

**TV Advertisements Sponsored by Alcohol Companies –
Interpretations and Behaviours of Young Male College
Students**

B.A. (Honours) Exercise and Health Studies 2014

**A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirement for
the Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Exercise and Health
Studies**

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Statement of originality and ownership of work

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Abstract

Title: 'TV Advertisements Sponsored by Alcohol Companies' – Interpretations and behaviours of young male college students.

Overview: Evidence exists that there is an intrinsic link between alcohol and sport particularly among young male college students. This is being reinforced by TV advertisements for alcohol brands depicting sports. The aim of this research is to gain a greater insight into the messages young males receive from these advertisements and their potential to influence drinking behaviour.

Methods: Three focus groups were carried out among 21 third level college students attending Waterford Institute of Technology. Only male participants who played sport were interviewed. The focus groups were recorded with a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim.

Results: Participants reported that 4 key messages emerged from watching alcohol sponsored sports advertisements on TV. They reported that these advertisements portrayed the 'positives' of drinking alcohol and did not show the negatives. Alcohol sports advertising on TV was said to 'play on the social aspect' and the participants unanimously agreed this is what the companies were targeting. Participants also associated consuming an alcoholic drink as a 'reward' for either them taking part in a sporting event or going to see a sporting event or competition. The majority of the participants also believed that these advertisements raised 'awareness' towards the alcohol brands which ultimately had an effect on their behaviour towards consuming this brand.

Conclusion: Alcohol sponsored sports advertisements on TV depict messages that portray an exclusively positive association between sport and alcohol.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how young males interpret and respond to a range of sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies.

Sports participation among male college students is extremely high. The most recent National Lifestyle Survey of College Students (CLAN, 2005) reports that 71% of this demographic group participate in sport 3 or more times per week. Twice as many males participate in sport compared to females with both first year and second year male students showing the highest sport participation rates of 72% and 74% respectively. These participation rates coincide with the well documented health benefits of physical activity such as reduced risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, certain cancers, weight control and depression (World Health Organisation, 2013). Although there are several health and social benefits from this, the link between alcohol and sport is a contentious one. The World Health Organisation (2009) expresses that alcohol is the world's third leading cause of poor health and premature death and outweighs even tobacco as a risk factor. European statistics also show alcohol to be the third leading risk factor for disease and mortality. Ireland is very much at the forefront of alcohol consumption in Europe. Statistics from 2005 have shown that on average every person in Ireland aged 15 years or older consumes over 12.5 litres of pure alcohol. This equates to over double the worldwide per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages for people of that age (World Health Organisation, 2011). Sixty one percent of college students take part in binge drinking sessions at least once a week and out of every 100 drinking occasions among male college students, 76% resulted in a binge drinking occasion (Hope, Dring and Dring, 2005). Alcohol related street violence, domestic violence, alcohol related injuries and drink driving are part of a long list of harms of alcohol misuse in Ireland (Hope, 2008). The link between alcohol and sport may contribute to the harm caused by alcohol.

There is widespread political debate on whether or not alcohol sports sponsorship should be banned in Ireland. Alcohol consumption rates for adolescents have been shown to increase as a result of viewing alcohol related T.V. advertisements (Smith and Foxcroft 2009). The aim and message of these advertisements seem to remain the same, to influence consumer habits and behaviours towards their product and to

increase sales. The audience that alcohol related sports advertisements target are young males as evidence has shown that this population has high participation in both sport and alcohol behaviour (Hope, Dring and Dring, 2005). Opposition such as the Association of Advertisers in Ireland (AAI) make the argument that there is not enough evidence linking sponsorship by alcohol brands to increased consumption and ridding sport of such sponsorship would damage the growth and development of Irish sporting and cultural bodies (Department of Health and Children, 2010). Therefore more research is warranted in relation to how this group interpret and respond to sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Alcohol related Harm

This section examines the harm associated with alcohol consumption both worldwide and in Ireland.

2.1.1 Worldwide

Globally, alcohol has much social and cultural importance, however it is also responsible for a great number of societal problems and costs (Anderson and Baumbeg, 2006). Evidence exists that alcohol is related to over 60 different types of health related diseases and conditions (Rehm, Room and Graham et al, 2003). Statistics from 2004 estimated that alcohol was attributable to 4.6% of the worldwide burden of disease and injury (Rehm, Mathers and Popova et al 2009) and approximately 2.5 million people worldwide die each year from harmful alcohol use. In particular, it is the leading risk factor for death in men between the ages of 15-59. Alcohol is 6 times more likely to be the cause of death in men than in women and worldwide consumption of alcohol was equal to 6.13 litres of pure alcohol consumed per person aged 15 years or over (World Health Organisation, 2011). Australia, which has a population of over 21 million, sees more than 10.5 million people affected negatively in some way by a stranger's alcohol use (Laslett, Catalano, Chikritzhs, et al 2010). According to Brown and Tapert (2004), "Alcohol consumption has the ability to trigger long term biological changes that can have harmful effects on the development of an adolescent brain, including neuro-cognitive impairment" (p. 25).

2.1.2 Ireland

In Ireland, alcohol consumption figures are among the worst in the developed world. In comparison to worldwide consumption Irish adolescents drink twice as much on average as other countries (World Health Organisation, 2011). The effects of alcohol misuse on the drinker's health are well documented. For example, in the report, 'Alcohol Related Harm in Ireland' by the Health Service Executive in 2008, a man had a 13 fold increase risk of liver cirrhosis if he consumed more than 60 millilitres of alcohol per day. Add that to the increased risk of several cancers, hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders and it is quite easy to see the health problems a

drinker can face. The effect of alcohol on society is another key issue in relation to alcohol misuse including the costs to governments, the people and even the drinkers themselves. In Irish society the cost of alcohol misuse is very much evident in every community. From the same report by Hope (2008), alcohol misuse use has been attributed to high rates of street violence, homicide, domestic violence, road injuries, harm to others including children, and workplace harm.

2.1.3 Male college students in Ireland

The population of particular interest in this study is male college students and their attitudes towards alcohol. Statistics from 2005 have shown that on average every person in Ireland aged 15 years or older consumes over 12.5 litres of pure alcohol. This equates to over double the worldwide per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages for people of that age (World Health Organisation, 2011). 61% of college students take part in binge drinking sessions at least once a week and out of every 100 drinking occasions among male college students, 76% resulted in a binge drinking occasion (Hope, Dring and Dring, 2005).

2.2 The Link between Sport and ‘Unhealthy’ Sponsors

In this section the researcher examines the link between sport and ‘unhealthy sponsors’. The researcher refers to other unhealthy sponsors outside of alcohol such as gambling, fast food and confectionary sponsors.

