

Determinants of Inter-Partner Learning in an Alliance Between a National Sporting
Organisation and a Professional Sport Franchise

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed _____ Dated _____

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved Nana, Norma Hazel Daniels, who sadly passed away, August 1st 2004.

ABSTRACT

This research explores the determinants of inter-partner learning in alliances. The potential for organisations to learn from their alliance partner is well recognised in the literature. The Knowledge Based View of the Firm (KBV) posits that an organisation's knowledge base, especially its tacit knowledge base, is a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Three key determinants of inter-partner learning are: intent to learn, transparency (i.e. willingness to share knowledge) and receptivity (i.e. capacity to learn). These three concepts are used to guide a single case study of an alliance between a National Sport Organisation (NSO) and a Professional Sport Franchise (PSF). Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants at both organisations. Each individual transcript was colour coded in relation to each of the four research questions. All relevant quotes were then copied into separate files for each organisation and categorised by research question. The results of the study suggest that 1) despite historical conflict, the relationship between alliance partners is becoming increasingly positive; 2) intent to learn was low in both organisations but higher in the NSO; 3) the NSO was more transparent than the PSF; and 4) receptivity was low for both organisations. Key conclusions of the research are that the NSO and PSF are failing to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by their relationship, but intent, transparency and receptivity remain useful concepts to explore inter-partner learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

The Knowledge Based View (KBV) of the firm is a relatively new phenomenon in the management literature, emerging in the 1990s (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). The central premise of the KBV is that a firm's knowledge base can function as a core competency and in turn provide the source of a sustainable competitive advantage (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002; Grant, 1997). When firms collaborate, either informally or through more formal arrangements such as alliances, the opportunity arises for each organisation to internalize new knowledge into its own strategic and operational endeavours (Hamel, 1991). The ability to acquire knowledge from partner organisations is well understood by industry, with an increasing number of organisations developing alliances in order to acquire greater levels of knowledge (Wijk, Jansen, & Lyles, 2008). The ability to learn is an often cited motivation for organisations to establish an alliance (Becerra, Lunnan, & Huemer, 2008; Teece & Pisano, 1994).

1.1.1 Relationships, Partnerships, Alliances

Not only are alliances becoming more common, they are also becoming more complex and non-traditional. Organisations are developing relationships with organisations that would not have been considered previously (Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989). For example, the Bridgestone and Toyo tire companies are long standing rivals, but have formed research and development alliances as well as the combined use of each other's production facilities (Kubo & Gibbs, 2008). Alliances have also evolved from local

collaborations to international collaborations. Many Japanese firms have developed alliances with equivalent Western firms, which has seen many of the Japanese firms prosper due to their ability to learn from their alliance partner (Tsang, 1999). The for-profit sector remains the 'spiritual home' of alliances, but cross-sector alliances between the for-profit and non-profit sectors are increasingly prevalent today (Wymer & Samu, 2003). In a reversal of tradition, for-profit organisations are seeking to improve their performance by learning from non-profit organisations (London & Rondinelli, 2003; Wymer & Samu, 2003). Alliances are clearly not what they used to be.

An alliance is defined as "any inter-firm cooperation that falls between the extremes of discrete, short term contracts and the complete merger of two or more organisations" (Contractor & Lorange, 2002, p. 4). Alliances can take on a number of forms including joint ventures, equity alliances, acquisitions, shares, licensing agreements, and value chain partnerships (Contractor & Lorange, 2002; Darby, 2006). Regardless of its form, all alliances require at least two partner organisations, but any number of partner organisations can exist within a single alliance. Fundamentally, alliances are created because each organisation lacks the ability to 'go it alone' in a particular area. The other organisation(s) in the relationship provide knowledge, skills or other resources that the organisation lacks. Though promising much, alliances are fraught with difficulties such as conflict, trust, opportunistic behaviour, control, autonomy, competition and goal contradiction (Darby, 2006; Hill & Hellriegel, 1994; Kogut, 1989; Park & Rosso, 1996). Some studies have estimated alliance failure-rate to be as high as 80% (Park & Rosso, 1996).

The field of sport management has become increasingly interested in the study of inter-organisational relationships (Alexander, Thibault, & Frisby, 2008; Babiak 2007, 2009; Babiak, & Thibault, 2008, 2009; Barnes, Cousens, & MacLean, 2007; Cousens, Babiak, & Bradish, 2006; Frisby, Thibault, & Kikulis, 2004; Parent, & Harvey, 2009; Thibault, &

Harvey, 1997). However, the study of alliances and the study of knowledge transfer between organisations remains unexplored territory in the sport management literature.

1.2 Research Context: National Sports Organisations and Professional Sports Franchise

This research will explore the determinants of inter-partner learning between national sport organisations (NSO) and professional sport franchises (PSF). “NSOs are not-for-profit organisations that are responsible for the development of their particular sport in their own country” (O'Reilly & Knight, 2007, p. 264). In simple terms, a NSO is the governing body for a sport in a country. NSOs concern themselves with a broad range of responsibilities, which encompass junior development through to the elite level. NSOs establish relationships with regional organisations that are responsible for organising the sport in their area. Their elite teams participate against national teams from other countries in events such as World Championships and the Olympic Games. Examples of NSOs in New Zealand include: New Zealand Football, Basketball New Zealand and the New Zealand Rugby League.

In contrast a PSF is an organisation that participates in a professional sports league (PSL). A PSF is exclusively concerned with the elite end of the sport participation continuum. A PSF may be either for-profit or not-for-profit in orientation. Globally recognised PSFs include the New York Yankees, Manchester United Football Club, and the Edmonton Oilers. Examples of New Zealand PSFs include the Wellington Phoenix Football Club, the New Zealand Breakers and the New Zealand Warriors. An overview of the New Zealand NSOs that have a relationship with a PSF are presented in table 1.

Table 1: New Zealand NSO and PSF Relationships

<i>Sport</i>	<i>NZ NSO</i>	<i>NSO elite team</i>	<i>NZ PSF</i>	<i>Inaugural PSF Season</i>
Rugby League	New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL)	Kiwis	New Zealand Warriors	1995
Basketball	Basketball New Zealand (BBNZ)	Tall Blacks	New Zealand Breakers	2003
Football	New Zealand Football (NZF)	All Whites	Wellington Phoenix	2007

It is important to recognise that the Phoenix, Breakers and Warriors are not national teams and do not belong to the respective NSOs. This is despite the ability of a player (e.g. Ruben Wiki) or coach (e.g. Ricki Herbert) to be an employee of both the national team and the PSF. To elaborate, Wiki was contracted full time to the New Zealand Warriors but was also a member, as required, of the New Zealand national rugby league team. Similarly, Ricki Herbert is both Head Coach of the Wellington Phoenix Football Club (FC) and the New Zealand national men's team. The relationships between NSOs and PSFs are a relatively new one and can be traced back to the expansion of Australian-based PSFs into New Zealand, which began in 1995.

1.2.1 Football

The Wellington Phoenix joined the Australian A-League in 2007. The history of the Phoenix can be traced back to the participation of the Auckland-based Football Kingz in the Australian National Soccer League (NSL) between 1999 and 2004. When the NSL evolved into the A-League, the ownership of the Football Kingz was restructured and the team became known as the New Zealand Knights. The Knights participated in the A-League between 2005 and 2007. Plagued by a lack of on-field success, the organisation struggled financially. New Zealand Football (NZF) held a 5% stake in the Knights but were forced to

take over management of the Knights for the remainder of 2006 season, until new owners could be found (Maddaford, 2006). The new owners fared little better than their predecessors, and the licence was revoked by the A-League and in effect transferred to new owner Terry Serepisos and his company Century City Football Limited (Century City Developments, 2007).

The vision of NZF is to be “the number one participation sport in New Zealand across all age groups, and qualify for and be competitive in all major FIFA tournaments” (New Zealand Soccer, 2005, p. 8). NZF is recognised by both the international governing body Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) as the governing body for football in New Zealand. As an organisation, NZF is experiencing difficult times. In 2008, SPARC provided NZF with a \$300,000 cash injection as well as an additional \$300,000 to assist NZF in meeting the interest costs on its \$1.5 million bank loan (Brown, 2008). As part of this rescue package, SPARC also appointed an independent commissioner to the NZF board (Brown, 2008).

1.2.2 Rugby League

The Auckland Warriors joined the Australian Rugby League competition in 1995 as one of four expansion teams alongside the North Queensland Cowboys, South Queensland Crushers and the Western Reds (Mirams, 2001). Originally owned by the Auckland Rugby League, a regional organisation, the Warriors have struggled to be financially viable and have undergone a number of ownership changes (Mirams, 2001). At one time, the NZRL owned the licence outright but would later transfer it to the private sector. Usually associated with businessman Eric Watson, the licence to participate in the NRL is owned by Warriors League Limited. There are two shareholders in Warriors League Limited:

Serious Holdings a company owned by the Eric Watson controlled by both Cullen Sports and, KA-NO.3 Trustee Limited (New Zealand Companies Office, 2008b).

The overarching purpose of the NZRL is best reflected in the first of many ‘objects’ detailed in their constitution: “Promote Rugby league: promote, foster and develop Rugby League throughout New Zealand, from ‘grass roots’ level to international level, and govern Rugby League throughout New Zealand” (New Zealand Rugby League, 2007, p. 8). The NZRL is recognized by both SPARC and the Rugby League International Federation (RLIF) as the governing body for Rugby League in New Zealand (Coffey & Wood, 2007). In June 2008, SPARC initiated an independent review of the NZRL to address a combination of financial and governance issues. One of the independent review committee members was the CEO of the Warriors. In terms of the NZRL-Warriors relationship, it has been described as “inextricably intertwined” (Jessup, 2005, p. C17). In the same article, the NZRL General Manager was reported to have said “If our relationship with the Warriors was compromised in any way we'd have serious concerns” (Jessup, 2005, p. C17).

1.2.3 Basketball

The New Zealand Breakers first participated in the Australian National Basketball League (NBL) in 2003. NZ Breakers Basketball Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the parent company ProTeam Holdings (New Zealand Companies Office, 2008a). Paul Blackwell and Hibiscus Independent Trustees Limited are the two shareholders in ProTeam Holdings.

Both the Federation of International Basketball Associations (FIBA) and SPARC as the national governing body for the sport of basketball in New Zealand recognise Basketball New Zealand Incorporated (BBNZ). The BBNZ constitution lists its mission as:

“to be New Zealand’s leading participation game” (Basketball New Zealand, 2006, p. 1).

Unlike the other examples, Basketball New Zealand has never had a financial interest in the Breakers and has not had the need for any government intervention in its affairs.

1.3 Research Problem

The three NSO-PSF relationships outlined clearly meet Contractor and Lorange’s (2002) criteria of an alliance, as described earlier. NSOs and PSFs are distinct and autonomous organisations but they are linked by a common interest in the same sport. New Zealand’s small population and limited resource base only increases the need for this relationship to be effective and functional. The PSF organisations that the Breakers, Warriors and the Wellington Phoenix compete against in their respective leagues do not have the luxury of an exclusive relationship with their national governing bodies. Similarly, the national governing bodies in Australia are not able to develop quality relationships with a single professional sport franchise, without the risk of being accused of favouritism. In both respects, the ability of the New Zealand NSOs and PSFs to acquire some source of competitive advantage over their rivals exists because their competitors do not easily replicate these relationships. However, the mere existence of these relationships is not itself sufficient. The key is the extent to which these organisations are able to draw value by learning from their partner. The ability to understand fully the intricacies of a NSO-PSF relationship in New Zealand as source of competitive advantage compared to those Australian based PSFs is beyond the scope of this research project. However, it is clear that the ability of each organisation to learn from the other is a fundamental antecedent to a relationship that adds value to both organisations, which in turn can lead to improved performance by both organisations in their respective markets.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the determinants of inter-partner learning within an alliance. Specifically, this study will utilise Hamel's (1991) determinants of learning – intent, transparency and receptivity – to explore the inter-partner learning in an alliance between a NSO and a PSF.

The first research question explores the nature of the relationship between the two organisations in the alliance. The remaining three research questions each explore intent, transparency and receptivity within the alliance. The specific research questions to be investigated are:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance?
2. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance intend to learn from their alliance partner?
3. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance share knowledge with their alliance partner?
4. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF have the capacity to learn from their alliance partner?

1.5 Overview of Methods

This research is a case study of a single NSO-PSF relationship. Efforts to conduct a comparative case study were thwarted by the inability to access a critical mass of participants from both organisations in other NSO-PSF relationships. Data for this study was collected using eleven semi-structured interviews. Five interviews were conducted with NSO employees and six interviews were conducted with PSF employees. Both participants and their organisations remain anonymous in this study. Participants were asked a range of questions related to their perception of how their organisation approaches their relationship with the other organisation with respect to inter-partner learning. These questions were developed to measure perceptions of their organisation's intent,

transparency and receptivity to learning from their alliance partner. The level of analysis therefore, is at the organisational level and not at the individual level.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This section outlines the basis for the remaining content of this thesis. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature on the concepts of knowledge, alliances and inter-partner learning. The literature review outlines the main framework of this research developed by Hamel (1991). Chapter 3 outlines the research method used in this thesis. It also describes the methods of interviewing, transcription and data analysis. Chapter 4 details the findings of the NSO and PSF. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, and overall conclusions of the research.

1.7 Key Concepts and Definitions

For purposes of clarity, this research will utilise inter-partner learning as originally proposed by Hamel (1991). This was considered appropriate given that the organisation is the unit of analysis in this research. Inter-partner learning refers to learning between alliance partners.

As already established, an alliance refers to “any inter-firm cooperation that falls between the extremes of discrete, short term contracts and the complete merger of two or more organisations” (Contractor & Lorange, 2002, p. 4).

Key concepts contained in the research questions are intent, transparency and receptivity - the three determinants of learning that have been established in the work of Hamel (1991). In this thesis, the determinants will be defined as Hamel’s (1991) original concepts - Intent: the desire to learn, Transparency: the opportunity to learn, Receptivity:

the capacity to learn. Learning is referred to as a process, and knowledge as “that which is known” (Grant, 1996, p. 110). The following chapter provides explanations of these concepts in more detail.

1.8 Delimitations of Scope and Key Assumptions

Case study organisations used in this research were one NSO and one PSF located in New Zealand. There were other potential organisations that also fit these criteria, however they were excluded because of their inability to attract a critical mass of participants. For example, both partners were needed to provide a useful case study and if one organisation was eliminated its partner was too.

The small number of organisations and the contextual nature of the relationship limit the ability of these findings being extrapolated to other similar relationships.

An assumption is that each participant’s views were consistent with the unit of analysis - the organisation. It is assumed that the participants were able to reflect on the organisation as a whole and not just their personal approach to learning.

1.9 Summary

The purpose of this research is to explore the determinants of inter-partner learning within an alliance. The concepts of intent, transparency and receptivity will guide this research. The research questions will be investigated by studying an alliance between a New Zealand based NSO and a PSF that are linked by a common interest in the same sport. In the literature review to follow, key concepts such as knowledge, knowledge based view, knowledge transfer, learning patterns in alliance and inter-partner learning will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relating to both knowledge and learning within the context of inter-partner relationships. Following a review on the concepts of knowledge and alliances, the review focuses specifically on the area of inter-partner learning within alliances.

2.2 Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

It is widely accepted that the concept of knowledge remains fragmented, without any definition receiving widespread acceptance (Assundani, 2005; Nonaka, 1994). The concept of knowledge has a long history, intriguing even the great ancient philosophers such as Plato (White, 1976). One of the less complex but by no means inadequate definitions, is provided by Grant (1996), who considers knowledge to be “that which is known” (p. 110). It is this definition of knowledge that is used in this study because of its widespread acceptance in the academic literature.

2.2.1 Explicit Knowledge

Despite the variety of definitions and perspectives relating to knowledge, the distinction between tacit (i.e. know-how) and explicit knowledge (i.e. know what) is widely accepted (Assundani, 2005; Grant, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Lubit, 2001). Explicit knowledge is easily codifiable, meaning that it is easily translated into words and other symbols. Explicit knowledge becomes manifest in tangible forms, such as books, reports

and manuals (Inkpen, 1996). These tangible outputs are a reflection of explicit knowledge's ability to be abstracted and stored in the objective world (Popper, 1972), meaning that it is transparent (Lei, Slocum, & Pitts, 1997). Explicit knowledge can allow anyone with a comparable skill base to utilise it (Lei et al., 1997). Compared to tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge is easier to assimilate and use (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

2.2.2 Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is a more difficult concept to define and classify (Howells, 1996; Inkpen, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Lubit, 2001). Tacit knowledge has been described as *translucent* (Lei et al., 1997). Tacit knowledge remains non-codifiable (Howells, 1996), and very deeply rooted in the mind, meaning that it can only be used in a specific context (Khamseh & Jolly, 2008; Kim, 1998). For example, Berman, Down and Hill (2002) suggest that if a baseball batter was asked to explain how he/she predicts the pitch and swings the bat accordingly, he/she would be unable to provide a description that is easily comprehended. Tacit knowledge is so engrained within the individual that it is very difficult for outsiders or those without a significant degree of knowledge to interpret it (Lei et al., 1997). This individual type of knowledge is usually developed unconsciously from one's experience in an environment (Berman et al., 2002; Lubit, 2001). Tacit knowledge is usually embodied in people. However, this does not mean that tacit knowledge will accompany people from one organisation to the next. Effective tacit knowledge use may be a function of the relationships within which a person is embedded. For example, routines of certain organisations may foster this knowledge potential. The environment plays an important role in developing tacit knowledge (Lubit, 2001).

To summarise this section, transferability is a key difference between tacit and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easily transferred through communication, a relatively simple process, whereas tacit knowledge is only revealed through its application (Grant, 1996).

2.3 Knowledge Based View (KBV)

The knowledge based view is an extension of the Resource Based View (RBV) of the firm (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). RBV theorists argue that resources are central to a firm's competitive advantage (Fahy, 2000). These resources can include assets, capabilities, organisational processes, information and knowledge (Barney, 1991). When deployed in its market, these selective key resources may sustain a competitive advantage (Fahy, 2000). In order for an organisation to experience a sustainable competitive advantage, an organisation's resources, or at least their key resources, need to be rare, valuable and imperfectly imitable (Barney, 1991). Intangible, rather than tangible resources are recognised as being more likely to achieve all criteria (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002; Fahy, 2000). Knowledge, especially in the tacit and uncodified form is clearly intangible. It is now well recognised that a firm's knowledge base can facilitate a significant competitive advantage (Assundani, 2005; Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002; Grant, 1996; Inkpen, 1996).

There are two key assumptions to the KBV (Grant, 1997). The first is that both tacit and explicit knowledge can be transferred. While tacit knowledge remains more difficult, it is only transferred through its application requiring the receiver to have a significant level of knowledge. The second KBV assumption is that individuals are the key source of knowledge. It is individuals that are able to learn and access knowledge located across its boundaries via different networks (Bell & Zaheer, 2007; Kogut, 1988; Lane & Lubatkin,

1998; Tsang, 1999). As Senge (1990) wrote in his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline*, “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs” (p. 139). Though organisational learning cannot simply be thought of as being the sum total of individual learning; it is much more than that (Dodgson, 1993; Tsang, 1999). Learned individual knowledge is converted into organisational knowledge in routines and documents. However a learning organisation cannot succeed without a learning culture installed in the organisation (Senge, 1990). This culture encourages learning as a way to grow the organisation’s capacity.

Grant (1996) provides a powerful statement supporting the centrality of knowledge to an organisation’s performance. Grant writes:

Knowledge is central to several quite distinct research traditions, notably organizational learning, the management of technology and managerial cognition. The issues with which the knowledge based view concerns itself extend beyond the traditional concerns of strategic management-strategic choice and competitive advantage – and address some other fundamental concerns of the theory of the firm, notably the nature of coordination within the firm, organisational structure, the role of management and the allocation of decision-making rights, determinants of firm boundaries, and the theory of innovation. (p. 110)

Despite debate about whether the KBV is sufficiently different from the RBV, it remains clear that tacit knowledge is a source of sustainable competitive advantage. For many organisations in the 21st century, the acquisition, retention and effective use of knowledge remains key (Argote & Ingram, 2000).

2.4 Knowledge Transfer

Before an organisation needs to be concerned over matters of knowledge retention and effective use, it is first necessary for employees to acquire knowledge. Commonly

separated into internal and external dimensions, knowledge transfer is the process through which knowledge is transported from one place to another (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Sang, 2008; Khamseh & Jolly, 2008).

