

**“An Investigation into the
Marketing of the GAA Focusing
Specifically on an Underage
Programme,
The Vhi Cúl Camps.”**

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the Degree of Masters of Science in Marketing,
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Declaration

“I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work, except where acknowledgements have been made and it has not been submitted as research work by any other person(s) in any other institute or university.”

Signed:

Date

Sera Rashford

Sept 2007

Abstract

This study is concerned with the marketing of the Gaelic Athletic Association focusing specifically on an underage programme the Cúl Camps.

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is an amateur sporting organisation that was founded in 1884 by Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin in order to preserve and cultivate the national games. It is the largest sporting organisation in Ireland with membership exceeding 800,000 at home and abroad. It is a powerful organisation with an important social and cultural influence in Irish life.

The VHI/GAA Cúl Camps were established in 2006 because members of the GAA felt other camps were better marketed. They felt they could set up a brand that could be used in all 32 counties and could be marketed more effectively.

The GAA teamed up with VHI to promote healthy living at a community based level and also to increase the number of young children participating in sport.

Now in its third year it is estimated that there will be in the region of 81,000 participants this year and due to this demand 1,000 camps will be available around the country.

The study examined the marketing of an underage programme namely the Cúl Camps and how marketing has helped the GAA.

The study also examined if marketing fits into the amateur ethos of the GAA and identified if the Irish Sports Council (ISC) / Government play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes within the GAA.

The research methodologies used to undertake the research include telephone questionnaires with Coordinators, Coaches and Ambassadors involved in the running of the Cúl Camps.

Overall the conclusion was mixed. It is believed that marketing has helped the GAA greatly over the last number of years. The Cúl camps appear to be marketing effectively but more marketing needs to be done in order for them to gain competitive advantage. One important conclusion that the researcher found was that many individuals felt the Irish Sports Council / Government do not play a significant role in the marketing of underage programmes within the GAA.

From the extensive Primary and Secondary research conducted the dissertation concludes by offering recommendations to assist the GAA in further development. It also concludes by stating that more research should be done on the marketing of the GAA and its successful underage programmes.

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List of Abbreviations and Terms

GAA- Gaelic Athletic Association

Cúl Camps- a nationally co-ordinated programme aimed at children between the ages of 7-13 years of age, to learn and develop sporting skills.

ISC - Irish Sports Council

FAI- Football Association of Ireland

AFL – Australian Football League

NGB's – National Governing Bodies

Croke Park- The Headquarters of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Dublin. Where the All Ireland Football and Hurling Championships are played each year.

GPO- Games Promotion Officer

Coordinators - oversee the running of the camps in each area and also coordinate registration of the camps.

Coaches – qualified and experienced individuals who devise a specific programme to ensure the participating children learn skills and enjoy a fun team - building activity.

Ambassadors – county players who visit camps nationwide giving tips to the children on how to improve their game and give the children an opportunity to ask them questions

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study was initially prompted by a lack of research into the Marketing of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). According to Mullen (1993) there is a lack of sports marketing literature available, almost no theory has been published on sport marketing and of the small number of successful experiences that have been documented in professional journals, few detail any fundamental concepts or principles behind the successful application. While Evans (1996) suggests that there have been very few empirical studies carried out in the overall marketing principles and practices of sports organizations. Much of the sports management literature had been restricted to studies of physical education or athletic programmes. However Olafson (1990) states that the sports management literature has also confirmed the academic neglect of a number of sub-disciplinary area, including marketing. Although several relevant studies have looked at specific marketing activities of sport organizations the majority of research is US based. Bearing this in mind the researcher felt that it would be a suitable topic to do her dissertation on as it may help future studies.

Over the last number of years the GAA has had to compete with professional sports such as soccer and rugby in attracting children. The task of attracting young people to various sports has now become big business not only in Ireland but all over the world. Shannon J.R. (1999) states that sport is now the eleventh largest industry in the USA. The GAA are aware of this and with the use of different marketing techniques the author wishes to see if marketing has helped the GAA grow and maintain its strong position in the Irish community.

Rational

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was established in 1884. According to the GAA website the GAA is the largest sporting organisation in Ireland boasting 2,800 clubs comprising of 182,000 footballers and 97,000 hurlers. The GAA have made a significant contribution to community wellbeing and to the development of Irish sport and the cultural heritage home and abroad. Bearing this in mind the researcher felt that it would be very interesting and challenging to do her dissertation on the marketing of the GAA as there is little or no research on this topic available.

According to John O'Donoghue T.D., Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (2006), all of the funding provided by the Government has benefited every single parish, village, town and city in the country and clearly demonstrates the Government's commitment to support investment in Gaelic Games. The Government will continue to provide funding in the future to support the important work carried out at a local level by GAA clubs all over Ireland. With this in mind the researcher would like to see if individuals who work with an underage program such as the Cúl Camps believe that the government/National Governing Bodies (NGB's) play a significant role in underage programs.

Ossie Kilkenny (2006), Chairman of the Irish Sports Council (ISC) stated that the ISC's investment in the GAA is based on the excellent track record of the GAA in providing new opportunities for young people to participate in Gaelic games in every part of the country and they are confident that they will continue to deliver increased participation levels in their games. Therefore the

researcher hopes to investigate one programme aimed at the underage level for example Cúl Camps and reveal how it has been marketed and see if it has been successful. This may reveal if numbers have increased or decreased since its inaugural in 2006, it may also reveal the marketing techniques the GAA use and how beneficial they have been toward the camps.

The GAA has proved itself to be one of the most progressive and competent sporting organisations in Ireland in recent years. It has moved with the times in so many different ways, but it still has a lot of catching up to do in different areas such as marketing. The researcher felt it would be interesting to see if marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years.

The GAA prides itself on being an Amateur organization which has a strong ethos. However over the last number of years the GAA has had to change with the times, making it difficult to maintain this ethos.

The researcher felt it would be appealing to see if marketing fits into the amateur ethos of the GAA.

Title:

“To Investigate the Marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an Underage Programme, the Cúl Camps.”

Research Questions:

- To examine the marketing of an underage programme - Cúl Camps.
- To investigate if marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years.
- To see if the Irish Sports Council/Government play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA

- To reveal if marketing actually fits into the amateur ethos of underage programmes in the GAA.

This Dissertation is laid out as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with an outline of the design for the dissertation as well as outlining the research questions and the rationale of the study and introducing the research topic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review of secondary data in relation to the research topic.

Firstly the chapter examines the definitions of marketing, sports marketing and sports sponsorship. Next the chapter looks at the evolution of sports marketing.

The chapter then examines two marketing aspects namely; service marketing and the marketing mix and relates them to the GAA. The chapter then concludes by identifying the linkage between the GAA and marketing, sponsorship, funding and the amateur ethos.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter contains a comprehensive assessment of all the available research tools in order to achieve the investigations objectives.

Qualitative and quantitative techniques were utilized in this study. The methodology describes the advantages and disadvantages behind both research techniques.

A phone questionnaire was distributed to a sample selection of Coordinators, Coaches and Ambassadors to examine the marketing of Marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an Underage Programme, the Cúl Camps.

It then identifies the approaches to data collection and explains how it was analyzed.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the detailed findings of the primary research investigation.

The findings from the phone questionnaire are presented in pie and graph form in order to make it clearer for individuals to view and understand the findings

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter encompasses a discussion between the findings from the literature review and the primary data found by the author.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

This is the final chapter in the dissertation; it deals with the conclusion and recommendations drawn up by the author from all both primary and secondary research.

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The function of the literature review is to provide the researcher with existing knowledge about the research topic. In this section the researcher will assess all the information obtained from secondary sources such as the internet, on-line databases, books, journals etc. Insuring relevant information is obtained is of utmost importance in this section.

This literature review was conducted by the researcher with the aim of identifying the marketing of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) focusing specifically at an underage programme - Cúl Camps. Despite extensive secondary research in this particular area there was little information to be found on the marketing of the GAA or on the marketing of amateur sports organisations. The term sports marketing is a relatively new concept therefore there is limited information available. There was however a lot of information available on general marketing.

The researcher felt to gain a better insight into the whole area of sports marketing it would be necessary to review all the relevant information available on the whole topic. The first step in this process was to establish a better understanding of significant terms such as: what is marketing, what is sports marketing and what sports sponsorship is. Following on from that, the researcher felt it was

necessary to show the evolution of sports marketing and how it has evolved over the last number of years.

The researcher then deemed it essential to examine the linkage between service marketing and sport and the development of the sports marketing mix.

Finally the researcher investigated all the above areas and related them to all the relevant information available regarding the Gaelic Athletic Association.

2.2 Marketing Defined

The author felt it was necessary to start her literature review with defining marketing as the study is based on the topic of marketing and it is essential to understand what marketing is.

According to Simkins (2000) marketing is not a science; there is no single definition or approach to undertaking marketing. Lancaster and Massingham (1993) agree that there is no universally agreed definition of marketing. Hunt (1976) suggests that definitions of the nature of marketing differ as a result of authors differing perceptions of the scope of the subject. While Ferrell and Lucas (1987) state that there is no one definition that perfectly describes the concept of marketing as different definitions are used for different purposes.

“A social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others”.

Kolter and Armstrong (2001)

“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably”.

The chartered Institute of Marketing U.K

“Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individuals and organisational goals”.

American Marketing Association (1985)

Piercy (1998) states that definitions of marketing count for little if business do not develop a process, culture and set of operational procedures to actually do marketing. While Davidson (1997) agrees that marketing is difficult to define and explain because it is both an approach to business and a specific function.

2.3 Sports Marketing Defined

The author felt it is important to understand what Sports Marketing is, so the reader is able to better understand the chosen research study.

The term sports marketing was first used in 1979 by the US trade magazine Advertising Age to describe activities of companies that were increasingly using sport as a promotional vehicle (Kelsner 1979). However, as Mullin et al (2000) points out this conception is limited as the marketing of sports events, products and services is also a major element of sports marketing theory and practice.

‘Sport marketing is a social and managerial process by which the sport manager seeks to obtain what sporting organisations need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others.’

(Shilbury et al 1998)

‘Sports marketing consists of all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers through exchange processes. Sport marketing has developed two major thrusts: the marketing of sports products and services directly to consumers of sport, and the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sports promotions.’

(Mullin et al 1993)

Shilbury et al (1998) and Mullin et al (1993:2000) note that their definitions of sport marketing are adapted from general definitions of marketing. While Shank (1999) suggests the following definition of Sports Marketing:

‘Sports marketing is the specific application of marketing principles and processes to sport products and to the marketing of non-sports products through association with sport.’

The definitions proposed by Mullin et al (1993) and Shank (1999) also make a clear reference to two distinct but complimentary aspects of sports marketing namely the marketing of sport and marketing through sport. This distinction is also made by Shilbury et al (1998) in their sports marketing text Strategic Sport Marketing. While Summers & Johnson-Morgan (1995) highlight the link between sport and the marketing principles:

‘Sports marketing is the application of the four P’s specifically in a sports context all designed to meet the needs of the sports customer’.

However Schaaf (1995) suggests the following definition emphasizing the importance of media and sports participants:

“Sports marketing is simply any scales or publicity related activity associated with an organised sporting event (or events) its personalities, or the celebrity lifestyle of its participants”.

2.4 Sports Sponsorship Defined

Given the role that sponsorship now plays in Irish sport and specifically in the Cúl Camps it is important to understand what sports sponsorship is and the effect it is having on the sports industry.

Meenaghan (1983) provide a good summary of the various efforts to define sports sponsorship. He comes to the conclusion that sports sponsorship is continuously misunderstood and confused with concepts such as charitable donation, endorsement and patronage. He also agrees that the various definitions of sponsorship are not consistent, and may reflect what a specific sponsor or an event organizer prefers to consider as sponsorship. According to Shank (2005) sports sponsorship is the exchange of money or a product for the right to associate its name or product with a sporting event. The decision to sponsor a sport is complex as they have to decide on the sport and level of competition.

“Sponsorship is a powerful device for communicating with spectators at sporting events, and by implication therefore with team supporters who watch matches at

home on television. Sponsorship appears to be effective not only for enhancing brand/company awareness and recall, but also for creating among supporters perceptions of widespread use (and hence the desirability) of sponsoring firms' products."

