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Nepotism & HRM practices - How they affect player satisfaction:

A Study of G.A.A Clubs

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information contained in this dissertation is information related to research carried out by myself for this project. All information, other than my own contribution, will be referenced accordingly and listed in a bibliography at the back of the report. This research is submitted for the assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of M A in Human Resource Management and was conducted in an ethical manner.

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Signature _____

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis was to try and establish the effects that nepotism practice and HRM practice had on player satisfaction in GAA clubs. Firstly, the researcher conducted a review of literature and found a significant amount of material on the effects of both practices in a business context.

The researcher then decided to conduct a review of the literature in relation to the practice within sporting organisations. It was found that nepotism was present in sporting organisations. There was little or no evidence of the application of HRM in sports. But there seemed to be a lot of evidence in relation to the effects that both had on employee satisfaction. So it came apparent to the researcher that sporting organisations may have similar effects in relation to its members but mainly its players. It was from this anecdotal and empirical evidence that the researcher drew the research questions.

The surveys were conducted throughout Ireland. There were 5 different regions involved, participants from Munster, Connaught, Leinster, Dublin and Ulster. This was in order to obtain a good sample size but also to get an in-depth insight into both practices, it was decided to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research. Questionnaires were used with 143 respondents from 11 different clubs. One group interview of 4 ex-players was then conducted for a clearer insight.

The results were significant, both sets of results showed that nepotism was having a significant negative effect on player satisfaction whilst HRM practices were having or would have a significant positive effect on player satisfaction. The findings were that player satisfaction was affecting intention to quit (commitment), but that the reputation of the club seemed not to be affected by this.

The research was very significant, because one of the main issues for the clubs was lack of commitment. Here the researcher has identified a possible solution to this problem that could improve team performance. It also shows that HRM is applicable to many different organisations and not just business firms.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	7
1 1 RESEARCH PROBLEM	7
1 2 HISTORY OF THE G A A	8
1 3 CURRENT STRATEGY OF THE G A A	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2 1 NEPOTISM	11
2 2 FOUR PERSPECTIVES OF NEPOTISM	12
2 3 NEPOTISM IN AN IRISH CONTEXT	13
2 4 WORLD CONTEXT	13
2 5 SPORTING ORGANISATIONS	14
2 6 ANTECEDENTS OF NEPOTISM	15
2 7 BENEFITS OF NEPOTISM	17
2 8 DRAWBACKS OF NEPOTISM	18
2 9 HOW TO WORK WITH NEPOTISM	19
2 10 THE HRM FUNCTION V's NEPOTISM	19
2 11 EVIDENCE THAT ANTI-NEPOTISM CAN BENEFIT A FIRM	21
2 12 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH	22
CHAPTER 3 PROBLEM DEFINITION	26
3 1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	26
3 2 SIGNIFICANCE	27
3 3 PROCESS OF THE RESEARCH	27
3 4 OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH	27
CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY	28
4 1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	28
4 2 ONTOLOGY	28
4 2 1 OBJECTIVISM	28
4 2 2 SUBJECTIVISM	29
4 3 EPISTEMOLOGY	29
4 3 1 POSITIVISM	29

Nepotism and HRM practices

4 3 2 REALISM	30
4 3 3 INTERPRETIVISM	30
4 4 AXIOLOGY	31
4 5 RESEARCH APPROACH	32
4 6 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	33
4 7 DATA COLLECTION	34
4 8 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	34
4 9 SELECTING AN APPLIED RESEARCH METHOD	34
4 10 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	36
4 11 MULTIPLE METHODS CHOICE	36
4 12 TIME HORIZON	37
4 13 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	37
4 14 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	38
4 15 LIMITATIONS	39
CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS	41
5 1 INTRODUCTION	41
5 2 FINDINGS	41
CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS	51
6 1 INTRODUCTION	51
6 2 NEPOTISM	51
6 3 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES	54
6 4 APPRAISALS	55
6 5 MERIT SELECTION	56
6 6 HRM PRACTICE	57
6 7 SATISFACTION AND MORALE	59
6 8 COMMITMENT (INTENTION TO QUIT)	59
6 9 REPUTATION OF CLUB	61
6 10 FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY	62
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION	63
7 1 INTRODUCTION	63
7 2 NEPOTISM AND POSITION OF POWER	63
7 3 GRIEVANCE	64
7 4 APPRAISAL	64
7 5 MERIT SELECTION	65
7 6 ROUND OFF OF HRM	65
7.7. THREE VARIABLES	66
7 8 FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY	67

CHAPTER 8 RECOMMENDATIONS	68
8 1 WORKING WITH NEPOTISM	68
8 2 CHANGE POSITION OF POWER	69
8 3 COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN	69
8 4 FORWARD THINKING	69
8 5 APPLICATION OF HRM TOOLS	70
8 6 PUTTING THE G A A STRATEGY IN PLACE	70
8 7 N C I WORKING WITH THE G A A	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY	72
APPENDICES	76
APPENDIX 1 SURVEY OF PRESENT AND PAST MEMBERS OF G A A CLUBS	76
APPENDIX 2 ANONYMITY DOCUMENT	82
APPENDIX 3 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	83
APPENDIX 4 MAIN TARGETS OF G A A STRATEGY 2009-2015	85
APPENDIX 5 VALUES OF THE G.A A	86
APPENDIX 6 HOW TO WORK WITH NEPOTISM	87

Chapter 1· Introduction

1 1· Research Problem

To investigate how nepotism and Human Resource Management (HRM) practices affect player satisfaction and how this in turn affects players' intention to quit (commitment) and the reputation of the club

While completing in partial a full time Masters in Human Resource Management and in reviewing the literature on the topic area, it came apparent to the researcher that there was a gap in the literature available. This gave rise to the perceived need to carry out research in the area

Nepotism, seems to be rampant part of Irish society, many authors refer to this, Cummins (1978), (Fanning, 2010) and (Fetzer, 2011). The other area of study HRM practices, are used to improve organisational performance within an organisation. This is done particularly through an organisation's staff. Through a review of the literature, it is clear that many authors have commented on the effects of HRM practices and their consequences in an organisation. For the purpose of this study, nepotism and HRM practices will be the two practices being measured against player perception. As explained by Laker and Williams, nepotism has many consequences for organisations. Most "work has shown that nepotism will always lead to decreased employee satisfaction and commitment" (Laker & Williams, 2003, p. 191). On the other hand, HRM is crucial to organisations. Boxall explains that "a state-of-the-art facility and technology can create competitive advantage only when there is a highly competent workforce to utilize them" (Boxall, 1998). This is supported by the resourced based view school of thought that argues that a firm can only create a sustainable competitive advantage through its human capital pool." Arguably, the possessions of resources that are rare, valuable, non-substitutable and difficult to imitate allow a firm to move ahead of its competitors" (Barney, 1991). Barney believes that whilst raw materials are easy to copy, people are much harder to imitate and that they are key to a sustainable competitive advantage.

A study of G A A clubs

Using a variety of research methods, the researcher will conduct a study to examine the relationship between variables. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher will determine the effects that Nepotism practice and HRM practices have on player satisfaction and how this can then affect intention to quit and reputation of club. These methods come in the form of questionnaires and group interviews. It was decided to use questionnaires to gather primary data from current members of G A A clubs. The method of group interviews was chosen to gather data from past members of the clubs. It was decided to distribute questionnaires around clubs in Munster, Connaught, Leinster, Ulster and Dublin in order to get an insight into the two particular practices and how they affect the variables. This was done in relation to current members of clubs, a lot of whom are both past and present players and many of them have or had a number of different roles in their clubs. In order to gather information on past members, who are still in their prime to play but have left their clubs for whatever reason, a group interview with ex-players were used to give a deeper insight to why they left their club, and what could have improved their satisfaction levels.

1.2 History of the G A A

The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded in 1884 to promote Irish pastimes and culture, including the playing of Gaelic Football and Hurling. These games have been played throughout Ireland for many centuries and the founding of the Association put in place a structure that resulted in clubs developing in every town, rural parish and village in Ireland. The games have grown to be the country's most popular sports and over 2,000 clubs exist today (O'Connell, 2008). In the early 1880s, Michael Cusack, a journalist, decided to try and promote indigenous Irish sports such as hurling, Gaelic football and handball. He attended the first meeting of the Dublin hurling club in 1882. From here, the game grew and the Metropolitan hurling club was established. On Easter Monday 1884, the Metropolitans played Killimor, in Galway. The game had to be stopped on numerous occasions as the two teams were playing to different rules. It was here that Cusack saw the need for standardised rules of the games and the need for a national body to regulate the games. Cusack wrote in the *United Ireland* and *The Irishman* to further his cause for a national body to be set up in relation to the indigenous games (G A A, 2000). As stated on the official G A A website, "A week later, Cusack submitted a signed letter to both papers announcing that a meeting would take place in Hayes's Commercial Hotel, Thurles on November 1 1884

Nepotism and HRM practices

On this historic date, Cusack convened the first meeting of the **‘Gaelic Athletic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of national Pastimes’** Maurice Davin was elected President, Cusack, Wyse-Power and McKay were elected Secretaries and it was agreed that Archbishop Croke, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt would be asked to become Patrons” (G A A, 2000) This was the establishment of what we know as the G A A

1 3 Current strategy of the G A A

In the *GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009 – 2015*, the G A A has pledged a number of targets that it will try and meet The G A A states “in accordance with national policy, we will develop an annual Games *Development Plan* linked to National Games Development Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) objectives This will be submitted to the Provincial Games Manager and to Croke Park” (G A A, 2000) (Some of the main targets can be seen in Appendix 4)

All of these targets come together to promote the development and integration of all players and people and to ensure lifelong participation and best practices to ensure fair and no-bias practices As stated in the inclusion and integration strategy, the G A A takes its mission, values and vision very seriously “The GAA’s values are the heart and soul of our Association. In every club around the world they are what bind us, what makes us unique and what attracts more and more players, members, volunteers and supporters” (O’Connell, 2008)

The Mission of the G A A is “The GAA is a community based volunteer organisation promoting Gaelic games, culture and lifelong participation.” This gives the basis of where the G A A sees itself “Our vision is that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed, to take part in our games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement” (G A A, 2009)

Finally, it is important to mention some of the key values of the organisation (Please see Appendix 5 for full list) One of the main objectives is to offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone to participate in its games and in our culture The organisation have developed initiatives for the country and for each individual club so that all players can be coached using best practices and other initiatives that include all player integration and

A study of G A A clubs

inclusion as lifelong participants G A A strategy as a whole is to include every player on a long-term basis They wish to do this through best practices and fair procedure

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Nepotism

Nepotism is a type of favoritism that will be discussed in this paper. Wong & Klenner defined Nepotism as ‘the hiring and advancement of unqualified or under qualified relatives simply by virtue of their relationship with an employee, officer, or shareholder in the firm’ (Wong & Klenner, 1994, p. 123). The word nepotism comes from the Latin word for nephew due to the hiring of an in-law or relation.

The word itself is surrounded by negative connotations, even in its definition it states the giving of unqualified or under-qualified relatives. Many authors have written anecdotal evidence on the topic and talk of its negatives (Wong & Klenner, 1994) (Laker & Williams, 2003).

On the other hand, many authors look at the positives of nepotism, i.e. Bellow, in his book *In Praise of Nepotism* (Bellow, 2003). In order for this research to be objective, we must assume that nepotism is neither good nor bad. Bellow explains that it is not the practice that is bad, but indeed the way it is practiced that determines the negatives or positives outcomes. For the purpose of this paper, nepotism will not be viewed in either a positive or negative manner. The research will instead try to gain a full understanding of the practice. Mulder also explains that ‘‘It is also important to note that this study’s definition of nepotism does not include close family friends, despite the fact that a reasonable argument could be made for their inclusion in a definition of nepotism’’ (Mulder, 2008, p. 54). This type of favouritism can be referred to as cronyism. But it will not be the focus of this study as the variables are too difficult to determine in such a case. In a more specific paper, Khatri and Tsang discuss the various antecedents and consequences of cronyism when it is operating within organisations, they discuss the difference between two different types of cronyism, horizontal and vertical. Firstly, they discuss horizontal cronyism as ‘‘Horizontal cronyism occurs among peers, such as business associates, friends, and colleague’’ (Khatri & Tsang, 2003, p. 299). Secondly, they discuss vertical cronyism as ‘‘vertical cronyism is based on a superior-subordinate relationship within the organisation. Here, cronyism involves exchange of patronage downward with personal loyalty upward’’ (2003, p. 299). This study of cronyism will not be included in this research due to the variables being too complex to determine such a relationship.

Ford and McLaughlin pose the question "Is nepotism good or bad?" They explain that "it depends on the size and ownership of the organisation" (Ford & McLaughlin, 1986, p 60) They go on to argue that policies on the subject and the way these policies are managed will determine the negative or positive effects of the practice

2.2 Four Perspectives of Nepotism

In their paper, Laker and Williams talk about the four different perspectives of nepotism. The first of these perspectives as explained by Laker & Williams, "views nepotism as the hiring of a relative of the owner of the business. From this perspective, nepotism is usually viewed in an unfavourable light" (Laker & Williams, 2003, p 192). The second perspective deals with the legalities of nepotism. As outlined by Laker & Williams, the perspective deals exclusively with "the hiring of a spouse of an existing employee (paired employees or PEs)" (2003, p 191). This is due to the large number of female employees now in the work place. This increase of female employees called for equality legislation as anti-nepotism policies affected them worse than men. The third perspective focuses much more on the political side of nepotism and as discussed by Laker & Williams, "The third perspective comes from the press reporting on the political nature of nepotism. Articles such as *Nepotism A little more than kin* which appeared in the Economist, and is just one of many that discuss the handing down of political power to a politician's relatives or offspring. "The result of this usually furthers corruption" (2003, p 193). The fourth and final perspective focuses much more on the management of human resources within the organisations. As described by Laker & Williams, "The effect of nepotism on employee satisfaction and organisational goals" (2003, p 194). The task of the HRM function is to ensure that organisational policies are fair and equal, but also to ensure that employees view these as fair and equal. This is because this unfairness can lead to organisational commitment and employee satisfaction being negatively affected as explained by Laker and Williams.

For the purpose of this paper, the researcher will base most of the research on the fourth perspective of nepotism. In their paper, Padgett and Morris explain that the selection of family members from two or more generations of family is "what might be referred to as cross-generational nepotism" (Padgett & Morris, 2005, p 35). This is the type of nepotism that this paper will focus on.

2.3 Nepotism in an Irish Context

A good example of nepotism in Ireland comes in the form of government politics. Political parties like Fianna Fail have had their roots in political dynasties. Eamon de Valera, the founder of the party, still has representation of that political dynasty in the same party by his nephew, Eamon O Ciiv. Brian Cowan left the party only to be replaced by Barry Cowan, his brother. John Gibbons wrote in an Irish Times article “THE HOLY trinity of corruption, cronyism and nepotism seems to be about all we have to show for a decade and more of Fianna Fail-led government” (Gibbons, 2009). Nepotism is a part of Irish society and many other cultures across the world. In relation to nepotism that is connected to HRM managers and how they deal with policies in an organisation, they must ensure that this practice is a fair and equal one, in other words, the fourth perspective. There is very little empirical or anecdotal evidence of this in Irish Literature.

2.4 World Context

Nepotism is a practice that can be identified across many spectrums. A study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 88% of the 432 responding companies employ workers that were related in some way. They also found that 83% of employees are married. Another significant statistic arising from this was the fact that 73% of companies that employ married couples have policies that prohibit one from supervising the other (O'Brien, 1993). One paper highlights the global nature of nepotism. According to Mese's research “Among all the businesses, 90% in the USA, 80% in Spain, 95% in Italy, 85% in Switzerland and 95% in Turkey, are family businesses and are identified as using nepotistic practice” (Mese, 2005, p. 1). Another author explains the reason for this, Develi outlines, “The reason for bringing family members into management positions instead of professional people in family firms is that trust is prioritized over expertise” “But these applications create serious motivation problems for other workers” (Develi, 2008, p. 24). In her paper, Morrissey illuminates the negative effects of such a practice. “In fact, an INC.com poll found that 48 per cent of respondents to a survey believed the number one reason people got ahead in a company was nepotism. Only 25 per cent said success came from hard work” (Morrissey, 2006). But not only does nepotism curtail itself to corporate business and family owned firms, it also spreads across to other areas as enlightened by Butte “Today nepotism has become a widespread reality in politics, publications and sports” (Butte, 2011, p. 189).

2.5 Sporting Organisations

For the purpose of this paper, the research will focus on nepotism in sporting organisations. More particularly the research will focus on the organisation of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). It is important to note that the researcher is unaware of any similar study already in existence. This means that empirical and anecdotal evidence are non-existent in relation to nepotism occurring in the particular organisation. Therefore, the researcher will give examples of nepotism occurring in other sporting organisations and also using anecdotal evidence where necessary. The first piece of anecdotal evidence that is apparent is recorded by Ford and McLaughlin, "even in a place seemingly innocent as a little league softball diamond nepotism can be a problem", "just consider the situation in which dad, the coach, is perceived as favouring his son Johnny in the pitching rotation. The ensuing problems are evident "and if those feelings are problematic in a summer softball game, it isn't difficult to imagine the potential difficulties caused by those same feelings in a more complex environment" (Ford & McLaughlin, 1986, p. 57). This is the basis of researchers' arguments about the family connection in sports as demonstrated by Ford & Williams, i.e. how these nepotistic connections can affect organisations and how they can affect non-family connected players and family connected players.

