An Investigation on Role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its Brand Perception on Consumers

- Case of Vodafone, Ireland

Supervisor: Mr. David Hurley

Student Name: Bhavish Khushalani
Student Number: 10332343
An Investigation on Role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its Brand Perception on Consumers

- Case of Vodafone, Ireland

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master’s in Business Administration

At Dublin Business School

Bhavish Khushalani

Masters of Business Administration 2017
Declaration

Declaration: I, Bhavish Khushalani (10332343) declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic policy.

Signed: Bhavish Khushalani

Date: 22.05.17
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my guide Mr. David Hurley, without whose expert advice and guidance, this would not have been possible.

I would like to thank all the lecturers who helped me reach the final stage of my course. I would like to thank all the participants who participated in the survey. Last, but, not the least, I would like to thank my parents without whose constant support and motivation, I would have not reached here.

Date: 22\textsuperscript{nd} May, 2017.
Abstract

The main of the research was to investigate the role of sponsorship in rugby and its brand perception on consumers. The researcher took the case study of Vodafone in Ireland because Rugby is the most popular sport of Ireland.

There is a strong significance of marketing activities on the consumers in case of sporting events as the organization market their products by sponsoring sports events. This study incorporates quantitative study as the researcher surveyed 100 respondents for this research.

Furthermore, the data gathered was analyzed through SPSS software by using descriptive, regression and correlation analysis. It was identified from the survey results that there is a positive role of sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception on the consumers of Vodafone. This has increased the significance of sports sponsorship within the organization as a sign of competitive advantage and a strong market position.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I: Introduction ........................................................................................................... 8

1.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 8

1.2 Background of the Study ............................................................................................... 9

1.3 Purpose of the Study ...................................................................................................... 12

1.4 Research Aim .................................................................................................................. 13

1.5 Research Objectives ...................................................................................................... 13

1.6 Hypothesis ..................................................................................................................... 13

1.7 Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 14

1.7.1 Explanation of the Research Question ...................................................................... 14

1.8 Variables ....................................................................................................................... 15

1.8.1 Dependent Variable ................................................................................................. 15

1.8.2 Independent Variable ............................................................................................... 15

1.9 Outline of the Dissertation ........................................................................................... 16

Chapter 2: Literature Review ............................................................................................... 18

2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 18

2.2 An Overview of Sponsorship ....................................................................................... 18

2.3 Sports Sponsorship ....................................................................................................... 19

2.3.1 Sport Sponsorship Effectiveness ............................................................................ 23

2.3.2 Risk of sponsorship ................................................................................................. 24

2.4 Branding and its concepts ............................................................................................ 25

2.4.1 Brand Perception .................................................................................................... 25

2.4.2 Brand Image ............................................................................................................ 25

2.4.3 Brand Equity ........................................................................................................... 26

2.4.4 Brand objectives in sponsorship ........................................................................... 29

2.4.5 Brand loyalty in sponsorship ................................................................................. 30

2.4.6 Brand association in sponsorship ........................................................................... 30

2.5 Relationship between Sports Sponsorship and Brand perception .............................. 31

2.6 Sports Sponsorship in Ireland ...................................................................................... 34

2.7 Vodafone Sports sponsorship and its impact on Rugby Team ................................... 36

2.7.1 Challenges confronted by Vodafone ..................................................................... 39

2.8 Recommendations for Vodafone ............................................................................... 41

Chapter III: Research Methodology .................................................................................... 43

3.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 43

3.2 Evaluation of Research Problem .................................................................................. 44

3.3 Research Onion and Proposed Methodology .............................................................. 46

3.3.1 Research Philosophy ............................................................................................... 47

3.3.2 Research Approach ................................................................................................. 48
Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Discussion ................................................................. 61
  4.1: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 61
  4.2 Demographic Analysis ...................................................................................... 61
  4.3 Descriptive Analysis ......................................................................................... 67
  4.4 Regression Analysis ......................................................................................... 89
  4.5 Hypotheses Assessment ................................................................................... 90
  4.6 Discussion .......................................................................................................... 91
Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendation ..................................................... 98
  5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 98
  5.2 Summarized findings ....................................................................................... 98
  5.3 Recommendations ......................................................................................... 99
  5.4 Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 100
  5.5 Future implication ......................................................................................... 101
Chapter VI: Self-Reflection .................................................................................... 102
  6.1 Self-Reflection ............................................................................................... 102
  6.2 Learning cycle by Kolb ............................................................................... 102
  6.3 Style of Learning By Kolb ........................................................................ 103
  6.4 Learning Development .............................................................................. 105
  6.5 Challenges .................................................................................................... 107
  6.6 Conclusion .................................................................................................... 108
BIBLIOGRAPHY ...................................................................................................... 109
APPENDIX: A .......................................................................................................... 116
APPENDIX: B .......................................................................................................... 117
Survey Questionnaire ............................................................................................. 117
Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Brand perception is one of the most vital factors of brand quality that refers to the general customer perception and feels about a brand as well as it affects the consumer behaviour of Vodafone, Ireland (Kervyn, Fiske and Malone, 2012). From a marketer’s point of view, whatever strategy of a company for marketing is, their focus is on attracting more customers through their marketing activities. In addition, the attitude towards the image of brand develops the brand image in the mind of the customers. It also stimulates the original purchasing behavior of a customer in terms of branding; hence increasing the share of the market, developing brand quality, and maximizing sales. Furthermore, brand quality is also being focused on several practitioners and academics, besides this, there is no paradigm among the equity studies and brand perception until now.

According to The Irish Times (2016), Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) that has declared the sponsorship with Vodafone for four years that costs around €15 million Euros. The reason behind such a huge sponsorship is to enhance the popularity of rugby in Ireland as well as promote the brand worldwide. Therefore, Vodafone has taken this step for the improvement of brand perception with the help of this sponsorship they aim to attract and pull in new customers. However, there are a number of barriers that Vodafone might have to face, such as the competitors of Vodafone in Ireland like Airtel can offer more amounts or a higher sponsorship into the rugby team for the attainment of brand perception and sustainability (Richelieu and Desbordes, 2013). This might become a serious issue to the company, as rugby is more popular in Ireland as compared to football and cricket.
1.2 Background of the Study

As per the study of Fetscherin and Toncar (2009), sponsoring sports has become common in today’s era as it is one of the most convenient and easy ways for organizations in terms of promoting their brand and gaining more customers. The sponsor provides support with the help of funds in an activity. In contrast, according to the current situation, the sponsorship relates to the development of brand perception for the company. Sponsoring the sports team has become the most effective method for the brand promotion, pulling in new customers, as well as creating customer value through their product and services into the global market. Brand perception is linked to the consumers, not with the brands (Zhang, 2015). In spite of the message that people thinks or say about a brand. The perception of a customer is mainly affected by marketing, public relations, reviewing, personal experiences, social media, and other channels.

Tifferet and Herstein (2010) echoed that the companies consider sponsorship as a significant method for promotion while setting up the budget for marketing. On the other hand, consumers are the most crucial part of marketing, brand success, and brand influence. It plays a significance role in the success of a company as a marketing concept that covers an impression, consciousness, or awareness regarding its offerings and the company. In simpler words, brand perception is a psychological creation that helps the consumers in realising a brand over another brand. In addition, it can be defined as the set of memories, expectations, relationships, and stories that in combination derives the decision to adopt a specific organization, service, or a product (Richelieu and Desbordes, 2013). It is mandatory to create rationale of what has come into existence in a very competitive market. Providing sponsorship for something that relates to the emotions of customers has always supported in the development of companies in terms of creating and developing brand image of Vodafone, Ireland.
Vodafone offered sponsorship deal to the Irish Rugby Football Union just after the team arrived back from South African tour.

Zhang (2015) mentioned in the study that sponsorship is essential for the growth and development of Vodafone in Ireland as the sponsorship in rugby can help Vodafone in reaching out the rural areas of Ireland. This might boost the popularity and customer loyalty of Vodafone consumers. Moreover, watching a favorite player wearing the shirt of your brand is something that makes them happy and increases trust on the brand. It makes them comfortable with the brand and they do not think to switch to any other provider (Duane, O’Reilly and Andreev, 2014). In this competitive era, sponsorship is considered as the best way for the sake of grabbing the attention of the customers among all of the rivals and promotes their product and service. On the other hand, the deal of sponsorship for four years between Vodafone and Irish rugby team is essential for both the parties. This sponsorship provides the players of Irish rugby team a better place to practice, qualified and professional coaches, hygienic diet that helps them in staying physically and mentally active, and other several facilities (Brockdorff, 2008). On the other hand, another concept of Vodafone behind this sponsorship is to transform the company from communications towards telecom.

According to the study of Zhang (2015), development and creation of brand perception are prerequisites towards the management of the brand. Each of the product and services can be evaluated with the help of symbolic, functional, ex-parental elements through which the development of brand perception is accomplished theoretically. There are a number of researcher and scholars who have defined the brand perception and imaging messages and meaning, blanket definitions, psychological elements and cognitive, and personification based term. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between brand perception and consumer behavior (Mosupyoe, 2011). Several studies have been accomplished extensively in the last few years in terms of developing brand equity.
Organizations require in-depth consumer behaviour insight as well as educating the customers regarding the brand to develop effective and efficient marketing strategies.

According to Punjaisri and Wilson (2011), in terms of branding, brand equity comes from the confidence of the customer. The more confidence is found in the brand place, the more possibility that the consumers are willing to pay higher prices for their desired brand. Primarily, 5 major factors are considered as the stem of confidence. The first factors define that the function of a brand performs in the way it is designed. The second factor defines that there is a link between purchasing and owning a brand with social imaging. On the other hand, the third factor states that there is a strong link between the sentiments and recognition of consumers with the brand. The fourth factors define the balance of brand functionalities and its value. The final and the fifth factor defines the consumer trust in terms of branding (Zhang, 2015).

As per the study of Giovanardi (2012), through brand proliferation, customers make their decision of purchasing based on mostly the brand perception instead of the product. In addition, while the brand image is consistent along with the customers, self-concept, it would be the preference of the customer that they give it. In contrast, the satisfaction of the consumers refers to the evaluation of the overall general experience of the customer towards a product or service specifically. The performance-specific expectation of customer as well as the disconfirmation of an expectation is the vital elements of satisfying a customer. When the expectation of product performance exceeds, the satisfaction of the customer also increases (Waititu, 2011). On the other hand, when product performance exceeds the expectation, the satisfaction of the customer decreases. Hence, the performance of a product is a vital element of brand perception; organizations might infer the possible impact of brand perception on the satisfaction of the consumers with the help of determining perceptual difference to the brand among non-users of the brand and existing customers.
Singh (2013) stated that there is a significant impact of brand perception on the consumer of companies, especially in the industry of telecommunication services. For instance, convenience, infrastructure, service of the store, and activities related to sales are the factors that directly affects the satisfaction of customers. Additionally, the loyalty of the customer is another vital aspect that affects the brand perception significantly. It can be defined as customer satisfaction extension, in simpler words it can be defined as the repetitive behaviour of purchasing in a narrowing sense. On the other hand, the loyalty of the customer stems from the customer’s approval of a brand (Bergman and Klefsjö, 2010).

Thus, this study has emerged as a source of identifying and justifying the potential advantages of a sports event for a brand that is hosting the event. While many studies have focused mainly on economic benefits, such benefits as environmental, socio-cultural and image based or branding have remained undiscovered. Therefore, this study will highlight the long-term impact of the rugby event that was sponsored by Vodafone in Ireland and that had much more to do other than just investing money for economic benefits. The impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship for rugby will be investigated with respect to the brand perception that it left on consumers’ minds in Ireland.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the role of sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland. However, there are a number of studies conducted in order to identify the impact of sponsorship from the business point of view. However, there are no specific studies on the brand perception is available as well as none of the research has neither focused on the rugby team of Ireland nor Vodafone’s sponsorship. Therefore, there is a need to conduct this study to identify the challenges as well as barriers that Vodafone faced while sponsoring Irish rugby team.
Moreover, this study will examine the impact of sponsorship from a business point of view and brand perception.

1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate the role of Sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland.

1.5 Research Objectives

The researcher has set some following objectives to investigate the role of Sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland.

- To critically conceptualise Vodafone’s sponsorship and its brand perception upon the customers of Ireland.
- To understand the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship in Ireland Rugby team.
- To analyse the challenges faced by Vodafone to give sponsorship to Ireland Rugby.
- To provide a possible recommendation to prevent this challenges.

1.6 Hypothesis

$H_0$: Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception do not have an impact on the consumers of Ireland. (Negative)

$H_1$: Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception has an impact on the consumers of Ireland. (Positive)
1.7 Research Questions

The researcher will set the following question that is based on investigating the role of rugby and its brand perception on consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland.

- What is the impact of Vodafone's sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in Ireland?

