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1. Introduction

‘An analysis of the perceptions on gambling sponsorships in English professional football.’

1.1 Rationale

As part of the final year of study, there is a requirement to write a dissertation which conducts research in to a chosen suitable area of study. Through having a strong interest in professional football and advertising, an exploration in to the research of the two fields has opened up avenues in to the prominent topics. From reading in to the area of study, it is evident that there is an absence in research between advertising and controversial professional football sponsorships.

Advertising is an important aspect of marketing communications which, with the backing of technology, can reach a large audience (Johnston, 1994). Sponsorships are an aspect of advertising (given the coverage), and the message of association involved in sponsorships can have an influential effect on the audience. Professional football has grown from a hobby and social gathering in to a business, with some of the players’ consisting of 6 figures on a weekly basis such a Wayne Rooney, Manchester United who is estimated to earn in the region of £260,000 per week (Smith, 2016). The audience drawn from football has increased widely, especially with the coverage on television and from the media: which has led to a large audience for footballing sponsorships and in particular kit sponsorships to reach.

Gambling associations and sponsorships have become increasingly popular and the relationship between gambling and sport is at its culmination; most notably the relationship between football and gambling. Thorough research has been conducted into the correlation between gambling sponsorships and ethical/moral themes from authors such as Yang and Goldfarb (2015) Johnston and Bourgeois (2015).

This dissertation looks to explore various avenues involving the perceptions held by key stakeholders regarding gambling kit sponsorships and how they are influenced by their own views and other stakeholders’ views. The investigation will be conducted over the professional football leagues in the UK with the outlook of challenging key assumptions and providing recommendations on improving relationships between gambling kit sponsorships and key stakeholders.

1.2 Background

The area of advertising in sport has been vastly covered by researchers who have looked to explore the various dimensions that establish the attitudes and perceptions held by consumers. Research by (Pyun and James, 2009) outlines the importance of making strong psychological connections and understanding the beliefs that influence consumer attitudes without causing irritation or annoyance. From general research in the sports advertising field, a number of avenues have been explored.

A study conducted by Jensen et al (2013), has looked in to the attitudes towards shirt sponsorships in football (soccer) that compares attitudes in Europe with those in America. The study has highlighted how attitudes have no significant differences and that there is a favourable attitude towards sponsorships that provide a direct benefit to the specific club supported by the participant. The study has highlighted the general acceptance of shirt sponsorships by fans and expresses the positive attitudes towards them.

Research in to shirt sponsorships highlighting attitudes and perceptions of consumers has led to the investigation in to the attitudes towards controversial shirt sponsorships. An article written by Agaku et al (2016) has discussed the implications of Tobacco advertising within sport. The article concludes that tobacco sponsorships and endorsements in sport can have a negative effect by encouraging youth supporters to take up smoking based on the association with their favourite sports teams and athletes. These implications are furthered researched by Jones (2015) who looked in to the relationship between football, alcohol and gambling, and in support of Agaku et al (2016), found that the exposure of gambling and alcohol can lead to the initiated consumption by youth fans and lead to problems such as 'problem drinkers' and gamblers in adults.

A study by Yang and Goldfarb (2015) which explores the impact of banning controversial sponsors, has discovered that banning controversial sponsorships could impact on the lower income clubs and clubs with lower attendances due to bigger clubs having the ability to poach replacements.

Research in to controversial sponsorships has led to the investigation into gambling sponsorships and their implications. A study by Hing et al (2013) looked in to the links between gambling attitudes and intentions and illustrated how exposure to gambling sponsorships on television may encourage gambling intentions, and people prone to gambling could be triggered to gamble with the presence of the sponsorships. In addition, an article written by Day (2011) highlights the importance of regulation and shows that there is a

mutual benefit between governing bodies, sports teams and gambling companies to ensure that a positive image is conveyed and that issues such as problem gambling are taken in to consideration and tackled effectively.

Alternative research from a gambling organisation perspective by Danson (2010) shows that shirt sponsorship is a natural place for gambling organisations to advertise and is an effective way to reach their demographic; the article also shows how regardless of legal restrictions in the UK, it is likely to continue to be the preferred platform of advertisement for gambling organisations.

In order to explore key perspectives, Johnston and Bourgeois (2015) conducted a study on third-party perceptions on shirt sponsorships in the Australian football league. This study highlighted that the sponsorships had a strong effect on participants and that gambling kit sponsorships could pose a threat regarding health and wellbeing through the possible addiction factor. Research has explored several avenues of gambling and sponsorships, however there is an absence of research on the perceptions from different perspectives on gambling company kit sponsorships and the implications to consumers, footballing authorities and marketing executives.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the dissertation is to explore the perceptions of gambling sponsorships in the English professional football leagues from various perspectives and critically analyse the implications.

The following objectives will be achieved through carrying out the extensive research:

- Investigate the consumer perception regarding gambling company kit sponsorships.
- Compare and contrast the use of gambling companies as kit sponsors with other controversial sponsorships.
- Review the perceptions held by football fans, non- football fans and marketing executives on gambling kit sponsorships.
- Provide recommendations for footballing authorities and clubs who support gambling companies sponsoring football kits.

The aims and objectives of the research will be met by the use of a range of data collection methods.

2. Research Design

2.1 Methodology

The concept of research, defined by (Sachdeva, 2007, p.6) is defined as “the systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested”. In order to collect valuable and accurate research which can achieve the outlined aims and objectives, a suitable research method must be adopted (King et al, 1995).

In order to provide a route to conducting effective research, Saunders et al (2009) developed ‘The Research Onion’ which is a model that outlines the layers that must be considered when conducting research. One aspect must be chosen from each layer in order to create an effective pathway. The Research Onion consists of philosophies, Approaches, Strategies, Choices, Horizons, and Techniques and procedures. Figure 1 illustrates the

