

**A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE DROPOUT RATE OF PROVINCIAL FEMALE
SWIMMERS BETWEEN THE AGE OF 18 AND 30-YEARS OLD IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**RESEARCH REPORT
10221 words**

**IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology
at
IIE Varsity College
for
Research - RESE8419**

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October 2020**

I, Dawn-Abigail Schutte, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University of Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

The general trend in swimming reveals that most female athletes drop out of swimming between the ages of 18 and 30 years old; therefore exploring the factors that contribute to the dropout rate will enable insight and understanding to be gained. As a result, women remain underrepresented in all sports in the country. This study sought to investigate the high dropout rates of female swimmers, which included gaining insight and understanding of the various factors that contribute to a female swimmer's dropout rate. The data collection methods used included in-depth semi-structured interviews with three purposively selected participants, which enabled the study to produce thick narratives allowing for an in-depth analysis to occur. Findings indicated that all participants displayed high levels of intrinsic motivation, although it was often the influence and impact of extrinsic motivators that lowered the participant's intrinsic motivation and self-determination leading to their drop out in swimming. Findings indicated that there is a need for psychological and social support for female swimmers within the swimming sphere.

It is recommended that support systems such as mentors and sports psychologists be implemented within the field of swimming, providing support to female athletes. A further study could explore ways in which this can be done in a cost-effective manner.

Key words: Motivation, swimming, dropout rates, female swimmers, academic career, overtraining, injury, burnout.

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1. Introduction

This study will qualitatively explore the factors that influence female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old to drop out of swimming and to consider the extent to which motivation influences the dropout rate of these female swimmers.

2. Contextualisation

South Africa has launched a series of initiatives to promote women's participation in sport, although doesn't have a great deal to show for it. Women still remain underrepresented in all sports in the country. Sikes and Adom-Aboagye (2017) highlight the fact that professional levels of the nation's main sports, cricket, rugby, and football, are yet to still consider establishing domestic leagues for women. While noting that numbers and statistics are hard to come by, although various comparisons can be made between South Africa and other countries, to show how far women lag behind in South Africa. While much of this can be accounted for by the lack of funding, media coverage and opportunities, this study aims to look at personal factors that contribute to women dropping out of professional sports; gaining insight and understanding the contributing factors attributed to their drop out of sport, better. Furthermore, supporting women in sport is not always about the Olympic glory or sporting success, but the numerous lessons that can be learnt through their participation in sport (Sikes & Adom-Aboagye, 2017). This study will focus on the experiences of these female athletes.

3. Rationale

The topic was selected because of the interest the researcher has regarding women in sport. Women remain underrepresented in various sporting codes in South Africa, although the researcher will focus primarily on swimming for the purpose of this study. There are many reasons that can be provided as an explanation towards this underrepresentation, some include external factors; factors related to funding and missed opportunities, while other include internal factors; factors that directly link to the athlete within their personal capacity. The researcher is therefore particularly interested in the internal factors, influencing factors that lead to female swimmers to drop out of swimming, with the broader motivation stemming from the underrepresentation of women in sport, swimming. There are not many female swimmers that still compete in swimming, at a professional, highlighting the importance and relevance of gaining a better understanding towards the factors that contribute to the dropout rate of female swimmers between the 18 and 30-years old. This study will generate

knowledge and provide insight into the dropout rate of swimmers, a field that is lacking in knowledge.

4. Problem Statement

A number of swimmers drop out of swimming between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (Marlton, 2020) resulting in a lack of female swimmers competing at a professional competitive level. The problem that needs to be investigated is the high dropout rate of female swimmers and to consider what are some of the factors that influence and contribute to a swimmer's drop out in swimming. Furthermore, considering motivational factors and the extent to which these influence the dropout rates in female swimmers.

5. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old to drop out of swimming and to consider the extent to which motivation influences the dropout rate of these female swimmers, looking at motivation in terms of extrinsic or intrinsic or a combination. Additionally, to consider other factors that influence the dropout rates, noting that dropout is when an individual, female swimmers with reference to this study, ceases to partake in swimming permanently.

6. Research Questions

6.1. Primary Research Question:

- Why do female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old drop out of swimming?

6.2. Secondary Research Questions:

- To what extent does motivation influence the dropout rate in female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?
- What additional factors influence the dropout rate female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?

7. Objectives

- To explore the factors that influences the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old in Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- To determine the extent to which motivation influences the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.

- To explore additional factors that influence provincial female swimmers to drop out of swimming between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.

8. Theoretical foundation

The first theory selected is **Locke's Goal-Setting theory (2015)**, which refers to the effects of setting goals on subsequent performance and proposes five basic principles of goal setting: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 2015; O'Neil & Drillings, 1994). This theory emphasizes the importance of the relationship between goal setting and performance and shows how female swimmers within their sporting discipline, need to set themselves goals, contributing to their performance and performance management.

Goal setting enables the athlete to enhance their performance as an attempt to ensure their success in any environment. It allows the swimmer to focus their attention and is crucial in terms of maintaining and enhancing their motivation. And vice versa, motivation influences these goals in terms of capability and self-reliance, which, in addition, are contributing factors to a swimmer's success. By athletes setting goals for themselves, they feel accountable, ensuring they constantly works towards achieving these goals resulting in their success. While athletes may set themselves goals, goals can also be set for them, which shall be discussed in further detail. In terms of performance management, as touched on, by an athletes goals being set for them, a control over their performances can be put in place, ensuring they are 'managed' correctly and appropriately, perhaps possibly preventing burnout, overtraining and injury. Lastly, Locke's goal-setting theory of motivation consistently delivers positive changes in the lives of individuals worldwide (Locke & Latham, 2019) therefore should be considered highly important.

Additionally, **Self-determination theory** (Deci & Ryan, 2020) is a conceptual framework, which accounts for multidimensional motivational processes that takes place within the context of sport (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007). It is particularly useful within sport motivation and applies directly to this study because of the impact it has on an individual's motivation. Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that people become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled, enabling individuals to grow and change via the choices and management of their own life (Deci & Ryan, 2020).

Athletes, in general, will be more motivated to take specific action towards an outcome when they feel they will have an effect on the outcome; a sense of self-determination inspires people to excel. For example, swimmers may be highly motivated to train hard for a few months prior to a highly competitive competition in an attempt to perform well at the competition. Athletes, swimmers specifically, who feel they are capable of achieving their goals and overcoming challenges will be driven to perform better. When these individuals excel, it allows them to gain an important sense of competence and build skills that are important to them (Deci & Ryan, 2020). This theory, evidently, provides a platform for the researcher to explore the motivational processes involved in an athlete's career and an understanding towards their behaviour that influences their motivation, goal setting, performance and success, relative to their motivation.

9. Literature Review:

9.1. Motivation:

The study of human motivation is an important consideration when discussing human activity, with particular reference to the sport and exercise domain (Harbichova et al., 2019). Hagger and Chatzisarantis (2007) suggest that motivational processes positively influence and improve the training conditions and performance of competitive athletes. The Self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of the need for self-actualization and autonomy (Szemes et al 2017), providing a platform to understand motivational processes from an athlete's perspective. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is often portrayed as separate and distinct "components" although for the purpose of this study, and specifically looking at how athlete's pursuit goals and their behaviour, they shall be looked at in relation to each other. This will be involves linking them to an individual as they draw on multiple sources of motivation and showing the importance of a balance between the two, in order for an athlete to achieve and be successful within a highly competitive and demanding sport, swimming.