1.7.1 Explanation of the Research Question

*What is the impact of Vodafone's sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in Ireland?*

The question is formed by a researcher to have a clear understanding of the sponsorship process and its impact on the brand perception of a company. Through a sponsorship, a company can conduct a campaign about the company. Through this question, the researcher will analyze how Vodafone impacts on the customers of Ireland. Rugby is a popular game in Ireland and people are more attracted after seeing that Vodafone is sponsoring this team. The customers can be loyal after seeing their favorite player in the jersey of Vodafone. This question has been formed to discuss the process of sponsorship. The question would form by the researcher to discuss the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship of the Rugby team. This question is very important as sponsorship is a very popular way to increase the brand image of the company. The role of Vodafone is very effective for the rugby team of Ireland as this company has taken all the initiative to provide all types of facilities to the Rugby in Ireland. Through this question, the researcher has evaluated how a sponsor company takes responsibility of a team.
1.8 Variables

The term variables can be defined as the easy and convenient way in terms of specifying a place, person, thing, or phenomenon that the individual tries to measure (Hair, 2010). On the other hand, there are two major forms of variables namely dependent variable and independent variable. These two major variables are described and defined below:

1.8.1 Dependent Variable

An amount or a quantity that relies on some other quantity or an amount are known as dependent variables. The value of dependent variable alters as per the value of independent variable alters as it relies on it. However, such variables can also be defined as the presumed effect (Dupuis and Biesbroek, 2013). Consumers of Vodafone, Ireland is dependent variable over here. Consumers are the most crucial part of marketing, brand success, and brand influence. It plays a significance role in the success of a company as a marketing concept that covers an impression, consciousness, or awareness regarding its offerings and the company. Marketing, public relations, reviewing, personal experiences, social media, and other channels mainly affect the perception of a customer (Duane, O’Reilly and Andreev, 2014). Moreover, there is a significant impact of brand perception on the consumer of companies, especially in the industry of telecommunication services.

1.8.2 Independent Variable

An amount or a quantity that cannot be altered as well as do not rely on other quantity or an amount are known as an independent variable. On the other hand, such variables can also be defined as presumed cause (Dupuis and Biesbroek, 2013). The Role of Rugby and Its Brand Perception is an independent variable over here. Brand perception is linked to the consumers, not with the brands. In spite of the message that people thinks or say about a brand.
Moreover, it can be defined as the set of memories, expectations, relationships, and stories that in combination deduces the decision to adopt a specific organization, service, or a product (Chien, Cornwell and Pappu, 2011). In simpler words, brand perception is a psychological creation that helps the consumers in realizing a brand over another brand. It is mandatory to create rationale of what has come into existence in a very competitive market.

1.9 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is based on 6 chapters. The first chapter is based on introducing the top and significance along with the background and objectives of the study that is focused on investigating the role of sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland. The second chapter is based on the literature review that sheds the lights on the previous studies on the topic as well as empirical justification and theoretical framework. Moreover, the third chapter is based on the methodology of the study that presents the tools, techniques, methods, and design adopted for conducting this research. On the other hand, the fourth chapter is based on presenting the data that has been collected while conducting the study as well as analyzing the data, interpreting and discussing it.
The fifth chapter is focused on providing the conclusion of the findings of the study along with the recommendations for future research options. Finally, the sixth chapter is based on self-reflection which talks about the learning of the course through learning styles and talks about the challenges faced during the whole process.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to direct the research in its completion by identifying and understanding the concepts of sponsorship which involves sports, brand perception, brand equity and the relation between sport sponsorship and brand perception.

It is very important to know that the individual perceptions of consumers about a certain brand sponsoring a sport is different from one another. It is also important to understand the effectiveness of sponsorship and the risks involved in it. From Vodafone’s point of view, it is important to know about the impact it has on sports, especially Rugby and the challenges it has encountered in the process.

Thus, the researcher will generalize this with different research carried out by various authors who have expert knowledge about the subjects.

2.2 An Overview of Sponsorship

There are numerous definitions of sponsorship; however most of them have basically the same meaning that vary in width, focus and definitions. Berett & Slack (2001) proposed that the sponsorship is defined as the financial provision of assistance by an association for the reason of accompanying profitable objectives. Further he officially explained sponsorship as a venture in terms of cash or an asset or in kind, in an activity in return for the access to the vulnerable profitable prospective with that activity. The goals of sponsorship are well explained by Arthuretal., (1997). He defines profitable sponsorship as exchange and developing an association with a group, event or team etc. for advertising objectives.
Conversely, this definition of means that the term “sponsorship” not only includes solely the organization between a sponsor and the sponsor unit, but also involves the advertising and the verbal efforts taken by sponsors to influence their savings in any sponsorship activity or experience. Hence a wide yet easy explanation is accepted and updated from Shuman and Gardner provides the basis for the description used in this thesis: the term sponsorship means all the savings in the occasions and properties that can be related to an organization supporting all the commercial purposes. The above definition explains three significant aspects of advanced sponsorship. Firstly, it explains reciprocity process between a sponsored body and the sponsor whereby the sponsored unit obtains supports in monetary and the sponsor receives the right to engage himself with the activities of sponsorship to attain commercial purposes like improving commercial picture or the awareness of brand (Pope & Voges, 1999). Secondly, the target of organization is not only limited to cause or occasions but it covers a broad area of activities little sporting occasions, sport person or teams of sport to a generous cause, for organizations that are non-profitable- practically anything that can be related to an association by a sponsorship deal (Keller 2003) . Hence the commercial sponsorship processes equally the financial and non-financial nature.

2.3 Sports Sponsorship

Around two-third of the spending of sponsorship is targeted at the events of sports, therefore is regarded as the central form of sponsorship (Lee & Cornwell, 2016). This is because of connecting the demographics of the spectators at a specific event of sport and consequently of being able to promote them directly. The awareness of brand is attained by promoting the brand to as many people as u can and the realization of the existence of a product or an association is awareness.
Therefore, a company can enhance the awareness of a brand among people by their involvement with the events of sports. Lyberger & Shrank, (2014) argued that occasion are brands, as every entity processes its own identity representing different set of values and attributes in the observation. Gwinner proposed an example of the creation and transfer of image in the sponsorship of event that conceive that the image of the brand is affected by event image. The spectators through the symbol, logo or brand name threaded throughout the occasion, studied to relate sponsored event and brand to each other. Therefore, it is possibly equal for the sponsored activity and association to get engaged in representative relationship with the transfer of inherited attributes from activity to sponsor. Gwinner (1997) also explains that the degree transfer of individuality and other several elements depends on various attributes such as the height of limited sponsorship, the degree of fit between sponsor and event, the frequency of event and involvement of product. When the relationship between attributes changes depending on the kind of sample, then a balance relationship exists. Such as, Gwinner explains that the linkage between the image brand and event brand will be weaker for the goods that have high involvement in comparison with low involvement goods. He argued that sponsorship is indirect and non-essential kind of communication. Nevertheless, we note that even though this example is responsible for the distinction in the involvement of goods, it is not responsible for the variations in EI and we find this effect in our research. The recent study predicts the positive impact of EI on the thinking of the sponsor’s image. According to Ciadinietal (1976) a well-built emotional tie between the admirer and their liked teams that resulted in a favorable approach related to the sports team.
Dolphin (2003) reported that half of the respondents recognized that sponsorship makes a worthless donation to those linked to the team of sports and make admirers feel good about the sponsors. This appreciation is improving over a wide range of sponsorship which reveals the loyalty and the contribution of the sponsor that are greatly appreciated by the buyers. Therefore, it can be concluded that the individuals who are energetic supporters of a sport experiences more strong emotions to the brand who is sponsoring in comparison to those who are lazy and not energetic.

Schadetal (2014) defines that value of prestige is significant and when sponsorship is defined in a wide area it involuntarily proves the prestige worth of an organization: monetary muscle, size and worldwide status. Numerous examples exist where monetary services have undertaken wide area of sports sponsorship to improve the brand image. An example includes an efficient sports sponsorship operation controlled by a monetary organization is Barclay’s Bank. The bank was proved to be a good match due to the strong and cultural picture of the bank for the English football league with the view that football is a natural game. Another example is the benefited visa from a considerable changed thinking of the master card which is branded due to the outcome of the 2000 Olympic game of sponsorship. The event sponsorships different, prominent and honorable as the games importantly increases a solid association of brand. The transfer of the Olympic image to the Visa brand resulted in the positive outcome and strengthened the organization’s image and the linkage with the present and prospective customers. The rapid expansion of sponsorship has resulted in the appearance of ‘sponsorship clutter’. Sponsorship cluster is the overcompensation of companies offering sponsorship that shows the extreme contending for the sponsorship of a specific occasion. Sponsorship of English test match by Insurance company of Cornhill is the major problem of the sponsorship cluster which has been sponsored by Cornhill insurance for $2 million with the goal of improving the level of awareness of brand.
The rate of recognition has increased to 21% from 2% and the transaction by 5%. Nevertheless, other monetary services organizations have taken up rival sponsorship of English proficient match and no organization has advanced a sufficient solid picture to become developed as the finest sponsor. Therefore, it was hard to enhance and maintain a non-imitable contended benefit. This becomes a quarrel that has encountered the same condition, vendors would require a more better approach to the market to set the spending of sponsorship and goals properly. Therefore, the managers need to access the options of sponsorship more clearly. In any case, without a point by point sponsorship hypothesis, there is no standardized procedure for choosing sponsorship program of sports. Reisinger and Grohs, (2014) have noticed the absence of exact reviews inspecting the effect of sponsorship projects on customers. 'Investigation on sponsorship directed so far has concentrated the effect on purchaser awareness and has fail to concentrate the effect on commercial image change and attitude of customers towards the sponsoring occasion and programme. Reisinger and Grohs, (2014) takes note of that moderately few endeavors have been made to comprehend the impacts of sponsorship and the most widely recognized kind of sponsorship impacts research is the simple measure of support logo introduction time amid scope of a sponsored occasion, which is not suitable for measuring impacts, for example, attitude or behavioral change. Monetary services companies should know how to distinguish their brand to extend a competitive benefit. Sport sponsorship is a means to reach most of the spectators though sponsorship spending could be in these terms. In addition, research is also required. This review of literature has recognized key gap in the awareness of sponsorship impact. Few is published on how the customers think and react to sponsorship, providing increase to calls for the investigation designed to recognize the elements that effects the reaction of customers towards the activities of sponsorship.
Grohs (2016) explains that further investigation is requires for in addressing two key questions of research. Do the buyers relate the event picture with the brand that is sponsored? How does image of sponsored occasion reflects the attitude in relate to the brand? In response to these questions, the following research discovers the relation between customer attitude towards the sponsored occasion and the sponsor plus the suggestions for the transfer of image brand.

2.3.1 Sport Sponsorship Effectiveness

In the view point of Rubio et al., (2014), corporate sponsors can attain increasing corporate image, exposure rates, consumer awareness as well as consumer preferences. The authors further note that sponsorship activity is positively and at the same time significantly associated with the product purchase intention from consumers, recognition of the corporate image as well as perception of the sponsorship intention. Likewise, the measurement of the media exposure rate can be carried out in three ways firstly through analyzing the sales prior to and following the corporate sport sponsorship, remembrance and recognition of the brand image from the customer standpoint and frequency of the appearance in the broadcasting, magazines, News and TV. Furthermore, it is extremely crucial for the firms to ensure that while sponsoring an activity they must portray that it is not for commercial gain instead for philanthropic motivation. On other hand, a corporation must not sponsor several events simultaneously.
2.3.2 Risk of sponsorship

Although sponsorship has several benefits, but at the same time it is risky and is literally very difficult to evaluate experimentally. Various methods are utilized by advertising organizations ranging from surveying consumers to have knowledge whether they are affected by sponsorship to assess the number of media coverage (Arai et al., 2014). Regardless of its significance, the study evaluating sponsorship efficiency is still in its early phase of growth. Researchers have not gained any hypothetical platform that can provide research of customer’s behavior about sponsorship. But arguments are appropriate essentially for the evaluation methods seemed to be the most suitable for measuring the efficiency of sponsorship. Negative relations: The picture of a sponsored unit in some conditions might not have a positive influence on the organization offering support. Though this is most expected to be the situation when the individual sportsperson support is there, it is also possible to include a group on an occasion. Like a team of sports whose performance is not so good or the production of a theatre that fails due to not providing a sponsor with the kind of image they are likely to have from the organization. Growth of arguments is leading to non-positive state of mind: The main drawback for sponsors is the presence of contenders. It is a challenge for each organization to be at top. Arguments that influence the sponsors will be a guide to weak belief from the customers and will also develop a non-positive sponsor-sponsee relation. Nonexistence of equality: The corporation between an organization and its supported entity, firm, or occasion is of profit to mutual parties. Various techniques of sponsorship are applied to sponsees relying on their requirements as well as the needs of sponsors. This point leads to the absence of equality and hence requires much more effort and time for preparation and assessment.
2.4 Branding and its concepts

2.4.1 Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to the capacity of the consumers to recognize the brands under specific conditions. The brand perception of customers can be expressed in two ways. Firstly, through brand recognition when a particular customer is able to identify the brand when he is given the brand as a prompt and, secondly, by the means of the brand which is recalled when that particular brand is recalled by the customers (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). Furthermore, the brand recognition can be categorized into two groups: verbal and visual. Verbal brand recognition is extensively utilized in the telemarketing when the customer hears about the brand name and get aware about its features and characteristics (Rubio et al., 2014). On the other hand, the visual brand recognition is evident when the customer sees a brand in the store. Social media plays a crucial role in creating brand perception among the customers. In the view of the fact that recently people got significantly engaged in the social media platforms, companies have started to utilize this platform for create perception about their brands (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014).

