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**More than meets the (rationalistic) eye:
people, politics and the everyday doing of
management work in English professional
football academies.**

M McCutcheon

PhD

2021

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management work in English professional
football academies.**

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requirements of the University of Northumbria
at Newcastle for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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and Life Sciences

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Abstract

Empirical research addressing the everyday realities of management work remains surprisingly limited in the sport management literature base. Inspired by recent inquiry (e.g., Gibson & Groom, 2018, 2019, 2020; Kelly, 2017) addressing the micro-dynamics of management work in sports organisations, this thesis generated original knowledge regarding the ways in which academy football managers strategically engage in their interactions and relations with others to achieve organisational and personal goals. Indeed, the significance of this thesis lies in its illustration of the importance for managers to build and nurture collaboration, as well as deal with resistance, as an everyday feature of their working practice. Cyclical, in-depth interviews were used to rigorously generate data with five English football academy managers. The data were analysed iteratively (i.e., subject to etic and emic readings). Here, the seminal symbolic interactionist theorising (e.g., Mead, 1934 and Cooley, 1902) was combined with related work addressing human interchange in organisational life (i.e., Grills & Prus, 2019). Furthermore, Kelchtermans (2007) micropolitical theorising and the dramaturgical insights of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983, 2000) were utilised to support the analytic insights generated in this thesis. Importantly, the analysis revealed that the managers recognised the importance of securing the trust and support of their superiors and highlighted the different ways they go about achieving this. Furthermore, the findings also revealed how they interacted with subordinates to establish their vision for the academy and how they navigated various situations in order to secure their own desired working conditions. Finally, the range of emotions that the managers experience and how they strategically show or hide such emotions is highlighted, along with how they manufacture their emotions in order to achieve desired outcomes. Overall, this thesis gives a more nuanced understanding of the everyday doing of management work in English football academies and can therefore provide valuable insights for the education of managers to help them deal with the everyday realities of football academy management work.

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I would also like to thank those managers who have generously given up their time to have numerous conversations with me throughout this study, it is very much appreciated.

On a more personal level, I am thankful for the love, support and patience of Lisa who has had to endure this process. To my Mam for her unconditional love and support, and to my Dad who sadly is no longer with us, but his unconditional love and support is something that I will never forget. To my friends and colleagues in football and academia for their enthusiasm and helpful advice which has always been appreciated. To my close friends who I have known my whole life, thank you for being who you are, especially Kempy who has been a big supporter of me during this PhD and who has provided helpful reminders to never take life too seriously.

Finally, but most importantly, to my daughter Alex, who provides all the motivation and drive I need, thank you my darling, I love you.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this commentary has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted through the Researcher's submission to Northumbria University's Ethics System on 14th May 2014.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 84,892 words

Name: Mark McCutcheon

Date: 30 / 12 / 2021

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Reflections of Management experiences.

The aim of this research is to generate rich insights into how managers of English football academies get work done in their respective club settings. My motivation to investigate this has been driven by my personal experiences of both managing and being managed. Below I have chronicled the critical instances in my life which have led me to embark on this topic of inquiry.

1.1.1. Diary Extract (September 2004): A turning point

In September 2004, I enrolled on to an MSc in Sport Management. This represented a turning point, as I was essentially committing to a career in sport. This was something I was excited by. Alongside my studies, I was also coaching football part time with the Newcastle Football Development Scheme (NFDS). I was asked to assume a part-time position as a football development officer in the west and outer-west areas of Newcastle upon Tyne. The primary focus of the role was to deliver football opportunities in areas of the city which had been identified as having social issues with young people and anti-social behaviour. My remit was to demonstrate that football interventions could lead to a reduction in crime and develop good citizens. My work at the NFDS was essentially a coordination and project management role. This was something I had mixed emotions about. I had initially felt out of my depth, especially when trying to negotiate and influence other agencies such as community support officers, street wardens, various community groups and local facility managers. I was responsible for outcomes of the project and for coaches working on the project. I remember thinking *"there is a big responsibility on me here to ensure that the outcomes of this project are met and that the coaches working on the project are doing the right things"*

I had started to consider my own abilities as a manager of others and the programmes we worked on. My communication skills and negotiation skills were tested and I was anxious that this

was something I needed to be better at. It is something I thought I was faking at and I was concerned that I could get found out at any moment. I felt added pressure to ensure the outcomes of the project were, especially since I was studying management at University.

Director of Leisure Services: *Hi Mark – I heard you’re studying sport management? Your project should be one of the better ones then eh?*

Me: *I hope so! I’ll be doing my best, that’s for sure.*

Director of Leisure Services: *Well, you’re the expert so I’d expect your project to hit the numbers!*

Me: *(nervous laugh) Haha – I hope so.*

This brief conversation left me feeling extremely nervous about failing in the role of managing this project and getting the outcomes that were needed. It served to give me a recurring doubt in my mind that I had to be a good manager. It was during this time where I considered how the project was managed by the Council. I specifically reflected upon how the different stakeholders, such as coaches, street wardens, community centres, sports facilities, local residents, police officers and the young people themselves were co-ordinated to work together on this project. I had regularly thought “*how are the Council measuring the overall management of this project, how are they measuring my performance?*” There were a number of key issues with this project which intrigued me but also caused me some anxiety. Managing and coordinating coaches for the first time was something which caused me anxiety as I felt that their performance was a result of my management. The gathering, organising and reporting of key information about the project intrigued me for two reasons. The first reason was because data about the success of the project was central to the Council objectives, yet we were never given any training or information about how we should collect, format and return this data. The second reason was because I was always trying to find a better way to collect the data we needed to return to the Council. I was always aware that whatever data collection

method we used it would have to be in such a way that helped the coaches I managed do their job rather than hindered them.

I recall a conversation regarding myself and a coach who I was co-ordinating on the project:

Me: *Hi James, how have the last two sessions at Brinkburn Centre been?*

James: *They've been ok, mostly younger teenagers really, some turn up late and then some drift away early.*

Me: *Sounds familiar! Thanks – do you have a completed register from those last two sessions please?*

James: *Yes – here you go – there's just first names and a tick if they were at the session or not.*

Me: *ok – thanks for these, but we need to collect more information on our registers, we need to collect all of the information which the register template sets out – full name, address, date of birth and school.*

James: *I know we do but it's hard and sometimes just not practical when these young people are coming and going. Some of them don't want to give you their details – they get cheeky or angry when you ask them.*

Me: *I know but we need to be clever about how we get this info – maybe some of them will respond to us saying that if we don't get the participant information we need the sessions will stop?*

James: *Is that true?*

Me: *I think so – otherwise the council aren't getting the returns they want...could mean me, you, Kevin and Chris not getting as many hours on our timesheet!*

James: *Really?? Ok – I'll have to think about how best to get the information from them. I'll get it done somehow.*

I remember thinking that this interaction with James left me feeling dejected for two reasons; the first was because I had used the threat of the young people not getting access to their sessions anymore as an underhand way of highlighting to James that his hours of work could be at risk as a means to get the information I needed. The second was that I did not provide James with any real solution about how to tackle the issue and so felt feelings of inadequacy as a manager as a result of that specific interaction.

1.1.2. Diary extract (September, 2008): A new responsibility

In September 2008, the FE College where I was employed, made a strategic decision to invest significant resources into its sport provision. The motive for this was to attract more students to the college to study, but specifically those students who would choose the college because of the opportunity to play sports. I was given responsibility for managing parts of the sports academy provision. This included managing the coaching staff and gym staff, as well as some teaching in the sport department. The college then had another restructure amid change in government funding to FE and it was at this point where I was asked to take overall management and responsibility for the sports academy at the college, as the then manager moved into a new position. I jumped at this opportunity and I am responsible for managing all aspects of the sports academy at the college. This included the sports facilities across two campuses, the budget for the sports academy and the gym, 16 full time, part time and casual staff and this also involved working with senior leaders at the College to help influence and shape the delivery of the sports strategy. I specifically remember thinking that *“I am now responsible and accountable for the performance of the sports academy at the College”*. It was here where I gained experience of the different aspects of management. I had to manage the budget and had tight performance measures linked to this. I had to ensure the sport facilities across both campuses were utilised appropriately and I managed the gym manager to ensure this happened – however I consistently felt as though I was not clear on what good performance looked like from him. I felt I had to manage upwards – to show senior leaders of the College the value and impact the sports

academy had on the rest of the College. I was also line managing a team of coaches and performance reviews were a particular emotional issue for me.

1.1.3. Diary extract (November, 2013): A new career and new conversations

In November 2013, my career changed focus slightly and I moved from FE into Higher Education (HE). I had been interested in a job advert I had seen which advertised the role of a ‘Graduate Tutor in Sport Management’. I had to try and find a PhD supervisory team whose research interests aligned with my current thinking. This was a difficult task as I was still new in the department, didn’t know many academic colleagues and essentially I set about it by ‘cold calling’ and initiating a number of conversations with senior colleagues. I managed to articulate my thoughts to Dr Louise Davis and Dr Sam Elkington who expressed an interest in finding out more about a possible PhD in this area. An extract from conversations with the then supervisory team Louise Davis (LD) and Sam Elkington (SE)

LD: *So Mark, have you thought anymore about how your PhD may go?*

MMc: *I have, but there are more questions and more questions, I need to get myself more of a focus.*

SE: *What are the things about football academies which intrigue you?*

MMc: *The management of them. Who manages them, why they are managed in the way they are and what are they trying to achieve? How does it feel to manage in these places? Lots of things intrigue me about this environment.*

LD: *You could say the performance of the academy is under scrutiny?*

MMc: *Yes probably and the manager of the academy.*

SE: *So, Performance Management?*

MMc: *Yeah possibly - I have so many questions about that – especially from the point of view of the academy manager!*

SE: *Sounds like a good place to start.*

LD: *Management and Academy Managers?*

MMc: *That's something I want to know more about.*

SE: *That could be your PhD, Mark.*

This set me in a direction of travel for my PhD. However, my two supervisors Louise and Sam, quickly moved on from the University and were unable to continue with their supervisory commitments. Fortunately for me, Professor Paul Potrac had recently joined the University and my outgoing supervisor Louise Davis set up an opportunity for me to meet with Paul to discuss my thinking on my PhD. The conversations I had with Professor Paul Potrac (PP) were supportive, but challenging as he sought to find out more about what I was trying to do;

PP: *Hi Mark, good to meet you, Louise has kindly arranged for us to catch up, how are you?*

MMc: *Hi Paul, I'm not too bad, thanks considering I don't really have a PhD supervisor, I really appreciate you meeting with me and I hope I can tell you a bit about my PhD.*

PP: *You're very welcome and by all means please tell me about what you're doing.*

MMc: *Great thanks...well it's about football academies and about how they are managed. I work in one as a part time football coach and I have always been interested in how these places are managed.*

PP: *Very interesting, have you considered how you might find out more about this?*

MMc: *Well I am speaking to academy managers to find out how they manage and I think I'll develop some best practice tips for other academy managers.*

PP: *Sounds interesting, how will you do that?*

MMc: *I'll continue interviewing the managers and find out how they manage their academy and then create a list of common things to help develop a list of best practice.*

PP: *Have you thought about what theoretical ideas may help to guide your PhD?*

MMc: *Erm, theory? Erm, well, there are some performance management frameworks I could use I suppose, but I am not too sure really.*

PP: *Ok, don't worry, what is it specifically about the management of football academies that interests you?*

MMc: *Hmmm, I suppose I'm intrigued about how managers manage and work with other people.*

PP: *Ah ok, so what is it about their work with other people that interests you?*

MMc: *I think it's probably about how they work to get the other staff to do their jobs and, actually, probably about how they manage themselves in the academy as well.*

PP: *Interesting, we should meet again to discuss this further, in the meantime have a think about how you might make sense of what the managers do.*

MMc: *That's great thanks Paul, I will do, that's given me some real clarity on what to focus on.*

1.2 Academic Introduction

Management is a phenomenon which is widely considered to be one of the most important functions within any organisation. It is the ability of key individuals in an organisation to plan, organise, lead and control (MacIntosh & Burton, 2019). Management has also been outlined as a process by which the purpose and objectives of a particular human group are determined, clarified and actioned (Peterson & Plowman, 1953; MacIntosh & Burton, 2019), giving early indications that managers are concerned with people and getting them to get work done in a particular way. The nature and structure of organisations can often dictate the roles and responsibilities which a manager must fulfil, yet predominantly, it is a role which involves establishing a direction for staff, managing resources in the form of finances, people and plant/equipment or facilities where appropriate (Boddy, 2002; Hoyer et al, 2012; MacIntosh & Burton, 2019). Those individuals who take on the role of manager are of significant importance to the organisation, since they can have a direct influence on the performance of staff and subsequently the performance of the organisation (Mullins & Christy 2016). The role of management can take a number of forms dependent on the organisation and environment which provides the context, yet it is a function which can support an organisation to make significant progress towards its aims and objectives, thus making management a crucial part of organisational work (Mullins & Christy, 2016).

The traditional view of management stems from early thinkers such as Fredrick W Taylor (1856-1915) who offered a mechanistic or scientific view of management. This was through ideas that improvements in worker productivity could be brought about through management providing an efficient technical work structure and through the provision of monetary incentives (Taylor, 1947). Those who have adopted a more structuralist approach to the study of management in organisations have demonstrated a preoccupation with the individual qualities a manager may or may not possess and how this can impact upon the organisation (Cummings, 1982; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Mowday & Sutton, 1993; MacIntosh & Burton, 2019; Smith, Yellowley, & Maclachlan, 2021). Many in this emphasis of research will attempt to identify factors such as individual, organisational or

environmental and relevant measurements that could be used to predict or shape particular outcomes. Crucial to those structuralist arguments is an assumption that variables or factors will produce particular organisational outcomes (Grills & Prus, 2019). Within this approach there have been researchers who have theorised that understanding social life and management in organisations revolves around a system of rules, processes and conflict and that people should be viewed as the producers, conveyors, and implementers of rules as well as being the sources of discrepancy, conflict and change (Pfeffer, 1981; Burns & Flam, 1987). Characteristics of such management were reflected through hierarchical structures of authority, a clear division of tasks with close supervision from managers (Mullins & Christy, 2016; MacIntosh & Burton, 2019).

Within the broader context of management and organisational behaviour, there have been comparatively little consideration given to the task of examining the more generic or engaged features of human relations. Attempts therefore, have been made to move past the structuralist approach to understanding management and organisational behaviour by positing that people will act towards things in terms of the images they associate with them (Morgan, 1997). Whilst offering viable assumptions to help appreciate the role of management in organisations, they do not adequately account for organisations being places of enacted realms of reality - in that the people working there will create, interpret and make sense of their social experiences. Greater attention is needed to the act of human endeavour, activity and interaction to help offer a deeper understanding of managerial life in organisations (Grills & Prus, 2019). Through 'bringing the person back' to the centre of management related research, we can enhance our understanding into what actually happens when people try to do management work and by focusing on the complicated behaviour of individuals and collectives particularly as they act and prepare to act toward one another we can develop richer insights into organisational life (Hallet, Schulman & Fine, 2009; Grills & Prus, 2019).

Within the academic sub-discipline of sport management, the work of the manager remains an under-researched topic of inquiry. Indeed, there has been little or no empirical research conducted into the work of the elite sport manager (Fletcher and Wagstaff, 2009). More recently, the work of Kelly

(2017) has highlighted the work of the elite football manager and helped the sport management literature to better understand some of the realities of managing and working in elite football. The work of Kelly (2017) outlined key aspects of football management which were attentive to the recruitment and appointment of the manager, previous playing experience and formal education, the assessment and recruitment of players and working with agents, boards and directors. By paying attention to such aspects, Kelly (2017), made significant contributions to the sport management literature by highlighting the nuanced work that professional football managers have to engage in. In addition to this, Hall et al (2021) examined the hybrid work an individual in elite sport had to contend with as they negotiated management, leadership and coaching responsibilities whilst they went about their work. The key findings from this study illuminated how the individual would strategically interact in order to secure buy-in from others and to afford the manager the relevant resource needed to complete their work successfully. Furthermore, the work of Gibson and Groom (2018a, 2018b, 2019), have addressed the micropolitical dimensions of organisational change from the perspective of those leading the change. Indeed, their work has critiqued the often rationalistic views of sport management work and has helped to illuminate the micropolitical considerations which the sport manager is mindful of during periods of organisational change and as a result, their studies have helped to advance our understanding of the social complexities of organisational change in elite sport environments. Additionally, scholars researching the field of sports coaching and football have helped to illuminate issues of trust, distrust and suspicion which quite often characterise such environments (Gale, Ives, Potrac & Nelson, 2019; Ives, Potrac, Gale & Nelson, 2022; Roderick, 2016). Building and sustaining trust in sports coaching work is viewed as a central feature of an effective coach (Gale, et al. 2019). Yet, those who work in football environments are often concerned with issues of trust, distrust and as such, can therefore engage in interactions which are entrenched in suspicion (Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2013). As such, this thesis considers the significance of trust and distrust in sport and football environments and seeks to further explore these issues through the lens and perspective of the sport manager.

Whilst the high quality contributions of the work cited above are to be welcomed, our understanding of the actual work the sport manager engages in during their everyday endeavours could help to enhance the sport management literature base. The everyday work and tasks a manager performs in their respective sport organisations could be better illuminated and understood to help advance our knowledge of what the manager actually does (Grills & Prus, 2019). Indeed, by attending to the ways that sport managers get work done on a daily basis, by illuminating the ways in which they navigate challenges and by understanding the emotions they experience and emotional management work they engage in as they go about their everyday work can help to advance the literature base. Our understanding of sport management work can be better illuminated by inviting managers to reflect and discuss how and why they act in the ways that they do across a range of management situations (Grills & Prus, 2019). While scholars in the mainstream field of management have increasingly recognised the centrality of emotions at all levels of organisational life (Turner & Stets, 2009), similar advances have yet to occur in sports management (Frisby, 2005). Arguably, our understanding of organisational life in sport would be greatly enriched by a drive to better understand how emotion has the capacity to not only bring people together, but also to push them to challenge cultural traditions, or, indeed, drive them apart (Turner & Stets, 2009). In sport management, there has been little consideration of how emotions such as excitement, joy, anger, anxiety, guilt and embarrassment may be produced in, as well as through, the social interactions and contextual relationships that comprise this social activity. Similarly, the consideration of emotion as “a permanent dimension of our being in the world and being towards others” (Crossley, 2011, p.62) would give a better understanding of the “coalitions, conflicts and negotiations” (Fineman, 2005 p. 2) that are prevalent as humans interact during the management process. Taking heed of the seminal work in symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy, it becomes clear that these concepts are inextricably entwined with the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the actors involved.

In responding to the arguments made above, this thesis seeks to put ‘thinking’, ‘feeling’, and ‘acting’ people and the interactions that occur between them at the heart of our understanding of management in elite sport (Grills & Prus, 2019). Specifically, this study aims to generate rich insights

into how managers of English football academies make sense of, and enact, management in the context of their respective football academies. In order to achieve this goal, in-depth interviews were used to explore the following topics and issues:

- How do managers engage with others (e.g. superiors and subordinates) in the workplace?
What do they do? When? How? Why?
- What dilemmas and issues do they encounter in this work with others? How do they attempt to navigate these challenges? Why do they act in the ways they do?
- What emotions do academy managers experience when they enact management? How are these emotions connected to their working relationships with others? What emotions do they choose to share or hide with others? When? How? Why?

The significance of this study then lies in the breaking of new ground in the theorisation of management in elite level sport as “a problematic, emotional, and ethical activity” (Potrac, Mallett, Greenough, & Nelson, 2017, p.143). On one level, its originality lies in the consideration of ‘how’ and ‘why’ academy managers experience and interpret this aspect of their work in the ways that they do. On another level, this work also sheds some initial light onto how the academy managers’ strategize their interactions and behaviours “as calculating and experiencing persons within a set of formal and informal expectations for performance” (Hallet, Shulman, & Fine, 2009). By focusing on such everyday issues, this thesis engages with the ‘fine grain’ and ‘connective tissue’ of management and thus raises “our understanding of the prosaic to critical knowledge” (Gardiner, 2000, p. 6). Indeed, by purposefully addressing the ‘politics of the small’ (Goldfarb, 2008), inclusive of how “conflicting interests are articulated, and [how] consensus may or may not be reached” (Goldfarb, 2008, p. 1816), I believe this thesis provides a more nuanced social understanding of management in elite sport than has, thus far, been achieved.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this section, I critically review the current state of the literature base in sport management, with a particular focus on the work of the sport manager and how they 'do' their work within an organisation. Here, in addition to summarising the topics covered, special attention is given to the paradigmatic assumptions that underpin such inquiry. I also outline how the sport coaching literature base has been developed by scholars utilising different paradigmatic positions together with sociological theorising. I then illuminate lessons from mainstream management literature which have also heeded to calls to consider paradigmatic plurality to help better understand the work of management. In particular, I offer a view which could help research in the sport management discipline to continue to develop by outlining the value of both the interpretivist paradigm and sociological theorising to the literature base.

2.2 Sport Management Literature – Evolution of a new discipline.

The sport management literature developed significantly following the inception of North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) in 1985, and the subsequent Journal of Sport Management in 1987. The European Association of Sport Management (EASM) was created in 1992 and they quickly moved to produce a refereed journal in 1994. This was the European Journal for Sport Management, which was retitled in 2000 to the European Sport Management Quarterly. In 1995, the Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand was (SMAANZ) became the third Sport Management association to be developed and they also prompted a widely respected journal known as the Sport Management Review in 1998. These three refereed journals were considered multidisciplinary in focus in that they included contributions from any aspect of organizational life related to sport (Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007). Indeed, since the commencement of these associations, the number of degree programs, peer-reviewed journals and scholarly conferences affiliated with sport management has grown significantly (Costa, 2005; Pitts, 2001).

Members of these associations are encouraged to explore the theoretical and applied facets of sport management, which include cross-disciplinary subjects such as leadership, ethics, marketing, finance, communications, and sociology. The academic discipline of sport management is said to be one of the fastest growing areas in North American higher education (Chelladurai, 2005; Frisby, 2005).

However, as fast as this discipline seems to be growing, the number of qualified professors to teach sport management courses has struggled to keep pace (Pitts, 2001). This has led to a combination of excitement and anxiety from scholars in the field, as the education of practitioners and academics and the willingness to develop and extend the boundaries of sport management research can have a profound impact on the status of this emerging discipline (Cuneen et al, 2004; Frisby, 2005; Pitts, 2001). In terms of paradigmatic positions much sport management research has been located in a positivist research paradigm which has largely influenced the ontological assumptions of management, the research methodologies employed to explore it and the subsequent claims which are made (Frisby, 2005).

2.3 Dominant Positivist Roots

As highlighted above, here have been some important contributions to the sport management literature base which have been located in positivist research. Indeed, Costa (2005) outlined the current nature of the sport management literature base and calls for scholars in the field to value paradigmatic development. Costa (2006) conducted a Delphi Study which included the surveying of 17 expert researchers in the discipline of sport management. Three rounds of questions were asked and responses were gained in a quantitative format which sought to gain a consensus of sport management experts, which is the aim of this type of study. Results were presented in table format indicating the popularity of responses regarding the priorities for scholars as they look to advance sport management research. Similarly, Pitts and Pederson (2005) analysed the content of the *Journal of Sport Management* and in this article they emphasised how sport management research is dominated by studies of physical education and athletic programs whilst acknowledging that the majority of these studies utilised a quantitative based research methodology. More recently, Pitts,

Danylchuk and Quarterman (2014) conducted a content analysis on the European Sport Management Quarterly and identified there were four key content areas; “Management and Organisational Skills in Sport”, “Sport Business in the Social Context”, “Sport Marketing” and “Sport Economics”. Limited critical attention is given to the paradigmatic location of the content in this article and this appears to be consistent with a body of literature which lacks paradigmatic scrutiny (Frisby, 2005; Costa, 2005). David Shilbury, in receipt of the Dr Earl Zeigler award (2011), discussed the importance of strategy in the field of sport management research and articulated results of his study into the different type of sport management strategy research which has taken place across the literature. The results of this research highlighted another lack of paradigmatic diversity whilst researching strategic management in sport, where positivism has dominated (Frisby, 2005; Costa, 2005).

Most research into the management of a sport organisation and its performance has generally been located in the positivist paradigm. This has prioritised generating answers to questions or to develop and enhance models, frameworks and guidelines of ‘best practice’ (O’Boyle, 2017). Within much of the research in this area, there appears to be a preoccupation with an organisation's performance in respect of measurable outcomes in order to create improved systems, techniques and tools to help improve organisational performance (O’Boyle & Hassan, 2014). For example, Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) measured the performance of Greek sport organisations through the production and comparisons of numbers in relation to key performance indicators (KPI’s), which in this case is customer and stakeholder satisfaction scores. They suggest the performance of the organisation is a result of the scores from customer and stakeholder satisfaction (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000). However, a study such as this does not pay attention to the complexities and nuances of meeting expectations of customers and stakeholders and this can be a very complex issue for managers and their staff to navigate (O’Boyle, 2017).

Another example of the positivistic dominated tradition in the sport management literature base is the utilisation of the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) from the business literature into the sport management literature. The aim of the Balanced Scorecard was to provide a

management system that reconciled external and easily quantifiable measures like market share and return on investment against internal factors such as administrative processes. The four key dimensions an organisations will measure itself on are financial, customer, internal-process and learning and growth (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). It is also suggested that the four dimensions are linked to a common organisational objective to ‘ensure consistency and mutually reinforcing conduct’ (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018 p.339). The Balanced Scorecard was used as a framework for the sport management literature to develop a multi-dimensional management model for sport. This management model is grounded in a positivist research paradigm in that its nine dimensions ensure it is structured to achieve organisational objectives (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018).

Sport management is both similar and different to business management (Smith & Stewart, 1999). Its similarities have arisen out of a relentless drive over the last 30 years for sport management to be more professionally structured and managed. Large areas of sport have consequently copied the values and practices of the business world, and as a result players, managers and administrators are paid employees, strategic plans are designed and performance is measured and managed. In addition, games and activities become branded sports products, fans become customers to be satisfied and surveyed, and alliances with corporate supporters are developed (Carter, 2011; Slack, 1997). At the same time, sport is also different from business. Firstly, it has a symbolic significance and emotional intensity that is rarely found in an insurance company or a bank. Although businesses seek employee compliance and attachment, their primary concern is efficiency, productivity and responding to changing market conditions (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018). Sport, on the other hand, is consumed by strong emotional attachments that are linked to the past through nostalgia and tradition – romantic visions, emotions, and passion can override commercial logic and economic rationality (Greyser 2006). Second, predictability and certainty, which are goals to be aimed for in the commercial world, are not always achievable in the sporting world. In practice, sport organisations face two conflicting models of organisational behaviour when deciding upon their underlying mission and goals. The first is the profit maximisation model which assumes that an organisation is in a competitive market where profit is the single driving motivational force. The second is the utility

maximisation model, which emphasises the rivalry between organisations and their desire to win as many competitions as possible (Downward and Dawson, 2000). The utility view assumes that sport organisations are by nature highly competitive and that the single most performance yardstick is competitive success. Such issues are considered when management systems for sport organisations are developed (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018).

2.4 Post-Positivism in Sport Management

In recent years, the field of sport management has slowly begun to embrace the use of qualitative methods as a legitimate means of generating data (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). However, it is acknowledged that this rarely extends beyond traditional semi-structured interviews, focus groups and case studies. As a consequence, much of this work is located in post-positivism, whereby qualitative methods still lead to models, diagrams and lists of best practice to be yielded (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). There is a view that whilst these are alternative approaches for some, certain interviews and focus groups have been criticised as they can fail to capture individualised stories that reflect the multiplicity, fragmentation and complexity of lived experience inside and outside of sporting organisations (Flintoff, Fitzgerald & Scrafton, 2008). Research methods which have utilised semi structured interviews and focus groups have been identified as qualitative in their nature and have been employed in order to provide a more person focussed approach to the research (Inglis, 1992; Olafson, 1990). However, such research methods have been central to the post-positivist paradigm where the data has been categorised, grouped, compared, checked for reliability and validity and thus led to the production of models of management and guidelines for best practice when managing in sport (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018).

Many scholars have accepted that research in sport management is often preoccupied with causal questions (Rudd & Johnsen, 2010). There have been calls from sport management scholars to

seek opportunities for mixed methods to be incorporated into the literature base. The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods can help to provide validity to research studies, it enables the researcher to triangulate which can provide the data with strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses (Rudd & Johnsen, 2010). Topics such as marketing, organisational behaviour and finance within the sport management discipline been studied using mixed methods, which are located in a post-positivist paradigm on account of the questions of validity, reliability, triangulation and member checking being important factors in this methodology (Rudd & Johnsen, 2010).

For example, Bayle & Madella (2002) use qualitative methods to establish performance indicators that a French sports organisation can utilise to help construct a performance profile for the organisation. Six dimensions of performance were created for an organisation to judge its performance; statutory, internal societal, societal, economic, promotional and organisational (Bayle & Madella, 2002). Despite occupying what is understood to be qualitative methods, the study still produced six elements to represent the dimensions of performance which reduces the concept, once again overlooking complexity and nuances within the management of sport organisational performance. This is another example of research in sport management being conducted in a post-positivist paradigm.

The aforementioned studies, appear to typify much of the research within the area of sport management in organisations regardless it being a quantitative based study or a qualitative based study (O'Boyle, 2017). In their study with an aim of providing a holistic view of organisational performance in sport, Bayle and Robinson (2007) attempted to advance the aforementioned studies which were concerned with measuring organisational performance (O'Boyle, 2017). They employed both a survey and semi-structured interviews to uncover management practices and tools used by National Governing Bodies (NGB's) within French sport. The results from this study suggested that there are three principles that performance depends upon; the systems of governance, the quality of the organisation's network and the positioning of the organisation within its particular sport – these principles are referred to as the 'strategic performance mix' (Bayle & Robinson, 2007). Despite two

of the three aforementioned studies using widely accepted qualitative methods of data collection, the results offered all resemble characteristics of a positivistic paradigm. That is to reduce the complexities of management in sport organisations to be grouped into principles, dimensions or outcomes for a manager of an organisation to incorporate as a recipe for improved performance. The extant research in sport management which seeks to address organisational performance is predominantly located in positivist and post-positivist research paradigms (O'Boyle, 2017). Much of this research is predicated upon management models such as the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992), the Performance Prism (Neeley, et al., 2002), or the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM Model) (Wongrassamee, Gardiner & Simmons, 2003).

Subsequently, a systematic approach to the management of sport organisations has been advocated as an essential tool for identifying strengths and weaknesses and revealing the ways in which the overall organisational performance in sport can be improved, with the use of a management model being deemed crucial to the long term success of sports organisations. (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018). However, the question within the literature remains about how to best go about implementing an appropriate model of management. There have been calls to look at management from a strategic perspective, where the attention should be focussed on what the organisation wants to achieve, therefore a management system should be linked to a sport organisation's vision, goals and objectives (Hums & Maclean, 2018; Robbins and Barnwell, 2002). According to Bayle and Robinson (2007), an effective management system should consider the variety of ways in which performance and success can manifest itself. In some instances, it may be important to consider issues such as staff retention, player development and overall levels of morale and job satisfaction – what can be referred to as process factors (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018). In whatever way a system of management operates, it needs to take into account the primary goals of the organisation (Atkinson, Waterhouse & Wells, 1997; Bryson, 2004; Carter, 2011). It is clear that much of the literature in sport management has been embedded in the positivist and post-positivist traditions. Indeed, the literature base which outlines considerations for managing the performance of sport organisations has a preoccupation with models of practice. For example, in developing a model for evaluating a sport

organisation's performance, there should be a focus on inputs and outputs. This involves looking at things like quality, quantity, efficiency, cost-benefit ratios, and employee productivity. This approach provides a checklist of essential management dimensions that need to be addressed whilst the organisation pursues its objectives (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018).

Sport management scholars are well positioned to seek a deeper understanding into organisations and managerial activities. Especially with regard to how structures and practices related to policy development, people management, marketing, the media and technology, accounting, and so on perpetuate and contribute to the management of sport (Frisby, 2005).

2.5 Critique of Positivism and Post Positivism

Despite the positivist and post-positivist research paradigms being central to the initiation and development of the sport management literature base, many scholars have articulated opposition to the “parochialism and domination and the ways in which the conventions of the positivist and post-positivist approach have become accepted as the natural way of producing knowledge and viewing a particular aspect of the world” (Amis and Silk, 2005 p.361).

Indeed, Dr Earle F. Zeigler, one of the pioneers of NASSM challenged for academics in sport management to determine its state and to facilitate efforts for improvement in developing sport management research boundaries by encouraging a wider attention of disciplines, research paradigms and methodologies (Pitts & Danylchuk, 2007). With those considerations in mind, early sport management scholars suggested that the body of sport management literature did not sufficiently reflect an emerging relatively complex field and that the research methodologies that were utilised were limited, in the sense that they predominantly led to the development of a similar paradigmatic knowledge base (Olafson, 1990; Paton, 1987; Slack, 1997). More recently, many scholars have also expressed concerns about the lack of paradigmatic diversity and limited range of topics being explored within the sport management literature (Pitts, 2001; Slack, 1997). In addition to this,

scholars have observed that there is an over reliance on survey methods and that much research within the sport management literature is homogeneous in its nature (Olafson, 1995). As a consequence to this, scholars have raised concerns about the legitimacy of the field of sport management in the realm of academia in general, given its relative lack of paradigmatic diversity and its relatively narrow view of what sport management actually is (Chalip, 2006; Slack, 1997).

Recently, scholars in sport management have also expressed a critical view on the conventional methods which have tended to dominate the sport management literature (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Traditional quantitative methods often group individual differences into tidy, simplistic, overarching categories that are subsequently reported neatly through numerical sets, charts and graphs within the literature base (Bonnett & Carrington, 2000; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Such data rarely portray the meanings, reasons, feelings and emotions behind the findings which get reported. Indeed, in reflecting the theorising of Crossley (2011), the social world compromises networks of interaction between actors who cannot be abstracted from these networks and who take shape as actors within interaction. This indicates a level of complexity into how work gets done in organisational environments which create both opportunities and constraints for those actors. Research which occupies a focus upon variables and their interactions does not adequately clarify the complexity in such social interactions and therefore reduces the social world to discrete atomic entities that renders both that world and the action of those within it unintelligible (Crossley, 2011). Such analysis of variables obscures the workings of the social world because it shifts the focus of analysis away from interaction between actors, where the work really gets done and where outcomes are genuinely decided, onto labels which we treat as properties of individuals. Essentially, variables don't do anything – it is the actors who do the social world and collectively determine the fate of their peers, social analysis, therefore, should reflect this (Abbott, 2001; Crossley, 2011).

There are a number of scholars in sport management who have articulated a need for the discipline to think more about the research paradigms it subscribes to, and to embrace a range of approaches to help advance the literature base (Knoppers, 2015). Indeed, Wendy Frisby (2005), upon

her receipt of the Zeigler Award noted that sport management research is and has been dominated by positivist approaches (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Whilst these approaches have undoubtedly proved useful in addressing issues and advancing the sport management literature base, Frisby (2005) articulates that literature in this area should see and think differently towards research by drawing upon social sciences to extend knowledge and understanding in the field (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). If researchers are to get a better understanding of sport management, then research needs to be conducted from multiple paradigms (Frisby, 2005). The paradigms we operate from as researchers, whether it is positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, critical social science, post modernism, or a combination of these paradigms, shape the questions we ask, the methods we use, and the degree to which our findings will have an impact on society (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The sport management literature has been led predominantly by a positivist paradigm and in many ways this has been viewed as a strength (Amis & Silk, 2005). A range of models have been unveiled as a result of the literature engaging in a methodical, persistent, and well-coordinated process of knowledge production, which for the most part has embraced the doctrines and standards of logical positivism (Kincheloe, 2001). Indeed, Amis and Silk (2005) have highlighted that the sport management field has been dominated by positivist and post-positivist approaches, along with their associated research designs, methods and writing styles.

Sport management research could do well to note the progressive work in areas like sport coaching, as currently it is a field which is 'blinkered by its disciplinarity' and there should be greater focus on innovative thinking and approaches to sport management research (Amis & Silk, 2005, p. 360). By adopting new methods of research and working in different paradigms, sport management research can impact upon, and have greater meaning for, the communities it serves (Amis & Silk, 2005).

2.6 Alternative approaches to the study of Sport Management

In a quest to avoid one sided reductionism, some sport management scholars have observed calls for the field to provide different paradigmatic approaches to help advance the literature base. Much of this research has been located in a post-structuralist research paradigm, where a critical lens has been employed to challenge dominant views in society (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Cooper, Grenier & Macauley, 2017; Frisby, 2005). A key assumption which such scholars subscribe to in this critical paradigm is that organisations are operating in a wider cultural, economic and political context characterised by unequal, deeply entrenched power relations (Frisby, 2005). Sport management research which has been conducted in the post-structuralist paradigm is not neutral as it has an agenda to bring about change by challenging dominant ways of thinking by those in power, since much management research serves the interests of managers who occupy positions of power (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Frisby, 2005). Whilst the efforts of scholars seeking to advance the paradigmatic thinking in sport management literature by subscribing to a post-structuralist point of view is both welcomed and laudable (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). There has been a preoccupation for such scholars to focus on the ‘bad’ or ‘ugly’ sides of sport in order to bring about changes (Frisby, 2005 p.8). This has led scholars to seek out situations where they perceive imbalances in power or social injustices are at play in attempt to make things better for those who are on the wrong side of such power relations (Cooper, Grenier & Macauley, 2017).

There have also been attempts to embrace paradigmatic diversity, in the form of interpretivist approaches. Scholars in sport management calling for a greater level of attention to be given to the value of (auto) ethnographic approaches (Wright, 2016). Scholars in sport management are recognising the fruitful line of inquiry a personal narrative approach can make, especially in relation to the ‘lived experience’ which can offer the literature base a more informed understanding of the lives and experiences of the people with whom the research is concerned (Wright, 2016; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2017). Such calls for an interpretivist line of inquiry within the sport management literature base are being acknowledged and acted upon, however this particular approach

can be utilised more readily by scholars. This has meant the sport management literature base is still thin on research which adopts an interpretivist paradigm that attempts to provide us with a genuine understanding of management and organisational life by the people who live it on a daily basis (Frisby, 2005).

2.6.1 A sociological understanding of Sport Management: lessons from the mainstream.

More recently observations from sport management scholars, articulate how the disciplines of sport management and the sociology of sport remain distinct and infrequently draw upon each other, despite calls for the contrary (Knoppers, 2015; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). By sport management research adopting a sociological lens and a critically reflexive approach, this will enable practitioners and scholars to begin to better understand how societal issues are inextricably embedded within the management, governance and development of sport (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Some scholars therefore suggest that this kind of critically reflexive outlook can encourage the questioning of established management practices and taken for granted assumptions. In doing so, the possibilities could open up for new ways of organising and managing sport (Amis & Silk, 2005; Frisby, 2005; Knoppers, 2015). There is now a stronger case made from some sport management scholars which encourages those engaged in sport management research and practice to push the boundaries of their thinking, and be innovative, reflexive and critical in their methodological considerations (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Drawing upon social sciences to extend knowledge and understanding in sport management can provide an effective vehicle for exploring the interconnections and micro politics within sport management. Indeed, Smith (2017) has provided sport management scholars with considerations around the notion of qualitative research being generalizable, in that qualitative researchers should not be obliged to seek generalisability and that research of this nature can help to illuminate the relatively unknown complexities of the social world. This is echoed by Hoeber and Shaw (2017) who advocate the sport

management literature embraces research methodologies which include personal narratives, self-ethnographies and auto-ethnographies. Such approaches can legitimise the lived experiences of researchers (Sparkes, 2000) and since many sport management researchers are also consumers (e.g., fans and spectators) and producers of sport (e.g., administrators, coaches, officials, volunteers), it is reasonable to assume that, as insiders to these worlds, they have valuable insight to share with the field (Hoerber & Shaw, 2017).

One particular example of scholars taking heed of such calls is not only in the way data is collected, but in the way data is represented (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). That is, to adopt a narrative approach when collecting and representing research findings. This is to help research bring to life the stories, biographies and social realities of people who are working within sport management environments. As articulated by Dowling (2012, p.37) “such an approach can no longer be marginalised within the field when we live in a society permeated by narrative”. Individual stories say something not only about us as individuals but equally something about the context in which we live and work; micro stories about individual lives are therefore also stories about macro societal relations (Stride, et al., 2016). Narrative enquiry of this nature can provide an effective means of reflecting how decisions are made within an organisation play out at the micro level, influencing individual daily lived social realities. In the case of a manager working in a sport organisation the thoughts, feelings, talk, actions and emotions are brought to life and can help us to make connections with the sport manager and help to illuminate the complexities of life working in a sport organisation.

To help us frame our thinking of the complexities of organisational life, it is appropriate to draw upon a literature base in the mainstream which articulates human interactions in inhabited institutionalism (Hallet, Shulman & Fine, 2009). The argument from Hallet, Schulman and Fine (2009) articulates the need for research to appreciate human beings in organisations as acting, striving, calculating, sentimental and experiencing persons and not the automatons and neutral agents. To understand organisational life should be to understand the complicated behaviour of these collectives, particularly as they act and prepare to act towards one another (Hallet, Shulman & Fine,

2009). The calls in this literature base to 'bring people back' to the focus of organisational research also seek to engage the classic symbolic interactionist thinkers of Mead, Blumer and Goffman (Hallet, Shulman & Fine, 2009). In respect of how people work in organisations using the classic interactionist credo, this poses a number of questions for those seeking to better understand organisational life:

- How do workers interpret the work that they do?
- How do they identify with or disavow work in connection to their sense of 'self'?
- How do they do things together?
- How do they strategize their actions as 'calculating and experiencing persons' within a set of formal and informal expectations of performance?
- How do patterns of interaction constitute negotiated orders that shape how work is accomplished?

Such inquiry can illuminate the complexity of human interaction with organisational life. This can be achieved through work being viewed as locally constituted through institutional arrangements, cultural assumptions and practiced through the facilitation of group dynamics. Although rules may determine the form of work, the interactionist thinkers can explore how people and their messiness of lived experience, define, negotiate, do or shirk their work in practice (Hallet & Ventresca, 2006; Hallet, Shulman & Fine, 2009).

Many scholars have utilised the thinking of Inhabited Institutionalism as a point of departure to help facilitate the understanding of organisational life (Hallet & Ventresca, 2006; Hallet, Shulman & Fine, 2009). There is a growing body of scholarship which seeks to develop a dialogue between the functioning and workings of organisations and the theories of human sensemaking which are rooted in the traditions of symbolic interactionism (Everitt, 2013). The theoretical orientation where institutions are conceptualised as 'inhabited' is concerned with how people make sense of their daily activities through interaction (Everitt, 2013; Hallet, 2010; Hallet & Ventresca, 2006).

Indeed, this theory has allowed for fruitful inquiry to be conducted with teachers and the education of teachers within the American education system (Everitt, 2013). Such work demonstrates how teachers who are new to the profession work and operate in such a way which is closely linked to the policies and mandates placed upon them by the schools in which they work. There are suggestions in this research that teachers sense-making in such establishments, can be anticipatory and retrospective, that is to suggest people will have a preconceived view on how they should work and act, but then amend this based upon their experiences and the environment in which they are working (Everitt, 2013).

Research which acts as complementary to Everitt (2013) is that which addresses inclusion policy and teachers strategies through the concepts of loose coupling and inhabited institutions (DeRoche, 2013). This study found that teachers will negotiate policy in the face of classroom reality by drawing upon their personal and social resources. Teachers will also draw upon their educational training as they create and implement strategies to help them deal with learner diversity (DeRoche, 2013). Consequently, this research helps to highlight the individual difference which teachers exhibit as they go about enacting and delivering upon a policy such as learner inclusion.

In another study using inhabited institutionalism as a point of departure, Hallet and Meanwell (2016) investigated an American educational law known as 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB). In this research, the authors drew upon the cultural processes of policy making and collected data based upon the social interactions of those developing the policy of NCLB. There appeared to be issues around accountability for the NCLB law and as such, the policy makers introduced alternative meanings to their initial strategy of creating a law which actually meant 'No Child Left Behind'. Due to the complexity of the social interactions in the process, those who developed that law inadvertently created something different to what was intended (Hallet & Meanwell, 2016). Researchers utilising the theoretical ideas of inhabited institutionalism, link institutionalised meanings and relationships with patterns of interaction and emergent understandings within organisations (Haedicke & Hallet, 2016). Inhabited institutionalist researchers can spend extended periods of time immersed in the

organisational settings that they study and they will utilise a variety of techniques for collecting and logging data (Haedicke & Hallet, 2016; Morrill & Fine, 1997). It is through this collection of rich data which researchers can uncover inconsistencies between institutionalised meanings and local practices as well as between predicted and observed patterns of action (Haedicke & Hallet, 2016). Such organisational research investigated through a lens of inhabited institutionalism treats anomalies, inconsistencies and unexpected findings as vital pieces of information. Such information is used to help understand how the cultural creativity and agency of those who inhabit the organisation can shape and is shaped by the environment of the institution (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). By using the theory of inhabited institutionalism, the everyday life of organisations can be illuminated which supports scholars and practitioners to better understand how managers and people interact and operate in organisational environments. Grills and Prus (2019) in their work on management were acknowledging and developing calls from scholars advocating interactionist thinking in inhabited institutions to help better understand how people get work done in organisations. The study of organisational life has been insightfully and diligently articulated to help the management literature to better appreciate the complexity of management work against a backdrop of human interaction and interchange.