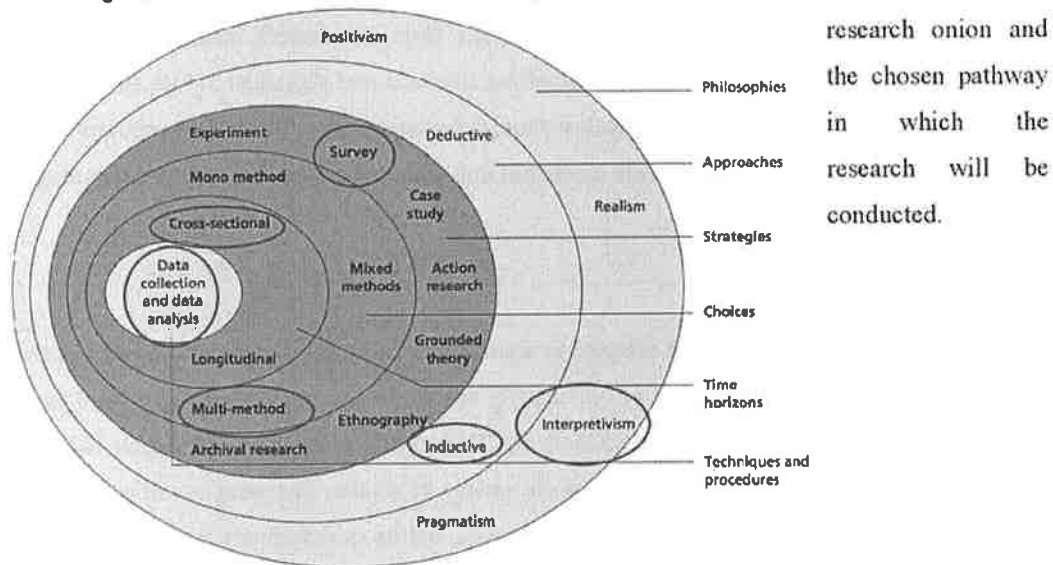


Figure 1. The Research Onion (Saunders et al, 2009).

2.2 Philosophy

Interpretivism is the ideology that facts cannot necessarily be generalised in to the social realm and that the context in which they are applied can distort the preconceptions held about the facts (Hall, 2014, p.308). This philosophy will allow the exploration of the various perspectives held to be analysed and compared.

2.3 Research Approaches

The inductive research approach is concerned with the collection of data and creating new theories after analysing the data, rather than setting out with a hypothesis to prove (Hayes, 2000, p.5). The nature of this approach is most suitable as it allows the collection of the data to then be analysed and findings can be drawn from the results.

2.4 Research Method and Strategy

Survey research is the most widely used method for the collection of primary data and can gain insights in to people's knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and opinions (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006); survey research gathers descriptive information which provides descriptions such as demographics and attitudes. Surveys will allow the collection of data on the various perceptions from the sample.

Qualitative research seeks to understand why consumers think or behave in the ways they do and identifies what they think and do; this form of research leads to descriptive research that is detailed rather than just providing numeric and statistical values (Barnham, 2015, p.838). Qualitative research will allow thorough research in to the key perceptions held by the relevant people and will provide an insight into their behaviour and attitudes regarding gambling kit sponsorships.

2.5 Sample

The sampling method that will be adopted is a convenience sample, otherwise known as an opportunity sample. A convenience or opportunity sample is one that consists of people that are easy to reach and most convenient (Coolican, 2014, p.51). A convenience sample is time efficient and has the potential to collect a wide variety of results. The sample will consist of interview participants who are industry professionals, online questionnaire participants who are football fans and offline participants who are not football fans.

2.6 Data collection

The two forms of surveys are questionnaires and interviews, both of which will be adopted for the research to provide different research in different formats.

Questionnaires are a very effective data collection method as they are flexible and are able to provide both closed and open questions which can provide qualitative responses with a wider scope and quantitative responses which can be organised to reflect responses in a statistical way (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006, p.116). Questionnaires will allow participants to

express their perceptions in more detail on certain questions, and limit the scope of their responses on others.

Interviews are another effective way of gaining responses. However, interviews are usually limited to a short series of questions which retrieve a detailed response where opinions and perceptions can be expressed in detail (Forshaw, 2004, p.32). Interviews will gain a wide insight in to the perceptions of the professionals and allow them to describe in detail their perspective and express their opinions.

Using the two proposed qualitative methods imply that multi-methods are being used in the research. Multi-Methods is the term used describe the usage of more than one research method to obtain either qualitative data or quantitative data (Saunders et al, 2009), this allows research to be collected from different perspectives and therefore provides a wider insight in to the perceptions.

2.7 Data Analysis

The findings from the data will be concluded through spreadsheets, tables and figures. These tools will illustrate the key findings of the research and present them in an effective manner which outlines the most significant findings.

2.8 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

2.8.1 Time Management and Sample

Due to the nature of the dissertation, time is a factor which must be adhered to. This factor could limit the amount of research that can be executed and could therefore limit the depth of the study.

The proposed sample is a convenience sample, which has been adopted due to the demand for research to be collected as efficiently as possible presents a few limitations to the study. The sample may not be representative of the various perspectives, there could be a bias of respondents, and it may not be able to provide a wider scope of opinions from all relevant personnel in football. However, this sample has been adopted as it is the most effective to implement within the time frame.

2.8.2 Ethical Considerations

The research will be conducted with persons over the age of 18 only. The nature of the topic is intended from a marketing perceptual exploration only, and not as a probe in to the ethical implications. The research is highly unlikely to cause any psychological harm.

2.9 Reliability and Validity

Hernon and Schwartz (2009) define reliability as a concept that “seeks to determine the extent to which the data or measurement is consistent”; and define validity as a concept that “refers to the extent to which study findings are generalizable to a population (external validity), whether the instrument accurately measures what it purports to measure (internal validity), and several other related constructs”.

It is important that the results gathered have both high validity and high reliability. This can be limited by ensuring that execution of the research is done in a consistent manner to limit the impact of variables. The research must be conducted in a fair and open way that is consistent with all participants.