Deci and Ryan (2020) suggests that higher levels of intrinsic motivation are associated with many positive outcomes, which includes self-efficacy, well-being and positive coping. Hagger and Chatzisarantis (2007) adds that when we consider athletes and their individual endeavors to train and work hard, this behaviour is associated with the pure enjoyment of the activity as opposed to their behaviour being for some particular award or specific outcome. These self-determined behaviours are purely intrinsically driven; the choice to swim is based on an individual's enjoyment, interest, and inherent satisfaction for the

action/sport itself. Intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in the success of an athlete, since the individual strives towards a goal for a personal sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. This internal form of motivation depends solely on the athlete without the influence of other individuals. A conclusion can be drawn regarding intrinsic motivation and dropout of athlete within a sport, suggesting that if an athlete lacks on intrinsic motivation, the stronger the likelihood of them dropping out of sport.

More specifically, several studies (Burtscher et al, 2011; De Pero et al, 2009, as cited in Harbichova et al., 2019) assess the effect of competitive level of sport and performance on motivation and support the premise that high pressures and rewards in competitive sport can alter an athletes perceived locus of control (from internal to external) which in turn has an impact on an individual by lowering their intrinsic motivation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2020). At this point we consider extrinsic motivation. The more athletes feel constraint; the perception they feel towards competence, autonomy and relatedness becomes less significant, impacting their actions (Amado et al, 2015). This leads athletes to feel less of an enjoyment, determination, and a 'positive attitude', leading to amotivation. In the long run, is translated into a lack of commitment resulting in a dropout.

These extrinsic motivators lower an individual's self-determination, undermining their autonomy resulting in them feeling less in control (Deci & Ryan, 2020). With specific reference to an extrinsic motivator, is the influence of parental pressure on athletes. It is a strong predictor of stress, additionally impacting the level of enjoyment and motivation shown by athletes as suggested by Amado et al (2015). Often parents associate their actions with being positive although indeed hinder the perceptions of an athletes, related to their motivation and performances.

Additionally, Szemes (2017) makes reference to the environment of the athlete, considering the importance this has on an athlete; in terms of their motivation and their motivation that influences their performance. Szemes (2017) suggests that training sessions that take place in an environment that is more motivating for athletes, the more willing and motivated they are towards meeting their high-performance requirements. It can therefore be concluded that if coaches know what motivational factors increase the levels of motivation in swimmers, the more effective training interactions and programs will be, ultimately impacting the athletes in terms of their overall performance. Evidently, we see the importance of

knowledge regarding motivation, and would like to highlight that there is a lack of research from a South African swimmers' perspective.

Furthermore, it is important to add that while many of the studies that have been reviewed have used quantitative measures, the Sports Motivation Scale to determine the level of motivation, these bring about many limitations with reference to this study. This research study intends to consider motivation from a qualitative perspective, gaining a deep understanding about how participants experience motivation, and how motivation, or the lack of motivation for that matter, influences an athlete in their competitive careers/sporting disciplines. Gaining insight into their firsthand experiences that impact them.

9.2. Goal Setting:

There has been a growth in interest towards applying sport psychology techniques, such as psychological skills training (PST) that involve traditional physiological and sports skills training, towards improving competitive performance in athletes (Meggs & Chen, 2019; Forster et al., 2015). Currently, research literature provides data indicative of the association between psychological skills and self-regulation, motivation, and coping with pain as important to ensuring swimmers are able to enhance their performance in the high-intensity training that is aligned with a sport such as competitive swimming (Meggs & Chen, 2019).

Goal setting is a commonly implemented PST method, enabling athletes to focus towards their efforts and provides direction towards their performances. Additionally, effectively motivating athletes within their sport settings (Locke & Latham, 2002) and it is for this reason that goal setting is a crucial factor when considering the dropout rate in female swimmers. Rotter (1990 as cited in Meggs & Chen, 2019) suggests that goal orientations are associated with the personality attribute locus of control while Meggs and Chen (2019) extend on this providing data, which reflects the degree to which people perceive the event to be under their control, representing internal control or under the control of others, representing external control.

Findings presented by Meggs and Chen (2019) which are consistent with those of Simoes et al (2012) conclude that goal setting interventions provide an opportunity for swimmers to commit to their goals which enables them to develop higher levels of effort towards their performances. The use of smart goals allows for the assumption that setting realistic and achievable goals increases motivation, which in return has positive attributes related to

performance. The data suggests that goal setting is effective in increasing effort, motivation towards training, and ultimately having a stronger effect on performance improvement (Megg & Chen, 2019).

The benefit of goal setting is empirically supported by many studies (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Locke & Latham, 1990; Locke & Latham, 2002) and is clearly important for success, although noting not all goals are equally effective (Seo et al 2018). Motivational perspectives, the self-determination theory, allows individuals to select their goals, self-set goals, which is an effective way in supporting the psychological need for autonomy that underlies intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Additionally, self-set goals enhance performance (Seo et al, 2018). The findings presented by Ryan and Deci (2020) are consistent with broader literature that suggests, people are more motivated to act when they feel fully endorsed and have some choice in their behaviour (Patall et al., 2008, as cited in Seo et al, 2018). The benefit of self-set goals has its place regarding an athlete's motivation, performance, and well-being, although on the contrary there are some studies that suggest that individuals are less successful in pursuing self-set goals as oppose to externally assigned goals (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002, as cited in Seo et al, 2018). This is particularly applicable when success is defined by effort, completion or performance, such as that associated with swimming. For example, a swimmer will feel successful when the effort they put into their training, is evident in their performances. They put in numerous hours of hard work, in the pool and out, and have set specific goals to achieve at a competition; they will only feel like they are successful once achieving these goals, which ultimately correspond to their performances both in training and during a competition. Furthermore, these set goals, will drive their motivation and give them an intention to train hard.

Ariely and Wertenbroch (2002, as cited in Seo et al, 2018) suggest that goal completion and performances improve as a result of assigned goals, especially when participants need to pursue a task over time as oppose just a during a single session, as is the case regarding swimming. Assigned goals places less burden on self-regulatory skills of the individual although should be noted that it comes with social pressure and feelings of guilt. With particular reference to swimmers, they could find themselves feeling a sense of obligation that compels them to continuously and consistently pursue the assigned goals over time whereas individuals can easily abandon self-set goals. Many research studies use quantitative methods and the implementation of interventions as a mean of assessing an individual's success by the contribution of factors such a setting and pursuing goals. A lack

of understanding towards additional dependent factors contributing to an individual's goal may be considered.

Motivation and goal setting directly correspond with one another. These factors provide insight into how an athlete is motivated and to draw on their goal setting techniques that enable them to stay motivated therefore are necessary to understand why female swimmers drop out of swimming between the above-mentioned ages.

