

The narrative of a Black South African Swimmer.

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By

Lekgowe M.B.M Thipe

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter one describes inequalities (e.g. difficulties), within the South African society, made evident by the apartheid regime from a political, economical, educational, labour and sports (particularly swimming), perspective. It also declares the research question and elucidates general and specific goals as well as the structure of the research project.

#### **1.1 PROBLEM**

Conducting research within the South African context is almost impractical without reflecting on the ethnic and racial divisions that were considered and became part of the dividing programme of the apartheid policy. Literally, apartheid means to be apart or aside, thus implying a statement of distinction as well as the act of putting something on one side. However, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines apartheid as “a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race” (Allen, 1992. p. 48).

The policy of apartheid was officially included in the Afrikaner Nationalist Party platform in 1948, bringing the party to power for the first time. The policy’s ultimate aim and main objective was segregation, and in particular, separation of the races, not only of White from non-White South Africans, but also of separating non-White South Africans from each other. Indeed, among Black South Africans, called the Bantu during the apartheid era, there was separation of one group from another. In addition to the Africans, who constituted about 75% of the total population then, those regarded as non-White included people known in South Africa today as Coloured (e.g. people of mixed Black, Malayan and White descent), and Asian (e.g. people of Indian ancestry) (Bonner, Delius & Posel, 1993; Christopher, 1994; Cross, 1999; Giniewski, 1961; Lodge, 1983; Mabokela, 2000).

Furthermore, the policy of apartheid emphasised re-establishing a separation of races within urban areas. A large segment of the Asian and Coloured populations were forced to relocate out of the so-called White areas. South African townships that had

been overtaken by White people spreading out to urban areas were destroyed and their occupants removed to new townships well beyond city limits. Approximately 1.5 million Black people were forcibly removed from cities to rural reservations (Ali, 1999; Beinhart, 2001; Christopher, 1994; Lodge, 1983).

Moreover, the policy served as a diplomatic political system that insured an ‘equivalent’ development of all who lived in South Africa, each with their own characteristics. The policy was also designed to impose, especially where Black people were concerned, inequalities on the economy, the labour market, politics education and sports, to mention a few (Alexander, 2002; Bernstein & Cock, 2002; Christopher, 1994; Frederickson, 1995; Lambley, 1981).

### **1.1.1 Political Context**

As already mentioned, the policy of apartheid was officially included within the Afrikaner Nationalist party in 1948. Hence, post-1948, the National Party displayed a monopoly of political power. The National Party and its ally the Afrikaner Party won a majority of the seats in the House of Assembly. The parliament then consisted of three Houses; the House of Assembly for White South Africans, the House of Representatives for Coloured South Africans and the House of Delegates for Indian South Africans. Still then, Black South Africans were kept out of parliamentary affairs thus denied one of the most basic of the civil rights, the right to vote. Literally, the latter meant that Black South Africans were excluded from participating in the governing of South Africa. They could neither take part in the legislative nor the executive functions of government (Bonner, Delius & Posel, 1993).

This legislature also brought along with it a policy that all Black people in South Africa would belong to a Black nation, which possessed a separate territorially based state, and within which the nation’s political rights were exclusively exercised. It was the extinction of the Black political presence in South Africa that was uppermost in the White policy makers’ minds, as it surfaced that Black numerical superiority constituted the greatest threat to continued White control (Kittner, Korner-Dammann & Schunk, 1989; Lodge, 1983).



### **1.1.2 Economic Context**

In 1962 the South African government established the first Bantustan, the Transkei, as the homeland of the Xhosa people, and granted it limited self-governance in 1963, later becoming independent. Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, and Venda were also granted independence. The homelands were not recognised anywhere else in the world but only in South Africa. Lebowa, Kangwane, Gazankulu, Qwaqwa, KwaZulu, and KwaNdebele homelands were later established around the 1970s. These homelands were self-governing living areas for Black people (Bonner, Delius & Posel, 1993).

Above and beyond, the establishment of the homelands was but one of the government's official strategies to encourage the Bantu's economic development in their own territories, and to displace the centre of gravity of the Black community from the heart of Johannesburg to the heart of the Reserves. Hence, Black South African's economy was traditionally a survival economy. The family or clan provided for daily needs, but scarcely for anything beyond that. This led to the prominent problem of continued poverty in areas where Black South Africans resided. The latter led to the relocation of unemployed Black South Africans, high natural population growth rates, agricultural stagnation and limited industrial development. This yielded a vicious cycle of poverty. Without anywhere to go and without access to international capital on any scale, the majority of Black South Africans exhibited remarkably low incomes (Kittner, Korner-Dammann & Schunk, 1989).

With the elapse of time, the Development Bank of Southern Africa produced estimates for the year 1985 and indicated very substantial disparities in incomes. Whereas the Gross Domestic Product per head in the rural areas where Black South Africans lived varied from approximately R150 to R600, that in the remainder of South Africa was approximately R7, 500 per head (Christopher, 1994).

### **1.1.3 Labour Context**

Apartheid's other major point from 1948 was to ensure an adequate supply of cheap labour to the mines. Thus, during the apartheid era, in rural communities of South Africa most Black able-bodied men traditionally worked in the Johannesburg mines or in the factories coming home for short spells during the longer December holidays.

This resulted in a serious problem of social, family and moral disorder (Bonner, Delius & Posel, 1993).

Once more, during the apartheid era, the labour market laws were also intended to raise barriers against Black South African workers. In a policy of ‘affirmative action,’ state-run railways and other huge state enterprises preferentially hired and promoted less skilled White South Africans. Many industries were nationalized just to impose racial preference. Between 1924 and 1933 the number of White South Africans employed by South African Railways rose from 4,760 to 17,783 or from ten to thirty-nine percent of employees, while the number of Black South Africans fell from 37,564 to 22,008 or from seventy-five to forty-nine percent. In central and local government employment the proportion of White South Africans rose from forty-five to sixty-four percent, while the number and percentage of Black South Africans fell correspondingly (Kittner, Korner-Dammann & Schunk, 1989; Owen, 1997).

Moreover, white South African farmers, wanting an artificially large supply of cheap Black labour, also endorsed measures limiting industrial jobs for Black South Africans. These farmers were key allies of White labour in initiating and preserving apartheid (Bonner, Delius & Posel, 1993; Kittner, Korner-Dammann & Schunk, 1989).

#### **1.1.4 Educational Context**

##### **1.1.4.1 Bantu education**

The word Bantu denotes many people, sometimes referred to as people of the sun, and is a collective expression. As early as 1953, legislation was introduced, the “education of the Bantu by the Bantu for the Bantu”. It was only in 1955 that the policy was implemented in its Bantu Education pretext, and then between 1964 and 1965 in its Coloured and Indian variations. This legislation sought to prepare the Bantu child for service to his community; it sought to implant in the Bantu child that all doors are open to him/her within this community, which implied that to the Bantu child many doors are shut in the White society (Christopher, 1994; Cross, 1999; Giniewski, 1961; Kallaway, 2000).

This education system was inferior and was carefully calculated not to allow Bantu children to lift their heads beyond a certain standard, and in which the spirit of servitude and patient submission would be taught. The primary school syllabuses stressed obedience, communal loyalty, ethnic and national diversity, acceptance of socially allocated roles, piety and identification with rural culture. Teachers were as well to be, and were indeed, rigidly regimented. Schools were recognized on a 'tribal' basis, and were to contribute to the revival of the 'Bantu culture' and brought into line with Bantu social institutions (Christopher, 1994; Kallaway, 2000).

Similarly, Bantu education was inferior because Bantu children, although of the same age, were normally one or two classes below the White children. This was brought about by the ideology that Bantu children came from a less cultured environment. Again, only 4% of the Bantu children went beyond the primary education stage, as against 24% of the White children, and the Bantu learner's examination results were not as outstanding. Due to the latter, academic standards for Bantu schools were lowered instead of raised to obtain better numerical results, and create a special 'Black matriculation', something which did not exist in White South Africa. (Giniewski, 1961).

#### 1.1.4.2 University education

University education was similarly segregated. In 1959, a ruling providing for the establishment of a series of new ethnically based institutions for Black South Africans was passed. In seeking to create the new Black higher education institutions, the government indicated that these institutions would be bearers of their own national culture. They would stimulate the native culture amongst their own national group. Future leaders would also have to be trained and educated at those institutions, not to break down the colour bar, but rather retain it in the best interests of both White and non-White South Africans. By the early 1980's there were separate residential universities for virtually every Black linguistic group (Kallaway, 2000).

