

Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Outcomes of Consuming Prestigious Sports Events

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors explore the range of cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestigious sports event experiences. The authors obtained means-end chains from 19 individuals from across a range of ages and both genders. A total of 39 examples of events were discussed by participants encompassing 25 unique events and 11 different sports. Outcomes were multi-dimensional. At the cognitive level, consumers developed outer- and inner-directed outcomes. At the affective level, prestigious sports events made consumers feel positive emotions, while at the same time energising them to attend in order to avoid negative emotional states. At the behavioural level, four types of outcomes served as a consequence of attending prestigious events: patronage, financial, communication and experiential. By recognising the multiple outcomes associated with the consumption of prestigious sports event experiences, managers will be better equipped to design experiences that satisfy consumer requirements.

KEYWORDS: Sport marketing, Sports events, Consumer outcomes, Prestige

Cite as

Moital, M., Bain, A. and Thomas, H., 2018. Cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestigious sports events. *Sport Management Review*, in Press.

1. Introduction

The economic value of sports events is high as they are the third largest within the events industry (Britain for Events, 2010). Governments, sport organisations, clubs, and charities organise sports events in order to pursue their organisational objectives, whether political, financial or social. As the competitive landscape around sports events evolves, organisers adapt in order to ensure survival. From a marketing perspective, delivering consumer value is amongst the most effective strategies to ensure event success and continued presence in the market. Prestige is high in symbolic value (Riley, 1995) and is often a key influence on the decision to attend a sports event (Kim, Liu & Love, 2015, 2016; Trail, 2012; Wang & Tang, 2018; Wang, Zhang & Tsuji, 2011). Thus, it is not surprising that many sports organisations make prestige a key component of the ethos of the organisation and its events (The Press and Journal, 2016), by highlighting the upper-class experience, luxury, or uniqueness.

The close relationship between sports events and prestige is facilitated by the fact that sports events can be expensive, unique, attended by high social status individuals, experiential, and high quality, thus matching the five values that endow an event with prestige (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In addition, sports events are publicly consumed and often the subject of (social) media coverage and communication. As publicly consumed luxuries (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2013), sports events are highly prone to reference group influence, which also makes them particularly prone to prestige appeals. Symbolic elements such as prestige are particularly important in sport event marketing because the intangibility of the sports event experience makes pre-decision evaluation difficult (Iglesias, 2004). However, despite the intimate relationship between prestige and sports events, there is limited detailed knowledge on the prestige motivation to attend sports events.

Exploring prestige in the context of tourism, Correia and Moital (2009) defined prestige consumption as a motivational process associated with enhancing a person's regard or honour, through the consumption of experiences that are perceived by the individual and surrounding others as symbols of prestige. They put forward a model of prestige motivation which differentiated between antecedents and consequences of consuming prestigious experiences. The antecedents refer to those characteristics of the experience that endow it with prestige, while the consequences refer to how the consumer reacts when consuming prestige; that is, the impact that consuming prestige has on the consumer. These represent consumer-oriented outcomes (Jang, Jae Ko, & Chan-Olmsted, 2015), which are of major interest to sports marketers (Funk, 2017) and consequently the focus of much of the consumer behaviour research in sport. Correia and Moital (2009) used the tripartite model of attitudes (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960) to establish the types of outcomes: cognitive, affective, and conative (behavioural). However, while they gave examples of possible outcomes related to each type, their research was conceptual with examples given only as illustrative. Some studies have sought to understand how consumers perceive prestige to benefit them (e.g. Correia & Kozak, 2012; Kumar & Paul, 2018; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), with authors acknowledging that consuming prestige products can bring about multiple benefits to the consumer (Kumar & Paul, 2018). However, not only were most of these studies not developed in a sporting context, but the vast majority of existing studies were quantitative with measurements underpinned by scattered literature and often not directly related to prestige, thus yielding limited results. Therefore, we address a gap in the literature on consumer-oriented outcomes by examining cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestigious sports event experiences.

2. Literature review

2.1. Prestige and sports events consumption

Establishing the exact contribution of the prestige motivation to the decision to attend sports events is difficult, because prestige is a motivation which is hidden (participants may not be aware that they buy products for prestige reasons) and concealed (even if they do so, they may refrain from admitting it because it is socially unacceptable) (Park, Chae, & Choi, 2017; Riley, 1995). There are, however, a number of reasons that support the assertion that prestige is an important driver of consumption, including sports event consumption, and therefore it is worth researching on its own.

An analysis of some of the major needs models identifies prestige as a key human need (Murray, 1938). In addition, prestige possessions, including products, services, and experiences, play an important role in the attempt to achieve the ideal self (Kumar & Paul, 2018) and generate social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Within marketing, brand prestige is a predictor of consumer behaviour (Jin, Line, & Merkebu, 2016; Kim, Kim, & Jang, 2014). Reflecting this importance, prestige has been the subject of many papers in the context of a variety of different products, such as tourism destinations (Correia & Kozak, 2012; Riley, 1995), hospitality (Jin et al., 2016), technology (Kumar & Paul, 2018), and food (Palma, Ness & Anderson, 2015). When considering closely related concepts such as luxury (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009) and conspicuous consumption (Leibenstein, 1950), the number of papers which focus on this specific motivation grows substantially.

Sport management literature scholars have provided rich evidence of the relationship between prestige and sport. At the national level, hosting major international sports events (Allison & Monnington, 2002) and sporting success at major events (Humphreys, Johnson, & Whitehead, 2011) are drivers of country prestige. Sport team prestige is positively associated with identification with sports team brands (Wang & Tang, 2018) and researchers focusing on sport fans have demonstrated prestige to be associated with belonging to a sports fan group (Zillman, Bryant, & Sapolsky, 1989). Prestige represents one of the motivations for spectators to participate in sport (Trail, 2012), with surrogate winning associated with enhanced status (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hiraakawa, 2001) and regard among peers (Wang et al., 2011), often through BIRGing (Basking In Reflected Glory; Bee & Havitz, 2010). Finally, researchers focusing on sports merchandise (Lee, Trail, Kwon, & Anderson, 2011) further demonstrate the importance of prestige as a source of consumer value in sport.

Research also suggests that prestige is a critical component of sports event attendance. Funk, Toohey, and Bruun (2007) found prestige to affect travel motivation associated with competing in foreign sporting events, with prestige accounting for 71% in the variability in travel motivation. One of the most widely used sports event motivation scales (Funk et al., 2001) includes an item (vicarious achievement) which reflects social prestige associated with affiliating with a successful team. Moreover, sporting competitions have strong associations with prestige imagery (Bouzdine-Chameeva, Ferrand, Valette-Florence, & Chanavat, 2015) and two studies on running events have also demonstrated that prestige is a motivator for taking part in sporting events (Kim et al., 2015, 2016).