3. Resources and Planning

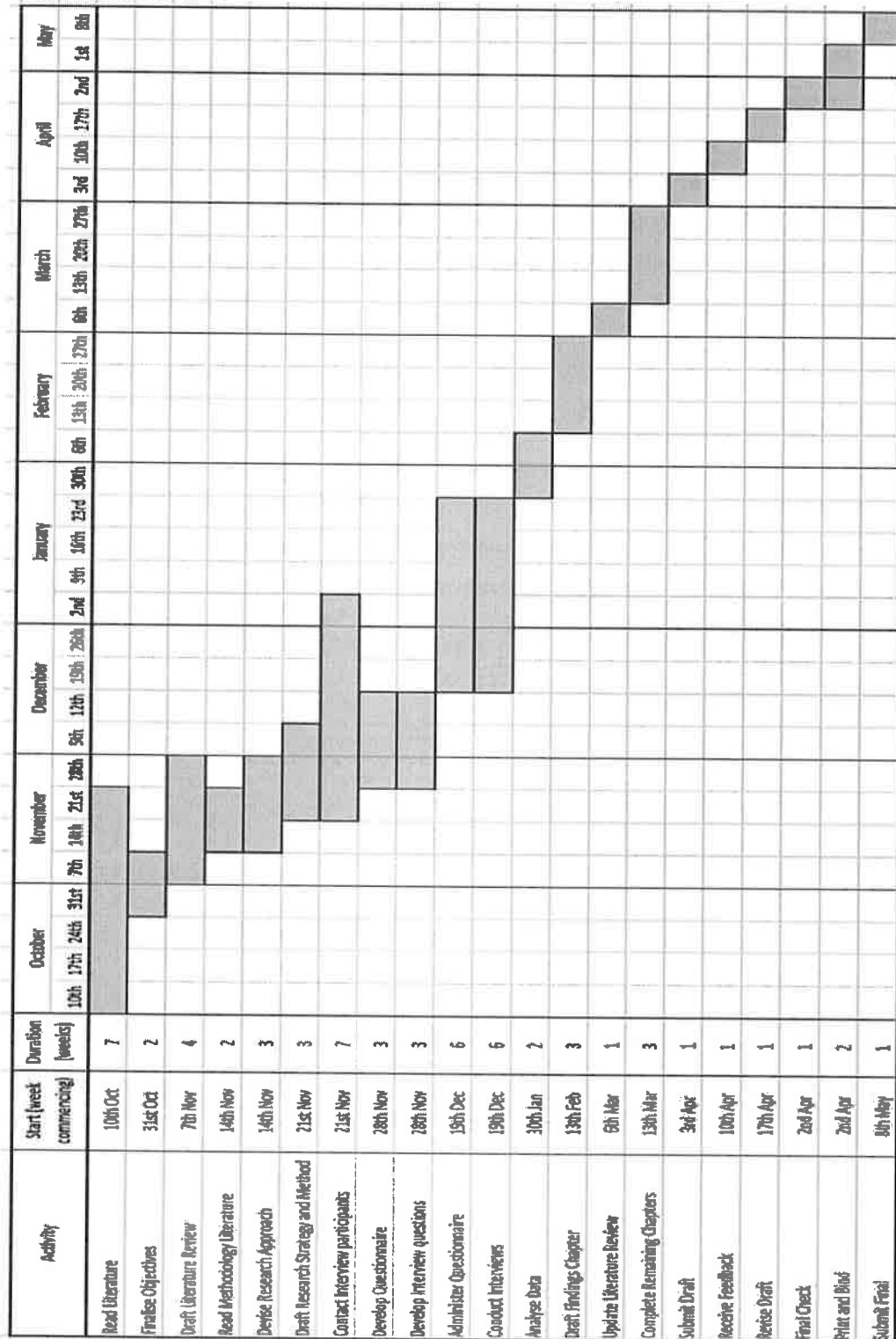
3.1 Resources

The resources used throughout the dissertation consist of journals, articles, books, reports, handbooks, and professional websites. These will be obtained through online research databases provided by the University, online databases, libraries and via search engines. It is imperative that the literature that is read and reviewed is relevant to the area of study and provides useful findings that can be analysed in order to achieve the aims and goals (Oliver, 2012). These resources will contribute towards the literature review and make up the secondary data.

3.2 Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart is a tool which maps out specific tasks that need to be completed and sets a date in which the tasks should be completed by (Kumar, 2015, p.15). The Gantt chart maintains that the user is on track to achieve the overall end goal by creating a timeline checklist. Attached below in Figure 2., is the Gantt chart detailing the plan for the dissertation including deadlines for the specific tasks.

Figure 2. Gantt Chart.



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Title of Research

The Personification of Crisps: A Look into the Abundance of Brand Mascots in the Food Retail Industry.

Research Question, Hypothesis or Aim

The main questions this study will be looking into are:

- Why is mascot branding so prevalent in the food retail sector?
- What were the influences/drivers behind Tayto changing their marketing strategy in 2006? How much of an influence was the mascot branding in this process?

Research Aims

The ultimate aim of this study is to determine how mascot branding complements the branding process and marketing strategy. It also aims to come to a conclusion as to why mascot branding is so prevalent in the food retail market.

Research Objectives

To achieve this aim, the main objectives of this study are:

1) To review the existing literature on branding and mascots in branding.

This will be done to gain a broader understanding of what leading marketing theorists believe about branding and mascots and also to see what other research has been done in this area.

2) To gather and analyse consumer's opinions on branding and brand mascots.

This will be achieved through surveying consumers. This will be done as it will be important to the study to see how much notice the public take of mascots and to gauge if brand mascots can influence their purchasing choices.

3) To assess the food retail industry and investigate and evaluate one of the brand mascot tactics currently used in the food retail industry.

The food retail industry will be examined to try to unearth any reasons why branding and mascots would be more important in this particular industry. This will be achieved through conducting desk research on the food retail industry and interviewing a marketing manager

at Tayto Crisps who currently use an effective brand mascot strategy. This will be done to discover what influenced the company to opt for a brand mascot strategy to gain an understanding of why others use it in the food retail industry too.

4) To develop a framework that will help discover how mascot branding complements the branding process and marketing strategy.

This will be done to provide a structured process in the form of guidelines for developing an effective mascot branding strategy.

Research Rationale

In recent years, there has been a notable resurgence of brand mascots in marketing. More and more companies seem to be creating mascots to represent their brand or bringing their former mascots out of retirement. One particular market mascots seem to be prevailing in is the food retail market. Whilst numerous theorists including Godin(2009), Brown(2014), and Kotler(1995) have studied the place of mascots and branding in business strategy and in consumer's minds, their studies do not account for the recent brand mascot renaissance and do not look specifically at any one market.

This study will be looking at how brand mascots are currently employed. The rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat has given companies greater opportunities to capitalise on their brand mascots. As Caulfield (2012) explains, "Social media is a place where mascots can come alive and personally interact with consumers". The modern food retail market has also transformed significantly in recent history, consumers are a lot more conscious about healthy foods, where their food comes from, the ethics behind how their food is made, and the price of their food (McCluskey 2016). This study will explore how brand mascots fit into this current market.

Literature Review/Contextual Analysis

There have been numerous different definitions of 'branding' throughout the history of marketing ranging from the early beliefs that a brand was simply a "name, term, sign symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product" (Armstrong, Kotler, 1995, pg. 255) to modern understanding that "a brand is the set of

expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another" (Godin, 2009). Some theorists now believe that a "brand is whatever your customers say it is..." (Bernoff and Li, 2011). Whilst the term branding can be traced back to farmers marking their livestock so they could tell them apart from other farmers, branding as we know it can be said to have begun in the 1950's (Hampf 2011). It was at this time companies started to emphasise and consumers began recognising their brand. Marquardt performed a study in 1965 which revealed that the majority of consumers bought a product based on the brand and that only 25% of people paid more attention to price than to the brand.

Branding has become an extremely important tool for any business trying to differentiate their products from others in the market. The importance of branding has grown throughout the last century as more and more businesses use it as a tool to differentiate their products from alternatives. One effective tool for establishing a memorable brand is the use of a brand mascot.