### **1.1.5 Sports Context**

Sports as well were segregated, nearly completely, for most of South Africa's history. White South Africans played and competed against each other, as well as watched each other's games, but they did not play with 'non-Whites', neither did they attend games to watch 'non-Whites' play. As a result, Black South Africans were excluded from most sporting codes and competitions in which White South Africans participated by 1900. The sporting model, in South Africa, during the apartheid era was a racist one. Thus sport in South Africa became one of the central cultural practices where White supremacy and difference were emphasised and learned over time (Nauright, 1997; Ramsamy, 1982).

This segregation in sport resulted in more Black South Africans being excluded from international competitions before the 1980's. Thus identification with a national South African team, in any sport, became a nightmare for many Black athletes, because they were not allowed to represent the country in which they lived, the country of their birth. Meanwhile, White organizations held national open championships in sports and were recognized by international sports bodies. Black athletes were left out of South Africa's national teams even after they had proven their competence. Hence, Black identities through sport were not easily developed (Ramsamy, 1982).

#### **1.1.5.1 Swimming**

The National Association for Swimming in South Africa appeared in 1899. The reinforcement of White power was its main objective, as they remained socially segregated from Black South Africans. As already mentioned, Black South Africans suffered the exclusion from most sporting competitions, including swimming, in which White South Africans participated, by 1900. Thus, swimming as well, just like many other sporting codes, became one of the central cultural practices whereby White domination and distinction were executed and cultured over time in segregated spaces. Cultural trends and socio-economic opportunities set within the apartheid era led more and more White South Africans to participate in swimming until they came to dominate it (Archer & Bouillon, 1982; Bose, 1994; Nauright, 1997).

#### 1.1.5.2 Geography

The immediacy of suitable training pools played, and still does, a major role in producing swimming champions. In South Africa, during the apartheid era, most competitive swimmers came traditionally from White areas that had municipal swimming pools. Few, if any, Black swimmers came from previously disadvantaged areas where there was an absence of swimming pools, overcrowding of pools or where pools were in poor condition and not designed for swimming training (Nauright, 1997).

#### 1.1.5.3 Facilities and equipment

Swimmers must begin swimming at an early age and train rigorously in specifically designed facilities. Coaches and top swimmers know better to exploit facilities considered vital for the preparation of swimmers. These include an all-year clean and clear swimming pool with heating facilities for winter training. Swimmers must also have access to facilities such as weight training, bio kinetic testing and monitoring. It is vital that they have access to rehabilitation, swimming camps, nutritional analysis and advice as well as local medical support. Kick boards, pull buoys, hand paddles, swimming goggles, flippers and all sorts of resistance-inducing devices must be owned by swimmers (Bingham, 1994; Campbell, 1990; Rutemiller, 1995). On the other hand, due to inequalities brought by the apartheid regime, most Black South Africans could not afford all these type of facilities and apparatus.

#### 1.1.5.4 Coaching

Coaches have an influence on the career of swimmers. Athlete-coach relationships can develop significantly and the influence coaches have on their swimmers can expand to other areas of the swimmers' life. Hence, all coaches need to guarantee their athletes technical and tactical training as well as preparation in a psychologically favourable environment. Coaches also need to be prepared to spend a large amount of their time and effort coaching their individual swimmers. They need to be able to realize the full potential of learner swimmers and to continuously encourage and give feedback to them (Cross, 1990; Juba, 1986; Kalinowsky, 1985; Vines, 1988).

However, due to the struggles of apartheid already highlighted, Black South Africans could not afford coaching fees.

#### 1.1.5.5 Parents

Parents as well have the ability to build their young developing swimmer. Parents must support their child swimmer and maintain this support whether the swimmer finishes first, last or anywhere in between. They should also emphasize the necessity of setting goals, working hard and being self-disciplined and are themselves models of hard work (Hannula, 1989; Lynn, 1995). Nevertheless, Black parents, even if their children wished to participate in swimming, were denied this opportunity by the policy of apartheid. Black women were to leave their homes to serve in the White households, while Black men worked in the mines or in the factories.

#### 1.1.6 Summary

The notorious governmental policy of apartheid stimulated inequalities within South African society, particularly where Black South Africans were of a concern. These inequalities spelt exclusion of Black South Africans in most life spheres such as politics, the economy, education, the labour market, and sports. This manifested in a variety of ways, which included humiliation of Black South Africans through the arrogance displayed by White South Africans in these spheres of Black people's lives. It therefore seems as though the government, during the apartheid era, launched in Black people a legacy of mistrust and disempowerment, feelings of having been excluded for several years, leaving them in profound and unresolved anger.

In the midst of all the above-mentioned as well as a possibility of experiencing post-apartheid realities, the participant in this study (the swimmer) became a prominent Black competitive swimmer. Thus, just as Nelson Mandela overcame the struggle, through the swimmer's narration, this study sought to bring forth a comprehension of how he (the swimmer) experiences being a Black competitive South African swimmer despite difficulties pertaining to swimming as a sporting code.

## **1.2 QUESTION**

The question for this research project reads as follows: How does a Black South African swimmer experience himself as a competitive swimmer despite difficulties (e.g. inequalities within South Africa's society), particularly those pertaining to the code of swimming?

## **1.3 GOALS**

### **1.3.1 General Goal**

The general goal of this research was for the researcher to try to understand how the participant experiences himself as a Black competitive swimmer, despite difficulties (e.g. inequalities within South Africa's society), particularly those pertaining to the code of swimming?

### **1.3.2 Specific Goals**

Specific goals for the research project were:

- To conduct a literature review.
- To describe the research methodology.
- To conduct the research project.
- To write the research report.

## **1.3 STRUCTURE**

Chapter one described inequalities (e.g. difficulties), within the South African society, made evident by the apartheid regime from a political, economical, educational, labour and sports (particularly swimming), perspective. It also confirmed the research question and clarified general and specific goals of the research project.

The rest of the study is organized into four chapters as follows: chapter two reviews the literature pertaining to the research, while chapter three explains the research methodology, the data collection, the data analysis and the conceptual framework from which the study emanated. Chapter four describes the results as obtained from interviews with the swimmer and chapter five is an integration of conclusions, the

reviewed literature and the results. Recommendations for further research to be embarked on were also made in chapter five.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides the definition of swimming and portrays the brief history of the sport exposing both international and local organizations involved in it. It also illustrates the entire array of existing swimming strokes that form part of the code. The chapter also classifies the different types of water sports. It also exposes advantages and disadvantages associated with swimming as well as a discussion of the findings of the recorded research pertaining to the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people.

#### **2.1 DEFINITION**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes swimming as to “propel the body through water by working the arms and the legs” (Allen, 1992. p. 1233). Literally, swimming involves the propelling of the body in water using body movements. However, for the purpose of this study, swimming will be regarded only in its competition form. That is the type of swimming performed for competing in swimming competitions commonly known as swimming galas or meets.

#### **2.2 SWIMMING HISTORY**

Swimming has been known since prehistoric times. The oldest of the many ancient drawings and paintings came from a country today known as Italy. The oldest drawing dated back 2,600 years, and belonged to the Etruscans at Tarquinia. An ancient tomb in Greece depicted swimming and diving scenes dating back 2,500 years. Written testaments to early swimming fell within the past 3,000 years. The Bible, the Iliad and the Odyssey all contained references to swimming. Thucydides noted the activity in scripts that are 2,400 years old (Decker, 1992).

Babylonian bas-reliefs and Assyrian wall drawings as well pointed to very early swimming skills among humans. The most ancient and famous of drawings depicted men swimming in the Kebir desert. They were estimated to be about 6,000 years old. The Nagoda bas-relief also had paintings of swimmers that dated back some 5,000 years (Decker, 1992).

Moreover, many of the world's ancient civilisations swam, including the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, Persians, Romans and Greeks. Plato once declared that anyone who could not swim lacked proper education, and Julius Caesar was known for his swimming proficiency (Decker, 1992).

With regard to swimming competitions, the Japanese pointed to evidence that races were held 2,000 years ago. The 'modern' sport could be traced back to English clubs in the 1830s, when breaststroke was the most common manner of moving through water. Today names such as Otter Swimming Club in London and the Leander Swimming Club date back to the 19th century (Decker, 1992).

