling.

b) Cycling

The two SCT scenarios that occurred in cycling, were the doping incidents of Alberto Contador and Floyd Landis. Both these on-field SCTs occurred during the Tour de France. The comments in these two scenarios indicated that doping is common in cycling. They actually referred to cycling as the leader in doping. Some consumers indicated that they stopped watching cycling because of the number of doping incidents. There were however, a few consumers that indicated that they did not care about doping, and considered it part of cycling. Some consumers even indicated that they expected cyclers to take banned substances, consumers argued that cycling, especially the Tour de France event, is a hard race, and celebrities need to take enhancement drugs in order to compete. Table 5.34 shows the comments pertaining to the brand image of cycling, grouped according to positive and negative perspectives of the brand image of the sport. The brand image of cycling was perceived as negative. Interestingly, the brand image of the sport event was also perceived as negative. In spite of this, there were a number of consumers who perceived cycling and the Tour de France event as having positive brand images. As noted before, it is evident that this group of consumers is very interested in cycling. This finding links with previous research which indicated that consumers that were strongly interested in sport were more willing than others to accept doping (Solberg, Hanstad & Thoring 2010). A further study that supports this finding indicated that commitment to a sport lessened the effect on negative publicity about the celebrities in that sport (Lake, Reece & Rifon 2010).

Negative image Cycling is full of doping.	Positive image: Athletes need doping
<p><i>"This is the least surprising thing to happen to cycling. Contador has been at the top for too long to not be doping. The only way to beat a bunch of cheaters is to cheat you".</i></p> <p><i>"I think anyone who has followed doping in "sport" knows that aside from bodybuilding (which is a "show" activity anyway), cycling is the leader. Ahead of swimming, weightlifting, track and field/athletics. Every advancement in PED's, and every advancement in detecting PED's, had its start in this sport. Who knows who is clean anymore?"</i></p> <p><i>"Cycling needs to be removed from all sports websites. Yes, I know, most sports have their issues with PEDs, but not nearly in the scale as cycling".</i></p> <p><i>"Either cancel the event permanently or let everyone use whatever they want. there hasn't been a fair race for 20 years"</i></p> <p><i>"...as others have pointed out, cycling is constantly (unfortunately) in the news as regards doping because there is more concern within the sport than most other athletic endeavours... ..say what you will about the few cases that have come to light in baseball or football but if they tested for as many substances or tested as stringently as cycling, weekend television would be pretty blank..."</i></p> <p><i>"Doping is a huge problem in cycling, but the assertion that a Tour stage (or even a complete Tour) is physically impossible without drugs is flat-out wrong".</i></p>	<p><i>"I stopped caring about doping in cycling a long time ago. Most of the drugs that are banned in the sport probably wouldn't give you a performance advantage anyways.... just let them race".</i></p> <p><i>"You know, I have no clue or notion about Contador doping – or about other pro cyclists doping in the TdF. But I do know this; what they do is insanely difficult. Just —riding the distance they do, day after day, is impossibly hard. Racing? It's beyond stupidly difficult. None of which exonerates anyone for cheating".</i></p> <p><i>"And here is the reality – If you watch the NFL; or you watched the World Cup this summer, you know that what these men do again and again is impossibly difficult. Because as long as one guy needs an edge; as long as all sports are that brutally difficult; competition is that ceaseless; NBA plays starts in November and ends nine months later; everyone will need an edge".</i></p> <p><i>"What it seems like is that there isn't a clean rider at the top 3rd of cycling, maybe even the top 2/3rds. It's possible the last clean riders were Lemond and Fignon, but maybe not then even. A lot of modern day doctors say that what these guys put their bodies through in a typical tour should not be possible".</i></p> <p><i>"Has anyone commenting on this site ever really gotten into bike racing – the training, the nutrition, the supplements, equipment, physio, etc., even at an amateur level? It's just like...the methods REALLY make you better. A lot better. Why is it so hard to fathom that guys like Contador, and others, skirted or flat out broke the rules to win and get rich? The naivety is just astounding"</i></p>

Table 5-34 Comments relating to SCTs and recycling

c) Australian Rugby Union (ARU)

Overall the ARU was perceived as having a positive brand image. Consumer's' comments indicated that the ARU consisted of a positive brand image, compared to the Australian Football League.

"First, I'm quite fan of Quade cooper, as he's one of the rare rugby union player who accelerate the game and take some risks. Sometimes, it's a bit too show-off (like a certain Chris Ashton) but rugby needs a bit of craziness".

"There was absolutely nothing in that clash. Rugby Union is above the sissy antics of ARL, let's keep it that way. Well done Wallabies you were all great and now for the World Cup".

d) Golf

The Tiger Woods' adultery scenario represented the only SCT that related to golf. It seems that participants perceived golf as having a positive brand image. Consumer's' comments indicated golf is a "gentlemen's sport, something I am sure his Dad taught him"

(Tiger Woods). It is further suggested that within golf, transgressions are not entertaining and the consumers did not seem to value the off-field SCT. For example, one consumer noted; *“Even the occupation is different golf is low key not like baseball and certainly not like entertainment where shock is a valuable tool”* (Tiger Woods). There were no comments made in relation to the impact of golf on the influence of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. It is thus evident that golf was perceived as a gentlemen’s game. These perceptions may be attributed to the past well behaviour of sport celebrities.

e) Swimming

When analysing comments pertaining to the type of sport and transgressions in swimming, no comments were found that related to the sport celebrity brand image. However, one comment within the Matthew Johns’ scenario indicated that swimming had a positive image toward women. The consumer compared swimming with the National Rugby League, and wondered why players in the National Rugby League were allowed to indulge in transgressions while the opposite was true for swimming. It is as if this consumer argued that the management of swimming dealt with sport celebrity transgressions more strongly than the National Rugby League did.

“You have to wonder why footy players get away with behaving so badly. If this happened with a swimming team those swimmers would not be swimming anymore...” (Matthew Johns)

On the basis of this comment, it is possible to suggest that, according to the social media data collection, swimming has a positive brand image. The positive brand image of swimming may be attributed to the management response to SCTs. It is thus possible that when management reacted strongly in relation to transgressions, consumers perceived the negative impact on the type of the sport as less severe. That is: when the management of swimming responded and condemned the sport celebrity transgression, the image of swimming is perceived as positive. The American, National Football league, is discussed next.

f) National Football League (NFL)

The data indicated that the National Football League had a negative brand image. Consumer’s’ comments showed the NFL players are unfit to be role models. Two comments showed that consumers believed the problems lie within the management of the sport, in that management encouraged sexual misbehaviour. For example;

“..These players are definitely not people who should be your kid's role models...”

“Any NFL team that hires females to massage their players is participating in something that would normally be charged as pimping.”

On the basis of these comments it is possible to suggest that the National Football League presents a negative brand image. The next sport investigated by this study is tennis.

g) Tennis

The SCT scenario that occurred in tennis was the Serena Williams’ on-court outburst. Consumers indicated that this type of SCT is unacceptable in tennis. One comment relating to Serena Williams’ on-court outburst and tennis showed consumers argued that this type of behaviour is not welcome in tennis. For example:

“USTA - Do the right thing. Send a message to the young tennis players coming up that criminal behaviour on the court (if they hadn’t been on a tennis court, the lines woman would have every right to file an assault charge against her - actually, I’m hoping that she does anyway,) by fining Serena at least \$250,000 and suspending her from at least one slam for 2010. Maybe then she’ll wake up and come out of her steroid induced haze long enough to realise the severity of what she did”.

It is thus clear that this consumer regarded tennis as a sport that presented a positive brand image. It was further noted that Serena Williams’ on-court outburst was the only transgression representing a female sport celebrity. This finding links with research that indicates women in sport receive less media coverage compared to men (Hugh & Shank 2005), and that consumers are more likely to recall and discuss negative events involving male sport celebrities than female sport celebrities (Bailey 2007).

The data indicated that consumers perceived the brand image of the various types of sport differently. It was as if the occurrence of SCTs in a sport affected on consumer’s’ perceptions of the effects of SCTs. It is possible that when SCTs previously occurred in a sport, consumers expect transgressions to re-occur, and they perceive the brand image of the sport as negative. Table 5.35 illustrates the brand image of the different sports, examined in this study, and the terms used to describe the brand image of those types of sport.

In addition, there were some consumers that indicated the re-occurrence of doping in cycling is part of the game. Furthermore, when management responded to the SCT, such as in the case of swimming, it seems that consumers perceived the brand image of the sport as positive. This finding supports previous research that illustrates that sport management should be seen to act strongly against sport celebrity transgressions.

Sport	Sport celebrity	Sport brand image	Terms used
NRL	Andrew Johns	Negative	Weak drug policy
NRL	Matthew Johns	Negative	Full of transgressions Dishonourable and rotten Men with god complexes Behaviour is unacceptable Low moral Caveman culture Take advantage of women Uses women as sex objects as bonding tool Degrades women NRL turns people away from the sport.
NFL	Brett Favre	Negative	No role models
Cycling	Alberto Contador, Floyd Landis	Negative	Cycling is full of doping. Cyclers need doping, cycling is insanely hard.
ARU		Positive	Above the sissy antics of NRL
Golf	Tiger Woods	Positive	Gentlemen’s game
Swim	Michael Phelps	Positive	Swimmers are being punished more harsher

Sport	Sport celebrity	Sport brand image	Terms used
Tennis	Serena Williams	Positive	Transgressions unacceptable in tennis

Table 5-35 The consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport

(NRL-National Rugby League; NFL-National Football League; ARU-Australian Rugby Union; Swim-Swimming)

Conclusion: Proposition 3

The findings of Proposition 3 indicated that Cycling received more negative comments, relating to the type of sport, and the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. It is thus possible to suggest that doping affected negatively on the brand image of cycling. The findings in Proposition 2 indicated that doping affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image of Alberto Contador and Floyd Landis. Therefore, based on these findings it is possible to suggest that the type of sport can moderate the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image. However, this finding is not supported in the other SCT scenarios.

The findings of Proposition 3 indicated that Golf received more positive comments, relating to the type of sport, and the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image of Tiger Woods. It is thus possible to suggest that Golf has a positive brand image. The findings in Proposition 3 indicated that in Golf the sport celebrity transgression (adultery) affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image (Tiger Woods), regardless whether the type of sport was positive. Therefore, based on this finding, this study suggests the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport; does not necessarily moderate the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. This suggestion is also supported in the SCT scenarios found in the National Rugby League.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the National Rugby League received a high number of negative comments and a high number of positive comments, relating to the type of sport and the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The difference was based on the characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression. The alleged Group Rape received the highest number of negative comments, and the On-Field Brawl received the highest number of positive comments relating to the type of sport. It is thus possible to suggest that the impact of different types of SCTs on the brand image of the National Rugby League varied. The difference in the outcome was based on the type of SCT that occurred. Therefore, based on these findings, this study suggests that the type of sport, does not necessarily influence consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image.

5.5.4 Proposition 4: When a Sport Celebrity Transgression (SCT) causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the: a) perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors, and b) perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sport.

Data related to proposition 5 were obtained from social media data collection, regarding the impact of SCTs on the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport.

As explained in Chapter 2, the negative brand image of one partner in a brand alliance has been shown to transfer to the other partner in the alliance (Votolato & Unnava 2006). Associative learning further demonstrates that celebrity sponsorship impacts on brand image through the transfer of images from the one brand to the other brand (Till & Shimp 1998). When applied to this study, this proposition aims to further understand the impact of the sport celebrity brand image on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport, after an SCT has occurred.

Data that specifically referred to the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport consisted of 243 comments. These comments were investigated, and of these, 46 comments related to the brand image of the associated sponsors, and 197 comments referred to the brand image of the associated sport. Table 5.36 provides a summary on the positive and negative comments on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport and how they related to an SCT.

	Positive	Negative	Total
Sponsors	20	26	46
Sport	30	167	197
TOTAL	50	193	243

Table 5-36 Comments on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport

(Source: developed for this study)

The data in Table 5.36 illustrates the impact of an SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport, and shows that consumers expressed more negative comments relating to the impact on the brand image of the sport than on the brand image of the sponsors. The data that referred to the impact on the brand image of the sponsors consisted of 46 comments, and of these, 20 comments were positive and 26 were negative. The data that related to the impact on the brand image of the sport consisted of 197 comments, and of these, 30 comments were positive, and 167 comments were negative. In relation to this dimension, it would appear that an SCT resulting in consumers to express more negative comments regarding the impact on the brand image of the sport, than on the brand image of the sponsors. The data further showed that an SCT caused consumers to offer more negative comments relating to the brand image of the celebrity's associated sport, than the brand image of the associated sponsors. The data were further analysed according to the findings.

a) The brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors.

A total of 46 comments were analysed in order to address proposition 4a, and of these, Tiger Woods' adultery scenario received the highest number of comments relating to the sport celebrity transgression and the impact on the brand image of the sponsors, followed by Michael Phelps' drug use, Matthew Johns' alleged rape, and Brett Favre's sexting. In addition, it is further interesting to note that all of the scenarios that received comments referring to the impact on the brand image of the sponsors were off-field sport celebrity transgressions. It seems that an off-field sport celebrity transgression causes consumers to adjust their perceptions of the brand image of the associated sponsors.

The comments further showed that Michael Phelps drug use caused consumers to offer more positive comments, than negative comments, relating to the brand image of the sponsors. The Tiger Woods' off-field adultery scenario received more negative comments relating to the brand image of the sponsors. The data further indicated that the three off-field scenarios (Tiger Woods, Matthew Johns, and Brett Favre) caused consumers to comment more negative comments referring to the brand image of the associated sponsors, than positive comments. Interestingly, all three scenarios related to disrespect towards women.

Interestingly, only the Tiger Woods' scenario had two website articles that related to sponsors (Andrew Johns also had one website article that referred to sponsors, but no comments were noted). This may be one of the reasons why Tiger Woods have the highest number of comments referring to the impact on sponsors. It is therefore possible to note that Tiger Woods' adultery have a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors. Table 5.37 summarises the consumer's' comments relating to the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits and the brand image of the associated sponsors, while table 5.38 illustrates some of the comments referring to the sport celebrity transgression and the brand image of the associated sponsors. The findings thus supported proposition 4a, and noted that when an SCT causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image negatively, there can be a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors.