2.4.2 Brand Image

Image can be understood as the beliefs, ideas and impressions held by a person about an object. Brand image is a set of perceptions that are saved in consumers’ memory and is related with brand associations. Construction and maintenance of the brand image is basic prerequisite of the brand management (Lim, Chung & Weaver, 2012). Any service or product can be expressed using the symbolic, functional or experimental elements that also develop the relevant brand image. The brand image is mainly depicted using four elements that are personification, cognitive or psychological elements, meanings and messages and blanket definitions. (Gamboa & Gonçalves 2014).
Brand image is an important concept in the domain of consumer behaviour research. Lam et al. (2013) reported the brand image as the reflection of personality of the brand. Brand image is proposed by Keller to be the set of associations organized in a meaningful way. According to the researcher, the brand image is interpretation of brand developed by the consumer either logically or emotionally (Chang, 2016). Stocchi, Driesener and Nenycz-Thiel (2015) stated that “the successful brand image allows consumers to recognize the needs that the brand satisfies and to distinguish the brand from its competitors, and increases the probability that consumers will purchase the brand”. Hence, brand image has strong effects as it can result in getting better position in the market, increased market share and sustainable competitive advantage. A few studies have confirmed that favourable brand image leads to developing loyalty, brand equity, brand performance and purchase behaviour (Choi & Heikkonen, 2015). Kleppe and Mossberg (2015) also studied the brand image and found that it the psychological concept that is developed from certain impressions established by the consumers. The selected impressions are exaggerated, expanded and are systematic to develop the image through an innovative process. The brand image is also discussed as the attributes and associations by the consumers with the brand name.

### 2.4.3 Brand Equity

A significant number of outstanding researchers have discussed the concept of brand equity and highlighted the problems in building it. In the view point of Manalo (2016), it is comparatively difficult to establish strong brand equity but not impossible. The potential barrier to the establishment of strong brand equity is the surrounding competition. Moreover, in the current dynamic and competitive business environment, it has become extremely essential for the brands to distinguish themselves from their competitors (Elsaß et al.,
There are four components that constitute brand equity including brand associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand awareness. The perceived quality corresponds to the perception of the consumers about the product or the actual ability of the brands to meet their expectations. In contrast, brand loyalty act as driver to the long-standing success. In fact, without brand loyalty, it is difficult to create brand equity (Chang, 2016).

The marketers need to gain deeper insight of the consumer behaviour so that they can develop stronger and positive brand image as well as effective marketing strategies. The relationship between brand image and the consumer behaviour has been explored by many researchers. Alwi and Kitchen (2014) cited the concept given by Keller as the customer-based brand equity (CBBE). The model noted the reactions of consumers based on various branding campaigns where the brand knowledge of these consumers differed from one another. The model stated that brand awareness and brand image act as the foundation of brand equity. This means that if right marketing techniques are applied, then it can result in establishing positive brand image as the memories of the consumers about the brand are connected with unique and strong brand associations. In this regard, it is implied that the brand knowledge should be developed through branding campaign before the consumers respond to the brand. In case the consumers are already knowledgeable about the brand, then lesser should be spent on brand extension. Aghekyan-Simonian et al. (2012) also studied the construct of brand equity and found that it is based on the confidence of consumers on the brand. Consumers are willing to pay higher prices if they place greater confidence on the brand.
There are five considerations from which this confidence stems:

i. Function performance by brand as per designed

ii. Balance between the brand functionalities and value

iii. Social image associated with owning the brand

iv. Sentimental attachment and recognition of consumers about the brand

v. Trust of consumers over the brand

Cho, Fiore and Russell (2015) also found that there is dominant impact of the brand equity on the consumers’ response towards the branding campaign. As more and more brands are entering the market, consumers base their decisions of purchasing on the brand image rather than on the product itself. However, the key is that brand image is consistent with the self-concept of consumers, only then consumers give preference to that brand. Alwi and Kitchen (2014) defined self-concept as the collection of perception of consumers about one self-based on the elements such as appearance, capabilities, personality, characteristics and shortcomings. Thus, it is concluded that there must be consistency between the consumers’ self-concept and brand image.

Consumer behaviour research reveals that the most widely used predictors of consumer buying intention are the customer loyalty and satisfaction. Malik et al. (2013) referred customer satisfaction as the general evaluation of the consumer about the overall experience of shopping of any service or product. Key indicators of the customer satisfaction are performance-specific expectations and expectation disconfirmation. If the consumer experiences better performance than expected, then the level of satisfaction increases but if the expectation exceeds the performance of the product, satisfaction decreases.
Based on the finding by Severi and Ling (2013), it is said that the product performance is an important component of the brand image and thus it can be inferred that brand image has significant impact on the customer satisfaction and brand managers can identify the perceptual difference towards the brand by comparing the non-user’s intentions and existing customer’s intentions. Moreover, it is noted by French and Smith (2013) that there is increased customer satisfaction and preference for the brand if there is congruence between the self-image of customer and image of the brand. Brand image is also the key driver of customer loyalty that is recognized as the extension of customer satisfaction. Customer loyalty is explained as the repeat purchasing behaviour of the consumer and suggests that the customer approves the brand. Customer loyalty plays an important role in generating profits for the company.

2.4.4 Brand objectives in sponsorship

In relation to multiple definitions, there is no general way in which the potential brand objectives can be achieved. However, it can be put forwarded that majority of the sports sponsorship are unpredictable and at the same time intangible. Along these lines, various researchers had proposed distinctive models to illustrate the common brand objectives that could be the motive of the corporate for sponsoring different sports events. For paradigm, a sponsorship portfolio can be one way of describing it (Kleppe&Mossberg, 2015). A sponsorship portfolio is the collection of the company or a brand sponsorship consisting of simultaneous and sequential involvement with the individuals, activities and events. Moreover, by the means of sponsorship portfolio, the brand managers can influence the consumers regarding the sponsorship property to establish relationship for the sponsor brand.
2.4.5 Brand loyalty in sponsorship

As indicated by Islam & Rahman, (2016) the measure of brand involvement from sports sponsorship prompts brand steadfastness after some time. Brand loyalty is as basic when the clients are faithful and inclines toward one brand before another subsequently from prior brand involvement. This must be related with a positive feeling. Reichheld and Teal (2001) characterizes brand unwaveringness as the willingness of people - purchasers, workers, and companions – to put giving up of one's own priorities keeping in mind the end goal to fortify the relationship. Making and overseeing viable branding encounters can prompt brand separation, expanding deals, shopper faithfulness and zealous advancement of the brand. Brand loyalty can be controlled by many components and sports sponsorship is one of them. Sirgy et al. (2007) recommend that the connection amongst dedication and sponsorship is interceded by a self-congruity handle. It implies that clients of a specific brand are probably going to construct sentiments of brand dedication when they perceive that the organization is supporting an occasion or a diversion that the clients can distinguish themselves with. Self-congruity with the sponsorship of an occasion or a diversion helps making a positive disposition towards the occasion. This positive feeling can be exchanged to the supporting firm of the occasion or diversion.

2.4.6 Brand association in sponsorship

One of the fundamental goals of the sponsors is brand association while sponsoring a team or event. Brand value is frequently grounded on the specific associations related to it. In the viewpoint of Kumar, (2014), customers do not purchase a product instead they purchase brand association of product. Nevertheless, the most crucial impact is the recognition of the product associated with other users of the brand.
Moreover, the brand associations established by the consumers are integral to its strength and it might include a symbol, celebrity spokesperson and product attributes.

## 2.5 Relationship between Sports Sponsorship and Brand perception

Kwak and Cornwell, (2015) tested the idea that purchasers have schemas that impact their responses to promote utilizing sport sponsorships. The exploration uses a $3 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial plan, where three varieties of sports sponsorship, print promotions and two diverse magazine covers (sport and non-sport) are utilized to test the impact of brand/occasion matchups and publicizing situation on intermediate measures of promoting viability. To coordinate and media vehicle impacts, differential reaction by gender is additionally analyzed. Three speculations are tested in view of research from the writing on sponsorship, matchup impacts, and publicizing schemas. MANOVA provides incomplete support to every one of the three theories, as matchup and media vehicle controls were found to essentially affect Aad. Also, females are found to report altogether higher Aad and Pi than males did in this review. The promoting schema system is utilized to talk about the findings of the research.

Tsiotsou et al., (2014) observed the values, beliefs and acquisition objectives of customers uncovered to a company’s sponsorship of an event of sport linked to an association which gives no benefits. A review mechanism was urbanized by a team of professionals, revised, protested and accomplished by about 442 spectators in the event in USA, Memphis, Tennessee. The values, beliefs and acquisition of, customer’s objectives to the organization which is sponsoring have positively influenced by the company’s association with cause-correlated advertising.
The donation of live sponsorship to customer-based equity of brand was proposed by Donlan (2014). The research accepted an examination by making use of self-administered opinion-poll at the two events of sporting in UK. The outcome of the results declared sponsorship as a suitable vehicle by which the equity of customer-based brand can be build. In addition, the outcomes also proposed that the most powerful sponsorship exhibited marked donations to develop brand relations, loyalty of brand and predicted quality.

Arai et al., (2014) examined the impact of sponsorship declarations on the firm benefit of supporting firms by exploring whether sponsorship declarations have an impact on irregular profits for share costs. The consequences of the occasion give prove that sport sponsorship declarations are emphatically affecting stock returns, however this effect varies among sports and areas. The result of regression proposed that irregular returns are altogether higher for sponsorships on brand level, smaller firms, and manages national reach. Plewa and Quester (2008) measured the impact of feelings on state of mind toward sponsors on sponsorship adequacy. The research analyzed this gap by defining a causal model, fusing efficient attributes (passionate power and valence) inside a passionate procedure (exchange of effect).

Information from a pilot examine (n=143), attempted amid the Australian Open 2008, affirms the centrality of feelings in the sponsorship influence procedure, for two of the four considered brands.

Utterström (2007) gave a superior comprehension of sports sponsorship as a promoting specialized apparatus in Swedish organizations. A subjective, contextual investigation procedure was utilized, utilizing meetings and documentation of two Swedish organizations inside a similar field of business. The outcome showed that few goals of sports sponsorship are regularly utilized, and the goals might be either consistent or inconsistent relying upon supported unit.
The most much of the time utilized goals of sports sponsorship are the commercial related targets, for example, representative relations, customer amusement, and commercial picture. Pijkeren (2010) discovers the relation after the sport sponsorship is greatly priceless for sponsors. Centrality of sponsors improves because of the sponsorship relationship. The relationship intensity relies on the contribution of the whole representatives. Outstanding consequences are declared when realizing the kind and number of attributes transfer. This amount of the transfer of attributes enhances while the kind of attribute transfer changes. The relations of sponsorship smooth the progress of the transfer of information and the exchange of services and goods (Weismann, 2014). The information transfer is more valuable since it carries the information of a specific market, newly developed product or an effective procedure of product manufacture. After being underexposed for an extensive duration, the relationship prospect has attained interest equally from network practitioners and scientists. In addition to this, it provides a theoretical expansion to the review of sponsorship. The research also provides a chance for better experimental analyses of other networks of sponsorship. Weismann (2014) evaluate loyalty of brand, perception, accessibility, and recollection of admirers of the Lake district leader minor association baseball squad of the organizations sponsoring the team. About 292 members (126 males and 163 females) concluded this research. Members accomplished the opinion poll, which includes a portion of demographics, a team faithfulness question, as well as two Likert scales trying member’s thinking and information about the team that is sponsoring connected to: Loyalty of brand, perception, accessibility and recollection of sponsorship. One-way MANOVAs were utilized to evaluate the effect of devotion, sex, education, and pay on the member's assessments of the sponsors, brand dedication, perception, and accessibility.
The outcomes demonstrated that the dominant part (76%) of admirers either take after the Lake District Leaders in some cases or reliably take after the Lake District Leaders. Critical contrasts were found in conclusions of the sponsors, loyalty of brand towards supporters, assessments of perception, accessibility towards sponsors among admirer’s faithfulness. Admirers with more elevated amounts of constancy evaluated things fundamentally higher than those with lower fidelity. Critical contrasts were likewise found in feelings of the sponsors, loyalty of brand towards sponsors, and accessibility towards sponsors among the admirer’s education. Admirers with an advanced education evaluated things higher than those whose education levels are lower.

The association amongst the performance, faithfulness, attitude, awareness of sponsorship awareness, mind set towards the sponsor and pay for objective of equally real sponsor for the Sport Lisboa e Befica (SLB) teaming the Portuguese soccer association was proposed by Biscaia et al. (2013). The collection of information was done by the admirers of the team of soccer. The information utilizes the conventional feature analysis (CFA) to test the importance of the theoretical behavior hypothesis models. These are searching the dissimilarities that is important significant amongst the association of the equal sponsors.

### 2.6 Sports Sponsorship in Ireland

In Ireland, sport has always been popular, but few people have learned how to use it as a source of profit. Nevertheless, in 2004, per analysts, the volume of the Irish sports sponsorship market reached $200 million.

It is characteristic that foreign sponsorship programs are manifested in the form of thought-out advertising campaigns integrated into the strategy of advertising, communication and sales of the sponsoring company. In Ireland, they often have the character of patronage or a one-time promotion (Arai, 2014). While most Irish businessmen vaguely imagine how to effectively combine sport with the interests of the brand. Companies sometimes go into a
“frontal attack”, hanging huge branded cloths in the stadiums. But this kind of direct advertising not only does not provide proper contact with the consumer, but can cause him to be antipathy. Here in the arena, as an alternative, advertising is “sports”.

However, the promotion of products and brands with the sponsorship of sports teams is a complex and time-consuming process that requires a thoughtful approach and special knowledge. But the results in case of success can be pleasantly surprised.

Promotion of the brand is usually accomplished through the creation of comprehensive programs, including both the creation and holding of own sports events, as well as the sponsorship of major competitions and sports teams (Schade et al, 2014). The circle of objects of sponsorship is almost unlimited. These include competitions, mass sports and entertainment events, famous athletes, national teams, certain sports, sports organizations, societies, clubs and television. The main strategies are divided into two types: creating a unique, “branded” sporting event or sponsoring existing events. There are cases when a company, not paying money to the organizers of the competition and not being an official sponsor, is conducting its own advertising campaign, illegally appropriating this status.