The importance of an interactionist approach to the study of management, offices and management related activities cannot be overstated. Encompassing themes in management such as achieving understanding, providing direction and coordinating activities with others across an endless array of humanly engaged and contested theatres – management related concerns are central to the human condition itself (Grills & Prus, 2019). Any person or group who attempts to influence or otherwise shape the behaviours or experiences of another person or group may be seen to engage in management related activity. Management endeavours or influence work also presume human capacities for adjustive behaviour, recognitions of the potentially enabling features of cooperation and abilities to communicate the relevance of cooperation involvements on the part of others as well pursue the particulars of direction, coordination or timing (Grills & Prus, 2019). When management is expressed in these terms almost everyone may be seen to assume roles as tacticians and targets.

Some occupational settings may quite explicitly attend to management work as a central feature of the everyday lives of members. While educators may attend to classroom management (Espelage, 2015) and police forces may be aware of the multiple facets of management work policing that accompany policing (Wankhade & Weir, 2015), management activities as they are framed are a central feature of everyday life (Grills & Prus, 2019). In addition to this, while people have capacities for cooperating with others, they also have abilities to act mindfully of others in ways that may resist and frustrate the plans and hopes of the other (e.g., reluctantly, elusively, obstructively, competitively, oppositional). Once the human capacity for minded, deliberative and selective participation is recognised, it becomes apparent that the people involved in all manners of relationships with one another may adopt a variety of standpoints or assume target and tactician roles with respect to each other. It also becomes apparent that people may have different ideas of: a) what is meaningful and important, b) what, if anything, could or should be done in any particular situation, and c) their involvements as well of those in the settings at hand (Grills & Prus, 2019).

The appreciation that management work is built on a complex interchange of human interaction has been considered and embraced by mainstream management scholars who have an understanding of interactionist thinking (Grills & Prus, 2019). It is this appreciation of the complexity, interaction and interchange of managers as they go about management work which can provide a basis for scholars to conduct management and organisational research (Grills & Prus, 2019). The management and organisational literature has a wide and often conflicting variety of assumptions, conceptual models and data-bases, and as such, it is essential that researchers are mindful of the interactionist approach to management – that is the task of examining the ways in which people do things in organisational settings. And this means attending to the ways that people engage in organisational life in much more direct and sustained terms than exists in the current management and organisational literature base (Grills & Prus, 2019).

In attending to the ways in which people engage with each other within organisational life, scholars have called for the use of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to help make sense of how

humans interact with each other (Manning, 2014). Scholars have made an attempt to utilise the metaphor of dramaturgy to try and better understand how organisations work (Silverman, 1971; Weick, 2001; Manning, 2014). In particular Weick (2001) made a conscious attempt to utilise Goffman's metaphor as he explored the intersection of actor's sense making and the ways in which organisations are made sense of by those actors who work and operate within the organisational setting. Weick (2001), has also utilised Goffman's work to illuminate how work policies, procedures and rules become circumvented as actors employ creativity and innovation in order to survive in the organisation in which they work (Manning, 2014).

Within organisational analysis, difficult questions remain in regard to the way in which the organisation as a dramaturgical entity operates and strategizes. This idea of organisational dramaturgy appears to have escaped the attention of scholars and this may have been on account of Goffman's view towards organisations which renders their meaning variable dependent upon the actor, there is a strong perception that organisations are locations of contested meanings, aims, agendas and passions (Manning, 2014). Goffman's considerations place the subject and the object as being unified in the framing of events and that these events will have a social reality which engages symbols in interactional happenings which create a meaningful context (Manning, 2014). Dramaturgy suggests that all humans are attempting to perform in some way in order to attain a meaningful response, to resist chaos and confusion. Goffman elucidates in his work titled *Asylums* how such performances in interactions can vary. Organisations have a concentrated pattern of interaction, region of behaviour, resources and rules and tacit conventions. There is an ecology to an organisation with its public and visible places, its niches, its hideaways and cracks – it can serve to symbolise the status of its occupants (Van Maanen & Barley, 1982; Manning, 2014). Organisations are places with a generalised notion of the worker and the human being and are therefore places that generate identities – the organisation will ultimately label a person in social terms (Goffman, 1961).

A dramaturgical view of organisations would attest that there is a tension between the organisational protestations and the complexity of the day to day work. To understand and study an

organisation from a dramaturgical perspective is to study not only what people in an organisation actually do, but how they vindicate or explain the how and why of what they do (Manning, 2014). Such a dramaturgical analysis of organisations is more concerned with collective plots and narratives, with the developing character of the organisation a pressing consideration. In this dramaturgical sense, organisations can possess ways of doing things which are material – in that they take up space and have a material presence. They are social as they provide interactional arenas and they can be deemed functional since they accomplish outputs. In addition to this they are deemed symbolic in that they can stand for other things. Such ways of interpreting organisational characteristics are driven by purpose and meaning making by actors engaged in the organisation (Manning, 2014). More obvious features of formal organisations such as rules, roles, relationships, structures of power, authority, mission statements, strategic plans and goals are only meaningful in and through the interaction by which they are founded – they are social objects (Manning, 2014).

For Goffman (1959), organisations are not places where order resides, rather an abiding sense of chaos and disorder lurk at the edges of interactions and that work is required to manage such interactions and keep them on track. Alienation, embarrassment, betrayal are among many of the darker sides to organisational life and it is through and by interactions that all order, small groups and institutions are created and sustained (Goffmann, 1959; Manning, 2014). Such interactions and the management work undertaken for an individual to achieve a successful interaction – according to their individual meaning making – can place a burden on that person as they go about navigating organisational life.

An unavoidable consequence of management work and organisational life is that of emotions. Emotions are seldom acknowledged in structuralist considerations of management (Grills & Prus, 2018), yet they are an inescapable feature of human interchange and interaction (Hochschild, 1979). Emotions are enacted aspects of everyday life and are indicative of how we engage in the social world, where such emotions can become more meaningful, definable and comprehensible as they are lived out with each other (Prus & Grills, 2003; Grills & Prus, 2018). Emotion management has

become divided along sociological and organisational psychology lines (McKenzie, Olson, Patulny, Bellocchi & Mills, 2019). Within the sociology literature management of emotion is theorised as commercialised, relational and often an alienating experience (Hochschild, 1979; Crossley, 2001). Whilst organisational psychology, literature and research places emphasis on harnessing individual traits and skills (such as emotional intelligence) to regulate emotions for increased productivity and to secure employee retention (McKenzie et al, 2019).

The idea that people in the workplace should make use of their capacities to manage emotion has become a common theme (Goudrea, 2013; Nickson, Warhurst, Commander, Hurrell & Cullen, 2012; Whitbourne, 2015). Such research and practices are predicated on varying disciplinary traditions, with different concepts of employee skills and emotions with many different consequences for how employees interrelate and might experience different emotional states. Emotion work and emotional management originally derives from sociology and has an emphasis on the work an individual engages in to modify their own and others emotions, in order to suit a specific social or occupational environment (Hochschild, 1983; Hochschild, 1990; Thoits, 2004). Seminal work conducted by Hochschild (1983) in 'the managed heart' focuses on the matter of companies – such as airlines – having developed a socially engineered scenario which essentially exploited the way in which humans will transform their authentic emotions for social purposes but for financial gain for the airline. The issue of authenticity for Hochschild was borne of the work done by Erving Goffman (1967) and his concepts of surface acting – which for Hochschild was forced emotional displays - and then deep acting – which for Hochschild was more genuine emotional performances. In this instance, Hochschild (1983) argues that deep acting is achieved when an individual reshapes and adjusts their very experience of emotion, so that instead of feeling angry they change their physiological and psychological dimension of the emotional experience in a specific situation to ultimately match the desired, commercially demanded emotion. For example, happiness, pleasantness or care. This analysis and awareness then helped Hochschild (1983), to make distinctions between the private emotion modification and the commercial emotion modification. For example, in an individual's private lives they could work to express a different emotion from the one they are feeling

(Hochschild, 1990; Duncombe & Marsden, 1995). This form of work is referred to as emotional work or management. This can be different in the workplace and in organisations as employees will regularly change their own, their colleagues and their customer's emotions (Henning-Thurau, Groth, Paul & Gremler, 2006; Korczynski, 2003). It is against this commercialised backdrop where the effort expended by the employee for their salary and for achieving benefits for the company is referred to as emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). According to Hochschild, such emotional labour requires workers to put in a concerted effort and that they must socially manage the emotion for the benefit of their employer – something which usually goes unpaid. Issues of gender, class and race are pervasive in such emotional work and emotional labour and as such, experiences are interactional, relational and structural, reflecting the inequalities embedded in the emotional roles individuals are expected to play – both at work and at home (McKenzie et al, 2019). The work conducted by Hochschild (1983, 1990) which has shaped the thinking on emotions in sociology, has proved unique in considering the structural constraints imposed by workplaces, managers and leaders upon the emotion work that is expected of employees in pursuit of organisational success (McKenzie et al, 2019).

Hochschild's work identified that emotional management is not reducible to an individual's capacity and instead it remains a structured, relational and collective practice. Therefore emotional management for the benefit of colleagues in the workplace is prioritised and calls for a greater level of attention to be directed towards opportunities for collective emotional management and expressions of worker agency (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton & Boyd, 2003; McKenzie et al, 2019).

Within the interactionist thinking towards management, humans may undertake emotive performances that are intentional and direct towards accomplishing some specific outcomes or goals. Therefore, humans are not just victims of their emotions but stand in a complex and unfolding relationship to affect performance and affective states (Hochschild, 1979; Grills & Prus, 2018). Managers not only face the task of managing their own emotional states and interchanges, but also may find themselves in the position of attempting to manage the emotional states and interchanges of

those with whom they deal. This is where managers are involved in emotional labour, which involves the regulation of emotions at work and the provision of emotional support through work (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Those occupying managerial roles can vary greatly in their attentiveness to the emotional features of the workplace as well as in their styles of dealing with matters of emotion. This can therefore offer the opportunity for scholars to better understand manager's thoughts, strategies, hesitations as well as their sense of effectiveness and any adjustments they make when dealing with their own emotional states as well as those of others.

By locating management work in the traditions of symbolic interactionism, scholars are well positioned to advance the management and organisational literature base through interpretative and pragmatic approaches to conducting research. Such efforts can ensure that management is understood to be a lived experience encompassing all the messiness and complexity of human interchange and interaction (Grills & Prus, 2019).

2.6.2 The micro-dynamics and micro-politics of management work in sport.

The concept of micropolitics and the political astuteness of sport managers have attracted limited attention in the sport management literature base (Magnusen & Todd, 2016). Indeed, political astuteness is understood as “a set of skills, knowledge, and judgements” regarding the discernment of managers (Hartley, 2013, p. 202). It is their ability to read situations, understand the interests and preferences of different stakeholders, and to productively work towards organisational goals whilst considering, and responding to, these often conflicting views (Hartley, 2020). Such skills are of central significance to those who engage in management work, since it is through and with others by which they get work done. Being attentive, therefore, to the needs and motives of those others is a key management skill, since this will determine how effectively a manager can get work done and their outcomes met (Grills and Prus, 2019).

Despite political skills being of central importance to individual, collective and organisational success there has been limited consideration given to how these dimensions operate within the sport

industry (Magnusen & Todd, 2016). To date, much of the available literature has focussed on the need to observe and examine the role of political skills in sport manager's professional development programmes (e.g., Brandon-Lai et al, 2016; Magnusen et al., 2011; Magnusen et al., 2019; Magnusen & Todd, 2016 Perrewe & Ferris, 2016; Robinson et al., 2020). Indeed, much of the research attending to micropolitics and political astuteness in sport management has utilised a Political Skill Inventory (PSI) developed by Ferris et al (2005) in the mainstream management literature (Perrewe & Ferris, 2016). For Perrewe and Ferris (2016), the utility of the PSI for sport managers was a central part of their research which reflected four key dimensions of social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity for the sport manager to consider. Indeed, whilst the four categories identified as salient to the development of sport managers provide the sport management literature base with a guide of what to focus on, the limitations of this approach lie in the narrow appreciation of the contextual and sub-cultural specific application of such dimensions. Furthermore, the work of Brandon-Lai (2016) proposed a conceptual model to evaluate the effectiveness of sport management internships to develop political skills for the sport manager in training. This research has utilised elements of the PSI to help articulate and classify the salient dimensions of what an effective internship should entail in order to facilitate the political skill development of the intern sport managers. Whilst helpful on one level to highlight what elements, if present in an internship, could yield better political development returns, this research has not engaged the thoughts, feelings, experiences and reflexive activity of the individuals within the contexts and sub-cultures they inhabit. Therefore, a narrow understanding and appreciation of how political skills actually happen in-situ, with others, on a daily basis still prevails within the sport management literature. Recent research from Robinson et al., (2019) sought to explore the relationship between the political skill of athletic directors and the commitment and job satisfaction of their subordinate coaches. Surveys were conducted with athletic directors (n=250) and their representative subset head coaches (n=806) and through structural equation modelling, political skill was shown to have a positive impact on evaluations of leader effectiveness. Again, this research helps provide the sport management literature base with data on the importance of political skills to the effectiveness of sports leaders.

However, this is another study which does not provide detailed insights into the contextual and sub-cultural nuances that each sport manager operates in. For the sport management literature to develop further, researchers need to focus on the contexts, individuals, and groups in which work gets done (Grills & Prus, 2019). It is only then, will the literature be able to better understand the true complexity of micropolitics and political skills as they play out in the everyday doing of sport management work.

Despite the rationalistic approaches to examining micropolitical skills and astuteness in the sport management literature base, there has been some attempts by scholars to give more of a focus on the sport manager and how they work and operate within the sport management contexts in which they are located (Hall, et al., 2021; Gibson & Groom, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Kelly, 2017). The work of Kelly (2017) has helped to provide the literature with a deeper understanding of how the football manager works within the context and sub-culture of professional football. Kelly (2017) investigated the role of the professional football manager and illuminated the crucial situations and relationships that a professional football manager working at the top level of the game would have to navigate. Through an interpretative paradigm, semi-structured interviews were initially conducted with 25 players, 20 managers and 5 football agents. Furthermore, interviews were also conducted with other key stakeholders such as a head of international player recruitment, academy managers and 4 players who had experience of the football academy system in England. Through such an extensive investigation, key elements of working as a professional football manager came to light. Indeed, Kelly (2017) has shown how the process of managers being recruited and appointed is a socially embedded process and which is facilitated through personal contacts. Furthermore, the issue of previous playing experience and formal education was addressed where it was highlighted that there was a distinct lack of formal management education and that previous playing experience was enough training to prepare an individual to be a professional football manager. In addition to this, Kelly (2017) also highlighted how a manager will assess and recruit players, quite often based on subjective assessments. 'gut-feeling' and personal contacts. In respect of issues related to the manager maintaining discipline and control, it was found a very traditional approach and one that reflected a

‘Victorian England’ approach to professional football was still utilised by the manager. Finally, the complexities of working with agents, directors and owners was also highlighted through the work of Kelly (2017). The shift in power from clubs to players and their agents was highlighted as an issue the professional football manager has to navigate. Furthermore, the relationship the football manager has with their respective directors and owners is one which is usually characterised by hostility and distrust through a lack of transparency and communication from the owners. This is another example of the complex social relationships the professional football manager must navigate. Kelly’s (2017) work was groundbreaking for the literature since this contextual understanding of professional football managers was never achieved before due to this traditionally being a closed social world (Carter, 2006).

Furthermore, Hall et al., (2021) helped to develop the sport management literature by focussing on how an individual engages with hybrid management work as an elite Rugby Union coach. This research highlighted the enactment of a head coach role with respect to the leadership, management and coaching responsibilities an individual had to navigate as they went about their sport work. Through a range of interpretivist methods, which included participant observations, ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews the collected data was iteratively analysed by using Crossley’s (2011) work on relational theorising. As such, Hall et al., (2021) highlighted how the head coach in this position would strategically manage their relationships with others in the organisation based upon the differing levels of trust the coach had with different individuals. As a result of such strategic interaction, the head coach was able to secure influence over key interests such as support, capital, resources and information. Finally, Hall et al., (2021) also found that such strategic interaction by the head coach considered others thoughts, feelings and interests which was used to secure buy-in to the agendas at hand. Subsequently, this research has served the literature base to better understand the lifeworld of a sport manager with respect to their multiple roles and how an individual might strategically navigate those roles and relationships.

In addition to the insightful work of Kelly (2017) and Hall et al., (2021), the work of Gibson and Groom (2018a, 2018b, 2019) has made a significant contribution to the sport management literature through their investigative work into how a football academy manager orchestrates and navigates organisational change. Through an interpretivist approach and by recording work diaries and through conducting 4 semi-structured interviews, the concept of orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005), was used in order to help make sense of the social complexity involved in the process of change. Indeed, Gibson and Groom (2018a) outlined how during a time of organisational change, there were some key activities that the football academy manager would attend to which included establishing a vision for organisational change, dealing with the problems of implementing change, managing staff ambiguity, strategising for organisational change and supporting the change process. This work has offered the sport management literature an informed appreciation of the social complexities which are involved in orchestrating and managing a period of organisational change in a professional football academy. This is specifically in relation to how the manager leading the change process understands and responds to the ambiguities and vulnerabilities associated with their efforts to influence others. Furthermore, Gibson and Groom (2018b) also considered how such periods of organisational change might have an impact on others within the football academy. Through using interpretivist methods of observations, field notes and through semi-structured interviews in-depth data was gathered which was then analysed by using micropolitical theory as a heuristic by which to make sense of the coach's thoughts, feelings and experiences. With a specific focus on the individual's sense of their professional self, it was found that their micropolitical literacy during periods of organisational change had served to help them secure their desired working conditions and practices. These studies have collectively made significant inroads in providing some foundational arguments and insights regarding the micropolitical work that individuals within a football academy engage in during periods of organisational change.

The sport management literature base could indeed benefit by considering the developments made in the sports coaching literature through interpretivist sport coaching researchers engaging with social theory. Scholars in sports coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2000; Jones & Wallace,

2010; Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglon, 2011; Potrac, 2004; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012; Potrac, Mallet, Greenoff & Nelson, 2017; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2015; Thompson, Potrac and Jones, 2015) have made significant developments by studying sports coaching through an interpretivist research paradigm and through the engagement of social theory as heuristic devices which to better understand complex social worlds. Such scholars who have located much of their research within the interpretivist paradigm have sought to gain a better understanding of the lifeworld of coaches, their interactions and experiences with the athletes and other actors with which they work.

Micropolitics and understanding the life worlds of sports coaches through micropolitical theorising has been both called for, and acted upon by scholars in the sport coaching literature. Indeed, Potrac and Jones (2009a, 2009b) were quick to recognise the fruitful opportunities to help explain the contested and negotiated complexity of sport coaching work by engaging with micropolitical theory. Their research illuminated how a head coach attempted to persuade key stakeholders such as players, assistant coaches and the chairman to buy into his coaching programme and his coaching methods. Through engaging micropolitical literature (Ball, 1957; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b) they were able to illuminate the various strategies the head coach pursued in order to persuade others of the benefits of his coaching programme and coaching methods. Such work has provided a catalyst for micropolitical research in sports coaching where Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) have shown how those who work in professional football environments, such as performance analysts, will adopt a micropolitical approach to their work in order to create, preserve and protect their professional sense of self and to advance their own career interests. Such research has helped to illuminate the complexities of working, surviving and thriving in sports coaching environments in what previously was considered a straightforward and unproblematic profession (Potrac & Jones, 2009; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2015).

The micro level interactionist work that sports coaches engage in has also been investigated by scholars in the sports coaching literature. A central theory to this line of research was Goffman's

(1959) dramaturgical insights in his classic text *The presentation of self in everyday life*. The work of Potrac, Jones and Armour, (2002) examined the coaching behaviours of an elite level football coach and highlighted how the coach will work to shape the impression they give to others in order to produce recognisable and convincing coaching performances. To help further this agenda, Jones's, (2006) work on an auto-ethnographic piece illuminated the dilemmas which required him to 'maintain face' whilst engaging in sport coaching activity. This has served to highlight the impression management work that individuals working in this vocation will need to engage in. Indeed, the calls from scholars to consider the importance of interaction and impression management for sports coaching have been strong and Jones et al., (2011) articulated how Goffman's work can fit the nature of sport coaching quite well and serves to highlight the complex social nature of this type of work. Furthermore, Partington and Cushion, (2012) utilised Goffman's dramaturgical ideas to explain the behaviour of youth football coaches. Indeed, they found that much of the coach behaviour exhibited was largely performative and influenced by social pressures which were not necessarily pedagogically conducive to athlete learning and development. Considerations of Goffman (1959) have also been applied into how sporting organisations and institutions can shape behaviours. Lee and Corsby, (2021), illuminated the context of state led sport system where athletes would struggle in navigating the tension between identifying with the coaching context whilst distancing himself from the wider organisational practices. The use of Goffman's primary and secondary adjustments accounted for how the athletes utilised limited agency for self-preservation despite being immersed in a 'totalising' regime. As such, the sports coaching literature has made key developments in better understanding how coaches will often engage in impression management work in order to survive and secure the outcomes they desire.

The sports coaching literature has also considered the emotional experiences and the emotional work of sport coaches as they engage in their work (Potrac, Smith & Nelson, 2017; Potrac, Mallet, Greenough & Nelson, 2017). Indeed, by engaging emotional theorists such as Hargreaves (1998), Hochschild (1983), and Turner and Stets (2007), the sports coaching literature has benefited as the emotional experiences and the emotional management work of those working in sports

coaching has been illuminated. Specifically, this has highlighted the interconnections between emotion, identity and embodied experiences by those working in sports coaching (Potrac et al., 2017) which has given a deeper understanding and appreciation of how those working in sports coaching experience emotions as a result of the complex and contested environments they operate in. This has allowed contributions from the literature to help coaches make sense of embodied emotional experiences and meaning and help to make the issues of emotions and identity within the sport coaching discipline to be illuminated (Potrac et al., 2017).

2.7. Summary

The sport management literature base can do well to heed the calls from its scholars to embrace paradigmatic diversity (Frisby, 2005; Shaw & Hoeber, 2017). This literature review has shown that within the sport management literature there is a paucity of research which investigates the everyday dynamics of the sport manager's work. There has been limited research which illuminates the micro-level interactions the sport manager engages in with their superiors, subordinates and other significant stakeholders as they go about the everyday doing of sport management work. It is clear that the literature would also benefit from understanding the dilemmas and challenges sport managers face during their everyday management work and furthermore, how they go about navigating such dilemmas and challenges. Finally, the emotions experienced, the emotional embodiment, and the emotional management work that sport managers engage in, are currently not considered by the sport management literature. By attending to such matters of emotion, there is a fruitful opportunity for this thesis to help better understand the emotional nature of the doing of sport management work.

In addition to the aforementioned topic areas outlined above, the sport management literature base could also better utilise social theory as the mainstream management literature and the sports coaching literature have done, in order to help develop our understanding into the life worlds of sports managers. This thesis, therefore, seeks to exploit the value of symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical theorising in order to help better understand the life-worlds of managers of professional football academies as they do their management work on a daily basis. Seminal symbolic

interactionist theorising by Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) help to frame the social processes which the football academy managers are a part of. The interactionist management thinking of Grills and Prus (2019), and their insight into the everyday doing of management work with respect to superiors and subordinates and how the football academy managers goes about getting work done with and through them will be of significance to the sport management literature. Furthermore, the micropolitical theorising of Kelchtermans (2007) will help to better understand the reasons and motivations that the football academy managers act and behave in the ways that they do and how they seek to create or preserve a range of situations and interests which they perceive will benefit them for a variety of reasons.

The use of Goffman's (1959, 1963) dramaturgical theory will help the thesis to illuminate the micro-level impression management work the football academy managers engage in as they get work done on a daily basis. Specifically, work which is done with and through other people in the football academy in order for them to secure a range of outcomes which serve their interests. Finally, the emotional theorising of Hochschild (1983, 2000) and Turner and Stets (2007, 2009) will help this thesis to make a significant contribution to the sport management literature base by illuminating what emotions football academy managers experience as they go about their daily management work. Especially with respect to how those emotions are experienced in connection with others in the football academy and the emotional management work that the football academy managers engage in will also serve to advance the sport management literature. This thesis therefore, will generate new knowledge into the everyday management tasks of the football academy managers, the impression management activity they engage in, the micropolitical interests at stake as well as the emotional dimensions and emotional management work which comprises the everyday doing of football academy management.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the philosophical and methodological underpinnings that I adopted in this thesis. Initially, I give consideration to the different paradigmatic approaches that can be used in the process of research, before outlining my subscription to the interpretive paradigm. Following this, I then describe the methodological approach and specific modes of data collection and analysis that are utilised in this thesis. This also includes outlining the theoretical concepts which were useful in examining the data. Finally, I outline how I would like the reader to judge the ‘goodness’ and ‘quality’ of this research.

3.2 Research Paradigms: Adopting an Interpretivist stance

A paradigm is the institutionalisation of intellectual activity which socialises students into their respective scientific community. Here, they will share beliefs and assumptions about knowledge and how scientific enquiry is conducted (Kuhn, 1996). In the human sciences, the term is interpreted as an established academic approach in which researchers will use common terminology, common theories based upon agreed paradigmatic assumptions, together with agreed methods and practices (Grix, 2004). The issues of ontology and epistemology are significant components of a research paradigm (Sparkes, 1992). Ontology is concerned with what is the nature and structure of reality, such as the claims and assumptions that are made about what exists and what we believe constitutes social reality (Blaikie, 2000). Epistemology refers to what it means to know and how we can know something (Crotty, 2013). Specifically, epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge especially in regard to its methods, validation and the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be (Grix, 2004). The ontological and epistemological considerations that a paradigm has will have implications for the methodological and theoretical approach which is adopted by a researcher (Crotty, 2013). Indeed, it impacts the research activity, including the way in which the study is designed, how data is collected, analysed, interpreted and

represented and the way in which the quality of the research is then judged (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Clarity on the research paradigms a researcher can subscribe to will help to frame the paradigmatic approach of this thesis. In sports management, research has traditionally been grounded in the (post) positivist paradigm. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing application of interpretive and post-structural perspectives (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Cooper, Grenier & Macauley, 2017; Frisby, 2005; Hallet al., 2021).

Positivism embraces any approach to research which applies scientific method to human affairs conceived as belonging to a natural order which is open to objective inquiry (Hollis, 1999). Terms which are associated with the positivist perspective include empiricism, objectivism, naturalism and a naturalist approach (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Positivism is based upon a realist, foundationalist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), which views the world as existing independently of our knowledge of it. That is, Positivism includes any process which applies scientific method to human affairs conceived as belonging to a natural order open to objective enquiry (Hollis, 1999). Positivists believe that there are patterns and regularities, causes and consequences in the social world just as there are in the natural world (Denscombe, 2002).

Positivism is said to have a historical legacy that stretches back to Aristotle and it has been developed in a variety of ways by scholars such as Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume and John Stuart Mill (Grix, 2004). This way of thinking emphasises the observational and verificational dimensions of empirical practice whilst making clear distinctions between ‘fact’ and ‘value’ and placing importance upon the ‘fact’. That is, to deem ‘fact’ as being able to explain social phenomena by using theory to generate hypotheses which can be tested through direct observation (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997 p.28). The type of knowledge important to this paradigm is what a positivist will deem as ‘objective facts’ (Grix, 2004 p.81). Positivism places an emphasis on empirical theory in the production of knowledge and rejects questions of values and trust believing that social science can be value-free, whilst placing a clear importance on ‘facts’ rather than ‘values’ and ‘trust’. Human sciences can be ‘messy’ on account of the unpredictable nature of people and

positivism attempts to overcome this by seeking rules and laws with which to render the social world understandable (Grix, 2018 p.82). Positivist inquiry will typically employ a systematic protocol and technique, which will focus on the testing of hypotheses in line with the procedures of scientific rigour. The salient elements of positivist inquiry are to seek a cause and effect relationship in order to predict behaviour in the social world (Grix, 2018).

Post-Positivism can be understood as a research paradigm which is placed between both positivism and interpretivism. It shares a foundationalist ontology with positivism yet it allows for interpretation in the research process (Grix, 2018). Scholars of post-positivist approaches have attempted to combine the 'why' (explanation linked to positivism), with the 'how' (understanding linked to interpretivism) by bridging the gap between the two extremes. (May, 2001 p.15). This approach to research believes that while social science can use the same methods as natural science regarding causal explanation (in line with positivism), it also moves away from them by adopting an interpretive understanding (Sayer, 1999). It has been said that historical antecedents of this approach can be traced to Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Herbert Marcuse (Grix, 2018). Proponents of the post-positivist approach will generally seek to not only understand but explain the social world. Furthermore, the post-positivist researcher will conceive of social change and conflict in society as not always externally observable. They believe that 'the immediately perceived characteristics of objects, events or social relations rarely reveal everything' (Neuman, 2000 p.77) meaning that we need to look beyond the surface.

Post-positivists acknowledge that interpretive understanding is an important feature of social science and that the objects and structures in society are understood to have causal powers. The researchers are therefore able to make causal statements and identify causal mechanisms which is in contrast to interpretivists (Sayer, 1999). Importantly, the post-positive belief in 'causes' is not as clear cut as positivist causes do not simply determine action. Instead what causes something to happen, has nothing to do with whether we have 'observed it happening'. Explanation depends rather on identifying causal mechanisms and how they work and discovering if they have been activated and

under what conditions (Grix, 2018 p.87). These conditions are central to the post-positivist view on knowledge. It is with this consideration that the post-positivist researcher will conceive that objects and structures in society will have causal powers and so the researcher is able to make causal statements and identify causal mechanisms which is in contrast to interpretivists (Sayer, 1999). Explanation of this research is dependent upon identifying causal mechanisms and how they work, and discovering if they have been activated and under what conditions. It is against this viewpoint, in which the researcher will subscribe to a methodology that allows for ‘member-checking’ and where actors are able to offer explanations of the structures they are a part of (Grix, 2018).

Poststructuralism is an ontological position that views traditional knowledge claims with scepticism (Grix, 2018). The nature of knowledge for a poststructuralist is contextual and ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ are multiple and subjective (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014). The poststructuralist view is one which rejects the notion of a humanist-self and therefore does not trust the truths developed from assuming a humanist-self (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014). Poststructuralism does not search for an answer, but will seek to provide change by providing constant reflection upon the dominant knowledge which appear to decide the truths in social contexts (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014). The epistemological nature of poststructuralism views knowledge as fluid and based on the power sources within a particular context (Markula & Silk, 2011). Discourse is an important poststructuralist concept which researchers in this paradigm believe correspond to the dominant ways of understanding a particular social field (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014). This notion is articulated through the concept of hermeneutics, which poststructuralists place importance on as they try to make sense of what agents infer within the structures in which they operate. Indeed, poststructuralists – unlike positivists – will acknowledge the ‘double hermeneutic’ which occurs in their process of research. This term refers to the act of interpreting an actor’s perception or interpretation – effectively an interpretation of an interpretation (Grix, 2018). To do research in a poststructuralist way is to take a critical stance towards the practice of sense-making and sense taking which we call research (Punch, 2000).

The most well-known perspectives associated with poststructuralism include 'deconstructivism' associated with Jacques Derrida and the 'genealogical approach' associated with Michel Foucault (Grix, 2018 p.88). It is suggested that poststructuralism reflects a decline in absolutes, in that no longer does following the correct method guarantee true results. Instead of only one truth and one certainty we are more ready to accept that there are many truths and that the only certainty is uncertainty. The quality of the poststructuralist research will pay attention to power relations and discourses which are prevalent in a particular context and then seek to critique or question such universal truths (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014).

Interpretivists believe that there is a clear distinction to be made between the natural and the social world. This approach to research has a concern with the way people construct and make sense of their social world (Denscombe, 2017). An interpretivist position subscribes to the view that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Potrac et al., 2014). A key premise of this is that the world is socially constructed through the interaction of individuals and the separation of 'fact' and 'value' is not so clear cut as a positivist may claim (Grix, 2018). The emphasis in this paradigm is on empathetic understanding as opposed to predictive theorising. As interpretivists do not believe in relying upon mere observation for understanding social phenomena (Markula & Silks, 2011). With this in mind, the social world needs to be studied from within and with methods different from those used in the study of the natural sciences (Crotty, 1998). The key influences cited in relation to this paradigm include influential thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey as well as American sociologists George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman (Grix, 2018). Importance is placed upon meaning in the study of social life and understanding the social construction of reality. Within this approach to research there is also a significance placed upon knowledge being theoretically and discursively laden and that a researcher is the sum total of their own personal subjective opinions, attitudes and values (Grix, 2018). These considerations will be of key importance as the researcher plays a vital role in the creation of knowledge in this research paradigm.

After reflecting on the questions and assumptions postulated by such paradigms, I found my ontological assumptions of the world were best aligned with an interpretive perspective. That is, there is no reality independent of perception and that knowledge is subjective and socially constructed (Markula & Silks, 2011; Potrac et al., 2014). I believe that the social world is a complex phenomenon and that individuals create their own meanings within a specific political, cultural and social context (Markula & Silks, 2011; Potrac et al., 2014). As an interpretivist I place importance upon people providing explanations of their situation or behaviour and attempt to see the world from their point of view (Veal & Darcy, 2014). To my mind, social reality is a result of how humans individually and collectively interpret and make sense of their social worlds (Markula & Silks, 2011) and trying to better understand how people interpret these social worlds is important to me as a researcher. In this respect, I do not consider sense-making to be a constant or fixed activity, but rather it is a process which is subject to change in direct relation to our experiences (Sparkes, 1992). With this in mind, I believe that the meaning an individual attaches to events which occur in the social world can be changed as they reflect and reconsider upon their experiences (Potrac et al., 2014).

The interpretive epistemological standpoint that I adopt is that knowledge is socially created (Potrac, et al., 2014). I believe that we can only attempt to understand the social world through subjective interaction rather than considering it as an external reality which can be objectively investigated without any researcher influence (Potrac, et al., 2014; Sparkes, 1992). Therefore, I consider research to be a subjective and co-created process between the researcher and the researched (Howell, 2013; Potrac et al., 2014; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This means that I believe the questions, observations and comments I use as a researcher will shape the participants' responses. I also believe that the participants' responses can influence the analysis and interpretation conducted by myself as the researcher (Manning, 1997). Therefore I recognise that this research study is a result of my interactions with the participants as well as my own interpretations, and appreciation, of how I make sense of the world (Markula & Silks, 2011; Potrac et al., 2014).

Central to my methodological assumptions is an idiographic approach in order to facilitate the exploration of how other people make sense of their experiences. The variable and personal nature of social constructions suggests that individual perceptions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigators and respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There is a priority placed on producing highly detailed and rich accounts on what is heard, seen and felt together with an exhaustive level of data analysis in order to analyse events which take place in the research context (Denzin, 1989; Potrac et al., 2014). Using this method over time will ensure the relevant body of knowledge offers a more informed and sophisticated construction and becomes more aware of the content and meaning of competing constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

My decision to adopt an interpretive stance was facilitated by my practical experiences as a manager in a sports environment, a football coach, and more recently as an aspiring academic. During my time spent as a manager of people I felt I had to operate within a highly complex situation which, essentially, was due to the multiple perspectives and meaning making attributes of people. Individual relationships with the wide ranging people I attempted to manage and influence would perpetuate a range of emotions, thoughts, feelings and anxieties in myself. As both a manager and a football coach, my interpretation and enactment of rules, regulations and policies (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012) has been interconnected with my emotions, thoughts, feelings, anxieties and desire to do the best job I could do in a given situation. As a manager, I encountered a range of emotions which, I believe, impacted upon my ability to manage. For instance, there was an occasion where I was conducting a 1 to 1 performance review and it was clear that my priorities were not aligned with the staff member I was managing. This caused me frustration and feelings of anxiety which, I believe, impacted my ability to manage the situation effectively and equally gave me an understanding how such interactions have meaning and emotion for others. The context in which I was operating which included social actors, the micro-politics of the organisation and the complicated behaviour of individuals (Blumer, 1947) have contributed to my focus on developing a better understanding of the life-worlds of individuals in a given context. I can also say that as a result of my management experiences I have a dissatisfaction with much management research that offers overtly rationalistic

accounts of organisational life which has been a strong feature of the sport management literature base. Through a co-creation of knowledge and perpetuating a “knowledge for understanding” approach (Wallace & Poulson, 2003), I believe that this will give a richer insight into the social and emotional aspect to management and contribute to the literature base gaining a deeper understanding into the life-worlds of managers.

3.3 Sampling and Participants

3.3.1. Selection of Participants

This study adopted a purposeful sampling approach in order to acquire the appropriate participants needed to answer the research questions. Purposeful sampling is where those enlisted are, in the view of the researcher, indeed gatekeepers of the information the researcher would like to access (Veal & Darcy, 2014). Good qualitative researchers will embrace this technique in order to ensure that they purposefully choose those gatekeepers that fit the parameters of the research questions (Tracy, 2019). I purposefully selected current managers of professional football academies in England as the source of data generation. This was because the key research questions the study aims to satisfy are dependent upon getting a deeper understanding of the life worlds of the individuals who manage football academies in England. Therefore, the best place to begin was by conducting a qualitative research process with the academy managers. The question of how many interviews are enough is ambiguous and according to Kvale (1996, p.101) “one should conduct as many as necessary in order to find out what you need to know”. A key point in the issue of “how many?” can depend upon the richness of the data gathered (Tracy, 2013 p. 138). The sample was also influenced by my philosophical position, in that I adopt an interpretivist approach to research. Interpretive researchers focus on collecting rich, thick and highly detailed data from a smaller number of individuals as opposed to a breadth of participants where generalisations may be formed (Potrac et al, 2014). I believe that the social world is constructed within individuals “subjectivities, interests, emotions and values” (Sparkes, 1992 p. 25). Consequently, the sample focused on depth and not breadth and I

wanted to produce rich, thick and highly detailed data on each of the participants and develop detailed insights into their individual lifeworld. I utilised my own network and contacts in football to secure five English football academy managers who engaged in this thesis. Indeed, knowing participants is a common occurrence in qualitative research (Gearity, et al., 2013). Whilst I did not know the participants directly, the football networks and contacts I have developed from working as a coach in a football academy secured the participants I needed for this thesis. For example, my own academy manager, who I had reached out to about this PhD study, offered to contact his counterparts at several clubs to ask if they would be willing to participate in the study. Importantly, his help in this way enhanced my credibility amongst the potential participants, as I was being ‘vouched for’ as someone who was considered trustworthy and an ‘insider’ in the football academy world. Similarly, my supervisor recommended me and the study to a close friend, who held an academy manager role. Importantly, participant recruitment to this ‘elite’ population was far more complex than sending a letter of invitation to individuals. Instead, it was something that was achieved in and through my relational networks in football and academia (Crossley 2011).

3.3.2. Participant Background

The final sample consisted of five academy managers, who were all male, aged between 35 and 56 years old, and had between 2 and 6 years’ experience of being the academy manager. Two of the managers worked in category one academies, two worked in category two academies and one worked in a category three academy. The categorisation of football academies is based upon the Premier League’s EPPP (Elite Player Performance Plan) strategy and auditing processes. Here, academies are organised into four categories (one being the highest and four the lowest) according to productivity rates, training facilities, coaching provision, player education and welfare provision. Within the thesis pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of the participants, as well as those other people and organisations that were mentioned during the interviews (Tracy, 2020).

Jossie – Blackwater Town

Jossie is an ex-professional footballer who has went on to develop a coaching career. He achieved his UEFA Pro License which is the highest coaching qualification obtainable. He transitioned into the role of academy manager at Blackwater Town where he has been after several years as a coach.

Blackwater Town is a football club currently in the second tier of English football. It was a category two academy with aspirations and plans to become a category one academy. For a category two academy it is well resourced in terms of staffing and facilities, it has recently been through a successful audit to gain category one status, which indicates its ability to meet staffing, resourcing and facility requirements of a category one football academy.

Brian – Forest Athletic

Brian is an ex-professional footballer who also developed a coaching career and achieved his UEFA Pro License. He has coached at other Premier League clubs before moving to Forest Athletic where he has occupied the role of academy manager for several years. Forest Athletic is a football club currently in the Premier League and based in the North West of England. The football academy is a category one academy according to the Premier League's Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP). The football academy is heavily resourced with full time coaches and multi-disciplinary staff (sports, scientists, psychologist, physiotherapists, strength and conditioning staff, nutrition support, education, safeguarding and welfare staff) delivering the football programme for players from the age of under 7 through to under 23.

Roy – Spartans FC

Roy played football at a semi-professional level and has a background in education. He has spent approximately 20 years coaching football and has acquired his UEFA A License coaching award. He was academy manager at Spartans FC for approximately 6 years. Spartans FC are a football club in the North of England operating in the fourth tier of English football. The football academy is a category three academy in the EPPP structure. It has a small number of full time staff in comparison to the category one and two clubs, there are around 3 to 4 full time staff and the remainder are made from part time, sessional staff. There is very limited financial support and running a football academy is a considerable financial challenge to the football club.

Billy – Melchester Rovers

Billy played football at a semi-professional level and achieved a degree in sport and business. As well as an academic profile, Billy followed a coaching pathway and has worked to achieve his UEFA Pro Licence. Billy was coaching and working at Melchester Rovers academy, before being installed as academy manager several years ago. Melchester Rovers are a medium sized football club operating in the second tier of English football having previously spent time in the Premier League. The football is a category one football academy having recently gone through the process of upgrading from category two. The coaching staff and multi-disciplinary staff are reflective of a category one academy and the academy has the backing and support of the club.

James – Bostock Stanley

James played football at a semi-professional level after a promising professional career was cut short through injury. James followed a coaching pathway which culminated him in achieving his UEFA A License. He coached at Bostock Stanley academy and engaged in some coach development work before being confirmed as academy manager, a position he has held for four years. Bostock Stanley are a medium sized club operating in the third tier of English football, the football academy is rated a category one academy. The staffing and support is reflective of a category one academy, however the club does experience financial pressures, which can add another dimension of pressure to the running of the football academy.

As there are a relatively limited number of football academies across the EPPP categories the reduced population from which participants can be drawn increases the risk of identification and is a problem which can be encountered primarily in ethnographic studies (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015). Furthermore, the internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004) of participants identifying themselves or other staff with whom they have worked alongside due to the interconnectedness of the research context was a possibility in terms of “risk to insiders from other insiders” (Tolich, 2004 p. 106). Therefore, elements of references to geographical locations and other specifics were generalised or broadened (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015) to minimise this risk.

3.4 In depth Interviews: A rationale

Given my position on interpretivist research and the importance of meaning making, I chose to utilise in-depth interviews to help me gain a deeper understanding into the social and emotional experiences of the participant academy managers. An interview is a conversation in which at least two people participate, with the motive of eliciting information from one of the participants (Skinner, Edwards & Corbett, 2015). The process of interviewing can be understood as “a craft and social activity where two or more persons actively engage in embodied talk, jointly constructing knowledge

about themselves and the social world as they interact with each other over time, through a range of senses, and in a certain context” (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p.83).

The use of interviews as a qualitative data collection method begins with the assumption that the participant’s perspectives are meaningful and knowable to be made explicit (Skinner et al, 2015). In this thesis, interviews provided me with a productive tool to investigate the social and emotional experiences of enacting performance management policies and processes. This is because the participant can be questioned on their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, and to elicit the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of their interactions. As the interpretivist approach to research has a concern with the way people construct and make sense of their social world (Denscombe, 2002), an interview, therefore, is selected when interpersonal contact is significant (Skinner et al, 2015).

Most researchers attest that there are three main types of research interviews; structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Veal & Darcy, 2014). Structured interviews are rigid in their administration and allow for no deviation from the specific question being asked, the flow of questioning will follow the exact same order as the researcher planned (Veal & Darcy, 2014). They are predominantly used in quantitative research as they are a convenient way of allowing the researcher to identify trends and to make comparisons (Skinner et al, 2015). I felt structured interviews inappropriate for this study given the developing and evolving understandings of this topic. In contrast, semi-structured interviews are more appropriate as they involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover (Veal & Darcy, 2014). Unlike structured interviews, such questions do not have to follow any specific predetermined order and as such, offers a certain degree of flexibility. In particular, it allows for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview process (Grix, 2018). Semi-structured interviews provide opportunities for the interviewer to use probes and prompts to help elicit further responses from the participant if the initial response lacked sufficient detail. In addition, should the participant provide a new or interesting topic of discussion the researcher is able to probe this further (Veal & Darcy, 2014). Given the nature of semi structured interviews, there are a number of considerations the

researcher should pay attention to in order to ensure an efficient and effective data collection process (Veal & Darcy, 2014). Good interpersonal skills will allow the researcher to be sensitive to the respondent's mood, body language, time constraints and to take into account any cultural norms. Such considerations should help the respondent to feel comfortable and in a state of mind to be open and honest when being interviewed (Skinner et al, 2015). The researcher should have an ability to listen carefully to answers and to be able to probe and cross check in a thorough but sensitive manner. They should also have an ability to take notes in a discreet and non-threatening way which does not interrupt the flow of the conversation (Grix, 2018). Such an approach should give the researcher the best chance of eliciting rich, thick and descriptive narratives. Whilst the researcher is engaged in the data collection process, it would be wise for them to continually examine their own biases. This is especially important as the data analysis and interpretation process begins (Veal & Darcy, 2014).