Nepotism and sport go hand in hand. Many different authors have recorded the practice in many different sports. In an economist article on South African rugby football union, the article states "Mr Mandela's government is now so incensed at what it sees as the continuing racism and sleazy nepotism of the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) that it is demanding the resignation of its executive committee and an investigation into its finances" (1998:35). Other authors have recorded nepotism in Australian cricket (Gregory, 2007). A much more recent example of nepotism in Irish sport is an example from the ladies 4 x 400 metre relay team that represented Ireland in the London 2012 Olympics. One member, Catriona Cuddihy was dropped to be replaced by another member, Joanna Mills. Cuddihy was then reinstated and Mills dropped again. This was in spite of the fact, as reported on RTÉ News, "On the track, Cuddy's personal best was 54.59 this season 0.18secs slower than Mills' seasonal best at that stage (RTÉ News, 2012). The fact that Catriona Cuddihy has a double family connection may indicate that nepotism was practiced here. Cuddihy's sister Joanne is a team member and her father is the team doctor. This indicates the practice of

Nepotism and HRM practices

nepotism in amateur Irish sport. Even the Olympic Council of Ireland in their statement illuminates how devastating this practice can be, “We also have to acknowledge that the past three weeks has been enormously difficult for the athletes involved in this appeal process, their families, supporters and friends” (R.T.E News, 2012). This indicates that nepotism is at work with amateur associations in Ireland and this possibly gives grounding that it is practiced in other amateur associations as well as the G.A.A.

A major article recording nepotism in sporting organisations is in relation to NASCAR racing. The authors explain how children follow parents into NASCAR racing. They state that parents transfer their knowledge, skills and experience to children through human capital transfer, “that focus on sibling career following in the NASCAR cup series, human-capital transfer, physical-capital transfer, nepotism, and brand name could all play a role in why a child follows their parent into a racing career” (Groothuis & Groothuis, 2007, p. 252). He explains the unfair advantages of being a son of an already established driver and how human capital transfer is key here. “Overall, there are many reasons for career following that are not mutually exclusive. Human capital transfer contends that family members that have access to learning make drivers more productive at a younger age” (2007, p. 264). He also argues about the brand name. “This result suggests that second brothers may free ride on the first brother’s reputation. This result also supports the brand name model with second brothers following first brothers into racing and being able to extend their careers longer, because of their family name” (2007, p. 264).

This research would suggest that family members that are established within sporting organisations have the advantages of human capital transfer and family name when being selected for team positions and careers. The researcher hopes to address this in this study. All of these papers identify that nepotism is alive in sporting organisations. This gives incentive to the area of sporting organisations, particularly the G.A.A. being the area of study.

2.6 Antecedents of Nepotism

There can be many circumstances that give rise to nepotism within an organisation. These antecedents have been recorded by many authors. In her paper, Mulder explains that nepotism has changed over the past decades and it can now be differentiated by the old and new, “Old nepotism characterizes the notions that have historically been associated with the

term nepotism, the idea that parents hire or find jobs for their children, often forcing them into the family business regardless of merit or job qualifications. In contrast, modern nepotism is what Bellow (2003) argues is a more accurate way to think about the practice in today's times. Modern nepotism occurs when children *choose* to follow in their parents' footsteps" (Mulder, 2008, p. 28). Conway (2004) goes on to explain that old nepotism promotes dynastic values over merit selection. Here selection is based on individual upbringing and family ties while modern nepotism is one where merit applies to nepotism and that these nepotees are subjected to higher standards and suffer greater disappointment from society on failure.

(1) Experience and education is considered to give rise to nepotism. Mulder explains "the nepotees' prior work experience and education are two important factors in modern-day situations of nepotism" (2008: 28). She explains that nepotees are very often seen as unable and incompetent in doing their jobs. But according to Bellow this is quite the opposite. "Nepotees tend to possess a great amount of knowledge and resources because they have often times been raised in and around the business, moreover, under the context of new nepotism" (2008: 28). He argues that a nepotee would not take a position that he is highly unqualified for as this would only result in huge embarrassment if he failed. Therefore experience and education are factors that give rise to nepotism.

The next major circumstance according to Bellow (2003) is opportunism. According to Mulder "Modern nepotism is opportunistic, meaning that children only need to be motivated to take advantage of their family name and privileged birth" (2008: 29). They explain that nepotees will only take advantage of practice such as nepotism due to non-related factors, this, Mulder argues "The willingness to take advantage of a situation such as nepotism has been related to a motivational need called self-determination" (2008: 29).

Finally Stout (2006) differentiates between self-determined nepotism and coercive nepotism. "Self-determined nepotism occurs when an individual decides to take a job in a family business only when they strongly believe that the job offered is a personal choice and a desired career path" (Stout, 2006: 53). Coercive nepotism, on the other hand, "occurs when the nepotee accepts a job out of feelings of coercion, because they were forced into taking the job by a family member" (Stout, 2006: 61). This would largely reflect Bellow (2003) version of old nepotism. Using the work of Stout (2006) and Bellow (2003) we can identify the circumstance under which nepotism occurs as "education/experience, opportunism, self-determination and coercive nepotism".

Nepotism and HRM practices

In the context of a G A A club education will not be relevant but experience will come to play for positions such as Team Captain and other important positions. All other recorded antecedents will be identified by researcher where possible and to the extent that one may do so. For example to identify coercive nepotism will be a very tough task indeed and the research will not focus on antecedents.

2.7 Benefits of Nepotism

Although many negative feelings are attached to the phenomenon, some authors argue that there are as many benefits to the practice as drawbacks. Ford and McLaughlin state that “despite the feelings and the many historical abuses of the practice, there are as many arguments for nepotism as there are against” (Ford & McLaughlin, 1986, p. 57). They explain that there are three main arguments used to defend its practice.

The first argument is that nepotism is good for small family-owned firms as it provides an efficient way to identify dedicated personnel to staff such an organisation. Barmash pointed out that new firms would not have the financial resources to pay top salaries or to fund huge recruitment drives and that nepotism was a good means to gaining an actual committed employee that wanted to see the success of the organisation (Barmash, 1986). The second argument put forward by Ford & McLaughlin is that if nepotism is freely practiced “It allows the extension of the talent pool, because if nepotism was banned there would be a large pool of people excluded due to relationship” (1986, p. 57). This is reiterated by Abdulla et al., who state that “permitting nepotism allows consideration of all potential employees who might be effective contributors to the organisation rather than arbitrarily excluding a large pool simply because they are related by blood or marriage to an existing employee” (Abdalla, et al., 1998, p. 557). The third argument is that nepotism tends to foster a positive family type environment that boosts morale and job satisfaction for all employees, relatives and non-relatives alike. One final argument made by Bellow, explains another benefit of nepotism is that it can be an effective means for succession leadership and selection against scientific merit. Bellow believes that nepotism can be more effective as leadership succession tool than scientifically based practices (Bellow, 2003).

In their paper, Ford & McLaughlin explain that many small organisations such as G A A clubs cannot afford separate personnel with a specific individual responsible for training, adopting proper selection and many other tasks associated with HRM. None the less, Ford &

McLaughlin explain that “small organisations need as good employees as larger organisations. Consequently, they often rely on nepotism to meet this need” (1986, p. 59). This statement is still applicable to sporting organisations such as small G A A clubs.

2.8 Drawbacks of Nepotism

Nepotism has been recorded across various organisations and seems also to be an integral part of society. This paper will focus much more on the organisational context in relation to sporting organisations in the G A A, and the effects that this type of favouritism has on members. Many authors have recorded the possible drawbacks of a nepotistic firm in regards to non-related staff and for the organisation as a whole.

Wong & Klenier explain that nepotism can cause firms to lose valuable senior management and render them from attracting new ones. “Nepotism can cause a company to lose valued executives and to be unable to attract new ones” (Wong & Klenier, 1994). This is because non-family staff have less commitment for the organisation and see their positions as temporary. “When a family member rises to the top, it can discourage the non-family managers and lessen their commitment and dedication to the firm.” Adding to this, Ichniowski explains that “Allowing nepotism lowers morale for those people who supervise relatives of high-level executives, those who must work with them, and those who feel that promotions and rewards are given unjustifiably to a relative” (Ichniowski, 1988) and both of these inhibit high quality talent from joining the firm. This causes problems because if nepotism can discourage talented individuals from joining the firm, it reduces the talent pool from which the company can draw on. This means that the right people might not be in the right position for the company as outlined by Wong & Klenier, “Even though a son or daughter shines in certain fields, he or she may not offer the right skill mix and talents that a company needs at a crucial moment in its history. If management stagnates, so does corporate performance” (1994).

According to Ford & McLaughlin, the drawbacks that come with nepotism can be categorized into three broad sections. The first drawback is that such a practice can have an effect on the employee morale, the second is that business and personal affairs get mixed up together. Toy et al (1988) argued that it can expose family fights, but more importantly, it can deter talented managers from getting to the top because there is no blood line. Not only will these managers quit but it also discourages new talented individuals from joining the firm.

Nepotism and HRM practices

Ichniowski highlights that “Permitting nepotism needlessly exposes the organisation to problems of family fighting, sibling rivalry over managerial succession and improper combinations of family and business in the decision-making process” (Ichniowski, 1988, p 107)

The final area is that people never know why they achieve promotions, or why they do not get selected. Is it for their merit or their connections? Again, Ichniowski explains that “Nepotism puts incredible and unfair pressure on the "nepotee". It can be an awful burden for the relative never to be sure if organisational rewards were earned by what he or she did or only because of who he or she is” (1988, p 107)

Favoritism as a whole seems to be negative for an organisation. Grove (1984) explains how important it is to keep favouritism etc out of evaluation as it can be a problem for organisational effectiveness and hinder organisational goals. He also explains that it is worth the time the supervisors spend doing this correctly, as they can keep and choose the right people for promotion and for the organisation. Ford and McLaughlin (1986) found a significant relationship between nepotism and the size of the organisation. In addition, they found that nepotism has an effect on the functions and policies of HRM's and on HRMs in their own jobs.

2.9 How to work with Nepotism

In her article, Morrissey explains that “although nepotism is viewed as a negative in organisations regardless of the type of organisation where the phenomenon is taking place” (Morrissey, 2006, p 161). She believes that if practiced correctly, it can quickly become positive, “as you will see, family-run business can turn the issue of nepotism from a hot button topic into a non-issue by following some simple guidelines” (2006, p 161). Through this article, Morrissey explains that organisations that use nepotism can use her 11 guidelines on how to work with nepotism. (See Appendix 6). Through these guidelines, organisations can use nepotism in a positive manner rather than in a negative one by making the practice a fairer one.

2.10 THE HRM function V's NEPOTISM

Ginseng-Prophal illuminates the effects of the practice on the HR function “It can be harder, and even more necessary for HR to establish and clearly communicate business philosophies, policies and practices and to apply them consistently across organisations when employees, perhaps even top executives are related Nepotism can have an impact on virtually all functions of HR” (Ginseng-Prophal, 2007, p 30) Mulder (2008) explains in her paper, that many HR selections, practices and policies are norms How a company chooses to recruit and what methods are used in the selection process predict several outcomes, including which applicants choose to apply, which applicants are hired, and even future job performance and turnover She goes on to say that it is possible that a nepotee may be selected because they are by far the best candidate for the job She states, “Like any other situation, if there are other, more qualified applicants, the potential nepotee may not be selected based upon this alone” (Mulder, 2008, p 55) But the assumption in her paper is that kinship can sometimes overrule HR practice as outlined “However, nepotism implies preferential treatment, so one would assume that Kinship would at the very least keep an individual in the selection process if not completely open the door to that individual in the final outcome Exactly how far kinship will take a person in an organisational selection process will more likely depend upon the company’s selection policies and history with nepotism” (2008, p 56)

Many authors seem to refer to nepotism as the darker side of HRM selection practices, and many more talk about how it is very lightly covered by the literature In his article, Fiebig discusses the negatives and positives of nepotism as a selection practice of merit based selection. Fiebig explains that “human resources are a very important function for deterring this, as nepotism is not justifiable” (Fiebig, 2000, p 18) He goes on to evaluate the possibility of nepotism and explains that in order for nepotism to be acceptable, “human resource professionals must constantly evaluate policies to ensure they are consistent with meeting the goals and objectives of an organisation, ensuring these are met along with being sensitive to the work environment, are the only tools available in deciding whether or not to use nepotism in the hiring process” (2000, p 19), provides justification for study on nepotism Another major article by Arasli et al. discusses nepotism, and how it affects the HR function, state, “In heavily nepotism-oriented businesses, if nepotism is felt intensively, the human resource management practices cannot work independently Due to this, it is not possible to have meritocracy in the organisation” (Arasli, et al, 2006, p 296) This is a major factor in nepotistic firms and affects the possibility of equity and fairness in the selection practice for nepotistic organisations whether they are sporting or business organisations The

Nepotism and HRM practices

importance of HR is stressed in this article also “Human resource management in an organisation is very important. These activities include recruitment, selection, training, career development, compensation, and performance appraisal. They are the basic functions of an organisation (2006, p. 297). Many others explain that HR practices can provide an organisation with competitive advantage through the use of its people. They explain that HR can increase job/player satisfaction while it can deter and reduce the people’s intention to quit. If people then have a good experience with their perspective organisation this will reduce negative word of mouth due to good practice (Burke, 2003, Pare, et al., 2001, Bond, 2004). It is obvious from the literature that if a company’s HR function is not effective, an employee will lack commitment, will not be satisfied with their job and their performance will not be 100%. Astrachan et al. explain “Lack of trust to business causes the demoralization of employees” (Astrachan, et al., 2002, p. 46).

The importance of HR was highlighted by research carried out by Pfeffer (1998). This research proved that through a combination of policies, practice and tools, that the HR function could act as a total system bringing synergy to the organisation to produce the highest levels of employee commitment and sustained company business success. He identified seven dimensions that companies have that are making profit through people and one of the most notable of these was selective hiring. Pfeffer explains that selection is crucial to success. He argues “the real sources of competitive leverage’ are the culture and capabilities of the organisation that are derived from the way people are managed” (Pfeffer, 1998, p. 45). Many authors seem to see HR as a means to keeping employees and members of the organisation satisfied and committed to the organisation. Others seem to think that nepotism can have the opposite effects as discussed in the literature above. So, are anti – nepotism policies effective?

2.11 Evidence that anti-nepotism can benefit a firm

Nepotism is a non-strategic decision that affects performance for all organisations. In their paper, Zheng et al. explore the influence of ownership on human resource management (HRM) practices by SMEs. The paper shows enterprise ownership determines both strategic choice and the level of complexity in the application of HRM practices. They explain in their paper that “owned enterprises and collective owned enterprise were still emerged in non-strategic methods in relation to HRM” (Zheng, et al., 2007, p. 30). Their

approach to HRM was still dominated by traditional practices, with “less focus on strategic selection and performance evaluation” (2007, p 30) According to Huang and Duncan (1997), SOEs that had adopted the enterprise reforms and changed the ways they managed their staffing through various contracting and responsibility systems tended to perform better Biffi (1998) also attributed poor performance among SOEs to nepotism. Hence, moving away from the traditional practices, and the adoption of some 'transformational' HRM practices, such as strategic employee selection and performance evaluation, this might help these enterprises to improve their efficiency and effectiveness This could apply to individual clubs of the G A A as they are small organisations

2 12. Empirical Research

A major article in relation to HRM and nepotism conducted research on the perceptions of HR managers towards nepotism. Abdalla et al. (1994) outline that they found a connection between nepotism and the size, sector and region. Unlike other authors, they found that larger organisations were theatres for nepotism. The research also showed that HR managers found nepotism only complicated their job in relation to organisation policies and functions They also found that it can be hard to deal with respondents that are close friends as well, and this, as already discussed comes in the form of cronyism Other implications of the research showed that there were negative feelings in the organisation if nepotism was present Finally they found that organisations that prohibit nepotism are more effective and that nepotism effects equal opportunity employment or violates this

Finally Abdalla et al. explains that if nepotism is allowed to flourish “Overall, such organisations would not be able to achieve organisational goals, objectives and effectiveness This would generate low morale, frustration and stress, regarding both employees generally and human managers Finally, a serious outcome of such a situation could be a brain-drain” (which is taking place now) from the Third World countries to the advanced, industrial nations” (1994, p 60) It is important to note that in further research carried out by Abdalla et al., they found that not all nepotism was negative “HRMs in developed and less-developed countries tended to be less positive about advantages of nepotism. In contrast, they tended to be more negative about disadvantages of nepotism Cultural differences between HRMs slightly affected their perception toward nepotism. The results of this study suggest that the responding HRMs in both countries include HRMs who had bad experiences, others who had

Nepotism and HRM practices

no experiences, and some who had good experiences with situations involving nepotism” (1998, p 570)

The majority of the literature reviewed in this study has been solution based. As discussed already, the study will focus on the 4th perspective of nepotism provided by Laker and Williams, “The effect of nepotism on employee satisfaction and organisational” Again, it seems to be up to the HRM department to control the practice and how it occurs. From the review we can presume that nepotism can be an effective tool for management whether that be sporting or business organisation, but it is hard to substantiate such comments until we can show actual research carried out. According to Vinton, “nepotism is one of the least studied and most poorly understood human resource practices” (Vinton, 1998, p 298)

Laker and Williams believe that “nepotism can affect an employee’s job satisfaction through their perception of fairness and equity and that these perceptions will also affect an employee’s commitment to the organisation” (2003, p 192). This study aims to prove that this research will be transferable to a sporting organisation. Laker and Williams also explain what organisation commitment is, “Organisational commitment (OCQ) represents the extent to which the employee identifies with the organisation and its goals and the desire to retain membership in the organisation and continue to pursue its goals” (p 195). Organisational commitment is vital to the success of any organisation. Laker and Williams found through their research that if nepotism is present there will be favouritism. This will cause inequity and employee dissatisfaction which will lead to lower commitment and subsequently higher labour costs, another major benefactor to commitment is trust.