Bennett (1999)

Thwaites and Chadwick (2004) believe that over the last number of years sponsorship has developed into an extremely versatile and flexible medium that has left defining sponsorship very difficult. Otker (1988) suggests sports sponsorship represents buying and exploiting an association with an event or team for specific marketing purposes. Meenaghan (1991) adopts a similar view and identifies sponsorship as an investment in cash or kind in an activity in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity. While Meenaghan (1998) agrees that over the last thirty years sponsorship has evolved from a small scale activity in a limited number of industrialised countries to a major global industry. However Slack and Bentz (1996) believe that sport sponsorship involves the allocation of limited resources with the intent of achieving certain organisational objectives while Carter (1996) states that sports sponsorship has repeatedly been described in the marketing literature as a strategic activity. Amis et al (1997) agrees that sports sponsorship should be considered as a strategic investment. While Amis, Slack and Berrett (1999) believe that sport sponsorship should be considered an imperative resource which can help companies to secure a position of competition advantage. Pope (1998) agrees that sports sponsorship can help achieve corporate objectives, marketing objectives, media objectives and personal objectives.

Thwaites and Chadwick (2004) suggest that there has been an increase in sport sponsorship due to the inability of governments to fund sports to the necessary levels to maintain development, with this in mind sport organisations have turned to corporate sectors for help. Berrett (1993) highlights this by informing us of the scope of corporate involvement in what has traditionally been referred to as amateur sport has also experience rapid growth, at least at the international level. Barrett also states how corporate sponsorship is playing an increasing role in both professional and non-professional sport throughout the world. While Wayne (1988) remarks how marketing managers are now beginning to accept that substantial benefits can be gained from the association of their company with sport and sports sponsorship is an excellent way to achieve this.

2.5 Evolution of Sports Marketing

The evolution of sports marketing is a necessary section as it illustrates the fact that this marketing concept is not new and it has been used in all sports from amateur to professional over the last decade.

Ukman (1984) suggests that sports marketing dates back to ancient Rome, when Roman patriarchs sponsored gladiatorial games, it is believed they did this for similar reasons as today's companies to gain public esteem. Barker et al (1986) agree that the history of sport marketing dates back to ancient Greece and Rome.

According to Weikel (1998) as early as the 1970's the tobacco industry has had an impact on sports marketing. The tobacco companies inserted cards

with famous baseball players into packs of cigarettes in order to boost sales. These cards evolved into the widely known bubble gum cards which evolved into an industry of its own, sports cards. Weikel (1998) also states how American Athletic Jesse Owens received free shoes in the 1936 Berlin Olympics from Adidas; this was seen as the first known example of an amateur athlete being used for advertising means.

Slack (1996) believes that the academic study of sports management in the U.S, is at least half a century old with the first texts published in the 1950's. Lazarus (1984) agrees that modern Sports Sponsorship can be traced to the 1950's when then President Dwight D. Eisenhower asked Mutual of Omaha and Union Oil to sponsor the first presidential physical fitness program. While Weikel (1998) mentions the importance of Jackie Robinson who first intergrated baseball in 1957, this breakthrough set an important dent in the sports world. Sports marketers realised they could target both blacks and whites by advertising in intergrated sporting events. The importance and significances of this event demonstrated the impact that could be made using sports as a medium of communication.

According to Weikel (1998) in the 1970's several important evolutionary events occurred in sports marketing. The Pittsburgh Steeler defender Joe Namath starred in one of the most acclaimed adverts for coke a cola. Strasser and Becklund (1991) note the shoe war that began in the 1970's between Nike, Adidas and other companies looking for different athletes to endorse their products. The first corporate sponsored stadium was named in Buffalo for Rich

Foods Inc at a cost of \$1.5 million over 25 years ago. Cornwell (1989) mentions that in 1971 Sports Marketing received a significant boost in publicity when the government banned cigarette advertising on U.S television and radio. However with the use of Sports Marketing Cigarette companies started out sponsoring motor racing events such as the Winston Cup and tennis tournaments such as the Virginia Slim's woman's tennis tour, this kept the cigarette brand name in front of supporters. Strasser and Becklund (1991) state that the exposure of sports continually grew and by the end of the 1970's sports were becoming a marketing tool and an industry on a national scale.

While Schlossberg (1991) believes that the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics can be credited with starting the trend of sport marketing on a formal basis thus turning athletes into a sponsored business. This was the first Olympics that was run on private money through major sponsorship, as a result the Los Angeles Olympics generated a profit. However the Olympic committee reacted negatively to the level of commercialism with the Los Angeles Olympics. Mullin (1985) agrees that the aggressive marketing efforts of the Los Angeles Olympic games was much different with those of earlier less commercialised events. According to Weikle (1998) the 1980's saw many changes with sport mostly to do with money. Salaries sky rocked, costs of sport franchises escalated, Drugs began to be detected and screened, television contracts for professional sports ran into millions. The popularity of sport kept growing and it became a more desirable marketing tool than ever before.

Mullin et al (2000) states that the last ten years have seen many encouraging signs of professional approaches to sport marketing. While Parkhouse (1996) agrees that the field of sport management has grown rapidly in the last twenty years with the number of colleges and universities offering sport management programs rising from 83 in 1985 to 200 in 1993.

Irwin et al (1999) notes that professional sport in the U.S has always been profit seeking, competing for consumers in the entertainment marketplace. While Shank (1999) states that sport as a business has long been minor league in Europe compared with the U.S and remarks that only in the 1990's did the commercialisation of sport develop into the scale seen in the U.S.

2.6 Service Marketing

Shilbury (1994) remarks that a number of the unique characteristics of the sports product market identified by Mullin (1985) clearly link sport to the characteristics of a service as summarised by Zeithaml et al (1985) namely: intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and inseparability. This is supported by Shank (2005) who believes that the nature of services marketing is critical for the sports marketing manager as so much of sports marketing is based on services rather than goods.

2.6.1 Intangibility

According to Wolak et al (1998) intangibility is one of the key characteristics of services. Darby and Karni (1973) and Zeithaml (1981) highlight the fact that the degree of tangibility has implications for the ease with which consumers can

evaluate services and products. While Sutton (1991) state that intangibility implies that a service is experience, it is rendered and physical ownership cannot occur. What the sports consumer takes away from attending a sporting event is primarily impressions and memories. However Shank (2005) suggest that the strategy for intangible services is to tangibilize them. While Hudson (2003) makes the point that marketing strategies must make the offering more tangible making the process of pre and post – service evaluation easier. Tickets, match day programs, merchandise and development of brands give customers something tangible. In March 2008, the GAA revealed their new brand identity which reflects the future direction of the association. While in 2003, Stephen McMahon and Ian Kehoe from The Post newspaper stated that the replica jersey market is a huge earner. In an All-Ireland winning season a county can expect to sell over 15,000 jerseys at €40-€50 per jersey.

2.6.2 Heterogeneity.

Onkvisit and Shaw (1991) consider heterogeneity to offer the opportunity to provide a degree of flexibility and customisation of the service. Wyckham *et al* (1975) suggests that heterogeneity can be introduced as a benefit and point of differentiation. Shilbury et al (1998) agrees that each game is unique and the result not guaranteed. The sport marketer therefore needs to devise marketing strategies that will add value to the product and service offering that are not based solely on the team's performance. While Hudson (2003) believes that sports marketers need to develop product and service extensions such as non-sport activities like conference and banqueting facilities and restaurants. The GAA have added line extensions in the form of summer camps to underage

children such as the “Vhi Cúl Camps” programme to their product offering. Parents see added value in sending their children to sports camps such as added skills knowledge to their children and healthy living. While on a more professional level, the GAA offer a guided tour through the stadium to capture the essence of what makes Croke Park a truly inimitable venue; it also hosts a Conference Centre including 87 meeting rooms and eight conference suites. The GAA Museum located in the Cusack Stand enables customers to re-live the history of Ireland’s principal sporting and cultural organisation, for sports fans and historians alike.

www.gaa.ie

2.6.3 Perishability.

Rathmell (1966) state that in general services cannot be stored and carried forward to a future time period. While Donnelly (1976) suggest that services are “time dependent” and “time important” which make them very perishable.

Hudson (2003) believes that sport can be sold no later than the day of the event. This has important implications for demand management. Sports marketers therefore need to develop marketing mix strategies to help manage demand. The GAA has its head quarters in Croke Park but they have the option of other smaller venues for example Clones in County Monaghan which has seen an increase in the number of Ulster Gaelic Football Championships which have been held there. In 2007, 80,000 children attended the Vhi Cúl Camps, in order to keep up with this demand in 2008 camps were run throughout Ireland from the

end of June until the end of August. In Mayo, 27 camps were set up and in Dublin 68; this was to facilitate the large crowds attending.

www.vhiculcamps.gaa.ie

2.6.4 Inseparability.

Carmen J.M. and Langeard E. (1980) state that inseparability is taken to reflect the simultaneous delivery and consumption of services and it is believed to enable consumers to affect or shape the performance and quality of the service. Hudson (2003) agrees that inseparability of product and consumption means that interaction with club employees is important. The fans contribute toward the product offering in terms of providing atmosphere. The atmosphere at the game is important to the overall experience and is a function of the fans interaction and participation. According to Devine. A. and Devine. F. (2005) the GAA are an amateur organisation that run drug free and family orientated events. Local fans are passionate about their sport and at both club and elite matches there is intense rivalry that makes for an electric atmosphere. Also the Cúl Camps programme highlights the importance of the interaction between coaches and children which is needed for the camp to be successful. The coaches are all qualified and they make learning new skills enjoyable providing the children with a relaxed and safe environment.

2.7 Sports Marketing Mix

‘Sports marketing mix is the coordinated set of elements that sports organizations use to meet their marketing objectives and satisfy customer’s needs.’

Summer and Johnson-Morgan (2005)

According to Shank (2005) the sports marketing mix consists of the following elements: Sports Product, Price, Promotion and Distribution. While Summers and Johnson-Morgan (2005) state that it is important that sport marketers consider how each of the marketing mix elements is integrated and related to each of the other elements.

2.7.1 Product

Shank (2005) states that one of the basic sports marketing activities is developing product and service strategies. Sports managers are responsible for new product development, maintaining existing products and eliminating weak products.

While Summers and Johnson-Morgan (2005) suggest that in the case of sport the product is often the game. The sports product itself is inconsistent and highly unpredictable that is what makes it so attractive but makes marketing difficult.

Devine. A. and Devine. F. (2005) believe that in the case of the GAA they can offer tours of Croke Park and visits to the GAA museum as to highlight the GAA product. In 2006, the GAA introduced their new underage programme the Vhi Cúl Camps, the programme has went from strength to strength, this may be due to the fact that they are well planned and coordinated.

2.7.2 Price

Shank (2005) and Summers (2005) both agree that price is critical and sensitive and also complex in sport. The following issues need to be considered with regards to sport: Price objectives, choosing price technique and adjusting price over time.

Devine A and Devine F (2005) feel that pricing is an important factor in the overall marketing strategy of the GAA. In July 2008, Jimmy O'Dwyer national coordinator of the Cúl Camps stated that the Cúl Camps programme is cheaper than rival schemes run by the FAI and the IRFU. The GAA charge approximately €65 for the Cúl Camps whereas other sporting camps charge close to €100.

www.squareball.com

2.7.3 Distribution

Shank (2005) believes that distribution is the most efficient and effective way to get the product into the hands of the consumer. While Summers and Johnson-Morgan (2005) state that intangible elements of sport are effected by the distribution levels. Devine A and Devine F (2005) highlight how the GAA have used the capital city to help distribution the games: the All-Ireland football and hurling finals are played in Croke Park Stadium in Dublin which is the home of the GAA. As a capital city, it has extensive transport service which includes the Luas and the Dart. It provides a wide range of accommodation and entertainment for the spectators beyond the immediate attraction of the sport. Shank (2005) also states that distribution is about deciding where to build new facilities and how to distribute tickets more effectively. The GAA have taken this into consideration and send the coordinators of the Cúl Camps around to primary schools throughout Ireland providing the children with application forms for the camps.

2.7.4 Promotion

According to Summers and Johnson-Morgan (2005) the promotion involves sponsorship, advertising, sales, promotion and corporate investment. However Shank (2005) believes that the area of promotion is not just advertising and communicating with sponsors but public relations is very important. Devine A and Devine F (2005) feel that the GAA have a professional website which will bring a new dimension of participation and interest in Gaelic Games to a world stage. Also the GAA have launched two videos: ‘What is Hurling?’ and ‘What is Gaelic Football?’ These products are a great way of promoting the GAA abroad to people who no little about the sport. The GAA helps promote the Cúl Camps by highlighting the different county players that will be attending them; this attracts more children who want to meet their sporting heroes.

2.8 The GAA and Marketing

Devine. A. and Devine. F. (2005) state that the GAA should be promoted in the same way as martial arts in Japan and bull fighting in Spain, as a sport unique to Ireland. While Stephen McMahon and Ian Kehoe from the Post 2003 revealed that the GAA are slowly realising the need to develop and maintain a central coherent marketing strategy. The GAA appointed a marketing sub-committee who advise the association on commercial issues throughout the year. The committee comprises of both specialists and GAA officials.