An unstructured interview on the other hand, is one in which the researcher has a broad list of concepts or loose questions which they convert into questions during the interview (Grix, 2018). This can be used in order to help encourage participants to talk about their own biographies or recount a range of different lived experiences. Quite often the interviewer will frame the questions based upon the participant's response, in doing so this helps give a more natural and authentic feel to the conversation. The data gathered from such sessions are not comparable as the content of each interview is likely to be very different due to the individual narrative taking place (Veal & Darcy, 2014). The major disadvantage to of unstructured interviews is that the researcher is vulnerable to being dragged 'off topic' by the responses of the interviewee, as responses that often seem like a natural part of the conversation, may when analysed, be totally irrelevant to the actual research question (Skinner et al, 2015). In practice, all three types of interview can be used in combination depending on what the researcher would like to achieve (Patton, 1990). A more informal or unstructured approach is favoured by some researchers who advocate for qualitative approaches to involve a full interaction with the participant. This is to allow a freer flowing conversation to take place in order to give a more detailed understanding of the context in which the participant is discussing (Dupuis, 1999). Additional advantages to unstructured interviews are that they allow for

the participant's emotions, opinions, and experiences, and the meanings they give to their experiences, to flourish in detailed ways (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Tracy, 2020). The lack of structure or researcher control also allows for unanticipated, spontaneous, and potentially exciting data to emerge (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015).

My approach to generate the data needed to satisfy the research objectives of the study was done through the use of semi structured interviews. Indeed, semi structured interviews were selected as they enabled an in-depth exploration of the interviewee's experiences and the meanings attached to them, more than what a fully structured interview would have provided (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Furthermore, considering my epistemological stance that knowledge is socially constructed, I regarded my role as a researcher subjectively, and tried to "see the world and its problems as they are seen by the people who live inside particular lives" (Denzin, 2001, p.65). As such, I approached each interview as "a conversation, a give-and-take between two persons" (Denzin, 2001, p65), where the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee creates knowledge (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

This approach therefore, enabled me to develop lines of enquiry which I believed were significant to the study of the social and emotional experiences of the participants as they went about their management work. Because of the nature of the semi structured interview I was able to prepare some predetermined lines of enquiry which I wanted the participant academy managers to reflect upon. Subsequently, this allowed the lines of enquiry to focus upon the social and emotional experiences of the participant academy manager as they engaged in their everyday management work.

3.5. Data Generation: Conducting In depth Interviews

To collect the data needed for this study I used semi-structured interviews, which have predetermined questions and prompts to help guide the discussion. This form of interviewing allowed for the respondents to elaborate on their responses and move the discussion into areas of importance for them (Veal & Darcy, 2014). After reflecting upon the aims of the study and the topic areas I was

concerned with, I created the interview schedule. Once I created the interview schedule, I conducted a pilot interview to help give me an insight into how the interview might run. A pilot interview is a run through of the scheduled questions with a person who can respond adequately. This allowed me the opportunity to reflect upon any changes that may have been needed to the question structure and / or delivery prior to interviewing a participant of the research study (Skinner et al, 2015). I conducted a pilot interview with a coach at a professional football academy who had spent 3 years working as an academy manager. As he was not currently an academy manager he was not included in the study, however his experiences of being in the role previously helped me to create an accurate picture of how the interviews may play out. This led to me making some slight changes to the questions and my prompts, as well as me ensuring I allowed more time and opportunity for the participants to reflect and think before answering the questions.

When I was confident with my interview schedule and had a plan of how I would deliver and guide the interview, I contacted the academy managers. I ensured I worked with them to arrange a time and a place for an interview which was conducive and comfortable for them (King & Horrocks, 2010). I was also conscious that the setting of the interview might influence content and direction (Purdy, 2014). This therefore, involved finding environments that were suitably private and comfortable for the participants to feel at ease to respond openly and in detail to the questions asked and were appropriate for recording audible data (King & Horrocks, 2010; Tracy, 2019). This normally involved me travelling to the academy venue where the manager was located, at a time in the week where we were both available. There were two key reasons for me visiting the venue; the first was so I could get a 'feel' and an appreciation for the physical environment in which the academy manager is working in. The other reason was to ensure the academy manager was in an environment where he felt comfortable and confident (Skinner et al, 2015). The interviews would either take place at the football academy or a local coffee shop to ensure privacy and comfort where the participant academy manager could talk openly and freely.

It is important for the researcher to ensure the respondent feels at ease and to try and develop a relationship in which a conversation can freely flow (Veal & Darcy, 2014). I coach football in a football academy environment and I was keen to ensure that I conveyed my coaching background to the academy manager as I introduced myself. This was an attempt to gain some credibility and legitimacy from the academy manager whilst I reassured him I would not be a threat to privacy as per the university ethics procedures (Tracy, 2013, 2019). When conducting the interview I also reflected on my appearance since it is suggested that researchers dress neutrally and similarly to the respondent to ensure that the focus of the interview is the research topic. However, with me working in a different football academy, I was conscious to reinforce the fact that I was there in a research capacity in the hope the academy manager would not see me as a ‘rival’ from another football academy. To aid this, I ensured I wore my University polo top with the University logo on to ensure it was clear I was there on University business. After we broke the ice and I (hopefully) secured some credibility from the academy manager, I began the audio recording device and formally outlined the format of the interview and took the academy manager through the informed consent documentation. The interview began with some rapport building questions which were open, inviting, non-threatening and easy such as ‘do you mind telling me a bit about yourself?’ (Tracy, 2019). This enabled me to press and direct the questions where I wanted the conversation to go, whilst also taking in account the opportunity for the academy manager to take the conversation in a direction important to them. I provide further insights into my reflections of how I navigated the research process and managed relationships with the academy managers in the concluding chapter.

As the interview developed, I was actively listening to the participant, in that I attended fully to what the participant was saying by focussing wholly on what was being said and giving my full attention to the speaker until either the message had been received or the participant had finished speaking. I demonstrated an interest, understanding and respect for what the interviewee said (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) and I made a concerted effort to establish rapport and to show empathy as the interview developed (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). I took on the role of what Sparkes and Smith (2014) call an ‘active’ listener, where I responded verbally and non-verbally to the participant during

the interview. Furthermore, I conveyed my attention and interest to what the participant had to say via maintaining eye contact, and using the occasional nod and by asking pertinent and relevant follow-up questions (Yeo et al., 2014). Another key element to active listening is the technique of paraphrasing (Guion, Diehl and McDonald, 2011). I used this technique to help confirm to the participant that I was indeed listening and that the message conveyed is the message received. Paraphrasing also has the added benefit of ensuring a speaker focuses wholly on the conversation, thus limiting distractions. Reflecting back to the speaker the emotions inherent in the message, by paying attention to tone and emotional content, the interviewer can gain a greater understanding of the messages being delivered (Guion, Diehl and McDonald, 2011). Active listening in this way, whilst being sensitive to the sense of self that the participant has can help them to relax, to be open and to talk in a candid manner about their experiences (Tracey, 2020). During the interview process I used open ended questions, probes and prompts by which to generate rich insights (Seale, 2018; Tracy, 2020). Here, for example, detail-oriented probes were utilised to enhance the descriptions and insights shared by the participants (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). These included questions such as “When did that happen?”, “Who was with you?”, “How did you feel about that?”, or “What did you do then?” Elaboration probes were also employed to elicit more in-depth details about a particular point raised in an interview (Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2020). This involved using questions such as “Why is that?” and “Could you tell me more about that?” Finally, clarification probes were used to further explore any points that were unclear or which could be misunderstood (Patton, 2015). These included using phrases such as “Would you describe it for me again?” and “Could I confirm that when you say X you mean...?” The second and each proceeding cycle of interviewing adopted a similar approach to questioning. The purpose of these subsequent interviews was to further explore, probe, and refine those experiences, insights, and interpretations shared in the preceding rounds of interviewing (Tracy, 2020).

The interview process progressed into a cyclical data collection method, where the data collected during the interviews alternates with the analysis of data in a tight cycle (Dick, 2012; Tracy, 2020). That is the interviews which followed one another took slightly different paths, depending upon the data collected from the previous interviews. Gradually, from interview to interview a more

rigorous and detailed interpretation of the situation develops (Dick, 2012; Tracy, 2020). This also occurred during each interview where questions could move from being more open ended to more focused depending upon the response of the participant academy manager. From interview to interview, the cyclical process is achieved by probe questions based on data from my earlier interviews. The probes became progressively more detailed and specific. In responding to the probe questions, the academy managers interpret the data from previous (and sometimes current) interviews. The effect is to challenge, and change or confirm, the emerging interpretations (Dick, 2012; Tracy, 2020). In total, 20 interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted approximately 120 minutes, with approximately eight hours of audible interview data being generated for each participant. Ultimately, 43 hours of interview data were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The cyclical conduct of the interviews was complex for me, in that I experienced my own challenges and dilemmas. For example, in terms of establishing and maintaining relationships with the participants over time, as I had to keep them ‘onside’ in order to facilitate ongoing conversations. This required impression management work of my own, as I shifted my focus between insider and outsider as I felt necessary in order to establish and maintain credibility and trust. I had to critically consider my simultaneous identities in the eyes of the participant academy managers by being a member of a different football academy to the ones I was researching. I was both an ‘insider’ in respect of having an awareness of the culture of academy football and I could demonstrate some ‘insider’ credibility in respect of using the relevant cultural vernacular and acronyms which are commonplace in the English football academy system. However, I was also conscious of me being from a different football academy and the very likely possibility of me being seen as a rival or a competitor. As such, I paid attention to my own appearance and manner (Goffman, 1959) before and during the interviews with the participants. In terms of my manner, I actively sought to address the situation, so the participant academy managers knew I wasn’t there to ‘steal their secrets’ of player development. Equally, I showed due deference by not acting in ways which may have been overly familiar. I was respectful of the power dynamic which meant showing my gratitude and avoiding what they might have considered overly familiar ways – I wanted them to know I respected them and

that I was there to just understand how they manage and get work done in their respective football academies. Furthermore, with respect to my appearance (Goffman, 1959), I made the conscious decision of attending the meetings and interviews with the academy managers wearing my Northumbria University branded polo shirt. I felt that this served to reinforce that I was there on university business, an impression I would have struggled to convey if I decided to put my football tracksuit on. By paying attention to such issues of impression management (Goffman, 1959), I developed trusting relationships which I believe are evidenced in the rich, illuminating and candid accounts of their management activities that are presented in this thesis.

3.6. Data Analysis: Utilising an Iterative approach

Traditionally, the data analysis process is influenced by whether the study is inductive or deductive in its nature (Grix, 2018; Tracy, 2019). Induction refers to the process by which conclusions are drawn from direct observation of empirical evidence. These conclusions are then fed into the development of theory. Such research is not hypothesis driven, instead theory is generated and built through the analysis of, and interaction with, the empirical data. Here, the researcher looks for patterns in the data and relationships between variables (Grix, 2018). In contrast, deductive research is a strategy where theory informs research at outset and hypotheses dictate what evidence the researcher looks for. Data is then collected to confirm or falsify the hypothesis. Deductive theories, in contrast to inductive theories, arrive at their conclusions by applying reason to a given set of premises (Grix, 2018). Such views on data analysis being either inductive or deductive and sitting neatly in opposites to each other have been challenged with more recent thinking outlining it is a more complex process (Tracy, 2019; O'Reilly, 2012). I found the process of data analysis complex as I found that I was immersed in analysing data from the moment I began to interview. The data analysis process can be viewed as an ongoing activity which occurs through the research study (Markula & Silks, 2011; Sparkes 2002).

3.6.1. Etic and Emic readings of the data

Due to the nature of my study, I was constantly reviewing the data and trying to make sense of it. My data analysis process was inextricably linked to my data collection process in that the interview was cyclical and amended based upon previous responses. Tracy (2019), outlines this process of the researcher moving back and forward between an emic reading of the data and the etic application of theories, models and explanations as an iterative process.

I took an iterative-phronetic approach to the data analysis process which was a logical and consistent progression from the data collection process (Tracy, 2019). I moved back and forward between emic and etic themes as I tried to make sense of the data. Traditionally, the generation, analysis and writing-up of data have been understood to be distinct, sequential phases in the research process (Tracy, 2019). In this thesis, an iterative-phronetic approach was adopted which entailed alternating between a) the generation of data, b) the emergent interpretation of data, and c) consulting and drawing upon relevant explanatory literature and theoretical frameworks throughout the duration of the thesis (Tracy, 2019).

The interview data were subject to two contrasting but interrelated cycles of interpretation (Tracy, 2013, 2019). The first was the emic or emergent sensemaking. This process of analysis consisted of three components, namely, data immersion, primary cycle coding, and hierarchical coding and writing (Tracy, 2013, 2019). Initially, this entailed considering the richness of the data generated and, through primary coding, seeking to establish tentative ideas about, and descriptions of, the social processes evidenced within them (Tracy, 2019). The next step was that of analytical coding. This involved grouping the developed codes into a hierarchical umbrella that sought to make conceptual connections between them (Tracy, 2019). Such coding was grounded in the interpretation of, as well as reflection upon, the meaning making of the participants as it related to the research questions driving this thesis (Merriam, 2009; Tracy, 2019). Through my interpretations of the data generated and using my research questions to provide a structure to my interpretations, I created emic codes which captured common issues within the data. For instance, in research question one, the emic

code '*Achieving trust of organisational superiors*' was created, which had a common matter of the participants placing an importance on securing the trust and support of their superiors. Furthermore, emic code '*Establishing reputations*' was created. This code encapsulated the participants shared experiences had the common issue of defending and sustaining the relationships with subordinates and reputations they had worked hard to establish. My interpretations of these issues which became emic codes were reflected upon and further explored with the participants to ensure there was an appropriate level of connection between the data and my analytical insight (Tracy, 2019; Saldana, 2015). The identification of meaningful data raised additional questions that were explored in the second and subsequent rounds of interviewing (Tracy, 2019).

The emic readings of the data were also accompanied by an etic form of analysis. This entailed critically examining those codes identified during the emic cycles, and organising, synthesising, and categorising them into interpretive concepts (Tracy, 2019). Indeed, the principal aim of the etic cycles was to connect the emic analysis to relevant theorising and sensitising concepts (Tracy, 2013, 2019). Etic analysis took place which further developed the initial emic readings of data and thus helped to provide a further explanatory conceptual understanding of the data. It was here where a secondary coding process took place and the focus shifted to using theoretical concepts to make sense of the emic codes which had been generated. For example, the emic code '*Achieving trust of organisational superiors*' was then examined through Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theorising of impression management, together with Kelchtermans (2002) micro-political theorising to help give a fuller explanation to the data. Furthermore, this phase of the data analysis also acted as a prompt for additional data collection from the participants, which ensured the data was aligning to theory and that the theory was aligning to the data in an iterative process (Tracy, 2019; Saldana, 2015).

The identification of meaningful data raised additional questions that were explored in the second and subsequent rounds of interviewing the participants which helped me to clarify the emic codes (Tracy, 2019). Through cyclical interviews with the participants and through discussions and sense-making conversations with my supervisory team, I was able to identify and connect the

theoretical concepts to the data in what was the etic analysis process (Tracy, 2019; Saldana, 2015). Importantly, such sense making activity highlighted the intersubjective nature of the data analysis process. Intersubjectivity can be explained by using the assumptions of symbolic interactionism which is based on how the meanings attached to objects are shared among people through their interactions (Bao, 2017). Indeed, the meanings I attached to the data, and the connections I made to the theoretical concepts were intersubjectively shaped through my cyclical interaction with the participant academy managers as I checked and clarified their responses and revisited our conversations. This intersubjectivity also occurred through discussions with my supervisor, as I shared my interpretations of the data and my thoughts of how such data might be linked to the relevant theoretical concepts. It was here, where my thinking and interpretations were shaped from our discussions which added another intersubjective perspective to my data analysis.

3.6.2. Heuristic Frameworks

I found the symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical theorising useful in the emic and etic process of analysis. Theories located within symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical traditions were used and were reflective of the interpretative nature of this thesis. The original symbolic interactionist thinking of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) has been engaged throughout the thesis and has provided a platform to engage other theorists in the symbolic interactionist tradition. The work of Charles Cooley (1902) who formulated the notion of the *looking glass self* has been utilised as a means to how an individual will monitor themselves from the point of view of others and how by thinking in this way an individual will experience powerful emotions such as pride or shame. The recent work of Grills and Prus (2019) and their text *Management Motifs: an Interactionist Approach to the Study of Organisational Interchange*, is rooted in the symbolic interactionist tradition and has critically considered the pragmatic accomplishments of management work and the generic social processes that accompany them. This has been an important text for this thesis, and their assertion that “achieving understanding, providing direction, and co-ordinating activities with others across an

array of humanly engaged and contested theatres” (Grills & Prus, 2019, p. 1) is a central condition if management helped to frame the everyday doing of management work in football academies.

Furthermore, by moving their analytical insights well beyond traditional organisational-based conceptualisations of management, they insightfully address a diverse range of issues related to social influence, behaviour, emotional experience, and meaning-making (Grills & Prus, 2019). Their ideas regarding holding and doing office, establishing and sustaining team endeavours, and managing self were appropriate tools for critically examining the generated dataset.

The micropolitical interactionist work of Kelchtermans and colleagues (2002a, 2002b, 2009a, 2009b, 2017) has also provided a useful heuristic by which to better understand the behaviours and actions of the participant academy managers. Indeed, their assertions that individuals can engage in strategic action in order to achieve, protect or advance what they consider to be desired working conditions (Ball, 1987; Kelchtermans, 2007, 2009) provided a useful backdrop by which to critically analyse why the participant academy managers behaved the way they did. Specifically useful in this regard was the range of micropolitical professional interests (e.g., organisational interests, cultural ideological interests, socio-professional interests, material interests and self-interests) which helped to frame where the participant academy managers would direct their attention as they went about their management work.

In addition to the theorising rooted in symbolic interactionist traditions, I also drew upon the dramaturgical theorising of Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983, 2000). In his text addressing *the presentation of the self in everyday life*, Goffman (1959) critically examined how, in the quest to fulfil societal expectations and influence other people, individuals frequently “play roles, negotiate situations and to a larger extent are forced to be actors (Marsh et al., 1996, p. 73). Indeed, Goffman (1959) provided rich conceptual insights into how an individual will seek to present themselves to others, the tactics they utilise to manage the impressions they give off, and in doing so, protect or advance the version of the self that is exhibited to others (Cassidy et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2011). Importantly, Goffman (1959) observed that such performances are not designed purely to cynically

mislead others (although this can sometimes be the case). Instead, he argued that they are also used to functionally support social interaction, achieve mutually desired outcomes, and, therefore, maintain social order (Jacobsen, 2019). In this thesis, his work which considered the front, back, impression management, and defensive and protective practices to be particularly useful when critically examining the behaviour of the participant academy managers as they go about their everyday management work. .

Building on the dramaturgical insights developed by Goffman (1959), the emotional theorising of Hochschild's (1983, 1997, 2000, 2003) and Turner and Stets (2007, 2009) have provided the final heuristic device by which to examine the everyday doing of management work in English football academies. Indeed, Turner and Stets (2007, 2009) help to frame what emotions can be experienced, the direction of those emotions and significantly, how those emotions are connected to others in and around the football academy setting. Furthermore, in her ground-breaking book, *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild (1983, 2000) illuminated the relationship between the emotions that an individual may authentically feel and those that are purposefully acted out for the benefit of others, inclusive of the potentially positive and negative consequences of such performances. Hochschild (1983, 2000) highlights the social rules which can inform the emotional experience and the public display of emotions to others. In addition, she also provided insights into the emotional management strategies that an individual might utilise in their efforts to manage the external projection of their emotions in the workplace. Hochschild's (1983, 2000) concepts of emotion management, feeling and display rules, and surface and deep acting were particularly useful when critically examining the everyday doing of management work by the participant academy managers.

3.7. Representing my findings

There are many ways a qualitative researcher can represent their findings (Veal & Darcy, 2014). For example, one popular way of doing this is through a modified realist tale, which is a central form of representation within qualitative research (Groom et al., 2014; Purdy et al., 2009). In this form of representation, the researcher will conduct the interviews or observations and through a process of analysis they are then able to report on what those under study have said, thought and done (Purdy et al., 2009). Van Mannen (1988) outlined four characteristics which help to shape the realist tale. The first is where the researcher will clarify the ‘typicality’ of the situation being observed and the person being interviewed. The second is where the researcher will attempt to present the participants point of view as they write up the study. The third presumes that the interpretation of the researcher is the correct one (Purdy et al., 2009) and fourth there appears to be a complete absence of the author from most areas of the final article (Sparkes, 2002; Tracey 2019). Indeed, Van Maanen (1988) argues that a realist tale reveals:

... a fieldwork-author who more or less disappears into the described world after a brief, perfunctory, but mandatory appearance in a method footnote tucked away from the text. The only glimpse of the ostrich-like writer is a brief walk-on or cameo role in which he puts into place the analytical framework. The voice assumed throughout the tale is that of a third-party scribe reporting directly on the life of the observed. The tone suggests anonymity, a characteristic of science writing, where the fieldworker is self-cast as a busy but unseen little fellow who is confident that the world as represented in the writing is the real one. (p. 64).

Sparkes and Smith (2014), suggests that realist tales offer powerful insights into the human world and that their value should not be underestimated. Well-constructed and data rich realist tales can provide detailed, compelling and informative narratives of the social world. However, contentions regarding the realist tale outline how many texts of this nature make no reference or relevance to the role the author played in the research process (Purdy et al., 2009). This has been a

source of debate for this area of research. The absent author is a textual illusion since they are responsible for selecting the data and shaping the narrative which is presented (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Tracy 2019). Therefore, the reader not only gets the participant's story but also the author's interpretation of it (Purdy et al., 2009). Because of this, the author must acknowledge that the written article represents their interpretation, evaluation and judgement of the participant's stories. In doing so, the qualitative researcher should take responsibility for their authorship to avoid rejecting the value of sociological insight and implying facts can exist without interpretation. As such, it is important that I have actively constructed and been involved in the creation of this knowledge. This is something that I have been central to as I engaged in an iterative data analysis process and moved back and forth between emic and etic themes (Tracy, 2013; 2019). After reflecting upon the aforementioned information, I presented my interpretation of the academy manager's stories in the form of a modified realist tale (Purdy et al., 2009; Sparkes, 2002). I not only wrote myself into the text when and where I felt it was appropriate (Sparkes, 2002), but through my interpretive stance I also acknowledge that my theoretical analysis and representation of their stories were exactly that: they were my interpretation of their social worlds (Huggan et al., 2014). I do not consider this to be the only true or definitive reading of the academy manager's stories (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). Rather, it is one reading, but a reading that I hope offers an informative and insightful interpretation of their working lives (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014).

3.8 Judging the Quality of the Thesis

Traditionally the quality of qualitative research studies have been judged using quantitative criteria, such as the ability to replicate key conclusions into other areas. This is not suitable for judging qualitative methods, and yet, this has usually been the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This thinking from Lincoln & Guba, helped to elicit more appropriate ideas in which to judge the quality of qualitative research and facilitated the adoption of a parallel position (Sparkes and Smith 2014). This parallel position substitutes the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and

objectivity for the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). To meet these criteria, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate a number of techniques, such as, prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation (sources, investigators, and methods), peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and referential adequacy. In addition to these, Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that member checking is an important technique for gaining credibility and to help acquire a more accurate reflection. This involves verifying with the participants that the researcher's interpretations of the data are accurate (Smith et al., 2014). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), if all of these techniques are utilised properly within a qualitative study, then trustworthiness will be achieved and the research must be judged as good quality scholarly work.

While this parallel position and the techniques associated with it remain the gold standard for judging the quality of qualitative research (Smith et al., 2014) has been subject to critique by Sparkes and Smith (2009, 2014). They suggest that Lincoln and Guba's (1985) parallel position is philosophically contradictory since it promotes both ontological relativism and epistemological foundationalism (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). This means that Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe in a world that is made up of multiple mind-dependent realities and, at the same time, a world in which reality can be found objectively. For Sparkes and Smith (2009), these two beliefs are not compatible as they are ontologically and epistemologically different. They contend that either the existence of a reality outside of ourselves is known objectively through the appropriate use of procedures or if not, then there should be an acceptance that in a relativist world of mind-dependent realities there is no way to sort out trustworthy interpretations from untrustworthy ones (Sparkes & Smith, 2009, 2014). In addition to this, the use of member checking as advocated by Lincoln & Guba (1985) does not sit comfortably with Sparkes and Smith (2014). For them, the use of member checking as a method of verification is dubious because it indicates that in a world of multiple realities - including the researcher's and the participants' - those under study are the knowers and, as such, the possessors of truth. It is not accepting the interpretivist notion that the researcher is a co-creator of knowledge (Tracy, 2013, 2019). Sparkes & Smith (2014), also contend that there is the possibility of

researcher/participant disagreement on interpretations. This is not to say that they do not believe in procedures such as member checks, but rather that participant feedback alone should not be taken as direct validation or refutation of the researcher's interpretations (Smith et al., 2014).

Although many scholars continue to adopt a parallel position when judging the goodness of qualitative research, some have reacted to such critiques and adopted alternative positions. Sparkes (1998, 2002) and Sparkes and Smith (2014) have developed the letting go position. Here, the qualitative researcher 'lets go' of the traditional notion of validity and, instead, calls upon other more appropriate criteria to judge the goodness of qualitative inquiry (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This position is informed by a relativist perspective which appeals to time and place dependent characteristics to help us judge the 'goodness' of qualitative research. This does not mean that Sparkes (2002) and Sparkes and Smith (2009) advocate that this form of relativism indicates 'anything goes' when it comes to assessing the quality of qualitative research. It also does not mean that all knowledge claims are equal to other knowledge claims. Indeed, it is suggested that relativism does not exempt qualitative researchers from partaking in open and unconstrained dialogue in an attempt to justify such scholarly work (Smith and Deemer, 2000).

Considering my own interpretivist location, I consider Sparkes & Smith (2014) view on 'letting go' a view I can resonate with. This is because I do not perceive that the quality of my research can be judged against a preordained set of rules. Rather, I consider readers to judge the goodness of this research based upon the non-foundationalist considerations of Smith et al., (2014) and Tracy, (2020). This means there are many factors I would like the reader to consider. Firstly, does this research make a significant contribution to our understanding of social life? In that, does this research bring clarity to confusion, make visible what is hidden or inappropriately ignored (Tracy, 2019) and generate a sense of insight and deepened understanding of the everyday doing of football academy management work. This is of importance to the sport management literature base as it continues to call for deeper and richer insights into sport management work (Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2017) and as such, this thesis goes some way to address these concerns by illuminating the

hidden lifeworld's of football academy managers. In addition to this, does the reader consider this to be a worthy and relevant topic in terms of timing, currency and being significant and evocative? A third factor to consider, is the question of rigour. Does this study use sufficient, appropriate and complex theoretical constructs, data, samples, context and analysis? (Smith et al., 2014). For this, I would ask the reader to consider the utilisation of social theory which rooted in symbolic interactionism, offers a nuanced theoretical perspective by which to examine and illuminate the lifeworld's of football academy managers. The dramaturgical theorising of Goffman (1959), the emotional theorising of Hochschild (1983) have helped to make sense of the micro-level impression management work and emotion management work which football academy managers engage in as they go about their everyday work. Furthermore, the micro-political theorising of Kelchtermans (2002) provides explanations of the interest's football academy managers (and, indeed, their superiors and subordinates) have, which can drive their behaviours and shape their interactions as they do management work. In addition to this, the interactionist management theorising of Grills and Prus (2019) has helped to highlight management activities as social endeavours and how football academy managers get their work done with and through others.

I would also like the reader to consider the level to which this investigation is harmonious with data and theoretical interpretations to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to the analysis of the data. To enable a rigorous data analysis process, I engaged in an iterative-phronetic approach which encompassed emic and etic readings of the data (Tracy, 2019). A fifth factor to help judge the quality of this work centres on the resonance between the reader and the situation which is being researched. By understanding the social world and lives of academy managers in their environment this can help the reader make sense of their own situation and reflect on the complexity of our social lives – particularly in the workplace. As advocated in the sport management literature by Shaw and Hoerber (2016) and across qualitative research in sport more broadly, by Smith (2018), research of an interpretivist nature should engage with issues of generalisability. For this thesis, I would like the reader to consider how the notion of naturalistic generalisability is of relevance. That is how you, the reader, can recognise your own experiences in the findings presented (Smith, 2018). Furthermore,

the notion of analytical generalisability is also of relevance here. This refers to the degree to which the theoretical concepts utilised in the thesis offer new insights for the explaining and understanding the social, emotional, and political demands of management in professional football (and, indeed, other contexts). Here, I ask the reader to consider the extent to which this research provides heuristic significance in that the reader is inspired to investigate further into the social and emotional experiences of managers doing management work.

Chapter 4: Managerial Tactics: Transcending the X's and O's

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I share my etic and emic readings of the data as they are concerned with how the participants initially engaged with superiors and subordinates. This chapter is organised into two sections. The first section focuses on the academy manager's engagement with their superiors (i.e. the chairmen, board of directors and technical directors) especially with respect to how they looked to establish a level of trust and support with them. The second section concentrates on the academy manager's engagement with their subordinates. In this case, how the participants sought to get key members of staff 'onside' (i.e. obtain their support and collaboration) and, where necessary, keep some staff at a distance as they work to establish a vision and a way of working for the football academy. Specifically, this section illuminates their respective staff which include a range of coaching staff, heads of coaching, sports science and recruitment staff. To help make sense of the interactions the academy manager has with both their superiors and respective subordinates, Grills and Prus' (2019) theorising on organisational interchange is utilised. This analysis is supplemented by the application of Keltchermans (1996) work on micro politics, especially how the participants' professional interests are embedded in their interactions with their superiors and their subordinates. The final heuristic device is provided by Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical ideas, which help to provide an opportunity to illuminate the micro level interactionist and impression work the managers engage in as they fulfil their role.

4.2. Superior supporters are our bread and butter!

The participants all attached considerable importance to gaining and maintaining the trust and support of superiors, who included the chairman, the board of directors and technical directors. There were two key aspects to this finding as firstly, the academy managers recognised that it was important for them to convince their superiors of their competence and to win their trust in their initial meeting and interactions. This was deemed important by the academy managers as they felt it gave them an element of security and support they would need to go about the everyday work of managing their football academy. The second key aspect to this finding, was the significance the academy managers also placed on maintaining the trust and respect of their superiors, suggesting that they are attentive to ensuring they don't do anything which might damage the trust and support they have worked to establish. The managers outlined how they felt it important to convey impressions of confidence and competence in their interactions with the superiors to help maintain, and further the trust and support they prioritised to do their work.

4.3. First contact – Win the trust and support early.

All of the participants outlined their attention to reputational concerns, with specific importance placed upon how they are perceived by their superiors. Despite the managers operating in a slightly different organisational structure they all outlined the work they engage in which attends to the needs of their superiors (such as chairmen, boards of directors and technical directors). The managers care very much about what their superiors think of them and they are proactive in taking action to try and ensure that they are perceived in a positive way. It is important for the managers that they feel trusted, and they work to build, secure and retain the trust of their superiors wherever possible. Since football can be characterised as a low trust, suspicious and insecure environment (Gale et al, 2019; Roderick, 2016), the participant academy managers all indicated the significance of establishing a relationship where they feel they are trusted (and able to trust others) within the workplace. The

former includes demonstrating that they are confident and competent in their role and being attentive to what their superiors are wanting to see from their academy manager.

It was important to the academy managers that they are seen as being competent, partly due for them to gain the trust and support they need to make key decisions and run the academy how they would like to. However, the managers also cited being seen as being competent is important to them because it can protect them against the fragile nature of managerial employment in professional football as they state in their own words:

I think this game is tough and unforgiving, I've played for managers who were unfairly sacked and had their reputation ruined because trigger happy owners or directors don't like what they see. But the problem is that they don't see everything so they can make rash and badly informed decisions. Going into this job as the academy manager, I still had those memories of some of my ex-managers in my mind – I had to make sure that these directors liked what they saw from me. If they didn't feel I was up to the task and able to do the job, I wouldn't have lasted long.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

I remember trying to figure out what they wanted from their academy manager, I wasn't sure if they wanted a yes man or if they wanted someone to push them and challenge them, I'm neither of those really, but I remember working hard to make sure they knew I was up to the task. If they don't think you can lead such an important part of their football club, you're on a hiding to nothing and you'll be out the door.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

There have been lots of managers who have come and went. The chairman always seems ok with what I do and me and the staff are here regardless. I think he knows I am a safe pair of hands and he probably knows that I can deal with any managers that come in and deal with the way they work. It is the chairman who would be the one who fired me so it is him who I need to continue to show that I can look after the academy without causing him concern.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The owners of this club are forward thinking and are always looking to improve. I think they want to see that reflected in their staff. If I didn't show them that I wanted to innovate and drive improvements then I think I could be vulnerable – yes. If I was happy with the status quo and kept things ticking along I think they might question whether I was the right academy manager for them.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Well like I say, I'm not the Chairman's appointment and I'm not sure if he likes me or not. I do have to report to him and I know that he's the type of bloke where if he doesn't like you, then you'll not be around for long. Now I'm saying it out loud, I'm wondering why the fuck I came back here as I think one wrong move and he'll sack me haha, I think it's something you're always aware of. When you're talking to him and around those directors you always want to make sure that you're seen as confident and knowing what you're doing, otherwise they might doubt you and if they doubt you, then you could be in trouble.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

All the participants described a level of insecurity and vulnerability which exists around their security and longevity in the role. This is consistent with previous work from Gale et al (2019); Roderick, (2016) and Kelly (2017) who have articulated the working culture in football as being insecure and characterised by distrust. Indeed, this was not lost on the participants and there was an acknowledgement that they need engage in certain courses of in order to help them to preserve their longevity in the role and secure relevant resources to do the job well. To help make sense of the activity the participants engage in here, we draw upon Keltchermans (1996; 2007) insights into micro-politics to help better understand an individual's behaviour in an organisational setting. The concept of micro-politics illuminates the tactics and strategies that are used by an individual (or group of individuals) in order to further their interests (Keltchermans, 1996; Hoyle, 1982). Specifically, the micropolitical view in this instance refers to the literacy an individual inhabits in order to achieve the working conditions which they believe are necessary or desirable for them to operate in. Such micropolitical work can encompass struggle and conflict, and collaboration and coalition building (Keltchermans & Ballet, 2002b). This theoretical view, therefore, has a focus on the individual in the context and how they behave in the immediate working environment.

The micropolitical actions taken by the academy manager are based upon their own sense-making and were concerned with their establishing, safeguarding or restoring their desired working conditions (Keltchermans, 1996; Keltchermans & Ballet, 2002b). We can see that the academy managers all had desires of establishing and preserving an element of job security. They all felt that

they can acquire the job security they desire by demonstrating to their superiors that they are competent. This *self-interest* which the academy managers sought to acquire is driven by their sense-making, where they understood that their superiors in the football club are those persons who can give or take the job security the managers are seeking.

The perceptions of their superiors mattered to the participants, and as such, they invested considerable energy in planning for their interactions with their superiors. All of them spend time planning out the way they would like the situation to go, paying particular attention to securing and developing trust, demonstrating signs of knowledge and competency and paying specific consideration to their superior and the nature of the interaction as they state in their own words:

Whenever I spoke with the board and in particular Dean, Brian and Geoff, I would always make a point of referring to the outcomes they wanted the academy to achieve – I did this to make sure they knew that I knew what was expected in the role. I was new in the role and inexperienced as an academy manager so I felt that this was a good way of helping to facilitate trust and foster a good relationship between us. In my first meeting with them after my appointment I made sure that measurable outcomes such as players produced, return on investment and minimising costs were regularly mentioned in my conversations, as those things seemed to be priorities for them.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Through previous conversations (with the owners) and the very specific questions they asked me – I quickly realised that they do their own research and they don't seem to rely on what I am telling them – they definitely do their homework! So, in order to ensure I reflected this attention to detail, my plan for the academy, I think, helped to demonstrate to them that I am a methodical and detailed person myself who likes to have evidence to justify decisions – it's fortunate that I am that type of person, but I think the more I discussed my plan with them, the more they seemed to warm to me.

Once I felt I had my plan and my ideas to a level where I was confident in talking though them and justifying them, then I contacted the owners to give them an insight. I wanted to do this so they were kept in the loop regarding what we were trying to achieve but also to ensure that they were onside with what I wanted to do so I had their backing. I created a very detailed plan for the Academy which was over 100 pages in length and I had copies printed in colour and bound to give a professional look and feel to the document – I presented parts of the plan via PowerPoint in our meeting- I made sure that what I delivered was detailed and professional. This was something which was particularly important for me in this situation as there was a lot I wanted to change and improve upon and having the owner's blessing would give me some peace of mind.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I have always got on with the chairman, who is my line manager on paper but I also sort of report into the reserve team coach on matters of players moving into his squad. It's interesting we talk about this because I always want to demonstrate that I am good at my job – even though I have my doubts regularly (laughs) – but when I speak to my chairman I know what he wants to hear – it's all about costs and keeping those expenses down – I always try to let him know how we are delivering quality with one of the lowest budgets around and how we are doing more with less – I always have my facts on our weekly costs, monthly costs and how these are projected against our annual budget whenever I speak with him. It's different with the reserve team coach as I want him to know that I know football and players, so in my conversations with him it's all about players that could step up and help his squad and how our under 18's are doing playing the same formation as his reserve team.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah you do think about what the owners are wanting, they are in charge and they make the big decisions. I think I've managed to create a good relationship with them as I think they trust me and I think they know I am a safe pair of hands. The owners gave me the role after they moved the previous academy manager on, I was assistant academy manager and after they fired him, they scheduled me into a meeting. I remember going into that meeting thinking I was getting fired so I was nervous – but I also thought that there was a chance that they could offer me the role – I think I prepared myself for both conversations. They offered me the role of academy manager and I was so relieved and happy – yet I felt I had to show that I was expecting it and that this role is a natural progression for me – even though I probably wanted to celebrate round the room.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I know me coming back as Academy Manager ruffled a few feathers amongst other staff. I was here as a coach, then moved to work in the FA then I am back again as manager. I wasn't really the chairman's appointment either, so I've always felt like I've been up against it. In terms of my meetings with the chairman and his directors it was always brief, but I knew when I met them I wanted to make sure they knew I was right for the job and that I can do the job properly. I would make sure I came across confident, put my shoulders back and look them in the eye, shake hands and make sure I had a positive expression on my face – even though I was probably shitting myself – they needed to see I was confident.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants outlined how they were attentive to their reputation and how they are perceived by their superiors. Their outlook could be explained by Grills and Prus (2019) theorising and ideas on management work. The key premise of this work is an interactionist approach to the study of management in organisational life and how managers engage in the human enterprise of anticipating, planning, initiating, pursuing and sustaining individual and group related objectives. Grills and Prus (2019) outline how a manager will *attend to reputational dynamics*. Whereby the individual engages in work which is attentive to the establishing of a reputation that allows them a level of resource and agency they perceive will be of benefit to them in the organisational environment. Central to this reputational work is what Grills and Prus (2019) term *formal labelling*, which rests upon social processes that allow for the authorised or institutionalised designations of the qualities of the individual. It is acknowledged that the interactions which lead to *formal labelling* can yield a perceived stigmatised outcome - positive or negative - or indeed, an *instance of inaction* by the individual may well be taken which is then not likely to be interpreted as having a particular view or allegiance. Indeed, the issues presented here were certainly important to the participants in this study. Furthermore, the participant's insights reflect micropolitical theorising as

“the micro-political perspective embraces those strategies by which individuals and groups in organisational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests” (Keltchermans and Vandenburg, 1996, p.5).

Specifically in relation to the *social-professional* relationships whereby the individual's interests relate to the quality of their relationships with the people who they perceive to matter. In addition to satisfying their *social-professional* interests, there was a more pressing matter for the participants to attend to, which was linked to their *organisational interests*. The participants were concerned with the image they were portraying to their superiors as they worked to gain job security, legitimacy and agency in their role – such *organisational interests* are a central tenant in micropolitical theorising (Keltchermans, 2015).

In seeking to be formally labelled by their superiors in a positive manner, the participants described how they actively sought to engage with their superiors in different ways. Specifically, how they felt it was important for them to gain the trust and support of their superiors, however in order for this to be secured, they worked to influence the perception their superiors have of them in their initial interactions. In respect of reputational concerns, the participants all appear to be acutely aware of how they could be subject to *formal labelling*. Managers appear to demonstrate an awareness that such interactions with superiors which can be perceived as *formal labelling* encounters, can have a positive outcome for the managers as they are then seen in a positive light which inspires the trust and support they want. They believe this gives them access to favourable support from superiors when going about their work. This is something which the managers place great importance on, as they believe this gives them a heightened level of agency to get their management work done if they can secure a positive *formal label* from their superiors.

Equally, the academy managers know that their social interactions with their respective superiors press them into concealing potentially stigmatizing terms, such as a perceived lack of confidence and competence. In their own words:

Yeah I think I felt a bit uneasy at times especially when I'm trying to make sure that I know what outcomes they (the superiors) want from the academy. I couldn't show that I was a bit unsure as that would make them doubt my ability to do the job – I had to make sure they knew I was up to speed with what the targets were and how the academy would achieve it – hence I would do my homework before we met so I felt comfortable discussing the priorities the directors have for the place.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I think the fact that I had done my homework and put all that work into creating a detailed plan for the academy after doing some root and branch investigation certainly helped me gain confidence in my thinking. I made sure my plan was professional and detailed – almost war and peace to be fair – Maybe if I didn't do that, I would have appeared less knowledgeable or not as self-assured to the owners, which would have been a problem for me.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

One of the things I think the chairman likes about me is the fact I can get on and work with any of the first team managers he appoints – and there's been a few of those by the way - I

sort of keep my head down and do the job, I'll have a bit of a moan now and then but I know now it falls on deaf ears so to speak, so I just crack on. Before I speak with the chairman, I have an idea of what he wants to hear. If I went to the chairman and started to give him problems by moaning about the manager, he might start to think that me and the academy were more hassle than we're worth – especially at this level – we're nowhere near Premier League are we. I don't want to be some sort of problem always moaning and this and that, so we just crack on with it.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The way the owners work are proactive and forward thinking. They are always looking to improve things on and off the pitch, and, yeah, I think they want to see that reflected in their staff. I have regularly showed them videos and presentations which help to give a real life visual of the work we are doing – it helps get the message across. I certainly feel that if I was not proactive and forward thinking and if I didn't show them that then they might think I'm not for them, so yeah, it does cross your mind.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I met them. I wanted to make sure they knew I was right for the job and that I can do the job properly. I would make sure I came across confident, put my shoulders back and look them in the eye, shake hands and make sure I had a positive expression on my face – even though I was probably shitting myself – they needed to see I was confident.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Such work which the academy managers engage in to attend to their reputational concerns and to secure legitimacy in the eyes of their superiors, require the managers to be cognisant of their micro level interactions with their superiors. In addition to Grills and Prus (2019), interactionist insights, this issue could also be understood using Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective. Goffman's dramaturgy helps us to frame the micro-sociological level of interactions through the idea that social identities can be produced, negotiated and performed through situated encounters...

“The self...can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the persons to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person himself and those around him” (Goffman, 1961a, p168).

Central to the work of Goffman (1959) is his idea of *impression management*, whereby the individual constantly monitors and adapts the public display of their identities in order to create a

particular image, or desirable impression, upon the audiences they encounter. Goffman provides an insightful outline here;

“When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him”

(Goffman, 1959, p1).

An important tenet in impression management is what Goffman (1959) highlights as the *backstage*. Here he gives his thoughts into this;

“A back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance, is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course”

(Goffman, 1959, p53).

He illuminates the *backstage region*; as a situation where the individual can be their ‘true self’ and where they do not feel they are being watched, judged or observed, it is a place where they can relax out of character, and this may contradict their public identities. This is a private space where the individual can rehearse, dissect, reflect and pre-empt their role performance (Goffman, 1959).

As can be seen from the participant accounts above, they pay attention to their *backstage* preparations before they interact with their superiors in order to give themselves the best chance of being perceived as confident and competent in their interactions as they seek to establish the trust and support of their superiors. Such *backstage* planning from the participants, involves them preparing themselves with key information and facts deemed important to their superiors, developing planning documents and detailed presentations to convey knowledge and competence in addition to also considering how they would like to come across in the interaction with respect to portraying images

of confidence. The participants talk of their preparation for their meetings and conversations with the chairmen, directors or technical directors. They are all aware and attentive to what the chairmen or directors will be concerned with during the interaction and the managers will subsequently spend time in the *backstage region* planning their interaction. They work in this *backstage region* to attend to concerns of their reputation, which the managers hope to leverage in order to secure the trust and support of their superiors. Such *backstage region* planning is important to the managers as they believe it will help to return them a successful interaction which creates an impression of competence and which inspires trust and secures support. Securing the trust of their superiors is significant to the participants since the presence of trust gives them the working conditions they desired and instilled confidence in their everyday practices and decision making as a manager (Gale et al, 2019).