Nepotism causes mistrust in organisations. This was found by Keles et al., where they found that unfair selection methods such as nepotism, cronyism and favouritism reduce organisational trust. Keles et al. argue that “the results of the study shows that nepotism, favoritism and cronyism reduce organisational trust in family business” (Keles, 2011, p 13). They explain that there can be many consequences to this “distrust in the management that leads to confrontations between employees and can negatively reduce performance” (p 14).

The work of Araslı et al. (2006) shows the effects of nepotism on human resource management in the case of three, four and five star hotels in Northern Cyprus. This research

was very significant. They found that nepotism had significant negative effects on the three variables. Firstly it affected job satisfaction. This had an effect on the employee's intention to quit and because they had a bad experience of the phenomenon, it caused negative word of mouth for the hotels. This, in turn, led to high turnover of staff, and poor employer brands. They also found that nepotism was not only affecting existing employees, but ambitious managers that wished to join the sector. The research found that HRM "with the evidence of this study, which suggests that HRM boosts job satisfaction and organisational performance if HRM works properly" (Arasli, et al, 2006, p 304). The study also found that job satisfaction had a serious effect on eradicating negative word of mouth and quitting intent. This study suggests in the case of hotels in north Cyprus, that in order to improve organisation performance they need to improve HRM, use Total Quality Management and reduce and eradicate nepotism. Arasli et al state that "unfair incidents occurring because of Nepotism in an organisation such as selection, promotion, delivering equipment, shifting, and rewarding of a family member probably reduce the level of employee satisfaction" (2006, p 307).

Padgett & Morris conducted research on the effects of nepotism in the hiring process and who benefitted from it. They explain that "we found that nepotism was perceived as a less fair hiring process than hiring on the basis of merit" (Padgett & Morris, 2005, p 42). They also found in their paper that nepotism affected job satisfaction and the commitment that members of the organisation gave. Finally, Padgett & Morris found that "subordinates also viewed their managers as less effective due to nepotism selection methods" (2005, p 43).

In his paper, Butte (2011) discusses the issue of nepotism across different parts of the world and gives facts and figures to show that nepotism is alive and kicking all over the world. Ford & McLaughlin found many of the same effects attached to nepotism as other authors. They also identified that "today the concept of nepotism is used for people who misuse their position for the benefit of their families" (1986, p 57). This can be in a sporting organisation or any type of organisation. In his research, Butte found that "working under the instructions of an incapable superior is a disturbing situation for a superior non-family member person. An inequality between the parties occurs here" (Butte, 2011, p 14). Other results of the study show that "lack of confidence, which appears under these circumstances, affects job satisfaction, motivation and performance negatively" (p 14). This leads to poor performance.

Nepotism and HRM practices

as reiterated by Butte “Nepotism in these organisations affects the employees’ working performances” (p 14)

A major finding here was that nepotism affects job satisfaction in a negative way This then affects word of mouth and quitting intention in a negative manner also This is in line with the work of Araslı et al, (2006) as previously reviewed Although, Araslı et al. found that HRM practice could have the opposite effect of that of nepotism, if conducted properly This was in relation to job satisfaction, word of mouth and quitting intention. Many authors have recorded the practice of nepotism across many different organisation as explained “Today nepotism has become a widespread reality in politics, publications and sport” (Joffe, 2004, p 74), family firms (Dyusleroglu, 2006) and the service sector (Araslı et al., 2006, p 296) In reality, the work of Butte (2011) and Araslı et al. (2006) will be applied to sporting organisations

Chapter 3: Problem Definition

Overall research question.

To investigate how Nepotism and HRM practices affect player satisfaction and how this affects intention to quit (commitment) and the reputation of the club

3.1 Aims and objectives

Domegan and Fleming (2007) describe problem definition as the stage where the researcher decides the data and information necessary needed in order to solve the research questions. This will result in a list of objectives. The researcher will use an exploratory method to determine the effects that the two practices, nepotism and HRM, have on player satisfaction and how this in turn will affect intention to quit (commitment) and reputation of the club.

The main objectives of the research are

- To conduct a literature review of Nepotism practice and HRM practices
- To determine whether nepotism or HRM practices has a greater negative or positive effect on player satisfaction
- To determine the effectiveness of the practice and to make recommendations to the organisation

In order to reach the objectives it is necessary for the researcher to have clear research questions that must be addressed. These questions have been devised as follows,

- 1 According to the literature review, what are the effects that each practice has on player satisfaction?
- 2 Is Nepotism a rampant part of the G A A Organisation at club level?
- 3 Is there any evidence of HRM practices within the G A A Organisation at club level?
- 4 How do these phenomena effect player satisfaction?
- 5 How does this in turn effect intention to quit (commitment) and reputation of the club?

3.2 Significance

The purpose of this research is to identify player and ex-player satisfaction levels in relation to nepotism and HRM practices in relation to the G A A at club level. More importantly, it also serves a purpose in giving G A A clubs some guidance in relation to how they might improve player satisfaction using practices designed by HR practitioners

The main significance of the research is that it will give clubs an insight in to how their players perceive the practices of Nepotism and HRM and how both of these can be used to increase player satisfaction. The researcher will also provide recommendations on how clubs can increase player satisfaction and this in turn will lead to positive effects for the clubs not only being studied, but for clubs all over the country

3.3. Process of the research

In order to gain the required data, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a vast but insightful base of information. Due to geographic and time constraints, it was decided not to interview all of the G A A players. Instead, an in-depth questionnaire was used to gather data with existing players. In order to get an insight into why G A A players left their club, a group interview will be held with ex-players who left in the prime of their playing career. Using both of these methods allows the researcher to gain insightful information on the phenomena and an insight into player's attitude to their G A A club. The fact that ex-players and current players were targeted means that both perspectives could be taken into account.

3.4 Outcome of the research

While conducting the research, the researcher aims to establish the phenomena in the organisation. From here, the researcher aims to show whether there is a significant effect on player satisfaction. By conducting research with players and ex-players the researcher aims to give a rounded view of the practices and how they affect player satisfaction.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy adopted in this study as stated is by Saunders et al. guided by a set of assumptions that will 'underpin the research strategy' (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 108). Many authors state that research philosophy will determine the outcome and result in the research. Saunders et al. explain that "research philosophy is the overarching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge in relation to research" (2009, p. 107). In other words, the researcher is developing new knowledge in a particular field. The researcher is basically answering a specific problem within a particular organisation. There are three schools of thought on the research philosophy which will be discussed below. These are ontology, epistemology and axiology.

4.2 Ontology

Wetly (2003) explains ontology 'is the science of what is the kind's and structures of objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in every area of reality. Ontology is, put simply, about existence'. Bryman and Bell illuminate that 'the central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors' (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 22). Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. According to Saunders et al. "this raises the question researchers have about the way the world operates and commitment held to particular views" (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 110). There are two main perspectives in relation to ontology. These come in form of objectivism and subjectivism.

4.2.1 Objectivism

Objectivism, according to Bryman & Bell, 'is an ontological position that implies when social phenomena confront us as external facts which are beyond our reach or influence' (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 22). Here the assumption is that we, as social actors, are powerless to change the phenomena that we face as we do not determine it as it is external to our existence. A good example of this would be a coach or mentor. They are expected to train a

team in a specific way. The objective stance would believe that a coach is no different in any organisation, that their role is the same across all organisations.

4.2.2: Subjectivism

Objectivism is concerned with objective aspects of coaching. On the other hand, subjectivism is, according to Saunders et al. “to do with the way managers themselves attach their own individual meanings to their job and the way they think that those jobs should be performed”. Remenyi et al. stress “the necessity to study the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them. (Remenyi, et al., 1998, p. 35). Here, the term social construction comes to play. The reality is constructed by the social actors. For instance, individuals will have perceived different situations in a variance of ways and as a consequence, brought their own view of the world to bear on the situation. If this is the case, then the team players will not be the only entities in their environment but they will also interpret the phenomena of that environment in different ways. This is how they will attempt to make sense of the phenomena through their own social interactions. According to Saunders et al (2009), this is in line with the interpretivist view of epistemology.

4.3: Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study. Saunders et al. explains that “the most important distinction is in relation to research type (resource researcher) who considers data on resources needed is likely more akin to the stance of the natural scientist” (2009, p. 112). They would see that data being collected is far less biased and therefore objective. On the other hand, the feelings of the researcher according to Saunders et al., who studied feelings and attitudes, also need to be considered. The resource researcher would argue that these cannot be measured, but as Saunders et al. argues “indeed human feeling can and frequently are measured” (p. 13). Bryman & Bell explain that “epistemology concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline’ (2007, p. 16). The researcher will determine what is acceptable. There are three sub sections of epistemology: positivism, realism and interpretivism.

4.3.1: Positivism

According to Remenyi et al., if your research reflects the philosophy of positivism; “You will prefer working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can

be law like generalization similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists” (Remenyi, et al., 1998, p 32) Here, the researcher will use existing data to develop the hypothesis This will then be developed and tested This may lead to the future development of theory which then may be tested by further research. Gill and Johnson (1993) explain that it is highly likely that for a positivist researcher to use a highly structured methodology Saunders et al explains “the emphasis will be quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis” (2009, p 114) However, Saunders et al. also explain that this may always be the case and that it’s perfectly acceptable to take parts of this approach such as hypothesis testing and use with others Questionnaires could be used by positivist

4 3 2 Realism

Realism is the second sub section of epistemology Saunders et al explains that “realism is what the sense show us as reality is the truth, these objects have an existence independent of the human mind” (2009, p 114) There are two types of realism, direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism, according to Saunders et al is “what you see is what you get what we experience through our senses portrays the world accurately” (2009, p 114) Slightly different to this is critical realism. According to Saunders et al., “critical realists argue that what we experience are sensations, the images of the things in real world, not things directly” (2009, p 115) They argue that our senses regularly deceive For instance, artificial flavours and colours may taste like orange but they may not even come close to actual object Bhaskar (1998) argues that a researcher will only be able to identify what is going on in the real world if they can understand the social structures and what has given rise to the phenomena that we are trying to understand

4 3 3 Interpretivism

Saunders et al. explain that interpretivism sees people as social actors They explain that this is an important reference as it suggests people as social actors acting on the stage that is human life Like actors, they interpret their role according to the interpretation. Birks & Malhotra (2005) recognise the interpretivist approach as dynamic where there may be a wide array of interpretations of reality The qualitative research will be gained through a series of questions The phenomena that nepotism is can fall under the two intellectual traditions of interpretivism which are phenomenology and symbolic interaction. This is explained by Saunders et al., “phenomenology refers to the way in which we as Humans make sense of the world around us, in symbolic interactionism. We are continually in the process of interpreting the social world around us, it is in the symbolic interpretation, which leads to adjustment of

Nepotism and HRM practices

our own meanings and actions” (2009, p 116) Nepotism can be viewed as a means to gain ground for family within an organisation. It is only natural that one would want to see their family doing well. This is just a result of phenomenology as we make sense of the world around us. We then use symbolic interaction to adjust our meaning of action in relation to phenomena such as nepotism. It is important to note that no matter what philosophy the researcher adopts, the most important thing is that they get the most accurate information. A group interview may be used here. According to Fisher (2007), there are number of assumptions that a researcher is allowed to make. These form pre-conceptions about a chosen topic, but they should not ‘second guess what they might find on the basis of these preconceptions’

4.4 Axiology

Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgments about values. According to Saunders et al. “this may include values we possess in the fields of aesthetics and ethics. It is the process of social enquiry with which we are concerned here. The role that your own values play at all stages of the research results to be credible” (2009, p 116). Heron (1996) argues that people’s values are the guiding reason of all human action. A good example of this was the Nazi world of Hitler where in his world he saw Jews as bad people. This came from his values because he had seen the world in such a light. It meant that his values were the root cause of the fact that millions of Jews perished.

In order for the researcher to be able to conduct this study thoroughly, it is necessary for two approaches to be adopted. In the initial stages of this research, the positivist stance will be taken as a hypothesis has been built from existing theory and this will be tested when this information has been concluded. Then it will be necessary for the researcher to use the interpretivist approach and this will be to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and effects of that practice on ex-players. This approach can be referred to as pragmatist approach ‘the most important determinant of the epistemology, ontology and axiology you adopt is the research questions as one may be more appropriate than the other for answering particular questions’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p 109). According to Easterby-Smith, a central theme of pragmatism is that ‘in the social world there are no pre-determined theories or frameworks that shape knowledge and understanding’ (Easterby-Smith, 1991, p 76). Here, the researcher

will adopt approaches from both interpretivism and positivism in order to conduct effective research.

4.5 Research approach

Deduction

Deduction involves the building of a theory that is subject to rigorous testing (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Where a deductive theory is used, the researcher develops a theory or hypothesis and applies a research strategy to test it. This is very often associated with quantitative analysis.

Robson (2002) lists five stages of deduction,

- 1 Firstly, the researcher must deduce the hypothesis from the existing theory
- 2 This involves expressing the hypothesis in operational terms. This proposes a relationship between variables
- 3 Then the hypothesis will be tested using a specific strategy
- 4 Then one must examine the specific outcomes of the investigation
- 5 If there is a need one must modify the existing theory

Gill and Johnson (2002) also explain that it will be important to employ an extra characteristic of deduction and this is a control to allow testing of the hypothesis. According to Saunders et al (2009), in order to be able to generalise statistically about regularities in human social behaviour, it is necessary to select samples of sufficient numerical size. This type of research is symbiosis with quantitative data. To build a theory it was here decided to use a questionnaire with 34 items on the questionnaire. This questionnaire was then designed to identify the two practices of which are nepotism and HRM practice. The questionnaire also identifies the effects that the two separate practices had on each of the three variables.

Induction

On the other hand, it is all about building a theory. This means that the researcher will go out and attempt to see what is going on in order to better understand it. Saunders et al argues "the purpose here would be to get a feel of what's going on, so as to understand better the nature of the problem" (2009, p. 126). The researcher will also consider the nature of the problem.

and why the phenomenon is occurring and what affects it having on the organisation. Esterby-Smith et al 2008 suggest that due to this nature, it is important to study small groups to get richer insights to the phenomena, this type of research is associated with qualitative data. The researcher will use small groups called group interviews to gain a good insight into the practices of both nepotism and HRM practice.

Mixed methods

Just like the other philosophies it will be necessary for the researcher to combine both inductive and deductive in order to gain sufficient information. Saunders et al explains “not only is it perfectly possible to combine deduction and induction within the same piece of research, but also in our experience it is often advantageous to do so” (2009, p 127)

4.6 The Purpose of the Research

It's important to note the significance of the research and the results being searched for in terms of questions and research projects. Saunders et al. explains that “the way in which you answer your research question will result in either an exploratory, descriptive or explanatory studies” (2009, p 138)

Explanatory study

This is a valuable means to finding out what is happening to seek new insights to ask questions and assess phenomena in a new light” (Robson, 2002, p 59) It is particularly useful if one wishes to clarify their understanding of a phenomenon. Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) explain that it can be likened to activities such as travelling or exploring one of its main advantages is that it is flexible and adaptable to change. Adams and Schvaneveldt explain that this does not lack direction, but rather what initially starts as a broad research topic will narrow as the researcher goes along.

Descriptive study

The objective of this research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Robson, 2002, p 59) Saunders et al. illuminates the fact that descriptive is a means to an end, but not an end in itself. Although it can provide some very interesting information, it can give the explanation for these, so it is useful to follow this up with explanatory research.

Explanatory study

According to Saunders et al, “these studies that established casual relationships between variables may be termed explanatory research” (2009, p 140) It may be necessary to explain the relationship between variables for instance the relationship between nepotism and player satisfaction, explanatory research can help one do this Robson understand that main reasons for this research is ‘to explain patterns relating to the phenomena being researched and identify relationships between aspects of the relationships’ (2002, p 59-60)

4 7 Data Collection

What has been established is the research philosophy and purpose of the research. It is crucial that the researcher understands the type of methods they will use to collect the data required as this is a crucial element in the research.

4 8 Qualitative Research

According to Saunders et al (2009), explanatory research can be used to conduct qualitative studies Due to the nature of the study, it is desirable to use qualitative methods in order to gain a better insight into the practice Qualitative research can be beneficial because as Healy and Rawlinson (1993) identify, there are three characteristics of qualitative data ,

- Based on meaning expressed through words
- Collection results based on non-standardised data requiring classification in categories
- Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation

There were many other reasons for the use of qualitative methods A major reason is the flexibility offer for obtaining answers as a structured answer might not get the correct result It also offers the use of semi structured questions giving more insight to questions and a better understanding of them.

4 9 Selecting an Applied Research Method

Rogan (2003) explains that there are three main methods used by qualitative researchers These are in-depth interviews, group interviews and projective techniques The main methods that will be used by the researcher will be a group interview with a group of ex-players

Nepotism and HRM practices

between the ages of 18-25. Only one group interview will be conducted. This is the prime senior hurling age. The use of a semi-structure will be used to gain insight into the phenomena. The semi-structured interview as explained by Saunders et al (2009), allows the use of omitting some questions in particular focus groups. Also, researchers can change and introduce new questions in order to get root of the variables. The focus groups will be conducted, and the participants will be assured of their anonymity and this will be agreed in writing. The aim is that the focus groups will disclose more information once the individuals know that their anonymity will be protected, as this will give them a high sense of security.