There are also several different definitions of what a brand mascot is. The table below conveys some definitions that theorists throughout the last couple of decades have given to brand mascots:

A brand mascot "is a fictional, animate being or animated object that has been created for the promotion of a product, service or idea"	Callcott and Lee (1995), pg. 156
Mascots function 'as a meeting point or interface for the communication of information between "producers" and "consumers"'	Lury, 2004
"Brand characters are created to promote a brand by establishing brand identity and favourable brand association...they also help brands to come alive with human	Weszka, 2011

qualities of emotion, thought and personality"	
Mascots – as a form of anthropomorphism – give brands a form through which they can act, think and feel.	Khogeer, 2013
"A brand mascot is an embodied personification of the values and qualities of a particular brand identity."	Bishop, 2015

Through looking at these definitions it becomes clear that the purpose of a brand mascot has changed from simply being a promotional tool to being the embodiment of the values and qualities of the brand in the last twenty years. The definition this study will be focussing on is the latest definition from Bishop in 2015 that "A brand mascot is an embodied personification of the values and qualities of a particular brand identity."

Brand mascots are particularly prevalent in the food retail market with a wide range of different brands basing their marketing strategy around their mascot. One company that have centred their marketing strategy around their mascot in recent years is the Irish confectionary brand; Tayto Crisps.

Tayto is one of Ireland's largest brands and a cultural phenomenon. They sell confectionary items such as crisps and popcorn in many different variations and in recent years have opened Ireland's largest theme park; 'Tayto Park'. (Largo Foods, 2016) Their marketing activities in recent years have been largely based around their mascot 'Mr. Tayto Man'. Tayto was losing market share from 2000 to 2006 and dropped as low as 20% but when Largo Foods took over and changed the focus of their marketing to Mr. Tayto Man, they rose to 47% market share by 2008. (Rogan, 2011). Tayto's marketing strategy with 'Mr. Tayto Man' is largely based around social media and public appearances. The brand's Twitter account is run through the name @MrTaytolreland and the tweets are composed through the personality of 'Mr. Tayto Man'. Their Facebook and Snapchat accounts operate

in a similar way. Mr. Tayto has a combined total of over 288,000 followers on Twitter and Facebook.

Proposed Research Methodology

Research is defined by Saunders *et al.*, (2009) as “something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge.” Saunders also developed the ‘Research Onion’, as seen in figure 1, which theorises that selecting a methodology was a process that consisted of many layers. These include the philosophy, research approaches, research strategies, time horizons and the data collection method. For this study, a philosophy of interpretivism was chosen as well as a deductive approach using qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection and analysis. (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

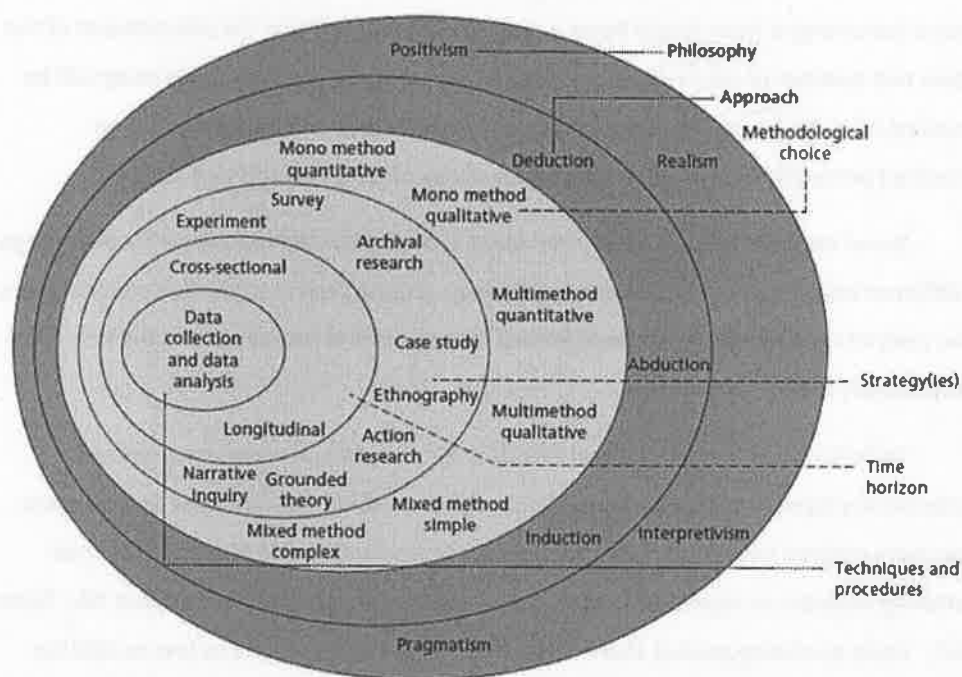


Figure 1: Saunders' Research Onion

Philosophy

The research philosophy forms the exterior layer of the 'onion'. Saunders *et al.*, (2009) explains that the research philosophy is vital as it “will underpin your research strategy and the methods you choose as part of that strategy”. This study is undertaking a philosophy of

interpretivism as human emotions are involved and it is not an exact science with a clear and factual answer. Saunders *et al.*, (2009) agrees that an interpretivist study is highly appropriate in the case of business and marketing research as business situations are complex and unique due to individual's involvement.

Approach

The research approach can either be deductive in which you develop a theory and hypothesis and design your research strategy to test the hypothesis, or inductive, in which data is collected and you develop your theory as a result of analysing the data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Choosing a research approach is important as it enables the researcher to make a more informed decision about how the research is designed, it helps the researcher choose what research strategies will and will not work, and will also enable the researcher to adapt their research design in case of any constraints. (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). This study will be using an inductive approach as it will be gathering its information and forming a theory from the analysis of the information.

Strategy

The purpose of a research strategy is to choose the methods that will best help the research to answer its research questions and meet its objectives (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This study will use surveys, interviews and desk research to gather its information.

This study will conduct a survey consisting of a wide range of Irish consumers including questions about the Tayto brand and mascots in marketing and also conducting a second survey amongst people outside of Ireland about how they feel about mascots and branding in marketing. The questions in these surveys will be aiming to gauge how influential a mascot is in recognising a brand and how influential a brand name is in the purchasing decision of the consumer. The sample size this research will be looking to achieve in both surveys will be 80-100 people over the age of 18. The advantage of using surveys is that "they allow the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way" (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

This study will also contain an interview with a member of Tayto management to gain a deeper understanding of why Tayto chose to focus on their mascot in their marketing campaign and the impact that it had. The advantage of using an interview technique is that

“there is no significant time delay between question and answer” and “the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection” (Opdenakker, 2006).

Choice

The set-out objectives will be achieved using the following methods:

- Objective 1: Desk Research.
- Objective 2: Desk Research, Survey.
- Objective 3: Surveys with customers, Interview with business manager.

Time Horizon

Research can either be undertaken in a cross sectional time horizon or a longitudinal time horizon. A cross sectional study is a study in which the data is gathered just once over a period of days, weeks, or months in order to answer the research question. A longitudinal study involves the collection of data multiple times over different periods of time. (Sekaran, 2003) This will be a cross sectional study due to the nature of the study and time constraints.

