

Alcohol sponsorship in sport: An investigation into the effect alcohol sponsorship has on young Irish adults.

MSc Marketing

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the impact that alcohol sponsorship in sport has on young adults. Alcohol sponsorship of sport is a pivotal element for a wide range of alcohol marketing activity in Ireland.

A vast array of marketing activities are used to highlight the link between alcohol, sports and popular athletes with the goal being that it drives consumption of alcohol. There has been a large number of organisations, particularly sporting bodies and alcohol companies opposed to a sponsorship ban being implemented. However, there are also a large number of group who are passionate advocates of a ban taking place.

Five in-depth interviews were carried out with young adults who are actively involved in sport by participating in it and by being spectators. One interview was carried out with the Commercial & Marketing Manager of Dublin GAA in order to gain a different perspective regarding a potential alcohol sponsorship ban.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It has been noted that Irish people consume more alcohol compared to their international counterparts. The per capita consumption rose approximately 40% in the last fifteen years. As a result, there has been a substantial increase in the health related consequences of alcohol use. (Mongan, 2007)

As a result of these figures, the Irish College of Psychiatrists believe that the time has come to dramatically curtail the promotion of alcohol through advertising and sponsorship. According to Hibell, young people in Ireland have one of the highest levels of drunkenness in Europe. (Hibell, 2012). It has been suggested by Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, that alcohol marketing including advertising, sponsorship and other forms of promotion, increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and to drink more if they are already drinking alcohol. (Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, 2009)

Alcohol Action Ireland suggests that a ban on alcohol sponsorship particularly in sport, would decelerate the promotion of alcohol in Ireland and diminish the potency of alcohol advertising that in turn would reduce alcohol consumption in Ireland. They note that the purpose of marketing is to create a need or desire for a product. They suggest that alcohol is not a staple, it is not a necessary purchase, and, therefore, a market must be created. (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2013)

There are many conflicting reports that debate whether or not there is a link between increased alcohol consumption and alcohol sponsorship and advertisement in sport. For instance, the Alcohol Beverage Federation (ABFI) claims that there is no substantial link between sponsorship and alcohol consumption. However, numerous medical professional dispute that claim.

About the overall consumption of alcohol, according to Ramstedt and Hope, Irish children and teenagers are also more likely to be regular and heavy drinkers than children and teenagers in other European countries. In 2002, 16% of boys and 12% of girls aged 12-14 were current drinkers while roughly half of 15-17-year-old boys and girls were regular drinkers with 60% of boys and 56% of girls reporting being regularly drunk (Ramstedt and Hope, 2005).

However, it could be argued that it is possible to change the drinking habits of a nation. For instance, in France, there has been a notable reduction, in alcohol consumption, alcohol related illness in the past thirty years. This has been achieved through a combination of measures that have included severe restrictions on alcohol promotion. (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). The drinks industry in France has contested these advertising restrictions by entering some legal battles in the European Court. Much to the drinks industries dismay, the right of the French Government to take measures to protect the health and well-being of its citizens have been upheld in court. (Rigaud & Craplet, 2004).

Research commissioned by Alcohol Action Ireland found that among 16-21-year-olds, alcohol ads represented 5 out of 10 of their favourite ads, almost all had owned some form of alcohol-branded merchandise and among 16-17-year-olds a third had seen an ad or a pop-up ad on their social networking page. (Behaviour & Attitudes, 2010)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Sponsorship is understood as ‘an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity’ (Meenaghan 1991, p. 36).

Early studies on sponsorship effects were focusing either on sponsorship recall. (Easton and Mackie 1998) The near-ubiquity of sponsors' brands in 21st-century society is astonishing – they appear everywhere from global sports teams to video games, musical festivals to popular television shows. This highlights the immense popularity of sponsorship as a marketing strategy.

Meenaghan & O’Sullivan believe that it is important for a company to identify the role of sponsorship in the overall marketing communications mix. Sponsorship unlike other tools in the mix offers a wide range of coverage in terms of personal objectives for company executives, reaches a large target audience in a single campaign and can have a philanthropic and commercial aspect to it also. (Meenaghan & O’Sullivan, 1995)

With the brand objectives, companies use sponsorship to increase public knowledge of their brand and associate brands with certain events thus reinforcing the brand image. Company objectives differ and each company will have a specific audience with whom they wish to communicate to. The company recognises the importance of their staff and key-decision makers and sponsorship allows them to build relations between the company and these key people at the specific events, which allows the company to entertain and thus reward staff and build goodwill among decision makers (Meenaghan 1991).

According to a report published by Warc, global sponsorship expenditure is forecast to rise 3.8% to \$57.3 billion worldwide in 2015. Sponsorship contributed 6% of global marketing spend last year, compared with 32% for direct and specialist marketing and 56% on above-the-line advertising. North America has been forecast to be the largest sponsorship region, with \$21.6 billion in spend this year; Europe is in second place on \$15 billion, with Asia-Pacific third on \$14 billion. Within the United States, sports are expected to take a 70% share of total sponsorship spend in 2015. 'Creating awareness' is the campaign objective most likely to be cited by sponsors of all kinds; in terms of channels used, social media is most popular, used by a staggering 90% of sponsors. (Warc, 2015)

Today's top-tier sponsorships pay more than \$100m for Olympic Games deals, with Coca-Cola spending approximately \$125m to be associated with the Beijing 2008 event. These sums are all the more remarkable given the fact that, according to Olympic rules, no brand names are permitted to appear on billboards and banners at the venues themselves. Brands have also experienced success creating and running their own events such as the Nike+ Human Race 10k or the RedBull Air Race. (Warc Report, 2010)

According to Wareman, if sponsorship is implemented effectively, it can drive brand awareness, reposition or build brands, increase emotional bonding with audiences, improve business relationships, drive direct sales, engage customers and employees or enhance corporate reputation. Wareman suggests that sponsorships can engage various audiences by tapping into their passions and they can add value to their experiences. He believes that since these audiences choose to consume and event or experience because they are passionate about

it, they would, therefore, be more receptive to a commercial message that enhance their enjoyment. (Wareman, 2008)

Klien suggests that the key to sports sponsorship is to maintain focus on the objectives, create an effective plan, allocate sufficient resources and establish metrics. This could potentially bring a brand to life, break through the clutter and, ultimately, drive business. (Klien, 2014)

With brand exposure, F1 racing offers corporations an attractive marketing platform on a global scale given its reach. F1 teams hailing from large nations such as Italy, Germany, Austria, India, and the United Kingdom maintain annual operating budgets that average an estimated €158m (Sylt, 2014)

D'Astous & Bitz suggest that if a consumer has a negative predisposition toward a sponsorship, they may perceive a sponsorship as manipulative. This tendency could explain why sponsorships are more effective when consumers perceive their intentions as philanthropic rather than commercial. (D'Astous & Bitz, 2005) From a sponsors' perspective, consumer purchase intention is the most useful indicator of sponsorship effectiveness given its impact on future sales (Crompton, 2004)

However, there has been research conducted with raises questions over the overall effectiveness of sponsorship. Javalgi found that the effect of sponsorship in terms of corporate image varied greatly from business to business. Sponsorship seemed to have a small positive effects, but in other cases its impact appeared to be negative. (Javalgi, 1994)

2.1 - Brand Image & Brand Familiarity

Keller (1993, p. 3) defines brand image "as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory". Learning of stimuli that are related to the brand (e.g., trademark, sponsorships) is a way to build, strengthen, and maintain these associations. The predominant – but not exclusive – channels for communication of these associations are mass media channels. Thus, sporting bodies are promising suppliers of pictures, episodes, experiences, and stories that may be relevant for building new associations.

Brand familiarity has been defined by Alba and Hutchinson (1987, p. 411) as "the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer". Brand familiarity is expected to play an important role in the effectiveness of the sponsorship image transfer. (Carrillat et al. 2005). To understand this effect, it can help by looking at the schema theory. A scheme is defined as 'an organised collection of belief and feeling represented in a cognitive category' (Soloman et al. 2006, p. 654) and as more knowledge of the brand is acquired by the consumer the more powerful and strong the schema becomes (Lord, 1973). In simple terms, the familiarity of the brand increases. Keller suggests that the schema of a brand is defined by the attributes of the product and also by the non-product related attributes, such as the brand's associations. (Keller, 1993)

2.2 - Purchase Intention

As noted by Lavidge and Steiner (1961), the conative stage of the hierarchy is related to the tendency to treat objects positively or negatively. It is consistent with the concept of behavioural intention, which is defined as the expectation or likelihood for an individual to behave in a specific way regarding the acquisition, use and disposition of a product (Mowen & Minor 2001). Purchase intention is the outcome of interest, because it focuses on the consumer's likelihood of acquiring a product, so many marketing researchers have treated conation as the consumer's intention to buy (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000). It is considered one of the most important measures for the conative stage (Beerli & Santana 1999). Purchase intentions are formed on the basis of many factors, including perceptions about attributes such as quality as well as the attitudes that have been formed towards the brand (Belch & Belch 2001).

The results of previous research investigating the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention have been inconsistent. For example, Crimmins and Horn (1996) indicated that 60% of their respondents claimed they would try the product of an Olympic sponsor. On the contrary, research by Hoek *et al.* (1997) showed that sports sponsorship could not increase purchase probability/intention among their respondents.

2.3 - Theoretical and Empirical Background

Some theoretical models of sponsorships have been proposed with some conflicting implications. Social learning theory argues that sponsorship and advertising contribute to the perception of drinking as a legitimate and normal activity in society. (Grube, 1995). This theory believes the adverse effects of sponsorship and advertising on alcohol consumption patterns, including the decision to begin drinking alcohol and binge drinking. (Single & Leino, 1998). Gerbner notes that sponsorship reinforces favourable views of drinking by providing positive role models such as athletes in conjunction with providing lifestyle images and themes. (Gerbner, 1995) Further, alcohol advertisements are rarely negative which may lead to the expectation that excessive consumption of alcohol has few adverse effects. Social learning theorists believe this expectation contributes to alcohol abuse. (Hoek, 1999)

There is a large empirical literature related to advertising. Some empirical studies have tested alcohol expectancy models for vulnerable groups, especially children and adolescents. Grube (1993, p. 65) concludes that these studies provide evidence that television advertising causes youth to be more favourably in their attitude towards alcohol.