The participants all gave an insight into their thinking and actions during their face to face interactions with their superiors, as we can see from the data the participants are attentive to their behaviour and the impression they give in situ, during their interaction. For example:

In that first meeting with the directors, I was so keen to prove to them that I was aware of those measurable outcomes such as players produced, return on investment and minimising costs that I would sometimes forget the point of what I was saying. I felt at times as though I was just repeating myself, so I had to just try and refocus and concentrate on the agenda points of the meeting.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I presented parts of the plan via PowerPoint in our meeting- I made sure that what I delivered was detailed and professional. This was something which was particularly important for me in this situation as there was a lot I wanted to change and improve upon and having the owner's blessing would give me some peace of mind. I've given enough talks in my time to know when people start to switch off and because I had given them each a copy of my plan, I could just talk them through the key bits I felt they would want to hear.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah I've come to know what the chairman wants, I don't meet him that much but when I do, like I say, it's about the costs. But without seriously compromising the academy programme and the staff then I don't know how I can save him anymore money. By showing that I care about the financial difficulty we have and by expressing my sympathy, I think he knows I

take the situation seriously and I will genuinely look for cost savings. If I didn't do that and was dismissive of costs savings or if he thought I had my head in the clouds, he'd come in here with a microscope and I'd be lucky if I had a fucking bag of footballs left.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

You have to show them you're the manager they want and need. To help me do that, I try to tell them about new ideas and initiatives and how they can improve the academy. I'm an enthusiastic person anyway and I know they like to see that in me – they are forward thinking people and they like that from their staff.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

In terms of my meetings with the chairman and his directors it was always brief, but I knew when I met them I wanted to make sure they knew I was right for the job and that I can do the job properly. Actually, the things I have heard about the chairman meant I'm probably not his number one fan, but you can't show that can you, you just smile, be strong and try to back yourself as much as possible without him thinking you're an arrogant prick.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

A key element of *impression management* for Goffman (1959) is what he calls the *front stage region*, where the public performances are given, and where an individual can enact carefully scripted role identities. The front stage region where the individual adopts a role performance, is defined by its reception from the audience as Goffman (1959, p.81) states:

“To be a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one's social group attaches thereto. A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well-articulated”

This consists of the *setting* which refers to the location, scenery and décor which is fixed in a particular place as well as, the *personal front* that the individual brings to the situation which refers to identity equipment which can be clothes, material objects or props and facial expressions. Goffman suggests individuals will pay attention to *scenery and props* which can cross over from the *back stage*

region into the *front stage region* as they seek to manage their performance during a social interaction. As we can see from the data, the participants describe how they work to convey impressions of competence and confidence to their superiors, they pay attention to the use of props during their interaction with their superiors in their attempt to establish a credible reputation and to secure the trust and support they believe they need. They are attentive to their *front stage manner*, in order to help them to ensure they give an impression of confidence and or competence during their interaction with their superiors. In addition, the data always shows that the participants are willing to make use of *props* such as preparing and using visual materials such as planning documents and videos which help the participant to articulate their messages and feel more confident about their messages, but also to ensure that they give the image of being knowledgeable and professional.

The participants also highlighted an attentiveness to their *appearance* during their *front stage* performance interaction with superiors, where they outlined a desire for not wanting to appear too formal and removed from the work they are in charge of and citing reluctance to wear a suit, yet they also spoke of their concern for appearing too much like a coach and they did not want to be perceived as a coach, therefore they had a reluctance to wear a club tracksuit. There was a deliberate attempt by James to try and put himself ‘on an equal level’ to his chairman and so he wore a suit, since he believed he might not have been taken seriously had he turned up in his tracksuit. The participants articulated their attentiveness to how their appearance could influence their interaction:

Firstly, I wanted to make sure that they didn’t see me as some sort of tracksuit manager who has no clue on numbers or strategy, but also that I was in touch with and connected to what happens at pitch level. To try and balance that I suppose I felt a club logoed polo shirt along with smart trousers and shoes will help do the trick.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I actually wore a suit when I met him as well, I think it put us both on an equal level, if I’d turned up in my tracksuit I think he would have toyed with me a lot more and probably not taken me very seriously.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Goffman also draws our attention to intricacies of the interaction when the scene is in action. To help our understanding of this Goffman outlines what he calls *a line of action* which:

“Involve ritualised, symbolic action whose meaning can be interpreted by others in a way that is consistent with the definition of the situation”.

(Goffman, 1967, p.4)

It is the portrayal of the individual with due regard to appearance, manner, personal front, gestures and speech. In addition, Goffman also outlined what he called *control moves*, which are the gestures, movements and expressions that compromise the role performance during the interaction to help the individual convey their *lines of action*. It is suggested that *control moves* are;

“A calculated attempt to manage the impression one is trying to create, usually in such a way as to enhance one’s public image”.

(Goffman, 1959, p.63)

Indeed, such micro-level interactions which the participants engaged in, highlighted their attentiveness to the portrayal of the image they wanted to project, as they state here:

For one of the directors though, he wanted detail, and I think, a few times I referred him to the plan I’d given him. But he wanted an explanation from me right there in my words, looking back it was a test, but I knew I couldn’t show any uncertainty so I gave what I felt was a confident reply and then I think I steered the conversations into places where I was most comfortable, that way I felt more confident about what we were discussing.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

To make sure they trust me and that they support me in running the academy, its important in those meetings that they see and hear positivity and enthusiasm. I use my arms quite a bit and been told I’m quite expressive, I think this contributes to my persona when meeting with the owners.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I am well prepared with the facts and the numbers but there are times he has caught me out when he’s asked things like what can we do to cut costs further, I’ve had to think on my feet at times when speaking with him, I think I’ve said I’ll have a think and get something back to him, he’s busy and it stalls him a bit.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

I would make sure I came across confident, put my shoulders back and look them in the eye, shake hands and make sure I had a positive expression on my face – even though I was probably shitting myself – they needed to see I was confident.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Such *control moves* reflect a calculated attempt to manage the impression one is trying to create or to pursue the art of *idealisation* whereby the individual seeks to present a perfect, prototypical version of a role, to justify their continued occupation of it. In respect of the academy managers in their particular scenes and front stage interactions with their superiors, they highlight their *control moves* which prove to be a calculated attempt by them to manage the impression they are trying to create – usually in such a way to enhance their image and give them what they perceive to be a successful interaction with their superiors. In particular, they highlight how they would make a conscious attempt to make eye contact, smile and give a firm handshake whilst also nodding in agreement to the comments and suggestions offered by their superiors, all in an attempt to establish and reinforce trust as a result of the interaction.

4.4. You've worked to secure that reputation – now defend it!

The academy managers highlighted how important it was for them to secure the trust and support of their superiors in their initial meetings and interactions, which they felt would then give them the agency they wanted to make decisions and do their management work. However, the participants also articulated a need for them to constantly be aware of, and pay attention to, how they are perceived by their superiors. They indicate that the establishment of trust and the acquiring of support from their superiors in their early interactions is an important priority to address in the early stages of their role. Yet, such trust and support which the academy managers claim has been secured through their demonstrations of confidence and competence needs constant maintenance and attention. This is because the managers fear that their superiors' perceptions of them can easily

change and the trust and support they have secured could be lost if they do not consistently demonstrate confidence and competence in all of their interactions with their superiors. They indicate that the trust and support they have worked hard to secure can be fluid and that it is not something which is fixed permanently. The managers outline how they are attentive to their reputation and how they are perceived by their superiors to ensure they maintain and build on the perception they have created:

It's one of those where you're aware that you can say or do something which could cause the bosses to question you or have doubts about you. Especially when you're in a job like this which is a key part of the football club and which can get media attention now and then – especially locally – you have to be on your game and give no cause for anyone to doubt you even on the days when you feel a bit crap, maybe it's the pressure I put on myself, but I'm well aware that the support from those bosses can go quicker than it came.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Because you don't mix with the directors and owners too much, you sort of make sure that when you do, you're on your game and know your stuff. I mean, I like to think I do know my stuff anyway, but it's important to make sure that you come across well with them, you don't want them doubting you in any way as it's always better knowing they think well of you.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I think the trust thing is an interesting one, it's not something I think about that often but it's there isn't it. I mean in my own experience I know that one or two people have lost my trust in an instant, so it's probably a bit of a tightrope you're walking. I think in this environment people are quick to make a judgement and put a label on you, I do guess I try to make sure the owners keep a good view of me though.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

In my case I think the chairman is sussing me out – maybe not so much now – but he doesn't seem to be that trusting, maybe it's just me. I think I always have to work hard to prove that I know what I'm doing, you always have to be ready when you meet him, what I mean by that is you need to be ready to show him that you are working well and the academy is working well.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

When considering the above issues of trust and engaging in work which does not jeopardise the trust of their superiors, the participants articulated their thoughts with regard to how the trust and support they have worked to earn from their superiors, can be lost or fractured very quickly. Such concerns are symptomatic of football environments which can be characterised as low trust and insecure places to work (Gale et al, 2019; Kelly, 2017). As such, the participants strategized their interactions, so as to preserve the trust they had established. Interestingly, Grills and Prus (2019) offer some insight into the impression management work managers may have to engage in while they attend to *competencies and skill based concerns* as they work to maintain the definitions of competence which are perceived by their superiors.

Specifically, they highlight that;

“Self-management may also involve perceived competencies and skill sets. Here, intentional non-action may be particularly attentive to the foreseeable consequences of action in stark contrast with inaction. Office holders may attend quite closely to the potential challenges to perceptions of competence that various lines of action may pose”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p.190)

Such concerns are based upon the sense-making of the individual as to what they perceive competency to be in their world. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019) suggest that the manager looks to sustain a *cloak of competence*;

“Much impression management work and the maintenance of definitions of competence is focused on what people do in various settings. It is also encouraged to consider how intentional acts of not doing, may contribute to maintaining definitions of competence and various auras of office”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p.190)

It is through an individual’s actions or inaction, whereby they engage in specific lines of action or inaction (Goffman, 1959) in order to offer an image of competence to their audience. Central to such management work is how the participants *resist discrediting claims* whereby they work to avoid being perceived by their superiors in a way they believe is harmful to their reputation and their professed ability to fulfil the role. Indeed;

“Those who occupy management roles may find that, quite apart from any initiatives undertaken on their part, the everyday reality of being in office is discrediting for some audiences. Attributions may be levelled internally or externally to those in management positions and the accompanying self-management strategies of office holders in the context such designations should be considered”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p.190)

Furthermore, it is suggested that individuals engage in *self-management* and *control strategies* to avoid being discredited by their superiors (Grills & Prus, 2019). The work of Goffman (1959) is also important here, as the participants are engaging in *stigma-attentive management* strategies, since they outline how they do not want to be seen as incompetent and lose the trust of their superiors, so they therefore engage in activity which pro-actively maintains the issue of trust with their superior.

A significant aspect of maintaining such a positive perception of themselves, is how they represent the rest of the football academy to their superiors. Once the academy managers are in their position for a reasonable period of time – a few months according to most managers – their attention begins to focus on how the football academy as a whole is perceived by their superiors, as the academy managers feel that this is then a direct reflection on them and their own competence. The managers’ talk of their attention and conscious efforts to represent the academy in a positive light and to protect the academy from any negative perception or rumours among their superiors which they believe can so easily and unjustifiably happen, for example:

I think I had done a good job of showing the directors that I was a safe pair of hands and I that I could do the academy manager job well. But once I’d been in the job for a few months, I probably felt a different sort of pressure whenever I met with the directors – we didn’t meet that often but when I did meet with them, I had to be on top of my game with respect to what was happening in the academy, what results were, which players were doing well, I make it my business to know these things but when I meant with the directors I made sure I knew how we were performing as an academy on the pitch and off the pitch – if I didn’t know or showed any uncertainty then they start to doubt your ability to do the job. I think they want certainty – they like that.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Once you're in the job and you're at it, you become submerged into it. You're still very aware of what the owners and directors might be thinking but you don't get the time to focus on it too much as you're fully immersed in the job. I remember there have been a couple of occasions where our under 18's and under 16's had big games against our close rivals here at the academy against Harlow Utd when one of the directors came to the academy to watch, I got a call off one of the girls in the admin office on the Friday afternoon, to say that Bill, one of the directors would be watching the under 18 game against Harlow Utd on the Saturday morning – I remember shitting myself about it actually, it was a bit of a reality check, cos I was so busy in the day to day of the job and trying to get the work done that needed to be done, all of a sudden I need to prepare myself for the director coming down. I spent that Friday night thinking about what he would want to know or want to see. Because I am fully involved in most aspects of the academy I always feel reasonably confident that I have a good understanding of what we are doing. But it threw me a bit when I found he was coming down because I'd been in the job about four or five months and I'm thinking he's going to want to see progress and to see things are going well. I guess I had a plan in my mind about how our chat would go the next day, I just went in there and kept calm and composed despite me panicking a bit about how the game might go, because it was always tight against Harlow.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I think the chairman knows what we do here and that we do ok, and the main thing actually is that we do it on a very small budget. So for me, academy manager, coaching under 18 team and then helping out with under 14 team to help save on coaching costs, that's what I do. I've always done that and the chairman knows, in fact I think he quite likes to hear it when I tell him how busy I am covering other staff and saving him money. But with the first team manager that's different and when he or his staff come to under 18's training, I want to make sure they know that the players here are well coached and looked after – we've managed to get a bit of a track record as well which helps.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

That stuff for me is a balancing act and it's something where I need to educate the owners a little bit – but probably in a way which doesn't offend them or takes the piss! They'll see results of the u23's or the u18's and I might get a call or email to ask why we haven't won at the weekend – I mean first of all I'm not happy we didn't win – who is? But the focus here is on the development of individuals and that means sometimes you aren't prioritising the win. I have to make sure that the owners know that and that the success of our academy is about individual players – fortunately I can point to the individual players we have helped become professional players in the last 5 years.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Yeah it's a bit of a constant battle, especially at the moment with the financial pressures we are under as a club. At the moment it's purely survival for the academy, the staff, everything really, it's a bit of a fucking mess but you crack on. You just have to continuously show that you are a low cost operation and that you provide value for money, but even then it's a tough ask.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participant views above are reflective of Grills and Prus' (2019) ideas regarding *defending established reputations*. This is where;

“There can be various reputational dynamics that office holders may perceive as desirable, participants' may come to define certain aspects of the self as valued, beneficial and consistent with how they both see themselves and how others see them”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p194)

In particular, to provide an explanation to the actions and work the academy managers undertake to ensure they keep and build on the trust and support of their superiors. When considering how an individual can work to *defend established reputations*, Grills and Prus (2019) suggest that through social processes an individual may pursue some lines of action, reject others and abandon others given emerging reputational concerns. In particular, an individual can be attentive to what he perceives the significant other may want to see and what they value, and in the context of organisational life, this is sub-culturally specific. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019) articulate that “the very notion of the ‘preferred manager’ is sub culturally specific” (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.194) which is compatible to Goffman's assertion of *idealisation* which “involves maximising the satisfaction of the audience who may not be limited to one situational context” (Goffman, 1959, p.57). In addition, the related strategy of *dramatic realisation*, which Goffman explains is to “dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts about the actor's right to inhabit that role” (Goffman, 1959, p.40). For the participants, they all describe how performances which demonstrate competence and confidence are significant in the context of the football academy in order to secure the trust and support of their superiors.

In the act of *defending established reputations*, Grills and Prus (2019) highlighted the notion of *reputational risks* which the individual might have to mitigate, whereby they are placed in challenging situations which can be unplanned and unforeseen, and which occur in the presence of significant others. Such situations can occur which the individual has no control over and which can lead to an inconsistency in the reputation they have previously worked to establish. In the data presented above for the participants, they highlight how they feel the need to be in a position where they know what is happening in their football academy and how they feel the need to appear confident and competent to their superiors once they have spent some time in the role.

As Grills and Prus (2019) suggested how managers can consider the detail of *defending established reputations*, we can turn to Goffman (1959) who offers an insight into defensive practices which can be used in an individual role performance. In order to maintain and develop the trust and support they desire, engaging in *dramaturgical discipline* and *dramaturgical circumspction* became a feature of their work as academy manager. The concept of *dramaturgical discipline* refers to the individual's careful management of their personal front so as to appear nonchalant and composed, whilst concealing the extensive work they are doing to create this very impression. In addition to this, Goffman also identifies what he calls *dramaturgical circumspction*, whereby an individual will exercise prudence, care and honesty in the staging of a performance and will prepare for likely contingencies, putting measures in place to deal with potential disruptions. From the data above we can see how Brian was anxious regarding the late notice of one of his superiors, visiting the under 18 academy game the following day. In order to maintain a calm and composed manner, Brian engaged in what Goffman calls *dramaturgical discipline*. In addition, we can see that the participants engage in *dramaturgical circumspction* to ensure they are well prepared and know the details which they believe their superiors will want to know should they interact with them.

In addition to their own reputational concerns, to ensure their superiors maintain perceptions of confidence and competence, the academy managers place an importance upon how their superiors perceive the football academy more generally – especially when they have been in the job for

upwards of a few months. The academy managers are also concerned and attentive to how the football academy is perceived by their superiors as by extension they consider this to be a reflection on them and their ability to manage, as they outline in their own words:

I'm comfortable around the director, as long as I know my costs and my numbers I think he's happy. He knows that the decisions of the first team and reserve team impact the under 18's and that we've had enough managers over the years. The reserve team manager is trickier as I feel like he looks for any excuse to have a pop, usual stuff like saying these under 18's can't cut it and aren't good enough, he probably doesn't understand much about developing players, he wants his team to win – and it's a reserve team by the way – but there's not much I can do about that. Whenever he comes down to our training ground, I am ready for him, I have an idea about the things he will say about the academy and the under 18's staff and players, but I know and trust my team and so, I'll always have plenty of positives up my sleeve to hit him with – I'm not having him thinking badly of us without a bit of a fight. I usually bump into the first team manager every two weeks and sometimes he'll say *Gerry* (the reserve team manager), *says your young lads are struggling in the reserves*, but I'm ready for that and I have some stats on our under 18's who have played for the reserves – my academy lads stats compare favourably to some of the crap they have signed but now can't get a game in the first team – and I make sure the gaffa knows this.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

I know I have worked hard over the years to keep a good relationship with the directors here, I do think they trust me and that they are happy with what we are doing in the academy. But I've had conversations in the past where I have had to defend what we do and probably defend one or two members of staff over the years. We've had one or two players in the u18's who have been on the fringes of the first team and who have turned the heads of some of the top clubs in England. All of a sudden I'm getting calls off the director asking to see me because one player doesn't think he's developing enough in the under 18's - after he has had a taste of the first team – I reckon his fucking agent was making his mouth go again – but all of a sudden I'm at the stadium with Ted and he's asking me about the under 18 coaches, coaching programme and what we do. I knew exactly what was coming in this meeting, so I went in their armed to the teeth with information. Destinations of our under 18's, many playing across all the leagues in England and at least 6 in the Premier League. I had the documentation of all our 1 to 1's and player reviews with this player – to be fair he is a good lad but I reckon his agent was speaking with Ted trying to unsettle a few things to get his player in and around the first team. Our under 18 coaches and support staff work very hard and I trust them, I had to show this and I had to come into my meeting with Ted and reinforce our efforts and how we develop players. If I didn't defend our academy in such a way then fingers can quickly start pointing at me as the academy manager and I'm not having that just because some agent is trying to further his agenda.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I think I have a good idea of what the chairman wants and that's to reduce costs wherever possible. They have bigger issues than us, we can be a bit of an expense and I have to demonstrate each month how we are saving money. Forget about player development and football philosophies, he has two main things he's bothered about: where can we save money and which players can we sell or can join the first team squad as a cheap alternative to the more seasoned professionals? When we meet I have the detail around costs and how we are trying everything to save money, I also try to highlight how the staff in the academy are very conscious of keeping costs down and saving the club money, I mean, they sort of are, but their main focus is football obviously – I probably over emphasise how much they are conscious of costs to the chairman as I don't want him to think the staff don't care and think money is no object.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The above views which are shared by the managers can be explained further through Grills and Prus (2019) and their ideas for *managing team images*. They specifically outline that;

“Co-ordinator concerns about achieving and maintaining acceptable team images warrant direct attention. It is because teams operate within a community of others, team co-ordinators and other office holders may be concerned about the images that outsiders associate with their teams, possibly envisioning these as highly consequential for the well-being of their organisation”.

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p194)

It is through *managing team images* where the manager will consider the type of image he wants to project to significant others be they internal or external. Such work is impression management of a collective team, which can impact the manager deemed responsible for that team and either some or all of the members of that team, depending on who and what they are trying to portray. Grills and Prus (2019), also suggest that *information control* is a key piece of interactionist management work which take place when *managing team images*. The audience of the team image work with ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ and the information offered to the audience to create the team images may be concealed or de-emphasised, as well as revealed or emphasised. Indeed, the notion of *representing the group to others* where the manager may well take it upon themselves to represent the organisation on their own, which is a task that lead impression management to escalate beyond the control of the manager should the audience happen upon contrasting narratives and performances

between the manager and the team he is representing. Goffman's concept of *idealisation* can help to explain how a manager will work to give his audience the prototypical standards of what they expect from the manager and the organisation.

In further developing this point, it could also be argued that there is clearly work done by the academy manager which is attentive to the image and the perception their superiors have of the football academy as an operation. The academy managers highlight a need for them to *manage team images* in an attempt to ensure their own reputation remains intact and / or to ensure the continuing viability of the football academy in the eyes of the decision makers in the football club. The academy manager's demonstrated *dramaturgical circumspection* prior to, and during, their interactions with their superiors in that they are in tune with what their superiors are looking for and wanting to know in their interactions. The superiors have their priorities and concerns and the academy managers are aware of these and cater for these in their interactions. A key task in this work by the academy manager is *information*, where they work to present the image of the football academy which they want to convey by drawing attention to the appropriate information. Such impression management work is an important task for the academy manager as he seeks to ensure a positive perception of the academy is maintained by their superiors. This work is done individually by the manager so they have full control over the *backstage*, *front stage* and *the lines of action* all of which are focussed on ensuring the superiors get the outcome they are wanting from their interactions with the academy manager.

4.5. Summary

In answering research question one, it is clear that the managers placed a considerable importance on their first meetings and interactions with their superiors. For them, it was crucial to establish a reputation which leads to them being trusted and supported by their superiors. Grills and Prus (2019) help us make sense of this work as a concerted effort by the managers to attend to

reputational dynamics as they work to defend or establish their reputations with their superiors. Indeed, the manager's reputation can be a gateway for them to achieve their own self-identity concerns, by paying specific attention to how their identity could be perceived by their superiors. It was important to all managers to secure a level of legitimacy from those superiors who ultimately decide their future in the workplace of the football academy. In addition, Goffman (1959) has given us a framework to better understand the micro-level interaction which takes place before, during and after the first meeting between the academy manager and their respective superiors. It is clear that the academy managers give thought to how they would like their interaction to play out and they plan and prepare for this accordingly. They are also attentive to the situational matters at hand and, as such, have an awareness of how their words, gestures and responses can all serve to produce what the academy managers would interpret as a meaningful and successful interaction.

In their early meetings and interactions with their superiors, the academy managers all placed an importance on creating an impression of competence and confidence which they believed was central to securing the trust and support from their superiors. Securing the trust and support from their chairmen and directors was cited as an important part of their work as they felt it gave them the agency and power to make the changes they wanted to the football academy. Such backing from their superiors gives the academy manager feelings of security and gives them a greater level of confidence when going about their work. In order to maintain the reputation they have developed for themselves in their early interactions with their superiors, academy managers played out or 'second guessed' how their future interactions might go based upon what they felt their superiors would want to see or hear in order to maintain or enhance the levels of support and trust they receive.

In respect of the data and the theoretical interpretations presented in this chapter, there is a contribution to the sport management literature base given here. Specifically, in respect to giving fresh insights into the micro level interactions and impression management work, which the academy manager engages in while they do their day to day job. Such insights help the literature to better understand the micro-level activity which is a central part of organisational life for the academy

manager as they try to preserve and protect their job and their football academy. This work gives a greater insight into the efforts managers have to exert in order to establish and maintain the trust and support of their superiors in order to secure their desired interests.

4.6. Managing this Team needs a bigger playbook!

The findings in this section reveal the work the academy manager engages in with subordinates, and the interactions they are involved in as they work to develop a vision and a football philosophy for their football academy. In particular, there are three key findings which are outlined in this section. Firstly, the immediate concerns the participants have as they start the job of academy manager are explored, as they describe their attentiveness and sensitivity to the people and the relationships they encounter in order to help them better understand how to get their plans and vision across. The second finding highlights the work the participants undertake in order to secure and get 'onside' the staff they believe will help them to drive and deliver their plans and vision, and how they try to locate and recruit the allies to support such ventures. Specifically, how the participants plan situated activity which they believe will give them the best opportunity to convey the messages they want to deliver and also how the development, communication and implementation of such collective ventures prove to be a constantly evolving activity. The final finding in this section illuminates how the participants strategise the deployment of staff in order to ensure an effective delivery of their vision and football programme. In addition, this final finding also provides an insight into how the participants go about identifying and managing people who might be problematic out of the organisation.

4.7. Understanding how the game works.

Upon beginning their role as academy manager, the participants outlined a level of attentiveness which helped them to understand how the environment works in respect of what the current staff do and how they interact on a day to day basis. The participants each had their own

plans, ideas and vision of how they wanted their academy to work, yet they outlined how they were reticent about communicating their plans until they had an opportunity to better understand the football environment they had just walked into. It was felt important to the participants that they could find out more about what was already happening in the football academy so they could better appreciate how their plans and vision may be received by the staff who were already working there. In addition, some of the participants outlined how such inaction gave them an opportunity to act as an observer, before they began to make some decisions on the best course of action to communicate their plans and vision to the staff. This period of time also gave the participants an opportunity to observe staff performance and behaviours around the football academy, so they could begin to make some decisions on how best to engage with the members of staff and work with them – or without them.

Yeah, because I had already been working there as the under 18 coach, I suppose I had some ideas about who I wanted and who I didn't want. I also had an idea what I wanted to change with respect to the football programme, because for me it needed changing, it needed to start afresh. When all the dust settled and it was all confirmed and sorted about me making that step from under 18 coach to academy manager, it was just sort of business as usual and I was quite happy with that. I guess I just needed a few weeks to catch my breath as it all happened so quick, I then started to observe more closely what was happening and I put off making any big decisions until the end of season which was only a few months away, this allowed me to be sure of how I was going to approach the changes I wanted to make.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

When I was new as the academy manager, I'd never done it before and wasn't sure what to expect really. I did enough coaching for lots of different age groups but this was a situation where I am still doing the under 18's but also now managing the academy. In the early stages, it was a bit of a struggle for me to organise my time, but there were a lot of good people at the place who I wanted to help. I spent the first few months finding out about their problems and issues they had when working here, I didn't realise we had so many issues. I think I went on a bit of a fact finding mission after that and got a better feel for what was happening. I think this gave me an opportunity to think about how to approach things, I didn't want to start making quick decisions that would start upsetting people or pissing people off who I still needed to work with.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Because I was assistant academy manager, I knew the environment already, I knew the staff and I knew the programme all very well. But it was a very difficult transition for me to become academy manager, I was very young for an academy manager and not only that, I

was going from a number 2 to a number 1, which can be a difficult transition. Because you're perceived in a certain role and have a set of duties attached to that role and the difficult transition was going from being more one of the lads, one of the group, to be the leader of the group. I knew what I wanted to change some things. I didn't do that straight away though, I had conversations with all of them to get their thoughts and ideas about how we could make things better moving forward. I sort of had to plan out how I was going to do that and I think I've had to work to guide the staff and give them some autonomy about how they want things to work, that has definitely helped to build on my relationships with staff and to get them to trust me as academy manager.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I've worked here before as a coach so I sort of know the place and some of the staff already. There were one or two people who I didn't really think were that good or who I wanted here, but I couldn't make big calls like that early on. I thought it best to give them a chance as it might be seen as heavy handed and unfair if I had just come and started getting rid of people. There has been a turnover of staff before me and money is getting tight, so I just felt that I need to get a lie of land before I start making some decisions. It's easy to make some very snap decisions but sometimes you can be your own worst enemy if you do that, you can turn people off you very quickly and then you're up against it from the start.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants are consistent in their approach to get a better understanding of the academy they have just walked into before they go about trying to instil their plans and visions or make any changes. They do this as they believe they can make a more informed decision about how they should go about their work in the academy environment, specifically they consider the best courses of action to take for them to get their plans, ideas and vision into the football academy. In addition, this period of initial inactivity and observation by the participants allowed them to better understand staff performances and allowed the participants to consider key staffing decisions. Specifically, the participants outline how their inactivity and their delay on making key decisions was also due to not wanting to alienate key people who they felt they would need and who they wanted to be a part of their plans for the academy.

The participants' shared outlook here can be explained in relation to Grills and Prus (2019) assertions that *managing uncertainties* can be a key part of management work. In this sense, 'due to the unfolding of everyday life, individuals may opt to act or not act out of a sincere sense that what

should be done or what needs to be done is unclear and uncertain' (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.190). As a matter of *self-management* 'individuals may opt not to engage in action out of an uncertainty about which lines of action are desirable in a particular setting' (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.190). Indeed, the notion of *inaction* by the individual may reflect the very real experience of uncertainty, ambiguity and various other hesitations to act. Such management work is central to what Grills and Prus (2019, p.192) outline as *self-regulation*, 'where individuals who hold office may be particularly attentive to issues of discipline, self-control, audience dynamics and the various expectations that may be applied to office'.

In the case of the participants highlighted above, their collective hesitancy to act was borne from a desire to not be seen as making hasty decisions, taking their time to observe the environment to help them find the best way to create the academy they wanted, of which observing the performances and dynamics of the staff in the academy in order to help them determine the right lines of action to take. In this respect, it is not to say that the participants avoided doing work, there was still the day-to-day work to be done. However, the participant's outlined how they were selective about the type of work they engaged in. In this instance, the participant's distanced themselves from making key decisions on vision of the academy, the staffing and the football philosophy, but they did engage in the day to day running in order to keep things functioning as was. Grills and Prus (2019, p.189) explain that individuals can engage in *distancing strategies* which are related to how and why some tasks are engaged with and others are not. Here, they specifically explain that 'the inaction of the individual allows them to restrict the flow of information within the setting, thereby allowing purposive inaction to hold strategic value for that individual'. This view is reflected by the participants who are reticent to communicate their plan and ideas until they have yielded a better understanding of the staff dynamics in the football academy and strategized the best way to deliver their own vision.

To help us further explain the participants' relative *inaction* here (Grills & Prus, 2019), we can also draw upon Keltchermans (1996) micro-political considerations which help to offer an

explanation as to why an individual might act or interact in a certain way. In the case of the participants' highlighted above, *organisational interests* of the individuals is a key consideration here, where job and tasks are central to what the individual desires, in addition to the individual ensuring that other people adopt certain roles, tasks and duties. The rolling out of their vision and plan for the football academy is a central *organisational interest* behind their relative period of inaction, as the participants' take their time to establish who might be best for certain roles and to consider the most appropriate lines of action to take during their interactions in order to secure what the participants considers, the best outcome. In addition to this, there are what Keltchermans (1996) articulates as *social-professional interests* which the participants are attentive to. Here, the individual pays attention to the quality of their interpersonal relationships within the organisation, so as to not be perceived in a negative way by significant others which could in future jeopardise the smooth implanting of the participants plans and vision for the football academy. The participants' spoke of not being too quick and hasty in their early decision making, as they did not want to alienate or jeopardise key relationships with staff, since they were aware that they wanted them as part of their academy and they needed to ensure positive social and professional relationships were established and maintained.

The participants further specified how they went about gathering information on the people who were already working in the academy:

Yeah, I mean, I didn't know everyone – particularly those staff working in the foundation phase and the other staff who support the academy coaching programme. There were a couple of occasions where I turned up at the training nights of u9's, u10's, u 11's (those age groups train on the same night) and so on, and I would arrive after the session started and I would wear my normal clothes and mix in and around the parents. I got a feel for which coaches had standards and what they would do. In the main they were ok, there was an assistant coach who looked like he was taking the piss a bit and making it all about him, so he was on my radar straight away..he looked more bothered about practising his own keep ups and tricks, than helping and coaching the boys.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Even though I had my plan of what I was going to put in place, I still needed the staff to do it. I quickly understood who I wanted from observing a range of coaching sessions – sometimes

I told the coaches in advance, sometimes I didn't. We record many of our training sessions so in some cases I watched the recording of the training session to try and see how it worked and what the coach did and didn't do – in the early stages, I was probably watching the coaching on those videos more than the players. I dropped in unannounced to a sports science team meeting – I wanted to see and hear what they were doing and what they talked about – I apologised when I walked in there and I protested a level of ignorance about sport science and wanted to find out more, so that was mitigation, as I didn't want to cause a problem for any of them, but I did want them to know that I was going to be a manager who takes an interest in all aspects of what we deliver.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I started to hear stories of one of GK coaches, turning up late to sessions, prioritising his own private GK coaching business and missing some of our sessions. I turned up – unknown to him – at one of the sessions – it was meant to start at 6pm, I was standing away where I knew I wouldn't be seen but could see the area where the GK coaching would take place. 6 GK's were already there, it was 6pm on the dot. I was already fucking foaming enough at that, but he didn't turn up until 6:10pm – what a joke, his body language also screamed arrogance to me – no way am I having that.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

I had to get a feel for what a few staff in the youth development phase were thinking – especially about my appointment from assistant into the overall academy manager. I just wasn't sure they were fully onboard with me, I couldn't put my finger on it. I remember one time, I knew they had a youth development phase team meeting – which takes place in the meeting room at 10am on a Monday. So I set up my laptop and worked in the classroom opposite, I left the door open, just in case I heard any small talk on the way in and on the way out, when they finished their meeting they went into the canteen to take their cups back, so I went into the canteen and walked straight to the back to speak with the chef – but all the time while speaking with the chef I was listening for anything which would signal they weren't having me. I didn't pick anything up to be fair – despite my best detective efforts. It sounds a bit petty I suppose but, to make things work you need to get a feel for who is on your team so your eyes and ears are always open.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I managed to get a cuppa with some staff on a 1 to 1 basis or a small group. I kept it dead informal, just had a bit of a laugh really, in fact many of those meetings – I mean I say they were meetings – they were just football conversations with a cuppa – they were probably bit impromptu where after some games on a weekend or after some training sessions I would hover about and ask if anyone fancied a cuppa. But it did give me an opportunity to find out a bit more about the staff and in particular listen to what they were saying, even though it was

all good craic and a bit banter, I was listening for those who could be a problem, there was one or two who were always fucking moaning and I'm sitting there thinking - you work full time in football, you have it easy mate.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

For the participants, it was important to get an appreciation of who they could trust and who they felt could do a good job (as well as the converse). This was important for the participants since their own interests are encapsulated in the performance of others in the football academy (Gale et al, 2019). In order to better understand who they could trust they engaged in activity which would not always be obvious to others. As they tried to better understand which staff they could trust, the participants all acknowledged that they try to get access to information about their staff and that this is done in a covert or undercover way. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019, p.188) further articulate the matter of *self-management* where 'by opting not to act, the participant avoids the pronouncement of challenge found in more declarative acts thereby allowing for retreat, reassessment and re-evaluation of anticipated lines of action'. This resonates with all the participants as they pursue the attainment of what they perceive to be relevant information in order to help them in their future decision making. This gives the participants an advantage in the form of an *additional interactional resource* as they have covertly, through inaction, gleaned an overview of how individuals in the organisational setting actually go about their work (Grills and Prus, 2019). In addition, the concept of *unfocused interaction* (Goffman, 1963) can help to frame the in-situ interaction of the participants as they encounter others in the football academy. Specifically, Goffman (1963) suggested that it is through *unfocused interaction* where an individual may take part in surveillance in order to gather the information they desire from others who are physically co-present but who are engaging in different activities and interactions, they may do this through a 'side of an eye' or 'half and ear' in order to capture information in a covert way. In the case of the participant academy managers who are physically co-present with their staff, they are engaged in different activities and focussing on different things – that is for the participants' they are focussed on gleaning information about how their staff – unbeknown to them – actually go about their work.

Furthermore, the specific issues the participants were concerned with included the behaviour and standards of the coaches, observing the work of the sports science department, finding out what staff were thinking about their (the participant's) appointment as academy manager and to find out who would moan and spread negativity. Such concerns can be further explained through Keltchermans (1996) micro-political considerations, which help to explain why the participants are engaging in such covert, surveillance management work. Many of the issues cited by the participants' can be described as *cultural-ideological interests*. That is the 'less or more explicit norms, values and ideas that are acknowledged within the organisation as legitimate and binding elements, this also includes the processes and interactions that lead towards the definition of these cultural elements, since they are subject to ongoing negotiation' (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2015, p.635). Such a concept can explain how the participant academy managers think the coaches should behave, i.e. focusing on the players and not keeping the ball in the air when they should be coaching, turning up on time and not being late to sessions and consider yourself lucky to work full time in professional football. Furthermore, the participants evidenced an attentiveness to *social-professional interests*, where such concerns 'relate to the quality of the inter-personal relationships within and around the organisation' (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2015, p.635). This concept can help to explain how the participants would casually drop into a meeting, offer an apology and mitigation for them being there so as not to concern any staff members. In addition, what was effectively a surveillance mission which could easily have caused strained relationships, was dressed up as, and sold to the audience (the staff), as an informal, friendly and impromptu cup of tea.

4.8. Enlisting star players and keeping them 'onside'.

The participants attached great significance to being able to instil a vision (e.g. an aspiration for all the academy to work towards), a coaching programme (e.g. a technical, tactical, physical, psychological and social curriculum which acts as a point of reference for coaches and support staff) and working philosophy (e.g. cultural norms, values and behaviours applicable for all staff and

players). They clearly invested considerable strategic thought regarding how they would best be able to influence their staff to ensure such ventures can be realised. A significant feature of their strategy is their engagement with and use of key members of staff in the academy to help them and to advise them. Initially, the participants' outlined the importance of having key allies who hold a significant role in the football academy who they can seek the counsel of:

I had already spoken with my u18 coach and my assistant academy manager to make sure they were on board with some of the key messages on what we were trying to achieve. As a group we sat down and developed a new coaching syllabus and technical programme. This was between myself, u18 coach, and assistant academy manager.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

When I was confirmed as academy manager, I had my plan which I had shared with the directors, a root and branch audit of the academy as it was and then my plan to improve and develop the place from facilities to the coaching programme. I had promoted Ralph - one of the under 18 coaches to assistant academy manager, to help me oversee the coaching programme – he was a respected member of staff who had been there years – he is well thought of by all staff as far as I'm aware – and yeah that was probably a factor in my decision to promote him. I knew I had my plan of how I wanted the coaching programme to look across all the age groups – I wanted it done my way really.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Jackie is a full time coach here but works across all age groups, helps staff and plugs gaps where needed. He's so important to me and to this place, I guess you could say he's what the bigger clubs have as a head of coaching. He has a great way of helping other staff but not imposing or taking over their sessions, he's well respected, no doubt about it. Fortunately, we have the same view on football and developing players so getting him to help me set out ideas and a coaching programme for staff to work to is pretty straightforward.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

There were a few coaches in the building who I really respected, who thought the same as me and who I knew would be fully on board and committed to changing the vision for the academy and updating the coaching programme. They were the foundation phase lead coach, the youth development phase lead coach for 12's to 16's as it was and one of the under 16's coaches. I think they had grown frustrated at the programme and the pathway we had, so I got the four of us together and we started planning for a change.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I had to quickly assess who I thought was the right fit for what I wanted, I already knew some of the staff and I'd heard things about others, but I needed to be sure of who I wanted and I had to make sure they were up to scratch. I'd known Dave for years, we had coached together, done our badges together and he is a good pal. Lucky for me he was already working as the head of safeguarding and welfare here and he had some good insight into the staff here.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participant's outlook here could be explained using Grills and Prus (2019) concept of laying the groundwork in order to give them the best opportunity of realising visions and missions. This endeavour 'denotes a set of activities that establish the linkages between envisioning missions and assembling teams' (Grills & Prus, 2019 p.139). More specifically, individuals will engage in influence work, consult with others – including the assessment of opposition, obtain preliminary assistance with team preparations and begin extending networks of support through existing team members. The participants' endeavours can also be examined through the micro political lens of what Keltchermans (1996) refers to as *social-professional* interests. Such interests are described as 'the quality of the interpersonal relationships within and around the organisation' (Piot & Keltchermans, 2015, p.635). In this sense, all the participants' are sensitive to building, developing or maintaining interpersonal relationships with key members of staff who they perceive will be able to help them to deliver the vision for the football academy further down the line.

Central to the participants' attachment and relationship to the key members of staff who they perceived could help them to deliver their vision were issues of trust and a shared view of how football should be coached and how the academy should operate with respect to the values and culture of the place. All the participants' outlined how the key staff who they get close to, and established a relationship with, will discuss issues of football coaching and more confidential issues of staffing and staff performance of others in the football academy. Because of the often sensitive and confidential nature of such interactions, the participants expressed the need for them to be able to trust their close allies, since the participants' are engaging in interactions where the topics of which, if they were

common knowledge amongst all staff, would cause potential upset and fallout. The participants also expressed the strategies they employ to ensure they can trust their one or two key members of staff, as this trust is not something the participants routinely give their key staff members:

Yeah I mean because I had already worked with my under 18 coach and my assistant academy manager, I knew I could trust them. Firstly, I knew how they coached and how they went about their work which I was comfortable with and to be fair I had enough private conversations with them in the past regarding players and other staff to know that I could consult them on some decisions of other staff and things like that.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Well I promoted Ralph to work alongside me, as I felt he was influential amongst the other staff and he could help me to get some key messages across. After a number of conversations with him and after I watched coach I knew he was the type of person and coach I wanted to help me. Did I trust him? Oooh, erm yeah, to a point. I think on matters of staffing, and who I would put with what age groups I would casually ask him what he thought of the current staffing structure – but I, I probably never really told him what I thought of certain staff and staff arrangements, I would ask him the questions and get his insights without fully divulging mine! It was like I was a novice coach all over again, where I ask players lots of questions as I wasn't confident in my own coaching knowledge. Except in this case I just didn't really want him to know my exact thoughts on staff in case he had closer relationships with some of them than I had thought.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I have worked with Jackie since I arrived here as a coach, he's great and a huge help, he's in it for the right reasons and his view and knowledge on football is excellent. Yeah I trust him, because we've been in the trenches together doing the bad gigs, in all weather and had all sorts of issues we have sorted over the years. He probably could have had the academy manager's job a few years back but passed it up, he loves the game and he affords me so much time and help – he's a legend.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Because I was stepping up from assistant academy manager to the number 1, I did have some feelings of uncertainty about how different staff might feel towards me. I knew, through previous conversations, that there were 2 or 3 of the lads who I got on very well with and who I respected and like I said I sought the insights of as they are good lads with some good football knowledge... ..In all honesty, no I probably didn't or couldn't fully open up to them about who I wanted to get rid of. I just felt that I needed to get all big decisions right and if I'd started to let my real thoughts slip and something got out, then I would be firefighting from the start. On top of that, I didn't want them thinking I was worried about what others in the building thought of me, that leads to showing your vulnerability, again I didn't want that otherwise I'm dead from the start.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Dave is a good pal. We've been through a lot together. He gives me good information about what is happening here. He is what a lot of people would call 'a busy bastard', but he means well and he does know his football. Trust wise of course it's important and I do trust him in the sense that he tells me how it is and doesn't bullshit. But he does have a bit of a mouth on him and he knows every fucker in this place, so I don't tell him everything I am thinking about different staff or some of the players, he's not malicious or anything like that, he's just a bit of a gobshite, but people like and respect him I think.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants were consistent in their attentiveness and awareness about the extent to which they can trust their key members of staff. This can be explained through Goffman (1959, p.2-3), who draws attention to the concept of trust during the social interaction;

“Taking communication in both its narrow and broad sense, one finds that when the individual is in the immediate presence of others, his activity will have a promissory character. The others are likely to find that they must accept the individual on faith offering him a just return while he is present before them in exchange for something whose true value will not be established until after he has left their presence”

Indeed, the participant academy managers place an importance on being able to trust and confide in their key allies and members of staff and as highlighted by Goffman (1959), such work is not without *expectancy* or *risk*. The notion of expectancy where the individual will assume a certain social order and risk where a desired social identity is presented and hoped for, in order to receive beneficial or reciprocal outcomes. In this instance, the work of the participant academy managers is rooted in them taking a risk that they can actually trust their key staff members. The motivations behind the work of securing and understanding the trustworthiness of their key staff can be further explained through a micro political lens in respect of the individual pursuing their *social-professional* relationships with their key staff, but use such relationships to access *organisational interests* whereby the individual is accessing information to help them make decisions about how they want to organise the staffing and deliver the coaching programme in the football academy (Keltchermans, 2007). Furthermore, Grills and Prus (2019, p.139) articulate how *laying the groundwork* ‘through

assembling supporting casts that may be used as a base from which to pursue specific missions' is a central aspect of management work when seeking to establish a working vision. Indeed, locating supporters through consulting with others about missions and strategically managing information dissemination (Grills & Prus, 2019) are further conceptual ideas which can help provide an explanation to the participants' management work.