2.2.1 Sports sponsorship worldwide and in Ireland

The term ‘unhealthy sponsor’ refers to any company, organisation or brand that promotes any product which is damaging to the health of an individual. Sport sponsorship has become the most popular form of sponsorship in the world with billions spent annually in this area. Increases in TV coverage worldwide have proven invaluable financially for a company and its brand (Davies, Veloutsou and Costa, 2006). But it’s not just alcohol companies taking a large piece of this sponsorship pie. Other ‘unhealthy sponsors’ come in the form of gambling, fast food and confectionary sponsors. Gambling companies such as Irish bookmaker Paddy Power

who sponsor many sporting events from horse racing to football teams such as Manchester City, gain invaluable marketing and advertising exposure. Fast food companies such as the Irish brand Supermacs which sponsor both the Galway men's senior hurling and football teams and more recently the Connaught Schools Senior and Junior rugby cups. Confectionary companies are also putting their brands to sporting events or teams allowing them large amounts of exposure through the channel of sport. Most recently, Manchester United football club signed a three and a half year sponsorship deal with leading Thai company European Food Public Company Limited who are to become the club's official confectionary partner in parts of Asia (Kourovskaja and Meenaghan 2013). In 2013 IEG predicts an increase of 5.5% in sponsorship by North American companies over 2012. Worldwide, spending for 2013 is not expected to reach the same heights as 2012, when spending increased by 5.1% to \$51.1 billion, however the total to be spent this year on sponsorship is \$53.3 billion, an increase of 4.2% for the same period. Even in this unstable economic climate sponsorship seems to be growing. In Ireland, spending was expected to reach €124 million for 2013, which results in a slow return to growth of 1.5%, after 4 years of decreases since its peak in 2009. "Cautious optimism" was reported from a poll of senior sponsorship practitioners about the prospect of increased spending in the market for 2013 (Onside, 2013).

2.2.2 The extent of 'unhealthy sports sponsors'

There are many benefits associated with the sponsorship of large sporting events and competitions. Top of the list is the financial and commercial aspect. In Ireland, alcohol companies contribute significantly towards the economy through sponsorship of large sporting events and arguments have been made that banning of such sponsorship will lead to massive repercussions for all involved, particularly the teams and sports events being sponsored. Take for example Heineken and their affiliation towards the European Rugby Cup or more widely known as 'The Heineken Cup'. This allows Heineken to enhance their company brand and image through the median of sport and in this case rugby. It increases consumer spending towards their product. Another example is the FIFA World Cup of 2010 which was played in Germany. The alcohol drinks company Budweiser invested heavily for exclusive rights to use commercially the FIFA World Cup logos, the emblems and the trophy

(Koch, 2010). However sports sponsorship also has its problems. Twice as much money is being spent by companies who promote unhealthy products compared to those promoting healthy ones. A New Zealand study carried out in 2006 examined the proportion of sponsorship spent on both 'unhealthy' and 'healthy' products. Findings reported that sports sponsorship associated with sponsors products classified as "unhealthy" (e.g. gambling, tobacco and alcohol) were over twice as common as sponsorship associated with sponsors products classified as "healthy" leading to double the exposure of the unhealthy product to the consumer (Maher, Wilson, and Signal et al., 2006).

2.3 Marketing and Sponsorship by Alcohol Companies

This section of the research investigates who alcohol companies target through their advertisements, how they market their products, the impact of alcohol sports sponsorship and advertising on their target audience, and the messages that these advertisements depict.

2.3.1 Who do they target?

Hastings and Angus (2009) findings confirmed that alcohol sponsorship has an influence on behaviours just like fast food and tobacco sponsorship. They also described how alcohol sports sponsorship targets male adolescents, stating "Alcohol sports sponsorship, linking alcohol, masculinity and sport, attracts young males, the groups mostly likely to be high risk and heavy drinkers". Big sporting events and competitions sponsored by alcohol companies allow the sponsor to get its brand out into the public eye. Hill and Casswell (2004) stated how "sports events attract the right number of the right kind of audience". Ireland's biggest sporting competitions, the GAA Football and Hurling Championships for many years were sponsored by Guinness. This allowed the Guinness brand and logo to be shown across a wide audience from the very young up to the very old. Another example of brand sponsorship putting its name to a competition is the previously talked about Heineken Cup, European Rugby competition. This type of sponsorship "accesses

audiences when they are most receptive to ‘experiential learning’ about a product while having a good time at an exciting branded event” (Hill et al, 2004).

2.3.2 Impact of alcohol sports sponsorship

O’Brien, Miller and Kolt et al (2011), examined the relationship between direct alcohol and non-alcohol sponsorship and drinking in Australian sportspeople. 652 sportspeople were recruited (51% were females) over the age of 18 from 2 universities in Australia. Participants were invited to take part in the study on a ‘first come first serve’ basis at both sports grounds and non-sports related venues. Results obtained reported that fewer than 33% (204) of sportspeople received sponsorship of some form and of this number 95% (194) received alcohol industry sponsorship. Drinking behaviour resulted in 393 (60%) of the entire sample meeting criteria for hazardous drinking with males contributing higher scores than females. Those who were in receipt of sponsorship had greater levels of hazardous drinking than those not receiving sponsorship.

2.3.3 Impact of alcohol advertising

Smith and Foxcroft (2009) examined prospective cohort studies to establish the effect of alcohol advertising, marketing and portrayal on drinking behaviour in young people. The review consisted of cohort studies that followed up more than 13,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 26 years. Studies that evaluated the relationship between alcohol advertising or marketing and alcohol use in young people were used. Results found that baseline non-drinkers were a lot more likely to have become a drinker at follow-up because of greater exposure to alcohol ads but the amount of times alcohol was consumed did not differ at follow-up in baseline drinkers. There was an increased risk evident in both drinkers and non-drinkers that baseline exposure to alcohol advertisements led to drinking at follow-up. However, a study by Koordeman, Anschutz and Eagles (2012) concluded a different outcome. This experimental study was carried out in Holland on 80 males aged 19 to 29 to analyse the effect of alcohol advertising on immediate alcohol consumption in college students. The sample used was a randomised between-subject experimental design to compare 2 advertisement conditions (one alcohol ads and the other non-alcohol ads). Results found alcohol consumption did not increase in the participants

on viewing of the alcohol commercials. While watching a movie that was interrupted by alcohol advertising, young men did not consume more alcohol as a result of the advertising. These findings can't be generalised however as different factors such as settings, designs, cultures and countries need to be used to further research the area.

However, another research paper from Anderson, De Bruijin and Angus, et al (2009) examined the impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on future adolescent alcohol use. Methods included searching libraries, key journals, Google scholar and reference lists of recently published papers for this research. Longitudinal studies that assessed individual's exposure to media were selected. Alcohol behaviour at baseline was assessed as was alcohol drinking behaviour at follow-up. All participants were aged 18 years or younger. Twelve studies reported an impact of exposure on subsequent alcohol use. It was found that amongst existing drinkers, heavier drinking occurred. Media and advertisements were also associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers. Conclusions suggest that the impact of media exposure, advertising and promotion has an influence on alcohol behaviour in adolescents. The likelihood is that this population will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol.