2.4 - Visual Processing

According to Rossiter and Percy, for sponsorship, visually processed information is imperative. They note that generally brands want to be reinforced by pleasant visual imagery and that it can be a sufficient condition for visual reinforcement to occur. (Rossiter & Percy, 1978)

Close, Lacey and Cornwell note that visual reinforcement is an important element in visual processing because a spectator at an event actively or passively sees the exposure of the sponsor without necessarily thinking about the event sponsorship. For sporting event spectators, brand logos are backdrops to the actual event. Close, et al., suggest that this suggests low-level encoding into short-term memory and constant passive exposure to the brand. (Close, Lacey & Cornwell, 2015)

2.5 - Event Quality, Attitude, and Visual Processing

According to Close et al., the quality of the sponsored event helps to drive attitudes towards the sponsor and the sponsor's products. Sponsorships can enable brand representatives to interact with event attendees personally via on-site services and other sponsorship linked activities. (Close et al., 2015)

Research conducted suggests that when attendees favourably view an event, favourable attitudes much more likely will be held toward the sponsor and, in turn, its products (Alexandris, Tsaousi, and James, 2007). Furthermore, raised perceptions of quality regarding the sponsor's products ensue from the sponsor's association with a high-quality event (Walker, Hall, Todd, and Kent, 2011)

2.6 - Alcohol Advertising

According to WHO, advertising works by creating positive expectancies and beliefs about a product. (WHO, 2012) In order to garner brand recognition and promote consumption of their product, the alcohol industry uses a broad range of strategies that encompass their marketing strategy. Such areas of this strategy would include, packaging and product design, placement of the brand and product in sports, and location in supermarket aisles and other channels of communication and pricing. The aim of alcohol marketing is to increase sales of an alcohol brand, whether it is encouraging existing customers to consume more alcohol or recruiting new customers. (Alcohol Ireland, 2014)

The median age of commencing drinking alcohol in Ireland was 17 years. It was revealed that five per cent of respondents who had ever consumed alcohol started to drink at or by age 14 years, 25% had started to drink at or by age 16 years, 50% by or at age 17 years, 58% consumed it before their 18th birthday or before the legal age at which alcohol consumption is permitted in Ireland. In summary, 63.9% of males and 51.4% of females were drinking alcohol before the age of 18 years. Research has shown that those who start drinking at an early age are more likely to become dependent drinkers throughout life. (Grant and Dawson, 1997)

2.7 – Potential Alcohol Sponsorship Ban in Ireland

According to Barry, young people are not only exposed to a large amount of alcohol advertising through sports sponsorship but their beliefs and behaviour are influenced by these positive messages about alcohol and its use, this increases the likelihood that they will begin to consume alcohol at an earlier age. Barry believes that alcohol sponsorship of sport works in terms of increasing sales and increasing alcohol consumption. He believes that pairing a healthy physical activity such as sport with an unhealthy product such as alcohol makes that product seem less unhealthy and somewhat more acceptable. It can, therefore, create a culture where young people perceive alcohol consumption as a normal part of living. (Barry, 2013)

Hogan revealed that doctors have been calling for an outright ban on alcohol advertisement and sponsorship in sport. One doctor, in particular, Dr William Flannery, of the College of Psychiatrists, vehemently opposes alcohol sports sponsorship. Dr Flannery believes that drinks industry targets adolescents and sponsorship was linked to the early onset of alcohol use. Dr Flannery has said that alcohol can have some detrimental effects on society. He revealed that alcohol was involved in 24% of all attempted suicides in Ireland. (Hogan, 2013)

Hogan further reveals that Dr Bobby Smith, of Alcohol Action Ireland, is another advocate of the ban of alcohol sports and sponsorship in sports. Dr Smith revealed that when he asked an eight-year-old to name one tobacco brand but he was unable to do so. However, when the same eight-year-old was asked about alcohol brands, he was able to name Guinness and Heineken. Dr Smith has asked for people to look at France as an example of where a ban has brought success. The country brought in a ban on alcohol sponsorship of sport. The Heineken Cup rugby competition in France was called the 'H' cup there. Dr Smith believes that that this led to a reduction in consumption and alcohol-related domestic abuse in the years afterwards. (Hogan, 2013)

2.8 –Opposition to a Proposed Sponsorship Ban

Former Director-General of the GAA, Paraic Duffy has denied claims that there is a link between alcohol sponsorship in sport and the perceived drink problem in Ireland. Duffy insists that there is no evidence to prove the link. Duffy notes that if someone can produce evidence that there's a link between alcohol sponsorship in sport and alcohol abuse in Ireland, then the GAA would have to look at the alcohol sponsorship and advertising differently. He believes that if there were such an outright ban on alcohol sponsorship, then money would be taken out of the sport and alcohol companies would invest someplace else. (O'Toole, 2013)

Duffy noted that the GAA relied on sponsorship for 33 per cent of its overall funding. Duffy believes that the removal of sponsorship by alcohol companies would increase financial pressures on sporting bodies and their clubs and that there should be a greater focus on educating people instead and making it more difficult for young people to access alcohol. (Hyland, 2013)

In a report published by the Department of Health & Children, it notes that the GAA accepts sponsorship from the alcohol industry for teams at an adult level but not at a juvenile level. The GAA have pioneered education regarding alcohol consumptions by recently setting up the Alcohol & Substance Abuse (ASAP) programme with the Health Service Executive and they have opted to move title sponsorship to multi-sponsorship for their All-Ireland Hurling

Championship which previously had Guinness as their sole title sponsor. Over 80% of all GAA income generated is invested achieving of the GAA's objectives. The GAA fully believes that their ASAP programme is the best platform to address the issue of alcohol misuse for the organisation. (Department of Health & Children, 2010)

Irish sporting bodies are unsurprisingly against an alcohol sponsorship ban in sport. According to McGee, Ireland's three main sporting bodies, the Football Association of Ireland, the Irish Rugby Football Union and the Gaelic Athletic Association are all opposed to a complete ban in Ireland. The heads of all three organisations told a Committee on Transport and Communication that there was no evidence that a ban would have a positive effect on reducing alcohol misuse in Irish society. (McGee, 2013)

The Football Association of Ireland is particularly opposed to a ban being implemented by the Irish government. The FAI believe that a damaging, consequence of banning alcohol sponsorship is that international event organisers would avoid staging prestigious tournaments and events in Ireland. The FAI believe that a ban on alcohol sponsorship in Ireland will not achieve its desired purpose. The organisation believe that international events are more likely to have an alcohol sponsor than local or national events and their availability in Ireland through television broadcast would nullify and impact that alcohol sponsorship would have. The FAI believes that a programme of self-regulation between the sporting organisations and the alcohol industry would be the best solution with both parties actively promoting responsible drinking. (Department of Health & Children, 2010)

2.9 - Sports Sponsorship Expenditure in Ireland

It was estimated that the drinks industry sponsorship of sporting events in Ireland in 2012 amounted to approximately, €35 million. Throughout the years, there has been an abundance of sporting events that were sponsored by an alcohol company. Just some of the major sponsorships included the Guinness GAA All-Ireland Hurling Championship, the Heineken European Rugby Cup, Carling Nations Cup, the Magners League and the Powers Whiskey Irish Grand National. (Foley, 2013)

According to Anderson, longitudinal studies have revealed that the volume of alcohol advertising and media exposure increases the likelihood that young people will start drinking, increases the amount of alcohol young people consume and increases the amount of alcohol young people consume on any one occasion. Studies have also revealed that an increase in expenditure on alcohol advertising is associated with an increase in alcohol-related harm among young people and there is a, therefore, a belief that a total ban on alcohol advertising would reduce alcohol-related harm among young people. (Anderson, 2007)

In relation to how much alcohol sponsorship is worth to Irish sporting bodies, McGee reported that the head of the Irish Rugby Football Union revealed that alcohol-related sponsorship was worth a total of €9 million to the IRFU. John Delaney of the Football Association of Ireland revealed that alcohol sponsorship was worth a significant portion of the FAI's overall sponsorship revenue. Paraic Duffy of the Gaelic Athletic Association informed the committee that the alcohol sponsorship was a small amount of the GAA's overall revenue. (McGee, 2013)

2.10 – Alcohol Sponsorship Linked with Sports

According to a report published by the National Youth Council, alcohol sports sponsorship directly links masculinity, alcohol and sport and embeds alcoholic products into the everyday life of the consumer. It has an incredible strength of being able to reach directly the target audience – young males who are the keenest sports fans and heaviest drinkers. During the 2008 European Football Championship, there was the high exposure of young adolescent boys (under 16 years) to beer advertisements. Those who watched more football games had a higher intention to drink alcohol in the following months than youths who have not seen the games frequently. (National Youth Council, 2009)

According to Shortall, sports sponsorship is quite a significant component of the many forms of alcohol promotion. Shortall suggests that a Government ban of all alcohol sponsorship is pivotal in the health and wellbeing for young Irish adults. Drinks companies are seeking to boost their brand image by glamorising their product by associating it with popular sporting figures. Shortall, notes that internal documents from Carling reveal that the main aim of Carling sponsoring sports is to build an image of the brand and to recruit young male drinkers. She believes that it is impossible to conclude anything other than the promotion of alcohol, including the sports sponsorship, leads young people drinking earlier in life, higher levels of consumptions and great health risks. (Shortall, 2015)

A 2011 longitudinal study in the UK by Gordon, Harris, MacKintosh and Moodie found a significant association between awareness of, exposure to, and involvement in, alcohol marketing, and drinking behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol. The initial findings reinforce the view that alcohol is marketed using several channels of communication, and that young people demonstrate a high level of awareness of and involvement with alcohol marketing. (Gordon, Harris, MacKintosh and Moodie, 2011)

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland believes that alcohol marketing has an impact on youth alcohol consumption and contributes to a general culture of excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol is a drug that contributes to multiple health and social harms, and continued association of this drug with sporting activity is unacceptable. A phase out of alcohol sponsorship of sports events would not fix alcohol-related harm overnight but it is a necessary part of changing the culture around alcohol consumption. (The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, 2014)

According to Dr Murray, who is a specialist in liver disease, and is also president of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and chairman of its policy group on alcohol, there is strong evidence to link promotion of alcohol through sports sponsorship with early and more problematic consumption in young people. Murray suggests that drink companies are investing in advertising and sponsoring sporting events because they achieve their purpose: they boost alcohol sales. He notes that the alcohol industry is a powerful lobby that protects its wider business interests. Dr Murray believes that initiatives on price and availability of alcohol can change consumer behaviour towards alcohol. He believes that campaigns advising the public to drink responsibly won't change the drinking culture; actions on price and availability would have a great effects, particularly on younger drinkers and hazardous and harmful consumers of alcohol. (Murray, 2015)

