UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

New team identification: Sydney FC, a case study

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Certificate of Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

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Acknowledgments

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Publications arising from this project

Journal articles

Lock, D. (2008). Fan perspectives of change in Australia's A-League. *Soccer & Society, 10*(1), 109-123.

Lock, D.,Taylor, T., & Darcy, S. (2007). Fan identity formation in a new football club and a revamped league: The A-League. *Sport Marketing Europe* (1), 30-35.

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Lock, D. (2006). *The development of social identity in fans of a new sports team: Sydney FC, a case study.* Paper presented at the International summer school for young researchers: Sport, Globalisation and Cultural Diversity, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Lock, D.,Taylor, T., & Darcy, S. (2006). *Sport fan identity & the new kid on the block.* Paper presented at the European Academy of Sports Management (EASM), Nicosia, Cyprus.

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Lock, D. (2008). *In hope of déjà vu: Validating the sports spectator identity scale with fans of a new sport team.* Paper presented at the Sport Management Association of Australian and New Zealand (SMAANZ) - Raising the Bar: Promoting Excellence in Sports Management, Fremantle, Australia.

Abstract

This thesis explores the team identification of fans of a new sport team, using social identity theory. As there is limited research on fans of new sport teams, this study sought to redress this situation by seeking to *explain and measure new team identification.* Through investigating new team identification, this study extends current applications of social identity theory and understanding of fans of a new sport team. Additionally, by measuring new team identification, this thesis contributes a valid and reliable measure of the construct, and discovery of key themes driving the formation and development of new team identification.

A mixed-method research design was used to investigate the central thesis topic. A case study of members of a new sport team, Sydney FC, provided the sample population. The research design included two surveys, administered at the end of the new team's first and second seasons, respectively, in addition to twenty-one interviews undertaken to deepen understanding of new team identification. The Sports Spectator Identity Scale (SSIS) was used to measure new team identification and test for differences in identity strength based on participant characteristics.

Results indicated that three defining behaviours provided the basis for the formation of new team identification. These were termed: Football first, Origin and Occasion. Measurement of new team identification using the SSIS validated the model in a new team context; however, the value of victory and the identification of rival groupings did not relate strongly to the construct. Member identity strength was significantly influenced by age, salary, membership category and games attended. Five behaviours underpinned the development of new team identification; these were termed: Searching, Expression, Eagerness, Names and Faces, and Spruiking.

Social identity theory provided a useful framework to explore the formation and extent of new team identification. The formation of new team identification was strongly influenced by support of football, in this case. The implementation of the SSIS to measure new team identification extended its previous applications. Participant characteristics exerted a clear influence on the strength of new team identification. Members engaged in additional team-related behaviours as their new team identification increased and they developed multi-faceted and socially important bonds.

Stemming from the key thesis findings, the conceptual outcomes provided a significant contribution to current literature exploring members of new sport teams. Furthermore, the nuanced differences between identification with new and established teams provide a distinct agenda for future research into new sport teams.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

People choose to support, engage and identify with sporting teams for a number of reasons, while the theoretical premise that individuals are driven to achieve a positive self-image has framed much previous inquiry on this topic (Tajfel, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Identification with social groups has been shown to provide a conduit through which individuals obtain a positive self-image as a result of the reflected success of others (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). However, to date the majority of research in relation to sport fans has focussed on established sport teams with long-term histories.

Social identification with established sporting teams (established team identification) has been widely researched. This literature charts: the process of established team identity formation (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000); the process or career identification follows (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001); and includes scales designed to measure established team identification (Dimmock, Grove, & Eklund, 2005; Heere, 2005; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Research posits that the strength of established team identification can influence fan behaviour (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Specifically, strongly identified individuals are more likely to act in ways that support "their" team (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1990); to perceive fans of "their" team more positively than rival fans (Wann & Dolan, 1994); and possess greater objective knowledge of "their" team's statistics and history (Wann & Branscombe, 1995).

The existing theoretical and conceptual evidence relating to team identification explores sport teams with a documented history from which to draw. By design, this body of literature explores sporting teams with established players and a public perception derived from past performances, successes and failures. A new sport team competing in a new league operates in a different context due to

the lack of club history and public understanding it starts with. Despite the differences between new and established clubs, new sport teams and the identification their fans develop (new team identification) is, to date, under researched. James, Kolbe and Trail (2002) provided initial insight into the psychological connection that season-ticket holders of a new sport team (in an established professional league) formed prior to the club's first competitive season. However, new team identification includes emotional and behavioural characteristics in addition to psychological connection. The emotional and behavioural characteristics of new team identification receive less attention in the literature on new sport teams.

This research project explores new team identification in the new Australian A-League competition, which began in 2005 (Cockerill, 2005a). The A-League and teams were both completely new when the competition began (Lock, Taylor, & Darcy, 2008a). Specifically, the A-League provided an opportunity to investigate new team identification in a competition and club that had no performance history. Therefore, the reasons fans chose to support the A-League and the strength of their relationship provided a compelling arena for research. The following introductory chapter includes: a specification of the research problem; justification of the research topic; exploration of the methodology used to test identification with a new team; and a clarification of the key definitions and scope of this research project. Finally, the delimitations of scope, key assumptions and thesis outline complete this introductory chapter.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The scant literature on fans of new sport teams indicates a distinct research opportunity. This research project will contribute to the sport management literature by providing empirical evidence exploring new team identification in a new sport team context. Moreover, in building upon an insightful study of psychological connection to a new sport team, this research project elaborates on the purely cognitive approach to fan team bonds used previously (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002) by exploring affective and behavioural aspects of new

team identification. Therefore, by examining the formation, measurement, strength and development of new team identification, this study aims to expand upon current understanding of the construct. Framing the topic as described, the central research objective addressed by this research project sought to: *"Explain and measure new team identification."*

To address the central research objective, five subsidiary research questions were designed to frame the gathering and analysis of data. Specifically, the research questions explore:

1. Can social identity theory be profitability applied in a new team context?
2. What themes are salient in the formation of new team identification?
3. Is the SSIS a valid measure of new team identification?
4. How do demographic variables influence new team identity strength?
5. How does new team identification develop?

Each of the five research questions is embedded in the notion that new or established team identification with sporting teams forms from an initial stage of awareness (Funk & James, 2001). Therefore, an exploration of how new team identification forms provides an important precursor to the broader topic, which specifically investigates the measurement and strength of new team identification. This extends to consider whether demographic variables and nominal characteristics influence or display significant relationships with new team identification. Finally, the development of new team identification is canvassed. Following the investigation of new team identification and development, the satisfaction of research questions one to five provides the basis for a graphical representation of the key conceptual outcomes. The sparse existing conceptual understanding of new team identification underpinned an inductive approach to model development. The broader significance of the research problem, both theoretically and conceptually, follows.

1.3   Research Justification

The following justification frames precisely why the satisfaction of the central research objective and subsidiary questions defined above makes a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge exploring fans of new sport teams. The justification comprises five parts. First, the inclusion of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to theoretically frame this study of new team identification is justified. Second, the need to consider themes that influence the formation of new team identity is addressed. Third, the importance of determining a tool to measure new team identification in the context of existing literature is considered. Fourth, an agenda to address the development of new team identification is put forward. Finally, the need for further conceptual development pertaining specifically to fans of a new sport team is identified.

First, social identity theory has framed much of the literature investigating fans of established teams to date (Jones, 1998; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993; Wann, Royalty, & Roberts, 2000). A multitude of studies have been conducted on established sport teams; however, considerably less research has been published on new sport teams and the bonds that fans form with them. As a consequence, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) has not been applied in a new sport team context, despite a proliferation of authors utilising the theory in studies of established sport teams (Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann & Dolan, 1994).

The key paper, to date, on new sport teams (James *et al.*, 2002) explored the psychological connection of season-ticket holders. However, new team identification includes a broader exploration of the fan-team bond than this purely cognitive investigation. Through its use of psychological connection the study (James *et al.*, 2002) did not examine the emotional significance or behavioural aspects of categorisation with a new sport team. However, past research into established sporting teams has probed these important conceptual problems (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999; Sloan, 1989; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1995; Wann & Dolan, 1994).

Therefore, it seems that following from the myriad of studies using social identity theory to investigate established team identification (Jones, 1998; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993; Wann *et al.*, 2000) there is a clear agenda to apply social identity theory to explore new team identification. Therefore, through analysis of new team identification, not just psychological connection, this study will contribute to existing knowledge of fans of new sport teams.

Second, themes influencing the formation of established team identification have emerged from studies of established sport teams (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). However, existing literature on the formation of established team identification stems from North American sport teams and there is scarce understanding of how new team identification forms outside of this context. Specifically, there is scant literature outlining why a team with such brief history is relevant to those that identify as fans. This is an important area for research. Social identity theory posits that individuals attach themselves to groups which reflect positively on them (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, fans seek to achieve vicariously through the success of others (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976). However, in a context where the team maintains such a brief history, what leads to new team identification is unclear. Consequently, through a better understanding of how new team identification forms, this research project will provide an advancement of knowledge regarding the formation of new team identification.

Third, models of established team identification have not been tested with a new sport team. Therefore, the application of models of established team identification with new sport teams presents a quandary. By applying the Sport Spectator Identity Scale (SSIS) (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) to a new sport team, this study aims to test the suitability of a valid measure of established team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). James *et al* (2002) argued that the scale development for the SSIS pertained only to established sporting teams and was not a suitable model of new team identification. Instead, the authors used the SSIS to formulate cognitive connection items, which constituted their model of season-ticket holders' cognitive team bond (James *et al.*, 2002). The claim that applying the SSIS to a new sport team is disputed here, as testing is required to ascertain

whether the model measures new team identification. Furthermore, the use of a scale predicated on the existence of a sport team can provide a point of contrast between new and established sport teams, which is lacking in the literature to date. Stemming from the application of social identity theory, the aspects of the SSIS omitted by James *et al* (2002) pertaining to affective and behavioural facets of established team identification represent critical aspects of the theoretical framework and are tested here as a consequence.

Fourth, literature modelling the career or process development of established team identification and psychological attachment provide important information in relation to the development of fan-team bonds (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). However, James *et al* (2002) noted that the process of identity maturation or development in relation to a new sport team represents an important area for future research. Therefore, an opportunity exists to apply the conceptual and theoretical findings of previous studies of established clubs to determine whether new team identification develops. This agenda is pertinent as previous research of a new sport team provided only a one-off snapshot measure of psychological connection (James *et al.*, 2002). By exploring the development of new team identification following season one and two of a new league, this research project will probe how the fan-team relationship develops in a new sport team context.

Fifth, to date, James *et al* (2002) is the only study that has explored fans of a new sport team. However, this study was conducted in a new professional baseball team in an established American league. Previous studies conducted exploring new or relocated sport teams (James *et al.*, 2002; Kelley, Hoffman, & Carter, 1999; Lewis, 2001) provide an understanding of fans that identify with teams with a brief history. However, they have not explored new team identification in a new league. Kelley et al (1999), Foster and Hyatt (2007) and Lewis (2001), provide insight into relocated franchises in America; however, the process of relocation is fundamentally different to the 'big bang' appearance of a new sport team in a new league. Existing fans of a relocated entity may maintain an

affiliation, despite the relocation of the franchise to a different region (Lewis, 2001).

Actual new sport teams are required to develop a consumer market from the ground up. This need is even more pronounced in a new league, as the locality of a new team in an established league will, most likely, possess existing fans of the league. Therefore, understanding new team identification in a new league context provides an important area for conceptual and theoretical development. Consequently, a study of new team identification will contribute both conceptually and theoretically to existing literature on fans of new sport teams.

1.4 Research Design

The research design utilised to gather primary empirical evidence addressing the central research objective and subsidiary questions defined previously comprised a case study of a new sport team in Australia. A mixed-method approach provided a means to triangulate data and provide both breadth and depth to the research process. Utilising qualitative and quantitative methods deviates from the research tradition, which has focussed qualitatively (Armstrong, 1998; Dunning, 1988; Hughson, 1996) or quantitatively (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; James *et al.*, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993, 1995) on sport fans. Mixed-method research designs have proliferated in recent doctoral research, which seeks a fuller understanding of sport fandom (G. Crawford, 2004; Jones, 1998). Following recent doctoral research, a mixed-method research design is proposed and outlined for use in this research project.

Three empirical data-gathering stages formed the primary techniques to measure new team identification. First, an online survey was conducted at the end of the new sport team's first season. This survey measured the formation; measurement; strength of new team identification; and the influence of demographic variables and nominal characteristics on the fan-team relationship. Second, 21 in-depth interviews provided qualitative explanations to support, elaborate on and triangulate the season-one survey findings. The interview

process continued until a point of theoretical saturation was reached for primary themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Third, following season two of the A-League, to measure identity strength and the development of this relationship during the first two years of Sydney FC's existence, a second online survey was conducted with members. The second survey explored the same variables defined for the season-one instrument, as discussed above.

1.5 Definitions

Attempts to classify, conceptualise and theorise sport watchers use a myriad of terms and descriptions to define individuals that attend events or matches. As a result, a "potpourri of instruments and concepts exist" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 120); as such, a clear conceptualisation of terms used to define sport watchers is vital. Early definitions of sport watchers focussed on spectators and fans. As Pooley observed:

> a spectator of sport will observe a spectacle and forget it quickly, the fan continues his interest until the intensity of feeling toward the team becomes so great that parts of every day are devoted to either his team or in some instances, to the broad realm of sport itself (1978, p. 14).

Previous research has explained the scope of individual's involvement with sport teams. Pooley's (1978) contention that the spectator falls at one end of the scale and fans at the other has since been supported. Wann et al (2001) differentiate 'sport fans' and 'sport spectators', alluding to the investment that both would typically make. A spectator [sport consumer] is classified as such, through watching an event, either live or through the media, without a vested interest in the game. Sport fans, on the other hand, maintain a specific sport-based interest. Fans may not necessarily attend games, but they possess a specific affiliation with the team, or players that represent the team (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001a). Specifically, they are identified as 'fans'. In this research project the term fan is used to refer to conceptual findings drawn from prior research into individuals that watch or attend sport. In addition, the term 'member' is used to define the population sampled and researched during this project. Members are defined as such as they: *Paid to join the new sport team, thus categorising themselves as members of the club.*

The second distinction relates to the sporting landscape in Australia. In the antipodes, four codes of football (Australian Rules Football, Rugby League, Rugby Union and Association Football) compete for the title of 'football'. In the following chapters the term 'football' represents the sport Association Football, instead of soccer, for two reasons. First, football has been rebranded in Australia and concerted efforts have been made to shift from "ethnic soccer" to "mainstream football" (O'Neill, 2006). In 2004 the Australian Soccer Association became the Football Federation Australia, marking the shift in terminology in the antipodes at the game's elite level. Second, as the population sampled during this research project predominantly referred to the sport in question as 'football', to provide consistency and representativeness the term 'football' will be used to describe Association Football.

To expand on both initial classifications, a list of terms used during the following four chapters is given below. The primary definitions used in this research project are provided in three sections: First, terms referring to social identity theory; and second, terms referring to identification with a team; and third, terms referring to the support setting.

Table 1.1: Definition of key terms

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	MEASUREMENT
Social Identity terms		
Social identity	An individual's self categorisation as a member of a distinct group or category, along with the value they attach to this membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)	A realisation that the individual operates as a member of Sydney FC and the value that they attach to this bond
Social categorisation	A cognitive awareness of membership in a social group or category (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).	The degree to which members identify that they are fans of Sydney FC
Self-esteem	The positive or negative value connotation attached to group membership (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999)	The feeling of value ascribed from support of Sydney FC.
Self-concept	A set of beliefs and values that an individual holds about themself (Jones, 1998)	The set of beliefs and values Sydney FC members hold about themselves

In-group	Refers to the central social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)	Fans or members of Sydney FC
Out-group	Denotes relevant rival groupings (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)	Fans or members of Sydney FC's rivals.
Team Identification		
Established team identification	The psychological orientation of the self, such that the individual defines himself or herself as part of an established sport team (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998).	Not measured in this research project
New team identification	As above, but pertaining distinctly to a new sport team	The measurement of how strongly members of Sydney FC identify. Measurement taken using the SSIS
Formation of new/ established team identification	Key aspects leading to the formation of fans' new or established team identification	The key themes in the formation of members new team identification with Sydney FC
Development of new team identification	The degree to which new team identification increases or decreases	The measurement of how levels of new team identification develop in the first two years of Sydney FC's existence
Cognitive	An individual's understanding that they belong to a social group (Tajfel &Turner, 1979).	The extent that members of Sydney FC categorise themselves as supporters of the new sport team
Affective	The emotional significance and value an individual derives from their social categorisation (Tajfel &Turner, 1979).	The emotional significance and value Sydney FC members derive from their categorisation with the new sport team.
Behavioural	Actions or behaviours originating from social categorisation with a group.	The extent to which members of Sydney FC engage in behaviours to support Sydney FC.
The support setting		
In-ground support	Actual support for the new sport team within their home ground at games	Number of games attended by fans and their presentation in this setting
Out of ground support	Support for the new team outside of the home-ground setting	The degree to which fans of Sydney FC express their support for Sydney FC in everyday life.

1.6 Delimitations of scope

The three central delimitations of scope for this research project are defined as follows. First, this research project uses a case study of a single new sport team in a newly created league and does not explore new team identification across the entire competition. This investigation provides a case study of one new sport team, solely.

Second, the focus of the study is on members of a new sport team, not the entire fan-base. Individuals that have not paid to become a member of the club are outside the sample population selected for this research project. Members of the new sport team constituted a sample population which had invested money to

join and confirmed some level of affiliation with the new sport team. Furthermore, through sampling club members, the population studied was drawn from various areas of the new sport team's home ground. However, this sample population excluded fans that watched the new sport team but had not invested in club membership.

Third, the research process explores new team identification during the first two years of one team's existence. The research process addressed this specific period and did not gather data pertaining to new team identification before or after this timeframe. A two-year timeframe allowed for observations to be made regarding the development of new team identification. Following from the definition of the key delimitations, an outline of the study is provided below.

1.7 Project outline

The research project has a five-chapter structure, including Introduction, Literature Review, Research Design, Results, Discussion and Conclusions. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews pertinent literature exploring social identification and sport fandom. The review begins by presenting the theoretical framework, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), to position its central assumptions and theoretical positions to frame the literature on sport fandom. Following from the initial focus on social identity theory, existing literature exploring established team identity formation provides a point from which to understand why individuals become committed fans of sport teams. The initial review of literature exploring team identity formation is supplemented by recent studies exploring the process or career of fan-team bonds. Then, studies of established team identification frame the central topic of this research project. Literature specifically examining new sport teams and relocated franchises completes the review, followed by a definition of a clear agenda for research emanating from gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design implemented to examine new team identification. This chapter follows four stages. First, the paradigmatic approach

adopted to study new team identification is outlined and justified conceptually and theoretically; second, the case study approach taken is explained; third, the research context and its influence on this research process is considered; finally, each method is described including a definition of the instrument, pilot test, respondent group, procedure and data analysis undertaken. Through these four steps, Chapter 3 lays the foundation for the collection of the primary empirical data underpinning Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4 presents the primary data analysis for the empirical evidence examining new team identification by first defining respondent characteristics. Then, the attendance patterns of members of a new sport team form an initial basis for the deeper exploration of team identity formation, measurement, strength and development, which follow.

Chapter 5 provides discussion and conclusions stemming from the empirical evidence analysed in Chapter 4. The discussion is framed to explore the context of the empirical findings relating to the central research objective and subsidiary questions thus clarifying the contributions of this research project. Answers to the subsidiary research questions formulate a conceptual outcome, which highlights the central research findings, graphically. Following from this discussion, the limitations, conclusions and implications conclude the research project.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the viability of research into a new sport team in a new league has been identified as a rich arena for conceptual and theoretical development. An agenda defining specific questions and justifications outlined how this research project will contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding new sport teams and the individuals that identify with them. The research questions arise in a context fundamentally different to that of established professional and collegiate team fans widely researched to date. Therefore, based on the process defined in this chapter a clear pathway for researching new team identification

has been provided. Expanding upon the foundations laid in this introduction, the literature review explores key theoretical and conceptual positions pertinent to the topic.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents a theoretical framework informing this examination of new team identification. In doing so, the literature review examines two primary bodies of literature to address the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of identification with social categories, and more specifically, sport teams. The chapter begins with a delineation of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978c; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), as it provides a theoretical basis to explore behaviour in group situations. This discussion progresses to review relevant literature pertaining to the formation of established team identification. To bridge the gap between the formation of established team identification and the actual fan-team bond, studies addressing the process development of fan career and psychological attachment are considered. Finally theorisations and conceptualisations of established team identification form a precursor to explore work on fans of new and relocated sport teams. The literature review culminates with a clear outline of the research agenda emerging from the literature explored during this chapter.

2.2 Social Identity Theory

In this research project the term social identity is applied in its social psychological context (Brown, 1988; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & Tindale, 2002; Tajfel, 1972, 1978a, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982; Turner & Giles, 1981). Therefore, social identification denotes an individual's cognition that they belong to a social category; the emotional value or significance that an individual ascribes to membership; and group self-esteem derived from evaluations regarding the 'in-group' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Other research highlights that all individuals belong to social groups/categories; "we are all members of various groups as a result of ascription; we can't help being a certain gender, coming from a certain place, having a certain religion, skin colour or ancestry" (Goldstein, 1980, p. 304). However, this passage refers to groups into which individuals are born. Tajfel (1978b) extended and clarified

this argument, by positing that the social groups from which individuals derive social and psychological well-being are not concerned with "physical attributes, which are constant and permanent features of an individual's life" (Tajfel, 1978b, p. 426). Examples of such groups include racial or physical groups (blue eyes, brown hair, etc.), of which an individual is categorised as a member through appearance alone. The social categories more pertinent to the topic of this research are social categories that individuals choose to join. The process by which individuals join such groups – according to social identity theory – is predicated on the notion that individuals strive to achieve a satisfactory concept or image of themselves (Tajfel, 1978c). To achieve this self-concept, individuals attach themselves to social categories which they deem to reflect positively upon them.

Social identity theory was developed in the Bristol School of Social Psychology during the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel, 1978b, 1978c; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982). Simply, it provides a theoretical perspective for understanding the behaviour of individuals in group situations. In their seminal work Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained three theoretical principles that underpin social identity theory; these are:

- Individuals strive to achieve or maintain positive social identity;
- Positive social identity is based to a large extent on favourable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups; the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups; and
- When social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join some positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained that individuals will join social categories, which are perceived [by them] to be equal to, or slightly better than their own self-evaluation. Should this positive concept of the group change, individuals

will strive to either join a group which reflects positively on them, or improve the group they belong to. Movement between groups is defined as 'social mobility' (Tajfel, 1972, 1978b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Giles, 1981). This construct purports that boundaries between social groups are permeable, and movement between them is possible. As such, individuals may leave a social category when they feel it reflects negatively on their self-concept.

Based upon the central assumptions of social identity theory, more recent research has posited that the theory comprises three distinct aspects. Namely, one's awareness of group membership (cognitive), degree of emotional and behavioural involvement (affective), and evaluations assigned to group membership (evaluative) (Ellemers *et al.*, 1999). This tri-partite explanation provides perspective on the key dimensions of social identity theory. Ellemers *et al* (1999) also argued that for individuals with a sufficiently important social categorisation with a group, conceptually, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of social identity should be distinguished from evaluation of group membership. Essentially, individuals with a strong social identification with the group will categorise themselves with the group and maintain an emotional and behavioural involvement. However, the evaluative measures that such individuals will use to maintain a positive reflection upon their self-concept require separate attention (Ellemers *et al.*, 1999, p. 373). Moreover, Jones (1998) noted that in studies of established team identification cognitive and affective dimensions of the construct provided the most accurate measures of the fan-team relationship.

The assumptions of social identity theory underline how individuals behave in group situations. Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 40) conceptualise a group as a collection of people who see themselves as members of the same "social category, share some emotional involvement in this definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group." Brown (1988) asserted that to be considered a 'group' one or more individuals external to the group must acknowledge its existence. As such, to be a group, it must in some way be distinct regarding individual actions, intentions

or the general system of beliefs held (Tajfel, 1978c). However, the scope of social groups needs to be clarified. Tajfel (1978b, p. 425) argued that "it is the psychological and social significance (which may emerge or disappear as a function of changing social conditions) of the criteria by which [the group is] defined which determines the 'togetherness' of groups." Moreover, the literature on social identity argues that individuals will only overtly display their social categorisation in relevant situations (Tajfel, 1978b). For example, many fans of sport teams will not overtly display their affiliation with a team aside from game days, because in everyday life this categorisation is not relevant.

Following from the discussion of what constitutes groups, some differentiation of the 'in-group' and 'out-group' is required. To be regarded as a social group, the 'in-group' (actual social category participated in) must be distinct from relevant 'out-groups' (social categories outside of the in-group, e.g., rival groups) and society in general (Brown, 1988). More specifically, for group members to maintain a positive self-concept and group self-esteem, intergroup comparisons with relevant out-groups must be favourable. If intergroup comparisons are not favourable, individuals will be likely to leave the group to positively alter their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, Tajfel (1978c) explored why individuals continued their affiliation with social categories withstanding negative reflection.

Tajfel (1978c, p. 64) argued that individuals may not be able to leave the social category either because some 'objective' reason prevents it, or it conflicts with important values which are acceptable points of the group image. In such cases, Tajfel (1978b) argued, two image-management processes may be used. Firstly, there may be an adjustment to the individual's in-group interpretations, by either justifying or reinterpreting the negative reflection. A relevant sporting example would be a revision of an individual's expectations of their sport team (e.g., placing in the top 3 versus winning the league), or alternatively reinterpreting negative results as a necessary process of growth and club development. Secondly, individuals may accept the group situation for 'what it is' and make

attempts to positively alter the in-group through a course of social action. Examples of this would include derogation of out-groups (e.g., Sydney fans might claim that they are more sophisticated football supporters than Adelaide fans) and demonstrations of bias towards the in-group (e.g. My team is better than your team) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Jones (1998, p. 31) defined social groups in the context of football support:

> …People do not simply relate to each other as independent, isolated individuals. Instead, membership of a social group and being seen by others to be a member of a group, such as being a fan of a particular football team, is an important part of an individual's cognitive, affective and behavioural processes.

Jacobson (2003, p. 2) asserted that social identity theory concentrates on the ways in which individuals "perceive and categorise themselves, based on their social and personal identities." The differences between personal and social identities require further distinction to conceptualise their place within social identity theory, and an individual's self-concept (Turner, 1982). Tajfel (1978b) looked at what acting as a member of a group meant. More literally, he posed the question: can certain behaviours be attributed to involvement in a social group, or to inherent personal characteristics? The distinctions between personal and social identities as parts of individuals' self-concept are now considered (Turner, 1982).

Personal identity is used interchangeably with the term individual identity and both refer to perceptions and categorisations of the 'self' (Jenkins, 2004). As Jenkins (2004) contended, individual identity is synonymous with difference. In saying this, Jenkins (2004) implied that personal characteristics are internal to the individual and are not a product of 'group membership'. Therefore, the behaviours that are disassociated from group membership can be said to result from an individual's personal identity, or a sense of 'I' (Jones, 1998). Actual personal feelings and perceptions of self are intrapersonal, while interaction with others on a personal level is defined as interpersonal (Tajfel, 1978a). Interactions at an interpersonal level involve connections made between two or

more individuals. An example of interpersonal interaction could involve a discussion with another individual about the Olympics. Such interactions are unrelated to social categories an individual may belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 34).

There are two notable dimensions pertaining to the 'in-group' and 'out-group', namely 'intra-group' and 'intergroup' behaviour. Intra-group behaviour involves an individual's categorisation amongst their fellow group members. Intra-group categorisation is a key concept for this study, especially given the research questions regarding the formation and development of identification. In applying social identity theory to football it could be hypothesised that fans of a football team will socially categorise themselves as fans of the club to gain some positive self-concept or esteem.

As individuals become subsumed in an intra-group situation, social identity theory suggests that comparisons to the out-group will become more significant (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Intergroup categorisation refers to the construct that categorisation as a member of a group must couple itself with the definition of a clear out-group. As Turner and Giles (1981) suggested, examples of intergroup behaviour are not hard to find, for example: the ongoing disputes between Israel and Palestine; battles for market share between Nike and Adidas; and matches between rival sporting teams in competitions across the globe are all illustrations of intergroup behaviour. Sport is a salient example of intergroup behaviour from both player and fan perspectives. Games provide players and fans with the opportunity to share vicariously, empathise emotionally and ride the highs and lows of success and failure with those from the same institution, geographic region, or nation (Turner & Giles, 1981). Therefore, it appears that social identity theory is a useful framework, not only to explain social categories, but to address the formation of new team identification; the strength of the construct; and the development of new team identification. To recap social identification, specific to an established sport team is referred to as established team identification. Conversely, comments or literature pertaining to new sport

teams refers to new team identification. Both form a sport specific use of social identification within team contexts.

In the following sections, relevant literature pertaining to sport fans is synthesised to position this research project in relation to previous study. Furthermore, the importance of social identity theory in the conceptual and theoretical development of the body of knowledge which currently examines sport fandom is highlighted.

2.3 Sport fans

Sport fans have been described as a "unique group of individuals to study, because many are highly involved and have an emotional attachment to sport" (Shank & Beasley, 1998, p. 436). Specifically, the emotional attachment that an individual develops with a sport team spans not only the duration of games, but infiltrates everyday life. The way individuals identify with sport teams has generated significant research interest. Team fans and the bonds they develop with sport teams have been widely addressed in the sports literature to date. Studies have explored reasons to attend and identify (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000; Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2003b; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999b); established team identification (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; Jones, 1998, 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993, 1995; Wann & Dolan, 1994; Wann, Ensor, & Bilyeu, 2001b; Wann, Roberts, & Tindall, 1999a); process-based approaches studying the process or career of established team identification (G. Crawford, 2003) and psychological attachment (Funk & James, 2001); and studies of psychological attachment, connection and commitment (these terms are used interchangeably in the literature) (Funk, 1998; Funk & James, 2006; James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000).

Findings suggest that sport fans hold a "bewildering array of values, attitudes and behaviours" (B. Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003, p. 206), which has contributed to the diversity of research addressing sport team fans from social psychological, sociological, brand loyalty and sport marketing perspectives. Consequently, the diversity of approaches exploring the fan-team relationship has resulted in "a potpourri of instruments and concepts", making any attempt to "review the literature…. an exercise in untangling semantic differences" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 120). A number of authors have attempted to add clarity to the field of sport support through detailed reviews of literature (Funk, Mahony, & Havitz, 2003a; Quick, 2000; B. Stewart *et al.*, 2003). Despite these reviews, terminology and conceptual definitions continue to be used inconsistently. Studies of established team identification tend to encompass cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of the construct (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993; Wann *et al.*, 2000). Psychological attachment is generally used in studies that focus on the cognitive dimensions of the fan-team bond, although some appear to measure more complex bonds (James, 2001; Mahony *et al.*, 2000).

A detailed discussion of established team identification, its dimensions and effects follows. Prior to this discussion, the positive social benefits derivable from sport fandom are explored to provide a foundation through which to understand why team support is so prevalent and popular. Smith and Stewart (2007, p. 155) described the consumer experience as follows:

> …. the sport consumer experience meets a number of important psychological, social and cultural needs. These needs range from escapism, stimulation, and entertainment, to national pride, cultural celebration, and a sense of collective and personal identity. Moreover, for the most part, this experience not only utilizes significant time and resources, but also produces enormous amounts of energy and passion.

This passage highlights two significant aspects of team support. Firstly, supporting a sport team is not just a cognitive process it also fulfils social and cultural needs. These include the emotional value derived from social categorisation and the evaluations that are reticent parts of the support process

and social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Secondly, supporting a team provides a means for individuals to escape daily life, which provides a significant attraction for fans and a source of energy and passion. Such sentiments highlight positive aspects of team support. Conversely, other literature has highlighted the negative influences of excessive energy and passion at sporting events (Dunning, 1988; Dunning, Murphy, Waddington, & Astrinakis, 2002; Hughson, 2000; Marsh, 1978; Marsh, Rosser, & Harre, 1978; Vamplew, 1994). However, as some scholars have argued, these studies of deviance focus on "the obtrusive behaviour of small subpopulations", sometimes underplaying that "the average sports fan manages his or her emotions admirably" (Zillmann, Bryant, & Sapolsky, 1979, p. 305).

Established team identity formation and the associated concepts and theories accompany a review of pertinent findings in the following section; this literature is critical to the preliminary stage of this research into new team identification.

2.4   Formation of established team identification

The factors that lead to new team identity formation have received minimal attention in the literature to date, with a more overt focus on motives to watch, attend or identify with established sport teams. However, studies conducted specifically on the formation of established team identity and the fan-team bond highlight a rich arena for research (Fink *et al.*, 2002; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). Research exploring reasons that individuals watch, attend, or identify with sport can be grouped in three ways. First there is the literature on the psychometric properties of fan motives that apply to a variety of sports (Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995; Wann *et al.*, 1999b). Second there is the body of literature which explores fan motives to attend specific sport events or team games (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Neale & Funk, 2006). Third, and most pertinent, there are the investigations exploring the factors influencing the formation of established team identification or psychological attachment (Fink *et al.*, 2002; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000; Neale & Funk, 2006).

This literature review of team identity formation concentrates on studies of established teams as little understanding of this phenomenon is available in a new sport team context. Research into the formation of established team identification is framed by the premise that individuals "are motivated to achieve positive self-esteem" (End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, & Jacquemotte, 2002, p. 1018), a sentiment which aligns with the theoretical tenets of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). More specifically, an individual's decision to attend a sporting event or to support a team derives from a social need to categorise with groups that reflect positively upon an individual's self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, the factors influencing interest, attendance and established team identification outlined in this section are not arbitrary, as they provide individuals with an avenue through which they can derive emotional significance and personal value (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

2.4.1 Fan motives

The psychometric properties of sport fan motivations are reviewed here to develop an initially broad range of feasible motives to attend or watch sport. These include Wann *et al's* (1995; 1999) Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS), Trail and James' (2001) Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), with its criticisms of Wann's SFMS and the Motivations of Sporting Consumers (MSC) model (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Although each scale applies different terms and dimensions to motivation, they can generally be reduced into four categories, namely: stress and stimulation seeking; entertainment; achievement seeking; and social interaction (Sloan, 1989). A summary of scales developed to measure generic sport fan motivations is provided in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Psychometric properties of sport fan motives

AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS
Wann	1995	Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS)	Eustress (positive levels of self arousal), Self-esteem benefits, Escape from everyday life, Entertainment, Economic factors (i.e. gambling), Aesthetic qualities (i.e. artistic), Group affiliation, and Family needs
Trail & James	2001	Motivation Scale of Sport Consumption (MSSC)	Achievement, Knowledge, Aesthetics, Drama, Escape, Family, Physical attraction, Physical skills, Social interaction
Milne & McDonald	1999	Motivations of the Sport Consumer (MSC)	Risk taking, Stress reduction, Aggression, Affiliation, Social facilitation, Self-esteem, Competition, Achievement, Skill mastery, Aesthetics, Value development, Self actualisation

Table 2.1 outlines two notable aspects of the scale-based approaches to sport fan motivations: first, the number of studies that have probed fan motivations; and second, the plethora of terms arising from this body of literature. To clarify the summary provided in the table above, the primary implications emanating from the implementation of the scales shown in Table 2.1 are provided.

Sport Fan Motivation Scale
The SFMS was developed to measure fan motives in a broad range of sports, not just one specific activity. The SFMS was tested in fans of a collegiate sport team (Wann, 1995) and retested using a more heterogeneous sample group of collegiate sport fans, later (Wann *et al.*, 1999b). Wann (1995) compared thirteen sports with the eight SFMS factors, to observe whether fans of various sports were motivated differently. Across the entire sample the highest mean score reported on the individual subscales measured entertainment, while the lowest was for the economic [gambling] subscale, which suggested that respondents attended games primarily to be entertained. Wann (1995) found that male participants were motivated by eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic, and aesthetics. Retesting of the SFMS validated these initial findings in a more heterogeneous sample of collegiate sport fans (Wann *et al.*, 1999b).

Females recorded higher scores for the family subscale in both initial and retesting studies (Wann, 1995; Wann *et al.*, 1999b), although this has not been broadly proven elsewhere.

In further work, Wann *et al* (1999) tested two dichotomies to explore whether the type of sport played influenced fan motivations. Firstly, Wann *et al* (1999) examined the impact of team/individual sport upon fan motivation to attend. Fans of team sport demonstrated higher scores for the subscales eustress and escape. This may conceivably link with the excitement and stress relief attributable to attendance at team sport matches. Fans of individual sports displayed a relationship with aesthetic motivations (Wann *et al.*, 1999b). Secondly, to provide further insight into the role sport type plays in the motivation of sport fans, the authors tested aggressive versus non-aggressive sport. As hypothesised, Wann *et al* (1999) found that fans of non-aggressive activities were more motivated by the aesthetic aspect of the activity. In contrast, fans of aggressive sport scored highly on the eustress and self-esteem subscales, which pertains to the action-packed nature of aggressive sports such as boxing and American Football (Wann *et al.*, 1999b). Conversely, fans of non-aggressive sports such as ice skating, ballet, and so forth were attracted by the physical beauty and aesthetic grace of the competitors. Therefore, this study is a clear addition to the body of knowledge at the time (Wann *et al.*, 1999b).

The broad-ranging conceptual and theoretical developments contributed by Wann *et al's* studies (1995, 1999) provided an excellent foundation to research into fan motivations. Furthermore, these studies indicated that the strongest motivation for fans of sport, both male and female, was entertainment (Wann *et al.*, 1999b). However, the SFMS has since been rigorously examined and critiqued during the development of the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), which also measured the psychometric properties of motivation with a sport team (Trail & James, 2001).

Motivation scale for sports consumption

Trail and James (2001) developed the MSSC model using the MSC (Milne & McDonald, 1999) and the SFMS to guide the scale development process. The sample population tested in the MSSC differed from the SFMS as it investigated season-ticket holders of a professional major-league baseball team (SFMS studied fans of an NCAA collegiate team). Trail and James (2001) contributed to understanding of the psychometric properties of fan motives in two ways. First, the study undertook a rigorous appraisal of the statistical validity of the SFMS, MSC and Fan Attendance Model (FAM, discussed further in 2.4.2) models. Second, and most importantly, Trail and James (2001) forwarded two factors not previously tested as motivations; these were: "acquisition of knowledge" and "physical attractiveness of participants" (Trail & James, 2001, p. 123). Acquisition of knowledge pertained to individuals motivated to support through a desire to increase their understanding of the sport or the team. Physical attractiveness of participants [athletes] referred to the increasing motivation of individuals to attend sporting events due to the model-like qualities of some top sporting performers (Trail & James, 2001). Overall, the MSSC represents the most thoroughly developed [statistical] tool measuring the psychometric properties of fan motivations. However, it did not contribute to understanding of how demographic variables or type of sport influenced motives to watch sport, which limits the conceptual influence of the findings (Trail & James, 2001).

Motivations of Sport Consumers

The MSC, developed by Milne and McDonald (1999), attempted to measure the psychometric properties of both participant and spectator motivations. As this research project does not explore motives of sport participants, only the findings in relation to fans are reviewed here. Despite a large sample group (n=1500), the MSC scale attempted solely to develop a tool to measure motivations, then tested motives against demographic groups. Moreover, the MSC was developed without reference to the SFMS (Wann, 1995), which conceivably would have provided a significantly improved conceptual positioning for the MSC. In the analysis of the MSC, the thirteen factors (see Table 2.1) were placed into

typological groups of motivations. These included: mental well-being needs (self-actualisation, self-esteem and value development); sport-based needs (risk-taking, aggression and competition); social needs (social facilitation and affiliation); and personal needs (aesthetics, skill mastery and stress reduction) (Milne & McDonald, 1999). The typologies were further split into high and low rankings and tested against demographic variables.

Females in the sample were strongly linked to low sport-based needs, which indicated that they were less likely to be motivated to watch sport than males. The high sport-based needs groups contained primarily 18-34 year olds, which suggested that younger participants were generally more geared towards involvement in sport spectatorship (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Additionally, individuals demonstrating high social needs were generally geared towards attending sport, which presented significant opportunities to spend time with friends and relatives (motor-racing, boxing, and pro wrestling). The personal needs group was more likely to attend aesthetically pleasing sports, such as ice skating and beach volleyball. However, the total lack of reference to Wann's (1995) study is a shortcoming of the work, both theoretically and conceptually. Furthermore, the findings are brief and lack the depth of analysis found in other studies (Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995; Wann *et al.*, 1999b). The review of fan motives to watch sport in general is progressed in the following section to focus on specific motives and reasons to attend games played by a specific team.

2.4.2 Attending games

The second part of this review relies on the premise that the application of generic sport scales to measure motivations to attend specific sport events or team games is not necessarily universally feasible (Funk *et al.*, 2002; Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004). Studies which have aimed to model factors influencing the decision to attend an event for a specific team, or comparison of teams, are now reviewed. This includes Funk *et al* and their work from both North America and Australia, applying the Sports Interest Inventory (SII) as a measure of attendance motivations in both women's sporting

competitions (Funk *et al.*, 2003b, 2004) and the Australian Football League (Neale & Funk, 2006); the Functional Attendance Model (FAM) (Kahle *et al.*, 1996); the effect of sporting level (Major V's Minor League Baseball) on decision to attend (Bernthal & Graham, 2003); and the role of gender in attending sport (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000). This body of literature provides more specific information with which to elaborate on the generic sport motivations provided above.

Sports Interest Inventory
Funk and colleagues applied the SII model in a variety of contexts globally and in both male and female sport. Furthermore, by specifically investigating women's sport teams and their fans, it appears that Funk*,* Ridinger and Moorman (2003b) highlighted the importance of the type of sport in relation to factors influencing the decision to attend. Specifically*,* Funk *et al* (2003b) highlighted the importance of soccer in the fans decisions to attend women's soccer matches. This indicated that the sport played by a specific team was a significant antecedent to attend.

Funk *et al's* (2003b) work broadly probes involvement, which fundamentally addresses the level of interaction consumers have with a sporting team. In an initial study of involvement antecedents in North American women's football, Funk, Mahony and Ridinger (2002) found that role models, excitement, drama, a wholesome environment, aesthetics and entertainment value (in that order) were the most salient involvement antecedents. Funk *et al* (2002) suggested that player role models served as a strong antecedent to involvement. Follow-up studies using the SII have provided different results in relation to women's soccer. For example, Funk *et al* (2003b) found that role models, team interest, entertainment value, supporting women's opportunity, excitement and drama were most salient (in that order). Additional regression analysis highlighted interest in team, escape, role models, aesthetics, socialisation and drama as the most significant predictors of attendance.