Research Plan

Resources Needed:

- Computer with word processor to produce dissertation, surveys, etc.
- Microsoft Excel to analyse survey results.
- Recording equipment or App on mobile to record interview.

Timings

Task	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Search the literature (General)								
Review the literature (Theory and Practice)								
Refworks Update								
Design research, write proposal								
Hand in research proposal								
Draft review with supervisor								
Collect research data								
Draft review with supervisor								
Analyse research data								
Draft review with supervisor								
Revise, proofread, print, submit								

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1. Background Information

Rationale

The health and fitness industry is thriving in countries globally. Health and fitness possess a huge role within modern day society and today, fitness gyms and private health clubs are a colossal worldwide business (Andreasson, 2014). The researcher has a passion for health and fitness and is interested in the topics that will be researched throughout this study. Additionally, this research is heavily related to the career path the researcher would like to take.

Health and Fitness Industry

The United Kingdom has witnessed a rapid growth within its own health and fitness industry in recent years (Fallon, 2004). The European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) highlight via the 2014 state of the UK fitness industry report that, “The industry has experienced another year of growth over the twelve month period to the end of March 2014, with increases of 3.9% in value, 1.5% in the number of fitness facilities and a 4.5% rise in the number of members” (The European health and fitness association, 2014). This means that for the first time in history the health and fitness industry in the UK is worth an estimated £4.08 billion with over 13.2% of the British population being registered members of 6,112 fitness facilities across the UK (The European health and fitness association, 2014).

Currently within the United Kingdom, there is a significant interest from private and public organisations in the development of health and fitness clubs (Simmonds, 2000). The government implement fitness facilities arguably as a tool to increase the health of the British population. A report published by the Department of Health (DOH) indicates that 61.9% of adults within the UK are overweight or obese. This has resulted in the National Health Service (NHS) spending over £5 billion to counteract some of the health issues faced by individuals being overweight or obese (Department of Health, 2011). The DOH also document one of the government current initiatives is to engage adults to exercise 5 times a week for 30 minutes a day and that the majority of this exercise can be done within weight lifting/cardio gym facilities (Department of Health, 2011).

However, due to the recent increase of people using gym/fitness facilities (Fallon, 2004), it could be stated that the health and fitness industry has undergone a major transition to become a consumer lead market where private corporations strive to cater for individual's needs purely for financial gain (Simmons, 2004).

In the past few decades Swansea had many leisure centres equipped with gym/fitness facilities and has had a few privately run gym facilities across the City (City and County of Swansea, 2014). In more recent times Swansea has arguably become a hotspot for gym facilities. In the past five years Swansea has observed the opening of widely recognised budget gym brands ‘Xercise4less’ and ‘The Gym Group’ (South Wales Evening Post, 2014).

The research will focus on why people exercise in gym facilities within the Swansea area. For clarity within the research, the Swansea area will include central Swansea and closely neighbouring areas ranging from the SA1- SA5 post code areas.

Definitions/Basic concepts

What is a gym?

Throughout the research, there will be multiple references to the word ‘gym’.

A gym consists of members and is a place where exercise related practical interests and goals are satisfied (Black, 2008).

A gym could also be described as a facility or fitness centre which is intended for the majority of the population including children, adolescents, adults and seniors. Individuals who frequently attend these establishments will have differing needs and goals. It may be contended that a modern day gym is a very pleasant and user friendly place for leisure-time athletic activity (Pinchas, 2006).

For the purpose of consistency throughout the research, a gym will be considered an establishment/facility which caters to various members of the population’s goals and where physical activity is practised.

What is exercise?

During the research there will be multiple references to the word ‘exercise’. When discussing exercise or referring to the term exercise, the research will be focusing purely on physical exercise that is practised within gyms.

“Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure” and that “Exercise is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured, and repetitive and has as a final or an intermediate objective the improvement or maintenance of physical fitness” (Carl Caspersen, 1985).

Reasons for people attending gyms to exercise

Sally Crawford and Robert Eklund convey via Silberstein et al that “Reasons for Exercise Inventory (REI) is a 24-item self-report inventory with seven subscales purporting to address motives for engaging in exercise activities. The seven REI subscales include exercising for Weight Control, for Fitness, for Health, to improve Body Tone, to improve overall Physical Attractiveness, for Mood Enhancement and for Enjoyment” (L.R Silberstein, 1988).

Researchers as a whole have struggled to grasp the current state of affairs in exercise behaviour patterns even though there is a generic awareness and multiple research confirming the benefits physical activity and exercise can have (Sally Crawford, 1994).

A more modern theory to motives for people exercising is provided by Ivanka Prichard and Marika Tiggemann. Pirchard and Tiggemann convey that there are many differing reasons

for people attending gyms to exercise and these motives to exercise can be categorised into three main areas (Prichard & Tiggemann, 2008);

Physical well-being

Arguably, exercise can be used to physically cleanse the human body. It is proven that a large variety of health-related benefits can come from consistent exercise. Exercise can improve cardio-vascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance and can aid in the maintenance of healthy joints, lower blood pressure and counteract cardio-vascular disease (Brown, Mishra, Lee, & Bauman, 2000).

Psychological well-being

It is widely recognised that exercise can be used to improve an individual's mental well-being. Exercise can result in the reduction of anxiety, stress and depression whilst enhancing self-esteem and energy (Prichard & Tiggemann, 2008).

Body image

It could be stated that people utilise exercise as a method to obtain a particular desired body image. Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts introduced the objectification theory that argues there is a clear relationship between body image concerns and exercise motives (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Aims and objectives of study

Concise research aims and objectives are very important as they give a researcher a clear focus and structure (Hackley, 2003).

Research Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to carry out an investigation into why people use gym facilities within the Swansea area.

