

A Qualitative Study on the Factors which Motivate Experienced Kwa-Zulu Natal Runners to Participate in Marathons.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the 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 or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Motivation and marathon running are interrelated because a marathon runner has to adopt training habits and lifestyle behaviours that goes beyond the recreational behaviour of individuals that run for a hobby. Purpose: The aim of this study was to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. Problem: The present study investigated the qualitative gap in the existing body of literature on the motivational factors in experienced runners and how these factors influence them to participate in marathons. Methodology: A semi-structured interview was constructed with three experienced runners (who have completed more than five marathons). A thematic analysis was then performed to examine the perspectives from each participant. Results: The findings indicated that experienced runners were mainly motivated to participate in marathons by their need to complete a marathon, the “runners high”, achieving personal marathon goals, sustainability to participate, and participation in the sport. Implications: These findings encourage further research on motivational factors of the different experienced runner levels to get a better understanding on the various motivational factors that could occur.

Key words: *Motivation; Experienced Runner; Participation; Marathon.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualisation

Within the field of behavioural and sports psychology, motivation has been thoroughly researched as there is no set list of motivational factors, as each individual has their own unique differences in terms of their motivation (Schuler, Baumann, Chasiotis, Bender, & Baum, 2019). With this said, motivation and marathon running are interrelated because a marathon runner has to adopt training habits and lifestyle behaviours that goes beyond the recreational behaviour of individuals that run for a hobby (Zach *et al.*, 2015). Experienced runners, those that have completed more than five marathons, have separate motivational factors compared to the novice runners because of the complex motivation needed for long-distance running (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019). For instance, experienced runners are motivated by their need to achieve personal marathon goals whilst novice runners are more motivated by the reward of completing a marathon can give them. Thus, this research study aimed to describe how experienced runners' motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons. This study used the subjective lived experiences of experienced runners (with the help of McClelland's Human Motivation Theory) to discuss the factors which motivated them as well as how these factors influenced them to participate in marathons. This study collected and analysed data from Kwa-Zulu Natal experienced runners to provide primary descriptions of their motivational factors, those that generally occur in experienced runners.

1.2 Problem Statement

There are numerous studies finding quantitative data on the types of motivational factors in experienced runners, generated from research on the Motivations of Marathoners Scale (MOMS) Model (for instance, studies done by Zach *et al.* (2015) and Waskiewicz *et al.* (2019)). However, there is a need to go beyond statistical research and explore how these motivational factors influence experienced runners. These quantitative studies only partially explore human motivation and do not provide enough descriptions of how to utilise this information in real life. This is problematic because it does not explain or describe how motivational factors influence individuals and how each individual has different unique motivational factors. Thus, the problem that needs to be investigated is the qualitative gap in the existing body of literature on

the motivational factors in experienced runners and how these factors influence them to participate in marathons. Additionally, there is little research on motivational factors of experienced runners from a South African perspective, which questions how these factors can be applied in a South African context.

1.3 Rationale

This topic was selected because there is not enough qualitative data on experienced runners and their motivational factors. Experienced runners differ from the average runner in that they use both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors to influence their participation in marathons (van Heerden, 2014), where average runners mainly use extrinsic motivation (Zach *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, this topic should be studied because it would add a qualitative perspective to the existing body of knowledge by providing a detailed outlook on the subjective lived experiences that experienced runners themselves will provide (these experiences being the factors which motivate them to participate in marathons). Thus, this research study was relevant because it provided a qualitative perspective to the already existing quantitative knowledge on the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. By providing a qualitative perspective to existing quantitative research findings (such as research using the MOMS Model) would help others have a better understanding of runners' motivation and how experienced runners' motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons. This study would contribute to the field of behavioural and sports psychology researching motivational factors as well as previous literature researching runners' motivation by providing a South African perspective.

1.4 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

1.4.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. Additionally, this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of behavioural and sports psychology, by providing data produced from a qualitative, South African perspective.

1.4.2 Research Questions

1.4.2.1 Main Research Question

- What factors motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons?

1.4.2.2 Secondary Research Questions

- How do these motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons?
- What motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly?

1.5 Research Objectives

- To describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.
- To explore how experienced runners' motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons.
- To describe what motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualisation

2.1.1 Motivation

Motivation is the direction of behaviour and consists of the reasons that influences this behaviour (Clancy, Herring, MacIntyre, & Campbell, 2016). One can either be motivated extrinsically (motivated by reasons outside one's control), or intrinsically (motivated by one's personal desires; Newland & Aicher, 2016), or by both (Van Heerden, 2014). Motivation can also be classified in terms of three individual differences, such as achievement, power, and affiliation (McClelland, 1961; Sparks & Repede, 2016). In terms of this research, motivation in runners can either be exhibited intrinsically or extrinsically and is experienced differently between individuals (in terms of achievement, power and affiliation).

2.1.2 Experienced Runner

An experienced runner is a marathon runner that adopts lifestyle and training habits that goes beyond leisure exercise (Zach *et al.*, 2015). They endure lifelong participation in long-distance running that ranges from 1500m to 42.2km (Willy & Paquette, 2019) and have been running for more than a year (Kemler, Blokland, Backx, & Huisstede, 2018). Alternatively, an experienced runner is understood as being a runner that has participated in more than 3 marathons (Zach *et al.*, 2015) and can be categorised as obligatory runners because of their need to persistently train and compete in running races (Hammer & Podlog, 2016). But, in terms of this research, an experienced runner is a runner who has participated in more than 5 marathons and adopts the lifestyle behaviour consisting of the social and competitive aspects of marathon participation.

2.1.3 Participation

Participation in sport includes the involvement in physical activity (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019) and it is associated on recreational and competitive levels (Hollander, Baumann, Zech, & Verhagen, 2018). Running requires ongoing and consistent training (Kaufman, 2019) and involves competing in organised races (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019). In terms of this research, participation is the duration and frequency of training for a marathon as well as competing in them.

2.1.4 Marathon

A marathon can be termed as a running race which requires running a distance of 42.2km (Zach *et al.*, 2015). It is a distance-timed race with the aim to run a certain distance in the shortest time possible (Roebuck *et al.*, 2018). A number of recreational novices, mid-level experienced, and experienced runners all participate in the race (Zach *et al.*, 2015). In terms of this research, a marathon is a running race of 42.2km in which experienced runners choose to participate in yearly.

2.1.5 Motivations of Marathoners Scale (MOMS)

The MOMS model was developed by Masters, Ogels, and Jolton (1993) as a way to assess the motives of marathon runners (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019). This scale identifies four overarching motives that describe the type of motivational reasoning

associated with marathon runners: psychological (psychological coping, life meaning, and self-esteem), physical (weight concerns and health orientation), social (recognition and affiliation), and achievement motives (personal goal achievement and competition; Kaufman, 2019). In terms of this research, the MOMS model is a means to categorise and subcategorise motivational factors that are used to assess marathon runners.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory that was relevant to this research is McClelland's (1961) Human Motivation Theory because it emphasises the motives that direct and sustain human behaviour (Sparks & Repede, 2016). This theory argues that human motivation is a response to the changes in affective states (which may be positive to negative) and this response will motivate one towards a goal to reach a different affective state (McClelland *et al.*, 1953; as cited in Guss, Burger, & Dorner, 2017). In terms of this research, the experienced runners' motivational factors direct and sustain their participation in marathons. These motivational factors drive one's behaviour in an attempt to satisfy one's need (Sparks & Repede, 2016), such as the need to connect with others as a motivational factor to participate in marathons for experienced runners.