All the participants outlined how, as a close, and small group of staff they accessed, shared and discussed information which was not readily communicated to the wider staff at the academy due to its sensitive nature and the needs for a degree of secrecy for reasons which they perceived would help with the delivery of the information to the wider staff and minimise any fallout:

We spoke of how we thought the programme would look for the different age groups and we started to get into the detail of what days, nights and times would certain group train, then how this would impact the coaches, the physios, the fitness staff – because I had been in here a while I knew what was working and what needed changing. It was stuff that would improve the programme, but we had to shape that before we started communicating it, otherwise it would just lead to confusion.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I shared my plan with Ralph and said what do you think? I basically gave him a PowerPoint presentation which was a straight to the point operational driven plan. No staff names were on there, it was our organisational structure and our training schedule. He looked at it and he said that it seemed fine, I asked him if he thought there would be any opposition to this – he said that he thought all that stuff would be fine – some of the real issues would be around the expectations of the staff and what their day to day roles would look like. So this was something we started to flesh out further together.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Jackie isn't daft, he's seen enough coaches who just want the tracksuit or some ex-pros who use this place as a quick stepping stone to somewhere else. We sat down in my office and we started writing on the board, where we were going to put staff. Jackie has his ear to the ground so to speak, he said "you need to break up the under 14 partnership of Mike and Neil. They both talk too much to the players, they don't let the ball roll enough, training sessions are low tempo – they both think they are Jose Mourinho"... so we had to look at that. I think my main concern in that meeting with Jackie is to put him in a legitimate role which gave him enough flexibility to drop into any session he wanted at any time.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The four of us met and we basically did a bit of bashing of the old coaching programme, sort of helped us remind ourselves that we are all on the same page with respect to how coaching should be done. I think we ended up discussing in detail how the foundation phase coaching programme will look and in particular which staff we felt would embrace this programme and which staff may need some work. There was an under 10's coach who focussed on tactics in a 7v7 game and wanted his teams to win. This was something we didn't need in that age group, so my under 16 lead phase coach said he would take him under his wing at under 15 level, which helped me. It meant it avoided me having to have a more difficult conversation.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Although Dave knows football and is a good lad, I had to reach out further to get some insights into the staff and who worked well. I watched coaches on the grass, myself, I even used our performance analysis platform to watch some of the recorded training sessions to see what the coach was doing. But I didn't want this whole thing to be me hammering in my ideas. I needed some staff to help me shape and do this otherwise I'm the one doing all the fighting...and although Dave is someone who I rely on to help know what is happening, I couldn't really include him in discussions of coaching programme...some of the other staff would be like, "how come the safeguarding bloke is taking a lead on this coaching programme"...so I got in James who is an under 18 coach and a good lad – and someone who Dave also rates – and also Max who is the Head of Coaching and has a decent reputation amongst the staff. I basically just fired loads of questions at them about what they thought – their heads must have been spinning. But we had a few good meetings together, then got Dave in, then we sorted out the structure of the place and who was going to do what.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

This management work which the participants' engage can be examined through their interactions at a micro level where Goffman (1959) outlines issues of secrecy during interactions between actors. In this sense, actors will use secrecy to enhance their own status and conceal information which may cause perceptions of vulnerability. The importance of secrecy and the protection of important details is highlighted by Goffman (1959, p78-79) "among all of the things in this world, information is hardest to guard, since it can be stolen without taking it". Indeed, Goffman (1959) outlines how secrets in an organisational setting can take the form of strategic, dark and inside secrets. In this sense, strategic secrecy refers to being an important contributory factor in an individual gaining leverage in an interaction for their own motivations. It can be seen here that such *strategic secrecy* involves the participant academy manager's close staff and Goffman (1959) helps

explain this through the concept of *collusion* where team dynamics are dependent upon loyal bonds of trust between team members, which can be “likened to a secret society, flavoured by the sweet guilt of conspirators, who support each other’s lines of self-presentation” (Goffman, 1959, p.108).

In addition to the concept of strategic secrecy for a perceived strategic gain, the participant academy managers also shared stories of their meetings and interactions with their close staff in which they shared other information and took part in other interactions which were for their consumption only.

We spoke of how these changes would be received by staff – I knew one or two coaches wouldn’t like having to move training days, but actually they were the coaches who I didn’t want. I didn’t think they were good enough – yeh I think we agreed to keep that secret for the moment, I don’t think I broadcasted that one.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Yes, I spoke to Ralph confidentially in that meeting and I alluded to the fact that there might be some people a bit unhappy, with what they were being asked to do, he looked at me and nodded, I think without saying it to each other we knew the changes would cause some staff a problem.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I knew I had to go and watch Mike and Neil work and spend some time observing them, I think I told Jackie that I would go and do that and he said something like ‘you’ll not like it, they’re a new breed of coach’ and I knew he was talking about something we always mention about these new young coaches who want to coach the first team before they’ve even put a proper shift in.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah mean in my discussions with Dave, James and Max, it got a bit sensitive about a coach who we all thought we needed to move on and who was probably a bit against us or poisonous really I mean we didn’t use the words poison, I think we just agreed he might not be what we are after, Dave out of nowhere asked if we wanted to get HR involved, meaning let’s get rid, so I went for it, but we had to do it discreetly.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Such secret interactions amongst the close group can also be explained through Goffman's ideas on secrecy. What Goffman (1959) terms as a *dark secret* is where matters of an individual or individuals being consciously deceitful within an interaction, to the detriment of their audience or another. Such examples can be seen as the participant academy managers and their close staff talk about and allude to the removal of other staff from the organisation. Indeed, as part of this group Goffman (1959) also explains that an *insider secret* can prevail, where the group shares a joke or a point of view on a certain situation which is inaccessible to a wider group or audience. Such insider secrecy refers to how those on the inside of the secret feel distinct or special (Goffman, 1959). The shared view of younger coaches wanting to fast track themselves through the academy system to coach the highest age group they possibly can, seems a like a view which is held by the participant academy managers and their close group of staff., possibly due to their vast experience in the game and them legitimising this through each other.

Such meetings, engagements and discussions between the participant academy managers and their staff do not happen in full view of the wider staff and, indeed steps were taken by the participant academy managers to ensure an element of covertness so as to not raise any unnecessary suspicions of others in the football academy:

For us to plan a way forward, I took us off site to a meeting room in a nearby hotel where I would go for a coffee. I wanted a block of time where we wouldn't be bothered and no one would be looking for us. Thinking time and time to plan our programme.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Ralph and I stayed late one Friday night to go through the planning details. The last group finishes around 8pm, so we met later in my office about 9pm to have a few hours going through details. I didn't want any interruptions, if you don't pick up your phone at 9pm on a Friday night not many people raise an eyebrow.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Jackie just walks around like he owns the place anyway, he's always in and out of offices. He came in here, we shut the door and had our meetings.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The four of us went to Costa, it was important that for two things, one was to get us bonding a bit outside of the academy, I could get the coffees in and show them I'm a generous bloke haha, but also so some other staff wouldn't start a bit gossiping, it can be full of gossip and nonsense this place at times.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Indeed, all of the conversations were deemed not appropriate for all staff and so were kept to the small number of staff, which Goffman (1959) would highlight as *strategic secrecy* taking place in the *backstage region*. The participants placed a real significance on utilising the ideas and thoughts of some of their key members of staff. Certainly, in order to establish a vision for the academy, Grills and Prus (2019, p.132) outline how a central part of organisation and management work is where an organisation or manager will *establish teams and engage missions*. They specifically articulate that this work is a 'socially orientated, joint activity, where people take themselves and others into account in developing the more particular lines of activity that go into the mission as a collective venture'. The management work that the participants have engaged in can be further explained by Grills and Prus (2019, p.143) in respect of the interactionist detail they provide to the concept of *establishing teams*;

"It may be appropriate to envision some missions as being constituted of *team of teams*, wherein the people in the larger venture may be unaware of the activities of others involved in other aspects of the mission"

This helps to articulate how a team within a team might operate in a backstage, strategically secret manner (Goffman, 1959) in order to realise organisational objectives (Grills & Prus, 2019). Furthermore, because of the sensitive nature of how the participant academy managers engaged, and interacted with their small team of trusted allies, there was not yet an attentiveness to how they generated and sustained their team image in relation to the other staff in the football academy, since they were operating with *strategic secrecy* (Goffman, 1959). In this early stage of interacting as a group, such work was very much a case of 'getting the job done' (Grills & Prus, 2019), that is, to say how the participants were primarily concerned with establishing a small group of trusted confidants

on whose view they could rely, in order to make progress on making some decisions with regard the vision for the football academy.

This finding can also be scrutinised through the lens of Keltchermans (1996, 2007) micropolitical theory which can provide an explanation for the motivations behind the socially orientated, joint activity which the participants engage in. Indeed, Keltchermans (1996, 2007), cite *organisational interests* as one driver behind an individual's behaviour in an institutional setting. That is, to say, the participants' worked to identify and engage with others who they considered to be key members of staff that would help them to better understand the roles and processes the rest of the staff will occupy. In this instance, and more critically, in the eyes of the participants' are what Keltchermans (1996, 2007), terms as *social –professional interests*, whereby the participant academy manager worked to engage with those staff who they had a positive relationship with, and who they felt could be an asset to them in the rolling out the vision for the football academy. In this sense, the participants demonstrated an attentiveness to understand how the staff they engaged with could be of use. There were three key determinants which helped the participant to better understand this, which included the extent to which the participant felt they could trust the member (s) of staff, their existing position in the academy and in what regard others in the football academy held the member (s) of staff. Engagement in this work highlights the micro-political literacy which the participant academy managers demonstrated, in the form of organisational interests and social professional interests Keltchermans (1996, 2007) as they went about trying to realise their vision for the football academy.

4.9. Tactical team selections and omissions.

After they worked to establish a small trusted group of staff who they felt could help them realise the vision for the football academy, the participants then went about the work of assembling teams and deploying team members in order to establish a structure of staffing for the academy. The participants each outlined an attentiveness to the staff they wanted to keep or redeploy, the new staff

they wanted to recruit and the staff they wanted to move out of the academy. They also discussed how they paid attention to placing staff into roles which the participants believed would either facilitate the delivery of their vision, or, at least minimise any disruption that could hinder the work at their football academy. The participants were all consistent in their activity which focussed on moving staff they did not want or who they thought might be a problem for them out of the academy or deploying them in a role which they felt would be best utilise their talents or help to alleviate any potential issues and cause what the participants perceived as less of a problem.

The following extracts from each of the participants' outline how they made a conscious attempt to keep, and in some cases, redeploy those staff who they felt could add value to the football academy or, at the very least, minimise any disruption to the progress which the participants' wanted to make in their role as academy manager:

I knew there were some good people working there already, some coaches who were in it for the right reasons, who were hardworking coaches. I had to observe them work though, for my own reassurance I wanted to see them work. I gave them all plenty of notice that I was going to watch them, I emailed them personally and I made it clear that it was not something which they had to worry about – their jobs didn't depend on it – when in actual fact it could have done! But they didn't know that. The staff I watched were fine, some really good and surprised me and one or two who were ok, but needed some work – I could live with that.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

In the early stages I tried to get round and see as much of the staff work as possible, there were some staff who coached together who I felt didn't quite work. I wanted to maximise value in each coaching session regardless of the age group. Yeah, I mean one coach would just repeat everything the other coach had said, where's the value in that? And then there were two others who, for me, just felt like they were in competition with each other. I moved those around. I actually arranged a meeting with all four of them and told them I would be moving them. It was the two part time staff I moved, so it was easier from an HR perspective, I basically swapped pairs. I told them I thought they would provide a better value to the players if they paired up this way.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah, I mean I acted on Jackie's advice really and I went to watch Mike and Neil work together. I watched away from the pitch side and let the session begin before I went out, I didn't really want them to see me so I gave it twenty minutes or so. The session generally looked crap to be honest. But you have to give it time and try to see what is happening. There was no tempo or energy to the session, both coaches were doing nothing. I deliberately went down to the pitch side and all of a sudden both of them started. Each taking it in turns to

shout ‘stop, stand still’ and then just say stuff which probably wasn’t even relevant. In an ideal world I probably wouldn’t have either of them in all honesty, but the best option or easiest option was to just split them up.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah, the u10’s coach was an easy one, he was over the moon at working with older players. So I moved him. It did cause some questions amongst the staff in the younger ages about what had he done to get a move up to u15’s, so I met with them to explain that I had felt that it would be good to give him an insight of the older age groups. I sort of then committed myself to finding ways to help the other staff get experience of different age groups. In hindsight if I knew I would be backed into a bit of a corner with those other staff, I might not have moved the lad in the first place.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I think there were two staff members who didn’t want to be here anymore. They were part time, they had other things and work stuff going on. One of them I wanted to keep as he is a very good coach and well thought of by lots of people here. Losing him wouldn’t reflect that well. The other one, he could go, no problem. He hadn’t been in long and seemed to just want the tracksuit for me, so no problem. Whereas the other lad, I wanted to stay so I phoned him and asked if he would meet me for a chat. I told him I wanted him to stay and offered him a role with an older age group, he jumped at it. I think he just wanted to be loved a bit, I think others were recognising his contribution and he just wanted me to. If I didn’t do that, maybe others here would doubt my ability to recognise good staff – so I think it paid off really.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants all outlined how they had to consider the staffing arrangements which they felt would ensure a better way of working at the academy, especially in respect to keeping staff and in some cases moving them to slightly different roles. Grills and Prus (2019), suggest that in organisational life, there is always a central issue of constructing or putting together a group of people to pursue some collective venture which represents a common organisational objective. Furthermore, it is suggested that there are multiple considerations for office holders to attend to as they go about establishing teams in an organisational setting;

“Groups may be realigned or recast, as well as buttressed, downsized or repurposed. Relatedly, the matters of assembling teams, providing instruction, generating teamness,

deploying team members, coordinating situated activity and managing team images seem pertinent across the full range of organisational life-worlds”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p.144).

The participants outlined how their endeavours to pursue their vision and ideas for the academy involved redeploying staff as they went about trying to assemble teams which they felt would work as they wanted them to. Indeed, as the participants go about this work, Grills and Prus (2019) outline how internal organisational arrangements may limit the agency of the office holder in their decision making as they assemble teams. Specifically, existing group memberships, position descriptions, traditions, agreements, resources, or preferences such as image concerns, activities, commitments and relationships can all impact directly or indirectly how an office holder may go about assembling the teams they desire. Through the accounts of the participants it can be seen that they are attentive to how coaches work together to give what the participant perceives as value to training sessions. They are also aware of how some staff can be moved and redeployed in a more seamless fashion than other staff, specifically in relation to part time staff and full time contracted staff and how it was less of a bureaucratic issue to shift part time and swap them round in order to achieve what the participant deemed as a more satisfactory working team.

The micropolitical work of Keltchermans and Ballet (2002), can also help to make sense of some of the strategizing behind the lines of action and decision making of the participant academy managers. Specifically, the retaining of certain staff due to their social standing within the academy setting served as a purpose which ensured the participant academy manager secured and protected their own reputation and perception amongst the other staff and therefore attending to their *social-professional* interests of relationships with important and influential staff members and thus removing any suggestion of the participant not being of sufficient standing to retain staff perceived to be important. In addition to the micro-political motivations behind their decision making, participants also demonstrated an awareness to attend to any fallout or repercussions as a result of their decision making. Specifically, the notion of *cultural – ideological interests* which pays attention to norms, values and ideas which govern the way in which people work in the organisation (Piot &

Keltchermans, 2015). Participants were swift to address issues and concerns of staff who wanted clarification of why staff had received a perceived promotion to coach with an older age group for instance. Indeed, participants worked to placate staff and reason with staff in an attempt to mitigate any issues arising which could lead to dissatisfaction and an ensuing negative culture.

In addition to being attentive to retaining staff and, if necessary, redeploying staff, the participants also discussed how they felt it necessary to remove staff and to manage them out of the football academy. The participants' outlined how some staff did not match their standards of performance or were identified as someone who could be a perceived problem in the participants' plan to deliver their vision for the football academy. Because of this, the participants' felt they had to remove those staff from the football academy in order to give themselves the best possible chance of delivering their plans for the football academy, with minimal disruption;

Based on what I knew and had seen when I was under 18 coach, I knew I had to move on my recruitment man and one or two other coaching staff. They were in it for themselves, put it that way. They cut too many corners for me and I did not want this here anymore. Could I have helped them and improved them? Probably not, their personal standards and work ethic for an environment like this was just not there. I didn't want them influencing others either, so I moved them out as quickly as possible.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Yeah it wasn't easy as there was a full time member of staff who I knew was going to be a problem. He was overseeing the younger age groups and had been doing it for a while, but the way he spoke to the young lads in training and games when they made a mistake was poor. He wasn't right, he couldn't communicate with young players, I'm talking 10 and 11 year olds and he's shouting at them when they make a mistake. I would watch some of the games when I could and some of the aggressive crap coming from him was ridiculous. I'm not having that here. I wanted a supportive environment but with the right amount of challenge done in the right way. His coaching manner and general demeanour needed calling out and other staff needed to know that type of behaviour is not going to be tolerated, so I moved him on.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Until I got into the role of academy manager I didn't realise just how little one or two members of staff actually did. There's Ted who always tells everyone how busy he is and hasn't got enough time in the day. I honestly didn't know what he did. He's always sorting tickets out for players or staff for first team games or driving players back and forward from

their digs to the training ground. He's a good bloke but I couldn't believe what money he was on, I'm wanting to bring in another coach and I can't really afford it because I'm paying Ted good money to not do much. It was hard but I had to let him go, we just said his position in the new structure no longer existed, to be fair I think he knew he had it good for a while'

(Roy - Spartans FC).

I sort of felt that I would have problems with one coach. I knew that he was very vocal about his football philosophy and how football should be played, he was one of those who had a view on everything and didn't mind telling you. I knew that other staff – staff who I really respected and admired by the way – weren't having him. He was someone who I would always have to worry about. I wasn't in post long before the phase lead was complaining about him being patronising to other staff and to parents. I think he caught me on a bad day or a day when I was losing patience as I think I said something like, *right get him in here, I can't be arsed with this bullshit*. In he came, we had it out and he left – turns out he was sick of the place just as much as we were sick of him and away he went to do kids birthday parties or whatever he was doing.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

A central part of management work in establishing teams to achieve a vision is what Grills and Prus (2019) highlight as *Assembling Teams*. They acknowledge that;

“Team coordinators (managers) are sometimes in positions to select the people with whom they will be working”

(Grills & Prus, 2019, p. 145).

Indeed, the participant's outlined how they had to work to remove certain staff in their early period as Academy Manager. Grills and Prus (2019) contend that at times the incumbent may find themselves in situations where their choices regarding staffing are limited. Such limitations could come in the form of external considerations such as legalities and contractual obligations. They could also be internal considerations involved which could range from financial, role specific, performance, and memberships of teams and groups. For the participants in their case, they all had, and indeed felt they had the agency to manage the individuals in this case out of their football academy. Regarding matters of managers pursuing action to remove people or not, Grills and Prus (2019) highlight how when there are agendas to pursue or there are objectives to be achieved, assistance may be deemed more desirable than none. Yet at the same time, given the disappointing, counterproductive or

potentially rebellious nature of the assistance they sometimes encounter, coordinators (managers) may regret not having pursued some tasks entirely on their own (Grills & Prus, 2019). The participant academy managers demonstrated an attentiveness to which staff they felt would be best (for various reasons) if they were not part of their football academy.

Such an attentiveness to removing staff from the football academy can also be examined through a micropolitical lens (Kelchtermans 2007). In this sense, there are a number of different interests which the participants are aware of which contributes to their decision to remove staff from the football academy. Specifically, there are *cultural ideological interests* where

“norms, values and ideas that are acknowledged within the organisational as legitimate and binding elements”

(Piot and Kelchtermans, 2016, p.635).

It is with this in mind that the participants outlined how they were aware of staff who would not acknowledge the values and norms expected in academy football. Such norms and values are subject to ongoing negotiation between individuals (Ball, 1994), and it was felt by the participants in this situation that there are some individuals who would not acquiesce with the norms which the participant academy manager wanted to feature in the football academy. Another aspect of micro-politics which can help make sense of the work and actions of the participant academy managers, are *organisational interests*, which “concern procedures, roles, positions and formal tasks” (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2016, p.635). It is here, where the participant academy managers showed an attentiveness to roles and tasks which they felt some of the current staff were not appropriate for or could not perform to the standard needed. More specifically, in this case, the participants were protecting the standards they wanted to set in respect of the work which gets done at the football academy. In this particular instance, the final aspect of micro-politics which can help provide an insight into the work and actions of the participant academy managers centres on their *social-professional interests*, which “relate to the quality of the interpersonal relationships within and around the organisation” (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2016, p.635). Such interests were played out by the

participant academy managers as they demonstrated an awareness of those staff who they would not have positive working relationships with. They therefore sought to remove those staff in order to ensure they had relationships in the academy which they felt appropriate to them.

4.10. Summary

To further illuminate research question one, this section has focussed on the work, interactions and strategizing which the participant academy managers engaged in with their subordinates. Developing a vision and a football philosophy for their football academy was central to this work and Grills and Prus (2019) helped to highlight the minutia task detail which can be involved in establishing a vision in an organisation. Specifically, the immediate concerns the participants had as they started the job were explored, as they described their attentiveness and sensitivity to the people and the relationships they encountered which helped them to better understand and strategize how to get their plans and vision across. This aspect was examined through a lens of micro politics (Kelchtermans, 2007) to help highlight how and why the participant academy managers acted in the ways they did, especially with respect to how the academy manager had the future delivery and realisation of their vision in mind. Once again, Goffman (1957) provided the framework to help examine the micro-level interactions and surveillance work the participant academy managers engaged in, or distanced themselves from as they worked to consider the best way of delivering their vision.

The section also highlighted how the participants worked to secure and get 'onside' the staff they believed would have helped them to drive and deliver their plans and vision. In addition, how they tried to locate and recruit the allies to support their ventures. Grills and Prus (2019) helped to articulate the detail of establishing teams and assembling teams which the participant managers engaged in, while Kelchtermans (2007), helped to provide explanations to the motivations behind the relationships the participants cultivated. Goffman (1957), has helped to illuminate how the

participants' planned situated activity which they believed will give them the best opportunity to convey the messages they wanted to deliver and also how the development, communication and implementation of such collective ventures proved to be a constantly evolving activity.

Finally, this section illuminated how the participants strategised the deployment of staff in order to ensure an effective delivery of their vision and football programme. In addition, this also provided an insight into how the participants went about identifying and managing people who might be problematic out of the organisation. Such tasks were explained through Grills and Prus (2019) and their assertions as to how assembling teams often can involve decisions to replace team members. Indeed, such work was underpinned through a range of motivations which the micro political lens of Kelchtermans (2007), helped to articulate why the participants will remove staff on for various interests.

4.11. Chapter Summary

This chapter has illuminated the work the participants engaged in as they began their role as a manager of a football academy. Firstly, the chapter focussed on the interactions they had with their superiors, and how they worked to establish their credibility and earn the trust and support in order to give themselves the best possible opportunity to manage the academy how they wanted to. The second half of the chapter focussed on the work and interactions the participant academy managers engaged in as they sought to establish and deliver the vision they had for the football academy. Specifically, this involved the coordinated activity they engaged in with the other staff, as they navigated a way to establish the vision they wanted for their football academy.

In particular this work has paid attention to a range of activities which compromise the everyday doing of management work. The chapter offers a deeper appreciation and understanding into the realities experienced by those who are managers of football academies doing management work. In respect of this, the calls from scholars such as Grills and Prus (2019) who advocate for

researchers to pay attention to the micro-level interactions that are involved in management work, have been reflected in this chapter. Grills and Prus (2019) are management scholars who have provided those who conduct management research with suggested lines of inquiry to pursue. This is in order to help develop an understanding of the doing of management work from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Their calls are rooted in the view that management-related concerns are central to the human condition itself and that the concept of management holds generic applicability across multiple settings. Specifically, providing direction, establishing teams, pursuing cooperation and embarking on missions which encompass management activities are aspects of everyday life which can provide fruitful lines of inquiry. Management is accomplished by people doing things together. It can be challenging, frustrating and difficult. Success can be fleeting and the terrain ever shifting, and researchers are therefore invited to consider such dynamics as a feature of ongoing social life.

This chapter reflects the calls from Grills and Prus (2019), in that approaches to studying management should address the everyday work of *doing* management in depth and detail, highlighting the messiness and ambiguity of the social worlds we inhabit. The main areas this chapter has covered include how managers work to establish the trust of their new employers when they first begin their role as an academy manager, where they try to convey images of proficiency and confidence in order to secure a level of legitimacy in the eyes of their superiors. The chapter also illuminates how they engage and interact with their subordinates on a micro-level in order to get a better understanding of the individuals and groups they are working with as they work to establish their preferred vision for the football academy. As a result, this chapter has highlighted the messiness and ambiguity which is experienced by the academy manager who is doing management work.

Overall, the data and the theoretical interpretations presented in this chapter is significant, original and builds on existing knowledge in the sport management literature. This chapter of work has firstly heeded calls from sport management scholars, who have advocated for the literature base to consider the progressive work in areas like sport sociology when calling for innovative thinking and

approaches in sport management research (Amis & Silk, 2005; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). In fact, it has been asserted that the disciplines of sport management and the sociology of sport remain distinct, infrequently drawing upon each other (Knoppers 2015; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Therefore, adopting a sociological focus can enable sport management scholars and practitioners to better understand how social considerations are rooted within the management of sport. Furthermore, by engaging in critically reflexive research methods will encourage the questioning of established management practices, structures and taken for granted assumptions, which can open up new approaches to managing sport (Amis & Silk, 2005; Frisby, 2005; Knoppers, 2015; Stride, Fitzgerald & Allison, 2016). Indeed, such calls from sport management scholars have helped to develop the literature base not only in respect of paradigmatic diversity and research methods (Hoeber & Shaw, 2017; Shaw & Hoeber, 2016) but also to connect the literature to other disciplines such as sociology, psychology and coaching (Gibson & Groom, 2018; Erickson, Patterson & Backhouse, 2018).

To this end, the work of Erickson, Patterson and Backhouse (2018) has made use of a narrative approach to help better understand the lived experiences of athletes who have reported doping in sport. This has helped the sport management literature base to yield knowledge for understanding (Wallace & Poulsen, 2003), which helps to account for the “jumbled, messy, contested, creative and mundane social interactions” that characterise everyday organisational life (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p.2)

In relation to the utilisation of social theory in the sport management literature base, the use of micropolitical thinking to help examine organisational change in professional youth football environments by Gibson and Groom (2018) has contributed to the development of this area. By engaging social theory, Gibson and Groom (2018; 2019), illuminated some of the intricacies of organisational life in a football academy during a period of organisational change. Specifically in relation to an individual in the football academy who was influenced by micro-political concerns such as furthering their own *professional self-interests* (Kelchtermans, 2009; Gibson & Groom, 2018) during a period of uncertainty in the football academy. Such work has provided the literature with

fresh insights into the micro-political actions and strategies utilised by coaching staff in a professional football academy. Furthermore, the work of Gibson and Groom (2018) offered an insight into the role of the academy manager during a period of organisational change and highlighted how the manager went about their work through a framework of *orchestration* (Wallace, 2003; Gibson & Groom, 2018), which helped to frame how the manager navigated the ambiguity and uncertainty of making change happen whilst keeping the day to day running of the football academy going. In addition to this, the work of Gibson and Groom (2019) also highlighted how the academy manager would engage in work in order to develop a *professional leadership identity* (Kelchtermans, 2009; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Gibson & Groom, 2019) during a period of organisational change and uncertainty. This work has helped to illuminate how leadership identity in a football academy can be a complex phenomenon which has micro-political literacy as a key tenet.

Overall, the work of Gibson and Groom (2018, 2019) have helped the sport management literature base to consider the value of social theory in helping to offer fresh insights into the organisational life worlds inhabited by people in sport. The use of micro-political theorising (Kelchtermans, 2009) has been central to this work and has provided a useful framework as a means of highlighting how and why people may think, feel and act in the ways they do whilst navigating their day to day work in sport. This chapter of work has heeded the calls of sport management scholars and, by building on the work of those who have engaged social theory in the literature base (Gibson & Groom, 2018; 2019). This work has significantly created new and original knowledge in the sport management discipline, specifically in respect to giving new insights into the micro level interactionist management work (Grills & Prus, 2019), the micro-politics (Kelchtermans, 2006) and impression management work (Goffman, 1959, 1963), managers of professional football academies engage in.

Specifically, this chapter builds upon the work conducted by Gibson and Groom (2018; 2019) and the limited research conducted in respect of the micro-level work managers of football academies engage in. This research is connected to when the academy managers first begin the role and the

work and interactions they engage in with their superiors, as they try to secure the trust and support they perceive they need in order to feel secure in their role. Furthermore, this chapter also examines the interactions and work the academy managers attend to with their subordinates as they try to establish their vision for the football academy.

This chapter has utilised Grills and Prus (2019) to help examine how the academy managers will attend to interactionist management work such as laying the groundwork, achieving visions, establishing and assembling teams, managing team images, selectively managing and retaining participants and engaging in distancing strategies. Furthermore, such interactionist management activities have been examined through a dramaturgical theoretical lens and by utilising Goffman (1963). This has enabled the micro-level interactionist work of the academy manager to be highlighted with respect to how they present themselves to different superiors and subordinates across a wide range of situations. This is attentive to how the managers will prepare themselves backstage in preparation for their front stage interaction and, also offers fresh insights into the actions of the managers during their interactions and how they respond and react to the other actors they are engaged with during their performance. Finally, the use of micro-political theory (Kelchtermans, 2006) has helped to offer insights into the motivations which contribute to the interactions of the academy managers. Such micro-political considerations like material interests, organisational interests, cultural-ideological interests, social-professional interests and self-interests have been deployed to help illuminate how and why academy managers seek to get work done in the ways in which they do.

As a result of this chapter, the insights gathered have helped the sport management literature to better understand the micro-level, interactionist activity which is a central part of organisational life for academy managers in professional football academies. Specifically, this gives new insights into the actual *doing* of management work as it is connected to the superiors and subordinates the managers engage with in the football academy.

Chapter 5: Managing the mundane and the not so mundane.

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I share my etic and emic readings of the data as they are concerned with how the participants went about the doing of their everyday management work, inclusive of the dilemmas and challenges that they encountered while attending to these tasks, activities and interactions. This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section focuses on the participants' practices and interactions as they went about what they considered to be the routine and mundane features of their management work. The second section concentrates on the dilemmas the participants have experienced as they seek to both influence and connect to other people in the football academy on a daily basis. Here, attention is paid to how the participants experienced a range of situations where they actively sought to protect, support, (or not) - other people in the football academy. The final section then focuses on the issues the participants have experienced as having a direct impact on themselves as academy managers. Specifically, this section addresses the situations they perceived as challenging or problematic, as well as how they were connected to their own interests, desires, reputation and career trajectory.

To help make sense of the situations and dilemmas that the academy manager experienced and engaged with as they went about their managerial work, Grills and Prus' (2019) theorising on organisational interchange is utilised. This analysis is also supplemented by the application of Keltchermans (1996, 2002, and 2007) work on micro politics, especially in terms of how the participants' professional interests are embedded in their everyday interactions and engagements with others. The final heuristic device is provided by Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical insights into organisational life, which help to provide an opportunity to further illuminate the micro level impression management participants engaged in as they went about their everyday work.

5.2. You've got to show up every day!

The participants outlined how they engaged in what they perceived as routine and relatively mundane work. This included financial tasks, (e.g., budgeting and forecasting), safeguarding and welfare processes, and Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) related tasks. These activities were almost exclusively administrative in nature. However, it was work which they believed still required them to be highly attentive to the task in hand, the people they were engaging with, and the subsequent outcomes that they hoped to achieve. There were two key aspects to this finding. Firstly, the participant academy managers reflected on the different tasks they had to engage in on a regular basis and how they felt some of those tasks could be boring and frustrating.

The second key aspect to this finding, was the awareness and understanding the participant academy managers had in relation to the significance the completion of such tasks have on the wider academy, for example they had to engage in work linked to the preservation or enhancement of the academy's Premier League category status, and, indeed their own professional standing. Here, they all outlined an appreciation of such work, and a sensitivity to the consequences of getting such routine work done in an effective manner.

5.3. Do the basics (really well)!

All the participants outlined a range of tasks that they felt were routine, and which they felt formed the more unexciting or emotionally and strategically unappealing aspects to their job role. The participant academy managers operated in slightly different organisational structures, in football clubs which ranged in categories from one through to three (in the Premier League and Football League's classification system of academy football). However, they all outlined and discussed tasks which they felt needed doing, but which, to them, were relatively uninspiring. Such tasks included a); financial planning, budgeting and forecasting, b); scheduling and programming of training and games, c); writing policy, d); reporting relevant information to the Premier League, e); adhering to EPPP criteria and developing action plans linked to achieving EPPP criteria, f); quality checks linked to the information coaching and support staff upload on the Performance Management Application (PMA),

g); the checking and overseeing of ancillary staffing such as ground staff, kitchen staff and cleaning staff as well as general scheduling and checks of equipment and kit. In the participants own words:

I was always aware of the paperwork and stuff like that you had to do as a coach. The training sessions, match reports, performance reviews for players, I had my experience of that as an under 18 coach and I had thought that the level of writing and reporting would get less the higher up you went! The reporting of information as part of the EPPP needs doing and from an academy wide perspective I need to collate, check it, add to it, change it, and keep on top of it. Such as the huge amount of information we have, it's something I have to keep on top of and to regularly deal with it. It's not a great job to be honest.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

One thing when you have a range of policies and procedures at a big place like this is that there has to be some sort of checking or monitoring of what is happening. Whether it's a health and safety policy, safeguarding policy, safer internet policy through to the EPPP and all the stuff that they want from us, someone has to keep an eye and have an overview of it. It's the consistent attention you have to give this stuff; whether you are doing it yourself and checking certain pieces of information or someone else is doing it and you have meetings and conversations so they can update you on it you know. It needs to be done but it's not what lights the fire you know

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Because money is usually tight for us, I have to provide regular updates on what we are spending to the chairman. He keeps a very very close eye on what we spend, he has to really. Every week I send through a breakdown of our costs against the budget we have been set, so it becomes a weekly task of me getting all the details of what we have spent and sending that through to him in a way which is easy for him to read. It's a weekly thing which is always on my to do list, and usually involves me chasing different staff for any spending related information, it's something which I don't really enjoy but needs doing.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Well at the moment we are in the midst of trying to secure a jump up in EPPP category from category 2 to category 1. So we have a working group which I'm co-ordinating in order to address all of the things they want us to address. It's a big task and it involves achieving a lot of criteria, it gets a bit overwhelming at times. The weekly meetings, then many of the actions either I am actioning directly or I need to check that someone else is doing it gets a bit tedious at times. I think it is also because we have to satisfy the current demands of reporting for a category 2 academy, so I am double checking that all training programme information and match programme information is up to date, which can be a chore – especially when you have to chase and remind staff.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Yeah, there's a few things which I don't really like doing but they need to be done. So, for example the scheduling of training and games isn't done directly by me but I do find myself double checking all is ok before it gets sent out, it's just a bit of a belt and braces approach from me really. We have regular safeguarding meetings and updates which I don't really like because it just feels like a forum to identify problems, but we need to do it and make sure there are no issues cos that's the world we live in today. It's the non-football stuff which can be a challenge for me to be fair, I'm learning and getting better though, I get it, we need to do it but there is so much non-football stuff which happens at a place where football is the main thing.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

While they generally viewed the undertaking of such tasks in a negative light, they all ascribed considerable significance to completing them with a degree of quality. For them, doing so was important in their efforts to secure the returns or outcomes that they felt would be advantageous to themselves, others and the wider functioning of the football academy. Here, they explained:

I didn't want the connection and communications with those at the EFL and PL to be harmed in any way, so I made it my business to understand and satisfy their requirements. It's important for the progress of the academy, which is obviously something I am responsible for. Whenever I speak with the contacts at the PL and EFL I am aware that their view of the football academy will be impacted hugely by the way I speak with them and what I tell them we're doing. So, yeah, I suppose that because it's my name as the manager of the academy, I want to ensure those guys know we're doing a good job.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

Well, I think since I came in as academy manager and communicated my plan and ideas with staff, I think I gave people a sense that I pay attention to detail, which I do, a lot of the time, especially when I coach players. When I coach I pride myself on the detail of the game and helping players to understand that. When I came here I had my plan which I was focussed on and proud of. But, for me, in all honesty, it probably depends on what the task in hand actually is, as to whether I want to immerse myself in it. But, like I say, I think the staff I work with see me as paying attention to detail all of the time, which I do and I try to do. I do think that by showing you pay attention to details as an academy manager is important – it sets standards for others – the staff are watching you and they look at what you do, so you have to do it with quality, if they know you're paying attention to the environment and what is happening, it gives you that opportunity to check and challenge if you need to.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah, I mean the weekly reporting of the expenditure gets a bit tedious. The chasing of staff to see what they are spending is not something I want to spend my time doing, but the chairman wants it and he's the gaffer – got to do it. I understand it, others here talk about not being trusted and stuff like that, but we're not a rich club, we are where we are and money is tight. You hear the horror stories of some clubs going bust, so I need to keep it in perspective, I try to make it as painless as possible for staff, but I now sign off on all outgoings so I have a record of where we are. It's hard because I want to trust staff and I do trust staff but the chairman wants tight financial control or the club may turn to us and say we're too expensive and not worth the worry – so between keeping tight scrutiny on money against some possible staff concerns of not being trusted, it's the lesser of two evils really.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Well like I say we're piecing together the paperwork and evidencing criteria to move us up a category and it's tough. But I have to lead us through it and need to keep us on track on all of the different areas we have to focus on and develop. Do I think it's worth it? Well, we are doing it, in terms of the external view of us, we need to be seen to be doing it, our owners are driven and want us to do it. If we didn't pursue this then what would that say to players, parents, other coaches, other key people in the football community about our ambitions here? Especially when there's other category 1 clubs not far away, we need to protect ourselves in terms of players coming and going. Much of this rests and will rest of my shoulders and so I need to make sure we're on the right track. ... why? For the future of the academy, the players, the staff, myself – a lot can be at stake here.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

So, information reporting to the PL is something we have to do, I don't get why if I'm honest, but I need all staff to update the PMA system, so I have to keep on at them and keep asking them to do it, even though I don't really get it myself. I have told staff that is data and information we should be tracking as coaches and developers anyway – so I am then making sure we are using the data we are tracking and uploading. If I didn't try to provide a purpose for this information input we do, then I'm convinced some staff would sack it off, then standards slip, then you're left chasing people and starting to lose a bit of control, which then starts to undermine your ability as a manager, well I think so anyway.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants' shared outlook towards the routine and mundane aspects of their management work could be interpreted using the work of Grills and Prus (2019), especially if it relates to the doing of *office-related duties*. For Grills and Prus (2019) office related duties refer to the:

“Office holder understandings of the duties, responsibilities and jurisdictional limits of the position they occupy may vary, but people occupying office nevertheless are expected to ‘do

something'. And whatever that 'something' is may prove to be considerably different than the activities the particular office holders may choose were they more entirely able to pursue their own agendas”

(Grills and Prus, 2019, p.87).

Grills and Prus (2019) insight is certainly reflective of the participant academy managers' outlook to the completion of mundane work. There were different reasons which the participant academy managers cited as to why they felt the need to make sure they had to do a really good job of these tasks. Such reasons included ensuring that the academy preserved its EPPP category or indeed worked to improve its category standing, ensuring the ongoing financial stability and survival of the academy and ensuring standards are set for others working in the academy. The motivations of the participant academy managers to ensure such tasks are done well can be further explained through the *micro-political* theorising of Piot and Kelchtermans (2007). Specifically in relation to *pursuing organisational interests* which they identify as “Interests which concern procedures, roles, positions and formal tasks” (Piot and Kelchtermans, 2007, p.635)

Indeed, the pursuit of *organisational interests* which help to explain how the participant academy managers have a specific concern and attentiveness to formal tasks such as reporting of expenditure against budget on a weekly basis or the enactment of policies such as safeguarding issues or the EPPP. They explicitly see it as their role to engage in such tasks even if they do not find that particular type of work favourable, since they have a level of concern to maintain and advance the interests of the football academy they manage. Such interests could be in the form of survival through adhering to tight financial scrutiny, maintaining the organisation through regular EPPP reporting or developing the organisation through conducting work which will secure a higher classification of EPPP category status. Indeed, there are also other micro-political concepts which can help to explain the motives and behaviours of the participant academy managers. For example, the idea that individuals will consider *social-professional interests* are where such interests are related to quality of interpersonal relationships within and around the organisation (Kelchtermans, 2007). This idea has

also been utilised in a football academy setting by Gibson and Groom (2018) who highlighted how football coaches would consider their *social-professional interests* and align themselves with other staff they felt could help them to gain their desired work conditions. Indeed, the participant academy managers outlined the importance of feeling comfortable to challenge staff when they felt necessary as a part of their desired work conditions. However, in order to do this, the tasks and work that they themselves engaged in, had to be completed in a proficient manner in order for them to hold feelings of confidence and credibility during their interactions with the staff – something the participants placed considerable significance on. The reason they had to conduct their own work to a high standard, was that it then enabled them to challenge staff without fear of hypocrisy or double standards. Moreover, it is also important to recognise *cultural-ideological* micro-political considerations, which can be described as having an attentiveness to the norms, values and ideas which are acknowledged within the organisation (Kelchtermans, 2007). This notion is utilised by Gibson and Groom (2018) in respect of how coaches will comply with the need to win football matches as an important element of the *cultural-ideological interests* in a football academy. It is evident that the participants had such considerations as they outlined the importance of them setting standards for other staff in the organisation to work to. This was deemed important by the participants as they felt that by completing tasks to a high standard and by paying attention to detail, they could influence the actions and values of other staff across the football academy.

In addition to demonstrating an awareness that they had to complete mundane tasks to a competent level and to set standards, the participant academy managers also highlighted the need to regulate and manage themselves whilst engaging in such work. Specifically, they described how they acted in ways which helped them to complete these unappealing tasks. Indeed, the following extracts provide some insight into the attentiveness the participant academy managers had to their own self-regulation whilst engaging in a variety of administrative tasks:

I probably had to motivate myself to get some of this reporting done and the checking done to ensure our paperwork and administration was all in order. We have our contacts and club support officers who from the PL and EFL who we need to, dare I say it, impress to some extent, I mean I have a moan at them from time to time but in the main I know I have to be

positive and engaged with our external EFL contacts when we have longer meetings and more serious conversations.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

Yeah I do pride myself on hard work, knowing what's going on and paying attention to details, yeah and the more I think of it, it probably does depend on the work and tasks I am doing. So sometimes if the task – like reviewing and signing off on a new health and safety policy or something a bit dull like that, then I have to really focus myself, it doesn't come too easy. I love the stuff where I can see benefits to improving players and coaches and where I can make that link between the work that I'm doing and the benefits to improve the players and coaches – I always try to make that link, because when I can't see it, I can get frustrated.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

The problem for me comes when I'm getting phone calls asking why we are paying for referees to ref the u12 game. The finances at this place are difficult – I know I'm going on here - but that's the level of detail the chairman gets to with these numbers at times and it does your head in, but what can you do? It's keeping people in jobs, I just get on with it and manage it the best I can.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah I mean the EPPP criteria for us wanting to improve our category can be tough going. When you're close to it and live it, do I think that having a certain number of changing rooms is going to help us develop better players? Well I leave that for others to decide. But I'm sure you can sense my feeling about it. But I have to champion this and promote this and do this, even though some of what they are asking of us is, well, I can't see the correlation between some of what they want and how that translates to developing footballers, but in our working group for this, I can't voice that too loudly, I need people on board and doing the work needed to raise our category status.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Yeah, there are many of these jobs you have to do as the manager which you don't like, which you think 'that's bollocks, why are we doing this', but the academy requires it, the system we work in, requires it, even though sometimes you're left scratching your fucking head. But you get on with it, it's a full time job in a senior position in a football club, there's lots of great work and experiences, I think you just have to keep that in mind when you're doing some of the crap stuff.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

As illustrated above, the participants outlined a level of confusion, frustration and boredom which they experienced when engaging in some of the tasks in their role as academy manager. They cited reasons such as the tasks not affording them appropriate excitement or that they didn't quite believe that the work was adding value to the process of developing players. This was specifically concerned with tasks which were required by the EPPP reporting procedures, which cause underlying confusion and frustration for the participant academy managers; something which ultimately had to be navigated. To do this, they had to regulate themselves in respect of them finding a way to get the task done as well as demonstrating an attentiveness to the importance of getting such work done.

The participants' behaviour can be explained using Grills and Prus (2019), in respect of their assertions that managers will have to *acknowledge the parameters of office*. This is specifically in relation to how those holding office will face the task of defining the nature of their present circumstances and encountering particular management roles in the *here and now*;

“Because management-related roles take place with broader theatres of operations, the matter of assuming or even orienting oneself to the office involves much more than invoking a pre-existing set of attitudes or mind-set” (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.85).

Indeed, the participant academy managers had frustrations which could be attributed to their preconceived notions about what the role of the academy manager entails. However, they demonstrated that they have a level of awareness in order to control and regulate themselves in order to achieve the task in hand, despite their relative frustrations. Furthermore, the participants outlook on self-regulation and the completion of mundane tasks could be explained by Grills and Prus (2019);

“Self-regulation presumes a capacity for people to monitor, define, assess and act towards themselves - regardless of whether they are more entirely on their own (as in solitary settings), in the company of more casual associates, or in settings that imply higher levels of organisational accountability” (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.182).

In respect of the participant academy managers specifically, such matters of self-regulation are associated with the more personal, often solitary concerns they have about managing or regulating themselves with respect to objectives, procedures, accomplishments and related themes (Grills & Prus, 2019). In this instance, the reporting of financial information, the paperwork and tasks associated with satisfying EPPP requirements and checking that others are inputting relevant football information as they should be into the PMA system, are areas of work in which the participants demonstrated a conscious degree of self-regulation. Furthermore, the notion of the *obligated self* which is attentive to management work and everyday life (Grills and Prus, 2019; Goffman, 1961) provides an opportunity by which to illuminate the processes of the participant academy managers.