Research Objectives

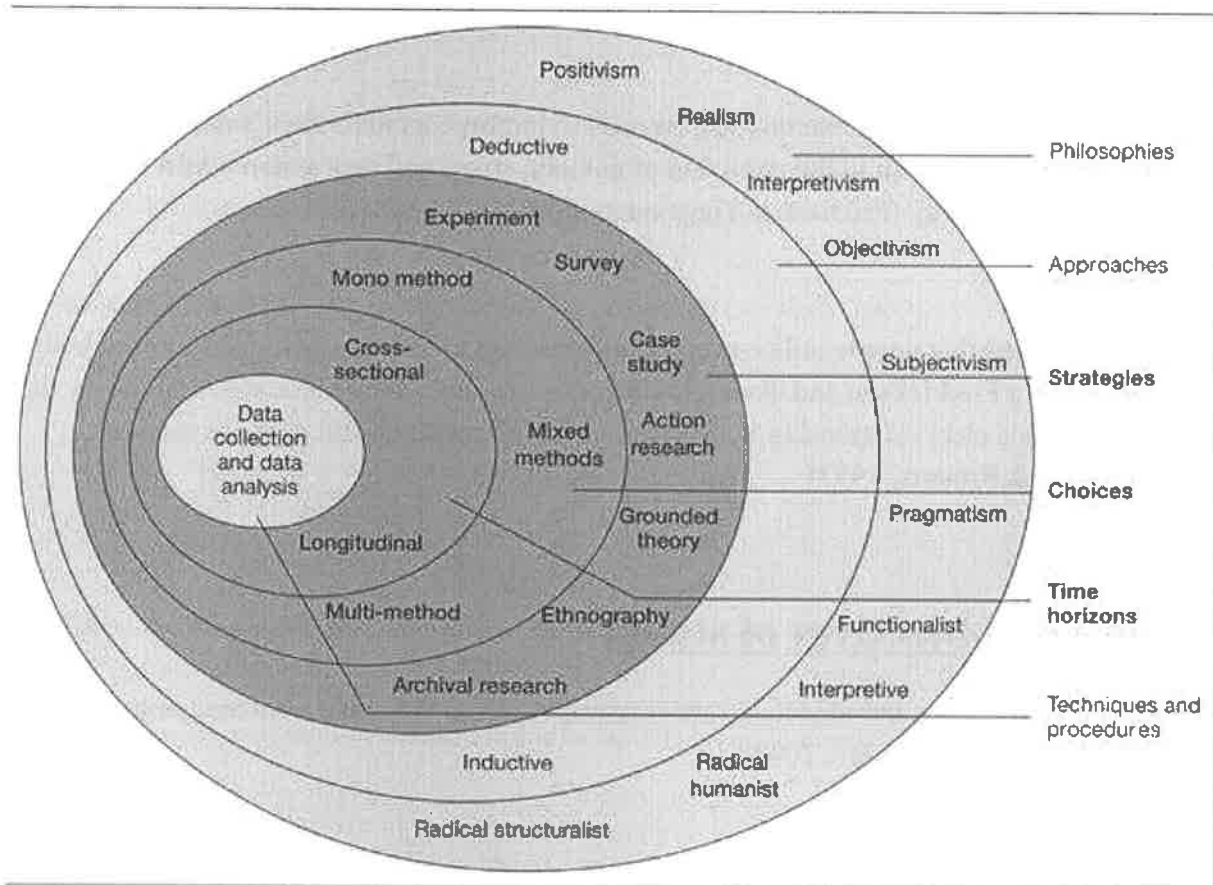
The research objectives are as follows:

- Identify the reasons why people exercise in gyms within the Swansea area
- Evaluate the extent to which body image is the reason why people exercise in gyms in the Swansea area.
- Make appropriate recommendations based on findings of the research

2. Research Methodology

The objective of this section is to convey the research methods that will be utilised during the study to allow the researcher to achieve the aims and objectives previously mentioned.

“Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense. Research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data and reaching conclusions” (Kothari, 2004).



Source: (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009)

The research onion provided by Saunders et al highlights the various research structures a researcher can use (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). It's crucial to conduct research using the most effective methods to collect, analyse and present data to successfully achieve a desired outcome (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Research Design

The paradigm used within this research will revolve around adopting a traditionalist approach working with statistics gathered from questionnaires. By using a quantitative research style, generalized results from a sample population can aid the study to formulate facts and reveal patterns during the data analysis process (Lutton, 2010).

In relation to the research onion provided by Saunders et al, this is the paradigm the research will undertake;

Positivist

The philosophical assumptions that guide positivist research consist of an objective view of reality, which the research will pursue to measure and explain (Belk, 2006).

Deductive

Deductive research revolves around a conceptual and theoretical structure which can be tested by empirical observation; this then results in particular instances being deducted from general influences (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Surveys

The aim of a survey is to produce statistics that is normally quantitative or a numerical description of a targeted population. Essentially, a survey will ask people questions and the findings that result from the questions answered can later be analysed (Fowler, 2009).

Mono Method

A mono method approach will consist of all information and data collected by one single research method (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Cross Sectional

A cross sectional research design takes a cross sectional sample from the overall population. By gaining a cross sectional sample from a population, relationships and patterns can be assessed through statistical analysis (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

All of the above lend themselves to the use of questionnaires.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a method of data collection. A questionnaire is a series of questions that are asked with the aim to retrieve desired information from a targeted population. Questions designed by a researcher can dictate the validity and accuracy of the information required (Brace, 2013).

Online questionnaires will be utilised to gather the data required for this study.

Advantages of online questionnaires include:

- Cost effective
- Enables the collection of large amount of data within a short period of time
- Saves time and effort
- Convenience for respondents
- Design flexibility

- Online software packages can automatically correlate data and find patterns and can be presented via graphs/diagrams

(Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2010).

Disadvantages of online questionnaires include:

- No interviewer
- Possible cooperation concerns
- Restricted sampling and respondent availability
- Element of bias results

(Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2010).

Sample

Dan Remenyi states “Purposive sampling uses information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about central issues of great importance to the purpose of the research (Remenyi, 2011). The sample for this research will be within the region of 50 completed online questionnaires. 50 questionnaires completed by a purposive sample of the population will arguably provide enough information to achieve the desired objectives of the study (Remenyi, 2011).

Data Analysis

Cross tabulation revolves around comparing one question to another and is a useful method to draw more information out of the data retrieved from the questionnaires (Keirle, 2002). A suitable software package will be used to analyse the data collected. This data can be presented via graphs and provide the basis for data analysis (Survey Monkey Inc, 2014).

3. Resources and planning

In order to complete this study and successfully achieve the objectives of the research, various resources will be needed throughout the entire process. The resources needed throughout this research include:

- A suitable P.C
- Internet access
- Library resources

Activity	October					November				December		January			February		March			April		May					
Week Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Holiday period																											
Research Workshop																											
Finalise objectives																											
Draft literature review																											
Read methodology literature																											
Devise questionnaire																											
Draft research strategy/method																											
3.Incoporate and analyse Data																											
4.Draft findings chapter																											
5.Update literature review																											
6.Complete remaining chapters																											
7.Submit work to tutor																											
8.Revise draft and format																											
9.Print, bind and submit																											

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1.0. Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the effect of organisational downsizing on employee engagement in a company in the Norwegian Off-Shore Oil and Gas Industry. Previous studies have been done to be able to analyse how employee engagement is affected in times where organisations are having to downsize due to economical restraints (Erickson & Roloff, 2007), however few in the recent years and with the turbulent times in the Norwegian Off-Shore Industry this topic is very current and this study aims to explore more in this field.

1.1. Wärtsilä

'Wärtsilä is a global leader in complete lifecycle power solutions for the marine and energy markets. By emphasising technological innovation and total efficiency, Wärtsilä maximizes the environmental and economic performance of the vessels and power plants of its customers (Wärtsilä, 2015).'