Considering the above, McClelland argues that individuals are motivated by three motives: the need for power, achievement, and affiliation (Johnson, Irizarry, Nguyen, & Maloney, 2018). The need for power, consists of one being motivated because they seek out recognition, prestige, and attention (McClelland, 1965; as cited in Johnson *et al.*, 2018). The need for achievement consists of being driven for success, improvement, and accomplishment (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Lastly, the need for affiliation is the desire to create and maintain social relationships, as well as to enjoy belonging to a group (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017). Individuals have a unique mix of these desires, but one trait is generally more dominant (Johnson *et al.*, 2018). For example, where an experienced runner might be motivated to participate in a marathon by their need to gain recognition; improve their marathon time; and feel connected with a group, their need to feel connected might be a more dominant motivational factor than the other two.

Thus, this theory focuses on the unique differences between individuals' motives, and the interaction between these motives and the corresponding incentives within the social environment (Schuler *et al.*, 2018). This theory is relevant to this research because it expands on the motives which drives experienced runners to participate in marathons by providing a qualitative perspective. It utilises the fact that each individual is motivated differently, and that whilst most individuals have similar motives, one motive may be more dominating in their behaviour. For example, where one experienced runner could be motivated by beating everyone's' times in a marathon (need for power), another experienced runner could be motivated by achieving a personal goal (need for achievement). Therefore, this theory will allow the researcher to describe and explain the factors which motivate experience runners to participate in marathons and it will allow the researcher to determine how these factors influence their participation in marathons yearly.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Motivation

Motivation is an important factor on why runners participate in the sport. With this said, experienced runners have motivational factors that separate them from other runners, in terms of the factors that drive their need to participate in marathons. For instance, the Clancy *et al.* (2016) study suggests that motivation is the direction of behaviour and consists of the reasons that influence this behaviour. They saw motivation as resulting from the interaction of various forces (such as internal and external events that influence how people to act) and that motivation acts as an outcome or mediator to those actions (Clancy *et al.*, 2016). Adding on to this, the Newland and Aicher (2018) study on the relationship between individuals and sport events demonstrated how motivation is either an external or internal factor that directs an individual's behaviour. For sport participation, they see motivation as being either extrinsic or intrinsic (Newland & Aicher, 2018). In terms of this research, they see experienced runners as being either motivated externally (such as receiving a reward) or internally (such as achieving a personal accomplishment).

However, this is not always the case. Van Heerden's (2014) study examined how both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are closely interlinked. They demonstrated that when

intrinsic motivation increases, extrinsic motivation also increases (van Heerden, 2014). In terms of running participation, experienced runners use both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors to influence their participation in marathons. For example, they use their pleasure of participating in the sport (intrinsic) and their desire to achieve the reward of completing another marathon (extrinsic) to motivate their participation in marathons yearly.

Similarly, Tablizo, Biado, Crispino, Lee, and Kemboi (2018) conducted a study to demonstrate how motivation in elite long-distance runners can be driven by intrinsic and/or extrinsic motives. They saw that runners that were intrinsically motivated were more inclined to having longer sports careers, whilst runners that were extrinsically motivated engage in less running in the future (Tablizo *et al.*, 2018). Whilst they only looked at elite runners, and concluded that they were extrinsically motivated, one can presume that experienced runners that participated in marathons are intrinsically motivated. This view is supported by Beckmann and Kossak's (2018) study where they concluded that individuals with intrinsic motives had recurring long-term behavioural tendencies, whilst individuals with explicit motives had short-term choices. Both these studies imply that experienced runners, who have had years of running experience, are intrinsically motivated because they enjoyed continuously achieving their personal goals, such as participating in marathons.

Thus, from the studies mentioned above, it can be suggested that experienced runners have and use both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Intrinsic being their need to achieve the accomplishment of participating in another marathon, and extrinsic being their need to surpass their previous marathon time. Considering this, one can assume that experienced runners are motivated by their need for achievement and power, and these factors influences them to participate in marathons.

2.3.2 Participating Motives Involved in Marathon Training and Racing

When trying to understand the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons, it is important to get a better understanding of the motives that drive marathon training and racing. These motives go beyond a novice marathon runner's motivation, to that of the more experienced runners who participate in marathons yearly (and looking into how these motives are their driving force in their

participation). Roebuck *et al.* (2018) conducted a study on the existing literature regarding the psychology of ultra-runners. They concluded that the most significant motivating factor for ultra-runners to engage in their sport is the opportunity to achieve personal goals, and that self-esteem and health-related reasons were the least important motivating factors (Roebuck *et al.*, 2018). Whilst this study was focused on ultra-running, it would appear the opportunity to achieve personal goals is a significant motivating factor for marathon runners whilst training. Similarly, Qiu, Tian, Zhou, Lin, and Gao (2020) examined the qualities among marathon runners and concluded that the achievement of completing a marathon, regardless of the effort and time spent on training, was a motivating factor itself. Much like the previous study, this suggests that achieving personal goals is a major motivational factor that influences experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly.

Furthermore, Aicher and Brenner (2015) conducted a study with the purpose to explain one's motivation to participate in sport and its events. In the study, majority of the participants in large sporting events were more inclined to engage in the sport together, with the intention of sharing a unique and intense experience (Aicher & Brenner, 2015). They concluded that social identities provided individuals with a sense of belongingness to a wider social group (who are also participating in those events; Aicher & Brenner, 2015). Experienced runners use their social identities to achieve a sense of belonging to motivate their training participation. This "belonging" also motivates them to participate in various marathon events yearly, as a means of participating in the collective unique and intense experience.

On the other hand, Aicher, Rice, and Hambrick (2017) conducted an investigation to develop a better understanding of runners' involvement with training and their motivations to complete running events. They concluded that runners who reported high levels of autonomous motivation completed more marathons when compared to other runners (Aicher *et al.*, 2017). This suggests the opposite of what was said previously by Aicher and Brenner (2015), who proposed that participants engaged in the sport for the membership of that community. However, they couldn't conclude the need to participate in marathons yearly, much like this study suggests. Moving on, Aicher *et al.* (2017) also concluded that one's level of motivation predicted their meaning associated with their participation. From this, it would appear that the more

runners internalise their motives for participating, the more involved they will be with the sport.

Thus, from the above studies, it can be seen that the achievement of completing another marathon (a need for power), achieving a personal goal (a need for achievement), and being a member of a group (a need for affiliation) are interlinking motivating factors for experienced runners in terms of their involvement in participating in marathon training and racing. In terms of this study, these factors mentioned previously demonstrate how experienced runners are influenced to train and participate in marathons yearly, as these motivating factors continuously drive them towards the goal of participating in a marathon.

2.3.3 Motives to Participate in Away-From-Home Marathons

For experienced runners, there are reasons as to why away-from-home marathons have such a desire to them, mainly because they exceed local marathons in their event. These away-from-home marathons include international marathons, such as the London and Boston marathons (Aicher & Brenner, 2015); as well as national marathons, such as the Two-Oceans and Soweto marathons. With this said, away-from-home marathons have different motivational factors (to that of local marathons) that influence runners to participate in them. Malchrowicz-Mosko and Poctza (2019) conducted a study to examine the motivational differences between local and sports tourists when participating in half-marathons. They found that there was a desire to feel integrated with others, to experience strong emotions, as well as a to have fun (Malchrowicz-Mosko & Poctza, 2019). However, they also concluded, for sports tourists only, that participating with a subculture of runners was a significant motivational factor (Malchrowicz-Mosko & Poctza, 2019). Whilst this study only focuses on half-marathons, the act of participating in away-from-home marathons demonstrates the same motivational factors amongst experienced runners, such as experiencing strong emotions and a sense of belonging, as discussed in the previous theme.