Morgan (1992) suggests that in the world of ‘amateur sports’, the concept and practices of marketing have become centrally important. The voluntary organisation is about much more than the development of athletes. Rather it is

about setting sport to potential and existing customers. This requires informing those individuals and collectives about what is on offer and in the process articulating and shaping needs i.e. marketing the sport. The President of the GAA, Nickey Brennan announced in March 2007 that a major marketing support campaign would be put in place to promote the championship which will consist of a comprehensive advertising, PR and promotional drive throughout the duration of the competition. Power (2007) agrees that the GAA are planning more promotion and a significant increase in the advertising market. He also stated that the GAA would have a rate card advertising spend of €500,000 which is double the amount spent on advertising over the last number of years.

The marketing of the organisation's sports has always been a strength of the GAA due to the strong sense of community and symbolism associated with the organisation. Games and events have always needed limited commercial marketing due to the strong use of "word of mouth" marketing associated with the organisation in Ireland. Silverman (2001) describes word-of-mouth marketing as communication about products and services between people who are perceived to be independent of the company providing the product or service, in a medium perceived to be independent of the company. These communications can be conversations, or just one-way testimonials. But the essential element is that they are from or among people who are perceived to have little commercial vested interest in persuading someone else to use the product and therefore no particular incentive to distort the truth in favour of the product or service. The GAA have used word of mouth as a very powerful marketing technique especially when marketing their underage camps. Most of

the GAA promotional work is done by using word of mouth. For example if one looks at the Cúl Camps programme their best marketing technique is word of mouth, the coordinators are constantly travelling around to different schools promoting the camps.

www.gaa.ie

Slack (1998) states that the marketing of a particular sport to potential participants usually involves young children who may take up the sport. Voluntary sport organisations use marketing as an intuitively appealing and logical function to increase participation. The Irish Examiner 2007 stated that, Dublin Secretary John Costello urged the GAA to adapt and develop an underage structure that will survive in changing Ireland. The future of the GAA is in children – particularly those who are under 9 years of age. He continued to state “The development of Games Promotion Officers (GPO’s) within clubs/ communities in Dublin has provided a resource, which if managed and utilised in an efficient manner, can support the volunteers in providing a games and skills development that will increase our participation numbers within Dublin”. These Games Promotion Officers help promote participation within schools, clubs and community. They enable clubs to facilitate the promotion of the Gaelic Games and assist in the development of coaches, administrators and volunteers.

According to Devine. A. and Devine. F (2005) the GAA and the Australian Rules Association have organised an International rules series which combines both sports. This has lead to the spread and reputation of the GAA throughout the world and also encourages fans from both countries to travel to

see these games. While Ian Kehoe of The Post 2004 states that GAA used the International Rules Test to pilot marketing and broadcasting initiatives. Dermot Power the GAA's Marketing Manager (2004) agrees that the International Rules Test gave the GAA a chance to test new ideas such as ticket distribution, marketing of the games and broadcasting rights. He also suggests that the tests gave the GAA a chance to target a different audience such as the young people with a big urban bias.

Slack (1998) suggests that voluntary organisations have received an increase in funding from corporate sponsors over the last number of years. This increased sponsorship has been linked to increased media coverage and spectators in many parts of the world who would not normally get to see or experience the sport if not for sponsorship. According to Devine. A. and Devine. F. (2005) the GAA have begun marketing abroad with the use of television and radio communications including the GAA's website which is allowing Irish immigrants to watch inter-county matches and keep up to date with the latest club results. By using advances in technology the GAA serve as a tangible link with immigrants who might drift away from their Irish heritage. Here are just two examples of how the GAA have marketed abroad:

An exhibition match between the GAA All-Star teams of 2003 – 2004 was held in Hong Kong this was an excellent way of promoting the sport internationally. While Guinness has already used hurling to great effect in its international advertising campaign.

According to Aaker (1991) a brand is a combination of image and reputation it is a resource that can add to the perceived customer value of a

product or service. While Bharadwaj (1993) suggests that a brand creates a positive image in the minds of customers. In March 2008, the GAA announced a new brand identity that would reflect direction of the association. The new identity consists of an updated more modern version of the GAA crest and name. The crest reflects the heritage of the association while the name is rendered as the core component of the crest. The President of the GAA Nickey Brennan (2008) stated that the brand identity is a way for the GAA to express the following, *“the GAA are a modern, forward thinking association, with huge youth participation and following. But everyone involved in the GAA is also immensely proud of our rich culture and heritage. Its important for us as an association to embrace the future, but always remain mindful of our past.”*

While Keller (1993) states that the brand is rated on its overall appeal as opposed to any individuals or measurable characteristics. It is an effective way for a firm to increase perceived customer value. However, according to Shank (2008) once awareness of the brand is achieved the marketing efforts should then turn to Brand image. Brand image can be described as the customers set of beliefs about the brand which in turn shapes attitudes. The problem many organisations face included the GAA is that the brand identity (the way the organisation view the brand) and the brand image (how the brand is actually viewed) are different. The organisation views its personality differently than the public. However, the brand image is the strength of the GAA. People of Ireland symbolise themselves with the GAA and its history. The GAA is the backbone of every Irish community. While Winters (1991) states that almost all conceptualisations of brand equity agree today that the phenomena involves the value added to a product by consumers' associations and perceptions of a

particular brand name. This, in turn, results in greater value for the brand name from the perspective of the organisation. This invariably assists organisations such as the GAA when adding line extensions such as the “Cúl Camps” to their product offering. Parents see added value in sending their children to sports camps such as added skill knowledge to the child, healthy living and for some working parents child minding facility outside school time. According to Shank (2008) Consumers who believe a sports product has a high level of brand equity are more likely to be satisfied with the brand and become loyal customers. It is also believed that brand loyalty has become for the first time since its early development a major issue for the GAA. The increasing awareness of professional sports and the increase of participation in recreational exercise have led to the stagnation of participation in GAA activities. Sheth (2001) provides an operational definition of brand loyalty stating that brand loyalty is a function of a brand’s relative frequency of purchase in both time-independent and time dependent situations.

2.9 GAA and Sponsorship

This section is important, as it highlights how the GAA has used sponsorship over the last number of years to gain a competitive advantage and also shows it is becoming more professional.

According to Stephen McMahon and Ian Kehoe of the Post 2003 the Dublin County Board signed a deal with Adidas which saw all county teams lining out in Adidas Boots for the next two seasons. As part of the deal Adidas will pay the Dublin players fund €8,000 per championship match. This deal will help benefit underage sides in both hurling and football. While Puma Sportswear

signed 6 personal deals with leading GAA players where each player will earn between €6,000 and €7,000 annually. Puma hope to build a specific GAA identity with the Irish market for the sportswear firm. They want to increase the number of contracted players and plan a major bill board advertising campaign. They also revealed that in late 2002, the GAA broke O'Neill's monopoly of the jersey market by opening it up to Irish based manufacturers, Azzurri and Gaelic Games. Both these companies offer county boards a variety of profit sharing deals, which can increase their previous revenue from jersey sales by 15 to 20 per cent. It is believed that revenue streams from the five counties' involved with Azzurri will range from €30,000 to €50,000 per season.

Samantha MaCaughren from the Sunday Business Post 2007 revealed that the GAA were looking for a new way to sponsor both hurling and football. A multi-sponsorship model would be attractive, where hurling and football would each seek three to four sponsors. International events such as the Olympics and the Champions League use this type of model which allows several brands to link up with a sports event. Already around €2 million is spent by sponsors on both hurling and football annually; under the new model four sponsors could each pay €1 million each. In 2007, Dermot Power the Commercial and Marketing manager for the GAA stated that there could be an income of between 50 and 100 per cent but added that most of the additional income would be invested in delivering an improved package. According to Eugene McGee of the Irish Independent May 2008, this new multi-sponsorship model was not met with open arms. Pearse Park County Longford was the first place to see the launch of this new model however it meant that all 66 signs

around the park would have to be covered up and only the 3 main sponsors of the championship would be shown. The local GAA people drew up three or five year advertising contracts for Pearse Park at around €3,500 for each of the 66 clients. If the GAA were to go ahead and cover up these signs then the contracts would be legally smashed. GAA people have no great problem with the principle of running the organisation professionally and maximising revenue for future development, but the ethos of the GAA is based on local involvement and commitment rather than all out commercial exploitation. Damian Lawlor and John Greene from the Sunday Independent May 2008 revealed that the GAA will pay at least €200,000 in compensation to every county board hosting a live TV game this season as the deal is set to limit the visibility of local sponsors. Every county board will receive a €30,000 dividend under the new TV rights deal and €110,000 as their share of the new sponsorship deal. A further €20,000 will be paid to every board which signs up to the new deal and €40,000 will go to any board which hosts a live TV match. If a county hosts more than one live TV match they will be in for a significant cash increase. Every board regardless of whether they host a live TV match or not is guaranteed at least €160,000. In March 2008, the GAA President Nickey Brennan announced the restructure sponsorship format. The All Ireland competitions would now be known as the GAA Football All Ireland Championship and the GAA Hurling All Ireland Championship each will have three sponsors. *“While the All Ireland inter county Hurling and Football Championships stand to benefit from the heightened profile and exposure that the new commercial partnerships will bring, the true beneficiaries will be grassroots GAA where the sponsorship revenues will be channelled for the continued development of our games.”*

According to the Irish Times newspaper 2003, Marketers are increasingly recognising the importance of sponsorship and the rewards that can be reaped from a well executed sponsorship campaign. Sponsorship's greatest strength is increasing awareness and enhancing the image of an organisation or its brand. It is also used to enjoy greater media coverage and increase sales and market share for participating organisations. Sponsorship also is an excellent way to overcome language and cultural barriers and is now considered a global communications medium. Therefore bearing this in mind, in 2006, Vhi became the sponsors of the GAA's new underage programme the Cúl Camps. Vhi Chief Executive, Vincent Sheridan stated that they will support the Cúl camps for at least three years. They are committed to the nation-wide promotion of healthy living at community level and hope to add this value to the health and safety focus of the Cúl Camps.

Stephen MaMahon and Ian Kehoe of The Post 2003 stated that the GAA generated only €3.5 million per annum in television rights. According to Ian Kehoe of The Post 2004 the GAA sold the broadcasting rights for the International Rules Series for the first time to an organisation other than the RTE, Dublin Station Newstalk bought the local radio rights and the Star Newspaper came in as a media partner. Dermot Power GAA's Marketing Manager (The Post, 2004) stated that "*this was the first time we had separated radio rights from TV rights, it gave us an opportunity to try and see what the market was like*". While in 2005, The Western People newspaper reported that the number of marketing and commercial opportunities that were created by regular television of football and hurling matches was countless. RTE were earning vast sums of money from Gaelic games and a whole industry had been built up around these

two traditional sports. Football analysts, reporters, photographers, and merchandise companies were all making a living thanks to our talented sports stars.

Given the right type of marketing, the GAA could increase their profile world wide and therefore increase the demand to see live matches or highlight packages in a whole range of new countries. www.enfearnua.com

Martin Breheny from the Irish Independent 2007 believes that the GAA has proven itself to be one of the most progressive and competent sporting organisations in Ireland in recent years. However the GAA need to exploit every opportunity to cope with the globalised marketing blitz available to soccer and rugby. Broadcasting rights have seen a move away from the traditional broadcaster RTE to TV3 and TG4 and in more recent times a move towards pay per view TV rights with Setanta Sports showing the national Gaelic football league. The battle for broadcasting rights could see the GAA cash in on over €20m in the next three years. Examining the GAA's Annual Report published in early 2008, the financial report shows that €7.5m of the 2007 profit came from the leasing of Croke Park to the Rugby Union (IRFU) and the National Soccer Association (FAI). This is a short term arrangement which has yielded some essential revenue which has being put back into game development.

Slack (98) states that Athletes in the major spectator sports are marketable commodities, sponsorship and broadcasting rights cost million, merchandising of sporting and licensing of sports goods is a major multi-national business. These trends are not just limited to professional athletes and events, many of them are equally appropriate to the so called amateur sports. Eugene

McGee of the Irish Independent May 2008 suggests that the GAA charge as much as they can for the service they supply, they charge as much as they want for admission into games, spend months battling with different companies in order to maximise commercial gain and seek to achieve the most appropriate sponsors available.