Arsenal of means of sports marketing is rather various. This is the exclusive use of the emblem of the competition, and the involvement of champions to participate in various promotions, and the establishment on behalf of the company of special prizes to the winners of the competition (Grohs&Reisinger, 2014). Often in honor of a sporting event, a special product or series of products are produced, as well as a variety of souvenirs and booklets. In addition, the logo and information about the sponsor are placed in the media, dedicated to sports topics, on billboards and banners in the venue of competitions. Often, commercials can be seen or heard right at the stadiums.
2.7 Vodafone Sports sponsorship and its impact on Rugby Team

Various leading sporting brands are sponsored by Vodafone such as the Manchester United, and the record breaking Ferrari Formula 1 motor racing team, are among the world's most flourishing football clubs. Sponsoring these is a significant portion of Vodafone's community and advertising policies, that are intended for the company to make it one of the known brands of the world (Gamboa&Gonçalves, 2014). Being a winner, Vodafone is seen to be related with other victors, and being engaged in inspirational activities that motivate the communal. Sponsorship is the material hold up of an occurrence, action or association by an unconnected co-worker. It improves awareness of brand which motivates to develop customer partiality and to cultivate loyalty of brand.

A corporation can strengthen awareness in the marketplace by doing sponsorship of an event or an association that attracts a related target marketplace.

Sponsorship shows an emphatical return on savings and is not an act of assistance A standard evaluative criterion should be utilizing to flourish the suitability of the event proposed associated with the sponsor, as sponsorship is a commerce agreement (Grohs&Reisinger, 2014). A sponsor could have various advantages when selecting a careful sponsorship which are as follows:

- creating preference and brand awareness increases.
- Creating emphatical public relations
- Providing eye-catching content for variety of services and products.
- building brand position through associative images
- support a retailing endorsement promotion
- creating inside expressive dedication to the brand
- act as commercial warmth that promotes good connections with customers.
Before sponsoring a movement, the sponsor must feel beyond any doubt that the occasion/association will be fruitful; has a demonstrated reputation, great prospects and generally be lined up with the sponsor's image and business targets. Sports sponsorship is the most well-known and can extend from universal to local and neighborhood occasions. Association accepting the sponsorship (sponsee) stands to profit gigantically equally from money related support and different types of support from a set up accomplice, gave that both sides have concurred an arrangement of regular destinations to support the sponsorship (Severi & Ling, 2013). For this situation, Ferrari will profit by joint ventures and shared income streams emerging from the making of a scope of services and products, and in addition the offer of marketing inside the telecom part.

With the assistance of the sponsorship of the Vodafone, the world's sports benefit a considerable measure from them. They can get a stage by which the sports individuals can demonstrate their talents to the country. World sports get the chance to extend and deliver to the amusements that have been rehearsing from numerous years (Grohs, 2016). This is a major introduction for the association and the sports class. Indeed, even the sports individuals are related with the benefit that is appeared in the sponsorship.

There is incredible effect of the Vodafone sponsorship on the players and the effect is a decent one (Wetzel et al. 2017). It is sound for the association and additionally the sports. The players can speak with the imperative individuals and set a position for themselves so they can move forward in their profession.

The players of Ireland, are particularly benefited from the sponsorship of Vodafone, they can demonstrate their ability and make a position for themselves in the national and worldwide sports. The players of Ireland can expand their position and status inside the country and universal position. In addition, they get cash to speak with the clients of the association through ads (ShanK & Lyberger, 2014).
The prime sponsor of the world rugby is Vodafone which has become a great image and has benefited equally the firm and the sports in view of income and productivity. The firm is able to strengthen its position and provide the best to the association, with the sponsor to the Rugby team. In addition, the Rugby team will also be able to sponsor them.

Vodafone is amongst the significant sponsor of Rugby and offers a strengthen association with the team which not only encourages their firm but also provides aid to attract audience. The firm has good relationships with the rugby of the global recognition (Özsomer, 2012). It is due to because it is amongst the most efficient sports in UK. A number of people are emotionally attracted to this game and watch it as well. Hence this resulted in the best outcomes of the firm.

The firm also helps in encouraging the sports of Rugby with the endorsement of Vodafone through rugby. Vodafone not only provides help to attract the customers but also played a significant part in encouraging the sports of Rugby. This is a significant game in some area of the world. Hence through Vodafone, the firm can encourage the sports in the universal level.

Rugby is the play of Ireland and Vodafone has a great influence on the sports. The major cause is that through Vodafone sponsorship, the sports will be able to attract many more clients. Among them the greatest influence that Vodafone has on the Rugby of Ireland is the aid of association to many teams to get the position so that they can show their talents to the spectators and viewers.

There are several positive factors that influence the sponsorship which is done by Vodafone. Among them the most important is the first-class amount of consumer base. And it is only possible since the customers get this opportunity to view the posters while they are on a visit to sports.

They also get the know-how of all the opportunities that are available by a
firm (Bridgewater, 2014). The clients can get linked to the firms which would greatly encourage them to improve their sales. Even with the word of mouth, the firms are attracting more clients which encourages them to keep hold of clients in the contending marketplace.

2.7.1 Challenges confronted by Vodafone

Vodafone has developing marketplace in the Asian countries as well as in the European countries. The group of Vodafone is constantly trying to improve their share in marketplace and is already in service in more than 26 advertise in around 16 nations. Vodafone has creating commercial center in the Asian nations and additionally in the European nations. The gathering of Vodafone is continually attempting to enhance their partake in commercial center and is as of now in administration in more than 26 advertise in around 16 nations. Working in 26 markets, Vodafone as of now have roughly 399 million aggregate ventured clients including 152 million enrolled clients. While growing business sector in the undiscovered region, Vodafone is predominantly centered around the securing and integration system. In the greater part of procurement cases, Vodafone confronted challenges. Securing and merging arrangement in the exceedingly focused market could be demonstrated as fatal. As indicated by Wagener, Riordan, and Storkenmaier (2010), the obtaining and blending policies of Vodafone by implication impacted its market rivalry

As indicated by Whalley and Curwen (2012), the Vodafone Organization have stood up to various difficulties in various circumstances, which may incorporate from entering undiscovered market to the securing of other organization. In the greater part of the cases the Vodafone administration has made critical steps that helped them to defeat the difficulties. Right now, this media transmission giant is confronting danger of expanding rivalry in the potential market. In the creating nations, the Vodafone gathering is centering to purchase
different organizations keeping in mind the end goal to abatement showcase rivalry. In any case, it is hard to manufacture a dull market. Indeed, even in the nation of origin (Ireland), Vodafone is confronting extreme rivalry.

In view of HoerniInderst, R. what’s more, Valletti (2014), the choice of new marketing procedure could be demonstrated as proficient as far as disposing of the difficulties and set up stronghold in the marketplace. Nevertheless, the choice of the new marketing system is difficult. The new marketing procedure of Vodafone ought to be created in view of the present quality and shortcomings of the association and the market requirements.

As per Baranes, Benzoni and Vuong (2011), analysis of the competitor’s strategy could be proved as effective to overcome the challenges. It is found that the analysis of the competitor’s business strategy can help the Vodafone group to identify the gap and develop own marketing strategy with an advantage.

Analysis of the own marketing strategy is important as it is helpful to identify the weakness of the organization and the issues within the current marketing strategy. As opined by Bach and Allen (2010), the Vodafone is currently analyzing the strength and weaknesses, which are valuable and can help to strengthen the organization’s new marketing strategy.

Development of new marketing strategy is very crucial but Vodafone management is very dynamic and they are continuously developing newer marketing strategies. According to Michalski’s, Sphicopoulos and Varoutas (2011), the Vodafone management has to deal with the customers of 16 countries, which force them to create different marketing strategies for different countries based on the customer behaviour, market demand and other associated factors.

In the European countries, rugby is a very popular game. The demand of the rugby players is
very high and so do their sponsorship demands. With the increase of companies offering handsome amount of money, the rugby teams have a power to choose the best sponsorships. According to Whalley and Curwen (2012), Vodafone is currently promised to IRFU about €50m for four years of sponsorship.

2.8 Recommendations for Vodafone

- Sponsorship proposal should contain a sufficiently detailed description of the format of the event, as well as information about the size of the audience, its socio-demographic portrait, necessarily about coverage in the media (Pope & Voges, 1999).

- All information should be as objective, transparent and convincing as possible so that a potential advertiser can conduct his own expertise in the effectiveness of the project. In particular, it is necessary to specify sources of information. It must be remembered that a vast majority of advertisers trust their own assessment and obvious facts (audience size and overall coverage in the press) more than any information, and even more so the organizer's calculations (Pucciet al., 2013). Ideally, the final version of the sponsorship proposal should be developed in close interaction with the advertiser.

- The advertiser must provide proof of the professionalism of the organizer of the sporting event. As a minimum, a photo and video report on past events can be used, as well as a report on the media coverage of past events.

- It is necessary to provide mechanisms that allow the advertiser to control the display of logos and the mention of his brand (for example, providing a media report on the outcome of the event) (Riefler, 2012).

- It should be borne in mind that the advertiser is inclined to demand a guarantee of displaying logos, especially on TV and in the print press (and is interested in penalties).
• It is adequate to pay serious attention to the description of the guest program. It is necessary to include in the offer a photo or video report from the previous event. This will allow the advertiser to be convinced of the professionalism of the event organizer. As an option, you must specify that the reception of VIP-guests can be entrusted to an authorized agency (Rubio et al., 2014).

• The sponsorship offer should contain information about non-advertising opportunities of the sports partnership, especially for building links with business partners, high-level representatives of local authorities, etc., as well as for holding a corporate event or a holiday (Rubio et al., 2014).
Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces various comprehensive research methods and techniques which are essential to conducting a specific research. The researcher considers some of the suitable research methodologies and makes the selection of the most appropriate ones. In this context, it is essential to mention that the researcher selected all the required methods before starting the investigation. These selected methodologies helped the researcher to conduct the research work in an effective manner. Various sorts of theories and techniques helped in the collection of relevant data and information regarding the impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception among consumers in Ireland. From the critical viewpoint, it can be stated that improper outcome can result due to the wrong selection of the research methods. Here, the researcher has chosen methods with proper justifications. The details of the research philosophies and approaches are manifested to evaluate their significance in the research studies. The selected research methodologies helped the researcher to bring out positive outcome after investigating the study. Apart from this, it is essential to mention that entire research was done by maintaining some specific ethical considerations. Through maintaining the ethics, the researcher enhances the reliability as well as the validity of the study. However, the researcher confronted certain constraints during the investigation and due to this reason the research is restricted to some extent.
3.2 Evaluation of Research Problem

In the words of Billig and Waterman (2014), it can be noticed that the research problems are addressed at the initial stage of the study. Through addressing the research problems, the researcher is able to concentrate on a specific issue and based on that the research objectives are formulated. Supporting the discussion, Jensen (2013) added that without analyzing any issue, it is difficult for the researchers to carry on a specific research and bring out a successful result. Through the research objectives, the research problems can be evaluated.

Evaluation through research objectives:

- **Objective 1: To critically conceptualize Vodafone's sponsorship and its brand perception upon the consumers of Ireland**

The objective has led the researcher to the direction where the research would be able to obtain the main outcome. To be more precise, the researcher conducted this research in order to analyze the impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception among consumers in Ireland. To fulfil the research objectives, the researcher formulated the research question. In this context, it is essential to mention that the research question is formulated based on the research objectives. The prime research question is ‘*What is the impact of Vodafone's sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in Ireland?*’ The reason behind the forming the question is to analyze the sponsorship process and its impact on the brand loyalty of Vodafone.
• **Objective 2: To understand the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship in Ireland Rugby team**

The study considers the Ireland Rugby team as a medium to establish the concept of the impact of sponsorship. In the research rationale, it has been mentioned that the IRFU declared their four-year sponsorship deal with the respective company. The reason and purpose behind the Vodafone’s sponsorship of the Ireland Rugby team are manifested by following this research objective. The researcher gathered the necessary data and information from the recent journal articles and website entries. The researcher aligns this objective with the research question and demonstrates how the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship affects their brand imagery in the respective country.

• **Objective 3: To analyze the challenges faced by Vodafone to give sponsorship to Ireland Rugby**

This objective is formulated in order to address the challenges that the respective organization faced their sponsorship with the Ireland Rugby Team. It has been found that the Irish Football Team has some serious issue with Vodafone with the money. This is the main reason that Vodafone decided to sponsor is to enhance their brand image in the rural areas. Rugby is the most popular game in the respective country and thus sponsoring the brand in that game benefits Vodafone. However, the question is about the challenges that Vodafone confronts in the sponsorship. This clears the fact that the study confronts both the positive and negative sides of the research and makes it a critical research.
- **Objective 4: To provide possible recommendation to prevent these challenges**

Lastly, the study brings out some recommendations to provide the solution path for dealing with the issues encountered in the research. This objective helps the researcher to complete the research work with an effective manner. Through establishing a complete knowledge of research variables, the study enhances its significance in the future researches.

### 3.3 Research Onion and Proposed Methodology

The researcher undertakes the certain process to conduct the study and lead it on the right track. The various sorts of characteristics are considered from the tool ‘research onion’. Saunders *et al.* (2009) pioneered that the research onion is the most crucial tool or model which helps the researchers with a certain set of stages. In this research, the researcher pursued all the stages mentioned in the research opinion during the investigation process. Cohen *et al.* (2013) added in this context that the stages of research onion direct the researchers in ways where they would be able to resolve the issues.