9.3. Burnout

Burnout is prevalent in highly talented athletes who become dissatisfied with or exhausted, both mentally and physically, from their involvement in sport (Garinger et al., 2018). Individuals who perceive sport where the demands exceed the rewards and where there are insufficient personal resources to satisfy the demands that come along with a competitive sport, swimming. Often this is seen in swimming, where swimmers put large amounts of training in prior to a competition and are dissatisfied by their performance/s at the competition (Marlton, 2020). Garinger et al (2018) suggest that these athletes no longer have the desire and determination towards participating at the same level of competition or participating at all (Smith, 1986, as cited in Garinger et al., 2018), which may result in them dropping out of swimming or may not work as hard during their training sessions, resulting in poor performances, ultimately than contributing to their drop out.

The study points out that burnout may not always result in dropout, and that it is a combination of burnout and other negative psychological states, or situational factors that lead to dropout in sport (Garinger et al., 2018). Burnout is often associated with prolonged psychological stress, noting that athletes experience a multitude of stressors during their competitive careers, impacting athletes in a variety of ways. Psychologically, excessive stress involves higher anxiety, lower motivation and places athletes at risk of depression (Hewitt & Flett, 1993, as cited in Garinger et al., 2018), which in return impacts an athlete's ability to perform to their full potential and capabilities. An athlete is at a higher risk of injuries as well as a potential increase in cortisol levels, which represent the physiological impacts they may experience.

It is important to consider Smith's (1986, as cited in Garinger et al., 2018) cognitive-affective stress model, involving the interplay between prolonged stress, motivation and personality factors, which produces a cognitive-emotional response, burnout. Additionally, considering

perfectionism, as a personality trait that relates to burnout, ultimately impacting the participation of an individual within their discipline of sport. Competitive athletes, who tend to be perfectionists, have the tendency to overemphasize neatness, precision, and achievement of their goals (Garinger et al., 2018). Lemyre et al (2007) suggest that perfectionism is highly associated with burnout, by increasing an athlete's susceptibility to experience excessive stress.

Elaborating on the above, due to the highly competitive nature of swimming, swimmers will experience excessive stress, particularly during competition as they attempt to execute a perfect performance in/ for a particular race. Furthermore, the training regime and nature of competition swimmers face are highly demanding and competitive; they will experience stress that contributes to burnout. Bringing attention to the following information that includes overtraining and injury. These are all contributing factors that should be noted and considered when attempting to understand the dropout rates in female swimmers.

9.4. Overtraining and Injury

Elite swimmers are required to complete large volumes of training that involve high frequency and intensity sessions which increase a swimmer's risk of overtraining (Gleeson et al., 2000). Pollock et al (2019) delve into the training regimes and recovery monitoring practices, providing data regarding the importance of the monitoring of fatigue and recovery levels as it crucial to swimmers and their performance at a competitive level. It is important for coaches and practitioners to understand the demands and pressures that sport, poses on these athletes that have an impact on their performance goals (Pollock et al., 2019).

There is a lack of current knowledge related to elite South African swimmers and current practices, including training load, fatigue and recovery monitoring although Pollock et al (2019) provides data around these practices with insight to Elite British swimmers. According to Arroyo-Toledo et al (2013), training programs should be designed around developing specific qualities required for specific events, which should involve a careful balance between sport-specific, strength and endurance training with the aim of avoiding overtraining. More than half of the participants, coaches of elite swimmers, surveyed in Pollock et al (2019) study, do not practice individual-specific methods tailored to an individual athlete and their recovery, which is necessary when considering the workload these athletes partake in on daily basis. Enhancing a swimmer's recovery is highly

recommended as an attempt to reduce the risk of injuries and overtraining pertaining to these athletes.

Again, acknowledging the large volume and intensity these athletes are required to achieve to ensure they reach the elite levels required from them within their discipline of swimming, Hooper et al (1993, as cited in Pollock et al., 2019) reported that 21% of elite swimmers experience overtraining symptoms, suggested by (Meeusen et al., 2013) is a result of an imbalance between training-recovery ratio. Overtraining symptoms relative to swimming include extreme fatigue, emotional and mental stress, performance plateau or decline and an increased injury (Meeusen et al., 2013). Providing evidence that those swimmers that experience overtraining is more likely to burnout, as discussed above, and can lead to drop out.

Furthermore, the correlation between overtraining and injuries is common, athletes are placed at high risk of overuse injuries, most common in the shoulder/upper arm and neck/back areas in swimmers (Pollock et al., 2019). This is particularly relevant and a contributing factor to the dropout rates across many sporting domains. There is a constant interplay between the factors mentioned before, motivation, goal setting, overtraining, burnout, and injury leading to swimmers becoming less motivated, less determined to set goals for themselves as a result injury. Although acknowledging that swimmers may not only get injured by overtraining but can be many personal, physiological, external (intrinsic factors) all may result in and to drop out.

Furthermore, considering the impact sports specialization has been it occurs to early in an athlete's career, which is often the case relative to swimmers. Brenner (2016) suggest that sport specialization is becoming the norm for many youth individuals involved in sport and a variety of reasons although provides insight into the detrimental effects on these athletes, which include both physical and psychological. Sometimes, the goals of the parent/coaches may not necessarily be that of the athletes having adverse effects on the athlete. These may include, a lack of motivation towards their performances, the frequent occurrence of injuries and potentially dropout, because of the lack of enjoyment. Specialization in sport before puberty is often not the best way to accomplish goals in majority of sports (Brenner, 2016).

10. Conceptualisation

According to Deci and Ryan (2020), **intrinsic motivation** is the tendency to participate in an activity because of the activity itself. For example, a swimmer will swim purely based on the feeling of enjoyment, pleasure and satisfaction that derives from swimming and does not require any ulterior motive. Opposing this, **extrinsic motivation** refers to the behaviour that is controlled by external sources. For example, when an individual chooses to engage/participate in a sport because of the praise, or criticism for that matter, received from others. For example, a coach that relies on negative reinforcement to improve the performance of an athlete, results in an individual to be extrinsically motivated in an attempt to not be told they aren't trying hard enough. Lastly, **amotivation** poses that there are no linkages between actions and outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Self-actualization refers to the desire that leads an individual to the realization of their talents and potentialities relevant to their success while **autonomy** refers to the need people want to feel related to the control they have over their lives. For example, in terms of self-actualization, a swimmer will want to pursue a competitive career in swimming after having identified their potential within the sport. In terms of autonomy, swimmers want to feel as though they have control over their own behaviours, which can include their achievements relative to the goals they set for themselves. Akhtar (2008) defines **self-efficacy** as the belief we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges ahead of us and complete a task successfully. Self-efficacy and self-actualization are closely related to each other, an athlete will acknowledge their potential and then work towards the various challenges in order to successfully achieve various performances set by goals.

A **SMART goal** is used to help guide goal setting and provides an individual with a sense of direction, motivation, a clear focus, and clarify importance. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (Aghera et al., 2018). Specific refers to a well-defined, clear and unambiguous goal. Measureable refers to specific criteria that measure the progress towards the accomplishment of the goal. Achievable refers to an attainable goal. Realistic refers to a goal that is within reach, realistic and relevant to the purpose the goal will serve. Lastly, timely involves a clearly defined timeline (Aghera et al., 2018). SMART goals set an individual up for success

Stress is defined as “an ongoing process that involves individuals transacting with their environments, making appraisals of the situations they find themselves in, and endeavoring to cope with any issues that may arise” (Fletcher et al., 2006, p. 329). There are many

conceptualizations of **burnout** proposed in sport although, Raedeke (1997) suggests burnout to be a multidimensional construct that involves a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, emotional, psychological, and physical exhaustion, and a feeling of sport devaluation. Often when an athlete has experienced burn out, is a result of overtraining.