2.2. Consumer oriented outcomes in sport consumption

Sports marketers engineer the sport experience by endowing it with attributes that deliver valued consumer-oriented outcomes, which can then benefit both consumers and the organisation. As Funk noted (2017), the sport user experience is underpinned by interactions

that “generate distinctive psychological and physical responses that foster an emotional connection with a sport organization useful in explaining and predicting loyalty and behaviours” (p. 150-51). As a consequence, consumer behaviour scholars typically examine the relationship between the attributes of the sport experience and valued consumer-oriented outcome variables. Attributes include those related to three broad areas: (a) social/customer-to-customer interaction elements such as spectators’ ritualized behaviour (McDonald & Karg, 2014), value creation (Koenig-Lewis, Asaad, & Palmer, 2017), and social atmospherics (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012); (b) the physical element of the experience such as physical atmospherics (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012) and physical sports facilities elements (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002); and (c) marketing communication stimuli in the form of responses to celebrity-related offerings (Zarkada & Tzoumaka, 2017) and naming-rights sponsorships (Eddy, 2014).

Researchers have considered a wide variety of outcome variables. These can be classified based on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural trilogy (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). The cognitive component comprises the consumer’s perception of his/her attributes following the consumption of a prestigious event (Solomon et al., 2013). Cognitive outcomes include team-related outcomes in the form of team involvement (Kerstetter & Kovich, 1997) and identification (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017; McDonald & Karg, 2014; Wang & Tang, 2018), and sporting events outcomes such as perceived core service performance (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012), motivation to attend (McDonald & Karg, 2014), and sports event interest (Funk et al., 2001). Doyle, Filo, Lock, Funk, and McDonald (2016) examined three positive outcomes, namely relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, while others have focused on self-concept related concepts such as self-esteem (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003) and self-expressiveness (Bosnjak, Brown, Lee, Yu, & Sirgy, 2016). Finally, several researchers focused on satisfaction, including satisfaction with the experience (Greenwell et al., 2002; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017; McDonald & Karg, 2014) and life satisfaction (Sato, Jordan, & Funk, 2016). Consumer reactions in the form of positive and negative emotions capture the affective component (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). A more restricted variety of affective outcomes have been covered, including generic emotional responses such as affective response (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012), affective state (Trail et al., 2003), positive emotions (Doyle et al., 2016), and engagement (Doyle et al., 2016). Others focused on specific emotions, such as pride (Burnett, 2003) and happiness (Bosnjak et al., 2016; Jang, Wann, & Ko, 2018).

The behavioural dimension can take the form of overt actions (actual behaviour) and verbal statements concerning behaviour (behavioural intention; Solomon et al., 2013). A varied range of behavioural outcomes has been covered, perhaps reflecting the fact that the ultimate objective of sports marketing activities is to drive the consumer to adopt behaviours that are beneficial to the organisation. Researchers have considered word-of-mouth behaviours through outcome variables such as recommending attendance (Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003) and going together (Swanson et al., 2003), positive word of mouth (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012), word-of-mouth intention (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017), and bragging rights (Burnett, 2003). Due to the pivotal role of loyalty as a key construct in consumer behaviour, a number of studies focused on intended behaviour through concepts such as likelihood of attending (Swanson et al., 2003) or of renewing (McDonald & Karg, 2014), and intention to continue participation (S. Kim et al., 2015) or to attend events/competitions (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). Another set of outcome measures include actual attendance behaviour in the form of game attendance (McDonald & Karg, 2014; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012) and spending. Spending studies have considered overall trip spending (Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Park, 2016) and onsite spending (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012), as well as spending on specific items such as merchandise (Kelley, Harrolle, & Casper, 2014; McDonald & Karg, 2014), food and beverage spending (Kelley et al., 2014), and tickets (Kelley et al., 2014).

2.3. Consumer oriented outcomes associated to prestige

Researchers have considered a number of consumer-oriented outcomes associated with the consumption of prestige. Cognitive consequences include person-related outcomes, such as well-being (Hwang & Han, 2014; Hwang & Hyun, 2012), self-integrity (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), self-esteem (Truong & McColl, 2011), and building memories (Funk et al., 2007), as well as making others jealous (Kerr, Lewis, & Burgess, 2012; Riley, 1995), social gain (Shukla, 2010), esteem (Riley, 1995; Shukla, 2010), and higher status (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). A number of product/brand-related cognitive outcomes are linked to prestige, including perceived price fairness (Hwang & Hyun, 2012), brand risk, trust (Jin et al., 2016), and identification (Hwang & Han, 2014), information costs saving (Hwang & Hyun, 2012), and satisfaction (with the brand; Hwang & Hyun, 2012; Jin et al., 2016).

There has been a much more limited consideration of emotional outcomes, and these have usually been researched as part of a non-affect construct. For example, Hwang and Han (2014) included a generic “feel good” item when measuring brand identification consequences, Correia and Kozak (2012) a “feel spoiled” item, and Palma, Nexx, and Anderson (2015) two items covering “feel good” and “feel classy.” Riley’s (1995) qualitative study identified jealousy and envy as prestige-related consequences associated with backpacking travel. With regards to the behavioural consequences of consuming prestige, some studies focused on repurchase (Hwang & Han, 2014; Hwang & Hyun, 2012; Jin et al., 2016) or the extent to which the consumption of prestige affected looking for alternative options (Hwang & Hyun, 2012). Other scholars focused on word-of-mouth behaviour, such as recommending the product or brand to others (Hwang & Han, 2014), talking about it (Correia & Kozak, 2012; Funk et al., 2007; Hwang & Hyun, 2012), or being able to say that you have consumed it (bragging; Kerr et al., 2012). With the exception of the latter study, behavioural consequences associated with the consumption of prestige have been researched from a quantitative point of view, using concepts such as brand loyalty and behavioural intention.

Limited references to the outcomes of consuming prestigious sports events can be found. In two studies, Kim et al. (2015, 2016) examined the effects of sporting event prestige on intention to continue sport participation, while Davis, Pysarchik, Chappelle, and Sternquist (1993) found that gregarious sports persons tend to travel to renowned places such as those locations that hold world championship events in order to impress their family and friends. Funk et al. (2007) found that active participants were motivated to attend international events, travel to places friends had not attended, build memories and be able to share travel experiences once back at home, which are outcomes commonly associated with prestige. Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin, & Ali-Choudhury (2007) found that the prestige of the event would increase the willingness to pay when attending charity-affiliated events.

Despite the notable contributions above, knowledge about cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes to the consumption of prestige is limited, both in the sports events and wider consumption literatures. No specific study has sought to examine the range of outcomes associated with the attribute of consuming prestige yet the importance of understanding relevant consumer-oriented outcomes associated with important product attributes such as prestige recommends such studies be carried out. The typical study exploring outcomes of prestige is quantitative in nature with measurements underpinned by literature which is scattered and often not directly related to prestige, thus yielding limited results. In addition, while the sports literature has examined a variety of sporting consumption outcomes, in-depth studies devoted to exploring the range of consumer outcomes associated with specific attributes do not abound. We fill this gap by exploring the consumer-oriented outcomes associated with the consumption of prestigious sports events.