![Figure 1: Research Onion](image_url)
In the above figure, it has been shown that the research onion represents six segments which include research philosophies, research approaches, research strategies, research choices, time horizons, data collection and analysis techniques. Every stage of the research onion provides the essential elements which are necessary for conducting a research study (Saunders et al. 2009). Furthermore, the stages give an idea how to conduct a study step by step. After the application of research philosophy, research approach, and research design, the onion tool leads the researcher to the center or end of the process. Here, the researcher is directed to gather the data and information which has a direct impact on the research outcome.

3.3.1 Research Philosophy

It the words of Taylor et al. (2015), it has been noticed that the Interpretivism, Positivism, and Realism are the most effective research philosophies that most of the researchers find appropriate in their research studies. Here, it is important to mention that the interpretivism research philosophy is mainly considered in the studies which are based on the social sciences. This research philosophy is used in the researches as the researchers tend to represent different visualization of the research process through interpreting the social world. Both the cultural as well as situational variations are evaluated with the help of this research philosophy. After gathering the data, it has been found that the researchers consider this philosophy when they study comparatively complex researches. In supporting the discussion, Creswell (2013) defined the realism research philosophy represents a mixed approach which considers both the interpretivism and positivism research philosophies. Based on the availability of the theoretical supposition and tools, some specific theoretical terms are used, and in such researches, the realism philosophy is considered.
On the other hand, the **positivism research philosophy** helps the researchers to conduct and evaluate a research in a more scientific manner. However, in the present research, both the interpretivism and realism philosophies are not appropriate, and thus these have been avoided. Along with that, it is essential to mention that the Positivism research philosophy has been considered in the present study.

**Justification of Chosen research philosophy:**

Here, the researcher pursued the **positivism research philosophy** as it helps to fill the knowledge gap through analyzing the universal laws (Creswell 2013). In this research study, the researcher depended on the quantifiable observation and obtained factual knowledge regarding the research topic. Through the application of the positivism research philosophy, the researcher ensured that no provision of human interest is there in the investigation (Flick 2015).

3.3.2 Research Approach

![Figure 2: Inductive and Deductive Research Approach](Source: Gray 2013)
According to the study of Kitchin and Tate (2013), the **Inductive Research Approach** and **Deductive Research Approach** are the most effective research methods. In the above figure, it has been shown that the **inductive research approach** is a ‘bottom to top’ approach where the researchers must start off with the observation part. Through gathering data and information, the researchers must generate new theories. In this context, it must be mentioned that it is quite difficult to build observation without generating any preconceived ideas. Creswell (2014) added that when the researchers generate new theories, they also need to examine the existing ones in order to make a proper alignment between the new and existing theories. Along with that, the researchers need to multiple times analysis and repeated shifting in order to build a new theory. Besides, this approach is expensive as well as time to consume in nature. Here, the researcher found that this research approach is not appropriate for this study as it will be difficult to rely on the observation without having the knowledge of the reality. The inductive research approach has been rejected in this study, and deductive approach was considered. As per the statement of Mackey and Gass (2015), the **deductive research approach** is a top to a bottom approach where the researchers start off with the theories and then depend on the observation. The deductive research approach is considered when the researchers examine the existing theories and concepts.

**Justification of Chosen Research Approach**

In the present research, the researcher has found that the **deductive research approach** would be the most appropriate method. This approach helped the researcher to start from the general level and then enter the most specific level. Another reason for considering this approach is that it requires low budget and less time as well (Merriam and Tisdell 2015).
3.3.3 Research Design

According to Collis and Hussey (2013), the research design is used in the studies because it helps to create a framework so that analyzing pattern can be applied effectively. It is mentioned that three specific types of research designs are there that are used in most of the researches. The research designs to include Descriptive research design, explanatory research design, and exploratory research design. In this context, it is essential to mention that the descriptive research design helps to analyze the non-quantified topics and issues. On the other hand, the exploratory research design is considered to generate the qualitative information (O'Leary 2013). Wildemuth (2016) criticized and stated that this research design might subject to bias during the interpretation of the gathered data. Apart from these two research designs, the explanatory research design is considered as a casual research design.
Form critical viewpoint, it can be stated that with the application of this research design, it is
difficult to reach to an appropriate conclusion. However, the exploratory and explanatory
research designs have been rejected by the researcher here.

**Justification of chosen research design:**

In the present research study, the *descriptive research design* has been considered.
Considering the statement of Pickard (2012), it can be stated that this particular research
design directs the researcher with certain steps so that effective analysis can be built. At the
initial step, necessary information is identified and the data gathering information instruments
are developed as well. Furthermore, the population and sample size both are identified here.
Afterwards, the data and information are collected, and problem statements are brought out.
Reynolds *et al.* (2014) added in this context that the descriptive research design helps
evaluate the research topic with a clear description.

**3.3.4 Research Strategy**

As per the statement of Silverman (2016), the diverse research strategies include experiment
through case studies, action researches, surveys, interviews, ethnography and archival
research, grounded theory and so on. Here, the researcher has considered a case study
analysis to establish the concept of the research topic. Along with that, the researcher
considered the survey and interviews in the research strategies so that effective outcome can
be brought out.
3.3.4.1 Questionnaire

Silverman (2013) opined that the researchers framed some questions to apply the quantitative or qualitative research techniques. These questionnaires are asked to the research participants, and they are allowed to contribute their comment without any pressure. The participants contributed their comments and expressed their viewpoint the way they feel, think, and believe. Saunders (2011) added in this context that the prime purpose of investigating with the questionnaires is to gather huge data with a low budget. However, in this context, it is essential to mention that the researchers should ensure that all the research participants are able to answer the questions framed for them. This is because, in some cases, it has been found that the participants are unable to understand the meaning of the questions asked in the participation sheet. In such cases, the participants ask another person about the questions, and hence their responses might be biased.

Considering the statement of Neuman and Robson (2012), it can be stated that the questionnaires of the researches can be characterized in three ways:

- The questionnaires include close-ended questions only: In most of the researches, the researchers ask the close-ended questions where the participants' answers are based on some options (Dumay and Cai 2015). In order to be more precise, the participants are not allowed to provide any other information or share their viewpoints in a detailed manner. They are bound to answer based on the option provided to them. After gathering their responses, the researchers analyze the responses as a whole and based on the outcome the conclusion is made (Paneerselvam 2014).
The questionnaires include open-ended questions only: Ali (2015) stated that the open-ended questions consider more elaborative answers where the participants are asked to share their beliefs and viewpoints. Unlike the close-ended questions, the open-ended questions allow the participants to state their views in a detailed manner. This is time-consuming in nature, and hence the researchers need to select very limited number of participants.

The questionnaires include both open ended and close ended questions: As opined by McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), some of the researchers consider both the open ended and close ended questions to enhance the effectiveness of particular studies. This is also time-consuming in nature. Besides, the researchers must make a conclusion by based on the responses of both kinds of questionnaires.

Here, in the present research study, the researcher solely relies on the close-ended questions which were asked through the application of survey strategies as the researcher tends to analyze the impact of brand perception of Vodafone on the consumers of Ireland. Thus, it is assumed that the close-ended questions would be enough for this research study. Along with that, the researcher needs to complete the entire research work within a limited period. Thus, it can be stated that the close-ended questions would the appropriate for this research.

In this context, it is important to mention that the self-questionnaires have a high significance in research. This is because the researcher can frame the questionnaires in such a way that the responses can fulfil the research objectives. Further, it helped the researcher to consider large number of participants and complete the survey within less time. Furthermore, it needs a low budget which is convenient for the researcher. The prime advantage of this type of questionnaire is that the researcher can avoid the presence of the interviewees. Billig and Waterman (2014) stated that the major challenges that the researchers confront are that the general people do not have the willingness of participating in such research studies.
This is because the interview process considers the open-ended questions which require more time in comparison to the close-ended questions. Considering these certain circumstances, the researcher decided to rely on the close-ended questions and avoided the open-ended questions.

From the critical point of view, it can be stated that some disadvantages are there in framing the self-questionnaires. Reynolds et al. (2014) stated that in this type of questionnaires, the researchers are likely to receive low response rates. In order to be more precise, the response rate depends on certain factors. In a case, if the participants find that the questionnaires are designed poorly, then they may not want to make a part of this research. Besides, if the questions are complex, then people would fail to answer, or the wrong answer would be provided. This would affect the outcome of the investigation. Thus, here, the researcher considered this factors and ensured that the questionnaires would be easy to understand. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) shared the viewpoint that sometimes the participants do not give the effort to understand the questions. They arbitrarily fill up the ticking boxes. Thus, here the researcher ensured that the participants would be encouraged and motivated for giving right and genuine answers. Before starting the investigating, the researcher would let them know about the research so that they feel involved.

**The Investigation Questionnaire**

Here, the researcher framed 26 close ended questions and made the questions very concise. This helped the participants to understand the questions. Along with that, the researchers include few options under each question. This is because long questions and large number of options make the participants confused (Dumay and Cai 2015). Thus, the outcome of their responses might be affected. In most of the questions, the researcher put the options as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
These questions are very easy to answer, provided, the researchers feel that they have enough options to answer with a free mind. From a psychological viewpoint, it can be stated that this option makes the participant concentrate what the question is asks for (Neuman and Robson 2012). In order to be more precise, people do not want to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ without judging the statement or questions. Considering this fact, the researcher applied this strategy here. Apart from this, the researcher considers rating system so that the beliefs of the participants can be determined.

**3.3.5 Research Choice**

Billig and Waterman (2014) opined that the researchers choose some particular research choices in order to implement the selected techniques. The most effective research choices include **mono method**, **multi-method** and **mixed method**. It is also mentioned that the mono method is considered when the researchers conduct either quantitative or qualitative research techniques. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) added in this context that in most of the case the mixed methods are considered as the multi method. The multi-method is applied when the researcher considers both the qualitative as well as quantitative questionnaires. In the present research study, the researcher considered only the **mono method**. This indicates that the researcher considered either qualitative or quantitative method. However, the details of the selection of research techniques would be manifested in the later section.

**3.3.6 Time Horizon Layer**

Before initiating the research work, the researcher has framed the entire work layout based on a Gnat Chart. The representation of the Gnat chart has been depicted below in a systematic and logical manner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main activities</th>
<th>1st week</th>
<th>2-4th week</th>
<th>5th week</th>
<th>6th-8th week</th>
<th>9th-11th week</th>
<th>12th week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of research topic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of the literature review</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of primary data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and interpretation of data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion and Recommendation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final submission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Gnatt Chart

(Source: Created by Author)
3.3.7 Data Collection Process: Primary and Secondary Research

As stated by Reynolds et al. (2014), the most essential part of a research study is the data collection process. Through the application of this process, the researchers are able to gather the relevant data and information associated with the research topic. With the help of the gathered data and information, the researcher derives the outcome of the investigation. In this context, it is essential to mention that the researcher is able to deliver standard format of the research with the help of the data collection process. Billig and Waterman (2014) added in this context that the Primary Data Collection Process and Secondary Data Collection Process are mainly used in the research works. In the present research, both the primary and secondary data collection process is considered.

The secondary sources are considered to gather the theoretical knowledge and illustrate the literature review section. The literature review section creates the base of the research topic (Dumay and Cai 2015). The relevant information regarding the case study is collected from various secondary sources. In this context, it is important to mention that the researcher collected the secondary data from various academic books, journal articles, relevant websites, along with other publications and authoritative sources. Along with that, the primary data collection process is considered in order to collect raw data and information. It must be mentioned that the primary data collection process enhances the reliability as well as the validity of a research study (Reynolds et al. 2014).

3.3.8 Data Analysis Technique: Quantitative Approach

In the words of Neuman and Robson (2012), it is noticed that two essential types of data analysis techniques are there that include Quantitative data analysis and Qualitative data analysis. As the researcher here pursued the mono method, only one type of data collection techniques can be applied here.
Besides, it has been mentioned before that the research solely depends on the survey process. Hence, the researcher considered the **Quantitative data analysis** to analyze the data and information which is collected from surveying the participants.

### 3.3.9 Sample

According to the study of McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), the term ‘population’ indicates the people who are directly or indirectly involved and affected by the research. In this research, the Irish people who participated in the survey are considered as the population of the research. Hence the representation of the survey is considered as the sample. In the survey, the researcher considered 100 people who are living in Ireland and watch Rugby game. In this study, the people of age group 18-45 is considered. This is because; it has been found that the people of these age groups have a good knowledge and huge curiosity about the game. Through the survey process, the researcher tends to analyze the impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship in Ireland’s Rugby game on the people living in Ireland. In the survey process, the researcher applied the **non-probability sampling technique** where the respondents were selected on a random basis. People of only the above-mentioned age group were considered. Here, the researcher selected the participants based on the subjective judgements. Before selection of the participants, it has been noticed whether the people, who wanted to participate, fulfils the age and other research requirements. For example, the people, who fulfilled the age requirements but do not watch Rugby game, were rejected.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

Some ethical considerations have been maintained during the investigation process to enhance the effectiveness of the research. Here, the researcher has mainly undertaken some of the ethical considerations that include data application, respondents’ involvement and respondents’ anonymity.
Data application: Before starting the investigation, it has been ensured that only the data and information which are relevant and accurate in nature would be considered. Along with that, the unnecessary and irrelevant data have been avoided which enhanced the reliability of the study.

Respondents’ involvement: The participants were encouraged as well as motivated by the researcher for participating in this research. It should be mentioned that the researcher showed authoritative permission letter to the participants before starting the survey process.