The faculty of the RCSI also believe that financial and other supports given to the national sporting bodies by the alcohol industry should be phased out. All existing contractual agreements should be allowed come to completion, provided that they are completed and that there are no new sponsorship agreements between alcohol producers and national sporting bodies. RCSI suggest that this can only be achieved by legislation. Voluntary codes will not be sufficient as not all national sporting bodies or alcohol producers would take the same approach to a voluntary code with each organisation varying. (Department of Children and Health, 2010)

According to a World Health Organisation report, there is a link between alcohol marketing and consumption in markets where alcohol is more widely advertised to young people & are more likely to continue to increase their drinking as they move into their mid-twenties, whereas drinking declines at an earlier age among those who are less exposed. (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2009)

In Ireland, the average spend by sixteen and fifteen-year-olds on alcohol in €20.9 per week. In total, that amounts to 145 million of the total annual spend by Irish adolescents. (Office of Tobacco Control, 2006) Research has also revealed that teenagers who drink regularly are more likely to become heaving consumers of alcohol into their adulthood. (Grant, Scherrer, Lyskey, 2006)

2.11 - Alcohol Action Ireland Propose Ban

Suzanne Costello, CEO of Alcohol Action Ireland, is quoted as saying “Sponsorship of sporting events by alcohol brands is a particularly potent form of sales promotion and comprehensive evidence shows that children are not only exposed to a large amount of alcohol promotion through sports sponsorship, but that their beliefs and behaviour in relation to alcohol are influenced by the alignment of alcohol brands with their sporting heroes and everything they represent. If this Government fails to act to phase out alcohol sponsorship of sport and allows the existing self-regulatory codes governing marketing and advertising to pass, unexamined by independent experts in public health, onto the Statute books, then it will have allowed the alcohol industry to write the law that governs alcohol marketing and advertising in Ireland and spurned the opportunity to make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of future generations of Irish people.” (Costello, 2015)

Alcohol Action Ireland base their assertions that there should be a ban based on the following facts. The public health team, for want of a better term, based their assertions on the following. (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2012)

One in four deaths of men between the ages of 15 and 39 in Ireland is alcohol-related.
--

The World Health Organisation states that to reduced alcohol-related harm, alcohol consumption needs to reduce and key ways of doing this are: tackling pricing, availability, promotion i.e., marketing, of which sponsorship is a key element.
--

The aim of alcohol sponsorship is to sell more alcohol to those already drinking a product and to encourage those who are not drinking it to start.

Alcohol companies actively seek to secure the brand loyalty of the new, young consumers coming on stream every year since every marketer knows that it is easier to get someone who has no brand loyalty to adapt a new one than to get them to switch.

Alcohol companies sponsor sports specifically to gain access to lucrative, young, male markets.

By linking with an event through sponsorship, an alcohol brand can receive numerous mentions on television and radio apart from paid-for advertising, for example in sports bulletins and programmes, as well as general talk shows and news programmes. (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2012)

2.12 - What evidence is available on the casual relationship between sports sponsorship on alcohol consumption?

According to a report issued by the Department of the Taoiseach, there is no evidence to prove that there is a casual link between sports sponsorship and alcohol consumption, including consumption by young people. They suggest that research has proven that is no clear connection between consumption and sponsorship. The report notes that the in-depth global survey of sponsorship activity carried out by MR Sports Marketing and Sponsorship Intelligence found no connection between sponsorship and consumption levels. The report also cites that there is absence of link between sports sponsorship and consumption by young people by reviewing the experience of other countries including, Greece, Italy, Denmark and Canada who have imposed advertising and marketing restrictions which have had little or no effect on the level of alcohol consumption. (Department of the Taoiseach, 2014)

Research conducted by Nelson and Young, which investigated the link between advertising and youth consumption of alcohol suggest that the evidence on alcohol advertising and youth is mixed, contradictory and inconclusive, (Nelson & Young, 2008). Furthermore, Aspara & Tikkanen found that the evidence cited in the reviewed studies is not rigorous and conclusive enough to prove any effect by alcohol advertising on adolescents' alcohol consumption volumes. (Aspara & Tikkanen, 2013)

Also, research conducted by ESPAD have found that teenage drinking in France is on the increase despite the alcohol advertisement ban in sports. ESPAD suggests that this is a clear indication that other factors are at play in terms of why young adults start consuming alcohol. (ESPAD, 2011)

Bremner, Burnett, Nunney, Ravat & Mistral have suggested that there have been various factors that have been shown to influence consumption of alcohol by young people. These factors include family attitudes to alcohol, peers activities, availability of alcohol and levels of education towards consumption. (Bremner, Burnett, Nunney, Ravat & Mistral, 2011)

Other studies have verified have verified that these various factors as being the most important in alcohol consumption habits among young people. Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou & Sanson

suggest that peer pressure, parental influence have been found to be the most significant influences in the drinking behaviour of adolescents. (Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou, Sanson, 2004)

Some studies have examined whether there is an association between alcohol sponsorship of sporting events, as part of an integrated marketing tool, and alcohol consumption. According to a study by Graham and Adams, professional English football matches have an alcohol advertisement of nearly two per minute. They believe that a restriction of all alcohol sponsorship as seen for tobacco may be justified. (Graham & Adams, 2013)

In another British study which examined the association between alcohol sponsorship of university clubs and teams found that students who play sport and who personally receive alcohol industry sponsorship or whose club receive funding from alcohol industry sponsorship would appear to have a more problematic relationship and drinking behaviour with alcohol than other university students who play sport and receive no alcohol industry sponsorship. (Kerry et al, 2014)

2.13 - What further options could be considered for regulating/restricting alcohol sponsorship?

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland believes that legislating against alcohol sponsorship of sporting events is the most appropriate and effective option in terms of reducing consumptions. They believe that the phasing out of sponsorship is the first instance should provide for a ban on all new sponsorship arrangements being put in place. They suggest that the existing arrangement need a stepped approach towards eventual cessation. (Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, 2014)

2.14 - Irish Government's Current Stance

In January 2015 plans to allow a legislative clause that would eventually allow for the banning of alcohol sponsorship of sports in Ireland was dropped. The Government is instead opting to put an existing voluntary code of conduct dealing with alcohol sponsorship on a statutory basis and is set to implement other measures in its Public Health (Alcohol) Bill. The implementation of such an outright ban – which has faced some obvious vigorous opposition from sporting organisations and drinks companies – would have required the full agreement of the Minister for Health and the Minister for Sport. It is understood the proposal was vetoed by Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sports Paschal Donohoe and his junior minister, Michael Ring. Mr Varadkar and Mr Donohoe have both said there will be no ban implemented until alternative funding streams have been identified by sporting organisations. (Kelly, 2015)

However the government have been keen to introduce a number of measures in order to reduce alcohol consumption are provisions to prevent the sale of very cheap alcohol; health labelling and warnings, including calorie counts; powers for environmental health officers to enforce the separation of alcohol within stores and to police minimum unit pricing; legal regulation of sports sponsorship; and restrictions on the advertising and marketing of alcohol, including a broadcast watershed. A law stating that it will also be illegal to market alcohol in a manner that is appealing to children will be. (Collins, 2015)

Health professionals have expressed their dismay at the government decision not to proceed with a full alcohol sponsorship ban in sports. Dr Ray Walley, president of the Irish Medical Organisation believes that there is clear evidence that advertising and sponsorship of alcohol increase consumption and exposes many young people to such marketing efforts. He has called on the Minister of Health to reconsider and take immediate action to ban sponsorship and promotion of sports by the alcohol industry. (Walley, 2015)

In March, 2015, a spokesperson for the former minister spoke out clarifying Leo Varadkar's stance on the potential ban. The spokesperson stated the Varadkar's stance is to support the aims at reducing the level of alcohol consumption in Ireland but his approach has been to ensure that his measures are strictly evidence based. This reasoning can explain why Varadkar is a keen supporter of minimum unit pricing for alcohol. Varadkar's spokesperson went to explain that the current Minister of Health remains unconvinced that that sponsorship of sporting events increased overall consumption. Instead, he believes that it just tended to promote one alcohol brand over another. As a result, the Public Health Bill does not propose an outright ban on sports sponsorship by alcohol companies, however they have pledged to review the situation in three years' time. (O'Brien, 2015)

In early 2011, Varadkar also expressed a concern that a ban would hinder sports development in Ireland. The Health Minister believed that placing constraints on the sporting organisations by eliminating the drinks industry as a source of sponsorship and financial support would have a negative impact on the development and availability of sport. (O'Brien, 2015)

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter will include an overview of the research aims and objectives and provide an extensive description of the methods that were used to obtain information in this research. The chapter will also include the theoretical philosophy and reasoning behind the methods that the researcher chose.

Quinlan (2011, p. 95) notes that any research project is influenced or underpinned by a philosophical framework, which is defined as ‘the worldview within which the research is situated.’

There is a vast array of definitions of the word amongst academics. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's interpretation of the word research is that it is "the systematic collection and interpretation of information with clear purpose to find things out" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.680). Research methodology is the theory to be followed when doing research (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) describe methods as the actual means by which the research is conducted. Also, the research questions and objectives will also be discussed during this chapter.

The overall objectives of this chapter are to provide an insightful, detailed account of the process involved in developing the research study. The chapter explains the research design that has been developed to achieve the objective of the dissertation. The researcher will explain how they went about identifying the research problem, the preparation and collection of data and how the data was analysed while detailing the instruments and techniques used.

This research study is aimed at providing some meaningful insights into the area alcohol sponsorship in Irish sport and whether it directly has an effect on young adults.

Research Objective One

To investigate what effect alcohol sponsorship in sport has on young adults. Does it influence their consumption? What are their consumption habits around sporting events & what brands are associated with certain sports?

Research Objective Two

To investigate whether alcohol sponsorship in sport be banned and whether it would decrease alcohol consumption?

Research Objective Three

To investigate what sporting organisations in Ireland do to raise the awareness about having a healthy attitude towards alcohol?