Internal knowledge transfer refers to how knowledge is diffused within the organisation and studies explore how knowledge is shared between and amongst employees and departments within a single organisation (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002; Grant, 1996; Szulanski, 1996, 2000). In large organisations, researchers are concerned with knowledge sharing between different units (Szulanski, 1996). Given the purpose of this research is to explore inter-partner learning within alliances, this review will not elaborate on internal knowledge transfer issues, suffice to say here that internal knowledge transfer is an important dimension if external knowledge is to also be effective.

2.4.1 External Knowledge Transfer

Complementing the interest in internal knowledge transfer, there is a considerable literature investigating the external context (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Khamseh & Jolly, 2008; Mowery, Oxley, & Silverman, 1996; Muthusamy & White, 2005; Walter, Lechner, & Kellermanns, 2007). External knowledge transfer refers to the transfer of knowledge across organisational boundaries (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). The net result of external knowledge transfer is that knowledge that was previously external to the organisation is now resident within the organisation. Dyer and Singh (1998) define inter-firm knowledge sharing routines “as a regular pattern of inter-firm interactions that permits the transfer, recombination, or creation of specialized knowledge” (p. 665). Inter-partner learning can be achieved by transferring existing knowledge from one organisation to another or creating

new knowledge through interaction between and amongst organisations (Larsson, Bengtsson, Henriksson, & Sparks, 1998).

Organisation learning is “the process of assimilating new knowledge into an organisations knowledge base” (Autio, Sapienza, & Almeida, 2000, p. 911). March (1991) used the terms ‘exploitation’ and ‘exploration’ to describe organisational learning. Exploration is more about the discovery of new information, new methods, and new skills to enter new areas in business. Exploitation is building on what already exists to improve either its effectiveness or efficiency. Gray and Meister (2004) identified three forms of knowledge sourcing behaviours that underpin organisational learning. Dyadic knowledge sourcing behaviours refer to knowledge sourced in the context of a person-to-person exchange. Published knowledge sourcing behaviours occur when a written document made by a single provider can be utilised by multiple knowledge seekers. Group knowledge sourcing behaviours occur when a number of knowledge seekers and sources are able to exchange knowledge in open environment.

There are a myriad of ways through which an employee can source knowledge external to the organisation (Lei, Hitt, & Bettis, 1996; Sherwood & Covin, 2008). These include training, research, databases, journals, conferences, the internet, other individuals and links with other organisations (Caloghirou, Kastelli, & Tsakanikas, 2004). Regardless of the specific routines, it is the partner interface mechanisms, especially interactions between people that provide the basis for knowledge transfer. Lower level employees “must be well briefed on the partner’s strengths and weaknesses and understand how acquiring particular skills will bolster their company’s competitive position” (Hamel et al., 1989, p. 138). The need for interactions between people is particularly cogent for tacit knowledge transfer given the unconscious manner through which tacit knowledge is usually acquired (Berman et al., 2002; Lubit, 2001). Therefore it is evident that observation, or at

least some form face-to-face contact, is essential for the acquisition of tacit knowledge (Lei et al., 1997).

2.5 Alliances as a Source of External Knowledge

Alliance partners are another source of external knowledge (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998; Sherwood & Covin, 2008; Simonin, 1999). Alliances create the opportunity for learning to occur and knowledge to be acquired (Baughn, Denekamp, Stevens, & Osborn, 1997; Becerra et al., 2008; Iyer, 2002; Lei et al., 1997). Alliances are based on the idea of a cooperative strategy (Contractor & Lorange, 2002). Ratten and Ratten (2004) state that alliances are “a cooperative agreement between two or more organisations” (p. 2). However Gulati’s (1998) definition contains more scope defining strategic alliances as “voluntary arrangements between firms involving exchange, sharing or co-development of products, technologies, or services...they occur as a wide range of motives and goals take a variety of forms and occurs across vertical and horizontal boundaries” (p. 293). However this study uses the definition of Contractor and Lorange (2002) “any inter-firm cooperation that falls between the extremes of discrete, short term contracts and the complete merger of two or more organisations” (p.4). Alliances can take on different forms including joint ventures, consortia, equity based partnerships, and cooperatives (Anand & Khanna, 2000; Simonin, 1997; Todeva & Knoke, 2005).

Motivation for alliance formation is multidimensional (Inkpen, 2002). For example Contractor and Lorange (1988) outlined several different reasons for entering into cooperative arrangements: 1) risk reduction; 2) economies of scale and /or rationalization; 3) technology exchanges; 4) co-opting or blocking competition; 5) overcoming government-mandated trade or investment barriers facilitating initial international expansion of

international firms and 6) vertical quasi-integration advantages of linking the complementary contributions of the partners in a value chain. However, these motives are not evident in all alliances as motives vary from alliance to alliance depending on the context and the organisations involved (Das & Teng, 2000; Mowery et al., 1996). Regardless of the specific motives, alliance partners perceive that collaboration is more beneficial than what they can achieve through independent action (Das & Teng, 2002; Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

2.6 Learning in Alliances

Organisations may be motivated to establish alliances with the specific (and sometimes explicit) purpose of learning (Shenkar & Jiatao, 1999; Teece & Pisano, 1994). Inkpen (2002) argues that the nature of the learning opportunity in an alliance is dependent on a number of factors. These include alliance form, partnering motives, the number of partners, and the strategic relationship. Alliances established, for the specific purpose of learning from alliance partners, are known as a 'learning alliance' (Khanna, Gulati, & Nohria, 1998; Lane & Lubatkin, 1998). For example, Hamel (1991) describes how Japanese firms entered into international alliances with Western partners with the specific intent to learn from their partner. This resulted in Japanese firms learning more from the alliance as a result of their ability to foster the intent to learn in their operational level employees, whilst Western firms by contrast demonstrated a defensive learning intent.

This is an example of 'learning through alliances' whereby one alliance partner learns or absorbs their partners' skills, capabilities and knowledge (Inkpen & Dinur, 1998; Kale, Singh, & Perlmutter, 2000; Tsang, 1999). This should not be confused with 'learning from strategic alliances' which refers to an organisation learning from its alliance

experiences with a view to improving their capacity to manage and ultimately benefit more from existing and future alliances (Tsang, 1999). Whilst, learning may be a key motive for alliance formation, it is not likely to be the sole source of motivation in an alliance (Inkpen, 2002). Therefore, an organisation is still eminently capable of realising its goals of alliance formation despite not learning anything from its partner organisation(s).

A strong intention to learn through alliances may result in the ‘learning race’ scenario (Hoffmann & Schlosser, 2001; Kale et al., 2000; Larsson et al., 1998; Tsang, 1999). Here, alliance partners are in a race to learn and absorb the desired knowledge or competency from partner firms before the alliance is terminated. The problem here is that the desire to acquire knowledge from the partner may supersede their interest in the alliance outcomes. This is most likely to occur when both firms operate in similar markets. In these situations, the chief concern is that the private benefits of the alliance (i.e. those that are individual to each organisation) may be achieved at the expense of the common benefits (i.e. those shared between organisations) (Khanna et al., 1998). The concept of a learning race does highlight the role of intention to learn and likewise transparency, or willingness to disclose knowledge to the alliance partner, regardless of whether the alliance partners are competitors in any way. Learning intent and transparency will be discussed in more detail given their centrality to the research questions.

Partners in an alliance should understand what skills the other partner possesses and how that can contribute to their existing knowledge base (Tsang, 1999). There are four specific ways of learning through alliances (Tsang, 1999). Asymmetrical learning is where both partners learn something in turn. For example, a Chinese alliance partner learned both technology and management skills, while its Singaporean counterpart were able to establish themselves in the local Chinese business community, with the help of the Chinese firm (Tsang, 1999). There are two types of symmetrical learning. The non-mutual type occurs

when the partners come together to combine skills to accomplish a project. The other type of symmetrical learning, mutual learning, is where each partner tries to learn skills from each other. For example “we take from you and we give to you; you take from us and give to us” (Huxham & Hibbert, 2008, p. 521). The competitive type occurs when alliance partners are in direct competition with each other (Tsang, 1999). The opposite of this is the non-competitive type, where partners want to develop their skills in their respective areas. However, no matter how little or how much each partner learns they should have learned something from being involved in an alliance (Contractor & Lorange, 2002).

The dynamics between alliance partners influences knowledge transfer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Given that the KBV assumes that knowledge resides within individuals, it is therefore important to consider the relationships that exist between members of different organisations as a precursor to understanding issues of knowledge transfer (Bell & Zaheer, 2007). The influence of social networks on the knowledge transfer process is well established (Wijk et al., 2008). As one might expect, it almost inevitable that conflict is a natural bedfellow of alliances (Kale et al., 2000). Darby (2006) explains that significant levels of trust and strong positive relationships between people in each of the alliance organisations are almost certain to have been common features of nearly every successful alliance.

Relationship capital is an important facilitator of knowledge transfer between organisations (Sarkar, Cavusgil, & Aulakh, 2001; Yan, 2004). In the context of alliances, relationship capital is comprised of mutual trust, respect and friendship between individuals in alliances and is a consequence of “the close interaction at the personal level between partners” (Kale et al., 2000, p. 221). In their meta analysis, Wijk et al. (2008) identified clear evidence that trust and strong relations, as represented by the term relationship capital

are amongst the most important factors influencing knowledge transfer between organisations.

2.7 Inter-partner Learning in Alliances

The seminal work of Hamel (1991) investigated how the collaborative processes between alliance partners could result in a reapportionment (i.e. redistribution) of skills. Hamel (1991) used the term ‘quasi-internalization’ to describe the trading of skills between partners and ‘de facto internalization’ to describe the process through which partner skills are acquired. In this grounded theory study, Hamel (1991) investigated inter-partner learning by eleven companies across nine strategic alliances in a number of industries ranging from aerospace to electronics. The first stage of the research involved determining a formal model consisting of intent, receptivity and transparency. This model was developed through a number of interviews with managers, who discussed partner’s intent, openness, and ability to absorb skills from its partner as part of a wider discussion on asymmetrical learning. The second part of the research aimed to investigate the understanding of how these processes affected learning outcomes involving two partnerships and five firms. These two stages lead to six major propositions being proposed. These propositions related to competitive collaboration, learning and bargaining power, intent, transparency, receptivity and sustainable learning.

Competitive collaboration refers to the primary objective in an alliance to internalize the other partner’s skills. The key competitive collaboration propositions offered by Hamel are:

- a) Some partners may regard internalization of scarce skills as a primary benefit of international collaboration.
- b) Where learning is the goal, the termination of an agreement cannot be seen as failure, nor can its longevity and stability be seen as evidence of success.
- c) Asymmetries in learning within the alliance may result in a shift in relative competitive position and advantage between partners outside the alliance. Thus,

some partners may regard each other as competitors as well as collaborators.
(Hamel, 1991, p 87)

Next, learning and bargaining power refers to a partner who learns more as it increases its bargaining power within the alliance. The following propositions are offered:

- a) Asymmetries in learning change relative bargaining power within the alliance: successful learning may make the original bargain obsolete and may, *in extremis*, lead to a pattern of unilateral, rather than bilateral dependence.
- b) The legal and governance structure may exert only a minor influence over the pattern of inter-partner learning and bargaining power.
- c) A partner that understands the link between inter-partner learning, bargaining power and competitiveness will tend to view the alliance as a race to learn.
(Hamel, 1991, p 87)

Intent as a determinant represents the view of collaboration as an opportunity for learning. This is further expressed in these propositions:

- a) The objectives of alliance partners, with respect to inter-partner learning and competence acquisition, may be usefully characterized as internalization, resource concentration, or substitution.
- b) Internalization intent will be strongest in firms which conceive of competitiveness as competence-based rather than as product-based, and which seek to close skill gaps rather than to compensate for skills failure.
- c) A substitution intent pre-ordains asymmetric learning: for systematic learning to take place operators must possess an internalization intent. (Hamel, 1991, p 87)

Transparency as a determinant of learning represents the ability to learn.

- a) Asymmetry in transparency pre-ordains asymmetric learning: some firms and some skills may be inherently more transparent than others.
- b) Transparency can be influenced through the design of organizational interfaces, the structure of joint tasks, and the 'protectiveness' of individuals. (Hamel, 1991, p 87)

Receptivity as a determinant of learning, is the partner's capacity for learning.

- a) Asymmetry in receptivity pre-ordains asymmetric learning: some firms may be inherently more receptive than others.
- b) Receptivity is a function of the skills and absorptiveness of receptors, of exposure position, and of parallelism in facilities. (Hamel, 1991, p 87)

Sustainable learning is the capacity for a continual learning process.

Whether learning becomes self-sustaining- that is, whether the firm eventually becomes able, without further inputs from its partner, to improve its skills at the same rate as its partner-will depend on the depth of learning that has taken place, whether the firm possesses the scale and volume to allow, in future amortization of the investment needed to break free of dependence on the partner, and whether the firm possesses the disciplines of continuous improvement. (Hamel, 1991, p 87)

The purpose of this research is to investigate the determinants of inter-partner learning: intent, transparency, and receptivity. As these determinants increase, so too does the level of learning between alliance partners (Johnson & Ravipreet, 2003). The concepts of intent, transparency and receptivity will be individually discussed in the following sections.

2.7.1 Intent

Intent represents an organisation's "initial propensity to view collaboration as an opportunity to learn" (Hamel, 1991, p. 90). For example, a sports team going into a game with the intent to win has a higher probability of winning the game than a team that does not. Thus it is the same with learning.

A number of researchers have affirmed intent as an important dynamic of learning in alliances (Kale et al., 2000; Khanna et al., 1998; Palakshappa & Gordon, 2007; Tsang, 2002; Tsang & Kwan, 1999). This includes a New Zealand study of alliances (Palakshappa & Gordon, 2007) that identified the reasons why organisations failed to understand the learning-related benefits from their involvement in a collaborative relationship.

Palakshappa and Gordon (2007) found that New Zealand firms with little or no intent to learn from their partners were less likely to report that they had learnt anything from the alliance relationship. The authors placed great prominence on this finding by concluding that "intent takes precedence over Hamel's other determinants of learning" (Palakshappa &

Gordon, 2007, p. 274). Hamel's (1991) study of Japanese firms involved in alliances with Western partners attributed their success in learning to the initial intention to learn from the alliance, an intent which the Western partner did not seem to possess. In short, the higher learning outcomes of the Japanese firms were attributed to their specific intention to learn.

Other motor vehicle manufacturing research has drawn similar conclusions:

Ford wanted to learn how to implement lean manufacturing and systematically draw this knowledge from Mazda through its joint operation in Mexico. Ford had not been successful in previous attempts to develop this ability in the U.S. Though Mazda gained financially through the joint venture by extending its LF18 platform into a new application, it lost its edge in lean production to Ford. (Baughn et al., 1997, p. 106)

As important as intent is in the learning equation, it is not absolutely necessary. To be clear, organisations with a low learning intent will have difficulty in learning. However, that does not mean that an organisation without intent will not learn. This is because learning may occur unconsciously (Tsang, 1999). As Baughn et al. (1997) remarked, "even if a partner does not appear to have a strategic intent to learn, they may well absorb and use important knowledge gained from the alliance" (p. 107).

According to Hamel (1991), there are four factors likely to affect an organisation's intent. The first is whether the organisation views collaboration as more or less a permanent collaboration or as a temporary vehicle for improving competitiveness relative to the alliance partner. A permanent approach is likely to be associated with a level of stability in which both partners are aware of what each other contributes. The second factor is the organisation's resource position relative to its partner and other industry participants. In these cases, organisations in a strong position will rarely admit that it has something to learn from a weaker partner. Third is the organisations calculation of the pay-off to learning. Organisations will usually calculate the perceived costs in relation to learning. The final factor is the organisation's preference for balanced or asymmetric dependence within the

alliance. Organisations with a preference for balance will prefer to control the power of any alliance situation.

An organisation's intent to learn must equally be translated into an intent by employees to learn. The desire to learn in an alliance must be drilled down through the organisation to all its employees. Employees can be unaware of their organisation's strategic intent to learn (Hamel, 1991). To avoid this situation, managers should ensure that: 1) their strategic intent to learn is embraced by staff that interact with the partner organisation; and 2) these people guard against the transfer of key skills to the partner whilst ironically ensuring that they are in receipt of such skills from the alliance partner (Doz & Hamel, 1998).

Whether or not organisations themselves may have a learning intent, they should not assume that their alliance partner has the same degree of learning intent. This could lead to asymmetrical learning, where one partner learns more than the other (Tsang, 1999). Organisations rarely attempt to envisage the counterpart's intentions and potential for learning (Baughn et al., 1997). This could see one partner being exploited due to a lack of intent and inability to highlight to their employees the alliance as an opportunity for learning (Hamel, 1999).

In summary, intent remains one of the most important factors in inter-partner learning. Organisations with high levels of intent are significantly more likely to report higher levels of learning from their alliance partner (Hamel, 1991). The learning intention of the organisation must be translated into employees intent to learn, or the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge may never be realised.

2.7.2 Transparency

Transparency is the potential for learning to occur. Hamel (1991) uses the term 'collaborative membrane' to describe the ability for skills and capabilities to flow between alliance partners. This concept is based on the biological reference to a cell membrane, which is semi-permeable, and acts as a regulator for what can enter and exit the cell. Partners that are high in transparency will allow each other uncontrolled access to their organisation. How closely these partners work together, and the levels of trust involved in the relationship will determine the permeability of each organisation.

Alliance protocols allow the creation and sharing of 'knowledge channels' between partners allowing for the transfer of information (Lei et al., 1997). As members of alliances develop an interactive level of friendship, sharing becomes natural (Baughn et al., 1997; Nonaka, 1994). For example as communication between alliance partners increases, information flow should also increase (Ratten & Ratten, 2004). However the 'clannishness', the point where one organisation may appear to reject outsiders may limit the relationship quality between organisations (Hamel, 1991).

Just as the level of intent will vary between alliance partners, the level of transparency will also vary. For any number of reasons, some partners will be more transparent than others (Baughn et al., 1997; Dyer & Singh, 1998; Hamel, 1991; Larsson et al., 1998; Muthusamy & White, 2005). Hamel (1991) found that in an alliance between Western and Japanese based firms, the Japanese based organisations were less transparent than their Western partner. Organisations may want to protect certain capabilities from being absorbed by their partner (Kale et al., 2000). Some organisations may appear to be selfish and hold some knowledge back (Huxham & Hibbert, 2008). This makes for good business sense, as organisations do not want to provide other organisations with free and

uncontrolled access. Organisations are usually comfortable with learning but not so comfortable with their key competencies being copied by a partner (Kleymann & Seristo, 2001). “Firms that manage their transparency will walk a fine line between openness and opaqueness” (Doz & Hamel, 1998, p. 208).

Partners that are high in transparency may find that they are exploited by other firms (Hamel, 1991; Larsson et al., 1998). Organisations may chose certain mechanisms (i.e. gatekeepers or policies) to restrict the sharing of knowledge (Hoffmann & Schlosser, 2001; Inkpen & Beamish, 1997; Simonin, 1999). However, even with these initiatives, alliance partners should recognise that some leaking of knowledge is inevitable (Doz & Hamel, 1998). Hamel (1991) refers to this leakage as ‘transparency by default’. Doz and Hamel (1998) also make the point that transparency may be influenced by the internal complexity of the organisation because outsiders have trouble trying to access the source of knowledge because they do not know where it is located. This is known as ‘walling off’ (Baughn et al., 1998).

Fundamentally, transparency is underpinned by cooperation (Larsson et al., 1998) and most importantly trust (Kale et al., 2000; Khamseh & Jolly, 2008; Tsang, 1999). Trust reduces the perception that the other organisation will act in a opportunistic manner (Khamseh & Jolly, 2008; Tsang, 1999). Fears that an organisation will be exploited by its partner will close lines of communication, resulting in a decrease in the amount of learning occurring (Osland & Yaprak, 1995). In short, an organisation that trusts its partner is more likely to be transparent.

In summary, transparency refers to an alliance partner’s willingness to share information with its alliance partner(s). Some organisations will be more transparent than others (Hamel, 1991), though each organisation has the ability to change their level of transparency.

2.7.3 Receptivity

While intent represents desire, and transparency the opportunity, receptivity represents the capacity to learn from an organisation's partner (Doz & Hamel, 1998; Hamel, 1991). "Exposure of a firm to relevant external knowledge is insufficient unless an effort is made to internalize it" (Kim, 1998, p. 507). For, example, an organisation may be high in intent and transparency but lack the ability to be receptive. Receptivity is similar to the term absorptive capacity (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Chen, 2004; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Lane & Lubatkin, 1998). Absorptive capacity refers to the ability to value, assimilate and commercialize new external knowledge (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

Key to the capacity to learn is the ability of individuals to interpret information. For example, an individual who is presented with a document in a foreign language (e.g. Mandarin) is unable to interpret or understand that document if he/she doesn't understand the language due to low receptivity. However, if that document is presented to the individual in their native language (e.g. English), they are highly receptive, as they are able to easily understand and interpret that document.