Sport celebrity	Brand attributes			Brand benefits				Impact on sponsors		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total	Continue sponsor	Discontinue sponsor	Total
Recreational drug use and sexting										
Michael Phelps	21	13	34	2	1	6	9	9	4	13
Andrew Johns	12	10	22	0	3	2	5	0	0	0
Ben Cousins	5	3	8	1	1	1	3	0	1	1
Brett Favre	8	7	15	1	1	7	9	0	2	2
Spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game										
Quade Cooper	7	1	8	0	1	8	9	0	0	0
Serena Williams	2	1	3	2	4	0	6	0	1	1
On-field brawl										
Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart	3	13	16	49	7	0	56	0	1	1
Transgressions that involved the sport celebrity's team										
James O'Connor	5	9	14	0	1	6	7	0	0	0
Doping and sexual misbehaviour										
Tiger Woods	29	44	73	8 (13)	24 (40)	28 (47)	60	11	13	24
Matthew Johns	7	51	58	3 (6)	51 (94)	0	54	0	4	4
Floyd Landis & Alberto Contador	1	24	25	3 (25)	8 (67)	1 (8)	12	0	0	0

Table 5-37 Comments on the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits and the brand image of the associated sponsors

(Source: developed for this study)

Comments relating to sponsors should continue supporting the sport celebrity	Comments relating to sponsors should discontinue supporting the sport celebrity
<p><i>"I don't know why Kellogg's decided not to renew their contract with Phelps."</i></p> <p><i>"I for one am glad that people started to boycott Kellogg's for dropping him."</i></p> <p><i>"How about boycotting Kellogg if you smoke pot."</i></p> <p><i>"Someone should have told him that whether he likes it or not, he is a role model and in the public eye. He one, can't do that and two, shouldn't put himself in situations that might jeopardize his career. I think herb is perfectly fine- it's not like he was blowing rails. He only set world records and won 8 gold medals for the US- Give the kid a break. Shame on Kellogg and shame on the press for tearing an accomplished young man down. It's not like he is on the juice, raping women, or fighting dogs. I think he learned his lesson. I say, GET OVER IT"</i></p> <p><i>"I think it's kind of ridiculous the big deal people are making over it. He's a kid - he took a hit off a bong. People do it. Would they be as upset if he was seen drunk? I get that pot is illegal, but to me, it's always been as equal an "evil" as alcohol. I think mainly the sponsors are mad because it makes him a bad role model in their minds, but there are PLENTY of professional athletes who've done things way worse than take a bong hit, yet most of them have kept their endorsements and the media has continued to put them in the headlines, for better or worse. And to be fair to everyone, we're all only human. I'm kind of tired of the people who exploit situations for a quick buck - give the guy some privacy. He still won eight gold medals; his performance is no less amazing just because he smokes pot."</i></p> <p><i>"Seriously, and like his sponsors are going to drop him. dude is the most amazing Olympic athlete of all time... seriously calm the hell down"</i></p> <p><i>"Kellogg's dropped him and he's been suspended from the US team for three months. Seriously? Let's hope that some of this common sense change heads this way know what I mean."</i></p> <p><i>"So ounce all the sponsors have optioned out; Take Tiger Inc. public and be the next Opera."</i></p>	<p><i>"Brett is nothing but an xxxx, I hope you lose all your endorsements and your wife gets rid of you. People lost respect when you left Green Bay and then you play tag with whatever will take you, well now no one respects you and no one wants you"</i></p> <p><i>"It makes me sick to realise the fortune I've paid Telstra over the years has been funding the (overly generous) salaries of these horrible people."</i></p> <p><i>"The Sponsors of the National Rugby League should withdraw their sponsorship immediately."</i></p> <p><i>"Was Phelps too stoned on signing day to remember the clause about substance abuse and illegal behaviour in his contract with Kellogg? Regardless of whether drugs are illegal, he was presumably contractually obligated to avoid the sort of behaviour in which he had participated and which had gotten him in trouble in the past."</i></p> <p><i>"If his contract forbade him from such behaviour, then he should be terminated. But there should be no public demonization."</i></p> <p><i>"Don't buy Nike or Wilson. We as normal average everyday people need to take a stand toward this horrifying behaviour."</i></p> <p><i>"TIGER SHOULD LOSE ALL HIS ENDOSERMENT HE SCREW IT UP"</i></p> <p><i>"To all women out there, AVOID Tiger Woods endorsed products. It may make other men think twice before they stray from their loved ones."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't think Tiger is going to recover from this. It's just too big and far reaching. Too many people affected by it. Any sponsors that continue to stay with him imply they condone his behaviour."</i></p> <p><i>"If the sponsors don't drop him, they are just as bad as he is. I too won't be buying anything he endorses now or in the future. As decent people we have to stand up for what is right."</i></p> <p><i>"We are back to buying much 3 razors if Gillette drops tiger. We take this all very seriously and show our disdain with our wallets."</i></p> <p><i>"p.s. just threw away my Gillette razor."</i></p>

Comments relating to sponsors should continue supporting the sport celebrity	Comments relating to sponsors should discontinue supporting the sport celebrity
<p><i>"Tiger is better off without these dishonest people anyway."</i></p> <p><i>"Nobody loves you when you're down and out."</i></p> <p><i>"These sponsors are short-sighted, within a short period of time, this will all blow over and he will be back winning championships...then he will be laugh\$\$\$\$hing."</i></p> <p><i>"Everyone boycott any company who is giving Tiger a hard time. Did he murder someone? Did he not pay his taxes? Did he not pay for his children? He is a great man; let him alone!"</i></p> <p><i>"Leave the guy alone with his family. I hope when Tiger is back on top he shuns the Gillettes of the world."</i></p> <p><i>"Killer instinct is what makes a sportsman exceptional! That's why NIKE stands by their man as he symbolizes the Just Do It attitude. Think about it....."</i></p>	<p><i>"I'll support Gillette and Tiger's wife. Golf is a gentlemen's sport, something I am sure his Dad taught him. He was a role model to young people all over the world."</i></p> <p><i>"All major brands will drop Tiger, count on it...He is not a role model for golf, or sports, or children, or the country. His sponsors are embarrassed and feel bad for him. Maybe his sponsors just don't want to add to his personal woes right now, but his image is toast. His image sold products."</i></p> <p><i>"I hope he continues to crash and burn on the links until he loses all his sponsorships, spokesman ships and fans. Anyone with such low morals deserves no less."</i></p> <p><i>"Tiger is a lying cheating xxx who deserves to be dropped by his sponsors."</i></p>

Table 5-38 Comments relating to SCTs and associated sponsors

(Source: developed for this study)

b) Brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sport.

A total of 197 online comments were analysed in order to address proposition 4b. Matthew Johns' alleged group rape scenario received the highest number of 120 (61%) comments relating to SCTs and the brand image of the associated sport, followed by Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl at 45 (22%) comments, and Alberto Contador's doping at 16 (8%) comments. The comments showed that Alberto Contador's doping and Matthew John's alleged group rape received the highest number of negative comments referring to the brand image of the associated sports. Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl was the only sport celebrity transgression to receive a high number of positive comments referring to the brand image of the associated sport. Table 5.39 summarises the frequencies of consumer's' comments on the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits and the brand image of the associated sport, following SCTs. Table 5.40 illustrates some of the comments posted in social media in relation to the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sport, after SCTs occurred.

The two sport celebrity transgression scenarios that received a high number of comments pertaining to the impact on the sport the celebrity is part of, was that of Matthew Johns' alleged group rape and Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador's doping. In these scenarios the transgression affected negatively on the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits. It is thus possible to suggest that sexual misbehaviour and doping caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image negatively, and there was a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport.

The on-field brawl was the only scenario that received positive comments regarding the impact on the brand image of the associated sport. The brawl seems to impact negatively on the sport celebrity brand attributes, but have a positive impact on the sport celebrity's brand benefits. The positive impact on the sport celebrity's brand benefits seems to translate to the sport the celebrities are part of. It is therefore possible to suggest that when an on-field brawl caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand benefits positively; there is a positive flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. There may thus, be a link between the sport celebrity brand benefits and the brand image of the associated sport.

Sport celebrity	Sport celebrity brand attributes			Sport celebrity brand benefits				Impact on sport		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
Recreational drug use and sexting										
Michael Phelps	21	13	34	2	1	6	9	0	0	0
Andrew Johns	12	10	22	0	3	2	5	0	2	2
Ben Cousins	5	3	8	1	1	1	3	0	3	3
Brett Favre	8	7	15	1	1	7	9	0	2	2
Spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game										
Quade Cooper	7	1	8	0	1	8	9	0	0	0
Serena Williams	2	1	3	2	4	0	6	1	2	3
Transgressions that involved the sport celebrity's team										
Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart	3	13	16	49	7	0	56	28	17	45
James O'Connor	5	9	14	0	1	6	7	1	1	2
Doping and sexual misbehaviour										
Tiger Woods	29	44	73	8 (13)	24 (40)	28 (47)	60	0	1	1
Matthew Johns	7	51	58	3 (6)	51 (94)	0	54	0	120	120
Floyd Landis & Alberto Contador	1	24	25	3 (25)	8 (67)	1 (8)	12	0	19	19

Table 5-39 Comments relating to brand attributes, benefits and the associated sport

(Source: developed for this study)

Comments illustrate that the sport celebrity transgression seems to positively impact the sport the celebrity is part of	Comments show that the sport celebrity transgression seems to negative impact on the sport the celebrity is part of
Positive comments	Negative comments
<p><i>"Everyone including the fans, the players and the media love a good punch-up. Why are there so many hypocrites who are afraid to say they really enjoyed it? Events like this make the game more popular.....The nanny state has affected every walk of life and has made us a nation of wimps" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Mate it's a brutal, physical game. It's blokes like you that try to soften the game, which nobody else wants" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"I wish rugby was more like Ice Hockey, just let them at it!" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Hypocrisy of brawl: To me the occasional fight has always been part of the game and to be honest I thought the brawl was some good old fashioned fun. I am not saying it's something you want to see every week but on occasion it's just the boys having some fun. Here is where I see a tremendous problem in the media and other people's reactions" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"..Best thing about league is the fights lol" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"What a fantastic sport!!" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"What a bunch of crap! Everyone including the fans, the players and the media love a good punch-up. Why are there so many hypocrites who are afraid to say they really enjoyed it? Events like this make the game more popular.....The nanny state has affected every walk of life and has made us a nation of wimps" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Who really cares about a bit of biff in a footy game, let it drop more concentration needs to be made towards the shocking state of the Referees in NRL at the moment my 8yr old Niece could do a better job. Let the brawl on Friday night lie and get on with making a bigger effort to improve the Ref's" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Too much testosterone. For God's sake it's only a game" (Adam Blair & Glenn</i></p>	<p><i>I don't mind a bit of biff but that was just ugly. Hopefully we see some suspensions from both teams, lengthy ones at that. We don't have time for thugs in the NRL" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Unfortunately these types of incidents overshadow the brilliance and skills displayed in today's rugby league matches. That is what we should be talking about and not this type of rubbish that occurred on Friday night" (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>"Now the NRL knows their drug policy is weak as well" (Andrew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"Johns has done allot of damage to the NRL, he is the most respected player in the NRL (was). What he has done is a disgrace and quite frankly he deserves to be banished from the code" (Andrew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"Union is becoming more like league every day. Now they are just letting there stars do whatever they want" (James O'Connor).</i></p> <p><i>"Because this is footy culture this is what these men do for fun!!!" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"The actions of all the men involved were disgusting. My son looks up to football players and for them to have a culture of just being able to take advantage of a woman and treat her like a piece of meat is disturbing" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"Society needs to start to support women in these situations, not blame them. To say that this culture in NRL (and elsewhere) of women as a 'toy' or 'sex-object', to be used as a bonding tool for the team, is never acceptable. But I won't hold my breath" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"..If you want to feel gaggingly disgusted, just read the absolute drivel this woman is saying! No wonder footballers think they are Greek gods there to be pandered to by women, if this one, and her like, are out there carrying on like this. !" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"There is something definitely rotten in rugby league if the pack rape of an 19 year old girl is considered as a media beat up by the bogans of Queensland" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"The NRL are spineless cretins. When this story broke in 2002 they were happy to make</i></p>

Comments illustrate that the sport celebrity transgression seems to positively impact the sport the celebrity is part of	Comments show that the sport celebrity transgression seems to negative impact on the sport the celebrity is part of
Positive comments	Negative comments
<p>Stewart).</p> <p><i>The talk of massive fines is ridiculous, as for all the talk of kids etc. I loved watching the state of origin brawls as a kid in the 80/90s and that's what made me play league. Oh and the hypocrisy the image of the game, worried about a fight yet kids can hear about live sports betting every 5 mins! Gambling has destroyed more lives / families including via suicide then a punch on between two passionate players! (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>At the end of the day it all shows passion and mateship, and healthy rivalry between two strong clubs. Hope the media and David Gallop don't blow this out being something bad for the game, because it isn't (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart)..</i></p> <p><i>Rugby League is a game played by men. When the two best teams in the comp get together and produce the game of the season, the NRL lead by Gallop and other net ball supporters get upset when the tension spills over into a bit of biff. The referees should be held responsible for not diffusing the situation adequately (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p> <p><i>What is going on? How soft has our society become. Man up, Jesus, everything I read is this sanitised politically correct rubbish. I think you guys just say what you think you have to say This is disgusting, I'm outraged. It's alright; you are allowed to like violence. It doesn't make you a monster it means you is a normal man (Adam Blair & Glenn Stewart).</i></p>	<p><i>no inquiry themselves and let the matter die away. When it is thrust into the public arena they are seen wringing their hands and calling peoples futures into question. The only reason is because it became public, not because it happened. Dishonourable, inept and completely without any sense of proper leadership" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"While Matt remains associated with rugby league the game remains ethically corrupt" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"Mmmmm.....so rugby league apparently encourages loose women, turns a blind eye to the sexual bullying of women, unrestrained drinking, and supports through the code of silence the "boys will be boys" antics that prevent them</i></p> <p><i>"Rugby can't sink any lower, firstly no one goes to any of the games, and every player is caught up in scandal or is a no name" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"Time for all NRL players - and the young men pretending to be them at nightclubs - to grow up and respect the rest of the community" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"...the product he represents i.e. Rugby League is being damaged by this incident, regardless if it was consensual or not. He was the face of the campaign to encourage and entice families and women to Rugby League. How can that face be affective if he cheated on his wife and was involved in group sex (consensual or not)? He was to sell a product and his past caught up with him and effectively prevented him from being able to sell the product, making him useless. It's about the marketing and advertising of the game" (Matthew Johns).</i></p> <p><i>"This is the least surprising thing to happen to cycling. Contador has been at the top for too long to not be doping. The only way to beat a bunch of cheaters is to cheat yourself" (Alberto Contador).</i></p> <p><i>"...It all helps in getting cycling clean. I don't care his reasons, but if they are honest, bravo! A lot of evidence this year to suggests cycling is still doping..." (Floyd Landis).</i></p>

Table 5-40 Comments relating to SCTs and the associated sport

(Source: developed for this study)

Furthermore, an interesting relationship occurred in the recreational drug use group and sexting scenarios. Within these scenarios, the transgressions seemed to result in more neutral comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits, and slightly more negative comments regarding the brand image of the associated sport. It seems that there were no negative comments regarding the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits, but there were negative comments referring to the brand image of the associated sport, when recreational drugs scenarios occurred. It is thus possible to suggest recreational drug use and sexting caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand benefits neutrally, however there were not a similar flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. Instead, consumers offer more negative comments relating to the brand image of the associated sport when recreational drug use and sexting occurred. When spontaneous on-field transgressions and the disrespect towards the team occurred, there were a low number of comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand benefits and the brand image of the associated sport. Quade Cooper's on-field SCT scenario received no comments regarding the impact on the brand image of the associated sport; while the Serena Williams' scenario received negative comments relating to the brand image of the sport. It is thus possible that the type of sport can influence consumer's' perceptions of the impact of spontaneous on-field SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image.

Summary

The findings indicated that when SCTs caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image negatively the transgression also translates negatively to the brand image of the associated sport. This was especially true for the doping and sexual misbehaviour scenarios. Furthermore, it seems that when consumers considered the brand benefits positively, the transgression translated positively to the brand image of the associated sport, especially when and on-field brawl occurred. In addition, when consumers offered no comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand benefits, such as in the case of *spontaneous on-field SCTs*, there was no translation of the SCT on the brand image of the associated sport. However, when spontaneous on-field transgressions occurred, consumers offered more negative comments in relation to the sport celebrity brand benefits, and there was a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. It is thus possible that when SCTs causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand benefits negatively, there can be a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter reported the results of this thesis. The results of the research propositions were presented followed by a presentation of the revised proposed conceptual framework. For research proposition 1, the results of the impact of SCTs on the consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image were influenced by consumer's' perceptions of the *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. It was concluded that consumers considered the sport celebrity brand image in terms of sport related brand attributes, personal brand attributes; symbolic brand benefits and experiential brand benefits.

It was found that consumers considered the sport celebrity's sport related brand attributes (expertise) to be still positive after an SCT occurred, while the personal brand attributes (role model) were perceived as more negative. The sport celebrity's symbolic brand benefits were negatively considered, and were considered in only the sexual misbehaviour scenarios. The experiential brand benefits were considered in all transgressions and were roughly equally divided into positive, negative and neutral emotive responses. It was further

evident that the a priori sport celebrity brand image was affected by the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image.

For research proposition 2, the results about the characteristics of transgressions were based on categories derived from the literature and included the off-field and on-field characteristics of SCTs. The impact of these characteristics on the sport celebrity brand image was described for each SCT. Findings confirmed that consumers considered the different characteristics of transgressions when assessing the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression. This proposition concluded with five new groups representing new characteristics of transgressions, including: recreational drug use and sexting; spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game; on-field brawl, disrespect towards the team; doping and sexual Misbehaviour.

The newly identified characteristics of an SCT were further analysed in whether the transgression effects translated to the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. Recreational drug use received more negative comments regarding the brand image of the associated sport, and more positive and neutral comments regarding the sport celebrity brand image. Spontaneous on-field SCTs that occurred during the course of the game, received no significant number of negative comments regarding the celebrity benefits and the brand image of the associated sport, but received negative comments about the sport celebrity brand attributes. The on-field brawl was the only scenario that received positive comments referring to the celebrity's benefits and the brand image of the associated sport, although the scenario received negative comments relating to the celebrity's brand attributes. Doping received negative comments regarding the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sport. Sexual Misbehaviour received more negative comments than positive comments referring to the sport celebrity brand image, the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

In short, scenarios that received more negative comments relating to the brand image of the associated sport included the following scenarios: alleged rape; doping and recreational drug use. The scenarios that received more positive comments relating to the brand image of the associated sport included the on-field brawl. Interestingly, when more negative comments existed relating to the celebrity benefits (Williams, Woods, Johns, Landis), there was more negative comments referring to the brand image of the associated sport. When more positive comments existed referring to the celebrity benefits (Glenn & Stewart) there was more positive comments relating to the brand image of the associated sport. It is thus possible to suggest that there may be a relationship between the sport celebrity's benefits and the brand image of the associated sport, following an SCT.