3. Method

Given the limited research on the mechanisms by which prestige influences sporting event consumption, exploratory research was regarded as best suited to providing an in-depth understanding of the outcomes of consuming prestigious sports events. Exploratory research is further warranted in light of the hidden motivation characteristic of prestige consumption (Correia & Moital, 2009; Riley, 1995), whereby consumers are often not aware that their behaviour is driven by prestige reasons. Yet examining the motives that are not readily visible to consumers is a precondition to effectively managing consumer motivation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and qualitative research has been shown to be effective when researching prestige (Riley, 1995).

Gutman's (1982) means-end theory was employed as a basis for data collection. Means-end theory is well suited to exposing hidden motivations as it seeks to explain how products or services facilitate the achievement of the desired end states (Veludo-de-Oliveira, Ikeda, & Campomar, 2006). The means-end perspective assumes that the consumer draws parallels between product/service attributes and the desired outcomes they can achieve through consumption, whereby attributes are said to lead to consequences, which in turn result in the satisfaction of desired consumer values (Gutman, 1982). By their nature, attributes describe the object being studied (i.e. in this case the prestigious sports event), while consequences and values describe outcomes for the consumer and therefore the means-end theory was considered to provide an appropriate approach to answer the research question. Unlike previous researchers who used means-end chains to create hierarchical maps linking attributes, consequences, and values (Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006), the knowledge obtained about the latter two served as a basis to identify cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestige.

3.1. Sample

Means-end chains were obtained from a purposive sample of 19 individuals across a range of ages and both genders. Participants needed to have attended the sports events that they chose to discuss as this improved recall, providing more vivid memories of actual experiences. It was important that the participants had a good recollection of the event they attended; hence the cut-off point of three years was established. Participants were recruited through personal and social networks. Table 1 provides essential information about the characteristics of the sample. The predominantly young sample held a variety of occupations. A wide range of sports events was covered, with the 39 examples of events discussed encompassing 25 unique events and 11 different sports.

Table 1: Description of participants and prestigious events identified

Name	Age	Occupation (Industry)	Sports event	Sport
<i>Study 1 – Prestigious sports events</i>				
Paula	54	Corporate Banking	Twickenham match Royal Ascot Olympic Games	Rugby Horse racing Rowing
Anna	23	Buyer in Procurement	England vs. Australia Fast Championships Premiership Final	Netball Netball Football
Rita	22	Student	Epsom Derby Olympic Games Goodwood	Horse racing Volleyball Horse racing
Jodie	22	Event Management	F1 Grand Prix (Abu Dhabi) Royal Ascot F1 Grand Prix (Spain)	Motor racing Horse racing Motor racing
Greg	68	Property Development	Olympic Games Olympic Games Royal Ascot	Football Rowing Horse racing
Cynthia	22	Event Management	Olympic Games Six Nations Cheltenham Cup	Hockey Rugby Horse racing
Mike	59	Engineering	Royal Ascot Heineken Cup Goodwood Festival of Speed	Horse racing Rugby Motor racing
Denise	24	Sales	Royal Ascot Premiership match Army vs. Navy match	Horse racing Football Rugby
Peter	28	Electrician	League Final FA Cup Final WPGA match	Rugby Football Golf
Oliver	23	Supplier Supervisor	Royal Ascot Cartier Polo International match	Horse racing Polo Rugby
<i>Study 2 – VIP sports event experiences</i>				
Amy	22	Student	Box at football match	Football
Claire	23	Student	Paddock VIP Club	Motor racing
David	22	Public Health Manager	Box at football match	Football
Joe	21	Signal Technician	Box at football match	Football
John	48	Community Officer	Box at Cheltenham Festival	Horse racing
Kelly	24	Administrator	Box at Goodwood	Horse racing
Lilly	22	Student	Box at Sandown	Horse racing
Sam	22	Student	Box at Goodwood	Horse racing
Steve	54	Public House Manager	Box at Newbury	Horse racing

3.2. Interviews

Two sets of interviews were carried out in England, and in both cases participants were recruited using the researchers' personal and work connections complemented by participant recommendations (snowball sampling). Initially, in 2013 ten individuals who acknowledged having attended events for prestige reasons were asked to choose three prestigious sporting events they had attended and to select prestige attributes for each event to begin the laddering process. The focus on specific sports events examples was beneficial since using realistic occasions enhances the likelihood of obtaining detailed and complete ladders (Gutman, 1982; Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006). The use of multiple events offered the potential to uncover a wide range of consequences. This initial stage revealed that the prestige of sports events experiences is often enhanced when event participation takes place in the form of VIP (very important person) consumption. This is not surprising as VIP experiences hold a number of attributes that previous research suggested denote prestige (Jones & Moital, 2017). Consequently, we carried out a further nine interviews in 2016 with individuals who had attended sports events as a VIP. The VIP experience is usually materialised through getting up close and personal with sports participants and celebrities, access to restricted areas (VIP booths, marquees, stands) and enjoying VIP hospitality. This second round of interviews elicited limited additional knowledge, with only one new theme identified (stress). Therefore, saturation was achieved.

Repetitive and interactive questions were employed to encourage the respondents to move along the levels of abstraction (Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006). Participants were first asked about prestigious events/events with VIP experience they had attended and then for each event the first question was, "What attributes of the event would you consider to be prestigious?" Examples of prestigious attributes included expense and sports associated with wealth (Conspicuous value), exclusivity and tradition (Unique value), celebrity attendance and upper-class participants (Social value), atmosphere (Emotional value), and luxurious dress code and high quality of teams (Quality value). Subsequently, probing questions were asked, such as "Why is [attribute of prestige] important to you?" When the first list of attributes was exhausted, additional attributes and their outcomes were explored so that additional ladders could be uncovered. A similar approach was taken to answers that reflected emotions (e.g., "Why is it important that you feel [emotion] at a prestigious event?") and behaviours (e.g., "Why is it important that you [behaviour] at a prestigious event?"). These probing questions were used to uncover complete ladders and probing took place until no new answers were extracted. When participants struggled to move to higher levels of abstraction, which occurred several times, they were asked the same question in slightly different ways. This is a particularly useful strategy when researching prestige motivation due to its hidden and concealed nature (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Clearly explaining the focus of the research (prestige), asking the initial questions about the prestige attributes of the event and asking probing questions with reference to the prestige of the event whenever possible ensured that any consequences could reasonably be assumed to relate to outcomes of prestige. The interviews, which lasted 25 minutes on average, were recorded and transcribed.