2.10 The GAA and Funding

Herman and Renz, (2004), state that non-profit organizations are under continuous pressure to develop strategies and embrace management practices, which ensure organizational effectiveness. This is because many non-profit organizations around the world, though independent entities, rely heavily on public funding in order to survive and provide social services. Herman and Renz (2004) also state that in many countries, the majority of the national sports organizations (NSOs) operate in a non-profit environment, though their survival is highly dependent on the annual funding provided by the government (i.e. the General Secretariat for Sport) in the form of subsidies or extra funding. However Slack (98) suggests that governments in many countries have reduced funding for amateur sport and marketing has been presented as the solution to financial problems.

In 2003, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue T.D., announced an allocation of €1,340,000 from the Irish Sports Council to the GAA for their 2003 programmes aimed at increasing young people's participation in Gaelic sports. The GAA planned to invest €4.34 million euro in its underage strategy in 2003. Including the Irish Sports Council the total invested in 2003

will be €5.74 million euro. The President of the GAA, Mr Sean Kelly stated that *“The partnership between the GAA. and the Irish Sports Council is producing results at grass roots level. The future of the GAA is with the youngsters playing for their school and in their local club and that is where our investment of time, money expertise is aimed”*.

The former Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism Mr. John O' Donoghue T.D., announced in 2006 that the Irish Sports Council budget would include funding of €1.5m to assist the development of Hurling and Camogie on a nationwide basis, and €1m towards the development of Gaelic Games in Dublin. Also the allocation of additional funding of €3.5m to five GAA projects of strategic importance in Galway, Sligo, Cork, Limerick and Kerry. The Minister stated that in its budget, funding would be given to the GAA in the sum of €3.59m for its 2006 programmes under the Grassroots to National Programme (€1.34m), Hurling Development (€1.25m) and Dublin Gaelic Games (€1m).

In 2007, the Minister John O'Donoghue stated that the Government had allocated almost €114 million towards the redevelopment of Croke Park. Since 1998 alone, this Government has provided over €268.5 million towards the development of facilities for all levels of Gaelic games in cities, towns and parishes throughout the country. Between 2001 and 2006 the Government provided special funding of almost €13 million to assist the GAA in increasing participation at underage level, supporting the development of hurling in non-traditional areas and helping the Dublin County Board in its efforts in promoting Gaelic games.

In June 2008, the Government hope to fund GAA coaches working in Irish communities in Britain and the United States, it emerged today. The scheme is designed to match current funding provided by the GAA to promote football and hurling among children in both countries. The Department of Foreign Affairs will provide €316,000 towards 10 coaches in Britain and €65,000 for four coaches in the US. Foreign Affairs Minister Micheal Martin said: “*The GAA plays a key role in the social and cultural life of Irish communities abroad.*” The Irish Government also announced it is allocating €20,000 to the cross-community Belfast Cuchullains hurling team which will play a series of matches in New York and Philadelphia.

2.11 The GAA and its Amature Ethos

This section highlights the fact that the GAA are an amateur organisation however over the last number of years they are finding it hard to maintain this status.

According to the GAA’s strategic review 2002, The G.A.A. was founded on, and flourished through, the voluntary efforts of its members and the amateur status of its club and county officers and its players. The Association aims to maintain and enhance its position as Ireland’s pre-eminent, community-based, amateur sporting organisation. In promoting its games, the Association will continue to build on, and develop, an ethos of local identity and a sense of place. While John O’Brien of the Sunday Independent (2007) suggests that to the GAA amateurism is even more fundamental and intrinsic to its sense of identity. The GAA look at the commercialism of rival sports and state passionately and with impressive

conviction that it will never sell its soul or compromise its connection with the local community from which it draws its strength. While Keith Duggan of the Irish Times 2007 agrees that the GAA, look at other sporting cultures to learn how they can adapt and develop and become ever more streamlined and modern, this has helped reinforce its position and keeps it flourishing. While the GAA Strategic Review 2002 states that maintenance of the voluntary ethos is perceived as crucial to the Association's role by the majority of both its own members and the wider public. The GAA will continue to value, the amateur status of its players and the dedication of its employees.

According to John O'Brien of the Sunday Independent (2007), there are two opinions forming within the GAA, those who assert the primacy of the grassroots game and those who recognize that, for the need to celebrate and protect the volunteer ethos, it is the game's biggest stars that are the Association's greatest asset and its most effective recruitment weapon when it comes to attracting kids ahead of rival codes. The challenge for an organization determined to maintain its amateur ethic is to embrace both those opinions in a way that makes neither camp feel hard done by. While the GAA Strategic Review 2002 states that the maintenance of the amateur status and voluntary efforts has to be founded on respect for the abilities and efforts of both the players and other volunteers. The organisation states that they can not see the emergence of a professional game, or 'pay-for-play'. However, they do agree that the players are not merely 'entertainers' but that they are the most important resource of the Association.

John O'Brien (2007) believes that a cash-hungry Association might be able to keep the lid firmly shut on professionalism but it will never be a straight-

forward business. Think of players as they weighed up details of their own modest grants against the details of the GAA's latest windfall which see the association receive €20 million over the next three years for television rights. While Keith Duggan of the Irish Times 2007 agrees that a surge in popular interest, enhanced television coverage and the creation of the qualifying system, led to bigger crowds and increased pressure on players, managers and teams to win. Duggan 2007 also mentions that the argument has grown that the GAA players are amateur players putting in the same hours as professionals and for the past few years, the cheering and the honour of the jersey have been insufficient compensation. However one must remember that County GAA players are dedicated, gifted and elite amateurs. But they are amateurs.

According to the GAA Strategic Review 2002 the increasing popularity of its games and the success in recent years of the club championships, together with the success of inter-County scene, all support the importance of 'identity' as one of the core strengths of the Association. The future of the G.A.A. and its games must be built on this strength, in order to maintain and enhance this ethos in the future. However Keith Duggan states that in parts of the GAA the organization is a purely amateur body, indeed the GAA often boasts that "*it is the greatest amateur sporting organization in the world.*" However if one takes a step back and looks at the association you can examine some examples of the so-called amateurism which is common practice in the GAA. Managers and coaches who are attached to club teams up and down the country get paid a fee for every training session and match-day they have. These managers can earn €300 a week for about 40 weeks of the year. That would be a round figure of

€18,000,000 for just one category of so-called amateur GAA official. Many players receive perks of various kinds that are far removed from the amateur status they like to perceive. At least 50 inter-county players currently have the free use of a car. That's another €250,000 provided for amateur GAA people. Other breaches of the so-called amateur ethic can be harder to define but are equally important. One of the biggest payments to amateur GAA players is the holiday break which for some counties can cost over a half a million per team; it can amount to €3m when it is added up annually.

Eugene McGee Irish Independent (2008) suggests that with all this misuse of money by members of the GAA one can forget about the concept of the GAA being entirely an amateur organization. While Keith Duggan (2007) states that it would be more accurate to state that the GAA is a slightly amateur organization. They need to re-assess the amateur ethos and correct the balance between the word 'amateur' in modern sport and professionalism as shown by the modern progressive approach of the GAA as an organization. Eugene McGee (2008) concludes by stating that with every passing season, the amateur ethos becomes more disguised and appears more difficult to maintain. The amateur code remains sacred, and it is time to safeguard it. It is time to put in place the small tokens like expenses and medical welfare that will make players feel appreciated and respected. It is time for everyone to remember that it is only a game but it is a game that has survived and prospered because people have felt a want and a need to play it and help it flourish.

2.12 The History of Summer Camps

Fetto J. (1999) states that a summer camp is defined as:

“A site where care and activities are provided for children during the summer months”.

Summer camps are truly an American phenomenon. According to the American Camping Association (ACA) Summer Camps date back as far as “The Gunnery School in Connecticut”, which was first established in 1861. Since its formation camps have grown rapidly and now there are over ten thousand camps currently in operation in the US which facilitates over 8.8 million campers each year.

The summer camp phenomenon eventually caught on in the European and Irish markets. Summer camps throughout Ireland started to increase. The camps range from driving schools for young adults, to music and dance right through to the traditional offering from the GAA and soccer communities.

www.summercamps.com

2.13 The History of GAA Camps

According to the Irish Times (2003), since the 1980’s GAA summer camps have been coordinated throughout the country. These camps have grown year on year and in 2007 the camps recorded over eighty thousand participants a rise of five thousand from the 2006 and rise of twenty six thousand participants since 2003.

The GAA provide a sports camp and as Shank (2008 p.21) states sports camps can be defined as organised training sessions designed to provide instruction in a specific sport.

The Vhi took over the sponsorship of the Cúl camps from AIB in 2006. The camps are a nationally co-ordinated programme aiming to encourage primary school children between the ages of seven and thirteen, to learn and develop sporting and life-skills by participating in Gaelic Games, in a fun, non-competitive environment.

Please see Appendix 1 for further information regarding the Cúl Camps Programme.

2.14 Conclusion

The author feels that after completing this in-depth literature review there are a number of conclusions to be made.

Sports' Marketing is not a new concept however over the last number of years this industry is rapidly growing and is becoming big business.

Sports Marketing and Sports Sponsorship come hand in hand. They target every sporting organisation that they feel they can make money from.

Sporting organisations need to aware of the sports marketing mix. It is important that each element of the mix is understood and that the organisation can fit their organisation and their product into each element.

The use of sponsors together with extensive media coverage has helped the GAA become more professional and has given the traditional sport a fresh new image. Marketing has helped the GAA reach new audiences around the world with the use of its website and selling its broadcasting rights.

Each year, the GAA receive thousands of euro from the government to help development underage programmes and facilities. The Government and the Irish Sports Council help the GAA in many different ways. It is clear from the literature review that without the assistance of both the Government and the Irish Sports Council the GAA would not be where it is today.

The amateur ethos of the GAA is becoming harder and harder to maintain but from the literature review the researcher does not feel marketing has affected the GAA, if anything it is making it stronger and giving it a competitive advantage. At present there, is a very fine line between amateurism and professionalism in the GAA that needs to be carefully monitored.

Chapter Three Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Aim:

“To Investigate the Marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an Underage Programme, The Cúl Camps.”

Objectives:

- To examine the marketing of an underage programme - Cúl Camps.
- To investigate if marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years.
- To see if the Irish Sports Council/Government play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA
- To reveal if marketing actually fits into the amateur ethos of underage programmes in the GAA.

3.2 Research design

The research design represents the ‘blueprint’ or plan which guides the data collection and analysis stages of the research project (Yin 1994).

In investigating the research questions, it was imperative to design the most appropriate methodological design possible. This chapter identifies what methods of research the researcher has selected and presents why the researcher choose these methods.

3.3 Methodology Defined

A simple definition of methodology:

“The overall framework within which the research is conducted.”

(Gratton and Jones 2005)

“A methodology is a model which entails theoretical principals as well as a framework that provides guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm. Methods refer to the tools or instruments employed by researchers to gather empirical evidence or to analysis data.”

(Sarantakos, 1998, p.32)

Methodology in this case provided a guideline for the researcher on how to obtain the required information in order to conduct a research project. The researcher felt it was necessary to find out exactly what research was and define it. In doing this, the researcher took into consideration previously compiled definitions to gain a greater insight into what exactly the process involved and how the researcher would engage in the activity of actually doing research.

3.4 Research Defined

A dissertation is otherwise known as a research project, therefore it is essential that the researcher understands exactly what research is.

To understand what exactly research refers to, the author shall begin by defining what the word means:

“Any honest attempt to study a problem systematically or to add to man’s knowledge of a problem may be regarded as research.”

(Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969)

“Systematic inquiry that uses disciplined methods to answer questions or solve problems. The ultimate goal of research is to develop, refine and expand a base of knowledge.”

(Polit and Beck, 2006:4)

There are many different definitions available but ultimately research is the collection of information about a particular subject with an aim to create a better knowledge about that topic and make recommendations.

3.5 Selection of Research Methodology

The methodology selected involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches and also a number of primary and secondary data collection methods. Throughout the duration of this dissertation, it was necessary to carry out different forms of research so as to build up a collection of data that was relevant to the investigation of the marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an underage programme, the Cúl Camps. While undertaking the initial research into

data collection, given the time constraints, it was decided that both primary and secondary research was to be used. From this both qualitative and quantitative analysis would be undertaken

3.6 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims to capture qualities such as feelings, thoughts and experiences. Qualitative research involves the researcher's identity, values and beliefs, which play a role in the production and analysis of a qualitative data. Qualitative research also involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as interviews (open-ended/in-dept or semi-structured), questionnaires, personal experience, participant observation and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments. Qualitative research is seen to be a lot harder than quantitative research and takes a lot more time. Chadwick et al (1984) summaries the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research:

3.6.1 Advantages of Qualitative Research

- Allows more flexibility.
- Represents a more realistic view of the world.
- It allows the interviewer to interact with respondents.
- It allows for interaction between group members.