Saunders et al (2009) argue that diverse groups can fuel or generate a number of ideas and evaluate them, in turn this then helps the researcher explain or explore the phenomena. In relation to this project, the researcher hopes to get more in-depth insight into the phenomena and of nepotism and merit selection methods. The researcher aims to explore how these have affected ex-players that are still eligible to play. Here, people will challenge one another's ideas in a controlled environment with a facilitator that can keep the discussion on track in an orderly way.

There are various limitations to focus groups. Firstly, respondents may not trust one another and may not feel comfortable to speak out. Another major limitation is that a strong personality could take over the research process reducing depth and insight. Smithson (2000) argues that it is crucial to analyse focus groups' data in ways which do not ignore these limitations. Domegan and Fleming (1999) also argue that the success of these group interviews depends very much on the facilitator. For this part of the research, the service of a trained facilitator has been acquired as it is important to get the findings in a fair and impartial manner. The facilitator, Sheila Shortall is a skilled communicator who has been recognised for her achievements in Toastmasters. She has achieved the highest certification D T M (Distinguished Toastmaster) from that organisation. She also received the outstanding Toastmaster of the Year title in 1999 for District 71 (Ireland and England). She is a trained business, interview and life coach and works extensively in this area. She has also facilitated many group discussions for different organisations. She is also the co-author of the book *"Better Communication and How to Achieve It"*. It is hoped that Sheila can bring her years of experience to the focus group, to be impartial to the group interview and to get the best data possible.

4.10 Quantitative Research

For the purpose of the research, quantitative research will be the primary source of information to determine the relationship among the variables. It will have to be conducted firstly and only then, the researcher may conduct the qualitative research to gain more of an insight into the variables and their consequences. According to Saunders et al., “quantitative is predominately used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as questionnaires’) or data analysis procedures (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or use numerical data (2009, p 151). The main research method that will be used is surveys and this comes in the form of questionnaires. Saunders et al. explain that surveys are good because they allow the researcher to collect a sizeable amount of data over a large population in an economical manner. This strategy allows the researcher to collect quantitative data which can be analysed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Finally, it is important to note that the limitations of such a method, comes in the form of insight whilst it will give clear measurable answers. It will also lack insight for these phenomena and why they occur. While quantitative research is a useful tool in that it allows the researcher to gain a general overview of the groups perception of the issue, it is often criticised for failing to recognise the difference between the ‘social world’ and the ‘natural world’ where the natural world follows a specific order and the social world is more subjective (Saunders, 2009).

4.11 Multiple Methods Choice

For the purpose of this research, the researcher will use a stage of mixed methods to conduct the research. Firstly, questionnaires will be used to collect information from a number of different senior G A A clubs. Once this has been done, ex-players between the ages of 18-25, who are still eligible to play, will be interviewed using group interviews to get their insight into the phenomena. Curran and Blackburn (2001) outline where a single research study may use quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination, as well as use primary and secondary research data. Saunders et al. explain that this type of research can be identified as “Mono Methods”. For the purpose of this research, mixed methods research will be used.

4.12 Time Horizon

Saunders et al. explain that it is important for a researcher to determine whether he is taking a snapshot of a phenomenon at a particular time or whether he is trying to put together a series of these snapshots over a period of time. Saunders et al. highlights “the snapshot time horizon is cross-sectional studies and the longitudinal is the series of snapshots or diary” (2009, p. 155). He also explains that neither time horizon is akin to research strategy, for the purpose of this research a cross-sectional time horizon will be adopted. This will give a snapshot of the phenomena occurring in these small organisations. Easterby-Smith (2008) explains that cross-sectional studies often employ the survey strategy. In other words, it can be used to describe the phenomenon occurring in the GAA Clubs.

4.13 Data Collection Methods

Populations and Samples

Saunders et al. explains that “the full set of cases from which a sample is called a population” a sample is necessary as it would be impossible to interview entire organisations or particular generations. This would be mainly due to size and cost associated with doing so. Henry (1990) explains that using samples can be more accurate than a census. This is due to the fact that more time can be spent on designing, collating and figuring out the collected data. Also, this can be beneficial to the amount of data collected and the time spent in the analysis of that particular data. Whilst conducting the research there will be two sample groups. The first will be consisted of five hurling clubs with all senior eligible players desired to complete the survey. The second group will be much smaller and will consist of ex-players between the ages of 18-25. When choosing the sample respondents, the researcher will use “simple random sampling” for both samples. Saunders et al. states that it “involves selecting a sample at random from the sampling frame using random number tables” (2009, p. 222). Saunders et al. also explains that it is important that the sample is random as this eliminates bias.

Ethical Issues and Procedures

Due to the nature of the project, anonymity and confidentiality guarantees will be put in place. Also, the researcher will treat the respondents and the candidates with the utmost respect and avoid unfair and unjust treatment while interviewing candidates. According to Domegan and Fleming (2007), no respondent will be forced to take part, only encouraged.

The subject itself is sensitive area and could cause a lot of controversy. The researcher will have to take the sensitive nature of the subject into account and be discreet and diplomatic when carrying out the research. The facilitator of the focus group interview will also be aware of this sensitivity, as it is imperative that no one is insulted in the process. The questions on the questionnaire should be written in a sensitive manner.

It was decided that the questionnaire be compiled in a way that gave the participants the opportunity to look at many different aspects of their G A A club. The research area could be deemed to be of a sensitive nature, therefore, it was felt that the respondents could have felt under threat and may have had a reluctance to complete it if the researcher had narrowed it down to the questions that were specific to the research question.

4.14 Qualitative Analysis

This is a very important part of the research process. Saunders et al (2009) identifies many different means for analysing the data, which come in the form of template analysis, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, analytical induction. One common feature across qualitative analysis approaches is the requirements of the researcher to disaggregate the mass of qualitative data collected, this allows the researcher to rearrange and analyse these data systematically and rigorously. All of these are used as inductive methods. For the purpose of this paper, template analysis will be used. Saunders et al explain that "template analysis involves developing categories and attaching each category to the units of data that are coded and analysed to identify and explore themes, patterns and relationships" (p. 506). This allows the researcher to rearrange and analyse these data systematically and rigorously. Following this approach essentially means transforming the nature of the data collected in order to allow the researcher to

1. Comprehend and manage them
2. Integrate related data drawn from different transcripts and notes
3. Identify key themes or patterns from them for further exploration
4. Develop or test hypothesis based on the apparent relationships
5. Draw and verify conclusions (Saunders et al 2003)

The template analysis is essentially an inductive and deductive method. This is because the codes are determined before the data collection. These are determined from the secondary data, and then once the data is collected they can be amended or changed or even discarded.

Nepotism and HRM practices

Template analysis gives the research a greater amount of flexibility. This can be crucial when trying to answer the research question once the relationship between variables has been identified the research will seek to prove or disprove them against the secondary data collected. Finally, King (2004) explains as cited in Saunders (2009) "that the template may be revised until all of the data collected have been coded and analysed carefully." This will mean that it will serve as a key analytical tool which will be revised and changed until it suits. It will then be a means to represent key themes and relationships in the data.

4.15 Limitations

It is important to talk about the limitations of the methodology in relation to the qualitative data gathered. This information would have been adversely affected if this had been done first hand by the researcher. This is due to the researcher's close relationship to the GAA and his involvement with his own club. It was felt that if the researcher conducted the group interview that the data could have been affected with possible bias. For this reason, and in order to improve the quality and accuracy of the data and remove bias, a trained facilitator was used. The facilitator conducted the complete group interview with questions designed by the researcher based around the research objectives.

Another important limitation was in relation to the distribution of the surveys. The researcher used many different distribution methods, some were sent by e-mail, some sent by post and some delivered by hand. The surveys were not collected the day they were distributed as it was a detailed survey and people needed time to complete them. This meant the researcher had to rely on the integrity of the club to have the surveys completed and returned. 68% of the surveys handed out were returned. This required intense follow up by the researcher. It also meant that in some clubs surveyed, the GAA clubs could have controlled the answering of the surveys, by giving them to players that they felt would represent them in the best possible light, as this would have been a means to protect the self-interest of a select few.

Finally, a major limitation was the protectionism of these clubs. One club would only allow the surveys to be conducted after it was ratified by the executive committee. It is important to note also that people take great pride in their GAA clubs and have a sense of ownership, and this will be seen throughout the analysis. This pride and ownership means people are

A study of G A A clubs

very protective of their club Therefore, the researcher had to be very careful and diplomatic in his approach to the research.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

The final questionnaire was compiled in a way that gave the participants the opportunity to look at many different aspects of their G A A club. The research area could be deemed to be of a sensitive nature. Therefore, it was felt that the respondents could have felt under threat and may have had a reluctance to complete it if the researcher had narrowed it down to the questions that were specific to the research question. In compiling the survey in this way, it was an opportunity to the participants to get a greater insight into their clubs in general and it also gave the researcher the opportunity to research the overall research question. 210 surveys were distributed to 15 different clubs and 143 surveys were returned from 11 different clubs.

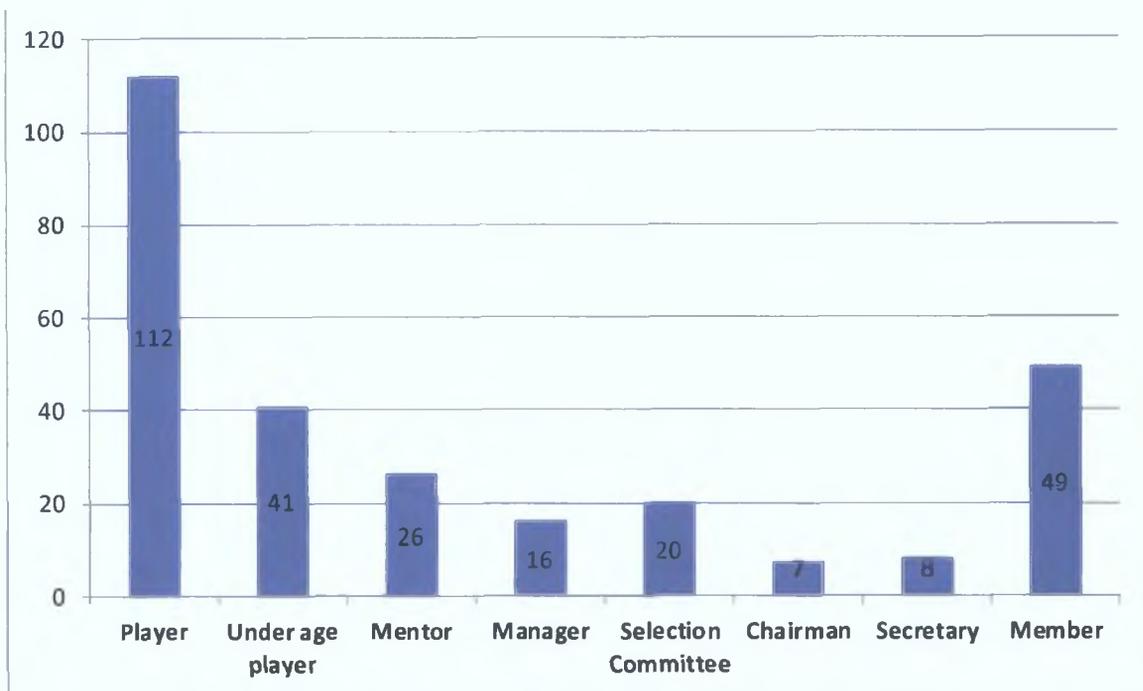
The main aim was to survey players only. However, the researcher decided to include different stakeholders in the survey to get a broader viewpoint and to avoid unnecessary resistance from clubs as this showed it to be more inclusive and gave the opportunity to all stakeholders to answer and reflect on many different aspects of their club.

5.2 Findings

Questionnaires were distributed to clubs in Dublin, Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught. The researcher did not receive any surveys back from the Ulster region. The researcher did however follow up on all surveys distributed. Most respondents had a number of different roles in their club as shown in Figure 1.1. However, due to the survey being focused at players, it was apparent that 112 of the respondents were players.

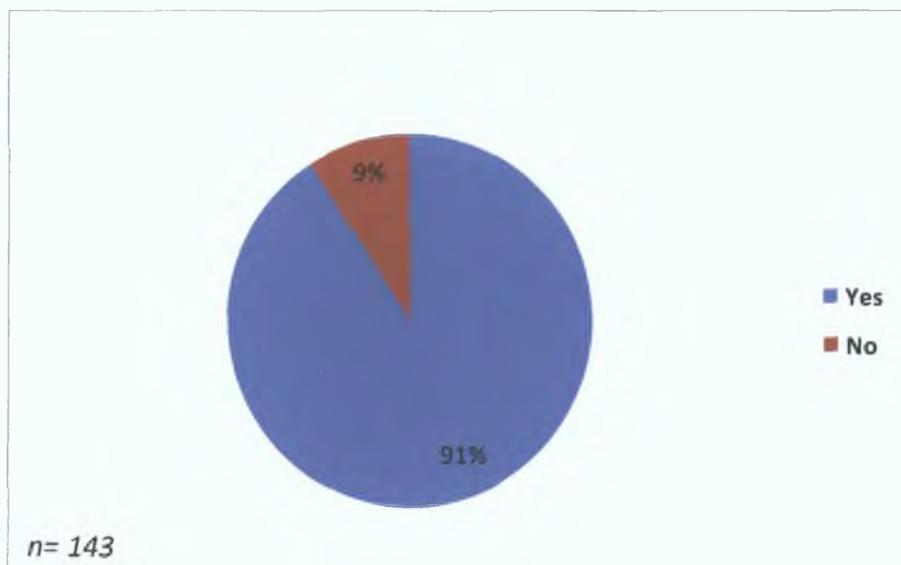
It is also important to remember that the researcher will use the data to distinguish between the two separate practices of HRM and Nepotism and how these both of these effect individual affect the three variables.

Fig. 1.1: What capacity is/was your involvement?



Looking at the findings, it is interesting to see that of the 143 respondents, 91% had other family members involved (Fig. 1.2). The results here show that all clubs seem to have strong family connections. This seems to be significant across all of the 5 areas studied. Family seems to be at the grass roots of the organisation. This was a good finding for an organisation that places itself as the heart of any community.

Fig. 1.2: Are any of your family members involved in the club?

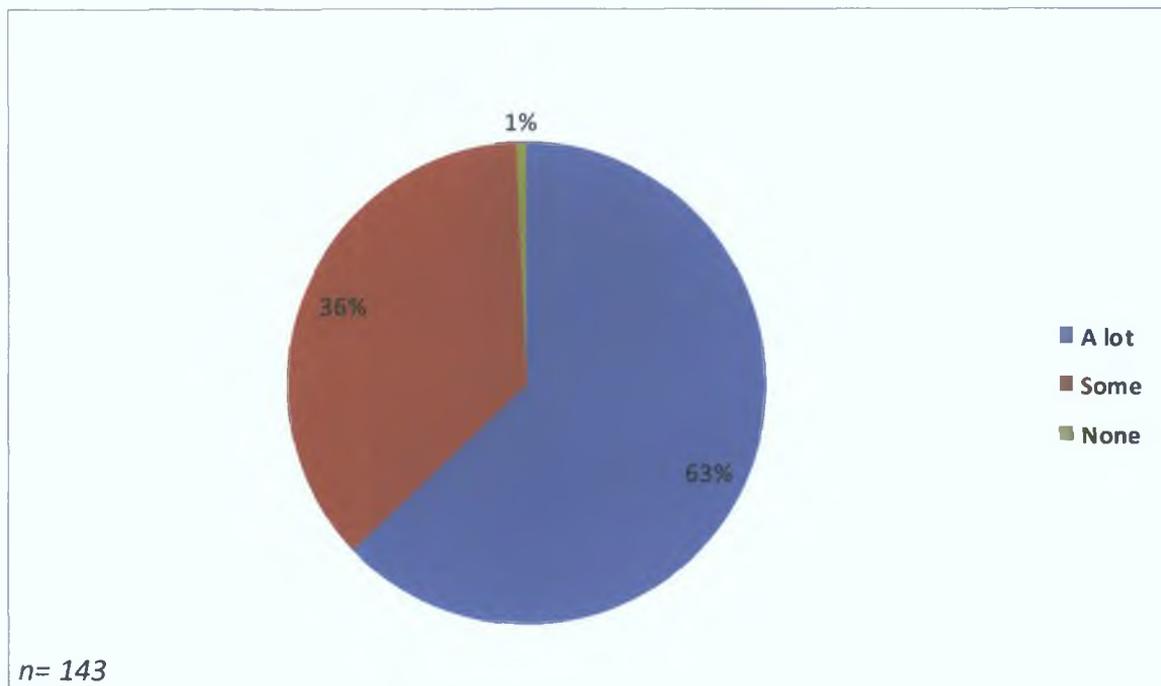


Nepotism and HRM practices

In trying to determine the level of HRM practices in the G.A.A clubs, the question was asked: How much of a contribution does your G.A.A club make towards the development of its players (Fig. 1.3). 63% of respondents agreed that their G.A.A made a lot of a contribution to it players. 36% agree that their G.A.A. Club made some contribution towards its players. Less than 1% of respondent said no contribution is made by the G.A.A. Club. The results here are not of any surprise to the researcher. The G.A.A and its clubs make an enormous contribution to the communities in which they operate. They help many people develop their skills, build self – confidence and they also build team morale.

68% respondents said that their clubs contributed to skills improvement, 64% said that their club contributed to team building , 33% said their club contributed to self –esteem and 8% felt it contributed in other ways.