A critical finding in Funk *et al's* (2003b) study was the importance ascribed for the subscale 'interest in players'. It has been demonstrated that identification with specific 'star' players is a significant motivating factor (Trail & James, 2001), but it appears that in the case of women's sport, players are less important in fan decisions to attend. This finding was retested in the Australian Football League (Neale & Funk, 2006). This study found that the role of the player was only salient in game attendance if the player was deemed to be a contributing and loyal member of the team. The broader findings of the retesting of the SII by Neale and Funk (2006) found five factors: vicarious achievement; player interest; entertainment value; drama and socialisation to be significant predictors of game-day attendance. Vicarious achievement was central in both models that Neale and Funk (2006) tested, and supports the initial theme of this section that individuals seek positive self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Overall, the implications of the various studies utilising the SII are broad. However, the distillation of the somewhat copious factors used in generic sport models of the psychometric properties of fan motives into the more useable categories provided here (Neale & Funk, 2006) are of central importance. Through reviews of other papers addressing fan attendance at sport events, further insight is offered in the following paragraphs.

Fan attendance model

To establish a functional model of fan attendance Kahle *et al* (1996) tested the motivations of collegiate football (American Football) fans. The factors tested by Kahle *et al* (1996) included: compliance (attend games because friends attend); obligation (feel an obligation to support a team as it represents the locality or university); camaraderie (attend to feel part of something bigger); identification with winning (attend because of exciting and/or successful performances); self defining experience (fan gains a feeling of involvement or personal appeal through attendance); unique self-expressive experience (attend game as it provides an experience that is different to everyday life); and finally internalisation (which in this study broadly pertained to love of the sport American Football). The categories tested by Kahle *et al* (1996) were developed theoretically via Kelman's functional theory of attitudinal motivation, not the

literature on sport fan motivations, which explains the differences between the factors tested by Kahle *et al* (1996) and other studies addressing fan attendance motives. Furthermore, Kahle *et al* (1996) found that internalisation was the strongest predictor of attendance, followed respectively by seeking a unique self-expressive experience and camaraderie. Therefore, Kahle *et al* (1996) concurred with Funk *et al* (2003b) that an internalised bond to the sport played was an important factor in fan attendance at games.

Sporting level and attendance

Further research has tested the impact of sport-setting or level upon an individual's reason to attend (Bernthal & Graham, 2003). Specifically, the authors tested two different levels (professional and amateur) of the same sport to see if fans attended games for different reasons. Although prior research had contrasted sporting type and motivation (Wann, 1995), Bernthal and Graham's (2003) contribution was to explore how the level of sport influenced reason to attend. It also provided a contrast between a professional Minor League team and an 'amateur' collegiate team. The study used four surveys, with two conducted at the Minor League team's home games and two at the collegiate baseball team's games. Scale items for the survey were conceptually developed by asking ten baseball fans to list factors in their decision to attend games. Furthermore, the development of items through participant consultation is noteworthy and demonstrates a clear consideration of the context being examined. Factors were refined to include: rivalries, quality of play; viewing outstanding players; value-added entertainment (contests, mascots, sound effects); and community (Bernthal & Graham, 2003). The authors argued that due to the specific focus being fans of baseball, employing an established scale to measure sport motivations (Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995) *per se* would have been problematic.

Bernthal and Graham (2003) found that individuals were more likely to support professional Minor League baseball for the total entertainment package. Essentially, entertainment additional to the actual game was a significant reason

to attend for fans of the Minor League baseball team. Fans of the collegiate team espoused social items pertaining to the collegiate community as the most important reason to attend. Bernthal and Graham (2003) articulated the need for sport marketers to consider not only the type of sport being marketed, but also the level of sport at which the team operates. Therefore, Minor League baseball teams would benefit from advertising the entertainment benefits of attendance at games, while collegiate teams should base marketing strategies on collegiality and school support and spirit (Bernthal & Graham, 2003).

Gender differences

Dietz-Uhler *et al* (2000) explored whether the reason for being a sport fan differed significantly for male and female fans of a collegiate sport team. Dietz-Uhler *et al* (2000) found that males identified with generic sport support at a significantly higher level than the females surveyed, although both males and females were equally likely to cognitively identify with specific teams. Further analysis indicated that: males spent longer discussing sport and watching sport on TV; held a greater knowledge of sport; and were generally more interested in sport. This fits the previous finding that males were generally more likely to be sport fans (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Therefore, Dietz-Uhler *et al* (2000) posited that males engaged in a more traditional form of sport support than the females surveyed. The attendance factors for male and female participants highlighted further inter-gender differences. Specifically, female respondents attended the collegiate team's games for social reasons, such as enjoyment of cheering, and the enjoyment of time spent with family and friends, a concurrent finding with previous work on the psychometric properties of fan motivations (Wann, 1995).

Further differences based on gender have been explored under the conceptual banner of sport consumption motives (James & Ridinger, 2002). James and Ridinger (2002) found that greater similarities were evident based on males' and females' consumption motives. Furthermore, the authors noted that although females enjoyed sports, men derived important social benefits from them (James

& Ridinger, 2002). The authors commented that future research was required to examine whether females also developed important identities relating to sport. James and Ridinger (2002) found that females disagreed with the notion that attending basketball games was a good opportunity to spend time with friends and family members, which has been shown as a motive for attendance in other research (Wann, 1995).

Summary

This section has refined the initial delineation of salient fan motives, to focus specifically on reasons to attend sport. It has demonstrated that the research context (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Neale & Funk, 2006), level (Bernthal & Graham, 2003) and gender (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000) of participants all provide significant factors dictating how fans are motivated to attend. In the following section, to further theorise the process that precedes identification with sport teams, the factors leading to the formation of established team identification are canvassed.

2.4.3 Established team identity formation

Studies exploring how established team identification or psychological attachment forms with a specific group or sport team/s are addressed here. This aims to move beyond the reviews presented to this stage, by addressing the factors that have been shown to forge established team identification specifically. This final section aims to further distil and inform the ensuing study of new team identity formation.

Factors leading to established team identification

In this section, the aim is to elucidate the factors highlighted in current literature that are critical in the formation of established team identification. Literature suggests that individuals are likely to engage in behaviours to improve their self-concept (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Tajfel, 1978c; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, vicarious achievement has been

highlighted as a significant factor leading to both attendance and established team identification. The literature on the formation of established team identification follows.

Research into established team identity formation concurs that vicarious achievement is a primary factor in the formation of lasting fan-team bonds (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Fisher and Wakefield (1998) argued that individuals formed established team identification to develop a positive self-image, stating, "In the present sports context, being linked to a winning team enables fans to be connected to the sport they love and to be associated with a winner" (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998, pp. 34-35). Two vital points are flagged in this passage. First, Fisher and Wakefield (1998) explained that established team identification allowed fans to consume a sport they love, which is significant, especially in the context of the arguments regarding the role of sport in fan motives to attend games (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle *et al.*, 1996). Second, the role of being associated with "a winner" is highlighted, providing clear parallels with other literature (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Wann & Branscombe, 1990).

Further implications from Fisher and Wakefield's (1998) study concerned the differences in established team identification between fans of successful and unsuccessful teams. They concluded that team success did not influence "fan willingness to engage in visible, expressive consumption behaviours" (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998, p. 36). This finding contrasts previous work, which has suggested that individuals will BIRG (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976) in positive situations and detach themselves from negative reflection i.e. unsuccessful teams (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). However, Fisher and Wakefield (1998) argued that fans engaged in alternate behaviours relating to successful and unsuccessful teams.

Kolbe and James (2000) explored the influences that led individuals to form an established team attachment with a professional club. Sampling season-ticket

holders of the Cleveland Browns in the National Football League in the USA, Kolbe and James (2000) generated 518 responses addressing salient influences leading to established team attachment. The findings of this paper provided insights which expanded upon other work (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Kolbe and James (2000) defined three main factors leading to individuals becoming professional team fans: influential people; events and their influence on becoming a fan; and the importance of city and community of fans. Each is discussed in the following paragraphs.

To explore the role of influential people in the formation of fan-team bonds, Kolbe and James (2000) included an open-ended response question, simply asking fans to articulate the most influential person in their established team attachment. Fans (40%) outlined their fathers as the most influential person in their team involvement. In addition, fans also highlighted star players as salient to team involvement; however, notably Kolbe and James (2000) found that the players mentioned were drawn from the 1950s and 1960s, which may well result from the nostalgia of older fans.

Events and their influence on becoming a fan were shown to have a relatively low importance. Partying in the parking lot, meeting players, visiting training camp and team style all displayed a moderate influence on reasons to become a fan. However, Kolbe and James (2000) did highlight that attending games and the experiences fans derived from this were important factors in the development of team loyalty.

Finally, the city and community of fans were shown to have a strong influence. Factors such as growing up in Cleveland [home city of team]; the Browns as my hometown team; the Brown's as a Cleveland institution; and the game-day atmosphere in Municipal Stadium (Kolbe & James, 2000), were all shown to be important. Furthermore, the authors noted that of these items, three referred to aspects which were superfluous to the team. Therefore, factors which lead to

established team identification or attachment may be outside the scope of a sport team, and this perspective has not been broadly considered in the literature.

Most salient factor in the formation of established team identification

Fink *et al* (2002) investigated the most salient reason for individuals to form established team identification. Quite distinctly from previous research, Fink *et al* (2002) investigated the specific relationships between fan motives and established team identification. Therefore, any difference in results could be attributable to the different objectives of this research process.

Fink *et al* (2002) investigated spectators at two collegiate basketball games using an eight-item scale containing: vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, drama/excitement, escape, family, and quality of physical skill of participants. In addition to testing the impact of different motivations on established team identification, Fink *et al* (2002) also sought to examine whether gender differences existed between motives and established team identification. A confirmatory factor analysis highlighted that four motive subscales (vicarious achievement, aesthetics, drama, and social interaction) displayed significant relationships with established team identification. Of these, the subscale vicarious achievement explained the largest proportion of variance relating to established team identification. Vicarious achievement was the primary indicator for the whole group, including males and females (Fink *et al.*, 2002).

Aesthetics explained only minimal variance, while drama and social interaction reported negligible relationships with established team identification (Fink *et al.*, 2002, p. 202). Additional testing revealed that all motive subscales correlated significantly with established team identification, with the exception of family, which had been demonstrably weak amongst males during other research (Wann, 1995; Wann *et al.*, 1999b). This study made a significant contribution to the field by specifically relating motivations to established team identification. The importance of this comparison is two fold. Essentially, the majority of

studies address the role of motivation in attendance or involvement with sport, which neglects actual bonds with teams. The evidence provided by Fink *et al* (2002) shows that vicarious achievement is salient in sport-generic motives, game attendance and established team identification. The broader dimensions of vicarious achievement and other work explaining the construct is explored below.

Vicarious achievement

The derivation of self-esteem benefits via categorisation with successful others has attracted attention in the literature on social psychology. Research on the self-esteem benefits attainable from categorisation with a successful sport team spans over 30 years (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976). Cialdini *et al* (1976), employed a tri-phased research process examining the effect of game outcome on the self-presentation of collegiate supporters to test the hypothesis that victory would lead supporters to espouse and show off their identification. Specifically "fans of championship teams gloat over their team's accomplishments and proclaim their affiliation with buttons on their clothes, bumper stickers on their cars and banners on public buildings" (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976, p. 367). The concept of fans gloating in relation to their team's success is broadly supported in the literature (End, 2001; End *et al.*, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Cialdini *et al* (1976) tested whether supporters wore collegiate sport attire on the Monday following a game. Findings demonstrated that supporters were more likely to display team colours if the team they supported was victorious. In addition, Cialdini *et al* (1976) tested the pronouns supporters used to define game results. Supporters more frequently used the term 'we' to define victories, while using the term 'they' to articulate negative results, thus distancing themselves from poor performances. Specifically, if results reflected positively on supporters they were more likely to categorise themselves with the team, while the reverse was demonstrated following negative results (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976).

Cialdini *et al* (1976) then tested individual pronoun usage in relation to both positive and negative results, a phenomenon which has since been studied

longitudinally across an entire season (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999). Almost twice as many supporters used the term 'we' to describe a win than a non-victory. This study demonstrated that supporters will Cut Off Reflected Failures (CORF) in certain cases (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976); this phrase was coined later in the literature (Snyder *et al.*, 1986). Such conceptualisations link closely with social identity theory and the notion that individuals strive to maintain a positive self-image (Snyder *et al.*, 1986). If reflection is negative, individuals will try to positively alter the group, or leave it (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, some research has noted that supporters positively alter the perceived image of the in-group by displaying bias towards it, not by CORFing (Wann & Dolan, 1994).

A further finding in Cialdini *et al's* pioneering study referred to the impact that environment had upon participants' BIRGing. They argued, "The process whereby one publicly seeks to associate himself or herself with a successful other then may be reinforced by the tendency of observers to respond in a similar fashion to associated stimuli" (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976, p. 369). Specifically, supporters will be likely to espouse their connection with the team in situations that are relevant to the team (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In contrast, supporters will be unlikely to demonstrate their affiliation in less relevant situations, where such behaviour is not the 'social norm'. It would seem conceivable that supporters are most likely to BIRG in situations that will maximise positive reflection upon their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979); however, the strength of identification of any given supporter may influence the degree to which public announcements of support are made (Wann & Dolan, 1994; Wann *et al.*, 2000).

End (2001) studied BIRGing, through a study of fan behaviour in online web message boards and specific 'fan sites'. To evaluate computer-mediated BIRGing, End (2001) used social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to explore the extent to which supporters used online message boards and 'fan sites' to BIRG and manage their established team identification. Through a content analysis of message boards and online fan sites, End (2001) found that unsuccessful clubs (as per results during the total season), experienced higher

numbers of messages espousing established team identification than successful clubs. However, successful teams did experience more activity on message boards following positive results. Notably, End (2001) illustrated messages posted on supporter websites that 'blasted' rival teams (discussed further in 2.4.3, Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). End (2001) concluded that team supporters use the World Wide Web to associate themselves publicly with NFL teams and be derogatory toward rival teams. The primary contribution of End's (2001) study was the extension of Cialdini *et al's* (1976) work into online message boards and fan websites. Cialdini *et al* (1976) provided comprehensive conceptual and theoretical development regarding team supporters' apparent desire to espouse support after success. However, the applications of BIRGing in an online fan community context marked a significant progression from the actual team support studies conducted previously (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). Further research into online communities would add further depth, reliability and strength to the findings of End's (2001) study.

Conceptually, BIRGing and CORFing receive widespread support in the literature pertaining to sport fans. However, in a recent study, two further conceptual categories regarding vicarious achievement were posited. Namely, Basking in Reflected Failure (BIRF) and Cutting Off Reflected Success (CORS) (Campbell, Aiken, & Kent, 2004). Campbell *et al* (2004) suggested that while Cialdini *et al's* (1976) argument regarding vicarious achievement was relevant, it ignored individuals that identify with teams that consistently fail, or supporters that withdraw from identification following prolonged success. Although Campbell *et al* (2004) acknowledged that such individuals are rare, in the recommendations provided they argued that future research should probe this group. The primary issue with Campbell *et al's* (2004) work is that it involved no empirical research whatsoever; furthermore, its hypotheses emanated from supposition, not a significant body of literature.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this section is especially pertinent to the central topic explored in this research project. Vicarious achievement and the social benefits accrued from association with successful groups emerged strongly as a reason fans form established team identification (Fink *et al.*, 2002; Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Neale & Funk, 2006), which concurred with the theoretical tenets of social identity theory.

The importance of an internalised bond with the sport as an attendance motivation is significant. Individuals may be motivated to attend a sport team's games or form established team identification because of a pre-existing affiliation with the sport in which the team competes (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle *et al.*, 1996). However, the extent to which a pre-existing affiliation with the sport played is critical to the formation of new team identification is untested as existing studies focus on established teams (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle *et al.*, 1996). This is not to say that the motives and factors leading to the formation of established team identification are inapplicable to a new team context, but further exploration is required to address which of these provide the most suitable instrument to assess why individuals watch, attend and identify with sport, or sport teams specifically, especially given the influence of research context, as shown elsewhere (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Neale & Funk, 2006). However, it seems plausible to suggest that a bond with the sport – in many cases – would pre-empt identification with a specific sport team, new or established. Thus, from the findings of previous literature (Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle *et al.*, 1996; Kolbe & James, 2000), broader consideration of how a fan's internalised social identification with the sport a specific team plays appears to be an important area for conceptual and theoretical development.

In the forthcoming section, recent attempts to define a process (Funk & James, 2001), or career (G. Crawford, 2003) of fan-team bonds is provided to bridge the gap between established team identity formation and actual established team identification.

2.5   Development of established team identification

Factors which entice individuals to watch [sport generically], attend games and, pertinently, form established team identification, have been canvassed. The process or 'career' development of established team identification (G. Crawford, 2003) and psychological attachment (Funk & James, 2001) is addressed here to develop understanding of how the fan-team bond progresses. Through this analysis, a further understanding of the stages that fans may experience as they progress or regress as supporters can be obtained. The work of Funk and James (2001) argued that relationships with sport teams follow a process from an initial, cognitive point of awareness.

The notion that an individual's relationship with a sport team develops has also been addressed in the sociological literature on sport fans (G. Crawford, 2001, 2003b, 2004). Crawford (2003) applied the concept of status passage to articulate the 'career' of Manchester Storm ice hockey fans. This notion has been contrasted by Jones (1998), who noted that fans of Luton Town FC formed an almost instantaneous established team identification. In this section, both approaches are reviewed as they provide a salient conceptual aspect to the basis of the current research study.

Psychological continuum model

The PCM (Funk & James, 2001), outlined a conceptual framework for psychological attachment with a sport team. In the PCM, four levels are articulated, although progression from the initial point of contact (attachment) through to the zenith of the model (allegiance) is not guaranteed. The four levels comprising the PCM are now discussed.

Awareness: There is agreement in the literature that at the first level of the PCM individuals develop a cognition of sports or teams through socialisation agents (Funk & James, 2001; Jacobson, 2003; Kenyon, 1969; Wann & Branscombe,

1993). Examples of socialisation agents include the influence of family members and friends (Kenyon, 1969), the media, community, geographic proximity, promotions (Funk & James, 2001) and the allure of high-profile sporting stars (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Such socialisation agents are forwarded as factors that initiate some cognitive reaction that teams or sports exist. Yet the interest developed by the socialisation agents mentioned triggers initial short-term bonds, which are unstable and weak (Funk & James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002). Although the individual is aware of a sport team, progression to the next level of the PCM is not guaranteed. More specifically, "knowing that sports and teams exist, but having no interest, signals that a person has achieved a level of awareness, but not attraction" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 127).

Attraction: Following awareness, the second level of the PCM refers to an aspect of established team identification or attachment that has arguably received the most attention in the literature on fandom to date. Conceptually, attraction refers to the point at which an individual makes a decision to support a team or sport. This specific stage of process attachment with a sport team provides sport managers and marketers with the greatest challenge; namely, converting initial interest in a sport or team into a cognitive attachment. At this stage of the PCM, initial awareness is usurped and the individual's established team identification or attachment gains direction. Funk and James (2001, p. 128) link this stage to "transient situational factors" or "hedonic motives", such as BIRGing (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980) or attempting to fit into a new community. Specifically, attraction to support is based on predominantly external motives, which the individual perceives to reflect positively upon their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Despite individuals attending games or buying merchandise at this level, the transient nature of the relationship means that such bonds are still unstable and weak. In fact, an individual's attraction may well shift to another sport or team, based on similar "transient situational factors" or "hedonic motives" (Funk & James, 2001). Essentially, if individuals at this level perceive another group as more desirable, or to reflect more positively on their self-concept, they will leave and join the

more favourable social category. Additionally, individuals at this level generally maintain a singular point of attachment, namely a specific player, locality, team, or sport. At this stage individuals are not culturally contracted (Giulianotti, 2002) to the sport or team they support, and shifting to another group is easy.

Attachment: The third level of the PCM represents the initial level at which support is based on internal aspects and the individual is settled on a team or sport to support (Funk & James, 2001). Attachment is internalised at this level, as "mental associations to the team at this level are intrinsically important" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 132). Therefore, the fan-team relationship becomes less transient and more points of psychological attachment are evident. More specifically, as established team identification or attachment increases, singular points of attachment develop to include experiential aspects of the support situation. For example, to become attached, an individual who was initially attracted to support a team through the presence of a high-profile player will develop additional points of attachment, through the experience and knowledge obtained via attendance and immersion into the in-group setting (Funk & James, 2001). The diversification of points of attachment serves to strengthen the felt connection with the in-group, thus increasing the durability of support at this level.

Allegiance: The fourth level of the PCM represents the "zenith" of Funk and James' (2001, p. 134) Psychological Continuum Model. Allegiance usurps attachment as the point at which an individual becomes devoted to the team or sport. At the attachment level of the PCM a fan's "attitude is persistent, resistant, and influences cognition and behaviour" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 138). Specifically, the fan is strongly identified with the team, the attachment is durable and they would not consider shifting allegiance. Funk and James' (2001) PCM provides a useful conceptual model of cognitive attachment with a sport team. However, due to the primary focus of this research project addressing new team identification, important conceptual elements of both the topic and theoretical framework are beyond the scope of the PCM. Therefore,

further review of conceptual bases of the process development of established team identification is pertinent.

Fan 'Career'

Funk and James' (2001) model derives from studies conducted in the areas of fan loyalty (Funk, 1998; James, 2001) and has led to subsequent research into fan-team bonds. The management focus of Funk and James' (2001) work has yielded a number of significant findings; and comparisons with sociological research examining season-ticket holders of a sport team provide additional insight (G. Crawford, 2003, 2004). Crawford (2003) examined the 'career' of season-ticket holders during a three-year research study of the Manchester Storm ice hockey team in the UK. Using a mixed-method approach, Crawford (2004, p. 19) conducted participant observations, two surveys and an interview process to elicit the "status passage" of fans of the Manchester Storm. The conceptual model representing the 'career' of Manchester Storm fans is displayed in Figure 2.1, below.

Figure 2.1: Career progression of the Manchester Storm fan.

General Public — Interested — Engaged — Enthusiastic — Devoted — Professional — Apparatus
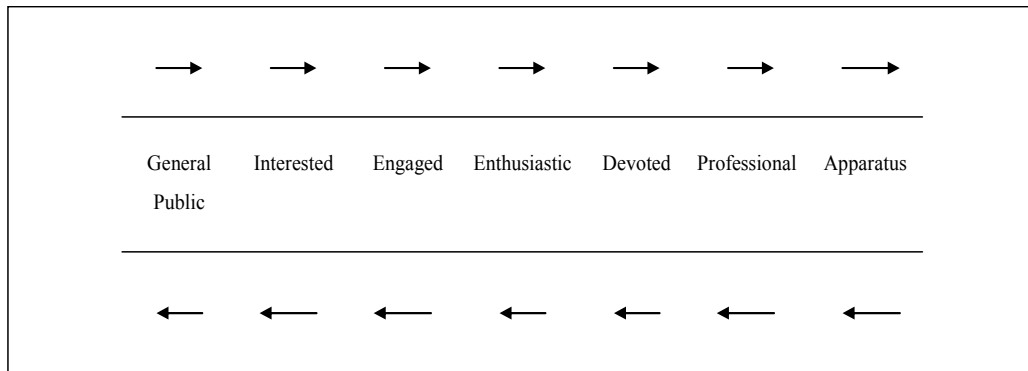
(G. Crawford, 2003, p. 228)

The 'career' model presented by Crawford adds a key dimension to much research into sporting consumers. Funk and James (2001) outlined that the PCM was a conceptual tool, which did not fully explain the movement between levels. Funk and James (2001, p. 138) asserted that "it is important to note, however,

that the vertical continuum is not constrained exclusively to upward movement; nor do people necessarily move from one extreme to the other." Through his conceptual application of "status passage" and "career", Crawford (2004, p. 19) elaborated upon this notion, articulating that fan career is "fluid and dynamic". Additionally, "though progression along this path may be linear, it is often far more complex and individuals may regress, leapfrog certain positions or move in and out of this career structure at any time" (G. Crawford, 2003, p. 227). Therefore, any conceptual or theoretical model of fandom which ignores the ability of an individual's affiliation with a team to decrease also ignores a salient aspect of the argument. In contrast to the more cognitively based approach of Funk and James (2001), Crawford's (2003) model provides further explanation of how fans careers with sporting teams can develop. Figure 2.1 highlights Crawford's (2003b) model, and two levels beyond the level of devotion. These two levels provide insight into the role of the sport fan, beyond the actual cognitive attachment to the team, which explains their omission from Funk and James' (2001) model. The seven levels of Crawford's (2003) model of career passage are each discussed below.

The foundation level of Crawford's (2003) model of 'career' is the general public. This level can be seen as existing prior to the awareness level defined by Funk and James (2001). Crawford (2003) acknowledges that little is known about this initial stage, when an individual does not necessarily recognise the team and is ambivalent towards it. Second on the career path is the level of interest. Literally, individuals at this stage have some awareness or interest in the team, but this does not necessarily include game attendance. As Crawford (2003) conceded, sports that are more popular than ice hockey (given its status in Great Britain as a minority sport) will experience greater numbers of individuals at this level of career development (G. Crawford, 2003).

Third, the individual progresses to being engaged with the team. Engaged individuals are likely to attend matches, although fans at this level are unlikely to wear merchandise or join fan clubs (G. Crawford, 2003). Although

individuals see themselves as fans at this stage, the bond is not necessarily enduring. Further, entertainment is more important than game results. Individuals at this level are as likely to regress to being interested as they are to progress to level four. At the fourth level individuals become enthusiastic. This level embodies the largest number of fans at Manchester Storm games (G. Crawford, 2003). In a progression from engagement, game outcomes become more important and individuals at this level are likely to be members of the fan club. Crawford (2003) argued that enthusiastic fans are likely to attend games, but at this level they are not fanatical.

At the fifth level fans become devoted to the team; however, Crawford (2003) cautioned that this level is populated by a distinct minority of fans in relation to ice-hockey. In the UK, as Crawford (2003) explained, ice-hockey maintains a marginal status in the sports market. Therefore, Crawford (2003) argued that the relatively low numbers of devoted fans of ice-hockey may vary in different sporting settings. For example, fans of football in the UK are likely to have a good understanding of the rules, wear merchandise and maintain a broad-based knowledge of the sport inside and outside of the UK (such as the National Hockey League in North America). This stems from the high profile market position of football in the UK. Crawford (2003) based his argument on the status of the sport, with football in Britain and ice-hockey in the USA commanding a far greater market share and awareness. Therefore, in these markets Crawford (2003) argued that a far higher number of fans would reach the devoted level of his model of status passage.

At the sixth level a "very small 'elite' group…consists of those who make at least a partial amount of their income from their involvement in ice hockey" (G. Crawford, 2003, p. 232). Fans at this level are unlikely to associate with a distinct rival grouping, instead choosing to support the sport of ice hockey in Britain. This group, Crawford (2003) found, was overwhelmingly male, white, well educated and middle class.

Finally, 'apparatus' formed the pinnacle of Crawford's (2003) model. Crawford (2003) argued that this highest involvement in a sport team is widely overlooked in typologies, conceptualisations and process models of sport fans. Apparatus defines those individuals that belong to the management structure or hierarchy of the sport team, but still maintain support of the team. Although rare, Crawford (2003) highlighted two examples of fans that had progressed from the foundation levels of the general public through to the top of the fan career.

Summary

Both process-based approaches exploring the development of established team identification and psychological attachment provide important insights into the progression of fan-team bonds. Most notable is the proposition in both models that progression is not assured. Moreover, as individuals are able to progress and become more strongly identified, so the process can be reversed and fans may regress and deviate from supporting the sport or team. A considerable strength of Crawford's (2003) work is that the conceptual model presented derives from ongoing empirical work with the team and fans, i.e. Manchester Storm's season-ticket holders.

Both models consider progression and regression as a team fan. However, further understanding of the factors that lead to progression or regression is still required in this area. Furthermore, the various levels of progression or regression defined in this section highlight the varying degree of identification or attachment that fans can exhibit with sport teams. Moving on from this discussion of the process development of established team identification and attachment, the following section reviews studies of established team identification.

2.6 Established team identification

Following from the review of literature outlining current conceptual and theoretical understanding of established team identity formation, this section moves on to address existing interpretations of the bonds fans develop with established sport teams. Although new team identification forms the central topic studied here, conceptual and theoretical understanding of the construct is lacking. Therefore, current conceptualisations and theorisations of established team identification are reviewed to provide a precursor to explore new team identification.

Studies have investigated psychological attachment/connection (Funk & James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002) and established team identification (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993, 1995; Wann & Dolan, 1994; Wann *et al.*, 2001b). Despite terminology using established team identification and psychological attachment interchangeably, clarification regarding the differences between each is required. Studies of psychological attachment generally investigate the cognition that an individual is a fan of a specific team (Funk & James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002). Studies of established team identification provide an extension of psychological attachment (based predominantly on social identity theory), which includes cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Jones, 1998). Therefore, fan cognitions that they support a team are subsumed within new team identification alongside affective and behavioural aspects.

Attempts to conceptualise and quantify established team identification stem from the common hypothesis that the strength of the construct acts as a predictor of fan behaviour. Sloan (1979) argued that individuals who maintain a strong established team identification are more likely to develop a long-term affiliation, a notion that has since been supported in the literature (Funk & James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993). Furthermore, Sloan (1979) found that fans with a strong established team identification would be less likely to CORF as some fans always admit their bonds, regardless of results

"suggesting more than momentary BIRGing (Sloan, 1979, pp. 254-255). Sloan (1979) alluded to the fact that BIRGing may not necessarily apply to more committed fans. This group of fans support the team regardless of result. Therefore, individuals with a strong established team identification are more likely to maintain affiliation through poor performances and more willing to invest time and money to see their team perform (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Research has also noted fans with a strong established team identification are more likely to engage in behaviours that support or positively impact the in-group (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Wann *et al.*, 2000). Wann and Branscombe (1993) noted in their seminal study of established team identification that fans with a strong team-bond were more likely to spend money on team-related products. Yet, these authors were unable to prove the hypothesis that fans with a strong established team identification would be more likely to select friends on the basis that they held a similar team-based affiliation (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

In-group – Out-group
Further evidence of the relationship between established team identification and fan behaviour include recognition of significant out-groups or rivals (Wann & Dolan, 1994). Such research probes the influence of identity strength upon fans' evaluations of both the in- and out-groups. Insights include the influence of established team identification on evaluations of rival and fellow fans (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Wann & Dolan, 1994) and objective and subjective knowledge in basketball fans (Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Research has also elaborated on the work of Cialdini *et al* (1976) and Sloan (1989), examining longitudinally the impact of game outcomes on fan reactions (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999).

The literature suggests that fans with a stronger established team identification level with the in-group, will display greater loyalty to the team and are more likely to be derogatory toward or 'blast' opposition fans or players (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Wann & Dolan, 1994). This process serves a purpose of

positively distinguishing fan groups from one another. In addition, blasting is an image-management technique that can be used to improve the reflection of negative results on fans' self-concept. Moreover, if on-field performances reflect negatively on fans, fans may blast referees or the opposition to positively differentiate and manage group esteem (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). As Cialdini and Richardson (1980, p. 410) asserted, blasting denotes an image-management tactic whereby fans of a team decrease "the perceived quality of something with which one is negatively associated (e.g. a rival team or referee)." Blasting, therefore, represents a course of social action used to positively enhance an individual's self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Wann and Dolan (1994) elaborated on the position of Cialdini and Richardson (1980) by testing the degree to which the level of established team identification influenced perceptions of the in-group and perceived bias against the out-group. This study confirmed the hypothesis that strongly identified fans would be more likely to show bias toward 'their team' and engage in behaviours that supported the in-group (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Conversely, fans with a weaker established team identification displayed less bias towards the in-group. Wann and Dolan (1994) explained the lack of negativity towards rival groupings through the positive reflection gained through observed bias towards the in-group. Specifically, respondents gained positive reflection on their own self-concept by demonstrating positive bias to enhance the in-group, thus, the authors argued, negating the need to be derogatory toward opposition fans (Wann & Dolan, 1994). In an additional study Wann *et al* (2000) measured the impact of established team identification and self-esteem levels on fan propensity to present their affiliation. In concurrence with other research, fans with a stronger identification were more likely to demonstrate support for the team (Wann *et al.*, 2000).

Dietz-Uhler and Murrell (1999) expanded on Wann *et al* (1994, 2000), testing the impact of game outcomes longitudinally during an entire collegiate sporting season. This study examined how game outcomes impacted upon respondent

established team identification levels. Although not as detailed in its findings regarding rival and fellow fans, Dietz-Uhler and Murrell (1999) contributed in several ways. Firstly, they found that over the course of the season fans with a strong established team identification with the university football team developed more favourable evaluations of the in-group, regardless of the team's results. Furthermore, in an amateur collegiate sport setting the university team will be highly relevant to the students forming the sample population. This is conceivably due to ongoing contact with the support setting and the development of established team identification as a process (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). Weakly identified fans of the university football team maintained a similar evaluation of the team during the course of the season (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999). Secondly, respondents with strong university identification rated the team more favourably after positive results. Conceptually, the affiliation demonstrated toward the university is similar to a connection to the city or country in which a team exists, thus relating to aspects of community in relation to the team (Robinson & Trail, 2005).

In a subsequent study, Wann and Branscombe (1995) used a two-study method to test the influence of established team identification on the objective and subjective beliefs of fans. It found that fans in the sample possessing relatively strong established team identification were more likely to possess objective knowledge regarding team history, statistics and players than individuals with a weaker identification. Wann and Branscombe (1995) proposed that fans with stronger established team identification were motivated to learn about team history, statistics and players to be able to fully converse with other fans. Objective knowledge provided a positive social attribute in relation to the in-group. Essentially, knowing about the history of the in-group, its players and management was a source of credibility within the social category (Wann & Branscombe, 1995).

The second study demonstrated that fans with strong established team identification displayed far more in-group bias than fans with a weaker bond.

Specifically, fans with strong established team identification used the subjective stage of research to reveal positive information about the in-group, while this group was also more likely to be derogatory toward, or provide negative information about, rival groups (Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Fans with strong established team identification are more likely to engage in multiple behaviours which support the in-group (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). As Wann and Branscombe (1993) urged, future research should probe variables and characteristics, which influence the strength of established and/or new team identification and in addition what leads to increases, or decreases, in identification with a team. Additional insight probing established team identification in a lower-league football context is considered below.

Established team identification – Luton Town FC

Jones (1998) explored the established team identification of fans of Luton Town FC in the UK, specifically addressing a "football team" competing in a lower level of its sport, which demonstrates significant parallels with previous research (Bernthal & Graham, 2003). Jones (1998) found that fans of Luton Town FC developed stable established team identification and clearly identified themselves as fans of the club. Furthermore, Jones (1998) found that established team identification with Luton Town FC centred on "tradition and locality" (Jones, 1998, p. 253). This outcome is significant and led to additional findings, which contributed to the existing literature. Generally participants did not identify with football (outside of their established team identification with Luton Town FC), or other football leagues, which is notable. Despite forging strong established team identifications, Jones (1998) did not find that fan involvement extended into consumption of football generally. Instead, noting that fans of Luton Town FC did not consume the club via the media and in-ground attendance at games was central to the relationship they had developed (Jones, 1998). Yet, Jones (1998) asserted that it was likely this process was very different in higher-profile leagues.

In addition, Jones (1998, p. 220) found that fans with a strong established team identity (measured using the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993)) were more likely to attend a high number of games. This has since been highlighted in subsequent research. Mahony *et al* (2000) found a correlation between length of support and strength of commitment. Furthermore, fans with a stronger psychological commitment were more likely to attend games (measured using the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale) (Mahony *et al.*, 2000). Jones (1998) expanded this concept to measure the influence of established team identification on attendance at away games. In complement to the works mentioned regarding attendance at home games, Jones (1998) revealed a pronounced relationship between strong established team identification and attendance at away games.

In additional work, Jones (2000) questioned why fans of Luton Town FC held a persevering bond, despite the underperformance of their team and the relatively low standard of football in which they played. Using an analysis of serious leisure identification, the study explored four behaviours, which combated the unfashionable nature of support for Luton Town FC. These included: in-group favouritism; out-group derogation; unrealistic optimism; and voice (Jones, 2000). Furthermore, Jones (1998) argued that the rewards of support should outweigh the costs. In cases where the costs of team support were higher than the rewards, Jones (2000) argued that fans engaged in the aforesaid actions as compensatory behaviours. Such acts can also be equated to the image-management tactics described previously (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; End, 2001; End *et al.*, 2002). The analysis of cost and reward is useful and advanced the literature exploring when fans engage in image-management behaviours.

The four behaviours attributed by Jones (2000) as means to improve reward deficits are similar to those identified in previous literature, with the exception of voice, which is somewhat removed from literature on sport fandom. Demonstrations of in-group bias have been addressed (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976;

Wann & Dolan, 1994). Although derogation of rival groupings has been shown to be insignificant in some forums (Wann & Dolan, 1994), it was highlighted as a method to improve fan experience (Jones, 2000). However, it was the notion of voice which was most elaborated on. This concept was applicable when "aspects of identifying with the club could not be seen positively" (Jones, 2000, p. 293). In such situations, voice denoted participant descriptions, which referred to aspects of established team identification that fans viewed positively, such as playing style, history and the traditions of the club. Through referring to such aspects, fans of Luton Town FC were able to manage their established team identification, even in occasions, which reflected negatively on their self-concept (Jones, 1998, 2000). To complement the review of literature exploring established team identification, studies of points of attachment follow, to highlight the multitude of aspects that fans of sport teams affiliate with.

Points of attachment
More recent literature has attempted to move beyond analysis of established team identification, which is specific to the bond fans develop with teams. Studies of points of attachment provide an additional perspective through which to explore fan-team bonds (Funk & James, 2006; Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Kwon, Trail, & Anderson, 2005; Robinson & Trail, 2005). The work of the authors mentioned model points or aspects of teams with which fans identify. Points of attachment include team, players, coaches and other factors, such as sport, university, level of sport (Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Kwon *et al.*, 2005), while other studies incorporated achievement and community (Robinson & Trail, 2005). The factor 'community' equates to the university point tested by Kwon and colleagues. Specifically, in a study of a collegiate team, the university represents a community relating to the sport team, while in analyses of professional sport teams, the community aspect could be supplanted by town or city.

Of particular salience is the acknowledgement in this body of literature that the sport and community/university can be a factor in attachment to a sport team

(Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Kwon & Trail, 2005; Robinson & Trail, 2005). This provides a useful extension of the work reviewed earlier, which addressed the ways in which established team identification may form. Although this body of literature is recent and still developing (the points of attachment displaying significance in different contexts are still being refined), it provides an area for consideration. However, Kwon *et al* (2000) argued that the degree to which some fans are identified with the team may shape which points of attachment are salient. One omission from the points of attachment literature includes attachment to other fans. Specifically, what role does the interaction with other fans, friends or family members at games add to attendance? Literature addressing this query is now reviewed.

Social interaction

Laverie and Arnett (2000) raised a critical question regarding social connections and ties in the development of established team identification. Specifically, as Wann and Dolan (1994) asserted, strongly identified fans discuss aspects regarding their team more frequently than those with a weaker bond. Furthermore, they questioned the role social connections or interaction played on motivations, attachment and identity salience. Therefore, does social interaction serve some ulterior purpose in game attendance? These questions are widely overlooked in the literature to date. The literature on fan motivations discussed previously includes the importance of social interaction, which has been shown to motivate female fans (Wann, 1995; Wann *et al.*, 1999b); however, the role it plays in week-to-week attendance is unclear. Specifically, whether social interaction is important in fans decision to attend, a supplement to attendance, or whether it serves some additional purpose. Therefore, future investigation that considers the role that social aspects of attendance play in the formation and maintenance of new team identification provides a key opportunity to advance existing literature exploring new team identification.

Summary

The literature on established team identification demonstrates how the strength of identification influences behaviour in relation to the team. Fans with strong established team identification will display support, consume club history and statistics and endeavour to attend higher numbers of games. In addition, in situations where established team identification reflects negatively on a fan, literature demonstrates how the use of Voice and in-group bias provides significant avenues to manage an individual's self-concept. The role that social interaction plays in the formation of new team identification is less clear. Studies of fan motives and established team identification have shown that in some cases females are attracted by social motives. However, the role of social interaction in the formation and maintenance of new team identification requires further research attention. To move this review more specifically into the domain of new team identification, literature exploring new sport teams and the bonds fans develop is reviewed below.

2.7 New team identification

Studies examining established team identification, attachment and affiliation have formed a significant body of research. Yet, research into new sport teams is scarce. A notable contributing factor in the sparse research into new sport teams is the rarity of their occurrence; however, the creation of the J-League (Japanese Soccer League) and Super-14 (SANZAR Rugby Union), coupled with the development of newly created entities contesting established leagues, has provided untapped opportunities to explore this research context. To date, James *et al* (2002) provide the sole research study examining a new sport team. They investigated the psychological connection of season-ticket holders of a new major-league baseball franchise in the USA (James *et al.*, 2002), implementing a single quantitative survey [a snapshot] to measure the psychological connection of season-ticket holders prior to their first season of competition.

James *et al* (2002, p. 215) raised the question of whether for new teams it is a matter of "building or maintaining the consumer base". Specifically, they proposed that, in addition to attracting new consumers, new sport teams need to implement marketing strategies to increase the psychological connection of established fans, thus increasing the chances of maintaining the consumer base. The study was conducted before the new franchise's first competitive season, to assess if psychological connection could be formed prior to a league season. James *et al* (2002) did not clarify whether the new franchise had contested pre-season warm-up games, where season-ticket holders may have already experienced the team. To test each variable against the strength of psychological connection season-ticket holders held with the new team, participants were categorised by age, gender, salary and education groups (James *et al.*, 2002).

Responses demonstrated a broad level of agreement with the scale items measuring psychological connection. Thirty-five percent of participants reported a strong psychological connection to the new sport team, forty-seven percent a moderate connection and eighteen percent disagreed with the scale questions, demonstrating a weak psychological connection. Results concluded that weak, moderate or strong connections to the team occurred in each group, which inferred that no significant between-group differences existed (James *et al.*, 2002).