Moreover, Captain Matthew Webb swam breaststroke when he became the first person to swim across the English Channel in 1875. A contemporary of Captain Webb was J. Arthur Trudgen, an English swimmer and coach who lent his name to the Trudgen stroke, which used a breaststroke kick but an over arm action that he had seen used by South American Indians (Decker, 1992).

The Trudgen was adopted around the world but then adapted by Fred Cavill, an Englishman who had immigrated to Australia. Cavill had developed the technique by watching South Sea Islanders. Instead of the breaststroke kick, Cavill used a "flutter-kick" like that seen among today's front crawl specialists such as Thorpe, whose massive size-16 feet act like propellers at the end of his legs. The technique became known as the Australian crawl, a term that lasted up to the days of Murray Rose and John Konrads in the 1950's and 60's before simply becoming the front crawl (Decker, 1992).

In the face of all these, the English are considered the first modern society to develop swimming as a sport. By 1837 swimming competitions were being held in London's six artificial pools. England's National Swimming Society organized these competitions. As the sport grew in popularity many more swimming pools were built, and when a new governing body, the Amateur Swimming Association of Great Britain was organized in 1880, it numbered more than 300 clubs members. In 1896, swimming became an Olympic sport for men with the 100 metres and 1500 metres freestyle competitions held in open water (Decker, 1992).

However, the first modern Olympic Games comprised of only four swimming events, three of them freestyle. The second Olympics in Paris in 1900 included three unusual swimming events. One used an obstacle course; another was a test of underwater swimming endurance; the third was a 4,000-metre event, the longest competitive swimming event ever. None of the three were ever used in the Olympics again. Soon after, as swimming gained popularity, more freestyle events were included, followed by the backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke, and lastly, the individual medley (Decker, 1992; Watson, 2001).

Astoundingly, for a variety of reasons, women were excluded from swimming in the first several Olympic Games. In 1896 and again in 1906, women could not participate because the developer of the modern games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, held firmly to the assumption, common in the Victorian era, that women were too frail to engage in competitive sports. It was only at the 1912 Games when women's swimming made its debut at the prompting of the group that later became known as the International Olympic Committee (Colwin, 2002; Decker, 1992; Watson, 2001). This illustrates discrimination based on gender that was proficient in swimming then.

From these humble beginnings, with four swimming events, the Olympics have recently developed 32 swimming races, 16 for men and 16 for women. The Special Olympics also include competitive swimming for people with disabilities and has 22 events for men and 22 for women (Decker, 1992, Watson, 2001).

### **2.3 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Swimming has both international and local organizations that enhance development of the code and continue to maintain adherence to its objectives. International swimming organizations are as follows:

WSCA is the World Swimming Coaches Association. It is the international professional coaching organization. FINA is the Federation Internationale` De Nation Amateur. This federation govern Masters, Open Water, Diving, Water Polo and Synchronized Swimming. IGLA is the world's foremost international organization solely devoted to develop and promote gay and lesbian swimming, water polo, diving, and synchronized swimming. IOC is the International Olympic Committee that

coordinates all swimming events in the Olympics. MACA is the Masters Aquatic Coaches Association (Watson, 2001).

AOC is the Australian Olympic Committee. WASA is the Western Australian Swimming Association. It is the state association for swimming in Western Australia. ASC is the swimming Australian Sports Commission. ASCTA is the Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association. Their motto is "from infants to internationals"(Watson, 2001).

LEN is the Ligue Europeene de Nation. It is the governing body of 50 national European Swimming Federations with administrative headquarters in Rome (ITA), overseen by members of an elected Bureau representing 13 different Federations. AETN is the Spanish Swimming Association of Coaches. CSCA is the Canadian Swim Coaches Association offering general resources for coaches in Canada. SNC is the Swimming/Natation Canada. It is the national swimming body for Canada. MSC is the Masters Swimming Canada embracing the motto Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Participation (Watson, 2001).

NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is the major controlling body for collegiate swimming competition in the United States. NISCA is the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association. It is the governing body for high school swimming, diving, and water polo coaches' in the United States. United States Water Polo is the national governing body for Water Polo in the United States.

ASCA is the American Swim Coaches Association. It is the professional coaching organization for swimming in the United States. US Diving is the national governing body for diving in the United States. USABA is the United States Association of Blind Athletes. It offers meets at the regional, national, and international level. USMS is the United States Masters Swimming. It is the governing body for adult swimming in the United States. USOC is the United States Olympic Committee. It coordinates the national governing bodies in the United States with the world's Olympic movement. United States Synchronized Swimming is the national governing body for Synchronized Swimming in the United States. WSSS is the Water Safety Swim School. It is a learn-to-swim group in California, USA. USS is the official governing body for swimming in the United States dividing the country into areas, called Local Swimming Committees (Watson, 2001).

## 2.4 LOCAL ORGANIZATION(S)

In 1908 the South African Amateur Swimming Union was formed. It was established from different Clubs throughout South Africa and was accepted as a member of FINA in 1909. There were no provincial bodies at the time and records did not reflect the number of Clubs that constituted the Union. Generally, it was believed that approximately 15 Clubs existed (Parsons, 2006).

In 1994 the Federation changed its name to Swimming South Africa (SSA). SSA is committed to the transformation of swimming. It accepts readily the challenge of taking swimming to broader sectors of communities, especially to communities previously denied the opportunity to swim (Parsons, 2006).

The organization has structured programmes focussing on transforming athletes, administration, coaching, officiating and team management capabilities. These programmes are aimed at offering sustained capacity building opportunities to individuals throughout the country, in various sectors of the sport (Parsons, 2006).

In addition, the organization has set goals for all aspects of the sport, aimed at transformation, both at national and provincial level. These goals are based on programmes already available at all levels of the sport to guarantee that merit inclusion of people in all aspects of aquatics is achieved (Parsons, 2006).

SSA also strives to maximise every resource available to grow swimming competence, and to produce swimmers out of all South African children. The latter is evident through existing transformation programmes (Parsons, 2006).

Likewise, SSA has declared an assortment of national squads, including a fast-tracking squad. This squad constitute 31 young swimmers, from all over South Africa, with the objective that they can compete with their fellow-swimmers at a national level (Parsons, 2006).

## 2.5 SWIMMING STROKES

There exists a constant variety within the sport of swimming. All four strokes concerned with swimming involve propelling oneself through water as efficiently as possible, thus they all share basic elements.

### 2.5.1 Freestyle

To be precise, the freestyle literally means one can swim any stroke, or any combination of strokes: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, sidestroke or elementary backstroke, even in competitions. But in modern swimming the freestyle has come to be synonymous with the crawl.

The freestyle, or crawl, has its roots dating back thousands of years. As the ancient Egyptian wall relief clearly demonstrate, soldiers of Ramses II used an over arm stroke to pursue their Hittite enemies across the Orontes River more than 3,200 years ago. The stroke itself was produced separately in numerous tropical areas of the world at least several hundred years back (Colwin, 2002; Decker, 1992).

In the late eighteenth century, an explorer by the name of Captain James Cook depicted people of the Solomons, and a number of other Melanesian and Polynesian islands, as swimming a type of crawl. More than two centuries earlier, Portuguese explorers of coastal Brazil, near modern-day Rio de Janeiro, noted that the local Indians also swam the crawl stroke (Colwin, 2002).

Upon its introduction, most swimmers thought the stroke too exhausting to be used for any distance longer than short sprints. But today it is used solely for all distance events, including English Channel swims and marathon races. Swum properly, the freestyle stroke requires less energy than any other stroke (Colwin, 2002; Decker, 1992).

The freestyle is both the fastest and the most efficient swimming technique. Most swimmers not only find it fast and efficient but also find it the easiest stroke to learn. And that is how the stroke gained its popularity among many swimmers.

### **2.5.2 Backstroke**

It was not until the twentieth century that the backstroke, or the back crawl, was invented. Before that the technique most likely used was what is commonly known as the elementary backstroke, fundamentally an inverted breaststroke. In 1974, for example, the Italian writer Oronzio de Bernardi illustrated a type of elementary backstroke in his volume on the art of swimming. In London three quarters of a century later, the marquis Bibbero was reported to have used a similar method to swim a mile in thirty-nine and a half minutes (Decker, 1992; Watson, 2001).