3.3. Data Analysis

A part-to-whole analytical process (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989) was adopted, whereby interview transcripts were examined at the both the idiographic (i.e. individual interviews) level and universally (i.e. across the entire set of interviews). Initially, areas were highlighted within each interview transcript that referred to the consequences (personal reactions or outcomes) of prestige motivation in sports events as defined by Correia and Moital (2009). Next, the focus shifted to classifying them as cognitive, affective or

behavioural, with the definition of each consequence used to make a decision about which component it best represented (see section 2.2 for definitions). These three components of attitude represent customer-oriented outcome variables (Oliver, 1993) and thus can be employed to underpin the analysis of the consequences of consuming prestige (Correia and Moital 2009).

Once all personal reactions had been allocated to one of the three components, the focus shifted to identifying patterns and themes among the entire set of participants. An inductive approach was adopted to identify themes, with concrete answers used as a basis to develop major categories and sub-categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This bottom-up approach to the development of the coding scheme was aided by existing research on sport, event and sports event consumption, as well as wider psychology and consumer behaviour literature. The process was relatively straightforward, although there was an element of subjectivity. While it was relatively easy to draw conclusions about which elements related to the behavioural component (behaviours or intention to perform behaviours), the classification into cognitive and affective was more challenging. One important criterion to separate cognitive and affective answers was the use of emotion descriptors and the word “feel.”

A number of steps were undertaken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. First, lengthy discussions took place among the authors of the study with a view to clarifying uncertainties and conflicts of interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, peer review was carried out in a number of ways. After preliminary analysis, the results were shared at two international academic conferences. Once the team was satisfied with the analysis, a colleague was asked to analyse a sample of the transcripts (3 from each of the two stages) and, after independently doing this, to comment on the final coding scheme and interpretations made by the research team. This exercise largely validated the initial coding and interpretations, and where differences existed agreement was reached. We also asked two colleagues to review the full draft of the paper. These activities aimed to ensure the comprehensiveness and sound interpretation of the data (Elo et al., 2014). A third step involved providing rich and thick descriptions by using participants’ verbatim quotes to allow the reader to judge the trustworthiness of the interpretation (Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017). In the next section, results are presented and discussed, with supporting evidence in the form of participant quotes provided in separate tables. When reporting results, names were changed to maintain participant anonymity.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Cognitive consequences

Borrowing from Riley (1995), we classified cognitive consequences according to whether they referred to thoughts about themselves (inner-directed) or thoughts about how others see them (outer-directed) as a consequence of consuming prestigious sports event experiences (Table 2). Outer-directed outcomes included perceptions of higher class and wealth, enhanced kudos and making others jealous. Two inner-directed cognitive outcomes were found: memorability of the experience and enhanced self-esteem.

Table 2 – Cognitive consequences: supporting statements

Reaction	Theme	Selected quotes
Outer-directed	Higher class	<i>When you're going into the VIP section you feel again you're almost a lot more higher regarded than some of the other people there (Sam)</i> <i>It was nice to be perceived as a higher social class for one day, come out of your normal life. (Jodie)</i>
	Wealthy	<i>I would personally perceive people who go to things like Royal Ascot as they must have a lot of money to spend on the day (...). So I think other people would probably perceive you in the same way. (Greg)</i>
	Kudos	<i>Well yes, there was a large amount of kudos when people got their tickets. Everyone at work was also trying to get them (Paula)</i> <i>The people that attend kind of dress to impress (Cynthia)</i>
	Jealousy	<i>I'm guessing the people watching us [in the VIP box] were jealous of what we were getting (...) It's nice to have that little experience of people being jealous of you (Amy)</i> <i>Probably an aspect of jealousy there as you have your own private area (Kelly)</i>
Inner-directed	Memorability	<i>You all kind of remember it for a little while after and talk about it. (...) well you think about things like this for a long time before and afterwards. (Denise)</i> <i>I guess I liked having the memorabilia of those photos (...) I like to have those memories. (Claire)</i>
	Self-esteem	<i>I think that does make you feel good about yourself and a lot of people take notice of what you're posting so yeah I felt really good about it (Claire)</i>

4.1.1. Outer-directed cognitive consequences

Several participants developed the perception that attending prestigious sports events makes them be perceived as upper/higher class. This was discussed by Sam, who felt more highly regarded than some of the other people. Other expressions employed that reflected a higher class experience referred to perceptions of snobbery, being classy and being posh. Participants' answers seemed to reflect their dream of being associated with the upper class and that consuming the prestigious experience gave them a chance to "taste" it, even if it was short-lived, as Jodie's statement illustrates. The consumption of experiences is thus regarded as a class symbol, supporting previous findings that experiences can symbolise status (Riley, 1995).

Coming across as rich, even if only for a day, was another cognitive consequence. Associations between the event and wealth result from the perception that the typical attendee at the sports event has substantial disposable income to spend on its various expensive elements. By attending the event themselves, participants perceive themselves as joining the group of "wealthy" individuals who attended the event and becoming one of them. The link between prestige and wealth is well established through Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption. According to Leibenstein (1950), showing evidence of wealth is a pre-condition for recognition of higher status to take place. The association between wealth and prestige expresses the relative income hypothesis put forward by Duesenberry (1952), whereby the display of wealth associated with consuming prestigious sports event experiences is a means

to ‘keep up with the Joneses’ (Gali, 1994). One participant expressed that by attending prestigious sports events, she would be receiving kudos. Kudos is a word used in the United Kingdom to refer to glory, fame, renown or praise (Morton, Rivers, Charters, & Spinks, 2013) and thus refers to how others react to an individual. Besides the word kudos, participants also referred to the ability to impress others, which is related to kudos (Morton et al., 2013). The ability to impress others was usually mentioned in the context of women wearing certain clothes (“dress to impress”).

Participants often mentioned that they thought their friends felt jealous when they attended a prestigious sports event, materialised in perceptions that those others wished they could also be at the event. This suggests that brand jealousy is heightened when the product is prestigious (Kerr et al., 2012; Riley, 1995). While often considered an emotion, in this paper it is regarded as a cognitive consequence as the participant did not feel jealous; instead, jealousy was referred to as something that others would feel because the participant was able to be there. The mechanism behind jealousy appears to be similar to the ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ process discussed earlier; however, in this instance the participant is the Jones in that the perception of having done something others could not do led to him/her to think that he/she had moved ahead comparatively, creating jealousy in others along the way.

4.1.2. Inner-directed cognitive consequences

Several participants referred to the word “memorable” and to frequently spending time thinking about the event, both before and after the event. According to Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1999), the creation of value through memorable experiences requires that these unfold over time. In the context of prestigious sports events, participants acknowledged that memorability starts well before the actual event and continues after the event. For example, before the event, memorability was associated with discussions about the event and engaging in rituals, such as deciding about and buying clothes. This indicates that prestigious sports events are well suited to meeting this time criterion.

Prestigious sports event experiences were also found to increase self-esteem, as evidenced by Claire’s statement. Self-esteem refers to the perceived self-worth of the individual and results from the relationship between actual achievements and an individual’s goals or aspirations (Truong & McColl, 2011). When the prestige consumption is admired by others, it reduces the distance between a person’s desired end state and the actual state in relation to the need for prestige, thus leading to an increase in self-esteem. This is in line with previous assertions that consumers buy high-quality and luxury goods to increase self-esteem (Truong & McColl, 2011).