Similarly, a study conducted by Newland and Aicher (2018) aimed to determine the relationship between destination and event elements with one's motivation to travel for sports events. The conclusion was that athletes are motivated to participate in a

particular sporting event for its reputation; the unique qualities that distinguish it from others; the challenge of the course; as well as for the prize money or gifts (Newland & Aicher, 2018). An alternative approach is that of Poczta, MacIachrowicz-Mosko, and Fadigas's (2018) study on the motives for mass running event participation. They found that experienced runners were motivated to participate in a certain event for "good fun" and for the experience (Poczta *et al.*, 2018). Comparably, Peric *et al.* (2016) conducted a study to express the motives that are important for sport event participation, looking majorly into the event aspects and qualities. They found that the motives that encourage participants in sporting events were their desire for new experiences and the prestige of doing an away-from-home event (Peric *et al.*, 2016). Aicher and Brenner (2015) have the same view on away-from-home marathons. They concluded that experienced runners had the desire "collect places" in terms of marathons, such as the Big Five marathons (New York; London; Chicago; Boston; and Berlin marathons; Aicher & Brenner, 2015). From the studies above, it would appear that away-from-home marathons provided an additional motivational factor for runners to participate in marathons.

Thus, it can be concluded that, from these studies, experienced runners view "away-from-home" marathons as a means to feel integrated with a subculture of runners (runners that participate in marathons) and the prestige of doing an away-from-home event. These factors not only demonstrate experienced runners need for power and affiliation to motivate them to participate in marathons, but also to direct and sustain their participation in marathons yearly.

2.3.4 Sustaining Running Whilst Faced with Challenges

Whilst the experiences of training and participating in a marathon have many benefits, as mentioned previously, the training can be extensive and hard on the body. Considering the extensive training, experienced runners continue to be motivated to participate in marathons despite the challenges they experienced. Hammer and Podlog (2016) conducted a study on the issue of why one chooses to participate in marathons and its extensive training. They found that obligatory runners (those who run at all costs) are more motivated to train out of a need to achieve personal goals, to attain recognition for their accomplishments, and to beat the competition (despite negative consequences; Hammer and Podlog, 2016). Experienced runners, in

particular, are sometimes classified as obligatory runners, as they are persistent in their running despite being aware of the risk of future injury (Hammer & Podlog, 2016). Hoffman and Krouse (2018) had a similar conclusion, in that obligatory runners would not stop their training and their marathon participation despite the potential harm to their health. Thus, both these studies demonstrate how the motivations of obligatory runners (both intrinsic and extrinsic) influence their participation in marathons. It can also be suggested that one's inflexible persistence to run at all costs can be considered a motivational factor itself.

Alternatively, the study done by Chalabaev *et al.* (2017) examined the function of self-determined motivation in predicting injuries in runners. They concluded that runners with self-determined motivation are more likely to detect the early warning signals of injury and are more likely to take preventative measures (Chalabaev *et al.*, 2017) because they are intent on completing a marathon. Experienced runners (because of their knowledge from previous injury experiences) would take preventative measures to ensure their participation in their chosen marathon. With this said, and despite their injured state, their self-determined motivation influences their participation in their training (and marathon participation). Similarly, Johnson, Kentta, Ivarsson, Alvmeyren, & Karlsson (2016) conducted a study to gain insight into the factors that supported runners through a challenging event. They concluded that, regardless of the high training loads and exertion levels, it was the positive physiological and psychological factors (such as the "runners high") that come from their high training loads that motivated their training. (Johnson *et al.*, 2016).

Thus, from the studies mentioned, it can be suggested that despite the challenges that experienced runners face, their motivational factors still influence them to participate in marathons. These motivational factors being their need for power (such as beating their competition and attaining recognition for their accomplishments) as well as the positive physiological and psychological factors.

2.3.5 Going Beyond the Motivation of Marathoners Scale (MOMS) Model

Considering the previous themes, the MOMS model provides a set framework for the motivations of marathon runners (Masters *et al.*, 1993; as cited in Zach *et al.*, 2015). However, there is a need to go beyond this model and explore how these motivational

factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. Zach *et al.*, (2015) conducted a study that expands on the motivational characteristics of marathon runners in terms of the MOMS model. They concluded that experienced runners, in particular, were more motivated by competitive and social reinforcement rather than by personal accomplishment (Zach *et al.*, 2015). Duclos-Bastia, Vallejo-Reyes, Giakoni-Ramirez, and Parra-Camacho (2020) came to a similar conclusion, but they found that only men based their participation as being motivated by competition and that women were more motivated in a recreational way (such as mental health, fitness, and the social component of running). Likewise, Waskiewicz, Nikolaidis, Chalabaev, Rosemann, and Knechtle (2018) looked at the relationship between ultra-marathoners' experiences and their motivational characteristics. They demonstrated that for experienced female runners, health orientation was one of the highest motives (in terms of the MOMS model; Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2018). These studies suggest that a runner's motivation (such as the need for competition, social reinforcement, and health orientation) are more than just one motivational factor (as the MOMS model suggests) but a mixture of a few factors.

However, other studies had different responses and findings to the MOMS model. In terms of this research, as mentioned before, personal goal achievement is a reoccurring motivational factor. The study conducted by (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019) highlights that personal goal achievement was the strongest motivational factor for experienced runners when using the MOMS model. They further added that finding meaning in life and self-esteem were the other reoccurring motivational factors (Waskiewicz *et al.*, 2019). In terms of this research, these two motivational factors do not just influence a runner's participating in the sport, but also in participating in marathons. Additionally, Starzak and Sas-Nowosielski (2019) conducted a study using the MOMS model as a means to explore the motives of marathon runners. The findings indicate that experienced runners were marginally motivated by extrinsic factors (such as gaining other's approval or competing with others) and that they were more motivated by personal goal achievement and self-esteem (Starzak & Sas-Nowosielski, 2019). Whilst the MOMS model suggests that personal goal achievement (an achievement motive) and self-esteem (a psychological motive) are separate, they are interlinked. What makes this study different to others, it that they pointed out the

psychological motives (such as psychological coping; Starzak & Sas-Nowosielski, 2019) as also being a motivation factor for experienced runners.

Thus, from the studies above, it can be concluded that the need for competition during races as well as the social aspect of running (the need for power and affiliation) are motivational factors that influence experienced runners to participate in marathons, as identified by the MOMS model. Whilst, the MOMS model only identifies these motives that influence participation, it is possible to go beyond these motives and demonstrate how these factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Paradigm

This research study used an interpretivist approach because it aims to understand and describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. This approach enabled this study to better understand lived human behaviour as well as gain an empathetic, in-depth understanding of the participants' subjective experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014), these experiences being how experienced runners' motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons.

The epistemological perspective of interpretivism sees the truth as being dependent on the context as well as one's interpretation of this information (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). What counts as knowledge for this research are the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to continue to participate in marathons and their interpretation of these lived experiences. By studying their experiences, this research provided insight into the participants' subjective experiences as the source of knowledge (Maree, 2020), which are the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.

