Explaining Elite Athletes' Corruption Behaviours: A Case Study of Doping and Match Fixing

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International Trade 2015

Sport Corruption

The global phenomenon of sport corruption threatens the integrity of sport (Engelberg et al., 2015; Hoeven et al., 2020; Nowy & Breur, 2017) and continues to challenge sport managers (Kihl et al., 2017; Lastra et al., 2018).

septembre 28, 2016

Sam Allardyce 'sting' is the latest chapter in a new era of investigative reporting

John Jewell, *Cardiff University*

The Daily Telegraph used hidden cameras to capture the England manager in an apparent impropriety … and it cost him his job.

mai 9, 2016

Fans deserve fair play in major sports, not cheating and corruption

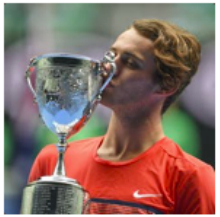
Hans Westerbeek, *Victoria University*

As the business of sport booms why does this come with an increasing frequency of integrity scandals of bribery, corruption and cheating?

Do the Olympics still matter?

Bruce Kidd, *University of Toronto*

The Olympics have been plagued by doping, corruption and political problems. But academic and former Olympian Bruce Kidd says the Olympic Games are still an important humanitarian movement.



janvier 15, 2017

Game, set and match-fix: what more can be done to stop corruption in tennis?

Diarmaid Harkin, *Deakin University*

The problem of corruption in tennis is likely to be an ongoing threat. So, it is important that the Tennis Integrity Unit develop into a trusted and convincing anti-corruption team.

Sport Corruption

CORRUPTION IN SPORT DEFINITION:

The deviation from public expectations that sport will be played and administered in an honest manner

(Masters, 2015)

- **Doping**
- **Match Fixing (betting related)**
- **Match Fixing (non betting related - tanking)**
- Bribery
- Illegal Gambling
- Insider Information for Gambling Purposes
- Money Laundering in Sport

Literature Review

Increasing focus upon understanding the complex decision-making process that **leads athletes to dope** (Kegelaers et al., 2018; Kirby et al., 2011; Lazuras et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2010) **and match fix** (Barkoukis et al., 2019; Hill, 2015; Hoeven et al., 2020; Hill, 2015; Tak et al., 2020). **However:**

- Small samples reflecting a narrow range of sporting disciplines and / or geographic areas (Kirby 2011, Lastra *et al.* 2018, van der Hoeven e*t al.* 2020,)
- Overdependence on statistical data (Lazuras *et al.* 2010; Tak *et al.* 2020, Van der Hoeven *et al*, 2020).
- Micro level accounts of elite athlete match fixing are relatively new (Numerato 2016, Kihl 2019)
- Limited knowledge exists regarding risk perceptions, sources of social norms and normative beliefs.

Reasons Behind Sport Corruption

- Cost / benefit motivations (money, career progression)
- Duress / coercion (Carpenter, 2012)
- Weak governance of sports organisations (Tak et al, 2019)
- Lack of moral judgement (Hoeven et al, 2019)
- Lack of awareness about the problem, severity and consequences (Hoeven et al, 2019)

Research Aim

Through a qualitative application of the theory of planned behaviour (Azjen, 1985), the research aimed to increase understanding of elite athletes' reasons behind intentional and actual corruption behaviours, specifically doping and match fixing.

Theoretical Framework

TBP = well-established and empirically validated social-psychological framework (Ajzen 2020).

Elite athlete match fixing behaviours remain unexplored using TPB, whilst academics have called for further TPB studies that explore doping behaviours (Sekulic *et al.* 2016).

Despite successful qualitative application of TPB in alternative research areas (Cohen *et al*. 2010, Goh 2019), sport corruption studies to adopt TPB have exclusively used quantitative methods.

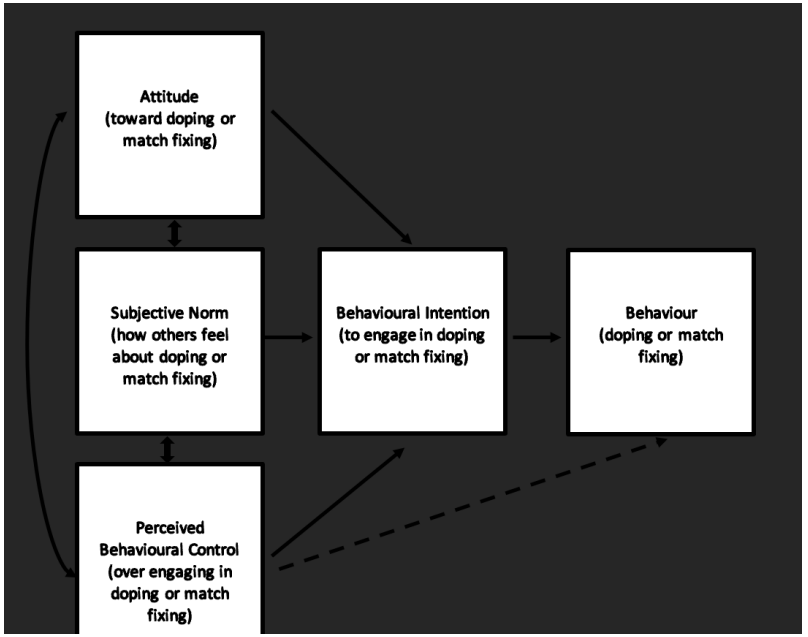


Figure 1. TPB applied to doping and match fixing (adapted from Ajzen, 1991)

Research Methods

Searched websites of all ASOIF / AIOWF / ARISF / AIMS / WADA IF signatories outside the Olympic movement for corruption sanction lists (n = 33 doping lists and 16 match fixing lists).