Respondents’ anonymity: Apart from this, it has been ensured that no physical or verbal harassment would be involved in the research. The researcher stuck to his decision and requested to the participants for making a part in this investigation.

3.5 Research Limitations

During the research, the researcher has faced certain constraints which affected the outcome to some extent. It should be mentioned that these constraints are both avoidable and non-avoidable in nature. During the research, time constraint was the major limitation that the researcher confronted. This is because the researcher had to complete the research work within a limited time span. Along with that, the budget limitation was the second major constraint that researcher faced. The researcher had a limited budget within which the entire research needed to be completed.

3.6 Summary

This chapter provides an effective parameter for the researcher with the set of specific tools and methods. These parameters helped the researcher to implement the most effective techniques which are required for examining the collected data and information.
Moreover, the theoretical knowledge has been obtained from the description of several research methods and techniques. The theories helped the researcher in making effective decisions for the selection of the methods.
Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1: Introduction

This chapter talks about the findings which were accumulated with the help of a questionnaire survey that had 26 questions. The questionnaire was answered by the consumers of Ireland between the age group of 18-45 years. The aim of the researcher is to find out the impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception on consumers in Ireland.

The design of the questionnaire is such that the answers chosen by the participants is analyzed by the researcher to get a good analysis about the brand perception of Vodafone on consumers in Ireland. The researcher has used an effective SPSS tool for the research which helps to analyze the responses with the help of tables and graphs. It also shows the correlation and regression analysis, thus, displaying the result of the findings.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

Age of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Age of Respondents
From the table and graph mentioned above about the age of the respondents, it has been deduced that amongst the 100 participants 66 respondents belonged to the category of 18-25 years, 27 participants belonged to the category of 26-35 years and 7 participants belonged to the category of 36-5 years. This reflected that a significant percentage of the total participants involved in the study belonged to the category of 18-25 years in this study.

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Gender**
It can be observed from the table and graph presented that most of the respondents belonged to male gender as out of 100 respondents 83 were male, whereas, there were 17 female respondents. This highlights that majority was inclined towards male gender.

Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Single</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Marital Status
From the table and figure presented above, it has been observed that 65% of the participants were single, whereas, 35% of the participants were not single or married. There were no divorced respondents identified in the responses. However, the majority of the respondents were single than married.

Table 4: Country
As observable in the graph and table depicted above, it can be witnessed that majority of the participants were from Ireland, as out of 100 respondents, 83 were from Ireland and 17 respondents belonged to different countries.

Frequency of Watching Rugby Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you watch Rugby game?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a year</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a month</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once in a month</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never miss a single game</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Frequency of Watching Rugby Game
From the table and figure demonstrated above, it can be asserted that out of 100 respondents of the survey 22 were those respondents who watch Rugby Games once in a year. Moreover, out of 100 respondents, 34 respondents were those who watch Rugby Games once in a month and 17 respondents stated that they watch it more than once in a month. Majority of the respondents were from category that they never missed a single game of Rugby.

Vodafone Users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you a Vodafone Customer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Vodafone Customer
From the figure and table presented above, it can be observed that out of 100 customers, 76 were Vodafone customers and 24 respondents were not the customers of Vodafone. This reflected that majority of the survey respondents were Vodafone customers.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think that the brand image of Vodafone needs improvement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
As observable in the table depicted above, it can has been analyzed that majority of the participants were in the favor of question statement which was focused towards assessing whether the customers think that the brand image of Vodafone needs improvement. The results showed that out of 100 respondents, 22 strongly agree with the statement where 38 agree making it an accumulated 60% of the total respondents who agreed that brand image of Vodafone needs improvement. Additionally, there were ten participants out of the total pool of hundred participants who provided a neutral response to the statement implying that they were not focused towards the question statement.

On the contrary side, overall 30 participants negated with the statement including the scale of disagree and strongly disagree. The findings of this question can be triangulated by the research of Schade, Piehler and Burmann (2014), enhancement of the brand image has a strong impact on the organization as it helps in getting a better position in the market and also helps the company in increasing their market share for a sustainable competitive advantage.
Question 2

Are you happy with the current sponsorship strategy of Vodafone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be asserted from the table that out of 100 customers, 21 strongly approved the question statement that the customers are happy with the current sponsorship strategy of Vodafone. However, there were 37 respondents who agree with the question statement. Alongside, 14 participants remained neutral to the statement signifying that they did not have any idea about the question or does not want to answer. On the other hand, 30 respondents did not support the statement.
The results of this question can be triangulated from the study of Rubio, Oubiña and Villasenor (2014) which highlighted that the brand awareness can be attained by promoting brands through sponsorship and increase the realization of the product association.

Question 3:

**Do you think that the steps taken by Vodafone management to develop their brand name are good?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Strongly Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be asserted from the table presented that out of 100 respondents 34 highly agree with the question statement that the steps taken by the management of Vodafone are good for the development of the brand name. Moreover, 38 respondents also agree with the statement while 13 remained neutral to the question. On the contrary side, a sum of 15 respondents negated with the statement being asked by the respondents of the study.
The data results can be triangulated from the study of Pucci, Simoni and Zanni (2013) which stated that a strong brand name can serve as a competitive advantage for the company because it enhances the awareness of brand among consumers.

Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be reflected from the table presented above that that out of 100 participants 24 highly agrees with the question that the Vodafone is the best brand of choice before watching its advertisement by Rugby players. Moreover, 43 respondents also agree with the statement while 14 remained neutral to the question. On the contrary side, a total of 19 respondents negated with the statement which was asked by the respondents.
The data results can be triangulated from the study of Lu, Chang and Chang (2014) which stated that sport advertisements and the brands which are endorsed during sports events influences the buying behavior of the customers.

**Question 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be asserted from the table presented above that out of 100 participants 24 highly agree with the question that the Vodafone is the best brand of choice after watching its advertisement by Rugby players. Moreover, 44 respondents also agree with the statement while 16 remained neutral to the question. On the contrary side, a total of 16 respondents negated with the statement which was asked by the respondents.
The table presented above highlights that out of 100 respondents, 15 participants highly agree with the question that the Vodafone’s sponsorship for Rugby is good for the game. Moreover, 43 respondents also agree with the statement while 14 remained neutral to the question. On the contrary side, 29 respondents differ with the proclamation which was asked by the respondents. The data results can be triangulated from the study of Gamboa and Gonçalves (2014) which stated that sponsorship strategy improves the credibility of the brand among the consumers.
Question 7

Do you think that the influence of Vodafone is due to the Rugby game in Ireland?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table mentioned above, it can be observed that most of the participants were in the favor of question which was focused towards assessing the influence of Vodafone is directed towards Rugby game in Ireland. The results showed that out of 100 respondents, 33 strongly agree with the statement where 35 agree making it an accumulated 68% of the total respondents who agreed with the question statement. Additionally, there were 9 respondents out of 100 who remained neutral to the statement inferring that either they were not attentive towards this question or were not aware about this question.
On the contrary side, a total of 23 respondents negated with the question statement which included the scales of disagree and strongly disagree. This implies that majority of the respondents were in favor of the question statement.

Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think the Rugby players are becoming benefited from Vodafone sponsorships?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table presented above is highlighting that most of the respondents were in the favor of question statement which was focused towards assessing whether the Rugby players are getting benefitted by the sponsorship of Vodafone.
The results showed that out of 100 respondents, 35 strongly agree with the statement where 32 agree making it an accumulated 68% of the total respondents who agreed with the question statement. Additionally, there were 13 respondents out of 100 who remained neutral to the statement deducing that either they were not attentive towards this question or were not aware about this question.

On the contrary side, a total of 20 respondents refuted the question statement which included the scales of disagree and strongly disagree. The result implies that majority of the Rugby players are benefitted by the sponsorship of the Vodafone. According to Schade, Piehler and Burmann (2014), it was stated that profitable sponsorship develops association with the team and events for their benefits.

**Question 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table presented above is highlighting that most of the respondents were in the favour of question statement that Vodafone needs to improve their sponsorship policies especially for rugby team. The results showed that out of 100 respondents, 28 respondents strongly agree with the statement, whereas, 45 respondents only agree to the question statement which makes an accumulated percentage of 73%. Additionally, there were 10 respondents out of 100 who remained neutral to the statement presuming that either they were not attentive towards this question or were not aware about this question.

On the contrary side, 17 respondents refuted the questionnaire statement. The results, therefore, presented that most of the participants were inclined towards the proclamation that the sponsorship policies should be improved for the rugby team. The results can be triangulated with the study of Pucci, Simoni and Zanni (2013) which stated that sponsorship strategy proves the prestige and worth of the company. Keeping this notion into consideration, the companies can redevelop their sponsorship strategies and policies for their own benefit and profitability.

Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you happy with the current involvement of Vodafone in Irish Rugby?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table stated above, it can be perceived that maximum respondents were in the favor of question statement which was focused towards highlighting whether the current involvement of Vodafone in Irish Rugby is satisfactory or not. The results showed that out of 100 respondents, 33 strongly agree with the statement where 36 agree making it an accumulated 69% of the total respondents who agreed with the question statement.

Additionally, there were 9 respondents out of 100 who remained neutral to the statement inferring that either they were not attentive towards this question or were not aware about this question. On the contrary side, a total of 22 respondents negated with the question statement which included the scales of disagree and strongly disagree. However, the results of the question portrayed that majority of the respondents were happy with the current involvement of Vodafone in Irish Rugby.
Question 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you agree that Vodafone has an advantage in rugby sponsorship?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the chart offered above, it can be asserted that there were 100 respondents on which 30 highly agree with the proclamation that Vodafone has an advantage in rugby sponsorship. Moreover, 43 of the total respondents also agree with the proclamation. In addition to the statement, 10 participants remain neutral to the question. On the other hand, a total of 17 respondents out of 100 differ with the question. This implies that most of the participants agreed that Vodafone has an advantage in rugby sponsorship.
Question 12

From the chart offered above, it can be asserted that 100 respondents were surveyed among which, 12 highly agree with the fact that Vodafone challenges pertaining to sponsorship in rugby. Moreover, 11 participants out of 100 also approved the statement. In addition to the above statement, 9 respondents remain neutral to the question. On the other hand, a total of 68 respondents out of 100 disagree with the question statement that Vodafone is not facing any issues or challenges in rugby. This signifies that most of the participants refuted with the statement that Vodafone is facing issues related to Rugby.
The table above is highlighting that 51 respondents highly agree with the statement that sponsorship amount which is offered by Vodafone is less than the competitors. Moreover, 29 respondents out of 100 only agree with the question statement. It can also be observed from the table presented above that out of 100 respondents, 11 respondents remain neutral to the question.
On the contrary side, a total of 9 respondents out of 100 disagree with the question statement that the sponsorship amount offered by Vodafone is less than their competitors. The results of the study can be triangulated by the study of Cornwell and Kwak (2015) which stated that efficient sports sponsorship operation offered by the organizations make them more competitive and profitable.

Question 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think the rising demands of the rugby organisations becoming a challenge for Vodafone?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table which is presented by the researcher is postulating that 47 highly agree with the proclamation that the rising demands of the rugby organisation have become a challenge for Vodafone. Moreover, 30 respondents out of 100 only agree with the question statement. It can also be observed from the table presented above that out of 100 respondents, 9 respondents remain neutral to the question.

On the contrary side, a total of 14 respondents out of 100 disagree with the question statement that rising demands of the rugby organizations can become a challenge for Vodafone. The results of the study can be triangulated by the research carried out by Gamboa and Gonçalves (2014) which stated that sponsorship strategy has become a challenge for the organization as it can help the companies in sustaining their competitive advantage.

Question 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be viewed from the table above that there were 100 respondents, 49 participants strongly agree with the fact that Vodafone needs to select a new marketing strategy for promoting their brand to the consumers. Moreover, 28 respondents out of 100 only agree with the question statement. It can also be observed from the table presented above that out of 100 respondents, only 13 respondents remained neutral to the question. On the different side, a total of 23 respondents out of 100 disagree with the question statement that Vodafone needs to select a different marketing strategy for promoting their brand. The results of the study can be linked with the research carried out by Chang et al., (2016) which stated that the companies should adapt to the new marketing strategies for developing a stronger and positive brand image.

Question 16
It can be viewed from the table presented above that 12 participants highly agree with the fact that meeting the increasing demands of the rugby teams can improve the situation. Moreover, 27 respondents out of 100 only agree with the question statement. It can also be observed from the table presented above that out of 100 respondents, 36 respondents remained neutral to the question. On the diverse side, a total of 25 respondents out of 100 disagree with the question statement that meeting the increasing demands of the rugby teams can improve the situation.

Question 17

Is offering sponsorship to other games can improve Vodafone’s market position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above presented that there were 100 participants in this survey where 10 highly agree with the fact that offering sponsorship to other games can improve the market position of Vodafone. Moreover, out of 100 participants 35 also agree with the fact. In addition, 31 respondents continued to be unbiased to the study which implies that either they are not attentive towards survey question or does not want to answer it. On the contrary side, there were 24 respondents out of 100 who disagree with the question that offering sponsorship to other games can improve Vodafone’s market position.

Question 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Vodafone need to invest more in rugby to increase their popularity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above offered that 100 participants 28 highly agree with the fact that Vodafone need to invest more in rugby in order to increase their popularity. Moreover, from the 100 participants 34 also agree with the fact. In addition, 24 respondents remained neutral to the study which implies that they are not alert of the survey question or were not inclined towards answering the question. On the conflicting side, there were 14 participants out of 100 who disagree with the fact that Vodafone needs to invest more in rugby to increase their popularity.