3.6.2 Disadvantages of Qualitative Research

- Risk of collecting meaningfulness and useless information.
- Unreliable predictors of the population.
- It is very time consuming.

- Problems of representatives and generalising of findings.
- It is not appropriate for evaluating pre-existing ideas.

3.7 Quantitative Research

Quantitative Research is precise, accurate and specific and refers to numerical measurements. The most common form of quantitative methods is surveys, questionnaires, documentary methods, observation and experiments. The researcher in quantitative research is thought to assume a rather passive role during data collection. Cormack (1990) summaries the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative research:

3.7.1 Advantages of Quantitative Research

- The results are statistically reliable. Quantitative research can reliably determine if one idea, concept, product, package is better than the alternatives.
- The results are projected to the population. The proportions of respondents answering a certain way are similar to the proportion of the total population that would have answered that way if they all had been asked.
- Quantitative multivariate methods have the advantage of allowing researchers to measure and control variables.

3.7.2 Disadvantages of Quantitative Research

- Issues are only measured if they are known prior to the beginning of the survey.

- Not appropriate as an initial learning phase, or as a method to develop creative ideas.
- The resulting theory often fails to take account of the unique characteristics of individual cases.

3.8 Secondary Research

This is the first stage in the data collection phase and is concerned with collecting research and information that already exists.

“A secondary source is something written about a primary source. Secondary sources include comments on, interpretations of, or discussions about the original material.”

(www.ithaca.edu)

Secondary research had to be done to outset what type of primary research would be best. From this the questionnaire was devised. At the start of this research project it was very hard to access any relevant information, as this is a relatively new research topic. Secondary research obtained throughout this research project will be assessed and evaluated and all relevant information will be used in the dissertation.

The researcher uses the secondary research as part of the literature review.

3.9 Primary Research

Primary research refers to research that has involved the collection of original data specific to that particular research project.

“A primary resource is an original object or document—the raw material or first-hand information. Primary sources include historical and legal documents, eye witness accounts, results of an experiment, statistical data, pieces of creative writing, and art objects.”

(www.ithaca.edu)

There are many different forms of primary research such as interviews, focus groups and surveys. The primary research conducted in this research study will consist of a phone questionnaire.

3.10 Combining both Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research

The researcher feels it is important to be aware that one can combine both research methods and also that in some researcher projects it is necessary to use both methods.

Creswell, (1994) for many years qualitative and quantitative research have been seen as methodological rivals. Hunt (1994) states that several authors have argued that it is time for the advocates of both research methods to declare a rhetorical cease-fire. While Jennings (1995) describes both qualitative and quantitative research as:

“Qualitative research does not place its emphasis on the collection and analysis of statistical data, and usually attempts to obtain in-dept insight into a relatively small number of respondents or observations whereas quantitative research is

based mainly on the collection and analysis of statistical data and hence to obtain a limited amount of information on a large number of respondents or observation.”

Quantitative research often ignores the human aspects within a study while qualitative research is considered weak without the support of quantitative studies. The researcher felt it was necessary to carry out a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to draw a conclusion.

3.11 Literature Review

Secondary research involved the use of an extensive and in-depth literature review. The in-depth literature review used the following resources:

- Journals
- Theses abstracts
- Library catalogues
- Books
- Search engines
- Microfilm
- National and international newspapers

A major investigation was carried out into available data relating to the research and ascertaining if any other colleges or universities were undertaking any similar research as the researcher.

3.12 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are perhaps the most commonly used method in sport related research.

Questionnaires are often associated with quantitative research designs when dealing with a large sample group, with this in mind the researcher felt this method would suit the three different categories of people she wishes to survey namely: Coordinators, ambassadors and coaches of the Cúl Camps Programme.

There are three different types of questionnaires:

1. Postal questionnaire- the questionnaire is posted to the participant who completes it and the posts it back to the researcher.
2. Telephone questionnaire- the researcher questions the participant over the phone and the researcher fills in the answers.
3. Face to face questionnaire- the researcher and the participant meet face to face and the researcher asks the questions.

The researcher felt that telephone questionnaires would be the most appropriate due to time constraints.

According to Gratton and Jones (2004), questionnaires have advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages are they are cheap, flexible, participants can complete it at their own pace and they remove possibilities of interview bias. Some of the disadvantages are they only give a small amount of information,

response rates are notoriously poor, there is no opportunity to probe and there may be problems over complex questions.

3.13 Questionnaire Design

It is relatively easy to put together a questionnaire however designing questions that fulfil all of the research questions is time consuming.

According to Graffton and Jones (2004) there are three questions to be asked at the beginning of the design stage:

- 1) What information do I need.
- 2) What questions can I ask.
- 3) How am I going to analysis the data.

Graffton and Jones (04) also state that there are a number of different question formats you can use when designing your questionnaire:

3.13.1 Simple open and closed questions

Closed- respondent is asked to pick one or more responses from a list of choices predetermined by the researcher.

Opened- respondent gives their answer without any prompting.

Combined Open and Closed - gives the respondent a chance to elaborate on a particular response.

3.13.2 Scales

Scales – series of questions designed to gain a single measure of a concept example, Attitude or opinion.

Likert Scales – used to assess attitudes. Respondents are asked on a simple scale whether they agree or disagree.

Semantic Differential- where respondent's reaction to a concept using a scale with contrasting adjectives at each end.

3.13.3 Other formats

Ranking - respondents place responses in order of importance to them.

List Questions - allows respondents to indicate several responses.

Filter Questions - allows respondents to move to a different section when the question does not apply to them.

The researcher decided that open and closed questions were the best choice for her study as they allow the respondents to give their opinions and quantitative data can be obtained.

The researcher started her questionnaire with straightforward questions, then grouped questions of similar themes together and left the more questions till the end.

3.14 Sampling

According to Gratton and Jones (2004) sampling refers to a subject of a specific population. Its purpose is to gain information about the overall population by selection a smaller number of individual cases from the population.

There are two stages in sampling:

- 1) define the population that is of interest to the researcher
- 2) determine your sampling method

There are a number of sampling techniques:

Random, Stratified Random, Cluster and Systematic.

The researcher felt that Cluster sampling was the most appropriate to her research as it provides an unbiased estimated of population parameters.

According to Emorly and Cooper (91) Cluster sampling is where groups are randomly selected rather than individuals. A sample of these subgroups (Clusters) are chosen at random, so all individuals in those subgroups selected are included in the sample. Then within these subgroups individuals are randomly selected.

The Cúl Camps consists of three groups who help run the camps:

Coordinators - oversee the running of the camps in each area and also coordinate registration of the camps.

Coaches – qualified and experienced individuals who devise a specific programme to ensure the participating children learn skills and enjoy a fun team - building activity.

Ambassadors – county players who visit camps nationwide giving tips to the children on how to improve their game and give the children an opportunity to ask them questions.

From the three groups of individuals listed above the researcher randomly picked individuals from each group.

The sample chosen plays a key roll in the success of the research project first hand information in the relevant field. Samples are more time efficient and allow conclusions to be made of the larger population. They help the study be completed in less time and findings become available earlier.

3.15 Pilot Study

The pilot study was completed on Wednesday 31st July. This involved getting a small numbers of coordinators, ambassadors and coaches to fill out the survey and then asking them what they thought of it, were the questions too difficult, did they understand the questions etc. This is highly recommended to be done before the survey is conducted, so as to, illuminate any questions that are ambiguous or unclear. It will also give you ideas as to the information you will receive back and whether it will answer your research questions. Six individuals were chosen, two from each group.

From the pilot study the researcher was forced to make a few small changes. For example a simple change in the lay out of the questionnaire and rephrase some questions.

Here are a few of the changes that were made to the questionnaire:

Question 3: Do you feel the Cúl Camps programme has been marketed effectively?

It was decided that a prompt should be used here which would help the individuals with their answer.

The following is the corrected question:

Question 3: Do you feel the Cúl Camps programme has been marketed effectively?

Please follow up your answer by giving specific examples relating to Advertisements, Brochures, Promotions, the Media (Radio, TV) Etc.

Question 5: Do you feel sponsorship is important to underage programmes such as the Cúl Camps?

The individuals taking part in the pilot survey thought that Question 5 should have a second part to it as it would help to obtain more information. Therefore question 5 came in two parts A and B.

The following is the second part to question 5:

Question 5. B) Is it important that the sponsoring company plays an active role in the programme?

3.16 Ethical Concerns

This study as with all research studies had ethical concerns that needed to be addressed. Punch (1998) postulated that the major concerns in relation to ethics were related to issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality. In the case of this research study these issues were addressed by the author. Prior to the commencement of the study consent was sought and granted by the participants of the study. Subsequent to consent being achieved, the author

explained by letter (See Appendix 3) to the interviewees what her research was about and again reiterated this when she contacted them by phone to conduct her questionnaire.

All questions from the participants were answered and assurances were given about the confidentiality of the data which was obtained through the course of the study.

Confidentiality, in this case, was the most prevalent issue for the participants of the interview as they expressed opinions about their work place and also their work colleagues through the course of the study, thus maintenance of confidentiality in this study was paramount for the author. Confidentiality was seen by the participants as being mandatory before they would participate willingly in the study.

In any meeting between the author and the participants was not relayed to anyone else and in the records of the author the names of the participants are not used.

3.17 Carrying out the Telephone Questionnaire

The researcher decided the best type of questionnaire to carry out was a phone questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed so that it could be easily understood, quick to complete and quick to analyse.

To ensure non-bias in the investigation a mixture of coordinators, coaches and ambassadors were chosen randomly. The researcher felt this would give a greater insight into the opinions of all those individuals involved in the running of the Cúl Camps programmes.

Upon presenting the phone questionnaire to the participant it was common manners to ask permission of their time and attention.

20 individuals from the three different groups namely coordinators, coaches and ambassadors were contacted however only 15 individuals completed the questionnaire given a 75% rate.

All questionnaires were anonymous to protect all individuals who took part.

The phone questionnaire was completed from Monday 11th of August to Friday 15th of August. 15 phone questionnaires were conducted between those dates.

After the completion of the phone questionnaire, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of all the relevant data was carried out.

The survey itself was composed of two pages containing ten questions. The survey was designed to investigate the researcher's research questions. (Please see Appendix 2 for questionnaire.)

3.18 Why each question?

The researcher decided what information was needed to devise each question.

The questions were picked with great consideration and always with the research questions in mind.

Each question was relevant to the research study and provided vital information needed to complete the study.

The researcher felt that some of the questions asked would provide in-depth answers and personal opinions of the surveyed individuals. The individuals all play different roles in the camps therefore some of the questions would be guaranteed a mixed opinion.

3.19 Data Analysis

In the presentation of the data, Microsoft Works and Excel were used. They were the most convenient packages available to analyse the findings. It was decided to use pie charts and bar charts to display the findings. This ensured the information was presented in a clear and concise way.

The researcher had to physically transcribe the phone questionnaires she had completed with the different individuals. After the questionnaires were transcribed, a process of grouping information occurred where similarities and contrasts were identified among the questionnaires conducted. Further analysis occurred when the researcher compared and contrasted this information to the literature review.

3.20 Research Limitations

The researcher experienced a number of constraints in conducting this dissertation.

Firstly, the researcher found it difficult to obtain any published information as very few if any empirical studies have been carried out on the Marketing of the GAA. Secondly, qualitative research is particularly time consuming as regards questionnaires. The researcher had to make several repeat calls to some participants at a more convenient time for the respondents.

Also the researcher found that some participants wanted to fill out the questionnaire themselves and post it back instead of participating in the telephone interview.

Chapter Four Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results and findings from the phone questionnaires will be discussed.

On concluding the primary research, the data was analysed and findings were generated.

The process of analysis involved transcribing all the questionnaires, they were analysed several times and then compared and contrasted to each other.

Diagrams were used to illustrate and display the main findings.