For research proposition 3, the findings indicated that consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport (Cycling), might have moderated the impact of the sport celebrity transgression (Doping) on the sport celebrity brand image (Alberto Contador). The findings indicated that Cycling received more negative comments, relating to the type of sport, and the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The findings in Proposition 2 indicated that the sport celebrity transgression (Cycling) affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image of Alberto Contador. However, this finding was only true when doping occurred.

The data showed that when SCTs occurred in other types of sport, the type of sport did not influence the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image. It was found in proposition 3 that adultery affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image of Tiger Woods. However, consumer's' comments indicated they still perceived golf as having a positive sport brand image, following the adultery. Therefore, based on this finding, this

study suggests the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport; do not necessarily moderates the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image.

Further, evidence of these findings was found in the National Rugby League scenarios. The findings that related to the National Rugby League scenarios further confirmed that the type of sport did not necessarily influence consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The findings of Proposition 3 indicated that the National Rugby League received a high number of negative comments and a high number of positive comments, relating to the type of sport and the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The difference was based on the characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression. The alleged Group Rape received the highest number of negative comments and the On-field brawl received the highest number of positive comments relating to the type of sport. The findings in Proposition 2 indicated that within the National Rugby League the alleged Group Rape affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image, and the On-field brawl affected positively on the sport celebrity brand image. It is thus possible to suggest that within the same sport, the National Rugby League, the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image depended on the characteristics of the SCT.

The findings in Proposition 4 indicated that all of the scenarios that received comments referring to the impact on brand image of the associated sponsors were off-field sport celebrity transgressions, they were: Tiger Woods, Michael Phelps, Matthew Johns and Brett Favre's scenarios. The Michael Phelps' drug use scenario received the highest number of positive comments relating to the celebrity's attributes and the brand image of the associated sponsors, and the Tiger Woods' adultery scenario received the highest number of negative comments referring to the celebrity's attributes and the brand image of the associated sponsors. It is thus possible to suggest that there may be a relationship between the sport celebrity's brand attributes and the brand image of the associated sponsors, following an SCT.

It was confirmed that when an SCT caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits negatively, the SCT can have a similar flow on effect onto the brand image of the associated sport. It was further found, that when a sport consumer considered the brand benefits positively, the SCT can have a similar flow on effect onto the brand image of the associated sport. That is: in the on-field brawl it was evident that consumers offered more positive comments regarding the sport celebrity brand benefits, and they felt positive towards the brand image of the associated sport. However, when the consumer considered the brand benefits negatively, the transgression had a similar flow on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. That is: the on-court outburst, sexual misbehaviour and doping scenarios seem to have a negative impact on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. It is further possible that the impact further translated on the sport brand image. The findings showed the on-court outburst, sexual misbehaviour and doping scenarios affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sport. It may thus be possible to suggest that the brand benefits and the impact on the brand image of the associated sport may have a direct relationship. In addition, the sexual misbehaviour and doping scenarios received the highest number of negative comments relating to the brand image of the sport. These factors were included in the final conceptual model.

The analysis suggested, see Figure 5.2 that consumers considered the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT, to have further brand effects. The brand effects that occurred because of the SCT, included an impact on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and their sport. Specific research propositions and themes were tested in this chapter

through NVivo analysis and qualitative content analysis. To summarise, the methods applied to analyse the social media data collection to the research propositions supported the findings.

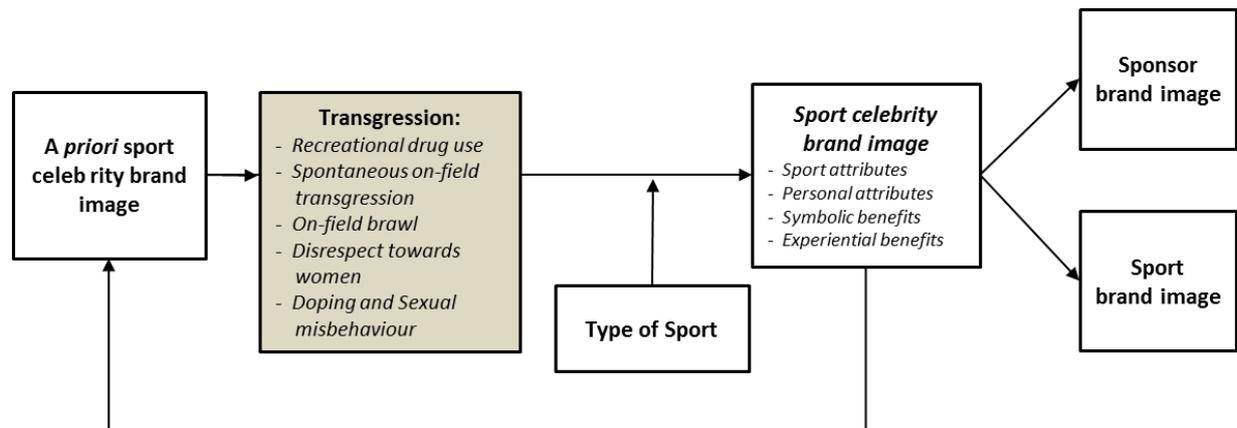


Figure 5-2 Revised model on the impact of a Sport Celebrity Transgression (SCT) on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity's brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport

Chapter 6 Discussions, Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported the results of the analysis of data gathered for the major study of this thesis. This chapter will draw conclusions and implications based on these results. Since all research has limitations, this chapter also addresses the limitations of this study as it may facilitate future research strategies. Finally, future research directions are discussed to conclude this thesis.

Chapter 1 commenced with a quote from previous work in marketing communication referring to celebrity transgressions indicating “erratic behaviour that offends customers is too much of a risk for a company to hazard....This is the biggest fear of executives involved in advertising and almost impossible to control” (Miciak & Shanklin, 1994, p. 57). As celebrities are increasingly being used as part of a sponsorship programmes (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008), it is suggested that sport celebrity transgressions (SCT) needs to be examined and tested, to determine the effects of the celebrity transgression (Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008).

Inspired by these studies, this thesis suggested four research propositions and several themes were developed. The study found that sport celebrity transgressions do have an impact on consumer’s’ perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, and the research propositions are largely confirmed. To investigate the effects of an SCT, the sport celebrity brand image, the characteristics of an SCT (off-field and on-field), type of sport, sponsor brand image and the sport brand image, are included in the research propositions. Specific research propositions to be addressed in this programme of research were:

- P1:** A Sport Celebrity Transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an a priori state.
- P2:** The Characteristics (off-field or on-field) of the Sport Celebrity Transgression will impact on whether and how consumers adjust their perceptions of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image following that transgression.
- P3:** The consumer’s’ perceptions of the Type of Sport, will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.
- P4:** When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the:
 - P4a:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity’s Associated Sponsors.
 - P4b:** Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity’s Associated Sport.

In Chapter 1, the research objectives were outlined in Section 1.2 and a brief discussion of the increasing importance of sport sponsorship was presented to set the scene for this research. The importance and justification for the research was discussed in terms of the lack of prior research in the area of an SCT and brand image transfer (Section 1.3). A two-stage qualitative research design was proposed as the most suitable to address the research purpose (Section 1.4). These stages consisted of: Stage 1: focus groups (Section 1.4.2), and Stage 2: social media data collection (Section 1.4.3). The scope of the thesis was

delimited to consumers that participate in online discussion forums relating to sport celebrity transgressions (Section 1.5).

Following this, Chapter 2 reviewed the literature relating to the research objectives and identified gaps in the theory. This chapter commenced with an introduction of the sponsorship literature (Section 2.2), and then moved onto a discussion of the different sponsorship mechanisms (Section 2.3). The conceptual foundation for the research was then outlined, particularly considering the sport celebrity brand image, and the importance of the sport celebrity brand image during sponsorship (Section 2.4). The conceptual foundation provided an illustration of the specific set of sport celebrity's brand associations that contributed to an *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. The key themes relevant to sport celebrity transgressions and how they related to the sport celebrity brand image were also introduced in this section: Sport Celebrity Brand Image; Sport Celebrity Brand Attributes; Sport Related Brand Attributes, Personal Brand Attributes, Sport Celebrity Symbolic Brand Benefits, and Sport Celebrity Experiential Brand Benefits. The combined discipline areas of sport celebrity brand image and the sport celebrity transgressions, with specific reference to the characteristics (off-field and on-field) of the transgression, were then discussed to justify their relevance in sports sponsorship (Section 2.5). Following this, the impact of the type of sport was discussed in relation to the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image (Section 2.6). This was followed by an explanation of the negative brand image transfer process (Section 2.8), followed by the development of a number of propositions and a conceptual model (Section 2.9). Conclusions for the chapter were then drawn (Section 2.10).

Chapter 3 presented the focus group methodology and the findings of the focus groups. The methodology was designed to inform the theory generation process, and to assist in the identification of themes appropriate for inclusion in the conceptual model. The chapter commenced with an explanation of the conceptual discussion and relevant research paradigm (Section 3.2), followed by a discussion on the rationale and objectives for the research programme (Section 3.3). This was followed by an explanation of the research design for this study (Section 3.4). After discussing the research design of this study, the focus group methodology was explained (Section 3.5), and the focus group findings were presented (Section 3.6). This was followed by a discussion of the results from the focus group study (Section 3.7).

Chapter 4 presented the social media data collection methodology of this study. The methodology was designed to enable the inclusion of real-time data from consumer generated content. The chapter commenced with an overview of social media data collection (Section 4.1), followed by an explanation of the data sampling applied in this study (Section 4.2). This was followed by a discussion on the data collection (Section 4.3), before moving on to a description of the data analysis (Section 4.4). The steps in this study's social media data collection were explained (Section 4.5), and the decisions that impact on the quality of this research followed (Section 4.6). Conclusion for this chapter where then drawn (Section 4.7).

Chapter 5 reported the results of the social media data collection. The chapter commenced with a discussion on the development of the conceptual model and research propositions of Study 2 (Section 5.1). From this, the scenarios of the different sport celebrity transgressions were grouped into whether they were off-field or on-field (Section 5.2). This section provided the results of the preliminary analysis, which included the development of a list of codes and abbreviations, and the grouping of social media data into themes (Section 5.3). The following section explained the grouping of comments into terms used in the social media data collection (Section 5.4). The chapter concluded with a presentation of

the results per research proposition (Section 5.5), and a discussion on the conclusion of the findings, and the presentation of the revised conceptual (Section 5.6). Finally, in this last chapter, conclusions were drawn for each of the research propositions (Section 6.2). The findings from Chapter 5 will be compared to the literature. Particular reference is made to the contributions of the research in understanding the research purpose (Section 6.3). The chapter will conclude with implications of the findings for theory, methodology and practice (Section 6.4), followed by the limitations of the research, and directions for future research (Section 6.5). This chapter concludes with a summary of the study (Section 6.6).

6.2 Conclusions regarding each proposition

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of SCTs on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and of the sport. A conceptual model indicating the relationships among these constructs were proposed. Results of the NVivo analysis generally support the four research propositions. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the research propositions and their results.

No.	Research Propositions and Themes	
P1:	A Sport Celebrity Transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an a priori state.	
Themes	a) Sport related brand attributes b) Personal brand attributes c) Symbolic brand benefits d) Experiential brand benefits	SUPPORTED SUPPORTED SUPPORTED SUPPORTED
P2:	The Characteristics of the Sport Celebrity Transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the Sport Celebrity Brand Image, following that transgression.	
Themes	a) The off-field characteristic of the sport celebrity transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression. b) The on-filed characteristics of the sport celebrity transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression.	SUPPORTED SUPPORTED
P3:	The consumer's' perceptions of the Type of Sport, the celebrity belongs to, will moderate the relationship between a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the Sport Celebrity Brand Image.	
Themes	Negative comments Positive comments	PARTIALLY SUPPORTED
P4:	When a Sport Celebrity Transgression causes consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity's Brand Image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the: a) Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sponsors; b) Perception of Brand Image of the sport celebrity's Associated Sport.	
Themes	Sponsors should continue to support the sport celebrity Sponsors should discontinue support to the sport celebrity Negative comments relating to sport and an SCT Positive comments relating to sport and an SCT	SUPPORTED

Table 6-1 Results of NVivo Analysis

(Source: developed for this study)

Conclusions regarding each of these propositions will now be drawn by briefly summarising the results of each proposition and explaining these results in relation to earlier findings from stages one and two of this research.

6.2.1 Proposition 1

To address the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state, Proposition 1 applies:

P1: A sport celebrity transgression will cause consumers to reconsider the Sport Celebrity Brand Image from an *a priori* state.

The results of this study are in agreement with P1. The results in Chapter 3 and 5 showed that four dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image, namely ‘sport related brand attributes’, ‘personal brand attributes’, ‘symbolic brand benefits’, and ‘experiential brand benefits’ were considered when assessing the sport celebrity brand image, following a transgression. The results showed that an SCT would cause consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state.

It was found that consumers valued specific brand attributes when evaluating an *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. This finding links with research that indicated the image of the celebrity consisted of specific brand attributes, such as expertise (Magnini et al. 2010). Brand attributes such as ‘credibility’, ‘attractiveness’, ‘trust’, ‘expertise’, and ‘role model ability’ are found to increase the effectiveness of the celebrity during a sponsorship campaign (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt Jr 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009). These brand attributes can further be grouped into product and non-product related brand attributes (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). When applied to the sport celebrity, the ‘expertise’, ‘skills’ and ‘performance’ of the sport celebrity, could have translated to the product related brand attributes of the sport celebrity, as they contributed to the performance of the sport celebrity on the field of play, and referred to in this study as sport related brand attributes. The celebrity’s ‘credibility’, ‘attractiveness’, ‘trust’ and ‘role model ability’ related to those attributes that were external to the performance of the celebrity, and might have represented the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image.

The findings further indicated that consumers evaluated the *a priori* sport celebrity brand image in terms of the following brand benefits; ‘admiration’, ‘identification’, ‘internalisation’, ‘positive emotions’, ‘entertainment’, and ‘excitement’ (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). As ‘admiration’, ‘identification’ and ‘internalisation’ relate to a sport entity’s symbolic brand benefits (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008); this study grouped these terms accordingly. The following terms were grouped as negative emotive responses; such as, ‘abandoned’, ‘annoyed’, ‘betrayed’, ‘deceived’, ‘disappointed’, ‘sad’, ‘shame’, and ‘shocked’. The following terms were grouped as positive emotive responses; such as, ‘forgiveness’, ‘love’, and ‘sympathy’. The following terms were grouped as neutral emotive responses; such as, ‘who cares’, ‘none of our business’, and ‘leave him alone’. Thus, an SCT caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image from an *a priori* state. However, it was also found that consumers not only considered the *a priori* sport celebrity brand image when an SCT occurred, consumers also noted a specific perception towards the four dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image. These additional findings are presented next.

It was evident in the focus groups and social media data collection that SCTs affected negatively on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. It was further found that the impact of SCTs on the four dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image varied. Research Proposition 1, are now presented according to how SCTs affected on the four dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image.

a) Sport related brand attributes

The focus group findings and the social media data collection indicated that the majority of SCTs affected positively on consumer's' perceptions of the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise). From a total of 85 comments, 69 comments were positive, and 16 comments were negative. This finding links with research done in the entertainment industry that shows that the celebrity chef's (Martha Stewart) high level of expertise is unaffected by a transgression (Premeaux 2005). The difference in the outcome might have been depended on the value consumer attributed to the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. For example, when a consumer valued the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image, and the SCT affected on the role model ability, the SCT might have no impact on the sport celebrity brand image. However, when a consumer valued the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image, and the SCT have a negative impact on the expertise, the SCT might have a more negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of this finding, this thesis suggests the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, depends on the value consumers attribute to the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise) of the sport celebrity brand image.