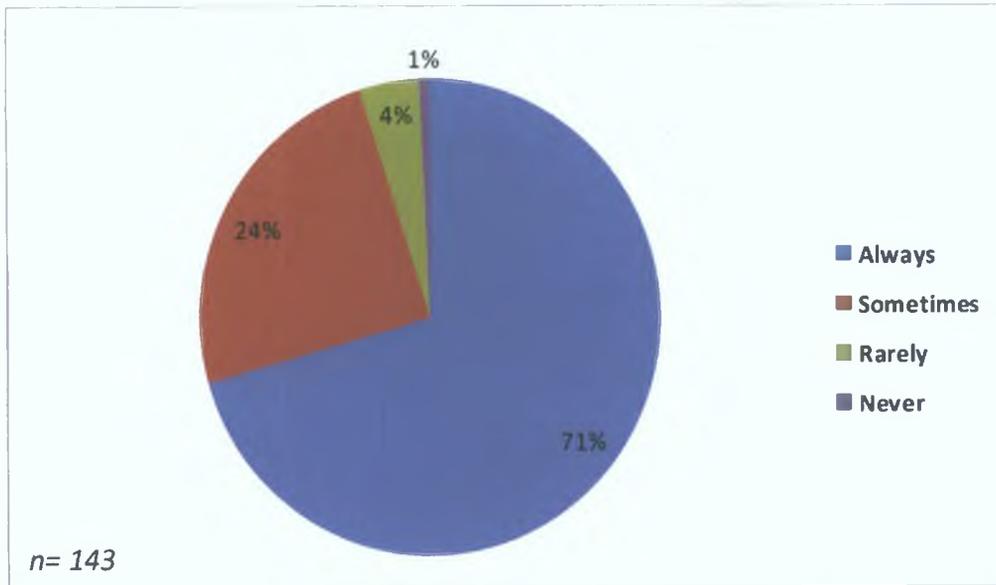
Fig. 1.3: How much of a contribution does your G.A.A Club make towards the development of its players?



It is important to note that a very significant figure of 71% was recorded for respondents who always felt a part of their G.A.A club (Figure 1.4). 24% responded 'sometimes' and less than 5% responded 'rarely or never'. Analysing this from both sides of the spectrum it is important to note that these surveys were conducted with stakeholders of their particular G.A.A club. This means that these respondents can be classified as the in-group. It would be natural that

most of these respondents would feel a part of their G.A.A club. But on the other hand, the findings are significant and good indicators for the clubs involved.

Fig. 1.4: Do you always feel part of your G.A.A Club?



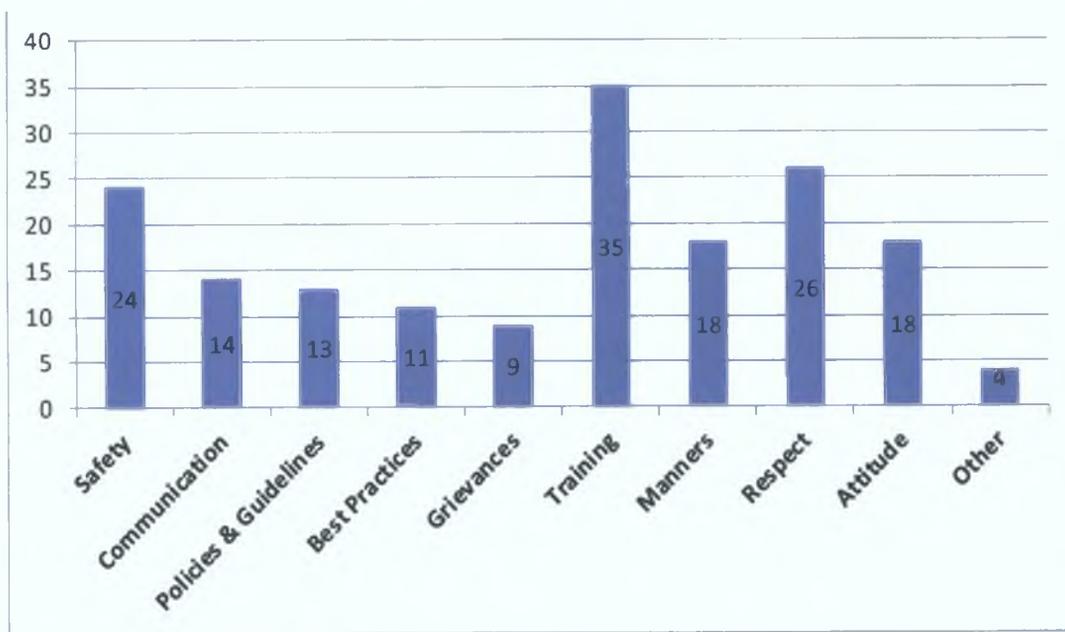
In trying to determine the main detriments of each G.A.A club, the researcher decided that it was significant to determine if there was an induction programme in place for G.A.A. clubs. Only 31% responded that there is an induction programme in place for all players. An induction programme is another tool of HRM where new members of the organisation get to know the values, the mission and the vision of the organisation.

These 31% were then asked what was covered on the induction programme (Fig. 1.5). 25% responded that best practice was one of the areas covered. This represents less than 8% of the total surveyed. This is one of the most prominent features of the G.A.A strategy 2009 -2015. A similar finding is true of communication, with that option scoring just marginally higher than best practices on the induction programmes. Communication is a major component of the success of any organisation. Addressing grievance procedures scored marginally lower.

A more significant factor for these clubs is that attitude and respect were represented by a significantly higher percentage, respect showing a response of 59% and attitude showing a response of 41%, but considering that there were 143 surveyed, the figures are 18% and 13% respectively. These attributes are other important factors in the G.A.A. In relation to strategy, it is encouraging that there are higher numbers showing here. Finally, of the 44 that answered yes to an induction programme being in place, 80% said training was addressed.

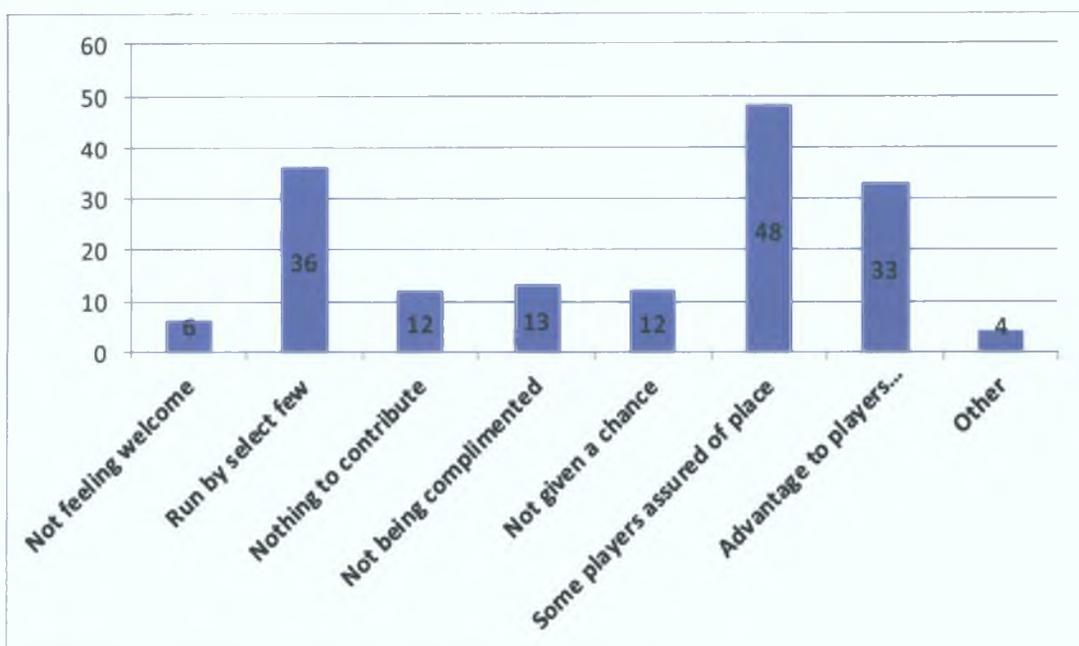
Nepotism and HRM practices

Fig. 1.5: If yes, which of the following are addressed? $n=44$



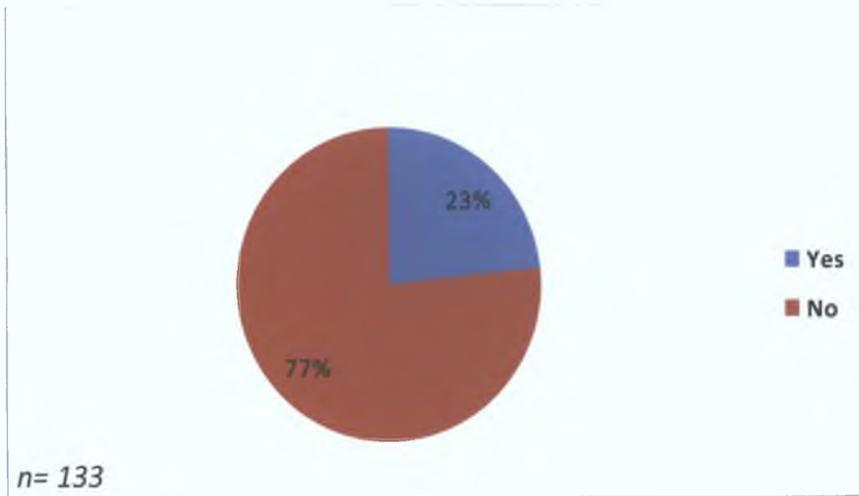
When asked ‘What do you enjoy least about your club?’ the most significant figure here was that 35% of the respondents felt that some players were assured of their place regardless of their current form. It is very interesting to note that 24% of respondents felt that players that were connected to management had an advantage over those that were not, with 26% of respondents feeling that the club was ran by a select few. These figures together represent over 71% of the options available (Fig. 1.6)

Fig. 1.6: What do you enjoy least about the club? $n=138$



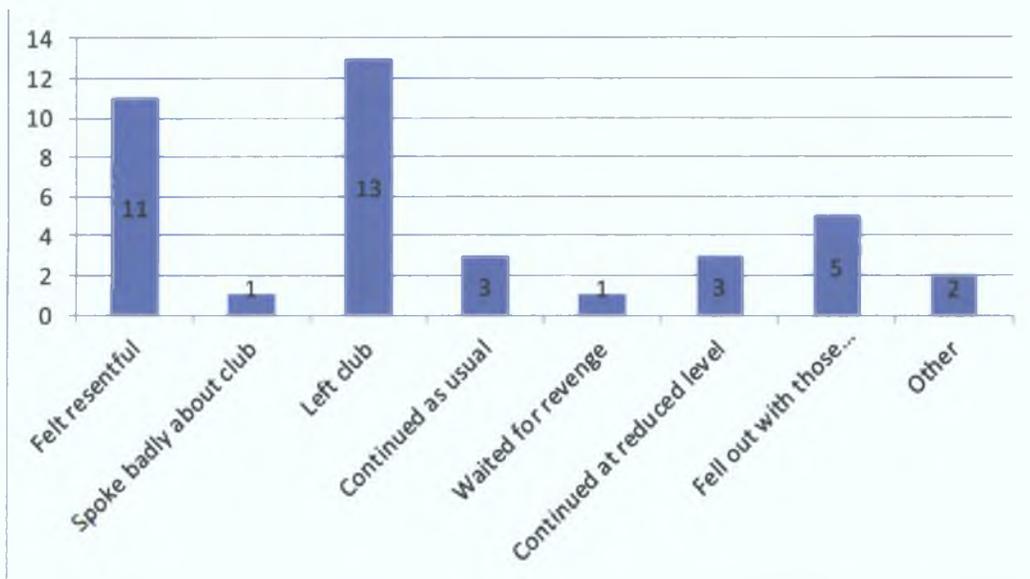
When asked about grievances, 133 of the 143 respondents answered. Of these, 31 respondents had grievances with their G.A.A clubs. This was a surprising figure as it would be easy to assume that this figure would have been higher (Fig. 1.7)

Fig. 1.7: Did you ever have a grievance with your G.A.A club?



Of the respondents who had a grievance with their G.A.A club, 59% had a satisfactory outcome, with 57% of respondents agreeing that the proper procedures were in place for grievances to be handled. For those who were dissatisfied with the outcome of their grievance procedures, 42% left their club, 16% fell out with the people they felt responsible and 35% felt resentful towards their club. Another 10% remained in the club, but at a reduced level (Fig.1.8)

Fig. 1.8: If No, how did you deal with it?



Nepotism and HRM practices

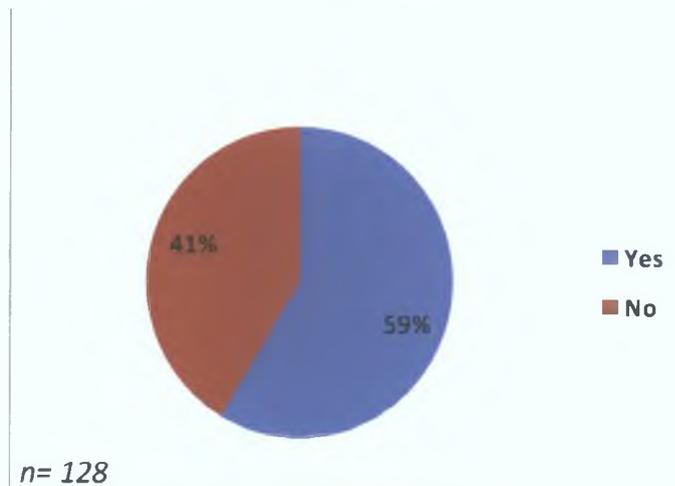
When respondents were asked what structures could be put in place in order to avoid such breakdowns in relationships, 24% (Fig. 1.9) responded that selection should be based on the correct skills mix and is not biased under any circumstances. This was the highest figures recorded in this particular question and highlights the negative attitude towards nepotism

Fig. 1.9: If no, what structures could be put in place to avoid breakdown in relationships?



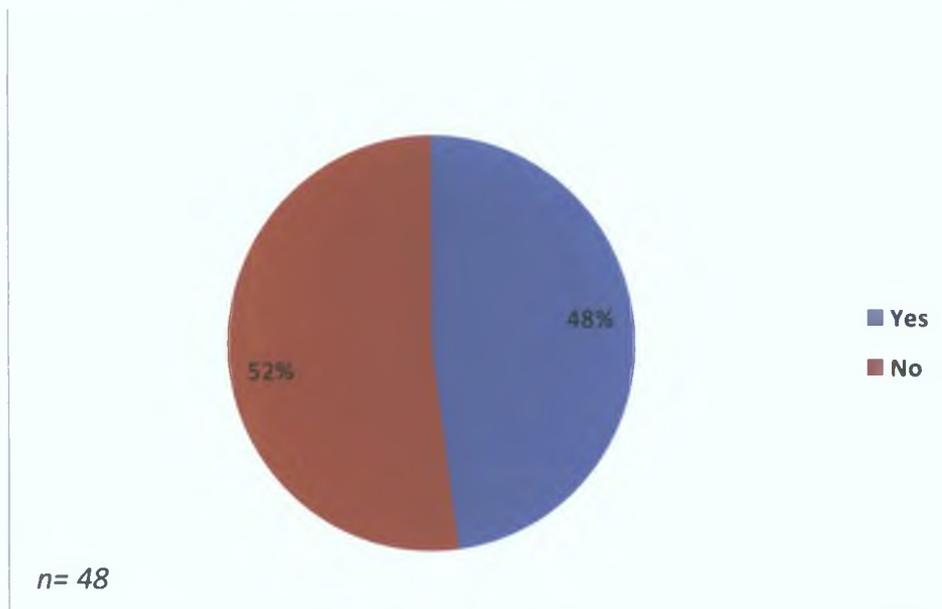
Question 23 aimed to measure if appraisals existed in an informal way. 49% responded that they received feedback from management; however, 19% felt they received no feedback. This shows that appraisals exist in an informal manner in these clubs. When asked did they receive constructive criticism, 59% felt that they did. However, 41% felt they did not. While there is a majority of players receiving constructive criticism, 41% is still a significant figure of players that feel they do not receive it. This raises the question of why so many do not receive constructive criticism. (Fig. 1.10)

Fig. 1.10: Do you get constructive criticism on your performance on a regular basis?



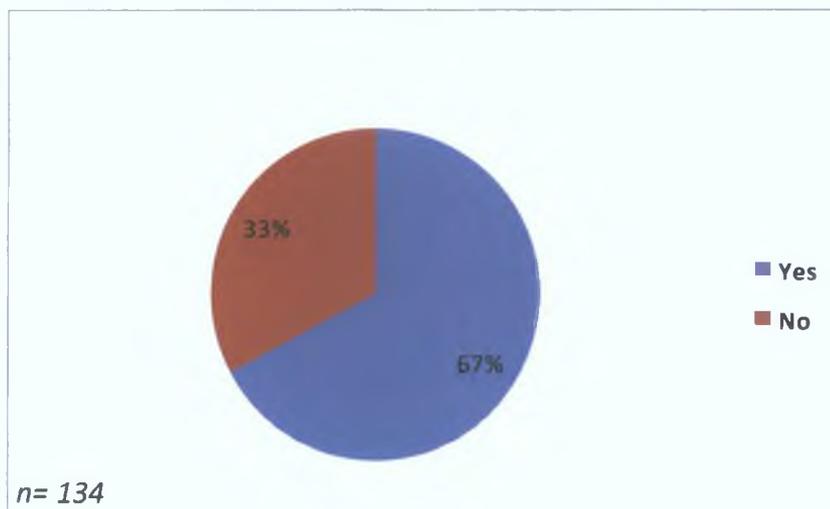
In determining the satisfaction levels that this feedback could bring about, Question 25 asked 'Could this affect your team spirit and morale if not received?' 52% of respondents said 'Yes' and 48% said 'No'. If no, does this affect your team spirit and morale? (Fig. 1.11)

Fig 1.11: Does this affect your team spirit and morale?