The second stage of the research process tested psychological connection of the weak, moderate and strong connections against factors influencing the decision to purchase a season ticket. Ten items developed through the research process specifically tested the factors influencing the decision to purchase a season ticket. Factors tested included (James *et al.*, 2002, p. 221):

o   Business opportunity
o   Media ads
o   Novelty
o   Economics

- o Family
- o Community prestige
- o Knowledge
- o Physical attraction
- o Achievement
- o Physical skill

Across the sample, the physical level of skill, learning, developing knowledge of the players and team and the prestige of being a major-league city were the strongest items relating to the decision to purchase a season ticket. In the weak connection group, only the physical level of skill influenced season-ticket holders to purchase a season ticket. The moderate connection group rated the physical level of skill, knowledge and prestige as highest motivations, while the strong connection group reported the broadest range of motivating factors, including spending time with family members (James *et al.*, 2002, p. 221). It would appear from this finding that a direct correlation was evident between the strong connection group and multiple points of psychological connection to the team. The moderate connection group were motivated by as many as seven factors included in the scale, while the weak connection group generally only agreed with one purchase decision.

James *et al* (2002) made a valuable initial contribution to understanding fans of new sport teams. Especially pertinent was that age, gender, salary and education had no impact on fan propensity to develop a psychological connection to a new sport team, in contrast to studies of established teams, which have found that young males developed a stronger psychological connection than other demographic groups (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000). However, additional testing is required to validate this finding. James *et al* (2002) raised another issue pertaining to new sport teams, as described below:

As franchises mature and fans mature with them, the need to determine what factors are influential in keeping the members of the connection to team groups in the team's fold grows increasingly important. Longitudinal studies and/or studies of teams at different levels of team/consumer development need to be conducted to achieve some understanding of this maturation process (James *et al.*, 2002, p. 224).

Specifically, James *et al* (2002) provided a snapshot of psychological connection in season-ticket holders of a new sport team. However, James *et al* (2002) did not explore affective and behavioural aspects of new sport team fandom as they were outside of the scope of psychological connection. Studies of established team identification contribute understanding of affective and behavioural aspects of fandom (Jones, 1998, 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1993, 1995; Wann & Dolan, 1994), which is missing in the literature on new sport teams. Furthermore, James *et al* (2002) did not explore the formation or development of new team identification, which the passage above shows. Therefore, there are specific opportunities for research into new sport teams to develop from the existing study of new sport team fans (James *et al.*, 2002). Literature exploring identification in relocated franchises is examined in the following paragraphs.

Relocated franchises
The limited research into relocated franchises, or teams, derives mainly from the USA. To date, three studies have explored the phenomenon of relocated franchises (Foster & Hyatt, 2007; Lewis, 2001; Mitrano, 1999). A further case study examined the inaugural season of the Carolina Hurricanes franchise to assess how "marketing strategy evolved during the adoption process" (Kelley *et al.*, 1999, p. 469); however, the organisationally based marketing approach conceptualised how marketing strategy evolved post-relocation instead of the impact this move had on the social identification of fans. Therefore the work of Kelley *et al* (1999) is not reviewed in detail here. The work of Foster and Hyatt (2007), although pertinent as a study of franchise relocation, explored a period five years after the Hartford Whalers became the Carolina Hurricanes and is conceptually irrelevant to this research process. Of the existing studies that

explore relocated franchises, Lewis (2001) provides a key insight into the impacts of relocation on sport fans.

In his sociological study of franchise relocation, Lewis (2001, p. 6) posed the question "to what degree do fans retain their allegiance to teams after those teams are relocated?" To address this quandary, Lewis (2001) monitored the online forums of four relocated franchises in the United States. Between 1995 and 1997 Lewis (2001) monitored the online forums of the Hartford Whalers, which became the Carolina Hurricanes, the Houston Oilers, which became the Tennessee Titans, the Quebec Nordiques, which became the Colorado Avalanche, and the Winnipeg Jets, which became the Phoenix Coyotes. Lewis (2001, p. 9) used lengthy responses from the four teams' online fan forums that "demonstrated the fans' feelings about the team." As an exploratory study, Lewis (2001) did not contact fans directly and analysed only comments from forum threads started by fans.

The major contribution of Lewis' (2001) work to understanding relocated franchises was the presentation of two types of fan allegiance – civic and symbolic. Lewis (2001) argued that under normal circumstances [in established teams] the two fan categories would be indistinguishable. First, civic allegiance referred to fans that followed the franchise based on an allegiance to their home town or city. When the franchise moved away from the locality, this group of fans shifted attention from supporting the franchise to implementing plans to obtain a new franchise in their home town or city. Civic allegiance was further dissected into two themes: an individual's strong connection to the town the team played in; and the importance of that team in developing a unique identity for the town (Lewis, 2001).

Second, symbolic allegiance categorised fans that maintained support for the franchise after relocation if it maintained its name, logo and mascots. Moreover, Lewis (2001) argued the allegiance with a franchise's logo, kit or other distinguishable characteristic was something fans linked to 'rooting for the

team'. Therefore, the connection to visible aspects of the team usurped civic pride in the group of fans with a symbolic allegiance. Lewis (2001, p. 17) continued:

> One of the factors that allows for the development of symbolic allegiance is modern transportation and communications technology. As this technology continues to expand and reach more people, one prediction is that fan allegiance will be based more on a team's logos and colours and less on its connection with hometown fans.

Lewis' (2001) assertion addressed the increasing mobility of individuals in society. Instead of supporting a local team due to geographic proximity and emanating from civic allegiance, individuals are able to travel to support a team they are symbolically attracted to, or alternatively maintain virtual support for a team using online chat rooms, forums and websites, without direct attendance at games. Although this study was exploratory and descriptive, Lewis' (2001) research does provide a number of conceptual notions, which would benefit from additional exploration.

Summary

The studies reviewed in this section provided a conceptualisation of new sport teams and relocated sport franchises. The existing study of a new sport team highlights that fans develop a strong cognitive bond, despite only a brief history. At this embryonic stage, much research is still required to develop the findings of the reviewed research (James *et al*., 2002; Lewis, 2001).

2.8   Identification with football in Australia

Existing literature has been drawn together to articulate the formation of established team identification; its development; the nuances of fan-team bonds and the current understanding of the construct relating to new or relocated sport teams. Here, the cultural process of established team identification, which proliferated itself through football at most levels across Australia, is explored. Previous research exploring established team identification focussed on the National Soccer League (NSL), which was the top level of football in Australia

from 1977 to 2004. The process of established team identification evidenced in the National Soccer League (NSL) has highlighted that ethnicity and specifically European ethnicity have been central in the formation of fan-team bonds (Adair & Vamplew, 1997; Hay, 1994; Hughson, 1992; Vamplew, 1994). Research into football in Australia pre-2004 focussed predominantly on football's history post WWII and the role that football has played in the lives, acculturation and social well-being of non-English-speaking migrants (Hay, 1994; Kallinikios, 2007; Lock, Taylor, & Darcy, 2008b; Mosely, 1987, 1995).

The football club served "as an instrument through which all elements of social life could be aided. They [football clubs] enabled people to interact, to establish patronage links, support networks and social contacts" (Mosely, 1995, p. 21). The consequent traditions that developed around football clubs created an avenue for migrants to gain prominence in their home community through playing and administrative roles as well as through club patronage (Mosely, 1995). The strong links that football clubs maintained within ethnic communities framed the previous process of established team identification, which has since been described as unique (Dunning *et al.*, 2002).

Fans identified with Australian domestic teams due to their ethnicity or the nationality of their parents (Hughson, 1996, 1997), a situation far removed from the more conventional theorisations of factors influencing the formation of established team identification (Fink *et al.*, 2002; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). Therefore, the formation of established team identification in Australia included the mobilisation of more physical social categorisations, i.e. nationality and ethnicity (Brown, 1988). The inextricable links football maintained with ethnicity in Australia developed the image of football as a game for Sheilas, Wogs and Poofters (J. Warren, Harper, & Whittington, 2002), a perception so prevalent in Australia that the derogatory term 'Wogball' [colloquialism for football] is present in the *Macquarie Dictionary* (Vamplew, 1994).

The 'ethnic' framework of the National Soccer League (NSL) and a hooligan problem that perpetuated itself in Australian football developed the perception of an environment that was viewed as exclusive and intimidating by football fans outside of the existing support network (Lock, 2009; Lock *et al.*, 2008b). However, some commentators have argued the role of the media in perpetuating this perception (Hughson, 2001). Hughson's (2001) provocative titling for his case study, '*The wogs are at it again',* pointed to the negative role that media played in developing public perspectives of the "soccer riot" and its inextricable links with certain ethnic groups in Australia. Hughson (2001) linked inflammatory media reportage as a precursor to the de-ethnicising of football in Australia. Moreover, "the de-ethnicising case has always hinged on the perception that soccer will only move into the mainstream of Australian sport once it has freed itself from controversies associated with ethnic identity" (Hughson, 2001, p. 40). This perspective underpinned the reasons that the NSL was replaced with the A-League. The A-League competition specifically endeavoured to reposition football away from its post WWII ethnic trajectory and into a mainstream future (O'Neill, 2006). The national governing body believed that the new league could initiate a form of new team identification, whereby fans could support the team of their city (O'Neill, 2006). Literature exploring the process of new team identification in the A-League provides preliminary understanding of the process.

The A-League

There is consensus that the A-League presents a notable shift from the NSL, both in culture and focus (Hallinan, Hughson, & Burke, 2007; Hay, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Lock, 2009). Studies to date include Hay's ethnographic work with fans of Melbourne Victory (Hay, 2006a, 2006b); Lock, Taylor and Darcy's work with members of Sydney FC (Lock, Taylor, & Darcy, 2006; Lock *et al.*, 2007); and Hallinan, Hughson and Burke's comparative study between fans of Melbourne Victory and the Springvale White Eagles in Victoria (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007). Hay (2006a) alluded to the changes that had taken place in the support of Australia's national competition, arguing that:

> The current [football] boom is different from all those which have gone before. Those were precipitated and sustained by high levels of inward migration of football-cognisant people; this one is virtually entirely driven by the interest of the existing domestic population (Hay, 2006a, p. 101).

The comments of Hay (2006a) are important when addressing new team identification in the A-League's following. Specifically, the notion that support for the A-League is drawn from Australia's 'existing population', not the interest of migrants from Europe (Hay, 2006a), indicates a shift in the process of identification. Thus, instead of forming established team identification due to the nationality of their parents, fans developed new team identification with A-League clubs through some 'existing interest'. Hay's (2006a) argument supports the perspective that A-League clubs draw from a broad cross-section of 'Australian' society, which was an explicit recommendation of the *Bradley Report* (1990) and *The Report of the NSL Task-Force* (2003). This shift has been indicated through research into Sydney FC's club membership (Lock *et al.*, 2007). Findings indicated that the A-League has succeeded in attracting a young market, which has formed strong new team identification with Sydney FC, despite only a brief club history (Lock *et al.*, 2007). The quantitative nature of these findings provides an insight into the broader makeup of Sydney FC's membership base.

Hallinan, Hughson and Burke (2007) provide a key insight into fan perspectives on the A-League. Fans interviewed purported that the A-League was far more professional than its predecessor. Furthermore, it was evident that fans believed the playing standard had improved due to an influx of quality foreign imports (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007; Lock, 2009).

Hallinan, Hughson and Burke (2007) invoked significant discussion regarding how the development of the A-League impacted upon a specific ethnically orientated football club. The comparative discussion, between the Melbourne Victory and the Springvale White Eagles, addresses a vital aspect of the new milieu; namely, how the restructure of Australia's domestic football competition

affected a specific ethnically based club. The findings indicated that it was unlikely that ethnically based clubs would feature at the top level of Australian football again; however, the prominence of ethnically orientated clubs in the suburbs and margins of Australia's cities has not abated. Football's role in the social fabric and networking of migrant communities demonstrably continued in the case of the Serbian football club Springvale White Eagles. There is a need for further research to explore this milieu to replicate or contrast the findings of this paper in a range of ethnic backgrounds and clubs (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007).

Summary

The literature presented denotes the complex cultural milieu from which the new A-League competition has emanated. Specifically, this is evidenced in the departure from a competition whereby the predominant cultural factor in established team identification was expressive ethnicity (Mosely, 1995) to a supposedly blank canvas including new teams spread across Australia (Lock, 2009). Why fans form new team identifications in the A-League is currently unclear. However, the influence of the previous framework of established team identification in football in Australia provides an insight into how individuals have historically bonded with football clubs in the antipodes. This milieu represents a considerable departure from the collegiate sport teams (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993, 1995; Wann & Dolan, 1994) and professional sport teams (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; End, 2001; James, 2001; James *et al.*, 2002) predominantly researched in the literature drawn from North America. Consequently, this research project represents a significant opportunity to assess whether existing theoretical and conceptual development derived from North America and Europe is applicable to the new Australian A-League competition and a new team competing within it.

2.9 Research agenda

The literature reviewed in this section has demonstrated that significant gaps exist in conceptual and theoretical contributions on new team identification, to date. The opportunity to measure new team identification and model its development represents a significant avenue for empirically founded conceptual outcomes. Research into new team identification has not been conducted and the limited new team-based research has concentrated on psychological connection (James *et al.*, 2002). As such, the areas for both theoretical and conceptual development are substantial. Social identity theory provides a useful and feasible theoretical framework to study sport fans, as evidenced by research conducted to this point (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; Jones, 1998; Sloan, 1989; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). While there has been widespread application of social identity theory to study established team identification, there are untapped opportunities to apply it to a study of new team identification.

There is little disagreement in sports literature that engagement in supporting a team enables individuals to maintain a positive self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, a number of notable examples drawn from the literature on sport fans demonstrate that established team identity levels are a contributory factor in an individual's image-management processes (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993, 1995). In consequence, measurement of new team identification appears to be an important area to develop an understanding of whether the concepts developed in relation to established sport leagues are applicable in the Australian context and pertaining to a new team. In particular, the literature reviewed in this section has demonstrated the overt focus of current literature on established team identification. Furthermore, it highlights the important contributions that studies of established teams have provided. Following from this review of literature, the following areas for research into new team identification emerged:

- Given the widespread application of social identity theory to explore established team identification, further research is required to test its suitability as a framework for new team identification.

- To date, literature investigating what leads to the formation of new team identification is scant and further understanding is required.
- Literature on new sport teams focuses on the cognitive connection fans develop and does not measure affective and behavioural dimensions of new team identification.
- There is little indication of what influences the strength of new team identification in the literature to date, thus an agenda exists to contribute understanding of variables that lead to strong or weak fan-new team bonds.
- There is an opportunity to test new team identification at different points in club development to expand on previous research, which took a snapshot of the construct (James *et al.*, 2002).
- Research has focussed on the process or career development of established-team bonds, but the development of new team identification provides an untapped opportunity for investigation.

The gaps in the literature, as defined above, justify the study of new team identification to extend the myriad of studies exploring team identification in fans of established clubs. Following from the research agenda, the research design implemented to explore the central research objective and subsidiary questions frames Chapter Three.

3   Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodologies implemented to answer the central research objective and subsidiary questions, presented in Chapter 1. The methodology is grounded in the conceptual, theoretical and contextual discourses and perspectives outlined in Chapter 2. The structure of this chapter is as follows: first, the case study research approach is outlined and justified, both in the context of previous studies of sport fans and literature on research methodologies. Second, the discussion goes on to address the research context in which the case study is situated. Third, a detailed description of each primary data-gathering tool including: the instrument, pilot work, respondent group, procedure and data analysis is provided. Fourth, the measures employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the research process and methodological triangulation are defined. Fifth, a discussion of the limitations and ethical issues arising from the research process completes this chapter.

3.2 Research approach

In this section, the research approach adopted to explore new team identification is addressed. To date, the majority of studies exploring fans of established and new sport teams emanate from the statistical and instrument-driven psychologically based North American body of research (Fink *et al.*, 2002; James *et al.*, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann *et al.*, 2001b). The widespread use of surveys to examine crowds is understandable, given the need to gather information from broad cross-sections of what can be large populations.

The role of surveys in providing data "from samples representative of a defined wider population" is well established in research of sport fans (Veal, 2005, p. 143). However, more recently, studies of sport fans have attempted to use a mixed-method approach (G. Crawford, 2001, 2003b, 2004; Jacobson, 2003; Jones, 1997, 1998). Such studies have sought to add the participants' words,

thoughts and feelings to develop a deeper understanding than purely quantitative findings, thus shifting the previously positivistic paradigm to include interpretive and inductive elements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Existing literature argues that the choice of research method/s or approach should stem from the object being studied, not preconceived paradigmatic ideals (Bouma, 2004; Bryman, 2004; Silverman, 2000). Specifically, instead of imposing a purely qualitative or quantitative approach based on prior beliefs, different research problems or questions should guide the methods that are used (Silverman, 2000). Questions and/or hypotheses investigating the broad characteristics of a population or behavioural attributes should be explored quantitatively (Jones, 1997, 1998). In contrast, explanations of social phenomena and contexts lend themselves to qualitative enquiry (Jones, 1997). The decision over the research paradigm is further complicated by the fact that each approach has inherent strengths and weaknesses. As Bryman (2004) commented, although distinct differences between qualitative and quantitative enquiry exist, the two paradigms should not be separated completely. Bouma (2004) expanded upon this view, noting that both research approaches are vital strategies in better understanding the social sciences.

Quantitative enquiry provides information about a large number of people, who are representative of a wider population (Bryman, 1988). This facilitates the testing of theories or hypotheses in large populations or sample groups. In contrast, qualitative enquiry explores smaller samples in greater depth in an effort to explain social phenomena (Bouma, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Much conjecture surrounds the assumptions that underlie each approach. Quantitative research is commonly used deductively to test pre-conceived notions, seek out relationships and quantify reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This opposes the inherently inductive and interpretive approach of qualitative enquiry, where participants guide the thematic and theoretical development (Bryman, 2004) and the notion that attempts to estimate reality are futile (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The respective criticisms of each approach are well

established; however, arguments contend that quantitative enquiry lacks the depth and explanation of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Veal, 2005). Conversely, the smaller samples explored using qualitative methods are generally criticised as they may not be representative of broader populations (Bryman, 2004).

Consideration of the paradigmatic differences associated with each research approach is vital. However, an additional distinction is required as, increasingly, quantitative methodologies such as surveys and qualitative instruments are analysed in a manner that contrives their paradigmatic position. Furthermore, as research strategies and designs evolve, analysis of qualitative and quantitative data is bringing the paradigms closer (Bryman, 1988). Statistical representation of interview themes and results and survey instruments with open-ended responses are two examples of how the two paradigms have merged through the use of qualitative analysis software (Bryman, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Quantitative instruments can also include open-ended essay-style questions, which depending on the analytical technique represent a fundamental separation from the statistical analyses normally associated with this method. Therefore, consideration is also required, not only of the choice of method, but the modes of analysis used either to quantify or explain the social phenomena investigated.

Mixed-method research approach

Historically, staunch representatives of the respective research paradigms have opposed the marriage of qualitative and quantitative investigation because "the two traditions reflect antagonistic views on how the social sciences should be conducted" (Bryman, 1988, p. 127). However, as Bryman (1988) elaborated, studies focussing on the technical benefits of employing a mixed-method design to reap the respective strengths of each approach has led to a reduced epistemological focus and a methodological shift towards research designs examining problems using a number of data-gathering tools. Additionally, "social science methods should not be treated as mutually exclusive alternatives among which we must choose and then passively pay the costs of our choices"

(Brewer & Hunter, 1989, p. 16). Therefore, through combining the two research paradigms the researcher may benefit from the strengths of each approach.

The research approach included quantitative and qualitative methods. Despite the somewhat partisan distinctions already described, the use of each paradigm represents an effort to invoke the inherent strengths of both qualitative and quantitative enquiry (Bryman, 1988) and reduce potential weaknesses of using only one. Previous research of sport fans has promoted the strengths of a mixed-method approach in gaining a fuller understanding of the topic (Jones, 1997, 1998). Notably, Jones (1997) argued that while quantitative methods are akin to assessing behavioural and descriptive aspects of fans, the inductive nature of qualitative research can unearth aspects of the support phenomena, which could have been overlooked by a single-method investigation. In addition, the use of in-depth interviews or participant observation facilitates thematic development, which can then be tested on the broader population using a quantitative survey procedure (Jones, 1997).

The implementation of quantitative and qualitative methods is underpinned by the research objective and questions articulated in Chapter 1. Furthermore, as these questions emanate from the literature on sport fandom, established team identification and social identity theory, the nature of each provides an important guiding light in the choice of methodology (Bryman, 2004; Silverman, 2000). The quantitative methods employed emanate from the necessity, stemming from the literature and theoretical framework, to measure demographic characteristics and the formation, strength and development of new team identification. Qualitative interviews were used to explain the formation of new team identification and whether new team identification developed. The mixed-method approach utilised a case study (Yin, 1994), which included two survey instruments and an in-depth interview phase. Each method implemented addressed more than one research question, as set out in Table 3.1 below. To reiterate, the five subsidiary research questions probe the following issues:

1. Can social identity theory be profitability applied in a new team context?
2. What themes are salient in the formation of new team identification?
3. Is the SSIS a valid measure of new team identification?
4. How do demographic variables influence new team identity strength?
5. How does new team identification develop?

Table 3.1, below, defines the role of each of the three primary data gathering tools in answering the five research questions.

Table 3.1: Method summary

Method	Research questions addressed	Purpose
Case Study	**All**	To provide a context in which to research new team identification.
Survey one	**All**	To explore who supports Sydney FC, specifically; attendance patterns, formation of new team identity; new team identity strength and development. The survey of members provided an opportunity to examine new team identification after one season.
In-depth 1-to-1 interviews	**1, 2 & 5**	Explore qualitatively new team identity formation and perceptions of development of new team identification.
Survey two	**All**	Investigate who supports Sydney FC, specifically; attendance patterns, new team identity strength & development and demographic characteristics. The survey of members provided an opportunity to examine new team identity development after the second season and an opportunity to triangulate year one findings.

3.3 Case study

The new team identification of Sydney FC members is addressed as a case study. Yin (1994, p. 1) defined the applications of the case study as:

> In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

The comments of Yin (1994) are pertinent to this research. Stake (1994) elaborated, arguing that the choice to implement a case study is not

methodological; rather, the object to be studied should guide the decision. Therefore, the decision to use a case study reflects the decision to reduce the scope of this research to members of Sydney FC. Additionally, the case study, as an empirical enquiry, lends itself to the case where: "boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The historical development of football in Australia has been fraught with a series of individual club and structural national league issues. Given the changes that Australian football has undergone since 2003 and the emergence of a new league, with new teams, this new milieu provides an opportunity to study new team identification. In essence, the case study provides a prime opportunity to observe and comment on the development of new team identification in the Australian context.

The specific case studied provided a context to investigate new team identification. As Veal (2005, p. 171) asserted, case studies are not used to provide "universally applicable findings…. However, if research has no implications beyond the particular case at a particular time and place, there would be little point in conducting it." Therefore, the methods outlined in this chapter provide the basis for collecting empirical data from which a conceptual outcome of new team identification will be developed. Prior to the definition of each method, the research context and case studied is defined.

3.4 Research context

The case studied was Sydney FC, a 'new sport team' situated in Australia and competing in the newly formed A-League competition. In this section the research context is established with a brief history surrounding the rationale for creating a new league with new teams. This discussion provides background for the A-League's predecessor – the NSL – and the change process leading to the ailing league's replacement in 2005. Within this context, Sydney FC is overviewed and the new team's performances during seasons one and two of the A-League are considered. Additionally, the options available to Sydney FC patrons provide a clarification of membership choices available to individuals

choosing to join the new sport team. These aspects of the research context are provided to facilitate additional areas for discussion in Chapter 5.

3.4.1 Football in Australia

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature published in relation to established team identification in Australia. This body of literature highlighted the strong links between football and ethnic communities in Australia. Commentators on the topic have linked ethnicity to the problems domestic professional football competitions have had in attracting sustained mainstream attendance (Adair & Vamplew, 1997; Vamplew, 1994). The ensuing perception of football has been that it was an ethnic affair, which has contributed to the marginalisation of the game in Australia (Vamplew, 1994). However, low game attendance rates have been seen as paradoxical when compared with the stellar participation rates of football at a grass-roots level in Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

The unique cultural context of Australian football prompted both academics (Adair & Vamplew, 1997; Vamplew, 1994) and respected Australian businessmen (Bradley, 1990; Kemeny, 2003; D. Stewart, 1994) to suggest that a successful national league competition needed to appeal to broader areas and regions of Australia, and not just specific ethnic or cultural groupings. An early investigation into the future of soccer, *'The Bradley Report',* recommended that such changes were required to develop "the image that soccer is Australian, not ethnic" (Bradley, 1990, p. 44). However, this call for repositioning went largely unheeded and little change occurred, as NSL clubs maintained power and influence over national football governance (Solly, 2004). Successive attempts to remove expressive ethnicity from the NSL (1977, 1992, 1996), yielded little success (Mosely, 1997), as historical links to ethnicity provided deep and important patterns within culturally based football clubs and de-ethnicisation agendas merely watered down the ethnic dimension, without removing it (Hughson, 2000).

In addition to the long-established ethnically aligned clubs in the NSL, the 1990s saw a proliferation of 'Australian' football clubs, which sought to engage mainstream followings. These 'Australian' clubs have been linked with Anglo-Saxon followings displaying 'imagined Englishness' (Brabazon, 1998; Magdalinski, 1997) but research arguing this lacks any empirical evidence to support that assumption. Notable examples of Australian clubs in the NSL included Perth Glory, Northern Spirit, Adelaide United and Brisbane Strikers. During the last 14 years of the NSL (1990-2004), the sporadic success of 'Australian' teams alerted the wider football community to the market potential of clubs that did not align with expressive ethnic (i.e. non Australian) heritage. Such 'Australian' clubs linked closely with the concept forwarded earlier that teams should apply to broader areas and regions (Bradley, 1990). Each club succeeded in attracting large crowd numbers, sporadically, while Perth Glory enjoyed unrivalled success during its 10-year history in the NSL (1994-2004) (Hay, 2006b).

In 2003, following the continuing under-performance and insolvency of NSL clubs, which fuelled ongoing public pressure to reform the sport, the Australian Federal Government intervened, commissioning a report into '*The Structure, Governance and Management of Soccer in Australia*' (D. Crawford, 2003). Essentially, '*The Crawford Report*' outlined a strategic program of change for Australian football governance to address the needs of its significant stakeholders. To implement the structural changes outlined in '*The Crawford Report*' the broad-ranging recommendations proposed that a suitable figurehead should supervise the change process. Australian business tycoon Frank Lowy, a previous chairman of the Hakoah club (latterly Sydney City) in the NSL became chairman of the reformed governing body. On assuming control of football's governance, Lowy and his newly appointed board commissioned a report probing the structure of the NSL (Kemeny, 2003). Specifically, the report addressed the pressing issue of developing a sustainable domestic league to replace the NSL, which had been plagued by "mismanagement and ethnically based trouble" (Huxley, 2006a, p. 28). As incoming Chief Executive Officer John O'Neill stated on his induction to the Australian Soccer Association (ASA)

in 2004, football in Australia was renowned for "nepotism, parochialism, jingoism and shoddy practices" (O'Neill, 2006).

Following the *Report of the NSL Task-Force* the NSL was disbanded in 2004, ending a 27-year history, encompassing 41 clubs (Kemeny, 2003). During the final three years of the NSL there were only four instances of clubs generating a trading profit, although the *Report of the NSL Task-Force* commented that the remarkable resilience of the NSL was the result of the "commitment and passion of club members and benefactors rather than through successful club business models" (Kemeny, 2003, p. 3). Following the termination of the NSL, the Australian Soccer Association re-branded itself as the Football Federation of Australia (FFA), following a brief period as the Australian Football Association (Solly, 2004). Subsequently, a sustained period of planning began to produce a national team, which would qualify for the World Cup in Germany 2006 (to revive national interest in the Socceroos) and a domestic league that was viable, sustainable and supportable. The result was the A-League competition.

3.4.2 The A-League

The A-League took the recommendations of *The Report of the NSL Task-Force* to extreme levels, implementing one-team-per-city franchises. Each of the eight foundation clubs were required to demonstrate financial viability, stability and a plan to engage the community, or city, in which they operated. Therefore, the A-League was fully divorced from the ethnic club structure that had previously attracted widespread attention in the literature written on the Australian football context (Hay, 1994; Hughson, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002; Mosely, 1995; Vamplew, 1994). Teams no longer aligned with community-based ethnic clubs e.g. APIA (Italian), Sydney United (Croatian), Sydney Olympic (Greek), Marconi Stallions (Italian) and Hakoah (Jewish). This clear attempt to disconnect the A-League from a specific ethnic base provided a significantly changed environment for football research. The A-League was not de-ethnicised *per se*. Instead, the A-League incorporated teams that applied to "broader areas and regions" (Bradley, 1990, p. 44), which ruled out ethnically oriented, parochial clubs. The purpose

of the A-League, therefore, was to provide an unrestrictive environment for fans of football (generically) to unite, regardless of previous involvement.

The context outlined in this section informs the background for the case study described in this research project. Specifically, new team identification in a new league forms the focal point of the study, which is addressed through a case study of Sydney FC (Yin, 1994). To provide insight into the actual club studied for this project an outline and brief history of Sydney FC follows. The case studied is described below.

3.4.3 Sydney FC

A brief history of the Sydney Football Club (Sydney FC) is outlined as follows. The club was founded in 2004 as the sole A-League licence holder for Metropolitan Sydney. All of the club's home games are played at Sydney Football Stadium (SFS), which has [sporadically] been home to the Australian national team, the Socceroos. In the first years of its existence the club secured a number of high-profile signings, which led to Sydney FC earning the nickname Bling FC[1] (Huxley, 2006b).

In the A-League's first season, Sydney FC finished second in the competition and won the grand final, maintaining an average attendance of 16,669 during the regular season (The A-League, 2007). This figure was the highest in the A-League during season one, and comfortably exceeded the league-wide average of 10,891 (The A-League, 2007). The successful first season led to a sold-out SFS for the Grand Final and a significant period of interest in Sydney FC. However, season two was less successful both on and off the field. To provide a point of comparison in relation to average attendances a breakdown for the eight A-League clubs is provided in Table 3.2 below. Table 3.2 also includes the percentage increase or decrease in average attendance from season one to season two.

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[1] Bling FC was a reference to marquee signing Dwight Yorke and his affiliation with expensive jewellery, commonly referred to as "Bling".

Table 3.2: Attendance at A-League matches

Team	Season One	Season Two	% change
Adelaide United	10947	12162	+11.1
CC Mariners	7899	9828	+24.4
Melbourne Victory	14167	27728	+95.7
Newcastle Jets	8912	11442	+28.4
New Zealand Nights	3989	3014	-24.4
Perth Glory	9734	7671	-21.2
Queensland Roar	14812	16465	+11.2
Sydney FC	16669	14999	-10.0

Source: The A-League, 2007.

Table 3.2 highlights that, while the majority of A-League clubs experienced a percentage increase on season one attendances, Sydney FC's crowd numbers dropped by some 10 percent in season two. Despite a boom in membership numbers, financial constraints led to Sydney FC losing high-profile players and coaches in season two. Sydney FC attracted an average crowd of 14,972 in season two, which represented a decrease on season one and reflected the downturn in the clubs on-field fortunes (The A-League, 2007). Ascendant club Melbourne Victory won the A-League in season two and their attendance at home games jumped drastically as a result. Poor on-field performances by Sydney FC were compounded by a three point penalty incurred for salary-cap breaches and the failure of players to engage in community outreach work. In addition, Sydney FC was eliminated from the finals series at the first knockout stage, ending a significantly less successful season two. The issues with performance, administration and community work all influenced the overall success of the club and underpinned the reduced attendance in season two.

In this research project, on-field performances provided an important area for conceptual analysis, especially in relation to the development of new team identification. As shown in Chapter 2, the performance of a sport team, whether established or new, is an important determinant of identification (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). Therefore, based on the brief outline of Sydney FC's performances in the first two seasons, points for further conceptual

analysis emerged, which are addressed in Chapter 5. The options available to members of Sydney FC are outlined in the following section.

Membership Categories

Sydney FC members were able to purchase membership at a variety of prices and levels. These were Foundation, Platinum, Silver, Bronze and the Cove, which included season tickets. Sydney FC also sold a 'Club' membership, which did not include a season ticket. Each of the seven available membership categories is shown in Table 3.3 below. In addition, a map of the home-ground setting and the seating areas allocated to each membership category is shown below.

Table 3.3: Sydney FC membership categories

Membership category	Season-ticket	Price rank
Foundation	Yes	1
Platinum	Yes	2
Silver	Yes	3
Bronze	Yes	4
Cove	Yes	5
Junior[2]	Yes	6
Club	No	7

Source: www.sydneyfc.com/membership

Figure 3.1 provides a graphical representation of Sydney FC's home ground, Sydney Football Stadium (SFS). Additionally, it shows the specific areas in which different member categories sat/stood in the home ground. Foundation, Platinum and Silver members had reserved seating in the areas depicted. Bronze members had access to the general admission areas marked in brown, which, although including guaranteed entry to games, allowed this group of members to move freely in the zones behind each goal, with the exception of the away-fan bay, (3) and the Cove, which is situated in Bay 23 of SFS (Huxley, 2006c). The Cove's location is symbolic, especially as membership in this category was pitched to "fanatical fans" by Sydney FC marketers. Historically, Bay 23 in the

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[2] Junior members can sit in Platinum, Silver, Bronze or Cove areas, and the price changes in each.

SFS was adopted by fervent fans of the Socceroos, the Australian national football team (Cubby, 2005). Marketing for The Cove attempted to create a passionate, vociferous and lively crowd element in this member area for all ages and genders to participate in (adapted from Sydney FC, 2005). See Figure 3.1 below for a pictorial representation of each membership category and the seating area it provides.

Figure 3.1: Sydney FC membership categories
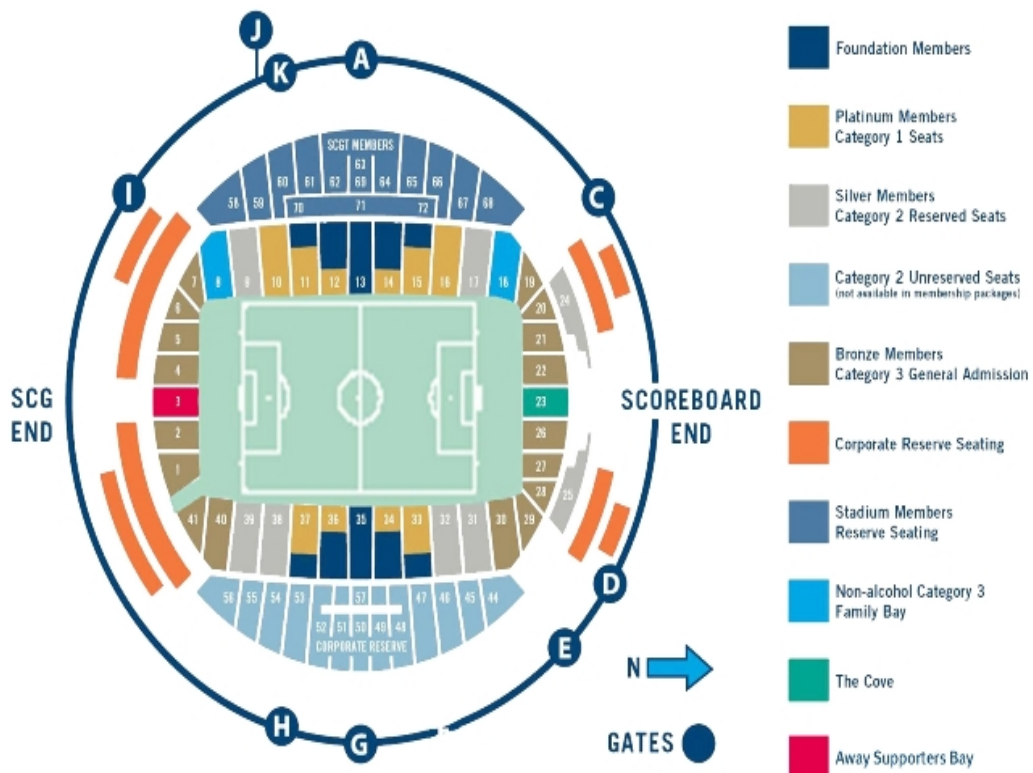
Source: Sydney FC

Summary

In this section, the research context and subject were outlined. This facilitated three specific aspects of the ensuing case study. First, it grounded the theoretical bases of the research project (both sport fan literature and social identity theory) in a social context. Second, it familiarised the reader with an abridged history of football in Australia, the catalysts to its reformation and the current league

structure. Third, an outline of Sydney FC provided both a tangible history for the club and a record of its performances during the period of research.

3.5 Methods & instrumentation

The data-gathering techniques implemented to yield primary empirical data (as outlined in Table 3.1) are described here. First, this section considers the most suitable measure of new team identification. Second, the three-phased research process is outlined, including the pilot testing procedures, population selection, respondent characteristics, instrument development, procedure and data analysis.

3.5.1   Measuring new team identification

The review of literature provided a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the behavioural influences that established team identity strength exerts on fan behaviour. Recognising this, a number of scales have been developed to measure established team identification or psychological attachment (James *et al.*, 2002; Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Mahony *et al.*, 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In the following paragraphs the Sports Spectator Identity Scale (SSIS), psychological connection to a new sports team (James *et al.*, 2002) and the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) are considered as potential tools to measure fan-team bonds. Each has been shown to be a valid measure of established team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), or psychological attachment (James *et al.*, 2002; Mahony *et al.*, 2000). Prior to reviewing single-item measures of established team identification and psychological attachment, a rationale for utilising single-item measures of new team identification follows.

Multi-dimensional models

In addition to the single-item measures described above, recent research has attempted to develop multi-dimensional scales of established team identification (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; Kwon & Armstrong, 2004). Each multi-dimensional scale attempts to provide a more detailed, multi-factorial

model of established team identification. The multi-dimensional scales developed to date have not been replicated or retested in alternate contexts. Furthermore, attempts to develop multi-dimensional scales have led authors to recommend that future testing is required (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere & James, 2007) and each attempt to model established team identification has led to contrasting outcomes. Furthermore, the multi-dimensional scales emanate from research into established sporting teams and benefit from the considerable amount of literature exploring fandom and identification in this context.

The complex, multi-dimensional scales have been informed by an appropriate period of conceptual and theoretical development in an established team context. New sport teams, conversely, are at an early stage of conceptual and theoretical development. Therefore, a more simplistic measure, which has been tested and validated in different studies of sport fandom, was preferred. Recent literature has suggested that efforts to refine single-item measures of fan-team bonds may increase the ease of survey use and brevity of completion time for participants (Kwon & Trail, 2005). However, due to doubts over the reliability of single-item measures a test-retest implementation approach was used to improve the reliability of results during this research process (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Suitable single-item measures of established team identification or psychological attachment are considered now.

Sports Spectator Identity Scale

The SSIS provided one of the first attempts to explicitly measure established team identification. Wann and Branscombe (1993, p. 2) argued that "a short but reliable measure of [established] team identification could be used to explore additional ways in which their [fans'] behaviours and experiences differ." The SSIS included seven questions pertaining to established team identification. Each scale item employed an eight-point rating scale, with a rating of eight indicating strong agreement with the item and a rating of one noting a weak agreement. An example of the SSIS is provided in Appendix 1. The SSIS provides a one-dimensional scale measurement of established team

identification, developed using social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Moreover, the SSIS has been shown to be a valid and reliable tool to measure established team identification (Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann & Pierce, 2003).

In actuality, the SSIS is a remarkably simplistic model of established team identification. However, within the seven SSIS item statements, salient aspects of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of social identity theory are addressed. Moreover, the SSIS does not attempt to measure established team identification multi-dimensionally; instead it aims to encapsulate a simple model of central aspects of established team identification. Consequently, the SSIS measures key aspects in an individual's identification with a sport team.

Wann and Branscombe (1993) also recoded responses to the SSIS item scales into a single-variable titled identity score. This, the authors argued, could be used to test for differences based on demographic characteristics of participants (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Therefore, in addition to providing a model of new team identification, the recoding of the SSIS variables provides an additional phase of analysis to assess how demographic variables and nominal characteristics influence new team identification.

Psychological connection to a new sport team

To measure the cognitive construct of psychological connection to a new sport team, James *et al* (2002) developed a scale drawing from the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The three items used to measure psychological connection with a new sport team included:

- I already consider myself a fan of the <team name>
- I would feel a loss if I had to give up being a <team name> fan
- Others recognise that I am a big <team name> fan

(James *et al.*, 2002, p. 219)

Each of the three items included in the scale to measure psychological connection directly derived from the SSIS. However, a number of SSIS statements do not pertain to psychological connection and James *et al* (2002) did not include them as the SSIS was developed based on the pre-existence of a sport team and affective and behavioural SSIS items were not tested. As the focus of James *et al's* (2002) was to explore the cognitive, psychological connection fans developed with a new sport team, only theoretically relevant psychological connection items were included to form the measurement tool. This brief measure of psychological connection represents an important progression in research exploring new sport teams. However, by exploring only cognitive connection, James *et al's* (2002) model did not test critical aspects of social identity theory, such as: how important being a fan is; consumption of club-related news; and identification of rival groupings. Such item-statements were outside of the scope of James *et al's* (2002) study. However, they pertain centrally to social identity theory and require testing in a new team context.

Psychological Commitment to Team

Mahony *et al* (2000) contributed through the development of a model of psychological commitment. Theoretically, the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) model emanated from literature exploring fan loyalty rather than established team identification. The PCT examined the properties of psychological commitment as a single factor. The resulting analysis compared participants' attitudinal commitment to the team, through the strength or connection of attachment, and then contrasted the connotations of attitudinal commitment on team-related behaviour (i.e. attendance or changing allegiance). Statistically, the PCT was rigorously tested, engaging four samples, drawn from both professional and university support populations. The PCT is a 15-item scale of psychological commitment to team, including twice as many statements as the SSIS. Although the PCT is a valid and reliable measure of psychological commitment, its theoretical basis addresses a specific aspect of established team identification and draws its theoretical frame from a different body of literature. Although rigorously tested, the PCT does not measure: the emotional value of

support, role of rival groupings, overt displays of support, or consumption of team in everyday life. Instead the PCT focuses on scenarios specific to cognitive team bonds.

Further testing

Wann and Pierce (2003) compared the SSIS and PCT to test the outcomes and validity of each model. Following a number of statistical tests, Wann and Pierce (2003) concluded that the correlations between the findings of each scale suggested that both scales measured similar constructs. Conversely, Wann and Pierce (2003) suggested that the relationships between the SSIS and a general measure of fandom were stronger than for the PCT. This is unsurprising, as the PCT was not designed as a general measure of fandom, but instead was intended to measure psychological commitment to team. Both scales demonstrated that all relationships were significant, thus the researchers concluded that each was a valid instrument. However, Wann and Pierce (2003) argued for measures of sport support to break away from the trend of one-dimensional models of established team identification. Consequently, Wann and Pierce (2003) suggested that although the SSIS and PCT appeared to be valid measures of established team identity/commitment, a multi-dimensional approach would provide a more complete measure of the phenomenon. Yet, these recommendations applied to research exploring established sport teams.