Lastly, **overtraining (also known as chronic fatigue)** can be considered when an individual's performance decreases and a plateau occurs as a result of failure to consistently perform at the intense level (Pollock et al., 2019) required in swimming. Overtraining may also result in injury, which is when an athlete can or may no longer participate in a sport, permanently or temporarily. These concepts shall be discussed in further detail as a later stage.

11. Research Paradigm

Interpretivism has been chosen for this research study because it values the construction of meaning as a source of knowledge; that the truth and knowledge is subjective and based on the individual's experiences within a meaning system (Ryan, 2018).

The epistemological assumption guiding this study allows the researcher to focus on exploring the dropout rates of swimmers based on their perceptions and experiences, while adopting an empathic understanding towards them. Additionally, it requires the researcher to be non-judgmental towards the participants and instead create meaning through the participants' interactions and perceptions about their particular experience (Ryan, 2018). The ontological assumption involves the nature of reality, and in this study, the reality of these swimmers is a social construct of the various factors and pressures they endure during their competitive career. The understandings of each swimmer's unique reality will vary therefore it is important to consider these and each one be valued independently. Lastly in terms of axiology, research is value bound, the researcher cannot be separated, therefore is part of what is being researched.

12. Research Design and Conceptual Approach

Exploratory qualitative research will assist the researcher to identify key issues, key variables and to gain a greater understanding towards a phenomenon specifically related to the contributing factors that influence the dropout rate of female swimmers. Inductive reasoning allows the researcher to move from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories, by establishing patterns and regularities and enables the researcher to explore these tentative hypotheses further. The researcher will use the data

to draw conclusions or infer an explanation. The study will draw on Locke's Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2015) and the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020) in making sense of the findings. Additionally, the study will be cross-sectional, as it will be done at one single point in time. The researcher is able to compare many different variables at the same; specifically related to the various factors that influence a female swimmer to drop out of swimming. Noting further that if the researcher were to be interested in looking at the cause-and-effect relationship, a longitudinal study would be preferred.

Qualitative thematic approach will be used in which the researcher will employ meaning-based research (Maree, 2020) in their attempt to understand the factors that contribute to the dropout rate of female swimmers in swimming. These factors will be explored within a naturalistic setting and attempt to understand how these interactions take place between the athletes and their experiences that influence them from dropping out. Additionally, this research needs to elicit in-depth responses to explore deeper meaning-making processes and a qualitative approach is the best way to do this as the information that the researcher is seeking cannot be quantified or measured.

13. Population

The population characteristics for this study included Kwa-Zulu female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, who have swum at a provincial level, additionally who have dropped out of swimming within the mentioned ages. There is a lack of professional females in sport, particularly swimming and more often than not, the swimming population consists mainly of males. It is therefore important to consider why the population consists mainly of males, and this study will attempt to understand the high dropout rate of female swimmers.

14. Sampling

The sample included three swimmers that meet the inclusion established above and were drawn from the above-mentioned population. Keeping the sample small, three swimmers ensured that the researcher was able to gain a rich, in-depth narrative from each participant effectively. The narratives allowed the researcher gain insight and explore the specific perceptions and experiences of each participant related to their swimming career. Furthermore, a small sample size is appropriate to achieve the aims of the study while the researchers aim was to gather as much as data as they could throughout the various interviews.

A non-probability sampling method, more specifically purposive sampling was used. A non-probability sampling method allowed for a descriptive exploratory research to take place, which was a crucial element when considering the various factors that influence provincial female swimmers to drop out of swimming. In addition, non-probability sampling required the researcher to use subjective judgments, drawing on current academic literature and the evolutionary nature of the research process. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to purposively select the population (Bezuidenhout et al., 2017), which was important as there were certain characteristics and parameters of the specific population that needed to be considered in order for them to be considered a part of the sample. For example, the researcher only targeted and selected female swimmers that were from Kwa-Zulu Natal, that were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, who have swum at a provincial level, and had previously dropped out of swimming. It is evident through the above-mentioned population characteristics the need to use purposive sampling was important, ensuring only participants were considered that fitted the specified population.

The researcher knew the participants personally, therefore was able to contact with them via Instagram. The researcher informed the participants about the study, the intentions of the study and what their participation would involve. The researcher then asked the participants for their email addresses whereby the researcher sent further information and communication to the various participants. Further communication included the information sheet and two consent forms, which required the participants to sign and date the documents and email them, back to the researcher. Once this step was fulfilled, the researcher scheduled a set date and time for the interview that suited both parties. And as mentioned above three participants were interviewed.

The unit of analysis for this study included the perceptions and experiences of the female swimmers towards the various factors that contributed to their drop out in swimming. This was particularly important to gain insight and was an attempt to understand the various contributing factors that contribute to the high dropout rate of female swimmers in swimming from their perspective and through their experiences.

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15. Data collection methods

In-depth semi-structured interviews, which took place via Skype, were conducted and allowed the researcher to pose prior set questions to the participants during the interview

with an aim of learning more about their views, opinions and beliefs about the specific phenomenon relating to this study (Bezuidenhout et al., 2017). The questions directly related to the factors that influenced them (female swimmers) to drop out of swimming although the researcher also discussed individual factors, for example motivation, which allowed the researcher to gain insight and more information specifically relating to each factor. While the researcher posed certain open-ended questions to the interviewee, there was a certain amount of freedom given to the participants to guide the discussion during the interview. It was here where the researcher was attentive to the responses of the interviewees so that they could identify new lines of inquiry that needed to be explored further. Here, the researcher probed and sought further clarification around certain points that were brought by the participants. Open-ended questions were important for this research study because they enabled the study to produce thick narratives allowing for an in-depth analysis to occur.

The time frame for the interviews was between forty-five minutes to one-hour. Due to current circumstances, the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing was adhered to therefore online interviews were conducted as oppose to face-to-face interviews. The researcher used an interview schedule, Appendix F, which was previously created, as a guide throughout the interviews ensuring they had covered all aspects relative to the study. A recording of the Skype interview, with permission from the participant, was taken, allowing the researcher to play the recording later when transcribing the data from the interview. This step would be the beginning phases of the data analysis process.

The researcher selectively chose potential participants by sending them a direct message via Instagram with the following information being presented to each individual, "Hi. I am currently completing my Psychology Honours Degree and need your assistance with my Research Thesis. You are somebody I have considered to involve as the study specifically looks at the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the ages of 18 to 30 years old from Kwa-Zulu Natal. Your participation in the study would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the study and might be interested in participating, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you." The researcher was successful in identifying these potential participants with the first three participants responding to the direct message with much interest. The researcher took an extra step, ensuring all participants fitted the population and various population characteristics were considered, one last time.