An American swimmer, Harry Hebner, at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, divulged the modern backstroke, or back crawl. Utilizing a rather radical technique, he shed more than three seconds off the Olympic record to defeat his preferred German rivals. Due to this new technique's quickness and efficiency, within a few years it had replaced the older style completely (Colwin, 2002; Decker, 1992; Watson, 2001).

The backstroke is the only stroke swum upside-down, thus the most odd of the four major swimming strokes. Unlike other strokes, swimmers cannot see where they are going, hence most beginner swimmers fear bumping their heads on the pool wall. It requires no special breathing technique since the swimmer's face is outside the water while performing the stroke. For this reason, the stroke can be comforting.

### **2.5.3 Breaststroke**

The breaststroke is simultaneously both the oldest and the most recent of the four major strokes. Descriptions of people swimming the breaststroke date back thousands of years and were found on rock drawings and pottery throughout the world. In the sixteenth-century, a French author had his giants swim the breaststroke as part of their daily physical training program. In addition, performing the breaststroke, Matthew Webb became the first person to conquer the English Channel in 1875 (Colwin, 2002; Watson, 2001).

The breaststroke is the energetic stroke which experts acknowledge to be the most difficult to perform. Casual swimmers often utilize it for relaxation while competitive

swimmers burn more calories when performing it, beating other strokes, with the possible exception of the butterfly stroke.

#### **2.5.4 Butterfly**

Unlike the other strokes already under discussion, whose origins date back hundred and even thousands of years, the butterfly is a design of the twentieth century. The stroke was invented about 1930, when a German and an American swimmer realized that nothing in the rules prohibited them from recovering their arms over instead of under the water. They combined this over-the-water arm recovery with the breaststroke kick and soon discovered that, though it was tiring, they could move faster in the water with it than they could with the conventional breaststroke, at least for short distances. This new technique advanced quickly and by the 1940's threatened the breaststroke with extinction (Decker, 1992).

The butterfly is perhaps the most spectacular swimming stroke. It is powerful, dramatic, elegant, flowing and very fast. The fly, as it is popularly known, is swum with a ripple body movement. Both arms are brought forward together over the water, and then brought back concurrently and symmetrically. For every arm stroke there are two kicks, with the legs moving up and down simultaneously in the dolphin kick.

### **2.6 WATER SPORTS**

There are a large number of sports that involve water. The following are sports involving water divided by category. These categories are based on the relation of the sports to the water. Some of the sports include only one part related to swimming (e.g. triathlon).

#### **2.6.1 In the Water**

In the water sports include: swimming as a technique that humans and other animals, use to move through water using only movements of the body; triathlon as usually a combination of swimming, cycling and running; modern pentathlon that involves epee fencing, pistol shooting, swimming, a show jumping course on horseback, and cross-country running; rescue swimming that involves swimming with the goal to rescue



other swimmers; surf lifesaving as a competitive sport, that evolved from the training activities of lifeguards at Australian surf beaches (Colwin, 2002).

Water basketball as a team ball sport played in water, similar to water polo; water polo as a team ball sport played in water; synchronized swimming as a hybrid of swimming, gymnastics and ballet; fin swimming that involves swimming with fins; water aerobics that involves performing aerobics in the water; water gymnastics that involves performing gymnastics in the water; snorkelling that involves the practice of swimming at the surface, typically of the sea, being equipped with a mask and a short tube called a snorkel; diving that involves diving off springboards or off platforms; water sliding that involves the usage of a slide with water flowing down it; synchronized diving as a hybrid of all the diving codes; and open water swimming as the generic swimming term used for swimming in general (Colwin, 2002).

### **2.6.2 Under Water Swimming**

Under water swimming includes: under water swimming as a technique used to swim at the bottom of the pool; scuba diving that involves swimming under water using a self-contained breathing apparatus; free-diving that aims to maximize the depth dived using no breathing apparatus; apnoea as the practice of not breathing for extended times; underwater rugby as rugby played under water using a ball that has been rendered neutrally buoyant; breathing through a snorkel with tackling that is only allowed if one has the ball or is tackling the one holding it; and underwater hockey as hockey played under water with short wooden curved sticks and a heavy puck, with players wearing diving masks, snorkels, and fins, who must surface to breathe while team-mates continue the game on the pool bottom (Colwin, 2002).

### **2.6.3 On the Water**

On the water sports include: barefoot water skiing where a person water-skis bare feet; boating that involves the usage of boats in water races; body boarding that is similar to surfing on a smaller board with the person normally lying down on the board; canoeing as the usage of canoes to race on water; canoe Polo as polo using a canoe; dragon boat racing that involves a team paddling sport on water; fishing that involves the recreation and sport of catching fish; kite surfing that uses a kite for

propulsion on flat water; parasailing that involves a person towed behind a vehicle, usually a boat, while attached to a parachute (Colwin, 2002).

Rowing that involves propelling a boat by means of oars; sailing that uses the wind for propulsion; skim boarding that involves riding while standing up on a board down the wet sand timing the ride to connect with a shore breaking wave; surfing downhill on waves; tubing that involves going down a river or behind a boat; wakeboarding that is similar to water skiing, however uses only one board attached to the feet; wake skating that is similar to wakeboarding and the board is not attached to the feet; water skiing that uses skis to slide over the water while being pulled by a boat or other device; and windsurfing on flat water that involves using the wind for propulsion in combination with sails (Colwin, 2002).

## **2.7 SWIMMING ADVANTAGES**

The advantages of swimming over other forms of exercise are numerous. Human beings can begin swimming at almost any age and continue to reap the rewards thereof for as long as they live. Swimming fills a wonderful recreational need for individuals and families, from beach and pool fun to water parks. The sport provides the best overall fitness with minimal impact on body parts, even on previously unused muscles and joints. It also aids the development and maintenance of an ideal body, one that not only appears good quality but is strong, flexible, better able to resist disease, and quicker to recover from illness and/or injury (Faulkner, 1996).

Furthermore, regular swimming builds endurance, muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness. It can serve as a cross-training element to a regular workout. Before a land workout, one can use the pool for a warm-up session. Again, swimming with increasing effort gradually increases the heart rate and stimulates muscle activity. Swimming can as well be utilized to aid the cooling down process after workouts, to move blood through muscles assisting their recovery, and to help relax athletes as they glide through the water (Faulkner, 1996).

More to the point, swimming burns calories at a rate of about three calories of bodyweight. It also aids the control of body weight as well as the percentage of the body that is fat. It decreases stress and increases alertness. Epidemiological evidence

as well confirms that swimmers live longer, and swimming dramatically improves the swimmer's quality of life (Faulkner, 1996).

There also exist psychological benefits to swimming. When swimming with very low effort, with a wandering mind, focusing on the rhythm of our stroke; this form of meditation can help generate a feeling of revitalization and well-being. In addition, most swimmers find indirect benefit from swimming. They develop life skills such as sportsmanship, time-management, self-discipline, goal setting, and an increased sense of self-worth through their participation in the sport. Finally, swimming also provides an environment for socialization, especially when done in groups.

## **2.8 SWIMMING DISADVANTAGES**

Numerous disadvantages are associated with competitive swimming; however, the disadvantages thereof do not exceed its advantages. Competitive swimming potentially increases risk of illness and/or injury. It does not permit training to be tailored to suit individual needs and may over train and burn swimmers out. Competitive swimming could as well limit performance at the top level owing to neglect the full development of all energy systems and swimming abilities. It also may have negative consequences in lactate breakdown and removal during limited aerobic development in spring thus leading swimmers to exploit long-term goals at the expense of short-term gains (Faulkner, 1996).

## **2.9 SWIMMING RESEARCH**

It seemed evident that most of the limited research regarding the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people was conducted at a specific era, during the 60's, the 70's, ceased during the 80's, continued again from the mid 90's, and then ceased again. Thus, due to the latter, references documented in the study dated back to those particular eras.

This setback could have been made possible by research institutions to discontinue funding research pertaining to the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people. Perhaps political issues relevant to those eras hindered researchers to comprehensively embark on this type of research, or credibly researchers themselves

lost interest and self-motivation to continue the investigation into the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people.