Instrument selection

The scales outlined previously (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; James *et al.*, 2002; Mahony *et al.*, 2000; Trail & James, 2001; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) each provide valid measurements of fan-team bonds; however, only the work of James *et al* (2002) specifically explored a new sport team. As mentioned earlier, the multi-dimensional scales developed more recently offer a definite opportunity to elaborate upon existing work in the field of established team identification. Yet, the statistical issues concerning fit and reliability at this early stage of scale development in testing with established clubs make the adoption of such scales in a study of a new sport team

problematic. The complexity of the multi-dimensional scales developed to date and the emergent and differing themes which emanate from each require further testing before application in a new sport team context.

The psychological connection to team items used by James *et al* (2002) did not address important aspects of new team identification, which inform key components in the theoretical framework of this research project. Specifically, key aspects in relation to social identity theory include: the emotional value of support; the importance of rival groupings; overtly displaying support in everyday life; and searching for team-related news and information. Therefore, the SSIS and PCT provided the most viable scales to measure new team identification. The SSIS was selected as it emanated from social identity theory, unlike the PCT, which derives from the literature on fan loyalty, which is conceptually and theoretically different. As such, the SSIS was chosen due to previous testing and its theoretical basis. Despite research finding that the SSIS and PCT explore similar constructs (Wann & Pierce, 2003), the simplicity of the SSIS, coupled with its basis in social identity theory, displayed parallels with the theoretical framework employed here. It provided an opportunity to extend on the important work of James *et al* (2002) by including four additional items investigating new team identification. Furthermore, the research sought to establish whether the SSIS was a valid and reliable measure of new team identification over a two-year period. The implementation of the SSIS in a new sport team context provided an opportunity to establish whether differences existed when compared with studies in an established club context.

3.5.2 Population

Prior to describing the group researched, the method of participant selection is clarified. Veal (2005, p. 197) asserted that a "sample is selected from a population." A population is a group of people sharing a similar trait (Black, 1999). Therefore, the population explored shares the common trait of being members of Sydney FC. Members were chosen as the primary units of analysis, as they had invested money to join Sydney FC. Therefore, members of Sydney

FC provided a unit of analysis that had committed to support the new sport team over the season via a transaction. Non-members had no actual tie to the club at this early stage of the product/team development. Henceforth, any comments pertaining specifically to the findings of this research or research process refer to Sydney FC members. Comments alluding to literature unrelated to Sydney FC members refer to sport fans. The primary data-gathering instruments are outlined in the following section.

3.6 Phase One – year-one survey

3.6.1 Instrument

The season-one survey instrument was delivered to Sydney FC members via the Internet using an independent online provider specialising in Web-based surveys. The decision to implement the survey online was based on ethical and logistical considerations (Dillman, 2000). Ethically, distribution of the survey instrument online negated the need for Sydney FC to divulge member addresses and contact details to the researcher. Logistically, the online survey instrument provided a far easier and quicker method to contact participants than a postal survey would have provided. In addition to the ethical benefits of implementing the survey online, an Internet-based survey provided a number of invisible capability-based benefits (Bryman, 2004; Dillman, 2000). For example, the researcher was able to add skip logic to the survey instrument, which allowed respondents to skip questions unrelated to them, based on previous answers.

A notable example from the survey implemented (Appendix 2) can be viewed in question one. Subjects were simply asked: "Are you a member of Sydney FC." If subjects responded "yes", they progressed to question two on their exit from the first page. Those who responded "no" were outside the scope of this study and were taken to the "thank you" page at the end of the survey. Skip logic was included in concurrence with the findings of previous research (Bryman, 2004; Dillman, 2000), which attributes increased response rates to surveys that are easy and relevant to complete. Due to the ethical, logistical, and capability-

based advantages of a Web-based survey, it was chosen as the mode of implementation for the survey procedures described here.

Survey one addressed: participant demographic characteristics and attendance patterns; the formation of new team identification; and the SSIS. In granting permission to survey its members, Sydney FC's membership and the FFA's research department requested the inclusion of a number of questions pertaining to important aspects of their business. This was agreed in return for access to Sydney FC's membership database. The questions added by both these parties were not relevant to the conceptual or theoretical basis of this research project and have been excluded from the current data analysis.

3.6.2 Pilot test

Thomas and Nelson (2001) endorsed the importance of testing prior to actual research to rectify "flaws that could have easily been corrected with pilot work" (Thomas & Nelson, 2001, p. 69). The pilot testing for survey one was conducted with a convenience sample (Veal, 2005) of staff from a university business faculty to assess the completion time, comprehensibility, accessibility and overall performance of survey one. Respondents were asked to reply via email, indicating missing variable options, issues with comprehensibility, or other problems with the survey instrument. Implementing a model of established team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), which has been shown to be valid and reliable (Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann & Pierce, 2003), reduced the necessity to re-test the item scales included in the model. The survey-one pilot was distributed to a convenience sample (N=32) one month prior to the conclusion of the first A-League season. In concurrence with the primary data procedure, the instrument was piloted online to test the function of the survey, the skip-logic function and completion time. Following the pilot test, only minor changes to language and survey appearance were required.

3.6.3 Respondent group

The survey was distributed by Sydney FC's membership department to members of the club. In season one Sydney FC held email contact for approximately 1200 members; however, due to family memberships and incorrectly listed email accounts, the club provided this figure as an approximation. From approximately 1200 members, 490 useable responses were gathered for analysis. This figure was more than sufficient to facilitate factor analysis of the SSIS, as conjecture posits that five respondents are mandatory per scale-item; in this case 35 respondents (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995). Following these guidelines, the 490 responses received represented a sufficient respondent group.

3.6.4 Survey procedure

Sydney FC's membership department was provided with a hyperlink to the survey and an informed consent letter, which was attached to the email and preceded the hyperlink in the member mail-out. The researcher did not view any contact details for participants at this stage, as the member mail-outs and participant details were managed completely by Sydney FC. When participants clicked on the hyperlink, it redirected them to the online survey, where they could complete the instrument through their Web browser. The instrument took between 10-15 minutes to complete, in a process which was aided by the inclusion of skip logic in the survey design. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were directed to the Sydney FC home page (www.sydneyfc.com) by clicking on the "exit survey" link. Due to ethical considerations on Sydney FC's behalf, the year-one survey was implemented prior to the in-depth interview phase. As such, member details were not available to the researcher unless provided in the year-one survey.

3.6.5 Data analysis

Following an initial recoding of downloaded survey data, the following analyses were conducted. The analysis procedures employed to assess survey-one data are as follows.

Respondent characteristics

Initial data analysis sought to establish the respondent characteristics of Sydney FC members that completed survey one. Frequencies, counts and percentages for age, gender, education and salary provided background characteristics for the sample group.

Attendance patterns

To elaborate on the initial respondent characteristics, further descriptive analysis was conducted to establish: how many games Sydney FC members attended; who Sydney FC members attended games with; and the clothing Sydney FC members wore to home games. Frequencies, counts and percentages were used to analyse the data.

New team identity formation

Analysis of new team identity formation was limited due to the initial instrument design. Survey respondents were able to select multiple responses pertaining to the formation of new team identification in the season-one survey. The responses regarding the formation of new team identification were analysed dichotomously, as participants were able to select multiple response options. Presentation of member new team identity formation characteristics in season one was provided in the form of frequencies, counts and percentage of cases.

New team identification

The SSIS was analysed using a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) factor-extraction method available via the data-reduction function in SPSS (Coakes & Steed, 2001). PCA is a factor-extraction method (Coakes & Steed, 2001), which unlike Exploratory Factory Analysis (EFA) considers all variance (correlated and uncorrelated) when assessing the fit of a model (EFA only considers correlated variance in its analysis) (Hair *et al.*, 1995). This was chosen as the factor-extraction method to provide a reliable extension on previous SSIS analysis, which used PCA to uncover significant relationships between

variables, and assess the single-component model in an established team context (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). PCA is applicable in cases where a scale is used to measure a specific construct (Black, 1999; Hair *et al.*, 1995). Consequently, PCA measures the relationships between variables displaying sufficient communality ±.50 to the overarching construct being tested (Black, 1999; Hair *et al.*, 1995; Veal, 2005). In this case the SSIS was tested as a model of new team identification.

The fit of the SSIS in a new sport team context was uncertain and untested; thus, applying a rigid, confirmatory method of analysis would not have provided the opportunity to explore the component structure of the SSIS in a context in which it has not been previously tested. Furthermore, research asserts that an exploratory factor extraction technique is preferable in situations attempting scale development or evaluation (Hurley, Scandura, Schriesheim, Brannick, Seers, Vandenberg, & Williams, 1997). Supporters of exploratory factor-extraction procedures feel that confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is "overused and in inappropriate situations" (Hurley *et al.*, 1997, p. 667). This comment is directed toward studies employing CFA without a strong theoretical basis and in cases or contexts where the model is untested. The removal of the SSIS from an established team context meant that an exploratory method, such as PCA, provided an opportunity to assess the component structure of the model in a new team context. Therefore, to evaluate the fit of the SSIS in a new sport team context, PCA provided a viable method to analyse the model and a reliable extension upon the previous analysis of the scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Prior to conducting the PCA, two diagnostic tests were conducted to establish the suitability of the sample and whether correlations existed between the seven SSIS variables. First, to assess whether the survey-one sample was applicable for PCA, the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin test of sampling accuracy was implemented (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Typically, values greater than .50 indicate that the sample is suitable, while readings of greater than .80 are preferable (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Second, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was implemented to assess whether

correlations existed between the seven SSIS variables (Field, 2005; Hair *et al.*, 1995). This test further examined that the data were suitable for PCA and that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). A significance level lower than .05 suggests that significant correlations exist in the data and PCA is warranted (Hair *et al.*, 1995).

To ascertain the best solution when using PCA, factoring should cease when additional components explain trivial amounts of variance (Rummel, 1970). There is further conjecture proposing the use of multiple tests to establish the correct component solution (Ford, MacCallum, & Tait, 1986). Therefore, additional testing provided a more rigorous assessment of the component structure of the SSIS as a measure of new team identification. A number of studies decide on component or factor structure using the default settings in SPSS, which recognises Eigenvalues greater than one (Kaiser, 1960). Following from initial analyses of Eigenvalues, for all items in a component to remain, each should explain ± 50 percent of the variance (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). In addition, observation of the scree plot provides a graphical representation of the component structure (Cattell, 1966). The implementation of these steps provided a rigorous testing of component structure for the PCA.

Variables influencing new team identification
Statistical analysis testing the influence of demographic characteristics (age, gender and salary) and nominal characteristics (membership category and number of games attended) on mean identity score was conducted to determine whether significant relationships existed. Mean identity score was obtained by recoding responses to the seven SSIS variables into a single variable titled "Identity score". Initially a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to see if significant between-group differences existed. Significance levels less than .05 indicate that statistically important between-group differences exist in the data (Black, 1999; Field, 2005; Veal, 2005).

Identity score was tested as the dependent variable in the ANOVA, with age, gender, salary, membership category and games attended as independent variables (Veal, 2005). The testing of these demographic characteristics aimed to extend the work of James *et al* (2002), which had shown that psychological connection did not differ significantly based on these groupings. The use of ANOVA testing in this thesis sought to examine whether new team identification displayed significant between-group differences based on age, gender, salary, membership category and games attended. As simplistic ANOVA testing does not display where significant between-group differences exist, post-hoc testing was implemented. Black (1999, p. 467) provides an excellent insight into the role of post-hoc testing when using ANOVA. The post-hoc procedure chosen is an important decision for the researcher, based on the outcome of the research (Black, 1999). Studies aiming to develop theory may require a less conservative post-hoc test, such as a Duncan or Neuman-Keuls. However, where research is based in a real-life context, a more conservative post-hoc testing procedure is recommended, such as Tukey HSD or Scheffe (Black, 1999, p. 467). As the research topic is grounded in a real-life context, Tukey HSD post-hoc ANOVA testing was employed to determine where significant between-group differences were evident based on mean identity score. Similarly to the actual ANOVA, significance levels equal to or less than .05 indicated significant between-group differences in the Tukey HSD test (Black, 1999).

For each ANOVA a Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variance was conducted to assess whether each group tested could be considered to display a homogeneous mean value (Black, 1999). Although a one-way ANOVA is a "robust test" on its own (Black, 1999, p. 458), adjustments were made if the Levene statistic was less than .05 and the assumption of homogeneity was violated. In cases where equal variances could not be assumed, a Tamhane's post-hoc testing procedure (which does not assume homogeneous variances) was included in addition to the Tukey HSD to re-test the significance of between-group differences and validate the findings.

New team identification – development

The SSIS responses for participants providing an email contact in their survey responses were logged for comparison with the findings from phase three. However, further analysis of the development of new team identification was not possible at this research stage.

3.7 Phase Two – in-depth interviews

3.7.1 Instrument

The interview schedule was semi-structured, employing a series of probes designed to elicit data pertaining to subsidiary research questions one, two and five (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the interview schedule). A semi-structured interview approach reflected a desire for each interview to maintain a qualitative focus, guided by participant responses. As Bryman (2004) argues, qualitative interviewing is different to the structured approach of many interviews conducted in a somewhat quantitative manner. Therefore, the interview schedule included 15 semi-structured questions drawn from survey-one findings, social identity theory and existing literature on sport fans. While this acted as a virtual guide to interviews, participants were asked follow-up questions when they were relevant to previous responses (Bryman, 2004).

A semi-structured approach was selected to maintain a relaxed atmosphere in the interview and primarily allow participants to respond freely to the questions without a stringent interview schedule, while still maintaining some control over the conversation. As Denzin (1989) argued, semi-structured interviews involve a continual process of refinement, and also provide an opportunity for participants to enlighten the researcher on topics outside of the interview schedule.

The primary interview questions explored why Sydney FC members formed new team identification and how new team identification developed. In addition questions were included probing the level of previous involvement members of Sydney FC had with football in Australia and abroad. This sought to investigate

whether members of Sydney FC were established fans of football, or whether the A-League had been successful in attracting people without a history of supporting the sport. Probes were also included to monitor whether members attributed certain moments or experiences during their support of Sydney FC as leading to an increased or decreased level of new team identification. Finally, the interview instrument explored the role of social interaction in members support experience, which provided an additional point of analysis in relation to factors leading to the formation and development of new team identification.

3.7.2 Pilot test

For several reasons, the semi-structured interview schedule was piloted prior to the first interview. First, it allowed the interviewer to become accustomed to the recording equipment and interview schedule (Alasuutari, 1995). Second, it tested the comprehensibility of the interview schedule from a respondent perspective. Third, it developed familiarity with importing interview recordings into the computer transcription and analysis programmes.

3.7.3 Respondent group

In qualitative research, the selection of cases and the number of participants are important points for consideration. Bryman (2004) argued that the number of interview respondents should depend on the case being studied. Furthermore, unlike statistical research, qualitative enquiry does not claim to be representative of populations in the manner of quantitative study (Veal, 2005). Therefore, the sampling concerns attributable to statistical research are less relevant to qualitative enquiry (Veal, 2005). However, questions remain over a sufficient number of participants. Some researchers posit that more than 20 interviews constitute a suitable number (Bryman, 2004; C. Warren, 2002). However, other commentators on the topic suggest that the interview process should cease when theoretical saturation has been achieved on the central themes of the research (Bryman, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 1977).

Participants selected for interview volunteered to participate in the process. On completion of survey one, respondents were asked to indicate their interest in participating in ongoing research with Sydney FC and this research project. Therefore, the population interviewed was limited to Sydney members that had completed survey one. Participants' email addresses were logged in a password-protected file, in compliance with the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines. Following phase-one of the research process, the 240 participants who provided an email address were contacted, of which approximately 200 received the email, due to bounce-backs from incorrectly provided email accounts. From this group some 40 respondents indicated an interest in being interviewed. Convenient dates, times and locations were confirmed for interview. In total, 21 in-depth interviews were conducted with members of Sydney FC that had completed survey one. The interviews continued until saturation of the primary themes was reached (Bryman, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 1977).

3.7.4 Interview procedure

Interviews were conducted over a three-week period in a convenient location, as determined by each respective respondent. The interviews were arranged via email and telephone contact with subjects at times they indicated suited their work, education or social schedule. Prior to the beginning of each interview, participants were required to read and sign an informed-consent form, in compliance with the *UTS Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines*.

At the start of each interview, to relax and settle the interviewee ahead of the more conceptually and theoretically based questions, participants were asked how they first became involved in football. Following the initial pilot work, it became obvious that due to the diverse football experiences of members, the interview schedule would be heavily dependent on participant responses. In light of this previous experience, the interviewer was primed to simply tick each of the fifteen schedule items as they were addressed in the discussion. This provided a tangible method of tracking the progress of each interview and

ensuring that the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the process were addressed.

3.7.5 Data analysis

Following an initial transcription phase into Microsoft Word Files (.doc), which was conducted after each interview, each recorded file was converted to a Windows Media file (.wmv) and stored in a password-protected file to ensure participant confidentiality (Veal, 2005). Interview transcriptions were then converted from standard Microsoft Word documents (.doc) into rich text format (.rtf), which is recognised by the qualitative data analysis package NVIVO 7. A computerised software analysis package was used in alignment with Veal (2005), who suggested that the additional analysis capabilities of such programmes may facilitate a better-quality research output. When the data were imported into NVIVO 7, to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality in the presentation of data, each respondent was assigned a member number. For example, participants were numbered in the order in which they were interviewed, i.e., in text citations the first person interviewed was labelled Member 1, and so on.

The analysis of qualitative data was informed by Creswell (1998). Notes were taken during each interview to inform and elaborate upon the semi-structured interview schedule implemented. Initial analysis included reading every line of each transcript to highlight any obvious patterns in the data. Additionally, word searches were conducted, with settings adjusted to spread results to surrounding paragraphs. Each word search was saved as a free node. Useful searches were retained, while unclear or infrequent responses were discarded. Themes were considered to be words, phrases and paragraphs that represented a common participant response (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As relevant themes and sub-categories became more evident, Tree Nodes were created to facilitate the inclusion of further coding categories under the initial theme referring to the same "tree structure" (Veal, 2005, p. 304). Each theme was checked and recoded to ensure the integrity of the analysis and the representativeness of data.

Following extensive checking and recoding, to provide qualitative data pertaining to the central themes of this research, tables were constructed to highlight theme structures, theoretical saturation and interview participant responses by theme. Participant narratives were used in quote form in-text to provide explanations of key themes. Following the data-analysis procedures, central research themes pertinent to the subsidiary research questions outlined in Chapter 1 were presented in a tabular format to inform the reader of the ensuing results. This provided a brief introduction to the important themes, prior to participant narratives being included to explain the formation of new team identity, and new team identity development.

3.8 Phase Three – year-two survey

3.8.1 Instrument

Predominantly, survey two was similar to the year-one instrument. As such, it provided an opportunity to retest the model fit of the SSIS in a new team context. Furthermore, it provided a means to track participants that completed both season-one and -two survey instruments to test whether identity score had increased. Two questions pertaining to the central topics of the research project were changed. Specifically, the questions exploring new team identity formation and attendance groups were altered from multi-response to single-response questions. This led to participants only being able to select one response, thus providing a clearer picture of what influenced new team identity formation in members and who individuals attended games with. The question pertaining to new team identity formation also included the splitting of the variable "Football First" to include "Support of Australian football" and "Support football", which were both emergent themes from the in-depth interview phase. Sydney FC requested the inclusion of value for money and seating area in this recoded question in return for access to their members. Additionally, the question regarding group attended with also included a recoded variable, "friends and family", to provide an option for members attending games with both. In

addition to, and stemming from the findings of survey one and the in-depth interview procedures, a number of questions were included to test emergent themes. (See Appendix 4 for a full version of survey two.)

3.8.2 Pilot test

The pilot test for survey two was conducted one month from the end of season two. It was distributed to academics in a university business school (N=24) in the same manner as survey one. No changes were made to the instrument following this procedure.

3.8.3 Respondent group

Due to the growing popularity of both football in Australia, generally, and the A-League, specifically, the second survey was distributed to approximately 3000 members (the count is imprecise due to the same issues mentioned in phase one), over double the sample for year one. In total, 788 complete responses were gathered for analysis.

3.8.4 Survey procedure

Survey two was implemented using exactly the same procedure as the first instrument. At the conclusion of Sydney FC's second season the survey was distributed by the membership department to all members.

3.8.5 Data analysis

The analysis procedures for survey two were the same processes as those described previously in 3.6.3. Analysis of new team identity formation was refined to simple counts and percentages, as only one response was available in survey two, unlike the dichotomous question structure in the first instrument. This underlined a more confirmatory focus in the second survey. The analysis procedures for the data exploring new team identity development during seasons one and two are presented below.

Development of new team identification

Tracking participants by name from survey one to survey two was prohibited due to constraints placed on the research process by ethical and privacy considerations. In not being able to gather identifying characteristics, such as name or phone number, in the survey process, only participants who consented to providing their email address were identifiable. This significantly reduced the number of participants that could be tracked for two reasons. First, only 240 participants provided an email address in survey one. Therefore, only individuals in this group could possibly have been tracked – if they responded to the second survey – which ruled out half of the first-year respondents. Second, it relied on participants not updating or changing their email address between years one and two. In addition to participants' email address, demographic characteristics were checked to confirm that respondent characteristics were the same in each survey instrument. In total, 63 respondents were tracked via email and demographic characteristics.

Initial analysis compared the mean identity score in years one and two to establish whether significant differences were evident. In addition, the mean scores for each item scale in the SSIS were compared to see if specific aspects of new team identification developed. To explore whether the mean identity scores were significantly different, a repeated-measures T-test was used to examine whether the two means were different and whether participant responses to surveys one and two were statistically similar. Studies employing a pre- and post-test are well suited to repeated-measure T-tests (Coakes & Steed, 2001).

3.9 Reliability and validity

The reliability and validity of research data in the social sciences is an important area for consideration and action, especially in quantitatively based inquiries (Bryman, 2004). Bouma (2004, p. 16) noted that honesty and accuracy "should be characteristics of any intellectual enterprise, and require a degree of self-

control". This comment refers to the inherent guidance of research by the individual conducting it. Reliability describes the extent to which the data gathered can be said to be consistent with previous measurement (Bryman, 1988; Veal, 2005). This was addressed in two ways. First, a test-re-test format was used to assess the fit of the SSIS in a new team context, which is recommended when using single-item measures of sport fans (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Additionally, the same testing and analysis procedures as used in previous research (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) were implemented as the tools of analysis to provide reliable results in this new team context.

Validity refers to the extent to which a study measures what it intends to (Bryman, 1988; de Vaus, 2002; Veal, 2005). Furthermore, Veal (2005) splits validity into two parts, internal and external. First, internal validity refers to the level of certainty that the variables tested influence the constructs measured, without alternate explanations (de Vaus, 2002; Veal, 2005). Moreover, with reference to the SSIS, internal validity concerns the degree to which the model actually measures new team identification. Previous validation of the SSIS in three different studies (Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann & Pierce, 2003) showed the model to be a valid measure of established team identification. Furthermore, question structure was retained between surveys (with the exception of the two questions identified above) to ensure that participants were answering the same question (de Vaus, 2002). Second, external validity (which is especially pertinent in this case) concerns the degree to which findings can be generalised and applied in other research settings. The external validity of findings was addressed by implementing a scale measure of established team identification, which had been shown to be valid in other countries and contexts. However, as described in 3.2, the research milieu studied is somewhat unique. Therefore the broader applications of some findings may require additional testing. The scope for broader application in football clubs and new sport teams in Australia is high.

The validity and reliability of qualitative data drew on Miles and Huberman's (1994) tactics framework to test for representativeness, researcher-subject effects, weighting evidence, ruling out spurious relationships and checking on rival explanations. This framework provided a useful foundation to ensure the reliability and validity of qualitative data; however, there are arguments in the literature, which suggest qualitative data should be assessed by other criteria than reliability and validity - namely trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While these arguments are acknowledged, Miles and Huberman's (1994) tactics framework was chosen as it provided a more thorough assessment of the qualitative data used in this thesis. This tactics-based approach provided an important monitoring process to ensure the integrity of the interview data. The semi-structured interview approach was designed to allow participants to speak freely, while covering specific data points during the conversation, which aimed to minimise researcher-subject effects and maintain the representativeness of data.

3.10   Methodological triangulation

Researchers in the social sciences employing multiple methods to study a single problem are likely to exhibit greater confidence in their findings (Bryman, 1988). In many instances, applying multiple or mixed-method approaches to explore the same problem is underpinned by a desire to achieve methodological triangulation. Put simply, methodological triangulation involves using multiple methods to study a single problem (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Implementing multiple methods to study a single problem is suitable in reducing the specificity that a single method would provide (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996), therefore allowing for a broader understanding of the research problem and its context. Furthermore, it provides a tool of re-testing and cross-validation, which is not possible in single-method studies, especially in studies using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. In such cases, triangulation provides a means to link and elaborate on the findings of each method implemented (Henderson, 1991). Triangulation provided a tool for the cross-validation and elaboration of findings across the three research phases described earlier in this chapter.

Triangulation occurred in two specific ways during the data analysis. First quantitative and qualitative methods were used to test the formation and development of new team identification. Specifically, survey one sought to test variables emerging from the literature on identity formation and development to assess their application in relation to new team identification. Then, in-depth interview data was used to re-test, explain and elaborate on survey one themes. Finally, survey two retested the themes generated from survey one and the interview phase to triangulate data in relation to the formation and development of new team identification.

Second, triangulation occurred via the implementation of survey instruments at two different points in the new sport team's history. Therefore, two surveys were used to develop links between seasons one and two data in congruence with the recommendations of Henderson (1991). By implementing two surveys the analysis of the SSIS as a tool to measure new team identification was explored rigorously and emergent trends were tested and retested to provide links between both surveys, thus triangulating quantitative data.

3.11 Limitations of research design

The research design discussed in the previous section is comprehensive and includes a mixture of methodologies. Despite this, there are inherent limitations with all research designs (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). The population studied comprised solely of members of Sydney FC. As such, non-members that supported Sydney FC during seasons one and two were outside the scope of this research. This limited the sample to individuals who had made a financial commitment, via membership of Sydney FC. However, the high number of respondents (N=490 and N=788) provided a broad cross-section, situated from around the home ground in both seasons. Additionally, by exploring only one new sport team, this research project did not address the research questions laid out previously in multiple contexts. Implementing a case-study methodology focussing on one club allowed the researcher to explore

a single context in far greater detail (Yin, 1994) but provided less breadth than a study exploring the entire league.

3.12   Ethical issues

Any research involving a primary research process conducted with human participants will have attendant ethical issues (Bouma, 2004). In addition to the requirement to comply with the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Clearance 2006-21a), additional information was sought to ensure participants were treated ethically at all times. The research was guided by the ethics principles of the *Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's Joint NHMRC/AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice, the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988) and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. The research did not deviate from the granted ethics approval.

Diener and Crandall (1978) highlighted four specific ethical considerations for the researcher. These areas can be reduced to address risk of participant harm, lack of informed consent, invaded privacy and deception (Diener & Crandall, 1978). First, risk of participant harm was negligible, as participants controlled the location for interview and the survey process did not involve researcher-participant contact. Moreover, at all stages of the research process, the researcher ensured that participant disturbance was minimal (Bryman, 2004). Second, at each stage of the research participants received clear definitions of the objectives, process and outcomes of the research, to facilitate an educated decision regarding participation. This process of obtaining informed consent took place during the survey process via an email message instructing participants of the involvement of the researcher, prior to participants entering the survey. Prior to the interview, the interview process and the outcomes of the research were described to participants, and they were then asked to sign an informed-consent form indicating they agreed to and had understood their role in the investigation. The researcher's position in this study was obvious to participants at all times.

Third, participant privacy was assured by: a) not gathering identifying information on participants (with the exception of email, which was voluntary); and b) maintaining all data (quantitative and qualitative) in password-protected computer files that only the researcher could access. The protection of this data was also a consideration in minimising harm to participants (Bryman, 2004). As stated previously, the researcher's role in the research process was obvious to participants at all times. Therefore, there was no risk of deceiving participants. Each participant was aware that they were able to stop interviews at any point to erase or change their response.

3.13   Role of the researcher

Given the researcher's involvement in football in Sydney, the issue of objectivity is addressed relating specifically to previous 'lived' experience. Having played, coached, and supported football in Sydney for the past five years, the researcher acknowledges a level of preconception with regard to this research area. Despite this preconception being formed through 'lived' experiences, the nature of this study is not guided by prior beliefs. Gough (1998) discusses this quandary through the realms of moral development research. In a critique of the work of Breidemeier and Shields (1995), Gough (1998) asserted that the researcher with a moral or personal opinion can conduct objective research as long as previous beliefs and opinions do not affect the design, collection or analysis in the study (Gough, 1998, pp. 134-135). Therefore, in an effort to maintain objectivity and retain the integrity of the research process and data presentation, this research project was conducted without reference to previous experiences.

3.14   Summary

This chapter focussed on the research design implemented to gather primary data. A mixed-method approach provided the most suitable means to investigate the research objective and questions presented in Chapter 1. This included two survey stages and in-depth interviews conducted as a case study of a new sport

team – Sydney FC. Data on Sydney FC members emerged via a research-collection period during seasons one and two. Quantitative data analysis included descriptive presentation of nominal characteristics, principal components analysis of the seven SSIS variables and one-way ANOVA to establish whether significant between-group differences were evident based on age, gender, employment, salary, membership category and games attended. Qualitative findings were analysed using NVIVO to establish significant themes in the data and explain and elaborate on the findings of the quantitative processes. Chapter 4 presents the central research findings and outcomes derived from the research design outlined in the previous pages.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

The primary data analysis procedures outlined in the research design are presented during this chapter to address research questions one to five. First, respondent characteristics and attendance patterns provide understanding of Sydney FC members that completed the survey and interview phases. Second themes leading to the formation of new team identification are considered. Third, the primary analysis of the SSIS provides an assessment of whether the model forms a valid and reliable measure of new team identification. Fourth, the influence of demographic variables on mean identity score probes for significant relationships. Finally, the development of new team identification completes the empirical analyses.

4.2 Respondent characteristics

The sample characteristics of survey respondents and interview participants provide a breakdown of the age, gender, education and salary ranges of Sydney FC members. Through an analysis of respondent characteristics, this section will clearly articulate the general characteristics of Sydney FC members. To supplement demographic data, respondent membership categories provide an indication of which level of membership survey respondents had invested in.

4.2.1 Season-one survey

The respondent characteristics for the season-one survey (N=490) are presented in Table 4.1. While demographic characteristics highlighted a diverse age range, a majority of Sydney FC's members were between 20 and 40 years of age (63.5%). Season-one survey respondents were predominantly male (91.8%), university educated (undergraduate or postgraduate study – 56.1%), in full-time paid employment (73%) and earning over AU$50,000 per annum (65%). See Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Respondent characteristics: Season-one survey

Variable	Value	Frequency	%
Age	Under 20 years	39	8.0
	21-30	158	32.3
	31-40	153	31.2
	41-50	69	14.0
	51-60	57	11.7
	Over 60	14	2.8
	N=	490	100.0
Gender	Male	450	91.8
	Female	40	8.2
	N=	490	100.0
Highest education attained	Primary school	2	0.4
	Secondary school	89	18.2
	Trade/technical certificate	25	5.1
	TAFE certificate	94	19.2
	Undergraduate degree	179	36.5
	Postgraduate degree	101	20.6
	N=	490	100.0
Salary	Under $25,000	67	14.3
	$25,000-50,000	98	20.9
	$50,000-75,000	115	24.5
	$75,000-100,000	79	16.8
	$100,000+	110	23.5
	N=	402	100.0

The membership categories of season-one survey respondents follow in Table 4.2 (for a full description of each membership category, please refer to Chapter 3). Table 4.2 displays the frequency and percentage of cases for each membership category available to Sydney FC patrons during season-one. In season-one the most popular membership categories included Cove (21.6%) and Club (20.8%); however, there was a broad mixture of patrons drawn from the majority of membership categories.

Table 4.2: Respondent membership category: Season-one survey

Membership category	Frequency	%
Platinum	85	17.3
Silver	82	16.7
Bronze	64	13.1
Foundation	38	7.8
Junior	13	2.7
Club	102	20.8
Cove	106	21.6
N=	490	100.0

4.2.2 In-depth interviews

The characteristics of interview participants are shown in Table 4.3, below. Interview participants were generally older than the season-one survey respondents. Members interviewed included a high proportion of participants that were male (81%), university educated (66.7%) and earning more than AU$75,000 per annum (65%). Additionally, 81 percent of interview participants were in full-time employment.

Table 4.3: Interview participant characteristics

Variable	Value	Frequency	%
Age	Under 20	0	0.0
	21-30	4	19.0
	31-40	4	19.0
	41-50	7	33.0
	51-60	5	24.0
	Over 60	1	5.0
	N=	21	100.0
Gender	Male	17	81.0
	Female	4	19.0
	N=	21	100.0
Highest Education attained	Primary school	0	0.0
	Secondary school	2	9.5
	Trade qualification	2	9.5
	TAFE certificate	3	14.3
	Undergraduate degree	9	42.9
	Postgraduate degree	5	23.8
	N=	21	100.0
Salary	Under $25,000	2	10.0
	$25-50,000	2	10.0
	$50-75,000	3	15.0
	$75-100,000	6	30.0
	$100,000+	7	35.0
	No response	0	0.0
	N=	20	100.0

Interview participants belonged to various membership categories. The membership characteristics of interview participants follow in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4: Interview participant membership category

Membership category[*]	Frequency	%
Platinum	5	23.8
Silver	2	9.5
Bronze	4	19.0
Foundation	3	14.3
Club	3	14.3
Cove	4	19.1
N=	21	100.0

* For ethical reasons, no Junior members were interviewed.

4.2.3 Season-two survey

The sample population rose in season-two, following an increase in Sydney FC's membership base following the highly successful first season (member numbers doubled from approximately 1200 to 3000). Consequently, the respondent numbers increased from 490, with 788 members completing the survey in season-two. The respondent characteristics for members completing the season-two survey follow in Table 4.5 below. The data shown extend the season-one survey and interview stage findings that a broad range of ages became members of Sydney FC. Season-two survey respondents were predominantly male (87.8 %), although the percentage of females in the population rose from 8 to 12 percent. Characteristics for education, employment and salary were generally similar to season-one survey demographic results.

Table 4.5: Respondent characteristics: Season-two survey

Variable	Value	Frequency	%
Age	Under 20	62	7.8
	21-30	215	27.3
	31-40	208	26.4
	41-50	171	21.7
	51-60	97	12.3
	Over 60	35	4.5
	N=	788	100.0
Gender	Male	692	87.8
	Female	96	12.2
	N=	788	100.0
Highest education attained	Primary school	5	0.6
	Secondary school	117	14.8
	Trade qualification	41	5.2
	TAFE certificate	141	17.9

	Undergraduate degree	279	35.4
	Postgraduate degree	193	24.5
	No response	12	1.6
	N=	788	100.0
Salary	Under $25,000	68	8.6
	$25-50,000	131	16.6
	$50-75,000	170	21.6
	$75-100,000	127	16.1
	$100,000+	181	23.0
	No response	111	14.1
	N=	788	100.0

Membership categories for season-two survey respondents are shown in Table 4.6 below. The majority of survey respondents in the season-two survey bought a membership category which included a season ticket (Platinum, Silver and Cove). Additionally, of the survey respondents in season-two, 41 percent joined Sydney FC after the first season. A substantial 59 percent maintained membership through seasons one and two of Sydney FC's brief history.

Table 4.6: Respondent membership category: Season-two survey

Membership category		
	Frequency	**%**
Platinum	243	30.8
Silver	202	25.6
Bronze	45	5.7
Foundation	25	3.2
Junior*	3	0.4
Club	72	9.1
Cove	198	25.2
Total	788	100.0

4.2.4 Matched survey respondents

The characteristics of survey respondents completing both season-one and-two survey instruments are shown in Table 4.7 below. Matched survey respondents were predominantly aged 31-40 (36.5%). Gender, education and salary displayed similar characteristics to the individual survey and interview stages described above.

Table 4.7: Matched respondents: Characteristics

Variable	Value	Frequency	%
Age	Under 20 years	6	9.5
	21-30	3	14.3
	31-40	15	36.5
	41-50	5	17.4
	51-60	8	19.0
	Over 60 years	2	3.2
	N=	63	100.0
Gender	Male	59	93.7
	Female	4	6.3
	N=	63	100.0
Highest education attained	Secondary School	14	22.2
	Trade/Technical certificate	6	9.5
	TAFE	8	12.7
	Undergrad degree	22	34.9
	Postgraduate degree	13	20.6
	N=	63	100.0
Salary	Under $25,000	8	13.3
	$25-50,000	12	20.0
	$50-75,000	10	16.7
	$75-100,000	14	23.3
	Over $100,000	16	26.7
	N=	60	100.0

The matched survey respondent group corroborated survey one data, showing that Club and Cove membership categories included the most respondents in season-one, at 41 percent. Season-two respondent characteristics mirrored the broader sample population findings. Only 3 percent of members purchased Club membership in season-two. Instead, the trend revealed above, whereby survey respondents sought game attendance with their package, also applied to matched survey respondents. Table 4.8 displays the breakdown of membership categories in the season-one and -two surveys.

Table 4.8: Matched respondents: Membership category

Membership category				
	Frequency season-one	%	Frequency season-two	%
Cove	13	20.6	20	31.7
Club	13	20.6	2	3.2
Platinum	11	17.5	21	33.3
Foundation	10	15.9	7	11.1
Silver	8	12.7	11	17.5
Bronze	8	12.7	2	3.2
Total	63	100	63	100

Platinum and Cove membership categories were more obvious in the sample in season-two, accounting for 65 percent of the response group, some 28 percent more than season-one. This outline of respondent characteristics from each of the data-gathering techniques highlighted the diverse nature of members of Sydney FC and demonstrated that individuals participating in each research stage held similar characteristics.

4.3 Attendance patterns

In the following section, Sydney FC member attendance patterns are explored. First, the number of games members attended during the first two seasons of the competition indicated how often members watched Sydney FC. This facilitated a further analysis to explore whether members attending a high number of games developed stronger new team identification. Second, the social groups in which members attended games provided a basis to explore the role of social interaction as a facet of new team identification. Third, the clothing/apparel members wore at home games underpins further discussion regarding the importance of overt displays of new team identification, which follow later in this chapter.

Number of games attended

Sydney FC members attended a high proportion of games in season-one, as evidenced by 75 percent of respondents (N=490) watching eight or more of Sydney FC's eleven home games. A further 16 percent attended 5-7 games while under 10 percent went to fewer than four games in season-one. Season-two survey data replicated initial findings. Members attended a high number of games in season-two, with some 78 percent of survey respondents (up from 74% in year one) attending eight or more of Sydney FC's games. In the remainder of the respondent group in the season-two survey (N=788), 14 percent attended 5-7 games, while 8 percent attended fewer than four games. The data analysis addressing the number of games attended displayed that for Sydney FC members, being at home games was an important aspect of new team identification.

Attendance groups

In the season-one survey, respondents were able to select multiple attendance groups, enabling them to provide indicative feedback to develop the season-two survey question. Sydney FC members attended games predominantly with friends (75.1%) and family (44.3%). The season-two question regarding attendance groups included a single rather than multi-response option. Table 4.9 indicates that friends and the emergent group friends and family (developed from survey one findings) encapsulated the most common attendance groups in the season-two survey, evidenced by some 66 percent of responses to this question. See Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Attendance groups: Season-two

Attendance group	Frequency	%
Friends	284	36.0
Friends & Family	235	30.0
Family	149	19.0
Partner/Spouse	78	9.9
Self	37	4.5
Colleagues	5	0.6
N=	788	100.0

Data presented here show that the majority of Sydney FC's members that completed the season-two survey attended games with friends, family, or a combination of both (some 85%). However, the data trend regarding attendance groups highlighted that the vast majority of members attended games in a social group of some kind, i.e. not alone.

Clothing at games

Table 4.10 describes the clothing that Sydney FC members wore to games in season-one. Despite a lack of tradition or club history, some 52 percent of season-one survey respondents wore official Sydney FC team merchandise. A further 37 percent wore normal clothing to home games.

Table 4.10: Clothing worn to home games: Season-one

Clothing worn to games		
	Frequency	**%**
Team merchandise	255	52.0
Normal clothes	179	36.5
Cove shirt	26	5.4
Other football kit	11	2.2
Other	19	3.9
Total	490	100.0

Season-two survey findings highlighted an increase in the number of Sydney FC members wearing merchandise to home games (increased from 52% to 71%). Concurrently, the number of Sydney FC members not wearing team clothing dropped to 25 percent from 37 percent in year one. The consumption of team merchandise in year two highlighted that wearing team colours increased in popularity during season-two.

Table 4.11: Clothing worn to home games: Season-two

Clothes worn to home games		
Clothing	**Frequency**	**%**
Team Merchandise	550	71.2
Normal clothes	192	24.8
Cove Shirt	27	3.5
Alternative football strip	4	0.5
N=	773	100.0

The data analysed on attendance patterns highlighted that despite Sydney FC's brief history, members attended a high proportion of games. Members attended games in social groups, which primarily consisted of friends, family or a combination of both. Furthermore, this section highlighted that while Sydney FC members invested in official team merchandise in season-one, a higher proportion attended games clearly displaying team colours in season-two.

4.4 Formation of new team identification

The purpose of this section is to determine why individuals decided to form new team identification with a club with such brief history. The analysis of new team identity formation embeds in the notion that to identify with a sport team, individuals must see it as relevant (Tajfel, 1978c). Specifically, this section explores why a new sport team with such brief history was relevant to its members and how, members deemed Sydney FC would reflect positively on their self-concept. Initially, the following variables formed a multi-response question to explore the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC. See season-one findings in Table 4.12, below (N=490).

Table 4.12: Formation of new team identification: Season-one

Reason	Frequency	%
Friends	133	27.1
Family	62	12.7
Value for money	149	30.4
Be part of Sydney FC	394	80.4
Love of football	444	90.6
Love sport	56	11.4
Players	81	16.5
N=	490	100.0

Table 4.12 indicates that initially love of football was the most common factor acting in the formation of new team identification. In-depth interviews provided participant responses detailing key themes in the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC. Interview participants were asked, *"At the start of the season, Sydney FC was an entity without direct history; what attracted you to support them?"* In the following analysis participant responses provide the primary source of data to address why members chose to form new team identification with Sydney FC. The interview analysis started by organising all interview responses to the above question into a free node, titled "formation of new team identification." This provided a basis from which to develop additional analysis and re-reading of each interview response outlining themes influencing the formation of new team identification. Following this process of

re-reading of responses, three themes relating to formation of new team identification emerged.