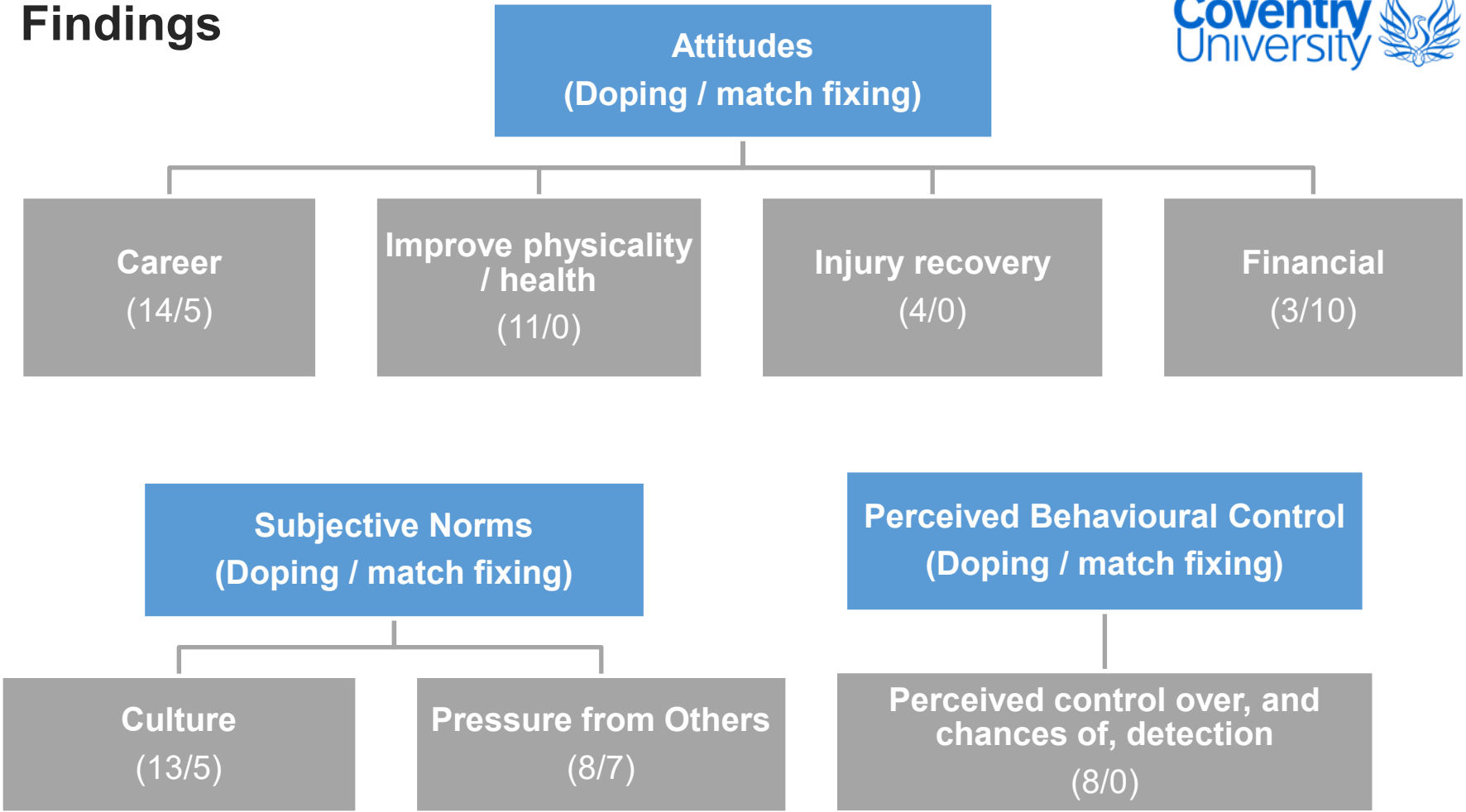
Athlete's names searched using Google to identify media interviews, admission statements and testimonies from dopers and match fixers who were caught, and those who self-admitted.

Final match fixing sample: 21 elite level match fixers (male = 21) from 15 nations and 7 sports.

Final doping sample: 33 elite level dopers (male = 29; female = 4) from 10 nations and 9 sports.

Data analysis = content analysis (Krippendorff 1980) and thematic analysis of statements.

Findings


Attitudes
(Doping / match fixing)
Career
(14/5)
Improve physicality / health
(11/0)
Injury recovery
(4/0)
Financial
(3/10)
Subjective Norms
(Doping / match fixing)
Culture
(13/5)
Pressure from Others
(8/7)
Perceived Behavioural Control
(Doping / match fixing)
Perceived control over, and chances of, detection
(8/0)

Practical Implications

The range of sub-themes related to attitudes, subjective norms (and in the case of doping, perceived behaviour control) demand anti-corruption strategies that integrate multiple, rather than singular, preventative strategies and target multiple motivations.

Integrity units (particularly those responsible for multiple corruption behaviours), should prioritise strategies according to the prevailing corruption motivations (e.g financial match fixing motives).

Strategies to change positive attitudinal beliefs regarding corruption behaviours into negatives ones may weaken corruption intentions.

References

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Thank you.