3.1 - Overview of Research Philosophies

A research philosophy is quoted as being an "overreaching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge about research" (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2012). Some authors have argued that the choice of research methods that is opted for is of secondary importance to questions regarding the research paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994, page 105) note: "Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." Therefore, the research philosophy is imperative and should be well reflected on so as to defend it in relation to alternatives that could have been adopted. (Johnson and Clark, 2006)

According to Saunders et al., the research philosophy adopted provides important assumptions about the way in which the researcher views the world. These assumptions underpin the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. There are three significant aspects that guide the research philosophy choice. The three aspects are epistemology, ontology and axiology. Each aspect contains important differences that will influence the way in which the researcher thinks about the research process. (Saunders et al., 2009)

3.2 - Research Strategy & Design

According to Bryman, research strategy is a "general orientation to the conduct of social research" (Bryman, 2014 pg. 22) and suggests the qualitative and quantitative can be taken to form to different areas of research strategy, indicating differences in epistemological and ontological orientations, as well as the principle orientation to the role of theory in relation to research. (Bryan, 2014)

Table 1

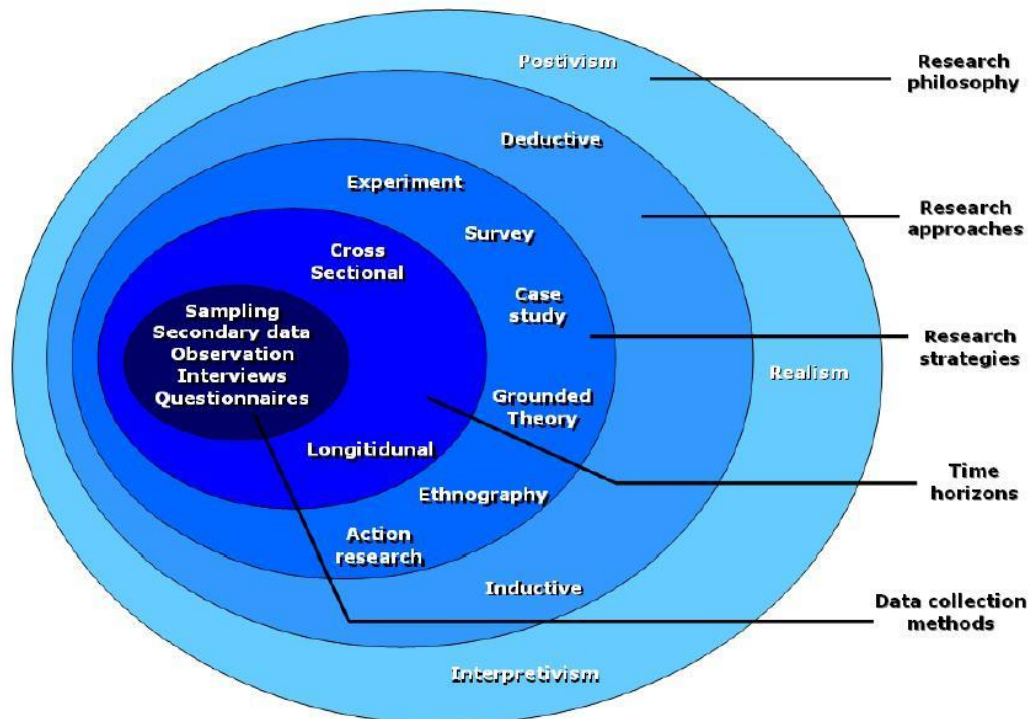
	Qualitative	Quantitative
Principle orientation to the role of theory in relation to research.	Induction; generation of theory	Deductive; testing of theory.
Epistemological Orientation	Interpretivism	Natural Science Model; in particular positivism
Ontological Orientation	Constructionism	Objectivism

Table 1: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies; Source Bryman, 2011

3.3 - The Research Onion

Saunders portrays the layers of the various research methods used by using a silhouette of an onion, which he refers to as the silhouette of an onion. The outer layer is the first area to visit when approaching the research question. Layers of the onion are subsequently peeled away and assumptions are made about each layer or stage. The researcher will discuss the issues that underlie the choice of data collection technique and analysis procedure. Over the course of the research methodology investigation, the researcher must examine approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons and finally, techniques and procedures to conducting the research. Each layer has a dependency on the one before it finishing. Therefore, the researcher must begin at

the research philosophy stage and make their through each layer until they reach the final data collection methods layer. (Saunders, 2007)



3.4 - Epistemology

Epistemology refers to what constitutes an acceptable knowledge of any given area of research and looks at how best to investigate a topic. (Saunders et al. 2009). Within epistemology, there can be a “resources”, or “feelings” orientated researcher. The resources-orientated researcher would typically embrace a positivist position while developing knowledge, whereas the latter would possess an interpretive perspective (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007, p. 103).

According to Collis and Hussey, epistemology is concerned with what a researcher can reasonably accept as being valid and reliable knowledge, and this acceptance, therefore, impacts the approach when researching. (Collis and Hussey, 2003)

3.5 - Positivism and Interpretivism

Positivism

According to Brand, positivism is a belief system arising out of practices in the natural sciences, i.e. physics, biology, chemistry, etc. which assumes that matters that are the subject of research are susceptible of being investigated objectively, and that their veracity can be established with a reasonable degree of certainty. (Brand, 2009, p. 432)

Denzin & Lincoln defined positivism is an epistemological position that outlines the existence of one objective truth or reality in obtaining knowledge in research. (Denzin & Lincoln 2008) Cresswell notes that researchers are assuming a positivist epistemology employ a quantitative based research design, using methods such as empirical experiments, questionnaires and content analysis to gather and analyse data. (Cresswell, 2003). The term quantitative, as defined by Quinlan (2011, p. 104), is 'data in the form of numbers; or data that can be coded numerically.' Bryman and Bell (2011) also claim that quantitative strategies use a deductive approach to research.

It is noted by Bryman & Bell (2007) that positivism is taken to entail the following principles.

The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed.

Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge (the principle of phenomenalism).
--

Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws (the principle of inductivism).
--

Science must be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, objective). 5. There is a clear distinction between scientific statements and normative statements and a belief that the former are the true domain of the scientist.

Interpretivism

According to Fisher (2007) Interpretivism research refers to the belief that reality is socially constructed. This means that the understanding of reality is not a simple account of what is: rather, it is something that people in societies and groups form from their interpretation of reality and other people's interpretation. (Fisher, 2007)

Bryman and Bell (2007) further explain that Interpretivism is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and, therefore, requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Interpretivism opposes positivism within the research onion. (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

3.6 - Deductive and Inductive Approach

Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research. The researcher, on the basis of what is known about a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces a hypothesis that must be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman & Bell 2007:11). Deduction involves developing a theoretical position prior to data collection (Saunders et al. 2009).

An inductive theory is the opposite; this involves exploring data and developing theories that will relate to the literature. According to Saunders et al. (2009), unlike deductive theory the researcher does not start with any predetermined theories or conceptual frameworks, but the

research still has a clearly defined purpose. After reviewing the two approaches, the researcher opted for an inductive analysis approach to the qualitative data collected. Meanings from the data were summarised, categorised and structured, according to identified themes that related directly back to the research objectives.

3.7 - Ontology & Axiology

According to Bryman and Bell, questions of ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities. The authors further explain that the central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgements about value. (Saunders et al., 2009: p137). Saunders et al. (2009) explain that this may include values that people possess in the fields of aesthetics and ethics; it is the process of social enquiry with which a researcher are concerned with. The researchers own values play a role in all stages of the research process that is of great importance for the research results to be credible.

3.8 - Research Methods

Quantitative

Cresswell and Plano Clark explain that quantitative data includes closed-ended information such as that found in behaviour or attitude. The analysis consists of statistically analysing scores collected on checklists or instruments to answer research questions or test hypotheses. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Zikmund further explains that quantitative research can reach a large number of people and can be easily measured. This involved gathering responses from a large group of participants on a similar topic. (Zikmund, 2003)

Qualitative

As described by Creswell & Plano Clark qualitative data consists of open-ended information that the researcher gathers through interviewing participants. The open-ended questions asked during these interviews allow the participants to supply answers in their own words. The authors further explain how qualitative data may be collected by observing participants or sites of research, gathering documents from a private or public source, or collecting audio-visual material such videotapes or artefacts. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)

Mixed Method Research

A mixed method incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2009). Teddlie & Taskakori suggest that there are two mixed method data-collection strategies. The two strategies are Within-strategy mixed-method data collection and Between-strategies mixed-method data collection. A within strategy involves the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data using the same data collection strategy. Between

strategies involves the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data using more than one data collection strategy. (Teddlie & Taskakori, 2003)

E-Research Methods

The E-Research method is a relatively new form of research which has only been used by researchers in recent years (Bryman et al., 2011). This method is beneficial as research data can be gathered from an abundance of websites, social media, email and online forms. There are a number of other benefits to this approach also as distance and limitations to size of sample are not issues and the speed with which the data would be collected is increased in comparison to traditional methods (Bryman et al., 2011).

Qualitative vs Quantitative

The researcher was faced with assessing that research approach to adopting for the dissertation whether it's qualitative research or quantitative research. Many researchers argue that the two approaches are quite distinct from one another and both relate to different philosophical assumptions.

According to Bryman & Bell, the significant difference between qualitative interviews and quantitative interviews are that quantitative interviews are predominantly structured whereas qualitative can be semi-structured or unstructured. (Bryman & Bell, 2011) Creswell suggests that in quantitative research, researchers often try answer through testing theories that provide answers to questions (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative research usually uses large sample sizes and results are based on these samples to get meanings based and derived from numerical and standardised data and it tends to use statistics and diagrams to conduct the analysis. (Babbie, 1990)

In contrast, the collection of qualitative data requires the interaction of the researcher with the subjects thus the researcher may be described as being more involved in the process The analysis of such data is time-consuming for the researcher as it involves transcribing the information collected through interviews, focus groups where conceptualisation needs to be applied (Saunders et al, 2009)

Hiatt suggests that qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants—that is, the qualitative research explores meaning, purpose, or reality. Qualitative research methods are described as inductive; the sense is that the researcher may construct theories, explanations and conceptualisations from details provided by a participant. (Hiatt, 1986).

On the contrary to qualitative data, quantitative data is classed as using numerical data aims to explain how something has happened rather than why It tests the statistical relationship between two variables and the findings are then expressed with the help of diagrams, charts (bar and pie chart for example) and are often believed to be an easier method of analysis (Saunders et al, 2009)

Upon reviewing both options, the researcher decided to pursue a qualitative method of research. There are numerous reasons as to why selecting qualitative research can be advantageous to the researcher. Frankel and Devers have described the aim of qualitative research is to comprehend the lived experiences of people and that it can illicit more information from the respondents. (Frankel & Devers, 2000)

“Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, page 5).

According to Merriam, qualitative is the ideal method to extract information based on knowledge and experience. (Merriam, 2009) Qualitative research derives meaning expressed through words, collected non-standardised data requiring classification and conducts analysis through conceptualisation (Saunders et al., 2009). Each interviewee will have different subjective views and qualitative will allow each respondent to articulate their views in their own words and explain their own experience regarding the effects of alcohol sponsorship in sport.