The three emergent themes defined by interview participants are outlined in Table 4.13. First, members highlighted an existing social identity in relation to the sport of football. Members articulated a generic bond with football and a more specific mission to positively influence the sport in Australia. Second, members explained an existing affiliation with their city of origin, Sydney. Furthermore, members espoused how the role of home city impacted on either the convenience of supporting Sydney FC, or an existing social identification with Sydney. Third, the actual occasion, including social interaction and in-ground experience was salient for some members.

Table 4.1 illustrates the coding structure graphically. The parent node "Formation of new team identification" sits on the left of the model. Each child node "Football First/Origin/Occasion" sits in the central column. Sub themes are provided on the right side of the model.

Table 4.13: Formation of new team identification: Coding structure

Parent node	Theme	Sub-theme
Formation of new team identification	Football First	Support Football
		Support football in Australia
	Origin	Convenience
		Support city
	Occasion	Social Interaction
		In-ground atmosphere

The saturation of responses for each interview participant and theme follows in Table 4.14. Furthermore, Table 4.14 shows each interview participant and the specific themes they deemed relevant in their new team identification with Sydney FC. Table 4.14 highlights the high number of interview participants that

explained an existing social identification with football. Additionally, it shows the saturation of the sub-themes, outlined in the coding structure in Table 4.13, above. Table 4.14 indicates that for members of Sydney FC, supporting Australian football was the most saturated sub-theme underpinning the formation of new team identification. The themes Origin and Occasion exhibited less saturation.

Table 4.14: Formation of new team identification: Themes

	Formation of new team identification: Themes					
Theme	**Football First**		**Origin**		**Occasion**	
Sub theme	**Football -generic**	**Support Australian Football**	**Support city**	**Convenient**	**Social interaction**	**In-ground Atmosphere**
Member1		√				
Member2		√				
Member3					√	
Member4		√				
Member5	√*		√*			√*
Member6	√*				√*	
Member7		√				
Member8		√				
Member9		√				
Member10	√*		√*			
Member11		√				
Member12		√*				
Member13		√*		√*	√*	
Member14		√*				√*
Member15		√*	√*			
Member16		√				
Member17		√*			√*	
Member18	√*		√*		√*	
Member19						√
Member20		√*			√*	
Member21		√				
N=21	**=4**	**=15**	**=4**	**=1**	**=6**	**=3**
Total	**=19**		**=5**		**=9**	

Indicates interview participants who explained multiple themes influencing the formation of new team identification.

A broader analysis of each of the sub-themes displayed above follows, including interview participants' words and quotes to elaborate on the initial analysis.

Interview participants thoughts and feelings are presented in italics to clearly indicate where quotes have been included.

4.4.1 Football First

As indicated in the season-one survey, interview participants described an existing social identity with the sport of football; however, the salience and value it assumed varied in interview narratives. Member responses described the global nature of football (Members 4, 9, 10, 18 & 20): *"Football is creative, it's got a structure to it, it's got so many options, it's so clever it needs so many skills, it's so diverse, it has a range of players and abilities. And it's so much the world game"* (Member 20). This passage described football using a phrase that underlined football's paradoxical position in Australia, The World Game, which refers to the global popularity of football. However, as described in Chapter 3, football assumed a vastly different role in Australia. Specifically, the turbulent history of football in Australia, the expressive ethnic ties and the perception of violence had marginalised football as an ethnic affair. Member 11 noted that the A-League had made strides in moving football towards a more mainstream 'Australian' position:

> *The face of the game for so many years to say to people this is a game for real Australians, this is a game for um, this is not the game for Sheilas, Wogs and Poofters [the title of the late Johnny Warren's book]. I think perhaps only now, sadly after he [Johnny Warren] died is it finally getting the true recognition (Member 11).*

The marginalisation of football as a game for Sheilas, Wogs and Poofters (J. Warren *et al.*, 2002) had a detrimental impact on the broader popularity of the sport. This comment articulates one member's feeling that football had started to emerge from its marginalised status. More importantly, this comment alluded to the length of Member 11's social identity with football. Member 9 recalled his affiliation as a football fan as *"going back now 45 years ago…. I've been with it for a long, long time."* Such long-term bonds with the sport were frequent within member interview responses, as Member 18 demonstrated: *"I basically since the age of 7 when I first attended my first Socceroos match and I still*

remember the game. Just basically it's just in a way it's just in my blood." However, such long-term identification had connected fans of football with a sport that, as Member 11 articulated, was seen as a game for Sheilas Wogs and Poofters (J. Warren *et al.*, 2002).

Instead of turning study respondents away from their social identity as football fanatics, it created *"a siege-like mentality amongst football fans, as if we are marginalised for such a long time"* (Member 5). In a continuation of this notion Member 8 provided the following analogy: *"If you are a football fan in Australia it's a bit like the early Christians in a way, you know you're right.... but everyone thinks you're a nutter.... I must admit there were times when I had given up. I had given up on football in this country."* Despite Member 8 acknowledging his own lack of hope that football would emerge from the various governance and insolvency issues, the development of the A-League and the Socceroos' qualification for the FIFA World Cup in 2006 signalled an unprecedented period of success. Member 1 noted how the success of the game had impacted her social identity: *"I think you don't feel like you're the odd one out now because you are following soccer."*

Member 20 explained his own personal joy at the period of success enjoyed by football in Australia between 2005 and 2006:

> *It's felt like it's been a long time coming, it's been a painful period to get here and it's been a long trip to get here but I can't overstate the joy that I get from seeing the whole country unite behind the Socceroos. The sort of support that they got, people staying up ridiculous hours at night to watch football where 10 years ago you could only ever dream of this response and cars flying the Socceroos flag, it's just been an absolutely mad experience (Member 20).*

This quote shows that for Member 20, his ongoing social identity as a football fan had not always been overwhelmingly positive. However, the recent success of the Socceroos, a team Member 20 had followed since their inception and World Cup appearance in 1974, the development of the A-League and the qualification of the Socceroos for the FIFA World Cup in 2006 provided fans of

football with a seminal experience. One member explained: *"There's football mad and then there's just completely obsessed, like I'll be sitting at work, bored out of my brains and someone will mention something that reminds me of anything two weeks ago, three weeks ago at the World Cup and I'll just be grinning"* (Member 21). However, this period of euphoria stemming from a growing perception among fans that the A-League and football in Australia was rising, which *"strengthened my belief in the fact that we do have something here that can grow"* (Member 18). The role of existing social identification with football is analysed in the following paragraphs; however, these comments provided a description of the deep and ingrained nature of members' social identification with football.

Supporting Football

Further analysis of the in-depth interview responses unearthed two sub-themes, highlighted by members noting an existing affiliation with football (as shown in Table 4.13 and 4.14). First, members described a generic love of football, which was shown in the season-one survey to be an important factor in the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC (Members 5, 6, 10 & 18). Sydney FC was relevant to one member just *"because I love the game* [football]*"* (Member 10). For another member, the decision was straight forward; *"I'm a football fan so I was always going to do it* [support Sydney FC]*"* (Member 18). This notion was encapsulated in the following comment.

> *There's been nothing that you can identify with, that you could say yeah I'm going to support that and you see the level of fanaticism about it, it is fanaticism for football more than anything, give us a team called ABC and we'll follow it, because we want a team (Member 5).*

Member 5's social identification with football made Sydney FC relevant (non-ethnically based). Identification with Sydney FC provided an opportunity to attend and experience live football, which previously had not been available in a suitable package for this member.

Support football in Australia

Other members articulated how forming new team identification with Sydney FC was a specific attempt to support football in Australia (Members 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20 & 21). The prospect of the new A-League provided *"a golden opportunity for us to get football right in Australia"* (Member 16). Member 20 felt that the A-League, given the turbulent history of past competitions, held *"so much promise for the future and for football in Australia."* Stemming from this notion, as supporters of football in Australia, members articulated that supporting Sydney FC was relevant as it provided a means to progress the sport in the antipodes (Members 8 & 16). The following explanation was provided:

> *I'm very much a big believer in supporting the things you believe in, so I'm behind supporting football in this country and supporting the A-League and physically paying money and hoping that you're in some little way contributing to its eventual success and seeing it flourish (Member 8).*

Member 8 saw his membership as a "little contribution" to the future of success of the A-League and football in Australia.

Three specific outcomes regarding the purpose of supporting football in Australia emerged from interview data. First, Member 15 espoused that her support of Sydney FC emanated from the notion that a successful, functional and viable A-League would lead to a prosperous Australian national football team – The Socceroos:

> *The basic reason to get behind the A-League was that I was an Australian supporter, I went to all the Australian games and I thought that if you're going to support Australia you have to support it from the ground up.... We thought we wanted to be involved in the ground level and if Australia is going to progress in the World we have to have a strong national competition, so that's why ourselves and some friends decided, ok, we're going to become founding members (Member 15).*

Second, supporting Sydney FC provided an opportunity to watch the highest-quality football possible in Australia: *"I would say that supporting football first* [in Australia] *and that was my objective to begin with, that was the idea. This is*

the best opportunity to see the best football that we have to offer in Australia" (Member 21). More specifically, this comment highlighted that by supporting Sydney FC, Member 21 perceived that a successful A-League competition facilitated the opportunity to watch a high level of football.

Third, support for Sydney FC represented a behaviour with specific reference to developing a domestic football league similar to top European leagues.

> *Being a football fanatic, I want football to go forward and I think it's vitally important that we get behind it. On my membership I was like number 70, I was one of the first ones to get it and I just wanted it, I knew that this was it, the last chance to be what it is in Europe, where you can get 20-30,000 people at a game (Member 14).*

This expands on the comments made by Member 21. Instead of the opportunity to see the best level of football available in Australia, Member 14 linked the improved competition to European leagues and the large crowds they attract. The interview responses presented here indicated that the members interviewed formed new team identification with Sydney FC, which emanated from a long-term connection first and foremost to football in Australia. By supporting the club, members aimed to invest in membership to positively alter the success of football in Australia.

4.4.2 Origin

Lewis (2001) argued that for some fans of relocated franchises an existing social identification with the town, city or Origin to which the team relocated provided an important factor in the decision to support it. However, 'Origin' did not act as the sole factor (i.e. members explaining the importance of home-city also identified other sub-themes in the formation of their new team identification) to form a new team identification for any of the Sydney FC members interviewed. However, in their interview responses five interview participants (Members 5, 10, 13, 15 & 18) highlighted that the city of Sydney influenced their decision to form new team identification. In the five responses two sub-themes emerged. First, members explained an affiliation with their home city (Members 5, 10, 15

& 18), which was salient in the formation of a new team identification with Sydney FC. Member 10 explained: *"I love the game and for a while I debated with myself about which team we should support, Sydney or Central Coast."* However, the important factor in deciding between the two clubs was Origin: *"I suppose I identified with the city* [Sydney] *more than I identified with the Central Coast"* (Member 10). In this case, it appeared that Origin cemented the choice over which team to support. This concept was defined in a comment from Member 5, who, although previously articulating how support of football was the central factor in his new team identification with Sydney FC, described the role his home city played in the process: *"Well, I'm from Sydney, well I've been here for 20-odd years, it just makes perfect sense to me. It's the team of this city"* (Member 5).

Second, one member noted the convenience of Sydney FC to his home: *"Well, it's just logical I suppose* [to support Sydney FC]*, living in Sydney and also we live fairly close to Sydney Football Stadium, or Aussie Stadium so it was very convenient for us to get to the games, the home games"* (Member 13). The role of Origin led some members to identify with Sydney FC instead of other teams, but generally across the sample it was not a critical factor in the formation of new team identification. The role of Origin in interview responses provided a similar pattern to those explaining social interaction in the formation of new team identification. The key theme in forming new team identification with Sydney FC was supporting football in one of the ways outlined previously. The role of the match-day occasion in the formation new team identification will now be discussed.

4.4.3 Occasion

Nine interview participants suggested that the match-day occasion associated with support was important in the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC (see Table 4.14). However, of the nine interview participants (Members 3, 5, 6, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 & 20) that identified with the occasion at games, six also noted that support of football (Members 5, 6, 13, 17, 18 & 20)

was the critical factor in the formation of their new team identification with Sydney FC. Only two interview participants nominated occasion as the most important factor in new team identity formation (Members 3 & 19). The analysis in this section is conducted in two parts. First, the analysis explores the role of social interaction in the formation of new team identification. Second, the importance of the in-ground atmosphere at games completes the analysis of the match-day Occasion and its influence on the formation of new team identification.

Social interaction

The role of social interaction at Sydney FC home games provided some members with an additional factor leading to the formation of new team identification. As the following participant narrative shows, social interaction was a factor in the formation of new team identification for some:

> *My family, I think, were looking for a football team to support. As soon as the A-League was thought about they were in there getting tickets and everything and it was just assumed that it would be a family thing that we'd all do together. So we went to all the pre-season matches beforehand and then we got the memberships and went to all the games (Member 3).*

Although Member 3 was female and noted the importance of her family in the decision to support, there was no trend in the interview data linking female members and social interaction in the formation of identity with Sydney FC. Of the other five interview participants articulating social interaction to be important in the formation of new team identification (Members 6, 13, 17, 18 & 20), each espoused an existing social identification with football as relevant in the formation of new team identification. Member 17 stated that supporting the success of football was key, but also he, *"thought it would be a great idea to do a father-son type of thing and that's the reason we joined [Sydney FC]"* (Member 17). In an earlier comment, Member 17 noted that supporting football was the most salient factor in attendance; however, the opportunity to consistently spend time with his son at games led to him becoming a member.

This was a common theme: *"I thought it would be good to be involved with from the start. Also my sons just started to play and it was a good get together with a couple of mates who are also season ticket holders"* (Member 6). However, the Occasion was a secondary aspect of new team identity formation with Sydney FC:

> *Oh, it adds to the enjoyment [social group], like if they hated it, I bought a family sort of thing because it was the best value and gets them into it. If they had turned around and said they did not want to go next year, I would still be a member next year myself. I think it's just an added bonus that they are still enjoying it and it gives me that time with them but I would still go anyway. I probably would just end up in the pub rather than in the park (Member 6).*

Interview participants articulating the importance of social aspects of attendance did not see this interaction as the primary factor in the formation of their new team identification with Sydney FC, with the exception of Member 3. Members not espousing that social interaction was relevant in their decision to attend (Members 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16) alluded, nonetheless, to the positive outcomes of attending games with friends and family members: *"I'll attend games anyway, but if my friends come with me…. it's a definite bonus"* (Member 12). Describing the social interaction he engaged in at games, Member 8 noted: *"It's sort of a nice to have, not a must have, really, I guess."* More specifically, football and supporting Sydney FC was the key factor leading to the formation of his new team identification: *"Well, I'd go on my own, so probably the team first and foremost and the friends is the next level. It's not just a social outing, I go there to watch it [football match] avidly, I'm not chatting away"* (Member 5). Further, he noted, *"Probably, it's a bonus, an extra, it's not the primary reason, that's for sure"* (Member 5).

The role of social interaction in relation to attendance at games was described as follows: *"No, it's the identification with the club; having friends to go with makes it a more satisfying and enjoyable experience, but if they did not want to go…. If I couldn't find anybody to go with to a particular game, I'd still go to*

the game" (Member 11). Member 2 stated that although not central in attendance, the time he spent with his wife at games was, *"the cream on the cake."* Social interaction provided members of Sydney FC with an enjoyable aspect of attendance, but it was not the central factor in the decision to form new team identification for the majority of interview participants.

Atmosphere

Other interview participants identifying with the Occasion described the influence of the atmosphere at games in their decision to attend (Members 5, 14, & 19). Member 19 attended because: *"it was purely just the atmosphere and singing and going for a few drinks"* (Member 19). For this interview participant the act of singing, chanting and engaging in the atmosphere at games was the central factor leading to the formation of his new team identification with Sydney FC. He continued, *"It's a bit of a release and it makes you feel part of something bigger, which I think is probably what people say when they are questioned, like why are you part of a gang, or why are you in the army, but it does make you feel more part of a community"* (Member 19). The role of the atmosphere and crowd participation was also identified by Member 14, he felt that if *"they took the singing and the shouting away and the real spectacle, what football is, I probably wouldn't think about renewing my season ticket."* Although Member 14 felt that supporting football in Australia was the most important factor in the formation of his new team identification with Sydney FC, the atmosphere at games was an important factor in repeat attendance. Furthermore, the atmosphere at games was something that Member 14 associated with *"what football is."* Without the large, boisterous crowds that this member associated with 'football support' *per se*, attendance would lack the atmosphere he enjoyed.

Another interview response highlighted the role of the in-ground atmosphere and the importance of Sydney FC's current home ground. He stated, *"This place [Aussie Stadium] has an atmosphere, you can have 20,000 in there and it feels like something, it's a good small compact stadium, it's important for the game*

here to stay there" (Member 5). However, this comment referred to the more generic football-based relationship, to which Member 5 attributed attending matches. Following from the interview narratives, to determine the broader application of the findings presented, the formation of new team identification required testing on a broad cross-section of Sydney FC members. The outcomes of the season-two survey findings, testing the formation of new team identification, follow.

4.4.4 Season-two survey

Thus far, the data analysis has indicated that an existing social identification with the sport of football led members to the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC. This theme was evident among some 91 percent of season-one survey respondents and nineteen of twenty-one interview participants. An analysis of in-depth interview data refined the existing social identity – support of football (as tested in the season-one survey) into two sub-themes; a generic affiliation with football and a more specific relationship with the success of the sport in Australia. To assess the application of these findings across a broader survey sample, the season-two survey included a single-response survey question.

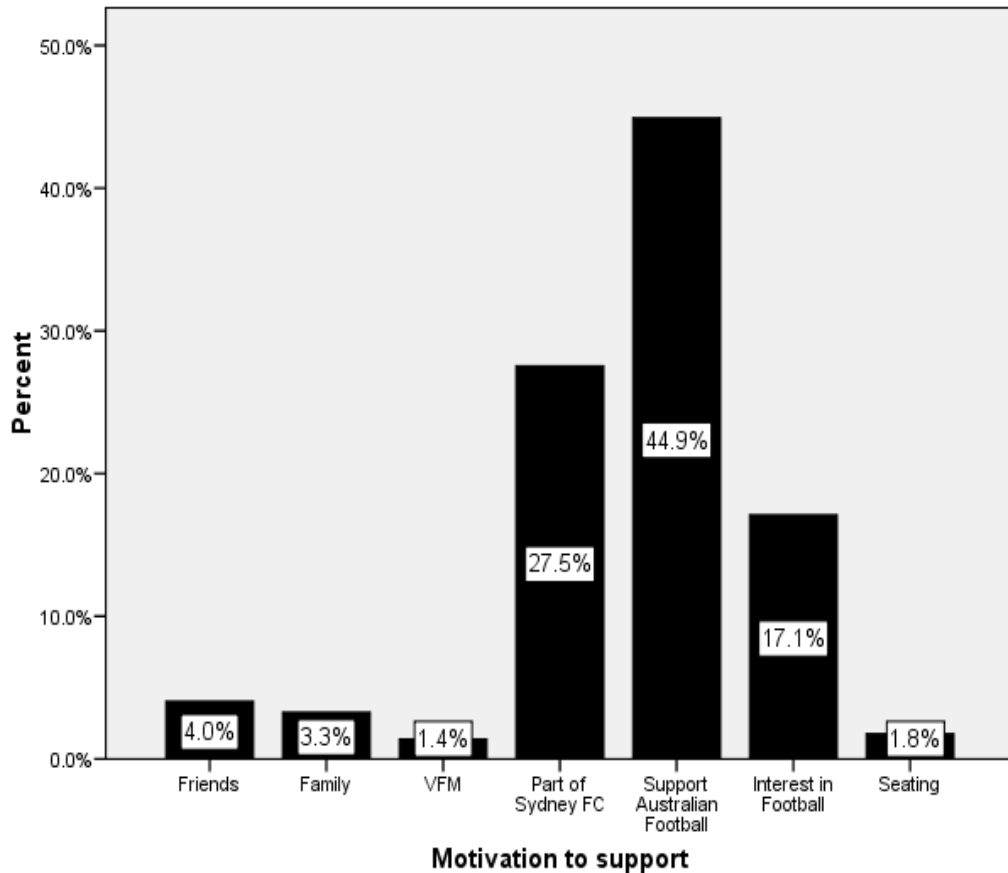**Figure 4.1: Formation of new team identification: Season-two**

Figure 4.1 presents season-two survey findings. In the interview findings, supporting Australian football was the primary reason members identified with Sydney FC. This was evident among some 45 percent of respondents. A further 28 percent of the season-two survey respondents purported that being part of Sydney FC was the primary factor in the formation of their new team identification. However, in these cases, members' existing social identification with football underpinned the desire for Sydney FC to be successful. Interest in football represented the only other significant factor in new team identity formation (17%), which complemented the in-depth interview findings. When added to the 45 percent of members selecting support of Australian football, an existing social identity with football in Australia or globally accounted for 62 percent of season-two survey respondents. Only 7 percent of season-two survey respondents selected either friends or family as relevant in the decision to support Sydney FC. Therefore, season-two survey findings validated the two

previous data-collection findings that members primarily identified with Australian football.

The survey and interview data analysed here provided a basis from which to explore the new team identification of Sydney FC members and elucidated the key themes in the formation of members' relationship with Sydney FC. The findings suggest that a deep and ingrained social identity with football led individuals to support Sydney FC. This process was underpinned by the notion that investment in membership of Sydney FC would positively influence football in Australia. Based on these results, an analysis of members' new team identification with Sydney FC frames the following section.

4.5   Measuring new team identification

This section presents an analysis of season-one and -two survey data, measuring new team identification, specifically. Conducting tests to establish whether the SSIS provides a valid measure of new team identification is central to this research project. This section comprises two parts. The first describes the diagnostic testing procedures used to establish whether the season-one and -two survey data were suitable for a PCA. To develop the analysis, the second section discusses the procedures followed to implement PCA, which tested the application of the SSIS as a model of new team identification.

Diagnostic tests

Two preliminary tests were conducted to confirm that the data collected were suitable for PCA (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling accuracy provided a measure of .87 and .86 in surveys one and two, respectively, confirming that the sample data were applicable for factor analysis. Second, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (.00) in both surveys, indicating that relationships existed between variables in the sample data (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). Therefore the data were suitable for PCA.

Principal Components Analysis

The one component SSIS structure validated in previous research (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) required statistical testing to ascertain the application of the model with a new sport team. Three-, two- and one-component solutions provided a rigorous testing procedure for the SSIS in the seasons one and two surveys. Only one component displayed an Eigenvalue greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1960), which supported a single-factor solution. Components two and three explained minimal variance (11.4% and 11.1%, respectively, see Appendix 5 for the season one and two component matrixes). Finally, analysis of Scree-Plots (See Appendix 5 for the Screeplot for season one and two surveys) for the data in the season's one and two surveys validated that only one component explained sufficient variance to warrant inclusion in the model of new team identification (Cattell, 1966).

The PCA of the seven SSIS variables displayed relatively high levels of communality on the majority of scale items, explaining some 55 percent of the variance in the season-one survey. Literature suggests a figure higher than 50 percent to be acceptable (Bennett, Henson, & Zhang, 2003). The 55 percent of variance (See Appendix 5 for the component matrix) explained using the SSIS in the season-one survey was considerably less than the 66.9 percent reported by Wann and Branscombe (1993) during model development. The PCA of the SSIS responses gathered during the season-one survey are set out in Table 4.15 below (N=490).

Table 4.15: Principal Components Analysis: Season-one

Principal Components Analysis			
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Component 1**
How important is being a Sydney FC fan to you?	6.71	1.41	0.88
How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of Sydney FC?	7.04	1.17	0.85
How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of Sydney FC?	6.68	1.51	0.84
During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either: television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?	6.96	1.24	0.72
How often do you display Sydney FC's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live or on your clothing?	4.18	2.26	0.69
How much do you dislike Sydney FC's greatest rivals?	4.58	2.52	0.59
How important is it that Sydney FC wins?	6.81	1.26	0.55

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 1 component extracted.

Table 4.15 shows that each SSIS variable (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) displayed a component loading of ± .50, which supported the inclusion of all seven statements as item measures of new team identification. However, the communalities of two statements indicated differences from Wann and Branscombe's (1993) study. First, identification of rival groupings loaded weakly on the component new team identification. Second, despite a high mean score on the item statement, the value of victory also demonstrated a weak communality with the component. Initial findings gathered from analysis of SSIS responses were retested in the season-two survey. The PCA of season-two data is shown in Table 4.16 below (N=788).

Table 4.16: Principal Components Analysis: Season-two

Principal Components Analysis			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Component 1
How important is being a Sydney FC fan to you?	6.70	1.42	0.86
How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of Sydney FC?	6.75	1.46	0.83
How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of Sydney FC?	6.99	1.14	0.83
During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either: the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?	7.17	1.08	0.69
How often do you display Sydney FC's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live or on your clothing?	4.88	2.22	0.67
How important is it to you that Sydney FC wins?	6.86	1.14	0.57
How much do you dislike Sydney FC's greatest rivals?	4.58	2.50	0.54

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 1 component extracted.

The findings displayed in Table 4.16 replicated season-one findings. An Eigenvalue of 3.65, which explained 52 percent of the variance, validated the SSIS in a new team context (Bennett *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, the season-two survey findings supported earlier data that value of victory and identification of a rival grouping displayed low communalities with the overall component, new team identification. In addition to the findings of James *et al* (2002), consuming team-related news and displaying support for Sydney FC in everyday life also showed a strong communality to the model. Furthermore, the strongest component loading in the season-one and –two surveys measured the emotional value of supporting Sydney FC. Previous research did not probe this affective dimension of new team identification (James *et al.*, 2002).

The primary data analysis assessing the application of the SSIS in a new sport team context indicated that the model represented a valid and reliable measure of new team identification. However, the variance explained by the SSIS in a new team context was significantly lower than reported by previous research (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The strength of new team identification and the influence of demographic variables on the construct follow.

4.6   Strength of new team identification

Analyses ensuing from the previous section, which showed the SSIS to be a suitable model of new team identification, explored the strength of the construct and the influence that demographic variables and nominal characteristics exerted on members' overall SSIS responses. The literature review outlined the value of measuring established team identification to explore fan behaviour. Member identity score (computed from responses to each of the seven SSIS variables as used by Wann & Branscombe, 1993) facilitated two analyses: First, to explore the strength of new team identification with Sydney FC; second, to assess the influence of specific demographic variables and nominal characteristics on mean identity score.

Recoding of SSIS variables provided a mean identity score for each survey respondent. Mean identity score rose from 43 in season-one to 44 in season-two. However, this increase was insignificant. The mean identity score reported in earlier research of 39.3 (Wann and Branscombe, 1993)[3] was lower than displayed in this study, which is notable given the brief history of Sydney FC. The standard deviation across the sample in year two was lower, despite an increase of almost 300 survey respondents from the season-one instrument, which indicated less dispersion from the mean. A breakdown of mean scores and standard deviations for each SSIS statement is available in Tables 4.15 and 4.16, which were included previously in the PCA section. Mean scores for the majority of the seven SSIS items were similar across both seasons' survey results. Item seven[4] demonstrated the largest increase in mean score in the second year. The influence of specific demographic variables and nominal characteristics on the mean identity score frames the following analysis.

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[3] This figure is lower than the reported 56.2 reported in Wann & Branscombe's (1993) paper. However, following personal communication with Professor Wann, 39.3 was the actual mean Identity score. 56.2 was a typing error, as the 7-item scale had a maximum total of 56.
[4] During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either: the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?

Variables influencing new team identification

Previous research investigating new sport teams found that psychological connection did not differ significantly based on age, gender and salary (James *et al.*, 2002). However, James *et al* (2002) noted that future research should assess the influence of demographic variables at different points in a new team's history and maturation. A one-way ANOVA tested for significant between-group differences based on age, gender, salary and membership category with the dependent variable – mean identity score. Season-one survey results indicated that significant between-group differences existed based on age (sig .00), salary (sig .00) and membership category (sig .00). Gender (sig .35) demonstrated insignificant between-group differences, which supported previous research using the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In the season-two survey the same significant between-group differences replicated, with age (sig .00), salary (sig .00) and membership category (sig .00) all displaying repeated significant relationships. The testing of these relationships follows.

Age

James *et al* (2002) found that the psychological connection of a new professional sport team's season-ticket holders did not differ based on age. By studying a professional sport team, this study aimed to retest the finding of James *et al* (2002) and establish the influence of age on mean identity score. The one-way ANOVA analysis demonstrated that significant between-group differences existed for age (sig.00) in both surveys. Additional testing was required to assess which age-groups were significantly different from one another. Post-hoc testing, presented in Table 4.17 below, showed which age groups were significantly different in the season-one survey data. Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variance was violated (0.24), suggesting that some groups were heterogeneous. Therefore, in addition to the Tukey HSD post-hoc procedure, a Tamhane test (equal variances not assumed) checked initial relationships and is shown at the far right of Table 4.17. Season-one survey respondents aged 16-20 displayed the strongest new team identification, with a significantly higher mean identity score than the majority of age groups (except 20-30 year olds).

Table 4.17: Post-hoc test: Age and identity score - season-one

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Tukey HSD	Tamhane
			Sig.	Sig.
16-20	31-35	5.89*	0.00	0.00
	36-40	7.30*	0.00	0.00
	41-45	6.66*	0.01	0.06^
	46-50	7.41*	0.00	0.01
	51-55	6.10*	0.03	0.01
	61+	12.51*	0.00	0.02
21-25	36-40	5.27*	0.01	0.01
	46-50	5.38*	0.04	0.11^
	61+	10.48*	0.00	0.06^
26-30	61+	8.55*	0.01	0.25^
31-35	16-20	-5.89*	0.00	0.00
36-40	16-20	-7.30*	0.00	0.00
	21-25	-5.27*	0.01	0.01
41-45	16-20	-6.66*	0.01	0.06^
46-50	16-20	-7.41*	0.00	0.01
	21-25	-5.38	0.05	0.11^
51-55	16-20	-6.10*	0.03	0.01
56-60	16-20	No significant differences		
61+	16-20	-12.51*	0.00	0.02
	21-25	-10.48*	0.00	0.06^
	26-30	-8.55*	0.01	0.25^

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

^ *Displays between-group differences not supported by the Tamhane post-hoc testing procedure, which does not assume equal group variance.*

Table 4.17 shows that although the variances for age categories violated the Levene Test, Tamhane post-hoc procedures confirmed the majority of relationships. A general trend was evident that younger members had a significantly stronger mean identity score than older season-one survey respondents. A graphical representation of this relationship follows in Figure 4.2.

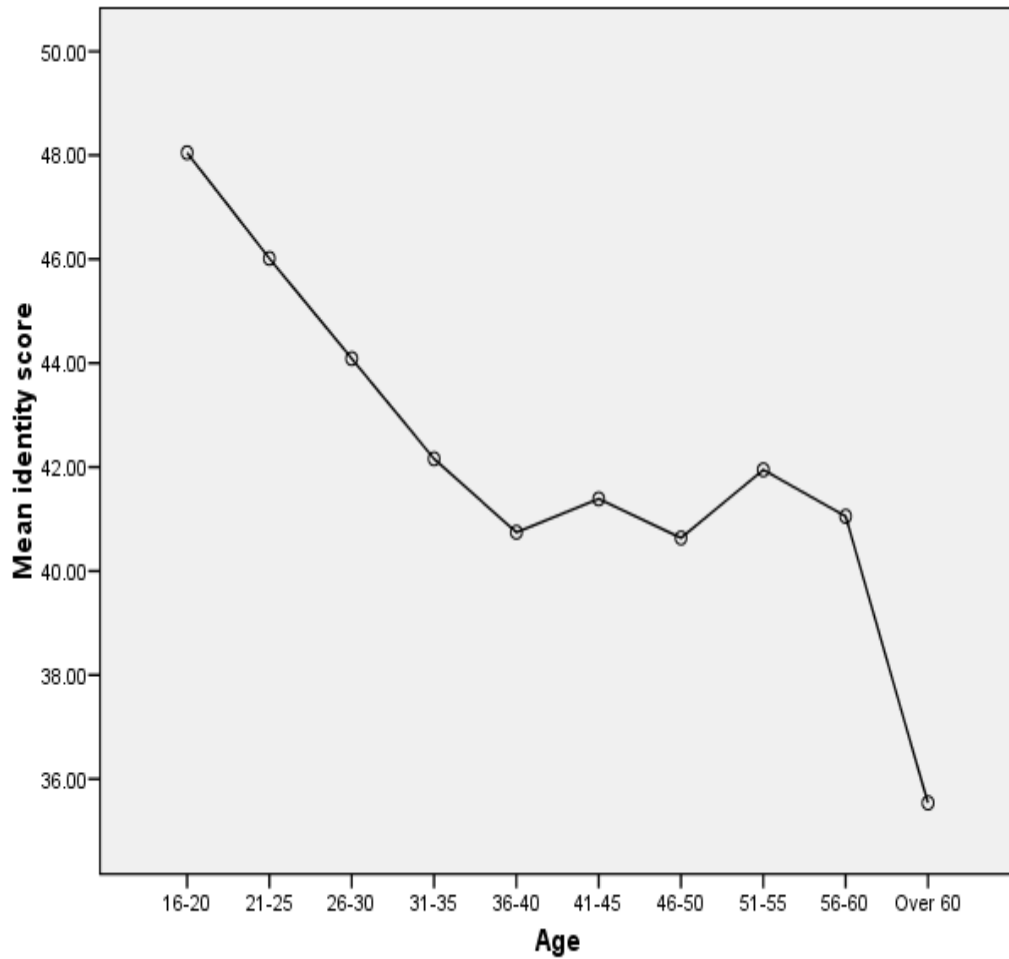**Figure 4.2: Means plot: Age and identity score – season-one**

Figure 4.2 depicts the relationship between age and mean identity score from the season-one survey. Members' mean identity score reduced by age group between 16 and 40 years of age (note Figure 4.2). However, the validity of these findings required retesting. Post-hoc testing of season-two survey data confirmed the statistical relationships highlighted in survey one analysis. The Levene Test for Homogeneity of Variance (.418) confirmed the groups were homogeneous and post-hoc procedures could assume variance. Tukey's HSD post-hoc test for age and mean identity score displayed significant relationships in the season-two survey data, below.

**Table 4.18: Post-hoc test: Age and identity score - season-two**

Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable Identity score

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Tukey HSD Sig.
16-20	36-40	4.83*	0.01
	41-45	4.62*	0.01
	46-50	5.23*	0.00
	51-55	6.15*	0.00
	56-60	6.56*	0.00
21-25	36-40	3.94*	0.05
	46-50	4.34*	0.02
	51-55	5.26*	0.00
	56-60	5.67	0.01
26-30	51-55	4.19*	0.02
	56-60	4.56*	0.04
31-35	16-20	No significant differences	
36-40	16-20	-4.83*	0.01
	21-25	-3.94*	0.04
41-45	16-20	-4.62*	0.01
46-50	16-20	-5.23*	0.00
	21-25	-4.34*	0.02
51-55	16-20	-6.15*	0.00
	21-25	-5.26*	0.00
	26-30	-4.19*	0.02
56-60	16-20	-6.56*	0.00
	21-25	-5.67*	0.01
	26-30	-4.59*	0.04
61+	16-20	No significant differences	
* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level			

Results from the season-two survey generally validated the findings of the season-one survey, indicating that a number of significant between-group differences existed based on age group. Specifically, the mean average of younger members' (aged 16-25 years) identity scores was significantly higher than those of older survey respondents in season-two. However, surprisingly, season-two survey respondents over the age of 60 years did not display significant between-group differences with any other age group. The post-hoc testing shown above confirmed the emergent theme from season-one survey findings that young members developed the strongest new team identification. Figure 4.3 replicates the findings shown in Figure 4.2; however, some differences were evident. Concomitant with season-one survey findings, there was a noticeable reduction in the identity score as age increased. A plateau in mean identity score was observed in season-one survey data between members

aged 40-60 years. However, this was not evident in the second survey findings, with the downward trend in mean identity score visible from 16-60 years (with the exception of 36-45 years, where mean identity score increased insignificantly). Additionally, the reduction in mean identity score as age increased displayed a more pronounced relationship in season-two (see Figure 4.3 below).

Figure 4.3: Means plot: Age and identity score – season-two
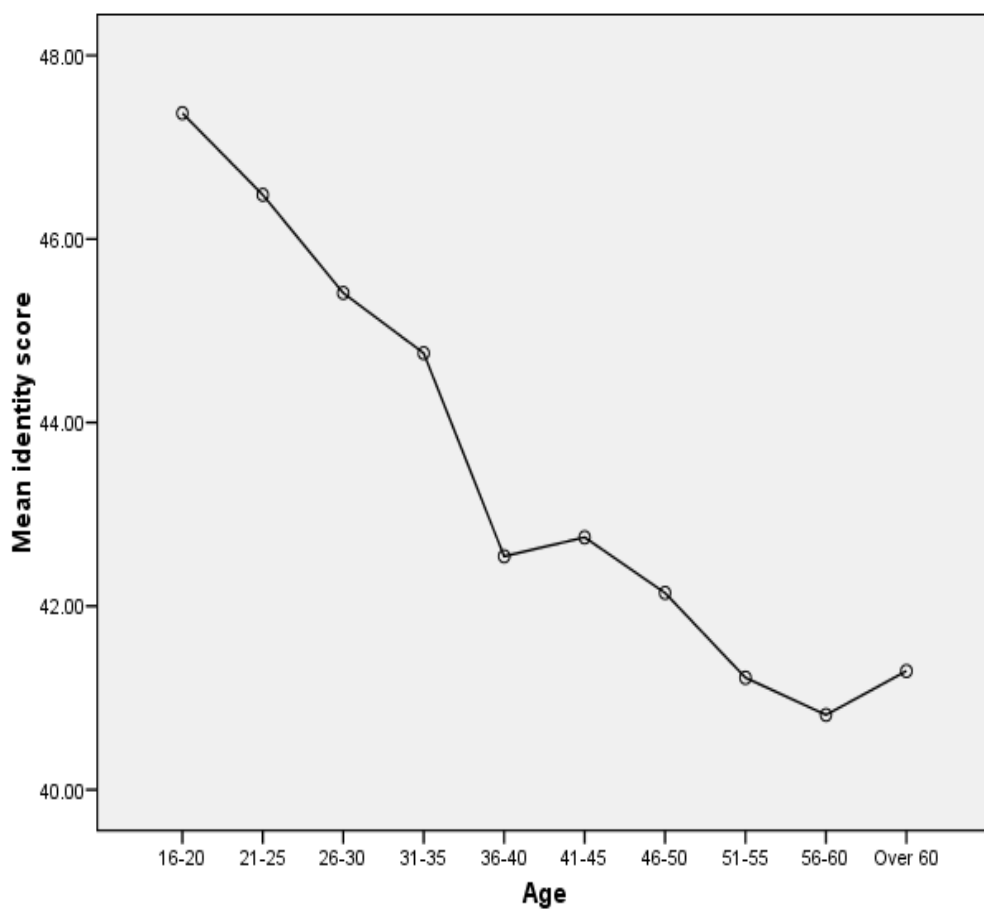
Therefore, a noticeable pattern was replicated by the data collated in each survey. Younger members of Sydney FC developed the strongest new team identification. However, individuals expressing strong new team identification were present in each age group.

Salary

Salary displayed significant between-group differences (Sig .00) in the season-one and -two surveys. The influence of salary on mean identity score facilitated testing to discern how salary groups impacted on mean identity score. Table 4.19 displays the post-hoc testing procedures used to establish which salary groups were significantly different. The Levene Statistic (.154) confirmed that the salary groups were homogeneous in season-one survey data. Table 4.19 illustrates that several between-group differences existed in the season-one survey data. Season-one survey respondents earning less than AU$25,000 displayed a significantly higher mean identity score than salary groups earning in excess of AU$50,000 per year.

Table 4.19: Post-hoc test: Salary and identity score - season-one

	Multiple Comparisons Dependent Variable Identity score		
			Tukey HSD
(I) Salary AU$	(J) Salary AU$	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Under $25,000	$50-75,000	4.49*	0.00
	$75-100,000	5.42*	0.00
	Over $100,000	7.14*	0.00
$25-50,000	Over $100,000	4.60*	0.00
$50-75,000	Under $25,000	-4.49*	0.00
$75-100,000	Under $25,000	-5.42*	0.00
Over $100,000	Under $25,000	-7.14*	0.00
	$25-50,000	-4.60*	0.00
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.			