The *obligated self* in respect of management work, is understood in the following way;

“To attend to the obligated self is to attend to the various responsibilities, duties, commitments and onuses that office holders may attribute to offices held. As a matter of self-management, such definitions of office may be quite consequential relative to the everyday work of managing one’s self in the context of perceived requirements of office”

(Grills and Prus, 2019, p. 198)

Such theoretical insights help to illuminate the attentiveness the participants show to a range of routine tasks, specifically with respect to their sense of obligation to the role in which they occupy as the manager of the football academy. The management tasks which the participants engage in, their relevant displeasure in carrying out such tasks, together with their attentiveness to self-regulation can also be examined through a *micro-political* theoretical lens. Micro-politics has been understood as “the behaviour of organisational members is understood to be largely driven by interests” (Kelchtermans, 2007, p.475). Indeed, this concept has been used by Gibson and Groom (2018) as a way of better understanding the actions and motivations of football coaches during periods of uncertainty in a football academy. Specifically, in this instance, in respect of the participant academy managers and their pursuit of *organisational interests*, the micro-political tenet of *self-interests* offers

a deeper explanation to their actions. Where the pursuit of *self-interests* are understood to be an individual's professional self-understanding, which comprises of self-esteem, job motivation and task perception (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2015), the engagement of the participants in their respective managerial work, centres on their own interests which are directly connected to ensuring that the football academy survives and thrives under their management. For the participants, if this means providing a weekly expenditure report to the chairman, checking that coaching staff are adequately inputting data into a computer system, or co-ordinating activity to improve the EPPP category of the academy, their thoughts of the immediate task in hand, give way to their interests of self-esteem, in the knowing that work is being done how they perceive it should be. This can also be connected to the validation of their management identity, and ultimately their career trajectory, as the participants work to secure positive outcomes for the football academy.

5.4. Take care of your team mates.... but take no prisoners!

The participants all discussed various dilemmas and problematic situations regarding the need to variously protect, support, or chastise certain members of staff in the football academy. There were numerous reasons which motivated the participants to act in particular ways towards certain individuals or groups within the football academy. These have been divided into two central sections. The first part highlights the occasions where the participants sought to subtly protect certain members of staff or groups of staff, in respect to the jobs they did, who they were exposed to, or to protect them with regard to what others may think of them. The second finding outlines how the participants would openly show support to certain members of staff and openly chastise others for a variety of reasons as different situations arose in the everyday life of the football academy. This was done for a range of professional and strategic reasons which were deemed important to the participants.

5.5. Subtle protection and kid gloves.

All the participant academy managers demonstrated an awareness of, and a sensitivity to, the needs of different members of staff. Such attentiveness, led the participants to engage in activity

which sought to guard and protect some members of staff. Indeed, such action was often conducted 'behind the scenes' in a more private capacity and was not something which was promoted or spoken about with others. This was due to a number of reasons. - The first was a sensitivity to the feelings of the members of staff the participants were trying to protect. The second was due to a need to conserve the image, perception and reputation of the particular member of staff amongst the wider staff team, players, parents and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., EPPP Premier League auditors and scouts) the football academy has to consider. The participant academy managers explained the activity they engaged in and their thinking that led them to such action:

When I made the jump from under 18 coach to academy manager, I had to consider who replaces me as the head coach. Nigel, who was my assistant was the obvious choice to everyone really, but in all honesty I had some reservations about his ability to be head coach. As a man, a person, he's top class, he's a great bloke, in it for the right reasons and puts the players first. But when I'm having to make a decision about if he is right to be the head coach of the u18's, it's not as straightforward as you might think. His football knowledge is decent, his organisation skills are good, the players like him and seem to respond to him, but I had this nagging doubt around his observation skills as the game is happening. I wasn't convinced on his ability to read what the opposition are doing and his ability to help the players fix the problems we were being caused in the moment of the game, if you know what I mean? At this level you need that, especially when the u18 games and results can quickly get out into the public domain, you need to make sure you're getting some positive results – and quite often that can depend on the coach making some in game decisions to help the players get a result. But, if I didn't give Nigel the head coach job then it would have damaged his standing in the club, probably kill his motivation and possibly even damage our relationship. I gave him the job – but I would make every effort to help him prepare for games and give him my thoughts as to what might happen in the game – thankfully due to our good relationship he was always open to have these types of conversations with me. Actually, thinking about it I probably delayed getting an assistant in to work with him which gave me more of a chance to help Nigel.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

I became aware of a bit of an issue between two of our coaches who were working together in the foundation phase. One was quite new – Olly - been in about 5-6 months, a good young coach with plenty of enthusiasm and some good ideas. The coach he was paired with – Jack - has been here for years, and, how can I say it, probably a bit set in his ways, but he is good, he has the respect of lots of other staff and always seems to have the ear of the parents as well. But it got back to me that Jack wasn't letting Olly have any real input, or letting him plan and lead on any practices, so I popped in to watch a session. A few of the foundation age groups train on the same night so I just wandered about. Yeah, I mean I didn't directly stand at the side of Jack and Olly's pitch, as things might have changed, but I kept an eye out at a distance. And yeah, all I could hear was Jack's booming voice and from what I could see, the extent of Olly's input was moving cones and the small goals. I just made a decision then to

swap Olly with James, who was assistant with the u11's and who had worked with Jack before with no issues. Olly needed to be with a coach who would help and support him, and Tim, the u11 lead coach was the man for him. Yeah, I didn't want Olly's enthusiasm getting dampened and when I spoke to him about coming here, I knew he wanted more than shifting cones about – not that he thought he was above that, he's a good lad – but he needed more than that and he certainly wasn't getting that off Jack. So I waited a week, ten days – possibly enough time for them to forget I was at the sessions, and I phoned the coaches up to inform them that I'd be making the change – I let them know it was my choice and that I wanted the right coaches for the right age groups. There were no issues. I spoke to Olly in a bit more detail to explain how I thought he would develop a bit more with Tim, something I think he was grateful for.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah, I mean for us here, it's about surviving as an environment and keep going you know. Like I say, the chairman contacts me regularly about costs and sometimes the conversation can step into a more difficult area where he asks about individual members of staff here who are on X amount of money and he asking me to tell him what they do for their money and how they contribute. I'm always prepared for those conversations as we can point to a number of players playing in the first team who have saved the club money, plus there are players we have sold who have made us money – speaking in those terms helps him understand. I try not to let the staff know about some of those conversations – it would just panic them unnecessarily.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Every age group can be different and we had one particular age group where most of the parents were difficult. There were some decent players in there but every season the parents would have something to say. I had a relatively young coach – Jamie - overseeing the u14 age group and felt that there would be some issues around his ability to manage the parents. I felt I needed to protect him a bit as he is a good young coach with potential but if he's getting grief from parents then it's not going to help him. We have a game model which asks coaches of 11v11 teams to play a 4-3-3. The issue with this group was they had too many midfielders and usually the more vocal parents would be of some of those midfield players who weren't getting as much game time as they wanted. I told Jamie that with this particular group he could play a 4-diamond-2 or a 4-2-3-1 if he wanted – basically to get these midfielder players more opportunity on pitch. He was fine with it and went with it - and yeah I was happy as it worked to prevent him getting as much ear ache as he might have done.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Well you know about this EPPP category audits that get done, and we got audited to check we're still operating at category one level. Some of its bollocks, you know my feelings on it. And there was some feedback I got from them (the auditors) with regard to the coaches of one of the age groups which was that they differed in their approaches from training and games. Apparently their messages and behaviour in games was not reflective of the training and syllabus we have here. I don't have a problem with my staff and I am happy with the work

they do, so I wasn't going to going upset those coaches by giving them that particular feedback from the auditors.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants demonstrated an awareness of the need to look after and protect certain members of staff when they felt such action would be productive. Such activity and attentiveness can be explained using Grills and Prus (2019) ideas regarding the action of deploying team members.

Here, they noted;

“There are some cases in which office holders simply assume that team members will fulfil the objectives they have in mind. On other occasions, co-ordinators find themselves tentatively assigning people to specific tasks, reassigning team members in the midst of ongoing engagements and readjusting their own objectives and activities along the way ”

(Grills and Prus, 2019, p.149).

Indeed, there are instances of the participants reassigning coaches into different age groups, and allowing for flexibility around the interpretation and application of the coaching syllabus and game model formations. Such examples highlight the willingness of the participants to readjust activities in order to protect the members of staff if they felt it appropriate and productive to do so. Indeed, there were conditions and situations which arose in the form of emergent challenges and obstacles within the participants' respective theatre of operations (Grills and Prus, 2019). It is under such conditions, where the participant academy managers felt that they ultimately needed to “recast their own agendas and activities in attempts to maintain the specific missions at hand” (Grills and Prus, 2019, p.149).

Kelchtermans (2007) micropolitical theorising could also be used to provide a rationale for why the participant academy managers pursued certain courses of action with staff members. The notion of cultural-ideological interests serve to provide a view which encompasses the processes and interactions that lead towards the definitions of cultural elements, since they are subject to ongoing negotiation (Piot and Kelchtermans, 2007; Altricher and Salzgeber, 2000; Ball, 1994). It is through this lens where the participant's lines of action can be explained as they sought to protect certain staff

members. Specifically, in order to help those staff survive or indeed, thrive, in accordance with what the norms, values and ideas dictate in relation to perceived competence in the football academy environment. Additionally, the idea of *social-professional interests* can also help to illuminate the motivations behind the lines of action by the participants (Piot and Kelchtermans, 2007). Indeed, Gibson and Groom (2018) highlighted how those coaches working in a football academy will act in ways which serve to protect their own interests and create desired working conditions. It is evident that the participants are attentive to working relationships within the football academy and some of their interactions actively sought to enhance or preserve relationships which they felt were important to the productive functioning of the academy.

Finally, the participant's micro-level interactions can be examined through the dramaturgical theorising of Goffman (1959, 1961). Indeed, Goffman (1961), uses the term "institutional arrangements" to articulate how organisations are constructed through the everyday relations and practices of their members. This is specifically in reference to micro-level structures with respect to organisational power being exercised through encounters during the daily round of organisational life. In this instance, the participants exercised their own power – albeit in a relatively secret manner – to help them realise outcomes they deemed satisfactory for the football academy. The actions of the participants can also be explained through what Goffman (1959, p.222) identifies as "tact" as a "set of protective practices which help the performers save their own show". In the accounts given by the participant academy managers they all outline how they have engaged in discrete activity, which has contributed to the saving face and reputation of their staff in accordance with organisational norms, values and ideas. The techniques of protective practices are employed to safeguard the impression which is fostered by the individual (s) in their presence of others (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, Goffman (1959) outlines embarrassment as a notion which actors will take particular care to avoid, especially as the perception and feeling of being embarrassed could prove to be ruinous for an actors performance. Specifically, in this instance the participant academy managers who disregarded or played down the negative feedback from the EPPP audit in order to save embarrassing important and experienced members of staff. They did this so as to preserve the feeling that what their members of

staff were doing was correct in order to maintain the perception that their key members of staff were performing as they should be – ‘nothing to worry about here’. It is what Goffman (1959, p108) outlines as *collusion*, which he likened the performance team to a secret society, flavoured by “the sweet guilt of conspirators”, who supported each other’s lines of self-presentation in order to create a collective team impression and who were protective of each other’s dignity (Scott, 2015). Furthermore, this activity by the participants can also be likened to Goffman’s (1959) ideas of *protective practices* where an individual will seek to save the face of another.

5.6. There’s vocal support and barracking in this game!

All of the participant academy managers outlined how there were occasions when they would make a deliberate and conscious attempt to support and praise members of staff or players. They would endeavour to do this in a public manner, which would be obvious to everyone and would lead to staff and / or players being very clear on who and what the participant academy managers were endorsing and championing. There were also occasions where the participant academy managers would oppose or even chastise members of staff or players, again in a public manner in order to help the participant academy managers send the messages throughout their football academy which they wanted to. Specifically, they sought to send obvious and visible messages to the other staff in the academy whether be around embracing new staff, setting expectations around staff input into CPD nights or directly informing staff of what is and isn’t acceptable. They explained the activity they engaged in and their thinking that led them to such action:

As a cross academy group we sat down and developed a new coaching syllabus and technical programme. It was important to have the other staff from sports science and recruitment involved, so they could get a feel for what the coaches are trying to achieve, for me it was vital that after the group meeting we had an agreed direction on what our coaching programme across the academy would look like. We sat for two days coming up with a programme across the phases, there were disagreements between us, but I had said before we sat down that we need to view disagreement as healthy – I guess I was trying to reduce any potential fallout which can always happen in these situations. Although they were new staff with shared mindsets, they still have egos which need considering. I didn’t want fall out with my new team but I did want shared discussion, I tried to insist from the beginning that we would have different views on parts of the coaching curriculum and to accept that. During discussions I made a conscious attempt to make it obvious to everyone that a particular view

or statement from each member of the meeting was met with positivity by me – this was an attempt on my behalf to demonstrate the importance and value of each of their contributions to the discussions. I couldn't do this all the time after each occasion somebody said something – I would have looked like an idiot. But I did purposefully look for opportunities to praise contributions where possible. I suppose I made a conscious effort to do this with the head of recruitment and the head of sports science and medicine who were both new members of staff and who aren't coaches. I didn't want those guys excluded in anyway – I'm not saying they would have been, far from it, but I guess I just made the effort to make sure everyone would value their input and that everyone would see me valuing their input.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

We had an in-house CPD and education night early in the season, I think the main intention of it was to get the staff together to meet and interact and for one or two coaches to deliver a couple of sessions for the staff to reflect upon and discuss. We had set a bit of a focus for the evening around standards and intensity of training sessions across the phases. I'd put an email out and asked for volunteers to put on a coaching session and for them to use their own age groups. I got two replies from younger coaches – one coach who was new in as an under 10's coach and the coach of the u13's. No one else replied – I had initially and ideally wanted three sessions – one from each phase but there wasn't really anyone forthcoming from the older ages of the youth development phase or the professional development phase. It probably pissed me off a bit as I thought I would have had a few more volunteers – it pissed me off even more when a couple of the staff in the professional development phase asked me if it was essential that they attended!! Yeah so the evening went ahead fine and the lads who delivered their coaching session did really well. At the end of the evening I made a point of praising the lads who delivered – and I probably went over the top with that praise but I wanted to make a point. I also made a point of saying something like how disappointed I was how we didn't have more staff willing to take part – particularly those from the older age groups – I wanted people to know that everyone is equally expected to help and contribute to what we do here it doesn't matter what age group you work with.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah I had to diffuse a bit of a situation between the under 14's coach and head of recruitment. Our under 14's coach was getting a bit sick of players that were coming in who weren't good enough and who weren't in the positions in which we needed covering. And the head of recruitment was complaining that no one was informing him or his part time scouts what was needed or what the standard needs to be. I think both had a point and both cared about the place doing well, so I felt their intentions were right for the good of the academy. I basically mediated a meeting and I think I ended up apologising to both of them and supporting them both in a roundabout way – where I said as an academy we probably need to be better at working with the recruitment team to help explaining the system and game model and player expectations that recruitment haven't been given this detail. So it was a way of diffusing the situation without either of them feeling like they were at fault. I made a point of saying that they weren't at fault. Yeah and I mean I had my frustrations with the pair of them

really, but I didn't say anything further that could have made the situation any worse than it needed to be.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

I remember there were a couple of weeks when one of the under 23 coaches, Jeremy, was just so negative about some of the players – particularly the younger under 18 players who were making the step up. And after training sessions he would come in saying *he's shit, he can't pass, this one can't run*. He spoke about one young player, Josh, slating him – who I actually quite like – and I asked him in the office, in front of the other staff, if Josh was in the starting line-up for tomorrow's game – I knew full well he was in the starting line up – and Jeremy confirmed that he has along with some comment about how the team were going to struggle, so I snapped back something about *well I hope you give Josh better feedback and more confidence than your giving us right now*.

Yeah, and the day after I went to the game, it was just here at the academy, I never have any input into the games, I make a conscious effort not to get involved and leave it to the coaches. But on this occasion I was very interested to see and hear how the staff – particularly Jeremy – would communicate with the players. Young Josh was starting the game which I knew, and he was playing right of a three up front. It was always going to be a tough game and there were a few of our under 18's playing. The lads started quite well but then there was probably a bit of negativity coming from our bench which I felt the lads didn't need – mostly Jeremy pointing out mistakes that certain lads were making – including Josh, I'm not sure if he wanted me to hear it or not, but I couldn't help myself and I started communicating to certain players on the pitch – including Josh that they were doing well and generally just giving them some positive reinforcement – basically I was just vocally contradicting every negative comment Jeremy had been saying, yeah and this was done in full view and ear shot of everyone on our touchline. Jeremy wasn't too vocal after I started doing that and it probably shocked him a bit that I would do that, because I never input into games as they are happening. I did the same at half time, it was 0-0 at half time and lads were doing ok. Matt the other 23's coach led the talk and that was fine, then Jeremy had his input and he was quieter than usual and again I took the opportunity to let the under 18's how pleased and proud we were of them, yeah again I guess I was trying to get rid of any negativity the players were feeling from Jeremy. I left before the game had finished, as a staff team we normally have a cuppa after the game and have a bit of a chat and a debrief of sorts – but I left- one reason was that I was probably still a bit pissed off with Jeremy and couldn't be bothered to sit in his company at that moment, as well as that it would leave him guessing and probably a bit worried as to what I was thinking and why I had left – and actually later when I was at home I did regret that a bit as I knew he'd probably have been worrying.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

There was an occasion where we were having trouble with a few parents of a particular age group. They'd been a bit of a hassle for a couple of seasons, despite us doing everything properly and doing it right, it's the classic situation where the more someone gets, the more they want – or think that they are owed. One of my coaches got a few negative messages from parents where they were questioning his decisions – I think I just snapped actually – and I said right, I want to speak to them before the next training session. The age group were in

for a session the next evening and I got admin to send a text to all the parents saying that there was a 10 minute chat before training. I told the coach just to go out with the players as normal and I met with the parents in the meeting room. It was 10 minutes if that, it wasn't a meeting or a conversation it basically a transmission of an ultimatum which was basically, shut up, let the coaches do their job and if you're not happy, there's your contract your son can leave – no hard feelings. I mean I wasn't rude and actually told them to shut up – although I would have loved that – it was just a clear message, that this what we're doing, it's not going to change, and if it isn't for you or your son, then you leave with our best wishes. Hardly got a peep out of them after that, the line had been drawn and one or two of them had the wind taken out their sails I think.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The importance the participants attached to public displays of support, disagreement or chastisement can be explained using Grills and Prus (2019) notion of pursuing cooperation. For Grills and Prus (2019) the pursuit of co-operation is at the core of management work. Indeed, they noted:

“Gaining cooperation from associates is central to a more adequate appreciation of holding office. Attention should be given to office holders who engage in delegating responsibilities, issuing requests for assistance, focusing and coordinating people's lines of activity, monitoring and assessing the behaviour of others, encouraging and discouraging particular activities and making strategic interpersonal adjustments.”

(Grills and Prus, 2019, p.93).

The work in which the participant academy managers engaged in with regard to public displays of support or chastisement, were inextricably linked to their pursuit of cooperation in what they deemed appropriate, or not appropriate, for their football academy. Their decision to publicly support or chastise was part of a strategy to influence others to do what they felt were appropriate behaviours and actions for their football academy. In addition, this required the participant academy managers to make strategic interpersonal adjustments as they felt appropriate for the situational demands (Grills & Prus, 2019). Furthermore, their concept of coordinating situated activity is what Grills and Prus (2019) explain as activity which office holders will engage in as lines of action intended to further the mission of the team, as they describe:

“Is contingent on people achieving a shared understanding of a socially constructed reality with respect to the mission and the subtasks at hand. A failure to achieve a shared understanding of social reality relative to a project may have ruinous implications for the mission, team members and the organisation at large.”

(Grills and Prus, 2019, p.150).

Certainly, from the perspective of the participant academy managers they indeed attended to coordinating situated activity. For them, this was by means of publicly highlighting what, in their view, was appropriate or inappropriate behaviours and actions with respect to the expectations they had for the various stakeholders of the football academy. This could often lead to situations which can be deemed ruinous to some members of staff through the public lines of action which the participants engaged in.

Such lines of managerial action can also be interpreted through the theoretical lens of micropolitics (Kelchtermans, 2007). As each of the participants engaged in publicly supporting or chastising individuals, they appeared attentive to their own level of power as the academy manager. They were aware of how their very public interactions would be received by both the targeted individuals as well as the wider audience which they also sought to influence. The concerns the participants had, that contributed to their motivation behind their lines of action, can be explained further through the micropolitical concepts of cultural-ideological interests and social-professional interests (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2016). It is evident that cultural-ideological interests were a legitimate concern for the participant academy managers. Specifically, with respect to how stakeholders interpreted a shared reality and acted, in respect of what the participants deemed appropriate or not appropriate on matters of behaviours at their football academy. Furthermore, concerns of *social-professional interests* which relate to the quality of interpersonal relationships within and around the organisation (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2016), are of significance to the participant academy managers. Specifically, in respect of how they consider their own relationships with key

individuals in the football academy, but also with regard to how staff are perceived by others and the health of the relationships of different staff and stakeholders across the academy.

Given the awareness of the participant academy managers to their communications and the deliberate public nature of their activity, the dramaturgical concepts of Erving Goffman, also provide a useful heuristic to help explain the interactions of the participants. Specifically, the behaviour of the participant academy managers can be linked the concept of a *role performance* which is less about the actual skills and qualities of an individual and more about what is (rightly or wrongly) attributed to them, it is defined more by its reception rather than its inception, as further explained;

“To *be* a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one’s social grouping attaches thereto...A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well-articulated.”

(Goffman, 1959, p.83).

The participants are able to adapt the public display of their identities in order to create desirable and influential impressions upon their audiences. Indeed, they have made careful and strategic decisions about which information they conceal or reveal and the images which they intentionally give (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, within symbolic interactionism the notion of *role-making* is a focus (Turner, 1962), which articulates how roles provide loose templates for action which afford the actor great scope for individual interpretation and meaning making. As reinforced by the participant academy managers, their roles are actively made and performed, which suggests agency, creativity and skilful identity work on their behalf. Their roles are negotiated, emergent and adaptable as they navigate a careful path between the demands of the occasion and their own personal agendas of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, there is evidence that the participants also engaged in *dramaturgical circumspection* as they made a conscious effort to publicly support or chastise members of staff. Through this, consideration is given to how an individual, in the staging of

a show, exercises “prudence, care and honesty” (Goffman, 1959, p. 212) in order to put measures in place which avoid or mitigate anticipated disruptions to their performance.

5.7. And don’t forget to look after yourself!

This final section highlights how the participants also encountered a range of situations which they perceived as challenging and problematic due to the nature of the situation potentially impacting their own interests, preferences and career trajectory. The participants outlined why they felt that such situations could be problematic and the issues or outcomes they felt that they could face if they did not consider their own lines of action. This section illuminates such scenarios and documents the micro-level work the participants engaged in as they navigated such dilemmas.

I was always conscious of trying to create an environment that I would flourish in, where I would feel comfortable and confident and where I felt I could thrive. To do that, getting the right staff in the right roles was important to me. This is so I felt comfortable that we had a good set of staff delivering our strategy and football programme. I suppose in order to maintain that sense of trust I have in the staff, to maintain an environment where I can thrive, it probably sometimes means dealing swiftly with any negativity or dissent from other staff. I don’t want any negative energy to go round the place because quite quickly that can impact your good staff – so I make a conscious effort to be aware of any negativity, gossiping or dissenting that goes around the place and I’ll tackle and challenge it head on. Where I am now, with the experience I have in the role and the backing I have from the directors, I do feel comfortable challenging people head on if they have any issues – sometimes one or two will moan for the sake of it, but I look to nip that in the bud, it’s not happen often, but I have been very forthright with one or two and actually ended up given them an ultimatum, actually I ended up managing one of them out of the place – but yeah, it probably is to help preserve the environment I feel works best and one where I can thrive.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town)

It can be tough at a football club like this because it’s a big one and with that comes some pressure. Fortunately we’ve got a few good players into the first team and they are managing to stay there. That helps – massively! I think I have become more conscious of managing myself in this environment. It can be a lonely place sometimes, where you’re alone with your thoughts and if you allow it, you can feel a bit lonely at times. There can be pressure you put on yourself to always be on top of your game and be ready to deal with anything. As the manager of the place, I think the way I work and my manner can be seen as a reflection of how well or healthy the academy is. I think when people see you or come into contact with

you, they are looking at your mood and your manner – it has to be positive and you have to be in control – or at least appear that way! I'm not sure that you show any weakness or vulnerability – I mean we all have some private things we don't show or speak about at work, but I think definitely in my position, I need to be positive and upbeat to show all the staff that there is nothing to worry about and if that means not showing when something is worrying you then that's what you have to do – it's important to keep that sense of order and control that the football academy craves!

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Well there are times when I've been stuck in the middle between our u18's and the reserves, like I've said a new manager can come in and make decisions on players which impact the reserves and then impact the under 18's. We've had some good under 18's who were playing up in the reserves, doing a good job but then all of a sudden the first team manager decides that he is bombing a few first teamers into the reserves then our under 18's get taken out of the reserves. And it's me who is getting the fall out, from our youth coaches, the players – sometimes their parents and agents – then when that happens people can start questioning my authority and if I have any credibility with the first team set up. Truth is that I can't control what the first team manager does and I have to ensure I clearly communicate that with others. I have to get my facts right and my side of events right otherwise if I don't take steps to address this with coaches and players as to why they are up one minute and then back down the next then they might think I don't care or that I am involved in the decision making. So, to try and avoid those situations, when a player from our under 18's goes up, I make sure I speak with them and manage their expectations of them, their parents and agents and make it clear that they could be back with us at any time and sometimes it's not due to their performance but about numbers of first team players in and around the reserves. I still get it in the neck from the under 18's staff at times but I let them know as well and I am in agreement with them really.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

As academy manager, I think you have to be a number of different things in the eyes of the staff, players and directors above you. You have to be in control of yourself, you have to be composed, happy, positive, competent, ambitious, and caring – lots of things - depending on who is talking to you and sometimes you pick up what you think they want to see from you. It can be tough, but in terms of me doing this job and trying to do well in this job, I need to consider what those staff or players might want to see from me when we speak or when they see me. If I get that right, then I think I will be seen as someone who they can trust and depend on – which is obviously important because those types of things make sure that you get yourself a positive perception and reputation which is important in this place. It's important because you need to continuously be able to influence and work with your staff and players, I'm a firm believer in that it is what you do every day in order to keep being an effective manager with your staff. I think I found that the hard way when I was preoccupied with all of the work to improve our EPPP category and that was taking up all of my time and my attention. I think other staff who weren't directly involved in our EPPP working group, felt a bit left out and that I was overlooking them. I just sensed it really – and I had to think about that and make some conscious efforts to go to their matches and ask about players like I would normally do – it was just for a couple of weeks the EPPP stuff I had to do to get a higher category just had my head fried!

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Yeah there are plenty of times when you think about yourself, I couldn't sit here and say yeah all I think of are my staff and the players. You do think about yourself, how you come across to other people and what other people might think of you. Football is a fucking fickle place and some people change their mind about on a whim. But yeah, there are times where you look after yourself and your workload, because if you're not careful you can end up getting pulled in all sorts of directions and getting involved in all sorts of situations you should really be letting others sort. Well there are some staff you can chat with no problem, you trust them to do their work and they are quite independent – not in a bad way – they just crack on with their work, but then there's some staff, a couple of them in particular who whenever you get into a conversation with them will tell all the issues they have and how they have some problems they want you to solve – they can take up a lot of you time, and start to drain your energy if you let it and if you stay in their company for too long. So there are lots of times where you try not to engage them in too much conversation as you know you'll end up having extra jobs on your desk which you don't need or things that you might have to address. I mean I'm not saying I avoid them and fucking hide when I see them or anything like that, but I am conscious of getting into any sort of big conversations with them – I usually make sure they know I have things to do or appointments and meetings to get to, so when they do start chewing me ear, it's easier for me to get away.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants clearly outlined an attentiveness to considering their own position and role in the football academy. Indeed they engaged in a range of actions as they navigated situations which they felt could be problematic to them and, in doing so, demonstrated a capacity to carefully consider their behaviour within their interactions. Grills and Prus (2019, p.192), highlight the importance of individuals in organisations being able to self-regulate and self-manage: “self-regulation and self-control represent crucial aspects of engaging in management activities”. The reasons which necessitate such self-regulation can vary; however one such common motive for the participants was their interest in, what Grills and Prus (2019, p.192) term “being presidential”. That is, the office holder will want to be seen in a certain light not only in the eyes of others, but also as a matter of meeting their own expectations of themselves in the context of managing the football academy. As such, participants are very much aware of their lines of action which will be defined by others as

desirable, and as such, they will engage in such activity to navigate perceived problematic situations (Grills & Prus, 2019).

Furthermore, the participants outlined an attentiveness to how they are perceived by others, in respect of their own reputation. Grills and Prus (2019, p.94) give insights into how individuals might attend to reputational dynamics:

“As a pragmatic matter office holders may engage in self-management activities that are attentive to reputational dynamics – paying attention to understandings of self-identity and how managers perceive their identity to be constructed among various constituencies”

Indeed, the participants outlined how they were aware of what those they were interacting with would expect to see and experience from them during their interaction. There appeared to be a certain impressions of a demeanour which included positivity, authority and competence that the participant academy managers felt they were expected to give to the staff. Interestingly, Grills and Prus (2019, p.194) observe that “the very notion of the preferred manager is sub culturally specific”, and that there is a need to frame management in the contexts in which the work takes place. There appears to be a learned and experiential awareness which the participants have developed, that help them to understand the desired impressions they should give off in order to create the outcomes they desire from their interactions.

Moreover, office holders can be subject to competing commitments and obligations which Grills and Prus (2019, p. 191) outlined in the following way;

“Mindful of the reality that ‘there are only so many hours in the day’ the need to balance the various demands of office with other commitments and obligations, office holders may be particularly attentive to adopting strategies that restrict the unwelcome expansion of missions”.

Certainly, the participants reflected on their range of competing tasks, specifically big projects such as EPPP category applications and policy implementation which can cause them some

issues in respect of taking them away from giving attention to staff, players and teams. Furthermore, where time, resources and staffing can be stretched an office holder can opt for strategic inaction where the manager will do nothing in order to preserve energy and attention for what they deem to be more central tasks (Grills and Prus, 2019). Rooted in this activity (or inactivity) is the concept of distancing strategy, which the participants outlined as a method which can protect them against becoming involved in work which others should be doing. As Grills and Prus (2019, p.189) explain “actors may attend to the perceived advantages of engaging in distancing strategies that are facilitated through inaction”. For the participants, they demonstrated an awareness of how, by not engaging in conversations and specific activity in and around their football academy, they established or preserved their preferred working conditions.

Grills and Prus’ (2019) interactionist theorising on the nature of management work have provided a useful heuristic with which to examine the activity of the participant academy managers. However, to help give greater insights to the behaviour of the participants, their activity can also be examined through a micro-political lens Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002). The participants were unified in their assertions that they engaged in certain lines of activity or inactivity, because of their proclivity to acquire or preserve their preferred working conditions. In respect of micro-politics, such behaviour and activity is viewed as being motivated predominantly by their own self-interests. This is concerned with an individual’s professional understanding of what they think their role should be like, and features self-esteem, job motivation and task perception as central notions of focus. Furthermore, the micro-political concept of material interests (Keltchtermans, 2007), in respect of the participants seeking to acquire more time, as they sought to protect themselves from being involved in what they felt was work which should not concern them is also evident. The participants also placed an importance on what others thought of them and would want to see from them. As such, they engaged in impression work which they felt necessary in order to reflect the behaviour that their staff would want to see from them. Another such motive for this can be explained through the participant’s attentiveness to securing and maintaining their socio-professional interests, which consider the quality of their interpersonal relationships in and around the football academy (Keltchtermans, 2007).

The final heuristic which offers insights into ‘how’ the participants enact their micro-level interactions is through Goffman’s dramaturgical theorising (1959). The participants were very clear in respect of how they felt the environment and people who operate within the football academy expect a certain type of behaviour or interaction from or with their academy manager. As they are attentive to this, the participants provide what Fine and Manning (2003, p.46), call a “front” which includes the attitudes, presence and expressions one uses consciously or unconsciously in order to construct a certain image. Indeed, it is not lost on the participants that the way they are viewed by others and their subsequent reputation, relies heavily on their ability to engage in impression management work in order to give their audience the impression they feel is needed for that moment. The participants cited that to secure the perception they wanted to create then they had to be positive, show authority and demonstrate competence across a range of situations. Therefore they demonstrated a sensitivity to defining the situation, and modifying their behaviour in accordance with what they perceived the situation required (Goffman, 1959). More specifically, this aspect of their everyday practice relates directly to the dramaturgical concept of idealisation, whereby actors will seek to present a perfect, prototypical version of a role to justify their continued occupation of it (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, the participants have outlined how they would seek to minimise their interactions or control their interactions in order to help secure or preserve their preferred working conditions. In order to do this, they engage what Goffman (1967, p.62) identifies as “avoidance rituals”, whereby the participants are concerned with keeping certain individuals at a distance to avoid an interaction which they may not be able to control as well as they would like to. Furthermore, the notion of trust or, more specifically, dis-trust is concerned with the decisions individuals will take which will impact their future engagements and relationships (Gale et al, 2019).

5.8. Summary.

This chapter has illuminated how the participants went about the doing of their everyday management work, inclusive of the dilemmas and challenges that they encountered while attending to these tasks, activities and interactions. Alongside highlighting the need to perform tasks effectively

(even ones that they consider boring or unexciting), it has demonstrated how the participants are cognisant of who, how and why they support or chastise staff within the academy. Finally, the chapter shows how the participant academy managers are attentive to their own circumstances in the football academy and how they work to secure or preserve their desired working conditions in which they perceive they will flourish.

The first section focussed on the participants' understandings of the ways in which they engaged with what they considered to be the routine and mundane features of their management work. This section has given an insight into the day-to-day realities of managing a professional football academy. It has illuminated how there are a wide range of tasks and activities which the participants must attend to on a daily basis. Furthermore, this section has helped to break new ground theoretically by engaging Grills and Prus (2019) to examine how managers are attentive to what they perceive as mundane and routine tasks yet, the competent completion of such tasks have wider implications for them as academy managers and the functioning of the wider football academy. This section also highlights how the participants have an awareness of micro-political (Kelchtermans, 2007) motivations for doing the work well. Specifically, how the tasks they complete can provide them, and the academy, with a range of positive outcomes that they perceive to be of value for a range of reasons which are important to them and the functioning of the wider football academy.

The second section concentrated on the dilemmas the participants have experienced as they seek to both influence and connect to other people in the football academy. To help make sense of the situations and dilemmas that the academy managers have experienced and engaged with as they went about their managerial work, this section has helped to provide fresh insights by utilising Grills and Prus' (2019) theorising on organisational interchange. Especially in respect to how the participants self-regulate and are attentive to their reputational dynamics which are at play in the football academy environment. As such, this section has provided novel insights into how the participants experienced a range of situations where they actively sought to protect, support or help (or not) other people in the football academy. By examining such work through the lens of Grills and Prus (2019), this chapter

has enabled fresh insights into how managers utilise their staff to achieve wider outcomes be it for the functioning of the football academy or to the ends of the participants. Furthermore, the concept of micro-politics (Kelchtermans, 2007) has helped to frame why the participants have acted the ways they have in respect of their interactions with their different members of staff. This has helped the chapter to provide a new insight into how the social interactions of the participant academy managers are connected to a range of micro-political causes. This chapter has also considered the work of Gibson and Groom (2018) to highlight how micro-political theorising can be used help to explain the motivations and behaviour of those who have experienced organisational change in a football academy. This section also utilises Goffman's dramaturgy (1959) which provides another theoretical breakthrough in respect to how the participant academy managers plan for, and enact their micro-level interactions with their members of staff in order to get their desired outcomes.

The final section of this chapter has focussed on the dilemmas the participants have experienced as having a direct impact on themselves as academy managers. Specifically, this section has addressed the situations they perceived as problematic, - and challenging, as well as how they are connected to their own interests, desires, reputation, and career trajectory. This analysis has also been supplemented by the application of Keltchermans (2007) work on micro politics, specifically, in terms of how the participants' professional interests are embedded in their everyday interactions and engagements with others. This has provided a new insight into why the participants might act in a strategic nature for their own micro-political gains from the perspective of the academy manager which differs from the work by Gibson and Groom (2018) who highlighted the self-interest of football coaches during periods of organisational uncertainty. The final heuristic device for this section has been provided by Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical insights into organisational life. As a result, new information has been discovered which has helped to provide an opportunity to detail the micro level impression management work that participants engaged in, which influenced the perception of themselves by their targeted audience. Such work was done in order to establish and secure their perceived desired work conditions which they felt they needed to have in order to survive and / or thrive. Overall then, this chapter has provided new knowledge not only in a theoretical

capacity, by utilising managerial interchange (Grills & Prus, 2019), micro-politics (Kelchtermans, 2007) and dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959), but by also providing a detailed insight into the day to day realities of managing a professional football academy.

Chapter 6: It is always an emotional ride!

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I share my etic and emic readings of the data as they are concerned with how the participants experienced and managed their emotions as they went about their everyday management work. Initially, this chapter highlights the range of emotions that the participants authentically experienced in and through their connections to various others in the football academy. Furthermore, this section explains how these emotions had a temporal concern attached to them with respect to the participants past, present, and future interactions and aspirations. Secondly, this chapter outlines what emotions they felt they could show to others, when they did that and why they felt comfortable sharing these genuine emotions. In addition to this, this section also highlights how the participants felt the need to hide their emotions from others and the reasons for doing so. The last part of this chapter outlines the inauthentic emotions that the participants would manufacture and perform for others and their motivations for doing so. Finally, the chapter finishes by highlighting the costs and benefits to the participants of managing their emotions in these ways as they go about managing the football academy.

To help make sense of the emotions experienced by the participants, the sociological emotional theorising of Turner and Stets (2007) is utilised. Furthermore, Cooley (1902) and his concept of the looking glass self also helped to interpret the participant's emotional experiences. This work is combined with Goffman (1959) and his considerations of how individuals will experience pride or shame across their social interactions. To further help explain why they experienced such emotions, Stets (2006) ideas on role identity are used to help frame the participant's perceptions of what role they should take and how contraventions of a paragon of their role can lead them to experience emotions. Kelchtermans (2007) micro political theorising also helps to provide further explanations as to how the emotions the participants felt were connected to a range of professional interests.

To help explain how the participants went about trying to manage their emotions and engage in emotion work, in their everyday managerial duties, Hochschild (1983, 2000) theorising on emotional labour is utilised to help understand how and why they did this. This analysis is also supplemented by the application of Grills and Prus (2019) and their considerations into the interactionist nature of management work and the emotional dimensions associated with this. Specifically in relation to how managers learn emotion rules in their organisation and how they may deploy emotions in a strategic manner. Furthermore, Keltchermans (1996, 2002, and 2007) work on micro politics, helps to frame how the emotions the participants managed could often be connected to various interests that were important to them as they went about their work. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical insights into organisational life, have continually helped to provide an opportunity to further illuminate the micro level impression management participants engaged in as they sought to manage their emotions.

6.2. They get you emotional.

The first part of this section outlines the range of emotions the participants experienced as they went about their work. Emotions such as joy, guilt, anger, jealousy, fear, sympathy, pride, and contempt were often felt in the day to day doing of their management work. The second part of this section outlines how the emotions experienced were connected to other people and /or interactions and how they had a temporal effect where the participant considered past, present, and future interests and interactions. For them, the emotions they experienced were caused by other people and circumstances in which the participants found themselves in. Furthermore, they experienced these emotions with past events, current circumstances, and possible future aspirations in their mind.

6.2.1. You experience some emotions in this game.

All the participants described a range of different emotions that they regularly experience during their daily life of managing the football academy. Here, they reflected upon situations which

caused different emotions in them, some of which they felt were positive and some of which they felt were negative. Here, they outline how doing their everyday work could lead to them experiencing emotions:

Yeah definitely, absolutely have I felt lots of different emotions and feelings in this place – it's football isn't it? It's emotional at times – particularly when you're on the side of a pitch. But yeah, I've experienced different emotions, happy, bordering on ecstatic at times – probably over the top ecstatic when I think about it! And the other side of it, is you can get angry, annoyed, frustrated, probably a bit down at times. It sounds like I go from one extreme to another quite often, which isn't true, but there can be a range of emotions you go through in this place.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Yeah, well if I was to list them off the top of my head, I suppose I would say positive feelings of being happy, yeah joy you could say. Definitely some pride about what you might have done or contributed to and feelings of a job well done or a sense of satisfaction – certainly when players are getting professional contracts and into the first team. I would say frustration at certain points, getting angry definitely. And at a club like this, you can feel the pressure at times and sometimes there's a few nerves and some worry – I'd be lying if I said I didn't worry at certain points in time.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Well I definitely get frustrated and I definitely get worried, I think it comes with the territory at a club like this because you're spinning so many plates and trying to keep the place going really. Of course feel a sense of achievement and pride when you see the players doing well and some of the teams putting in a good shift. But you can get disappointed when things don't go the way you wanted for certain players and teams in certain games but we are where we are and it's always going to be a struggle for us. Yeah you might look at other clubs and get a bit jealous of their resources and what they can do, but you can't focus on that. Yeah I think there are times when I've been very pissed off with certain things that go on, but I suppose you try and keep things in perspective.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Emotions wise yeah I've had the lot really haha, you have some great days, great times when you see your players, your staff, your teams all enjoying it, doing well, getting success – there's some real positives and happy moments that you treasure really. And yeah the downside when you feel angry, upset, taking things personally, hurt, sometimes frustration and then you can worry and get anxious at times about various things which come across your desk. Yeah you question yourself and reflect on what you do. You question the whole academy system sometimes and what we do as a whole and sometimes you can feel a bit

guilty or worry if you're doing right by the young players. So yeah, I've certainly experienced plenty of emotions working in this place!

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I'm a positive person and I try to keep positive whenever possible, there are lots of good things which you try and keep your focus on and you get those feelings of being happy, being satisfied in the job – knowing that you're doing something good and giving players good experiences and good memories. But the place can get on your nerves at times, you get annoyed at certain things, frustrated, confused at why certain things happen. And yeah thinking about it, you can get nervous sometimes and worry about stuff that you get caught up in – so yeah I get different emotions going on.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

From the participant's accounts above, it is clear that emotions are a persistent feature in their experiences of managing the football academy. The pervasiveness of emotions has not been lost on those who research and reflect on the complexities of human interactions. Certainly, Denzin (1984, p 13) observed how emotions are central to the “micro, macro, personal, organisational, political, economic, cultural and religious” elements of social life. This is echoed by Turner and Stets (2007) who suggest that emotions are a complicated feature of human experience, behaviour and interaction (Potrac, Smith & Nelson, 2017). Specifically, in the context of the participants managing their football academy on a daily basis, the theorising of Hochschild (1975, 1979, 1983), in respect to how emotions are experienced and managed in the workplace provide a useful heuristic to explain the experiences, behaviours and interactions of the participant academy managers. Furthermore, the theorising of Grills and Prus (2019) also attends to the nature of management work having an emotional dimension to it. Specifically how, being managed and managing others can elicit emotions which should be considered and examined as individuals have a capacity for a primary emotion (Turner & Stets, 2007) such as happiness, anger, fear and surprise. Grills and Prus (2019) highlight the importance of understanding emotions within a management setting:

“What is rather crucial for undertaking (management) processes is an attentiveness to learning emotions in such settings. An appreciation of the relational and intersubjective qualities of

learning ‘real feelings’ that accompany being managed (and managing) in particular sub-cultural settings is central (to the research process)”

(Grills and Prus 2019, p.206).

Furthermore, they go on to suggest how the learning and understanding of emotions which are experienced are influenced by the sub-culture one is embedded in (Grills & Prus, 2019). The accounts given by the participant academy managers highlight how there are situations which can arise that cause emotional experiences and that they are aware of the different emotions they can experience. However, more tellingly Grills and Prus (2019), highlighted how people can come to understand, interpret, experience and ultimately attach meaning to these emotions through their interactions with others. It is from this view that they argue the research of management settings can provide fruitful lines of inquiry to better understand how emotions are experienced and made sense of, in the process of doing management work. Furthermore, whilst observing that there are no organisational structures, policies and rules that are not the result of human processes, Grills and Prus (2019, p.210), expand this idea by highlighting that “there are no such processes that were not accomplished by people doing things together as self-reflective and emotive actors”. Through highlighting the emotive experiences of the participant academy managers, this chapter helps to give a fuller sense of the practical accomplishment management activity in everyday life (Grills & Prus, 2019). In addition, this chapter helps to develop the sport management literature base which has yet to recognise the emotional experiences and emotion work which has not been considered in the technical and rationalistic representations of sport management work.