The reviewed literature concerning the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people is organised into five categories as follows: psycho-cultural factors, socio-cultural factors, physiological factors, economical factors, and an informal conversation.

### **2.9.1 Psycho-Cultural Factors**

Psycho-cultural factors were reported to have an influence in the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people. After a study concerning a psycho-cultural analysis of the self-concept of the Black competitive swimmer was conducted the following surfaced: there existed folk myths such as that Black people had an innate fear of water; and that the texture of their hair required more styling care after swimming (Campbell, 1974). Again, Loy (1969) pointed out the vitality of having acceptable Black role models participating in swimming. He believed that Black role models in swimming could illustrate the value of swimming success and thereby increase the expectations that Black youth, too, might reap tangible benefits from the sport.

### **2.9.2 Socio-Cultural Factors**

The lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people was also attributed to a complexity of socio-cultural variables. To some researchers, notable social factors such as age, education, income, ethnicity, and sex were variables influencing the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people. This lack of participation was also equated to the lack of Black role models in competitive swimming (Campbell, 1974; Jackson, 1991; Mael, 1995; Pendleton, 1975).

### **2.9.3 Physiological Factors**

Physiological factors were as well reported to be linked to Black people's lack of participation in competitive swimming. Perhaps one of the more widespread explanations cited for the latter was a body type, which was not buoyant (Ghesquiere, 1971; Mael, 1995; Piscopo, 1962; Seale, 1957). A study regarding anthropometric

factors affecting buoyancy in the African revealed that: Black swimmers comprised longer limbs and narrower hips than White swimmers, even at approximately the same overall body size; Black swimmers also had wider bones and narrower muscles and considerably less sub-cutaneous fat than White swimmers, thus Black swimmers were considered sinkers while White swimmers were regarded floaters (Brown, 1972; Ghesquiere, 1971).

The absence of Black swimmers among top performers in swimming competitions also provoked lots of interest when viewed in structural and compositional terms. In a study concerning variance in swimming ability for both Black and White swimmers, the following were suggested that: structure and composition were a limiting factor for Black people's success in swimming; lung capacity, internal organs, morphology, bone and the amount of fat were important factors affecting Black people directly and indirectly in swimming; Black people, once they learnt how to swim, were less flexible and exhibited poorer stroke mechanics such as stiff shoulders, straight arm entry, zigzag body motion and bent legs in the kicking action (Mael, 1995).

#### **2.9.4 Economical Factors**

On the side of economics, the literature attributed the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people to the cost of money needed for pool admission and swimming lessons that most Black people could not afford. "Swimming requires facilities that may be too expensive or inaccessible to some Blacks" (Mael, 1995, p. 480). Furthermore, researchers highlighted variables such as inadequate transportation, the unattractiveness and the need to repair existing facilities as major factors influencing the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people. They also hypothesised the problem of inaccessible facilities as well as educationally appropriate swimming programs (Loy, 1969; Mael, 1995; Pendleton, 1975). Alternatively, other writers presented a consideration of the effect of segregated swimming pools and beaches, or an absence of swimming facilities near home (Lawson, 1975; Loy, 1969; Mael, 1995).

### **2.9.5 Informal Conversation**

An informal conversation concerning the lack of participation by Black people in competitive swimming also yielded the following: Black swimmers, if part of a mixed class, exhibited a tendency to cease attending training sessions once the group had learned the initial stages of swimming, thus demonstrating a tendency to become discouraged upon witnessing other swimmers continuously performing better. Hence, regardless of their socio-economic status, these swimmers took longer to swim as compared to any other ethnic group. They neither reached top ranks nor provincial level (<sup>1</sup>S. Ban, personal communication, March 16, 2005).

### **2.10 SUMMARY**

Based on the reviewed literature, the definite effect of each of the above-mentioned factors on the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people emerged to be vague. The relationship between buoyancy and swimming proficiency were also distinguished with great uncertainty. Moreover, the reviewed literature were unable to provide an answer pertaining to the research question, due to the fact that, despite all the findings, the swimmer is a world-class competitive swimmer ranked 17<sup>th</sup> on the short course (25m long) for the 200m breaststroke and 31<sup>st</sup> on the long course (50m long) for the 100m breaststroke under his age group.

The next chapter will address the following: contexts, participants, position, methodology, ethics and relevance of the study.

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<sup>1</sup> International coach employed by the HPC for the swimming academy.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Chapter three aims to address contexts pertaining to the research as well as to identify participant(s) involved within the study. This chapter also intends to discuss the research position, the methodology used, ethics that were adhered to, and the relevance of the research project.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT**

The research contexts for the research project were:

##### **3.1.1 Academic Context**

This study was conducted from the academic context of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria (UP). Within UP the Faculty of Humanities hosts the School of Social Sciences that accommodates the psychology department supporting two pre- and post-graduate courses with the intention to develop the field of psychology as a science as well as to allow people meaningful participation within the society they live in. There also exist more than twenty permanent full-time academic members; hence the department has put up structures to render services from lecturing to supervising postgraduate students and research. There are as well various co-operation programs effective nationally and internationally and they facilitate four Masters programmes and two Doctoral programmes to postgraduate students. Again the department is actively involved in community projects by way of integrated tuition and research involving Honours and Masters students (<http://www.up.ac.za/academic/humanities/eng/psy/eng/index.htm>, retrieved October 14, 2005).

### 3.1.2 Organisational Context

The TuksSport Academies, of which swimming is one, located at the High Performance Centre (HPC) were initiated in 2001 with its main objective being to explore every corner of Southern Africa to recruit top potential sporting talent, regardless of each contender's financial standing. These academies cater for the needs of promising professional athletes, from training, education, housing and nutrition. Though the Academies promote the dream of sporting excellence, it is not only about athletes excelling on the field, track or court. It is as well about generating well-balanced individuals with social, personal and academic qualities to match their sporting abilities (<http://www.hpc.co.za/cfm/index.cfm>, Retrieved May 7, 2005).

TuksSport Academies enjoy a culturally rich demographic spread of athletes who are integrated by their shared passion for attaining sporting excellence. These athletes receive world class coaching in a setting from which all hindrance to success is removed. This allows an atmosphere for a focused and intense sport-specific training. Mixtures of phases of the programs are aligned to each athlete's physical and mental development, which is largely determined by their age. At entry level the main focus is on physical, tactical and psychological development of the athletes. Athlete's individual yearly curriculum is clearly defined with specified individual goals, against which they are monitored (<http://www.hpc.co.za/cfm/index.cfm>, retrieved May 7, 2005).



### **3.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT(S)**

The research participant(s) for the study were:

#### **3.2.1 Swimmer**

The swimmer is an 18-year-old male who describes himself as someone outgoing and hard working with a strong desire to be the best in swimming. He grew up with the thought that the swimming pool was fun and a great place to while away time with friends. He was introduced, by his grandmother, to the world of swimming at a tender age of eight.

His first formal coach appeared when he was nine years of age, and it was this coach who encouraged, the young swimmer then, to take swimming seriously. The coach signed the swimmer up for his first competition at the age of twelve.

In 2000 the swimmer earned his first gold medal after winning the South African National Development competition held in Durban. Today he is a world-class swimmer ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the world, for the 200m breaststroke, on the junior rankings for the short course, which is 25m long, and 31<sup>st</sup> for the 100m breaststroke, on the long course, which is 50m long. He is currently hosted by the TuksSport swimming academy at the HPC where he is offered quality training daily, to aid him accomplish his swimming goals.

The swimmer and the researcher met while the researcher was employed by the HPC as a mentor for the rowing and tennis academies. Through an informal conversation with the swimmer, the researcher was able to confirm his interest to take part in the research project.

#### **3.2.2 Researcher**

I (the researcher) completed a junior degree in Psychology in the United States of America with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). UAB required that, during their third year, psychology students complete modules in research psychology

and its methodologies. In their fourth year, these students were to conduct research on their own topic as well as to compile a written report of the research findings.

After completing the junior degree, I enrolled for an Honours degree in psychology with UP. Likewise, I was introduced to research and its methodologies and continued the following year to enrol for a Masters degree. UP's psychology department also requires that, during the final year of the Masters degree, students conduct and complete a research project. I also enjoyed playing tennis for UP's first team, on the women's side.