2.3.4 Impact of alcohol marketing

Henriksen, Feighery and Schleichler et al, (2007) carried out a study in the US on young people aged 10-15 years. The study was carried out to gather data on how marketing alcohol products contribute to alcohol use among this age group. The information was gathered via questionnaires and results found that alcohol advertising was associated with the initiation of drinking as well as alcohol use. The researchers also found that young people wanted to own and have alcohol promotional items that were associated to the alcohol advertisements. Another key area of alcohol marketing and exposure leading to alcohol use among young people was the amount of alcohol outlets that were available in the living area of the young person. Menn-Jinn, Gruenewald and Remer (2009) and Wagenarr, Toomey and Lenek (2005) express evidence that access to alcohol was far greater for young people from areas with a larger amount of alcohol outlets and that increased

availability of alcohol outlets may cause increased alcohol use and problems among this population. It is fair to say that this evidence of marketing and advertising of alcohol goes well beyond that of TV advertisements and alcohol companies and brands use many techniques in promoting their product.

2.3.5 Messages in alcohol advertisements

Jones, Sandra and Donovan (2001) carried out a study to assess young people's perceived messages in three ads for a vodka-based, pre-mixed alcohol beverage. A convenience sample of young people from the age of 15-16 and 19-21 was used. The sample was exposed to one of the three advertisements and completed a post exposure questionnaire. Results found that the majority of the sample associated the advertisements with the removal of negative emotions (e.g. 'stress reduction'), feelings of 'carefree' and 'increased enjoyment', with the consumption of the product perceived to offer 'self-confidence', 'sexual/relationship successes and 'social successes. Also, one in four of the 15-16 year olds saw the advertisements as aimed at 'people my age', while almost half of the 19-21 year olds saw the advertisements as aimed at people 'younger or much younger than me'. In a somewhat different approach to perceived messages from alcohol advertisements, Russell and Russell (2009) examined eighteen prime-time programs on TV that depicted alcohol messages where the messages were coded based on modalities of presentation, the level of plot connection and valence. They found that mixed messages existed but the ways in which they were presented were different, negative messages were associated to the plot and communicated verbally while positive messages were associated to subtle visual portrayal. Like Jones et al (2001), a study carried out by Waiters, Treno, and Grube, (2001) also examined a convenience sample of 97 students (50 male) to find out what young people find appealing in alcohol advertising. A focus group setting was used and the sample were shown six commercials. The sample were asked a number of questions to prepare them for the upcoming discussion. Results suggested that the participants were in favor of elements of alcohol advertising commercials that incorporated lifestyle and image-orientated with humour, youth-orientated music and characters. However, they did not like the product-orientated elements of the commercials. The main message to arise from the focus-group was that alcohol advertisements portrayed a 'sexual

attractiveness' and that attractive young adults 'drink beer to personally rewarding ends'.

In an Irish context, a report on alcohol marketing towards young people in Ireland suggested that a varied and wide range of messages were reported by young people across the Munster, Leinster, Ulster and Connaught regions. Of these messages perceived, the participants reported that the shape and colour of the bottles as well as the alcohol colour were considered most attractive. The participants attributed words and statements like 'funny', 'clever', 'attractive', 'linked to sport', 'very smart', 'eye-catching', 'sponsors my sport', 'very classy' and a list of other words or phrases to these marketing messages. Two thirds of all media marketing campaigns were considered appealing and out of all the marketing practices recorded, six out of every ten appealed to youngsters (Hope, 2009).

2.4 Regulation of Advertising and Sponsorship in Ireland

This section of the research talks briefly about the regulations of advertising and sponsorship that are in place in Ireland today.

2.4.1 CCCI and AAI

The establishment of the Central Copy Clearance Ireland Ltd. (CCCI) in 2003 by the Advertisers Association of Ireland (AAI) and the Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland (IAPI) pre examines all advertising for all alcohol beverages whether made in Ireland or abroad, if it is intended for use in the Irish media. A set of regulations have to be adhered to as well as a self-regulatory code and unless these are met no Irish media owner will accept it for publication. This has resulted in significant fewer complaints made about alcohol advertising since 2003. The codes restricted the placement and weight of exposure in TV, Radio, Cinema, Outdoor, Print and Internet. In 2005 the Minister for Health and Children endorsed these codes. All events involving the alcohol industry, especially music and sporting events were monitored. It was in November 2005 that the Alcohol Marketing Communications Monitoring Body was formed with its main aim 'to monitor the level of adherence by

advertisers and media Owners' to all these Codes. A high level of compliance has been reported since its foundation (Alcohol Marketing Communications Monitoring Body, 2011).

2.5. Conclusion and Rationale

2.5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to give the reader an overview of the current research in this area of study. The study area examined was how young males interpret and respond to sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies. Evidence suggests there are mixed results in terms of the effects of alcohol advertising on male adolescents and more research is required in this area. However, the findings that do exist have prompted interventions to be implemented in relation to policy change and specific measures to be put in place to address the exposure of alcohol advertising to young people.

2.5.2 Rationale

Research has shown that both sport participation and alcohol consumption is very high in adolescent males. Evidence exists for the harm that alcohol causes. What research also shows is that sport sponsorship is increasing even in these harsh economic times. Alcohol companies play a big part in this sport sponsorship. As it is a major topic in Irish society today, this study investigates the link between alcohol companies and sports sponsorship and how they target adolescents and particularly males. However, not enough research currently exists to ban alcohol sponsored sports advertising, or even to provide evidence that it is doing more harm than good. This study will provide additional evidence to understand the messages these advertisements are portraying and what impact they have on the behaviour of young male college students.

2.6 Research Questions

1. What messages do young males receive from TV advertisements depicting alcohol sport sponsorships?
2. What potential influence do these advertisements have on young people's behaviours?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used and will be presented under the following headings; Research Design, Study population and Sampling, Concepts, Data Collection Methods, Data collection Procedures, Data Analysis Procedure and Ethical Considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative research study consisting of 3 focus groups to investigate attitudes held by young males towards TV advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies. Qualitative research was deemed to be most appropriate as it provided a significant insight into attitudes held by young men. Focus groups are the most common form of qualitative research and involve an informal discussion in which participants discuss the research topic in their own terms, guided by the researcher undertaking the study (Lucasey, 2000).

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

A Non-probability convenience sampling consisting of snowball sampling was used. The study population consisted of a total of 21 young male college students aged 18-25 who play or are involved in sport and studying various courses at Waterford Institute of Technology. All qualifying participants had to play or be involved in sport. For those who did not play or were not involved in sport, they were excluded from the study. For the focus group discussion, 8 students were approached across the year's one to four and studying different courses, and invited to take part in the study. Each participant was then asked to invite 2 friends to also take part in the research. As a result of this, a diverse range of participants across college courses evolved. Once the sampling quota was reached qualifying participants who agreed to take part were contacted with details of the study setting and site of data collection. On arrival at the focus group, participants were given information on the structure of the focus group and their rights to take part (appendix A). Each participant was issued with an informed consent form to sign (appendix B).

3.3 Concepts

All concepts were explored by carrying out a number of focus group discussions.