These findings may have a profound impact on the sport celebrity effectiveness in marketing communication. The literature in Chapter 2 stated that a celebrity who is considered to be an expert is found to be more persuasive in a sponsorship association, owing to their high levels of expertise (Eisend & Langner 2010). The theory further shows that a celebrity with a high level of expertise has a positive influence on consumer's' intentions to purchase the product (Erdogan & Drollinger 2008; Maddux & Rogers 1980; Ohanian 1990; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009). When a SCT has the ability to impact on the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image, it might have further affected on the consumers intentions to buy products that associated with the sport celebrity brand image. Furthermore, expertise is found to impact on the consumer's' identification with the sport celebrity (Maddux & Rogers 1980), and therefore, when expertise was negatively affected, the consumer's level of identification with the sport celebrity might have been negatively affected.

b) Personal related brand attributes

The focus group findings and the social media data collection indicated that the majority of SCTs affected negatively on consumer's' perceptions of the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. From a total of 195 comments, 163 were negative comments, and 32 were positive comments. That was, a high number of consumers described the sport celebrity brand image as unattractive, untrustworthy, and not being a role model.

These findings may have a profound impact on the sport celebrity's effectiveness as spokesperson in a marketing communication campaign. The findings indicated that SCTs affected negatively on the attractiveness, trust and role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image. The theory supports the notion that celebrities are more persuasive when they are highly attractive and trustworthy (Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Ohanian 1990) and they have more influence over the consumer. This may suggest that SCTs have a direct effect on

the persuasiveness of the sport celebrity. The level of persuasiveness may further lead to fewer influence over the consumer, and, as an end result, impact negatively on the effectiveness of the marketing communication campaign. The impact on attractiveness, trust and role model ability will now be discussed.

Attractiveness, or physical attractiveness, was not mentioned in the comments of sport consumers in the social media data collection. However, the literature review in Chapter 2 indicated that 'attractiveness' is also measured in terms of 'similarity', 'familiarity' and 'liking' (Erdogan 1999; Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Maddux & Rogers 1980). Findings in the social media data collection indicated that sport celebrity transgressions affected on the 'likeability' of the celebrity. This finding links to research done by Charbonneau and Garland (2005) that indicates that likeability is defined as the fondness of the celebrity owing to their behaviour. On the basis of this finding, this thesis suggests the difference in the outcome of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, may have depended on the value consumers attributed to the attractiveness (likeability) of the sport celebrity brand image.

This finding may have consequences for the use of the sport celebrity brand image in marketing communications campaigns. Further research shows that the more attractive the celebrity is the more effective the celebrity is as a spokesperson for sponsor organisations (Eisend & Langner 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez & Haytko 2009). This may mean that if an SCT affected on the likeability (attractiveness) of the sport celebrity, it may have a negative impact on the celebrities' abilities to be an effective spokesperson. Attractiveness is also found to impact positively on the identification and admiration of the sport consumer with the sport celebrity brand image (Premeaux 2005). When an SCT has the ability to negatively impact on the attractiveness of the sport celebrity brand image, it may result in lower levels of consumer's' identification and admiration of the sport celebrity brand image.

The results further showed the trustworthiness of the sport celebrity brand image was negatively affected by SCTs. The findings showed that when the trustworthiness of the celebrity was negatively affected by transgressions it affected negatively on the believability of the celebrity. Focus group findings indicated that consumers did not believe the sport celebrity's advertising messages, after transgressions occurred. This finding links to research done in marketing communications that indicates trust as the degree of confidence the consumer has in the celebrity's "...intensions and ability to make valid assertions..." (Ohanian 1990, p. 41). According to the theory trust leads to credibility and to the persuasiveness of the celebrity (Erdogan, Baker & Tagg 2001; Kamins 1990; Ohanian 1991). The theory further finds that celebrities that experience a high level of trustworthiness produce more positive consumer attitudes (Sternthal, Phillips & Dholakia 1978). This may well mean that SCTs that resulted in lower levels of trustworthiness may directly lead to more negative consumer attitudes towards the sport celebrity brand image. Trust is also found to be an important element in consumer's' expectations of relationship continuity with a brand (Dwivedi & Johnson 2013). When SCTs affected on the trust element it may have a negative impact on the long term relationship with the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of this finding, this thesis suggests the difference in the outcome of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, may depend on the value consumers attribute to the trustworthiness of the sport celebrity brand image.

The results showed that SCTs affected negatively on the role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image. This finding indicated consumers needed sport celebrities to set an example. These findings may be unique to sport celebrities, as other celebrities may not be so highly regarded as role models. This finding correlates with research that indicates that sport celebrities have a positive influence on young adult's behaviour (Dix, Phau &

Pougnnet 2010). It further links with the result that sport celebrities have important socialisation agents and could have significant influence on behaviours, positive word-of-mouth communication and brand loyalty (Dix, Phau & Pougnnet 2010). Therefore, when an SCT impact on the role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image, it may result in negative word-of-mouth communication, and negative behaviour of young adults. On the basis of this finding, this thesis suggests the difference in the outcome of the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, may depend on the value consumers attribute to the role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image.

In addition, previous research shows constructs such as celebrity's attractiveness, trustworthiness and credibility impact even further onto the consumers purchase intention, and attitudes towards the advertisement and organisation (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008; Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell 2002). When an SCT thus impacts on the sport celebrity's credibility, attractiveness, and trust, it may have further consequences, such as a negative impact on consumer's purchase intentions and their attitude towards the organisation. On the basis of these findings, this thesis suggests the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, may depend on the value consumers attribute to the attractiveness, trustworthiness, and role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image.

c) Symbolic brand benefits

The results from the focus group findings and the social media data collection showed that SCTs affected negatively on the symbolic brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. From a total of 57 comments, 51 comments were negative. That was, when SCTs occurred, consumers expressed lower levels of internalisation and identification with the sport celebrity brand image.

These findings may have a profound impact on the sport celebrity brand image and its effectiveness in marketing communication strategies. The literature review in Chapter 2 indicated that sport consumers who identify with the sport team are highly devoted and loyal towards that specific team (Madrigal 2001; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Zemliansky 2013). In order for a consumer to express a lower level of identification, it may mean that the consumer experienced higher levels of identification before the occurrence of the SCT. Previous studies indicate that committed consumers, with high levels of identification, are reluctant to change their perceptions of the person they feel committed to (Crosby & Taylor 1983; Funk & Pritchard 2006; Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999). If an SCT has the ability to impact on the consumer's level of identification, the transgression may have further consequences on the relationship between the consumer and the sport celebrity brand image. Identification with the individual sport celebrity is also found to result in a more positive brand image (Boyle & Magnusson 2007). It is thus possible that when an SCT resulted in lower levels of identification with the sport celebrity, it may result in lower levels of loyalty towards the sport celebrity brand image.

The importance of internalisation is previously proven in branding research (Kates 2004; Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt 2010). Previous research states that consumers find celebrities appealing in advertisements because of the celebrities match-up with consumer's values (Miciak & Shanklin 1994). A lower level of internalisation may mean that, after an SCT occurred, consumers might have experienced less conformity to the values of the sport celebrity. The conformity between the values of the consumer and the values of the celebrity are needed to ensure the effectiveness of an advertising campaign (Magnini, Garcia & Honeycutt 2010; Miciak & Shanklin 1994). The findings indicated that the sport celebrity's values should correlate with the moral demands of consumers.

Additionally, Kates' (2004) study suggests that the success of brands can be attributed to their legitimacy. That is, the way the brand embodies the culture, the meaning and the moral demands of the consumer. The sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT, may not have contributed to the consumer's identification with the sport celebrity, and may furthermore not be consistent with the consumer's' expectations of the values of the sport celebrity brand image. This may then ultimately affected negatively on the legitimacy of the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of this finding, this study suggests the difference in the outcome of the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, may depend on the value consumers attribute to the symbolic brand benefits.

d) Experiential brand benefits

The results from the focus group findings and the social media data collection showed that the impact of SCTs on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image varied. The findings indicated that SCTs caused consumers to experience negative, positive and neutral emotive responses. Negative emotive responses included feelings such as; 'abandoned', 'annoyed', 'betrayed', 'deceived', 'disappointed', 'sad', 'shame', and 'shocked'. Positive emotive responses included feelings such as; 'forgiveness', 'love', and 'sympathy'. Neutral emotive responses included feelings such as; 'who cares', 'none of our business', and 'leave him alone'. The findings showed that sport consumer's' comments consisted of roughly equal numbers of positive, negative and neutral emotions, when evaluating the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image following SCTs. From a total of 179 comments, 66 were positive comments, 62 were negative comments, and 51 were neutral comments. The differences in the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image depended on the value consumers attributed to the experiential brand benefits. For example, consumers who indicated they valued entertainment and excitement might perceive the sport celebrity brand image as positive; but consumers who indicated disgust and embarrassment, might perceived the sport celebrity brand image as negative, following SCTs.

These findings may have a profound impact on consumer's' loyalty towards the sport celebrity brand image, in that it involves the feelings of consumers. When consumers experience an emotional connection with a brand it has a direct impact on consumer's' decision making process (Roos & Friman 2007), and result in intensely loyal customers (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). Furthermore, intense loyal consumers can create mutually beneficial, identity-enhancing long-term relationships (Atkin & Block 1983; Funk & James 2006; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). When extensively loyal consumers view their brands as abandoning their emotional-branding promises, formerly loyal consumers can create a significant backlash towards the brand (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel 2006). When these SCTs impact on the experiential brand benefits it may impact on the consumer's' loyalty towards the sport celebrity brand image, and consumers may even experience a backlash that result in them abandoning the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of these findings this study suggests the difference in the outcome of the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image may depend on the value consumers attribute to the experiential brand benefits.

Proposition 1: Conclusion

Research proposition 1 states: an SCT will cause consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image, from an *a priori* state. The results of this study proposed that sport celebrity's brand attributes and the sport celebrity's brand benefits, affected on an *a priori* sport celebrity brand image. It was further found that when an SCT occurred consumers perceived the dimensions of the sport celebrity brand image from a certain perspective. These additional findings were noted and presented as part of the outcomes of this proposition.

Sport related brand attributes-expertise

The results showed that SCTs did not necessarily impact negatively on the sport related brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. It was evident that the majority of SCTs resulted in positive attitudes towards the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise). That was, consumers still perceived the sport celebrity in terms of an expert following SCTs. However, there were a number of SCTs that affected negatively on the sport related brand attributes. This difference in the outcome was depended on the value consumers attributed to the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image. That was, when consumers valued expertise, and the SCT affected on the expertise, there was a correlated negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. However, when the consumer valued expertise, and the SCT affected on the role model ability, there was no correlated negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of this finding, it is thus possible that the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image depend on the value consumers place on the sport related brand attributes, expertise.

Personal brand attributes-role model

The findings indicated that SCTs affected negatively on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. That was, consumers perceived the sport celebrity brand image as a liar and untrustworthy. This difference in the outcome was depended on the value consumers attributed to the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. That was, when consumers valued the personal brand attributes (i.e. role model ability), and the SCT affected on the personal brand attributes, there was a correlated negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. However, when the consumer valued personal brand attributes, and the SCT affected on the expertise, there was no negative correlated impact on the sport celebrity brand image. On the basis of this finding, it is thus possible that the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image depend on the value consumers place on personal brand attributes, attractiveness, trustworthiness and role model ability.

Symbolic and experiential brand benefits

The findings indicated that SCTs affected negatively on consumer's' perceptions of the symbolic brand benefits, and affected negatively, positively and neutrally on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. This difference in the outcome was depended on the value consumers attributed to the symbolic and experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. That was, when consumers valued the symbolic brand benefits (i.e. identification), and the SCT affected on the identification of the sport consumer with the sport celebrity brand image, the SCT may have a significant negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. The findings showed that sport consumer's' comments consisted of roughly equal numbers of positive, negative and neutral emotions, when evaluating the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, following that SCT. Therefore, this study suggests that there may be additional factors influencing the

impact of SCTs on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, such as the characteristics of SCTs. This will be further discussed in Proposition 2.

6.2.2 Proposition 2

To address the impact of the characteristics of an SCT on the consumer perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT, Proposition 2 applies:

P2: The characteristics (off-field and on-field) of the sport celebrity transgression will impact on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the sport celebrity brand image, following that transgression.

The following two characteristics of an SCT were investigated in terms of the characteristics identified in Chapter 2; as off-field or on-field. The data for this proposition was analysed according to qualitative content analysis that provided results across the different transgression scenarios, and the results were presented in Chapter 3 and 5. In this section the results were discussed according to each of the characteristics of an SCT and the discussion closes with a conclusion about the research proposition. The data suggested that the impact of SCTs on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image were influenced by the characteristics of the SCT.

Brand attributes and an SCT

The findings indicated that SCTs affected positively on the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise) of the sport celebrity brand image. However, the findings showed there were a number of SCTs that showed a negative impact on the sport related brand attributes. The differences in the outcome were based on the characteristics of the SCTs. It was found that some of the on-field characteristic of SCTs affected negatively on the sport related brand attributes. For example, in the Tiger Woods' off-field adultery scenario consumers still perceived the celebrity as an expert in golf, and in the Floyd Landis' on-field doping scenario consumers mentioned there is no sport achievement when doping occurred. On the basis of these findings, this thesis suggests off-field SCTs impact positively on the sport related brand attributes, and some on-field SCTs impact negatively on the sport related brand attributes. Furthermore, this study suggests that the characteristics of the SCT impact on consumer's' perceptions of the sport related brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, following that SCT.

Overall, the findings indicated that SCTs affected negatively on the personal brand attributes (i.e. role model ability) of the sport celebrity brand image. This thesis showed that consumers perceived the sport celebrity as untrustworthy, unattractive and dislikeable, when SCTs occurred. This results link to Premeaux (2005) views on the impact of a scandal on the celebrity chef's attributes, where it is argued that when a celebrity is caught up in a transgression it affects their credibility, attractiveness and trust. The findings showed there might be one SCT characteristic that affected positively on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl scenario affected positively on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Interestingly, the on-field brawl scenario was the only SCT scenario that has a positive influence on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Therefore, this study suggests that the characteristics of the SCT impact on consumer's' perceptions of the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, following that SCT.

Brand benefits and an SCT

This thesis found SCTs affected negatively on the symbolic brand benefits (i.e. identification) of the sport celebrity brand image. The findings showed the impact of SCTs on the experiential brand benefits varied. Overall, the difference in the outcome of the findings indicated that the impact of SCTs on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image was dependable on the characteristics of SCTs. The findings of this proposition are now presented according to the off-field and on-field characteristics of SCTs.

a) Characteristic 1: Off-field transgression

Off-field transgression and brand attributes

The results of this study showed that off-field SCTs affected negatively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Off-field SCTs received more negative comments than positive comments referring to the sport celebrity brand attributes. It was found that consumers expected their sport celebrity's to be role models in their private lives. This finding links with research that shows that sport celebrities are perceived as role models to young adults (Dix, Phau & Pougnet 2010). More specifically, the following individual off-field transgressions scenarios were cross analysed in terms of the sport celebrity's brand attributes.

The two off-field SCT scenarios that indicated a negative impact on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand, were that of Tiger Woods' adultery and Matthew Johns' alleged group rape. Therefore, this study grouped these two scenarios into a new category, labelled sexual misbehaviour. This finding links with research that shows that accusations of rape will turn consumers totally away from the celebrity (Bailey 2007). The four off-field SCT scenarios that indicated a positive impact on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, were Michael Phelps, Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins' drug use and Brett Favre's sexting. It was evident that when drug use and sexting occurred, consumers still perceived the sport celebrity brand attributes as positive. Therefore, this study suggests grouping these scenarios into a new category, labelled the recreational drug use and sexting category. Based on these findings, it was evident that the impact of off-field SCTs on the brand attributes varied based on the type of off-field SCTs. Sexual misbehaviour (adultery and alleged group rape) was found to have a negative impact on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Recreational drug use and sexting have a less negative impact on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image.

Off-field transgressions and brand benefits

The results of this study suggested that overall, off-field SCTs affected negatively on the symbolic and experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. In particular, the findings indicated that sexual misbehaviour affected negatively on the symbolic and experiential brand benefits. The data showed Matthew Johns' alleged group rape, followed by Tiger Woods' adultery, affected negatively on experiential brand benefits, in that consumers experienced feelings of disgust and disappointment. Both these scenarios included sexual misbehaviour. Consumers also showed they did not admire the sport celebrity brand image anymore. In contrast, some off-field SCT scenarios were found to result in neutral experiential brand benefits. The data showed the Tiger Woods' adultery; Michael Phelps' marijuana use and Brett Favre's sexting had a neutral impact on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, in that consumers indicated they "do not care". Tiger Woods' adultery also received a high number of negative comments relating to the sport celebrity brand benefits, and was therefore grouped under the sexual misbehaviour

category, while Michael Phelps and Brett Favre's scenarios were grouped into the recreational drug use and sexting category.