In addition, the curiosity that grew for conducting this study was of a personal nature. As a Black competitive tennis player, a sport still believed by many to be 'White', I developed an interest to try to explore experiences of yet another Black athlete as well participating in a sport still believed by many to be 'White'. This curiosity was exposed more by the aspiration to deepen my understanding pertaining to questions such as the following: how was the swimmer drawn into the world of swimming despite being Black; what are his experiences of the latter; and most importantly how was he, and still is, capable of continuing his successful participation in competitive swimming.

### **3.2.3 Co-Researcher**

The other participant in the research project is a co-interviewer. He as well is currently enrolled for a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology at UP and has been part of the Tuks cycling club for more than five years. He will be assisting as part of a reflecting team. Reflecting teams yield the provision of alternative meanings of narratives. As White & Epston (1990) elaborate on this notion, "Reflection promotes experience of experience, and it is through the experience of reflecting on our experience that we make meaning of it" (p. 169).

### **3.2.4 Supervisor**

The supervisor for the research project is the co-ordinator of the Masters degree program for Counselling Psychology at UP and has completed a Ph. Degree in Psychology.

### **3.3 RESEARCH POSITION**

The research position for this research project surfaced from within the field of narrative psychology, in which narrative is the guiding metaphor. The narrative metaphor serves as the primary vehicle by which people make sense of their everyday experiences. Experience is possible because of embodiment and it is also narrated (Crossley, 2000; Morgan, 2000; Sclatter, 2003). Experience of narration is as well shaped by history and culture. Literally this implies that when we narrate an experience we do this by taking the past, present and future into account, and also draw on cultural resources, for an example discourses and metaphors, to shape the experience (Crossley, 2000; Freeman, 1998a, 1998b; Sclatter, 2003).

#### **3.3.1 Experience**

In the telling, listening, and reading of stories an opportunity arises to share experiences about our own lives and the lives of others. When uncertain, we have the sense of consulting our experience; we concentrate intensely on our remembering to recall a sequence of events accurately. Thus, the more subtle process of recollection illuminates experience (Crites, 1971; Freeman, 1998a; 1998b; 1997; Lightfoot & Lyra, 2000; Nelson; 1991; Sclater, 2003; White & Epston, 1990).

Most importantly, experience is part of our life and continues to affect the manner in which we form and mould who we are. Hence, we are able to talk about and attribute meaning to experiences (Freeman, 1998a; 1997; Lightfoot & Lyra, 2000; Sclater, 2003).

#### **3.3.2 Experience and Narrative**

The most direct and apparent way of recollecting is by narrating. Thus, recollection yields access to experience. As a result, narratives provide a means to understand how humans make meaning of their lives due to the qualitative essence they offer to the form of experience. Furthermore, other individual experiences can never be

understood unless only through what they say or write about it (Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Gee, 1989; Gergen, 2001; Josselson, Lieblich & Mizrachi, 1999; Nelson, 2001; Riessman, 1993; Sclater, 2003; Tappan, 1991). Hence, “In order to make sense of our lives and to express ourselves, experience must be storied and it is this storying that determines the meaning ascribed to experience” (White & Epston, 1990, p 9-10).

Likewise, narrative can act as an interpretative tool that offers meaning, not only to experience but also, to life itself. The knowledge we have acquired is only yielded through interpretation. We therefore utilize interpretative actions to make sense of our world, hence expressions bringing forth meaning can be interpreted (Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Riessman, 1993; White & Epston, 1990).

Additionally, people have dominant narratives about their life experiences. They consistently exhibit this trait when coming across an experience that does not fit with the flow of the dominant narrative since they need to make sense of the experience (White & Epston, 1990).

Consequently, all forms of narrative share the fundamental interest in making sense of experience, the interest being in contrasting and communicating meaningful relationships (Crites, 1971; Gee, 1989; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; White & Epston, 1990). Thus different narratives mark the process by which individuals live their lives and relationships.

### **3.3.3 Experience, Narrative and History**

Human life itself is a history. It is a historical phenomenon stretched out in time between birth and death. As human beings, we are living entries into history, contributing to its specific form and the specific nature of its movement. The manner in which we talk allows the impression of a time and a place. Hence, turning to narrative and to concrete human life is a way of becoming occupied with history, with honouring, not only the life in question but also its historical essence. Narratives therefore serve as a bridge between people, a way of bringing people into human contact with each other, even across a considerable gap of time or space (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Freeman, 1998b; Ricoeur, 1985; Sarbin, 2000).

In addition, the act of narration can be viewed as tied to the process of historical understanding itself, of seeking to derive sense of the past from the present outlook. For this reason, our very own identities rely upon the process of historical understanding and also have a narrative connotation. Narrative, in short, seems to emerge out of a natural tendency to narrate. It goes hand in glove with the notion of being in time and employing language to connect experience into logical form. To narrate a life is, at least in part, to assume a process of locating oneself in time past, time present, and time into the future (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Freeman, 1998a, 1998b; Gergen, 2001).

Moreover, narrative familiarizes people's lives through time. Their lifetime, their individual experience and their sense of being are part of the equation. Narrative also assumes as a basic assumption the notion that human beings are best understood along a time dimension, and that our present identities are personal ways to link our past with our anticipated future (Crites, 1971; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Gergen, 2001; White & Epston, 1990).

More to the point, our sense of personal identity depends upon the connection of experience through time, a connection linking even the gap between remembered past and projected future. For this reason narratives also dwell on the local, sequential, historical, and emergent conditions of actions and experience. They replace general notions with particular examples and strive to communicate the meaning and importance of events (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Gergen, 2001; White & Epston, 1990). Ultimately, present experiences are usually narrated against the background of past experiences, and then estimated to bridge the experiential gaps in terms of constructing the future.

### **3.3.4 Experience, Narrative and Culture**

Essentially, the paragraphs above have put forward an attempt to elicit the view that through narrative, human beings inflict meanings on experience. However individualistic these meanings can be, they also detain a cultural representation of human agency, as well as cultural schemas for relationships, culturally suitable goals, and successive actions to fulfil those goals. Most ethnic cultures transmit from

generation to generation a standard and a design cross-examined and reworked with each new generation (Freeman, 1998b; Gergen, 2001).

With the above supposition in mind, narrative patterns can be viewed as openings to monitor what a group of people consider significant in the conduct of human affairs. Narrators, poets and novelists, often struggle with the intensely vague questions of human experience until narratives provide them with powerful tools that, although universal, operate in culturally specific ways (Crites, 1971; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Freeman, 1998b).

Moreover, narrating about an event in our lives is telling a social narrative. Thus narratives are simultaneously personal and social in nature. Narratives we tell developed from our experiences and feedback from our local culture. They provide a depot of shared knowledge and beliefs in human societies as well as a crucial foundation of cultural learning. The meaning attached to these narratives we tell do not occur in a vacuum (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Freeman, 1998a; Gergen, 2001; Sclater, 2003).

Yet again, knowledge takes place within communities of those we know. We negotiate the reality we recognize with others. The manner in which we experience ourselves is possible through the systematic interchange with others. The self constantly creates itself through narratives that include other people who are jointly woven into these narratives. Therefore, narratives of whatever culture we belong to, influence us to ascribe certain meanings to particular life events and to treat certain meanings as relatively insignificant (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Freedman & Combs, 1996).

In the end, narratives are validated or invalidated by means of the social context in which they take place. Besides, the very nature of social validation requires personal qualification of significant others as validation agents, and so becomes a form of personal experience.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DATA**

This particular section of the study will describe the collection, transcription and analysis of the data.

#### **3.4.1 Data Collection**

The data collected for the research project were in a form of four unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews do not employ prepared questionnaires or interview schedules. Rather they have a number of themes or issues, which they aim to explore. They are also informal and not structured by a standard list of questions thus allowing researchers the freedom to deal with topics of interest in any order and to phrase their questions as they think best. Unstructured interviews are, at times, also called intensive interviews or in-depth interviews and are usually designed to collect qualitative information from a small-sized sample (Daute & Lightfoot, 2004).

Unstructured interviews seemed especially suitable for this study for three reasons. Firstly, they were particularly fitting for studying a topic about which little is known, such as the topic pertaining to this research project, in an attempt to generate concepts and theories about the topic (Daute & Lightfoot, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Josselson, Lieblich & McAdams, 2003).