67% of respondents felt that teams were selected in a fair manner. This is still a worrying figure, as 33% of the respondents felt that they were not (Figure 1.12). Question 28 asked 'Has conflict been generated due to the selection process?'. 53% answered that there was conflict generated due to the selection process. These are all significant factors to the overall results.

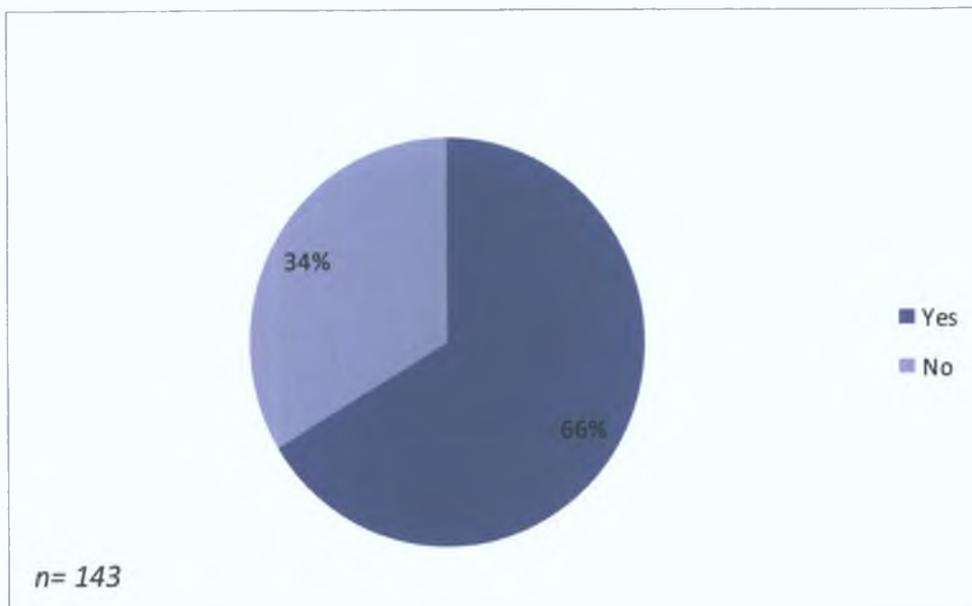
Fig. 1.12: Do you think teams are selected in a fair and impartial manner?



Nepotism and HRM practices

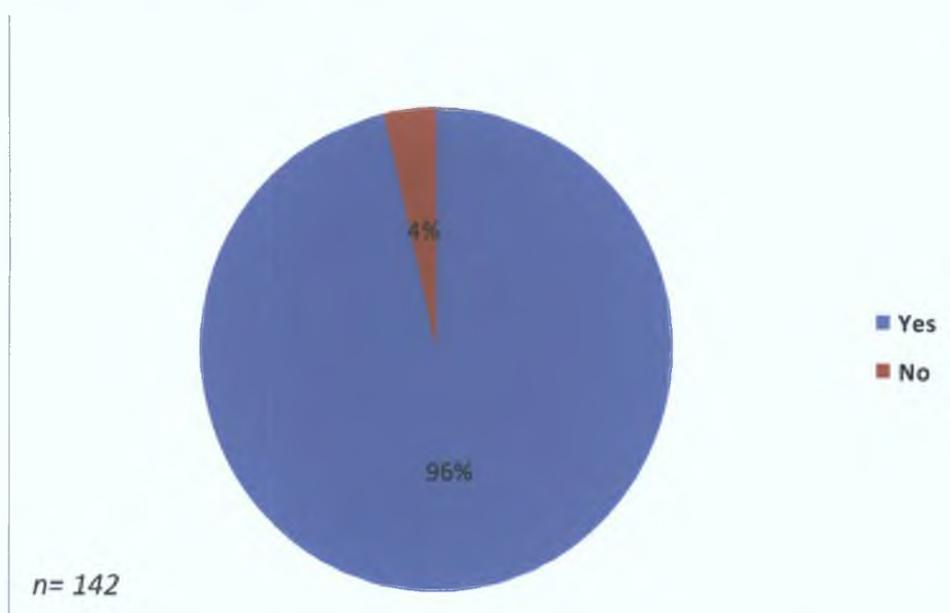
An overwhelming 66% of respondents agreed that a family tradition in hurling and football makes it easier for players to be selected on a team. This gives a sense of the family ties in the G.A.A and the possible advantage that these ties can give a player. (Fig. 1.13)

Fig. 1.13: Do you think a family tradition in hurling and/or football makes it easier for players to get selected on the team?



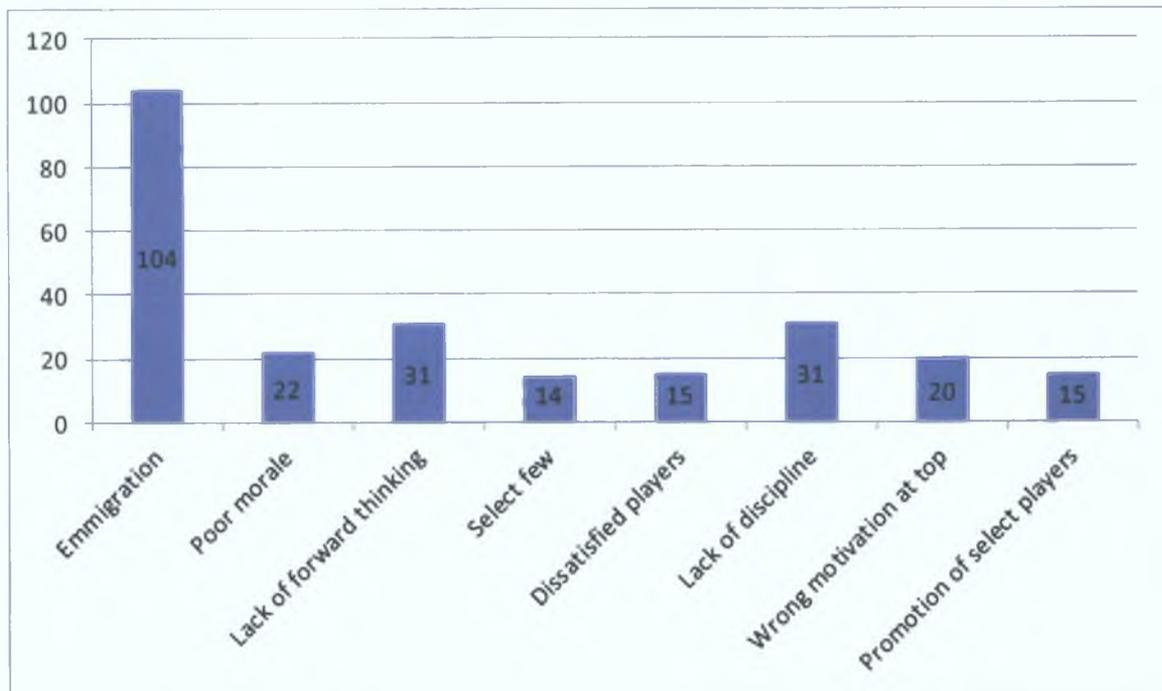
In answering the research question fully, the survey asked 'Would you recommend your club to potential new recruits?' An overwhelming 96% of respondents said that they would recommend their club to potential new recruits (Fig. 1.14)

Fig. 1.14: Would you recommend your club to potential new recruits?



When asked 'What are the main threats to your G.A.A. club?', emigration was seen as the main threat to G.A.A clubs. Excluding emigration, 22% felt that a lack of discipline was the greatest threat to G.A.A clubs. This lack of commitment as already recorded, has a clear link with unfair selection practices such as nepotism. Respondents felt that a lack of forward thinking was a significant threat represented by a similar figure of 22%. It should be mentioned that 15% of respondents felt that poor morale was a real threat to G.A.A clubs. (Fig. 1.15)

Fig. 1.15: What do you consider the most significant threat to your G.A.A Club?



Chapter 6: Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In addition to 143 questionnaires received back from eleven clubs, a group interview was also conducted with four ex-players from the GAA. All players were originally from the same club. The participants were between the ages of 18-25, all four would be at a prime age to participate in hurling. The participants can be identified as AM, BM, CM and DM, M standing for male respondent, the first group was male ex-players, this part of the study was conducted by a trained facilitator so that it was impartial and completely non-biased. As stated in the methodology chapter, this facilitator only had one part to play in this work and that was to extract the information from the members of the group interview.

The researcher had no hand, act or part to play in extracting the information from this interview group. The researcher designed the research questions around the hypothesis and then these questions were then provided to the facilitator. The four candidates were picked from a group of ten using random sampling techniques. The information gained from all 4 candidates was also transcribed from the facilitator. The researcher was given the information to analyse.

The researcher analysed both qualitative and quantitative data. This analysis was done to try and answer the research question, and give a broader picture of the practices involved and how they affect the variables.

6.2 Nepotism

From this survey, it was determined that 91% of respondents had relations in their GAA clubs. This, however, does not represent nepotism. What does indicate nepotism is the most negative change in the organisations. The most significant figure here was that 35% of respondents felt that some players were assured of their place regardless of their current form. This could be due to a number of reasons, but it is extremely interesting to note that 24% of respondents felt that players that were connected to management had an advantage over the one that were not, with 26% of respondents feeling that the club was ran by a select few. These figures show that connections with management give players an unfair advantage, which leads to them gaining their place on the team regardless of their current form. These

figures appear to determine that nepotism is practiced in G A A clubs, and that there seems to be a minority in control of these G A A clubs. Another figure that confirms the practice is that 66% of respondents agreed that a family tradition in hurling and football makes it easier for players to be selected on a team. Firstly, this is supported by Groothuis (2007) where he talks about the brand naming helping players reach the top ranks. This family tradition seems to suggest positions of power within the club. This practice would go against the overall vision of the organisation. The feeling that clubs are ran by a select few is a worrying statistic for the G A A as they believe that inclusion and integrations of all people is key to their success. This position of power seems to be the root cause to this practice. An interesting figure here is that 15% of respondents felt that “no change of personnel” was the worst change and a similar figure of 21% responded the best change was “change of personnel”.

These figures indicate that people holding a position of power for too long can have a negative effect on the club. This has affected satisfaction levels of respondents with change of personnel having a positive effect. This means status quo should change in order for best practice and fair procedure to work. As already shown, there is a direct link between position of power and nepotism. This shows that nepotism has a negative effect on the satisfaction levels of respondents. From this research, it is evident that in order to avoid nepotism and dissatisfaction within clubs, people should change their position of power on a regular basis and as suggested in surveys there should be a maximum length in the different managerial roles.

Butte (2011) discusses the issue identified, today the concept of nepotism is used for people who misuse their positions for the benefit of their families. This was reiterated in the group interviews, all of the participants said that a selector can't be impartial if you are connected to a player. They felt that at underage level a number of parents were part of the selection team and in some cases that these selectors were selecting from the same set of players for up to eight years, this prevented players from getting exposure from different mentors and it also meant that the same players may have had an advantage for the formative years. This was also supported by Groothuis (2007) in his work. It also supports the human capital transfer from manager to son as outlined by Groothuis (2007). This is the transfer of skills and knowledge from father to son.

Nepotism and HRM practices

This would suggest that Nepotism is a part of the G A A at club level and does have negative effects on player perception. When the focus group were asked the question about merit selection, BM suggested that in order to lessen nepotism “Mentors that want to promote the game of hurling should stay with the one age group for a period of time and not move up as their own children move to the next age level.” This is reiterated in the literature review Groothuis (2007) explains the unfair advantages of being a son of an already established driver in NASCAR racing. This seems to bear evidence in the G A A. This is further reiterated by CM when being interviewed about conflict in relation to the selection process. He felt that all players were not treated the same, “if you had a connection to the selection team, you were assured of your place, except in the case of an injury” As a result of these situations both players felt distant from their club. CM’s perception does prove nepotism exists and it is practiced in G A A clubs.

It is evident from the group interview that nepotism is having negative effects on players. In the survey, the highest recorded figure of 8 choices was that 24% of respondents felt that selection should be based on the correct skills mix and is not biased under any circumstances. Again, the survey shows high percentages towards select few, tradition in the sport and unfair advantage due to connections. These highlight the negative attitude towards nepotism. This was illuminated in the literature review where Arasli et al (2006) found that nepotism had significant negative effect on employees. This shows that regardless of the organisation, the size, the place, the type, nepotism has negative effects on people in general. It is, however, important to remember that nepotism is good for small family run organisation such as these clubs as it provides an efficient way to identify dedicated personnel to staff such an organisation. Barmash (1986) pointed out that new firms would not have the financial resources to pay top salaries or to fund huge recruitment drives and that nepotism was a good means to gaining an actual committed people that wanted to see the success of the organisation. It is important to note that this seems to be a major component to the running of these G A A clubs. A final point here is that not selecting these people, because of who they are related to, is not good practice. This was also identified by Ford & McLaughlin. Where they explain that, “cutting nepotees out of selection is unjustified and you’re cutting a whole talent pool out of the organisation. This would suggest working with nepotism?” (Ford & McLaughlin, 1986)

6 3. Grievance procedures

Because HRM practices for the purpose of this research is being studied separately to nepotism, it was therefore important to determine the HRM practice most applicable to a G A A club if not already in existence. The researcher decided that Grievance, Appraisals and Merit selection would be the most applicable. So these were included in the study of both quantitative and qualitative research.

Of the 143 surveys, only 31 respondents had grievances with their G A A clubs. This was a surprising figure as it would have been assumed that this figure would have been higher. This again could be attributed to the in-groups and out-groups in organisations. In this research the in-group seems to be all of the current members of the organisation, whilst the out group seems to be all the ex-players. The in-group is likely to have considerably less conflict with the organisation. Again, more evidence exists from the research where the ex-players had a rate of 50% in relation to grievance with their G A A club. When questioned about this, DM immediately answered, "I had a grievance, I brought this grievance to the attention of Club officials and I felt I was ignored". He also felt he was punished for airing his grievance as the selection committee didn't give him any playing time after that event.

CM said that he also had a grievance, but he decided to say nothing as he was afraid it would affect his chances of future selection. BM stated that he had no grievance, but he felt mentors should not be directly connected to the team players as this creates a conflict of interest. Interestingly, this shows the negative attitude towards the practice of nepotism. On the other hand, when participants were asked "What was the outcome of this and similar episodes on the team?" CM explained that it lessened team morale, as some players sided with the player and others sided with the selection committee. It also created doubt in some player's minds as they too felt vulnerable. DM contributed that it lessened the confidence of the player and as a result they started to look at other options and other sports to fulfill their sporting ambitions.

These findings point to significant problems with the G A A clubs. These problems not only lead to dissatisfaction internally, but other people end up leaving their clubs due to the lack of best practices within their club. Again, it is significant to note that 50% of the out-group had a grievance. All their grievances had not been dealt with correctly and had not a satisfactory outcome. This would suggest that ex-players are members of an out-group that did not fit in with the in-group. This eventually led them to leaving their club. It is important to note the group did not feel that their club, located in North Tipperary did not have the right procedures.

Nepotism and HRM practices

in place to deal with grievance. They felt that introducing grievance procedure practices would increase their satisfaction levels. In relation to the surveys, 57% of respondents (in-group) agreed that the proper procedures were in place for grievance to be handled. The fact that 59% were satisfied with the outcome's results shows that grievance procedures can have a positive effect. This shows that this HRM practice has a significant positive effect on all of the clubs and the respondents of the survey.

6.4 Appraisals

The second HRM practice that was deemed applicable was appraisals. Both the quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques try to determine how this affected satisfaction levels and if this practice even existed even in an informal manner. Appraisals are the use of feedback and communication to improve performance. This should be communicated between players and one of the selection committee. In trying to measure if the tool existed in an informal way, the survey determined 49% received feedback from management, however, 19% felt they received no feedback. This shows that appraisals exist in an informal manner in these clubs. When asked did they receive constructive criticism, 57% felt that they did, however, 43% felt they did not. Even though the majority of players receiving constructive criticism, 43% are still a significant figure of players that feel that they do not. This raises the question why so many do not receive constructive criticism.

In the group interview, AM said he had got some feedback on an ad hoc basis. All of the other participants felt they got little or no feedback. Again, it is important to note that 75% of the out-group had little or no feedback. Again, this figure is higher than the in-group which would suggest neglecting some members of the club, and suggests that not all players are treated the same. Another important factor that came from this study was the belief that this tool could definitely improve performance. BM stated that even a meeting with the coach would be useful. The last question here was "Do you feel this would improve your satisfaction level as a player?" Every participant felt it would. DM, who has moved on to other sports, explained that in rugby there is an evaluation of each match, they are shown the video, this gives them the opportunity to see where they were doing well and shows them where they could improve. This is an incentive to improve and a huge confidence booster and players get the opportunity to look at how they can improve their skill level. It also means players are constantly setting new goals to improve.