The local ship design office at Fitjar, Norway, has agreed to work with the researcher in order to gain further knowledge on how the downsizing they are currently facing is affecting their employees.

1.2. Background and Literature Review

A lot of research has been done on the subject of Employee engagement and the effect on employees facing downsizing within their organisation (Grunberg, et al., 2000), however this research has mostly been focused on the American Manufacturing Industry within the last decade, with little or none research on the Oil and Off-Shore, heavy, Industry.

Downsizing has been defined as;

... A set of activities, undertaken on the part of the management of an organization and designed to improve organizational efficiency, productivity, and/or competitiveness (Cameron, 1994).

One important study was the MacLeod (2009) report, *'Engaging for Success'*, which looks at the benefits of employee engagement to organisations and individuals. In the current business environment organisations are facing financial pressures which has led to them being forced to undertake cost-reducing actions such as downsizing the workforce to be able to survive (Gandolfi & Hansson, 2011). The process of downsizing affects all aspects of the organisations; from the managers who have to be the bearers of bad news, the ones who lose their jobs, and the survivors at shop-level; the employees who still receive their pay check at the end of the month. The effects of the changes on them are often identified as feelings of loss of control and uncertainty as a result of the fear for their own jobs. Potential effects on their work day is a bigger workload, longer days and fewer vacation days, as well as new work place relationships and co-workers and policies and procedures (Chipunza &

Berry, 2010). These factors can ultimately lead to stress and burnout, and be a costly affair for the organisation if not handled correctly. The external pressures faced by the off-shore industry in times of low crude prices (The Business Times, 2015)

1.3. Rational

This research will look at the Human Resource aspect of organisational downsizing and aim to guide Human Resource professionals in organisations in how it affects employee engagement, offering recommendations on best practice from an employee perspective. This study will aim to expand on previous studies that have been done about the effects on employees in times of downsizing, due to the lack of research on the impact of layoffs in the 21st century (Ramlall, et al., 2014) and especially research on the Norwegian Off-Shore Industry. This study is being undertaken in a currently interesting time period as the oil rich country Norway, where 86% of the total export in 2012 consisted of oil, gas and refined petroleum products (Ryggvik, 2015), face crude prices dropped by 40% over the last year (The Business Times, 2015). The offshore industry has announced more than 25,000 job cuts since the beginning of last year and the cuts are happening in companies involved in every aspect of the industry, from the companies hiring the rig workers to the companies designing and manufacturing the equipment for the rigs.

Wärtsilä Fitjar has been designing ships transporting equipment from main land to the rigs, and with the current low level of investment there is less work, forcing them into laying off employees as they face less projects coming their way. The industry are facing difficult times, speculating in whether the oil prices will return to the same as before the drop, from \$115 a barrel in June 2014 to below \$50 at the beginning of 2015 (Raval, 2015)- or if this is a new price level that the off shore oil and gas industry will have to adjust to. The research will aim to see if this is an additional concern and stress factor to the employees.

1.4. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to critically analyse the effect of Organisational Downsizing on Employee Engagement in a company in the Norwegian Off-Shore Industry.

1. Critically analyse academic literature on the effect of organisational downsizing on employee engagement
2. Identify the employee perception of employee engagement in the Norwegian off-shore industry after downsizing.
3. Evaluate the findings and highlight best practice of employee engagement within organisations in the Norwegian off-shore industry and make recommendations for managers to best deal with employee engagement in the aftermath of downsizing

2.0. Research Design and Methodology

Research has been defined as;

'A process of enquiry and investigation, it is systematic, methodical and ethical, and can help solve practical problems and increase knowledge' (Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 3)

When undertaking a research project it is important to be aware of the different methods and stages of a project, and at the different levels. This was identified by Saunders et al (2009) with their Research Onion, as displayed below.

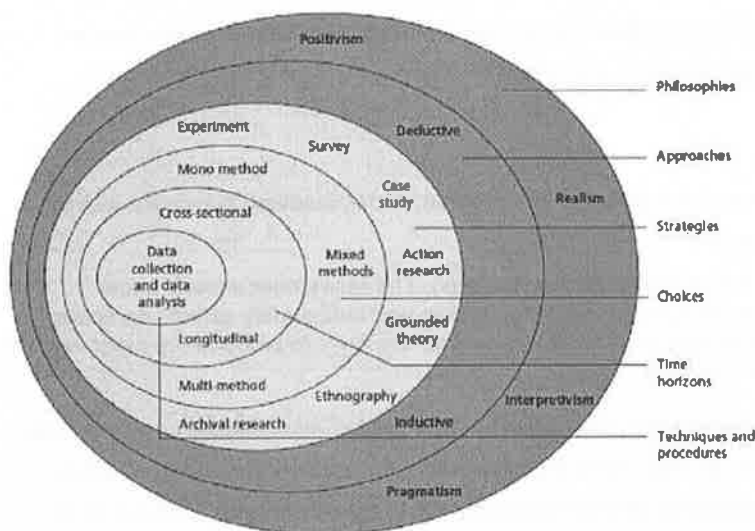


Figure 1. The Research Onion, (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 138)

The researcher will be addressing data collection and data analysis, the core of the onion, see section 2.3 and 2.4. Cross-sectional design will be approached through the qualitative research and a semi-structured interview. There will be a use of mixed methods, as a questionnaire will be distributed, quantitative data, in addition to a few more in-depth interviews, qualitative data. This will aid the researcher in interpreting the data collected, and the use of qualitative data can help explain relationships between quantitative variables (Saunders, et al., 2009). In this way the survey will give the researcher information about patterns or behaviours that can be studied more in depth in the interviews.

On the next layer of the onion one can identify that both grounded theory and survey will be used, in order to best understand and analyse the data collected. The study will be inductive and using the philosophical angle called Interpretivism.

2.1. Paradigm

For this study the use of the phenomenological methodology is most suitable, referring to the human way of making sense of the world, and called 'Interpretivism' on the Research Onion. The researcher must focus on the human aspect, rather than technological objects (Saunders, et al., 2009). This will be highly appropriate to the chosen research subject as Interpretivism research is good when researching organisational behaviour and human resource management (Saunders, et al., 2009).

2.2. Sample

When deciding on from who the data will be collected, in this research purposive sampling will be used, this involves;

'The sample is 'hand-picked' for the research. The researcher already know something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data' (Denscombe, 2007)

This will be an advantage as it gives the opportunity to get the most valuable and informative answers. The sample will be shop-level employees at the chosen organisation; Wärtsilä. First there will be approximately 20 interviews sent out to the employees, followed up by interviews of around 3-4 employees. This will be employees in the average age range between 30-50 years of age at Wärtsilä.