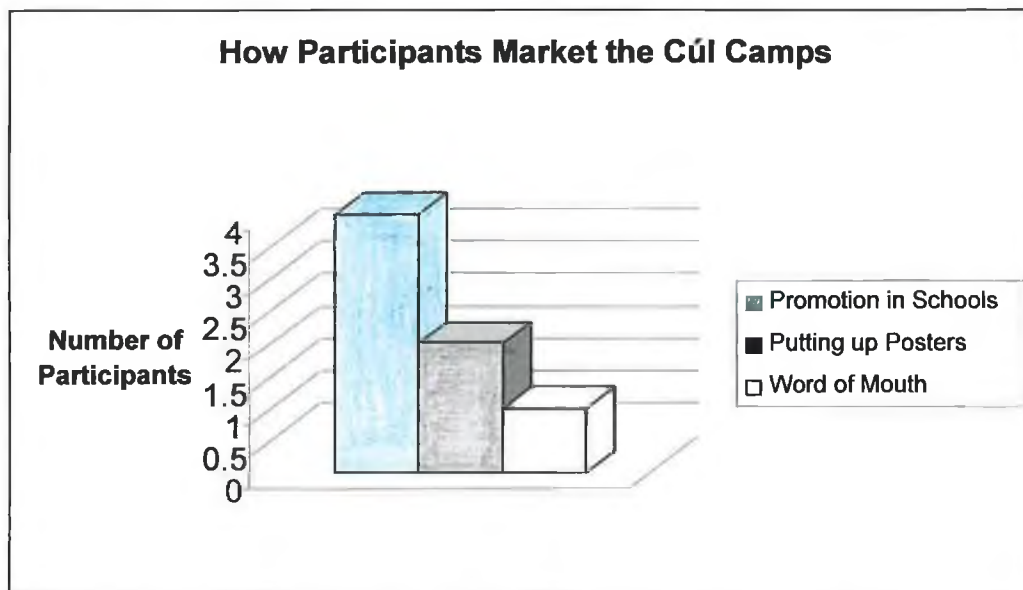


Fig. 1.1 The marketing of the Cúl Camps by participants

The results in fig. 1.1 show that 7 individuals who were interviewed believed that they played a part in marketing the Cúl Camps. They gave the following suggestions of how they felt they were marketing the Camps:

- Promotion in Schools- by going into primary schools throughout Ireland and talking to teachers and students.

- Putting up Posters- by advertising the camps in schools, local shops and club houses.
- Word of mouth - by simply talking to the children, parents and teachers about the camps.

The researcher felt that the participants who said they played a part in the marketing of the Cúl Camps only played a minimal role. The participants all did promotional work and did not have any say in the overall marketing of the camps.

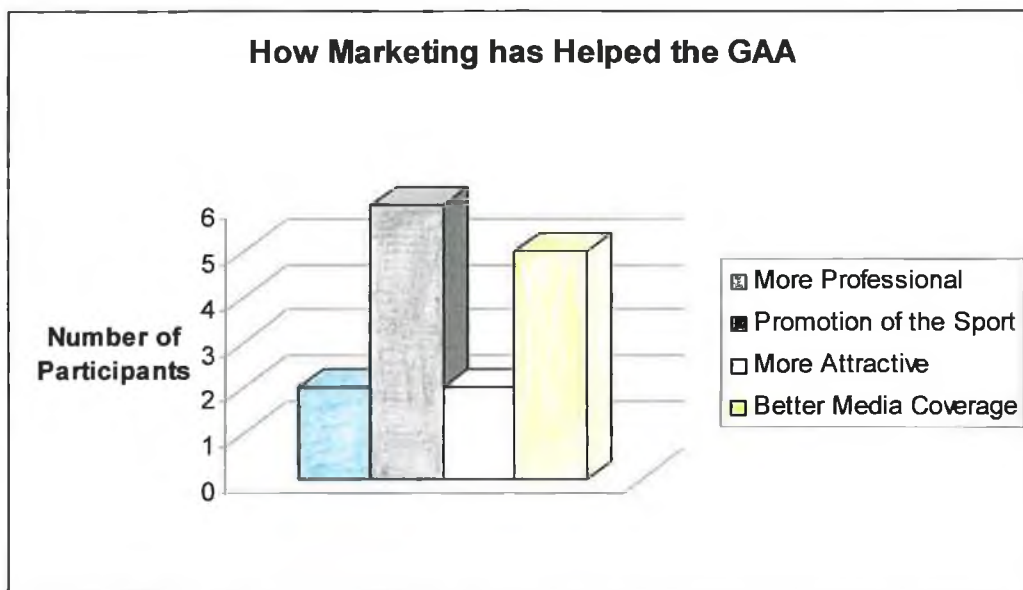


Fig. 1.2 how marketing has helped the GAA

The graph in fig 1.2 shows that everyone interview believed that Marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years. The 15 individuals have given the following suggestions of how marketing has helped the GAA:

- It has made the GAA look more professional.
- It has helped promote the sport throughout Ireland and over seas.
- It has made the GAA and the Sport more attractive.

- It has seen better media coverage over the last number of years with different broadcasters fighting for the television rights.

It was interesting to see that all of the individuals who were interviewed agreed that marketing has helped the GAA. The literature review coincided with the data obtained from the questionnaires in agreeing that marketing is important to the GAA. Morgan (1992) believes that marketing is centrally important to the GAA. While Slack (1998) states that marketing has helped increase media coverage and five interviewees all shared the same opinion.

One interviewee stated *“the GAA may not be what it is today without marketing. It has made it a more documented sport worldwide and throughout the country. It has helped the GAA become more professional looking and gives it a competitive advantage.”*

Another interviewee felt that *“marketing has given the GAA a wider audience; it has brought advertising to the fore front of peoples mind and helped the GAA grow and promote its product offerings.”*

Finally an interviewee felt that *“marketing has helped the GAA through sponsorship deals and branding of the organisation which has increased the GAA’s profits over the last number of years.”*

The literature review highlights this statement; in March 2008 the GAA launched its new brand identity: it was to reflect the future direction of the organisation.

The president of the GAA Nickey Brennan stated that this new brand represents

a modern and vibrant association with a huge youth membership. This shows the importance of marketing for the GAA.



Fig 1.30 The effective marketing methods

Fig 1.30 represents the 9 individuals who felt that the Cúl Camps are marketed effectively. They felt that the camps are marketed successfully throughout primary schools in Ireland. The camps are also marketed in both local radio and newspapers giving the commencement dates and contact numbers of local coordinators.

The interviewees felt that this form of marketing was effective and the children got a chance to meet the actual individuals who run the camps.

Since the introduction of the camps in 2006 this has been the form of marketing which has seen the increase of participants each year.

One interviewee stated that *“the use of local media to advertise the camps, provision of brochures to primary schools and word of mouth are all very effective full methods of marketing for the Cúl Camps”*.

Another interviewee stated that “*the GAA have utilised their links with the GAA players to include them in PR events, they have used the back page of match programmes and Vhi have the camp details publicised at their head office in Dublin.*”

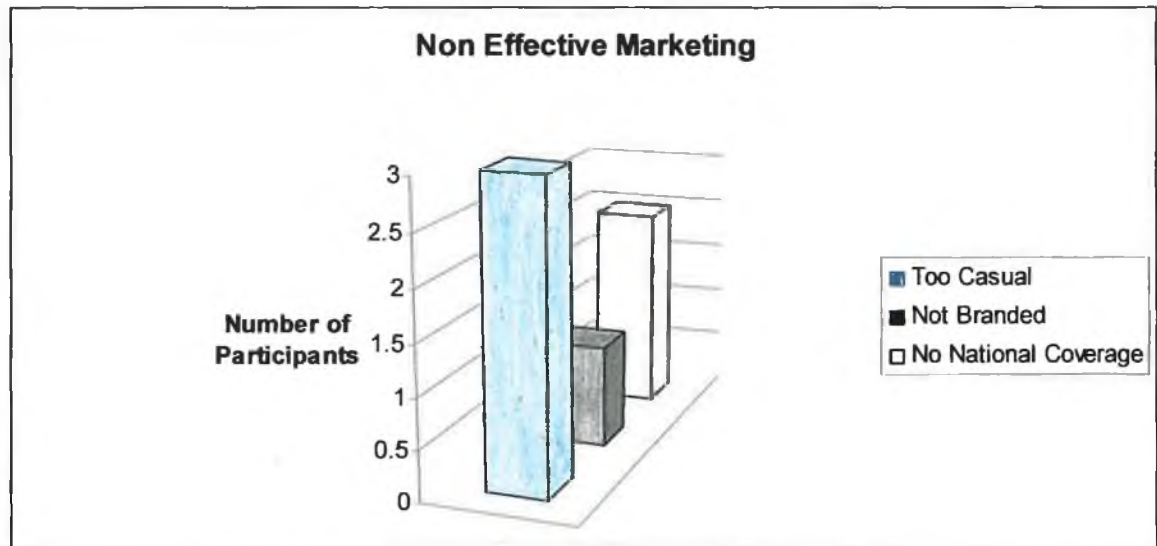


Fig 1.31 Non effective marketing methods

Fig 1.31 shows that 6 individuals feel that the Cúl Camps are not marketed effectively. They felt that by simply handing out application forms to school children that it was too casual and often the application forms may not reach the children’s parents.

They also felt that there was no national media coverage promoting the Cúl Camps.

Finally it was suggested that the Cúl Camps were not branded sufficiently and this was an important issue for the GAA marketing team.

One interviewee stated that “*the GAA Cúl Camps could benefit from using more national air time and they felt that there was a major lack of advertisements for the camps this year.*”

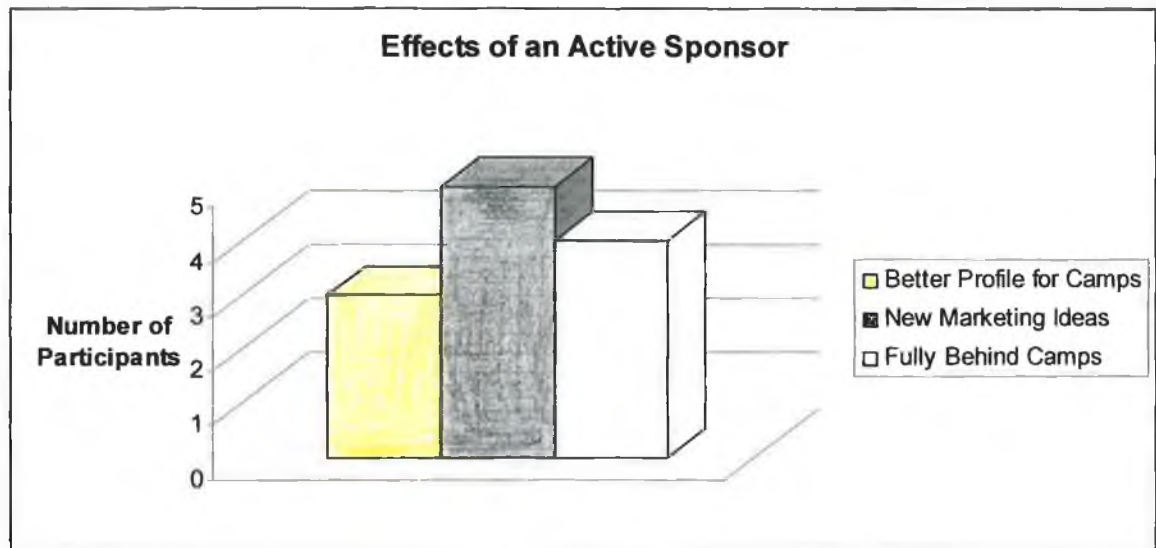


Fig. 1.4 The effects of an active sponsor

The results in fig.1.4 show that 12 individuals felt it was important that the company who sponsor an underage programme play an active role.

- They believed it gave the camps a better profile.
- New marketing ideas were developed with the amalgamation of the active sponsor and the GAA.
- It shows the sponsor is fully behind the camp and will help it develop.

Findings from the questionnaire reveal that individuals felt that it is important that the sponsor play an active role as it shows the sponsor is fully behind the programme and it suggests they are interested in the success and development of the underage participants. Other individuals stated that by playing an active role the company may see things that improve the programme. The literature review reiterates these points, Pope (1998) agrees that by sponsoring an event such as an underage programme the company may achieve different objectives while

Wayne (1988) believe that substantial benefits can be gained from the association of a company with a sponsor.