Hamel (1991) argues that enthusiasm for learning is a key antecedent of receptivity. The 'Not Invented Here syndrome' (NIH) restricts receptivity. NIH syndrome implies an inclination to reject knowledge from external sources (Lichtenthaler & Ernst, 2006). Another factor influencing receptivity is the ability to unlearn, which refers to the ability to forget past behaviours (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Dodgson, 1993).

Knowledge distance refers to the degree in which source and recipient knowledge bases overlap (Cummings & Teng, 2003). This implies that for an organisation to be receptive it must also be on equal footing with that of its partner. However "if the skills gap between partners is too great learning becomes almost impossible" (Hamel, 1991, p.97). An

additional factor influencing receptivity is receptors, or those people that have the ability to influence an organisation's receptiveness, due to their own individual capacity to learn (Baughn et al., 1997; Hamel, 1991).

In summary, receptivity refers to an organisation's ability to absorb skills and knowledge from its partner. It is this receptivity that allows an organisation to learn from its partner considering that the previous two determinants of learning, intent and transparency, are satisfied.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has provided a conceptual overview of knowledge, the ability of knowledge to underpin a sustainable competitive advantage and alliances. In addition, those factors that influence the ability of knowledge transfer between alliance partners were discussed in more detail. This involved a discussion of Hamel's determinants of learning. These determinants consist of intent, transparency and receptivity. Despite been published in 1991, Hamel's basic concepts remain cornerstones of research into learning between alliance partners (Inkpen, 2000). Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the level of intent, transparency and receptivity within the context of an alliance between a national sport organisation and a professional sport franchise.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to explain the method used in this study. This chapter demonstrates a qualitative approach used to explore inter-partner learning in a single case study format. All information relating to data sources, participant recruitment and selection, interviews and data analysis is explained.

3.2 Research Approach

This study utilised a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative research usually entails an inductive approach, rejects positivism and generates theory (Yin, 1994). An inductive approach usually describes theory that is developed from data as opposed to deductive research that tests a theory.

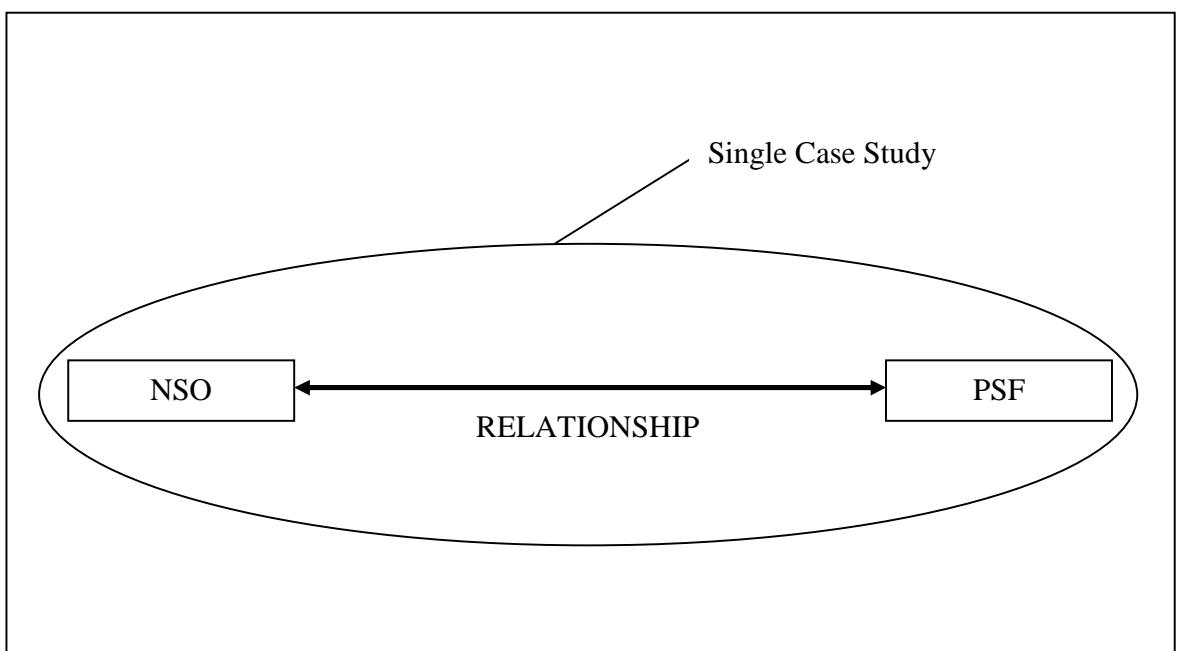
Hamel (1991) used a qualitative approach to research inter-partner learning. He was granted access to key managers and operating employees in a number of partner organisations. To understand the concept of learning, qualitative data, consisting of interviews, was necessary. This study aimed to explore inter-partner learning using the determinants established by Hamel (1991). With two organisations agreeing to participate in the research it was decided a single in-depth case study was necessary. A number of rationales exist for choosing a single case study design (Yin, 1994).

By choosing a single case study approach, the researcher was able to grasp a more intensive deeper understanding of the organisations and their relationship (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). In comparison, a multiple case approach would have been more superficial allowing a less in-depth analysis than what could have been achieved with a single case study.

The rationale for this research was a unique circumstance existent in New Zealand, where NSOs and PSFs had developed a greater than normal relationship.

Eisenhardt (1989) describes the case study as “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (p.534). It is important to define the unit analysis of any case (Yin, 1994). In this research, the organisation was the unit of analysis, represented by a critical mass of participants. By gathering a critical mass of participants in each organisation, it was assumed that their knowledge would be representative of the organisation. Hamel (1991) refers to this as gaining access to “both sides of the collaborative membrane” (p. 85). It is important to note that each dyad is a case study, therefore individual organisations are not case studies (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Case Study Diagram



3.3 Data Sources

The case study consisted of two organisations - a professional sport franchise and a national sporting organisation. While the individual participants were interviewed, the unit of analysis was not the individual, but the organisation itself.

In this study, it was decided not to identify both the organisations and the participants. Participants were promised anonymity if they were interviewed, which allowed them to disclose their complete views. Therefore, in the final report they were given an alias to protect their identification.

3.3.1 Participants

Interviews were the main data gathering method of choice for this study. Interviews are an important source of case studies that allow human ability to explain the situation (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Therefore, gaining access to the participants at the selected organisations was a critical part of this research. Realistically, all employees of the organisations involved were potential participants. However, an inclusion and exclusion criteria was established around the participants, to interview those that could contribute significantly to the topic area.

1) Participants had to hold one of the five selected positions of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Marketing Manager, Head Coach, and High Performance (HP) Manager. Where these exact titles did not exist within the two organisations, the closest position to these was selected. It was determined at a meeting involving the academic supervisors and the researcher that these positioned employees at the case organisations were in the best situation to contribute information to the current study of inter-partner learning. Often the high status individuals in an organisation are more likely to provide a better perspective of

the organisation and the relationships that it has with others (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). For example, in his research on alliances, Doz (1996) recruited participants that had been directly involved in the partnership. Hamel (1991) also interviewed those that were based on either side of the alliance.

2) Potential participants currently in these positions were excluded from the research if they had been in the organisation for a period of less than three months. This exclusion criterion was established as anyone that had not been involved in the organisation for a substantial period would not have been able to adequately contribute to the topic of inter-partner research.

3) As a backup plan, the offer was extended to past employees of these organisations, if those in the current role did not meet the previous criteria. If past employees were sought, they were required to have been involved within the organisation in the last three years. Any time spent previous to this period would have called into question the potential ability for participants to accurately recall information. However, all participants interviewed were currently employed by the organisation at the time they were interviewed as well as having been in that organisation for longer than the required three months. Therefore, there was no need to interview past employees of the organisation.

It should be noted that members of the Board were not initially considered. The researcher and academic supervisors presumed that the Board were too distant in relation to the day-to-day running of the organisation. Therefore, the selected employees were in a better position to comment on the research topic. However, while conducting interviews with the initial selected participants one Board member's name from each organisation was mentioned by a majority of the participants on a regular basis. This led the researcher to believe that the Board played a bigger role in the inter-partner relationship than first envisaged. Therefore, the selected Board members, whose names were mentioned in the

initial interviews, were recruited as participants in the study. Interestingly, both participants held the same position on the Board which created a matched pair. One of their key Board roles was managing the relationship with their partner organisation. This confirmed they were the most appropriate Board members to interview on this topic area. This method of participant recruitment is referred to as 'snowballing'. Snowballing entails the identification of key people, and interviewing them as to who else may hold similar attributes in relation to themselves which may be able to contribute significantly to the study (Berg, 2001). Researchers such as Doz (1996), used this method in their own research, asking participants while interviewing them "who else should we interview" (p. 58).

3.3.2 Negotiating Access

Gaining access to organisations may be a potential problem for outsiders, including researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2003). For example, 'gatekeepers' guard the institution's concerns (Gorden, 1980). One example is by stopping external people from gaining easy access to potential participants.

Lofland and Lofland (1995) outlined four suggestions for being successful in gaining access to organisations. These include connections, accounts, knowledge, and courtesy. Due to the researcher's involvement in Auckland University of Technology's school of Sport and Recreation, he was able to utilise connections that staff members had developed to gain access to some, but not all potential participants. Once initial contact had been made with a few of the participants and interviews began taking place, the researcher felt that this process snowballed and allowed the researcher to gain greater access to others in the organisations.

By keeping accounts of the research brief and precise to inform the participant of the study, and by not over complicating it, the researcher secured interviews with desired participants. All participants contacted were dealt with in the utmost courtesy (which will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs). The researcher thought it was more appropriate to contact the individuals involved directly, rather than go to the superior, in which in most cases would have been the CEO of the organisations involved. For example, the individuals could respond immediately regarding their level of availability, whereas if the CEO responded negatively this would completely discount the whole organisation.

In the case of negative responses, and where the potential participant declined to participate, the researcher thanked them for their consideration. It should also be noted that gaining access to any organisation, especially private sport franchises in New Zealand is not an easy process. Private sport franchises run based on utility maximization (winning) and profit maximization (Sloane, 1976). The basis of an external researcher gaining information on any organisation may cause potential sensitivity. Norm O'Reilly, a leading sport management academic, stated that in Canada it is difficult for academics to get to talk to those involved in PSFs, even more so getting time to talk with professional team players would be near impossible (personal communication, December 14, 2007).

3.3.3 Contact

Participants were initially contacted by email where they were informed of the research topic by a brief explanation, which included an information sheet. This *getting in* stage requires the interviewer to give an account of the research which explains the topic and requirements of participation. This should be done at the recruitment stage and also repeated when it comes to the interview (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

The information sheet explained the research in an individualised way which enabled the participant to decide whether to participate or decline (refer to appendix 3). The researcher was aware and prepared that participants may decline to participate in the study. Acceptance was determined with the participants reply to the email. A majority of participants responded by return email. Those that did not reply to the original email were contacted by telephone approximately a week later. Following a positive response, the researcher arranged a time and place to interview the participant. If the participant was to be interviewed via telephone, a consent form (refer to appendix 4) was sent to a provided address, which was sent back to the researcher in a provided self-addressed envelope. However, at face-to-face interviews the consent form was distributed to the participant at the time on the interview, signed, and collected by the researcher.

3.3.4 Responses

A number of participants at both organisations were willing to be interviewed by the researcher. Therefore, it was decided to use these organisations as a single case study. Participants were entitled to decline to participate in the study, or withdraw at any time without explanation.

3.4 Interviews

Interviewing is one of the widely used methods in qualitative research (Gorden, 1980; Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). It is also the most popular approach in organisational research, and it occurs mostly between two people in a specific setting where questions are asked to extract information from the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Gorden, 1980; Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). The interviews used a semi-structured approach, where a

number of questions were developed from the relevant literature. These were prepared in advance for the interview process. This resulted in the production of an interview guide (see appendix 1). The interview aimed to capture both information and understanding relevant to the research topic of inter-partner learning (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Using a semi-structured format allows the interviewer to utilise prepared questions to gather responses relevant to the research topic while also allowing the interviewer to pursue other lines of questioning resulting from the participant's replies (Gorden, 1980). This allows the interview to be a flexible process between the interviewer and interviewee (Gorden, 1980).

It was predetermined that a majority of the interviews in this research study would be face-to-face with the participants. This would involve the researcher taking on the role of the interviewer and the participant the interviewee. Due to the researcher being the only person involved in the research process, the individual interview method was determined to be the most practical. Using the face-to-face approach gave the researcher the ability to interact with the participants while further developing his confidence in interviewing. However when this was not possible, as was the case for some circumstances, telephone interviews provided an alternative.

Telephone interviews were used with four of the participants based in one of the organisations. The main flaw with telephone interviews is that they eliminate the potential to readily observe verbal and body language cues that would be experienced in a face-to-face interview. According to Berg (2001), important steps must be taken to conduct an effective telephone interview; establishing legitimacy, convincing the participant that they are essential in the research, and making sure the information that is obtained is meaningful. To satisfy these conditions, the researcher contacted three of the four participants by telephone before the interview, and also had continuous email contact with all participants' prior to the interview; as well as providing detailed information on the study and the

participants importance in the process. One participant did meet face-to-face with the researcher prior to undertaking their telephone interview. For the interview to flow well, the researcher conducted mock interviews using the telephone prior to the actual interviews, to ensure that he was suitably prepared. To guarantee that the interviews could be recorded the researcher used the speakerphone function. In comparison to face-to face interviews, telephone interviews are usually lower costing, time saving and done at a faster pace (Gorden, 1980). The researcher found that with telephone interviews he was able to complete them in a much quicker timeframe, while keeping the respondent more on task and prevent straying from the topic area, which was the case with some face-to-face interviews.

3.4.1 Pilot Interviews

To prepare for the study's interviews, pilot interviews were conducted. Several members of staff at Auckland University of Technology volunteered to help. The researcher explained to the pilot interview participants that they were involved in an exploratory interview, and that they were asked wherever possible to be critical so as to establish an improved interview guide (Oppenheim, 1992).

When carrying out pilot studies, respondents should be as similar to the main participants as possible (Oppenheim, 1992). Therefore, to keep the inter-partner dimension constant in the interview, staff were chosen that were involved in an inter-partner relationship. For example, staff members were involved in inter-partner relationships with the following organisations: New Zealand Academy of Sport, the Auckland YMCA and the Singapore Sports School. Universities as education providers usually work in partnership with a number of organisations, and their employees provided a great opportunity for pilot

interviews. Not only was there the opportunity to test the interview guide questions, but there was also the added benefit of developing the researcher's confidence in conducting face-to-face interviews.

When conducting these interviews, the researcher took the opportunity to treat them as 'the real thing' by introducing himself, explaining the purpose of the research, and why the participant was chosen. The pilot interviews were recorded in part to allow the researcher the opportunity to familiarise himself with the use of the audio devices. This process provided the researcher with both practise and confidence when undertaking the actual interviews.

3.4.2 Interview Guide

Interviews took place over a four week period. The interviews were based around Hamel's (1991) determinants of, intent, transparency, and receptivity. However, these exact terms were not mentioned in the interview because they may have interfered with the respondents perceptions, thus creating a form of bias. Therefore, the questions were applied to suit a more general audience because they were unlikely to be unaware of the academic terminology in the topic area.

Interviews can also be susceptible to interruptions from external sources (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). The researcher arranged to interview participants at a location where distractions would not occur. Usually this was in a meeting room at the organisation's offices. The interviewer commenced with a brief introduction, which disclosed the topic that was to be discussed, and he outlined what he wanted the respondent to think about before he started the interview. It was decided to keep this introduction brief and to the point following the pilot interviews. Respondents were already aware of the research and

did not require information to be relayed to them once again. Therefore, the researcher introduced himself, asked permission to record the interview, and stated his brief research introduction before asking the respondent the prepared questions.

3.4.2.1 Interview Guide Explained

The interview guide was a checklist of points to ask each of the participants when being interviewed, and any responses that were generated from these questions was a bonus (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2007). The first introduction questions were specific to the individuals involved. They required straightforward answers, in a short time. This got the respondent talking about themselves, their experience in the organisation; the length of time that they had been involved in the organisation, their position, and the role of that position. This quickly established an easy rapport between the researcher and respondent.

It is important to understand the alliance relationship existence in this case study. Therefore, the next section of questions allowed the respondent to progress towards talking about the extent of the relationship that existed between the case study organisations. A very broad question was used where participants were asked to describe the case study relationship to the researcher. Following their response to this question, further probing questions were utilised by the researcher so that he fully understood the nature of the relationship. An understanding was needed as to the nature, extent, length, objectives, importance and areas of collaboration.

The third section dealt specifically with Hamel's (1991) first determinant of intent. The overall objective with this section of questions was to gauge the degree of overall intent. Questions focussed on the opportunity to learn, what was being achieved, the short term and long term gains and sources of knowledge.

The next section focussed on the second determinant of transparency. The questions asked sought to explore the degree of openness in the collaborative relationship.

Participants were asked questions relevant to their organisation, willingness to share, protectiveness, and how open they perceived they were in relation to the partner.

The final section of questions was based on receptivity. The researcher wanted to develop an understanding of the organisation's capacity to learn from their counterpart. For example, who was the teacher and who was the student in the relationship, the degree to which each organisation was a student, and the attitude of each organisation to learning.

Overall these questions were grouped into the five categories: introduction, organisational, intent, transparency and receptivity. However, it was possible for some questions to fall into a number of the categories. While the questions acted as a guide, anything that the respondents said, or that the researcher thought could be useful to his research was further explored during the course of the interview. In some circumstances, some of the questions in the interview guide were not asked as the researcher felt that the respondent had already answered these adequately at some point during the interview. Prior to each interview, participants were emailed a few questions which were very similar in format to those in the interview guide. The researcher anticipated that this would enable the participant to better prepare for the interview.

3.4.3 Interview Protocol

Interviews were held at the participant's place of work and at a time convenient to the interviewee. It was important that the interviewee felt comfortable in the location where the interview was to take place. The environment was important for the respondents to be able to talk about the topic freely, without being distracted by the surrounding environment

(Bryman & Bell, 2003). Gorden (1980) introduces the phenomena of 'time and space'; he mentions that space may influence time. He uses the example that, it would not be appropriate to interview a teacher in a classroom, which may be filled with bookwork or notices on a bulletin board that reminds that teacher of being a week behind schedule. Therefore, it is more appropriate to select a space to interview the participant free from interference. For example, face-to-face interviews at one of the organisations took place in their meeting room.

In this study, the interviewer used two recording devices during the interviews. Two devices allowed one to serve as a backup device should either one potentially fail. The recording device was placed out of sight during the interview so as not to distract the respondent from answering the questions truthfully. It was important to record the interview, as that freed up the researcher to concentrate on the responses, take additional notes on nonverbal communication, provoke answers and ask further seeking questions of the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The researcher was aware that participants had the right to refuse having the interview recorded. Usually a small minority of participants may decline to have interviews recorded (Gorden, 1980). Therefore, in preparation the interviewer brought with him writing material to record the interview on paper. However all participants agreed to have their interviews recorded.

Recording an interview leaves the interviewer free to do any note taking. However, this does not eliminate the note taking process entirely. Some note taking is important. For example, the use of probe notes are made during the interview by the interviewer, which enable specific phrases used by the respondent to be clarified at a later time (Gorden, 1980). Note taking was kept to a minimum so as not to distract the participant. Recording offers

the opportunity to archive the data for later referral, because the human mind does not possess a limitless capacity to recall all that is said in a 30 minute interview.

When preparing for the interviews a number of factors were taken into account. Communication is an important factor in completing successful interviews. The interview needs to be precise and keep to the point around the topic area. When it strays from the topic area the interviewer needs to bring it back into focus for the interview to proceed in the allocated time (Gorden, 1980). For example, in this study the participants were instructed that the interview time would take approximately 30-45 minutes. Initially the interview was estimated to last up to 60 minutes, though initial participant responses provided feedback that the interview length was protracted. However during the pilot interview stage the researcher was able to reduce the time period dramatically to 30 minutes. The researcher believed this allowed for all participants from the selected organisations to agree to participate, as this did not impede greatly on their ordinary working day. Therefore, it was important to keep the interview to this allotted time, firstly because this time was identified in the initial participant information sheet. Secondly, the participants had generously given their time free of charge, and they worked in a busy work environment.