As an interpretivist, the ontological position believes that reality is subjective in the sense that the participants' experiences of their motivational factors are unique and are dependent on the meaning they ascribe to them (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). By observing the multiple perspectives of the participants' realities (Maree, 2020), this

research will have a better understanding and explanation of the motivational factors which influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. Thus, for this research, the ontology perspective provided a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences (Maree, 2020), which are the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.

The axiological position of interpretivism values the complex understanding of the various unique realities (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This research values the subjective interpretations of the participants and their perceptions of their experiences (as well as the researcher's interpretation; Maree, 2020), such as the factors which motivate them to participate in marathons. Thus, in terms of this research, the participants interpretation as well as the researchers own interpretation (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014) on the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to participate in marathons has been valued throughout the research.

3.2 Research Design and Conceptual Approach

This research study is a qualitative descriptive design because it relies on the narratives of the participants and focuses on how they make sense of their experiences (Maree, 2020). The goal of qualitative research is to explore how an individual experiences, perceives, and attaches meaning to a phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014), this phenomenon being how the motivational factors of experienced runners influences them to participate in marathons. Thus, employing a qualitative approach allowed the research to be more naturalistic, in that it focuses on the participant's interactions occurring in natural settings (Maree, 2020). Using this approach provided an in-depth, detailed description and interpretation of the participants' (Vasimoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016) motivational factors and allowed the researcher to explain them through the participant's eyes (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). For instance, doing one-on-one interviews (a qualitative data collection method) allowed the participants to explore their own personal motivational factors and allowed the researcher to further explore each of the participants subjective factors that influence them to participate in marathons.

This research study made use of a descriptive research design as it provided information and described a certain phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014), which

are the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. Employing descriptive research allowed the researcher to systematically describe the existing phenomena (Atmowardoyo, 2018) and allowed for the involvement of naturalistic data (Nassaji, 2015). Using this design allowed for a better understanding of experienced runners' behaviours and their subjective experiences of their motivational factors. Furthermore, this study worked inductively as it produced connections between the research objectives and findings (Liu, 2016). The researcher used the data as the foundation for identifying and interpreting meaning when developing codes (and essentially themes; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017). Working inductively allowed the researcher to build connections between the research findings and the objectives, to determine what motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. Additionally, this study made use of a cross-sectional research design because it provided a way to create a general picture of a phenomenon at one point in time (Maree, 2020), the phenomenon being the motivational factors of experienced runners.

3.3 Population and Sampling Methods

3.3.1 Population

The target population for this study were all experienced runners in South Africa, and the accessible population were three Kwa-Zulu Natal experienced runners from the Regent Harriers Running Club. The population characteristics for this study included a combination of males and females residing in the Kwa-Zulu Natal area, being a part of the Regent Harriers Running Club, and having completed more than five marathons.

3.3.2 Sampling Methods

The unit of analysis for this study involved the lived experiences of experienced runners towards their motivational factors that influenced them to participate in marathons. By looking at the runners' lived experiences, this research was able to provide deeper insight and understanding on their subjective experiences (Maree, 2020), which are the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. Furthermore, the sample size in this study consisted of three experienced runners. Having three participants allowed this research to obtain new and richly

textured understanding (Vasileious, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018) of the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.

With this said, this study made use of nonprobability sampling methods. Nonprobability sampling is used when it is impossible to gain access to the entire population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). It focuses on how many individuals are needed for an interview in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem being explored (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This method allowed the researcher to subjectively select individuals that represented the population (Etikan, Alkassim, & Abubakaer, 2015). For instance, the researcher was able to subjectively select three experienced runners that fit the population parameter of having completed more than five marathons. Thus, this sampling method was appropriate because it provided this research with the opportunity to explore and better understand the subjective experiences of the participants and how their motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons.

Specifically, this research made use of snowball sampling because it allowed the participants to identify other potential participants that fit the population parameters (Elfil & Negida, 2017), that being having completed more than five marathons. This sampling method provided the opportunity for the researcher to gain access to a population that cannot be located in a specific area (Elfil & Negida, 2017). For instance, experienced runners (as a population) were very difficult to gain access to since there was not a designated list of individuals to refer to. Thus, after each interview, the participant referred the researcher to another potential participant that fit the parameter of having completed more than five marathons. This participant then referred to another potential participant after their interview. Therefore, this type of nonprobability sampling method was appropriate for this study because using snowball sampling allowed the researcher to construct a list of experienced runners from a member of the population, when the population is difficult to reach.

3.4 Data Collection Method

This is a qualitative research study because it aims to provide a thick description of the subjective experiences and meanings associated with a phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014), that being experienced runner's motivational factors. Thus, this

research made use of semi-structured interviews as its qualitative data collection method. Interviews allowed the researcher to present questions to their participants with the aim of learning more about their beliefs, opinions, and views (Maree, 2020) on their motivational factors as experienced runners. This provided this research with the opportunity to learn about the in-depth experiences of the participants (Turner, 2010) and how their motivational factors influenced them to participate in marathons. Interviews were the more appropriate choice for this study because, compared to focus groups, interviews provided greater depth and range of themes within the context (Seal *et al.*, 1998; as cited in Guest, Namey, Taylor, Eley, & McKenna, 2017) of motivational factors in experienced runners. Interviews were also more efficient because one-on-one interviews generated more unique items (Guest *et al.*, 2017) relating to the personal experiences of the experienced runners' motivational factors. Specifically, one-on-one interviews have been found to be more effective than focus groups for generating a list of themes and topics within a particular domain (Guest *et al.*, 2017). In terms of this research, one-on-one interviews provided the researcher the themes relating to the factors which motivates experienced runners to participate in marathons.

Using a semi-structured interview approach ensured that each interview discussed the same general areas of information but also providing a degree of adaptability in collecting the information (Turner, 2010). For instance, the researcher asked a similar set of questions (see Annexure D for interview schedule) to each participant but also allowed room for flexibility and to ask questions relating specifically to their unique, subjective answers. Particularly, using a semi-structured approach allowed the researcher to ask up follow-up questions that expanded the participants' individual motivational factors. This allowed the researcher to generate an authentic narrative provided by the participants. These narratives helped generate data on what their motivational factors are and how these influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. Additionally, having the interviews be approximately 40 minutes long allowed the researcher to explore the personal narratives of each participant and their reasons for their answers.

The interview questions were open-ended questions because it allowed the researcher to develop a rapport with the participants and allowed the researcher to

ask follow-up questions based on the participants' responses (Turner, 2010). Open-ended interview questions were designed to allow the participants the freedom to answer the questions using their own words (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2001). Using open-ended questions were appropriate for this study because it helped the researcher gain an empathetic, in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014) from the asked questions, those relating the motivational factors that influenced them to participate in marathons.

3.4.1 Application of Data Collection Method

The steps that were taken to collect the data for this research were:

Firstly, the researcher developed an interview schedule (see Annexure D) by using this research's objectives and generated questions surrounding the themes developed from their literature review. The researcher designed three introductory questions relating to factual issues (such as the participants' demographic information) and these questions allowed the researcher to build rapport at the beginning of the interview. The researcher also designed six main open-ended questions relating to the motivational factors in experienced runners and how these factors influenced them to participate in marathons. Sub-questions were also designed to help the researcher aid the interviewee with answering the main question, as well as it allowed the interview process to proceed more smoothly. These were then sent and were approved by an ethics committee (see Annexure B).