This shows that HRM practices can have a positive effect, the opposite to the other practice, nepotism. This reflective practice and insightful research really give an idea of the positive effects that HRM practice could bring to the G A A. If this has not been conducted properly, it goes against the G A A strategy where best practice is a key factor. Also, trained coaches should be aware of this tool and be able to apply it. However, these figures would suggest that the G A A is not meeting its goals of having a trained coach for all participants. The strategy states that it will try and ensure a trained coach for its entire players. These figures seem to suggest otherwise. In trying to determine the satisfaction levels that this feedback could bring about the question was asked could this affect your team spirit and morale if not received, 46% of respondents saying yes. The out-group all felt that this could affect team spirit and morale. If used correctly it would not only help players to work on their weak points, but as suggested by BM, would help them to establish realistic expectations of themselves. From an L&D practitioner's point of view, not only should these clubs be in line with G A A policies and practices, but the use of a tool such as appraisal can only help these clubs improve individual performance which will contribute to the overall success of the organisation.

6.5 Merit Selection

The final HRM tool that was deemed applicable was merit selection. This survey even suggested the need and the desire for this tool. A significant result here is that 18% felt that dedication and commitment should be rewarded. This highlights the want and desire for fair play within the club. Again, a HRM practice that could be applied here is merit selection, this could improve satisfaction levels as a fair procedure would be more evident.

This leads the researcher to ask are players being selected in a fair and impartial manner, as the results of this question seems to suggest otherwise. Although, question 26, which directly asks "do you think teams are selected in a fair and impartial manner" shows that over 63% of respondents, felt that yes teams were selected in a fair manner, it is still a worrying figure that 37% of respondents felt that they were not. Giving this due consideration, if we analyse this figure, it represents over 1/3 of a playing team. The worry here is that this would affect team morale, which could cause problems in relation to commitment and morale issues. This seems to be represented by question 15, where 51% respondents of the 143 respondents felt commitment issues were the worst change in their G A A clubs in the last 5 years. This was also reflected in the group interviews, where CM felt that he lost commitment when

Nepotism and HRM practices

managers would pick their sons over him even though he felt he had given the commitment required. Players seem to be unwilling to give the commitment required for success. There seems to be a direct link here between Nepotism and commitment, as a significant amount of the in-group felt teams were not chosen fairly. As already determined, nepotism has been shown to be an unfair selection practice within G A A clubs. Although other practices such as cronyism, as suggested in the literature review, could also be a contributing factor to unfair selection, Nepotism still has a significant influence.

In the group interviews, when asked “Do you feel players are selected on merit or due to connections with the selectors?”, again, all interviewees felt that there were problems with players being connected to management of all of the teams that they were part of. They felt these players had received unfair advantage. Interestingly, CM made the point that merit selection existed in his club, but only after the manager’s sons had been placed first. This would suggest these managers are letting emotions rule their heads rather than reality. The group as a whole felt Merit selection in all cases would strengthen team spirit. This was stated by AM and all had a positive attitude to this practice. It was felt that Nepotism as a practice should be shut out. Pfeffer explains that selection is crucial to success. He argues “the real sources of competitive leverage’ are the culture and capabilities of the organisation that are derived from the way people are managed” (Pfeffer, 1998, p 45). Therefore, selection must be conducted in a fair manner as shown by the literature review and the research.

6.6 HRM practice

As HRM was being studied independently of nepotism in this research, and in order to gain some information on what procedures these clubs have in relation to HRM practice, respondents were asked if there is an induction programme in place in their clubs. 44% answered yes to an induction programme being in place, 80% said training was addressed. Looking at the low figures that represent grievance, communication and best practice would suggest a lack of forward thinking from these clubs. These three practices are crucial to the success of any organisation run by humans, as they bring solidarity and direction to the organisation. As the saying goes, “united we stand, divided we fall”. It would also suggest that these clubs are failing to keep to the strategy of the overall G A A.

On the other hand, there were good results in the amount of development the G A A clubs contributed to the personal development of its players. The results here are not surprising as

A study of G A A clubs

the researcher believes that if a G A A club did not contribute to skills improvement and team building it would be violating the most basic needs of a G A A club. These results were reassuring to the researcher. However, significantly they do indicate that some HRM practices are at play in G A A clubs nationwide. As it is evident here that from a learner and development practitioner's point of view that these clubs help players develop self-esteem, skills and team work skills, all of which are crucial to the success of any organisation.

However, in the qualitative research, each participant was asked what they felt was the contribution of the club to its players. Interestingly, AM answered that for those who succeed within the club as a player, it is a big confidence booster as you were getting positive feedback from spectators, team mates and selection committee. He also commented that this would have the opposite effect if you did not succeed. For those players that were not up to scratch, he also felt that they might be in the way at training as they were seen as unlikely to make the grade. DM commented that if the selection committee has a set idea about the team, you would find it difficult to question their decision. Both are interesting statements. Quite simply one would have to ask, if these players are felt to be in the way by an ex-player, how would this be impacting on the players themselves? If one considers the large number of juvenile players that partake in the G A A and the fact that only a percentage of them can make it to the top, then a lot of players will only get their confidence knocked in the long term or when the club has no use for them anymore.

From this answer, it seems that the in-group receives a lot of development and encouragement, however, the out-group bears the negative effects. This all goes against the integration and inclusion strategy of the G A A as stated in the introduction. Nepotism as a practice goes against this strategy as it's about the self-gain and interests of certain family, the promotion of their own. Nepotism therefore seems to be a major contributor to the in-groups and out-groups of the G A A. This would suggest that nepotism is having a negative effect on the G A A's inclusion and integration strategy. It also seems evident that the majority of players progressing from juvenile ranks only get their confidence knocked. This would suggest the opposite to development' perhaps demoralisation.

It is interesting to note here that from the research there seems to be significant factors between the in-group and out-group as discussed above. From this analysis, HRM practices seem to have a significant positive effect on both players and ex-players. Arasli et al (2006) found that HRM could have the opposite effect of that of nepotism, if conducted properly.

Nepotism and HRM practices

However, both parties again seem to see nepotism as negative for the organisation, and both parties views on things overall seem to be the same, but the components that make their views up are made of completely different parts. The research question wanted to identify the effect that HRM practice and Nepotism practice had on three variables, these were satisfaction, intention to quit and Reputation of the club. It should be explained that intention to quit can also be referred to as commitment. Reputation of club is the opinion of the respondent of the club and how s/he would communicate this to the external parties.

Three variables

6.7 Satisfaction and Morale

In the literature review, Abdalla explains that if nepotism is allowed to flourish “Overall, such organisations would not be able to achieve organisational goals, objectives and effectiveness” This would generate low morale, frustration and stress. It can be determined from this analysis and findings that nepotism has a significant negative effect on G A A clubs and its stakeholders but more significantly on its players, this also includes ex-players. On the other hand the three HRM practices, grievance procedures, appraisal and merit selection can all be said to have a significant positive effect on the stakeholders of the organisation again more importantly players and ex-players. The majority of the survey respondents agreed that nepotism has a negative impact, affecting player satisfaction levels. The interview group also agreed that nepotism is negative to the organisation. Again, through the survey it was determined that HRM practice could have a positive effect on player satisfaction levels. The group interview came to the same conclusion, they also felt that these satisfaction levels affected team performance, as well as on an individual basis. This suggests that the use of HRM over Nepotism could lead to improving team performance by making a few simple changes to the layout of the structure in the organisation and adopting some new ones.

6.8. Commitment (Intention to Quit)

Laker & Williams believe that “nepotism can affect an employee’s job satisfaction through their perception of fairness and equity and that these perceptions will also affect an employee’s commitment to the organisation” (2003, p. 192). It has been shown through this study that this research is transferable to sporting organisations. Laker & Williams also explain what Organisational commitment (OCQ) represents the extent to which the employee identifies with the organisation and its goals and the desire to retain membership in

A study of G A A clubs

the organisation and continue to pursue its goals” (2003, p 195) Organisational commitment is imperative to the success of any organisation. It is evident from the research that there are two groups emerging from this study, in-group and out-group. The research makes a direct connection here with the in-group, as they obviously identify with the G A A club's goals, while the out-group much less so. Laker & Williams believe that satisfaction levels can affect commitment or intention to quit. It is evident from this study that this is true for the G A A.

Nepotism has already been shown to have a significant negative effect on both ex-player and current player satisfaction levels. It then in turn has a significant effect on commitment with the members of the interview group stating it was a contributing factor to the eventual exit from their club. In the survey, 51% of respondents felt commitment issues were the worst change in their G A A clubs in last 5 years. Players seem to be unwilling to give the commitment required for success. This was considered one of the greatest threats to the G A A clubs. After excluding emigration, 23% felt that a lack of commitment was the greatest threat to G A A clubs.

This lack of commitment, as already recorded, has a clear link with unfair selection practices such as nepotism. Analysing this further, it seems that nepotism is coming full circle. Firstly, managers select their own sons/daughters for the teams, regardless of their current form as suggested by 48% of the survey. This then leads to the practice known as nepotism. Not only does this go against the strategy of the G A A at the top, but is completely unfair, unethical and unjustified. This unfair practice in the short term makes gains for a few, but seems to be a long term loss of the greater good of the organisation. As suggested, the clubs are run by a select few, 36% agreed. As proven in the research of 143 respondents, 112 players and a group interview with 4 ex-players between ages 18-25 a prime age for participation. This practice of nepotism is having negative consequences for the organisation. Firstly it decreases player satisfaction levels and secondly this leads to commitment issues. Not only do these clubs lose players due to its presence, but they have players that continue to operate there but not with the commitment required that is needed to win the championship. The answer seems very clear from the research the application of human resource practices has the opposite effect to nepotism. From this study, it had positive effects on satisfaction which then leads to positive effects on commitment.

6.9. Reputation of Club

To answer the research question fully, it was asked in the survey “would you recommend your club to potential new recruits?” An overwhelming 92% of respondents said that they would recommend their club to potential new recruits. What is interesting here is that 22% had a grievance with their club so this would suggest even though treated unfairly, the majority of people will still recommend their club. Similarly in the group interview, all but one candidate would recommend their club. However, he also said he could not recommend his old club but had no problem with his new one, this coming from a group where half of the group had grievance problem, and were dissatisfied with the outcome.

With the identification of Nepotism practice and HRM practice and their effects on player's satisfaction, these results highlight that none of these practices effect the reputation of the club. This seems to be an independent variable. Although not proven, the researcher refers back to question 12 of the questionnaire, where the second most favourite response of the options available was that the club promotes a sense of pride. This was represented with a figure of 19%, a high figure when you consider it 1 of 8 options. The researcher feels that this attitude mirrors a family attitude. Although members of a family might be unhappy with their family group, they would never speak negatively of that group. This could be something to do with our sense of belonging as most people have been part of their clubs for a considerable period of their lives. They may see their G A A clubs as somewhere they belong to and like the family unit they might have inside problems but that doesn't mean you speak badly about your group. It is important to note that this is imperative to the G A A success that people feel a part of the organisation. Even when they have been treated badly or didn't feel part of the in-group, they will still recommend their club. This is an important finding and differs from what would happen in a company. Most likely, people would bad mouth it, and this would spread quickly and it would fail to attract and retain the best. But this sense of belonging seems to overshadow speaking negatively about the club. This means they can maintain their reputation.

6 10 Further Areas of Study

Communication breakdown

As the research was collected and then examined, it came apparent to the researcher that the big problem for G A A clubs was communication breakdown with different individuals and interest groups. These seem to cause problems for the organisation. When answering questions in relation to grievances, it became apparent to the researcher that these people that remained at the club could very possibly be operating within the club with vegeances. This could only cause conflict. As a HR practitioner it would be suggested that all of these relationship breakdowns be addressed, this would enable the clubs and their people to operate and function at the highest levels. As a resolution can only bring higher solidarity. Question 18 of the questionnaire was a comment question and for those who seemed to be happy with their grievance outcome, communication at some level brought this about. For those who seemed to be unhappy with their outcome, communication breakdown was the main benefactor. In relation to appraisals, 43% felt they had received no feedback, and all of the interview group felt they had received little or no feedback. Again, this indicates communication breakdown problems.

Lack of forward thinking

Another reoccurring theme here is respondents felt that a lack of forward thinking was also significant as represented at a figure of 21%. This could suggest a lack of planning and goal setting, again this requires communication. This is a significant figure and seems that a recordable number of respondents feel that G A A at club level needs to update and progress. The application of HRM could be the way forward? It is interesting to note that respondents felt that a select few and promotion of some players but not all were a threat that need to be taken into consideration. With the combination of both representing 25% of the results. People obviously feel that nepotism and power control are big problems for G A A clubs. This lack of forward thinking seems to be a significant benefactor to practices such as nepotism. These are further areas that could be researched to bring more answers to light and to further help G A A clubs improve performance.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7 1 Introduction

The research was conducted amongst 11 clubs around the country. The researcher attempted to cover all of the five areas, these included Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Dublin. Unfortunately the clubs from Ulster did not participate. There was a considerable response from the other four areas. The study was conducted through questionnaires and one group interview which used open-ended questionnaires. There were 143 respondents to the questionnaire and four people were selected from a group of 10 to be involved in the group interview.

The main difference between both methods was that one was aimed mainly at current players and the other was aimed at ex-players. The group interview focused on ex-players. The questionnaire was mainly aimed at players. Interestingly, both of the data gathering methods brought up very similar results when answering the research question. The conclusion from this suggests that Nepotism does exist in the GAA and that there is an element of HRM practice also at work here. Both results show that nepotism is having a negative effect on both ex-player and player satisfaction. Again, both results seem to favour the already existing and continued introduction and development of HRM practice. This seems to have a positive effect on player satisfaction. When trying to determine if player satisfaction effected intention to quit, it was found that it did affect player's commitment levels. In trying to determine if player satisfaction affected the reputation of club, it was found that it had neither a negative or positive effect on the reputation of club. It seems to be an independent variable in relation to this organisation. In an unproven statement, the researcher feels that this could be connected to the pride that is instilled and the community connection with such a club.

7 2 Nepotism and position of power

It was found from the research that all players and ex-players found that nepotism was a negative practice. Players that had a family tradition in hurling were perceived to have an advantage over others. People that had connections to the management also seem to be another common feature. It was very interesting from the results of the surveys that these clubs seem to be run by a select few. This meant that people holding positions of power were

using their power for the gain of their own family members. This became very apparent in the group interview, participants commented that they thought that these people should change their position of power on a regular basis. This they saw as especially true in underage teams where the same management team stayed in place and consolidated their positions of power with a juvenile team as they progressed through the age groups. This seems to be a major antecedent of nepotism and its practice. Overall the general consensus was that nepotism was having a negative effect on players and ex-players.

7.3 Grievance

Grievance was one of three HRM practices that were chosen to determine its applicability to G A A clubs. It was interesting to note the small amount of grievances among the survey respondents labeled the in-group compared to the interviewees labeled the out-group. Both parties had seen little or no procedures in place to deal with such grievances, however, of the in-group members that had grievances they mainly had satisfactory outcomes compared to the out-group members. Both parties seem to be amenable to the HRM tool, and saw it as a positive and that its application could only have positive effects on the organisation in question.

7.4 Appraisal

The second HRM tool was appraisals. In relation to the out-group, they stated that they had received little or no feedback when partaking in the organisation. The majority of the in-group, 57%, had received constructive criticism. It was still worrying to see such a high figure of G A A players that had not received any constructive criticism. Again, the majority of the in-group felt that this would not affect their morale levels. A significant 48% of in-group felt that it could affect their satisfaction, however, all of the out-group felt that this would affect their satisfaction levels in a positive manner, so it was deemed that this HRM tool could have a positive effect on players and ex-players. It was also interesting to note that one of interviewees had been subject to feedback whilst playing rugby. Video evidence to assess performance was used in this situation and the interviewee felt that this reflection gave him goals to work towards. From an L&D practitioners point of view this would be development of the players and would be very relevant to improving individual performance which would help the club achieve its goals, winning championships!

7.5. Merit selection

The final HRM tool was merit selection, the majority of the in-group felt that teams were selected in a fair manner, but a significant number felt that they were not. Again, this would affect the morale of the team. The out-group felt that there were problems with fair selection methods, due to continuous selection of players who had connections with management. They also felt that this effected commitment issues, as if one feels that without a connection to the management it is more difficult to get selected, then one could lose interest, which in turn affects commitment. This was recorded as one of the biggest threats to G A A clubs. The lack of commitment by some players appears to have a direct connection to nepotism. The group interviewees felt that nepotism could be one of the root causes of a dilution of commitment by the players that saw themselves marginalised because they didn't have "the pull" by the selection team to ensure their place on the team. Again, this shows the negative effect of nepotism. It follows that merit selection would have a major positive effect on player satisfaction, and would in turn increase commitment. The out-group felt that nepotism should be shut out, and this would increase team morale, commitment and the will to compete.

7.6. Round off of HRM

In an effort to determine what HRM practices were used, it was asked if induction programmes were used in their club. The majority of the in-group felt that there was no induction programme in place, while the entire out-group felt that no induction programmes were in place. Of the percentage that said that there was an induction programme in place, it was worrying to see that very small percentages of these respondents felt that communication, grievance and best practices were addressed, as these components are seen as vital to the running of any organisation. It is fair to say that this research backs up Arashi et al. 2006, who believe that HR can improve Job /player performance.

It was also asked, how much of a contribution does the club make towards the players? The in-group felt that it made a good contribution towards the development of its players. However, interestingly here, the out-group felt that for those who succeed it made a very good contribution, but for those who did not make it to the senior ranks it could have the opposite effect. When one considers this scenario, the fact that only a number of the players

will make it to senior ranks. It is worth considering the effect it has on those who do not make the grade, and it is completely unjustified, if the reason has been due to nepotism. This means that nepotism is actually causing the opposite effects of development of players.

It is interesting to note here that from the research, there seems to be significant factors between the in-group and out-group as discussed above. From the concluding analysis, HRM practices seem to have a significant positive effect on both players and ex-players. Both parties again suggest that nepotism has a negative impact for the players. Both also deemed HRM practices as a positive for players.