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The researcher responded to the participant's direct message by thanking them for their interest in the study and asked participants to send their email addresses to which the researcher could further communicate and email them. The researcher sent through the information sheet and two consent forms, requesting the participants to please read the forms, sign the consent forms, if they wished to participate and email them back to the researcher. This process was indeed a smooth and easy one with much interest in participation from the various individuals. Once these three participants emailed the signed consent forms back to the researcher, the researcher scheduled a suitable date and time for both parties. The researcher confirmed this information, date, time and session link, with participants via email.

On the day of the interview, the researcher sent a reminder email to each participant. The researcher Skype called the participants individually, introducing themselves, the purpose of the study and once the participants and researcher began their conversation around the topic, the researcher began recording the interview. This was to ensure the researcher could play the recording when beginning the data analysis process, transcribing. An in-depth semi-structured interview took place where the researcher posed certain set questions to the participants while allowing the participant to share their own unique experiences and perceptions surrounding the various questions and topic of the study. The researcher probed and asked participants to elaborate more on new ideas, opinions and beliefs that arose during the conversation. The interviews provided much insight into the various factors that contribute to the drop out of provincial female swimmers, with a few new interesting ideas arising. The three interviews ranged from between forty to fifty-two minutes, which took place via Skype, as mentioned above.

Data collection was indeed a pleasant experience with participants being highly attentive and invested in the study. The researcher was not posed with many challenges in terms of data collection.

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16. Data analysis methods

Thematic analysis was used in which the researcher identified common themes, which included a variety of topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly during the interview with and between the participants. Because of the use of the inductive approach, the data determined the various themes that are related to the participant's specific experiences and perceptions as they described during their interview.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step approach was used for this thematic analysis whereby the researcher actively engaged in the data by first transcribing the audio recording from the interview, while becoming familiar with all the aspects of the data and gained a comprehensive understanding of the content. Secondly, the researcher generated initial codes, using line-by-line coding, which were features of the data that appeared relevant and was meaningful towards providing an indication of the context of the conversation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher coded all data that aided to the understanding and provided insight towards the specific factors that contribute to provincial female swimmers dropping out of swimming. The third step involved sorting the relevant data extracts according to the overarching themes and was the start of the interpretive analysis of the various codes.

A deeper review of the identified themes followed where the researcher ensured that the data within these themes cohered together meaningfully with distinct differences visible between each theme. This step involved two phases that included the themes being checked in relation to the coded extracts and then for the overall data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Step five involved 'refining and defining' the themes, and subthemes, within the data with the researcher having provided numerous names and clear working definitions in a concise manner for each theme. And lastly, the researcher transformed their analysis by interpreting the various themes, providing examples, and allowed the themes to address the research questions relating to this specific study. The researcher ensured they went beyond a mere description of each theme, by providing a supported analysis with evidence that addresses the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The qualitative data analysis was and still remains an interactive layered process with each step and layer of the analysis being documented. It was important for the researcher to prepare and organize the data in a systematic manner to ensure a comprehensive thematic analysis could take place, and this also proved to be useful for the researcher since qualitative data analysis is a lengthy process. All data gathered from all three interviews were subject to an intensive examination, understanding, reading and re-reading.

With the use of Braun and Clarke's step-by-step approach as a guideline for the thematic data analysis process, the researcher began transcribing the data that was audio recorded from the interviews. The first step involved researcher transcribing the data verbatim, including all non-verbal cues as those provided meaning to the spoken word. The three

participants were given pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was protected. During this process the researcher became familiar with all aspects of the data, gaining important insight and understanding towards the content by listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts several times.

The next step involved coding the data, in which the researcher carefully read through the transcribed data line by line, providing initial codes. These initial codes enabled the researcher to arrange and position the information into meaningful units in order to make sense out of it. It proved to be easier for the researcher to print the transcriptions enabling them to mark off specific segments of data using symbols, sets of words and identifiers. These codes/meaningful units were collection points for the researcher that consisted of significant data related to the various factors that influence provincial female swimmers to drop out of swimming, which were represented by various themes.

The researcher identified various overarching themes that were previously established and in addition identified new themes that arose from the data. The researcher kept a list of all of themes, as they are fundamental to study and is based upon the specific research objectives the study wishes to achieve. The researcher continued the coding process via line-by-line coding analysis until the data could offer no further codes/themes, meaning the data was saturated. Here, the researcher reviewed the themes extensively ensuring all data within each theme corresponded together in a meaningful way, with distinct differences between each theme.

Furthermore, the researcher focused on founding the connection between the various themes ensuring all the themes and subthemes pertaining to the study are related to each other and contribute to the research purpose, questions, and objectives. The researcher has established themes and subthemes, provided names and definition to each, allowing the reader to gain much understanding towards each. Finally, the researcher has begun transforming the analysis into an interpretable piece of writing, by using extracted examples that relate to each theme, question and literature. The themes are directly related to and answer the research questions relative to this study.

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17. Trustworthiness

Guba (1981 as cited in Maree, 2020) proposes four criteria to ensure trustworthiness in a qualitative research study:

In order to address **credibility** in this study, the researcher will include well-established research methods, a research design that fits the specific researcher questions and a good theoretical foundation aligned with that of the research methods and questions. Additionally, a well-defined, purposive sampling, detailed data collection methods. The researcher will attempt to establish rapport early on during the interview.

In order to address **transferability** in this study, readers of the research will be able to make connections between aspects of the study and their own experience of research as oppose to generalized claims.

In order to address **dependability** in this study, the researcher will keep a journal documenting the various decisions made during the research process, with specific reference to data collection and data analysis process. This will ensure that others are able to follow the reasoning to various studies. Furthermore, documenting category labels created, revisions made to categories and any observations noted that concern the data when working through the text (Maree, 2020).

In order to address **confirmability** in this study, the findings of the study will be shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, motivation or interest. The researcher will acknowledge and admit their own predispositions ensuring they reduce researcher bias (Maree, 2020). Lastly, the researcher may ask the participants to verify the data gathered and the interpretations made to ensure not misinterpretations have been made.

18. Presentation of findings

The findings were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted online via Skype. Two provincial female swimmers and one national swimmer from Kwa-Zulu female, who had dropped out of swimming and were between the ages of 18 and 30-years old, were interviewed and contributed to this study.

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18.1. Theme 1: Motivation

Motivation played a role in all three participants interviews and provided much understanding towards a few factors that influence a swimmer to drop out of swimming.

18.1.1. Sub-Theme 1: Intrinsic Motivation

The findings showed that all three participants were intrinsically motivated enabling

them to be successful within their swimming career. Participant 1 stated, *“I would always want to better my time, do better and see myself do better.”*

18.1.2. Sub-Theme 2: Extrinsic Motivation

Two extrinsic motivators were found to contribute; support systems and funding by third parties. Participant 1 expressed the importance of having a good support system stating, *“the relationship I built with him was the kind of glue between swimming and my career.”* Whereas Participant 2 expressed her experiences surrounding the lack of support stating, *“I need to show up in a certain way for you to like me or for you to accept me, or for you to support me. And it is completely unacceptable.”*

Participant 3 spoke about funding and the influence this on her stating *“the minute you are injured, no longer number one or top five in the world, you are dropped from all your sponsors.”*

18.2. Theme 2: Goal Setting

Findings indicated that different athletes draw on self-set goals or assigned goals, with none using both. However, Participant 3 contended the need for goal setting and mentioned that she *“never really invested in setting up goals as she knew should would always improve her time somehow.”*

18.2.1. Sub-Theme 1: Self-set goals

Participant 2 made use of self-set goals stating, *“most of it was purely on what I set for myself.”* She believed this enabled her to perform at her best by placing higher level of effort into her performances as mentions, *“I had some of my best performances.”*

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18.2.2. Sub-Theme 2: Assigned goals

Contrary to the above, Participant 1 alluded to her being assigned goals by her coach, which were long-term goals. She expressed the lack of short-term goals that would enable her to achieve the long-term goals and success, while mentioning *“the lack of interest”* received by her coach.