Secondly, the researcher asked permission from the gatekeeper of Regent Harriers Running Club Facebook group (see Annexure G) to ask if the researcher could approach their members (whilst still protecting the potential participants' identities). Once granted permission, the researcher emailed one potential participant asking whether they were willing to participate in an interview for this research. This participant, once agreed, then recommended two more participants (due to the fact that there is no set list of experienced runners in Kwa-Zulu Natal), where the researcher then emailed them the same as before. Once all three participants agreed to be interviewed, they received and signed the consent to participate (see Annexure E) and consent to audio record (see Annexure F) documents.

Lastly, the researcher then set a time for each participant to conduct their interview, at a time of their choosing. Each interview was done via Skype to ensure safe social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before starting the interview, the researcher gave an explanation of what this research was about and explained how the interviews would be used to aid this research. During each interview, the researcher systematically asked the three introductory questions and then asked the following six main questions and sub-questions, not specifically in the same order. Each interview ended with the researcher asking whether the participants had any follow up comments or questions. Each interview was approximately 40 minutes long and was voiced recorded by the researcher with the use of a cell phone voice recorder.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

Due to this research study being a qualitative descriptive research design, it relied on the words of the participants and focused on how they made sense of their subjective experiences (Maree, 2020). Thus, the researcher used thematic analysis through the use of coding as a means to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and explaining patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Clarke, Braun, & Hayfield, 2016). This data analysis method was appropriate for this study because it provided a method for examining the perspectives of each participant, highlighting the differences and similarities in their answers (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017), in terms of experienced runners' motivational factors. This method also allowed the researcher to identify patterns within and across the data in terms of the participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and behaviours (Clarke *et al.*, 2016), those relating to experienced runners' motivational factors and how these influenced them to participate in marathons.

Furthermore, the researcher used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach as a guide through their data analysis. Their type of thematic analysis provided flexibility by allowing the analysis method to be modified for the needs for this research, whilst still providing detailed and rich (yet complex) data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This type of thematic analysis was appropriate for this research because it allowed the researcher to determine the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons, in addition to explaining how these factors influenced experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly. The researcher used line-by-

line coding to generate potential codes and themes within the collected data. Line-by-line coding is the organisation of codes into descriptive themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008) and it was appropriate for this study because the researcher could develop categories (themes) as a means to group certain codes (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The researcher also made use of selective coding after completing the line-by-line coding, which involved the process of identifying and selecting the core themes and systematically linking it to other themes (Maree, 2020). This type of coding was appropriate for this research because it allowed the researcher to link all developed themes to one core theme (Maree, 2020), that being experienced runners' motivation.

3.5.1 Application of Data Analysis Method

The five steps (in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach) that were taken to analyse the collected data in this research were:

Firstly, for all interviews, the researcher transcribed the data word-for-word from the audio recording into written form via a Word document. These transcriptions were verbatim and were done by the researcher themselves on the day of each interview. In these transcriptions, the researcher made note of any nonverbal cues done by both the participants and the researcher (such as pauses; laughs; and gestures). Once completed, the researcher checked the transcript against the original audio recording in order to check its accuracy. Additionally, the researcher wrote down their impressions of what each participant had said in their interviews, as a form self-reflection. In addition, the researcher made notes on the participant's themselves, such as that they were all from Kwa-Zulu Natal and other specific, confidential information. All this information had been typed up on a table in a separate Word document from the transcripts. With this all said, all transcripts, audio recordings, and demographic tables have been kept in a password-secured folder that is only available to the researcher and their supervisor. Each participant was given an identification number, such as "Participant 1", that has been used throughout their transcripts; their folders; the analysis process; and final report (in order to ensure confidentiality).

Secondly, the researcher reread and relistened to the data in order to achieve a better understanding of the subjective experiences of each participant. Once familiar, the researcher copied each transcript onto a sperate Word document where they identified

characteristics of the data and then organised the data into meaning units. These meanings units were groups of phrases from the participants' interviews that relate to experienced runners' motivational factors, such as achieving a goal. The researcher used line-by-line coding, which was done manually with the use of the highlighting and comments tool on Word. This was done by the researcher where they read through each line of the participant's responses in their interview, highlighting and commenting on certain phrases that had meaning to this research (those relating to experienced runners' motivational factors). Once this was completed, the researcher made a master list of all the meaning units developed from each transcript on a separate Word document. This was done separately for each transcript.

Thirdly, the researcher sorted through the organised codes that were in the master list and organised them into potential themes by the use of a written thematic map. This was done by organising the codes that had similar highlighting colours and comments together and marking them with a theme name. Once all potential themes were marked, the researcher then read through the organised data for each theme to ensure that they formed a coherent pattern. This was done separately for each transcript's organised codes. Once all the themes were established and checked, the researcher checked the validity of each theme by relistening to each interview. Once completed, the researcher wrote a final thematic map of the final themes they had found.

Fourthly, the researcher defined and refined each individual theme by conducting and writing a detailed analysis. This involved the researcher examining each theme in relation to the literature found in this research's literature review. The themes being: motivation; participating motives involved in marathon training and racing; motives to participate in away-from-home marathons; sustaining running whilst faced challenges; going beyond the Motivation of Marathoners Scale (MOMS) Model. The researcher then used selective coding where they selected and identified themes from each thematic map that share an idea relating to experienced runners' motivational factors. This was done on a separate written thematic map by the researcher themselves. This allowed the researcher to develop main themes and sub-themes from all the thematic maps. These were then checked and rechecked with each original transcript to ensure that were valid for this research's objectives. This was then typed up on a separate

Word document. Moreover, this coding and analysis process took approximately ten days to complete.

Lastly, the researcher wrote up the final analysis report which described each theme with direct quotes from each transcript (whilst still ensuring confidentiality) and from the literature review. This report demonstrated how these themes relate directly to this research's objectives and questions. When this was completed, the researcher allowed each participant to read through the final write-up report to ensure that the researcher had accurately represented their subjective motivational factors that influenced them to participate in marathons.

3.6. Trustworthiness

To determine if this research study was trustworthy, the researcher ensured: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability.

Firstly, credibility addresses the connection between the participants' views and the researcher's representation of their views (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This research study was credible because the researcher ensured that each participant was genuinely willing to participate in the study (Shenton, 2004). There were also debriefing sessions between the research and their supervisor to discuss better alternative approaches and to draw attention to potential flaws in this research (Shenton, 2004). For instance, the supervisor ensured that the researcher was planning on asking appropriate questions during the interview process and directed the researcher to ask more appropriate questions. Additionally, the researcher provided sufficient description of the phenomenon (that being the motivational factors in experienced runners) with the help of previous research findings to ensure that this research was congruent with past studies (Shenton, 2004). For example, the researcher made use of well-established research methods, such as using interviews to collect the data and using thematic analysis as a means to analyse the data.

Secondly, transferability is the generalisability of inquiry (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This research study ensured transferability by providing adequate contextual and background information about the phenomenon (Shenton, 2004). The researcher provided sufficient descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation to ensure that

the readers have a thorough understanding of it (Shenton, 2004). For example, the researcher provided examples from the collected data to prove the findings of the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to participate in marathons. They researcher also identified the limitations of the study (Nowell *et al.*, 2017).

Thirdly, to achieve dependability, the researcher ensured that the research process was logical, clearly documented, and traceable (Tobin & Begley, 2004; as cited in Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This research addressed the dependability issue by describing in sufficient detail the research design and methodology, and how the researcher implemented this research (Shenton, 2004) whilst continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the research process at each stage (Shenton, 2004). This was achieved by providing evidence for each decision and choice made in the research design and methodological process (including the data collection and analysis methods).