The researcher also needed to create a sense of professionalism by dressing in a formal manner when interviewing participants. This created the effect that the interview was important to the researcher, which it was, while also making the participant feel that they were an important contributor to the research. The interview commenced with the researcher introducing himself to the participant at the location of the interview; usually this was done with a formal greeting, namely a handshake. A brief introduction of the research topic then took place. It was explained that the individual would be asked questions relating to learning with their partner organisation (“Feel free to answer them as best as possible”). Following the introduction, the interview began. When participants are

being interviewed it is important for the interviewer to establish a rapport (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). The researcher tried to establish a working relationship with the interviewee, to make each participant feel comfortable and talk freely about the research topic, to provide answers that are honest, reliable and objective.

Verbal factors were also taken into account. Talking at a reasonable pace and volume ensured that the interviewee understood what was being said and did not misinterpret the question that was being asked of them. Dull speech, anything that was of a monotonous tone, was avoided so as not to distract the interviewee. While the interview was in session the interviewer responded to the participants responses with verbal comments including; yeah yeah, yes nodding, laughing, smiling and frowning (Gorden, 1980).

Often the questions used in the interview may trigger thoughts that the interviewee will express at a later stage. Therefore it is recommended that the interviewer not be too eager to wrap the interview up or turn off the tape (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Fontana & Frey, 1994). At the end of the interview the interviewee asked the participant to express any thoughts that the questions had provoked. This was usually done by the participants without any prompting. The researcher always made the participant aware that the tape was still running, by stating “please be aware that the tape is still recording”. The researcher also demonstrated to the participant when he had stopped the recording device.

Following the interview the interviewee was thanked for their participation. It was also stated for the record on the tape that “this was the end of the interview with participant X”. The researcher then explained what would happen with the data, and if the participant should require a summary of the research, findings would be available to them at the conclusion of the final report.

3.4.4 Communication

A major factor in interviews is communication. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. Types of verbal communication have been mentioned previously, for example speed and tone. The non-verbal types were identified as:

Proxemic communication is the use of interpersonal space to convey meaning. Chronemic communication is the use of time in interpersonal relationships to convey meaning. Kinesic communication is the use of body movement to convey meaning. Paralinguistic communication is the use of volume, pitch and voice quality to convey meaning. (Gorden, 1980, p. 314)

However, problems can occur with verbal communication. Words can mean different things for different people. Cultural complexities and social status can also effect communication. For example different cultures and social groups may have different jargon (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). The interviewer should be aware of this and know what jargon is being spoken (Fontana & Frey, 1994). In this study the researcher was confident that from his study in both the sports and business areas that he was well versed in the vocabulary used in the particular industries.

3.5 Data Analysis

The only major disadvantage of recording interviews is the transcription stage. For example an interview lasting an hour in length may take up to several hours to transcribe, contributing to a very time consuming process (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005).

The transcription analysis allows the recorded interview to be translated onto a textual document. There is major importance that this document is translated correctly, because subsequent analysis of the data is interpreted through this document (Poland, 1995). Through this translation document differences can arise between what is actually said in the interview and what is recorded in text. A certain amount of information will be lost, for

example, Poland (1995) uses a comparison example of what was recorded on an audiotape “...I think we were blessed with a really good investigative team” which in the transcript was recorded as “... I think we-re a blast with a really good investigative team” (p. 294). Therefore certain symbols are used to translate this audio into visual material.

Each interview was transcribed in its entirety by a professional transcriber. The transcriber completed a confidentiality agreement (refer to appendix 5). Usually this was done as soon as possible following the interview. This was to gauge the progress of the interviews and address any problems that could be addressed in the following interviews (Gorden, 1980).

Poland (1995) identified four common discrepancies in transcripts, sentence structure, the use of full stops, comma, paraphrasing or mimicking, omission or words, common where transcribers go back and forth to listen to a particular section of the interview, and lastly mistaken words, usually due to similarity in sound structure. To combat the issue of discrepancies the researcher listened to the audio while reading along to the completed transcript. This also provided the researcher with the opportunity to check the accuracy of the transcript and further immerse himself in the data.

3.5.1 Coding

Once transcripts had been checked for accuracy the coding of the data took place. In line with advice provided by Miles and Huberman (1994), after each transcript was received it was coded, as opposed to waiting until all interviews had been completed and transcribed.

The first step involved the researcher sifting through the raw data and coding into three predetermined categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These categories included the

three determinants of learning developed by Hamel (1991) consisting of intent, transparency and receptivity. A fourth category initially established at the beginning as ‘other’ developed into the category named ‘relationship’.

For each individual transcript the researcher colour coded the entire document in relation to each of the three predetermined categories (refer table 2). Colour coding took place using the highlight function on Microsoft Word. After all transcripts had been colour coded all relevant quotes were cut and pasted into one document relevant to the organisations. For example all participants belonging to the NSO whose transcript had been coded in red to highlight the intent category was pasted into an overall document with all the other participants’ quotes. Codes were applied to large chunks of data usually, a minimal amount consisting of a sentence, and no bigger than a paragraph in length (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 2: Colour Coding Categories

<i>Category</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Colour</i>
Intent	INT	red
Receptivity	REC	green
Transparency	TRANS	blue
Relationship	REL	yellow
Other	-	pink

While the data was being analysed the researcher thought it applicable to include both marginal remarks and memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These provided opportunities for the researcher to both comment on any ideas that were inspired by the quotation and to also detail any linkages in the data. The process of ‘memoing’ was possible by using the ‘insert comment’ command in Microsoft Word. Both the ‘highlighting’ function and ‘insert comment’ functions can be found on the Microsoft Word formatting toolbar.

All responses from the participants at the PSF were grouped together, as were the NSO resulting in a large data set. This was condensed into two coded documents each approximately 20 pages in length. These documents were still too lengthy for the researcher to use in the findings section on this study. On seeking advice from his supervisor, the researcher reduced the data down to eight pages in length, resulting in a small and more manageable data set. The researcher was able to achieve this by eliminating quotes that were not relevant to the research, and in some areas of saturation, only include the most essential quote. This document therefore contained the crucial data in which the researcher was primarily interested.

3.5.2 Inter-rater Reliability

To alleviate the problem of bias that may jeopardize the credibility of the coding process an intercoder agreement was necessary. After the initial coding process by the researcher, data was also reviewed by one of the researcher's supervisors. The purpose was to see whether the supervisor agreed or disagreed with the initial coding process carried out by the researcher. Any disagreements resulted in a discussion between the researcher and the supervisor resulting in the correcting of any coding problems (Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996).

3.6 Ethics

Ethical approval was applied for through the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) (refer to appendix 2). Since the focus of this study was the interview method, individual participant's identities remained confidential in the transcription process and in the final report through the use of aliases. The aliases disclosed

the type of organisation but not the participants. For example, the participants from private sports franchise were referred to as PSF1, PSF2, PSF3, PSF4 and PSF5. These participants were in random order and each number did not represent a pre-selected role.

3.7 Limitations

As with any research there are a number of limitations evident. The researcher has tried to outline all those confined to this study. One of the main limitations in this research was the use of a single case study. New Zealand has only a few unique cases involving NSO-PSF relationships. Therefore this may limit the transferability of the results.

Time also affected the ability to interview participants. A short time period only allowed participants the opportunity to respond in one interview of limited duration. Therefore, this study depended on a number of key participants being truthful in their responses while being able to provide the researcher with all the information he required.

Both the organisations and the participants involved in the study were provided confidentiality, therefore participants were given aliases and some content had to be replaced. This may contradict the purity of the participants' responses, as their responses were replaced with terms that are more generalisable.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has detailed the methods used in this study. A single case study was employed where semi-structured interviews were carried out with a critical mass of employees both at the NSO and PSF organisations. These participants were involved in the relationship between both organisations, and therefore were in the best position to comment. Questions were asked of participants relating to the areas of intent, transparency and

receptivity, in order to explore the determinants of learning within the case study organisations. However, the specific purpose of this research is to explore the determinants of inter-partner learning between a national sport organisation and professional sport franchise.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Overall, eleven interviews were conducted with participants in this study. This included five participants based at the NSO organisation and six at the PSF. This provided a significant mass of participants at each organisation. Interviews on average lasted approximately 30 minutes in length. This resulted in over 200 pages of transcript, with each interview containing an average of 20 pages. It was these transcripts that was analysed through the process of coding.

Three predetermined codes had been established before the analysis took place, based on the determinants of learning; intent, transparency and receptivity. A fourth category, 'relationship' was also developed in the coding process. Data was mainly coding in relation to the responses to each question. However, when the researcher thought a response suited a different category it was grouped accordingly.

As outlined previously, all participants interviewed were promised the opportunity of remaining anonymous. Therefore each participant was assigned an alias (table 3). Each alias abbreviated the type of organisation and gave the participant a unique identification number.

Table 3: Respondent Organisation and Abbreviations

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Participant Abbreviation</i>
National Sports Organisation	NSO1, NSO2, NSO3, NSO4, NSO5
Private Sport Franchise	PSF1, PSF2, PSF3, PSF4, PSF5, PSF6

Certain words in participant responses could potentially identify the organisations involved. For example, there were mention of organisational names, the type of sport, peoples' names, team names and sponsors. To assure that these organisations would be provided confidentiality anything that could identify them was replaced with an appropriate alias. Where an alias has been used this is shown in [square brackets]. This chapter begins with the findings from the NSO. Firstly, the relationship between the two organisations is presented. It then branches off to explore the determinants of learning: intent, transparency and receptivity.

4.2 Relationship

It was an important part of this research to explore the nature of the relationship that existed between the case study organisations. Sometimes it had been a negative one:

It would appear that historically the relationship hasn't been that great. Prior to [PSF6] coming on board, it was almost at a stage where there was no communication between the two organisations. That's changed quite a bit in the last eighteen months from what I'm told. (NSO1, personal communication, April 18, 2008)

Of those participants interviewed, two were involved with the organisation when the PSF was established. That may call into question their view as they are basing their opinions on hearsay. However that did not affect the overall response that all participants made in relation to this theme. Wanting to understand why there had been a negative relationship, NSO1 offered, it was "probably a combination of personnel and suspicion" (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

NSO4 has been involved in the organisation for a lengthy period, and was able to recall events where a senior member of the NSO had a heated verbal exchange with another senior member of the PSF (personal communication, 23 April, 2008). This apparently had

been one of the factors that had resulted in a rift between the organisations. Apart from this there was also a perceived fear of the establishment of the PSF in New Zealand, as explained by NSO4:

Oh, as I say I just think when they [the PSF] came in initially, there was a lot of fear that they were going to take things away from people who were already here, and to a certain extent that's happened, but you know, you've got to roll with it. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

Part of this fear was that the NSO thought the PSF was a competitor for the same pool of resources. A minor number of participants at the NSO identified that the PSF was a competitor in a few selected areas. NSO4 stated, "the [PSF] not only compete for players, they compete for sponsorship, they compete for facilities, and I think the big one is maybe sponsorship" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

When asked about the PSF as a competitor NSO5 said "I suppose technically they are, but we never saw them as a competitor, and that they took a sponsor off us or that they did this or they did that" (personal communication, June 3, 2008). NSO5 explained this notion that the PSF was a competitor:

So really there facility has become a competitor with the other facilities up and down the country that we've used... You see, we're a national sporting organisation, and yes they've got a facility, but they've become a competitor in the market of facilities (personal communication, June 3, 2008).

This historic perspective that had once seen the relationship between the organisations as very bleak, without nil communication had certainly changed, especially when this study took place. It would appear that this relationship had improved in the last couple of years as NSO4 reported "currently [it's] a very good one I think. [It's] still developing, but compared to what it was two or three, three or four years ago maybe, it's excellent" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

At the NSO there was consensus that this relationship had since developed into a positive one. When asked what had sparked this change in the relationship, participants made mention of a number of key personnel in both organisations. NSO1 affirmed, “Prior to PSF6 coming on board, it was almost at a stage where there was no communication” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). Other members supported this current positive relationship:

- “I think that the relationship between [the NSO] and the PSF is potentially [a] very good [one]” (NSO2, personal communication April 21, 2008).
- “It’s fair to say that it probably hasn’t, but it is and it will. Yes, it’s growing” (NSO1, personal communication, April 18, 2008).
- “The guys up there, [at the PSF] I think that we’ve kind of realised that we’re all in this for the same reasons, and have really moved to pool [ours NSO] resources” (NSO4, personal communication, April 23, 2008).

When discussing the type of relationship that existed there was no overall agreement on the form it took. NSO3 used the word ‘partnership’:

Probably, there’s certainly a, partnership, I think would be the best way to describe in terms of... there’s some share, certainly some shared goals and some shared sort of vision...So certainly, working in coordination and there’s definitely a working relationship. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO5 commented that it was an informal relationship, at a formal level, due to the NSOs involvement in regards to the licence of the PSF:

A requirement of the license application was that they needed to get approval from the federation that they came from, not represented. So because the team was [a] resident, wanted to be the resident of New Zealand, they were required under [the international governing body] regulations to get the approval of the federation that controlled [the sport] in that country. (personal communication, 22 May, 2008)

Interestingly NSO3 made this comment about the relationship: “probably if [the NSO] was over flowing with resources, it would probably discourage a relationship and a collaboration with the [PSF]” (personal communication, April 22, 2008).

However talk about the type of relationship seemed to focus on the upcoming signing of an over arching formal agreement between both organisations. It would seem that NSO1 was heavily involved in preparing this agreement:

I’m preparing a draft partnership agreement for a formal relationship between the [PSF] and [NSO]. I suppose the thawing in the approach has been through I suppose just an understanding over time of what the two organisations are about and how they can actually fit in the same space. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

While others weren’t quite so involved in its production they certainly we aware of it:

At the moment, there’s a finalisation of a partnership agreement that revolves primarily around the [PSF] facility...but it also encompasses the work that we do in partnership with their [programmes]. So there is a written memorandum and partnership agreement in production. (NSO3, personal communication, April 22, 2008)

With the pending signing of this document NSO4 saw the relationship strengthening:

As I say, the relationship we’ve had with them over previous years has been kind of an arm’s length one. We haven’t wanted to take too much involvement in their business, and I guess some elements of our community have seen them as kind of rivals. But right at the moment, we’re just getting together and formalising a relationship, a written relationship I guess, an agreement. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

While the agreement certainly strengthened the relationship NSO5, listed the benefits from the NSO point of view:

There’s an opportunity for from our point of view, the opportunity is that we could use that facility for our training camps and things like that, and that would be a way of assisting the [PSF] with their costs. (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

When asked about the advantage of the relationship that the NSO had with the PSF, respondents noted the PSF's ability to enhance the sport in New Zealand - being involved in this relationship allowed the NSO to tap into that opportunity. NSO5 noted:

Well, at the outset, we could see that the advantages of having a team in the Australian league were that it would give [the sport] a higher profile, a more consistent profile in New Zealand.... we were expecting that there would be greater television exposure for our sport in New Zealand. We were expecting that there would be a higher standard.... so given that we were anticipating there would be a higher standard of [our sport] on show in New Zealand. We were expecting that our players would be given more opportunities to play in that league. (personal communication, 22 May, 2008)

Remembering that in New Zealand the role of any NSO is to both grow and develop their sport from grass roots to the elite level, without the PSF the NSO was unable to provide this level of opportunity for the players to be involved in an elite PSL. NSO 4 talked about this benefit:

And the other thing that this brings in New Zealand is exposure is one thing but it also brings the players a lot more opportunities. Ten years ago, if you were a player coming out of school, and you wanted to become a good [sport] player, probably the ultimate thing you could do was go to the United States on a scholarship. But now there's another opportunity to link up with the [PSF] and other Australian clubs. Because before the [PSF] came along, when the New Zealanders played in the Aussie league, they were regarded as imports....Now that the [PSF] are in the league, New Zealanders are regarded as Australians, like Australians. And coincidentally in the last ten minutes I've just been talking to one of the other clubs in Australia, just trying to find some talented Kiwi players to help fill out their roster. So those are the kind of opportunities that have opened up. New Zealanders now don't only play for the [PSF], so all the other clubs want New Zealanders on their rosters as well, because they see that as a way of improving their team, without having to use import spots to do it. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

When asked what the NSO hoped to achieve from its relationship with the PSF, NSO3 described this combination of resources:

[T]here's a desire to try and best utilise resources. And sure there's not really any... if possible, to reduce duplication. So if the [PSF] have some physical or some coaching, or some playing resources, and [the NSO] does, there's certainly some coordination, and where possible, it's not always possible but if that can help avoid

some duplication, then, there's certainly some benefits there. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

While it made financial sense to partner up with the PSF, the NSO had an idea of shared goals. Working in unison to accomplish the same goals was expressed by a majority of NSO participants, for example NSO4 said:

[The NSOs] goal at all times is to try and promote the sport...., make it better for people in New Zealand to have a [sporting] experience. And I think the [PSF], I'm not suggesting that I'm speaking for the [PSF], but I would suspect their goal is the same. They see themselves as an elite [sporting] team, and they want to encourage people to become interested in [the sport] and come along to their games. And, you know, we're quite happy with that goal, we'd like to see that too. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

One theme that developed out of the data, was that of a development pathway. The NSO indicated their PSF counterpart was a pathway in their own organisation's development. No more was this pathway more evident than in the development of players at an elite level. NSO1 made specific reference to this pathway:

[I]t gives us that pathway for players, it gives us the ability to develop players without them having to leave New Zealand or go too far, ah, which in terms of our limited resources in terms of funds, that's an obvious benefit to us. It lets us see these players in action, and it lets us as I said before tap into the media opportunity created by a sport franchise in a professional league. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

Others were also supportive of this player development pathway. NSO2 said "it provides the professional environment for the players, for the players aspiring to play for [national team]" (personal communication, April 21, 2008).

The NSO indicated the PSF relationship was important in terms of this pathway. Hypothetically without the PSF things would be more difficult for the NSOs player development pathway. This is best illustrated by NSO1's response:

[L]ogistically it would be much more difficult because our players to get that experience and that exposure would need to go further offshore, and so therefore,

our support networks and our logistics in managing that and our funding has to be that more comprehensive. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

The current relationship had seen collaboration in a number of areas. These areas were outlined by the participants. One significant area of importance was a joint junior development programme for both organisations. NSO5 identified this programme:

[W]e have just set up with the [PSF], the [junior development] programme...The residential programme for the juniors which are the next wave we hope of [national team], so that's the key, that's the key at the moment in terms of collaborating. (personal communication, June 3, 2008).

NSO 4 was able to expand on the specifics of this junior develop programme:

[T]he main one is junior [national team] have quite a big year coming up...we have the opportunity to win the hosting rights for the world junior championships next year. If that's the case, then the junior [national team] will automatically qualify. And the plan is to get our junior [national team] players based at the [PSF] facility for the entire second term of the school year, next year....this is trying to simulate that I guess, just for that one term, get those players together playing as team, getting them training consistently day in and day out. And they'll be based with the [PSF].... [PSF2], he's a development coach up at the [PSF], he'll play a hand in that. So that's the main calibration we've got at the moment. The other thing is we've got a [national team] camp coming up...We'll base our practices at the [PSF] facility. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

NSO3 supported this junior development collaboration, and also identified some other synergies:

[T]he first one is player development, in terms of with the junior men players across the country. There's also coordination around scheduling, with the [national team] and [PSF] players. There's some talent identification, where there'll be meetings at least twice a year, oh with the national coaching staff and the [PSF] organisation, just as far as where players, players sit. And there's also that informal relationship of coaches in both programmes sharing sort of information about players. (personal communication, April 22, 2008).