18.3. Theme 3: Burnout

Burnout proved to be a significant contribution, with all three participants mentioning their experiences with burnout. Participant 3 stating *“my swimming experiences weren’t the same, I started getting sick, had a depressed mood for most of the time and I just wasn’t enjoying it as much.”* In addition, Participant 2 expressed how she began to hate swimming, impacting her ability to perform and deliver.

18.4. Theme 4: Overtraining and Injury

All three participants commented on injuries they experienced with Participant 2 describing her injury as *“I had been going through so much trouble with my shoulder. My shoulder just couldn’t cope with the workload.”* The data that emerged from the interviews, showed that their injuries were attributed to overtraining, highlighting the interplay. Participant 1 echoed similar experiences saying, *“I physically couldn’t train much anymore because of injury.”*

18.5. Theme 5: Academic Career

A new theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of pursuing an academic career, which Participant 1 described as *“Swimming and sponsorships are not going to make you money forever, and unfortunately, you need money to survive.”*

19. Interpretation of findings

The findings of the research study will be discussed in detail by presenting the factors that influence female swimmers to drop out of swimming with an in-depth understanding towards these factors being gained.

The high level of intrinsic motivation displayed by the participants played a crucial role in the success of the athlete, as they strived towards a personal sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, Participant 1 stated, *“I was intrinsically competitive.”* In addition, the data showed that an individual’s environment/support system played a crucial role in their motivation, more specifically their motivation towards their performances. Two participants highlighted the importance of a having a support system, and how their supportive environments motivated and enabled them to perform better. This is evident when Participant 1 said, *“My parents were at every single gala, supporting, cheering me on and kept me motivated throughout each gala.”* While the third participant highlighted the lack of support she received, the façade she constantly had to wear, and how this impacted her swimming career. She acknowledged the vital importance of having a good support while expressing her concern for the lack of support given to South African swimmers, specifically, stating *“our country doesn’t provide any support to you.”* Additionally, participant 3

mentioned, *“the country and our sports federations expect so much of us”* indicating the high level of expectations placed on swimmers by their country as well as sports federations.

It is evident these factors, place immense pressure on athletes to constantly compete and perform at the highest level, ultimately altering their locus of control and contributes to lowering their intrinsic motivation and self-determination. An athlete's perception towards their swimming career changes, often impacting their actions, with it potentially relating to a dropout, with participant 2 saying *“it will literally make or break an athlete, that's it.”* Furthermore, the pressure that comes along with a competitive sport and the pressure to constantly perform at a competitive level has a significant impact on an individual's motivation and level of enjoyment. Participant 3 stated, *“it was no longer fun and I was no longer enjoying what I was doing.”*

It is evident through the findings that goal setting was in fact, a technique not commonly used among participants, with only two participants using of goal setting, more specifically self-set goals and assigned goals, with much criticism as well. It was evident that participant 2's hopes and dreams were set on achieving these goals resulting in higher levels of effort towards her performances and allowing her to perform to the best of her ability, while participant 1 critiqued the use of assigned goals. Evidently, participant 1 experienced a less positive effect of goal setting as opposed to participant 2. On the other hand, Participant 3 never used either of the above, resulting in her not having many expectations for herself, allowing her to be more relaxed and feel less pressure. Although, in mentioning these “positive” attributes, a discussion below surrounding the lack of goal setting shall be discussed.

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From the analysis and description of burnout, participant 3 gave; it was evident that she was exhausted, mentally, physically and emotionally. Her interests towards her involvement in a competitive swimming career no longer existed, as a result of prolonged psychological stress and situational factors, such as her supportive environment at the time, which led to her experiences of higher levels of anxiety, lower motivation and depression. There are many factors associated with burnout such as overtraining and injury.

Therefore, aligned with and supporting the aforementioned information, the findings showed that all participants in this research study had experienced injuries during their swimming career and as mentioned, many of them attributed them to overtraining. Participant 1

expressed that *“it was not only a physical pain but an emotional one too.”* It is evident that there is a constant interplay between overtraining and injury.

An additional factor that the findings showed, which was not previously considered, and contributes to the high dropout rate, is female swimmers pursuing a career in academics. Participant 3 stated, *“I realized that academics was actually a bit more important than swimming, and I need to actually focus more on that than swimming.”* Many swimmers have a lifespan and with that comes the realization of the importance of education and the positive long-term effects this has on an individual as they cannot have a professional career for forever and need something that can support you financially for the rest of your life. An education background and pursuing an academic career is important for individuals to attain and often this cannot be done when dedicating most of your time to a professional swimming career, as the pressure placed on an individual is immense. Evidently, through the findings presented, 2 participants dropped out of swimming due to them wanting to pursue an academic career.

To further extend on the interpretation of findings, an understanding of the findings by referring to supporting literature and within the framework of Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) and Locke’s Goal-Setting theory (2015) shall be discussed.

Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that people become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled, enabling individuals to grow and change via the choices and management of their own life (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This study showed that although all participants displayed high levels of intrinsic motivation, it was often the influence and impact of extrinsic motivators and other factors that lowered the participant’s intrinsic motivation and self-determination.

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Competence, autonomy and connection were found in this study to become less significant as a result of injury, overtraining and burnout, making participants feel a sense of constraint; lowering their self-determination (Amado et al, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Their perceptions towards competence, autonomy and connection, impacted their actions pertaining to their motivation and performances (Amado et al, 2015). The effect of injury and burnout on a swimmer leaves them feeling less in control of their actions resulting in a lower intrinsic motivation and self-determination, as discussed above. These two factors make the activity, swimming, less rewarding, less satisfying, and often result in a lack of commitment, alluding

to the high dropout rate.

Furthermore, the connection to their environment, which was fostered by their support system, contributes to an individual's overall motivation and their motivation that influences their performances (Szemes et al., 2017). This study found that if participants felt a sense of connectedness to their environment, the more likely they are to succeed as a result towards the increase in motivation. It is evident a participant expressed the lack of support in her environment, while the participants placed much pressure on her. The environments of both these participants resulted in them feeling less connected, resulting in a lower self-determined athlete.

Locke's Goal Setting theory (2015) highlights the importance of setting goals and the subsequent effect this has on an individual performance. This study found that not many participants made use of various goal-setting techniques, possibly impacting their performances and success within their environment negatively. (Locke & Latham, 2019). This alludes to a swimmer being unable to focus their attention on achieving these goals, which impacts them in terms of maintaining and enhancing their motivation resulting in a lack of success. Swimmers are unable to maintain high levels of motivation, and their lack of goal setting results in a lack of performance and performance management.