6.2.2. The good, the bad, and the ugly.

The range of emotions the participants experienced were connected to, and embedded in, a range of situations, interactions, anticipated future events, and reflection on past occurrences. Furthermore, specific individuals and groups of people were identified as being the cause of, or connected to, the emotions that were experienced by the participant academy managers. In their own

words, the participants outlined how the emotions they felt were because of a range of situations they were involved in. This section firstly outlines and explains the positive emotions that were experienced by the participant academy managers. Here, they outline how they would experience happiness or joy:

Well one Saturday a few months back, I can certainly remember being very happy, very proud and I had a real feeling of satisfaction, possibly even bordering on smugness actually. It was a game day where we were hosting one of our neighbouring and rival clubs East End Rovers at under 18 level and under 16 level – they fancy themselves and they would usually beat us, they have a bit more resource than us and in the younger ages if we're both after a player then a lot of the time the player would sign for them and not us. I sound bitter don't I?! Maybe I am...but anyway, during the run up to this particular game I was probably a bit nervous about how the game day might go. Mostly because the under 18 result is a big talking point for everyone around the place, even the local paper does a news article on it, and then there's the social media. But the staff in the run up to the game were excellent. I watched training a bit more than usual I think that week, the preparation was really good. On game day itself, I think everything went to plan, the under 16's won 3-0 and the under 18's won 4-0. Brilliant, the way the lads played was excellent the whole day on and off the pitch seemed to just click, I was so proud of every member of staff and the players that day, it just felt really good to be honest, really satisfied. Yeah, I think I was congratulating everyone and telling them how pleased I was with them.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Yeah I think football can bring you some great moments can't it? I think the happiest I have felt was when three of our players got their first team debuts and have went on to establish themselves into professional players. I've experienced some brilliant moments in games when watching our academy teams from the young ones to the under 23's – whether it has been individual performances, team performances – or dare you say it – the result – everyone loves to win don't they? We've had some great wins which make you very happy. I think the fact that you feel happy is because you feel good for the people around you doing well, the players, the staff, you want them to do well, I suppose if they're doing well then I'm doing my job properly as well.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I think I have felt happy when things in and around the pace are going well, when staff seem happy, when there's laughing and smiles from everyone – that's important. You don't want to be in charge of a place where everyone is miserable. I want people to be positive and to enjoy what they do. It does make me happy when there is a good mood about the place and the environment is a good place to be – yeah a big factor in that is that player performances

and attitudes are right and are in a good place in both training and games – if players are doing well and performing and playing with smiles on their faces then it's a good place to be and I'm happy.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

The participants' experiences of happiness can be explained using Turner and Stets (2009) theorising. For them, the experience of happiness can lead an individual to establish bonds with the others they interact with (Turner & Stets, 2009). Indeed, happiness is considered to be a universal emotion which can be accessible to all and has some key characteristics (Ekman, 1992), such as being quick in their onset and experienced as events which are happening beyond one's control (Turner & Stets, 2009). Certainly, the events which led the participant academy managers to experience happiness were beyond their control and were reliant on others such as coaches and players. However, more specifically, the behaviour and performances of the coaches and players were in keeping with what the participant academy managers perceived as cultural norms for a successful football academy which were the cause of their emotion.

Happiness is considered to be a primary emotion and can be experienced at differing intensity levels (Turner, 2000) and, furthermore, this is given a visual cue through the face which is said to be the most important outlet of emotion amongst humans (Kemper, 1987). The participant academy managers referred to smiles being on faces which helped them to identify and confirm those primary feelings of happiness. Indeed, as the participant's experiences of happiness were connected to others in the football academy, this is something they sought to accentuate. They are reliant on experiencing happiness with and through others. The results and performances of the teams in the professional development phase (PDP) and the performances and positive experiences of the staff are key drivers of happiness for the participant academy manager. Subsequently, they are attentive to, and have a real concern of how results and performances in the PDP area of the academy are realised and their own happiness is often a direct result of this. The emotion of happiness which has been experienced by the participants can also be explained through a micro-political theoretical lens (Kelchtermans, 2007). Indeed, the motives which led the participant academy managers to experience happiness were

embedded in and emerged through social relations (Kemper, 1987). This can be further explained using the micro-political concept of *social-professional interests* whereby seeing others in the football academy succeeding and experiencing success proved to be a key reason for the participants to experience happiness. For them this is also a validation of their work performance as academy manager, since the staff in which they oversee are having positive work experiences. Additionally, there is the micro-political notion of *self-interest* which also features here, since the participant academy managers felt that if others were doing well then, they, themselves must be doing their job well – a sense of validation embedded in their experience of happiness.

Another positive emotion the participants experienced was a sense of pride. Here, they described how pride was often linked to seeing academy players representing the first team or getting professional contracts. Furthermore, this emotion was also connected to a personal sense of doing a good job which was reflected in staff performances and project work that helped to advance the category the football academy was graded at. Here, they outlined this in their own words:

I think you're always proud when a player breaks into the first team, and even more so when they do well. It's what we're here for, and yeah I suppose when those occasions happen you feel a sense of pride as hopefully directly or indirectly you've played some sort of part in it. It's definitely nice when it gets recognised by the fans and local media that the academy is doing good things for the football club and helping to get young local lads into the first team, so yeah there is some pride you take from that.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Well there's probably been one or two occasions where you look round at the place and the people in the place and think yeah, I'm having an impact here, we're doing ok. I am fortunate to be in a place like this, but I've worked hard and we try to do the right things by the players and the staff. So when things are going well in terms of players coming through, players performing well, teams performing well and staff doing well then at times you can take some pride in that, particularly when the board or the first team manager gives you some acknowledgement you know.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

With us working on our application for an improved category status it takes a lot of time and coordination to get all of the criteria and evidence in place to get to a point where you are able to make a credible submission. It was not without its challenges, but there were certain

situations where I felt proud of the staff for working hard to get this thing going. It's not an easy project but at times I have felt proud of the staff across the board for working like they have done to get this together.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

When you see the players coming through the place and progressing you get a buzz definitely. Especially when players are getting into the first team it's great. You definitely feel a sense of satisfaction when you go to the first team game and one or two of your academy boys are in the starting line-up, it's brilliant, it's what it's about.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The accounts above highlight how the pride the participants experienced is connected to their everyday work. Their meaning making reflects the work of Turner and Stets (2009, p109), who consider pride to be “a more general and permanent emotion revolving around self-approval”. Indeed, this emotion has been considered in the symbolic interactionist tradition and has specifically been examined through Cooley's *looking glass self* (Cooley 1902). It is through the notion of the *looking glass self* which describes two key concepts which ultimately give rise to the emotion of pride. The first concept in the *looking glass self* is that an individual is constantly observing themselves from the viewpoint of others they interact with. The second is that we live in the minds of others through our own imagination and this produces real and intense emotions which include pride (Scheff, 2005). For the participant academy managers, their feelings of pride can emanate from their own judgments of doing a good job coupled with how others perceive them to be doing a good job. The act of observing the self is central to an individual experiencing a positive emotion such as pride, which Cooley (1902, p184) emphasised here;

“A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principle elements; the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance and some sort of self-feeling such as pride”

The emotion of pride can be present in social interactions as individuals will evaluate themselves in the looking glass which causes this positive emotion. This in turn, will shape an individual's behaviour as they try to sustain the feeling of pride (Turner & Stets, 2009). Such an

emotion can also be connected to how the participants considered their own micropolitical motivations with respect to their *self-interests* (Kelchtermans, 2007). It is through this lens where their sense of professional self-understanding is illuminated as the participants outlined, for them, what they considered success to be. This included, players from their academy playing for the first team, securing professional contracts and staff teams engaging in good work to improve the status of the academy. Such measures of success relate to the micro-political *self-interests* of self-esteem where the participants secured confidence in their own ability through the pride that they feel in respect of their own validation of a 'job well done' (Kelchtermans, 2007).

A final positive emotion the participants experienced was a sense of surprise when they initially had pre-judged a situation which turned out to be more positive than they had expected. They explain this in their own words here:

Well you know what it can be like when you have to deal with parents. I think I've had more negative experiences than positive ones with parents during my time here. But yeah sometimes they can surprise you. I remember one meeting I was going into with a parent where I was expecting a hammering. We had told the player and his family the week before that he would not be getting a scholarship with us, and his parents asked to meet me the following week. I was aware that previously a couple of my coaches had some issues with the parents and felt that they were a bit too in your face and overbearing – so as you can imagine I was ready to be hammered and ready for them to tell me we had ruined their son's life and that sort of thing. But it was the exact opposite – they came in and met me and they were lovely. Very complimentary of everything we had done for their son and they told me that they felt a weight was lifted from his shoulders and that maybe an environment like this just wasn't for him. They thanked me and the staff for the opportunity we gave their son and were complimentary about the way we communicate and engage with parents. I was like wow, that's nice! A great little meeting – I was expecting both barrels but it turned out to be very complimentary and positive.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I remember feeling a bit nervous about a parent's night one of my coaches was holding at the beginning of the season. He's the head coach of the under 14's and he was facilitating a meeting for all his players and parents to go through the specifics of the training nights, training and game model and the expectations we have of the players and parents. It's basically a more specific, age appropriate focussed meeting than the big whole academy one I do. Yeah, to be honest I wasn't sure he could command the room that well plus there were one or two parents who have strong personalities that I felt might challenge him on a few things. So I went along to this meeting, just to help him out if he came unstuck really, and it

turns out that I had nothing to worry about. He was great, he delivered an excellent session and he dealt with questions and issues very well. It was very professional – he reflected on the academy very well and I was certainly surprised at the extent of his ability to facilitate such a meeting. Really good.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I think I am probably used to some of our under 18 players going up to train with the reserves or the first team and then the manager or whoever he sends to talk to me usually says something like the players aren't good enough, or they aren't tough enough for this league and want to take too many touches – the usual stuff really. So when we sent four of our lads up to the first team to train with them for the week due to them having a lot of injuries I was expecting the same sort of feedback from the gaffer. In fact, I wasn't him to speak with me, if I was lucky, his assistant manager would come down and say a few things about them not being good enough. On this occasion I got a call of the manager and he asked if I could pop up to see him. I was thinking that he probably wanted to see me because one of the under 18's had done something really bad and was in serious trouble. But it turned out that he wanted to praise the lads and give some real positive feedback about their performances and the way they had conducted themselves – and that two of them were in the first team squad for the weekend game! He said that we should be proud of them and congratulated me which was certainly a nice surprise.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The participants all outlined how they had a preconceived notion of a situation or an interaction ahead of time. Their feelings about such situations were usually ones of doubt and negativity, however the participants all recalled how they felt a positive surprise both during and after the situation. Indeed, the participant academy managers felt such negative feelings about their upcoming interactions due to the thoughts that something could go wrong and the negative implications this may have for them. Goffman (1959, p.243) observed that “there is no interaction in which participants do not take an appreciable chance of being slightly embarrassed or a slight chance of being deeply humiliated” which serves to outline the precarious nature of interactions which, in this case, the participant academy managers were very aware of. Indeed, from the accounts given by the participant academy managers, their apprehensions about the situations arose from a potentially direct situation where they themselves may have felt a chance of embarrassment. More specifically, the

potential of delivering an inadequate role performance which leads to a lack of self-verification in the role identity produces negative emotions (Turner & Stets, 2007). When identities are not verified or confirmed, then an individual can experience anxiety and lowered self-esteem (Burke & Stets, 1999). For the participant academy managers, their preconceived thoughts about their impending interactions were ones that could deliver identity damaging outcomes (Turner & Stets, 2007). However, their sense of surprise is embedded in relief as their perceived challenges to their identity do not occur, and, for some, the interaction ends up providing them with positive identity verification which can give rise to positive emotions. (Burke & Stets, 1999).

Specifically for the participant academy managers an interaction which caused concern was the case of the meeting with the parents who it was felt were about to give many reasons as to why the football academy had not been good for their son. There were other interactions where the activities and actions of others, such as the coach hosting the parents meeting or the players playing up with the first team, which could have led to a negative reflection upon the football academy and by extension – the ability of the academy manager. It is these such considerations which caused the academy manager to have concern about the upcoming situations and this can be due to emotions being identified, shaped and exhibited in line with the social expectations which an individual belongs to (Sandstrom, Lively, Martin & Fine, 2014).

However, for the participant academy managers their apprehensions gave way to a positive surprise as they engaged in the interaction and situation. The emotional feeling of surprise, for many, is considered to be a primary emotion (Turner & Stets, 2007), however such an emotion can range across low to medium to high intensity states in an individual (Turner, 2000). For the participants, their feelings of surprise were embedded in relief as the potentially difficult meeting with the parents of the released player turned out to be not difficult at all. Additionally, their feelings of surprise were also rooted in pride as the players who had been up with the first team proved to be a credit to the academy which was the feedback from the first team manager. The positive feelings of a surprise which were felt by the participants appeared to be inextricably linked to another emotional feeling

which was experienced as a result of something going well that helped to reinforce a positive reflection of their football academy, and themselves as the football academy manager.

This section documents what the participant academy managers perceived as a range of negative emotions and experiences. Here, they outline how they would experience a sense of anger as they explain further in their own words:

Sometimes I get annoyed at the little things, or what may seem to be the little things, but they mean so much. I get really angry at unnecessary mess and untidiness. After the session has finished, I hate looking out onto pitch 1 out there or the 4G astro pitch and seeing cones left out or a rogue football rolling about or goals and mannequins scattered around the pitches. And then if I go to the kit room and it's messy, it really makes me angry as it is the basics and if we can't get these basics right, what chance have we got? It doesn't happen too often but when it does, it does annoy me.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I've certainly felt lots of emotions when I have watched some of our games across the academy before. One occasion was when I was annoyed, yeah angry you could say because the head coach who knows our game model and how we try to play in terms of our system, you know our formation, and he starts changing things mid game because the team is getting beat. Now, this was an age group in the youth development phase and we want them to get used to a couple of different formations that we work on as part of our game approach. However, the team was 2-0 down at half time and he decided to change the formation into something which is not part of what we do. It was purely down to him not wanting to get beat – he wasn't thinking of the players and the consistent messages they've been hearing in training – it was new to them and you could tell in the second half – they got beat 5-1. I was very angry at the coach's decision making here.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah you can get angry and pissed off at certain things that happen. When you spend so much of your time in this place, sometimes things can grate on you, other people can grate on you at times. I'm not going to paint a picture of everything is nice and rosy all of the time because I don't think anywhere is. People can get pissed off with each other. Yeah, an example I can remember where one of the recruitment staff – who can often have a lot to say for himself – was openly reviewing games in the canteen when the lads had just got beat and he had a player in on trial playing in that game. He was spouting off about this player on trial not playing in his preferred position and how can he impress if he is not in his best position. I was making a cup of coffee over hearing this nonsense – I wasn't happy at all, it really made me fucking angry actually. But I just said to him – look – he's 2 weeks into a 6 week trial – he has another 4

games, maybe even 5 games to play in and he played in preferred position last game. But his comments and attitude definitely grated on me.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants outlined their feelings of anger which would arise across different situations. Indeed, Kemper (1987) outlined how the primary emotion of anger has an evolutionary survival value in that anger encourages a quick response when individuals are perceived to be in danger. For the participants, danger could be perceived as threats to their reputation and identity as a competent and effective academy manager. It is through such perceived threats where an emotion such as anger can be felt and this is an emotion that can emerge in all social dealings (Turner & Stets, 2007). For the participants, the emergence of anger was connected to a situation of the football academy 'not being able to get the basics right' in respect of the football equipment not being put away properly by staff or players after use. For the academy manager such behaviour goes against the norms of appropriate behaviour expected in the culture of the football academy. The anger experienced in this instance is connected to the wider view and perception of the football academy not being able to keep things tidy, which in turn, reflects on the ability of the academy manager to keep things in order and ultimately the effective role identity of the academy manager is threatened (Stets, 2006). There is also the issue of individual staff not showing the required level of respect to the academy manager by not doing the simple tasks of keeping the academy tidy. The direction of the anger in this case is where an individual has breached the social contract with the academy manager as the due respect has not been given in this instance.

In addition to this, the football game management of a coach who changed formations which went against the established 'game model' of the academy led to feelings of anger for the participants. It is here where anger has been felt since the coach has gone against what the established 'game model' ought to be. This has been communicated to all staff and the coach has gone against it and is not showing the academy manager the appropriate level of respect. This also makes the academy manager look bad in the eyes of others since the 'game model' which he seeks to embed in the

football academy does not appear to be respected by all staff. Furthermore, they would also feel a sense of anger in situations when recruitment staff vocally and openly question the decision making of coaching staff during the player trial and recruitment process. This is something which causes the participant academy manager to experience anger on account of the processes in the environment not being effective which is something that reflects badly on the role identity (Stets, 2006) of the academy manager and their ability to oversee an effective football academy.

The emotion of anger felt by the participant academy managers across these situations was connected to others in the football academy. However, the script for these situations and how others should behave is rooted in the role identity the participants have attached to their position of academy manager (Stets, 2006). The role identity is the meaning an individual gives to themselves as they carry out a role. The meaning the role is given is derived from the culture in which the individual is socialised into (Stets, 2006). For the participant academy managers their feelings of anger are derived from others not adhering to the script by not fulfilling their obligations (as outlined above), and in not doing so, this was taken personally by the participants. Furthermore, the anger they experienced comes from a contravention by others to the role identity they have of themselves as managers of the football academy, and as Kemper (1987) outlines, such activity can pose a sense of danger for the participants which gives rise to a quick, emotional response such as anger. In the culture of the football academy, the academy manager perceived certain ways of working and interacting as appropriate for the football academy. When such norms are contravened, the anger emerges from imagined scenarios such as the academy can't do the basics right, or staff can't work to a plan or that players coming in on trial don't get a fair opportunity – all of which are connected to the role identity of the academy manager to preside over a football academy which is operating as it should with respect to the cultural norms.

The participant academy managers also outlined another negative emotion they would experience as they went about their everyday work. Here, they outlined how they would experience a sense of guilt and the reasons that contributed to the feeling:

You do feel some guilt or some nagging doubt about when you have to release a player who has been with you for a long time. If you have a player who has been a part of your system from a young age and has moved from foundation phase into youth development phase and then possibly even the professional development phase and then you have to release them – you can definitely feel some sort of guilt or questions of have we let this person down? After all, we have been a big part of his football development for pretty much his entire life so far and we have had to let him go as he is not good enough for a contract at the next level. Yeah, certainly as the academy manager I can feel like I've let one or two down, but overall you can't dwell on those things too much.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

I suppose I do get some feelings of doubt about what we do as a system rather than just an academy. I think, when I think about certain situations then you can have feelings of doubt and yeah, probably guilt sometimes. Yeah, there's definitely some guilt that can kick in. I mean before COVID we had the school day release programme in full flow. So for two days out of five the players would come in here instead of being in school, I mean the school would set them work that they would do in our classrooms and this is organised and supervised by our education team. But the lads are not in school, which is where they should be to give them the best chance of succeeding in their studies. Then you look at the age groups so under 15 and under 16 – year 10 and year 11 are very important school years for GCSE content. In reality, we are taking kids out of school – who for some – not all – some, we pretty much know won't be getting another contract with us. You can see how guilt can start to creep in about doing things right. Ask any other academy manager as well, if they're honest and care about this stuff, they'll say the same.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

For the participants their feelings of guilt emerge from how they think they could be managing an environment which has been, or is letting players down. Whilst recognising that they, themselves are not directly responsible, they do acknowledge that they are part of a system which does not always serve in the best interests of the young players. Guilt is aroused as an individual evaluates themselves negatively and this is usually a result of engaging in activity which breaks the ethical expectations of the generalised other (Turner & Stets, 2007). It is the ability of the participants to engage in reflexive behaviour in which they will monitor themselves from the perceptions of others (Cooley, 1902). Indeed, what would others think of them as managers who oversee football academies which could be hindering the educational and football development of its young players? This is an imagined scenario which can provide the catalyst for the emotion of guilt to emerge in the participant

academy manager. The micro political theorising of Kelchtermans (2007) can help to explain how such an emotion may arise in the participants. The concept of *social-professional* relationships whereby the quality of interpersonal relationships within and around the organisation and the relationships between the organisation and its external community (Kelchtermans, 2007) can provide an insight into how the managers are concerned with the perceptions of others with respect to how the football academy should be seen to be working in a morally appropriate manner. Indeed, with respect to *social-professional* relationships, the participant academy managers have recognised the need to keep players and their families ‘onside’ as much as possible with respect to ensuring there are enough players in the football academy to fill teams and fulfil the appropriate games programmes. This places the participants in situations where they are unable to be completely truthful (such as not being up front and honest with players about their longevity in the academy whilst still taking them out of school) which can cause feelings of guilt to arise. However, by being candid with such organisational secrets could lead the academy manager to suffer potentially career damaging consequences linked to their own *self-interests* (Kelchtermans, 2007). This is specifically with respect to their own reputation and perceived trustworthiness and competency through the eyes of their superiors and the wider staff in the football academy. A further negative emotion which the participant academy experienced was that of a sense of fear and anxiety about certain situations. For example:

I think if I am elaborating on any times I’ve felt anxious it probably comes down to losing any of our better players or not being able to get in some other better players at certain age groups. When you think we’ve got a couple of big clubs as our competitors which get very well documented and if you lose a player to one of those, then you’ve got questions to answer or at least some work to do to mitigate any sort of negative perceptions of the place. It doesn’t happen often, but we are fishing in the same pond for the same sort of players, there’s no hiding from that. So at times you do feel a sense of nerves and anxiety that you have enough to attract players and keep – that’s important – keeping those players is important. And yeah, if we lost a player – which we have done, or failed to recruit one losing out to a competitor, then you can worry a bit about the internal and external perception people might have of the place. But you can’t get too hung up on that, you have to keep believing in what you’re doing – fortunately we’ve got a bit of a decent track record and getting players into the first team, it’s just the pressure and expectations never stop!

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

You can worry a bit at times about the external perception of the place especially when the under 18 results and the under 23 results are getting reported in the local and regional media and through social media. But you can't control that really – but I'd be lying if I said it doesn't play on my mind a bit. If you take a heavy loss or a run of defeats then you can worry a bit about too much negative attention and negative energy around the place. I remember our under 18's had a bad run of four defeats and we were going into a game against our local rivals and I was a bit fearful for all of us going into that one, because if that one isn't a positive result then everyone gets down and you've got to really work at yourself to try and get everyone positive again – so that one worried me! It ended up a 1-1 draw which probably just allowed us some space to breathe and use it as a positive which stopped a bad run.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I mean the financial situation of a club like ours can often cause you to worry and fear for your job. You never know, you see one or two stories in the press about a couple of clubs who have stopped their academy provision and you worry sometimes that it could happen here and that your job might be vulnerable. But you try not to think about that too much. Well if you do think about that then you worry about the family, paying the bills all of that stuff really, plus what do you do, I love being involved in football and I probably wouldn't want to do anything else really. So yeah, you try not to focus too much on that as it can worry you.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

The participants' accounts of fear and anxiety in their daily practice could be interpreted using Turner and Stets (2009). Fear is another emotion that has been commonly identified in the literature as a primary emotion, which is an emotion that is considered universal among humans (Turner & Stets, 2009). Indeed, fear also has its biological purpose as an act associated with running away to protect the organism, and, in the context of the participants, this primary and biological emotion was felt as a result of matters of identity and reputation (Turner & Stets, 2009). For the participant academy managers they outlined how they felt some fear or worry with regard to how their football academy might be perceived by others both internally and externally. This was especially so in the instances where the football academy may lose the young players they wanted to sign to other clubs or in higher profile games where the under 18's or under 23's were playing rival competition where results are reported in the local press and on social media. There was a fear that the reputation and

perception of the football academy could be compromised and by extension the ability and leadership capability of the academy manager. Such reflexive activity which the participants are attentive to, is cognisant of elements of Cooley's (1902) *looking glass self*, certainly with respect to the imagination of an individual's appearance to other people and the imagination of the judgement of that person. It is through this activity that gives rise to the emotional feelings of fear experienced by the participant academy manager as they hold what they perceive to be legitimate fears for what other people may think of the performance and functioning of their football academy. Furthermore, the precarious financial position of a football academy can also act as a determinant of fear for academy managers who are fearful for their own jobs and livelihoods but also that of the staff they manage and the players who are part of their football programme. Reflections on how the possibility of unemployment is very real for some and how this can impact personal lives such as the impact upon family life. In addition to this, they also harbour concerns about what job they may get as football is an important part of their work identity and a different career path could lead to non-verified work identities which give rise to such negative emotions (Turner & Stets, 2007). Micro political concepts such as *social-professional interests* and *self-interests* (Kelchtermans, 2007) can also help to explain why the participants feel the emotions of fear and anxiety. This is because the perceptions of others such as the directors, are important in respect of them perceiving the football academy as performing well. In addition, it is also significant for their own interests, as how they want to experience their role of the academy manager, is embedded in others perceptions of the organisation, and by extension the ability of themselves as academy managers. A key facet of such *self-interests* also lies in their hopes for their future career trajectory and how reflections and perceptions of them as effective academy managers are connected to their future opportunities.

The final negative emotion outlined by the participants proved to be a sense of frustration which they would experience as they went about their everyday academy management work. Such frustrations spanned across various situations that were both internal to the football academy and external to the football academy. Firstly, they outline the situations which were internal to the academy that cause them frustration as they explain here in their own words;

I think, probably frustration is something which when I think about it, is often something I experience – but it's something I'm used to and it's just the way it is here. We're always having to keep an eye on what we spend and make decisions about what we can do or can't do due to financial issues, that can frustrate me as you want to do things properly and as professional as possible but your hands are tied if you can't afford to bring people in to take things forward. Then when the first team manager decides to bomb out some of his first team players and they train and play with the reserves, it stops us getting some of our more promising under 18's getting an opportunity to develop in the reserve team, that is definitely frustrating as it is out of our control and it is completely at the decision of the first team manager who is trying to get 3 points, stay in the division and could be gone next week. So our priorities of developing players are not considered at all by the manager – but it's the nature of what we do, you're at the fortune of who the manager is and the decisions he makes as to how much it helps or hinders you.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah you get frustrated at times when you're being judged against things you can't control. Look at the first team manager and you're relying on him to take an interest in our younger players, perhaps get them involved in training and consider them for the first team. If he doesn't take an interest and prefers his own players or getting them in through his own links and networks then it can frustrate you because your lads in the academy and under 23's might not be getting a fair crack when time is against them. That's definitely something which frustrates me.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants all outlined some examples when they felt frustrations that were caused due to situations which arose internally to the football academy as they went about their work. Upon examination of their accounts and examples, it is apparent that their feelings of frustration are a result of situations which are beyond their control. Such frustrations occur as a result of hierarchy, internal processes and decisions which are usually controlled or governed by the first team and their decision making linked to the use of academy players. More specifically, this can be examined through the ambiguity or pathos which exists within a football club (Jones & Wallace, 2005). For Jones and Wallace (2005) coaches' ambitions could only be realised through the players they coach and for whom they never have complete control over their ability, learning and development. In the case of the participant academy managers, their ambitions and understanding of success are uncertain and are reliant on the decisions of others in the football club. Indeed, the needs and wants of the first team, and the staff who

manage and coach the first team are of a higher importance than the football academy which the participants manage. As such, their frustration which they experience is connected to them not having control or indeed, being a subordinate. Subsequently, this raises the issues of power and status which can be a catalyst for an individual to experience a negative or positive emotion (Kemper, 1987). For the participant academy managers, their sense of frustration is born of the power dynamic and the lower status which their football academy is viewed within the wider context of the football club when compared to the priorities of the first team, the manager and the staff who are connected to the first team. For Kemper (1987), this can be explained through the concept of *structural emotions* where relative power and status within the social structure can invoke emotional responses (Turner & Stets, 2009). It is here where the participant academy managers' frustrations arise, since their priorities for the football academy and themselves, are not coalesced with the priorities of the wider football club on matters highlighted in their accounts above. It is because of the issue of a lower status in the hierarchy of the football club which gives rise to their frustrations.

Additionally, the participants all outlined some examples when they felt frustrations that were caused due to situations which existed externally to the football academy that also lay outside of their control:

I think academy football gets a bad press at times and that is something which frustrates and irritates me. People are too quick to judge about making professional footballers but what about making memories for young players – some of their best football memories and best experiences come from us. We help give life lessons and develop respectful, hardworking young men. It's not all negative there's lots of positive impacts we have on a young person's life. But many of those messages don't get out there which frustrates me.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Yeah the websites and the social media can attract some comments which if you let it, can certainly frustrate you. If people see us losing against one of our rivals then at under 18 level or under 23 level then you get the comments that everything is going wrong and it's a disaster. Some of these people who say these things have no idea how the system works and how we still focus on individual player development and process over outcome, so it gets you frustrated and annoyed at times, but you don't focus on it too much.

(Billy – Melchester Rovers).

From the participant accounts, the use of identity theory in respect of the role identity and meaning an individual gives to that role (Stets, 2006) can be considered to help explain why the participant academy managers experienced frustration. This is specifically relevant for the examples cited above which include the negative perception that external others often have of the football academy system. From the perspective of the participants, there is a lot of good work that gets done with the young players in the academy and they have some of the best football experiences as part of their childhood – but that does always get appreciated by many who are outside the academy system and who deride it. Interestingly, the participants have limited control over this external perception and as their role identity (Stets, 2006) is reflected upon, it causes some frustration as they perceive they are viewed in a way that is not favourable and that they cannot control. This could be considered alongside the theorising around control identity which considers how much control an individual desires (Burke, 1991) and in the case of the participants they do not have the control over this situation and therefore the emotion of frustration emerges. Furthermore, the identity control theory posited by Burke (1991) considers how an interruption to the meanings held by an individual of their identity standard become discrepant with self-in-situation meanings can lead to negative emotions being experienced. Specifically, Burke (1991) suggested a break in the feedback loop can cause a negative emotion where an individual does receive feedback that is congruent with the perceptions of their identity. For the participant academy managers, their own competencies can be reflected through external perceptions of their football academy and indeed, the wider academy system in which they operate, however the negative perceptions from others are the salient issues which cause frustration for the managers.

6.3. You can show a bit but you have to hide a bit as well!

The first part of this section demonstrates how the participants felt comfortable enough to show their genuine emotions (both positive and negative) and with whom. The second part of this section outlines how the participants felt the need to hide their emotions (both positive and negative)

in certain situations and when in the company of certain people. Furthermore, the reasons and motivations behind the participants hiding their emotions in this way are explained.

6.3.1. There are times you can show your emotions.

The participants all outlined situations and interactions where they felt they could show their true emotions and feelings. The first part of this section outlines the positive emotions the participants showed to the others they were interacting with. There were certain people they felt comfortable enough with to be able to show their positive true feelings and in their own words, they explain what they were feeling and why they felt they could share or show those feelings:

I was proud of one of our under 18's who got called up to train with the first team and not only that but he made his full first team debut – I was over the moon for him and his family – lovely people and he's been here since he was 9 years old. When we met I was so happy to see them, I hugged them and I was so happy for them it was great. Yeah sure it was a natural emotion and seeing them since his debut made me so happy. I had no reasons not to show them how happy I was – it was great to be a part of.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

It's great when the lads do well on a weekend, there's a good feeling, you're positive and you're happy – you don't mind telling the lads they've done well. It's important you highlight and reinforce the good work when it goes well. You need to take advantage of these times – the environment can be challenging so when there is a good performance and a good result – particularly for the under 18's and under 23's you have to allow yourself and the players and the staff the opportunity to enjoy it. There have been plenty of times where I have gone into the under 18's dressing room after a good performance and showed them how happy I am – it's important they and staff see that as well.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

The situations and interactions where the participant academy managers felt comfortable in expressing their positive emotions can firstly be explained through Hochschild (1983) and her ideas towards *display rules*. For Hochschild (1983), display rules can be the formal and informal norms that regulate the expression of emotion. For the participants, they each reflected upon certain criteria

or characteristics that a situation would have, in order for them to be comfortable showing their positive emotions and emotional state. For them, seeing players develop and secure professional contracts and gain first team debuts, were moments to savour, to be proud of, and to celebrate with the player and their family. Furthermore, there are also instances when the teams in the professional development phase (PDP) would get what the participants deemed as a positive result which they felt was due to great work from the staff and the players. It was here that they sensed it right to celebrate and enjoy the moment with the other players and staff in the phase. For Grills and Prus (2019), learning emotion rules and displaying anticipated emotions are a key part of interactionist management work and helps to highlight how the participants are attentive to such issues during their own interactions. This is because, for Grills and Prus (2019), an emotional performance as a display of teamness and allegiance is an important part of management work at the micro-level. This can be evidenced from the participants' accounts of them sharing in the happiness of the significant others in order to help them highlight and reinforce that there is indeed, shared and co-joined interests between the academy manager, their staff and their players.

Moreover, Kelchtermans (2007) might contend that the reading of the situation in this way to be able to convey their true emotions in an accurate manner would help the participants to realise their *social-professional interests* in respect of the quality of their relationships with the others they are interacting with. This is certainly reflective of the participant's accounts where they seek to build, establish and keep trust with certain members of their staff and being seen to experience the right emotion at the right time is a central part in cultivating a trusting relationship. Evidently, for the participant academy managers, their gumption to engage in, and show that very real positive emotion was important to them due to them wanting to share in the joy and success of others and in doing so, be seen to be doing it so as to establish and keep positive relationships.

In addition to being able to show positive emotions, the participants all outlined situations and interactions where they felt they could show their true negative emotions and feelings. This section outlines the negative emotions the participants showed to the others they were interacting with. There

were certain people the participants felt comfortable enough with, and situations where they felt it was appropriate, to show their negative true feelings. In their own words, they explain what they were feeling and why they felt they could share or show those feelings:

I had my Under 18 coach come to me – he'd had an agent come to him on a couple of different occasions asking questions about one of his players about would he be in the team, will he play a certain position, why is he not in the team and that sort of thing. That's not the line of communication we have, and this agent knows this. It made me quite annoyed actually – and so I got one of the admin team to get him in to meet with me. I was annoyed and yeah I showed him I was annoyed, he's worked with us enough times to know what the expectation is and he blatantly ignored that on this occasion. I told him straight that it was unacceptable and that we expected better of him. No, I had no issues in showing him how strongly I felt about it. I wasn't rude – at least I don't think I was – but my tone I think was sharp, to the point and I definitely told him he was in the wrong. Yeah I wanted him to know I was annoyed so this wouldn't happen again.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Well I was really angry that time with the goalkeeper coach turning up late and prioritising his own coaching business. When I knew about it and saw it for myself I knew I wasn't having him around anymore. I arranged to meet him as soon as possible and I told him he wasn't to come back. I was straight to the point and he asked why – he quite annoyed himself when I told him that. I just told him directly that he was late for his session too often and he couldn't meet the demands of what we wanted as an academy coach. When he got angry telling me I didn't have evidence and that I was wrong I just said this isn't a discussion - you don't have an opportunity to talk about this – I basically shut him down, probably I was a bit rude but I didn't care – I didn't really like him and I wanted him gone.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

There's Dave who I usually bounce things off. He's a mate first and foremost, he's been in it for years – yeah he's head of safeguarding and welfare – he's been here for a long time, longer than me, he knows the place. If I'm unsure on something I'll normally ask him. Yeah I don't mind telling him if I'm a bit concerned about something or if I'm not happy about something – I know he'll not go shouting his mouth off. There are times where we'll sit and have a cuppa in my office and I can tell him I'm not happy about something or worried about releasing a player and he'll always give a good perspective. So, yeah there's been a few times Dave has seen me in different states.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Like the showing of their positive emotions, the situations and interactions where the participant academy managers felt comfortable in expressing their negative emotions can be explained

through Hochschild (1983) and her ideas towards *display rules*. For Hochschild (1983), display rules can be the formal and informal norms that regulate the expression of emotion. For the participants, they each reflected upon certain criteria or characteristics a situation would have in order for them to be comfortable showing their true negative emotions and emotional state. For them, upholding the standards and values of the football academy, addressing issues which can harm the environment of the academy, or having private conversations with individuals who they know they can trust and have a personal relationship with were often scenarios where they felt their true negative emotion could be seen by others. For Grills and Prus (2019), learning emotion rules and displaying anticipated emotions are a key part of interactionist management work and helps to highlight how the participants are attentive to such issues during their own interactions. Furthermore, Grills and Prus (2019) attest that expressing emotions and attending to reputational dynamics are entwined, and that how managers express emotion in order to pursue different interests are a key feature of management work. This is evident through the emotional behaviour of the participant academy managers in ways which they feel the emotion but also express in order to protect and preserve the interests of the football academy, and by extension their own, self-interests. Such theoretical considerations dovetail well with Kelchtermans (2007) in respect the accounts given by the participants demonstrate how the anger they express serves a purpose to protect the *organisational interests* of the football academy. This is true of the instance where the academy manager would take steps to show the football agent how his behaviour is not tolerated as it is not in the best interest of the wider functioning of the football academy. There is also the notion of *cultural-ideological interests* where the coach who was repeatedly late and who seemed to prioritise his own business and interests was not tolerated. The participant academy manager did not want this coach to be a part of the football academy and so he was not guarded on the negative emotion he expressed. This is especially true where the participant academy managers are showing what norms, values and ideas are culturally appropriate for the environment.

6.3.2. But there are times you need to hide your emotions.

The participants also outlined situations and interactions where they felt they had to hide what true emotions and feelings they were experiencing. They outlined situations with superiors, subordinates and external stakeholders where they felt it appropriate to hide their emotions. There were a range of reasons the participant academy managers had for such behaviour. Firstly, they explain why they had to hide their emotions from their superiors;

I know I've been regularly angry and annoyed at the reserve team manager who can slate some of our under 18's who step up to train with his team or have made appearances in the reserves. He's quick to say how they aren't good enough or they're not ready yet and all that. But some of them do need work – so coach them! Help them! It's easy to say he's not this or he's not good at that, but he never talks about how he can improve the players or what they need to do to develop some of the players. There's a couple of times I've wanted to say that to him when he's said that certain players are no good; 'so what are you going to do about it – how can we make them better?' But I know he'll take offence at the slightest disagreement so, I just work with him and take what he says as the gospel truth, because if you challenge it, you're fighting a losing battle really, then he could shut off taking any under 18's at all out of spite, I think he has that in him.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

It can be frustrating when the first team doesn't consider the under 23's or the under 18's at times. You have to jump at the click of their fingers really, you just hope they plan and are organised and communicate early who they might need for training sessions. If they don't plan or communicate early you get a call on the day that they need 5 players to help fill out a training session. That causes massive frustration amongst the staff and it has pissed me off before, but you keep in mind that it's a great chance for our players – even though you know they probably aren't going to get a good chance to really show what they can do, as you can't do loads as a player in an 11v11 walk through! I have to support it though, I can't tell the first team staff no you can't have the lads at the last minute – even though sometimes I'd like to!

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

The participants also explained how they would hide their emotions from the staff who they managed in the football academy and other subordinates;

Releasing scholars and telling them they aren't getting a pro deal is horrible. Those meetings always fill me with dread, the bad ones where you're delivering bad news. I hate it and yeah I do get nerves and some anxiety with it. But the other staff do as well, I can tell the under 18's

staff, the u23 coach and welfare staff don't like it – I mean who does – but I know I have to be a calming influence and to reassure the staff that it the process, we've done everything we can and it's just a process of the system and world we are in. I can't show them I'm nervous about it, the staff can't see that as it will make them worse I'm sure. Rightly or wrongly these are things which happen in our world and we need to put ourselves, well I need to put myself in a position where I can deliver the bad news in a clear, calm and respectful manner.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

Well when that member of the recruitment team was spouting off like I mentioned, I was angry – not happy at all. But we were in the middle of the canteen and I although I wanted to tell him that he was being a fucking gobshite and that he was talking bollocks I couldn't. I was angry but I just had to remain calm, talk facts and make it clear that he was mistaken but in a way where people knew I was in control of the situation and my emotions. If you lose your head then people will question you and all of a sudden you're creating a bad atmosphere, there's no way I could have shown my full annoyance.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

Finally, the participants explained how they would hide their emotions from the different external stakeholders who they encountered:

I have definitely had my fair share of meetings with parents – across all ages of the academy – where I have wanted to vent my anger so to speak. The delusion and blinkeredness of some parents is astonishing at times. I remember there was one parent of a player who we offered a scholarship to who said – we'll get back to you and walked out. I was like...what?? I was so angry. I had to check myself and I let him leave, it could have ended up a bit messy and we had to move on to other meetings. I had to contain my anger and frustration to ensure the remainder of the meetings went as planned. When we rearranged the meeting with the parent who walked out and he came back in, I wanted to throttle him really, but I had to get to the bottom of the situation and we really wanted to sign the player. I couldn't show him how angry I was that wouldn't have helped for a productive meeting. He came with a wish list of things he wanted reassurances on, I was angry inside at the stuff he was asking for, things like protected game and assurances like that – stuff we could never guarantee. I just had to remain calm and address each of his points as professionally as possible, if I let my emotions get the better of me that day, it wouldn't have ended well and we definitely wouldn't have signed the player!

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Some agents really get on my nerves, endless requests and you've got to make some of them feel loved. There's a few who have a number of the better players at this club and at other clubs. There are times when you want to tell them that they are just a distraction to the game and that they can offer players nothing that we can't offer them here. They are just signing up

players for their own ends in the hope they get a nice pro deal for them to negotiate. But agents are part of the system and you have to work with them otherwise if I told them of my general disdain for them then it would mar the system and relationships we have which could affect our ability to sign players.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

The participants all explained the situations where they felt they had to hide their true emotions and feelings from their superiors, subordinates and external stakeholders. This was something they felt they had to do, for a variety of reasons as the different situations arose. Indeed, Hochschild (1979, 1983) outlined that individuals will regularly have to engage in such *emotion management* behaviour which maintains a presentation of themselves that follows the emotion ideologies, feeling rules and display rules. For the participants, they engaged in what Hochschild (1983) termed *surface acting* whereby the real and authentic emotions of anger and frustration they were feeling in the moment could not be made visible to the others they were interacting with. Indeed, they felt they had to deal with the situation in what they would identify as a ‘professional’ manner, which for them, is to remain calm and composed. The key reasons behind their *surface acting* were to help them to navigate potentially identity threatening situations and to avoid what Goffman (1959) considers shame and embarrassment. Furthermore, Goffman (1959, p28) suggested that individuals can be taken in by their own performance and that actors can be sincere where they have a genuine belief in what they are doing and they are fully congruent with “the impression fostered by their own performance”. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019), have outlined the importance for managers to pay attention to *emotion rules* within an organisational setting. For them, the circumstances in which managers learn to display emotions in ways that are attentive to the *emotion rules* that are established in various settings and relative to specific audiences of are significant importance to the effectiveness of the manager (Grills & Prus, 2019).

Furthermore, Kelchtermans (2007, 2011) micro-political theorising can help to explain some of the actions and behaviour the participant academy managers engaged in. Indeed, their attentiveness to the outcomes that they wanted from their interactions certainly point to a level of

micro-political literacy. There was some important and key work which participants experienced that centred on the EPPP strategy and how their own emotions towards this line of work could not be fully disclosed. This was predominantly down to a fear that this may hinder their progress towards achieving their targets around achieving EPPP criteria. Such scenarios can be examined through what is termed as *organisational interests* whereby policy and procedures are realised through, in part the emotional management work of the participant academy managers. Furthermore, the emotion management which is required during interactions with parents and agents of players could be explained through *material interests* (Kelchtermans, 2007), if in this instance the participants are looking to secure the services of the best players and retain their best players – a human resource. This is then linked to their concern for the wider perception of the football academy they manage so they attract and keep the best players and for this to happen successfully the participants are attentive to engage in emotion management work.