Question 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does sponsorship policies enhances the sustainability of Vodafone Ireland?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following table presented above contemplated that a total of 17 respondents out of 100, strongly agreed with the notion that sponsorship policies enhances the sustainability of Vodafone in Ireland.

Moreover, 39 out of the total 100 participants also expressed similar sentiments towards afore mentioned question. In addition to the above statement, 28 participants neither agreed or disagreed with the statement which implies that either the participants are not aware of the survey question or does not want to answer it. In contrast, 16 of the total respondents expressed negative sentiment and disagreed with the question statement that Vodafone sponsorship policies can enhance their sustainability in Ireland.

Question 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is improvement in marketing strategy would be essential for the growth of Vodafone Ireland?
The following table presented above contemplated that a total of 66 respondents out of 100, strongly agreed with the notion that improvement in marketing strategy would be essential for the growth of Vodafone Ireland. Moreover, 27 out of the total 100 participants also expressed similar sentiments towards afore mentioned question. In addition to the above statement, 7 participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement which implied that they lacked the necessary information to make a negative or positive association with the statement in the survey question. In contrast, there were zero respondents who expressed negative sentiment and disagreed with the question statement that improvement in marketing strategy would be essential for the growth of Vodafone Ireland.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Role_of_Rugby_and_Brand_Perception</th>
<th>Consumers_of_Vodafone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role_of_Rugby_and_Brand_Perception</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>928**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) 1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers_of_Vodafone</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .928**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above depicts the correlation between the dependent and independent variable of the research. It can be observed that a perfectly positive relationship founded between role of rugby and its brand perception on the consumers of Vodafone as the correlation is estimated 92.8% which is nearer to +1. Therefore, it can be stated that the correlation is perfectly positive.
4.4 Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Predictors: (Constant), Role_of_Rugby_and_Brand_Perception

From the table mentioned above, it can be observed that the value of R Square is estimated at .928 which signifies that the research predictors that were selected for this study explain 92.8% variation in the dependent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Predictors: (Constant), Role_of_Rugby_and_Brand_Perception
\(^b\) Dependent Variable: Consumers_of_Vodafone

The table of ANOVA (analysis of variance) is tested for analyzing the reliability level based on the data gathered for the research and also for testing the regression in the study. It can be asserted that the sig value is 0.000 which implies that Consumers of Vodafone can be explained from the Role of Rugby and its brand perception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients(^c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Dependent Variable: Consumers_of_Vodafone
The table presented above has highlighted the regression analysis outcomes which comprehend whether there is a significant influence of study predictors on the dependent variable. The Sig value of Role of Rugby is 0.000 implying that is less than 0.05 so the null hypotheses will be rejected.

### 4.5 Hypotheses Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Sig. Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a significant role of sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception on consumers.</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accepted**

### 4.6 Discussion

*Objective 1: To critically conceptualize Vodafone’s sponsorship and its brand perception upon the consumers of Ireland.*

The research was conducted to evaluate the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship for the rugby and its brand perception on customers in Ireland. Vodafone bearing a global presence successfully competes in the industry. With the development of sponsorship programs the company aims to increase its customer. As from the findings it is evaluated a strong and significant positive relation exists between role of rugby and its brand perception on customers. From this strategy being practiced Vodafone unpinned the potential advantages with making their presence more visible to the world (Tifferet and Herstein, 2010). This increased their brand image but with competitive pressures in industry it still must compete effectively against the rivals.
With creating positive perception on the consumers of Ireland the customers are exposed to Vodafone products and services and catered with full information and satisfactory service level.

The people in Ireland are fond of rugby and with investing through sponsorships in this game and its brand perception Vodafone successfully increased the flow of customers (Bergman and Klefsjo, 2010). Through responses it was evaluated people had positive feelings for Vodafone sponsorships activities and preferred to watch rugby players in ads of Vodafone. This engaged more people and customers to connect with Vodafone. People were more interested in knowing the services and offers provided by them. The brand perception of Vodafone reinforced by sponsorship activities in the sports industry specifically rugby.

The results of study were supported by the literature and the objective was successfully accomplished. The impact of brand perception on the consumers of Ireland created a well framed infrastructure that yielded more sales for Vodafone (Singh, 2013). The leading telecom company continued to cater first class service to consumers who were provided with discounts, exclusive service and value added products. This increased the level of satisfaction among customers and established customer loyalty. Through sponsorship activities the brand perception on customers had a positive impact as customers assessed the products and services functional and symbolic features (Zhang, 2015). This implies that companies that successfully do marketing for their products portfolios were enjoying good relations with the customers and Vodafone increased its competitive image in market with multiple services rendered to customers and long term relations maintained.

Most of the researchers also found that the activities that the companies carried out are conducted because of providing the consumer with differentiation. Sponsorship is also a kind of marketing activity and pursued widely by the companies to enhance their market share and to grab more profits (Cho, Fiore and Russell, 2015).
Vodafone approached in the right direction to provide sponsorships to the rugby team and posited positive bran perception for the services in the eyes of consumers.

To conclude it all it can be said that the sponsorship of Vodafone is very efficient and effective with the Ireland Rugby team because it is one of the most played sport in that region. With the immense popularity and recognition of this sport it is beneficial for Vodafone to create a good perception in the minds of the customers with the help of the sponsorship. It is a common perception of the Irish people that it is good to invest in Rugby games as it is a popular game there. With this sponsorship, Vodafone reached out to several customers and was benefited in various ways. The customers positively responded to the stance that they like seeing Vodafone commercials during the Rugby. The statistics clearly shows that there was a positive impact of sponsorship for Vodafone with Ireland Rugby team as their sales increased greatly. Hence it was a win-win situation for both the customers as well as the corporation.

**Objective 2: To understand the role of Vodafone’s sponsorship in Ireland Rugby team.**

The role of Vodafone’s sponsorship in Ireland had significant impacts and the role was understood. In pursuing this objective certain amount of benefits were seen which mutually benefited Vodafone and sports team. Vodafone realized the importance of sponsorship activities and introduced it in rugby because it realized that the people of Ireland were massive who are fond of this game and usually preferred watching frequently and often people did not liked to miss any series. To grab more data of customers this was the chance that Vodafone took and through such activities initiated the company gained more recognition from customers (Simsek and Yinanc, 2017). People were happy that Vodafone have initiated such a change for them with such extent that the players were to be likely the brand ambassadors for Vodafone. With such kind of practices and strategies the company did their best and got mutual benefits for the rugby team and for the company.
Vodafone on its end increased the domain of customers and increased its sales by a larger proportion (Singh, 2013). From such kind of strategies Vodafone enabled to build competitive pressures on their rivals and they untapped the opportunities to attain competitive advantage. The role of sponsorship was the success idea as identified that multiple companies seek the attention of customers by engaging in such activities where the awareness and information is diffused among maximum people. This result in global recognition for the company and for the sports specifically related to. The doors for new possibilities opened for Vodafone and they considered such activities to penetrate in new markets (Pijkeren, 2010). Vodafone played important role in sponsoring events. The company reached out to more number of people as most were the viewers of rugby. The sponsorship was a strategy adopted by Vodafone that allowed entering the sport industry. The rugby team also yielded many benefits as on international level they made their presence more visible (Wetzel et al. 2017). The sports industry also got the chance to shine as players also got to know about Vodafone who were also the kind of representatives.

Such sponsorship activities led to developments in Ireland such as local infrastructure improved for Vodafone and rugby team. They got on common grounds and mutually represented each other on national level. The rugby team got recognition to more viewers and Vodafone increased its sales. The promotion of such activities on international levels helped Vodafone to increase its visibility on global scale. More companies were attracted to Vodafone and more number of customers also turned to them through this strategy. People supported them and this motivated them to continue such practices in future. Most people viewed Vodafone’s strategy as means to promote rugby and its players.
There was positive influence of this strategy as customer flow also increased; the players also got recognition and worth (Tsiotsou et al., 2014). Both entities had mutual benefits which also resulted in positive word of mouth and this made Vodafone more competitive in the market. It was observed that sponsorships provided a positive effect for the company in promoting of products and services.

To conclude this stance, it can be said that there were various benefits which were extended by this sponsorship of Vodafone with Ireland Rugby team. One of the major advantages which were extended in this regard is that it has created a competitive edge for the Vodafone in the highly competitive and contemporary business environment. By making the Ireland Rugby players the brand ambassadors of Vodafone the popularity of the increased among the customers as it is one of the most watched games in Ireland.

Moreover, it should also be noted that this sponsorship has created an improved infrastructure for both the Rugby team and Vodafone as a company. For an organization, it is extremely important and significant for them to increase the number of their customers to earn more profit. And this benefit was achieved by Vodafone with this effective partnership with Ireland Rugby. By sponsoring one of the famous sports played in Ireland Vodafone could increase their customers.

**Objective 3: To analyze the challenges faced by Vodafone to give sponsorship to Ireland Rugby.**

The third objective was addressed and there were challenges and hurdles while going for such kind of marketing strategies. Often the issues confronted required mutual co-operation among both Vodafone and the rugby team. The financial aspect was also considered because this was directly related to the players and infrastructure that supported the rugby team. It was analyzed that these things are interlinked.
Their overall approach was related to create the positive perception among the consumer that bring positive impact on Vodafone in terms of sale and to capture more database of customers as the source were considered as viewers of rugby sports.

When companies engage in the marketing strategies such like sponsorship activities there are several hurdles. These are the kind of challenges faced by the company. From the response rate, it was analyzed that some people still wanted massive level of changes in their strategy which means people supported the view for that new marketing strategies to be implemented by Vodafone. These challenges occurred as this kind of sponsorships required high investments and often the personal interest of companies is the first priority. Vodafone confronted many hurdles while to make their image more visible to the target customers. The sponsorship activities were to be carried in efficient way which can provide benefits (Whalley and Curwen, 2012). If the strategy did not work this can gave losses to rugby team and to the company. As highlighted from the studies that Vodafone for providing the sponsorship activities needed huge investment and support viewers.

For incorporating the sponsorship activities several more challenges were faced by Vodafone. For advertising cooperation was required between both the entities. The improvements were required in the administration of such activities. As per the study of (Valletti, 2014) it was highlighted that the administration required to manage the clients and to carry out promotional activities. As the rugby game is a popular game in Ireland and widely liked by people in Ireland. People watched the game with high interest and hardly missed any session of it. This was evident when the responses of people also who are highly engaged in watching it. Due to all these reasons the players of the rugby were expensive and it was hard to afford them for this. With growing level of events and sponsorships the costs of players were high and this required the Vodafone to plan for each player and align their financials accordingly (Whalley and Curwen, 2012).
Hence the company engaged into such activities and made contract with player and provided them with handsome amount. According to one source it was identified that Vodafone contracted IRFU for a huge amount of € 50 million for the span of four years. The sponsorship for the sports teams was complex activity for the Vodafone and time consuming process. Vodafone realized that this types of events required comprehensive details and major investment. The response set also identified that Vodafone strategies needed changes by initiating events more efficiently. At certain times, it was felt that resources are exploited when the organizers were not paid.

To conclude that it can be said that, there are certain challenges which are faced by organization when they use sponsorship. Advertisement is an important aspect of sponsorship and one of the major challenges which were faced by Vodafone was the administration of such activities. It is important to keep close administration of such activities in order to ensure that everything goes fine. Another important challenge which is discussed in the above part of the research was financial affordability, as there are a number of companies who want to sponsor rugby player hence the competition is high and the players are expensive. For acquiring the players, the company had to pay a hefty amount. Lastly it is discussed that the whole process and strategy of sponsorship of Rugby team of Ireland was a complex task and it required a lot of time and money for Vodafone. Irrespective of all the challenges faced by them they could efficiently implement their sponsorship strategy. Moreover, it should be noted that the benefits which were extended to Vodafone outweighed the challenges which were faced by them.
Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is proposed towards conclusion and recommendation centered on the study and based on the findings collected from the previous chapters. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the summarized findings that are given in section 5.2 that has further highlighted the summary of the results. Additionally, recommendations in brief are provided to the management of Vodafone on how to improve the Impact of company’s sponsorship on Rugby and its brand image among consumers in Ireland. Lastly, this chapter concludes with the main conclusion of the study and proposed future implications.

5.2 Summarized findings

The research objective of this research was apparent to the readers as the fundamental purpose of this study was to investigate the role of rugby and its brand perception among consumers in the context of Vodafone, Ireland. From the research conducted it can be concluded that the role of sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception is significant and has an impact on consumers of Vodafone. A strong relationship exists between sports sponsorship and brand perception which is further consolidated by the findings of the study conducted. As people of Ireland follows Rugby religiously so sponsorships have a huge effect on a company’s brand value, image and perception among people. Moreover, the findings of the research elaborate that customers value the brand as they perceive through different mediums. For example, consumers in Ireland are more likely to view a brand as valuable if they see its existence or attachment to their favorite team or sports events.
The proportion of the event or the team also influences brand value because bigger or famous sporting events or big clubs draws a larger number of audience or fans so the probability of a brand being valued by the attendants along with an increase in popularity is greater as only established brands can spend such hefty amount of money towards sponsorship deals. This in turn specifies the size of the company and becomes a household name for the followers of teams or sporting events. In short brand name becomes associated with that team or event. The findings also indicate that consumers are aware of the marketing strategy and sponsorship deals of Vodafone. The research results further revealed that respondents believed the popularity of Vodafone in Ireland is due to its involvement in Rugby game however they are also of the opinion that Vodafone needs to improve its sponsorship policy for the rugby team along with increasing the amount offered for the sponsorship as the competitors are offering higher amounts in sponsorship as compared to Vodafone.