NSO2 felt there was more collaboration at the management level, but also identified coaching and junior development:

[I]t's mainly the management, but also the coaches. And there are crossovers, the paths are crossing really there, like [PSF1] has become an assistant coach for the [PSF] and assistant coach for the [national team] as well. And [PSF2] is also involved with, with [the PSF] [junior development programme], who is head coach of [PSF] [junior development programme]... is involved with the junior coaching as well. They came to the all New Zealand camps, which is a junior camp. So yes, I mean there is a lot of interaction there. (personal communication, April 21, 2008)

While NSO1 confirmed collaboration at the coaching level, they also introduced a new area - sponsorship:

[W]e're just at the moment doing some work around not so much joint sponsorship activities but supporting each other in terms of sponsorship opportunities. Now, I don't think we're anywhere near at the moment having a sponsor like [sponsor A] for example that sponsors the [PSF] and [NSO]. But if we can help the [PSF] to secure [sponsor A] for them and they help us secure [sponsor B], I'm just using an example, we can work together in that regard. So there is opportunities for that. There is obviously opportunities for sharing coaching resources... Now there are clear synergies there because God willing, there'll be Kiwis playing in the [PSF] who will also be playing in the [national team], so they get access to that expertise. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

It was NSO3 that offered this summary:

[T]here's certainly collaboration at a , at a governance level between the board of [the NSO] and the Boards of [the PSF] There's collaboration at senior management level in terms of the development of partnership agreements, memorandum of understanding between the general manager of the [PSF] and the CEO of [the NSO]. And then there's operational level collaboration where, so I work quite closely with the [PSF] coaching staff and, and some other national team coaches. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

4.3 Intent

Opportunity was the first theme to appear. This developed mainly out of whether the NSO saw their relationship with the PSF as an opportunity to learn. Most participants, such as NSO1, confirmed the opportunity existed to learn by stating "Oh absolutely, yes it would be naïve and arrogant to think that you can't learn off somebody and anybody. We can obviously learn off them [the PSF]" (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

While those at the NSO saw the opportunity existed, they were quick to note that the PSF could also learn from the relationship, displaying what could be called symmetrical learning. NSO3 quoted:

[T]here's certainly some stuff that the [PSF] are doing as a professional club that we'd like to put in place. And certainly the [PSF] have worked with us surrounding some international trends and what's happening internationally, with [the sport]. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO2 also supported this symmetrical learning:

[L]earning can go both ways. And I think that, because in [the NSO], although it is a non-profit organisation, it's got a lot of professional people working for the organisation, so I think the you know the learning can go both ways, and should go both ways. I think both organisations can benefit from learning, from each other. (personal communication, April 21, 2008)

It would appear that the NSO as an organisation was intent on learning from the PSF. Only NSO5 expressed an organisational view of limited intent by replying, "up until now they [the NSO] wouldn't have looked at it like that" (personal communication, June 3, 2008).

It would even appear that a learning intent had been discussed within the organisation. When speaking about the organisation, in terms of staff, NSO1 mentioned "they're all very motivated, and I've spoken with them all about their own specific and personal objectives, and they're very much in that learning mode. So I think enthusiastic is a very appropriate word for them" (personal communication, April 18, 2008). When further pressed on whether the NSO was doing all it could to learn from the PSF, the overall response was - no. NSO1 expanded on this point:

[P]robably not, probably not to date and there's probably more we can do. In an ideal world, I'd like to my staff interacting on a regular basis with them and then coming into our office and doing bits and pieces, but that's the thing that will come over time as we strengthen the partnership relationship. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

Other participants supported this believing more could be done to learn. NSO 4 commenting: “Ah, [chuckle and pause] well I guess you can always do more” (personal communication, April 23, 2008). While NSO3 further clarified: “I think you can always do more to learn from anyone.... but probably no” (personal communication, April 22, 2008). When asked to further expand on what more could be done to learn, NSO3 referred to the partnership document: “I think that’s part of what we’re negotiating at the moment” (personal communication, April 22, 2008).

Those at the NSO were keen to utilise the resources of the PSF. It was explained that they viewed the PSF facility as an opportunity to learn. NSO5 expanded in that opportunity:

[T]hey’ve got the facility, there’s an opportunity for from our point of view, the opportunity is that we could use that facility for our training camps and things like that, and that would be a way of assisting the [PSF] with their costs. (personal communication, 3 June, 2008)

This resource was seen as hugely valuable for the NSO, as without the financial resource of the PSF the NSO would have never had the financial backing to develop a similar facility. The researcher certainly through his interaction with the participants felt a vibe that the opportunity to use the NSO resources was an exciting prospect.

Participants were queried as to whether they saw the PSF as a source of knowledge which they could tap into. Opinions within the NSO varied. NSO3 stated:

Probably not across the board in terms of operational staff, but certainly some of the [NSO] staff, which we have learned staff and coaching staff would certainly at various levels look at the [PSF] as an organisation to learn from, yes. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

However, NSO2 said “yes, certainly there is a knowledge there that [the NSO] can tap into” (personal communication, April 21, 2008). It was NSO4 who was aware that the PSF were a source, providing an example that they could possibly access: “Like I know that

the [PSF5] has maybe just come back from the States, where he's been visiting various [sporting] facilities over there. There's obviously stuff that he's seen that maybe we can tap into" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

NSO participants were quick to point out their organisation was not a leech in so far as they received more knowledge than what they contributed. Participants suggested that the PSF could learn much from the NSO. NSO2 indicated "but again it goes both ways, where [the PSF] can tap into the [NSO] experience and knowledge" (personal communication, April 21, 2008). NSO4 offered a supporting view "hopefully they see us as a source of knowledge too (personal communication, April 23, 2008). When asked to give an example of where they could learn of the PSF and vice versa NSO1 provided this example:

I think possibly right here and now we probably have a better grasp of junior development programmes and talent identification across the country. I'm sure that the [PSF] have talent scouts for them. They probably do a better job offshore, we probably do a better job here. And so there's certain areas that they can learn off from us in that regard. And probably our government relations, our relations with key stakeholders within the sport is areas we can help these guys. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

When wanting to understand whether learning from the PSF was either a quick fix or a long term objective, it was quite clear that the NSO were in consensus that they were more interested in learning into the future. NSO1 elaborated:

Depends what the issue is. Some things if they're very operational, they're a five minute answer. But in terms of overall strategy for development of the sport, for growing our talent base, for presenting the sport in the public spectrum, those are very much long term learning opportunities. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

NSO3 also supported this long term objective:

[T]here's not really I suppose a, a definitive problem going to the [PSF] with, and to say, well, answer this. So I guess it would be the latter to some extent, in terms of trying to look at it better and more effective framework, programmes, approach to

[the sport] in the country. And that's the kind of coordination and collaboration that we talk about. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

4.4 Transparency

It was evident that the NSO appeared to be a highly transparent organisation. The researcher acknowledged the fact that they had allowed him into the organisation as an outsider to conduct his research. This somewhat alluded that there were some levels of transparency existent within the organisation. Participants made reference to this fact. "I think it is because you rang me up and I'm...and I'm sitting here a week and a half later. Everybody in the world has got my phone number," said NSO 5 (personal communication, June 3, 2008).

When asked to offer insight into the openness of the organisation NSO4 offered this opinion:

Oh, yes, you'll have to buy us a bourbon and we'll you know, talk to you! But you know, it's part of our job to be open to the [sporting] community, and to hear issues and discuss solutions, so if we are difficult to get to know, we shouldn't be. So, all our phone ...I think that's the same in a lot of national sports organisations are, on the website, all our mobiles are up there I think, so it's just a matter of giving us a call, and we'll take the call. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO1 also supported an open attitude "but I think overall [the] head office is fairly straightforward, we certainly don't hide anything (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

From the previous responses the NSO had an open door policy that was quite widespread. It seemed that this NSO was just as open towards anyone within its sporting community, such as its respective regional sporting organisations, as well as the PSF. In one way this could be seen as a positive as the NSO is open to the PSF. However, did the NSO value its relationship with the PSF to any greater degree than that of any other

organisation? Criticisms of the NSO not valuing the relationship could be invalidated when NSO1 commented:

What I've tried to do is normalise the situation and it's not us and them, you know the [PSF] is part of [the sport]. And very much they're part of the discussions if we're doing this or doing that. I don't sort of just distinguish between the two. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

NSO3 also supported the importance of this relationship by indicating, "as I say the [PSF] are doing [the sport] a huge service in New Zealand and that's part of our goal as well" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

The NSO felt that due to their non-profit status the right to protection from the PSF was thwarted. NSO5 commented: "No, because we're not allowed to, because they're the public and we've got to disclose everything, because we're an incorporated society (personal communication, June 3, 2008). NSO3 also supported this: "Being a sort of public not a public listed company or anything, but certainly being funded through SPARC and working as a servant to a membership, everything is usually out on the table" (personal communication, April 22, 2008).

This non-profit/incorporated society sector that the NSO were certainly part of, allowed certain areas to be visible to anyone. However there were a few specific areas, such as player contracts, financial and organisational issues that the NSO felt needed protecting from the PSF. NSO1 was clear on what they wouldn't divulge:

[W]e certainly wouldn't give them details of contracts that we hold with sponsors or whatever, but then, we wouldn't ask for theirs. That's just commercial business sense. But I don't think there's anything else in terms of intellectual property that we'd particularly hold. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

These relatively few areas that needed protection could possibly imply that the NSO to some extent had a certain level of trust in the PSF. Speaking of behalf of the NSO, NSO1 said: "[we] don't see any specific need to protect [the sport] from the PSF at all" (personal

communication, April 18, 2008). This point was made that they would be protective of certain things, but this was not just limited to their dealings with the PSF. NSO3 alluded to this:

I mean there may be some delicate financial issues, but certainly the strategic direction, the technical approach of the team and stuff; they're not sort of direct competitors to any of our teams, so in that sense, no. I mean there might also be some organisational stuff which wouldn't be out in the public realm for anyone. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO1 reiterated:

I mean the stuff we wouldn't share would be the stuff we wouldn't share with anybody. I know, I mean, I'm not going to go racing off to a [NSO in Australia] and tell them what we pay [one of our players]. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

It was NSO4 who did mention being protective of sponsors, which seemed to hark back to the negative relationship in the past:

We might be loathe to share marketing, you know, sponsorship things. I think we still are, there's still a rivalry in that area. And I don't know that we necessarily want them to know that we're approaching a certain company for sponsorship. They might see that as an opportunity for them to jump in as well. Ah, but you know, that's part and parcel of any relationship, there are some things that you don't want to reveal. So I hope that in terms of developing the sport, we share information quite freely. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

It was NSO4 who seemed to think the organisation had to be protective of its sponsors. Without revealing the identities of the organisations involved, a sponsor with the NSO became a sponsor of the PSF. NSO4 explained the situation:

One of our big sponsors several years ago was [sponsor X]. They used to sponsor the [national team] and also our national league. But the [national team] sponsorship has kind of fallen away, mainly because the [national team] have very limited exposure in New Zealand, but we don't have very many international games in New Zealand in a year. Whereas the [PSF] have come along and they have [a great more games than the national team], plus any play offs they make. So, that's guaranteed exposure for [sponsor X], and maybe they saw that as a more attractive proposition. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

NSO4 explained why they should be protective “ They’ve got sponsors now that were our sponsors three or four years ago, and they’re probably planning to jump on sponsors that we’ve currently got” (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

When asked about their willingness to share participants expressed a positive intent to share. NSO5 said “Oh, absolutely” (personal communication, June 3, 2008). NSO4 expressed a similar view stating “Absolutely, there’s no reason not to. And as I say the [PSF] are doing [the sport] a huge service in New Zealand and that’s part of our goal as well, so why wouldn’t we” (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

NSO4 pointed out that the PSF were clearly willing to share, and “they’ve been very forthcoming in their information and I hope that the flow of information is just as good the other way” (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

When asked to expand on this NSO4 said:

[W]e had a wad of national league meetings, but a couple of years ago I attended one where we sat around for two days discussing how to make the league better. [PSF3] came in and gave us a few ideas about what happens in the Australian league. You know, there’s certainly no reason for [PSF3] to do that, especially at the time, you know I guess there was a lot of suspicion about the [PSF]. I think that kind of attitude helps break down suspicion. And he was, shed a lot of light on the situation, and did give us a few ideas that might help us. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

NSO5 also supported this:

The [PSF] have [PSF3], has been part of our [national competition] planning weekends. And he’s come along and presented, you know, what they do, in terms of how they get people to the games, what they do with their marketing and promotions, and their schools’ development programme. (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

A willingness to share was evident within the NSO. They viewed the benefit for both their organisation and the sport. This sharing was already happening in particular areas. For example, NSO3 alluded to sharing that was already occurring:

[W]e'll come back from the international tournaments. We'll share some of the trends and observations from those tournaments. With respect to sort of privacy agreements, the coaches will share information about the players, and which players they have on the radar and which players are kind of doing well. Obviously a lot of that stuff could always be done better if you've got a lot of busy people. But certainly there's a willingness there to share that type of information. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

Stating there is a willingness to share, actually saying that you will share, and then delivering on that still remains to be seen. It is probably reliant on the PSF as to whether they will take the NSO up on their offer.

There seemed to be a culture of openness that existed in the NSO as outlined by NSO4, "One of the things I think that we've done to try and make a closer relationship with the [PSF] is, you pick your level and you liaise with that person of that level at the [PSF]" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

For example both the communications people would update and share with each other prior to their respective organisations issuing press releases. NSO4 detailed "if there were any press releases they were putting out, we'd get them. If there were any press releases we were putting out, they'd get them" (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

Other respondents were able to provide example of exchange between partner members:

So for example, for a long time, [sponsor X] was a shared sponsor of the two organisations. And there's former members of the [NSO board] are on the [PSF] Board, and there's shared patrons and things along those lines. So, there's kind of an understanding of people who are supportive of [the sport], and there's certainly a sharing of that information. (NSO3, personal communication, April 22, 2008)

- "I know that I have a couple of staff that contact them, and they have a couple of staff that contact our guys" (NSO1, personal communication, April 18, 2008).

- “[T]heir video analysts came down to one of the SPARC courses to work with our guys. And I’m sure our physiotherapists work with their chap on a very operational level” (NSO1, personal communication, April 18, 2008).

While the sharing of tangible documents did not seem to occur that regularly, there was sharing of ideas that could benefit the sport. NSO1 stated, “Certainly [we] share ideas, we’ve already had some meetings in that regard with them. Ah, reports, um, yes, there is some that we share, yes” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). NSO1 further explained that “ideas about marketing the sport, ideas around securing and retaining talent and ideas” were shared (personal communication, April 18, 2008). NSO4 too supported this sharing of ideas: “certainly [we] share ideas” (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

Further backing up with an example of another respondent:

I know NSO3 is quite innovative in some of the things he does in terms of developing coaches. Um, and so he has a lot of ideas and he’s only too willing to share them, and I’m sure that the [PSF] could benefit from that too. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

What was evident throughout the interview process was that a number of key individuals were the backbone to this transparent relationship that existed between these partners. These were the same people that had helped to turn around the relationship from a negative one to a positive one. At the NSO from their perception, it was the introduction of a leader who had initiated this. For example, NSO1 said “PSF6 is a close friend of mine anyway, so we have a very clear and transparent understanding of what we want to achieve in terms of everyone working together” (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

It is of interest to note here that the exact word ‘transparent’ was mentioned by the participant. Understandably this was highly unexpected as the researcher had not prompted the participant any way. Other participants also mentioned their relationships with other PSF personnel. NSO2 explained “I’ve got a very good relationship with both [PSF5] and

[PSF1], and [PSF2] and ... the owner of the [PSF]" (personal communication, April 21, 2008).

NSO4 was able to provide an overall perspective:

Coaching people liaise with their coaches, you know, [the] CEO liaises with their general manager. The Board relates with their Board. One thing that's helped us [PSF6]... he used to be on the [NSO] Board as well.... him there with almost a foot in each camp has really helped the relationship grow. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

Other respondents such as NSO1, were able to provide evidence of the constant communication that existed "I'm in regular contact with the [PSF] now, I mean their marketing team has spoken to me twice this week , as I say, I'm putting documentation across to [PSF3] next week" (personal communication, April 18, 2008). PSF3 also spoke of regular contact with the NSO3, "It would be at least on a weekly basis, perhaps even more. If the [junior] programme wasn't there, then it would probably be realistically be less, but because we're working very closely on this programme" (personal communication April 22, 2008).

4.5 Receptivity

When questioned, as to the ability of the organisation to learn, most participants were mixed in their opinions. Some respondents did not call into question their ability.

NSO4 said:

Our ability to learn from the [PSF is] probably the same as our ability to learn from anything. I guess you learn a lot of ways, you learn from mistakes and you learn from advice. Ah, so, no, I would hope that our ability to learn is pretty good. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

NSO1 further expanded on the previous response:

[W]ith the staff that we've got here, I would describe it as very good. There's no from what I can see, impediment from patch protection or habits that have to be changed. All our guys are pretty flexible and keen to do what's best for the sport (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

NSO2 was also in agreement with the ability of the NSO to learn "I would say that [the NSO] have got great ability to learn from the [PSF] because the people in [the NSO] have got the vision, and have got the ability to learn" (personal communication, April 21, 2008).

However some impediments were starting to show as outlined by NSO3:

[T]here's a receptiveness to it. There's some capacity issues around both organisations, whether that's geographic or just time, and focus areas, as I said there's a different focus areas in some aspects, where the promotion, marketing, I suppose of [the NSO] is around a membership driven organisation, as opposed, with some elements of the single team or teams as our national team, whereas the [PSF] is obviously driven around primarily promoting and supporting their [Australian league] team. So, in that sense there's some difference in the core operation of both organisations, but the similarities, or the areas that are shared, there's a willingness to learn, sometimes due to capacity of both organisations. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

As a matter of significance to this study NSO3 used the word receptiveness, without any prompting from the researcher.

One clear impediment was the resources of the NSO. NSO3 alluded to being overstretched, which meant they didn't have the opportunity to learn:

There's a reduced number of staff working on a increased number of projects with quite a wide focus and remit. So there are times where actually delivering operational tasks can come ahead of actual organisational or personal and learning development. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO5 seemed to support this view of a limited resource base:

There's a willingness, there's absolutely a willingness, but it comes back down to what I talked about before, the resources within the management. People don't wake up every day and think, I mean, there's their own business to do. (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

When probed further as to why this organisation seemed to have low receptivity two factors became apparent - a high employee turnover rate and inconsistent leadership. Firstly, it would appear that the NSO was made up of a relatively young group of individuals, according to NSO1 “the average age of the staff here, take me out of the equation, is about 23” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). It was more than this; it was the constant flow of inbound and outbound staff that reduced the ability to be receptive to learning. NSO2 suggested that “obviously, with [the NSO], there is a flow of people going through. There wouldn’t be that many people employed by [the NSO] that had been there a long time” (personal communication, April 21, 2008)

Others also noted this employee turnover rate, such as NSO4 “but as I say one of the issues I guess with [the NSO] as an organisation is we do have a high turnover rate (personal communication, April 23, 2008). NSO3 also supported this “staff turnover which is where, we’re quite a transient industry, as you probably know, so there’s a number of staff turnover” (NSO3, personal communication, April 22, 2008).

Any organisational learning had presumably exited the organisation when that staff member left. NSO4 gave supporting evidence that more needed to be done to retain what had been learned: “Quite often you lose a lot of those lessons when people leave, and they have to be learnt all over again. So, yes, that’s an issue that affects our ability to learn from anything” (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

When probed further to gauge what was been done to retain what had been learnt NSO4 responded with “I guess it’s a matter of trying to have some overlap between people leaving and people arriving” (personal communication, April 23, 2008). More needed to be done to retain those lessons learned.

The next factor that seemed to affect the organisations ability to learn was inconsistent leadership. NSO5 addressed this issue:

[The NSO] has had inconsistency of leadership from a management point of view, in that we've got a brand new CEO, we had a CEO last year who left after six months, and the year before that we had an interim CEO. So there hasn't been consistency of leadership (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

NSO5 further justified this:

Well, as I said to you before, the lack of leadership out of the [NSO] office over the last three years has meant that no, they haven't and they aren't. And they it's not that they don't recognise it, and it's not an excuse, but as an organisation they don't[learn] and they haven't, but I'm expecting that they will going forward (personal communication, June 2003, 2008).