3.3.1 Messages

This concept aims to gain a greater understanding of the messages young male college students are receiving upon exposure to alcohol sponsored sports advertisements that are currently or previously been broadcast on TV.

3.3.2 Influence on behaviour

This concept aims to establish if there is any influence on behaviour towards alcohol in young male college students after viewing these advertisements on TV. And if so what influences do these advertisements have on this group?

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Advertisements

5 popular sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies were shown to each group (appendix C). The 1st advertisement shown was the Guinness Wheelchair Basketball commercial. This was chosen as it was the most recent advertisement shown on T.V. at the time and was sponsored by the well-known Irish Guinness brand. The 2nd advertisement chosen was sponsored by the Budweiser brand and it involves sponsorship of one of the biggest sporting competitions in the world, the FIFA World Cup of 2010. I chose this advert for this reason as the FIFA World Cup is shown worldwide. The 3rd advertisement shown to the group was the Road to the UEFA Champions League Final advert sponsored by Heineken. Again, I chose this ad for its connection to the very popular sport of soccer and the Champions League in Ireland and worldwide. The 4th advertisement shown was the 'The Scrum' sponsored by Heineken beer for the European Rugby cup. This advertisement was chosen due to the popularity of rugby and the European cup in Ireland. The 5th and final T.V. advertisement shown to the focus group was the Guinness Hurling advert of 2007. My reasons for choosing this advert was the fact that hurling is the most popular played sport in Ireland and the Guinness brand was the main sponsor of the GAA Hurling and Football championship up until recent years.

3.4.2 Interview Schedule

An interview schedule (appendix D) was used to discuss each of the advertisements shown. The schedule consisted of open ended questions and prompts for example - 'What did you like about the ad?' 'What do you think these ads are saying to you?' 'Who do you think the advertisements suggests drinks this particular beer, why?' (adapted from Waiters et al 2001). An example of the prompts used included – Can you expand on that? How do feel about this? Can you clarify that for the group? The researcher recorded the focus groups using a dictaphone. The data from the focus groups were transcribed verbatim from the recordings taken.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

3.5.1 Study setting and site of data collection

Focus groups were carried out in room TL252 in the Tourism and Leisure building in Waterford Institute of Technology between January 18th and 25th of 2014. The room was set up to accommodate 8 participants and the researcher. Chairs were set up in the middle of the room with one chair at the top of the circle for the researcher. TV commercials were set up to be shown on an overhead projector in the room. This setting was preferred as it allowed easy access and familiarity to both the participants and researcher. 'Do not disturb' and 'focus group in progress' signs was posted on the outside of the room to avoid interruptions.

3.5.2 Focus groups

The data collection procedures used for this study were three focus groups lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. Sufficient time was allowed for the researcher to build a rapport with the participants, while putting them at ease to encourage honest discussion on the topic. Five TV sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies were shown twice to each of the focus groups participants prior to the discussion (appendix C). The focus groups began by first of all welcoming all participants to the group and thanking them for their time and co-operation. The researcher introduced himself to all participants and explained what the focus group was about, the aim of the study and rights of all persons involved. All participants were told that the focus group would be recorded on a dictaphone. All agreed that this was ok. On completion of the ads, participants were then given some time to

reflect on what they had seen. The focus group began by the researcher asking a number of open ended questions to initiate conversation and discussion amongst the group. The researcher also included prompts to the group when conversation slowed down in order to tease out as much information as possible. On completion of the focus group all participants were invited to have some refreshments provided for their help in the study. All participants were thanked for their co-operation and informed that they would be made aware of the results of the study if they so wished.

3.6 Data Analysis

The focus groups were transcribed verbatim from the recordings made. To analyse the transcripts from all the focus groups a procedure called thematic content analysis was used. The aim of thematic content analysis is to reduce, organise and summarise qualitative data. This is done by reading, summarising and labelling the data. The research questions allowed for some pre-determined codes to be established. A code is a word or phrase used to summarise a feeling, behaviour or experience and can either be pre-determined or can emerge from the data. Pre-determined codes are things that the researcher is looking for and are guided by the research questions. Pre-determined codes that were established for the focus groups are; interpretation of messages and influence on behaviours. These pre-determined codes were given a colour to identify each in the data. Results were then presented under these headings. A process of reviewing the data for themes and coding progressed until the data had been fully organised and a final report taken for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics exist due to the concern for the well-being of participants with respect to physical and mental harm. A number of issues were considered prior to commencing the study. Measures were taken in order for the study to remain as ethical as possible for all participants.

- Alcohol use is a very sensitive issue for many and affects people and society in many ways. The researcher was aware of this issue and realised that participants may be sensitive to such issues and this in return may affect their honesty and participation in the focus group setting. As a result, participants were made aware of the personal nature of questions at the recruitment process.
- All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to leave the study at any point, no questions asked. No coercion took place due to the method of recruitment.
- For the purpose of this study all participants were given an informed consent form and details of their rights in relation to this study were also issued (appendix A and B).
- Anonymity was ensured for all participants. Participant's names would not be used in any of the research data. Of the names that appear on the informed consent form, these would be used only to gather the participants for the focus groups. All informed consent forms with names would be destroyed upon required details recorded.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF

RESULTS

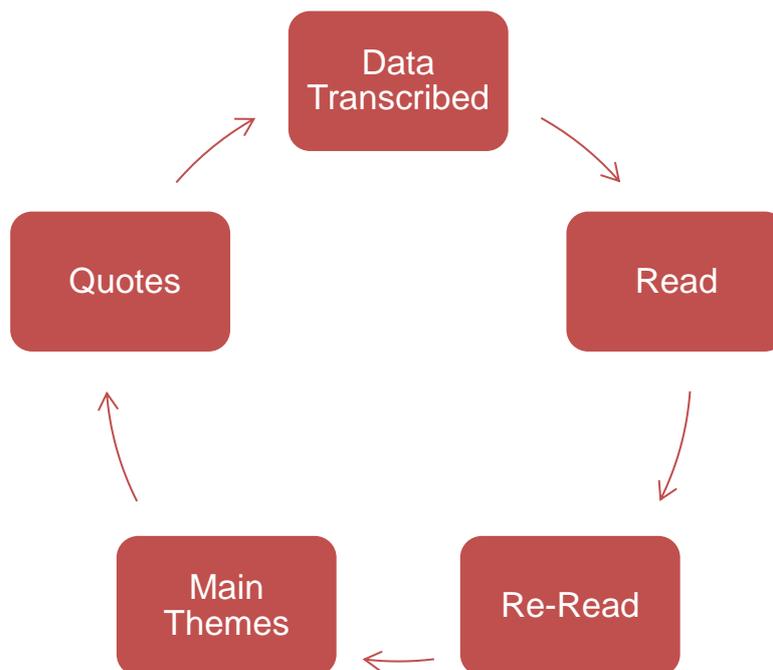
4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the 3 focus groups that were carried out. All focus groups were carried out in Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford. To keep with strict confidentiality guidelines, all participant quotes will be kept completely anonymous. The focus groups aimed to answer both research questions presented. For clarity, results will be presented under each research question.