In addition, the research results also reveal that majority of respondents believe that Vodafone needs to come up with a new marketing strategy to improve its already known brand image. Overall the findings of the research reveal that the role of rugby plays an essential part in the brand perception of Vodafone in Ireland and it is directly linked with consumers of Vodafone.

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendations are provided based on the findings of the research. It is recommended to the management of Vodafone that they should devise a strategy to improve its brand image along with an improvement in its sponsorship policies as the competitors are offering greater amounts in sponsorship deals so Vodafone should try to increase the amount in order to be able to face any competition in the future. Marketing strategy of Vodafone needs improvement and modification as it is essential to the growth prospects of the company in Ireland.
To have an influence in Ireland it is fundamental for Vodafone to review its policies and make it attractive to its potential targets because any lacking or mismanagement of polices might result in undesirable outcomes in the future.

Competitors pose an ever-increasing threat for Vodafone because of their policies in of sponsorship and marketing. It is also recommended to the management of Vodafone that they should try to explore other areas of sponsorship deals. For instance, Vodafone, should invest in event competitions as it is a very popular sport and widely followed by the masses in Ireland. Likewise, Vodafone can also invest in show jumping events and sponsor golf players which will unwind a new path to for promotion of the company and increase their popularity as well as market share in Ireland. Diversification in Vodafone’s sponsorships deals will open other marketing opportunities for the company in Ireland while also bringing them more revenue and an increase in its brand image.

5.4 Conclusion

The previous sections of the study discuss the role of sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception in the case of Vodafone. Furthermore, the research reflected the opinions of the respondents about current policies of sponsorship and marketing strategies employed by Vodafone which has led to a conclusive finding that the consumers of Vodafone are directly related to the role of rugby on their brand perception. It is crucial that brand perception among people is constantly revived and improved because it is directly linked with brand loyalty and image of the company. A company’s growth both in terms of market share and popularity is based on that. It is compulsory for managers of the company to consider their shortcomings in drafting of policies and should ponder over on improvements and implementation of policies and strategies in order to improve brand perception of Vodafone among the population of Ireland.
5.5 Future implication

It is necessary that the researcher should highlight the future implications in the study because it helps the future researchers in authenticating and validating their research. For this research, the researcher has only utilized quantitative research design for carrying out analysis on the data gathered, however, the researcher could also focus on qualitative research design for completing this research. For this purpose, the researcher can carry out interviews from the consumers or some of the managers of Vodafone where they will provide their valuable insights on Rugby and its brand perception on consumers. In addition to the future implications, the researcher could also use case studies of different companies such as Tetley or Ladbrokes for enhancing the findings of the study and give a different direction to the results by incorporating personal opinions of the consumers or managers. If these implications are incorporated in the study, then the future researchers could enhance the findings and analysis.
Chapter VI: Self-Reflection

6.1 Self-Reflection

This chapter demonstrates and discusses the style of learning and cycle which I adapted in order to do my research in the best possible manner. The tremendous effect caused by this style of learning has helped in the development in MBA course at a level of expertise and personal development. This chapter concentrates on the skill-sets that have helped in the improvisation by the research carried out. Furthermore, it talks about the struggles or challenges which i came across during the research. Finally, the experience that i gained during the dissertation process is talked about in this chapter, which has made me capable of being more professional.

6.2 Learning cycle by Kolb

When an individual learns, he moves forward with the help of a cycle which helps him achieve his learning goals. There are four steps to it, which are 1. To establish a solid experience 2. Examining the experiences and its reflection 3. Conceptualize and interpret the developing ideas 4. The ideas are then utilized for the testing of the thesis for the future, out-turning new events.
According to Kolb (1974), learning is a combined action with every step being agreed upon and then moving to the further steps. When an individual learns by moving through all the four steps, his/her learning is termed as successful. Hence, all the steps are equally important and one step cannot be more effective than the other at an individual scale. (*Kolb’s Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle | Simply Psychology, 2013*)

### 6.3 Style of Learning by Kolb

In Kolb’s learning style, there are four well-defined styles which are dependent on the cycle of learning as shown above. Kolb has distinguished his model very well as it not only describes the experimental learning which is carried out by almost everyone, but, also helps us understand the various styles of learning at an individual level.

Preferably, Kolb talks about the cycle of learning as series of steps where all the key points
are looked upon by the learner, which are the encounters of the cycle, reflecting, reasoning and acting. Solid experiences result in the reflections and examinations. These reflections are then converted into practical ideas in order to investigate and make new active demonstrations.

Kolb’s model operates at two scales: (a four-stage cycle).

1. Abstract Conceptualization (AC).
2. Concrete Experience (CE).
3. Active Experimentation (AE).
4. Reflective Observation (RO).

The next level is the four-type demonstration of the style of learning, where each of them are shown as a combination of two styles. These combined styles were termed by Kolb as:

1. Assimilating.
2. Converging.
3. Accommodating.

In the current research, the above model was apt as the questionnaires operate as a solid or concrete experience. The research was carried out to understand the perception of consumers about Vodafone’s sponsorship role on Rugby. With the help of Kolb’s learning model, I could understand the research more clearly.

I am very content as with the help of this model, I was able to gain complete analysis on the topic of research. (*Kolb’s learning styles, experiential learning theory, Kolb’s learning styles inventory and diagram, 2006*)
6.4 Learning Development

In this section, there will be a discussion of the knowledge that I gained through the process of the MBA course. Furthermore, the learning gained by the researcher will also be talked about.

During the exciting process of my MBA course, I was taught 9 modules, some of them being Financial Analysis, Marketing innovations, Performance driven marketing, business strategy etc. I learned how to go about conducting the research with the help of these modules, however, there is one important module which I think was a base for all the research, and that is writing for graduate studies. This important module helped me understand the way a research is to be carried out, which was very helpful. The study here in Ireland is very practical compared to the study in India., which made it a bit hard for me initially, however, I managed to learn and improve on each research that was carried out. This includes the presentations, the analysis on the financial markets of companies, business plans and the case study which strengthened my research abilities. Hence, these modules helped me grow as a researcher and be ready for the dissertation.

Talking about the dissertation, it helped me a lot as I could research and learn more on my topic which is based on sport sponsorship. My topic is “An investigation on the role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception on consumers- A case of Vodafone, Ireland”. In my opinion, understanding a consumer’s perspective requires skills. I managed to acquire these skills which are fresh and for me as a researcher.

When I started with my dissertation, I was worried as to how would I go about carrying out the research. My thesis supervisor, Mr. David Hurley guided me with forming a good framework for the literature review, to start with. This made it easier for me to understand how to narrow down my research to the topic which I was focusing on. As my research topic
talks about consumer’s perception on Vodafone’s sponsorship on Rugby, it was not much talked about specifically. Hence, I had to read a lot about sport sponsorship, brand perception, brand equity, etc. to form a structured literature review. With the constant feedback of my supervisor, I gained confidence and carried on with my research by working more hard on it. This dissertation was a great learning curve for me, as it involved a lot of thinking, hard work and reading which helped me grow confidently as a researcher. This was possible with the help of my supervisor’s advice at every stage that I needed it. The most important factor involved here was the time management which I have improved myself with over the period of my course. This helped me complete the dissertation well in time. Furthermore, I have evolved professionally as I managed to learn, improve and grow in various aspects. As I carried out my research through a quantitative approach, I came across 100 participants for my surveys, each of who have their own view points about the topic I was researching on. In a way, I improved on my communication and analytical skills with the help of this research as I got an opportunity to talk to a lot of people and more importantly understand their views and analyse them.

As talked about the literature review earlier, I would also like to say that the skills to edit the research and pick out the important points also improved in me as a researcher. I can review the writings and put them across in an effective manner. Thus, talking about the Kolb’s learning cycle, I went through all four stages in terms of forming a solid experience by carrying out my research through a specific method which is quantitative, followed by the research approach and design. Also, I examined conceptualized my findings and put in on paper in the literature review. Furthermore, I also completed the last stage by conducting the research through surveys which is an active experiment. This was shown in analysis done by me after reviewing the information of the participants.
In my opinion, sport sponsorship is an interesting topic to work on, and personally, I enjoyed working on this research topic. I met a lot of people who enjoy watching Rugby and were very happy to share their opinion about the brand (Vodafone) which is sponsoring the famous sport. I have become a more confident person and this will be very beneficial for me from my career’s perspective.

Hence, on an overall scale, this dissertation has helped me enhance my thinking ability at a professional and most importantly, at a practical level.

6.5 Challenges

I feel that challenges teach a person to grow strong and be firm in the decisions that are made. My initial challenge was to find a topic for my dissertation. I decided on the topic with the help of my Research methods lecturer Mr. PJ Paul. Sports interests me, thus, this topic was most suitable for me as after deciding on the topic, the curiosity to learn in me increased more and more.

As talked about earlier, the literature review was another challenge. With the effective guidance of my supervisor Mr. David Hurley, I could form a good structure for my literature review and go about doing it to the best of my ability.

Furthermore, the questionnaires design was also a tough task as it had to meet the research objectives, however, my supervisor guided me through it and it was manageable in the end. Later, another challenge for me was to find the participants for the survey as it is very time consuming. As my topic was linked to Rugby’s sponsorship by Vodafone which is a sport loved by many people, it was not as challenging as it could be.

Overall, the challenges which I faced during the dissertation were hard, however, with good time- management and a wonderful guidance of my supervisor, I could achieve the goal in time, keeping in mind that it is not so easy to finish a project in such limited time.
6.6 Conclusion

I would like to conclude by saying that I have learned a lot from the modules during my MBA course which also helped me gain confidence to complete my dissertation. Along with the confidence, the skills which I acquired such as time-management, analytical etc. were very essential to proceed to the final step, which was the dissertation. This was only possible with the help of my lecturers who guided me and my supervisor, who played an important role in helping me complete my dissertation with his guidance.

Therefore, MBA for me, has been a learning, has taught me how to be practical, and most importantly, be confident in the work I do. I will continue to work hard and keep learning as I believe that learning never stop.
• Bergman, B. and Klefsjö, B., 2010. *Quality from customer needs to customer satisfaction*. Student literature AB.


• Chien, P.M., Cornwell, T.B. and Pappu, R., 2011. Sponsorship portfolio as a brand image creation strategy. *Journal of Business Research, 64*(2), pp.142-149.


• Buabeng, E.Y. and Sam, A.K., 2011. The effects of price promotions on building a customer base within the Ghanaian mobile Telecommunication industry; the case of Vodafone Ghana.


• O'Leary, Z., 2013. The essential guide to doing your research project. Sage.


• Wildemuth, B.M. ed., 2016. Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science. ABC-CLIO.

APPENDIX: A

CONSENT LETTER FOR DISSERTATION
MBA

Dear participant,

My name is Bhavish Khushalani and I would like to invite you to participate in my research study entitled: “An Investigation on the Role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its brand perception on consumers- Case of Vodafone, Ireland.” I am currently enrolled at DBS, Ireland and am carrying out this research for my Master’s thesis that I am working on, currently.

The purpose of this research is to determine the Impact of Vodafone’s sponsorship on rugby and its brand perception on consumers in Ireland. My research is being supervised by Mr. David Hurley who is an experienced guide for conducting the research.

Your participation is voluntary. Your responses on the questionnaire will remain confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

I request you to kindly fill up the questionnaire to the best you can. It should take an approximate time of 6 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You are free to leave the survey at any time.

In case of any questions related to the research, Mr. David Hurley and myself would be glad to answer them.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely Yours,
Bhavish

Signature
(optional):
APPENDIX: B

Survey Questionnaire

"An Investigation on the Role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its Brand Perception on Consumers-
Case of Vodafone, Ireland"

Demographic Information:

1. What is your age?
   a) 18 - 25
   b) 26 - 35
   c) 36 - 45

2. What is your gender?
   a) Male
   b) Female

3. What is your marital status?
   c) Single
   d) Married
   e) Divorced

4. Specify your Country?
   a) Ireland
   b) Other

5. How often do you watch Rugby game?
   a) Once in a year
   b) Once in a month
   c) More than once in a month
   d) I never miss a single game
6. Are you a Vodafone customer?

a) Yes  
b) No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Role of Sponsorship on Rugby and its Brand Perception on Consumers.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do you think that the brand image of Vodafone needs improvement?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Are you happy with the current sponsorship strategy of Vodafone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do you think that the steps taken by Vodafone management to develop their brand name are good?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you prefer Vodafone as a brand of choice before watching its advertisements by Rugby players?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you prefer Vodafone as a brand of choice after watching its advertisements by Rugby players?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do you think Vodafone’s sponsorship for Rugby is good for the game?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you think that the influence of Vodafone is due to the Rugby game in Ireland?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you think the Rugby players are becoming benefited from Vodafone sponsorships?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Do think Vodafone needs to improve sponsorship policies especially for rugby team?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Are you happy with the current involvement of Vodafone in Irish Rugby?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Do you agree that Vodafone has an</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Do you think Vodafone is facing sponsorship challenges in rugby?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Do you think the sponsorship amount offered by Vodafone is less than its competitors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Do you think the rising demands of the rugby organisations becoming a challenge for Vodafone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>As a recommendation, do you think that Vodafone needs to select a new marketing strategy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Do you think meeting the increasing demands of the rugby teams can improve the situation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Is offering sponsorship to other games can improve Vodafone’s market position?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Does Vodafone need to invest more in rugby to increase their popularity?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Do sponsorship policies enhance the sustainability of Vodafone Ireland?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Will improvement in marketing strategy be essential for the growth of Vodafone Ireland?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>