4.2. Affective consequences

Affective consequences refer to emotions felt in the context of consuming prestigious event experiences. Attending prestigious sports events was motivated by wanting to experience positive emotions and avoid negative emotions. Approach and avoidance emotions are considered to be two underlying motivational systems linked to emotions (Tamir, Chiu, & Gross, 2007). Table 3 provides supporting statements for each of the affective consequences.

Table 3 – Affective consequences: supporting statements

Reaction	Theme	Selected quotes
Approach emotions	Excitement and enjoyment	<i>So it is like you enjoy the day and a bit of time either side. (Denise)</i> <i>You try and enjoy it more (Greg)</i> <i>You know it will be [more enjoyable] (...) it's the anticipation of the day and the expectations you have of it to be good. (Denise)</i>
	Feeling special/important	<i>[the VIP experience] made me feel very special and privileged so to be able to do that again (...) then it would make me feel more important again. (David)</i> <i>It made you feel a lot more important and special (Kelly)</i>
	Feeling proud	<i>You wouldn't get the feeling of being proud to be in those [regular] seats, people pay more for that feeling of being proud (Denise)</i>
Avoidance emotions	Fear of missing out	<i>In this instance I went because my friends are Reading supporters and were really excited to go. So I didn't want to miss out, and wanted to join in with the excitement before the event. (...) I wanted to be involved. (Anna)</i>
	Regret	<i>We just really wanted to attend any Olympic event I think (...) and I would have regretted it hadn't I at least tried to go. (...) I think I would have missed out. (Paula)</i>
	Embarrassment / feeling silly	<i>[in contrast to football] at the rugby the people all go and have a good time and create a good atmosphere (...) I'd be embarrassed to attend if the next day there were stories about fights and all that in the paper. (Mike)</i> <i>If other people have [attended the event], you want to be able to say you have as well. (...) so you don't feel silly when they talk about it. (Oliver)</i>
	Stress	<i>We turned up literally just as the race was starting. There was no worry about finding a space (Lilly)</i> <i>Nobody wants to go to an event especially when there is lots of queuing as it stresses you out and sort of ruins the experience especially if it's too busy for you to enjoy it. (...) it does make the experience a lot calmer but also just as exciting. (Kelly)</i>

4.2.1. Approach emotions

Approach emotions refer to emotions that consumers seek to go through by participating in prestigious event experiences. Peter summed up what all the other participants expressed in various forms: there's more emotion involved when the sports event is prestigious. Three affective outcomes associated with the consumption of prestige were identified: excitement and enjoyment/fun, feeling special/important and pride.

Excitement and enjoyment/fun appear to be among the important consequences of consuming prestige, as both were mentioned (often more than once) in relation to the majority of the events discussed. Excitement and enjoyment are positive emotional states which encompass high levels of pleasure and arousal (Russell, 1980) and are often felt as part of sport consumption experiences (Doyle et al., 2016). In addition, as Denise's explanation

shows, consuming prestige can lead to these feelings throughout the whole event's life cycle. One surprising finding was that during the event, not only did the participants enjoy themselves more, but attendees were more motivated to have fun/enjoy themselves, as Greg's statement illustrates.

References to a strong affective mindset related to joy and excitement in the form of anticipation were frequent. Several participants, such as Denise, explicitly commented on the higher level of anticipation when prestige is present, while others mentioned anticipation through looking forward to it (for longer). Pre-purchase or anticipatory affect has been the interest of researchers, with previous research suggesting that anticipation evokes more emotion than retrospection (van Boven & Ashworth, 2007). Anticipation in respect to prestigious sports events is linked to expectations about joy and excitement as Denise and Greg's quotes suggest. This supports previous research linking anticipation to these two positive emotions (e.g. van Boven & Ashworth, 2007).

The majority of participants cited feeling special or important as a consequence of consuming prestigious sports events, but this was particularly a reoccurring reference in the VIP sample. Such findings highlight that the elevated position that prestigious experiences offer allowed participants to feel special and important. Segregation within the event and the associated higher service quality and socialisation opportunities of some experiences (enclosures/VIP areas) were particularly regarded as a source of feeling special/important. These findings confirm that consumers buy branded products when they want to feel special/important and that special/preferential treatment leads to a sense of elevated status (Jiang, Hoegg, & Dahl, 2013).

Pride was also felt by participants as a consequence of participating in prestigious sports event experiences. Pride is an ego-focused, competitive emotion oriented towards achieving glory and thus pride is related to higher rank (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010). Participants referred to pride either by explaining they "felt proud" or "smug" with higher ranking emerging either when the participant was able to attend the event when others could not, or when she or he was able to experience the event differently (i.e., better) than other attendees (e.g. main stand vs. corporate hospitality box). These results provide evidence that sports events are objects of pride (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010), leading to pride through social comparison against others who are attending, or would like to attend, the event.

4.2.2. Avoidance emotions

Avoidance emotions refer to negative emotions that consumers seek to avoid by attending prestigious sports events. Four negative emotions were identified: fear of missing out, regret, embarrassment and stress.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a "pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent" (Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, & Gladwell, 2013, p. 1841) and was expressed by several participants. In the context of sports events, FoMO is related to missing out on positive emotions that prestigious events can bring about (notably excitement and enjoyment). FoMO can even be the key driver of attendance, as in Anna's case, as she did not support either team at the match but decided to attend as she feared she would be missing out. This suggests that FoMO can be the main motivation to attend prestigious sports events when the individual is not particularly involved with the sport.

The fear of missing out appears to be associated with feelings of regret. Anticipating regret has been found to be a powerful motivation behind consumption decisions (Rosenzweig & Gilovich, 2012) and in the context of prestigious sports events it seems that regret is felt not as a consequence of purchasing, but as a consequence of not attending, as

Paula's statement demonstrates. Sports events are experiential in nature and therefore this finding provides further evidence that experiential purchase decisions are more likely to lead to regrets of inaction (missed opportunities) than regrets of action (Rosenzweig & Gilovich, 2012). Paula's actual attendance was beyond her control (tickets were allocated by ballot) and she sought to reduce regret by attempting to secure tickets. This suggests that regret is linked to the locus-of-causality dimension of attribution (Oliver, 1993), which posits that different attributional sources will lead to different emotional outcomes. Not attending as a result of failing to attempt to secure tickets would be perceived by Paula as her fault, leading to high levels of regret. Conversely, failing to secure tickets that she bid for was beyond her control in which case she could not be blamed, resulting in greatly diminished levels of regret.