4.2 Results

The results were transcribed, read and re-read, and main codes and themes developed from the data. Figure 1 below displays this. Coding is done by reading, summarising and labelling the data. A code is a word or phrase used to summarise a feeling, behaviour or experience and can either be pre-determined or can emerge from the data. Following this, the main themes that arose from the focus groups are set out hereunder.

Figure 4.2 Coding of data



4.3 Demographics

The sample size of students taking part in this study was (n=21). All participants were male. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 25 years with the mean age being 21 years with a standard deviation of 2.22 years. Table 1 displays the demographical information of the participants; gender, age group, student status and academic year. All participants are students of Waterford Institute of Technology.

Table 4.3 Participant Demographics

Presentation of Participants	(n=21)
Gender	
Male	21
Female	0
Age Groups	
18-19	6
20-21	7
22-23	4
24-25	4
Student Status: Full Time	21
Year	
1st Year	4
2nd Year	6
3rd Year	6
4th Year	5

*Mean age 21 years (S/D 2.22 years)

The areas focused on in this chapter are directly related to the research questions outlined in Chapter 2. The data gathered was categorised under these headings before themes were developed to best answer the research questions. Each of these areas will now be discussed in relation to the information gathered across the 3 focus groups.

4.4 Messages Young Males Received From TV Advertisements Depicting Alcohol Sports Sponsorship

This section of the results focuses on the messages young males are getting from the T.V. advertisements depicting alcohol sports sponsorship. Figure 2 below outlines the sub-themes that arose from the focus groups. These sub-themes will be discussed under the following headings:

- Social Aspect
- Reward
- Positives of alcohol
- Norms
- Culture
- Targeting Males

Figure 4.4 Messages young males received from T.V. advertisements depicting alcohol sports sponsorship.



4.4.1 Social Aspect

The most dominant theme coming from the 3 focus groups seemed to be that there was a strong 'social aspect' being portrayed in these advertisements and the majority of the participants agreed that these ads were playing on that. One participant said, *"I think all the ads bring the social side, I mean it's not the just the Guinness one, it's like social cohesion like, even in the Budweiser ad"*. Participants associated 'going to the pub' and 'meeting friends' with drinking alcohol, *"and you're sitting there and you're like. What's on telly? Next thing one of the ads would come on. Nine o'clock. Jeez, the boys might be down the pub. Sure I might head down for one"*. There was no evidence overall of contradiction or difference of opinion between participants in relation to this theme. The majority of the groups believed that the advertisements showed a 'togetherness' among all the people which ended with them socialising together in the pub after 'over a pint'. The social aspect seemed to be the major theme that kept cropping up as the discussion continued, *"like it brings it back to the social aspect again like, you meet the boys in the pub for a pint after the game"*.

4.4.2 Reward

Another major theme that arose when participants were asked about messages received from the advertisements was that of 'reward'. The majority believed that alcohol was portrayed as a reward for a hard weeks work or in this context a hard match or game. One participant commented, *"he's kind of going through different adventures and he ends been at the final having a drink and it kind of looks like having a drink needs to be done at the end of a hard day"*. It was interesting that a number of participants compared their own personal experiences in relation to the use of the theme 'reward'. They associated taking part and playing in their own sports with having a 'reward' to look forward to after the game, that reward being 'a pint' in the pub. They explained that this happened on a number of occasions and was common practice for then in general. Participant C comments, *"I know for myself from a sporting aspect, there's no better reward then, especially after winning a match, than to go straight to the pub and you have a few pints with the lads"*. Overall the consensus from the participants was that these advertisements were trying to

show the audience that drinking this particular alcoholic beverage could act as a reward for the stress that life can throw at you, be it in work or on the field of play.

4.4.3 Positives

Another very evident theme from the discussions conducted was that of the 'positives' that these alcohol advertisements portray. Many participants believed that the audience was led to believe that you can only have 'enjoyable, positive experiences' when drinking this brand and said that the media really reinforce this while ignoring or failing to point out the 'negatives' that can be associated with alcohol also, one participant commented, "*I think they show all the positives, you know, they don't show the negatives like*". In contrast a number of participants said that the advertisements looked 'cool and impressive' and 'attractive' which left you feeling good and positive, one participant said, "*It wouldn't change, but obviously, to me, it gives off a vibe of a positive attitude to alcohol. I mean the ads are impressive, it's all very positive*". One participant voiced a slightly different opinion in relation to this theme on positives. He said that the advertisements never show the results of having a number of their pints because of the negatives that could be portrayed, and this is purposely done so as not to make their product look bad, he said, "*everyone is happy like, so you see the first one like but you don't see 7 or 8 later like, and everything might not be positive like, but that's what they have to do, they can't make their beer look bad*".

4.4.4 Norms

Another theme to arise from the discussions was that of the 'norm'. Participants believed that these advertisements portrayed a message that to drink these alcohol brands was considered to be the 'normal' thing to do. According to one participant, he talks about how he believed it was something that his father would do and their fathers and for him it was normal, "*It's probably the way our dads were and their dads, and it's the way we're brought into society, normal I suppose*". However, in contrast, one participant in particular said that he wasn't one to believe it was the norm and that he himself had never grown up thinking like that, he commented, "*nah, it was never like that for me really, actually I came from a family in which drinking or that wasn't considered the norm, that was just me though*". Participants also

discussed how they associated these alcohol brands with certain sports, sports events and sport professionals. They concluded that the messages they received from the advertisements suggested that if it was ok for these professionals to be seen or involved with these brands then it was ok for the people watching to drink them also, *“personally when I was a young lad and I’m into rugby and watching the Heineken cup I was like seen posters and advertising everywhere so I was like well if it sponsors the rugby everyone must drink it like”*.

4.4.5 Culture

Similarly to ‘norms’, participants believed the advertisements gave out a message that it was part of their ‘culture’ to associate alcohol with sport or sporting events. Irish society has a ‘culture’ of having a drink while ‘watching the match’ or getting people to go to the pub to watch the match. Also, like in the earlier theme ‘reward’, participants talked about past experiences of growing up in this ‘culture’, *“yea, it’s like the reward thing, you grow up in it like”*. Another participant further explains his opinion in relation to the theme of ‘culture’, *“It’s like culture. It is culture. When someone’s on a drinking ban, the first thing they’re thinking about is the massive lash they’re going to do after the drinking ban”*. Another participant also commented, *“its culture; its culture, isn’t it, with sport, especially in Ireland, anyway”*. Another interesting angle taken by some participants was that specific advertisements which targeted popular sports had more of an impact in relation to ‘culture’. They believed that that the alcohol companies didn’t target sports that weren’t popular in Irish society or that people would associate with having a drink while watching, in other words they believed that the drinking culture wasn’t there with other less popular sports, *“it’s the sport too, you know there’s no advertising or sponsorship in basketball because it’s not as popular like rugby or hurling like with the Guinness and like the drinking culture isn’t there with some sports, but with hurling and soccer and rugby your kind of expected to go like and culture and that”*.