Lastly, confirmability involves establishing that the researcher's findings and interpretations will come from the data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This research ensured confirmability by addressing and acknowledging the beliefs underpinning the decision made and methods used throughout the research study (Shenton, 2004). This was achieved by the researcher providing comprehensive methodological descriptions and providing reasons for the approaches that will be used (Nowell *et al.*, 2017) to ensure that others would understand how and why decisions were made.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Presentation of Findings

This research's sample consisted of three experienced runners residing in Kwa-Zulu Natal area, who are part of the Regent Harriers Running Club, and who had completed more than five marathons. With regards to how long these experienced runners have been participating in marathons, Participant 1 has run over 75 marathons; Participant 2 has run over 60 marathons; and Participant 3 has run over 70 marathons.

4.1.1. Theme 1: Motivation

The theme motivation played a role in all the interviews and provided a better understanding towards the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.

4.1.1.1. Sub-Theme 1: Completing a Marathon

The analysis demonstrated that completing the marathon itself was the main motivational factor for the participants. For instance, Participant 2 stated that it was the *“desire to run a marathon”* that motivated them to participate in marathons. In agreement, Participant 3 stated that *“experienced marathon runners keep coming back”* to continuously participate in marathons yearly because of the marathon itself being the main driving factor in their participation.

4.1.1.2. Sub-Theme 2: The “Runners High”

The analysis showed that the adrenaline kick, known as the “runners high”, that one receives after completing a marathon was a motivational factor. For example, Participant 1 stated that *“finishing the race is like a drug, which makes us keep going back for more”*. Participant 2 agrees in that it is an *“addiction”* and that experienced runners *“crave that endorphin”*, which is the result of completing a marathon.

4.1.1.3. Sub-Theme 3: Achieving Personal Marathon Goals

Achieving personal marathon goals was the driving motivational force during marathon training and on race day itself for all of the participants. Participant 3 stated that *“the marathon is where we want to achieve our own goals, personal goals”*. In particular, the analysis demonstrated that there are two distinct personal marathon goals that motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons: Firstly, competing with oneself and with others. For instance, Participant 2 asserts that running a marathon is about *“testing yourself against yourself, mainly, and against others”*. Secondly, the goal of achieving a personal best marathon time. For example, Participant 3 insists that *“no one just runs to run for a marathon, we all run for a time, the best time that we can do”*.

4.1.1.4. Sub-Theme 4: Sustainability to Participate

As experienced runners, the participants all felt that their long-term experience as marathon runners was a continuous motivational factor for them. In particular, the analysis demonstrated that there were two influential motivational factors for experienced runners' sustainability to participate: Firstly, the lifestyle from competing in marathons. Participant 3 stated that their marathon participation was *"part of [their] personality, seeing as [they've] done it for so long. It's what [they've] always done. It's like routine"*. Secondly, the fact that they can still participate in marathons (because of age). For example, Participant 1 declared that they *"will continue until [they] can't"* participate in marathons anymore, which motivated them to participate in marathons yearly.

4.1.1.5. Sub-Theme 5: Participation

The analysis showed that marathon participation motivation, for experienced runners, occurs within groups of like-minded runners as well as by oneself. All participants agreed that there are two participation motivational factors in marathon training and racing: Firstly, running as a group and finding camaraderie. For instance, Participant 3 stated that *"because of the friendships that you have with running partners...you're motivated to train because they're getting up to train"*. Secondly, self-motivation. For example, Participant 2 stated that *"to win you've got to be by yourself...the group does help but you can't rely on the group all the time because they won't be there on race day"*.

4.2 Interpretation of Findings

As evident in Sub-Theme 1 (completing a marathon), the findings highlighted that the participants were mainly motivated by the marathon itself and this influenced them to participate in marathons. For instance, Participant 1 stated that *"first and foremost, it's always [the] goal of running a marathon"* that motivates them to participate in marathons, as an experienced runner. This means that experienced runners see a marathon, whether it is a local marathon or an away-from-home marathon, as an experience which they continuously wanted to encounter. The participants saw a marathon as an accomplishment which they wanted to participate in yearly. This was interpreted this in this way because the participants saw the marathon as a desire and accomplishment that motivated them to complete it, year after year.

In connection to this, the “runners high” (Sub-Theme 2) that one receives after completing a marathon is another motivational factor that influenced the participants to participate in marathons. This adrenaline kick emphasises the driving factor for the experienced runners’ need to continuously participate in these marathons. For example, Participant 3 compared running a marathon to a drug, where they saw the physiological reaction (referenced in the interviews as the “runners high”) as “a *good drug, a happy drug*”. This indicates that this factor is a physiological consequence of Sub-Theme 1 (completing a marathon), which further motivates experienced marathon runners’ participation. The reason for this interpretation was because, as the participants had stated, this “runners high” is much like an addiction where experienced runners feel an adrenaline kick that makes them crave the same feeling when participating in a marathon. Thus, experienced runners are motivated to participate in marathons yearly because they want to reexperience the feeling of the “runners high”.

In addition to this, as Sub-Theme 3 (achieving personal marathon goals) states, the findings found that achieving personal marathon goals motivated the participants to participate in marathons. For instance, Participant 1 explained that the “*achievement that [one] feels...somehow keeps pulling [one] back to do it again*”. This signifies that the goals experienced runners set for themselves provide them with the motivation they need to train for the marathon as well as to complete the marathon. In particular, competing with oneself and with others allowed experienced runners to be motivated to participate in marathons until they achieve better than themselves or that of others. Similarly, the desire to achieve a personal best marathon time also motivated experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly. Both these factors further motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly in order to achieve better than their previous marathon. For example, Participant 2 stated that experienced runners “*want to do better and better*” in terms of competing with oneself and others as well as continuously wanting to improve their marathon time. The researcher interpreted these in this way because the participants had personal goals that made them want to participate in marathons, and thus made them motivated to participate in marathons yearly.

Additionally, it is evident that the participants' sustainability to participate (Sub-Theme 4) in marathons is a motivational factor that influenced them to participate in marathons. This indicates that experienced runners' participation in marathon training and racing is connected to their ability to maintain their level of running. In particular, the findings demonstrated that the lifestyle from competing in marathons was the result of being an experienced runner and, in return, motivated them to participate in more marathons. For instance, Participant 2 clearly stated that it is their running "*lifestyle that helped [them] develop a need to motivate [themselves]*". Comparably, the fact that they can still participate also motivated them to participate in a marathon. For example, Participant 3 explained how they are "*grateful that [they] can still run and that's what gets [them] out*" to complete the next marathon. The researcher interpreted these in this way because these factors are a demonstration of experienced runners' ability to maintain motivation after many years of training and participating in marathons. This maintenance, in turn, becomes part of their motivation.

Lastly, the analysis showed that marathon participation (Sub-Theme 5) is another motivational factor that influenced the participants to participate in these marathons. This means, much like Sub-Theme 5 demonstrated, that experienced runners' motivation can come from external factors as well as internal factors. On one hand, finding camaraderie with other experienced runners helped the participants with their own motivation and participation. For instance, Participant 1 stated that they were motivated by the camaraderie they found by training in a group because "*everyone motivates everyone else to run*". On the other hand, self-motivation was also a motivational factor that drives experienced runners to participate in a marathon. Specifically, as Participant 2 stated, "*when [they're] out there by [themselves], [they've] got to be able to motivate [themselves]*". The researcher interpreted these in this way because both of these factors illustrated how others as well as one's self can drive experienced runners' motivation to participate in marathons yearly.