Embarrassment and feeling silly were also found to be negative emotions driving participants to attend the sports event. Miller and Leary's (1992) contention that much of what humans do and do not do is based on the need to avoid embarrassment appears to apply to prestigious events. In other words, the prestige level of a sports event dictates both what to do (attend prestigious events, as per Oliver's statement) and what not to do (refrain from attending non-prestigious ones, as per Mike's statement). Embarrassment appears to represent the "inavoidance" need as described by Murray (1938, p. 192), which refers to behaviour driven by the need to avoid humiliation, embarrassment or belittlement.

Whilst strictly speaking stress is not considered an emotion, it can cause negative affective conditions (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). VIP experiences were particularly associated with lower levels of stress. Stress can arise through two main channels: through major life events or minor everyday hassles (Zlomke & Jeter, 2014). Stress has been found to increase the frequency of worrying (Zlomke & Jeter, 2014) and Lilly discussed how the VIP event experience minimised these minor hassles, as "there was no worry about finding a space." Such findings suggest that through minimising stress, participants were able to avoid the negative emotions associated with it, such as worry and irritation. This enabled them to relax, which was required for a better experience through high levels of excitement and fun.

In summary, owing to their social relevance, failing to participate in prestigious sports event experiences could lead to negative emotions, and seeking to avoid them becomes an important motive for wanting to participate. Embarrassment and feeling silly, as well as FoMO, were often described in the context of group discussions and therefore these negative emotions appear to be closely associated with the social visibility aspect of event consumption, whereby past or future event experiences are a topic that is often brought up during social conversations.

4.3. Behavioural outcomes

Four types of behavioural outcomes were identified in the data: patronage, experiential, communication and financial. Supporting statements are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 – Behavioural consequences: supporting statements

Reaction	Theme	Selected quotes
Patronage	Intention to attend	<i>I think people said how quickly tickets were going to go as well, I felt kind of pressured into just buying them! (Rita)</i> <i>I think it [the VIP experience] makes you want to return especially (Claire)</i>
	Travel farther	<i>You pay so much to go and I travelled from Cornwall for it! (Cynthia)</i>
	Attend even if not a sports fan	<i>I'm not a big horse racing fan but it's fun to go and experience the atmosphere and go with friends. (Oliver)</i>
Experiential	Comply with rules and etiquette	<i>I think it felt as if having made that financial decision and there is a responsibility there, a social one (...) the event was out of the ordinary, not something you do every day and we made a choice to move it up [the social behaviour] to a slightly higher level and I think we played our part in that and enjoyed it more. (John)</i>
	Research more	<i>I made sure I knew a little bit about the race track and the people I was going to meet so I didn't come across as an idiot (Claire).</i>
	Role-play	<i>You feel posh for the day (...) you feel like you want to act like you're rich. Like I drink champagne at Ascot and I never normally drink it (Denise)</i>
Communication	Word of mouth	<i>yeah I tweeted about it and uploaded pictures to Twitter and Facebook (...) I guess I wanted to show off and brag about the better facilities I had access to and the better view of the pitch. (David)</i>
	Display signs (badges)	<i>(...) it might sound a bit pretentious but I enjoyed the fact that people can see your badge which is on your outfit which highlights the area you're staying in. (Rita)</i>
Financial	Expectation of higher prices	<i>You accept when you are there that you will pay 30 percent more for a drink than you would elsewhere. (Mike)</i>
	Spend more	<i>You wouldn't want to look like the tight one if you didn't spend loads once you got there (...) you want to look like you do it all the time, it's kind of arrogant. But it's true! (Oliver)</i>
	Saving up	<i>You have to plan ahead (...) like you have to save money a bit before because you plan on it being an expensive day! (Denise)</i>
	Early purchase	<i>Because I think people said how quickly tickets were going to go as well, I felt kind of pressured into just buying them (Rita)</i>

4.3.1. Patronage

Patronage consequences refer to greater levels of intention/willingness to participate in a prestigious sports event. Participants articulated this through expressions such as wanting to get involved, be part of it and join in when the event was prestigious. Other participants were

curious about whether the hype that accompanied prestigious sports events was justified or they felt pressured to buy tickets. The prestige of the event can also motivate the attendee to travel further, as was the case of Cynthia when she felt that the prestige of the Olympics made it worth travelling from Cornwall. While for some participants attendance was directly related to the sport they enjoyed, several participants (including Oliver) said that they had attended the event even though they were not fans of the sport. According to them, the prestige elements, rather than the sport side, attracted them to the event. Increased levels of patronage is arguably one of key objectives of marketers and this research shows that endowing a sports event with prestige value is a means to energise event attendance.

4.3.2. Experiential

Experiential consequences pertain to behaviours that enhance the experience of the participant and of other attendees. One of the main experiential consequences was putting in more effort in order to comply with rules and etiquette expectations, notably dressing up and complying with social interaction expectations. Participants felt motivated to comply due to both selfish (e.g. to fit in and look good on the day) and altruistic (e.g. ensure a good atmosphere at the event) reasons. John's statement illustrates this point when he mentions his responsibility to adopt certain patterns of social behaviour for the benefit of others, while also enjoying it more himself. In order to comply with rules and etiquette, and understand what is expected of them, the participants also felt the need to research the event more as demonstrated by Claire's statement. Finally, they were more willing to role-play by adopting behaviours that are not frequently performed during their daily lives, such as acting rich and posh.

Events are consumed in the presence of others and therefore event participants co-create value with each other (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2014). While participant behaviour is largely uncontrollable, the marketer can and should influence and shape customer behaviour by acting as a facilitator of customers' ongoing co-creation processes (Rihova et al., 2014). In the context of events, this is undertaken through making sure participants have the right personal resources, shared images and social (rules and norms) structures (Rihova et al., 2014). Dressing in the right clothes (an important personal resource) and knowing how to behave (how to act rich or posh) appear to be key pillars in the co-creation of the imagined lifestyle of the upper classes. Prestige sports events appear to be particularly susceptible to the acceptance of rules of behaviour, especially if they are integrated as part of the narrative of the event. Seeing others behaving at the event as the upper classes do contributes to developing perceptions that the participant is mingling with those upper classes, even if they realise that other participants "are not of a different world from me" (Sam). The participant, in turn, will feel he/she is of a higher class (a cognitive reaction) and consequently be more satisfied with the experience.

4.3.3. Communication

Communication consequences involved engaging in word-of-mouth behaviour before, during and after the event, with participants using word of mouth to inform relevant members of their social system of their attendance. As Steve explained, word of mouth behaviour was often supported by pictures which were shown to friends, online or offline. A non-verbal method for communicating a prestigious behaviour to others was through displaying signs of prestige consumption. In particular, displaying badges that give access to the VIP areas was instrumental in establishing a social hierarchy of experience that is central to the conception of prestige, as Rita's answer demonstrates.