The most frequently adopted qualitative techniques include interviews and group discussions, where the researcher can work with questions designed for the study (Blumberg, Donald and Pamela, 2005). Qualitative is advantageous if the collection and analysis of data aren't designed to coincide with numerically focused objectives. The personalisation and in-depth level of data obtained via qualitative methods could be interpreted by some critics as biased and subjective. (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 - Sample Size Chosen

In relation to the sample size deemed appropriate, it has been suggested that this is dependent on the research questions and that it is more a question of what exactly needs to be found out, what will be useful, what will offer credibility and what can be done within the available resources, than it is about specifying an actual number prior to undertaking a research project. (Patton, 2002). The researcher decided to interview six different people in order to gather opinions about alcohol sponsorship in sport.

3.10 - Data Collection

This study utilised a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews as a primary method of collecting data. Utilising semi-structured interviews can be very helpful “to seek new insights” (Robson, 2002, page 59) and are deemed most appropriate as part of an exploratory study. (Cooper and Schindler, 2008).

When conducting the interviews, the researcher made a conscious effort to demonstrate a genuine interest in the interviewee and provided early assurances regarding the use of confidential information and anonymity (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994). The location of where the interviews took were chosen at a place that was convenient for the participants and that provided for an interview without interruptions. Opening remarks were chosen carefully by the

researcher. Open questions were used to facilitate depth in the discussion and minimise bias (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson, 2008). Long questions, or questions made up of two or more questions, were avoided (Robson, 2002)

Opening remarks were chosen carefully, so as to set the scene for the interviewee and put the respondent at ease. All interviews were audio-recorded after permission was given by the interviewee (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and immediately afterwards transcribed to enhance the trustworthiness of the data (Robson, 2002).

3.11 - Ethics

All ethical implications have to be considered when conducting research. There are four main ethical issues to consider when conducting business research (Bryman and Bell 2009)

Whether there is harm to participants.
Whether there is a lack of informed consent.
Whether deception is involved.
Whether there is an invasion of privacy.

Bryman and Bell (2009) state that the researcher should communicate the benefits of the research to everyone involved in it. The researcher notified the participants of the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement in the research and informed them that their participation was completely voluntary and that if they choose to withdraw from the research, they could do so at any stage. The privacy of each of the young adults who participated was upheld, and they were informed that no personal data would be given to anyone without their prior consent.

The participants were made aware that the interview was an MSc research project and gave their full permission for the researcher to use any of their quotes. Concluding the interview participants were told they had full access to their individual transcript and audio recording, should they wish to access it.

3.12 - Semi-structured interviews

The format of the interviews that the researcher would opt for would be a semi-structured format with thematic coding used to uncover their opinions regarding alcohol sponsorship in sport. Six interviews took place with five young adults and one commercial and marketing manager of one of Ireland's leading sporting teams. Semi-structured interviews help explore and identify an area that the researcher is most interested in. Within semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a series of questions or has specific themes and topics they want to discuss with the participant (Saunders et al., 2009). While using the semi-structured method, the researcher does not necessary need to follow the order of questions listed to ask the participant, once the conversation flows logically. Questions that are not listed may also be asked on the day of the interview as the participant may mention something interesting and as a consequence

the conversation can provide the researcher with extra data. Semi- structured interviews can be carried out in different methods, they can be face-face interviews, telephone interviews, and the interviewer may record or take notes of what is being said. There is also the option of videophone interviews (Saunders et al., 2009).

This study could also have applied structured interviews which follow a more stringent and consistent set of questions. However, the nature of the intended interviews, the researcher wanted to approach them in an open and flexible manner. As discussed, each interview that was conducted was recorded using an audio device, with transcribing taking place immediately following every interview. Each interview was then read thoroughly numerous times, and notes were taken by the researcher when significant and insightful comments by the participants were encountered.

3.13 - Method of data used in research.

The researcher opted to use thematic analysis for this research. Saunders described thematic analysis as when a researcher analyses the data through the use of themes. (Saunders, 2011). Thematic coding is a form of qualitative analysis which involves identifying or recording passages of text that are linked by a common theme or idea which allowed the researcher to index the text into categories and establish a “framework of thematic ideas about it” (Gibbs, 2007)

The thematic coding was used following Creswell’s guidelines to analyse the response of the participants. Comments which the researcher found to be important were grouped into codes or labels with abbreviated terms to represent the feeling and thought that participants had about the issue at hand. Each theme was then categorised according to the different research objectives.

These themes are presented in the tables below.

Table 2 - Themes emerging based on research objective 1

<p>RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1</p> <p><i>To investigate what effect alcohol sponsorship in sport has on young adults. Does it influence their consumption? What are their consumption habits around sporting events & what brands are associated with certain sports?</i></p>
<p><u>Interview Themes</u></p> <p>Alcohol always consumed at events. Sponsorship has no effect. Strong brand awareness.</p>

Table 3 - Themes emerging based on research objective 2

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2
<i>To investigate whether alcohol sponsorship in sport should be banned and whether it would decrease alcohol consumption?</i>
<u>Interview Themes</u>
No ban Education Cultural Psyche

Table 4 - Themes emerging based on research objective 3

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3
<i>To investigate what sporting organisations in Ireland do to raise the awareness about having a healthy attitude towards alcohol?</i>
<u>Interview Themes</u>
Positive message. Raising awareness of sensible drinking. Cynicism from some. Message, value and ethos.

3.14 - Data Analysis

The first stage of the data analysis process involved the researcher transcribing each of the six semi-structured interviews involved in the study. The transcribing took place immediately following their conclusion, using the audio. This corresponds with the suggestion from Kvale, who believes that the process of analysing qualitative data should begin at the same time as collecting these data, as well as continuing immediately afterwards. (Kvale, 1996)

After transcribing the data, summaries of the data were produced, compressing or condensing long statements into briefer statements. (Kvale, 1996). From the summarised data, themes that linked with the research objectives were then identified and the data were categorised allowing the researcher to draw conclusions.

Chapter 4: Data Findings

This chapter will present the findings from the six in-depth interviews that were carried out between July 27th and August 14th 2015.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

To investigate what effect alcohol sponsorship in sport has on young adults. Does it influence their consumption? What are their consumption habits around sporting events & what brands are associated with certain sports?

Interview Themes

Alcohol always consumed at events.
Sponsorship has no effect. Difficulty in defining the effect.
Strong brand awareness.

4.1 - Alcohol always consumed at events.

The first question of this study attempted to investigate whether alcohol sponsorship in sport has an effect on young adults. The researcher attempted to discover what the young adults consumption habits would be around sporting events. With the exception of one person, all of the young adults who were interviewed consumed alcohol when attending a sporting event or watching a sporting event on television. One participant replied to the question about whether they would consume alcohol at sporting events by commenting on the occasion of the day:

“Yeah definitely. I sort of make an occasion of it and at a lot of sporting events I would definitely drink at them.”

The second participant explained that while he would always consume alcohol at a sporting event, he would consume more if he was not accompanied by his family:

"Yeah, 100%. It depends on if I'm with family or friends. If I'm with family, it'll be just one or two pints but with friends it would be more."

The third participant responded similarly by noting that he would consume less alcohol if he was to attend a sporting event as opposed to being a spectator in a pub:

"Yeah I would, probably less so if I was attending a game though, probably more often than not we'd have cans in somebodies house or drinking in a pub."

4.2 - Sponsorship has no effect & difficulty in defining the effect.

When the interviewees were questioned whether sponsorship in sport actually has an effect and influences young adults consumption habits, the results were mixed.

The fourth interviewee replied:

"Personally, I don't really think that it does. You see countries like France, who have banned all sorts of alcohol sponsorship and you see teams have to tape up their jerseys but you still know what the brand is. You see the Guinness Hurling Championship but you don't think I'll have a pint of Guinness watching it."

The third young adult interviewed by the researcher expressed difficulty in defining the effect:

"I'm not too sure but I do know that if you do go to a match, I know from working in stadiums, everyone is drinking. All the foyers are just full of drink stands everywhere and I suppose with television advertising then as a subliminal influence as well."

The first interviewee believes that the alcohol sponsorship in sport has no effect:

"Probably not. I just think that there's so much in your face that the advertising goes over your head now at this stage so especially with younger adults who don't really mind about sponsorship."

Such opinions are in line with the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland's opinion on the matter. DIGI contends that the wider evidence and data shows that there is no link between alcohol sponsorship and misuse. They appreciate that actions must be taken to address the harm caused to individuals in Irish society by the misuse of, and over-indulgence in alcohol. However, it does not believe that the link between sponsorship and consumption has been proved. (Drinks Industry Group of Ireland, 2013)

Some interviewees did acknowledge that there is a drinking culture that surrounds games. One interviewee in particular who does not consume alcohol at games said the following:

"You can tell when attending an event that there're loads of people drinking at it. I just find I enjoy myself enough at it that I don't need to have alcohol at it and it just focuses yourself on the game."

However, this interviewee noted that when he participates in sport, there is consumption of alcohol post match.

"For the club that I play with whether we win or lose, we go to the pub afterwards and we talk about the game and we have a bit of craic and it's sort of like a bonding experience."

When asked whether that was influenced by alcohol sponsorship in Gaelic Games, he replied:

"No absolutely not. I'm from a small village so it's more of a social occasion where we talk to locals about the game."

4.3 - Brand Awareness

When questioned about what alcohol brands they associate with certain sports, each of the young adults identified Heineken as being linked with rugby. That is potential evidence of the sport and alcohol brand being synonymously linked. When the five young adults were asked about what brands they associated with each sport they replied to the researcher with the following:

"The first one I can think of is Guinness because it used to sponsor the All Ireland Hurling Championships. With soccer, I would associate Carlsberg who used to sponsor Liverpool and Carling too who used to sponsor the Old Firm teams and with rugby there's a lot of Heineken advertising."

"I can remember Guinness being on the big screens and billboards in Croke Park. That's what I'd associate with the GAA." Regarding soccer & rugby, the respondent replied "Carlsberg definitely and then Carling as well and Heineken for the rugby." The third interviewee was unable to identify any alcohol brand with the GAA. However with soccer and the respondent replied with Carling and with rugby he identified Heineken and Guinness being associated with that sport. The fourth interviewee revealed that he associated Guinness with the GAA, Budweiser with soccer and Heineken with rugby.

The fifth interviewee was asked what alcohol brand they associated with rugby and they replied emphatically with: "Straight away I can think of Heineken. It's just to do with the Heineken Cup."