When asked to justify the NSO as either a teacher or a student in the relationship responses were mixed. NSO2 seemed to think that due to its history the NSO was automatically a teacher: "Well, [the NSO] can be a teacher to the [PSF], just simpl[y], right from the start. They needed some experience in terms of organising events, in terms of knowledge of the local players, because they started from scratch" (personal communication, April 21, 2008). NSO5 also seemed to support the NSO as a teacher:

[the NSO] is the teacher because, not because, [the NSO] as the organisation that's affiliated to [international governing body]. We have the, we are the organisation that [international governing body] has asked, or given authority to develop the game, and promote the game and look after the game in our country...the standards that we set, and I go back to when we set the agreement with [the Australian NSO], between [the Australian NSO] and [the NSO] for the running, when this team wanted to enter the league, I think the decisions that we made at that time are the reason why the [PSF] are delivering at, how do I say it, let me just get it right. I think the standards that we set around the game in terms of the agreement between [the Australian NSO] and [the NSO] have set the basis for how the organisation runs itself, and some of the good things that are happening out of it. And specifically the fact that the New Zealand players are playing in the Australian league now. The fact that our referees referee...in Australia as well. I think it's been good for refereeing. The fact that our....people had to go and get properly trained and all those things. Those were all things that [the NSO] set as the basis for the agreement between the two countries when this team was afforded a license. Now....So as I say, we're part of the international body but we've actually helped develop some regulations internationally as a result of it. (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

In certain areas the NSO1 thought it was a teacher to the PSF. NSO1 said “our player development pathways, our coaching framework, probably our stakeholder management for like key agencies, government agencies” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). NSO4 believed the NSO was able to teacher due to their involvement in the sport internationally:

[O]bviously we have opportunities to attend certain things that the [PSF] don't, I mean our coaches, our players go the world championships and we learn stuff there. Stuff that can be cut , brought back and applied to national, to clubs like the [PSF] and vice versa. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

While the previous respondents expressed a teacher's view, others, like NSO1, though it more symmetrical: “I don't think we can classify one as the other. I think at different times we can probably change role” (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

Others also agreed with this symmetrical view, like NSO4:

Oh, I don't think there is, I don't think those roles are defined. You know, we both have some things to learn off each other. And, to be fair, if you go back to the original proverb or the original philosophy, the teacher probably learns as much from the student as the other way, if he's a good teacher. (personal communication, April 23, 2008)

So too did NSO3:

I think both probably describe it more as either both groups are students or both teachers or both organisations are teachers and they're collaborating to make their actual learning or teaching better. In saying that, it's actually clear that, this is a student, this is a teacher. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

NSO3 further backed up the response:

there's collaboration of resources, collaboration of best practice , some staff and organisational collaboration to best meet those goals, rather than saying well, either the [PSF] can learn everything off [the NSO] in that regard, or [the NSO] can learn everything off the [PSF]. It's probably more a collaboration and sharing than a this person is the teacher, that person is the student. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

Participants were asked to describe the organisation as a student to understand their learning attitude. A majority of respondents suggested a positive student-like attitude. NSO2, for example, said: “it would be a very good student (personal communication, April 21, 2008). NSO5 also concurred “I actually think we’re a really good student when it comes to learning (personal communication, June 3, 2008).

NSO4 took a more broad approach “I’d like to think open-minded. But again, that relates to the organisation as a whole.... But I, that’s a general statement” (personal communication, April 23, 2008). NSO1 foresaw a future goal of the NSO “I would use the adjective enthusiastic, as a student...I don’t know what it used to be like but that’s how I’d like to see us” (personal communication, April 18, 2008).

It was NSO3 that disagreed with these previous responses justifying the inabilities of the NSO as a student:

I would say there’d be some aspects as an organisation, as a student overstretched, so that might prohibit some level of learning. Overstretched by capacity to, it would almost be like the best analogy would be a student who’s working full time and trying to squeeze a Masters degree around a 60 hour a week job. (personal communication, April 22, 2008)

When wanting to understand the capacity of the NSO in what had been learnt participants were unable to elaborate on any such examples. However when further probed about what areas that they could possibly learn from the PSF some respondents were able to elaborate. For example NSO1 felt that they lacked the skills in the area of marketing “probably marketing and branding opportunities, I think they’re ahead of us in that regard” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). NSO5 also supported this “they’ve got lots of tell us about go-go girls and people [doing sporting tricks]. Well that’s all the marketing and promotional side of the game” (personal communication, June 3, 2008)

However in an unusual move, likely due to the resource inadequacy of the NSO, an external marketing company was learning on behalf of the NSO. NSO1 explained that “I’ve got a marketing company looking very closely at that and they’ve spoken comprehensively with the [PSF] about what they do, so I think we’re very quickly catching up in that regard” (personal communication, April 18, 2008). NSO4 elaborated on how they could enhance the national league competition, by learning from the PSF’s involvement in the Australian League by indicating “You know, the [PSF] are in the Australian league, so they learn, they’ve got a wealth of information about how that league operates and it’s stuff that we can learn from to operate our league” (personal communication, April 23, 2008).

4.6 PSF Findings

This remaining section of this chapter contains the findings based on the interviews with participants at the PSF.

4.7 Relationship

Overall, a majority of participants agreed that the relationship that they had with their NSO partner in the past was negative. PSF1 said “in the past there hasn’t been a great link” (personal communication, April 14, 2008). There had not been much communication “in the past we haven’t had a lot of communication with [the NSO]” (PSF4, personal communication, April 24, 2008). This level of communication was at a stage where “it suddenly felt like both organisations weren’t prepared to talk to each other” (PSF6, personal communication, May 26, 2008).

“Initially when we started (referring to the establishment of the PSF) it probably wasn’t, it was the two very separate entities” (PSF3, personal communication, April 16,

2008). PSF5 believed the “the two organisations saw each other perhaps as threats or hindrances to their development” (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

PSF6 believed this was because the NSO felt threatened by their emergence “I think historically it has been quite a tense relationship. I think [the NSO] feel threatened by what we’ve been doing, and it’s interesting because we don’t feel threatened by them at all” (personal communication, May 26, 2008). It appeared that at the current time that interviews were conducted the relationship had advanced. That negative relationship was developing into a much more positive one. PSF3 said “I think it’s positive right now” (personal communication, April 16, 2008).

PSF2 detailed the developing relationship due to the areas of collaboration:

It’s building. When I first came on board there was no [junior development programme] up in place, so the only interaction they would have had would have been with the [national team] and the [PSF]. But now there’s a lot more happening now (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF1 explained there would be more collaboration with the NSO teams utilising their facility “that will happen more with the [national men’s] and the women’s team and junior [national team] coming in here and using this venue, where we’ll have easy access to sit down and chat” (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

While some participants elaborated on the relationship improving from its previous state “in one word I’d say improving” (PSF6, personal communication, May 26, 2008).

PSF4 commented on its improvement due to the appointment of NSO1, “That [relationship] has since improved with the appointment of [NSO1]... So that he’s trying to make some changes at [the NSO]. So, in turn we’ve had about a little bit more communication” (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

PSF5 also talked about communication:

Since I've come on board, and certainly with the help of our board, we've really tried to open up the communication channels with [the NSO] and work together.... I think it's getting there. I think it's still got a little ways to go. But certainly the communication dialogue is much better now. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF 6 seemed to think the relationship had developed "So we are starting to work much closer together. We have, a, yes, I think the relationship has improved a hell of a lot, it really is starting to come right at last" (personal communication, May 26, 2008).

However PSF1 realised it was not yet perfect "I guess in my six months years here, yep it's not perfect yet" (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

There was consensus that the relationship was a huge benefit for the sport in New Zealand. PSF5 explained this:

I think there's a couple of points, firstly if it's good for [the sport], it's good for us, you know, it's part of it. The stronger the game is in the country, the better we're all going to be, both parties are going to be better off. I think from a purely selfish point of view, we're looking for [the NSO] to have the structures in place to develop the kids, and develop the coaches to a level where the kids that are being developed are good enough to come and play for us as [the PSF]. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF6 also alluded to the combining of resources that could both benefit the sport:

[A]nd we're in, one of the key things that we want to do is.... to make use of every buck that comes along. And if we can get some extra bucks and they can get some extra bucks, let's work out how we can work together and make it work. So we are trying to work much closer with them. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

However, PSF3 seemed quite adamant that they were in a way unique in comparison to the NSO, serving a different part of the sporting market in New Zealand:

Obviously we're a professional club, they're (the NSO) a governing body. So they're quite the two of us are quite different in what we're trying to do, we have one team that we're trying to make the best, they are trying to cater to [the sport] across the country. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

When asked to identify areas of collaboration in the relationship all participants were able to identify an array of collaborative areas. According to PSF5 there was collaboration involving junior development “we’ve started really in the junior levels, where we’re really getting some good communication, putting some joint programmes in there” (personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF2 also supported this:

What we’ve come up with is in term two of the school year which starts in May, the junior [national] team will come up and base themselves here, train with us in our [junior development] programme, compete as a team in the second division league. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

Apart from collaboration in the junior area, the PSF were also allowing the NSO teams use of their facility “we’ve offered our facilities now for them [the NSO] to practice in and all our equipment as far as scouting equipment and weights and all that sort of stuff, which is good, good situation” (PSF5, personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF3 was able to summarize the previous area of collaboration:

The [national team] will be holding their pre-qualifying camp here. We are running the junior [national team] programme as an [junior development] programme, so yes, we’ve merged a lot of the functions of the two companies as much as possible. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

Areas of collaboration will only become stronger with the upcoming signing of a formal agreement, “we have [a] working relationship and we’re just in the process of finalising a partnership document with how the two organisations work” (PSF3, personal communication, April 16, 2008).

Already a joint document had been signed encompassing the joint junior development programme between the organisations, as mentioned previously:

Yes, as far as the [junior development programme] and [the NSO], there’s an understanding of the Term Two programme I was talking about, we call it a residential programme. There’s an understanding of clarity just in the documents that outlines why we’re doing this, who’s responsible for what, which is yes, this is

obviously doing it. So on that level anyway there's an agreement there. (PSF2, personal communication, April 14, 2008)

To confirm the joint (junior development) programme document had been signed, while the partnerships document was in its draft stage. PSF3 confirms that “the agreement for the [junior development programme] is specifically related to that programme, but the partnership document will be all encompassing for all of the sort of services and things that are exchanged, and how that works” (personal communication, April 16, 2008).

Another point of collaboration contact involved a current employee who had a dual role with both the PSF and NSO. PSF1 mentioned that the “link will be greater now” between the two organisations (personal communication, April 14, 2008). PSF1 further elaborated on its significance “we (the PSF) haven't had a [employee] from the (PSF) being with the staff of the [national team]” (personal communication, April 14, 2008). PSF5 also commented on this appointment, “my [fellow colleague] is an assistant [role] to the [national team] programme, so we're starting to get that cross-pollination, which is good” (PSF5, April 24, 2008). PSF also confirmed this dual role “So, currently [PSF1], is the [national team] assistant [position]” (PSF3, April 16, 2008).

Another area of collaboration involved players who were both involved in the national men's team and the PSF team, as PSF1 explains:

But we certainly, in our recruiting, in our scouting, we certainly look for the best players possible – Australian, New Zealander or whatever, but we prefer to have New Zealand based players playing in the [PSF] as we know, you know, it, helps [the sport] here and it helps the [national team] if we have these guys playing here as well. It's never going to be a situation where all the [national team] are playing, you know, for the [PSF]... we've certainly got, you know, the most amount of [new Zealanders] that we've ever had in this group. (personal communication, April 18, 2008)

Members of the PSF saw the relationship they had with the NSO as a working relationship, and the up and coming signing of the document as a formal partnership. PSF4

said, “It’s always been a working relationship (personal communication, April 24, 2008. While currently there were different areas of collaboration, a partnership document was needed to finalise the arrangement in a formal manner. PSF2 stated that “[the NSO] and us now have a partnership looking ahead (personal communication, April 14, 2008). That partnership signalled a great, and closer working relationship in the future “we’re trying to get an overall agreement. So we are starting to work much closer together (PSF6, personal communication, May 26, 2008.)

When it came to the potential benefits from the relationship a number of desirable outcomes were mentioned. PSF2 elaborated on bettering the number of New Zealand players who were jointly involved in the PSF and NSO elite teams:

To have open communication with dealing with players and athletes, we’re both pulling them here for the [PSF] team and they want them to represent the national team...And we all want what’s best for the athlete and for them to go as high as they can, and if that’s to represent their country or play professional here in New Zealand... And so by us being in communication with the national body, it just means there’s kind of more of a stronger message going to the athlete. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF1 further backed that up, by indicating, “there’s a give and take with us and [the NSO] and how we manage the players time effectively, and how we manage their bodies as well (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

The next objective that a majority of participants echoed was the benefit that the relationship would have on the sport. For example PSF3 said:

[W]e want to get as many people as possible interested in and playing [the sport], and we also want to make sure that the best talent is developed to the highest level it can be, and is also available for us. We ideally want to have the best New Zealanders playing for us. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

PSF6 also reiterated this, wanting “to make sure that we’re not doubling up, and try and raise the standard of [the sport] in New Zealand” (personal communication, May 26, 2008).

From a PSF perspective they were looking to feed off the NSO’s player development pathway, as PSF4 explains:

[H]ow do I describe this, mainly being that a pathway for younger kids to realise how they go about playing [the sport] in New Zealand, where to play, how to play, learning to play, and then the steps and mechanisms and facilities and everything available to them through [the NSO] to create that passion for [the sport]. And then in turn what happens after school with [the sport], what kind of path can you take in [the sport]. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF5 also reiterated this player development pathway, and the strengthening of the sport within in New Zealand:

There’s a couple of points, firstly if it’s good for [the sport] it’s good for us, you know, it’s part of it. The stronger the game is in the country, the better we’re all going to be, both parties are going to be better off. I think from a purely selfish point of view, we’re looking for [the NSO] to have the structures in place to develop the kids, and develop the coaches to a level where the kids that are being developed are good enough to come and play for us as [PSF]...But, yes, getting the kids into the game is something that we need [NSO] to do, getting them playing [the sport] so that there’s a lot more interest within it. Ultimately we have a bigger talent pool of kids coming through as well, which is good for us, because we need this team to be full of New Zealanders in order to survive. And so the bigger the talent pool, the bigger the talent level of those kids coming through, the better it is for us. (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

When asked about the NSO’s importance in relation to the PSF, PSF6 was quite frank, though realised they were important:

If I was being particular honest in one way, I would say they’re nothing to us but a pain the butt. They want their players to play in the international zone, which is fine. And that comes right up and finishes just before we start playing [in the league], sort of two weeks out. So they’re a pain in the butt from that, but I mean they are important, because they do a whole lot of things in [the sport] that we don’t ever want to have anything to do with anyway, and I mean, we can’t. We need to stay focused on our core business which is trying to win a championship in Australia...The coaching and things that we do needs to fit in with [the NSO], and it’s the area that they should be running and doing, it really is. So yes, it is

important, it's important for [the sport, it's the public face of [the sport] in New Zealand. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

The NSO however was crucial to the PSF competing in the Australian competition. The NSO had to firstly approve the PSF to compete in the PSL each year. PSF5 said “without them we can't compete in the competition, that's the first thing. They endorse us to compete in the Australian league” (personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF6 also mentioned the NSO “they have to OK it. Basically it's a rubber stamp, but yes, they have to OK it (personal communication, May 26, 2008). PSF3 also supported this, and mentioned the NSO governance of the sport in New Zealand:

Yes, definitely. We play in the Australian...league, and yet we have governance under, to an extent under New Zealand, [the NSO]. For example, any of our players have to be cleared by [the NSO] to play rather than [the Australian NSO]. And also they govern the game in New Zealand, and we need the game to be as strong as possible, and the better the [national team] are, the more interest in the game and all of those things. So we see them as very important and one of our key stakeholders. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

PSF4 also noted this governance role of the NSO: “Of course it is. Ah, it's the governing, of course it's the first governing body of [the sport] in New Zealand, it's a very important organisation” (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

4.8 Intent

In an effort to further understand the opportunity to learn from the existence of a relationship PSF5 stated:

[T]here's always opportunities to learn in everything you do, but yes, I don't think we sit here and say what's [the PSF] doing, let's go and pinch that. I certainly think that we view ourselves as in a position to work with them and perhaps help them in some of their learnings as well. Whenever you've got people with experience who have been around the world and seen different things, and the way things are done differently around the world, I think it's always worthwhile having conversations

with them, you never know what you can learn. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF6 seemed to completely disagree:

I don't think they do view it as an opportunity to learn from [the NSO]. I think our objectives are so different. I mean at the end of the day we're interested in trying to win the championships in Australia. [The NSO] is interested in growing [the sport] in New Zealand and doing well with the world team. I think there are probably a couple of small crossovers where there are some benefit. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

When participants were asked to respond to whether they believed the PSF was doing all it can or more needed to be done - PSF1 thought about the question for a while before responding with this comment:

Um [long pause] Probably not, I think everybody in this programme gets heavily involved in what they're doing, in their own little world, a little bit. And [the NSO] is a body that we deal with for different things, but I don't think everybody in the office is focused on trying to create a tighter bond on to, or to use them to the best of our ability. But I think they're in the same situation, they're probably a little under staffed as well, and they probably don't have too much time to seek out too much past what they're supposed to be doing. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

When asked to expand on these comments PSF1 responded with:

[I]t's not top of mind to go and continue to learn from [the NSO], we know that we need an excellent working relationship from them, but we haven't sought the meetings and the consultation to actively go and do it, but passively we speak on the phone and we try and pick up without the formal kind of proceedings to go and really share the knowledge. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF2 also supported this, while detailing that the strengthening of the relationship would enhance this intent to learn:

There's probably more stuff that we could be doing, I mean, where we've come from to now. There used to be I guess...well to where we're at right now from when I first came on board, we're definitely a lot closer together in building these partnerships on all different levels. It can definitely get a lot better. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF5 was unsure whether the PSF was doing all it could to learn “I don’t know, you tell me” (personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF6 disagreed with the previous participants comments and believed the PSF was doing all it could to learn from specific areas that would be a benefit:

I think we are definitely doing all that we can to learn where we see an opportunity for that to happen. There are going to be some things, there are always going to be some things that we could do better perhaps...think with this agreement, and I mean I tend to be talking about this agreement, what we’ve got that we’re working on, I think when we’ve got that signed and tied down, it will actually formalise probably a much better, a much stronger learning environment than we’ve had in the last while. Yes, it’s a tough one, it’s a hard one. As I said to you before, we’re really not that interested in where the under fourteen boys and girls tournaments are held, and that’s vitally important to [the NSO], and so you, what do we want to learn out of that? Nothing really. We’re interested to go and have a look though, seeing what the fourteen year olds are like and whether their skill levels are high enough.... I think that’s probably going to be a very good catalyst for both parts to learn off. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

In dealing with the NSO, the PSF was more concerned about seeking a full understanding on the issue. PSF1 outlined that the PSF was interested in long term gain:

I think most of the people in this office, or all the people pretty much understand that short term gain is not what we’re about. We’re trying to build a programme to win the championship...So I think what we learn, we try and learn for the long term, we’re not trying to make quick fixes where maybe it has happened in the past, the club has been looking for some quick fixes. But I think the long haul, this is what we’re looking for a little bit better now. I think most of the staff has that mentality. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF6 also seemed to understand that long term gain was what it was all about:

I don’t think we are just purely looking of answers, and I think it would be hard on the [PSF] to say that when, certainly for the last two years I mean we are, since I’ve been involved...we’ve been absolutely focused on our values, vision and values which are honesty and all those sort of things....we’re not looking for the fish, we’re looking to find the line so that we can work out how to fish, and to make sure that the bait is right, so that we get, and the hook size is right so that we get the right fish. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

PSF 4 also supported this view:

I think as I said, we're trying to, every time, the big picture, the big goal, is to foster that [the sport's] culture in New Zealand. So, I would say it's not just a quick fix, a quick fish if you will, it's the whole bounty. I think that's the goal every time. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

It was PSF5 that was able to provide an example of wanting to know more than just the answer:

[You can] relate it to the [national team] situation and talking to them about when they need our players because obviously we have a lot of [national team players] on our team, and you know when they need our players is a very specific question. And then it's like well why, why do you need them for that long, why do you need them for this period when we are actually in season and those sorts of things, and getting a deeper understanding of what they're trying to do and what their goals are. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF3's opinion was somewhat mixed, explaining that it really depended on the situation whether the PSF just needed an answer or wanted a greater understanding of the issue:

[I]t would depend on what the scenario is really. And it would depend on what our knowledge base is, I guess. It's, it's whether it's something that we have greater expertise in assisting them, then we're probably just after an answer.... we have a large knowledge base here in terms of our coaching, our scouting etc. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

The next step was to understand whether the PSF viewed the NSO as a source of knowledge. PSF1 seemed to think they were a huge source of knowledge providing examples:

Our administration officer.... deals with [the NSO] on a daily basis, well, not quite a daily basis but certainly regularly, and one of the roles there is to give clearance for your imports. That is a certain administrative part that we have to go through [the NSO] to do things. Keeping in touch with the [national team] schedule and what they're up to, to the marketing people, I think each one of those are learning from each other about how we do our games best, what they do in their games, what we can bring to the excitement of our games. At the board level, I think they have to work together in some of those things, the scheduling of games, the scheduling of tours, those kinds of things. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF2 seemed to think that the NSO were a huge source of knowledge in the area of player development:

Yes, definitely, I think just from all those levels of if we're talking about the pathway or we're hoping that the kids sees us as a pathway to get to making a career out of [the sport]...They are very much on the grassroots level – [the NSO], they cover everything. So we rely on them to filter up their best talent and push them our way as they get to that level that's required.... So we definitely tap into them a lot. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF2 expanded further on the NSO as a source:

[The NSO] have had these connections and relationships with these kids from day one, whenever that was, since they've started having national teams and trials. So the databases they have as far as like the coaches and the athletes, we go to them and we don't know all the kids that's around the country, but [the NSO] obviously have, because they have coaches all the way around the country that work together, so we share information in regards to that. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

Though others did not identify them as an important source, PSF6 didn't think they were "A source of knowledge, my impression would be that sometimes yes but not regularly" (personal communication, May 26, 2008). Why the PSF didn't see the NSO as a source of knowledge this was mainly because the NSO were not involved in the same league as the PSF. This was expressed by comments made by PSF3; "probably not, and generally we're working with them as one club within the Australian ...League, which [the NSO] has no knowledge of" (personal communication, April 16, 2008).

