TACKLING CORRUPTION IN SPORT: PROFILE OF A CHEAT

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The recent high profile case of Lance Armstrong has revealed the huge impact of cheating on a broad set of stakeholders. Cheating (and corruption, unethical, illegal behaviour generally) is emerging as an increasing problem in sport (Gorse & Chadwick, 2011). The impact of unethical behaviour includes significant violations of trust (Dietz and Gillespie, 2011). Research has demonstrated how trust violations undermine integrity, reputations and breakdown of current and future relationships within and between organisations. To date, issues of trust and the impacts of trust violations have not been examined in the context of sport management or in attempt to understand how to control corruption in sport.

The control of unethical behaviour requires a combination of detection, prevention and management strategies. To develop effective control strategies we accept the ideas of Byers (2012) which suggests that there are multiple ontological layers to control, including formal mechanisms, social contextual factors and individual (personal) factors of motivation and identification. The purpose of this research is to develop profile(s) of cheats to enhance our understanding of the similarities and differences in the motivation, perceived penalties and rewards behind the unethical behaviour. Profiles would highlight individual-level risk factors (e.g. age, gender), but also identify key trigger points (situations and contexts in which this behaviour *first* occurs) which explain the manifestation of unethical acts. This project focuses on the development and testing of such profiling within the context of sport. A recent report spanning ten years identified over 96% of the recorded examples of unethical behaviour in sport involved the use of banned performance enhancing substances (Gorse & Chadwick, 2011). More strikingly it found Europe was the most affected. The deliberate abuse of these substance and other cheating practices undermines the integrity of sporting competition: it creates a loss of control of the athletes' behaviour and a breakdown of trust between competitors, fans, sponsors and governing bodies in the industry.

The development of cheat profiles would provide for the first time governing bodies and anti-doping agencies both in the UK and wider with important data that would allow two significant strategies to reduce such offending: first, it would permit the more effective targeting of Governing body' anti-doping regulations and policing to show where this behaviour is most prevalent, and therefore how and where they might best detect and catch cheats. Second, through identifying the early trigger points, it would allow more focused education programmes to be developed aimed at reducing the occurrence of future nefarious behaviour.

This study focuses on doping in sport, focusing on individual, team (social context) and cultural factors which contribute to the propensity to engage in this unethical behaviour. Rotter (1980) observed that those with a high trust propensity were less likely to cheat than others revealing a key antecedent. One explanation for this perspective links to a social and team dimension that was so prevalent in the Armstrong cycling case - those with low trust propensity consider their behaviour is more the norm, as they regard others as less than trustworthy. Related to the team dimension, reviews (McCabe et al. 2001) have shown that while individual difference should not be overlooked, the social context is important to this behaviour. For example, studies of academic cheating reveal it to be more prevalent in some faculties than other, for example amongst business students. These studies reveal that perceived peer behaviour has the largest effect, but also the role of perceived certainty of being reported by a peer, and the understanding and acceptance of academic integrity policies amongst students and faculty are important considerations; such findings suggest whether we think others are cheating can have a significant impact on our own unethical behaviour.

It is important to recognise the relevance of cultural dimensions to faking and cheating behaviours (Searle, 2006). In some contexts, 'doing what is necessary' is regarded as part of the process. Behaviours including using other people to take tests, or taking the credit for others work, especially if they work for you, are perceived as acceptable in some cultures.
For this project a database in excess of 2,000 UK cases of doping in sport has been developed. These cases have then been coded into category-sets – year of offence, athlete/team involved, country of athlete/ sport, activity (i.e. doping, match-fixing, etc) and outcome. The data collected will then be analysed using advanced statistical analysis techniques in the form of standard multiple regression and structural equation modelling. Preliminary results of our analysis will be reported at EASM 2013.

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