6.4. There are times you throw in a fake and a dummy to get past your man.

This section highlights how the participants would manufacture or perform inauthentic emotions in certain situations in which they would find themselves. This was for a range of reasons that they felt it appropriate that they adjusted their behaviour in this way. In particular, the interactions with staff and external stakeholders would lead to inauthentic emotion responses. Firstly, in their own words, they explain how and why they would perform inauthentic emotions when interacting with their staff:

Well I have spent a lot of time doing coaching observations and watching how the staff work with the players, yeah I've done this formally and informally. You watch a variety of practices and sessions, there's stuff you see which you're really pleased with and sometimes there's stuff you see which causes you some concern and even frustration and yeah disappointment really. There have been a couple of occasions where I have observed a coach work as part of our coach development processes. He knew I was coming to see him, we had agreed on a session and he planned for it and he sent me the session plan in advance of the session – as soon as I looked at the session plan I was disappointed. We'd not long had a coach development meeting where we revisited the key principles behind the planning of our training sessions across the phases. Basically, we try to incorporate a number of multi-

disciplinary perspectives into our sessions. But on his session plan I knew he'd forgotten or overlooked some points around the psychological aspects of the session, the physical aspects of the session and actually when I looked at the design of some of his practices, I wasn't sure they would get the outcomes he was looking for. I replied to his email – and this was a mistake from me really – I asked him a number of questions about the session, it was the day of the session and he replied with a short and polite response I think. But afterwards I felt bad as I knew my email would have thrown him. It would have hit his confidence a bit and sure enough when I went to watch - it wasn't great, he's normally a confident lad and he wasn't confident at all that night. I was annoyed and pissed off with myself for sending that email to him before the session - that was crap from me and a bad decision. I was also frustrated and disappointed with him, that he could make so many mistakes in his planning process – so I wasn't in a good mood at all. And as the session went on, it was a poor session which just annoyed me even more. I had to work really hard at not jumping into the session and having a go at some of the players, but there was no way I would have done that as it would have killed my coach completely. After the session we went to the canteen and had a debrief, I had to be positive and give him some positive feedback. I felt a mixture of a bit of guilt for the earlier email and I was very frustrated and annoyed at the quality of the session, but at that moment he just needed to hear the positives – I had to work hard to give him some positives – but I got there. I apologised to him for the email which may have distracted him, he seemed a nervous wreck and he knew the session wasn't great. But it's my job to help people and some positive messages in that moment was what he needed – not my pissed off face – he didn't need that.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

I'm lucky in one sense that I get to go out on the training pitch with the players and I'll do a few sessions with the under 18's. You watch them train and you watch them in games and you see things you don't like or which can make you frustrated. But you can't always dig them out, when the under 18's have had a bad week, the staff can get frustrated and low, the players are low and the mood around the place can quickly get a bit negative and sapped of energy almost. There's no one more pissed off than me, but they can't see me being annoyed – I've got to show people that it's not all bad, we can get better and improve, I find myself reinforcing the positives and being enthusiastic, I have to be like that for the staff especially and for the players.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

We've had a lot of work on with the EPPP criteria as we look to push from cat 2 to cat 1 - it's a lot of work. We have our EPPP internal working group in place which I chair and there's always lots of actions for all staff across the academy. I can sense a lot of the time when we come together and meet that some of the staff are getting a bit sick and tired of the whole thing - me too at times and I do question it privately and yes it does frustrate and annoy me the things we have to put in place and the work that is left to do. But I have to stay focussed on the jobs in hand, I have to keep communicating the bigger picture to all the staff about what we're trying to achieve – of course at times I'd love to shout that I don't like doing it and that I wish it would just fuck off, but you can't can you? I need to keep positive and send

out positive messages to our staff about how well they're doing – even if they're not – and that we are on track and the difference this will make to the academy and the wider football club. They need to see that things are moving along nicely and that I am calm and controlled. If I start spouting off my feelings of concern it's not going to reassure them about this process.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I don't think you can get too emotional one way or another. You need to keep things in check and perspective - certainly as the academy manager. If we get a good result and a good performance at under 18 and under 23 level you have to get a balance between enjoying it, but not so much that people think it is an exception rather than the rule. We're trying to develop a winning mentality in the players and if that means you go nuts every time you win a game, I'm not sure that gives off the right message. Look, when we beat our rivals Oggerton Albion, there is no one more happy than me – I'm so happy to beat them, but you have to check yourself and help the staff and players keep things in perspective – especially about our standards. If I start doing knee slides and high fives then I'm not sure it's sending the message we want about a winning mentality. We want it to be the norm here. I'm not saying don't enjoy it, but let's not act like we hardly win a game that's all.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants also outlined scenarios where they would engage with external stakeholders, which led them to manufacture their emotional state:

I think probably when the representatives from the football league, premier league and the professional game auditors come down to observe and assess as part of the EPPP auditing process – then you're probably more enthusiastic and positive than you usually are. It's strange, and I'm not saying that I'm not positive or the place isn't positive because it is, I genuinely believe we're doing ok and that we're on the right lines. But yeah, when those guys come in and they are assessing and observing, you want them to have a positive experience and see the place in a positive light, so I think you're then about thirty percent more positive and enthusiastic yourself to try and help make that positive impression of the place. Well, yeah, whilst I'm being positive and enthusiastic with them, inside I'm probably nervous that we might have missed something or they see something they don't quite like, but again this stuff comes with the job.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

Well as you know, you get the odd run in with some parents and you sort of suss them out and get a feel for who might be a bit more hard work. The other season there were the parents of three or four players in the under 16 team who were a pain, they had been a pain throughout most of the time their sons had been with us and one in particular was probably one of the most ungrateful and ignorant people I've had to deal with. On home match days he was

always around the place, in the parents rooms, full of himself probably cos we offered his son a scholarship earlier than most others, he was a bit of twat about it really. But there you go, and yeah I don't really like the bloke, but when I see him around the place and on match days at home, it's like I have to give him smiles and some positive conversation and yeah I suppose pretend that I like him, we have to work with him throughout his son's time with us and he needs to see me being positive around him so I have to show him that, even though I don't really like him.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

The participants all outlined scenarios where they felt they had to alter their emotion and emotional state. This is something which Hochschild (1979, 1983) identifies as *deep acting* whereby the individual does more within themselves to find the emotion they need for that moment. For Hochschild (1983, p.47) deep acting is deciding “what it is we want to feel and on what we must do to induce the feeling”. The participant academy managers demonstrated an attentiveness to appreciate what emotion they needed to exhibit for the situation they were in. Their main driver for the manipulation of their emotion was to achieve an outcome from the situation that was desirable to them. Furthermore, Grills and Prus (2019, p.207), suggest that “managers can deploy emotions strategically e.g. to alter a situation to one's perceived advantage”. Indicating that participants may well use this as part of their managerial ‘tool kit’ to get the outcomes they require. Specifically for the participants, they would accentuate or dial up an emotion that they were not necessarily feeling in order to reach an outcome they felt would be of benefit. The notion of *role embracement* can help explain how the participants were fully submersed in their activity. For Goffman (1961, p.94) this notion is to “embrace a role is to disappear completely into the virtual self-available during the situation, to be fully seen in terms of the image, and to confirm expressively one's acceptance of it”. This therefore, requires the participant academy managers to have a deep level of commitment, dedication and to give a powerful level of concentration in the doing of their management work.

The use of micropolitical theorising by Kelchtermans (2007), again provides an opportunity to examine the motives and reasons which drive the meaning making and behaviour of the participants in this instance. Specifically, in order to adjust their emotions for the situation in hand

they are attentive to read the situation to a) determine what a good outcome would be for them and b) what emotion needed to be portrayed in the situation to achieve the desired outcome. For the participants, such reasons ranged from *cultural-ideological* norms in respect of upholding values and standards of the football academy, through to *social –professional interests*, where the relationships between the academy manager and his coaches are preserved and kept as harmonious as possible. Ultimately, the actions of the participants to alter their emotional appearance can be traced back to the preservation and enhancement of their own self-interests (Hargreaves, 1998; Keltchermans, 2007).

6.5. The ups and downs of managing emotions in this place.

This final section outlines the perceived costs and benefits for the participants of managing their emotions in the workplace. The participants demonstrated an ability to consider what is right for the football academy and the needs and wants of the people in and around the academy. Furthermore, they were also attentive to their own needs and wants and, as such, they would regulate and manage their emotions accordingly. This behaviour had its benefits, but also its costs to the participants, as they outline in their own words:

Yeah you quickly realise that it's not always about you and what you want. Although, when I came into the role, I wanted to create the environment where I would flourish and I would be effective. There are times when things are outside of my control – like when external auditors come in – I can't control everything there, so you do what you can to try and get the best outcome possible, and if that means being upbeat and positive when you don't want to be, then you have to do it. I think if you can recognise what the auditors want to see and hear, then you're going to say it and do it, because you want the best possible chance of success for your football academy.

(Jossie - Blackwater Town).

It's important you keep people onside, keep helping them where you can. I've got standards, we've got standards here – high standards, but we recognise that not every day will people show up bringing their best game. Everyone has off days and I've come to appreciate that your communication with them on their off days is very important. If you're not careful you can damage relationships and trust with your comments and actions. Staff will scrutinise everything you do or don't do as academy manager, you have a great opportunity to influence positively but also a big opportunity to mess it up! It's a blessing and a curse really, but if

you read situations well and get your communication right then you always have a great chance of making progress. But it does get tiring, it can get mentally exhausting at times as you think about how to address certain situations. That's something which takes up a lot of your mental energy, you just have to make sure you don't let it consume your free time and family time.

(Brian - Forest Athletic).

Well I have come to manage frustrations in this place, otherwise you will always be fighting. We are where we are, we have to manage with what we've got. Yes, you try and improve what you can but you have to work and operate in the place you're in. I have started to focus on what I can control and what I might be able to influence. By keeping myself in check this way, we have staff that keep coming back, football gets played and we keep going. I could easily rant and rave all the time but that's not going to help me make progress – it might make me feel better for ten minutes, but it's not something which is going to help this football academy.

(Roy - Spartans FC).

Yeah, by regulating yourself you get progress in certain areas. Like the EPPP category improvements we are doing. It's a big project and at times, like I've said I've been frustrated, angry, overwhelmed – I've felt overwhelmed lots! But others don't need to see that or hear that. They need positive messages and how this is going to make a difference to all the players we work with and the club as a whole. If I get that right and keep people on track then you can see progress gets made. People look to you as an academy manager as their point of reference, and rightly or wrongly you reflect how good the place is in some people's eyes. That brings pressure you have to deal with but it gives you the capacity to make a difference.

(Billy - Melchester Rovers).

I think if I said what I thought on lots of occasions I would be in all sorts of fights! You can't go round being completely truthful with some people – you'll be in and out of HR all the time for a start haha! No, you need to keep the relationships right and productive where possible, too much confrontation isn't going to work. Though you have standards and have your principles which you stick to and which you want the academy to keep to, but you can't enforce that with a hammer all of the time, you need different tools in your tool box and sometimes that means controlling yourself.

(James - Bostock Stanley).

The participants all demonstrated a capacity to reflect on how and why they manage their emotions in certain ways. They appreciate the costs and the benefits from interacting in these ways with others in the football academy. Hochschild (1983) termed the activity of managing and regulating one's emotions as they go about their paid employment as *emotional labour*. More specifically, where the effectiveness of an individual in their role can be determined by their ability to regulate, control or indeed manufacture their emotional state. This is not lost on the participant academy managers as they can appreciate their own *emotional labour* can have an impact upon the effectiveness of their football academy. Yet this important attribute appears to be something they have learned in a sub-cultural context and for Hochschild (1979), cultural scripts can serve to inflict requirements on an individual which can be stressful, even alienating and thus require them to engage in emotion work to meet required outcomes (Turner & Stets, 2007; Grills & Prus, 2019). Whilst Hochschild (1983) recognises the potential benefits to the workplace such emotional labour can bring, she articulates how it is not without its costs to the individual. More specifically in respect to what is termed *emotional stamina*, which is to engage in such *emotional labour* for a prolonged period of time. As alluded to by the participants, such work can become tiring and cognitively exhausting, citing the need to be able to stop thinking about all scenarios and the emotions that may be needed or not. However, it is through Cooley (1922) *looking glass self* with respect to how attentive the participants were to how they are perceived by others, which drives them to manage their emotions in such ways that they portray the appropriate role identity for their job of academy manager (Goffman, 1959; Stets, 2006). Furthermore, Grills and Prus (2019) suggest that managers would do well to reflect on their emotional performances as they go about their management work to exploit or avoid *informal labelling* which "assigns various emotive interpretations to self and others" (p.208). In addition to this, they also outline what they call the *formal labelling* of emotion, which are a result of certain social processes that promote the authorised and institutionalised labels of emotively related qualities of a person (Grills and Prus, 2019).

It is through micropolitical theorising (Kelchtermans, 2007) that the reasons for the participants acting in the ways they did can also be explored. The participants reinforced the

importance of not having to get into fights (arguments), or getting people onside and trying to create a work environment where they felt they could flourish. Such reasons can be linked to *social-professional interests* whereby the participants are cognisant of their interpersonal relationships with staff around the football academy and by engaging in emotional labour it helps them to build and preserve important relationships with their staff. In addition to this, the concept of *self-interests* is evident in the participants motivations, as they seek to create a working environment which they feel will be motivated in and will flourish, but in order to achieve that, they concede that they have to engage in elements of emotional labour which help to create and sustain their preferred working conditions. Ultimately, the outcomes that the participants felt they could gain through an adjustment to their emotional performances were rooted in their micro-political interests and desires (Kelchtermans, 2007). Through their accounts the participant academy managers have demonstrated that they knew such favourable outcomes could be garnered because of their engaging in emotional labour.

6.6. Summary

This chapter has illuminated the emotions that the participants experienced, as well as how those emotions were connected to others and events that occurred in the football academy. Furthermore, this chapter has shown what emotions the participants are prepared to show, with who and why, in addition to documenting what emotions they feel they have to hide and why they feel they have to do this. This chapter has also shown that there are times when the participants will manipulate and alter their emotions in order to achieve their desired outcomes from their interactions. Finally, the range of costs and benefits to the participants of engaging in such emotional work have also been outlined.

The first section focussed on the positive and negative emotions the participants experienced as they are connected to other people and events in and around the football academy. As such, this section has given an insight into the range of positive and negative emotions that an academy manager can experience as they go about their everyday work. It has also illuminated what interactions and

events can cause their different emotional states. To further enhance the novel insights into the emotions experienced by the participants, the sociological emotional theorising of Turner and Stets (2007) has been utilised to break new ground into the understanding of how the emotions experienced are connected to their interactions with others. Furthermore, Cooley (1902) and his concept of the looking glass self has helped to frame the reflexive work of the participants which often fuels their emotional feelings. Cooley's (1902) theorising has dovetailed with Goffman (1959) and his considerations of how the participant academy managers will experience pride or shame across their social interactions which has served to provide the chapter with new insights into the sociological emotional dimensions experienced by managers of professional football academies. To further help explain why the participants experienced such emotions, Stets (2006) ideas on role identity has been used to help frame the participant's perceptions of what role they should take as an academy manager and how contraventions of their view of role can lead them to intense emotional experiences. This section of the chapter has also provided a fresh and further insights into why the participant academy managers experienced a range of emotions by using the micro-political theorising of Kelchtermans (2007) to provide supplementary explanations as how the emotions the participants felt were connected to a range of professional interests they have at the football academy.

The second section of this chapter, considered what emotions the participants felt they could show and what they felt they had to hide. As such, this section has provided novel insights into how the participants showed or hid their emotions depending on their reading of the situation and who they were with. By examining such work through the lens of Hochschild (1979 and 1983), it has enabled fresh insights into how the participant managers decided who they felt they can share their emotions with and why, in addition to who they feel they have to hide their emotions from and why. Indeed, the theorising of Hochschild (1983) with respect to *display rules* has helped this section break new ground to illuminate the cultural norms that the participant academy managers felt were congruent with the actual emotions they were experiencing and therefore they could show their emotions to their audience. Conversely, the act of hiding their true emotions was examined through Hochschild's concept of *surface acting* which has also enabled this section to provide new insights into what

emotions the participants felt they had to hide and the reasons behind doing so. The managerial interactionist theorising of Grills and Prus (2019) and their consideration into *emotion rules* have facilitated this chapter in illuminating the ways the participants academy managers are attentive to what emotions are appropriate for the environment in which they are managing. The concept of micropolitics (Kelchtermans, 2007) has again helped to frame why the participants have acted the ways they have in respect of the showing and hiding of their emotions. This has helped the chapter to provide a new insight into how the emotions of the participant academy managers are connected to a range of micro-political causes, such as how they are connected to material interests, organisational interests and socio-professional interests.

The third section of this chapter highlighted how the participant academy managers will work to modify their emotions and emotional state. Theoretically, this gives new insights by using Hochschild (1983) to examine the micro-level emotion work that the participant football academy managers engage in during their everyday managerial duties. Hochschild's theorising on emotional labour and the notion of how the participants engaged in *deep acting* has served to provide new understandings of the emotion work involved in the everyday doing of football academy management work. Furthermore, Grills and Prus (2019) has been utilised for the first time to help better understand how management work can require emotional work and that emotions are embedded in such activity. Specifically drawing on Grills and Prus (2019) ideas of how managers may modify their emotions to gain strategic outcomes which help them to get work done. The theorising of Goffman (1959) has provided a useful heuristic with which to examine the extent of the participant academy manager's *role embracement* which so often leads them to manipulate and modify their emotional state due to their dedication and commitment to the role. Finally, this section offers new insights into the motivation and reasons the participant academy managers adjust and manipulate their emotions by utilising micropolitical theory (Kelchtermans, 2007). It is through this lens where the range of interests and desires that are considered by the football academy manager can often serve to drive their modified behaviours.

The final section of this chapter has focussed on the perceived costs and benefits to the participant academy managers of showing, hiding and adjusting their emotional behaviour in these ways. Hochschild (1979, 1983) has been utilised to help illuminate the emotional labour that the participants will endure and how they are conscious of the emotional stamina they need in order to create and preserve the role identity (Stets, 2006) they perceive to be appropriate for the sub-cultural context in which they operate. This theoretical insight has dovetailed with the *looking glass self* (Cooley, 1902) to help frame how the participants are attune to what others may think of them which lead them to engage in this emotion work . The motivations for doing emotion work are embedded in the various interests the participants hold, for which micro political theorising (Keltchermans, 2007) has helped to break new ground with respect to how emotional labour by the participant academy managers is linked to a variety of micro political interests.

Subsequently, this chapter has helped to further the sport management literature by offering fresh insights into the emotional nature of sport management work. Here, complimentary social theory has been utilised to illuminate the emotional nuances and complexities of managing a professional football academy. Turner and Stets (2007) sociological theorising on how emotions are experienced has helped to provide a new insight to how the doing of sport management work can lead to emotional experiences. Cooley (1902) and his notion of the looking glass self has helped to show the reasons why sport managers might experience different emotions while Goffman (1959) has served to illuminate the precarious nature of social interactions with respect to a sport manager experiencing embarrassment or pride and how this can drive much of their emotional experience. Hochschild (1983), has helped the chapter to advance the sport management literature base by highlighting the emotional work the sport managers engage in which is embedded in their day to day work. Furthermore, mainstream interactionist management literature from Grills and Prus (2019) has been used for the first time to help advance the sport management's literature base with respect to doing management work in a football academy and the emotional dimensions linked with this. Finally, the application of Keltchermans (2007) work on micro politics, specifically, in terms of how the participants experienced their emotions and acted on their emotions with respect their perceived

micro-political interests have provided novel insights into football academy management and in doing so, has also helped to progress the sport management literature base.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise the key findings and outline how they contribute to the sport management literature. Following this, I outline suggestions and opportunities for future research. Finally, I offer my reflections on the research process. In particular, how they were, and continue to be, tied to my multiple identities and roles at home, as an academic and as a practitioner football coach.

7.2. Overall contribution and summary of key findings

This thesis has developed new knowledge by highlighting how managers of professional football academies interact with others in their football academy and get their daily management work done. Furthermore, it shows the emotions the manager's experience as they do their everyday work and highlights the emotional management work they engage in. Furthermore, the use of social theory has helped to advance the sport management literature by helping to frame the nuances and complexities of organisational life in football academies. It is through the use of Erving Goffman's dramaturgy, where impression management at the micro-level is evidenced. The interactionist managerial exchanges from Grills and Prus (2019) help to highlight the range of everyday management duties which get accomplished with and through others. The micro-politics of those working in organisations by Kelchtermans (2007) frames the range of motives the academy managers had for acting in the ways they did. Finally the use of Hochschild (1983) helps to break new ground to show the emotional management strategies of football academy managers.

Complementing the recent work of Gibson and Groom (2018a, 2018b, 2019), Hall et al., (2021) and Kelly, (2017) where the sport manager has been the focus of the research, my thesis builds upon this momentum by illuminating how football academy managers go about the actual doing of their everyday work, especially with regards to how they get work done with and through others. This thesis extends the existing work by highlighting the political astuteness of football academy managers

illustrating their inter and intra personal capabilities, as they go about reading people and situations, whilst managing their own behaviour in order to get their management work done. In doing so, giving themselves the best opportunity to survive and thrive in their respective football academies. Furthermore, this thesis shows the emotions experienced and the emotional work done by the football academy managers as they go about the everyday doing of their job which empirically helps to break new ground for sport management. In addition to this, the theoretical interpretations used in this thesis serve to develop the sport management's engagement of social theory which enhances our understanding of how sport managers get work done in relation to others.

Indeed, such findings are not unproblematically generalised to all managers (inside or outside of sport), however, the findings in this thesis do possess naturalistic and analytical generalisability (Smith, 2017; Potrac, et al. 2021). In the case of naturalistic generalisability, this occurs when the reader's personal and tacit experiences resonate with the research. For those doing management work, some of the findings will certainly be familiar as they navigate the dilemmas of working with others in order to get work done. Furthermore, the notion of analytical generalisability is also appropriate for the findings of this thesis as the symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical heuristic frameworks have provided concepts which are consistently applied to explain the data (Smith, 2017; Potrac, et al. 2021).

7.2.1 Research Question 1: Engaging with superiors and subordinates

This finding illuminated the work the participant academy managers engaged in as they began their role as a manager of a football academy. There were two key aspects to this finding; the first showed the work they engaged in with superiors and the other showed the work they engaged in with subordinates. Firstly, the finding showed the interactions the participants had with their superiors, and how they worked to establish their credibility and earn the trust and support of their superiors. They did this in order to give themselves the best possible opportunity and agency to manage the academy towards their desired and expected goals. During their interactions with their superiors, the participants outlined how they tried to convey images of proficiency and confidence in order to secure

a level of legitimacy in the eyes of their superiors. This has demonstrated how the participant academy managers were attentive to the impression that they give to their superiors as they sought to earn their trust and support. The second aspect to this finding has shown the work and interactions the participant academy managers engaged in as they sought to establish and deliver the vision they had for the football academy. This involved the coordinated activity they engaged in with the other staff, as they navigated a way to establish the vision they wanted for their football academy. Specifically, the finding has highlighted key tasks the academy managers will engage in which include establishing teams, providing direction, pursuing cooperation and selectively retaining and removing members of staff. Furthermore, this finding also illuminated how they engaged and interacted with their subordinates on a micro-level in order to get a better understanding of the individuals and groups they are working with as they attempted to establish their preferred vision for the football academy. The micro-level interactionist work of the academy manager has been highlighted to show how they tried to present themselves to their subordinates in a range of situations. The participant academy managers would often prepare themselves backstage in readiness for their interaction and, furthermore the finding has shown how they responded and reacted to the other staff they engaged with as they sought to get their vision and ideas realised.

This finding has been explained by using a number of social theorists. Firstly, Grills and Prus (2019) highlighted that a central management task is how an individual might lay the groundwork to help them achieve visions and respective missions. This finding demonstrates how the participant academy managers did these things by trying to secure the support and trust of their superiors in order for them to feel confident enough to shape and map out their vision for the football academy. Furthermore, the use of Goffman's (1963) dramaturgical notions of impression management have helped to show the intricacies of the participant academy managers micro-level interactionist behaviour as they sought to win the trust and support of their superiors. The findings have shown how they will prepare backstage for their front stage performance with their superiors. They were attentive to the impression they give, and indeed, strategised their interactions in order to give themselves the best opportunity to establish trust and secure the support they desired.

Finally, use of micropolitical theory (Kelchtermans, 2007) has helped to frame the motivations which contribute to the interactions of the academy managers. Such micropolitical considerations like material interests, organisational interests, cultural-ideological interests, social-professional interests and self-interests have been deployed to help illuminate how and why academy managers seek to get work done in the ways in which they do. This finding has also shown the micropolitical literacy (Kelchtermans, 2007) of the participant academy managers with respect to how their modified behaviour is connected to their self-interests, social-professional interests, organisational interests and cultural-ideological interests.

This finding heeds the calls from Grills and Prus (2019), in that approaches to studying management should address the everyday work of doing management in depth and detail, highlighting the messiness and ambiguity of the social worlds we inhabit. The work of Gibson and Groom (2018, 2019) has helped the sport management literature base by offering fresh insights into the organisational life worlds inhabited by people in sport. The use of micro-political theorising (Kelchtermans, 2007) has been central to this work and has provided a useful framework as a means of highlighting how and why people may think, feel and act in the ways they do whilst navigating organisational change in sport. This finding therefore, builds on the micro-political work of Gibson and Groom (2018, 2019), by examining interactionist management work through a dramaturgical theoretical lens and by utilising Goffman (1963) to show a managers in football academies modified their behaviour in order to secure the micro-political outcomes they wanted. Such insights, which have shown how managers of professional football academies sought to influence the perceptions of their superiors and subordinates as part of their everyday doing of management work, contribute to develop the sport management literature base to yield knowledge for understanding (Wallace & Poulsen, 2003), which helps to account for the “jumbled, messy, contested, creative and mundane social interactions” that characterise everyday organisational life (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012, p.2).

7.2.2 Research Question Q2: Encountering dilemmas, navigating challenges and managing the everyday

This finding has illuminated how the participants went about the doing of their everyday management work, inclusive of the dilemmas and challenges that they encountered while attending to these tasks, activities and interactions. Alongside highlighting the need to perform tasks effectively (even ones that they considered boring or unexciting), it has demonstrated how the participants were cognisant of who, how and why they supported or chastised others within the academy. The finding showed how the participants have been attentive to their own circumstances in the football academy and how they worked to secure or preserve their desired working conditions in which they perceived they would flourish. The first part of the finding focussed on the participants' understandings of the ways in which they engaged with what they considered to be the routine and mundane features of their management work. This has given an insight into the day-to-day realities of managing a professional football academy. It has illuminated how there are a wide range of tasks and activities which the participants must attend to on a daily basis. The second part of this finding has concentrated on the dilemmas the participants experienced as they sought to both influence and connect to other people in the football academy. This has given insights into how the participants self-regulated and were attentive to their reputational dynamics which were at play in the football academy environment. The final part of this finding has focussed on the dilemmas the participants experienced as they had a direct impact on themselves as academy managers. Specifically, this finding has illuminated the situations they perceived as problematic, - and challenging, as well as how they were connected to their own interests, desires, reputation, and career trajectory.

This finding has been explained theoretically through Grills and Prus (2019) to show managers are attentive to what they perceived as mundane and routine tasks yet, the competent completion of such tasks had wider implications for them as academy managers and the functioning of the wider football academy. Grills and Prus (2019), have enabled insights into how managers utilised their staff to achieve wider outcomes - be it for the functioning of the football academy or to their own ends. Goffman's dramaturgy (1959) has been used to show how the participant academy

managers planned for, and enacted their micro-level interactions with their members of staff in order to get their desired outcomes. Furthermore, the concept of micro-politics (Kelchtermans, 2007) has helped to frame why the participants have acted the ways they have in respect of their interactions with their different members of staff. Micro-political motivations for doing the work well have been outlined with regard to how the tasks the participants completed provided them, and the academy, with a range of outcomes that they perceived to be of value for reasons which were important to them and the functioning of the wider football academy. This finding has shown in particular how the participants' professional interests were embedded in their everyday interactions and engagements with others.

This finding has provided the sport management literature with novel insights into how the participants experienced a range of situations where they actively sought to protect, support or help (or not) other people in the football academy. This finding has also provided a new insight into why the participants might act in a strategic nature for their own micro-political gains during their everyday management work. This builds on the work by Gibson and Groom (2018, 2019) who highlighted the self-interest of football coaches during periods of organisational uncertainty and change. As a result of this finding, new information has been discovered which provides insights into the micro level impression management work participants engaged in, which influenced the perception of themselves by their targeted audience. Such work was done to establish and secure their perceived desired work conditions they felt they needed to have in order to survive and / or thrive. Overall, this has provided new knowledge not only in a theoretical capacity, by utilising managerial interchange (Grills & Prus, 2019), micro-politics (Kelchtermans, 2007) and dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959), but by also providing a detailed insight into the day to day realities of managing a professional football academy.

7.2.3 Research Question 3: Experiencing emotion and engaging in emotional work

The first part of this final finding highlighted the positive and negative emotions the participants experienced as they are connected to other people and events in and around the football academy. As such, this has given an insight into the range of positive and negative emotions that an academy manager can experience as they go about their everyday work. It has also illuminated what interactions and events caused their different emotional states. The second part of this finding highlighted what emotions the participants felt they could show and what they felt they had to hide. As such, novel insights into how the participants showed or hid their emotions depending on their reading of the situation and who they were with have been uncovered. This finding has also demonstrated how the participant academy managers worked to modify their emotions and emotional states, which was often based on the range of interests and desires that they considered important and relevant for the sub-cultural context of their football academy. The final part of this finding has shown the perceived costs and benefits to the participant academy managers of showing, hiding and adjusting their emotional behaviour in different ways.

To help make sense of the emotions experienced by the participants, sociological emotional theorising of Turner and Stets (2007) was utilised to demonstrate how the emotions experienced were connected to their interactions with others. Furthermore, Cooley's (1922) concept of the looking glass self, helped to frame the reflexive work of the participants which often fuelled their emotional feelings. Cooley's (1902) theorising combined with Goffman (1959) has helped to show how the participant academy managers experienced pride or shame through their social interactions. Furthermore, Stets (2006) ideas on role identity framed the participant's perceptions of what role they should take as an academy manager and how contraventions of their view of role led them to intense emotional experiences. The emotional theorising of Hochschild (1979 and 1983), has enabled fresh insights into how the participant managers decided who they felt they could share their emotions with and why, in addition to who they felt they had to hide their emotions from and why. Indeed, the

theorising of Hochschild (1983) with respect to display rules has helped to break new ground to illuminate the cultural norms that the participant academy managers felt were congruent with the actual emotions they were experiencing and therefore they could show their emotions to their audience. Hochschild's (1983) concept of *surface acting* which has also enabled this section to provide new insights into what emotions the participants felt they had to hide and the reasons behind doing so. Hochschild (1983) has also been used to examine the micro-level emotion work that the participant football academy managers engaged in during their everyday managerial duties. Hochschild's theorising on emotional labour and the notion of how the participants engaged in *deep acting* has served to provide new understandings of the emotion work involved in the everyday doing of football academy management work.

Similarly, Grills and Prus (2019) has been utilised for the first time to help better understand how management work can require emotional work and that emotions are embedded in such activity. Specifically, drawing on Grills and Prus (2019) ideas of how managers may modify their emotions to gain strategic outcomes which help them to get work done. The theorising of Goffman (1959) has provided a useful heuristic with which to examine the extent of the participant academy manager's *role embracement* which so often led them to manipulate and modify their emotional state due to their dedication and commitment to the role. Furthermore, micropolitical theory (Keltchermans, 2007) has helped to understand the motivations and reasons the participant academy managers adjusted and manipulated their emotions. Micropolitical theorising has helped to frame why the participants acted in the ways they did in respect of the showing and hiding of their emotions. Hochschild (1979, 1983) has also helped illuminate the emotional labour the participants endured and how they were conscious of the emotional stamina they needed in order to create and preserve the role identity they perceived to be appropriate for the sub-cultural context of the football academy. This theoretical insight combined with the *looking glass self* (Cooley, 1902) has helped frame how the participants were attune to what others may think of them which led them to engage in this emotion work . The motivations for doing emotion work were embedded in the various interests the participants held. This is where micro-political theorising (Keltchermans, 2007) has helped to break new ground with

respect to how emotional labour carried out by the participant academy managers was linked to a variety of micro-political interests.

This finding has helped to further the sport management literature by offering fresh insights into the emotional nature of sport management work in a football academy. Social theory has been utilised to illuminate the emotional nuances and complexities of managing a professional football academy. Turner and Stets (2007) sociological theorising on how emotions are experienced has helped to provide a new insight to how the doing of sport management work can lead to emotional experiences. Cooley (1902) and his notion of the looking glass self has helped to show the reasons why sport managers might experience different emotions while Goffman (1959) has served to illuminate the precarious nature of social interactions with respect to a sport manager experiencing embarrassment or pride and how this can drive much of their emotional experience. Hochschild (1983), has helped the findings to advance the sport management literature base by showing how the emotional work the sport managers engage in is embedded in their day to day work. Furthermore, mainstream interactionist management literature from Grills and Prus (2019) has been used for the first time to help advance the sport management's literature base with respect to doing management work in a football academy and the emotional dimensions linked with this. Finally, the application of Keltchermans (2007) work on micro politics, specifically, in terms of how the participants experienced their emotions and acted on their emotions with respect to their perceived micro-political interests has provided novel insights into football academy management and in doing so, has also helped to progress the sport management literature base.

7.3. Suggestions for future research

It is hoped that this thesis can help to contribute to an emerging research agenda within the sport management literature base which utilises social theory to help illuminate the nuances and complexities of organisational life in sport. There have been calls within the sport coaching discipline for researchers to pursue a 'knowledge for understanding' research agenda to help provide a more nuanced and informed view by which to support coaches working in their respective football settings,

especially with regards to helping coaching practitioners better deal with the complexities of organisational life in football (Gibson & Groom, 2019; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2015; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Jones & Wallace, 2005). However, there has, despite some notable exceptions (e.g., Gibson & Groom, 2019), been a paucity of such inquiry within the sport management discipline. For me, such insights and knowledge are as applicable for managers as they are for coaches.

Whilst this thesis helps to break new ground in the sport management literature, there is still much work to do to better understand how sport management work gets done with who, how and why. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019) make a strong case for researchers to embrace the study of *management in the making*. It is here where researchers are encouraged to illuminate the everyday doing of management, and in order to do this effectively, the research of management should be approached in situ (Grills & Prus, 2019). This is where management research is approached in specific sub-cultural contexts and in the world of everyday life. To better understand the everyday realities of doing management work then one needs to gain an appreciation of management in the context and the social locations present and to consider the activities and interactions. It is through such in situ and ethnographic endeavours where researchers can attend to a range of activities that comprise the everyday doing of management work.

Such activities include how an individual engages with the parameters of holding office and there are fruitful lines of enquiry to be realised by researchers attending to how sport managers orient themselves towards office. Indeed, the interactionist approach to *management in the making* as outlined by Grills and Prus (2019), encourages researchers to consider how a sport manager might encounter and engage with their management role. The process of encountering and engaging with the office consists of a range of activities which researchers can better understand in order to illuminate the anticipatory, preparatory and preliminary features of the sport manager's role. Such activities can include providing direction, accessing resources, dealing with disruptions, influencing policy and managing emotionality (Grills & Prus, 2019), and each provide the sport management

literature base with an opportunity to better understand how such management work gets done within the sub-cultural context.

Furthermore, researchers can help the literature to understand issues of freedom, agency, aura and responsibility which sport managers may or may not experience and to what extent. Specifically, what is termed as latitude by Grills and Prus (2019), where sport managers may have opportunities to engage in behaviours, activities and processes which demonstrate creativity or a circumvention of the rules or policy. By attending to such considerations researchers are well placed to examine how the sport manager gets work done, survives, or indeed, thrives in sport organisations where they have had to circumvent atypical rules and behaviours in order to achieve their desired outcomes. Such opportunities for latitude could be entrenched in issues of aura, as termed by Grills and Prus (2019). Aura could serve to impact how a sport manager is observed or thought of by others inside or outside the organisation, thus influencing perceptions of esteem and power which may or may not be accurate. Researchers across sport could do well to illuminate the actual realities of an individual in sport and how they may or may not use issues of aura and perception to get work done and achieve their desired outcomes. There could be significant advances to be made in the sport management literature to this end, since for sport especially, it is often accepted that individuals are empowered by virtue of the management position they hold, however a more realistic view may highlight the collective and joint nature of sport management work and a reliance on others to get work done.

Due to the nature of sport work with regard to how success can often be attributed to team work and people doing things together, researchers are also provided with an opportunity to consider how individuals might try to change organisations from situations of ambiguous potential to a more coordinated approach with others who are collectively engaged. Indeed, Grills and Prus (2019) outline the importance of understanding how managers engage in a range of practical aspects implementing collective ventures. Such aspects include how managers focus on particular endeavours, how they lay the groundwork for such endeavours and how they might achieve various objectives in their pursuit of collective ventures. For researchers in sport management, this provides

an opportunity to develop a more nuanced understanding of how the sport manager might work to establish teams, provide instruction to those teams, and generate *teamness* through the social processes which comprise the everyday doing of sport management work (Grills and Prus, 2019).

In addition to researchers paying attention to how sport managers implement collective ventures and establish teams, there are also opportunities for the literature base to better understand how managers might work to sustain team ventures and maintain focus (Grills and Prus, 2019). For the sport manager, the practical work of sustaining teams and the various adustive activities that they may have to take in these contexts can be illuminated to help the literature convey how sport managers work to maintain the focus of the teams for which they are responsible. Such lines of enquiry can help to give a more nuanced appreciation of how sport managers might approach some of the relational aspects of sustaining collective ventures which can include how they pursue cooperation and selectively manage individual team members. Furthermore, there are opportunities to investigate how managers may approach issues of dismissals and the problematics they may encounter as they lose team members. This therefore, gives researchers in sport management a lens through which to illuminate the everyday problems of sustaining teamwork and generating notions of *teamness* in order to give a more precise understanding of organisational life (Grills and Prus, 2019).

There are also opportunities for researchers to consider how the social self is framed in the context of self-management as individuals engage in sport work (Mead, 1934; Grills and Prus, 2019; Hall et al., 2021). It is here, where the sport management literature base could offer more empirically informed insights as to how one's understanding of the self can inform and impact their behaviour and activities they may or may not engage in as they do management work. As individuals can engage in self-reflection, to be the object of their own actions and to be able to adopt the perspective of others they have the capacity for self-management (Grills and Prus, 2019). This therefore, can be utilised by sport management researchers to help the literature better understand how the sport manager engages in self-management strategies as they go about managing others, or indeed, find themselves being managed. This can also offer unique opportunities to give attention to the political astuteness of the

sport manager and their ability to read and understand the micro-political climate of the organisation in which they are managing. Such considerations can help to provide both the researcher and the sport manager with a deeper appreciation into the complexities of organisational life which can work to constrain or provide agency to the sport manager. This approach can yield a ‘knowledge for understanding’ which can inform a ‘knowledge for action’ (Jones & Wallace, 2005) agenda that serves to better equip sport managers with the necessary inter and intra personal skills to help them survive and thrive within the organisations they inhabit.

7.4. My experiences as a PhD researcher

7.4.1. A personal perspective

The undertaking of this PhD has challenged me in a number of different ways across personal and professional situations. Firstly, from a personal perspective managing my commitments and making progress on my PhD was challenging at times. One reason for this is due to my family situation, where I don’t live full time with my daughter, as her mother and I divorced around the time I started work at the University and began on my PhD journey. It meant that my daughter (who was aged 2 at the time), would come and stay with me every other weekend and a couple of times throughout the week. The situation of not living full time with my daughter put a real strain on me and it is something I have had to learn to live with. It has meant that during the times my daughter stayed with me, I tried not to do work in order to prioritise my time with her and focus my attention on her. I was not long into my PhD when my dad, aged 66, died suddenly in February 2015. I am an only child and I was very close to my dad, and for me, he was a true ‘working class hero’. He left school at 15 to work as an errand boy to support his mother, brother and sister. He worked as Electrician at Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Councils and he retired at the age of 60. Although he left school at 15 years old and did not have any further or higher education to speak of, the importance of education was not lost on him, and he and my mother supported me through my

time at University. He was very proud of me gaining my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and for the career I had developed for myself. When I told him that I would be heading back to University at the age of 32 to be a graduate tutor and undertake a PhD, he was very supportive and, despite the fact I would be taking a pay cut to do this role, he championed the longer term benefits to my career. It is against that backdrop to which losing my dad has hurt me deeply but has also served to keep me determined to progress with my PhD and finish this journey that he started with me.

On a more practical level, the varying commitments I have contended with are something which I have had to manage – not always successfully – but I have always tried my utmost to ensure I fulfil the different obligations I have which include; being a good dad to my daughter Alex, being a good partner to Lisa, being an amenable ex-husband to ensure the best possible parental situation for my daughter and being a good son to my mother who has mobility issues, relies on me for shopping, and since my dad passed, is short on company when I am not around. It is against these obligations as part of my personal situation to which my PhD has been completed.

7.4.2. A professional perspective

Whilst there have been certain points in time in which my personal situation has been challenging as I have tried to progress my PhD, there were also some challenges from a professional perspective. Initially, being employed as a graduate tutor at the age of 32 did not come with the job security as it was a fixed term contract. This was something which certainly caused me some worry, but eased over time as I secured a role as a lecturer and then have since advanced into senior lecturer. When I joined the University as graduate tutor, it was under the premise that I would undertake a PhD, yet I did not have a supervisory team already in place for me starting the role. I found it challenging, but interesting to knock on the doors of my new colleagues and ask them if they had the capacity and inclination to supervise my PhD. I managed to secure the services of Sam and Louise however, they both left the University to pursue their careers which meant that they could no longer be a part of the supervisory team. This added to my confusion as to whether I was doing the right thing professionally, there just seemed to be too much of this PhD process I was embarking on which

was left to chance and to situations which were outside of my immediate control. Fortunately, before leaving the University, Louise set up a meeting with a new member of staff into the department, Professor Paul Potrac. I felt we connected straight away and Paul certainly asked me some challenging questions – but in his usual supportive and caring manner – which made me think about not only my PhD, but my whole perspective on research and the type of research I wanted to engage in as an academic. The conversations we had have certainly opened the door for this PhD to take place and to help me gain clarity upon the research I believe to be important and how it can help others.

Once I was clear on the direction of my PhD and how I could see it helping to give me a research career trajectory, the main priorities were the doing of the PhD amongst the professional workload commitments, which came with being a graduate tutor, a lecturer and now a senior lecturer. In addition to these commitments, I have also continued to work as a football coach at Newcastle United Academy where I have been head coach of the under 13 squad, and more recently assistant coach of the under 16 squad. This commitment is in a part time capacity, however it still requires me to coach at the academy for 3 nights per week and attend a game on a weekend. Despite this being a big time commitment this is something I have been keen to continue as I enjoy it, it keeps me current, and being in this culture helps me to understand it better from a researcher perspective. However, it has often been tricky to navigate as I explain further below.

7.4.3. Navigating football academy life

I have been coaching in the academy football environment for approaching 10 years and I really do enjoy it. I got released from the centre of excellence environment back in 1997 as a hopeful 16 year old and since then I have taken to coaching football culminating in me achieving my UEFA A license back in 2013. Because I have been ‘in the system’, have played local non-league football (to a standard where I was getting £50 a game) and have secured my coaching qualifications as I have went

along, my footballing ‘backstory’ is something which is deemed suitable and appropriate by others who work in the culture of a football academy. Not least, because to greater or lesser extents theirs is a similar story. As such, you gain some legitimacy and a level of credibility in the eyes of other coaches and sense a feeling of being ‘one of us’. It is through this that you feel you are part of the team and very much perceived in the ‘right way’ for a sub-culture of this nature. As I reflect on my experiences as a football coach and someone who is a senior lecturer at University doing PhD research into these football academy environments, I am reminded of a lyric in the John Lennon song ‘Working Class Hero’ which goes *‘they hate you if you’re clever, and they despise a fool’*. Now, hate and despise are strong words and I don’t think hate and despise are right for my reflections. However, the sentiments of being perceived as either too clever or as a fool in the football academy environment are ones which ring true and which I was all too aware of. Because of my aforementioned football backstory I was perceived as a culturally appropriate fit, that coupled with my personality to get along with people and just get on with things has helped me to survive and probably thrive in this environment. However, as my PhD research progressed and other coaches would ask how it was going and what I was doing, I became very aware of what I would say and how much I would say. In the world of academy football you are usually seen as either a practitioner or academic – not both, and in my quest to remain perceived as a coach and as such, continue to be considered as sub-culturally appropriate in the eyes of the other coaches, I would often play down my PhD research and not talk about it in any significant detail. Furthermore, the nature of my PhD research which focuses on managers of football academies and how they get work done has often led to difficult and tense scenarios which the managers described. The nature of some of my conversations I have had with academy managers do not make for light conversation with my fellow coaches and I have been conscious that I uphold my duty to preserve anonymity, which is something I may have found difficult if I engaged in detailed conversations about my research.

In addition to my awareness of how I may be perceived by others in the football academy in which I coach, I also had to critically consider my simultaneous identities in the eyes of the participant academy managers by being a member of a different football academy to the ones I was

researching. I was both an ‘insider’ in respect of having an awareness of the culture of academy football and I could demonstrate some ‘insider’ credibility in respect of using the relevant cultural vernacular and acronyms which are commonplace in the English football academy system. However, I was also conscious of me being from a different football academy and the very likely possibility of me being seen as a rival or a competitor. As such, I made every attempt to ensure the participant academy managers knew I wasn’t there to ‘steal their secrets’ of player development, but to just understand how they manage and get work done in their respective football academies. To help with this situation I made the conscious decision of attending the meetings and interviews with the academy managers wearing my Northumbria University branded polo shirt. I felt that this served to reinforce that I was there on University business, an impression I would have struggled to convey if I decided to put my football tracksuit on. In our early interactions I made sure that the participant academy managers knew what I did in the football academy and I tried to put their mind at ease that I was not there as a rival or a competitor. By paying attention to such issues of impression management, I hope to have ensured that the participant academy managers have given illuminating and candid accounts of their academy management experiences which have been instrumental in this thesis.

7.5. Reflective Summary

Overall, my experiences of engaging in the PhD process have been rewarding but challenging across a number of different levels. From a personal perspective, it has led to feelings of conflict and concern with regard to where I spend my time; if it is with my daughter, partner, mother or friends then I would experience feelings of guilt or shame that I am not adequately fulfilling my PhD duties. If I spend evenings and weekends doing PhD work then feelings of guilt and shame would emerge with respect to fulfilling my obligations as a dad, partner, son, or friend. From a professional perspective, balancing my workload and ensuring I perform my senior lecturing duties to a level that matches my sense of self and the standards I hold for myself could be a challenge and there were

some occasions where I felt that I was delivering a substandard performance across different work based situations. This led to some feelings of inadequacy and that I was letting myself down. However being exposed to such challenges and having such thoughts allowed me to question those feelings and ultimately motivated me to adjust and adapt accordingly. Issues of the multiple obligations I have across personal and professional domains have served to highlight the multiple identities which I can occupy across a range of situations. From dad, partner, son, or friend, to senior lecturer, PhD researcher, academic and football coach, those roles I take will require different behaviours to be exhibited. There is no doubt that this has been challenging, however through a capacity to self-reflect and to self-regulate, I feel that I can be pleased with my endeavours.

There will be many others who have an opportunity to engage in PhD research alongside a raft of other commitments and they will no doubt have reservations about doing so. However, if you are able to discover a topic area which interests and excites you and can align yourself with a supervisory team who care, who are supportive and who can challenge you, then I would wholeheartedly recommend the process. As a result of my engagement with the PhD process, I have developed skills and proficiencies which permeate all aspects of my personal and professional life. I have become a more research informed academic, where I feel able to speak with conviction in key areas of sport management work. Furthermore, I have become a better lecturer and coach through my improved capacity for self-awareness, self-regulation and self-reflexivity.

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