4.9 Transparency

From the outset, the PSF viewed themselves as a transparent organisation. For example, there was a consensus that the PSF was a very approachable organisation, supported by their open media policy, expressed by PSF4 "We are very accessible.... We're very open doors. We've always had the open door policy....the media has pretty much all

access....so, in return for universities and gosh, everybody, we're very open doors"

(personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF3 also talked of this open policy:

We have a media policy about being the most accessible sports club in the country and athletes, coaching staff are all very accessible to the media, public, whoever. And we, one of our core values is honesty, so we're pretty easy to know because we're very straight up on how we represent ourselves. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

PSF 6 thought that being so open as an organisation was a potential vulnerability:

You know, I mean the number of people we have that ring up and say could you, you know can you help us with this, could you do that for us, I think one of our vulnerabilities is actually how open we are. But I mean, that's how it will stay while the current ownership and Board structures and things, but we're that sort of people. If you have something to say, you say it. And I think we are very easy to get to know. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

While believing that they, the PSF, were a very open organisation, there were certain aspects where they were protective of what they would share with the NSO. When asked if the PSF keep its cards close to its chest, PSF6's response was "In some areas, we do" (personal communication, May 26, 2008). When pressed to identify these protected areas, financial information was quite evident:

Financially nobody knows what our ...and they never will. So I think, basically it's , I would say yes we keep our business cards very close to our chests, because I think most people would have a heart attack if they knew what's going on. The commitment that's made by the owners is colossal. But having said that, for the balance of the team, we're pretty open to anything about what's going on. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

PSF3 also mentioned protection of financial information:

Probably financials, things like that. We're happy to share knowledge, learning, things like that. But, the same as any business, you have things that are private and specific to your business, and we wouldn't... I think as the type of company they are, the financial statements would be public but, there are things that they do that we wouldn't expect them to share with us, but it's more about operational knowledge that we can share (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

Others, like PSF4, also commented on financials, but also outlined areas that they would possibly share with the NSO:

[Who] would think that anytime a company, a private organisation talks about their facts, or about their figures, about their financial figures, I would think that would be one thing that of course any company would guard, and not want to share readily. But, with any other facts and figures for instance, TV numbers or the quantity of materials that we're putting into New Zealand, anything like that, I think that anything that's not financial, that's personal to an organisation and to any company really, I think that would be the only thing that we would kind of, maybe not guard. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

Apart from financials, PSF2 seemed determined to protect their main human resource - their players:

I think there is some keeping things close, although we want [the NSO] to prosper, there's still the professional side of things where you've got players, they come and go a lot more than what you'd have in a not so professional area. So we might have New Zealanders that come and say the [national team players] that don't play in the [PSF], they play for [an Australian team], where you've got [national team players], and I guess we wouldn't go out of our way to open up everything when it's put into...when those guys are involved or somehow, so we do have to keep something up our sleeve...but at the end of the day too, we do have to win games, and we have a professional outfit, it's sometimes just business...just as far as maybe your plays that we have, I mean, we wouldn't go out and share those with everybody. (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

Apart from wanting to protect certain aspects of their business, there was a willingness to share. PSF1 was quite positive about sharing:

Absolutely, yes, yes. And with regard to sharing knowledge, you know [PSF2] got involved recently in their clinic situation... he was a guest lecturer at their major event for the year with regards to coaching development... [PSF3] spoke at a few things on behalf of [the NSO], so certainly we want to share what we know....I did a clinic on Saturday for all the coaches here and that was part of [the NSO] as well, so yes, we're more than happy to share. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF2 also supported those comments, specifically related to coaching of junior players:

Yes, definitely. I think on the junior level again, like we're taking these junior [national team players] in and exposing our environment, our values, because we're sharing them with junior [national team], because we see that as being

important.....we're opening up ourselves to them. So for them to come into our programme, obviously we're definitely open to them. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF3 made clear that "we don't have any problems sharing what we do" (personal communication, April 16, 2008). Further the partnership document was an example of their willingness to share with the PSF "obviously, yes, that's what the partnership agreement is about" (personal communication, April 16, 2008). PSF6 provided this example on what the PSF was willing to share with the NSO:

Absolutely, I mean my example before of the video library. I mean, we've assembled all of this stuff, it's in here, we're quite happy to, we've got medical staff, we've got all sorts of things, so I mean, but I mean we're just trying to do all of that, formalise so that we've fronted up with a hell of a pile of money to do what we've done, and we don't believe that [the NSO] should get it for nothing, there's a cost involved, it will be an absolute mates rate cost, but they can help us and we can help them. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

When talking about the PSFs willingness to share reports with the NSO, they felt that the NSO had never requested any. PSF4 elaborated:

I haven't, personally me, I haven't given them any reports, but if they were for instance to come to me and say, hey we're interested in your TV numbers this past season, do you have those figures? Sure, I'd give those to them.... so far they have not asked me for any information or reports, but I would be willing to share with them, absolutely. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

However if they were asked for any information they would surely provide it. PSF2 said "but we've never really got to the stage where someone's actually needed a report" (personal communication, April 14, 2008). When questioned, it was clear that ideas were being shared PSF5 said "[we] certainly share ideas and vision and things that we think would be good for the game" (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

PSF3 again linked this willingness to the partnership document:

All these things that we're talking about, this partnership thing is about that. It's that, we have a knowledge base and a resource base here that we can make available there, they're putting all the coaches together in these environments and so yes,

there's a clear sharing of ideas and reports and all of that. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

It was clear that the sharing of ideas were turning into outputs, for example PSF2 pointed out that a joint junior development programme started as an idea forged between the two organisations "that was an idea that we both came up with, we'd been running and since that idea, I think we're at the stage where it's going to start up in a few weeks time" (personal communication, April 14, 2008). PSF2 then expanded on these ideas:

Yes, I kind of see it like people just have different ideas, or you know, people might have the same ideas but it might be an idea that's new. And all of sudden you'll be oh, asking for more and more information about that, whether it's on a coaching point of view or players background, or players strengths and weaknesses or just the way they go about working on the computers, with scouting and stuff, or that kind of thing. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

It emerged that there was an abundant level of communication that was key to the relationship. PSF5 was able to talk of the communication channels developed from the relationship "we've really tried to open up the communication channels with [the NSO] and work together" (personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF3 also mentioned that PSF6 was a key member in the relationship that had been developed with the NSO "particularly with [NSO1], we've got a good relationship there. We also have.... [PSF6 who was previously involved with].... [the NSO], [who] maintains those relationships, so there's pretty open exchange of information" (personal communication, April 16, 2008). PSF2 detailed the level of communication that was currently happening:

Oh, well, we talk on the phone or contact email probably two or three times a week. But that's also to do with because the programme is coming up and starting shortly, so there's a lot of things to be done and to have organised. But, it's just , while you're continuing to talk to each other just to make sure everyone's on the same page , make sure everything is up and running, but to make sure that what we're delivering is consistent with what they do. There's going to be some small differences but you don't want to be selling the wrong, or going against the wrong messages that have been already sent, addressed. So it's important for us to be on the same page. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

It was clear that there had been some meetings between the NSO and PSF. It seemed that these were not a regular occurrence but happened on an ad hoc basis, which PSF2 had mentioned previously. The PSF on two occasions could provide a couple of examples when they had invited members of the NSO to their headquarters for meetings. For example, the CEO at the NSO had had meeting with a couple of the staff at the PSF (PSF4, personal communication, 24 April, 2008). The second example occurred a day prior to the researcher's interview with the first PSF participant, where communications personnel from the NSO had visited the PSF headquarters for a meeting with the general manager.

4.10 Receptivity

When PSF1 was asked about the ability of the PSF to learn, the following comment arose: "Our ability to learn...I'd describe it as potential to do better" (personal communication, April 14, 2008). Wanting to further understand why that it came down to an individual perspective, and those that had a capacity to learn, PSF2 said "I think it's, we, it just comes down to I guess, the people involved (personal communication, April 14, 2008). PSF5 also elaborated by saying "I think that goes as deep as the individuals within the organisation and what their capacity is to understand and learn, and take information in. But, I certainly like to think that we are" (personal communication, April 24, 2008). For the PSF to be receptive, PSF1 felt that the NSO had to share more with them:

I think they could possibly after a tour, they could come in and say these are some of the new trends that we've seen in Europe, just from a coaching side of it, some of the new techniques sport science wise that you guys may be able to use. But certainly if they want to be really proactive in everything they've learnt, they could certainly help us a little more. (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

When PSF1 was asked why this was not currently happening, the following was recorded:

[T]here's no real forum, it's not like a twice yearly or a fortnightly or a monthly consultation about how they could help us with their knowledge or how we could share and I think that that's probably what I'm talking about that this is coming to, to say why don't you get together a couple of times a year and sit down and talk about your organisations and how you can help each other. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF3 detailed:

[F]or the process to work, both, well, our staff particularly have to be open to learning from what they're trying to achieve, because we in effect are delivering something on their behalf to their athletes. So, we need to be able to be open to learning from them, otherwise we're not going to be achieving the goals of the programme. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

They could see possible areas where they could learn from the NSO. In one case PSF4 was able to provide an example:

I would think that as far as a community level, and what we can learn from them as far as maybe programmes that they have tried or maybe you know, how the former structure that they had to [the sport] in New Zealand. I think we've learnt from that, or maybe have taken that knowledge. I think they've also taken our knowledge from what we've done, and seen that as a way to improve what they're doing. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

When further probed about their ability as an organisation to absorb anything they could, participants were under the impression there is nothing that that NSO currently had that they could absorb. They thought they were more superior in their ability. When asked about the organisations ability to learn PSF4 said: "Do you mean over our head as in we wouldn't understand it? (personal communication, April 24, 2008). There reply was "Oh, no, I think we would be able to understand it" (personal communication, April 24, 2008). However later PSF4 remarked "we certainly don't believe that we know everything" (personal communication, April 24, 2008).

When questioned about who was the teacher and student in the relationship opinions were mixed. PSF2 saw a symmetrical relationship: “I don’t see it as one being a teacher and one being a student” (personal communication, April 14, 2008). PSF4 too could not decipher between a student and teacher:

I wouldn’t say that either one of us is a teacher or a student, I would say that we just, we communicate with each other, and in turn any information that you do receive, you learn from. So, I would say that neither one of us is either teacher or student. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

However PSF3 thought it dependent of the situation “I think both [we] are both” (personal communication, April 16, 2008). Further, PSF3 explained:

I think there are very few situations where you have that probably teacher/student purely, in that we have certain expertise in some areas and they have certain expertise in some areas, and some may be the same area. And, so you’re having people that are the teacher also being the student because they’re finding out more about their own areas. So I think that both, both are classed in those areas at different times. So, we need to be students when we’re learning about the high performance programme, what the objectives are, what their structure is, all of those things. And then we become the teachers when we talk about our day to day implementation of that [junior development] programme, and how we do it. So yes, it’s not one or the other. I think both, they assume that role, depending on the situation and who has the knowledge base. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

When asked to expand, PSF3 was able to give an example:

I’ll take this book (referring to a coaching manual). Um, we, are the teacher in that we have put together the content in the book, and the process for delivery of it, and the mechanism for funding etc. Then we are, the student in that [the NSO] has the knowledge of the association structures, the contact people, the who’s hands we need to put it in, who follows up. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

PSF6 also thought it depended on the situation:

There are some areas where [the NSO] needs to be the teacher, there’s some areas where we need to be the teacher, and like all relationships like that there’s going to be some tension where they intersect, and I think that’s how it is really. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

Other participants were not quite so incisive, PSF1 clearly thought the PSF were the teacher due to their historic experience:

[W]ell I think you know, if you look at knowledge over a period of time, they've been established a lot longer than the [PSF] have. I think in certain areas of the game, they're going to have people that are far more experienced than we do. (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

When asked to expand on the NSO was the teacher PSF1 said:

[O]bviously how the structures of [the sport] are built in New Zealand, and how the competition structure and how [the NSO] operating system kind of works. International knowledge obviously from the competitions that they play at and the teams around the world, so they get a better view of the new trends of the game, and they go into the World championships and seeing those kind of things. (personal communication, April 14, 2008).

PSF2 also thought the NSO were a teacher at the start of the (junior development) programme, however the PSF had caught up, and learn from the NSO:

I think, I think as far as the [junior development programme] is concerned and the [NSO], I think at the start it was a lot to do with the [the NSO] being a teacher and the [PSF] being the student because we were new. Ah, I think now we've established ourselves that it's probably on level par with each other now. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

It was PSF5 that felt strongly about the PSF being the teacher "I certainly see us as the teacher (personal communication, April 24, 2008). When asked to expand on this, PSF5 said:

We're a little bit more proactive in suggesting pathways and ways to develop the game. And I guess part of it is just the resource base, like we have the resources to be able to do some things, and I guess when they're in a position about those resources, they perhaps may not be able to, well just have the ability to put some of these things into place. And because we have the resources, we can go to them and say hey, why don't we try this and why don't we do that, because we can fund it. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

In wanting to further understand the resources the PSF thought they were able to provide PSF5 offered the following:

We have three full time coaches here, that can put some time into the kids in our off season and things like that, scouting, video, whatever they need. Like we can coach and stuff, we have three full time people who are pretty skilled, you'd like to think three of the best in New Zealand, within the [the sporting] environment to be able to impart knowledge. And so we're here, we're full time, we're paid, we can put the time in, and [the NSO] doesn't have that. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF2 also picked up on PSF5's view of the PSF as the teacher, citing their knowledge base:

I think we have a good amount of knowledge in this organisation because we've got guys that have been around Australia...we're sharing this facility with [the NSO] because now the [national team] will be coming and training here. The knowledge that we have on the Australian players because we play them every week, we can work out twice a week, and the coaches styles, like we have a good knowledge of those guys...as the [national team] would have a good knowledge of them because they played them every year, but it's more like I guess, you know, I guess because we're doing a week to week, or day to day job, seven months of the year, I think we are able to share a lot of information we already know about the players or coaches. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

They seemed to have a greater knowledge on the sport in Australia due to their constant involving in playing there:

Once again because we do it every week for the seven months of the year compared to what the [national team] do with the national programme, I guess we might be more, might be slightly ahead as far as that is concerned. (PSF2, personal communication, April 14, 2008)

In wanting to understand the attitude of the PSF organisation as a student PSF6 said:

We're hungry for knowledge, we send our coach around the world every year trying to learn, we're out to learn. The Board contributes a lot, everybody contributes a lot, so as a we are hungry, that's for sure, and very ambitious for what we plan to do. We are, we're confident that we've got the mix right as a student, and that we're in the right place to learn and pass the exam at the end of the year. If we weren't, we should all pack our bags and go home. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

PSF5 was more specific about learning that applied by stating "I certainly think we're open, open to ideas yet I guess we'll filter out what we think is applicable to us"

(personal communication, April 24, 2008). When asked to expand on this PSF5 elaborated on applying what was learnt, and how it specially benefits the PSF:

But we're more than happy to listen to ideas and take any information and basically pick the bones out of it for what will help us, at the end of the day. Um, and that's I guess what every organisation is trying to do, is make themselves better day to day. So if there's something that we can steal from somebody else to make us better, we'll certainly do that, but we'll also question information that's being given to us to see whether it is actually relevant for us. (personal communication, April 24, 2008)

PSF6 also supported specific areas:

Yes, well I, I think we learn from them what we need to learn from them. We are a totally commercial organisation, our objectives are, it's one of the hard things in the comparison that you're trying to do to me anyway is the difference in objectives... we have established an objective of making the finals....we're interested in what they're turning out. We're very interested in the output of their business. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

PSF3 however thought as an organisation the PSF as a student was creative:

I think we're like the creative kid that is also there, very specific in where they're going. And, that they will pick up on things that are also happening in their class, but they're very focused on their thing. Ah, probably a little disruptive, but generally in a positive way. And yes, maybe the teacher gets frustrated with them, but they're....but we would be the problem child that requires a lot of attention potentially, but also we move into the star category as the top performer. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

When asked to explain why they were creative PSF3 explained:

Because we're doing everything differently, because no one else has done what we're doing. And so everything we do is going to have an impact on the rest of the [sporting] community. Everything we do changes how it's always been, effectively. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

PSF4 was also supportive of the PSF as a creative organisation saying, "I would think that we're eager to learn, and eager to figure out different solutions and different ways of doing things" (personal communication, April 24, 2008). PSF 2 also added a similar opinion wanting to explore every possible avenue "definitely interested in learning, just

wanting to know more, I guess, yes, I guess just trying to turn over every stone” (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

When asked if the PSF was currently going back to the NSO, PSF1 commented on the constant relationship they had with the NSO concerning referees:

Yes, we go back to them week after week about the referees. Obviously the referees are run by [the NSO] and they assist the [national league] and run the games over here. And so from a coaching staff we continually go back to them and try and critique the referees in the best way we can possible. And obviously if we’ve got some concerns we need to voice them and even about who referees the game, or people that we think referee the game best in our interests, so from a coaching point of view we certainly go back and forth on that one. (personal communication, April 14, 2008)

PSF3 also supported this continually relationship with the NSO:

Oh, I guess , areas such as like refereeing....We have three referees controlling every one of our games.... the referee’s evaluator is a [NSO] employee, so we’re constantly going to them, talking about ways to improve the quality of refereeing. The whole scope of our partnership agreement does that. It means we’re constantly going back to them on this is what we’re doing, these are the programmes we’re doing, how do we make them better, how do we help you guys by doing them , so it’s... I guess we have a philosophy with [the NSO], ideally from here on that it’s a pretty open exchange of ideas, and so that the environment is put in place that both organisations share, so that both are constantly learning and constantly getting better. (personal communication, April 16, 2008)

However PSF6 cited one area that the PSF was in constant contact with the NSO, in the area of player ability, and this wasn’t going to change:

Availability of players, but I mean that’s something that’s never going to change. That’s one of those areas that there’s always going to be that tension, as I was saying to you before....when we are wanting to have our players on board, we are looking to get players on board to train them and do their thing, and they are wanting to have them at the international tournament. (personal communication, May 26, 2008)

4.11 Summary

This chapter summarised the participant responses from the interviews. There was enough relevant information present in each of the categories to provide the researcher with the ability to answer each of the research questions. Therefore, the next chapter will offer a discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a combined discussion on the findings of both the NSO and PSF organisations in this research. The purpose of this research was to explore the determinants of inter-partner learning within a NSO-PSF alliance. The research also sought to understand the relationship that existed between the case study organisations. Eleven interviews with participants was the primary source of data collection. Furthermore this chapter discusses the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance?
2. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance intend to learn from its alliance partner?
3. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance share knowledge with its alliance partner?
4. Do organisations in a NSO-PSF alliance have the capacity to learn from their alliance partner?

5.2 Nature of Relationship between Organisations in a NSO-PSF Alliance

This relationship between the NSO and the PSF is clearly of the enduring variety. There is no evidence that the NSO is seeking to license another organisation to participate in the Australian sports league. Neither is it foreseeable that an alternative to the NSO is likely to emerge.

Enduring as the relationship may be, it is has not been without its fair share of conflict. Historically, the relationship between alliance partners had been negative. All participants from both organisations spoke in these terms. At one stage, only a basic level

of communication underpinned the relationship. This may have developed due to the NSO being highly suspicious of the establishment of the PSF within New Zealand and the PSF's likely negative impact on the New Zealand league. The NSO felt that the PSF would impinge on their role as the governing body for the sport within New Zealand. Participants at the PSF also were aware that the NSO felt threatened by their presence. This negative relationship was elevated further by some personal disagreements between employees from both organisations. For example, NSO4 was able to cite a heated verbal exchange that had taken place between senior personnel at both organisations in the past. The NSO felt uncomfortable about the PSF's use of a shared facility as well as competition for sponsors. Sponsorship was one area that certain tensions were felt with one of the NSO sponsors crossing sides and aligning itself with the PSF. While the PSF were a competitor, in certain areas the PSF did not see the NSO in the same light.