Secondly, unstructured interviews allowed the swimmer to expose experiences of those life events he regarded relevant to the study. Finally, the self-interpretive information evident in unstructured interviews was specifically the type of data I (the researcher) sought (Atkinson In Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

Consequently, four video taped interviews, each of an hour long, were conducted for a total of four hours. The first interview served as an introductory interview that allowed the swimmer's relaxation and calmness. The second interview explored experiences of the swimmer's swimming narrative. The third interview encouraged the emergence of the swimmer's narrative about his experience as a Black

competitive swimmer, despite past and present inequalities, within South Africa's society. The final interview sought the swimmer's narration of his anticipated future in competitive swimming and also encouraged closure to his narrative. Throughout the interviews, specific questions were invited only when the swimmer's narrative became too general or unclear to be useful for analysis. I also urged him to narrate freely of his experiences.

### **3.4.2 Data Transcription**

Transforming spoken language into written text is a vital process, as simplicity cannot be assumed of language. Inclusions and exclusions, as well as the manner that the text is arranged and displayed, have implications on how the reader will understand the narrative. Omissions allow the reader a chance to provide own interpretation(s). Therefore this particular process of the research project involved finding a way to record interviews held with the swimmer. I transcribed the data in an attempt to curb the problem, usually occurring during transcription, of narrative sometimes being selective, partial and incomplete (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Riessman, 1993).

### **3.4.3 Data Analysis**

Four interviews were analysed by means of narrative analysis. Narrative analysis anchors the appreciation of the storied nature of human development. It is a method for interpreting oral or written narrative communication. As a genre, narrative analysis is a culturally developed way of organizing experience and knowledge. It is a specific discourse form, transpiring as embodiment of cultural values and personal subjectivity. It organizes life, which includes social relations, interpretations of the past, and plans for the future. It also breeds distinctive insight into the range of multiple, interesting forces that order and clarify relations between self and society (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

Narrative analysis is as well an interpretative tool aimed at historically and culturally examining phenomena, issues, and people's lives. It seeks intricate patterns and depiction of identity, knowledge, and social relations from specific historical and cultural viewpoints (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).



Moreover, narrative analysis enables people to “impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (Riessman, 1993, p.2). Hence, the narrative analysis utilized in this research project was an inductive reading of the four interviews, with the intent to understand how the swimmer employed history and culture to make sense of his experience(s).

### **3.5 RESEARCH QUALITY**

In her discussion on validity Riessman (1993) states that, “there is no canonical approach in interpretative work, no recipes and formulas, and different validation procedures may be better suited to some research problems than others” (p. 69). Thus, validity was increased through the following:

#### **3.5.1 Supervision**

UP’s department of Psychology authorized one of its faculty members to supervise Masters Degree student’s report writing process. As a result, to increase validity of this study, the supervisor encouraged conformation to the appropriateness of the research method(s) utilised in the study.

#### **3.5.2 The Co-Interviewer**

The co-interviewer served as part of a reflecting team in the study. Utilizing the idea of a reflecting position during interviews is seen as a “political act whose function is to distribute power among all the different voices in the discourse, dominant and non-dominant” (Freedman & Combs, 1996. p. 170). Reflecting in this case enhanced the description of particular events or relationships, by the swimmer, from multiple perspectives (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

#### **3.5.3 Technology (Video Taping)**

Video taped interviews render the practical point that, it is easier to hear and recognize what participants are saying if participants are seen saying it. It then follows that if participants can be seen speaking, they can also be clearly heard. Following from the latter, immediate transcription, although desirable, is not essential when

additional visual information is there to support listening (Gillham, 2005, Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

Therefore videotaping included capturing a repeated review of the same visual sequence. It enabled the privilege of a fine-grained interaction and complexity of elements of visual sequences. It also assisted with backtracking through the interviewing process thus enabling the return to the starting of the interview, as it actually happened, and also allowed validity of the research report even after editing (Gillham, 2005).

### **3.5.4 Participant Involvement**

The swimmer brought different variables to the study. These variables were linked to various sources in his life, thus leading to increased insight (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Huberman & Miles, 2002).

## **3.6 ETHICS**

### **3.6.1 Consent**

Federal policy has long been converted into local standards for the protection of human subjects from physical and emotional harm by requiring researchers to obtain informed consent from research participants (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Thus, as with other types of research relating to human subjects, I was obliged to deal with professional ethical codes. I gained permission from all involved within the study, and also handed out an informed consent letter to them to read. The letter clearly stated the research topic, its intent, its nature, its methodology and its goals.

Participants were also requested to sign specific documents to serve as a signifier of their acceptance to be part of the research project, as well as to acknowledge that they have been informed of the research process. They were also informed that transcripts of the visual recordings could be included with the final research document for academic purposes. Participants were also given clear explanation of their role in the research project and notified of the fact that they could terminate their participation from the study at anytime they wished to do so.

### **3.6.2 Confidentiality**

Psychology researchers are at all times expected to, as it is one of the codes of ethics they must adhere to, maintain confidentiality of those involved within their study. Once access has been granted by all taking part in the study, the researcher must protect all types of data from unauthorized people. Thus confidentiality and anonymity was assured regarding information discussed during the research project. The latter was reached through altering all information leading to the swimmer's identification as well as an alteration of all the names of the people made mention by the swimmer. In addition, UP's ethics committee, for the department of Psychology, approved the research proposal pertaining to the study as a means to confirm adherence to the codes of ethics.

### **3.7 RELEVANCE**

In their search and discovery of a new and different method of working with people, Freedman and Combs (1996) found that working with people to tell their stories in detail, especially stories that did not support or sustain problems, rather than working with problems was the alternative. Likewise, the relevance of this research would be to enable this way of understanding to be part of the scientific field. This unique way is the one that is not problem orientated but person orientated.

The swimmer's narrative yielded an emergence of a new body of information regarding his experience as a Black competitive swimmer despite difficulties within the code of swimming. Narrating his experience(s) placed in focus the significance of his capability to discover solutions from challenges of competitive swimming as he currently lives in post-apartheid South Africa. The latter will perhaps usher the beginning of a continued and sustained research culture which, hopefully, will open up several dimensions of swimming research that might assist the swimming fraternity in understanding the phenomena attendant upon by narrative psychology in previously disadvantaged persons in the swimming arena. Once more, rather than

what the researcher and the reader(s) might have wished to discover, the study allowed the swimmer's own attached meaning of his experience(s) to surface. Moreover, the study contributed, to some extent, to the TuksSport swimming academy, hosted by the HPC community that inspired it.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter identified the academic and organizational contexts as related to the study; classified the swimmer, researcher, co-researcher, and supervisor as participants in the study; described narrative psychology as the theoretical framework the study stemmed from, discussed the procedure to collect, transcribe and analyse data; and elucidated the ethics that were adhered to as well as the relevance of the study.

The next chapter tries to answer the research question as well as integrate results with the reviewed literature.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter an attempt to answer the research question from the interviews that were transcribed, for the purpose of this study, will be made. The research question that was posed in chapter one was: How does a Black South African swimmer experience himself as a competitive swimmer despite difficulties (e.g. inequalities within South Africa's society), particularly those pertaining to the code of swimming? In listening to the videotaped and reading the transcribed interviews, the message of the swimmer's narrative for me was: a continued perseverance in competitive swimming despite... and/or a continued perseverance in competitive swimming through...

#### 4.1 PERSEVERANCE DESPITE ...

##### 4.1.1 Fear

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming despite being fearful of competing against White swimmers as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**1 Researcher: Please tell me your swimming story.**

2 Swimmer: I started swimming late, which was like in  
3 '97, and in '99 I swam the qualifying gala to the  
4 development nationals in Durbs, and I qualified. It was  
5 a first big, not a big, gala but for me it was a big gala. I  
6 mean racing against all the White people and like, you  
7 know, I'm used to racing against all the Black and  
8 Coloured guys. So White people were like, you know,  
9 are like, specialized in swimming. And then, I did that.  
10 It was the first big gala. You're scared of the  
11 atmosphere, it's the first time you go there, and you  
12 just scared of the White people and stuff. And then  
13 2000, I qualified for development. It was like I was at  
14 home cause Pretoria is closest. I'm used to swimming  
15 in Pretoria. I felt at home and I got 2 silvers.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer's experience competition is painted by fear of competing against White swimmers as opposed to competing against Black and Coloured swimmers (Ln 5-8). Besides being fearful of the latter, it seems he is also fearful since it is his 'first big competition' (Ln 4-5). It also appears as though this fear is surfacing as a result of the swimmer's certainty that White people specialized in swimming (Ln 8-9).