4.3. Findings in Context

With this research being originally set out to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons, the findings presented from the analysis were as expected. Specifically, Sub-Theme 1 (completing a marathon), 2 (the "runners high"), and 5 (participation) demonstrated similar answers to previous

literature. For instance, for Sub-Theme 1 (completing a marathon), the desire to complete a marathon was similar to what was said by Aicher and Brenner (2015), where they concluded that experienced runners saw the marathon, such as an away-from-home marathon, as a motivational factor for their participation. Similarly, the “runners high” (Sub-Theme 2) that was mentioned by the participants had the same positive physiological and psychological factors as Johnson *et al.* (2016) had concluded in their study. Comparably, Aicher and Brenner (2015) had similar results to this research, in that experienced runners had the desire to achieve a sense of belonging with other runners in order to motivate their participation in marathon training and racing, much like Sub-Theme 5 (participation) deduced. These three themes demonstrated that these motivational factors not only influenced experienced runners to participate in marathons but also influenced their yearly participation in marathons.

However, the data presented in Sub-Theme 3 (achieving personal marathon goals) and 4 (sustainability to participate) were unexpected. For instance, competitiveness and achieving a personal best marathon time (as presented in Sub-Theme 3: achieving personal marathon goals) had not appeared in the literature previously. Where the literature (such as Aicher and Brenner (2015)) mainly surrounded the need for fellowship (much like Sub-Theme 5: participation concluded), Sub-Theme 3 findings demonstrated how competing with others, in particular, was a motivational factor that influenced the participants’ participation in marathons. Additionally, the lifestyle from competing in marathons and the fact that they can still participate in marathons (as presented in Sub-Theme 4: sustainability to participate) had not been mentioned in current literature. For instance, the fact that they can still participate is a vital motivational factor for experienced runners who have competed in numerous marathons over the years, much like the participants in this research.

With this said, the findings from this research also demonstrated how experienced runners are motivated by their need for achievement, power, and affiliation, as presented by McClelland’s (1961) Human Motivation Theory (Johnson *et al.*, 2018). It is evident from the findings that experienced runners are mainly motivated by their need for achievement. In particular, Sub-Theme 1 (completing a marathon), 2 (the “runners high”), 3 (achieving personal marathon goals), and 4 (sustainability to

participate) are all demonstrations of experienced runners' need for achievement. Much like what the participants had said in these themes, experienced runners' need for achievement consists of them being motivated for success, improvement, and accomplishment (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Moreover, experienced runners are also motivated by their need for power (as seen in Sub-Theme 3: achieving personal marathon goals) as well as their need for affiliation (as seen in Sub-Theme 5: participation). For example, in Sub-Theme 3 (achieving personal marathon goals), experienced runners' need for the best time and competition was motivated by their need for recognition and prestige (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Similarly, Sub-Theme 5 (participation) demonstrated how experienced runners are motivated by their enjoyment of belonging to a group (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017).

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Addressing the Research Question, Problem, and Objectives

The research question, problem, and objectives for this research study were answered and solved.

The main research question for this research was "what factors motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons?". It was evident from the findings that experienced runners were mainly motivated to participate in marathons by their need to complete a marathon, the "runners high", achieving personal marathon goals, sustainability to participate, and participation in the sport.

The first objective for this research was to describe the factors which motivated experienced runners to participate in marathons. From the findings, all the participants discerned that their need for achievement (demonstrated by Sub-Theme 1: completing a marathon; Sub-Theme 2: the "runners high"; Sub-Theme 3: achieving personal marathon goals; and Sub-Theme 4: sustainability to participate), as well as power (demonstrated by Sub-Theme 3: achieving personal marathon goals) and affiliation (demonstrated by Sub-Theme 5: participation) were motivational factors that influenced experienced runners' participation in marathons. All participants agreed that it was achieving their personal goals of completing a marathon, achieving a better marathon time, and bettering oneself that motivated them the most.

The second objective for this research was to explore how experienced runners' motivational factors influenced them to participate in marathons. It was evident from the findings that experienced runners' motivational factors, mentioned previously, helped motivate them during marathon training and on race day which further motivated them to continuously participate in the marathons and the required training.

The last objective of this research was to describe what motivational factors influenced experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly. From the findings, it is evident that experienced runners were mainly motivated to participate in marathons yearly by the marathon itself (Sub-Theme 1), the runners high (Sub-Theme 2), and their sustainability to participate (Sub-Theme 4). These factors drive experienced runners' desire to satisfy their need for achievement, and thus influenced their marathon participation yearly.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

Before collecting the data, the researcher ensured that selecting the participants were done in an equitable and fair manner. The researcher first asked permission from the gatekeeper of the Regent Harriers Running Club Facebook group (see Annexure G) to contact its members. The researcher then ensured that all the participants had signed a consent form to participate (see Annexure E) and the right to audio record the interviews (see Annexure F). To ensure that the participants understood all aspects of this research, the researcher explained to them (in language at their level) the nature and goal of the study as well as how the data was being collected and transcribed. The researcher also explained that they had right to withdraw from this research study at any stage.

Furthermore, all consent forms and interviews were done online to ensure safe social distancing because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst collecting and analysing the data, the participants were assured that their responses and identities would not be made available to unauthorised users and that their identities would always be regarded as confidential. This was ensured by using pseudonyms throughout the study, so that their real names will not be used at any stage. Additionally, the recording of the interviews, interview transcripts, and consent forms has been kept in a password

locked file, only available to the researcher and their supervisor. In addition, the researcher's supervisors ensured that the researcher adhered to and acted appropriately to their different roles throughout the study. The researcher had monthly meetings with their supervisor where they were assisted in the right, ethical direction. The researcher's supervisor also ensured that this researcher did not distort any results, falsify and misuse information, as well as use inappropriate research methods.

5.3 Limitations

There are a few limitations to this research study. The schedules of the participants were not under the researchers control and limited when the interview and how long the interview was conducted. Additionally, with this being an honours research study, the researcher has had little experience in the field of research as well as only having a certain number of months to conduct the interviews (which may prevent potential data from being collected). This study also encountered potential COVID-19 pandemic limitations, such as the prevention to do face-to-face interviews. Whilst online interviews (via Skype) were conducted, the data collected might have resulted in different conclusions, such as the interviewee's not being as forthcoming online than face-to-face. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic also impacted how the runners trained as well as their participation in marathons that year.

5.4 Heuristic Value

This research study has provided the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons, those being their need to complete a marathon; the "runners high"; achieving personal marathon goals; sustainability to participate; and participation in the sport. This has provided additionally insight into how these factors motivate experienced runner's participation in marathons as well as their participation in marathons yearly. Additionally, this study contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the field of behavioural and sports psychology, by providing data produced from qualitative, South African perspective. However, these findings encourage further research on motivational factors of different experienced runner levels to get a better understanding on the various motivational factors that could occur. Additionally, future research could possibly consider a focus on elite runners and their motivational factors to carry on running after retiring.