4.4.6 Targeting males

The focus groups gave quite a unanimous verdict on the theme of 'targeting males'. The participants believed that it was very evident from the way the advertisements were produced and portrayed that the alcohol companies were solely targeting males and not females, "*Yea like those sponsors, like the one that sponsors the world cup, like they know that like males will be watching it, the majority will be males in comparison to females, like a lot of the ads were more male orientated*". A general consensus emerged from the participants as they explained that they believed that sport in general and drinking beer was more of a male thing than female and that the beer brands been shown were very masculine, "*Any of those lagers, like Carlsberg, Budweiser, they're masculine. And especially when they're linked to sports. I'm not being sexist or anything, but beer and sports is a real masculine thing, isn't it*". When asked about the particular age group the advertisements were targeting, again the majority of participants agreed. They stated over the course of the discussions that the age bracket the advertisements target ranged between 18 and 40 years, "*yea, 20 to 40 like, and you would hope they were over 18 too like*". However, I think it was also important to note that participants associated the Guinness brand but not specifically the Guinness advertisements with the 'older' male. "*Even the Guinness ad there with the hurling you associate it with tradition like and old lads*". After some reflection on this particular theme and the importance of it in this context, the group unanimously agreed that it was young adolescent males being targeted by these advertisements.

4.5 Potential Influences These Advertisements have on Young People's Behaviour

This section of the results focuses on the potential influences these advertisements have on young people's behaviour towards alcohol. Figure 3 below outlines the sub-themes that arose from the focus groups. These sub-themes have been broken down and will be discussed under the following headings:

- Awareness
- Reaction

Figure 4.5 Potential influences these advertisements have on young people's behaviour.



4.5.1 Awareness

In terms of influence on participant behaviour towards alcohol the group expressed an overall 'heightened awareness' of the alcohol brand being received from the alcohol advertisements. It was suggested that that the media are allowed to show these advertisements and there is no restriction on who can view them or when and as a result the brand becomes more and more familiar to the audience with it being 'ingrained in your mind', *"I think what Niall said there, it's kind of very accurate like, when I was a young lad and I'm into rugby and watching the Heineken cup I was like seen all these advertising on TV and everywhere so I was like well this looks good, and that ad is cool, I must watch out for that beer and try it like"*. Other participants described how it's 'shoved down our throats by the media', *"yeah, we were talking about what influences, it is the media. They're shoving it down; they're ramming it down your throat from an early age"*. Some more of the participants expressed how these advertisements can heighten their awareness to go for a drink, with one particular participant undecided on which way he felt, *"maybe not, maybe yeah. I don't think consciously I'd want to go, but I'd say maybe sub-consciously, it's getting into your head"*.

4.5.2 Reaction

A number of participants believed that these advertisements triggered a 'reaction' towards the alcohol brand in these advertisements. They believed that when they came across these advertisements on TV, it prompted a thought process within them that made them think about going for a pint either at the time or at a later date, one participant explains, *"yea, and the wheelchair ad. I think after watching ads like that, am it make me kind of want to go for a pint after match I play too"*. Another participant comments with a similar opinion, *"yea, even the first ad there, the Guinness one, like it would make me want go out and have a Guinness, I be like, hey yea I'd love to have a Guinness now"*. This trend seemed to continue throughout the discussion with another participant saying, *"That probably would, yeah. On a Friday or Saturday night, if I was sitting in and I saw an ad like that, I'd be like, Jesus, I wouldn't mind a pint now, you know"*. There was not a lot of contrast or difference in opinion amongst the group in relation to this theme with the majority believing that

most of the advertisements shown prompted a reaction in them towards the alcohol brand.

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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The researcher's aim for this dissertation was to explore how young males interpret and respond to a range of sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies on TV. This study intended to answer two specific research questions on this topic. The first question was what messages do young males receive from TV advertisements depicting alcohol sport sponsorship? The second question was what influence do these advertisements have on young people's behaviours towards alcohol?

This chapter will summarise the results found from the previous chapter and then discuss significant findings from the data collected and analysed. A number of key findings arose from the data collected. One of the most worrying results that emerged was that the link between alcohol and sport is so integral that there is a presumption among young males that sporting role models use or misuse the alcohol. It also seems that alcohol is sold almost as a necessity for a good social life and participants felt very strongly about this. Finally, young males that are interested or participate in the big 3 sports (hurling, Gaelic football and rugby) definitely feel they are being targeted.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Positive Perceptions and Association of Role Models to Alcohol Use

The most notable and worrying findings of this study was that alcohol sports advertising depicted messages to young males that alcohol was primarily associated to positive experiences and feelings and not negative ones. Also, an unexpected finding from participants was that they strongly associated sporting role models with the use or misuse of alcohol and believed that if it was ok for them to use it was ok for them to use. A lot of evidence exists in relation to messages young people receive from alcohol advertisements. Jones, Sandra and Donovan (2001) study coincided with these findings also. Their study revealed that the majority of the sample associated the advertisements with the removal of negative emotions, feelings of 'carefree' and 'increased enjoyment', and with the consumption of the

product perceived to offer 'self-confidence', 'sexual/relationship successes and 'social successes'. It is easy to compare and contrast Jones et al study with the research carried out here with all results seen as positives.

Coinciding evidence also exists on a smaller scale through a more recent study by Russell and Russell (2009). Mixed messages existed, however positive messages were associated to visual portrayal with negative messages connected to the plot which ultimately had a positive ending, reinforcing the positives in the commercial. Positive messages from alcohol advertising were also evident in a similar qualitative research study from Waiters, Treno and Grube (2001) in which they also used a focus group setting and showed their participants six TV commercials sponsored by alcohol companies. Participants agreed that they associated positives such as a sexual attractiveness and personal reward after viewing these alcohol advertisements. Hope, (2009) study coincided with messages portrayed from advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies. Results of participant involvement attributed words and statements like 'funny', 'clever', 'attractive', 'linked to sport', 'very smart', 'eye-catching', 'sponsors my sport', 'very classy' and a list of other words or phrases to these marketing messages. It is obvious from positive statements and words like this how the participants feel in relation to these advertisements. It would suggest that no negatives were seen in these ads but it is unclear in Hope's study as negative findings were not the main aim.

5.2.2 Association of Alcohol for Good Social Life

It is quite evident from the results that participants attribute a strong association between alcohol and a good social life. Anderson and Baumbeg (2006) coincide with this opinion by declaring that alcohol has 'much social and cultural importance'. However, the main concern of their study was the greater number of societal problems and costs that occur as a result of alcohol misuse. Putting that to one side, there is an overwhelming opinion by the participants that alcohol has a significant role to play in their social lives. They explain that their social lives would struggle without the involvement of alcohol. Strong beliefs exist that they could not have a social life without alcohol. It is very nearly considered a prerequisite of a healthy, popular social life. Sporting events were highly associated to a healthy social life also. Hill and Casswell (2004) find that alcohol sponsorship targets audiences that

watch sport because these audiences are most receptive to 'experiential learning' about a product while enjoying themselves either watching or at the sporting event. Again, according to this finding the alcohol companies target the sporting events because it is connected to large social gatherings and that is another way of optimising sales. However, it is also important to point out that a lack of evidence on the association between alcohol and its role in a favorable social life remains and further research needs to be carried out in this area.