One interviewee stated that *“it is important for both the sponsor and sponsored to get the most out of their investment. From a business and marketing point of view an active role is very important. The sponsor may see things that can be improved on by taking an active role.”*

Another interviewee stated that *“a health company such as Vhi gives the image of health promotion to concerned parents and this is the ideal sponsor for the Cúl Camps in the age of the obesity epidemic.”*

While an interviewee suggested that *“it depends on the sponsor, play station were a previous sponsor but this was a contradictorily alignment for the GAA camps but Vhi are more inline with the GAA ethos.”*

Finally an interviewee stated that *“for a sponsorship to be successful, it is crucial that both parties (sponsor and sponsored) share common values, for example Bank of Ireland and the GAA are both unique Irish brands and are community based. It is also important to ensure that the GAA benefits from marketing expertise and access to new channels which sponsor organisations can provide.”*

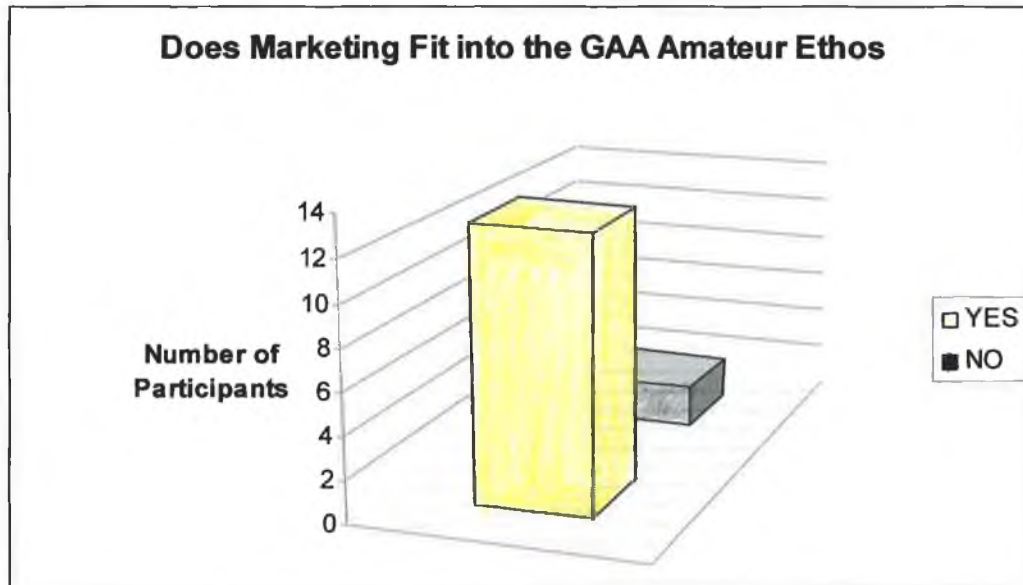


Fig. 1.5 Does marketing fit into the GAA amateur ethos

It is clear from fig.1.5 that 13 individuals believed that marketing does fit into the GAA amateur ethos, leaving only 2 individuals who believed that it does not fit. Referring to the literature review, Keith Duggan states that the GAA are the greatest amateur organisation in the world however with the influence of marketing, player's endorsement and extensive media coverage this Amateur Ethos is becoming harder to maintain. With this in mind it was interesting to see that nearly all individuals felt marketing does fit into the Amateur Ethos.

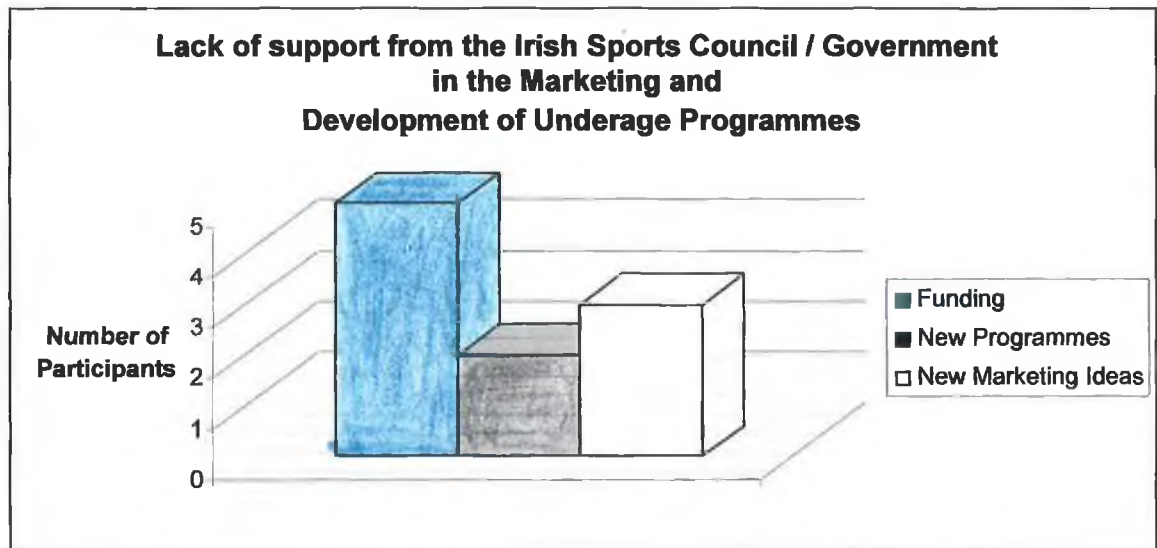


Fig. 1.6 Lack of support from the ISC/Government in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA

The graph shown in fig.1.6 represents 10 individuals who think that the Irish Sports Council/Government do not play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA.

- They felt more funding was needed in the area of marketing.
- They also felt that new marketing ideas were needed in order for the underage programmes to succeed.
- They suggested that new programmes should be developed with better marketing strategy.

The findings from question 7 and 8 are very interesting.

When asked in question 7, *“Do you feel the Irish Sports Council/ Government play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA?”* 10 interviewees said No however in question 8 when asked, *“Do you feel sufficient funding is available for the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA?”* the response was very close

with only one person in the difference believing that they provide enough funding.

In the literature review, it is highlighted that between 2001 and 2006 the Government provided almost €13million in funding to help increase participation at underage level. However the interviewees believe that the government do not play a better role in marketing and development of underage programmes within the GAA. While the majority feel they do provide enough funding.

However as the graph shows the interviewees felt more funding should go toward the highlighted areas mentioned in the graph.

One interviewee stated that *“the government should earmark a certain percentage of the funding they give as having to go to underage development aimed directly at marketing.”*

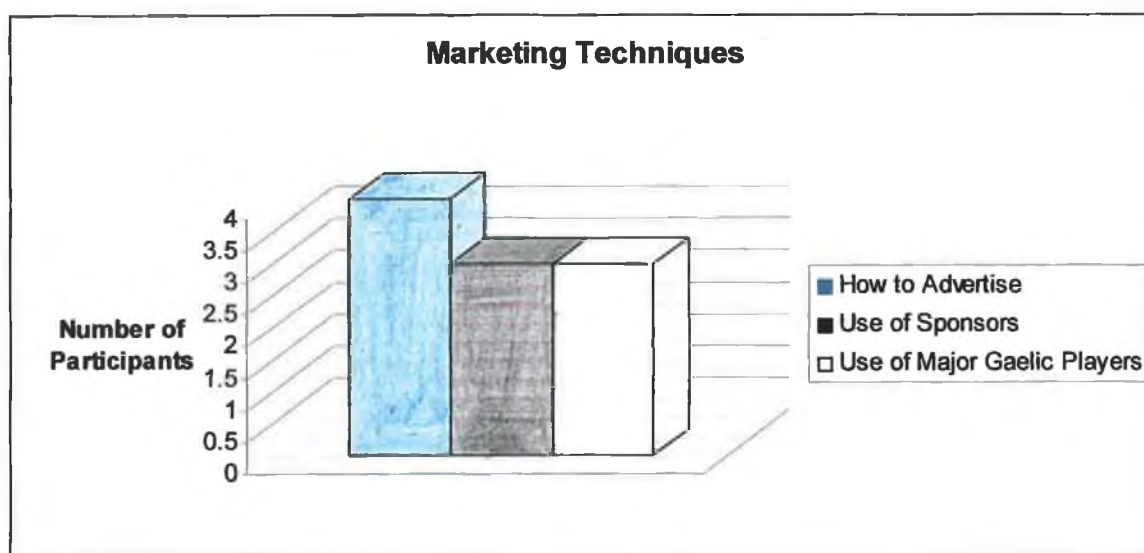


Fig. 1.7 Useful marketing techniques for the GAA

10 individuals believe that the GAA has learned useful marketing techniques from other organisations. By looking at fig 1.7 it reveals the techniques they feel the GAA have learned:

- How to advertise more effectively
- How to use our major Gaelic Players to promote the sport
- How to use sponsors to gain a competitive advantage

One interviewee suggested that the GAA have learned a substantial amount of useful marketing techniques from other organisations one such example is the Australian Football League (AFL).

The literature review agrees with this point, Ian Kehoe (2004) stated that the International Rules Test was used to pilot marketing initiatives. While Dermot Power (2004) from the GAA also agreed that the International Rules Test gives the GAA useful marketing help. Also Keith Duggan of the Irish Times (2007) stated that the GAA look at other sporting cultures to learn how to adapt and develop and maintain its position.

Another interviewee stated that *“the GAA are many years behind such organisations as the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) but in the last five years they have started using their biggest assets – their players to promote their games and products.”*

However an interviewee felt that *“the GAA have learned from other organisations such as the FAI with regard to underage programmes. The GAA seem to be doing more marketing now than ever.”*

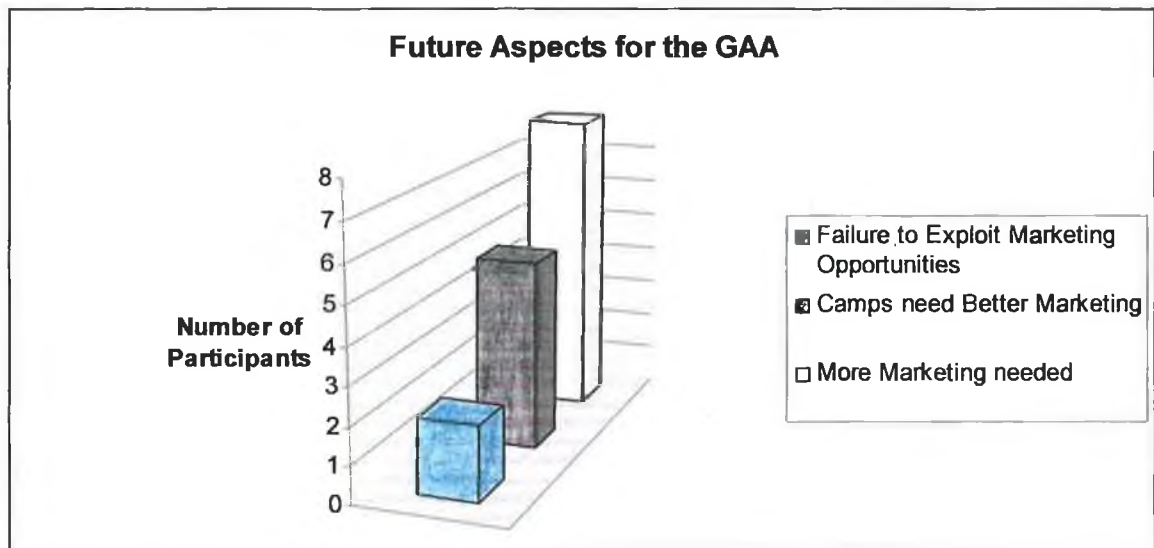


Fig 1.8 Future aspects for the GAA

Fig 1.8 shows the results of the final question, “Are there any other comments you would like to make which you feel are relevant to the topic: Marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an underage programme – Cúl Camps.”

Each individual answered this question and the comments are as follows:

- 8 individuals felt that more marketing is needed throughout the GAA
- 5 individuals believed that the Cúl Camps would benefit substantially if they received more marketing.
- 2 individuals suggest that by exploiting different marketing opportunities when they arise the GAA and underage programmes will benefit in the future.

Some interviewees pointed out that the GAA should use their underage programmes specifically the Cúl Camps programme as a competitive advantage but they feel the GAA are failing to exploit this marketing opportunity.

The literature review also reiterates this point with Martin Breheny (2007) from the Independent stated that “*the GAA need to exploit every opportunity to cope with the globalised marketing blitz available to soccer and rugby*”.

The majority of the interviewees felt that more marketing is needed throughout the GAA in the future. One interviewee felt that the “*GAA should be advertising and promoting the games all year not just when the championship is on. He felt there was a link missing between the marketing of the Senior and underage levels that should be made in order for the organisation to continue its success in the future*”.

The literature review points out that Devine (2005) believes that the GAA should promote both Gaelic Football and Hurling as a unique sport to Ireland like other countries throughout the world do with their own traditional sport.

Another interviewee suggested the “*the GAA should use the big screens in Croke Park to promote the underage camps whenever there are matches being played there.*”

The general response from interviewees was that more marketing is needed at underage level. A better more structured marketing strategy needs to be put in place that will highlight the success of the camps. Advertising and promotion needs to be looked at and more media coverage needs to take place.

Chapter Five Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study analysed the marketing of the GAA focusing specifically on an underage programme, the Cúl Camps. By comparing and contrasting all data obtained from the following research methods:

- Secondary research in the form of the literature review
- Primary research in the form of the phone questionnaires.