When the participants was asked about soccer and GAA, the respondent associated Heineken and Carlsberg with soccer but found it difficult to identify one single alcoholic brand with the GAA.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

To investigate whether alcohol sponsorship in sport should be banned and whether it would decrease alcohol consumption?

Interview Themes

No ban
Education
Sponsorship should be banned
Cultural Psyche

4.4 - No Ban

The researcher wished to discover the participant's opinions on whether an alcohol sponsorship in sport should be implemented. The results proved to be mixed with some intriguing answers gathered.

Alcohol Action Ireland believe that a ban on alcohol sponsorship in the sport would decelerate the relentless promotion of alcohol in Ireland diminish the overall potency of alcohol advertising and, therefore, reduce its potency. (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2014)

One interviewee was asked whether alcohol sponsorship should be banned outright. The participant dismissed Alcohol Action Ireland's opinion on the subject:

"No I don't think so. It's just sort of a thing (sponsorship at GAA matches) that's associated with it but it doesn't really persuade me to go out and drink Guinness. I don't think that it would persuade many others."

4.5 - Education

A sports science professional from Dublin City University believes that changing regulation in Ireland and banning sponsorship in sport is not the solution to decreasing alcohol consumption among young adults. The participant is quoted as saying:

"I think getting more health promotion officers in schools to target people at an earlier age. Through my sports science background I think there're not enough health promotion officers. Education is key. Not even teachers but health officials who are in the field, who would go from school to school to promote healthy living and physical activity as a whole and more so with a focus then on alcohol consumption."

This attitude is in line with Drinkaware Ireland, the organisation, which is run by the Mature Enjoyment of Alcohol in Society, plans to target schools in order to educate young people to have a healthy attitude towards alcohol. (Ryan, 2015)

The Institute of Alcohol Studies advocates investment in school-based alcohol education programmes as an effective measure for reducing the risk of alcohol misuse in later life. (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2014). Additionally, the GAA believe that education is an important element to promoting a positive attitude towards alcohol. The GAA has an extensive educational programme in alcohol in place and they believe that the elimination of alcohol sponsorship from sport in Ireland will deliver no benefits but rather increase financial pressure on the organisations. The GAA also hold the view that there should be increased efforts in educating the population to have a more positive attitude to the use of alcohol. (House of the Oireachtas, 2013)

4.6 - Sponsorship Should Be Banned

However, one interviewee did suggest that there should be a sponsorship ban in place. He stated:

"Sport cannot be looked at in completely commercial terms. It shapes a lot of young people and their lives and they're looking up to sporting role models and stuff. If it goes hand in hand with these drinking advertisements, it's going to have bad effects."

Such an opinion is backed up by Dr, William Flannery. Dr Flannery vehemently opposes alcohol sports sponsorship taking place. Dr Flannery believes that drinks industry targets adolescents and sponsorship was linked to the early onset of alcohol use. (Hogan, 2013)

4.7 - Cultural Psyche

One interviewee revealed that the consumption habits of young adults are effected by the Irish culture and a sponsorship ban would have no positive effect. When asked whether there should be a ban enforced by the Irish government, the interviewee responded:

"I don't really think so. It is part of our culture in Ireland and it would be difficult to stop and it's probably in our psyche to drink more and the levels that we do."

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

To investigate what sporting organisations in Ireland do to raise the awareness about having a healthy attitude towards alcohol?

Interview Themes

Raising awareness of sensible drinking.
Cynicism from some.
Positive message, value and ethos.
Using role models to promote a positive attitude.

In March 2015, Dublin GAA stepped into the debate on alcohol and sport but in a way that might not have been expected. They signed a three-year sponsorship deal with Bavaria 0.0% non-alcoholic beer. It is certainly believed to be the largest non-alcoholic beer sponsorship agreement to be signed in Ireland and comes at a time when the debate over alcohol in society and alcohol in sport is at a higher pitch than ever before. (Sport for Business, 2015)

4.8 - Raising Awareness

The researcher spoke with the Commercial & Marketing Manager of Dublin GAA, Tomás Quinn about the sponsorship. Quinn was asked what the idea was behind such a sponsorship. Surprisingly Quinn revealed it wasn't all about the commercial financial opportunities but more about delivering a positive message.

"Yeah, I suppose we were approached by a number of alcohol companies with an interest in getting involved in Dublin GAA and it we gave a lot of thought about whether an alcohol sponsor would be good, given the relationship between GAA and kids and between clubs in every community and we would have given an awful lot of thought to that. There would have been a commercial point of view to the financial element that would have come from an alcohol company but then what was the message we were sending and would we be comfortable with that so effectively we gave it a lot of thoughts and we did consider it and we met a couple of companies and this angle came about where we had the possibility of going with a non-alcoholic beer and kind of flipping the message on its head and raising awareness for sensible drinking and trying to do it in a smart way. We would obviously have commercial targets and things we want to meet but sometimes our deals would be based on purely commercial decisions. If it was all about money we would have made different decisions."

4.9 - Cynicism

However, the deal was treated with cynicism from some medical professionals. According to Healy, former GAA president and medical professional Dr, Patrick Loftus has strong reservations about the partnership. He believes that it is indirectly supporting the alcohol business. (Healy, 2015) The researcher questioned Quinn about Dr Loftus' assertion.

“Yeah, he was cynical and to be honest I wasn’t surprised. When we were weighing up the whole thing, even at the start if we brought in an alcohol sponsor we knew there’d be backlash to a certain extent.”

4.10 - Positive Message

Quinn also discussed how Dublin GAA ensure that all commercial partnerships deliver a positive message to their fanbase.

“We’d be very clear with all our partnerships that we get involved with what their message is. Their values and ethos has to be similar to what we have and we’re not going to partner with people we’re not comfortable with. I think (Bavaria Zero Zero) was a good fit for us. Alcohol sponsorship in sport is a questionable area at the moment and a lot of sports have done really well out of it and naming rights are synonymous like the Heineken Cup. We just felt that rather than Dublin GAA go down that route, we’d just do something different. When we met the guys in Bavaria Zero Zero, we were pretty clear that we have the same values and they were coming at it for the right reason. I know cynics might have questioned it but they were definitely coming at it for the right reasons. It wasn’t so much about raising awareness of the Bavaria brand, it was as much raising awareness for the affects alcohol can have on people who want to play sports and how it is possible to go out and not have to be drinking. We always feel that we want our partners to want a connection with Dublin GAA fans so once we heard that we were pretty comfortable with it.”

4.11 - Role Models to Promote a Positive Attitude

Quinn later outlined plans to for the Dublin GAA players to play an active part in raising awareness among young adults about having a positive and healthy attitude towards alcohol with the sponsor Bavaria Zero Zero.

"We're probably six months into our partnership with Bavaria Zero Zero. Certainly using players to raise awareness and use them as role models is something that we're going to look to do. It's a three-year partnership so it's going to be evolving. It's not just about raising awareness of the brand but raising awareness about sensible drinking and using the players in that instance. You will see that coming over the next couple of years."

Such an attitude from a sporting organisation is in line with the GAA opinion on alcohol sponsorship. The GAA advocate that they are totally committed, through the promotion of its sports, to the development of healthy lifestyles and healthy attitudes to alcohol. However, the GAA have stated the accept there are issues around the misuse of alcohol amongst young people, they do not believe that there is any hard evidence that demonstrates that an outright ban on sports sponsorship would have any impact with reducing the incidence of misuse (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2013)

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will build on the key findings from the primary research and, referring to the literature review.

5.1 - The effect alcohol sponsorship in sports has young adults.

The response from participants about whether alcohol sponsorship in sport had a negative effect on young adults was somewhat mixed. It was noted by some participants that they felt the link between alcohol sponsorship in sport had no effect with their attitude or consumption. For example, one participant felt that sponsorship in sport has no effect whatsoever and that it 'goes over their head' due to how saturated sports sponsorship currently is. This opinion can be somewhat backed by Javalgi's, opinion of sponsorship having a varied effect. Javalgi noted that sponsorship seemed to have a small positive effects, but in other cases sponsorships impact appeared to be negative. (Javalgi, 1994) Another participant was able to mention an alcohol brand associated with hurling. However, he noted that the sponsorship would not make him desire that alcoholic beverage. The participant is quoted as saying "It's just sort of a thing that's associated with it but it doesn't persuade me to go out and drink Guinness. I don't think that it would persuade many others." This can be linked to a report published by the Department of the Taoiseach, which suggests that there is no evidence to prove that there is a casual link between sports sponsorship and alcohol consumption, including consumption by young people. They suggest that research has proven that is no clear connection between consumption and sponsorship. (Department of the Taoiseach, 2014)

This conflicts with what other research has revealed, that argues that there is a direct link with alcohol sponsorship in sport negatively effecting young adults. For example, a longitudinal study in the United Kingdom found a significant association between awareness of, exposure to, and involvement in, alcohol marketing, and drinking behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol. (Gordon, Harris, MacKintosh and Moodie, 2011). One participant noted that he felt alcohol sponsorship in sport normalises the attitude of young adults regarding alcohol consumption. Another participant believed the alcohol sponsorship reinforced the belief that going to sporting games and alcohol go hand in hand.

Whether the participants believed the alcohol sponsorship in sport should be banned or not, the vast majority displayed high levels of brand familiarity. All participants were able to link the alcohol brand Heineken with rugby. Wareman suggests that if sponsorship is implemented effectively, it can drive brand awareness, reposition or build brands, increase emotional bonding with audiences, improve business relationships, drive direct sales, engage customers and employees or enhance corporate reputation. (Wareman, 2008) The ability of all participants to link that brand with rugby provides evidence that sponsorship potentially drove brand awareness among young adults. However, it is debatable whether brand awareness can drive purchase intention. Hoek et al., conducted research that suggested sports sponsorship could not increase purchase intention. (Hoek et al., 1997). This links with one participant who was aware that Guinness was associated with hurling but did not experience any desire to purchase the alcohol brand.