7.7 Three Variables

Morale

The research found that nepotism had significant negative effects on player satisfaction and that HRM practice had significant positive effects on player satisfaction. The feeling was that individual and team performance were affected due to low morale. The conclusion is that HRM practices could help improve performance of both individual and team bases in G A A Clubs.

Commitment

As had been determined from the literature review, organisational commitment is vital to its success. This is reiterated throughout this study. Another finding is that satisfaction levels affect commitment. If nepotism is having a negative effect here it will reduce organisational commitment. On the other hand, organisational commitment could be improved by applying HRM practices as this is seen to have a positive effect here.

Reputation of Club

The most interesting fact was that the reputation of the club seems to be an independent variable when it comes to G A A clubs. It is felt that this could have to do with the sense of pride that comes from being a member of these clubs, which are at the heart of the community. This may be similar to the sense of pride that comes from being a family member. One will never speak badly of their family even if they have inside problems, it is like not letting down the side. This was highly represented by the in-group and out-group,

Nepotism and HRM practices

this suggests that this sense of pride is a major component to the success of the G A A. People may have problems and feel hard done by the systems and possibly by the effects of nepotism in the club, however, people will not bad mouth their club in public. As a result, it is still attractive for new players to join.

7.8 Further areas of study

Two major problems continuously showing themselves throughout this research was communication breakdown and a lack of forward thinking the researcher feels that this could be addressed in the future.

It seems evident from the research that HRM practice is having a greater positive effect on G A A clubs than nepotism in relation to player satisfaction. It also seems evident that it can be a more effective practice than nepotism. The literature suggested that HRM practice would have a greater positive effect on player satisfaction. This seems to be backed up by the research. Nepotism, whilst not rampant in the G A A, due to other practices such as cronyism, still represents a significant part of these clubs. There seems to be a small amount of evidence that suggests that HRM is at play at some G A A clubs. Finally, the results show that nepotism is having negative effects on intention to quit, whilst HRM will have the opposite effect. Reputation of the club does not seem to be affected by either practices, this is very important to the development of the G A A as it gives the organisation and its clubs a means to move forward in relation to developing its practices, policies and its people. More importantly, it helps clubs improve team performance, which might help them win games. What makes this research significant is that it helps these clubs become fairer playgrounds, not only for non-nepotees, but for all people within the organisations.

Chapter 8: Recommendations

From this research the author has come up with recommendations that will help clubs deal with nepotism, and by applying HRM practices could improve commitment and team performance

8 1 Working with Nepotism

Although many would suggest the eradication of nepotism, the reality is that this could not happen. This is due to the fact that G A A clubs are highly family orientated and come from closely connected communities. There is always going to be connections with the management and other positions of power within the club, if they are nepotistic or not. A more realistic approach is to learn to work with nepotism, not to allow nepotism to flourish by ignoring its existence, but to put measures in place that make the system fair and accountable for all players. This may well mean that the son of the manager makes the team, because in reality his son could be one of the better players. As suggested in the literature review, a selector cannot place a player at a disadvantage because they are connected to the management. In order to do this, the researcher suggests 7 steps, adapted from the work of Morrissey 2006

1 If it is going to be done, do it

If nepotism is evident, don't hide it. Make it clear to all members that if one of the manager's sons is good enough he is going to be on the team.

2 Be up front and honest with people

Let people establish realistic expectations of their skills. Communicate their strengths and weaknesses, and show them how they can improve.

3 Not every nepotee is good enough.

It has to be remembered that every player is not good enough, regardless of whom their father is. You can't just put them for the team because of their connections, they must meet the grade.

4 Make sure every member maintains a high performance, especially nepotees

Treat everyone fairly and ensure that everyone is giving a 100% and nepotees are giving 120%. Don't be afraid to tell nepotees if they are not performing up to scratch.

5 Prove yourself

Nepotism and HRM practices

If you are a nepotee, shut the critics up and show them that you are worth your place on the team. If you're good enough, they can't complain.

6 Learn from others

Try to assess what other clubs are doing to combat nepotism and get guidance from G A A headquarters to combat the problem. This way you can make progress quickly

7 Be professional and provide opportunities for all

If you're a manager with a son on the panel, be as professional as possible and ensure that everyone gets a chance to prove themselves

Using these steps won't eradicate nepotism but it will make the practice more fair, transparent and professional.

8 2 Change position of power

It is important that positions of power are changed regularly, these include positions at all levels of management in the clubs. It is of no effect if another member of the same family holds the same role for a long period. If the organisation is family centred, change the family not the person. This reduces nepotism even further as people are not in a powerful position for too long, this reduces the risk of nepotism happening. It's important to note a limitation of this would be in relation to the amount of volunteers that would be willing to take up roles. But the reduction of power control can only increase the level of people that want to get involved in their clubs.

8 3 Communication breakdown

The findings show that communication breakdown seems to be a big problem. This is evident from the study of grievance and appraisals. Simply, communication can avoid grievances and help players improve and develop their weaknesses. It can bring higher solidarity to the club as problems can be aired out in a fair manner and people can work together to achieve the organisation's goals.

8 4 Forward thinking

Some freshness in thinking is needed in this organisation. Most clubs have developed their facilities, however, many clubs may need a revamp on procedures and policies. This revamp can be used to establish best practice and guidance for use in the club. This can act as a

template for dealing with unfair practices and grievances that can be dealt with if the need arises. Also for new managers that want to use HRM techniques they can also use these as guidance tools if and when they need to implement them.

8.5. Application of HRM tools

The application of HRM practices seems to be the way forward for these clubs, by using these simple techniques they will improve team performance as proven in this study

1 Put a grievance procedure in place

This means that problem can be dealt with efficiently and effectively. This can be done very quickly and problems that could grow into a monster can be nipped in the bud, thus avoiding serious conflict.

2 Application of appraisals

Using appraisals is just common sense. Taking the time out to go through team and individual performance gives teams and individuals the chance to identify their weaknesses and work towards their goals.

3 Merit selection

This again is a fair procedure, it doesn't mean you can't pick your own son/daughter, it just means that he is selected on merit and because he has the skill and has given the commitment. It just means he hasn't an automatic right to his place. If this professional approach is put in place, and consistent merit selection is adhered to, it can only lead to the long term success of the organisation.

8.6 Putting the G A A Strategy in Place

Using G A A HQ guidelines and procedures will be the way forward for these clubs. Trying to keep up with the integration strategies of the organisation is also essential to future success. Field as many teams as possible, in order to increase the participation levels of all players, and with more participation it is likely that players will be more willing to commit and this should add to the success of the G A A at club level.

8.7. N.C.I working with the G A A

Finally, a further recommendation from this study is that the G A A Headquarters be approached to work with a college such as N C I that has vast expertise in HR practice and procedure in order to design a strategy that could be tailored for use in G A A clubs, implementing HRM practice, but specially designed to meet the needs of a voluntary G A A club

As the findings suggest that G A A clubs could improve their H.R.M to give greater satisfaction levels to all who participate in the organisation

I, the researcher believe that this could be a very good partnership for the further development of G A A clubs, as the G A A is all about people HR is also about people and N C I has the expertise in this area Here, both parties could work together in a collaborative way to bring about the most cutting edge practices to G A A clubs that could enhance its future development

G A.A Motto

Ni neart go curle chéile (There is no strength without working together)

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Survey of Present and Past Members of G A A Clubs

All information gathered by this survey will remain anonymous and completely confidential

1 How long have you been a member of a G A A club?

2 Are you a current member or a past member?

Current member Past member

3 What capacity is/was your involvement?

1	Player	
2	Under age player	
3	Mentor	
4	Manager	
5	Selection Committee	
6	Chairman	
7	Secretary	
8	Member	

4 If not a current member, why did you leave the club?

5 Are any of your family members involved in the club?

Yes No

6 If Yes, What is their involvement?

1	Player	
2	Under age player	
3	Mentor	
4	Manager	
5	Selection Committee	
6	Chairman	
7	Secretary	
8	Member	

7 How much of a contribution does your G A A club make towards the development of its players?

A lot Some None

8 What is the nature of the contribution (if any)?

Skills Improvement Team Building Self-Esteem Other

9 Do you always feel a part of your G A A club ?

Nepotism and HRM practices

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

10 Is there an induction programme in place for all players?

Yes No

11 If Yes, which of the following are addressed?

1	Safety	
2	Communication	
3	Policies and Guidelines	
4	Best Practices	
5	Grievances	
6	Training	
7	Manners	
8	Respect	
9	Attitude	
10	Other	

12 What do you enjoy most about the club?

Please tick where appropriate

1	It promotes a sense of fair play	
2	It promotes a sense of pride	
3	Players have the opportunity to become valued team members	
4	It provides encouragement to set personal and team goals	
6	Its provides the opportunity to stay fit and healthy	
7	Its helps players learn skills that contribute to their overall confidence	
8	Other, please state _____	

13 What do you enjoy least about the club?

Please tick where appropriate

1	Not feeling welcome	
2	Run by a select few	
3	Not feeling I have anything to contribute	
4	Not being complimented when I do well	
5	Not being given a chance	
6	Feeling some players are assured of their place on the team regardless of their current form	
7	Feeling that advantage is given to players who are related/connected to a trainer/member of management	
8	Other, please state _____	

14. What has changed for the better in your G.A.A. club in the last five years?

Please tick where appropriate

1.	Change of personnel	
2.	Teams winning more games	
3.	Better morale	
4.	Everyone's talent considered	
5.	Better structures	
6.	Better facilities	
7.	Awareness of Health & Safety	

15. What has changed for the worse in your GAA club the last five years?

Please tick where appropriate

1.	No change of personnel	
2.	Teams winning fewer games	
3.	Poor morale	
4.	Team being picked from too few players	
5.	Players not willing to give the commitment required	
6.	Facilities have become dilapidated	

16. Did you ever have a grievance (treated unfairly) with your G.A.A. Club?

Yes No (If No, go to Question 19)

17. If Yes, did you address the problem?

Yes No (If No, go to Question 19)

18. If Yes, please give a brief description of how you addressed it?

19. Was the outcome satisfactory?

Yes No

20. If No, how did you deal with it?

Please tick where appropriate

1.	Felt resentful	
2.	Spoke badly about the club	
3.	Left the club	
4.	Continued to participate in the club as usual	
5.	Waited to get your own revenge	
6.	Continued in the club, but at a reduced level	
7.	Fell out with those who you felt were responsible	
8.	Other	

Nepotism and HRM practices

21 Do you feel the proper procedures are in place to address grievances?

Yes No

22 If No, what structures could be put in place to avoid breakdown in relationships?

Rank in order of preference from 1 to 5, where 1 is most preferred and 5 is least

1	Have a consistent grievance and disciplinary policy in place	
2	Communicate that the selectors must give a fair chance to potential talent, as well as proven talent	
3	Dedication and commitment is rewarded with a chance for players to prove themselves on the pitch	
4	Selection is based on players having the correct skill-mix and is not biased under any circumstances	
5	The mentors and management reflect on the morale of the club and on what contribution they have made to it	

23 How do you measure your own performance?

Feedback from selection team	
Feedback from other hurlers	
No feedback	

24 Do you get constructive criticism on your performance on a regular basis?

Yes No

25 If No, does this affect your team spirit and morale?

Yes No

26 Do you think teams are selected in a fair and impartial manner?

Yes No

27 If No, whose responsibility is it to ensure that team selection is dealt with in a fair and impartial way?

28 Have conflicts been generated within the club due to selection process?

Yes No

29 If Yes, what was the cause of the conflict?

30 Do you feel some players are valued more than others?

Yes No

31 If Yes, Why do you think this is?

A study of G A A clubs

32 Do you think a family tradition in hurling and/or football makes it easier for players to be selected on the team?

Yes No

33 Would you recommend your club to potential new recruits?
 Yes No

34 If No, why not?

35 What do you consider the most significant threat to your GAA club?

1	Emigration	
2	Poor morale	
3	Lack of forward thinking	
4	Select few	
5	Dissatisfied players	
6	Lack of discipline	
7	Wrong motivation at top	
8	Promotion of some players, but not all	

36 In your opinion, what has been the main reason for players leaving the club?

Please tick where appropriate

1	Felt aggrieved	
2	Not getting selected	
3	Joined another club	
4	Emigration	
5	Poor management structure	
6	Not enough accountability for selection	
7	Management there to promote their own	
8	Management making decisions based on emotions rather than fact	
9	Poor leadership	

Nepotism and HRM practices

37 What projects or improvements would you like to see implemented in the club?

38 How do you feel new projects or improvements will increase player's satisfaction?

39 If you have any recommendations on how you feel your G A A. club could be improved, please include them below

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Your input is highly valued and appreciated greatly

Appendix 2· Anonymity document

01/08/2012

To whom it may concern

I, Andrew Hootor, the researcher of this thesis project, and any third party acting under my name, will not disclose any information given by you to the interview of this research project to any third party. All of the information gained will only be used in this thesis.

Your identity will remain anonymous.

Andrew Hootor

Researcher

Appendix 3 Focus Group Questions

1 How long have you been a member of a G A A Club?

Nepotism

2 Are any of your family members involved in your club of origin?

3 How much of a contribution does the G A A made towards the development of its players?

4 Why did you not feel part of your G A A Club?

Grievance

5 Did you ever have a grievance or feel that you were treated unfairly by your G A A Club?

6 What was the fallout from the grievance not been dealt with in a satisfactory way?

7 Do you think the proper procedures are in place to address grievances?

Appraisals

8 Did you get constructive criticism on a regular basis?

9 Got some feedback on an ad hoc basis, others felt they got little or no feedback

10 Do you feel that communication tools such as appraisals would improve your performance?

11 Do you feel this would improve your satisfaction level as a player?

Merit selection

12 Do you think teams are selected in a fair and impartial way?

13 Do you feel players are selected on merit or due to connections with the selectors?

14 How do you counteract this?

15 Have conflicts being generated in your club due to the selection process?

Reputation of club

16 Would you recommend your club to potential new recruit

Commitment

17 Do feel that these practices could affect your commitment levels

18 Apart from emigration what do you consider to be the most serious threat to your G A A Club?

19 In your opinion what has been the main reason for players leaving the club?

20 What projects/improvements would you like to see implemented in the club?

21 As an eligible player in your prime what should the G A A do to bring you back to hurling?

A study of G A A clubs

Our Vision

“Our vision is that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed to take part in our games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement”

22 How do you feel your club lives up to this mission statement?

Appendix 4· Main targets of G A.A Strategy 2009-2015

- *Player Pathway*

We will implement the GAA players and games pathway from child to adult. It will promote full participation and encourage players to take part in our games in the long term.

- *Code of Best Practice*

We will roll out the GAA's Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport, incorporating a code of conduct that shows respect for fellow players, mentors and match officials. Best practice will also be developed in the recruitment and selection of those working with our underage players. This will comply with the appropriate legislation, requirements and guidelines in jurisdictions in which we operate.

- *Respect Initiative*

We will roll out the GAA Respect Initiative, which promotes respect and discipline for players towards match officials and each other.

- *Qualified coaches*

We will meet the national and provincial coach education targets to make sure every player is coached by a person qualified to the appropriate level.

- *Club Coaching Officer*

We will promote each club appointing its own Club Coaching Officer whose main role will be to promote best practice in coaching and games development in the Club.

Appendix 5: Values of the G.A.A

Finally, it is important to mention the some of the key values of the organisation

- Community is at the heart of our Association.
- We are a volunteered organisation
- We welcome everybody to be part of our Association
- We respect each other on and off the playing fields
- We listen and respect the views of all
- Effective teamwork on and off the field is the cornerstone of our Association
- Ní neart go curle cheile (There is no strength without working together)

Appendix 6 How to work with Nepotism

1 Formalize job duties

Don't give family members responsibilities without first considering their skills set and the requirements of the position. If a family member isn't trained to either run or work in a specific department It important that they are upfront about it, instead of ignoring the obvious,

2 Make sure family members stick to their skills sets

When I began I found where my management skills could be put use, but don't overstep limits and try to do too much. While one may have to push each day to get better, do it by handling responsibilities which are comfortable to you.

3 If it is a family business run it as such

Don't try to hide the fact that it is a family owned or family operated business, whether the family member is a franchisee or franchisor. If the family is involved, do so from the onset of the business.

4 Prove yourself

When a family member joins the family business the worries and job concerns of other employees will dissipate once they realize the family member is there to enhance and improve operations not to replace any of them. This requires a strong work ethic from all employees.

5 Be upfront and honest with the franchisees

It is important to take concerns of franchisee to heart. Be honest talk about both short and long term goals, so that franchisees always have a sense of feeling informed about the direction of the company.

6 Not every family member is suited to be president or CEO

Just because one is a namesake doesn't automatically entitle him to a free pass to the top of corporate hierarchy. Sometimes it is wise to look past family members for leadership positions and give considerations to non-family members for such a role.

A study of G A A clubs

7 Ensure that family members assert themselves gradually

One might appear arrogant if he asserts himself too soon. Learn to understand the business from top to bottom before expecting to earn the right to tell a franchisee he was doing something wrong

8 Don't sweat it, if the family business isn't for everyone

It's extremely important that children should never be pressured or feel as if they have an obligation to work in the family business, if it is not for them don't take it personally

9 Maintain High performance expectations for family members

Make sure that everyone is treated equally. Make sure that family members are paid on the same scale as other performing similar duties

10 Learn from others

It's important that each company learn from other family businesses that have addressed the use of nepotism and turned it in to a positive

11 Make sure that family members maintain a professional, but caring management style with employees. It's important that employees can discuss issues with family members and provide opportunities for all employees of the organisation