20. Research Question addressed

20.1. Primary Research Question:

- ***Why do female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old drop out of swimming?***

The study found that individuals drop out of swimming as a result of a lack of intrinsic motivation towards their swimming. An individual's locus of control is often changed as result of extrinsic motivators and additional factors that shall be discussed below.

20.2. Secondary Research Questions:

- ***To what extent does motivation influence the dropout rate in female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?***

Motivation was the overarching theme that contributed largely to the dropout rate of female swimmers. Individuals draw on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to be successful within a highly competitive and demanding sport, such as swimming. Although a possible conclusion can be drawn regarding intrinsic motivation and dropout of athlete within a sport,

suggesting that if an athlete lacks intrinsic motivation, the stronger the likelihood is of them dropping out of sport. Furthermore, the additional factors that influenced female swimmers to drop out of swimming had an impact on their motivation and their motivation towards their performances. It was evident that motivation was negatively impacted in various ways resulting often resulting in an individual feeling less determined and motivated towards their actions surrounding their swimming careers.

- ***What additional factors influence the dropout rate female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?***

The study found that burnout, injury, overtraining and an academic career proved to be significant contributors to the dropout rate of female swimmers. The constant interplay between Injury and overtraining, and burnout could be attributed to an individual's dropout in swimming. Although, most important, the choice to pursue an academic career by female swimmers plays a significant part towards the dropout rate of female swimmers, alluding to the fact that female swimmers' dropout of swimming due to realizing the importance of academics therefore pursuing an academic career.

21. Ethical Considerations, Limitations and Heuristic Value

21.1. Ethical Considerations

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In terms of ethical considerations, the following will be taken account for; the researcher will contact potential participants via email. The researcher will honour the principle of respect by obtaining voluntary informed consent from the participants prior to the study, in which the participant will consent to their participation in the study and the recording of discussions during the Skype interview (see appendix D and E). The researcher will ensure the nature of the study and the nature of the participant's participation will be explained prior to obtaining informed consent from participants. The interviews will take on a conversational approach, although the researcher will prepare a few open-ended questions prior to the interview.

Anonymity means that there will be no way for anyone to personally identify participants in the study. That data will be collected without obtaining any personal, identifying information. Realistically, because this study will be conducted via a Skype call, where the researcher

personally knows many of the participants and the study involves an interview with the participants, participants will not be anonymous to the researcher although the researcher will ensure no participants identity will be not be revealed through the research. The researcher will use pseudonyms in the write of the report to ensure that information remains confidential and protects the identity of the participants.

Confidentiality means that the participants can be identified but their identities are not revealed to anyone outside of the study. The researcher knows the identities of the participants although will put measures in place to ensure the participants identities are not revealed to anyone else, by separating or modifying any personal identifying information. That data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive and memory stick, in order to ensure no one has access to the information other than the researcher. The audio-recordings will also be destroyed after the completion of the study.

21.2. Limitations

This study is unable to provide interventions to prevent female swimmers from dropping out of swimming, and this should be considered in a different study at a later stage. Participants personally know the researcher therefore may be reluctant to tell the truth and be completely transparent during their interview. Additionally, Covid-19, a worldwide Pandemic, has limited interactions with participants, as social interactions are restricted. The researcher therefore needed to adapt the data collection methods to ensure social distancing was adhered, resulting in online interviews taking place via Skype.)

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21.3. Heuristic Value

The study has provided successful insight into the factors that contribute towards the reasons why provincial female swimmers drop out of swimming between the ages of 18 and 30 years old in KwaZulu-Natal. The study indicated that there is a need for psychological and social support for female swimmers within the swimming sphere to ensure longevity in their swimming careers. It is recommended that a future study regarding support systems such as mentors and sports psychologists be implemented within the field of swimming, providing support to female athletes. A further study could explore ways in which this can be done in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, a further study could involve comparing and contrasting the difference between men and women regarding the different factors that contribute to their individual drop out.

22. Conclusion

This study provided insight, understanding, and generated knowledge surrounding the various factors that influence a provincial female swimmer between the ages of 18 to 30 years old to drop out of swimming. The factors included intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, goal setting, burnout, overtraining and injury, and a new factor that arose through the study was the importance of pursuing an academic career. This knowledge can assist in future studies and assist in provided psychological support to athletes.

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ANNEXURES

Appendix A: FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Title: A qualitative exploration of the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the age of 18 and 30 years old in KwaZulu-Natal

<u>Research Purpose</u>	<u>Primary Research Question</u>	<u>Research Rationale</u>	<u>Seminal Authors /Sources</u>	<u>Lit Review Conceptual Framework</u>	<u>Paradigm</u>	<u>Approach</u>	<u>Data collection Method (s)</u>	<u>Ethics</u>	<u>Key Findings</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
To explore the factors that influence female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old to drop out of swimming. Additionally, to understand motivational and other factors that influence female swimmers to drop out of swimming.	Why do female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old drop out of swimming?	<p>- Researcher has an interest regarding women in sport – who remain underrepresented.</p> <p>- To gain a better understanding towards the factors that influence female swimmers to drop out.</p> <p>-The study will generate knowledge and provide insight into the dropout rate seen by female swimmers in swimming.</p>	<p>(O'Neil & Drillings, 1994)</p> <p>(Deci & Ryan, 1985)</p> <p>(Locke & Latham, 2002)</p>	<p>Theme 1: Motivation</p> <p>Theme 2: Goal Set ing</p> <p>Theme 3: Burnout</p> <p>Theme 4: Overtraining and Injury</p>	<p>Interpretivism will be used.</p> <p>Epistemology: To gain a better into the lives of these females' swimmers and with specific reference to the reasons why they quit.</p> <p>Ontology: In this study, the reality of these individuals is a social construction of the various pressures that have an effect on them and ultimately are the reasons why they quit swimming.</p> <p>Axiology: The knowledge gained from the research will be based on the perceptions and personal experiences of the individual specifically. The researcher should be non-judgmental towards the reasons and instead the research should be used to gain knowledge and provide support to these individuals.</p>	<p>Qualitative thematic approach where meaning-based research will be used in order to understand the factors that influence female swimmers to drop out. This will be done in a naturalistic setting in order to get an accurate representation of the various factors that influence female swimmers to quit.</p>	<p>Online Interviews will be used to collect data and these interviews will take place via Skype. The researcher will ask the participants open-ended questions but will also allow the participants freedom to enable the conversation to flow. Questions will directly relate to the factors that influence the participant to drop out of swimming. A voice recorder, a computer (Skype) and a hard drive will be used.</p>	<p>-Voluntary consent from participants for their participation in the study and permission for the interview to be recorded by the researcher. The audio recording will be destroyed after the study.</p> <p>- Participants' identities and the information will be kept private and confidential.</p> <p>- Data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive and destroyed after the study.</p>	<p>Finding indicated that all participants displayed high levels of intrinsic motivation, although it was often the influence and impact of extrinsic motivators that lowered the participant's intrinsic motivation and self-determination leading to their drop out in swimming.</p>	<p>It is recommended that support systems such as mentors and sports psychologists be implemented within the field of swimming, providing support to female athletes. A further study could explore ways in which this can be done in a cost-effective manner.</p>
<u>Research Problem</u>	<u>Secondary Questions</u>	<u>Key Concepts</u>	<u>Key Theories</u>		<u>Sampling</u>	<u>Data Analysis (s)</u>	<u>Limitations</u>	<u>Key Contribution</u>		
The high dropout rate of female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old who have swum at a provincial level.	<p>-To what extent does motivation influence the dropout rate in female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?</p> <p>-What additional factors influence the dropout rate female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years?</p>	<p>Extrinsic motivation, Intrinsic motivation, and amotivation.</p> <p>Self-actualization, autonomy, and self-efficacy.</p> <p>Stress, burnout, and overtraining.</p>	<p>Locke's Goal-Setting theory (2002) can be applied to this study because it directly relates to the swimmers and their goals. Their goals impact their performance and performance management.</p> <p>Additionally, Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020) considers people have being self-determined where their needs for competence, connection and autonomy are filled.</p>		<p>Non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling because it allows the researcher to purposely selects the population for the study.</p>	<p>Thematic analyses, which will include identifying common themes from the gathered data.</p>	<p>- Participants personally know the researcher therefore they may be reluctant to tell the truth and be completely transparent.</p> <p>- Covid-19, a worldwide Pandemic. This has limited interactions with participants, as social interactions are restricted.</p>	<p>Provided insight into the various factors that contribute to a provincial swimmer drop out in swimming.</p> <p>While also shedding light on the a need for psychological and social support for female swimmers within the swimming sphere.</p>		