The results support the contention that positive experiences, including prestigious ones (Töllner & Woisetschläger, 2016), often generate enthusiastic promotion through word of mouth. Communication behaviour appears to be primarily driven by the need to communicate that a (socially) value-laden behaviour is being performed, which is a pre-condition for prestige to be granted (Correia & Moital, 2009). Prestige is conferred by others to the member of the social group and therefore these others have to know that the participant is experiencing higher prestige when compared to them in order to grant him/her prestige. Hence, all participants in the study confirmed they engaged in word of mouth. In addition, communication outcomes appear to be, at least partially, a consequence of what Kerr et al. (2012) termed bragging rights (as David's statement shows), whereby the consumption of prestigious sports event experiences provides participants with "opportunity – or a right, to communicate (brag) about that behaviour" (p. 1). This communication behaviour associated with prestigious sports events appears to be a powerful trigger to attend, with several participants acknowledging that they had decided to attend the event due to the event being talked about. This suggests a virtuous circle between word of mouth and attendance. As an event starts to be talked about due its prestige, it motivates more people to attend. These attendees, in turn, also engage in word of mouth behaviour, leading others to wanting to attend. Prestige becomes, thus, a very powerful promotional tool that benefits marketers, potentially leading to lower marketing communication effort and costs.

4.3.4. Financial

Expectation of paying high prices, either for the ticket or at the event, was one of the financial consequences of consuming prestige identified in the study. Some participants linked the (high) price paid for the ticket to spending more on the day, with Mike claiming he expected to pay 30% more for drinks compared to other occasions. Querying the prices, according to Mike, "defeats the whole point in the first place." Oliver added that spending substantial amounts of money while at the event would allow them to fit in with the spending culture of the event. The expectation and acceptance of higher prices appears to be related to wanting to avoid what could be called experiential dissonance. Due to the prestige element, sports event attendees want to make sure that all aspects of the experience are aligned to the notion of buying into an act of being rich/posh for a day, including all aspects of spending. The solution for accommodating higher than normal prices could involve saving up for the event, as Denise's statement demonstrates.

Researchers have shown that participants at prestigious events are willing to pay higher ticket prices (Bennett et al., 2007), but the link between prestige and expense at the event has been less explicit. Both behaviours are related to the participant's ability to display wealth. According to Leibenstein (1950), material displays of wealth are essential in the pursuit of status, and spending, whether on the ticket or on the day, appears to be employed as evidence of wealth, thus aligning with wanting to come across as wealthy (a cognitive reaction). This propensity to pay higher prices to convey wealth is beneficial to the sports event organiser as it contributes to increasing revenues in two key event revenue streams (Kelley et al., 2014): ticket sales and on-site sales (food, drink, retail). Revenues from the latter are particularly important as it is not always possible for the organiser to reflect all the costs in the ticket price as this would affect demand for the event.

When prestigious sports events are perceived to be in high demand and tickets are difficult to get, attendees tend to buy tickets further in advance, committing financial resources earlier than they would otherwise. Cash flow is an important consideration when assessing an event's viability (Getz & Page, 2016) because ticket sales often lag the timing of many upfront expenses. By motivating consumers to purchase a ticket (and partake with their

money) earlier than they normally would, cash flow will improve, thus contributing to the financial success of the event.

5. Conclusions

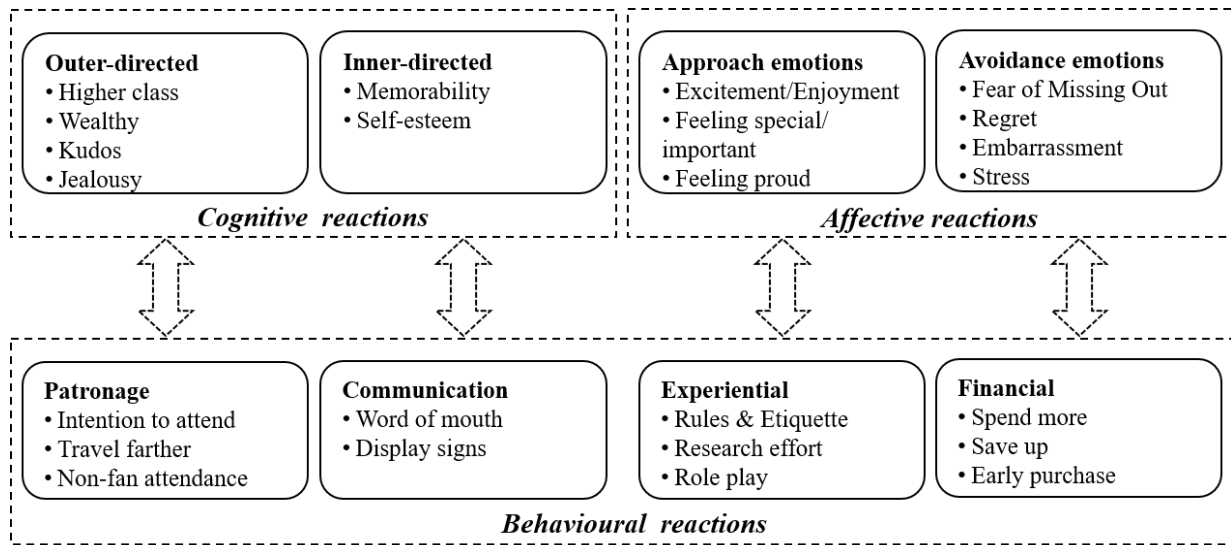
Recent theoretical developments have led to a call for more research on consumer responses to specific design features of the sport experience (Funk, 2017). Our research responds to such a call by examining the outcomes of prestige, a highly relevant feature of many sporting event experiences. While prestige attributes are often considered as an effective source of value and are consequently used by many sports organisations, there is limited knowledge on how consumers react to the consumption of prestigious sports events. Using laddering as a data collection strategy, this study sought to explore the cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestigious sports events. Outcomes encompassed thoughts, emotions and actual or intended behaviours identified by participants as a consequence of the prestige of the event. Our focus on these three attitudinal elements also responds to Funk's (2017) call for research to better understand thoughts and feelings associated with the sport experience using small groups of sport (event) consumers.

The results of the study show that cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes are multi-dimensional, encompassing a variety of benefits and behaviours that attendees associated with consuming prestige. Figure 1 summarises the outcomes of consuming prestige, proposing that behavioural outcomes interact with cognitive and affective ones to achieve prestige value. At first glance, this variety of outcomes suggests that attending prestigious sports events satisfies multiple needs rather than a single one in the form of higher regard or honour, as per the definition of prestige motivation (Correia & Moital, 2009). However, these consequences are levers that affect an individual's regard or honour. Cognitive and behavioural consequences as well as approach emotions act as positive levers and, if experienced, can lead to enhancing the person's regard or honour. In contrast, if avoidance emotions are felt, they detract from regard or honour, acting as negative levers and therefore they become powerful motivators to attend prestigious sports events. References to the ability of prestige consumption to satisfy multiple needs exist (Kumar & Paul, 2018), and this paper enhances our understanding of the mechanisms by which consumers achieve higher regard or honour in a sporting event context. The range of consequences is much broader than what both the sports event consumption and prestige literatures have considered, and therefore this paper makes a substantive contribution to furthering our understanding of prestige consumption in general, and sports event consumption in particular.