The between-group differences evidenced in Table 4.19 displayed strong significance levels (0.00). Figure 4.4 shows a box plot chart to provide a visual representation of the relationship between salary and mean identity score, alongside the standard deviation and range of each group. Each salary group included members with high and low identity levels. Season-one survey findings also indicated that as salary level increased mean identity score with Sydney FC decreased. See Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Box plot: Salary and identity score – season-one
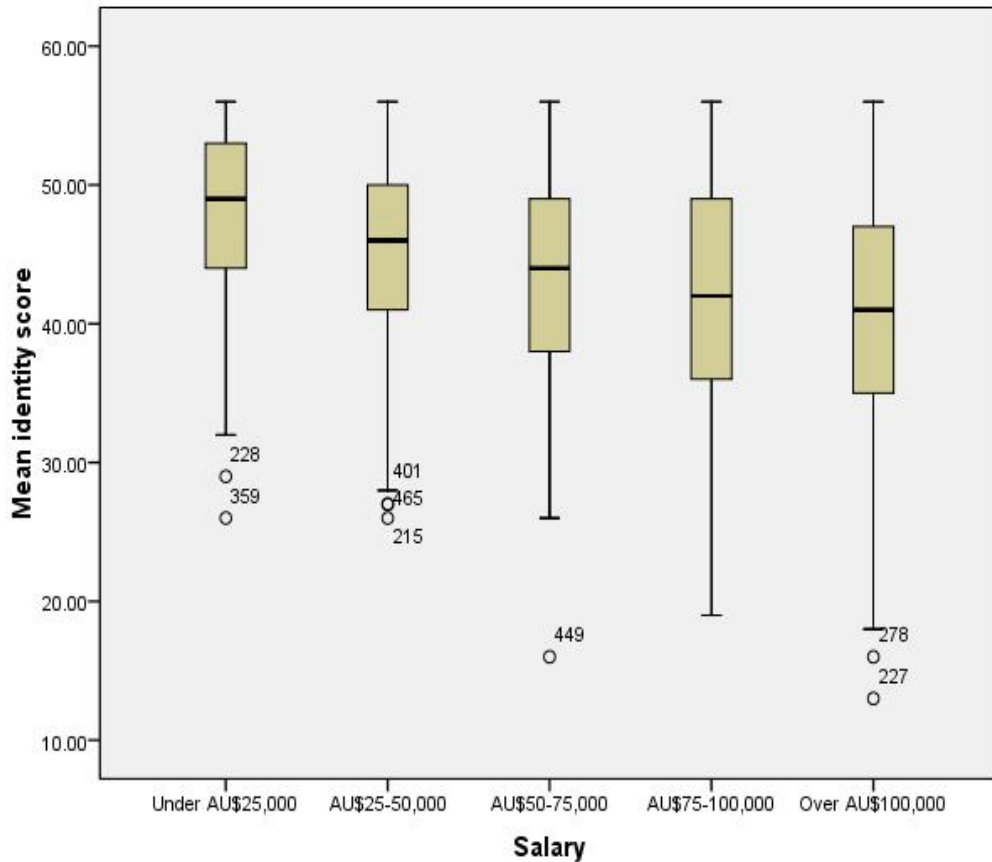
The findings from season-one survey data provided an initial insight into the relationship between salary and new team identification with Sydney FC. However, as previous research displayed contrary findings, retesting was required. To retest and attempt to replicate the findings, season-two survey data probed the same relationship. Table 4.20 includes the post-hoc ANOVA testing used to establish where significant between-group differences existed in the survey respondent data in season-two. Levene's Test was violated (0.31). Table 4.20 includes the Tamhane post-hoc test due to the heterogeneity of variances indicated in the Levene Test. Continuing from season-one survey findings, the same pattern appeared to be evident, with significance levels weakening slightly.

**Table 4.20: Post-hoc test: Salary and identity score - season-two**

(I) Salary AU$	(J) Salary AU$	Mean Difference (I-J)	Tukey HSD Sig.	Tamhane Sig.
	Multiple Comparisons			
	Dependent Variable Identity score			
Under $25,000	$75-$100,000	3.42*	0.03	0.01
	$100,000+	5.82*	0.00	0.00
$25-$50,000	$75-$100,000	2.78*	0.04	0.05^
	$100,000+	5.18*	0.00	0.00
$50-$75,000	$100,000+	3.64*	0.00	0.00
$75-$100,000	Under $25,000	-3.42*	0.03	0.01
	$25-$50,000	-2.78*	0.04	0.05^
$100,000+	Under $25,000	-5.82*	0.00	0.00
	$25-$50,000	-5.18*	0.00	0.00
	$50-$75,000	-3.64*	0.00	0.00

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

^*Tamhane test displayed insignificant between-group difference for this comparison*

Data analyses presented in Table 4.20 confirmed that individuals in lower salary groups developed the strongest new team identification after two seasons. In contrast to the previous findings, season-two survey respondents earning less that AU$25,000 displayed significantly stronger new team identification than members earning more than AU$75,000. Figure 4.5 depicts this relationship.

Figure 4.5: Box plot: Salary and identity score – season-two
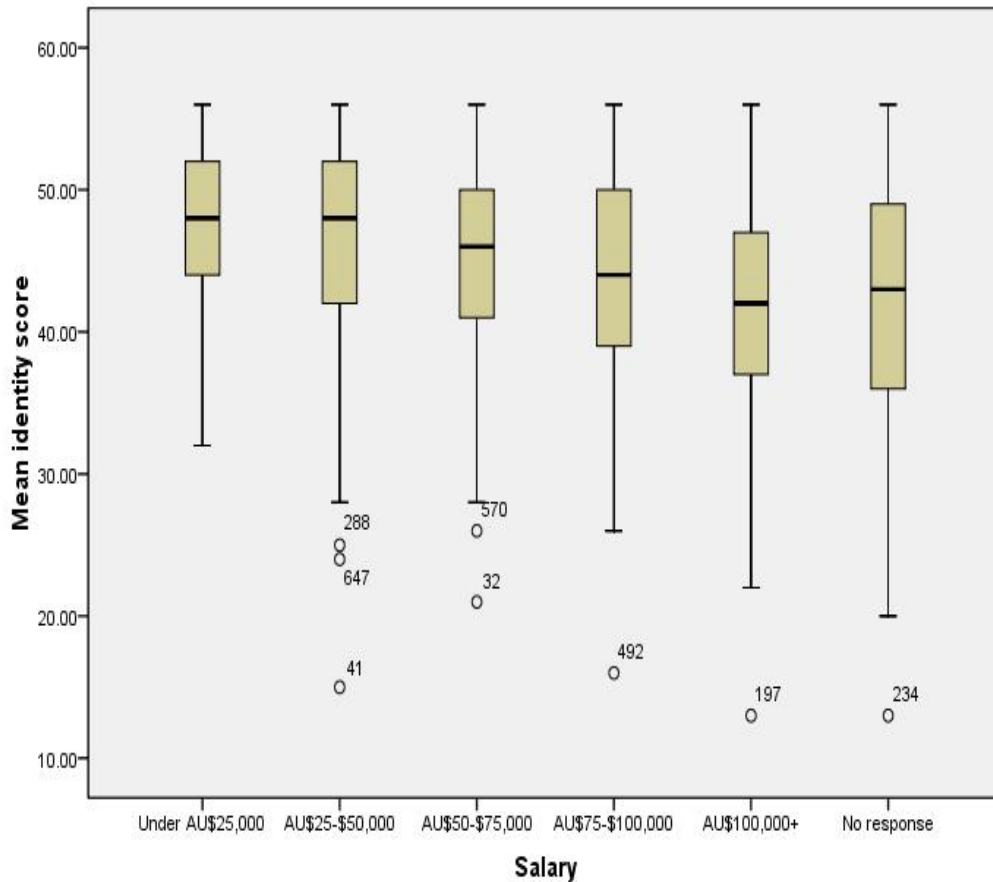
Season-two survey findings validated the relationship between members salary and mean identity score. The season-two findings confirmed that lower-earning members developed the strongest mean new team identification with Sydney FC. In contrast to initial findings, the increase in standard deviation and variance with salary was not as clearly evident in the season-two survey responses.

Membership category

As with age and salary, membership category displayed significant between-group differences at the .00 level in both surveys. Post-hoc testing is displayed in Table 4.21 to detail where significant between-group differences for membership category and mean identity score were present. The Levene Test confirmed that membership category groups were homogeneous (.724).

Table 4.21: Post-hoc test: Member category and identity score - season-one

			Tukey HSD
(I) Member category	**(J) Member category**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Sig.**
Platinum	Cove	-4.86*	0.00
Silver	Cove	-4.19*	0.01
Bronze	Cove	-4.72*	0.00
Foundation		No significant differences	
Junior		No significant differences	
Club	Cove	-3.73*	0.02
Cove	Platinum	4.86*	0.00
	Silver	4.19*	0.01
	Bronze	4.72*	0.00
	Club	3.73*	0.02

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

<p style="text-align:center">Multiple Comparisons</p>
<p style="text-align:center">Dependent Variable Identity score</p>

Members of the Cove displayed significant differences with the majority of categories, as shown above. The strong mean identity score for the Cove stems from the development of this category to cater for fanatical members and supporters (who did not join the club). Specifically, the mean identity score for members of the Cove was significantly higher than the Platinum, Silver, Bronze and Club categories. Figure 4.6 provides a graphical display of mean identity and membership category.

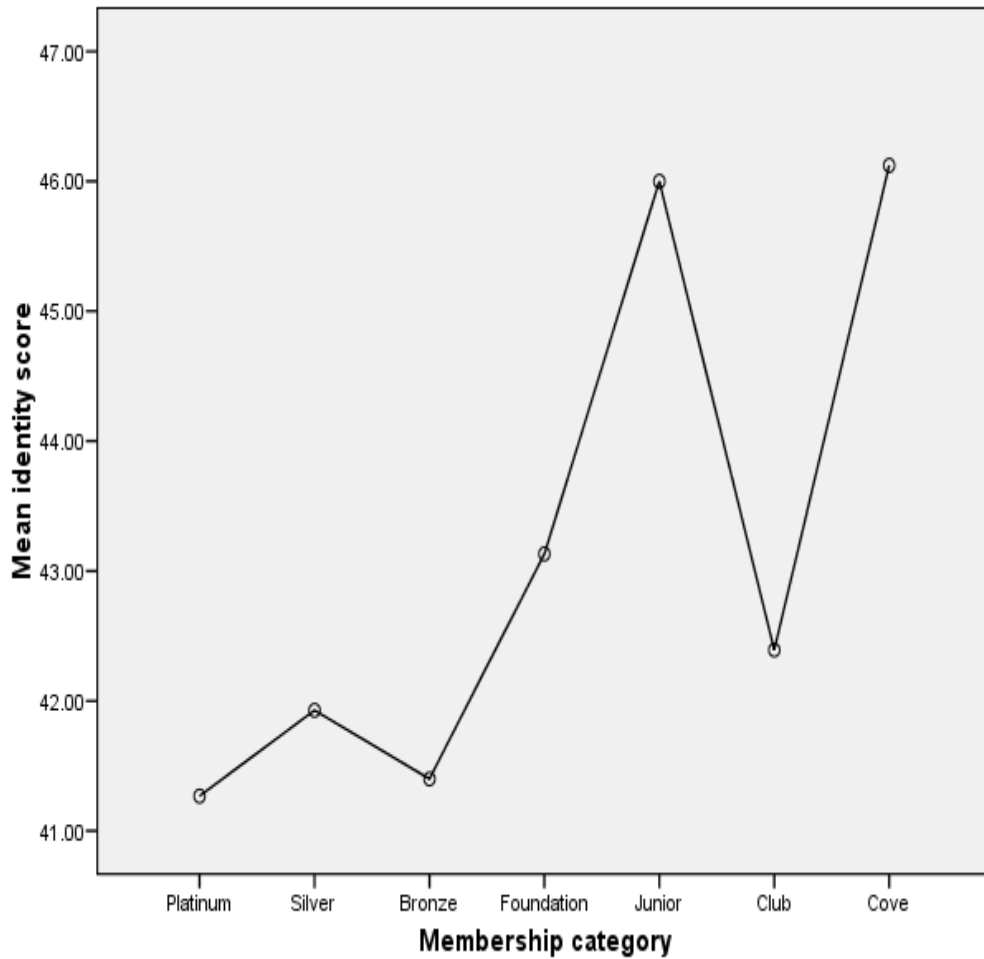**Figure 4.6: Means plot: Member category and identity score - season-one**

Figure 4.6 illustrates that members of the Cove membership category recorded the highest mean score in season-one (just higher than juniors). Platinum, Silver, Bronze and Foundation categories (all including season tickets to attend games) displayed a relatively weak mean identity score in comparison with members of the Cove. The retesting of these findings returned similar results. Initially the Levene Test showed that membership groups were homogeneous for mean identity score (.209). Tukey's HSD post-hoc testing is presented below:

Table 4.22: Post-hoc test: Member category and identity score - season-two

			Tukey HSD
	Multiple Comparisons		
	Dependent Variable Identity score		
(I) Member category	**(J) Member category**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Sig.**
Platinum	Cove	-4.40*	0.00
Silver	Cove	-4.09*	0.00
Bronze		No significant differences	
Foundation	Cove	-6.54*	0.00
Junior	Platinum	No significant differences	
Club	Cove	-6.21*	0.00
Cove	Platinum	4.40*	0.00
	Silver	4.09*	0.00
	Foundation	6.54*	0.00
	Club	6.21*	0.00
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.			

Post-hoc analyses of season-two data revealed some inconsistencies with the pattern of between-group differences based on membership category and mean identity score from season-one. However, Platinum, Silver and Foundation members all displayed significant differences from the Cove, which reinforced that members in this category displayed the strongest mean identity score. Figure 4.7 presents the graphical relationship between membership category and mean identity score based on the season-two survey.

Figure 4.7: Means plot: Member category and identity score - season-two
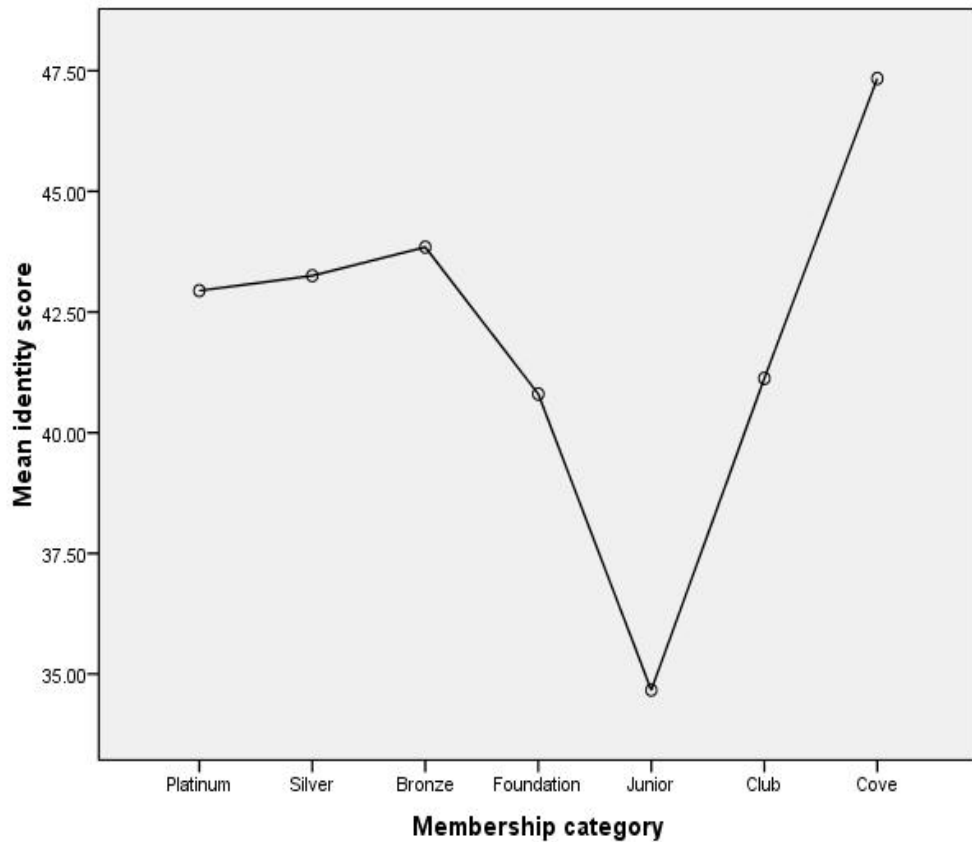
The retesting of respondent membership category and mean identity score validated that members in the Cove developed the strongest new team identification with Sydney FC. However, the season-two survey findings highlighted areas of contrast with the season-one survey analysis. Platinum, Silver and Bronze members had higher mean identity scores than Foundation and Club members, which reversed previous findings and raised questions regarding attendance at games. Members in the Cove displayed the highest level of new team identification in both seasons, which has implications pertaining to the marketing of specific membership categories. However, the increased identity score of members with season tickets provided the impetus to test whether games attended influenced new team identification.

Game attendance

This section implicitly examines how the number of games members attended related to mean identity score. A one-way ANOVA indicated that significant between-group differences existed (sig .00). Homogeneity of Variance was acceptable (Levene statistic .321). Post-hoc tests are shown in Table 4.23 below.

Table 4.23: Post-hoc test: Games attended and identity score - season-one

Multiple Comparisons			
Dependent Variable Identity score			
			Tukey HSD
(I) Games attended	(J) Games attended	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
All	8-10	2.94*	0.01
	5-7	4.86*	0.00
	3-4	6.55*	0.00
	1-2	7.77*	0.00
8-10	All	-2.94*	0.01
5-7	All	-4.86*	0.00
3-4	All	-6.55*	0.00
1-2	All	-7.77*	0.00
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.			

Table 4.23 shows that survey respondents attending all games in season-one displayed a significantly higher mean identity score than members that attended fewer games. Furthermore, individuals attending fewer games displayed weaker new team identification. The relationship between games attended and mean identity score is presented in Figure 4.8 below:

Figure 4.8: Means plot: Games attended and identity score - season-one
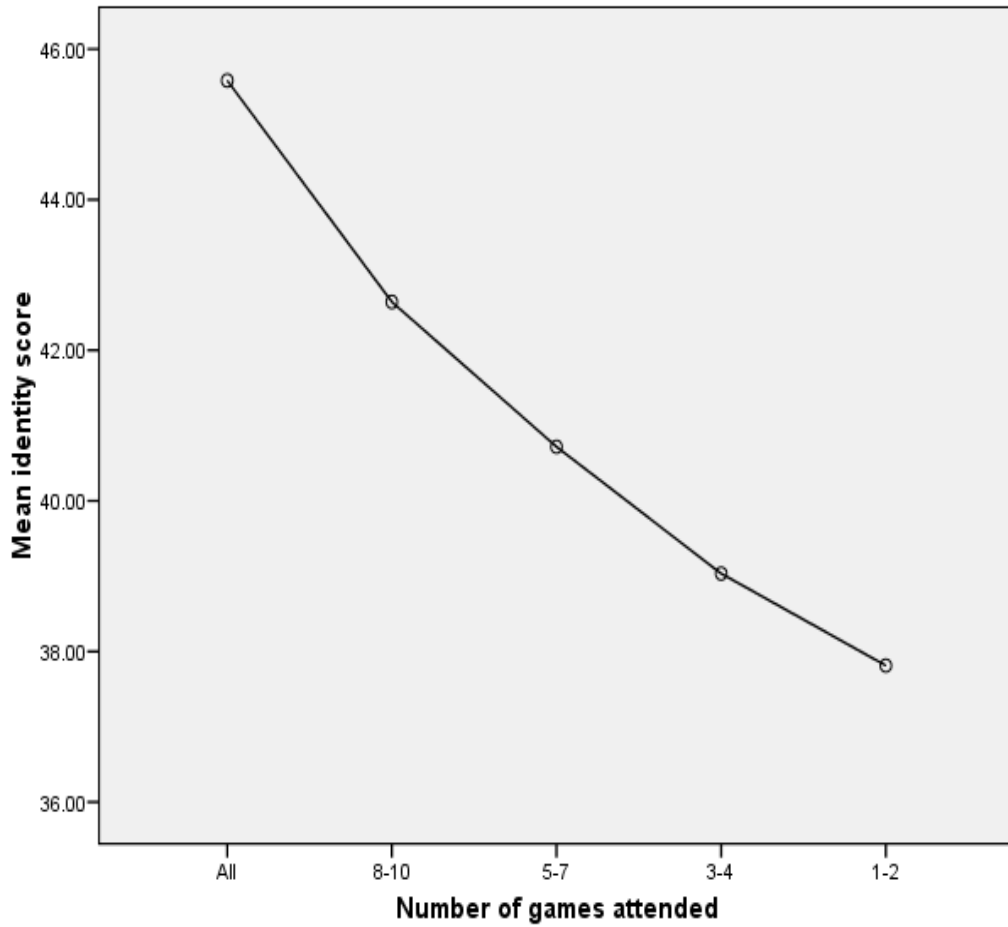

Figure 4.8 shows that season-one survey respondents who attended all games reported the strongest mean identity score. Furthermore, the mean identity score increased concomitantly with the number of games attended, as shown in previous research (Mahony *et al.*, 2000). The results of retesting of games attended and the mean identity score in season-two follow in Table 4.24. The Levene statistic indicated that some groups were heterogeneous and Tamhane post-hoc retested significant relationships.

Table 4.24: Post-hoc test: Games attended and identity score - season-two

			Tukey HSD	Tamhane
Multiple Comparisons				
Dependent Variable Identity score				
(I) Games attended	**(J) Games attended**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Sig.**	**Sig.**
All	8-10	2.47*	0.00	0.00
	5-7	7.46*	0.00	0.00
	3-4	6.80*	0.00	0.00
	1-2	10.46*	0.00	0.00
8-10	All	-2.47*	0.00	0.00
	5-7	4.99*	0.00	0.00
	3-4	4.34*	0.00	0.01
	1-2	7.99*	0.00	0.02
5-7	All	-7.46*	0.00	0.00
	8-10	-4.99*	0.00	0.00
3-4	All	-6.80*	0.00	0.00
	8-10	-4.34*	0.00	0.01
1-2	All	-10.46*	0.00	0.00
	8-10	-7.99*	0.00	0.02
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.				

Post-hoc testing of season-two survey data confirmed the earlier findings regarding games attended and mean identity score. The Tamhane post-hoc procedure supported all significant relationships found using the Tukey HSD procedure. Retesting of season-one survey data replicated findings and individuals attending all games displayed significantly stronger new team identification than other categories attending fewer games. In addition to season-one survey findings, individuals attending 8-10 games in year two also showed a significantly higher mean identity score than those who had attended seven or fewer games. Figure 4.9 illustrates that in the second season, games attended again displayed a pronounced impact on mean identity scores.

Figure 4.9: Means plot: Games attended and identity score - season-two
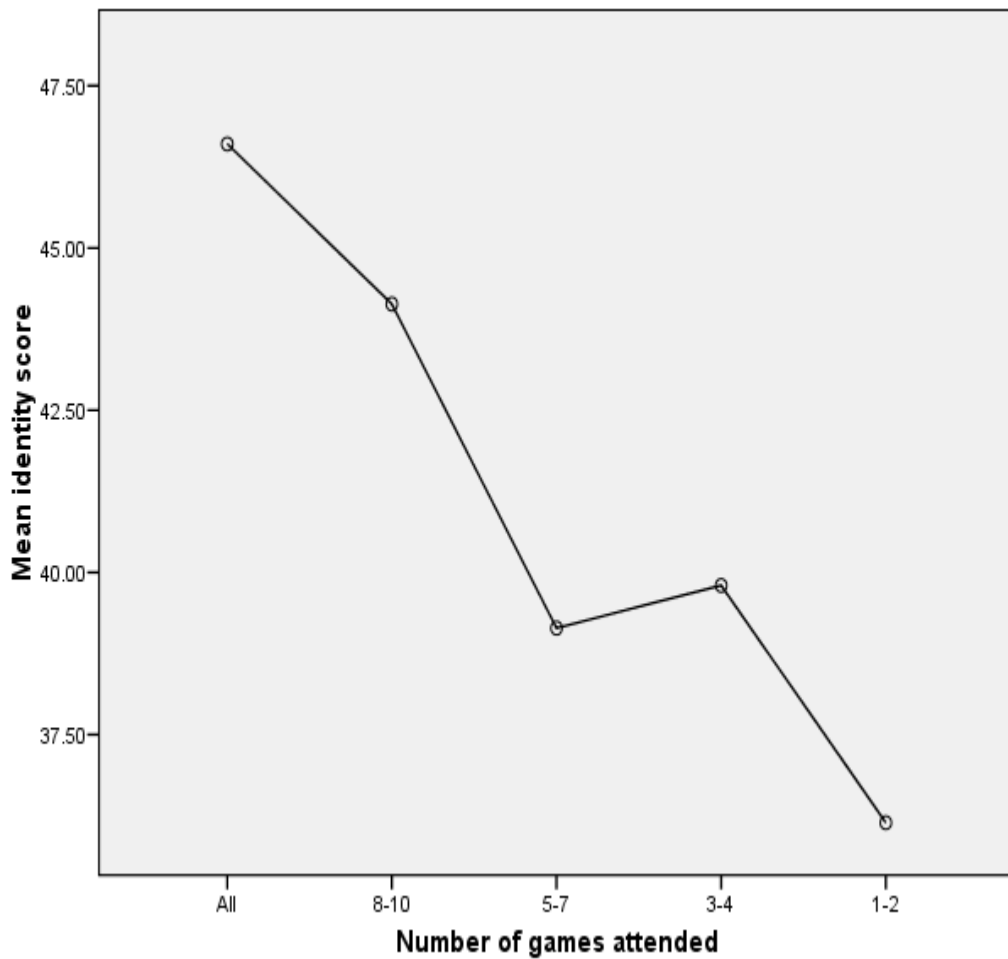
The season-two survey findings validated and replicated the outcomes of the initial analysis. Namely, members that attended more games during Sydney FC's first and second season developed stronger new team identification. Figure 4.9 shows a more pronounced drop off in mean identity score for members attending fewer than 8 games in the season.

This section presented data analysis testing the influence of demographic variables and nominal characteristics on mean identity score, derived from SSIS responses. Age, salary, membership category and games attended all displayed highly significant between-group differences. Notably, age, salary and games

attended provided the clearest indicators of mean identity score. While the results contrasted with previous research (James *et al.*, 2002), the two-phased survey approach provided reliable and valid findings showing replicated significant between-group relationships based on age, salary, membership category and games attended. Membership category showed an inconsistent relationship with mean identity score, and the strong new team identification scores for members of the Cove (which was marketed as an area for fanatical supporters) has implications for future product development.

4.7   Development of new team identification

The analysis, probing the development of members' new team identification, expands on the results presented thus far. Quantitatively, measuring the development of new team identification entailed tracing members who completed both surveys (see matched survey respondent characteristics in section 4.2). Consequently, quantitative analysis focuses on whether member responses to the SSIS increased or decreased between the season-one and -two surveys. In addition, interview data enabled an assessment regarding how Sydney FC members perceived their new team identification to have developed.

4.7.1   Survey findings

Following a comparison of survey respondents' email address and demographic characteristics, 63 respondents completing both survey instruments were matched for analysis. Matched survey respondents represented a variety of membership categories and represented a broad range of ages. In the matched respondent group, the mean identity score rose insignificantly (from 47.4 to 47.6), demonstrating that new team identification levels hardly changed during the first two seasons. Therefore, the increase in mean identity score between seasons one and two was minimal and endorsed earlier findings pertaining to the trend across the entire sample. Further statistical testing determined whether individual member responses were similar in both surveys. A paired samples T-Test facilitated testing of two aspects, specifically: whether significant

differences existed between seasons one and two mean identity scores; and whether individuals provided similar item responses in both surveys.

An initial observation of a correlation in identity score in years one and two revealed that identity scores for both seasons one and two were significantly correlated (sig .00). This indicated that member responses in both surveys were similar. Furthermore, the paired samples T-Test confirmed that no significant differences existed between the matched-respondent samples in seasons one and two (sig .721). Therefore, the survey results indicated similar new team identification levels in seasons one and two surveys. In-depth interview responses explored whether Sydney FC members perceived their new team identification to have developed during the period of their support. The analysis of interview data follows.

4.7.2 Interview findings

Interview responses explored how members perceived the development of their new team identification with Sydney FC. Participants in the interview stage answered the question: "Has your level of support increased/decreased in the time since you started supporting Sydney FC?" Initially, of the 21 interview participants, 20 acknowledged a perception that new team identification had increased. Only Member 11 noted that his new team identification had not developed. Therefore, in contrast to the quantitative data, the interviews suggested that new team identification strengthened quickly in Sydney FC members. Emergent themes from the interview analysis are set out in Table 4.25. Generally, sub-themes were not evident in member responses regarding increased new team identification (See Table 4.25 Below).

Table 4.25: Development of new team identification: Coding structure

Parent node	Theme
Development of new team identification	Searching
	Expression
	Eagerness
	Names & faces
	Spruiking

Table 4.25 outlined the themes and sub-themes unearthed in interview responses. Each theme encompassed behaviours that members felt derived from developed new team identification with Sydney FC. First, interview participants noted an increased desire to search for club-related news and media. Second, members defined how expressions of support via merchandise increased in importance. Third, members explained an increased eagerness to support the club. Fourth, members developed increased identification with Sydney FC as they developed understanding of players and coaches. Finally, members described how they sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC and football in Australia to others. The saturation of interview participant responses for each theme is shown in Table 4.26 below:

Table 4.26: Development of new team identification: Themes

Theme	Searching	Expression	Eagerness	Names & Faces	Spruiking
Development of new team identification: Themes					
Member1	√*			√*	
Member2	√*	√*	√*		
Member3			√		
Member4	√*			√*	
Member5	√*		√*		
Member6	√*		√*		
Member7				√	
Member8				√	
Member9	√*	√*	√*		
Member10	√*		√*	√ *	
Member11					
Member12	√ *		√*		√*
Member13	√				
Member14	√ *		√*		
Member15	√*			√*	
Member16	√ *	√*			√*
Member17	√*	√*	√*		√*
Member18			√*	√*	√*
Member19			√*		√*
Member20			√		
Member21			√*		√*
Total N=21	=13	=4	=13	=7	=6

Indicates that member narrative covered more than one theme.

Table 4.26 shows the coding for the five emergent themes Sydney FC members described when asked if new team identification had developed. The table highlights that eagerness to support (13 sources) and searching for team-related media (13 sources) were the most saturated themes, marking an increase in new team identification with Sydney FC. Expression (4) and spruiking Sydney FC to others (6) were less saturated. Of the 21 interview participants, fifteen (Members 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21) articulated two or more ways in which their new team identification with Sydney FC had developed. Each of the five themes unearthed through the interview process expands the analysis below. Initial remarks regarding increased new team identification provide an introduction to the themes defined above. Member 5 explained how new team identification as a member of Sydney FC progressed:

> *I mean, I've got one season of memories, I guess, already to think about, as it goes on it becomes more and more entrenched. I always say it's one of the few constant things in your life, the team you support. Girlfriends come and go, jobs change and you've got your family, and for me club support is something that you have forever. It never changes, never goes away, but every year goes by there's another layer (Member 5).*

This passage highlights how one interview participant considered his new team identification as a Sydney FC member. Additionally, the passage above showed how strong new team identification can be after only one season, with Member 5 stating, "It never changes." Furthermore, the concept that his fandom developed in layers is notable. Member 4 was more specific about the increase in his new team identification: *"At the start of the season I was probably a five out of ten. Towards the end of the season, yeah up towards an eight out of ten in terms of how I'd emotionally invested."* One interview participant hoped for a further development in his own new team identification in season-two: *"Yes, I think it's grown and hopefully it will grow next season even more"* (Member 18). The above statements provide a foundation for the more specific analysis of ways in which new team identification developed. Below, the role of searching for news about Sydney FC outlines the first behaviour defining increased new team identification with Sydney FC.

Searching

Interview participants described how searching for club-related media assumed greater importance as new team identification developed. This research finding supported the survey findings outlined earlier for the SSIS item scale[5] pertaining to consumption of team-related news, which rose slightly in mean average (7 to 7.2) between seasons one and two. The strong mean score indicated that searching for relevant information on Sydney FC in the media was important for seasons one and two survey respondents. Member 14 explained, *"I'd probably check the Sydney FC site a couple of times a day to see if anything has changed."* Searching for news on Sydney FC was a part of everyday life for

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[5] *"During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either: the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?"*

155

some members. One comment illustrated more specifically how consumption of club-related media increased:

> *Every day I go on the Internet, every day I go on the Internet and go into their site into their website to read what's going on, to read news. So before I never, at the start of the season I never used to do it, probably 3 games in or whatever, ever since, every day you know every time on the Internet I check without fail on the site, just to see what's happening and I try to find articles in the newspaper (Member 12).*

It is evident that Member 12 was conscious of the strength of his new team identification at various times during the first season. More importantly, the above comment notes how new team identification with Sydney FC strengthened and the increased necessity to search for news and information on Sydney FC increased as a result.

The majority of responses (13) that noted an increased desire to search for Sydney FC related media did not describe a specific purpose to this behaviour. However, Member 6 did offer a purpose for searching for club-related media and news:

> *Yeah [my identification increased] looking for more information about it, I suppose being a fan, wanting to be on top of it when talking to someone else about it and they might have read something about it in the paper and you haven't read it and you sort of think I have to get up to date on that. I'm a fan so I should know about it (Member 6).*

The search for club-related news and media provided team-related knowledge for Member 6, which increased as his new team identification developed. When discussing the team with other members, being up to date on Sydney FC news was an important part of Member 6's new team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1995).

Additional responses indicated that some members noted a specific point in the season when new team identification increased and influenced their desire to consume club-related news and be abreast of Sydney FC relevant happenings. Member 12 elaborated on his previous comments regarding club news, stating:

"When we were in the finals, when the grand final was on it was a huge thing, it was everywhere, so whenever it's in the newspaper I will read up on FC or I try to know what's happening whenever I can." This comment highlighted the effect of the finals series (the culmination of the A-League season) on Member 12's interest in club-related news. Member 13 added:

> *Yeah [my identification developed], I think so. You know, as the end of the season was coming up, you're just thinking about it more, your focus is on it because it's a culmination of the end of the season so you tend to be hungrier for that sort of information. Having a look at things like websites to get that information and find out the latest gossip and things of that nature (Member 13).*

Given Sydney FC's success in its first season, a development in new team identification towards the end of the season seems plausible, especially given the links between team success and established team identification (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976).

Expression

Responses highlighted that in addition to searching for club-related news, expressions of support through merchandise and team-related products became more important as new team identification developed (Members 2, 9, 16 & 17). Member 16 explained the realisation that new team identification had developed: *"Trying to buy a bit more merchandise, spending hours to try to get the [Sydney FC] logo to put on my phone to take up the whole screen."* Member 17 told a similar story: *"I would go to sports stores, looking for jerseys and everything that had to do with the club so I could either buy it for myself or buy it for my son."* By investing in team-related merchandise, members sought to express their support for Sydney FC. Furthermore, investing in merchandise allowed members to visually display their support for Sydney FC. Member 9 explained, *"We gave 300% behind the club. Certainly investing in merchandise. I mean, we bought soccer balls, we bought jerseys, we bought tracksuits."* However, expression of support through team merchandise received less saturation than searching for news, which may stem from a high number of members investing in team merchandise when Sydney FC began.

Eagerness

Thirteen interview participants defined an increased eagerness to support Sydney FC as new team identification developed. Interview participants described how their journey with Sydney FC during the first season triggered this increased sense of eagerness to support: *"Yes, I think I did, and it's because we saw, I think, to kind of analyse why that would be. It's because you've travelled with them along a path and you feel part of it is the simple answer to that."* For some interview participants, attending games became a fundamental part of new team identification (Members 6 & 10):

> *I basically have been to all the games. I only missed one because we were actually in the UK at the time last season. That was all we missed. So it was never a question of whether should we go to this game or not. If there was a game on we had to be there (Member 10).*

Essentially, Members 6 and 10 both noted that attending games assumed a greater importance as the first season progressed. For one interview participant, attending away games assumed greater importance: *"We're going to watch them over in New Zealand; it is only a pre-season game, but we are going to New Zealand to watch them."* Travelling to New Zealand highlighted the extent of Member 2's new team identification at an early stage of Sydney FC's history. Member 14 also alluded to away support:

> *I think it did increase because the fans around really got a real passion, real ownership of the team and you can see that in some of the games, where people have got really right behind it and you're getting good travelling support as well. Yeah, and I do think my, I mean, I've become even more passionate now (Member 14).*

Member 14 alluded to an increased eagerness to travel and support Sydney FC. However, travelling to New Zealand was not a common theme in interview participant responses. The term 'ownership' referred to the level of understanding and knowledge Member 14 developed during the first season as his "passion" for Sydney FC developed.

New team identification with Sydney FC invested itself into everyday life for some interview participants. Member 6 explained: *"Because it's basically on*

every second weekend, you are planning your things around it [Sydney FC games] *and so you know you've got to change what you do."* Member 21 noted, *"At the beginning of the season it was Dad saying we're going tomorrow, the game's on. I'd forgotten—right, change plans and let's go, and by the end* [of the first season] *I knew when the next game was three weeks in advance and I had rung friends and I had tried to get them to come."* Member 21 noticed her increased eagerness for game day and the role reversal with her father as she experienced an increased sense of new team identification. For Member 18 the development of his new team identification permeated all aspects of daily life:

> *Because you're thinking about it [Sydney FC] every week and as it comes along you're thinking about it. When you're at work, when you're at home, when I'm coaching the junior soccer team that I coach, I'm thinking about what happened last weekend, what's happening next weekend and you're starting to build and identify with the team (Member 18).*

Important aspects of new team identification relating to Sydney FC derive from this quote. This passage describes the consuming nature of new team identification and the way it increased as Member 18 became aware that his support was developing in importance. Generally, responses in this section explained the all-consuming nature of supporting Sydney FC, despite the club having only one season of history. It highlighted that as new team identification developed some members accrued multiple points of identification relating to Sydney FC.

Names & Faces

At the start of their first season, understanding and knowledge of Sydney FC's players, with the exception of Dwight Yorke, was scant, as alluded to in this passage from Member 18: *"When you start the season from the very beginning, you're not sure of who the players are, you're not sure of what's going to happen."* Specifically, understanding who the players were and their inherent talents and attributes formed an important part of new team identification for some members. The following quote defines how an initial lack of knowledge of team players changed during season-one:

I mean, even though with certain players they start developing personalities, at first they're just this amorphous bunch of people plus Dwight Yorke, you know, you've got no idea who they are... But then they all sort of develop, you get to know them, you get your sort of favourite players, there's a lot of ones you don't think are very good, you can sort of you get more involved with the actual team (Member 8).

Member 8 alluded to the somewhat faceless nature of Sydney FC, prior to the first season. Consequently, Member 8's new team identification developed as his knowledge of and affiliation with team players increased. Member 8's identification with Sydney FC's marquee signing, Dwight Yorke, was consistent, as he already had knowledge of the player's exploits elsewhere. Therefore, interview participants described how new team identification developed as understanding of players in Sydney FC's squad increased and they added faces to the names of the unheralded players the new team recruited. Another response alluded to an initial lack of understanding of team players, but then articulated the importance of lesser known players:

Yes. Because now what was a definite link with the players and there were certain players we never knew a lot about at the beginning of the season and I know I identify them as being key to the team, players like [Alvin] Ceccoli, who I think is a fantastic player—underrated, definitely underrated (Member 10).

This comment illustrates how identification with specific players developed. Furthermore, Member 10 highlighted one of the lesser known team players, rather than marquee signing Dwight Yorke.

The interview responses suggested that a growing awareness of team players acted as an additional point of identification. One interview participant identified increasingly with Sydney FC coach, Pierre Littbarski as the first season proceeded, stating, *"They really did improve and I became a fan of Littbarski, I really like the way he handles things"* (Member 15). Similar to the way in which Sydney FC members identified with players, Member 15 commented on this process in relation to the coach. Specifically, Littbarski's

behaviour and coaching style led to an increase in Member 15's overall new team identification. The role of spruiking and promoting Sydney FC in new team identification development follows.

Spruiking

The final sub-theme explained by interview participants as a noticeable outcome of increased new team identification was a desire to spruik and promote football and Sydney FC to others (Members 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 21). For one interview participant, this process resulted from her own enjoyment: *"The fact that I enjoyed it so much is something that I wanted to share with friends that had less taste than myself [laughs]."* Member 12 explained spruiking by acknowledging his own efforts to leverage awareness: *"I talk to them [friends] about Australia [Socceroos] about Sydney FC, about how good the A-League is, how everybody needs to watch games to support it* [the A-League]. *I kind of feel it's my duty to try and sell the game to everybody I know, to all my friends and I think I do that well [laughs]."* This comment highlights a notable aspect of Member 12's new team identification. He actively sought to promote football and Sydney FC, essentially doing so to benefit both sport and team. Another interview participant noticed this theme emerging as his new team identification developed: *"I just kept raving on about it* [Sydney FC], *you know, I see them and I still play in the over-35s so every game I go to and training I just talk about it. Every time there was [sic] special offers for tickets I used to get all my mates to come along"* (Member 12). This overt support of Sydney FC revealed a notable image-management tactic, which was similar to the process leading supporters of Australian football to form new team identification with Sydney FC. Members (12, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 21) attempted to improve their friends' perception of Sydney FC by spruiking and promoting the team to others.

Summary

This section highlights that despite insignificant differences in identity score between the sample in years one and two, participant narratives acknowledged changes to team-related behaviours stemming from a perceived increase in new

team identification. Interview participants described how, as their new team identification increased, searching for news and information on Sydney FC became more important. Furthermore, as new team identification developed, interview participants' explained an increased eagerness to attend games at home and away. This led to members thinking about the team in everyday life. Members described how, as the first season progressed, the faceless nature of Sydney FC developed as they learned about players, thus putting faces to the names of the new teams unheralded players. Interview participants acknowledged an increased desire express support by looking for alternative merchandise. Finally, for some members, their new team identification was important to the degree that they actively sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC to others. Each of these aspects represented an increased sense of new team identification with Sydney FC.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the central research findings, specifically addressing the research objective and questions outlined in Chapter 1. The results included: demographic characteristics of members in both surveys and the interview phase; the attendance patterns of members; how new team identification forms; measurement of new team identification and demographic variables and nominal characteristics influencing the construct; and analysis of how new team identification develops. The findings of each of these sections are reviewed briefly here.

The demographic characteristics of the respondent group displayed a diverse range of survey respondent age groups and salary brackets. Members were predominantly male, with a female population that grew slightly into the second year (increasing from 8.2% to 12.2%). Overall, the diverse respondent group facilitated a number of statistical analyses, especially the investigation of the influence of demographic variables on mean identity score. Additionally, membership category and games attended provided a useful point for comparison, especially the differences between the first- and second-year survey

data. In year two, a majority of members had invested in a membership category that included a season-ticket. This was a notable change in the findings from year one.

Findings pertaining to the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC provided important insights into a club with a brief history. The results demonstrated that a majority of members supporting Sydney FC maintained an existing social identification with the sport of football in Australia. However, both a generic affiliation with football and an existing social identity as a fan of Australian football were apparent during interview narratives. Season-two survey findings validated support of football in Australia as the most relevant factor in the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC. Supporting Sydney FC provided members with a means to reinforce existing social identification with football through attempting to positively alter the success of the A-League competition. This analysis positioned further exploration of new team identification.

Prior to this research project, little research had measured new team identification in a club with such brief history. Here, testing of the SSIS provided an assessment of the model as a measure of new team identification. The PCA of the seven SSIS variables revealed that the SSIS was applicable (statistically) to measure new team identification in members of Sydney FC. This outcome is significant and demonstrates that new team identification with Sydney FC assumed similar characteristics to those modelled with established clubs. However, survey data indicated that rival groupings and the value of victory displayed lower communality to the construct of new team identification.

The recoding of the seven SSIS variables led to significant outcomes. Specifically, age, salary, and number of games attended displayed clear patterns, which were replicated in both surveys. Younger, lower earning members

attending eight or more games displayed the strongest new team identification. These patterns based on demographic variables were in contrast with previous research examining these variables. Although respondent membership categories provided significant between-groups differences, this stemmed from the relatively high scores displayed by members of the Cove. Conversely, gender did not exhibit significant differences, which showed that both males and females developed both strong and weak bonds with Sydney FC.