Off-field transgressions: Cross scenario analysis summary

Based on these findings this study suggests that sexual misbehaviour impact negatively on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. The recreational drug use and sexting transgressions resulted in positive perceptions of the brand attributes, but indicated neutral feelings towards the brand benefits experienced. Therefore, this study suggests grouping the off-field SCTs into two new categories; including, recreational drug use and sexting, and sexual misbehaviour.

b) Characteristic 2: On-field transgression

On-field transgression and brand attributes

On-field SCTs affected negatively on consumers perceptions of the brand attributes, of the sport celebrity brand image. In particular, the findings indicated that the following on-field SCTs affected negatively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image: Floyd Landis' doping, Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl and James O'Connor's disrespect towards the team. The reason for this high number of negative comments might be contributed to the fact that James O'Connor had a clean image before the transgression, and it was as if consumer's' comments indicated that they did not expect doping and an on-field brawl from the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image.

In contrast, some on-field SCTs affected positively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The data showed that the following on-field SCTs affected positively on the brand attributes: Quade Cooper's on-field foul play and Serena Williams' on-court outburst. The results showed that Quade Cooper's on-field foul play received more positive comments than Serena Williams' on-court outburst, relating to their sport celebrity brand attributes. This might be contributed to the fact that these two scenarios occurred spontaneously during the course of the game.

On-field transgressions and brand benefits

The results of this study suggested that, overall on-field SCTs affected positively on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. In particular, the findings indicated that the on-field brawl affected positively on the experiential brand benefits, resulted in feelings such as excitement, entertainment and positive-word-of-mouth communication.

The findings further indicted that some on-field SCTs affected negatively on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. In particular, the data showed Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador's doping, and Serena Williams' on-court outburst resulted in negative feelings such as disappointment and disgust. It was further found that some on-field SCTs have a neutral impact on the experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. The data showed James O'Connor's disrespect towards the team received more neutral emotions (Who cares?). Based on these findings it was evident that the impact of on-field SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, was depended on the type of on-field SCT that occurred. The type of on-field SCTs may have been depended on whether it was spontaneous on-field misbehaviours (i.e. Quade Cooper and Serena Williams' scenarios); an on-field brawl (Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's scenario); and whether it was doping (Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador's scenarios).

Research proposition 2: Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicated that the off-field and on-field characteristics of SCTs affected negatively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The impact of the characteristics of SCTs on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image varied. It seems that the on-field characteristics of SCTs affected more positively on the brand benefits. It was evident that the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image was depended on the characteristics of the SCT. Therefore, this study grouped the different types of on-field and off-field SCTs into new categories, including; recreational drug use and sexting; spontaneous on-field transgressions; on-field brawl; disrespect towards the team; and sexual misbehaviour. The new categories are now presented.

a) Recreational drug use and sexting

The three SCT scenarios that included recreational drug use were that of Michael Phelps' marijuana use, Andrew Johns' drug use, and Ben Cousins' drug use, while sexting included the Brett Favre's scenario. It seems that recreational drug use and sexting affected positively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. All four transgressions resulted in consumers commenting positive comments relating to the sport celebrity's brand attributes. Consumer's' comments included quotes such as: "*Brett Favre is a ... good quarterback and that is all we need to know*" It was as if recreational drug use and sexting were consistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand attributes. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that recreational drug use and sexting impact positively on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand attributes.

There was, however, a difference in the comments relating to the impact of recreational drug use and sexting on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Recreational drug use and sexting resulted in consumers to offer more neutral comments referring to their brand benefits (e.g. "...who cares..."). The Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins drug use transgressions received slightly more negative comments than neutral comments regarding their brand benefits. As these numbers were very low, these two cases were grouped with the other recreational drug use scenarios. It is thus possible to suggest that recreational drug use and sexting result in consumers to feel neutral emotive responses towards the sport celebrity brand image.

b) Spontaneous on-field transgressions

The two on-field SCTs that happened spontaneous during the course of the game were that of Quade Cooper' on-field misbehaviour and Serena Williams' on-court outburst. Both these on-field SCTs affected positively on consumer's' perceptions of brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Consumer's' comments included quotes such as; "*To be honest Quade Cooper is a marvellous player, and despite what he did I think it could've been accidental he could have just slipped, cut him some slack. Also I am glad he created that little rivalry he caused all black players to lose their temper and whilst he created this distraction his team nailed the all blacks.*" This might be because the transgression occurred spontaneously on-field during the course of the game. It was however, possible that consumers accepted the two celebrities' misbehaviours more easily because they seemed to expect this misbehaviour from these individual sport celebrities. Quade Cooper and Serena Williams were known for their passionate and aggressive style of play, and therefore, the resulting positive comments regarding their brand attributes. It was as if spontaneous on-field transgressions were consistent with consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand attributes. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that spontaneous on-field transgressions impact positively on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand attributes.

There was, however a difference in the comments relating to the impact of a spontaneous on-field transgression on the brand benefits of sport celebrity brand image. The difference between these scenarios might be the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. Spontaneous on-field transgression in Australian Rugby Union resulted in more neutral perceptions of the brand benefits (i.e. *who cares?*), while in Tennis the spontaneous on-field transgression resulted in more negative perceptions regarding the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image *“I’ve always adored Serena, I think she’s best female player in the world, but I was dismayed....she went too far with the nasty behaviour”*. This difference in the impact of spontaneous on-field transgression on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image might thus be attributed to the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. This phenomenon will be investigated further in Proposition 3. It is thus possible to suggest that spontaneous on-field transgressions were not consistent with consumer’s’ expectations of the image of tennis, hence, the more negative comments toward the sport celebrity brand benefits. It was as if consumers expected spontaneous on-field transgressions in Australian Rugby Union but not in Tennis. It is thus possible to suggest that the impact of spontaneous on-field sport celebrity transgressions on the sport celebrity brand image varied, and depend on the type of sport the celebrity associated with.

c) On-field brawl

The on-field brawl between Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart affected negatively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The on-field brawl resulted in consumers commenting negative comments relating to the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image (e.g. *“they are no role models”*). It was as if an on-field brawl was inconsistent with consumer’s’ expectations of the sport celebrity brand attributes. Therefore, this thesis suggests that an on-field brawl impacts negatively on consumer’s’ perceptions of the sport celebrity brand attributes.

There was, however, a difference in the comments relating to the impact of the on-field brawl on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. An on-field brawl received more positive comments relating to the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Consumer’s’ comments indicated that they believed the brawl created positive word-of-mouth communication. Consumer’s’ comments included quotes such as; *“At the end of the day it all shows passion and mate ship, and healthy rivalry between two strong clubs”*; *“Bring back the biff”*; and *“what a fantastic sport”*. Interestingly, this was the only SCT that resulted in such a high number of positive comments in relation to the brand benefits. It seemed those consumer’s’ experience positive emotive responses when an on-field brawl occurred. Therefore, this thesis suggests that an on-field brawl results in consumers to experience positive emotive responses such as excitement and entertainment. These findings indicated that the characteristic (on-field brawl) influenced the impact of SCT on the sport celebrity brand image.

d) Disrespect towards the team

The SCT scenario that involved disrespect towards the team was that of James O’Connor’s. The disrespect towards the team affected negatively on consumer’s’ perceptions of the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The huge negative impact might be because consumers perceived James O’Connor as having a positive brand image. O’Connor was the face of Wallaby rugby, used as ambassador in most of their advertisements, in the year before the scandal. It was as if the disrespect towards the team was inconsistent with consumer’s’ expectations of the sport celebrity brand image. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that disrespect towards the team impact negatively on consumer’s’ perceptions of the sport celebrity brand attributes.

There was, however, a difference in the comments relating to the impact of the disrespect towards the team, on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. The disrespect towards the team resulted in more neutral comments regarding the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. Consumer's' comments included quotes such as; "*No big deal, I do it all the time*" and "*who cares about this?*" It is thus possible to suggest that disrespect towards the team result in consumers to experience neutral emotive responses. Therefore, this study suggests that the characteristic (disrespect towards the team) of SCTs impacts on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image.

e) **Sexual misbehaviour and doping**

The two SCTs that involved sexual misbehaviour were that of Matthew Johns' alleged group rape and Tiger Woods' adultery, and the two SCTs that involved doping were that of Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador. These scenarios received the highest number of negative comments regarding the sport celebrity's brand attributes and brand benefits. Alleged group rape received the highest percentage of negative comments, followed by adultery and doping. Consumer's' comments included quotes such as; "*Floyd Landis is an admitted liar and cheat*"; "*His (Tiger Woods) image is being erased and people don't like being used or lied to*" and "*What Johns did was morally wrong and he is no role model*". It is as if sexual misbehaviour and doping are inconsistent with consumer's' expectations of the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that sexual misbehaviour and doping have a negative impact on the sport celebrity brand attributes.

Furthermore, the findings showed sexual misbehaviour and doping affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand benefits. Alleged group rape received the highest percentage of negative comments, followed by adultery and doping. It is thus possible to suggest that sexual misbehaviour and doping result in consumers to experience negative emotive responses. Consumer's' comments included quotes such as; "*...Landis is a disgusting human being...*"; "*He (Matthew Johns) is not a respectful person...he has to go....he is a disgusting man...*" and "*Tiger is a disgrace*". It is as if consumers do not expect sexual misbehaviour and doping from the sport celebrity brand image. These findings indicated that the characteristics (sexual misbehaviour and doping) of an SCT affected on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. When these transgressions were analysed further it was evident that sexual misbehaviour and doping resulted in the highest number of negative comments referring to their sport celebrity brand attributes and benefits. It is thus possible to suggest that consumers regard sexual misbehaviour and doping as the most serious sport celebrity transgressions.

This study added to the existing body of knowledge on SCTs five new groups of SCTs. This study categorised consumer's' comments pertaining to the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image into the following groups: 1) recreational drug use and sexting, 2) spontaneous on-field transgressions that happened during the course of the game, 3) on-field brawl, 4) disrespect towards the team, and 5) doping and sexual misbehaviour. The impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, depended on whether the SCT was consistent with the consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand image, therefore, each SCT resulted in different outcomes. The outcome also depended on the type of sport the celebrity belonged to, and investigated in the next proposition.

6.2.3 Proposition 3

To address this element, Proposition 3 applies:

P3: The consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport, will moderate the relationship between a sport celebrity transgression and the sport celebrity brand image.

The results of this study are in agreement with P3. The results from the qualitative content analysis and NVivo analysis showed that the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport did not necessarily moderate the relationship between an SCT and the sport celebrity brand image. The findings of Proposition 3 indicated that within the same type of sport, the SCT (*on-field brawl*) affected positively on the sport celebrity brand image, and a SCT (*alleged rape*) affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image. However, Proposition 2 indicated a difference in the influence of *Spontaneous On-field SCTs* on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. *Spontaneous On-field SCTs* were found to impact negatively on the brand image of tennis, but did not have an impact in rugby. It seems that the type of sport did not always moderate the relationship between the SCT and the sport celebrity brand image. The impact of the type of sport on consumer's' perceptions, does not link to research done in sport marketing, which indicated that consumers become normalised by the transgression in sport (Connor & Mazanov 2010), and are therefore, less likely to consider the transgression in a negative context.

This thesis adds to the current body of knowledge on the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, by showing the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport; might have moderated the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, depending on the characteristics of the SCT. For example, when spontaneous on-field SCT occurred, the type of sport influenced the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, but when sexual misbehaviour and doping occurred, the type of sport had no influence on the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The fourth proposition investigated whether consumer's' perceptions of the SCT have a flow-on effect on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport.

6.2.4 Proposition 4

To address this element, Proposition 4 applies:

P4: When a sport celebrity transgression causes consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity's brand image negatively, there can be a flow-on effect to the:

P4 a) Perception of brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors.

P4 a) Perception of brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sport.

The results of this study are in agreement with P4. The results from the qualitative content analysis and the NVivo analysis showed that when an SCT caused a consumer to respond negatively in relation to the sport celebrity brand image it could have translated to the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport. This negative impact on the sponsors and sport has been borne out in research done by Hughes and Shank (2005), and Solberg, Halstad and Thoring (2010). These studies indicate that an SCT impacts on the stakeholders in sport. Another study emphasises the issue of corruption in sport as affecting sponsors and managers (Hill 2010). Studies focusing on the negative impact of an SCT on their sponsors were done by Westberg et al. (2008) and Wilson et al. (2008). These studies find that sport managers and sponsors perceive an SCT as having a negative impact on their sponsors and sport, but failed to investigate the perceptions of consumers. A recent study that investigates the perceptions of consumers, done by Doyle, Pentecoste and Funk (2013) indicates that the SCT

can impact on the associated sponsors, but failed to use a real sport celebrity in the investigation. Another study in marketing communication shows that the sport celebrity's fit with the product, based on their level of expertise, significantly affects the celebrity's associated brands (Amos, Holmes & Strutton 2008). This may suggest that when an SCT impacts on the level of expertise, it may have a further negative impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

This thesis added to the current body of knowledge on the impact of an SCT on their associated sponsors and sport. The findings showed that the impact of an SCT on consumer's perceptions of brand image of the associated sport was much more severe than the impact on their associated sponsors. Consumers tend to offer more comments towards the brand image of the associated sport than they did towards the brand image of the associated sponsors when an SCT occurred. The data further indicated that an SCT affected negatively on consumer's perceptions of the brand image of the celebrity's associated sponsors and sport. This finding links with research done by Westberg, Stavros and Wilson (2008) and Doyle, Pentecoste and Funk (2013) who indicate that the SCT can impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors. The data were further analysed, and, in particular showed that the impact on the brand image of the associated sport depended on the characteristics of SCTs.

a) Sexual misbehaviour and doping

The findings of this study indicated that sexual misbehaviour and doping have a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors. The Tiger Woods' adultery scenario resulted in more negative comments relating to the impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors, than any other SCT, followed by Matthew Johns' alleged group rape scenario that received the second highest number of negative comments.

The data showed that sexual misbehaviour and doping have a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. In particular, the results showed that sexual misbehaviour and doping might have affected negatively on the sport celebrity's brand benefits. Matthew Johns' alleged group rape, received the highest number of negative comments relating to the impact of the alleged group rape on the brand image of the associated sport. Therefore, this study suggests alleged group rape affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sport, and resulted in consumers to experience negative emotive responses, such as disgust. Furthermore, within the Matthew Johns scenario consumers indicated that the National Rugby League was full of transgression, and referred constantly to the general negative attitude of the sport towards women, and how degrading the sport was towards women. It was evident that the consumer was tired of the many transgressions in the National Rugby League and they further indicated that all of these transgressions turned people away from the sport. This finding links with research done by Dimitrov (2008) that shows the National Rugby League harvested a negative image. The study argued that sexual misbehaviour was common in the National Rugby League, and it was further used as a 'bonding' tool between the individual players (Dimitrov 2008).

Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador's doping scenarios received the second highest number of comments indicating a negative impact of doping on the brand image of the associated sport. The findings showed that cycling has a negative image, some consumers even referred to the Tour de France as the Tour de Fraud. Within Cycling doping was considered as part of the sport, it was as if consumers expected athletes to dope because the Tour de France was insanelly difficult. The occurrence of previous doping incidents in the Tour de France might have been contributed to the negative brand image of Cycling. It was

thus possible to suggest that the number of previous transgressions might have affected on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image following a transgression.

These findings indicated that the sexual misbehaviour and doping might have affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sport and to a lesser extent the brand image of the associated sponsors. Other scenarios such as Serena Williams spontaneously on-field transgression, James O'Conner's disrespect towards the team, and Tiger Woods' adultery each received one negative comment relating to the negative impact on the brand image of the associated sport, but were considered too small a number to take into account. It was thus possible to suggest that when sexual misbehaviour and doping caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image negatively, there was a negative flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. Therefore, this study suggested that sexual misbehaviour and doping affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

b) On-field brawl

The data further indicated that when an SCT caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image positively, there was a positive flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. However, this statement was only partially true. Proposition 1 indicated that the on-field brawl affected negatively on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, and positively on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. From a total of 16 comments, 13 comments indicated an on-field brawl positively affected on the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. From a total of 56 comments, 49 comments showed the on-field brawl affected positively on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image.