The conclusion and recommendations of this research are based upon extensive analysis and discussion of all the data used within this dissertation.

The literature review examined published secondary sources in the relevant areas while the research process involved a qualitative phone questionnaire. A quantitative element to this study involved the analysis of the phone questionnaires into graphs.

5.2 Objective One

To examine the marketing of an underage programme, the Cúl Camps.

This is the third year that the Cúl Camps has been running and each year the number of participants has risen from over 75,000 in 2006 to an estimated 81,000 in 2008. However with the increase in the number of other camps, pressure is on for the GAA to try and keep one step ahead of the competition. From the findings the researcher feels that the GAA need to launch a new marketing

campaign in order to compete with this growing market as each year more sport camps are introduced. The GAA have always had a strong link with schools in Ireland and this network should be used to the full. To get ahead of the competition the GAA should ensure that their organisation is the first in the schools in 2009.

Branding is an excellent marketing technique and during 2008 the GAA launched their new brand. Some of the individuals who were interviewed believed that the camps were not branded sufficiently with this in mind the author suggests the following: That a nationwide national school competition should be set up to design the Cúl Camps Brand and playing kit. This would be a way of getting the right design while also developing widespread interest amongst children in the camps. The playing kit is a way to market the Cul Camps all year round and should be an essential part of the marketing plan.

The GAA need to involve the different individuals who actually run the camp namely Coordinators, Coaches and Ambassadors more in the marketing of the camps. It may be of great benefit for the GAA to involve these individuals and get their personal opinions and views on how to improve the Cúl Camps. Ambassadors should be used to go around to the schools in the county to promote Gaelic practically the Cúl Camps The Ambassadors are some of the major Gaelic players throughout they country. This would attract more children who want to wish to follow in their hero's footsteps and the author believes will lead to an immediate purchase.

It was stated in the findings that an active sponsor is important, with that in mind the author feels that a nutritionist should be at each camp one day of the week to educate children about the proper nutrition for athletes. This service could be provided by the Vhi as it would show they are playing a more active role and the author feels this would provide a positive image to all parents.

The researcher feels that the marketing of the Cúl Camps is very casual as suggested by the people who were interviewed. However as mentioned in the literature review the GAA use word of mouth which is a very powerful marketing technique and this method has been successful for the organisation over the last number of years. They also feel the need to be more professional in the marketing of the camps. This could be done by placing the applications forms in the local papers and also highlighting the fact that one can download the application forms off the GAA website.

5.3 Objective Two

To investigate if marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years.

Marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years in many different ways.

It has gained extensive media coverage with different stations offering large sums of money for the broadcasting rights.

In 2008, the GAA introduced a new sponsorship structure for the senior championship, this now sees four new sponsors attached to both the Gaelic and hurling Championship.

Marketing has helped the GAA gain a more professional look which has helped draw more individuals to the traditional sport. One of the major marketing techniques that have given the GAA a competitive advantage is its use of advertising. Each individual that was interviewed commented on the Guinness advertisements this has helped the GAA reaching new audiences.

The GAA need to continue the marketing process but need to up the scale a little in order to compete with other sports. They need to make a link between the senior and underage level in the form of advertising as the camps and the championship are run at the same times. By making this link the GAA would benefit at both levels.

The GAA also need to be aware of the sponsorship deals that they get involved in as they do not want to risk destroying the traditional sport.

5.4 Objective Three

To determine if the Irish Sports Council (ISC) / Government play any role in the marketing and development of an underage programme in the GAA.

The Irish Sports Council (ISC) / Government do provide a considerable amount of funding each year for the GAA, however none of this funding is specifically given for marketing. The researcher believes that it is not the role of the ISC/Government to provide funding specifically for marketing.

The researcher suggests that the ISC / Government and other NGB's should form a sub committee to aid in the development of marketing strategies

aimed at underage programmes. This would help all sporting organisations in Ireland who may be finding it difficult to obtain the correct form of marketing.

The GAA receive thousands of euro of funding each year, they should put funding aside specifically for marketing of underage programmes. This would help the underage programmes within the GAA who may not be getting enough recognition.

5.5 Objective Four

To reveal if marketing fits into the Amateur Ethos of the GAA.

The researcher feels that marketing does fit into the amateur ethos of the GAA however it is becoming harder to distinguish and maintain as the games become more professional.

The GAA pride themselves in being an amateur organisation, but as they continue to enter into sponsorship deals and more money is being filtered into the organisation this status is hard to keep.

The researcher feels that marketing has helped the GAA keep the amateur ethos it prides itself on. The many different advertisements highlight the traditional sport that is loved throughout the country.

The GAA is an amateur ethos organisation but over the last number of years this status has become harder to keep. Many of the players are now involved in endorsements and received free cars and managers can earn over €300 a week. These examples are not very fitting for the so called amateur ethos the GAA prides itself on.

Marketing has given the organisation a more professional look which the researcher feels is needed in order for it to continue its success.

The organisation needs to keep a watchful eye on the levels of marketing and professionalism that it is entering if it wishes to maintain the amateur ethos that it stands for.

Identity is very important to the GAA and what it stands for; it is a core strength of the organisation and by using marketing wisely it can help promote this aspect and its amateur ethos.

Finally the Researcher wishes to acknowledge that there is at present a shortage of research on this specific topic. Therefore the researcher feels it is necessary for further studies to be done and extend the body of knowledge in this area.

Marketing is an important role in any organisation, it helps the organisation flourish and maintain a competitive advantage when used at its best ability.

Sports' marketing is a relatively new concept that should be carefully monitored and valued.

Sports' marketing is growing rapidly and there is a major gap here for further research and development.

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Vhi / GAA Cúl Camps

Summer camps were first organised on an ad hoc basis in the 1980s and have proved very popular in the intervening years. Building on the enormous success of these initiatives and the huge growth in numbers attending the camps the GAA felt there was a need to promote these camps in a more streamlined manner. By doing this the GAA could ensure that the quality of standards and principles of best practice would be observed nationwide.

For years members of the GAA complained about the impression given by other summer camps which were better marketed than theirs. For that reason, they decided to address the issue and come up with a brand that they could use in all 32 counties and that could be marketed effectively to create awareness as the GAA Summer Camp brand.

In 2006 the GAA, in association with Vhi Healthcare, decided to take the concept one step further with the creation of Vhi Cúl Camps. According to Declan Moran, Director of Marketing and Business Development, Vhi Healthcare are proud to sponsor the Cúl Camps and are delighted to partner with the GAA on this initiative. The VHi are committed to supporting the Cúl Camps for at least three years and work closely with the GAA and the individual Clubs to ensure it is the summer activity for children of all ages.

Paul Caffrey former Dublin Manager 2008 stated that the Cúl Camps are a nationally co-ordinated programme; Vhi Cúl Camps encourages children to learn and develop sporting and life-skills by participating in Gaelic Games, in a

fun, non-competitive environment. Participating children not only learn skills but also to place an emphasis on fun and team-building activity. The Vhi/ GAA Cúl Camps are an ideal way for children to develop their Gaelic Games skills in a structured, yet friendly environment. The social aspect of the Vhi/GAA Cúl Camps is very important also and these camps offer a great opportunity for children to make new friends through their interest in Gaelic Games.

In 2006, the former GAA President Sean Kelly stated that the introduction of the Cúl Camps had *“the potential to increase participation in there games all over Ireland and he was delighted that Vhi Healthcare had joined with the GAA in there endeavours to provide what they felt would become a hugely popular summer activity for children. This fresh initiative would help the GAA combine their resources to ensure a first class product nationwide”*.

These camps are organized, facilitated and supported by thousands of coordinators, coaches and ambassadors. Vhi Cúl Camp Ambassadors visit camps nationwide, giving tips to children on how to improve their game and offering the children a unique opportunity to ask them individual questions on their sport. These ambassadors are usually county players and it can be the highlight of the camp for most children to meet these elite players.

The Cúl Camps are advertised in most local news papers and radio stations throughout Ireland. The county coordinators travel around to the majority of primary schools throughout Ireland advertising the camps and giving a brief talk about what the camps have to offer. They also distribute the

application forms for the camps. This form of marketing is casual but it has been effective over the last three years. The GAA use “Word of Mouth” to market the camps this form of marketing has been used over the last three years and is a very powerful marketing tool. A lot of the marketing done by coordinators is promotional work and consists of informing individuals about the camps.

Each child that takes part in the camp receives a full set of playing gear consisting of a jersey, togs, socks and a knapsack. This is a very useful way of advertising both the GAA and the Vhi as the Cúl Camps logo is on both the jersey and knapsack. This is a useful branding technique that will help advertise the camps all year round.

The 2006 Vhi Cúl Camps attracted over 75,000 children between the ages of 7 and 13 to almost 850 venues throughout the 32 Counties. While a record 80,000 kids attended the Vhi Cúl Camps in 2007. 2007 also saw the first international Vhi Cúl Camps launched, with camps being hosted in both New York and Boston later in the summer. Over 160 children were expected to participate in the New York camps under the direction of 40 coaches and 100 children were expected to participate in the Boston camps, supervised by 20 coaches.

In 2007, a new initiative was introduced within the Cúl Camps; this was to find the Cúlest Coach. Children nationwide got the opportunity to vote for their Cúlest Coach and state why they believe he/she should be nominated the Cúlest Coach.

Now in its third year 2008 will see the expansion of the Vhi/GAA Cúl Camps to further destinations abroad. A total of 22 camps will be held outside Ireland, with 4 camps being rolled out in Canada, 4 in Europe, 5 in the UK and 9 in North America. 300 children are expected to participate under the direction of 15 coaches.

The initiative has gone from strength to strength with 80,000 children participating in 2007 in the Vhi / GAA Cúl Camps nation-wide. To keep up with demand, there will be nearly 1,000 camps available in 2008.

According to Vincent Sheridan, Chief Executive of the Vhi, they are delighted to build on the success of the last two years and bring the GAA camps even further in the coming years. In 2008 an extensive training pack will be given to each of the 1,000 clubs that host a camp. These packs include footballs, bibs, sliothars and training disks which will assist the coaches at the camps.

It is very clear to see that the Vhi Cul Camps are a huge success with the large number of participants each year. The marketing done for this camp comes across basic but it is proving very effective as the numbers increase each year. The Vhi have only taken out a three year contract with the GAA for this Camp so it will be interesting to see if they extend this contract in the future.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Do you play any part in the marketing of the Cúl Camps programme?

Yes

No

If Yes, please state:

2) Do you think Marketing has helped the GAA over the last number of years?

Yes

No

If Yes, Please explain:

3) Do you feel the Cúl Camps programme has been marketed effectively?

Yes

No

Please follow up your answer by giving specific examples relating to Advertisements, Brochures, Promotion, the Media (Radio, TV) Etc.

4) Has the popularity of other sports for example soccer and rugby affected the participation levels in the Cúl Camps programme?

Yes

No

5. A) Do you feel sponsorship is important to underage programmes such as the Cúl Camps?

Yes

No

5. B) Is it important that the sponsoring company plays an active role in the programme?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer:

6) Do you think Marketing fits into the amateur ethos of underage development in the GAA?

Yes

No

If No, Please explain:

7) Do you think the Irish Sports Council/Government play a significant role in the marketing and development of underage programmes in the GAA?

Yes

No

If Yes, Please explain:

8) Do you feel sufficient funding is available for the growth and development of underage programmes in the GAA?

Yes

No

If No, Please explain:

9) Do you think the GAA have learned any useful marketing techniques from similar organisations with regard underage programmes i.e. F.A.I?

Yes

No

If Yes, Please explain:

10) Are there any other comments you would like to make which you feel are relevant to the topic: "Marketing of The GAA focusing specifically on an underage programme, the Cúl Camps"?

Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO



Research Department,
Business and Humanities,
Institute of Technology,
Ballinodan,
Co. Sligo.

Tel: 0719181289 / 0879711865

Email:

Date: 08/08/08

Re: Market Research

To Whom It May Concern:

The Masters of Science in Marketing is carrying out market research to determine the status of "The Marketing of the GAA focusing Specifically on An Underage Programme, The Cúl Camps".

As part of this study, telephone questionnaires will be conducted with Cúl Camp coordinators, coaches and ambassadors. It would therefore be of great assistance to the researcher if you could expect a phone call between the dates August 11th to the 15th of August 2008 and answer a five minute questionnaire.

I wish to advise you that all the information collected for this research project is strictly for the pursuit of an academic award and as such all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (contact information above) or the supervisor, Roddy Gaynor at the Institute of Technology, Sligo.

Yours Sincerely,

Lena Rochford
Ms of Science in Marketing