Appendix B: ETHICS CHECKLIST



HONOURS RESE, RESM and RMET ETHICS CHECKLIST

Dear student

Please complete this checklist and include this in your proposals as an appendix:

Student name: **Dawn-Abigail Schutte**

Title of the research: **A qualitative exploration of the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the age of 18 and 30 years old in KwaZulu-Natal.**

	Yes	No	Comment: supervisor/ navigator/lecturer
Are you using human subjects in your research?	X		
I intend to use human subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I will not conduct research with human subjects under the age of 18 and other vulnerable groups. I understand I can only proceed once I receive an ethical clearance letter. 			
Interviews/ Focus groups An example of the <i>written consent form</i> I intend to use is attached.	X		
I will record the interview/focus groups and the sample of the letter where I ask for permission to do so is attached.	X		
I plan to use an interview schedule: The example of my research instrument is attached.	X		
I plan to use a questionnaire: The example of my research instrument is attached.		X	
I plan to use a gate-keepers letter: The example of my letter is attached.		X	
I plan to do research on an IIE site/with IIE students/staff/artefacts and I filled in the application for permission to do so. The application is attached. I understand I can only proceed once I receive IIE Approval for this.		X	

Signed

Appendix C: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



20 July 2020

Student name: Dawn-Abigail Schutte

Student number: 16010289

Campus: Varsity College Durban North

Re: Approval of HPS1 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

There are some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor before you may proceed (see below):

Please discuss with your supervisor/navigator/lecturer how you will address these issues listed below:

Please note: **Your fieldwork may only proceed once you address the following issues:**

- Your final **interview schedule** is missing or needs refinement. Your supervisor needs to sign off your final interview schedule or questionnaire.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor: Jarryd Byron

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr Razia Khan

Honours co-ordinator: Tracey Haselau

Appendix D: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dawn-Abigail Schutte and I am a student at IIE Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Jarryd Byron about the dropout rate of provincial female swimmers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old within the discipline of swimming. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of factors that contribute to the high dropout rate evident by these female swimmers. Additionally, contributing to the field of Sport Psychology by adding the above-mentioned data relating to this specific niche area, swimming.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you were provincial female swimmer who is between the age of 18 and 30 years old and lives in Kwa-Zulu Natal therefore the perfect suited candidate to be a participant in this study. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to you participate in an online Interview that will take place via Skype. The interview will take on a conversational approach where I will have a few open-ended questions prepared and allow you te freedom to discuss factors that you feel influenced you in your swimming career.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about the factors that influenced you to drop out of swimming. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;

- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at IIE Varsity College, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:
Dawn-Abigail Schutte

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:
Jarryd Byron

Consent form for participants	
<p>I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Dawn-Abigail Schutte about the contributing factors that influence female swimmers between the age of 18 and 30 years old to drop out of swimming.</p> <p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I agree to be interviewed for this research. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected. 	
Signature	Date

Appendix E: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
<p>I, _____, agree to allow Dawn-Abigail Schutte to audio record my interview as part of the research about the contributing factors that influence female swimmers between the age of 18 and 30 years old to drop out of swimming.</p>	
<p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Appendix F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What are some of the factor that motivated you during your swimming career?
2. Did your motivation towards being successful change throughout your swimming career?
 - If there was a change, please could you explain the process?
3. How did your motivation influence you during training and performance?
4. Did you experience stress at all during training or competition?
5. If yes, how would describe some the ways you enabled yourself to cope during this/these stressful times?
6. Was there someone/many individuals who played a significant role in enabling you to be successful in your career?
7. Did you feel that you had a support system during your swimming career?
 - If yes, who were these people and what kind of support did they supply?
8. Are there specific factors/techniques that you can attribute enhanced performances to?
9. What enabled you to be successful in training and at competitions?
 - Did goal setting play a role? If yes, what kind of goals did you set?
10. Did you ever experience burnout at some point during your swimming career?
 - If yes, please could elaborate on your experience?
 - How did you know you were burnt out?
 - How did you cope/overcome burnout?
11. Did this impact you in any way towards your career swimming?
12. What would you consider the most stressful part/involvement be in your swimming career?
 - And, what were some of your coping mechanisms?
13. What would your weekly training schedule involve, including swimming training sessions, land work, recovery?
14. Did you find your motivation towards performing at a competitive level fluctuate through our career?
 - Please could you elaborate more on your experiences?
15. Throughout your swimming career, did you experience any injuries?
 - If yes, what injury did you get?
 - What would you attribute the cause of your injuries too?

16. Your participation in sport was it purely swimming based or were you actively involved in a variety of sport?
- (If participant specialized in swimming only) – Ask them at what age and why?

Appendix G: ORIGINALITY REPORT

Blackboard
SafeAssign Originality Report
RESE8419_VCDN1 • Safe Assign Plagiarism Practice • Submitted on Wed, 28 Oct 2020, 12:58 [View Originality Report - Old Design](#)

Dawn-Abigail Schutte

[View Report Summary](#)

1 A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE DROPOUT RATE OF PROVINCIAL FEMALE SWIMMERS BETWEEN THE AGE OF 18 AND 30-YEARS OLD IN KWAZULU-NATAL

by
1 Dawn-Abigail Schutte
16010289
RESEARCH REPORT
10221 words

2 IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology

at
IIE Varsity College

for
Research - RESE8419
Supervisor: Jarryd Byron
October 2020

3 I, Dawn-Abigail Schutte, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University of Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

4 Education Institution for degree purposes.

2 28 October 2020

1 Miss Dawn-Abigail Schutte Date

Attachment 1
Research Report .pdf 100 %

Sources

INCLUDED SOURCES

Institutional database (13) 100 %

Internet (7) 0 %

Top sources

Word Count: 15,266
Submitted on: 28/10/20
Submission UUID: 28744421-11c4-5d8b-85d3-01094720c200
Attachment UUID: 6417e483-73e8-9c89-8204e-6a9f4d08a119