Cognitive outcomes such as self-esteem have been considered by the sports consumption (Trail et al., 2003) and prestige (Truong & McColl, 2011) literatures. The prestige literature has also examined other cognitive consequences identified in this study such as making others jealous (Kerr et al., 2012; Riley, 1995), higher status (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004), and displaying wealth (Leibenstein, 1950). Unlike cognitive outcomes, there were novel affective outcomes not previously associated with prestige and sports consumption. Existing studies on affective outcomes in sport tended to focus either on positive emotional outcomes (Trail et al., 2003; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012) such as pride (Burnett, 2003), or on how negative emotions negatively affect other outcomes (Trail et al., 2003), such as fan behaviour. In contrast, we found negative emotional outcomes to positively affect event attendance by acting as motivators when the individual feels compelled to act to escape present or anticipated negative emotional states (FoMO, regret, embarrassment and stress). Prestige also triggered regulation strategies for positive emotions by energising participants to deploy more motivational resources in order to further satisfy their emotional

desires, notably excitement and enjoyment/fun. This link between prestige and both positive and negative emotion regulation strategies (Tamir et al., 2007) has not been reported before.

Figure 1 - Summary of cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of consuming prestigious sports events



We categorised the various behavioural outcomes using a novel classification: patronage, experiential, communication, and financial. Similar to previous studies, we identified spending as an outcome of sports event consumption. Previous researchers centred on examining the determinants of spending, such as affective responses within the stadium environment (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012), socio-demographics (Park, 2016), and trip characteristics (Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Park, 2016). However, these studies have consistently found these determinants to account for a small percentage of the variance in spectators'/attendees' spending. Our results suggest that prestige, and more specifically the extent to which prestige is derived from spending, could contribute to a stronger explanatory basis for sports event spending. This research also found that prestige not only generates a stronger drive to attend the event, but expands the market geographically and makes the event appealing to non-sports fans. The latter two outcomes do not appear to have been explicitly examined in the sports and prestige literatures. Some references to the non-sport value of sporting events can be found in the literature (Greenwell et al., 2002; Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017). However, the relationship between prestige and sport has mostly focused on the sport side such as fandom (Zillman et al., 1989) and surrogate winning (Funk et al., 2001). This research appears to question the findings of previous research (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017) which found sport performance to contribute to satisfaction more than non-sporting elements.

The sports consumption literature has considered socialisation/co-creation outcomes such as ritualised behaviour (McDonald & Karg, 2014), value creation (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2017) and social atmospherics (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012). Two experiential outcomes identified in this research – complying with rules and etiquette and willingness to role-play – shed further light on customer experiential outcomes which enhance the experience of both the participant and others. This study also found that prestige leads sports events participants to research the event more, which contradicts Hwang and Hyun's (2012) findings that it leads to information costs saving. These greater levels of research can be explained by the fact that prestigious sports events often include many more rituals and rules and etiquette expectations which the participant is expected to adhere to when compared to luxury restaurants. Moreover, in this study the focus of information search was not on whether to buy the

product, but on how to behave once at the event. Aware of behavioural expectations but ignorant of the detail about what these expectations encompass, the participant researches the event. Communication outcomes were dominated by word-of-mouth behaviours, an outcome that is commonly researched in both the sports consumption (Burnett, 2003; Swanson et al., 2003), and prestige literatures (Correia & Kozak, 2012; Funk et al., 2007; Hwang & Hyun, 2012; Kerr et al., 2012).

5.1. Limitations and further research

We focused mostly on sports events with a long tradition located in a single country. Future research could replicate the study in other geographical contexts, on newer events, and on non-sport experiences such as cultural events, cruises, and hotels. Future researchers could also examine the factors influencing the presence and intensity of outcomes across the various types of sports events. We did not make assumptions about the relative importance/frequency of identified outcomes. Future work could focus on developing an outcomes scale to enable researchers to better capture sport consumption outcomes. Some of the outcome variables identified in this study but not usually examined could be considered by the typical sport consumption study (e.g. Bee & Havitz, 2010; Cunningham & Kwon, 2003), such as FoMO, commitment to saving and distance willing to travel. More research on the value of the non-sport experience is warranted, extending our work and that of Greenwell et al. (2002) and Koenig-Lewis et al. (2017).

Although a wide variety of events and sports were covered, there could be some unintended bias in the selection of participants due to defining only one criterion for participation – having attended a prestige event. Future researchers could adopt a more structured approach by selecting participants based on their past attendance of different types of prestige events. The amount of prestige a sports event is perceived to have should be seen as a continuum, and we wanted to focus on events that could confidently be positioned towards the high prestige end of the continuum. We tried not to impose our own views on what is and what is not a prestigious event, and hence we left the decision about what prestige events to cover to the respondent. We assumed that participants would naturally be picking events that they deemed to have a relatively high level of prestige. In study two, since the focus was on VIP event experiences, there was an underlying assumption that such a VIP experience is inherently prestigious and therefore located towards the high prestige end of the continuum. Future research could ask participants to indicate how prestigious they considered their chosen events to be with a view to establishing the boundaries for inclusion more objectively.

Memorability is often associated with the actual consumption moment (Stuart & Tax, 2004) yet this study found memorability to encompass experiences taking place before and after the event. Existing experience design models are thus incomplete and should therefore be updated to consider the design of the pre- and post-event sides of the experience. By capturing a wide range of consumer responses that take place before, during and after the prestigious sporting event experience, we address recent calls for research to account for consumer-oriented outcomes along the entire sport experience cycle (Funk, 2017). The research was able to capture pre- and post-event outcomes using interviews which relied on self-disclosure and memory. Future research could also employ participant observation in order to examine outcomes, notably behaviour, at the event in more detail, complemented by diaries/log books to capture thoughts, emotions and behaviour pre- and -post event.

5.2. Implications for practice

There are also several important implications for practice. First, the results of this study provide valuable information to sports event marketers as they can focus their efforts on satisfying the variety of outcomes. For example, practitioners should focus on designing the experiences in a way that facilitates prestige-inducing behaviours, such as offering props branded with the name of the sports event that allow consumers to take pictures, thus facilitating their work of communicating to relevant others that they are (or were) at the prestigious event. Second, sports event marketers need to consider both the pre-event and post-event stages as intrinsic elements of their marketing strategy. For example, they can motivate consumers to engage in certain pre-event rituals that are prestige value-laden and are worthy of communication to the social group. During the post-event stage, marketers could help consumers to communicate and share their experience with others, for example by having photographers taking pictures and posting them on social media. Finally, from a marketing communication perspective, practitioners could focus the message on some of the themes that have been identified in this research, thus helping to communicate the intangible benefits of attending the event better (Mittal, 1999), such as not feeling left out in conversations.

6. References

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