However, despite these historical differences, the relationship was showing definite signs of improvement at the time that the interviews were conducted. The historically negative relationship was no longer a feature of the relationship, with both organisations realising the opportunities created by collaboration. This new approach is the result of a number of changes. Individuals that were responsible for the negativity in the past had left both organisations. New staff had also made an impact. One such example was the PSF's recruitment of a staff member from the NSO, which appears to have provided a bridge between the two organisations. The appointment of a strong leader at the NSO was also mentioned as a positive for the relationship. A current development had seen one PSF participant, in a full time position, also employed in a part time role with the NSO. It was both the ability of key individuals in both organisations to work together and this dual appointment that had been the catalyst for the improved relationship. To add to this, there were a number of friendships that had been struck-up by employees in both organisations.

Both organisations are collaborating with each other in a number of different areas, such as marketing, junior development, facilities sharing, players, and coaching personnel. There were a number of players involved in both the PSF team and the NSO national team. A recent appointment had seen a dual position where one employee was working for both the PSF in a full time role, and the NSO in a part time role, which could only be seen as building a closer relationship between both organisations.

An agreement was signed by both organisations in relation to a junior development programme. This joint programme seen both organisations contributing certain resources, for example the PSF was contributing the use of their facility, and coaching staff to the development of elite junior players within New Zealand. While this agreement only encompassed a joint junior development programme, other agreements were under development. This was an overarching partnership agreement, which would allow for increased sharing of resources between the two organisations. It is important to note that currently some of the resources mentioned in the partnership document were being utilised by each organisation. This document was seen as a formal way to sanction uses of each other's resources.

The power imbalance between the two organisations is also noteworthy. The NSO controls the licence that is issued to the NSO. Although the PSF participants believe that the NSO will continue to 'rubber stamp' their agreement on an annual basis, it nonetheless does create a master-servant relationship and the PSF will experience a high degree of resource dependency on the NSO. Generally, the NSO viewed the PSF as providing them with an elite-athlete, development pathway and the ability to enhance the sport in a way that the NSO cannot achieve by themselves. One participant at the NSO did point out that if the NSO had certain resources it would potentially discourage a relationship with the PSF. The PSF knew the NSO provided an opportunity for them to tap into their junior

development and structures of the sport in New Zealand. However, all interviewees in both organisations agreed that the relationship between the organisations was a benefit to their common sport in general. The relationship allowed both organisations to work together on common ground. By doing this they were able to combine resources, minimise duplication, and invest their efforts in benefiting the sport in general.

On reflection, it is evident that there is an emerging feeling of community between the two organisations. Interviewees spoke in positive terms of their relationships with their counterparts and other people in their alliance partner. Some even spoke of it in terms of working for the 'sporting community' rather than their employment with an individual organisation. This is not to suggest that the relationship is perfect. Rather that the relationship was improving and that further enhancements was likely to occur.

5.3 Learning Intention of Organisations in a NSO-PSF Alliance

Intent to learn was evident in both organisations. However, these levels of intent could not be categorised as being strong. Specifically, levels of intent were higher in the NSO than the PSF. Both sets of employees spoke of the opportunity to learn from the other organisation. For example, the NSO employees spoke enthusiastically of the opportunity to learn that would be created by their ability to access the PSF facility.

Differing levels of intent were evident in the study. NSO participants were more likely to talk in terms of not doing enough to learn from the PSF. The PSF admitted that learning could occur in the alliance but it was clear that intent to learn had not been drilled down by management to all employees. Intent was therefore only present in a few individuals due to their own initiative. Doz and Hamel (1998) point out that it is senior management that need to establish a learning intent throughout the organisation. It was

Hamel's (1991) study that argued to those organisations that were unable to clearly display a learning intent throughout the whole organisation, were unable to learn.

Some participants at the PSF felt that the other individuals were too focussed on their own tasks and not intent of learning from the NSO. It would seem that learning was then not an aim of the PSF in their relationship with the NSO. This was displayed through consensus from those at the PSF that priority was not given to learning from the NSO. The overall aim of the PSF was to win the championship and the PSF needed to realise the uniqueness of their relationship with the NSO compared to those teams that were competing in the Australian-based league. The PSF viewed the NSO as a very broad based organisation dealing in a range of markets with only few small areas of mutual interest connected to their pursuit of the championship. However, some participants at the PSF viewed their objectives as completely different, which undermined any possibility of learning. It is surprising that this view was expressed given their mutual interest in the sport and the dependence of the PSF on the NSO in terms of developing local athletes.

Learning was not the main motivation of this alliance. It was apparent that both organisations had substitution intent. This was where each partner substituted its partner's competitiveness in a particular area for lack of competitiveness in that area (Hamel, 1991). For example, the NSO seemed satisfied to substitute its lack of resources in the area of facilities and finances for that of its PSF. While the PSF substituted its inability to access the sports club and regional sport organisation networks without the NSO. This finding supports that of Palakshappa and Gordon (2007), who also found substitution intent to be present in the five out of the six alliances that they studied.

With this substitution intent comes a 'fear of dependence' (Doz and Hamel, 1998). This is where partners become dependent on each other's resources and therefore if the alliance is terminated, that may leave a partner with diminished skills. However, responses

seemed to indicate that the alliance relationship seemed to be a long term objective, rather than a quick fix. In this alliance, it was clear that the NSO was not at a stage where it was totally dependent on the PSF's resources, though it was clear that the NSO would never be able to develop those resources themselves without greater financial input. Therefore, in the future it was a possibility that the NSO would become dependent on these resources.

In summary, whilst both alliance partners have intent to learn from the other, the intention cannot be regarded as being strong.

5.3 Transparency of Organisations in a NSO-PSF Alliance

Both organisations seemed to have initially felt they demonstrated high levels of transparency. It would seem that because of the NSO's non-profit status and the responsibilities that came with being a NSO, that served a number of stakeholders, they were a naturally open organisation. This supports Hamel's (1991) perspective that there are certain reasons why some organisations may be more transparent than others.

The PSF displayed a limited level of transparency. Many participants commented on the fact that they had a media friendly policy. They implied that by giving the media access this supported that they were an open organisation. However when pressed to understand what areas it would protect from the NSO, PSF interviewees were able to give a number of examples without hesitation. These included financial information, player contract details and team tactics, basically anything that related to the success of its team in the Australian competition. This to a certain degree may also suggest that the PSF was not trusting of the NSO. However, this was a completely different story with the NSO. Participants were unable to think of anything that they would specifically protect from the PSF and only when pressed a few participants listed player contracts and any delicate

financial issues. However one participant mentioned sponsorship issues, saying they would be reluctant to share sponsorship intelligence, however it was another participant at the NSO that saw both organisations in the future securing separate sponsorship deals for each other. Both organisations were able to articulate what their alliance partner would protect and indicated their unwillingness to seek anything on this list.

While the PSF was quite specific in the areas it would protect, the PSF had demonstrated in their partnership draft document that it was willing to share with the NSO. Examples from the draft document include: coaching assistance, technical analysis, player scouting and a training facility. However apart from this, there seemed a willingness in both organisations to share information with each other. It was apparent that the PSF was sharing information while protecting some of its competitive advantages. While there was willingness, there was no actual evidence to support anything tangible being transferred between both organisations. There however seemed to be the transfer of intangible ideas that would best benefit the common sport. For example one idea that developed was the joint junior development programme. While both organisations showed willingness to share information with each other, showing willingness and being able to deliver on those promises remains to be demonstrated. Participants from both organisations said they were willing to share with each other. It seemed there was a willingness to share, though both organisations needed to take each other up on the offer and ask. However, while the NSO said it was sharing information with the PSF, the PSF disagreed and would have liked the NSO to share more information that it brought back from international tournaments with them.

As alluded to previously, there seemed to be an open door policy that existed between both organisations. For example, PSF and NSO employees would be involved in each other's coaching clinics. NSO members were utilising the PSF facility, and having the

occasional meeting at the PSF headquarters. This is a likely catalyst for future inter-partner learning because organisations that can gain access to the facilities of its alliance partner are more likely to learn (Baughn et al., 1997).

There seemed to be no reason to assume that there was any clannishness operating between the organisations (Hamel, 1991). There were no gatekeepers in place to stop employees gaining access of knowledge from each organisation. However, the draft partnership document of the PSF could be seen as a protective policy, limiting the PSF's level of transparency. It is apparent that the document in effect articulates the limits of what it is willing to share.

This openness that was demonstrated by each organisation seemed to prosper due to the personal friendships that existed between employees of both organisations. These friendships seemed to spread throughout all levels of the organisation. For example, CEO's, board members, coaches and communication staff had developed a friendship which had advanced a communication channel between both partners. This would support Baughn et al. (1997) that as friendships grow and partner employees interact with each other sharing becomes natural. Due to this friendship, participants from both organisations felt that they had greater levels of communication with each other. However, it was the PSF participants that commented on the great level of communication that they had with the NSO. This level of communication seemed to be managed principally by the senior staff, but also seen at the operational level with employees in constant contact, usually via telephone, with their counterpart in the partner organisation.

In summary, it is evident that both organisations are willing to share knowledge with their partner. The NSO appears to be more transparent than the PSF.

5.4 Receptivity of Organisations in a NSO-PSF Alliance

Receptivity, or the capacity to learn, is the hardest determinant to elaborate on in the alliance between both organisations. The NSO was limited in its capacity to learn from the PSF due to two human resource factors. Firstly, over the last couple of years there had been leadership turnover at the NSO where there had been three CEO's join and subsequently leave within a short period of time. When interviews were undertaken, a CEO was in place in a permanent role, which provided the organisation with some stability, and the employees, a leader.

It was not long before this second human resource factor was discussed. A significant portion of participants, regarding the NSO's high level of staff turnover, mentioned this second factor. It was apparent that participants felt this was an overall NSO problem within New Zealand and not just specific to their organisation. It was unclear what had caused this, however period of constant change is likely to have an unsettling effect on others within the organisation. Participants commented that this constant replacement of personnel resulted in any learning disappearing when the individuals departed the organisation. More needed to be done to either retain these staff and/or the lessons learnt from the PSF.

However new leadership and other new staff within the NSO created the opportunity to develop receptivity. For example, the new staff within the NSO did not need to unlearn, before they could learn. Hamel (1991) mentions that a young workforce is less likely to need to unlearn. Many had not been involved in the negative relationship of the past, meaning they had a fresh outlook going forward and were not tainted by the negative relationship that existed previously. With a new leader, the staff could be shown direction and their learning intent alluded to previously could be developed.

While the NSO had what could be termed low levels of receptivity, the PSF also displayed a similar level of receptivity. While participants felt their organisation was superior, or the more powerful of the two, they felt that they identified only tiny crossovers where they could learn from the PSF. While opinions were divided, some participants thought both organisations were symmetrical in their levels of learning.

There were those participants that, due to the superior resources of the PSF, felt strongly that they were the teacher in the relationship. Opinions like this would suggest that the NSO would struggle to learn because of the knowledge distance between organisations. According to Hamel (1991) some organisations may never be able to close the skills gap, due to the knowledge gap being so significant. While some participants reiterated that the PSF resources were valuable and justified their teacher status, others also spoke of the PSF as a creative student. Being a creative student would suggest that the PSF had little interest in learning from the NSO, preferring instead to be more self-reliant in their knowledge generation.

While members of both organisations detailed certain areas that it could possibly learn from its partner, no tangible examples could be provided of what had actually been learnt. This was apart from one PSF participant who thought they, the PSF, had caught up in regard to junior development. The PSF was able to provide an example of where they and the NSO had combined resources to produce a coaching manual, where the PSF had provided coaching expertise and the NSO the opportunity to distribute the manual. The evidence suggests that these organisations had in fact learnt very little from their alliance partner.

5.5 Future Research

There are a number of research opportunities in the area of inter-partner learning emerging from this study. These can be divided into research context and research questions.

In terms of context, there are additional NSO-PSF case study opportunities in New Zealand. As with any single case study, the issue of extrapolation is problematic and the question of whether the results of this research are applicable to other relationships is best left until data from these alliances is collected. Whilst instances of NSO-PSF alliances may be rare in the world, there are examples in Australia whereby state sporting organisations have a close relationship with PSFs. This context is very suitable to the study of alliances. The inter-partner learning between and amongst organisations in a sport - the clubs, the regional bodies and its NSO – is another context that should also be explored. Athletes and coaches who are employed by both the NSO and the PSF is a more specific set of circumstances within which there is a reasonable expectation that the opportunity for inter-partner learning is quite high. There are also those external relationships between sport organisations and their media and commercial partners (i.e. sponsors).

A number of research questions can also be raised. These include: 1) To what extent does profit orientation impact upon inter-partner learning? 2) What is the impact of dual appointments (i.e. a person being employed both organisations) on the transfer of knowledge between alliance partners? 3) Do organisations realise the benefits of learning payoff in alliances? 4) How does inter-partner learning evolve over time? 5) Are NSO's able to protect their competencies given their public status? 6) What level of trust exists between partners in an alliance? 7) Which employees are the key sources of knowledge transfer between organisations?

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore Hamel's (1991) determinants of inter-partner learning in an NSO-PSF alliance. Four research questions guided the research. Though once characterised by negative sentiments the relationship between the NSO and PSF has become increasingly positive. There was evidence of friendships between employees in each partner organisation. The intent to learn was not high in either of the organisations. The learning intention of the NSO was higher than that of the PSF. Similarly, the NSO seemed to be more willing to share knowledge with the PSF than vice versa. The non-profit status of the NSO is put forward as a key factor underpinning this difference. Neither organisation appeared to have the capacity to learn from each other. Overall, this study confirms that Hamel's (1991) determinants of learning are an effective approach to understanding inter-partner learning.

Unfortunately, it seems that organisations in the alliance studied are failing to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the alliance. These alliances cannot be replicated by other PSFs in the Australian sports leagues. Most NSOs are also not able to establish close relationships with a single PSF. Taken together, these NSO-PSF relationships are a yet-to-be realised source of sustainable competitive advantage. To not capitalise upon a resource that is useful, rare, not easily imitable and not easily transferable, is a strategic management sin of the highest order.

Sports organisations have developed systems of inter-partner relations that achieve a balance between independent and collective action on one hand, and their simultaneous cooperative and competitive instincts on the other. Thus relationships between and amongst sport organisations provide the ideal context to explore the nature of learning between organisations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

<i>Area</i>	<i>Research Question</i>
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your role at the PSF? • Have you held any other positions at the PSF?
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the relationship between the PSF and NSO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -cordial or hostile -partner or competitors -close or distant • What does the PSF hope to achieve from its relationship with the NSO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does the PSF have any objectives regarding its relationship with the NSO? • Is the NSO important to the PSF? Why do believe so? • In what areas do the PSF and the NSO collaborate with each other? • At what organisation level does the most collaboration take place?
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the PSF see their relationship with the NSO as an opportunity to learn? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is sharing information and knowledge reflected in any agreements between the two organisations? • Is the PSF doing all it can to learn from the NSO? • There is the proverb, give a man a fish, feed him for a day, teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime...when the PSF seeks the help of the NSO, is the PSF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Just looking for the answer or are they looking to acquire greater comprehension of the issue? • Do staff at the PSF look towards the NSO as a source of knowledge that they can tap into? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Do you know of any such examples?
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the PSF willing to share what it knows with the NSO? • Is the PSF an easy organisation to get to know?

Receptivity

- Does the PSF keep its cards close to its chest?
-Is the PSF protective of what it shares with the NSO?
- Is there anything that you feel the PSF would not share with the NSO?
- Does the PSF share ideas or reports with NSO? Examples?
How is this done?
- How would you describe the PSF ability to learn from NSO?
-How would you describe the ability of the PSF to absorb the skills/knowledge/information that the NSO is able to share with the PSF?
- Lets define a teacher as someone that teaches, and a student as someone that learns from the teacher. Who do you think is the teacher and student in the relationship between the PSF and NSO?
- How would you describe the PSF as a student?
 - Inattentive
 - Mischievous
 - Thick/stupid
 - Short attention span
 - Not interested in learning...doesn't seem to care
 - Know it all
- Is there anything the PSF continually goes back to NSO for assistance in?

* Abbreviations PSF and NSO have been used instead of the case study organisations. This example interview guide was used with PSF respondents.

Appendix 2: AUTECH Ethical Approval



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH)

To: Geoff Dickson
From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTECH
Date: 6 March 2008
Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/13 **National sporting organisations and private franchise relationships: A New Zealand comparative case study of inter-organisational learning.**

Dear Geoff

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH) at their meeting on 11 February 2008 and that I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTECH's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTECH's meeting on 14 April 2008.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 6 February 2011.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTECH:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 6 February 2011;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 6 February 2011 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTEK grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTEK and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely



Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Paul Cleary paucle09@aut.ac.nz, Sean Phelps.

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

17 January 2008

Project Title

National sporting organisations and private franchise relationships: A New Zealand comparative case study of inter-organisational learning

An Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research project seeking to understand inter-organisational learning between national sporting organisations and private sporting franchises. We believe that you are able to offer insight into inter-organisational learning within the context of the sports industry in New Zealand. This perspective would not be obtainable without your participation in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand of inter-organisational learning between national sporting organisations and private sports franchises.

The research project may result in the publication of findings in an academic journal. This research will also result in practical implications for the sports business industry. The project is also contributing to the researcher's thesis in the final year of a Masters of Business.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

You have been chosen because of your role and seniority in as National sporting organisation or a Private sports franchise. We have selected a few participants from your organisation and other organisations for this project. Having been involved in this organisation for a period of more than three months we believe that you are able to contribute to the topic of inter-organisational learning.

What will happen in this research?

Participants will be invited to participate in an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview will seek to understand how national sporting organisations and private sports franchises are learning from each other. If possible one member of each of the organisations involved may be invited to participate in a second interview. This will only occur if it is necessary. Participants will be asked about their availability for a second interview at the time of first interview.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There will be minimal discomfort or risk to the participant. Interviews will be semi-structured that will allow for free discussion to take place regarding the project topic.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Information obtained will remain confidential, as well as any other information likely to put the individual at risk. Participants at any time are able to withdraw from the interview, and may refuse to answer any specific questions.

What are the benefits?

This research project aims to be a benefit to both the academic community and the managers in the sports and business industry. By participation in this research you are contributing to the development of literature regarding, how organisations learn from each other.

This study is important for both practitioners and individuals to understand how learning can both enhance and contribute and enhance an organisations current position.

How will my privacy be protected?

As mentioned above identities of participants will remain confidential. Information gathered will only be used for data relation to this study.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no financial costs of participating in the research. All that is required from the participant is approximately 30 minutes to participate in the interview. We are aware that participant's time is valuable therefore it is critical to keep interviews to the approximate time span. If possible a second interview may be required in assistance of further clarification of information. This will only take place firstly if it is required, and secondly in the participant agrees.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have two weeks following the reception of this invitation. The researcher will ensure that communication is made to ensure that you have received all information and forms relating to the study.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Invitation to participate in the study will come from an initial email or phone call explaining the research to the potential participant. An information sheet will be presented via email. The potential participant may either chose to accept or decline the offer. The participant may email/phone the researcher with their decision (contact details at end of this document). Following a positive response a participant consent form will be sent to the individual. Following this the researcher will arrange a time to interview the participant. At the time of the interview the consent form will be collected by the researcher.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, feedback from the study will be provided in a summary format to participants involved in the study at there request. This summary will be provided on completion of the study. An approximate time for this summary should be expected between August to October 2008.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Geoff Dickson, geoff.dickson@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 7851, or Dr Sean Phelps, sean.phelps@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 7094.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Paul Cleary
School of Sport and Recreation
Auckland University of Technology
Ph: 921 9999 ext 7119
Mob. 021 235 2580
Email: paucle09@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Geoff Dickson
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Dr Sean Phelps
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Email: sean.phelps@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14 April 2008, AUTEK Reference number 08/13.

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form



Consent Form

Project title: National sporting organisations and private franchise relationships: A New Zealand comparative case study of inter-organisational learning

*Project Supervisor: Dr Geoff Dickson
Dr Sean Phelps*

Researcher: Paul Cleary

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 17 January 2008.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes
No

Participant’s signature:.....

Participant’s name :.....

Participant’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14 April 2008
AUTEK Reference number 08/13*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 5: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

17 April 2008

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Confidentiality Agreement



Project title: National sporting organisations and private franchise relationships: A New Zealand comparative case study of inter-organisational learning

Project Supervisor: Dr Geoff Dickson
Dr Sean Phelps

Researcher: Paul Cleary

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature: [Handwritten signature]

Transcriber's name: Nicole (Nicky) Haisman

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Ladybird Transcription and Administration Services (Nicole Haisman Trading As)
95 Wentworth Drive
Rototuna
Hamilton 3210
NEW ZEALAND
Phone 64 [07] 854 1508
Mobile: 021 162 1710
Email: ladybirdadministration@ihug.co.nz



Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

[Dotted lines for contact details]

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 6 March 2008 AUTEC Reference number 08/13

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.