The data further indicated that the on-field brawl was the only SCT that affected positively on the brand image of their associated sport. The positive impact on the sport celebrity's brand benefits seems to translate to the brand image of the associated sport. Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart's on-field brawl received 62 percent positive comments that showed that the on-field brawl affected positively on the sport the celebrity was associated with. There were, however, no comments made regarding the impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors. On the basis of these findings it was thus possible to suggest that when an on-field brawl occurs, it caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity's brand benefits positively, there could have been a flow-on positive effect on the brand image of the associated sport. It was thus possible to suggest there may be a link between the impact of SCTs on the brand benefits and the impact on the sport.

c) Recreational drug use and sexting

Within the recreational drug use and sexting scenarios, the data showed that these scenarios did not have a flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. According to Proposition 2, recreational drug use and sexting affected did not have a negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image, and consumers experiences neutral feelings (*i.e. who cares?*). However, there was no similar flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. The data showed those consumer's' comments referring to the impact of the SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport seemed to vary depending on the type of sport. Within football, recreational drug use affected negatively on consumer's' perceptions towards the associated sponsors. When recreational drug use occurred in football, consumers indicated the sponsors should discontinue their support to the sport celebrity.

Interestingly, recreational drug use in swimming caused consumers to reconsider the brand image of the associated sponsors more positively. Consumer's' comments indicated

that sponsors should continue to support Michael Phelps, even after his drug use. The difference in the outcome of this finding may also depend on other factors, such as the previous occurrence of the SCT. It was the first time Michael Phelps was caught using marijuana, while Ben Cousins was known previous drug offences. From a total of 13 comments, 9 comments indicated that sponsors should continue sponsoring Michael Phelps. It was thus possible to suggest that recreational drug use in swimming caused consumers to reconsider the sport celebrity brand image positively, and there was a positive flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors. The difference in the outcomes of these two findings may also be attributed to the culture of each sport.

The findings also indicated that recreational drug use and sexting scenarios affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sport. The Andrew Johns' and Ben Cousins recreational drug use, and Brett Favre's sexting, each received 2 to 3 negative comments regarding the impact on the brand image of the associated sport. As the number of comments was low, the impact was not considered to be that severe. Interestingly, Michael Phelps recreational drug use was the only transgression in this group that did not receive any comments relating to the impact of the transgression on the brand image of the associated sport (Swimming). There were no comments made that referred to the impact of recreational drug use on the sport celebrity associated sport (Swimming). Within the spontaneous on-field transgressions and the disrespect towards the team, there was low numbers of comments referring to the sport celebrity's brand image and the sport the celebrity was part of, and was not considered for further analysis.

Based on these findings, it was evident that sexual misbehaviour and doping affected negatively on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, and they have a further negative impact on the associated sponsors and sport. It was further found that on-field brawl affected positively on the brand benefits, and has a positive flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sport. Next, the conclusions about the research purpose are discussed.

6.3 Conclusions about the research objectives

The purpose of the research programme was to develop a conceptual model that included constructs that influenced consumer's' perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. In addition, this research programme further included the role of the different characteristics (off-field and on-field) of SCTs and the type of sport. Specific objectives to be addressed in this programme of research were:

1. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the sport celebrity brand image.
2. To investigate the influence of the characteristics of sport celebrity transgression on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image.
3. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the celebrity's associated sponsor brand image.
4. To investigate the impact of sport celebrity transgressions on the celebrity's associated sport brand image.

In Figure 2.4 (Chapter 2) the proposed conceptual framework for this study was presented. The framework presented likely constructs that would be relevant in a study of the sport celebrity brand image and an SCT and was created from a conceptual perspective. The results of the propositions influenced the initial framework and although some minor changes were made according to the findings of the propositions, the results of the focus groups and social media data collection, confirmed and expanded the initial conceptual framework. The final and revised conceptual framework for this study was presented in Figure 5.2 (Chapter 5).

In the original conceptual framework it was proposed that consumer's' assessed the sport celebrity brand image in terms of a specific set of brand attributes and brand benefits, but that it was not clear how or whether consumers might perceived these valued brand attributes and brand benefits, following SCTs. Furthermore, it was not clear whether the different characteristics of the SCT might have affected on consumer's' perceptions of the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. The final model provided clarity on the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image, and indicated that when the sport celebrity was involved in an SCT, the SCT affected on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image.

6.3.1 Sport celebrity's brand attributes

The model suggested that when the sport celebrity transgressed, consumers valued the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, differently. The model indicated that SCTs did not seem to have a negative impact on the sport related brand attributes of the celebrity. Consumers in this study were able to differentiate whether the sport star was still a good athlete, and still attained high levels of expertise despite of the transgression. The only type of sport celebrity transgression that seemed to impact negatively on the sport related brand attributes was doping. Consumers indicated "there is no sporting achievement when doping occurred". Consumers further indicated that off-field SCTs affected negatively on the sport celebrity's personal brand attributes, the consumer especially, perceived the celebrity as untrustworthy, dislikeable and unable to be a role model. These issues have important implications for the sport celebrity brand image in sport sponsorship. These two types of celebrity brand attributes influenced the original framework on the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. It was noted that the results contributed to the knowledge on sport celebrity transgression by indicating the consumer perceived the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity's sport related and personal brand attributes differently, depending on the value consumers placed on these brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image. The expanded conceptual framework identified the constructs of the sport related and personal brand attributes important to the consumer when the sport celebrity is involved in transgressions.

6.3.2 Sport celebrity's brand benefits

The model also suggested that the impact of SCTs on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image varied. The model indicated that when the sport celebrity was involved in an off-field SCTs, consumers perceived the symbolic brand benefits as negative, and consumers indicated that their admiration for the sport celebrity ended. However, when the consumer considered the sport celebrity's experiential, following an SCT, the consumer expressed positive, negative and neutral emotive responses. It seemed that consumers differed in their perceptions of the sport celebrity's experiential brand benefits on more or less equal proportions. Consumers expressed positive emotive responses by indicating that the on-field SCTs were entertaining and exciting, and consumers expressed negative emotive

responses by showing that the off-field SCTs were disgusting, distasteful and disappointing, and consumers showed neutral emotive responses towards some off-field SCTs, such as marijuana use. The model showed the difference in the impact of SCTs on the brand benefits, were dependent on the value consumers attributed to the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, following the SCT. The fact that this study found that consumer's' comments consisted of positive, negative and neutral emotive responses, showed that consumers were divided on the impact of an SCT on a sport celebrity brand image. This might indicated that other factors might have affected on consumer's' perceptions.

6.3.3 Characteristics (off-field and on-field) of a Sport Celebrity Transgression and the impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

The model provided clarity on the impact of the characteristics of SCTs on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following that SCT. The model showed consumers evaluated the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image on the basis of the characteristics of SCTs. The findings showed that the characteristics of SCT can be categorised into the following groups; *Recreational Drug use and Sexting*, *Spontaneous On-field Transgressions*, *On-field Brawl*, *Disrespect towards the Team*, *Doping* and *Sexual Misbehaviour*. The model further provided clarity on how these new categories of SCTs might have affected on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image.

The model indicated that when *Recreational drug use and Sexting* occurred, consumers still perceived the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image as positive, while the brand benefits were perceived as neutral. *Recreational drug use and Sexting* seemed to be consistent with the consumer's' expectations of the sport celebrity brand image. However, it was found *Recreational drug use and Sexting*, affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sport.

When *Spontaneous On-field Transgressions* occurred, consumers perceived the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image as positive, but the impact of *Spontaneous On-field Transgressions* on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, depended on the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. *Spontaneous On-field Transgressions* in rugby resulted in neutral emotive responses (who cares), while it resulted in negative emotive responses in tennis (disgusting). Therefore, the model indicated the impact of SCT on the brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image, may be influenced by the type of sport the celebrity belonged to.

When *On-field Brawl* occurred, consumers perceived the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image negatively, while the brand benefits were overwhelmingly perceived as positive. It seemed that consumers considered the *On-field Brawl* as inconsistent with their expectations of the brand attributes, but consistent with the brand benefits they experienced. This meant that while they judged the SCT they still found it entertaining. The *On-field Brawl*, was the only SCT that affected positively on the brand image of the associated sport, and could even resulted in positive word-of-mouth communication. In addition, the *On-field Brawl*, was the only SCT that showed a positive impact on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image.

When *Disrespect towards the Team* occurred, consumers perceived the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image as negative, while the brand benefits experienced were neutral. It seemed that consumers perceived the *Disrespect towards the Team* as inconsistent with their expectations of the sport celebrity brand attributes. There was no impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport recorded.

When *Doping* and *Sexual Misbehaviour* occurred, consumers overwhelmingly perceived the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image as negative. *Doping* and *Sexual Misbehaviour* affected negatively on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. In addition, *Sexual Misbehaviour* was the only category of SCTs that affected negatively on the symbolic brand benefits (i.e. identification) of the sport celebrity brand image. *Doping* is the only SCT that affected negatively on the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise) of the sport celebrity brand image. It seems that *Doping and Sexual Misbehaviour* were inconsistent with consumer's' expectations of the brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, and inconsistent with the expectations of the brand benefits experienced.

6.3.4 The influence of the consumer's' perceptions of the type of sport

The model further provided clarity on the influence of the type of sport on consumer's' perceptions of, the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image. In particular, consumers did not consider the type of sport when assessing the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The two most prominent findings indicated that the SCT affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand image, regardless of the type of sport. For example, National Rugby League received a high number of positive and negative comments referring to the type of sport and the SCT effects. The difference was based on the characteristics of the transgression. The alleged group rape was found to have a negative impact on the brand benefits and the on-field brawl to have a positive impact. However, it was also found that the same SCT have a different impact on tennis and rugby. Spontaneous on-field SCTs affected negatively on the tennis brand image, but not on the rugby brand image. It might be possible that the alleged group rape was considered to be so negative that the type of sport did not matter to the consumer. Therefore, this thesis suggested that the influence of the type of sport on the relationship between the SCT and the sport celebrity brand image, might have been depended on the characteristics of the SCT. However, when spontaneous on-field SCTs occurred, the type of sport may have an influence on the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image.

In sum, the key outcome of this research is that an SCT affected on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. The SCT did not necessarily impact negatively on the sport related brand attributes (expertise, skills, performance), but was found to impact negatively on the personal brand attributes (credibility, attractiveness, trust, role model ability) of the sport celebrity brand image. SCTs further affected negatively on the symbolic brand (admiration, identification, and internalisation) benefits experienced by the consumer, when off-field SCTs occurred. The impact of SCTs on the experiential brand benefits varied. The impact of SCTs on the experiential brand benefits resulted in negative emotive responses, positive emotive responses and neutral emotive responses. A further outcome of this study was that the characteristics of transgression affected on whether and how the consumer adjusts their perception of the sport celebrity brand image, following a transgression. It was found that when an SCT occurs, the characteristics of the transgression itself might also impact on consumer's' perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image. It was further shown that SCTs could be grouped into: recreational drug use and sexting, spontaneous on-field transgression, on-field brawl, disrespect towards the team, sexual

misbehaviour and doping. Furthermore, the study indicated that the type of sport might mitigated how a consumer perceived the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The study showed that when an SCT occurred, it could have a flow-on effect on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. The difference in the outcome of the findings was dependable on the characteristics of SCTs. The findings discussed in Section 6.3 have implications for theory, for methodology and practical implications. These implications are considered next.

6.4 Implications for theory, methodology and practice

The findings of this study draw attention to a number of important implications for theory on the importance of the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT. The discussion of the implications of this study is presented in three sections: the first section addresses the implications of the results for theory, the second addresses the implication for methodology and the third focuses on the implications for practice

6.4.1 Implications of the results for theory

Developing theory about the Sport Celebrity Brand Image, following an SCT

Current sport celebrity research has focused more on the positive brand image of the sport celebrity, and shows that celebrities are highly valued because of their high levels of attention, interest and profit generation (Gupta 2009). Therefore, sponsor organisations align their products and services with these brand images, believing that the message delivered will achieve significant attention and recall from consumers (Erdogan & Drollinger 2008; Ohanian 1991). Furthermore, consumer attitudes toward these brand attributes and brand benefits are based on their uniqueness and favourability (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler 2008). When celebrities transgress, the meanings associated with their brand attributes and brand benefits may change. It may even impact on the uniqueness and favourability of a specific brand association. Although emerging themes in research suggest that attention to potentially negative sponsorship issues is increasing (Pope, Voges & Brown 2009; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008), studies investigating the potentially negative impact on the consumer's' evaluations of the various brand attributes and brand benefits, of the sport celebrity brand image, have received strikingly less attention. This lack of research represents a gap in branding literature, where there is little evidence to guide brand managers after the occurrence of an SCT.

This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge on the sport celebrity brand image, by indicating that consumers value different types of brand attributes, following SCTs. The thesis finds that overall SCTs did not seem to have an impact on the sport related brand attributes (i.e. expertise), but appeared to have a negative impact on the personal brand attributes (i.e. role model ability), of the sport celebrity brand image. Perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image may be formed using the sport celebrity's brand attributes as evaluative criteria: whether the sport celebrity was perceived as an expert in sport, or whether the sport celebrity was perceived as a role model. This difference in perceptions of the impact of SCTs may depend on which brand attribute is valued by the consumer, and may result in consumers having different responses to the impact of SCTs. For example, if the consumer values the role model ability of the sport celebrity brand image, and the role model ability is affected by the SCT, then the SCT may have an overwhelmingly negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image. In contrast, when the consumer values the expertise of the sport celebrity brand image, and the role

model ability is negatively affected by the SCT, then the SCT may not have a negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image.

This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge on the sport celebrity brand image, by indicating those consumer's' value different types of brand benefits, following SCTs. This thesis find that symbolic brand benefits are negatively affected by SCTs, while the experiential brand benefits are experienced as positive, negative or as neutral. Therefore, perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image may be formed using the sport celebrity's' brand benefits as evaluative criteria: whether the sport consumer values symbolic and/or experiential brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. For example, some consumers experience symbolic brand benefits such as identification when they associate with the sport celebrity, while other consumers may experience some experiential brand benefits, such as excitement.

Developing theory on the Characteristics of a Sporting Celebrity Transgression (SCT)

The characteristics of the transgression have been investigated by researchers and they identified the characteristics of transgression as off-field and on-field (Summers & Johnson Morgan 2008; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008). These aspects of transgression have been considered and judged in this study, and the characteristics are combined and investigated in terms of the sport celebrity brand image in a specific type of sport. The implication and contribution of these two combined characteristics were that they provided a framework to understand the extent of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image in a specific sport. However, this thesis has operationalised several scenarios and found that the grouping into off-field and on-field SCTs may be developed further.

The thesis added to the body of knowledge on SCTs, by indicating that the characteristics of SCTs may be further grouped into six more refined types of SCTs. The implication of this finding is that it expanded the understanding of the impact of certain types of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image and the sport brand image. Using the six types of SCTs as an explanation of how consumers re-evaluate sponsorship after the occurrence of an SCT, it is conceivable that consumer's' responses may differ based on the types of SCT occurring. Perceptions of the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, using the different six types of SCTs as evaluative criteria may have different results. This study suggests consumers may respond differently to the effects of an SCT based on the following types of SCTs: *Recreational drug use and sexting; Spontaneous on-field transgressions; On-field brawl; Disrespect towards the team; and Doping and Sexual misbehaviour*. For example, in the context of sport sponsorship activity, a consumer may assess the impact of an SCT on the brand image in different ways based on the type of SCT. First, some consumers may perceive enhancement drugs to impact negatively on the sport celebrity brand image, but not necessarily recreational drug use. Further research into the effectiveness of sponsorship during an SCT, can yield much insight into the type of SCTs and their impact on consumer's' perceptions when a transgression occurred.