5.5 Conclusion

Experienced runners have motivational factors that continuously influence their participation in marathons, as well as in the sport, such as need to complete a marathon; the “runners high”; achieving personal marathon goals; sustainability to participate; and participation in the sport. These factors are important in understanding human motivation as they provide insight into how these how these factors motivate experienced runner’s participation in marathons as well as their participation in marathons yearly.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY DOCUMENT TABLE

TITLE: A Qualitative Study on the Factors which Motivate Experienced Kwa-Zulu Natal Runners to Participate in Marathons.

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors /Sources	Literature Review - Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	References
To describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.	What factors motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons?	This study is relevant because it contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of behavioural and sports psychology, by providing data produced from a qualitative, South African perspective.	McClelland (1961); Zach <i>et al.</i> (2015); Wasiewicz <i>et al.</i> (2019); Roebuck <i>et al.</i> (2018); Aicher & Brenner (2015); Aicher <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Theme 1: Motivation; Theme 2: Participating motivates involved in marathon training and racing; Theme 3: Motives to participate in away-from-home marathons; Theme 4: Sustaining running whilst faced with challenges; Theme 5: Going beyond the Motivation of Marathoners Scale (MOMS)	Paradigm: Interpretivism – enable this study to gain an empathetic, in-depth understanding of the participants' subjective experiences, these being how experienced runners' motivational factors influence them to participate in marathons. Epistemology: The knowledge for this study is the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to continue to participate in marathons and their interpretation of these experiences. Ontology: This study provides a deeper understanding of the lived subjective experiences, which are the factors that motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. Axiology: The participants and the researcher's interpretation on the motivational factors that influence experienced runners to participate in marathons will be valued throughout the research.	Qualitative, descriptive design. Population 3 KZN experienced runners from Regent Harriers Running Club Sampling Unit of Analysis: The lived experiences of experienced runners towards their motivational factors that influence them to participate in marathons. Sampling Methods: Non-probability sampling; Snowball sampling Size: 3 experienced runners	Online semi-structured interview, done via Skype, and will be 45 minutes long. The questions were open-ended. Data Analysis (s) Braun & Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis approach through the use of (line-by-line) coding.	Researcher has asked permission from the Gatekeeper to contact members. Researcher will ensure participants have signed a consent form and understand all aspects of the study. Ensure that the participants' identities are confidential by securing their data in a password locked file and that their identities will not be made available to unauthorised users. Limitations The participants' schedules are not under the researcher's control. COVID-19 prevents face-to-face interviews. COVID-19 impacts how runners train and their participation in marathons. Due to this being a honours programme, the researcher was limited in the number of participants they could interview.	Experienced runners were mainly motivated to participate in marathons by their need to complete a marathon; the "runners high"; achieving personal marathon goals; sustainability to participate; and participation in the sport. Key Contribution This research contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the field of behavioural and sports psychology, by providing data produced from a qualitative, South African perspective.	Aicher & Brenner (2015); Du Plooy <i>et al.</i> (2014); Maree (2020); Roebuck <i>et al.</i> (2018); Wasiewicz <i>et al.</i> (2019); Zach <i>et al.</i> (2015).
Research Problem	Secondary Questions	Key Concepts	Key Theories							
Investigate the qualitative gap in the existing body of literature on the motivational factors in experienced runners and how these factors influence them to participate in marathons.	How do the motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons? What motivational factors influence experienced runners to participate in marathons yearly?	Motivation; Experienced Runner; Participation; Marathon; Motivations of Marathoners Scale (MOMS)	McClelland's (1961) Human Motivation Theory							

ANNEXURE B: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



20 July 2020

Student name: Bianca O'Byrne Student number: 17002391

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.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

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):

Honours co-ordinator: Tracey Haselau

ANNEXURE C: 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: Bianca O'Byrne

Title of the research: A Qualitative Study on the Factors which Motivate Experienced Runners to Participate in Marathons

	Yes	No	Comment: supervisor/ navigator/lecturer
Are you using human subjects in your research?	X		
I intend to use human subjects - 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: Bianca O'Byrne

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- *Greet the interviewee.*
- *Discuss the aims of this research study and how the interview will help this research.*
 - *The purpose of this study is to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons.*
 - *Aims to add more information to the field of behavioural and sports psychology, from South African perspective*

Introductory Question Prompts:

- (Approx) How long have you been running?
- (Approx) How many marathons have you done?
- How often do you train?

Main Question Prompts:

- What motivates you to run?
 - Are you always motivated?
 - How do you stay motivated?
 - What motivates you the most?
 - What makes you stay motivated to run every year?
 - Why do you train?
 - What motivates you to train?
 - How do injuries affect your training motivation?
 - What marathon are you training for?
 - How are you staying motivated to train for this marathon?
 - Would you ever consider an away from home marathon?
 - What would motivate you to do one?
 - How do you think these motivational factors influence your participation in the sport?
 - How do you think these motivational factors influence your participation in marathons?
-
- *Ask if they have any final comments and questions.*

ENNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Bianca O'Byrne and I am a student at IIE Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Jarryd Byron about the factors which motivate experienced Kwa-Zulu Natal runners to participate in marathons. The purpose of this study is to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons and to provide a qualitative, South African perspective to the existing literature in the field of behavioural and sports psychology. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of experienced runners' motivational factors and how these factors influence them to participate in marathons. This study hopes to contribute to the field of psychology, in that it will provide new data to the field of behavioural and sport psychology (those focusing on motivational factors), by providing a qualitative, South African perspective. 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 meet the criteria needed for my research, that being you having completed 5 or more marathons. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to interview you on your motivational factors that influence you to participate in marathons. 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 your motivational factors. 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 Psychology Honours. 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: Bianca O'Byrne The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: Jarryd Byron

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Bianca O'Byrne about the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:	
• I agree to be interviewed for this research.	
• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
• 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.	
• I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.	
• I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
Signature	Date

ANNEXURE F: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Bianca O'Byrne to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the factors which motivate experienced Kwa-Zulu Natal runners to participate in marathons. The purpose of this study is to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons and to provide a qualitative, South African perspective to the existing literature in the field of behavioural and sports psychology This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:	
• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
• The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.	
• 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

ANNEXURE G: GATE KEEPER CONSENT FORM



Gatekeepers letter/ Request to conduct research

Dear _____

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct research at your Regent Harriers Facebook Group.

My name is Bianca O'Byrne, a Psychology Honours student at the Varsity College a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The research I wish to conduct for my Honours Research Study titled A Qualitative Study on the Factors which Motivate Experienced Runners to Participate in Marathons.

The aim of this study is to describe the factors which motivate experienced runners to participate in marathons and to provide a qualitative, South African perspective to the existing literature in the field of behavioural and sports psychology. The project consists of interviewing 3 experienced runners from the Kwa-Zulu Natal area on what factors motivate them to participate in marathons. These interviews will be done via Skype and will be 40 minutes long at a time of the interviewee's choosing. The data from the interview will help describe how motivational factors influence experienced runners, like the interviewees, to participate in marathons. All data produced from these interviews (including the interviewee's identity, personal information, and the transcripts) will be kept in a password locked file and will not be available to unauthorised individuals.

Yours sincerely

Student: Bianca O'Byrne

Supervisor: Jarryd Byron

My contact details are as follows:

Bianca O'Byrne

The contact details of my supervisor/navigator/lecturer are as follows:

Jarryd Byron



Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company	
I,	
Representative of	
My capacity:	
Give my permission thatmay conduct research at my company. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not	
Select below:	
• I request that my company's identity be kept confidential.	
• My company can be identified in the study	
• The study may never be available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository after months.	
Signature	Date