5.2.3 Targeting Males

Alcohol consumption levels by Irish adolescents, 13 to 19 years, have been shown to be twice as much as that of other countries (World Health Organisation, 2011). Coincidentally and unofficially the participants in this study spoke about how they consume their 'fair share of alcohol'. In particular, adolescent males have been shown to be a very problematic area. To be even more specific adolescent male college students take part in at least one binge drinking session per week almost 61% of the time (Hope, Dring and Dring, 2005). These statistics suggest alcohol companies that provide sponsorship have done their homework when it comes to their target audience and going by these statistics is it any wonder that young males feel they are the ones being targeted. Participants interviewed in this research had a strong opinion that alcohol companies definitely targeted young males because they were the ones that were more influenced by the association between sport and alcohol. Hastings and Angus (2009) findings from their study coincide with findings from this study. They explained that alcohol sports sponsorship, linking alcohol to sport and masculinity attracts young males. Hill and Casswell (2004) study concluded that alcohol companies that sponsor sporting events were able to 'attract the right number of the right kind of audience'. Now, this finding this could be interpreted in a number of ways. However, in the context of this study it would be easy to speculate that when they said 'the right kind of audience' they really meant males and quite possibly young males.

5.2.4 Drinking is Considered the Norm

It is evident from the results obtained that young males consider drinking alcohol and associating it with sport as the norm in their lives. Worryingly as this is, it is not a norm they built up themselves as they talk about it been something that they grew up with and that their fathers practiced when they were also young. The norm of drinking alcohol was seen as something that was accepted in society and it is as if it is a prerequisite in their lives. It was explained that society accepts this in their opinion as normal everyday behaviour. These norms would possibly coincide with Hope (2005) report on consumption levels in male college students being so elevated in comparison to their female counterparts. Considered the norm, high binge drinking patters occurred in this population on a weekly basis. Another area the researcher wants to possibly associate with the perception that drinking is the norm is the amount of alcohol outlets available to this population. Evidence exists that the increased availability of public houses and off licenses could cause increased alcohol use in young people (Menn-Jinn, Gruenwald and Remer, 2009 and Wagenarr, Toomey and Lenek, 2005). So would it then be fair to assume that young males are so used to being surrounded by pubs and places that sell alcohol that they see it as the norm or what is normal in their life. An interesting assumption but again, this cannot be justified unless a further study into this topic was undertaken.

5.2.5 Culture and Reward

Two other unexpected findings emerged from the focus group data. Participants of this research study expressed how they felt that alcohol advertising on TV presented messages that alcohol was considered a 'reward' and part of their 'culture' in both a sporting and lifestyle context. No evidence exists to examine the association of alcohol been part of culture and seen as a reward. When discussed further participants explained how alcohol was a major part of Irish culture and that they as Irish people are known worldwide as serious alcohol drinkers and this has been the case for many years. They believe that it isn't going to change anytime soon and that is why they associate culture with alcohol in this country. They feel the alcohol companies understand this also and target that area specifically. Following their explanation on culture, they followed up by saying that drinking at the end of a week,

or following a match was a reward for them and that culture also nurtured this. They go hand in hand it was understood. Irish culture says you reward yourself with an alcoholic drink more often than not. Personal experiences emerged from the findings also and participants time and time again associated reward and culture with the social aspect of drinking.

To speculate on these findings, it may be possible to say that alcohol companies realise the potential of the Irish market due to the drinking and socialising culture that exists. The large amount of spending on sponsorship, predicted to have reached €124 million (Onside, 2013), however not all this is from alcohol sponsorship, is evidence of the value they see in sponsoring in this country. One could then assume that the findings of the above study that alcohol has an association to our culture and is seen as a reward are fair and accurate. Again, it is important to realise that more research in this area would be needed to make the evidence more robust.

5.2.6 Influence on Behaviours

Heightened alcohol awareness is always an issue that generates concern in relation to exposure of the target audience to alcohol sponsorship of advertisements. This was a topic that arose in the focus group discussion carried out in this study. Even though not as popular as other aforementioned issues, the importance of the issue could not be overlooked. Participants believed that the alcohol sponsored advertisements created a heightened awareness among the participants about alcohol. This could easily be considered an effect or impact left as a result of viewing these ads. To return to a study carried out by Smith and Foxcroft (2009) in which they examined the effect of alcohol advertising, marketing and portrayal on drinking behaviour in young people. Their results found that as a result of exposure to these ads non-drinkers at the beginning were a lot more likely to become a drinker at a later date because of greater exposure to alcohol ads. On the flip side, Smith and Foxcroft (2009) also mentioned that the consumption of alcohol did not increase in already drinkers. Therefore, in this context one could argue that the non-drinkers had heightened awareness of the brand and this resulted in them becoming likely drinkers at a later stage. However, more research would need to be carried out in

this area to certainly prove this. Trying to measure awareness certainly poses its own difficulties.

5.2.7 Reaction

An unexpected topic that emerged from this qualitative study was that of a 'reaction' that alcohol sponsored sports advertisements triggered in the young male participants. Upon exposure to these ads the findings suggested that the participants had a psychological reaction in that they thought about going for an alcoholic drink after viewing the ads. It was explained that going for a drink might not take place straight away, but that it would at a later stage thus increasing alcohol consumption in the individual. However, in contrast, if this finding is compared to the findings of the Koordeman, Anschuts and Eagles (2012) experimental study, it would not coincide. Koordeman et al argues that upon viewing alcohol commercials, consumption levels in the young males did not increase. It is important to note that Koordeman et al was measuring immediate alcohol consumption in his study population while the researcher in this research thesis was examining the reaction of his participants and in turn alcohol consumption after exposure to alcohol sponsored ads. Ultimately though, both research studies had the same goal, to examine alcohol consumption after viewing advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies. Alternatively this finding could be examined as a change in behaviour. It is fair to say that a reaction could be considered a change in behaviour. This change in behaviour was provoked upon viewing of the alcohol advertisements. Long term adolescent alcohol use as a result of media and alcohol advertising exposure resulted in heavier drinking among current drinkers (Anderson, De Bruijin, Angus et al, 2009). This would suggest, and fairly so, that the participants in this study had a 'reaction' or change in behaviour that resulted in them consuming more alcohol long term. However, again we can only speculate that this was associated to this finding and further research would have to be conducted to generate concrete evidence.