The analysis of new team identity development led to contrasting outcomes. Data analysis (quantitative data) found minimal development in the mean identity score between years one and two. However, when asked qualitatively about whether new team identification had developed, 20 of the 21 members noted a developed bond. This bond was evidenced in a plurality of ways. Most noticeably, interview participants acknowledged an increased desire to search for club-related news and increased eagerness to attend games and support the new team. Members also espoused that as the season progressed their experiences relating to the team fostered stronger new team identification. In six instances, this developed into a situation where some members actively sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC to their friends and families. This chapter highlighted the central research findings. Stemming from the findings presented here, discussion and conclusions regarding each research question follows in Chapter 5.

5 Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter builds on the findings presented in Chapter 4 and discusses the research questions in the context of social identity theory and existing literature on sport fandom. The five subsidiary questions addressed during the course of this research are reiterated to clarify the focal points of discussion and the thesis contribution:

1. Can social identity theory be profitably applied in a new team context?
2. What themes are salient in the formation of new team identification?
3. Is the SSIS a valid measure of new team identification?
4. How do demographic variables influence new team identity strength?
5. How does new team identification develop?

A diagrammatic representation of the thesis' conceptual outcomes is displayed in Figure 5.1. The conceptual outcome development is based on findings related to the formation, measurement, strength and development of new team identification. The subsequent sections of the discussion will detail the evolution and evidential bases for the conceptual representation.

Figure 5.1: Conceptual outcomes
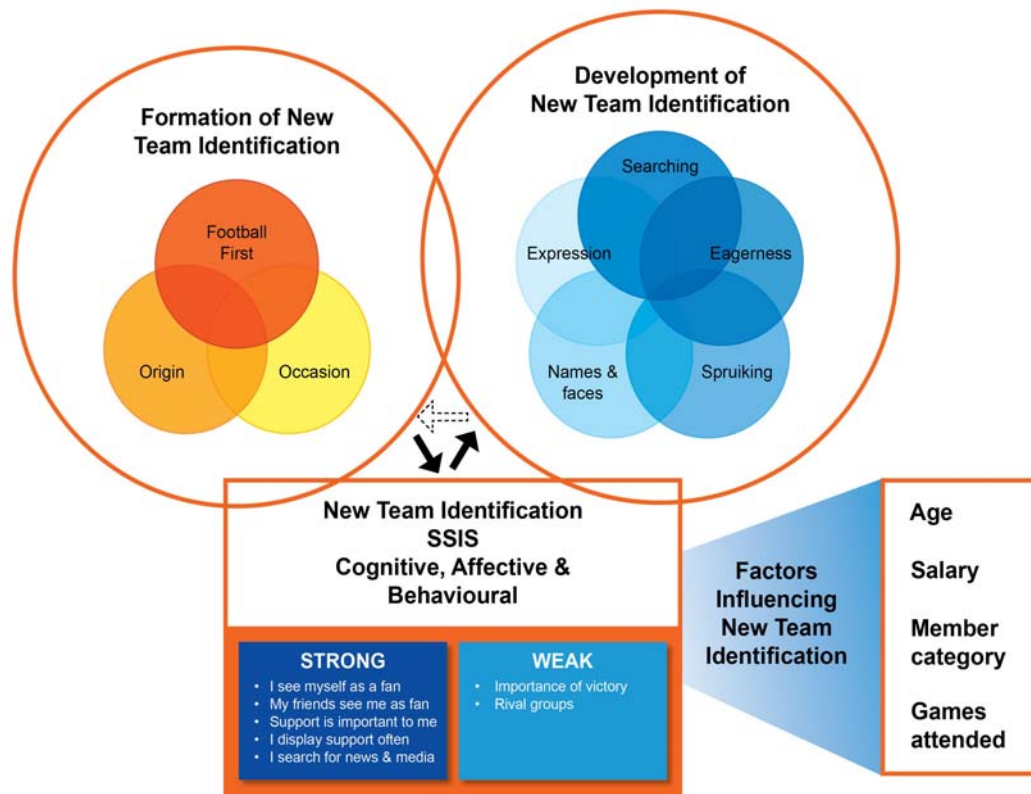
5.2 Formation of new team identification

The study of the formation of new team identification investigated why members chose to support a new team. Existing literature posits that individuals will strive to attach themselves to social groups they perceive to be equal to or slightly better than themselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, to identify, individuals must view a social category as relevant to their self-concept (Tajfel, 1978c). To date, literature exploring the reasons that individuals identify with a sport team (and not sport generically) concentrates on motives to attend games (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Kahle *et al.*, 1996) or factors leading to the formation of established team identification (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). By design, these studies have explored reasons to attend games or identify with established sport teams. Sydney FC was a new sport team, therefore, the players were unheralded; the team lacked history and tradition; and the club had no explicit rival groupings. The pathway members followed in

the formation of new team identification provided a critical narrative to frame the broader analysis and discussion of new team identification.

Members explained a long-term relationship with football, which in some cases spanned up to fifty years. The strength and importance of an existing social identification with football explained how Sydney FC became relevant to members, irrespective of the newness of the players, team and organisation. Prior to season one of the A-League it was unclear whether Sydney FC would be successful, how the team would play and, consequently, whether the successes/failures of the club would reflect positively or negatively on members' self-concept. The decision-making processes that fans make when forming an established team identification take into account past performances and existing knowledge of players, playing style, history, and global/local profile (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). Potential fans/members of a new sport team in a new league base their decision on other factors. Three themes emerged in relation to the formation of new team identification. These are termed Football First, Origin and Occasion.

5.2.1 Football First

The presence of an existing social identification with football was critical to the formation of members' new team identification. This was evidenced in two ways: first, through a desire to support the future success of football in Australia; and second, through a generic affinity with football. An existing social categorisation as a football supporter played a role in the formation of members' new team identification with Sydney FC. A strong and important relationship with football was a first step in the identification process. This finding contrasted with previous research, which found that fans formed established team identification based around "tradition and locality" (Jones, 1998, p. 253). In his study of football fans, Jones (1998) noted that Luton Town FC fans did not generally maintain a high level of support for football aside from their identification with Luton Town FC. The process of new team identity formation with Sydney FC contrasted with Jones' (1998) findings, as, for

members of Sydney FC, supporting football influenced the formation of new team identification centrally.

The contrasting findings between this study and Jones' (1998) work is closely aligned with previous literature, which has argued that the level at which a sport team competes (elite – sub-elite) influences the formation of established team identification (Bernthal & Graham, 2003). More specifically, Bernthal and Graham (2003) argued that fans of sub-elite sport attended games to support aspects of their home community. Therefore, following from the argument of Bernthal and Graham (2003), a second-division English football club such as Luton Town FC would have fans that formed their established team identification based on the premise of tradition and locality (Jones, 1998). Furthermore, the A-League's attraction for fans of football conceivably stemmed from the fact that the new competition represented the highest level of the sport in Australia and can explain why Sydney FC members supported football, first and foremost. Interview narratives were used to further explore the theme Football First, and two sub-themes emerged from the interview process.

Supporting football in Australia

The first sub-category emerging under the theme Football First included members that formed a new team identification in order to positively influence the success of football in Australia. The quantitative focus of previous literature on fans, has provided a statistically based overview of the role the sport plays in the formation of established team identification (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). However, the outcomes of this study demonstrate that the formation of new team identification can be far more complex than a simple sport bond.

The formation of new team identification to support football in Australia links conceptually with other work, which has argued that individuals will strive to positively alter a social category which reflects negatively on their self-concept

(Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As the literature argues, fans tend to display bias to the in-group (Jones, 1998, 2000; Wann & Dolan, 1994), blast rival teams and their fans (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980) and thus engage in behaviours to improve negative reflections in relation to the in-group. Members of Sydney FC continued their affiliation with football in Australia despite the constant failures of the national team and the insolvency and mismanagement that have historically plagued the sport at a national governance level (Solly, 2004). This milieu represented a similar situation to that studied by Jones (2000), albeit at a sport rather than team level. Jones (2000) questioned why fans supported teams (or sports in this case) that performed consistently poorly. He found that these fans engaged in behaviours such as in-group bias and derogation of rival groups to manage their established team identification (Jones, 1998). In this case, members choosing to support football in Australia engaged in support of Sydney FC to influence their existing social identification.

Sydney FC members' new team identification was related to their higher-level desire to see football succeed in Australia. Through support of Sydney FC, members acted to benefit their existing social categorisation and to separate football from its marginalised and often lampooned position in Australia as a game for 'Sheilas, Wogs and Poofters' (J. Warren *et al.*, 2002). The formation of new team identification in order to support football in Australia demonstrated that fans (of sport) will act at a club level if they think it will lead to the development of a sport with which they already identify. This finding provides a critical progression in understanding why individuals identify with new sport teams. However, it should be noted that this is a highly contextualised situation that relates to the marginalised position of football in Australia. The second sub-theme discussed below refers to a more generic support of football, which contributed to the formation of new team identification.

Supporting football
During the course of this research, access to live football emerged as a contributor to Sydney FC members' social identification with football. This

relationship has been described in previous research, whereby an interest in the sport played by a specific team fuels the formation of an established team identification (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Funk *et al.*, 2003b; Kahle *et al.*, 1996; Kolbe & James, 2000). The previous literature explains a generic sport bond that acts in the formation of identification. However, the interview narratives provided member explanations regarding exactly how an existing affiliation with football led to the formation of their new team identification. An affiliation with the sport of football provided Sydney FC members with the impetus to form a new team identity as a conduit to experience live football at games. Essentially, the creation of Sydney FC and the A-League provided followers of football with an opportunity to indulge in a passion, which had been arguably restricted in the previous league by its focus on ethnic affiliation and problems with governance and financial stability (Kemeny, 2003; O'Neill, 2006). Prior to the A-League, many study respondents were involved in football through support of clubs in other major football leagues globally and through support of the national team, the Socceroos. The new A-League provided existing fans of football with an opportunity to engage with a professional Australian club and access the sport live.

5.2.2 Origin

Members also described the role of 'origin' in the formation of their new team identification. Origin is similar to the conceptual terms 'civic allegiance' (Lewis, 2001) and 'university' (Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Robinson & Trail, 2005), which refer to aspects of community. In the case of Sydney FC, Origin was not a primary contributor to the formation of members' new team identification. However, study respondents did describe how identification with Sydney, the city, cemented their choice of team. For example, some members lived almost equidistantly between Sydney FC and the Central Coast Mariners, but identified with the former, as they felt more closely affiliated with their home city, or Origin.

Sydney FC members did not have the same opportunity to form new team identification based on tradition and locality as that observed in other studies (Jones, 1998). The new team context and the brief history of the club negated identification based on tradition. The one-team-per-city structure resulted in the creation of a single football team in Sydney, with which some existing fans of football identified through their social identification with Sydney, the city. However, social identification with Sydney was a secondary consideration in the formation of their new team identification following from members' strong support of football either in Australia or globally.

5.2.3 Occasion

The 'Occasion' and experience at home games was identified as a further influence in the formation of new team identification. Game experience, atmosphere and social interaction have all received attention in the literature on fan motives and reasons to attend sporting matches or events (Jacobson, 2003; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Specifically, reasons to attend have been associated with socialisation agents (Jacobson, 2003) and the dimensions of eustress and release derived from the boisterous and stimulating atmosphere at sporting matches (Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). However, like Origin, social factors and game atmosphere were secondary in the formation of new team identification. The Occasion at games provided a supplementary aspect, which acted in conjunction with support of football in Australia or globally, leading members to form a new team identification with Sydney FC. This aligns closely with the arguments of Kolbe and James (2000), who noted the importance of attendance at games and the experience derived from the in-ground experience in the development of strong fan-team bonds.

In addition to the role played by the atmosphere within the match-day Occasion, members consistently described social factors at games as an added bonus to attendance. While social interaction with others at games was not critical to the formation of new team identification, it was meaningful in the broader context

of the Occasion. This explained why such a high proportion of study respondents attended games with others (especially friends, family and a combination of both) rather than alone. Therefore, social interaction and atmosphere at games enriched and added enjoyment to the match-day Occasion.

5.2.4 Vicarious achievement

Vicarious achievement and the allure of successful others has received much attention in the literature on the formation of fan–team bonds (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). However, the members sampled in this study of Sydney FC did not describe vicarious achievement as important in the formation of their new team identification, despite the body of work demonstrating the function of BIRGing in other contexts (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; End, 2001; End *et al.*, 2002; Fink *et al.*, 2002; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). The new team–new league context may have contributed to this finding. Identification with a successful social category would appear to be fundamental in the facilitation of an identity based on vicarious achievement. The context researched here included a team with no performance history or public expectations due to prior success/failure and, hence, no background from which to BIRG (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976).

To BIRG, some degree of understanding of previous positive performances is central to forming an identification based on vicarious achievement (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976). The newness of Sydney FC conceivably underpinned the negligible role of vicarious achievement, in contrast with research on established teams (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). The high importance members ascribed to the success of the A-League may explain why positive reflection from Sydney FC's successes was less relevant than a successful and functional competition to replace the much maligned NSL (Kemeny, 2003). Additionally, through a successful competition, members hoped that a successful A-League and Sydney FC would contribute to improving the marginalised position of football in Australia (Solly, 2004; J.

Warren *et al.*, 2002), to improving playing standards (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007) and "making it [football in Australia] what it is in Europe" (Member 14).

5.2.5 Ethnic Affiliation

This study noted a major social change in Australia away from the traditional identification with football clubs based on ethnicity (Hay, 1994; Hughson, 1997; Mosely, 1995; Vamplew, 1994) to a more conventional process of team identity formation posited in other studies of A-League clubs (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007; Hay, 2006a, 2006b; Lock, 2009). Following the strategic removal of expressive ethnicity from Australian professional football, members of Sydney FC identified based on an existing interest in football in Australia (Hay, 2006a) and not due to the ethnic allegiance of the club.

The findings here indicate that the A-League represents a change from an ethnically exclusive environment (Bradley, 1990) to a more inclusive and unrestrictive framework of support (Hallinan *et al.*, 2007; Hay, 2006a; Lock, 2009; Lock *et al.*, 2008b). The empirical data gathered during this research supported previous arguments that the A-League has engaged the interest of Australia's existing domestic population, instead of being reliant on inward migration from Europe (Hay, 2006a). In this vein, the A-League has been a considerable success, albeit at an early stage of development. Given the evidence obtained from Sydney FC members in each research phase, the primary theme in the formation of new team identification was support of football in Australia or globally. Ethnic affiliation did not appear to be a central theme in the formation of new team identification following the shift to the current "one team–one city" strategy.

5.2.6 Conceptual outcomes: Stage one

The sport of football acted centrally in the formation of new team identification and the initial fan-team bond for Sydney FC members started at the level of the

sport - football. From this first phase of the discussion, stage one of the conceptual outcome was devised, as per Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Conceptual outcomes: Stage one.
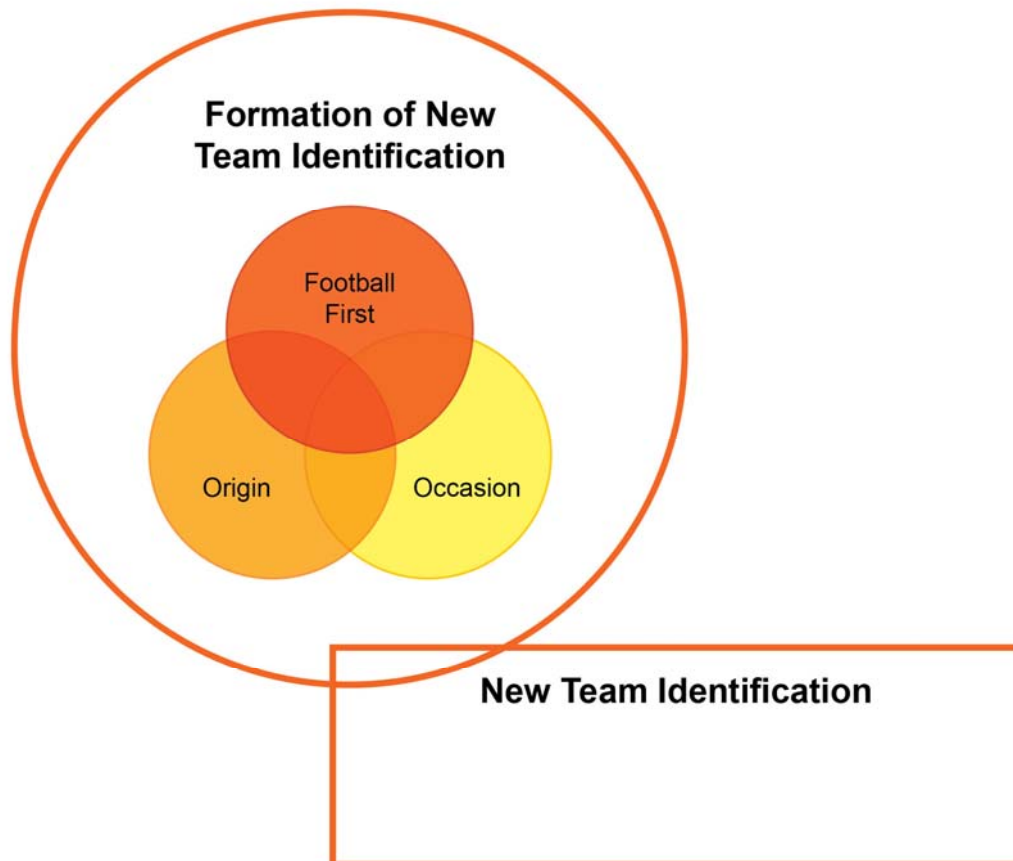
Figure 5.2 represents the formation of new team identification, which, as discussed here, stemmed from an established social identification or affiliation with Football First, Origin and Occasion. Although these themes contributed to identity formation among members of Sydney FC, different themes leading to the formation of new team identification may emerge in other situations. The three themes that led to the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC displayed interrelationships and interdependencies. Some members described how forming identification with Sydney FC acted to support football in Australia specifically. However, they continued to articulate the importance of a buoyant and lively atmosphere at games. The overlapping circles acknowledge this finding. The next iteration of new team identification

incorporated the outcomes obtained from testing the SSIS with a new sport team.

5.3 New team identification

When studying psychological connection in season-ticket holders of a new sport team, James *et al* (2002) noted that applying the SSIS in a new team context was problematic due to the scale's basis in an established team context. While the contention of James *et al* (2002) was noted, the implementation of the SSIS was justified, as this study explored new team identification at the end of seasons one and two of Sydney FC's history and members had one year of team-related experiences when the research process began.

In applying the SSIS at the end of a new sport team's first season, this research extended previous work, as it measured identification at a different stage of new team identity maturation. This approach was a response to the recommendation made by others (James *et al.*, 2002). In addition, this research project was the first to test cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics of new team identification. Via the test-retest approach, as advised for studies employing a one-dimensional measure of fan-team bonds (Kwon & Trail, 2005), the SSIS was shown to represent a valid measure of new team identification. However, the argument of James *et al* (2002) regarding the application of the SSIS to a new sport team was, to an extent, supported by the results. The five additional SSIS statements, which James *et al* (2002) did not test during their exploration of psychological connection to a new sport team, led to notable conceptual findings regarding:

- the emotional value of support;
- following the new team in the media and contact with fans;
- overt displays of support in everyday life;
- the value of victory; and
- identification of rival groupings.

Cognitive items of the SSIS loaded strongly in this new sport team context, which complemented existing work with fans of a new sport team (James *et al.*, 2002). The two cognitive SSIS statements displayed high component loadings and explored how strongly members saw themselves as fans; and how strongly members perceived their friends to see them as supporters. These two statements displayed strong component loadings in previous testing of the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The strong communalities displayed by these two item statements supported previous findings, which showed that individuals develop strong cognitive bonds with new sport teams (James *et al.*, 2002).

Extending upon previous literature, the SSIS item statement displaying the strongest component loading measured the importance of being a Sydney FC member, thus measuring an affective aspect of new team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). This affective measure displayed a stronger component loading than the two cognitive items discussed above. Therefore, despite its limited history, members of Sydney FC derived significant emotional value (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) from their categorisation with the new sport team. The emotional value derived from supporting a new sport team has received little attention in literature to date and this finding represents a valuable contribution to current understanding of the bonds that fans of new sport teams develop. Ultimately, the strength of the component loading for this item statement displayed clearly that new team identification possesses an affective dimension that was previously untested in the literature.

The SSIS item statement displaying the highest mean score in the season-two survey measured how closely members followed Sydney FC in the media and via contact with other members/fans. Despite the high mean score, following the team in the media and through contact with other members demonstrated a weaker communality to the overall component of new team identification than the two cognitively based statements and the affective measure discussed above. Component loadings of .72 and .69 in the season-one and -two surveys were lower than, but equated to, the loadings (.75 and .79) reported during initial

testing of the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The high mean score reported for this item statement showed that following the team in the media and through contact with other members provided a significant behavioural aspect of new team identification. The statistical relationships displayed by behavioural items tested in the SSIS developed the cognitive relationship tested elsewhere (James *et al.*, 2002) and elaborated upon the existing understanding of the member–new team relationship.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) argued that individuals who belong to a social category will seek to positively differentiate themselves from other relevant rival groups. This notion suggests that fans of a specific team will attempt to separate themselves from supporters of other teams and sports, by displaying their team colours and affiliation. A high proportion of study respondents wore team merchandise to home games. However, the degree to which members of Sydney FC perceived themselves as overtly displaying their support in everyday life was relatively weak. The SSIS item statement included to measure whether members displayed their support away from the home-ground setting loaded relatively strongly to the construct new team identification. Component loadings of .69 and .67 in seasons one and two replicated Wann and Branscombe's (1993) findings (.71 in each study). However, the component loading was lower than those displayed by the cognitive and affective aspects of the SSIS reported above. In addition, the mean score for this item was relatively low, which indicated that members did not strongly display their social categorisation in everyday life.

Outside of the match-day experience, members did not feel that displaying their support was socially relevant. Cialdini *et al* (1976) argued that individuals would be more likely to publicly seek to display their social identification in arenas where observers would respond in a similar fashion. Therefore, Sydney FC members were more likely – theoretically – to overtly display their support around other fans or members of the new sport team. The status of football in Australia is likely to have influenced the low importance of overt displays of

support away from the match-day experience. The derogation of football in Australia created a somewhat negative situation with which to affiliate (Solly, 2004; J. Warren *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, this SSIS finding may stem from members seeking to avoid negative reflection from overtly displaying their identification with Sydney FC in everyday life, due to the marginalised position of football in Australia (Solly, 2004; J. Warren *et al.*, 2002).

The two remaining item statements, which explored the value of victory and rival groupings, informed the construct of new team identification in two ways. First, the low communality displayed by the value of victory with the construct new team identification provided a notable contrast with existing literature (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Literature exploring BIRGing notes that individuals will attempt to attach themselves to successful or winning teams (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; End, 2001; End *et al.*, 2002). However, in the present study the importance of winning demonstrated a relatively weak communality (.55 and .57) to the construct new team identification, despite recording a relatively high mean score (6.9 and 6.8) in both season-one and -two surveys. Previous testing of the SSIS with an established team displayed far stronger component loadings regarding the value of victory; however, in a new team context, winning appeared to be less important to the overarching construct new team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

The high mean score for the item statement measuring the value of victory could relate to an additional component of, or factor relating to, new team identification, which the SSIS instrument did not test. However, this finding is closely aligned with the seemingly insignificant role that vicarious achievement played in the formation of new team identification, in contrast to other work (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000). However, as club history develops, the likelihood exists that members will increase their affiliation with Sydney FC and the value of victory will assume a more prominent position in

the construct new team identification, to the extent shown in studies of established sport teams (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Members of Sydney FC did not display a strong cognition of a distinct rival grouping. The item statement measuring rival groups displayed a relatively weak component loading with the construct new team identification (.59 and .54). However, the loadings reported in initial testing of the SSIS were relatively similar (.58 and .63), which indicated that intergroup conflict was not highly related to either established or new team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Some research into sport fans has shown that beating sworn rival groups or teams is, at times, more important than the team's overall success (Jones, 2000). Furthermore, positive intergroup comparisons are an important aspect of maintaining a positive self-concept in group situations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Strong intergroup conflict has been linked with an increased identification with the in-group (Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As a consequence of such intergroup conflict, individuals will make an effort to positively differentiate their social category from others, a practice that has been linked with increased in-group identification (Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The lack of identification with a rival grouping supported earlier findings drawn from an established sport team context (Wann & Dolan, 1994). Wann and Dolan (1994) noted in their research of collegiate sport that fans placed little emphasis on fervent rivalries. However, in such situations individuals sought to improve perceptions of the in-group via displays of in-group bias to positively alter the team image (Wann & Dolan, 1994). A further explanation for the lack of identification of rival groupings emerged through research on fan career (G. Crawford, 2003). Crawford (2003) noted that fans at the Professional stage of the fan career model did not specifically identify with rival groupings. Instead, due to a generic support of the sport ice hockey in the United Kingdom, this group of highly identified fans did not see value in fervent rivalries, choosing instead to support a sport they loved. This demonstrates significant parallels with the findings presented earlier on the formation of new team identification

presented here. The low importance ascribed to specific rival groupings could conceivably stem from the fervent and established social identification Sydney FC members reported with football. In complement to the work of Crawford (2003), members strong support of football may have led to a situation where supporting the sport was more important that engaging in fervent rivalries.

The importance of intergroup conflict or rivalry in strengthening in-group identification has been discussed (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, new sport teams face a different problem to that of established clubs: namely, do rivalries develop as a product of history? Or should new sport teams aim to leverage intergroup conflict? This dichotomy represents a challenging problem for new sport teams generally and for Sydney FC specifically. Significant examples of intergroup conflict abound in various sports, cultural settings and countries. One specific example stemming from the literature on sport fandom originates from work conducted with Luton Town FC. For fans of Luton Town FC, victory over their sworn rivals Watford FC was more important than victory in any other games and assumed critical importance (Jones, 2000). However, rivalries like Luton Town FC and Watford FC emerge as products of history and have developed over decades. In twenty years, the likelihood exists that members and fans of Sydney FC will fervently identify with a rival grouping. As such, it seems through this research study that it takes time for rivalry to develop.

5.3.1 Conceptual outcomes: Stage two

The next iteration of the conceptual outcome development incorporated the results of testing the SSIS with members of Sydney FC. The empirical analysis highlighted that the value of victory displayed a weaker relationship with new team identification than that reported in studies on established clubs (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In addition, findings regarding rival groupings indicated a lower but generally equitable loading to the construct of new team identification when compared with prior work exploring an established team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Despite the differences mentioned between new and

established team contexts, the SSIS – via a test-retest process – provided a valid measure of new team identification. In addition to previous research (James *et al.*, 2002), the application of the SSIS found that Sydney FC members gained emotional value and significance from their categorisation with the new sport team (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, members engaged in behaviours to support Sydney FC, providing a further extension of previous studies (James *et al.*, 2002). In consequence, the implementation of the SSIS informed the conceptual outcome as follows:

Figure 5.3: Conceptual outcomes: Stage two
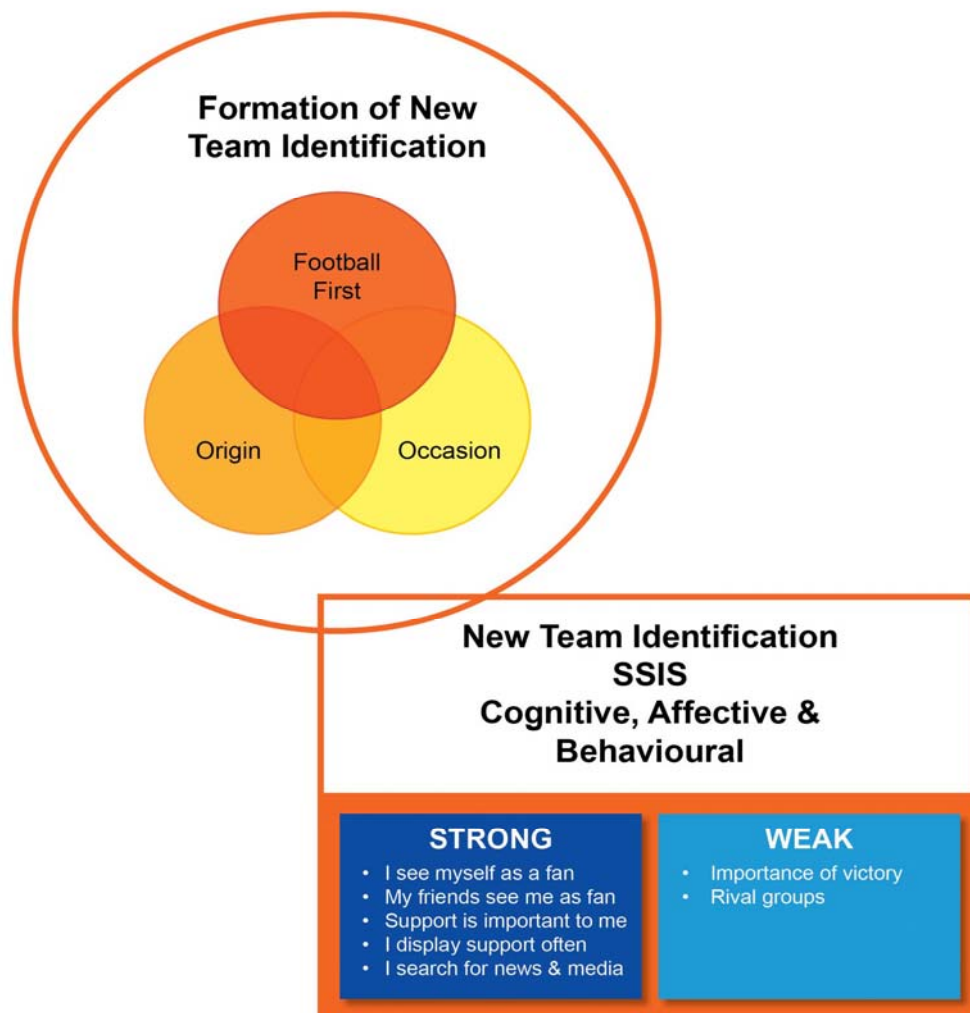
Stage two of the proposed conceptual outcome includes the five item statements displaying the strongest loadings for new team identification on the bottom left-

hand corner of the construct new team identification in navy blue. The importance of victory and rival groups displayed weaker relationships and are displayed in the bottom right corner of the construct new team identification. The inclusion of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of new team identification at this stage of the conceptualisation underpins the finding that the construct is more complex than a purely cognitive bond. Variables influencing the strength of new team identity and displaying statistically significant relationships with the construct follow.

5.4   Variables influencing new team identification

Testing the influence of demographic variables and nominal characteristics on the recoded SSIS variable scores provided an avenue to retest and extend previous work (James *et al.*, 2002). This extension provided an opportunity to test for variables that influenced new team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

The mean identity score for members of Sydney FC (43 and 44 in seasons one and two, respectively) was higher than that found during development of the SSIS in an established collegiate sport team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). However, the differing populations sampled by the two studies might have had an impact on the results. Wann and Branscombe (1993) sampled university students, who undertook the survey as a course requirement. This study sampled Sydney FC club members, who had purchased membership, thus indicating some existing level of new team identification. Therefore, the sampling differences between this and other research using the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) provides a plausible explanation for the higher mean identity score reported in a new sport team context. Given the findings of previous research (Foster & Hyatt, 2007; Wann & Branscombe, 1993), the high identity score reported was a positive result for the management of Sydney FC. Individuals with a strong established team identification have been shown to be more likely to engage in behaviours to support the club (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998) and forge lasting bonds (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Previous research found no between-group differences for psychological connection and established team identification when testing for relationships with demographic variables (James *et al.*, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). However, some other research has found that young male fans developed the strongest established team identification (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000). In this study, some demographic variables and nominal characteristics exerted a repeated influence on the strength of new team identification (age, salary, membership category and games attended), while others displayed an insignificant relationship (gender). Males and females expressed both strong and weak established team identification, which is in concert with previous research (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). This both corroborated (James *et al.*, 2002) and contrasted (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000) previous literature exploring the relationship between gender and new or established team identification.

On the other hand, age and salary displayed a pronounced influence on the mean respondent identity score in the season-one and -two surveys. Due to the homogeneous sampling of first-year university psychology students, Wann and Branscombe (1993) did not contrast age and identity scores; however, the authors did flag it as an agenda for future inquiry, along with the inclusion of other demographic variables. In both season- one and -two surveys, respondents aged between 16 and 35 years displayed the strongest new team identification. This finding complements previous research, which found that young fans developed the strongest established team identification (Dietz-Uhler *et al.*, 2000). The strong identification of young participants represents a significant coup for the managers of the new A-League competition, of which a specific focus has been to engage the previously disenfranchised youth market (Cockerill, 2005b).

In addition to the relationship between age and mean identity score, salary also displayed highly significant between-group differences. Members earning less than AU$50,000 displayed stronger new team identification than higher-earning

salary groups. This finding is in contrast to previous work, which showed no significant differences for psychological connection with age or salary (James *et al.*, 2002). Further testing is required to establish whether the difference in findings between this and James *et al's* (2002) work are contextual or theoretical. Specifically, it must be established whether the contrast in findings emanates from the point of new team development tested or whether the context (baseball in the USA and football in Australia) and constructs measured (psychological connection/new team identification) impacted findings.

Membership category displayed statistically significant between-group differences with new team identification in both seasons. However, the nature of the trends varied in the season-one and -two surveys. Therefore, positing explicit implications regarding the relationship between membership category and identity score is problematic. Members of the Cove maintained the strongest identity score in seasons one and two, which represented the only clearly replicated trend in both surveys. This was unsurprising, as the Cove was specifically marketed as an area for fanatical supporters (Cubby, 2005; Sydney FC, 2005).

The statistical testing of member identity score confirmed the success of designating a specific area for so-called 'fanatics'. Furthermore, in season two, individuals holding membership in a category which guaranteed game attendance possessed a stronger new team identification than club and junior membership categories, which did not include game attendance. The growth of Platinum, Silver and Cove membership numbers in season two conceivably influenced this finding. In consequence, the increased mean identity score in the membership categories that included season-tickets developed the impetus to assess whether the number of games attended influenced identity score. Prior research has indicated a clear relationship between the number of games fans attend and the strength of their fan-team bond (Jones, 1998; Kolbe & James, 2000; Mahony *et al.*, 2000).

Members attending a high proportion of the new team's games developed the strongest identification. However, the direction of the relationship between the number of games attended and identity score is difficult to ascertain. Previous research has found that fans with a strong identification will engage in behaviours that support the team, such as game attendance (Jones, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Additionally, previous research has shown that participants with a strong psychological commitment are more likely to attend games (Mahony *et al.*, 2000). However, the question is whether actual game attendance increases team-based identification or if individuals with a strong identification are more likely to attend games to support 'their team'. Kolbe and James (2000) argued that team-based experiences derived from attendance at matches played a significant role in strengthening the fan-team bond. However, the general notion that actual support at matches increases identity score requires further testing for the reasons outlined.

5.4.1 Conceptual outcomes: Stage three

Following from the discussion presented in this section, the next iteration of the conceptual outcome development expanded to include variables shown to influence new team identification:

Figure 5.4: Conceptual outcomes: Stage three
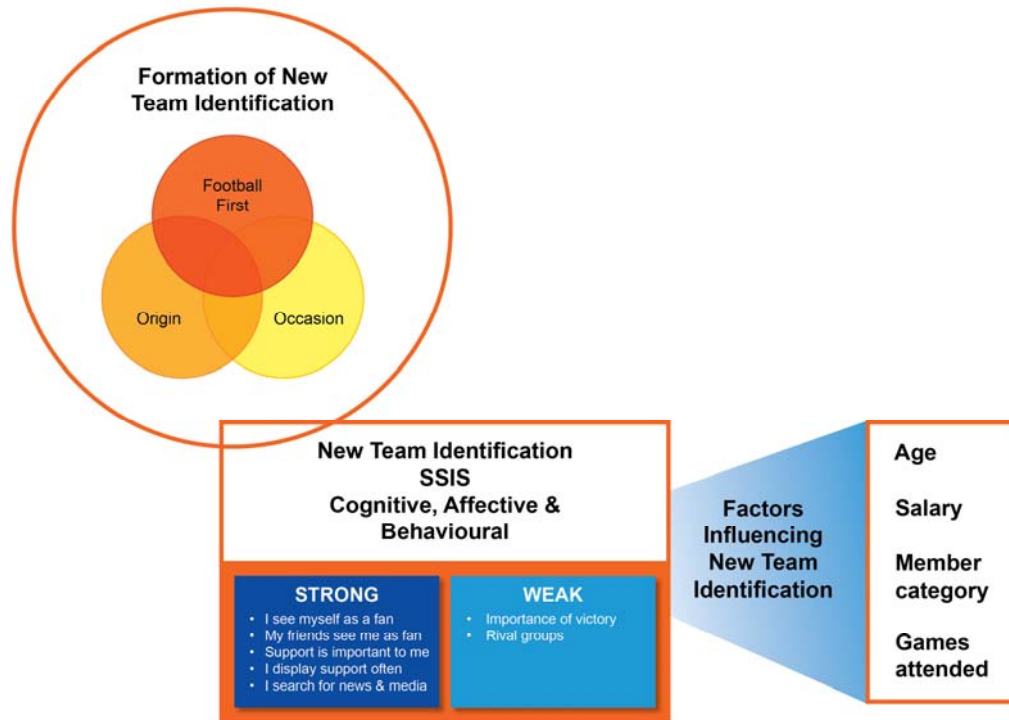
Stage one of the conceptual outcome highlighted the formation of new team identity. Stage two of the conceptual outcome expands to show the SSIS as a measure of new team identity, with rival groupings and the value of victory as periphery items. Subsequent discussion and analysis developed the conceptual outcome to include age, salary, membership category and number of games attended as characteristics influencing the strength of new team identification. This provided notable findings, probing variables and characteristics that influenced the strength of new team identification and provided clear and replicated answers to the research questions set out in earlier work (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In the following section, the development of new team identification is canvassed.

5.5   Development of new team identification

Research question five specifically addressed the development of new team identification. Season-one and -two survey data indicated no significant change in mean identity score for the matched survey respondents. However, as James *et al* (2002) remarked, the development or maturation of team bonds requires testing at various points in a new team's history. A significant factor in the identity score reported in year two may derive from the poor on-field performances and off-field turmoil experienced by Sydney FC in its second season. This study provided an initial indication that testing the development of new team identification quantitatively is – to an extent – reliant on the consistency of on-field performances. After winning the Championship in season one, Sydney FC finished fourth in season two and exited the final series at the first stage. Following the conceptual and theoretical implications of game results on established team identification (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980), inconsistent team performances may have impacted on the strength of new team identification.

The overwhelming theme in the qualitative interview analysis noted that new team identification did develop over time. Sydney FC members did not describe the immediate identification that emerged in research of fans elsewhere (Jones, 1998). Instead, Sydney FC members defined a more process-based development of their new team identification, which complemented other work (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). Members outlined five behaviours that contributed to their new team identity development. First, members noted an increased desire to search for team-related news and media. Second, expressions of support through team merchandise gained importance over time. Third, members noted an increased 'eagerness' to support 'their team' through attending games. Fourth, members explained how their new team identification developed as they matched the names of unknown players with faces. Finally, as a result of developed new team identification, members sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC to others. These are all examples of member behaviours that highlighted additional forms of support and points of identification with Sydney FC.

The development of new team identification encompassed multiple behaviours for some members, a finding consistent with previous literature on the subject (Funk & James, 2001). Funk and James (2001) noted that at the stage of 'attachment' fans engage in multiple support behaviours. At this stage of the process, the fan-team bond – within the PCM – became less transient and members developed more durable relationships (Funk & James, 2001). Therefore, members' engagement in multiple team-related behaviours meant their support was potentially durable and had progressed from what has been described as an initially transient relationship (Funk & James, 2001). Each of the five behaviours provided key information pertaining to the quandary raised by Wann and Branscombe (1993) regarding factors that evidence increased new/established team identification.

5.5.1 Searching

Members described how, as identification developed, they searched for relevant news and media on Sydney FC to a higher level. This was consistent with the findings of previous studies examining the positive outcomes of fans with a strong established team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Furthermore, it complemented the SSIS findings, which measured the importance of searching for team-related news and media. In previous research fans with strong established team identification have been shown to seek to stay abreast of club news, transfer dealings and player and club statistics to benefit their self-concept and extend their affiliation (Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Wann and Branscombe (1995) also noted that objective knowledge of club statistics provided a tool for fans to demonstrate their affiliation with the in-group by showing a high level of team-based understanding.

Member interview narratives described how searching for news and media covering Sydney FC derived from an increased interest in team-based occurrences, which supported previous work (G. Crawford, 2003). This

stemmed from what members ascribed to an increased level of new team identification. Furthermore, the desire to search for team-related news increased towards the end of season one. The 'culmination' of the season and the success experienced by Sydney FC in season one increased members' desire to search for team-related news and media, and this finding extends previous work (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). However, this relationship appeared to be slightly different to that defined by Wann and Branscombe (1995). For Sydney FC members, searching for team news represented an avenue through which to engage with the new team, not necessarily to learn about it. Therefore, this finding highlighted that searching for news can act as a facet of new team identification, which doesn't necessarily concern developing knowledge and understanding of the new team.

5.5.2 Expression

It has been suggested that as new team identification develops the desire of members to positively differentiate themselves from rival groups increases (Tajfel, 1978b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This was evidenced by an increased number of Sydney FC members expressing support by wearing merchandise to home games in season two of the A-League in survey data. Despite a high percentage of members purchasing official team merchandise during the first two seasons, expressions of support did not appear to be paramount in the development of new team identification. Members purchased official team merchandise at the inception of their new team identification, which aligned with their initial desire to display allegiance. As their new team identification developed, members did not continue to buy official team merchandise. Instead, they chose to scour shops, the Internet and other retail sources for alternative merchandise articles. Similarly to consuming news on Sydney FC, members described how buying such merchandise expressed their team support, and this positively differentiated such members as 'strongly identified'.

5.5.3 Eagerness

Members noted how they became more eager to support as their new team identification developed. They described how a developed sense of new team

identification with Sydney FC fostered an increased desire for game day and team-based activities. Despite the lack of club history discussed previously, new team identification, as described by members, assumed critical importance. This eagerness was evident in interviews to the extent that for some members the desire to support permeated everyday life and thoughts. Furthermore, members described an increased eagerness and need to attend games to support 'their' team, displaying distinct parallels with previous literature (Jones, 1998; Mahony *et al.*, 2000) and previous discussion in this chapter. Specifically, individuals with strong new team identification described how attending Sydney FC's games became critical to support, as evidenced by one member planning to travel to watch Sydney FC in New Zealand. This replicated the work of Jones (1998), which demonstrated that strongly identified fans would attempt to support their team through travelling to away games. Member narratives generally explained how developing new team identification increased their eagerness to attend games.