2.3. Data analysis

2.3.1. Qualitative Data

The study will also use qualitative analysis of the data collected, defined as;

'the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem... collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis ... establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation include the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change' (Creswell, 2013, p. 44)

This will be suited for the Human Resource related subject chosen for this project. The qualitative data will be the interviews and the transcripts from when the interviews were conducted, and they will be analysed to see if there are clear patterns or behaviours that are being repeated.

2.3.2. Grounded Theory

To get a good understanding of the qualitative data, the concept of 'grounded theory' will be applied. This has been explained as;

'An approach to the analysis of qualitative data that aims to generate theory out of research by achieving a close fit between the two' (Bryman, 2008)

This is appropriate to the research subject chosen as the previous theory and potential findings can lead to new understanding of the subject or particular aspects, highlighting a new course or different findings than expected.

2.4. Data Collection

There are several methods of collecting data, identified as;

- Secondary Data Collection
 - Case Studies
 - Interviews and surveys
 - Experimentation
 - Observation/Ethnographic
- (Lancaster, 2012)

In this research the data collection methods will be questionnaires created using the online survey tool Google Forms, distributed to the employees' internal emails, followed up by interviews of a chosen sample. This is an advantage because it has low or no costs and easily accessible (Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2010). The questionnaires will give the researcher a good number of data to analyse, and hopefully show a pattern of behaviour and reaction to the downsizing and employee engagement in the Norwegian Off-Shore Industry. It will be followed up a semi-structured interview of a few employees, done face to face. The data collected will be kept confidential, and it will be of high importance of the researcher that no names are identified in the final report.

2.5. Limitations and Ethical Risks

2.5.1. Time management

The limitations might be the accessibility to the sources of the primary data. The researcher has decided on a week to travel to Norway to conduct the interviews in the work place, this requires good time management to get the most out of the time planned for the interviews.

2.5.2. Ethical Risks

There is also the possibility that the answers from the interviews might not be extensive enough, as some might find it intimidated to be interviewed about a sensitive subject. As a social researcher there is a duty to work in a way that minimize the prospect of any harm to the participants (Denscombe, 2010), thus all employees will receive consent forms in advance explaining the topics that will be explored, giving participants a chance to quit the survey at any point, in order to avoid physiological implications.

2.6. Reliability and Credibility

Bryman (2008) identified that, while reliability and validity is important in a research project, in a social research using qualitative data the ability to do exact measurements can be more difficult. Therefore, within this the idea of Credibility has had more focus. It is important that the researcher is perceived by the participants in the study as fair and open. This can be achieved by good practise by the interviewer and members having access to the results after the study has been published, so they can see that the interviewer has acted professional by not publishing any names and that in the published research the interviewer has correctly understood the social context and responses (Bryman, 2008).

3.0. Resources and Planning

Resources and planning is a vital part of any research project (Armstrong, 2006), in order to be able to get a conclusive understanding of the subject area various sources will be used to access information and knowledge to help reach the aim and objectives of this research.

3.1. Resources and planning process

Primary data will be collected through practical sources, such as HR managers at Wärtsilä who will provide information about the company and its policies, and allow the researcher to conduct interviews with the employees. Theoretical sources will be accessed through books in the library, academic journals and the internet in order to aid the researcher, these are also referred to as secondary data. It is important that the literature used is relevant to the subject matter, aims and objectives (Oliver, 2012).

3.2. Gantt chart

The attached Gantt chart on the next page, delineating the dates that will be followed, will aim to improve time management, and be a part of the planning process outlining the proposed actions and their anticipated time scales (Armstrong, 2006). The final hand in date for the project will be 5th May. When undertaking a big research project such as the Dissertation it is important that the researcher is able to manage time well and get the work done in a timely manner to not be overwhelmed by tasks and deadlines. The Gantt chart will be an advantage while researching the chosen subject.

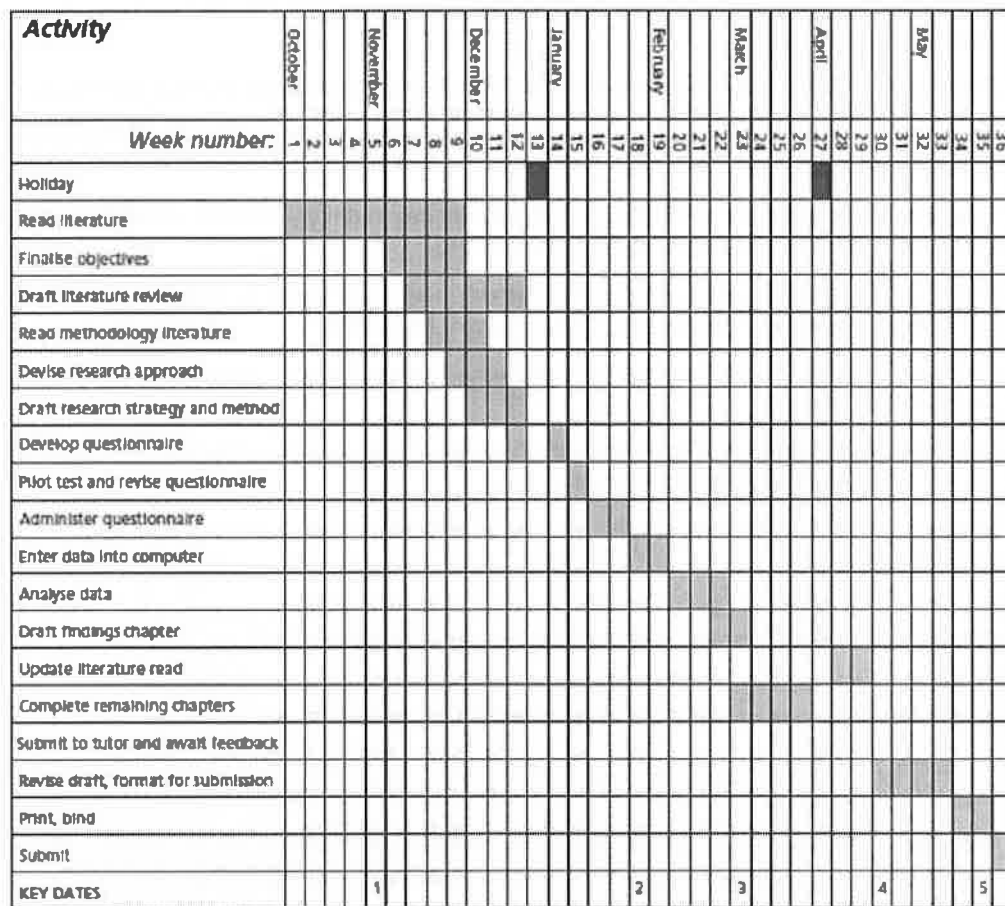


Figure 2. Gantt chart (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 45)

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