Developing theory on the impact of a Sporting Celebrity Transgression on the Brand Image of the associated Sponsors and Sport:

Consumer's' perceptions on the sport celebrity brand image, following a transgression have important implications in terms of gauging the effectiveness of the sport celebrity brand image during sponsorship. A unique association between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image is created through the brand image transfer process (McCracken 1989). The importance of brand image has been increasingly recognised in sponsorship studies because consumers use heuristic decision processes, including reliance

upon the brand image of the sport celebrity, for evaluative purposes. Most theorists would expect that an SCT could negatively impact on the sport celebrity brand image, and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

Using the sport celebrity brand image as an explanation of how consumers re-evaluated sponsorship, after the occurrence of an SCT, it was conceivable that consumer's responses can be developed on the bases of the value they attributed to the match-up between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image. This study found that when consumers valued the role model attribute of the sport celebrity brand image, and an SCT affected on the role model ability of the sport celebrity, the effects of the SCT might have transferred to the brand image of the associated sponsors. For example, consumers indicated Tiger Woods is no role model anymore, and sponsors should discontinue their relationship with the celebrity. However, when consumers valued the sport celebrity's expertise, the SCT seemed to have no further effects on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors. The difference of the impact of SCTs on the brand image of the associated sponsors, may be whether the SCT impacts on the match-up attribute between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image. Sponsors that have chosen to match-up with the expertise of Tiger Woods, may have been largely unaffected by the SCT, while sponsors that aligned with the role model ability of Tiger Woods may have been negatively affected by the adultery. It may also be the reason why Gatorade withdrawn their sponsorship from Tiger Woods, while Nike continued to sponsor the star. Therefore, this thesis contributes to sponsorship theory, the impact of SCTs on the match-up attribute between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image. The thesis finds that the impact of the SCT on the brand image of the associated sponsors, depend on whether the match-up attribute between the sport celebrity brand image and the sponsor brand image, was affected by the SCT. Therefore, perceptions of the impact of SCTs on the brand image of the sponsors may be formed using the following evaluative criteria: whether and how consumers value the match-up brand attribute between the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of the sponsors, following an SCT.

The thesis contributes to knowledge on branding in sport, and indicates the effects of *Sexual Misbehaviour*, *Doping*, *Recreational Drug Use*, and the *On-field Brawl* on the brand image of the associated sport. The thesis found that perceptions of the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport, following SCTs, may be formed by whether and how consumers valued the different types of SCTs. The thesis results showed the following types of SCTs affected negatively on the brand image of the sponsors and sport.

Sexual Misbehaviour and Doping affected negatively on the sponsor brand image and the sport brand image. *Recreational drug use and sexting* elicited a negative impact on the brand image of the sport (although the number of comments were relatively low), and indicated no impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors. However, *Recreational drug use* showed no impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors in swimming (Michael Phelps), but indicated a negative impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors in football (Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins). This may be attribute to the frequency of the SCTs occurring in the lifetime of the sport celebrity.

In contrast, the *On-field brawl* elicited a high number of responses indicating a positive impact on the brand image of the sport. *Disrespect towards the team* and *Spontaneous On-field SCTs* have no impact on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport.

This study found that the impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image, and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport, might be depended on the different types of off-field and on-field SCTs, the type of sport, and the value consumers attributed to the match-up brand attribute during sponsorship.

6.4.2 Implications of the results for methodology

Along with the theoretical implications, this study also has implications for methodology. The findings and contributions relating to methodology will now be briefly addressed:

Method for assessing the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT in a specific sport

The ethical problem of investigating a real SCT was challenging, therefore a new method for investigating an SCT was developed in this study. The method of assessment of an SCT developed for this study provided a significant contribution to the methodology literature. This method was the first attempt to develop a model that included different types of SCTs and their impact on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of their associated sponsors and sport. It further provided a step-by-step guide on how to conduct social media data collection, in an environment that described reality. Furthermore, during this study the researcher took account of the real-time responses of consumers on social media while at the same time minimised the role of the researcher in the data collection. The implication of this development was that it expanded the knowledge on social media data methodology.

This study added to the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour by investigating the responses of consumers to SCTs. Although researchers are increasingly recognising the impact of an SCT on managers and media representatives (Hughes & Shank 2005; Westberg, Stavros & Wilson 2008; Wilson, Stavros & Westberg 2008), the primary target for sponsorship activity is still the consumer (Grimes & Meenaghan 1998). Therefore, the present research elected to focus on the impact of an SCT on perceptions of individual consumers. Previous research that included consumer's' perceptions in their study did not include a real SCT scenario in their investigation. Research conducted by Doyle, Pentecoste and Funk (2013) investigate the impact of SCTs by including a fictitious sport celebrity in their analysis. Using a fictitious sport celebrity has a different outcome of results (Till & Shimp 1998). Therefore, this thesis contributes to knowledge the perceptions of consumers, while investigating real SCT scenarios using real time data.

Real findings from real sport celebrity transgressions

The difficulties relating to assessing the sport celebrity brand image in a specific sport that is involved in an SCT could be solved by investigating the real sport celebrity in an experimental setting, however, that was ethically not possible without identifying the celebrity. The outcome of this situation was to investigate a large number of *real* consumer's' comments about a *real* sport celebrity transgression that already occurred and played out in social media. This research design addressed a contemporary issue, an SCT in real time, and provided results from real consumers that went online by their own choice and offered information freely about issues that concerned them. This study's implications for practice will be discussed next.

6.4.3 Implications of the results for practice

Further implications of the results of the study relate to implications for practice. This study was applied to consumers in online discussion boards, and the results provided specific contributions to this sector that is currently under researched. The implications for practice that this study provides are its contribution to the management of different types of SCT. Managers may now be more aware of the impact of different types of SCTs on the brand image of the sponsors and of the sport. It is also possible to develop different response strategies for each type of SCT.

The implications for both brand managers and sport management is that different types of SCTs did matter in the assessment of whether an SCT affected on the sport celebrity brand image. There was unanimity among consumers that off-field SCTs affected negatively on the personal brand attributes of the sport celebrity brand image, and this may have further effects on the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport. Efforts by brand managers and sport management to minimise the likelihood of celebrities engaging in off-field SCTs will protect the integrity of the sport brand.

Prediction derived from the findings indicated that brand managers and sport management have much concern with some on-field SCTs, while less cause for concern when other types of on-field SCTs occurred. In the latter situation, consumer's' expectations of the type of SCT and the type of sport may insulate the brand from any negative impact.

There was unanimity among consumers that off-field SCTs, sexual misbehaviour, affected negatively on the symbolic brand benefits, such as the admiration and internalisation of the consumer with the sport celebrity brand image. Brand managers and sport management should ensure that the values and morals of the sport they support should be upheld and portrayed by their sport celebrities. These values and morals of the sport and the sport celebrities should further match-up with those of the sport consumer. The literature in marketing communication indicates that when there is a match-up between the values of the celebrity and the values of the brand they are endorsing, the marketing communication campaign is more effective (Gurel-Atay & Kahle 2010). The results of this study showed that when there is no match-up between the values of the celebrity and the values of the consumer the sport celebrity transgression may have a further negative impact on the sport the celebrity is part of. The results of this study showed that consumers regarded certain sport celebrity transgressions in conflict with their own values and images. The sport celebrity behaviours have to be aligned with the image of the sport they are active in. This contributes to creating awareness among sport celebrities, marketers and brand managers about the importance of the protecting the brand image of sport.

6.5 Limitations and future research

While there are significant contributions of this research study, all research contained limitations that must be accounted for. This section will identify issues that influenced the findings. The limitations relating to this study, and some suggesting for future research includes the following.

The results are based on consumer's' perceptions in an online discussion forum where the participants might have respond without any identification. That mean this study was not able to determine the demographic characteristics of the consumer, such as age, gender and culture. Further investigation into the impact of demographic factors of the consumers, such as gender and age, on their perceptions of SCT effects can be investigated as part of future research.

Furthermore, as indicated in Stage 1 of this research design, the level of commitment of the consumer towards the sport celebrity may have a further impact on consumer's perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image, following an SCT. Further investigation incorporating the level of consumer commitment on the impact of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image and partners, may be valuable.

Further application of the proposed conceptual model for further investigation is needed to offer a better understanding of the social media data collection procedures developed in this study. Although this study indicated that SCTs affected on the sport celebrity brand's image and the brand image of the associated sponsors and sport, it did not provide empirical evidence of the relationship between the constructs. Further quantitative research is necessary to provide more insight into this phenomenon.

In addition, the findings provided a snap-shot of the sport celebrity transgressions that occurred at a specific time, which meant that not all types of transgressions were included in this study. For example, it would be interesting to investigate whether match-fixing, that have the same characteristics as doping, also have the negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image and the brand image of their associated sponsors and sport, that doping had.

Further, this study found SCTs affected differently on the brand attributes and brand benefits of the sport celebrity brand image. It was found that when an SCT affected negatively on the sport celebrity brand attributes, consumers noted that sponsors should discontinue their support to the sport celebrity. In contrast, when the impact of the SCT on the brand attributes was positive, consumers noted that sponsors should continue their support. The results of this study showed that there may be a link between the impact on the sport celebrity brand *attributes* and the impact on the sport celebrity's associated *sponsors*.

Furthermore, when the impact on the sport celebrity brand benefits was negative, there is a negative flow-on effect on the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. These findings showed that there might be a link between the sport celebrity brand benefits and the impact on the sport celebrity's associated sport, following an SCT. It would be interesting to examine different types of SCTs, to determine whether the findings from this study hold strong on the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity's brand partners.

This study also focused on the impact of different characteristics of SCTs on the sport celebrity brand image and their associated sponsors and sport. It was found that doping and sexual misbehaviour had a significant negative impact on the sport celebrity brand image and their associated sponsors and sport. Further qualitative studies to support these findings are necessary in order to ensure a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Furthermore, this study found that spontaneous on-field sport celebrity transgressions affected on the sport celebrity brand benefits and their associated sport differently, pending on the sport to which the celebrity belongs. It would be interesting to examine the impact of spontaneous on-field sport celebrity transgressions on different types of sport. A quantitative study, focusing on the National Rugby League's negative image, especially in the field of disrespect towards women and what this mean for the future of the game is needed to ensure the future of this type of sport. Also, this study found that recreational drug use affected negatively on the type of sport to which the celebrity belongs. It would be interesting to investigate different sport celebrities and determine whether this finding from this study could be repeated in different types of sport. In relation to recreational drug use, further studies can also examine whether the frequency of the SCT can impact on consumer's perceptions of the sport celebrity brand image.

In addition, this study found doping and sexual misbehaviour affected negatively on the brand image of the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport. It would be interesting to investigate the consequences of this negative impact on the sport celebrity's associated sponsors and sport. Alternatively, a survey study examining consumer attitudes, in terms of affective, cognitive and very importantly their behavioural actions towards these sport celebrity transgressions.

Further investigation into streamlining social media data collection methodology in order to assess the sport celebrity brand image following an SCT, would provide a significant contribution to the management of brand images in sport. Although effective, the conceptual model in this study may be designed to fit more types of sports and more types of SCTs. These limitations have been identified and acknowledged, but these potential limitations do not detract from the significance of the findings and provide a basis for future research that will be discussed in the next section.

6.6 Summary

The main reason for conducting this study was to determine the impact of an SCT on the sport celebrity brand image. The theory-building research demonstrated that brand image consisted of brand attributes, benefits that impact significantly on the consumer attitudes, following SCTs. It showed that different types of SCTs may result in various outcomes. It also showed that, when SCTs occurred, the negative brand image transfer from the sport celebrity brand image to the sponsor brand image and sport brand image, depended on the different types of SCTs. This impact of the SCT on the sport celebrity brand image may further be mitigated by the type of sport the celebrity associated with, and the various characteristics of the sport consumer. The challenge for sport celebrities, sport managers and brand managers are to acknowledge the importance of the sport celebrity brand image in the sport and sponsorship industry. It was also important that the sport celebrity brand image match-up with the values of the sponsor brand image and the sport brand image. Only then can the different sports achieve its main purpose – to serve the customer through the maintenance of an acceptable sport celebrity brand image and a sport image.

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Appendix A Coding of Comments into themes according to the characteristic of the SCT (Off-field & On-field)

Construct	Participants' Comments	Themes	Sub-Themes	Type of SCT	Attitude
Brand Attributes	<p>Tiger Woods is a <u>great player</u>, and stuff happens in people lives, in their personal lives, and it should not affect his play or performance. (Male, Group 1)</p> <p>Tiger Woods is sponsored by Nike, he is a <u>good player</u> so the brand should be good as well, it must be a good brand for them to wear as well. (Female, Group 1)</p> <p>When the scandal is not sports related the celebrity is still a <u>good player</u> (Male, Group 2)</p> <p>Personal scandals do not affect my opinion of the sport star. I think all types of publicity are good. He is still a <u>good player</u> even if he commits to a sin. (Male, Group 2)</p> <p>Tiger Woods, is a <u>good sports man</u>, we are not interested in his personal live, will keep on watching the game while he is participating in the sport (Male, Group 4)</p> <p>Personal lives got nothing to do with the game, for example Tiger. They focus on personal lives while they should have focused on <u>his golf</u>. (Male, Group 1)</p> <p>On-field (enhancement drugs) scandal is really bad, I wouldn't watch the game then, because it reflects not pure talent (Male, Group 2).</p>	Sport Related Brand Attributes	<p>Great player</p> <p>Good player</p> <p>His golf</p> <p>Pure talent</p>	<p>Off-field</p> <p>On-field</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Negative</p>
	<p>Tiger Woods was a good <u>role model</u> he even has a church named after him. He should live up to those standards. (Male, Group 1)</p> <p>But they are <u>role-models</u> for kids. Kids bring pictures of their favourite sports people home where they read all their advice, and furthermore adhere to the advice sports people hand out. (Male, Group 1)</p> <p>Even if they don't want to be a <u>role model</u>, they have it and kids look up to them. They have the responsibility to be good it is part the price. (Male, Group 1)</p> <p>But young people look up to the sports star. Young people will start to act like these <u>role models</u> and it will affect them. Wouldn't watch game if you rape somebody it would show you support the scandal. (Female, Group 2)</p> <p>Andre Agassi used cocaine and it would have affected him badly. I don't think he is brave because he <u>lied</u> before and only came out now.(Male, Group 1)</p>	Personal Brand Attributes	<p>Role model</p> <p>Liar</p>	<p>Off-field</p>	<p>Negative</p> <p>Negative</p>

Construct	Participants' Comments	Themes	Sub-Themes	Type of SCT	Attitude
	<p>But if you excuse Tiger Woods then you could say that using drugs is ok because of the pressure to keep sponsors. I believe <u>character</u> is relieved under pressure. (Female, Group 2)</p> <p>Tiger said in an interview that his family comes first and it is important for him to keep up a very <u>clean image</u>, thus he is a liar. Don't like him because I cannot <u>trust</u> him. (Female, Group 3)</p> <p>Because they are celebrities they are expected to behave to a <u>higher standard</u> (Female, Group 4)</p> <p>It will however affect the sport person's <u>credibility</u> but not his performance.</p>		<p>Character</p> <p>Clean image, trust</p> <p>Standard</p> <p>Credibility</p>		
Brand Benefits	<p>But young people <u>look up</u> to the sports star. Young people will start to act like these role models and it will affect. Wouldn't watch game if you rape somebody it would show you support the scandal. (Female, Group 2)</p>	Symbolic Brand Benefits	Look up to him	Off-field	Negative
	<p>Very <u>disappointed</u> but I will still watch Tiger but in the back of my mind I will still be upset. (Female, Group 1)</p> <p>If Tiger endorsed brand I would still use it even with this scandal. I will be <u>disgusted</u> but will still watch him. (Male, Group 2)</p> <p>Tour de France the underdog won three years ago, but after a few days it was clear that the winner was doing performance enhancer drugs. I felt <u>betrayed</u> and though I watched something unethically. (Female, Group 1)</p> <p>If Serena Williams used enhancement drugs for example. I would feel <u>betrayed</u>, but I would still buy the product but wouldn't watch the game. (Female, Group 1).</p> <p>That is why he (Woods) is playing golf, he is playing for use to see his golf and not his personal life, he is playing to give us entertaining (Male Group 1).</p> <p>But I don't agree, she (Serena Williams) was <u>entertaining</u>, and it is frustrated to play at such a high level (Female, Group 1).</p>	Experiential Brand Benefits	<p>Disappointed</p> <p>Disgusted</p> <p>Betrayed</p> <p>Entertaining</p>	<p>Off-field</p> <p>On-field</p> <p>On-field</p> <p>Off-field</p> <p>On-field</p>	<p>Negative</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p>

(Developed for this study)

Appendix B The chosen SCT scenarios used in the main study

1. Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart

Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart are professional Australian Football League players of the 2000s. Both of these players are accredited for their high level of expertise in football. Blair was named the best rookie of the year at the Melbourne Storm club, and was named the man-of-the-match on several previous occasions. Glenn Stewart is an outstanding player in the Sydney Sea Eagles and was selected in the Kangaroos squad for the 2008 Rugby League World Cup. Stewart was voted the Second-Rower of the Year in 2008. (<http://www.couriermail.com.au/sport/nrl/blues-key-player-glenn-stewart-given-time-to-prove-fitness-for-state-of-origin-decider/story-e6frepbx-1226401483793>). However, both Adam Blair and Glenn Stewart were involved in an on-field brawl during the infamous “Battle of Brookvale”. The two players exchanged blows when they were representing Melbourne Storm and the Sydney Sea Eagles, respectively during the 2011 NRL Quarter Final. The pair continued to fight long after the referees had attempted to calm the players down. Four Manly players also participated in the one-on-one brawl that resulted in a further all-in brawl that lasted some minutes. Blair and Stewart were sent off and sin-binned by referee Shane Hayne. The incident resulted in further suspensions for both Blair and Stewart (Source:<http://www.theroar.com.au/2011/08/26/manly-beat-storm-as-brawls-erupt-video/> Viewed 30 Aug 2011).