5.3 Limitations

A number of limitations were evident in relation to this study. First of all it is important to mention the sample size in relation to the focus groups that were carried out. The sample (n=21) was quite small which may not be a true reflection of opinion in comparison to a larger sample size. Also, the study population had its limitations with participant bias possibly skewing the overall view. Some of the participants taking part were studying a health related course which may have had an influence on results due to the nature of their studies. These courses contain modules that educate the participants on health issues whereas participants from other courses, for example, an engineering course, don't study these modules that educate them on health issues. Adding to this is the study's sensitive nature to alcohol. The researcher was aware of this but participation in the focus group could have been reduced due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

Another limitation of this study experienced by the researcher was the time, organisation and scheduling of the focus group session with the participants. As this was the first piece of primary research carried out by the researcher, a lack of experience in relation to time management, underestimation of recruiting participants and organising data collection settings and times could affect the results obtained. This can be improved through further research undertakings and focus group data collection by the researcher. The final limitation looks at whether the data analysis was sufficiently systematic and rigorous to make it valid and reliable for future studies. Analysis was systematic in terms of following a procedure known as thematic content analysis, however due to this being the first time the researcher used this procedure, some inaccuracies occurred in relation to the understanding of the data analysed.

CHAPTER 6

**CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Conclusion

First and foremost there is a lack of existing evidence on the relationship between alcohol sponsored sports advertisements and their impact on the behaviour of young males. However, of the evidence that does exist, there is mixed opinion on this issue. The researcher carried out this study to gain a greater understanding of the messages depicted by alcohol sponsored sports advertisements and how they influence the behaviour of young males. This researcher identified areas in the research that can be used in future discussions on removing or limiting alcohol sponsorship in sport as according to the evidence collected in this study it is having negative and worryingly poor outcomes on young males. The implications of the findings of this study suggest that alcohol is seen as a necessity for a greater social life, and young males associate many positives with drinking. The other worrying implication is that young males have a strong belief that their sporting heroes have a close association with alcohol brands and its ok for them to do so too, an issue that encourages alcohol use. Finally, evidence gathered from this study suggests that young males feel they are been purposefully and aggressively targeted by alcohol companies through sport.

6.2 Recommendations

- Reduce or completely remove sporting role models away from alcohol sports sponsorship. The researcher recommends that these sporting icons could be used to raise awareness of safe drinking.
- Role models could also be used to take the focus off the positives of alcohol drinking and in turn look to portray messages that 'you can still enjoy a healthy, happy social life without needing alcohol'.
- In order to reduce exposure to young males involved in the three main sports in Ireland (hurling, Gaelic football and rugby), an alternative healthy sponsor to alcohol sponsorship is a must.
- Currently the Irish government are looking at introducing legislation from 2016 to reduce or remove the exposure of alcohol advertising, including alcohol sponsored sports advertising, to young people. Key aims of the legislation are 1) limit advertising of alcohol on television and radio to evening hours, 2) limit advertising of alcohol in cinemas to films over 18, 3) restrict advertising of alcohol in outdoor media from 2018, 4) undertake work to put in place legislation which will identify the forms, frequency and prevalence of outdoor media advertising to be either included or excused from any restrictions, 5) regulation of advertising of alcohol in print media and 6) set limits on how alcohol is portrayed in advertisements (Department of Health 2013).
- In recent years, tobacco sponsorship of sport has been replaced successfully in other countries as a result of tax implementation. The researcher recommends that this strategy could be used in the same context for alcohol sports sponsorship in Ireland.
- For future research purposes, longitudinal cohort studies should be conducted to generate more robust evidence on the issue of whether or not alcohol sports sponsorship causes problem drinking. Any generated evidence could

then be incorporated into the current Growing Up in Ireland study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Information Sheet

- The purpose of this research is to be used in a 4th Year research thesis in Waterford Institute of Technology. This research does not pose a risk to the health or well-being of the participants.
- Participation involves 2-3 focus groups settings, containing 5 - 7 participants and will be conducted by researcher (Michael Ryan) from Waterford Institute of Technology. Each focus group will last approximately 30-45 minutes and be conducted on the grounds of Waterford Institute of Technology on an agreed date. Participants may withdraw from the research at any stage without question or penalty. Refreshments will be available to all participants.
- An audio tape of the focus groups and subsequent dialogue will be made. If participant does not want to be taped, he will not be able to participate in the study.
- The researcher (Michael Ryan) will not identify the participant by name in any reports using information obtained from this focus group, and that confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
- Lecturers and administrators from my Waterford Institute of Technology will neither be present at the focus groups nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent any individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
- For research problems or questions regarding this study please contact Michael Ryan, 29 Ursuline Court, Waterford City, County Waterford.

Phone: 086 8878310

Appendix B - Informed Consent Form

I _____ volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Michael Ryan from Waterford Institute of Technology. I understand that the project is part of a 4th year research thesis. I will be one of approximately 21 people being interviewed for this research. I am also aware of the following:

1. My participation in this research is voluntary, no coercion has taken place and I understand that I will not be paid for my participation.
2. This research does not pose a risk to my health or wellbeing.
3. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
4. All data including my name is 100% confidential.
5. I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by Barry Lambe of Waterford Institute of Technology (supervisor of Interviewer).
7. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me.
8. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

For further information, please contact: Michael Ryan, 29 Ursuline Court, Waterford City, County Waterford. Mob: 086 8878310

Appendix C – T.V. Advertisements

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwndL0KQTDs> – Guinness Basketball Advert 2013
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M7FjiS8HDQ> – Budweiser FIFA World Cup Ad 2010
3. <http://www.heineken.com/ie/our-ads/roadtothefinal.aspx> - Heineken Road to the UEFA Champions League Final
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0TxjWaPHXI> – Heineken Rugby Advert (The Scrum) 2008
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJU47Od08As> – Guinness Hurling Advert (Alive inside) 2007

Appendix D – Interview Schedule

Hi everyone, welcome to this focus group. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation, I really appreciate it. My name is Michael Ryan and I will be conducting this research today. This focus group is being carried out in total confidentiality and all names in the focus group will remain anonymous. Is everyone ok with that? Yes. Ok that's fine. The title of this focus group is 'How young males interpret and respond to sports advertisements sponsored by alcohol companies'.

The aim of this focus group is to find out your interpretation of these adverts, what messages you receive from them and what influence they have on your behaviour towards alcohol? The following interview schedule will help discuss this topic in detail. I will ask a number of questions to the group and mostly listen to responses and the discussion in general. I will also give some prompts from time to time to help keep the discussion going and tease out as much information as possible.

Interview Schedule

Principle Questions

Q1. Which is your favourite ad and why?

Prompt – “Can you expand on that a bit more please? So what you're telling me is?”

Q2. What do you think these advertisements are saying to you?

Prompt – “So what exactly is the message here? So why is that? What comes to mind when you see these advertisements? Can we discuss that further?”

Q3. Can you tell me who these ads are targeting, like what people are they aimed at (age, gender, etc.)?

Prompt – “How do you know? Explain to me what is happening here? So what you're telling me is? So your interpretation of that is? Is this ok with the group?”

Q4. After watching these ads, what, if any, influence do they have on your behaviour towards alcohol?

Prompts – “Can you expand on that a bit more please? So what you’re telling me is? So your interpretation of that is?”