The interview analysis contributed to existing knowledge through its illustration of how the stage of league season triggered an increased interest in the new sport team. The 'eagerness' members displayed for Sydney FC increased towards the climax of the first season, which supports the literature on BIRGing (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976), especially given the club's successful debut year. Furthermore, the finding that new team identification increased towards the end of Sydney FC's successful first season provided a pertinent theme, which led to increased new team identification and provided clear information in response to Wann and Branscombe's quandary regarding factors which influence the strength of team identification.

5.5.4 Names and faces

At the beginning of Sydney FC's history, few players had high-profile public personas or reputations, with the exception of the club's marquee signing, Dwight Yorke, whose exploits in the English Premier League preceded his arrival in Australia. At the beginning of season one, many players were

'faceless', that is, members did not know who they were. Essentially, members of Sydney FC described how the unheralded players at the club led to a process where they needed to put faces to the names of players through team-related experiences. Trail and James (2001) noted the importance of high-profile players as motivators of sport fans. However, instead of identifying with Sydney FC's high-profile marquee recruit, Dwight Yorke, members ascribed value to unheralded players they learned about through game attendance during the first season. Therefore, non-marquee players were key to identity development.

This finding has clear parallels with the work of Neale and Funk (2006), who argued that players only mattered to fans if they were contributing and loyal team players. Therefore, the status of a specific player is only significant should they play week-in, week-out and contribute to the overall success of the team (Neale & Funk, 2006). Thus, marquee player status appeared to be of little importance to club members. In the case of Sydney FC, new team identification with players grew from an initial lack of knowledge regarding attributes, ability and worth to the team, and matured during the course of the first season as members put names with faces. Furthermore, players that contributed and played week-in, week-out were considered more important by Sydney FC members, which complemented previous research of the subject (Neale & Funk, 2006).

5.5.5 Spruiking

Finally, members articulated how, as their identification developed, they sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC to friends, colleagues and non-fans of the club. Specifically, this group of Sydney FC members sought to improve perceptions of the team through contact with others, which could be interpreted as a method of managing new team identification (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976). This finding provided an extension of previous research. The pinnacle of Crawford's (2003) model of 'Fan Career' illustrated how a small group of highly identified fans progressed to the level of 'Apparatus', whereby they assumed a role in the actual organisation. The members who engaged in behaviour to spruik and

promote the new team to others were not employed by Sydney FC, and therefore, were different to the typological group highlighted previously (G. Crawford, 2003). Yet, the marginalised status of football in Australia appeared to be a contributory factor in this behaviour. Spruiking and discussing Sydney FC with others appeared to be a process by which members attempted to improve existing perceptions of football (J. Warren *et al.*, 2002) and alleviate the perpetual feeling experienced by fans of football in Australia of "being the odd one out" (Member 1).

The spruiking and promotion of Sydney FC to friends, colleagues and non-fans of the club displayed both similarities and differences to previous work. The promotion of Sydney FC to others had parallels with the 'Voice' described by Jones (2000). However, 'Voice' defined an image-management tactic fans used when aspects of categorisation with Luton Town FC could not be viewed positively (Jones, 2000). Instead, Sydney FC members sought to spruik and promote Sydney FC, which they attributed to a perception that new team identification had developed and a personal desire to see both the new sport team and football in Australia thrive. Members engaged in a virtual advertising capacity, which attempted to develop the popularity of Sydney FC.

5.5.6 Conceptual outcomes

The above discussion of new team identification development encompassed five team-related behaviours. An amalgam of behaviours was evident in the development of new team identification. This finding complements previous literature on the topic (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). The majority of members studied developed their new team identification equivalent to the 'Enthusiastic' level of Crawford's (2003) model; and concomitant with the 'Attachment' and 'Allegiance' levels of the PCM (Funk & James, 2001). At these stages of psychological attachment/established team identification, attending games and displaying support are important and fans possess a good understanding of players, team and history. All of the five behaviours defined in this section served to foster increased levels of new team identification.

Although members expressed some characteristics similar to the 'Devoted' level of Crawford's (2003) 'career' model, this level defined a group of long-term followers that did not exist in a new sport team context, due to the club's brief history.

The final stage of the formulisation of conceptual outcomes incorporates the behaviours members noted as markers in the development of their bond with Sydney FC and are displayed in Figure 5.5 below. The conceptual representation of outcomes suggests how the team-related behaviours built on the new team identification measured by the SSIS as the first season progressed. The three arrows in the centre of the conceptual outcome define the relationship between formation, measurement and development of new team identification. The arrow between the development and formation of new team identification displays a potential yet uncertain relationship. As with factors influencing new team identity formation, the findings emanate from the context researched and may be subject to alterations in other situations, as indicated by studies that have demonstrated other ways in which fan–team bonds develop (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). Nonetheless, the five behaviours identified provided a key progression of current understanding in relation to the development of new team identification, as presented in Figure 5.5 below:

Figure 5.5: Conceptual outcomes: Stage four
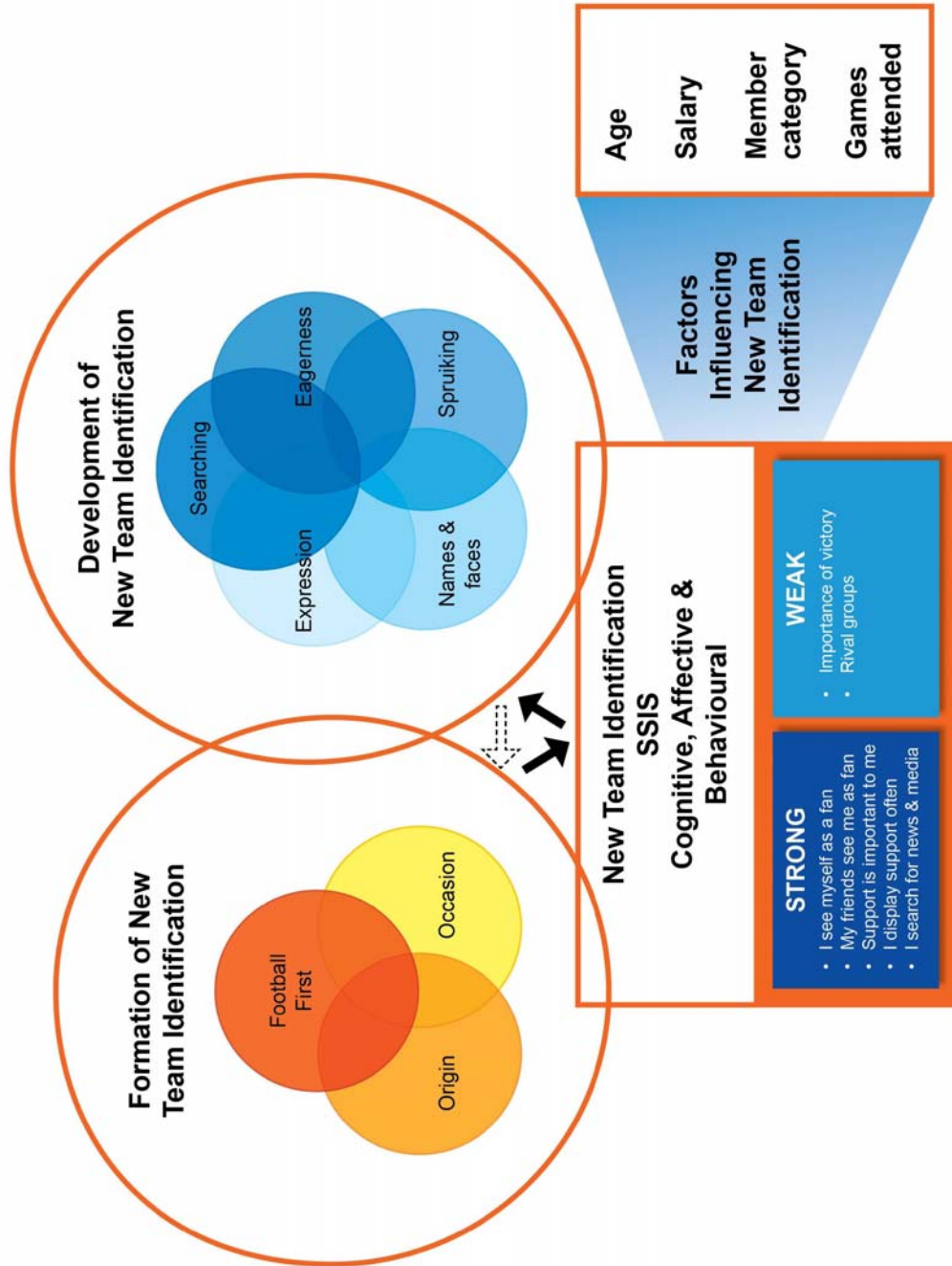
The conceptualisation of outcomes serves two distinct purposes. First, it illustrates the various aspects of new team identification explored during the course of this research project, specifically pertaining to the research questions posed. Conceptually, the outcome spans from the formation through to the development of new team identification. Second, it highlights the potential interrelationships between each stage of the research process and underlines a specific agenda for research to assess how the formation, measurement and development of new team identification relate to one another. Overall, this conceptualisation of outcomes contributes to existing knowledge of new team identification and originates from the extended period of empirical research which has framed this research project.

5.6 Content and methodological considerations

In Chapter 1 the declared delimitations clarified the scope and boundaries of this research project. The limitations that emerged during the research process arose through issues with instrumentation and theory, which primarily stemmed from the limited previous empirical research investigating new team identification.

The multi-dimensionality and complexity of recently developed scales measuring established team identification (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007) provided an important point of conjecture in Chapter 3. The use of the SSIS limited the measurement of new team identification to a one-dimensional construct. Utilising a multi-dimensional model to measure new team identification could have provided an opportunity to test for relationships between various factors and assess the value of each in a new team context.

This was the first study to measure new team identification over time and track the development of the construct. However, due to privacy considerations, UTS ethics restrictions prevented gathering research participants' names, or contact phone numbers. Therefore, the survey participants' email address provided the

only means to track individuals. While survey respondents were required to actually provide an email address in the optional survey response field, to track participants the process required survey respondents to provide exactly the same email address in both surveys. However, through changes at work and in day-to-day life a number of email accounts would have changed between the first two seasons. This limitation was reflected in the number of survey respondents that were identified as completing season one and two surveys (N=63). The low number of matched respondents limited the broader value of the statistical findings exploring new team identity development.

5.7   Thesis contribution

This thesis makes five major contributions, specifically stemming from testing of the five research questions (RQ); these contributions frame the following section.

5.7.1   RQ 1: Applying social identity theory

This study has demonstrated that social identity theory is a viable theoretical framework to explore new team identification. Previous literature has demonstrated that social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is a suitable framework through which to explore sport fans (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and football supporters (Jones, 1998). This research project extended this previous finding, demonstrating that social identity theory is also applicable to members of a new sport team. Expanding upon previous work, this research project has demonstrated that new team identification entails more than a purely cognitive attachment (James *et al.*, 2002). This finding emanated from the use of social identity theory to explore new team identification and extended previous applications of the framework.

5.7.2   RQ 2: Formation of new team identification

Determining the themes that led to the formation of new team identification extended our previous understanding of how a new sport team becomes relevant

to potential fans. Sydney FC members described Football First, Origin and Occasion as themes that acted in the formation of new team identification with Sydney FC. The importance of these themes in making a team without tradition, history, track record or results relevant to individuals is significant and provided a key contribution to the literature on new sport teams to date. This has implications for continued investigation of the role existing social identifications play in the formation of new team identification. This study has shown via methodological triangulation that support for football in Australia was a fundamental feature in the formation of new team identification.

5.7.3 RQ 3: Measuring new team identification

This study has elaborated on previous research, which focused, by design, on the cognitive bond season-ticket holders developed with a new sport team (James *et al.*, 2002). Through the application of the SSIS to measure new team identification, this study has contributed to the existing body of literature in three ways.

First, the SSIS provided a valid model of new team identification and the testing of the SSIS in the new team context is a contribution to the literature exploring new sport teams. This research project has shown the SSIS to be a valid measure of new team identification and extended previous applications of the model. Second, while the testing of the SSIS confirmed that members of Sydney FC developed strong cognitive bonds, this research also elaborated on new team identification and extended knowledge beyond the purely cognitive bond measured previously (James *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, the application of the SSIS highlighted that members derived emotional value from their categorisation with the new team and engaged in behaviours to support the new sport team. Therefore, by measuring affective and behavioural dimensions of new team identification, this research project provided a critical contribution to the literature on new sport teams. Third, the absence of team history led to differences in SSIS results between established and new teams. The value of victory and rival groupings displayed a weaker relationship to new team

identification than that shown in an established team context (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). However, the addition of these scale items did show that they are – statistically – applicable to a measure of new team identification.

5.7.4 RQ 4: Demographics and new team identification

Following from Wann and Branscombe's (1993) recommendation that future research of sport fans should probe for factors that influence the strength of established team identification, this study sought to test for relationships based on mean identity score in a new team context. Testing sought to determine the influence of age, gender, salary, membership category and games attended on mean identity score. The relationships uncovered in relation to age, salary, membership category and games attended provided key contributions for both theorists and practitioners. In contrast to previous research in a new sport team context (James *et al.*, 2002), this research project clearly demonstrated that young members with lower salaries who attended a high proportion of Sydney FC's home games developed the strongest new team identification.

The influence of membership category on identity score revealed less consistent relationships. However, in practice, marketing an area and membership category for "fanatical supporters" within Sydney FC's home ground appeared to be a successful marketing strategy. Members of the Cove displayed the strongest new team identification in both seasons, suggesting that marketing a membership category to 'fanatics' may be a viable approach to leverage identity strength in certain member groups. Overall, the findings in relation to age, salary, membership category and games attended provided clear and replicated relationships, which contributed to our existing understanding of variables and characteristics influencing the strength of new team identification.

5.7.5 RQ 5: Development of new team identification

The investigation of new team identity development complemented and extended existing work on team identification, which has previously focused on

established sport teams (G. Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001). This research project identified five behaviours explaining the development of new team identification. Additionally, as new team identification developed, members engaged in multiple activities to support the new team, and this discovery complements previous work (Funk & James, 2001). New team identification developed despite the lack of club history and members developed multi-faceted bonds. An increased desire to search for new team-related media and eagerness to attend and support the new team encapsulated the most common behaviours underpinning developed new team identification. Furthermore, new team identification assumed critical importance towards the climax of the new team's first season, when the club was challenging for the A-League title and experiencing a significant period of initial on-field success. This provided additional insight into the role of positive results on the development of new team identification (Cialdini *et al.*, 1976).

5.7.6 Conceptual outcomes

The conceptual outcomes emanated from extensive testing of research questions one to five. As a result, the model of conceptual outcomes clearly develops our existing understanding of new team identification. The conceptual outcome proposed here offers the opportunity for testing/application in different cases and contexts to ascertain whether additional variables are required to explain: the formation of new team identification; aspects of new team identification; factors influencing new team identification; and behaviours underlining the development of new team identification. The presentation of the conceptual outcomes as a means to test and explain new team identification in the future is a notable addition to existing knowledge on the topic.

5.8 Future research

A number of future agendas for research into new team identification have been derived from the research process undertaken. These include: sampling; methodology; multi-dimensionality; development of new team identification; conceptual outcomes; and football in Australia.

Sampling

The two existing studies of new sport teams, and the individuals that support them, have focused on season-ticket holders (James *et al.*, 2002) and club members (Lock, 2009; Lock *et al.*, 2007, 2008a). Focusing on season-ticket holders and members provided both investigations with a methodology to sample individuals with a psychological connection or new team identification. Consequently, the difference/s between season-ticket holders/club members and non-members is an area for future exploration. Future research could sample both members and non-members to explore whether this dichotomy influences the formation, strength and development of new team identification.

Methodology

Future research into new team identification would also benefit from utilising more diverse mixtures of methodologies. The overt focus on quantitative inquiry in studies of established team identification and psychological attachment fails to capitalise on the depth of understanding gathered via qualitative methodology. Jones (1997) argued that mixed-methodologies were a preferable course of action in studies of sport fans. Furthermore, in his exploration of supporters 'career' Crawford (2003) went on to display the benefits of a mixed-method approach. Without a qualitative research phase, this research study would have neglected critical aspects regarding the formation and development of new team identification. Qualitative methodologies are critical tools in such situations, where research is exploratory in nature and seeking to develop theory.

Multi-dimensionality

Arguments presented in this research project clarified why the employment of multi-dimensional models of established team identification to measure new team identification at such an early stage of conceptual and theoretical development was problematic. However, from the understanding of new team identification provided during the course of this research project, future research should endeavour – as studies of established teams have done – to explore the

multi-dimensionality of new team identification (Dimmock *et al.*, 2005; Heere, 2005; Heere & James, 2007).

Development of new team identification

Based on the research process employed here, future research may benefit from collecting data on new team identity development at strategically selected points in a new club's development. Initiating the data-collection process prior to season one would provide useful baseline data. This could provide a further check point of identity strength, which may conceivably identify nuanced changes in the construct. Future research may also consider employing a tri-phased survey approach, investigating the period prior to the first season (James *et al,* 2002), after, and following season two. The methodological approach adopted in studies of new or established team identity development is an area for consideration. As demonstrated previously by Crawford (2003) and in this research process, qualitative data contributes a rich source of information regarding the development of established and new team identification.

Conceptual outcome

The proposed conceptual outcome provides a key contribution to the body of literature exploring fans, season-ticket holders and members of new sport teams. The central research questions, which this research project addressed and answered in the contributions section above, explored: the application of social identity theory with a new sport team and the formation, measurement, strength and development of new team identification. Future research can benefit from retesting the conceptual outcomes of this research project in alternate cases and contexts to extend the current applications of this conceptualisation.

Football in Australia

Finally, in 2009 the A-League is due to expand, providing the basis for an Australia-specific agenda for future research. The expansion process will provide fresh opportunities to explore new team identification in Australia. At

this stage, two new teams – Gold Coast United and North Queensland Fury – have already been included for the 2009 season. Future research could continue from this study and explore new team identification in these newly introduced A-League football clubs.

5.9 Conclusions

The key outcomes deriving from the research conducted are summarised here. The formation of new team identification provided conceptual advancements, contributing to our understanding of how a new club is relevant to individuals who choose to support it. Members defined an existing social identification with football in Australia that led them to support a new team. In addition, members also defined a more generic affiliation with football that was not specific to football in Australia. Evidently supporting football both in Australia and globally bridged the lack of public understanding of team, players and history that any new sport team in a new league would encounter. This finding accounted for considerable differences between the process that fans of established and new teams follow in the formation of identity.

Prior research into new sport teams has concentrated on the cognitive attachment fans develop. The application of the SSIS highlighted that affective and behavioural dimensions warrant further consideration in a new team context. However, subtle differences between established and new team identification were evidenced. The SSIS explained less variance in a new team context than shown previously (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Additionally, rival groupings and the value of victory displayed weaker relationships than expected. Overall, the empirical analysis of the SSIS as a measure of new team identification extended existing applications of the model. Furthermore, the SSIS tested as a useful, valid and reliable tool to measure new team identification in the future.

Significant and repeated differences were observed for identity strength with age, salary, membership category and games attended, and each of these had an effect on new team identification. The influence that demographic variables and nominal characteristics exerted on new team identification provided a significant contribution to research on new sport teams. Furthermore, the significance of these findings indicated a clear agenda for broader consideration of the role that demographic variables and nominal characteristics enact on both established and new team identification.

Prior to this research project the development of new team identification remained under researched. The development of new team identification was defined by five behaviours. Searching for team-related news and eagerness to support encapsulated the two key areas of new team identification development. More importantly, some members highlighted multiple ways in which new team identification developed. Furthermore, the stage of the league season assumed central importance in fostering a development in new team identification. The culmination of the new team's first season and its journey to winning the A-League Championship inspired members to think about and engage with the club at a higher level.

In conclusion, through the contributions described, this research project has added to existing knowledge of new sport teams and the individuals that support them. Furthermore, through an in-depth analysis of new team identification, the findings and discussions illustrated that new sport teams provide a rich arena for research. Although the context presented and studied represented fundamental parallels with established teams, it displayed sufficient idiosyncratic differences to warrant concerted research attention in the future, specifically probing members and fans of new sport teams.

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Appendix 1

Sports Spectator Identity Scale (SSIS)

How important is it to you that XXX wins?

Not Important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Important

How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of XXX?

Not at all a fan 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very much a fan

How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of XXX?

Not at all a fan 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very much a fan

During the season, how closely do you follow XXX through either the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?

Never   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Every day

How important is being a XXX fan to you?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very important

How much do you dislike XXX's greatest rivals?

Do not dislike 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Dislike very much

How often do you display XXX's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live, or on your clothing?

Never   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Always

(Wann & Branscombe, 1993)

Appendix 2

Season-one survey

1. Members

* 1. Are you a member of Sydney FC?

○ Yes

○ No

2. Your membership of Sydney FC

* 2. Please indicate which membership category you belong to.

○ Platinum

○ Silver

○ Bronze

○ Foundation

○ Junior

○ Club

* 3. What are the most important factors in your decision to become a member of Sydney FC? Tick as many options as apply.

☐ Friends

☐ Family

☐ Value for money

☐ Being part of Sydney FC

☐ Membership of Healthe

☐ Interest in football

☐ General sporting interest

☐ A Marquee player i.e. Dwight Yorke

☐ Other (please specify)

[_____]

3. Your membership of Healthe

* 4. Are you aware of the benefits offered to you through membership of Healthe?

○ Yes

○ No

* 5. Have you taken advantage of the benefits offered to you by your Healthe membership?

○ Yes

○ No

4. e-newsletter

* 6. Did you receive the Sydney FC e-newsletter regularly this season?

○ Yes

○ No

5. The Sydney FC e-newsletter

* 7. Do you read the Sydney FC newsletter?

○ Yes

○ No

* 8. How would you rate the following aspects of the Sydney FC newsletter?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Content	○	○	○	○	○
Presentation	○	○	○	○	○
Delivery	○	○	○	○	○

9. How would you like to see the newsletter improved? Please provide your comments in the space below.

6. Rate your membership

* 10. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following aspects of your membership.

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important
Pricing/saving on public tickets	○	○	○	○	○
Seat position	○	○	○	○	○
e-newsletter	○	○	○	○	○
Standard of football at home games	○	○	○	○	○
Healthe membership and benefits	○	○	○	○	○
Special offers to members	○	○	○	○	○
Value for money	○	○	○	○	○

11. Would savings on programmes and merchandise (for members only) add value to your membership of Sydney FC?

	Yes	No
Programmes	○	○
Merchandise	○	○

7. Transport

✱ 12. How many kilometres away from Aussie Stadium (approximately) do you currently live (please write only in numbers. e.g. 12)?

[_____]

✱ 13. How long does it take you to travel to Sydney FC home games (Please write only in minutes. e.g. 50)?

[_____]

✱ 14. Which of the following methods of transport do you use to travel to home games? Please tick as many as apply.

- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Cycle
- ☐ Car
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Other (please specify)

[_____]

✱ 15. If you drive or get a lift to home games, where do you usually park? Please select one.

- ○ Moore park/SCG parking
- ○ Fox Studios
- ○ On a street near Aussie Stadium
- ○ A friends house
- ○ I do not travel by car to home games

8. Aussie Stadium

✱ 16. Please rate the following aspects of Aussie Stadium.

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Stadium/seating access	○	○	○	○	○
Seating comfort	○	○	○	○	○
Food & Drink (quality)	○	○	○	○	○
Food & Drink (price)	○	○	○	○	○
Atmosphere	○	○	○	○	○
Parking	○	○	○	○	○
Match day entertainment	○	○	○	○	○

9. Your support pattern

✱ 17. Please indicate which bay you most regularly sat/stood/watched games from this season (please type in numbers only. e.g. 19)

[_____]

* 18. How many of this season's 2005-2006 Hyundai A-League games (excluding friendly games) did you attend? Please select one of the following categories.

○ All

○ 8-10

○ 5-7

○ 3-4

○ 1-2

* 19. Who did you usually attend home games with? Please tick as appropriate.

☐ Friends

☐ Family

☐ Partner/spouse

☐ Co-workers

☐ Self

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

10. Attending Sydney FC games

* 20. Which of the following factors caused you to miss home games? Please tick as many as apply.

☐ I did not miss any games

☐ Bad weather

☐ Poor team performances

☐ Lack of interest

☐ Other commitments

☐ Opposition

☐ Day of week game was played

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 21. When would you prefer to watch Sydney FC play?

○ Friday

○ Saturday

○ Sunday

○ I have no preference

✱ 22. Which website would you most regularly get information on Sydney FC from? Please tick one

- ○ www.sydneyfc.com
- ○ www.sydneyfc-unofficial.com
- ○ www.a-league.com.au
- ○ www.tribalfootball.com
- ○ www.theworldgame.com.au
- ○ None
- ○ Other (please specify)
  - [   ]

11. Merchandise and clothing

✱ 23. When attending Sydney FC games, what do you typically wear?

- ○ Sydney FC official merchandise
- ○ Cove shirt
- ○ Normal clothing
- ○ Alternative football strip
- ○ Other (please specify)
  - [   ]

✱ 24. How much (in dollars) have you spent on Sydney FC merchandise this season (please write only in numbers. e.g 125)

[   ]

12. Previous football support

✱ 25. Have you supported a football (soccer) club, other than Sydney FC in Australia?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

13. Previously supported club details

✱ 26. Please state the football club you supported.

[   ]

✱ 27. And the number of years you supported them.

[   ]

14. Other sporting memberships

✱ 28. Do you currently hold membership of any other sporting club?

○ Yes

○ No

15. Club details

✱ 29. Please state the name of the sporting club

[ ]

✱ 30. And the sport in which they participate

[ ]

16. Your interest in other sports

✱ 31. Please indicate your interest in the following sports, by ticking the boxes which describe your participation/support.

	I make an effort to watch this sport on TV	I play, or have played this sport	I support, or have supported this sport	I have no interest in this sport
AFL	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basketball	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cricket	☐	☐	☐	☐
Netball	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rugby League	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rugby Union	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. You as a Sydney FC fan

The following questions look at your identification with Sydney FC. Please select the number that most accurately describes your opinion.

✱ 32. How important is it to you that Sydney FC wins?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not important ----------------------------------- 8=Very important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

✱ 33. When Sydney FC wins, do you feel like you have won?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all ----------------------------------- 8=Very much so	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

✱ 34. How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all a fan ------------------------------- 8=Very much a fan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

✱ 35. How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all a fan ------------------------------- 8=Very much a fan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 36. How strongly do you see your friends as fans of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all fans --------- ----------------------- 8=Very much fans	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

37. During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Never ------------------ ---------------------------- 8=Every day	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 38. How important is being a Sydney FC fan to you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not important ---------- ---------------------- 8=Very important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 39. How much do you dislike Sydney FC's greatest rivals?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Do not dislike ---------- -------------------- 8=Dislike very much	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 40. How often do you display Sydney FC's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live or on your clothing?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Never ------------------ ---------------------------- ---- 8=Always	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

18. Decision to attend

* 41. When deciding to attend Sydney FC games, which of the following statements is more applicable to you?

	1-Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8-Agree
I attend games to spend time with my family, friends, partner/spouse or colleagues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I attend games to support Sydney FC.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I attend games to support Sydney, my home city.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I attend games to watch live football	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

19. Personal details

* 42. Your age

◯ 16-20 ◯ 21-25 ◯ 26-30 ◯ 31-35 ◯ 36-40 ◯ 41-45 ◯ 46-50 ◯ 51-55 ◯ 56-60 ◯ 61-65 ◯ 66-70 ◯ 71-75

* 43. Gender

◯ Male

◯ Female

* 44. Your home postcode (please write)

[   ]

* 45. Country of birth

◯ Australia

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

20. Cultural heritage

* 46. Do you identify with a specific cultural/ethnic grouping other than Australian?

◯ Yes

◯ No

21. Cultural group

* 47. Please state the cultural group to which you belong.

[   ]

22. Your education and employment

* 48. What is the highest level of education you have completed, or are currently undertaking?

◯ Primary school

◯ Secondary school

◯ Trade/technical certificate

◯ TAFE certificate/diploma

◯ University undergraduate degree

◯ University postgraduate degree

✱ 49. Please select your current form of employment from the options below.

◯ Full-time home duties

◯ Looking for work

◯ Retired

◯ Full-time education

◯ Part-time/casual paid work

◯ Full-time paid work

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

50. Please indicate your annual salary from the options below

◯ Under $25,000

◯ $25,000-$50,000

◯ $50,000-$75,000

◯ $75,000-$100,000

◯ Over $100,000

23. Your comments on Sydney FC

51. Have you any other comments regarding Sydney FC that have not been addressed in this questionnaire?

[   ]

52. If you would like to participate in further stages of UTS's research with Sydney FC, please provide your email address in the space provided.

[   ]

24. Thank you very much!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your views are important to us and will be used in the formulation of future plans and strategies.

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Appendix 3

Interview schedule

<u>**Football history**</u>

1. How did you first become involved in football?

2. How long have you been involved in football, and what has your participation involved?

3. Have you previously supported a football club?

<u>**Fan-team probes**</u>

4. At the start of the season, XXX was an entity without direct history, what attracted you to support them?

5. What do you see as the most important factors in your ongoing support of the club?

6. Has your level of support increased/decreased in the time since you started supporting XXX?

7. If yes, what factors have affected your level of commitment….?

<u>**Social Identity probes**</u>

8. Who do you attend games with?

9. How do you relate to those you attend with

    a. Family
    b. School friends
    c. New friends, met through the FC
    d. Colleagues
    e. ….?

10. What does your social interaction with others entail, if anything?

11. How important is the atmosphere at games?

12. Is your interaction with those you attend and the atmosphere at games important in your decision to attend?

13. Should your circumstances change, or those you attend with stop attending, would you continue to support XXX?

<u>Other information</u>

14. Will you continue to support XXX in the future?

15. Do you have any other comments regarding XXX?

16. Have the recent performances of the Socceroos affected your interest in football ….?

Appendix 4

Season two survey

1. Members

✱ 1. Are you a member of Sydney FC?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

2. Last year's survey

✱ 2. Did you complete last years survey?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

3. Welcome back!

Your participation in this year's survey is very important to the study. This years survey is similar to last year in many parts, but we are looking to track how your support and satisfaction levels have changed in the past year, whilst confirming themes which emerged in year 1.

4. Your membership of Sydney FC

✱ 3. How many seasons have you been a member of Sydney FC for?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2

✱ 4. Please indicate which membership category you belong to.

- ○ Platinum
- ○ Silver
- ○ Bronze
- ○ Foundation
- ○ Junior
- ○ Club
- ○ Cove

✱ 5. What was the most important factor in your decision to become a member of Sydney FC? Please select one of the following options

◯ Friends

◯ Family

◯ Value for money

◯ Being part of Sydney FC

◯ Support of Australian football

◯ Interest in football

◯ Seating

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

✱ 6. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following aspects of your membership.

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important
Pricing/saving on public tickets	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Seat position	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
e-newsletter	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Standard of football at home games	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Healthe membership and benefits	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Special offers to members	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Value for money	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. In the space provided below, please list the organisations that you recognise as sponsors of Sydney FC (Please separate each with a comma).

[   ]

✱ 8. Would special members only offers from Sydney FC's sponsors add value to your membership?

◯ Yes

◯ No

9. How satisfied were you with the Sydney FC functions held after home games and during away games at Star City?

	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

✱ 10. Will you renew your membership of Sydney FC for the 2007-2008 season?

◯ Yes

◯ No

5. Your membership of Healthe

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* 11. Are you aware of the benefits offered to you through membership of Healthe?

◯ Yes

◯ No

6. Healthe benefits

* 12. Have you taken advantage of the benefits offered to you by your Healthe membership?

◯ Yes

◯ No

7. e-newsletter

* 13. Did you receive the Sydney FC e-newsletter regularly this season?

◯ Yes

◯ No

8. The Sydney FC e-newsletter

* 14. Did you read the Sydney FC newsletter?

◯ Yes

◯ No

* 15. How would you rate the following aspects of the Sydney FC newsletter?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Content	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Presentation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Delivery	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

16. How would you like to see the newsletter improved? Please provide your comments in the space below.

9. Transport

✱ 17. How many kilometres away from Aussie Stadium (approximately) do you currently live?

○ 0-5km

○ 6-10km

○ 11-15km

○ 16-20km

○ 21-25km

○ 26+km

✱ 18. How long does it take you to travel to Sydney FC home games?

○ 0-15 minutes

○ 16-30 minutes

○ 31-45 minutes

○ 46 minutes - 1 hour

○ Over an hour

✱ 19. Which of the following methods of transport would you typically use to travel to home games? Please tick as many as apply.

☐ Walk

☐ Cycle

☐ Car

☐ Bus

☐ Train

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

✱ 20. If you drive or get a lift to home games, where do you usually park? Please select one.

○ Moore park/SCG parking

○ Fox Studios

○ On a street near Aussie Stadium

○ A friends house

○ I do not travel by car to home games

10. Aussie Stadium

✱ 21. Please rate the following aspects of Aussie Stadium.

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Stadium/seating access	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Seating comfort	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Food & Drink (quality)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Food & Drink (price)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Atmosphere	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Parking	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Match day entertainment	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. Your support pattern

✱ 22. How many games did you attend in Version 2 of the Hyundai A-League? Please select one of the following categories.

◯ All

◯ 8-10

◯ 5-7

◯ 3-4

◯ 1-2

✱ 23. Who do you typically attend games with? Please select one option.

◯ Friends

◯ Family

◯ Friends & family

◯ Partner/spouse

◯ Co-workers

◯ Self

◯ Other (please specify)

[_____]

✱ 24. When attending Sydney FC games, what do you typically wear?

◯ Sydney FC official merchandise

◯ Cove shirt

◯ Normal clothing

◯ Alternative football strip

◯ Other (please specify)

[_____]

12. Consuming Sydney FC

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✱ 25. When would you prefer to watch Sydney FC play?

○ Thursday night

○ Friday night

○ Saturday day

○ Saturday night

○ Sunday day

○ Sunday night

○ I have no preference

✱ 26. How often do you visit Sydneyfc.com?

○ Every day

○ Every other day

○ Twice weekly

○ Weekly

○ Rarely

○ Never

○ Other (please specify)

[_____]

13. Previous football support

✱ 27. Have you previously supported a football club in Australia, or abroad?

○ Yes

○ No

14. Previously supported club details

✱ 28. Which League/s does/did the club you support play in?

☐ National Soccer League

☐ Serie A (Italy)

☐ Scottish Premier League

☐ English Premier League

☐ La Liga (Spain)

☐ Other (please specify)

[_____]

29. Which club do you identify with first i.e. please select the team you support most strongly.

○ Sydney FC

○ Other club you support

15. Deciding to support Sydney FC

On the previous page you stated that you identify with a team other than Sydney FC, primarily. The questions on this page refer to your support of both your primary club and Sydney FC.

30. Please select the option that most accurately defines your reason for identication with a former NSL, or overseas club ahead of Sydney FC.

○ I have supported this club for longer than Sydney FC

○ They play at a higher level

○ They are my hometown club

○ My whole family support this club

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

31. Given your strong support for another football team, please select your primary motivation for supporting Sydney FC.

○ Supporting the success of Australian football

○ Watching live football

○ Support of Sydney, my home city

○ The atmosphere at games

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

16. Your decision to support Sydney FC

32. As a new fan of club football, please select your major motivation for attending Sydney FC games from the following options.

○ Supporting Australian football

○ The A-League provided a team I could identify with

○ Atmosphere at games

○ To be part of something

○ To support Sydney, my home city

○ The success of the Socceroos

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

17. Your participation in football

∗ 33. Apart from spectating, how else do you participate in football?

☐ Player

☐ Referee

☐ Administrator

☐ Coach

☐ My children play

☐ No other involvement

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

18. Other sporting interests

∗ 34. Do you follow any other sports apart from football?

◯ Yes

◯ No

19. Club details

∗ 35. Which other sport/s do you follow? Please tick as appropriate

☐ AFL

☐ Basketball

☐ Cricket

☐ Netball

☐ Rugby League

☐ Rugby Union

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

36. Please indicate your involvement in these sports.

☐ Player

☐ Coach

☐ Administrator

☐ Spectator

☐ Official

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

20. You as a Sydney FC fan

The following questions look at your identification with Sydney FC. Please select the number that most accurately describes your opinion.

* 37. How important is it to you that Sydney FC wins?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not important ---------- ----------------------- 8=Very important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 38. When Sydney FC wins, do you feel like you have won?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all --------------- ------------------------- 8=Very much so	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 39. How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all a fan -------- ---------------------- 8=Very much a fan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 40. How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all a fan -------- ---------------------- 8=Very much a fan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 41. How strongly do you see your friends as fans of Sydney FC?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all fans --------- ---------------------- 8=Very much fans	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

42. During the season, how closely do you follow Sydney FC through either the television, radio, newspapers, or contact with other fans?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Never ------------------- ----------------------------- 8=Every day	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 43. How important is being a Sydney FC fan to you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not important ---------- ---------------------- 8=Very important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 44. How much do you dislike Sydney FC's greatest rivals?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Do not dislike ---------- -------------------- 8=Dislike very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 45. How often do you display Sydney FC's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live or on your clothing?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Never ------------------- ----------------------------- ---- 8=Always	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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46. Since becoming a fan of Sydney FC has your level of identification/support increased?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all---------------- --------------------------- 8=Very much so	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

47. As a fan of Sydney FC, and football in Australia do you see it as your role to promote the club/game to others?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1=Not at all---------------- --------------------------- 8=Very much so	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. Personal details

✱ 48. Your age

○ 16-20 ○ 21-25 ○ 26-30 ○ 31-35 ○ 36-40 ○ 41-45 ○ 46-50 ○ 51-55 ○ 56-60 ○ 61-65 ○ 66-70 ○ 71+

✱ 49. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

✱ 50. Your home postcode (please write)

[   ]

✱ 51. Country of birth

○ Australia

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

22. Cultural heritage

✱ 52. Do you identify with a specific cultural/ethnic grouping other than Australian?

○ Yes

○ No

23. Cultural group

✱ 53. Please state the cultural group to which you belong.

[   ]

24. Residency

This question is optional.

54. Please select your current status in Australia from the following options.

○ Australian Citizen

○ Australian resident

○ Temporary Resident

○ Student visa holder

○ Holiday visa holder

○ Other (please specify)

[ ]

25. Your education and employment

* 55. What is the highest level of education you have completed, or are currently undertaking?

○ Primary school

○ Secondary school

○ Trade/technical certificate

○ TAFE certificate/diploma

○ University undergraduate degree

○ University postgraduate degree

○ No response

* 56. Please select your current form of employment from the options below.

○ Full-time home duties

○ Looking for work

○ Retired

○ Full-time education

○ Part-time/casual paid work

○ Full-time paid work

○ No response

* 57. Please indicate your annual salary from the options below

○ Under $25,000

○ $25,000-$50,000

○ $50,000-$75,000

○ $75,000-$100,000

○ Over $100,000

○ No response

26. Your comments on Sydney FC

58. Have you any other comments regarding Sydney FC that have not been addressed in this questionnaire?

59. If you would like to participate in further stages of UTS's research with Sydney FC, please provide your email address in the space provided.

27. Thank you very much!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this year's survey. Your views are important to us and will be used in the formulation of future plans and strategies.
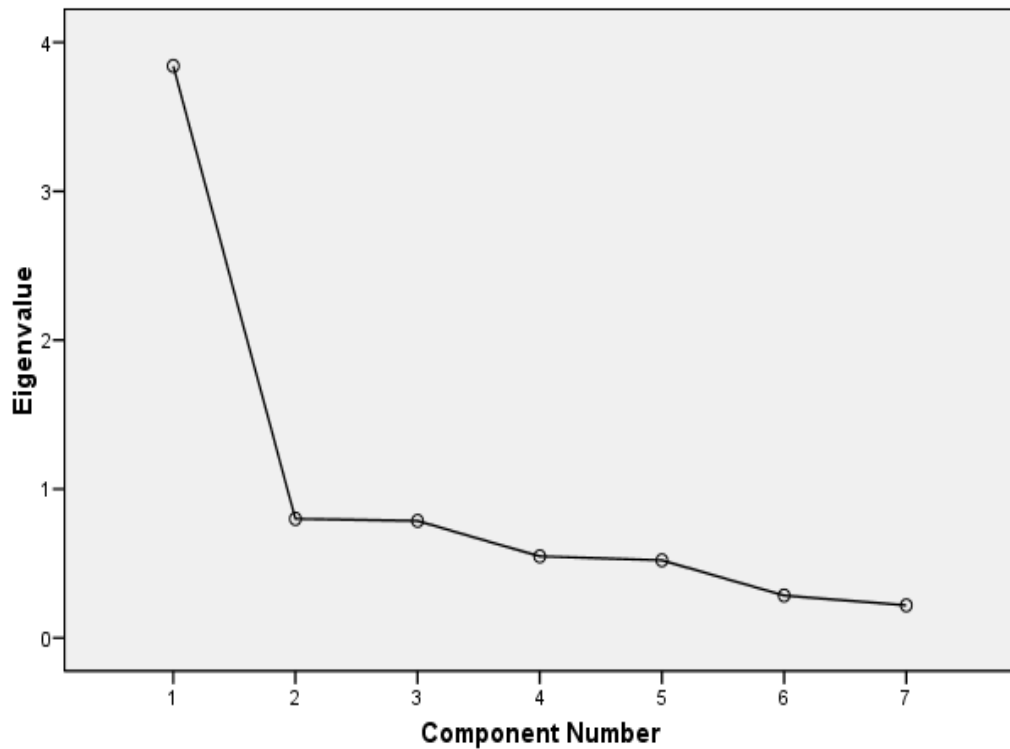
Appendix 5

Component Matrix: Season 1

YEAR ONE

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.841	54.878	54.878	3.841	54.878	54.878
2	.799	11.421	66.299			
3	.786	11.229	77.529			
4	.548	7.828	85.357			
5	.521	7.446	92.803			
6	.285	4.069	96.872			
7	.219	3.128	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Scree Plot

Component Matrix: Season two

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.647	52.103	52.103	3.647	52.103	52.103
2	.840	11.998	64.101			
3	.778	11.114	75.215			
4	.633	9.037	84.252			
5	.535	7.644	91.896			
6	.318	4.548	96.444			
7	.249	3.556	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Scree Plot