2. Alberto Contador

Alberto Contador Velasco is a professional Spanish cyclist of the 2000s. Contador is known as a cyclist with high levels of expertise in the field of cycling. Contador is one of only five riders who won all three Grand Tours of road cycling. He was the winner of the 2007 Tour de France, and is widely considered to be the best climbing specialist and stage racer in the world. He further won races such as the 2008 Giro d’Italia, the 2008 Vuelta an Espana and the 2009 Tour de France (<http://au.eurosport.com/cycling/albertocontador>). Alberto Contador initially also won the 2010 Tour de France, only to be stripped of the title later after being found guilty of doping. He tested positive for the enhancement drug, Clenbuterol a drug that helps with breathing and weight loss. The urine test was taken on the second day of the Tour de France on 21 July 2010. He defended his actions by stating that he ate contaminated meat. The Spanish cycling federation suspended Contador for one year over his positive doping test in the race, and ended his contract with the renamed Team Saxo Bank.

(Source:<http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/news/latest/502866/contador-considers-quitting-cycling-due-to-doping-scandal.html>; Tuesday, 12 Oct 2010, Gregor Brown).

3. Andrew Johns

Andrew Gary Johns was a former professional Australian rugby league football player of the 1990s and 2000s. Johns was previously described as one of the best football players in Australia. Johns was the captain of the Newcastle Knights in the National Rugby League football team and participated in two premiership victories during 1997 and 2001. Johns played in 249 games for the Newcastle Knights and represented Australia in 2 World Cups and played in a further 21 Test matches for

the Australian side. He is often regarded as the best player of all time. He retired from rugby league in 2007 at the age of 32. Andrew Johns was awarded the Golden Boot Award and the Dally M Medal for best player more than once, and finished his career as the highest point's scorer in Australian premiership with 2,176 points (<http://www.rugbyleagueproject.org/players/andrew-johns/summary.html>).

However, Johns admitted taking recreational drugs for the past ten years. Andrew Johns was arrested for possession of an Ecstasy tablet outside London tube station on 26 August 2007 and spent five hours in jail. Johns, who retired because of a neck injury early in 2007, believed his use of illicit substances traces back to problems with alcohol and a battle with bipolar disorder, a mental disease he has carried most of his life but which was only diagnosed in 2004. Johns confessed to these charges on national television during The Footy Show four days after his London arrest (<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story>). Although this transgression happened during his career, it was included in this study as the transgression played out in the media only in 2007, when Johns admitted his earlier drug use.

4. Ben Cousins

Ben Cousins is a former professional Australian Football League (AFL) player during the 2000s. Ben Cousins was regarded as an athlete with high levels of expertise as a footballer. Cousins were a member of the West Coast Eagles and Richmond Tigers AFL clubs, and played a total of 270 games for them. During Cousins eleven years with West Coast, he won several of the league's highest individual awards including a Brownlow Medal, Most Valuable Player and a premiership medallion. He was further selected six times in the All-Australian Team and represented Australia in the International Rules Series. He further captained the West Coast's club champion for five seasons. However, Cousins football career was tarnished by off-field incidents concerning recreational drug use. The West Coast Eagles fined him on several occasions, terminating his contract in October 2007, and he was banned from the Australian Football League for one year. He returned to Richmond Football Club in December 2008, and he retired in 2010 (<http://www.news.com.au/national/ben-cousins-breaks-silence-on-drug-charge/story-fndo4eg9-1226421901902>).

5. Brett Favre

Brett Lorenzo Favre is a former professional American football quarterback of the 1990s and 2000s, and highly regarded as one of the best quarterback players. Favre was also perceived as a family man portraying a positive image towards fans. Favre was a quarterback for the Green Bay Packers, Atlanta Falcons, New York Jets and the Minnesota Vikings. He is the only player to throw for over 70 000 yards, over 500 touchdowns, over 300 interceptions, and over 10 00 pass attempts. Favre is the only player to win the AP Most Valuable Player three consecutive times (1995-1997). He retired from professional football on January 17, 2011 (<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/330132-why-brett-favre-is-the-greatest-nfl-quarterback-of-all-time>). However, while he was playing for the Minnesota Vikings, he was accused of 'sexting'. Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages and/or photographs between mobile phones. Favre allegedly sent voicemails and X-rated pictures to Jenn Sterger, who was then a sideline reporter employed by the New York Jets, while Favre played for that team. Up until the scandal, Favre conveyed a positive family man image and was married to his wife, Deanna, for 14 years. The

scandal has generated major media reaction in America (<http://www.thehollywoodgossip.com>).

6. Floyd Landis

Floyd Landis is a former American cyclist during the 2000s, highly regarded for his expertise in cycling. Landis turned professional in 1999 with the Mercury Cycling Team. In 2006, Landis won the first edition of the Amgen Tour of California, before going on to finish first in the 2006 Tour de France. However, Landis was stripped of his Tour de France victory and fired from his team after a drug-control test demonstrated the presence of a skewed testosterone/epitestosterone ratio during one of the Tour de France stages (<http://sports.espn.go.com/oly/cycling/news/story?id=5203604>).

7. Hansie Cronje

Hansie Cronje was a former professional South African cricketer and captain of the South African national cricket team in the 1990s. Cronje was regarded as a trusted player with accompanied high levels of expertise. Cronje has often been hailed as a brilliant leader of men. The South African cricket team lost just 11 of their 53 Tests with Cronje as captain and won 99 of the 138 one-day internationals with him at the helm between 1994 and 2000. Cronje made his first-class debut for Orange Free State against Transvaal at Johannesburg in January 1988, and played in eight Currie Cup matches plus being part of the Benson and Hedges Series winning team, scoring in one-day games on averaged of 60.12. Cronje was the captain of Orange Free State for the 1990-91 seasons, and he scored his maiden century for them against Natal in December 1990, and finished the season with another century and a total of 715 runs at 39.72. Cronje further appeared for Leicestershire where he scored 1301 runs at 52.04 finishing the season as the county's leading scorer. In 1997, Cronje played for Ireland as an overseas player in the Benson and Hedges Cup and helped them to a 46-run win over Middlesex by scoring 94 not out and taking three wickets. However, Cronje was involved in match fixing allegations in the late 200s. He admitted to accepting bribes from illegal bookmakers to influence matches. Cronje testified before South Africa's government-appointed King Commission probing corruption in cricket, and was banned from the game for life in October 2000 (<http://mg.co.za/article/2012-05-30-the-sullied-hero-who-died-young>).

8. James O'Connor

James O'Connor is a professional Australian Rugby Union player, who made his Australian rugby debut in 2008. O'Connor won the 'Rookie of the Year' on two occasions; first in October 2009 he took home the Emirates Western Force 2009 award, and was also named the Wallabies 'Rookie of the Year' in 2009. In 2010 he represented Australia on international test rugby level and was a top Tri Nations try scorer

(<http://www.rugby.com.au/wallabies/TheTeam/WallabiesProfiles/ProfilePage/tabid/1513/playerid/74/Default.aspx>). However, James O'Connor failed to attend the Wallabies Rugby World Cup official team announcement and squad photo of the 30-man squad at Sydney airport. The Australian Rugby Union suspended James O'Connor until Sunday 28 August 2011. The suspension meant O'Connor missed the Tri Nations decider against the All Blacks at Suncorp Stadium, and he was unavailable for selection in the Barbarians side to take on Canada at Skilled Park on

the Gold Coast. O'Connor was furthermore handed a \$10,000 suspension fine for his failure to attend the sport's proceedings (<http://www.ruggaworld.com/2011/08/22>).

9. John Hopoate

John Hopoate was former professional rugby league footballer who played for the Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles, Wests Tigers and Northern Eagles in the National Rugby League competition in the 1990s. Hopoate scored 21 tries during 1995 where he finished second in the top try-scoring table. However, his reputation became greatly marred by an on-field misdemeanour in 2005 and led to him being sacked from playing football. This transgression did not receive a large number of comments as it played out in the media long after the transgression occurred (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hopoate).

10. Matthew Johns

Matthew Johns was a professional Australian rugby league football player of the 1990s and 2000s. Johns is further a well-known media commentator on Australian media. Matthew Johns made his State of Origin debut in the opening match of the 1995 series. Johns played his first World Cup against Great Britain, South Africa and New Zealand. His next Test appearance was against Fiji during the 1996 season when Super League players were not considered for selection. Newcastle's grand final win against Manly in 1997, and provided Johns with his career highlight and he continued to be among the game's most resilient competitors at club level. Johns played in two Tests in 1999 - against Great Britain in the Tri-Nations competition and as five-eighth in the 22-20 win over New Zealand in the final. Johns' was forced to depart from the club at the end of the 2000 season because of salary cap restrictions and joined Wigan an English club for six month. In his return to Australia he spent his final season with Cronulla. Johns has since made his mark in the Sydney media with Channel 9 (<http://www.rugbyleagueproject.org/players/matthew-johns>). However, during 2009, Matthew Johns was accused of sexual misbehaviour that involved an alleged gang rape incident. The incident occurred when Johns was still playing for the Cronulla Sharks in 2002, but had been publicly revisited by the woman involved during 2009. The Cronulla Sharks is part of the National Rugby League in Australia. At the time the New Zealand police investigated the incident but no charges were laid. The alleged assault occurred on February 15, 2002. Johns said he had consensual sex with the woman seven years ago and he was upset that the woman was making the claims again. At the time it was known that three Sharks players were allegedly involved in the incident after a preseason game in Christchurch. None of the players were named publicly. The woman, whose identity is unknown, said she suffered psychologically as a result of the alleged assault, which she described as degrading. Johns apologised for the pain this scandal caused his family (Source: <http://www.theherald.com.au/news/local/news/general/matthew-johns-in-group-sex-scandal/1507880.aspx?page=9> visited 3 Aug 2011; Matthew Johns in group sex scandal; Jacquelin Magnay; 08 May, 2009). This transgression happened a few years ago, but was chosen for this study as it played out in the media only in 2009.

11. Michael Phelps

Michael Fred Phelps is a professional American swimmer of the 2000s. Phelps, at the height of the scandal, won 16 Olympic medals, 6 gold and 2 bronze in Athens in 2004 and won 8 gold in Beijing during the year 2008. He holds the record for the

most gold medals won in a single Olympics; his eight at the Beijing Games in 2008 surpassed Mark Spitz seven gold medals won in Munich in 1972. Phelps is regarded as the best Olympian swimmer of all time, by holding the all-time record for most gold Olympic medals (<http://ergonomics.about.com>). However, during 2009, Michael Phelps was caught using drugs. He used Marijuana at a private dinner party in South Carolina, and the incident was caught on camera. The anonymous person took the picture with a mobile phone and circulated it on social media. Through social media the damaging pictures were circulating fast and it attracted major media attention. Phelps was been banned from swimming from competition for three months, and his sponsor, Kellogg's, discontinued their support to the star (Source: Is the Michael Phelps Pot Scandal Justified? By: DivineCaroline).

12. Mike Tyson

Mike Tyson was a former American professional boxer. Tyson was the youngest boxer to win the WBC, WBA and IBF heavyweight titles at 20 years old. Tyson won the WBC title in 1986 and won the WBA and IBF titles after defeating James Smith and Tony Tucker. He was the first heavyweight boxer to simultaneously hold the WBA, WBC and IBF titles. He successfully defended the world heavyweight championship nine times. However, in November 1997 Tyson disqualified for biting off part of the ear of his opponent, Evander Holyfield. He retired from professional boxing in 2006 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Tyson).

13. Nick D'Arcy

Nick D'Arcy is a national-record holding butterfly swimmer from Australia. However, in 2008 he was removed from Australia's Olympic team owing to a violent assault on another swimmer in a bar, shortly after the Australian Olympic Trials. D'Arcy was prosecuted through the courts for assault and was also removed from Australia's team to the 2009 World Championships.

(<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/nick-darcy>).

14. Quade Cooper

Quade Cooper is a current professional Australian Rugby Union fly-half player. At an Under-19 level, Cooper represented Queensland and Australian Schoolboys. He broke the record for most Australian schoolboy caps. His first Super 14 try came when he first played for the Queensland Reds in 2007. As part of the Queensland Reds, he was awarded the 2010 Super 14 Player of the Year Award. During the 2011 World Cup in New Zealand, he was one of the main team members contributing representing Australia (<http://www.redsrugby.com.au/Reds/RedsSquad/PlayerPage/tabid/583/playerid/6/Default.aspx>). However, during a tri-nations game Quade Cooper engaged in on-field foul play against All Black Richie McCaw. Cooper was cited for striking McCaw, the captain of the All Blacks team, with his knee in his face during the second half of the 2011 Tri-Nations game. The charge was dismissed the Sunday morning after the incident and Cooper walked free after a 45-minute hearing dismissed the foul play charge (Source: Quade Cooper citing over knees to head of All Black Richie McCaw dismissed; Jim Tucker and Jim Morton; From: News Limited newspapers; August 28, 2011 9:15am).

15. Serena Williams

Serena Williams is a professional American tennis player. At the time of the scandal, Serena was ranked world no. 1 in singles on five separate occasions. She became the world no.1 for the first time in 2001 and regained this ranking for the fifth time in 2009. She is the only female who won over \$35 million in prize money. Her sport achievements consist of 29 Grand Slam titles, with 14 singles, 13 in women's doubles and 2 in mixed doubles. Williams ranks fourth in Grand Slam women's singles titles won, and won two Olympic gold medals in women's doubles. She is the first player to win 5 Australian Open singles titles during the open era (<http://www.wtatennis.com/player/serenawilliams>). However, during the 2009 American Open Williams was involved in on-field misbehaviour. The scandal occurred during the US Open semi-final against Kim Clijsters. Williams had an on-field outburst and yelled at an on-court official. She was fined \$10 500 for her angry on-court outburst (<http://www.womenstennisblog.com/2009/09/14/serena-williams-fined-10500-for-us-open-semifinal-scandal/>).

16. Tiger Woods

Tiger Woods is a professional American golf player of the 2000s. Woods, at the time of the scandal, won 74 official PGA Tour events, second only to Sam Snead and one ahead of Jack Nicklaus with 73 wins. Woods has further won 14 majors, second only to Jack Nicklaus. He has the lowest career scoring average in PGA Tour history. Tiger Woods is one of five players (Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player) to have won all four professional major Grand Slams, and Woods was the youngest to do so. Woods further won all four professional major championships in a row, known as the Tiger Slam. Woods kept an all-time record for most consecutive cuts make, with 142, at the 2003 Tour Championships (<http://www.databasegolf.com/players/playerpage.htm?samid=WoodsTig01>). However, during late 2009, Tiger Woods was involved in adultery. The scandal shocked the golf world as Tiger Woods was previously portrayed a family man. The scandal came to the media's attention when Woods was involved in an early morning car wreck. The incident happened late November 2009 and led to accusations of a string of extramarital affairs. Tiger denied the accusations but has since admitted to "transgressions" and issued an apology to his family in February 2010. Sponsors differed in their reaction to Woods' transgressions. Sponsors such as Nike and EA Sports kept on sponsoring the star, while sponsors such as Accenture, Gatorade and Gillette ended their relationship with the star. Nike is by far Woods' biggest sponsor with an annual contract of more than \$30 million for the golfer. Woods profits from the success of the company's golf division, and in 2008 sales for Nike Golf hit a record \$725 million (www.forbes.com; 06/17/2009: The world's highest-paid athletes. Kurt Badenhausen).