5.2 - Alcohol Sponsorship Ban in Ireland

It was discovered from the primary research conducted that that four of the five young adults believed that no ban on alcohol sponsorship in sport should take place. One participant reiterated his belief that sponsorship does not have a negative effect on people. The participant suggested that there are other options to pursue, in order to encourage a healthy attitude towards alcohol in Ireland. The participant who is a young sports science professional from Dublin City University is of the belief that education is paramount. He notes that health officials who are in the field should visit schools to promote healthy living and physical activity with a focus on healthy alcohol consumption. The Institute of Alcohol Studies advocates a similar opinion. They believe that investment in school-based alcohol education programmes is an effective measure for reducing the risk of alcohol misuse in later life. (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2014). The GAA also hold the view that there should be increased efforts in educating the population to have a more positive attitude to the use of alcohol. (House of the Oireachtas, 2013). Another organisation that the participant's opinion is in line with Drinkaware Ireland, the organisation, which is run by the Mature Enjoyment of Alcohol in Society, plans to target schools in order to educate young people to have a healthy attitude towards alcohol. (Ryan, 2015)

Another participant cited how the alcohol sponsorship ban in France was ineffective, therefore, does not give credence that such a ban would have a positive effect in Ireland. The person noted that despite the actual naming of alcohol companies being banned in France, he was still able to identify the company with the aid of brand imagery. The participant appears to display a high level of brand familiarity. Brand familiarity has been defined by Alba and Hutchinson (1987, p. 411) as "the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer". Research presented by ESPAD also raises question marks over the effectiveness of the ban in France. They have found that teenage drinking in France is on the increase despite the alcohol advertisement ban in sports. ESPAD suggests that this is a clear indication that other factors are at play in terms of why young adults start consuming alcohol. (ESPAD, 2011)

One participant simply believed that it was in Ireland's cultural psyche to consume alcohol and a ban on alcohol sponsorship would not have a positive effect. An article published by Irish Times agrees with this assertion. The author suggests that drinking alcohol is simply embedded into the Irish frame of mind. (Murphy, 2015)

However, one participant believed that there should be legislation introduced that forbids alcohol sponsorship in sport. He highlighted the point that sport cannot be looked at in completely commercial terms as it shapes a lot of young people and their lives. The participant felt that sport and alcohol currently work in conjunction and, therefore, it's going to have a bad effect. This opinion is in line with the Alcohol Action Ireland, who are strong advocates of an alcohol sponsorship ban being introduced in Ireland. They have stated that one in four deaths of men between the ages of 15 and 39 in Ireland is alcohol-related & they suggest that alcohol companies sponsor sports specifically to gain access to lucrative, young, male markets. (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2012) The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland also believes that alcohol marketing has an impact on youth alcohol consumption and contributes to a general culture of excessive alcohol consumption.

It could be argued that more theatrical and empirical research needs to be pursued to categorically state whether or not alcohol sponsorship has a direct influence among young adults. At this moment in time, there seem to be conflicting arguments taking place from analysing research and data analysed offers mixed opinions.

5.3 - What sporting organisations in Ireland do to raise the awareness about having a healthy attitude towards alcohol?

The researcher conducted an interview with the Commercial and Marketing Manager of Dublin, Tomás Quinn. Quinn emphasises that there was message that Dublin GAA wanted to deliver with their partnership with a non-alcoholic beer. Quinn spoke about the relationship between GAA and children and Dublin GAA and Bavaria's desire to deliver a message about raising awareness for sensible drinking and delivering that message in a smart way. Quinn noted that they did consider attracting an alcohol sponsorship but decided not to engage in such a partnership despite the financial attraction. The attraction of delivering a positive message about sensible drinking took precedence. Such an attitude from a sporting organisation is in line the GAA's opinion on alcohol sponsorship. The GAA advocate that they are totally committed, through the promotion of its sports, to the development of healthy lifestyles and healthy attitudes to alcohol. (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2013)

Quinn noted that the message, values and ethos was vitally important with who they partner with and emphasised how alcohol sponsorship in sport is a questionable area at present. He noted that the partnership was about raising awareness for the effects alcohol can have on people who want to play sports and how it is possible to go out and not have to be drinking alcohol. Such an initiative can be linked with the ethos of the GAA. Although the GAA, currently accepts sponsorship from the alcohol industry for teams at an adult level, it does not at a juvenile level. The GAA have pioneered education regarding alcohol consumptions by recently setting up the Alcohol & Substance Abuse. (Department of Health & Children, 2010)

Dublin GAA's attitude towards such a partnership with a non-alcohol beer could potentially highlight the positive message that a sporting organisations could deliver to a mass audience while enjoying financial support from the partnership.

Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations

The participants in this study had mixed views on the effects alcohol sponsorship has in sport. It was also informative to get the opinion of a commercial manager involved in sport who wanted to deliver a positive message to young people about alcohol.

The exploration of the effects that alcohol sponsorship in sport has on young adults in Ireland is an intriguing area of research. Alcohol companies sponsor sport in order to sell more alcohol. The primary aim of alcohol sponsorship is to increase sales of alcohol, whether that is achieved by enticing current drinkers to buy more or by recruiting new customers who would be young adults. Sponsorship is an extremely effective means of promotion and an integral means of promotion, a key part of the marketing mix to sell more alcohol.

The study has shown that it is a divisive issue with a number of differing opinions and somewhat conflicting research released. Given the lack of conclusive evidence highlighting that there is indeed a direct link between alcohol sponsorship in sport and consumption of alcohol among young adults, the researcher suggests that the report from the Oireachtas Committee puts forward some intriguing proposals which may be the answer to the debate. Some of the recommendations seem to offer a situation where groups in favour of the ban and those opposed to any such ban would be content with. Such recommendations in the report are listed below.

A code of practice for consumption of alcohol in sports arenas should be drafted by all sporting organisations.

Drinks companies who sponsor sports should have a fixed percentage of their funding diverted to a fund used exclusively for use by alcohol and substance abuse prevention programmes.

A mandatory code for brand owners and rights-holders to provide responsible training in selling, advertising and marketing.

Sporting organisations should be “encouraged” to support programmes that encourage social inclusion in order to reduce alcohol abuse, “particularly among young people”.
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Any ban should be considered if it is done on a EU-wide basis to ensure sporting organisations “are not operating at a disadvantage”.

Such recommendations appear to be the most sensible solution at this moment in time. The result would appear to be that sporting organisations would not lose a large amount of the valuable funding they receive from alcohol companies and they would also be promoting a healthy attitude towards alcohol which can only be advantageous.

The main opposition for the potential sponsorship ban is from the Ireland's largest sporting bodies, who believe that there would be huge social, health and economic benefits to sport in Ireland with the alcohol industry making a significant financial contribution to it.

An opposing view believed that there are huge economic, social and health benefits accruing from sport in Ireland. The alcohol industry, through its sponsorship of sport, has made a significant contribution to sport and its promotion in Ireland. The support provided by the alcohol industry is deemed to be integral to the survival of mainstream sport. A reduction or elimination of this support through a legislative ban could potentially be detrimental for the sporting organisations.

Empirical analysis regarding the connection between alcohol sponsorship has taken place internationally but no independent empirical study has taken place in Ireland. There has been no conclusive evidence that young adults consume more alcohol because a certain event or team is sponsored by an alcohol brand. The question could be asked whether the consumption of alcohol is merely an influence from the match outcome, the event's importance or even the time and day of the match.

Given Ireland's proximity to the United Kingdom and the appetite for British sport, there could potentially be reservations regarding the influence of such a ban. Young Irish adults who view British sport would still be exposed to a large amount of alcohol branding thus making any ban in Ireland potentially ineffective. Competitions such as Guinness Pro 12 and the Champions League have alcohol sponsors and are both shown in Ireland on British television stations.

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Appendices

Interview One

INTERVIEWER: In terms of alcohol advertising, what is your feeling towards alcohol sponsorship in sport & do you believe it possibly influence young adults or adolescents into consuming it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I would agree with that they could be influenced because alcohol adds to the stereotype that going to sports games is associated with going drinking for the day and that sort of supports the sponsorship.

INTERVIEWER: Can you identify an alcohol brand associated with GAA?

INTERVIEWEE: The first one I can think of is Guinness because it used to sponsor the All Ireland Hurling Championships.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any alcohol brands you would associate with rugby or soccer?

INTERVIEWEE: With soccer I would associate Carlsberg who used to sponsor Liverpool and Carling too who used to sponsor the Old Firm teams and with rugby there's a lot of Heineken advertising

INTERVIEWER: When attending sporting events would you consume alcohol?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah definitely. I sort of make an occasion of it and at a lot of sporting events I would definitely drink at them.

INTERVIEWER: How much would you drink per month?

INTERVIEWEE: I would drink once a week.

INTERVIEWER: How much would be in that day?

INTERVIEWEE: I'd say six to eight pints.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think can be done to prevent and decrease alcohol consumption among young people?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose there would just have to be ways of not having alcohol associated with so many pastimes of young people. It's associated with going to sporting events, concerts, anything like that there seems to be alcohol that comes with it.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think alcohol sponsorship for sporting events should be completely banned?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and no, I mean the alcohol brands are important to the economy..

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the sporting organisations would be financially worse off if they didn't have the funding that alcohol sponsorship brings or do you think the health and well-being of a young generation would be more important?

INTERVIEWEE: Sport cannot be looked at in completely commercial terms. It shapes a lot of young people and their lives and they're looking up to sporting role models and stuff. If it goes hand in hand with these drinking advertisements it's going to have bad affects.

INTERVIEWER: Would you directly associate people drinking with attending a match in Croke Park, the Aviva or wherever?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, definitely. Whenever there would a big international you'd see all the pubs around the stadium packed out.

INTERVIEWER: That's great. Thank you very much.

Interview Two

INTERVIEWER: In terms of alcohol advertising, what is your feeling towards alcohol sponsorship in sport & do you believe it possibly influence young adults or adolescents into consuming it at an earlier age?

INTERVIEWEE: Probably not. I just think that there's so much in your face that the advertising goes over your head now at this stage so especially with younger adults who don't really mind about sponsorship.

INTERVIEWER: So you believe that they're not taking it in?

INTERVIEWEE: People are just bombarded at the moment that it just kind of goes over your head so I wouldn't say it's influencing younger people.

INTERVIEWER: With the different sports in Ireland can you identify an alcohol brand associated with the GAA?

INTERVIEWEE: The GAA. I can remember Guinness being on the big screens and billboards in Croke Park. That's what I'd associate with the GAA.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any brands you'd associate with soccer and rugby in Ireland?

INTERVIEWEE: Carlsberg definitely and then Carling as well and Heineken for the rugby.

INTERVIEWER: When attending a sporting event would you consume alcohol?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, 100%

INTERVIEWER: Every single time?

INTERVIEWEE: It depends if I'm with family or friends. If I'm with family it'll be just one or two pints but with friends it would be more.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think alcohol sponsorship should be banned in Ireland?

INTERVIEWEE: No not really, as I said earlier I think it goes over everybody's head at this stage.

INTERVIEWER: So you don't believe that there would be a reduction in alcohol consumption among young people if it was banned?

INTERVIEWEE: Probably not. I think there's other ways of going about it.

INTERVIEWER: So what do you think can be done to prevent young people consuming copious amounts of alcohol and instead have a positive attitude to going out to sporting events etc?

INTERVIEWEE: I think getting more health promotion officers in schools to target people at an earlier age. Through my sports science background I think there's not enough health promotion officers.

Education is key. Not even teachers but people health officials who are in the field who would go from school to school to promote healthy living and physical activity as a whole and more so with a focus then on alcohol consumption.

INTERVIEWER: Would you directly associate people drinking with attending a sporting events? Does it go hand in hand?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, 100%.

Interview Three

INTERVIEWER: What is your feeling towards alcohol sponsorship in sport & do you believe it possibly influence young adults or adolescents into consuming it?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm not too sure but I do know that if you do go to a match, I know from working in stadiums, everyone is drinking. All the foyers is just full of drink stands everywhere and I suppose television advertising then as a subliminal influence as well.

INTERVIEWER: So you believe there is a link between alcohol sponsorship in sport and young adults consuming it?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose yeah, every group of lads go down to the pub for the match.

INTERVIEWER: When you attend a sporting events would you consume alcohol?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah I would, probably less so If I was attending a game though, probably more often than not we'd have cans in somebodys house or drinking in a pub.

INTERVIEWER: Can you identify any brands associated with the GAA?

INTERVIEWEE: Let me think.. No not off the top of my head.

INTERVIEWER: Soccer?

INTERVIEWEE: Probably Carling, nothing else pops into my head.

INTERVIEWER: Rugby?

INTERVIEWEE: Heineken and Guinness for sure.

INTERVIEWER: Roughly how much would you drink per month?

INTERVIEWEE: I'd probably drink three or four nights a month. Maybe more.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there's anything that could be done to prevent large amounts of consumption among young people? Should alcohol sponsorship be banned?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm not so sure. For as much alcohol advertising there is as much isotonic drinks. It's entirely down to that persons choice that lead them to drinking more.

INTERVIEWER: Would you directly associate people drinking with attending a sporting events? Do the two go hand in hand?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah as soon as you go in even before you get to your seat all you see is bars and people lining corridors drinking.

INTERVIEWER: To ask again, do you think there should be an outright ban on alcohol sponsorship in Ireland?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Any reasons as to why?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose if it was normalised there may be a decrease in people drinking.

Interview Four

INTERVIEWER: What is your feeling towards alcohol sponsorship in sport & do you believe it possibly influence young adults or adolescents into consuming it?

INTERVIEWEE: Personally, I don't really think that it does. You see countries like France who have banned all sorts of alcohol sponsorship you see teams have to tape up their jerseys but you still know what the brand is. You see the Guinness Hurling Championship but you don't think I'll have a pint of Guinness watching it. It's just sort of a thing that's associated with it but it doesn't really persuade me to go out and drink Guinness. I don't think that it would persuade many others.

INTERVIEWER: Can you identify any other brands with GAA, soccer or rugby?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, the FA Cup was sponsored by Budweiser and Heineken with rugby.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else with GAA?

INTERVIEWEE: No I can't think of anything.

INTERVIEWER: Would you consume alcohol when attending a match?

INTERVIEWEE: No I don't actually. I go and watch the game and not drink any alcohol.

INTERVIEWER: Roughly how much alcohol would you consume a month?

INTERVIEWEE: A good bit. Per week, ten or twelve pints maybe.

INTERVIEWER: You said you don't drink personally at games but does that mean you don't associate people drinking with attending sporting events?

INTERVIEWEE: No no, you can tell when attending an event that there's loads of people drinking at it. I just find I enjoy myself enough at it that I don't need to have alcohol at it and it just focuses yourself on the game. When I was growing up there'd be people who would always buy cans before going to O'Moore Park but to be honest I was so interested in the actual sport I never had any interest in drinking.

INTERVIEWER: Do you find now participating in sport there's a drinking culture after the game?

INTERVIEWEE: Absolutely. For the club that I play with whether we win or lose we go to the pub afterwards and we talk about the game and we have a bit of craic and it's sort of like a bonding experience.

INTERVIEWER: So it doesn't have a reflection about alcohol advertising within gaelic games?

INTERVIEWEE: No absolutely not. I'm from a small village so it's more of a social occasion where we talk to locals about the game.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there can be anything done to reduce alcohol consumption in Ireland?

INTERVIEWEE: I think if the drinking age was reduced to 16 it would actually reduce it because in Ireland you have to wait until you're 18 so it's such a long time to wait so that's why they start drinking when they're younger. However, on the continent the drinking age is 16 and there's less of a drinking culture among young people."

INTERVIEWER: Just to reiterate and conclude. Do you think alcohol sponsorship in sport should not be banned and the drinking age should be reduced to 16?

INTERVIEWEE: Absolutely yeah.

Interview Five

INTERVIEWER: In terms of alcohol brands in sport, do you associate any with the GAA?

INTERVIEWEE: Probably not, not that I could think of.

INTERVIEWER: Anything with rugby?

INTERVIEWEE: Straight away I can think of Heineken. It's just to do with the Heineken Cup.

INTERVIEWER: Anything with football?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose Heineken again and then Carlsberg.

INTERVIEWER: Would you associate people drinking alcohol when attending a game?

INTERVIEWEE: I would yeah, just because it's so widely sold in the stadium and people go to the pub to watch them.

INTERVIEWER: If you were to go out what would you drink?

INTERVIEWEE: Heineken probably

INTERVIEWER: Is there a reason for that?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose now that I think about it just has a good image.

INTERVIEWER: What is your general feeling towards alcohol sponsorship in sport would you believe it might influence young adults and adolescents into consuming it.

INTERVIEWEE: I'd say it does. Even as a child when you're watching it you see an advertisement and you'll grow up with the mentality that the two are partnered together.

INTERVIEWER: So you feel it sort of normalises alcohol and making it okay?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I feel that way.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there's anything that can be done to reduce consumption among young adults?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't really think so. It's part of our culture in Ireland and it would be difficult to stop and I feel our laws are quite strict compared to other countries in Europe and it's probably in our psyche to drink more and the levels that we do.

Interview Six

INTERVIEWER: Dublin GAA's sponsorship with Bavaria was ground breaking in many ways as it was the first non-alcoholic beer sponsorship in Ireland. Do you feel that you're paving the way and what was the idea behind such a partnership?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah I suppose we were approached by a number of alcohol companies with an interest in getting involved in Dublin GAA and we gave a lot of thought about whether an alcohol sponsor given the relationship between GAA and kids and between clubs in every community would be good and we would have given an awful lot of thought to that. There would have been a commercial point of view to the financial element that would have come from an alcohol company but then what was the message we were sending and would we be comfortable with that so effectively we gave it a lot of thought and we did consider it and we met a couple of companies and this angle came about where we had the possibility of going with a non-alcoholic beer and kind of flipping the message on its head and raising awareness for sensible drinking and trying to do it in a smart way. We would obviously have commercial targets and things we want to meet but sometimes our deals would be based on purely commercial decisions. If it was all about money we would have made different decisions.

INTERVIEWER: It's a message that you have

INTERVIEWEE: Absolutely yeah. We'd be very clear with all our partnerships that we get involved with that their message, values and ethos has to be similar to what we have and we're not going to partner with people we're not comfortable with. It think (Bavaria Zero) was a good fit for us. Alcohol sponsorship in sport is a questionable area at the moment and a lot of sports have done really well out of it and naming rights are synonymous like the Heineken Cup. We just felt that rather than us go down that route, we'd just do something different. When we met the guys in Bavaria Zero Zero we were pretty clear that we have the same values and they were coming at it for the right reason. I know cynics might have questioned it but they were definitely coming at it for the right reasons. It wasn't so much about raising awareness of the Bavaria brand, it was as much raising awareness for the affects alcohol can have on people who want to play sports and how it is possible to go out and not have to be drinking. We always feel that we want our partners to want a connection with Dublin GAA fans so once we heard that we were pretty comfortable with it.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel then when it was in the newspaper that former GAA president was against the partnership and was somewhat cynical about it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, he was cynical and to be honest I wasn't surprised. When we were weighing up the whole thing because even at the start if we brought in an alcohol sponsor we knew there'd be backlash to a certain extent. Bringing in a non-alcoholic beer sponsor I knew there'd be a backlash but there was only one article I think and there was probably other politics at play there. Even when we did the launch the PR committed to giving the Irish Times an exclusive that day so the negative article came from the Irish Independent and that might have been down to the little bit of politics. Involved and that goes on with media launches but they might have done that article anyway. However there was also a number of positive articles and we got positive feedback through social

media. We made sure that any promotional or social activities Bavaria have with Dublin GAA it's all Zero Zero. There's not a position where sometimes they're going to promote the alcohol brand

INTERVIEWER: So there does seem to be a continuous message throughout

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah and to be honest that's what they want and that's what we want. Even at the start there was no Bavaria Zero Zero Twitter or Facebook and we made it clear if we interacted with them online we can't be directing young people to an alcoholic brand so they set up their non-alcoholic Twitter handle so little things like that we were very clear on.

INTERVIEWER: All the Irish sporting bodies, the FAI and IRFU in particular are opposed to an ban on alcohol sponsorship. Dublin GAA have shown they can survive and thrive without any alcoholic brand sponsorship.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah first and foremost AIG are our primary sponsor. Year two of a five year contract. We break it down into industry sectors. Toyota would be our car partner. We just renegotiated with Aer Lingus so they're our airline partner. We'd also have Britvic, Ballygowan, Energise Sport who would be our hydration and sport drinks. They would be our main sponsors. Below that we would have the Gibson Hotel, Ros Nutrition, Skins Compression Wear and Linwoods Health Foods so we've secured a lot of sectors but we've no banking or technology. So that's where sponsorship is at. We identify an industry sector and we identify a sponsor that is that just one for the sake of it but a good partner for Dublin GAA. "

INTERVIEWER: Do you think using players as role models, whether it's Bernard Brogan or Diarmuid Connelly delivering a message about a positive attitude to drinking, do you think it could be delivered effectively to young people.

Yeah absolutely. We're probably six months into our partnership with Bavaria Zero Zero. Certainly using players to raise awareness and use them as role models is something that we're going to look to do. It's a three year partnership so it's going to be evolving. It's not just about raising awareness of the brand but raising awareness about sensible drinking and using the players in that instance. You will see that coming over the next couple of years.