In addition, the competition's atmosphere is frightening to the swimmer since he is introduced to it for the first time (Ln 10-11). However, this fear seems to decrease perhaps even disappear when he is competing closest to home, as he is able to earn himself medals (Ln 13-15).

Researchers suggest that familiarity with facilities may be advantageous to athletes. They also propose that there exist important psychological differences for games played at home versus games played away from home. Hence these researchers hold firm the idea that athletes exhibit higher pre-game self-confidence and self-efficacy for games played at the home venue as opposed to games played at the opponents' venue (Belenger, Carre', Muir & Putnam, 2006).

The swimmer employs history by sequencing events beginning with a period he believes it was late for him to start swimming, in 1997 (Ln 2). He then describes his experience of what he regards as his 'first big' competition, in 1999 (Ln 4) and finally explains how he experienced his first home competition that earned him two silver medals, in 2000 (Ln 12-15).

The swimmer employs a discourse of his varied experience of competition against different races. He is fearful when competing against White swimmers while he is used to competing against Black and Coloured Swimmers.

I am wondering if, besides being frightened by competing against White swimmers and the atmosphere of his first big gala, travelling to competition venues by road did not impact negatively on the swimmer's physiological state before competition thus resulting in anxiety. Perhaps the swimmer perceives away games as less important, however regards home games as a more important status contest since he competes in front of his friends and family.

#### 4.1.2 Lack of Facilities

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming despite the lack of facilities as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**16 Researcher: Now what advice do you have for the  
17 Black children from the townships of South  
18 Africa, or from all over the country, even if not  
19 from the townships, who want to start swimming  
20 and/or even take the sport seriously?**

21 Swimmer: Um, I'd say it's difficult. I know it's  
22 difficult, from being a township swimmer. I mean  
23 from growing up being a township boy, a black  
24 person to start up swimming whereby you don't have  
25 winter, winter swimming pools. So, you just need to  
26 put enough effort during summer and you know,  
27 before, before winter. Where in winter you don't just  
28 sit and do nothing. You just do, you just run or play  
29 soccer for the mean time you know, for keeping up  
30 your fitness. And they must not give up because  
31 swimming is a very tough sport. Very, very tough  
32 sport and um, is an individual sport as well and, ja.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer is rendering advice to the Black youth of South Africa, whom might wish to someday become swimmers and/or are swimmers by now, in response to the question posed to him by the researcher (Ln 16-20). He makes the youth aware of the reality, at least from his own perspective, that being a male township swimmer and not having access to a heated swimming pool during the winter season carries some heavy weight on one being a swimmer (Ln 22-25). However, he provides them with alternative ways on how to counter the difficulty (25-27). He emphasizes training with enough effort during the summer season and also provides them with the option to run and play soccer during the winter season (Ln 28-30).

Furthermore, the swimmer highlights to them the high fitness level that is priority to being and/or remaining a swimmer (Ln 30). He also reminds them that swimming requires persistence since it is a tough and an individual sport (Ln 31-32).

In addition, as already been highlighted, the literature attributes the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people to the cost of money needed

for pool admission and swimming lessons that most Black people cannot afford. Moreover, there frequently exists the need to repair existing facilities and inaccessible facilities as well as educationally appropriate swimming programs are usually also challenges Black people have to face (Loy, 1969; Mael, 1995; Pendleton, 1975).

The swimmer employs the discourse of finding alternative ways to counter difficulties that could hinder a swimmer's training program (e.g. not having access to a heated pool during the winter season).

Yet again, since South African township life is faster and dynamic as compared to rural areas, I am wondering if the swimmer's advice does not stem from his knowledge that township teenage life is influenced by a western way of living and that it can be put into ignorance by some of teenagers (e.g. a swimmer who has the potential to perform well undermining his/her potential by joining notorious gangsters and involving himself/herself in drugs). Moreover, it seems his advice is stemming from the reality that teenagers in the townships are no longer interested in cultural activities.

#### **4.1.3 Harsh Training Conditions**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming despite having to go through harsh training conditions as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**33 Researcher: ok. Now I know that the facility of the  
34 public pool you used to swim in is not up to  
35 scratch according to you from the other interview  
36 and now you have a better facility to use. What is  
37 your experience of that?**

38 Swimmer: Is that the question, what is my experience of that?

**39 Researcher: yes.**

40 I mean uh, if, even now, if I train just for 5 months  
41 and I stop for 5 months and I swim for another 2  
42 months of the year, and I do that every year, my  
43 swimming wouldn't go anywhere. Whereby I keep  
44 on, I have to keep on swimming the whole year, the  
45 whole year right through. Swimming is a very  
46 difficult sport whereby, you miss 3 weeks of



47 swimming, you don't touch the water, you're messed  
48 up, you're like unfit. The most unfit person in the  
49 field. It's not like soccer where it takes you like, if  
50 you miss 3 weeks of swimming you, it takes you like  
51 two months to get back into the track so as I said, my  
52 swimming compared to, now compared to then it  
53 was, now is very, very good. But I still hate winter  
54 swimming though because you wake up and it's very  
55 cold outdoors and stuff, but like I said I'm, my  
56 swimming is very good now, ja.

From the posed question, it seems as though the swimmer's training program is often interrupted more especially during the middle of the year. (Ln 40-43). It also seems as though the swimmer is suggesting that the latter be different (Ln 43-45) since the difficulty of swimming requires high fitness levels (Ln 45-48). He also indicates that swimmers ought to be able to continuously train, at least for a period of one complete year (Ln 43-45). He also believes swimming to be too demanding as opposed to soccer; hence swimmers should continuously train for a complete year to keep up their fitness levels (Ln 45-51).

Furthermore, it seems as though he no longer experiences difficulties with facilities today since he is doing well in swimming (Ln 51-53). However, the latter does not alter his experience of swimming during the winter season (Ln 53-55).

The swimmer employs the discourse of the degree in discipline athletes require between two sporting codes. He perceives swimming as a more difficult sport when compared to soccer hence his suggestion for swimmers to have more discipline, to be able to train continuously for a complete year, than soccer players.

I am wondering if the harsh training conditions were not due to the fact that there was a shortage of coaches to guide the swimmer since coaches had to attend all who were utilizing the public pool.

## 4.2 PERSEVERANCE THROUGH...

### 4.2.1 Performance and Discipline

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through performing well and being disciplined as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**57 Researcher: all right. What is your experience of  
58 all this, of you doing so well in your competitions?**

59 Swimmer: I mean I'm very happy with my  
60 performances like uh, every time I do well. At least I  
61 feel like I'm not just going to train for nothing. I  
62 mean swimming is a very difficult sport and I think  
63 like, you have to be very, very disciplined to be a  
64 swimmer so ja (yes)

It seems as though, from the above extract, the swimmer is responding in a very specific manner to the question posed to him. The question relates to his experience of “doing so well in his competitions” (Ln 57-58). He indicates that swimming training often seems worthless when communicating that “I’m just not going to train for nothing” (Ln 61) and that “swimming is a difficult sport” (Ln 62). However, two things seem to help him overcome the meaninglessness of training and the difficulty of swimming, first his good performance (Ln 60) and then his discipline (Ln 63).

Competitive swimming frequently adopts difficult training programs that swimmers have to follow as well as the difficult winter training they have to train through (Hansel, 1994). Hence, the swimmer is delighted with his performance, especially since he is able to do well in a sport he considers to be ‘very difficult’.

Furthermore, a swimmer can ascribe variety of meanings to being disciplined. For a swimmer, being disciplined can mean training harder, longer, and with great focus. It might also imply establishing clearly what is to be achieved and structuring life to achieve from it the desired outcome. Yet again, it might signify making time to listen to how the body responds so as to take good care of it (Byron, 1999).

Additionally, a disciplined swimmer progresses through the good and the bad times of swimming. He/she is capable of adjusting to a routine that alters from time to time. Moreover, he/she is able to manage time well so as to maintain balance between various aspects that form part of his/her daily life (e.g. swimming, school and family) (Byron, 1999; Hansel 1994).

Likewise, Byron (1999) stresses the following regarding being a disciplined swimmer:

Being disciplined is just establishing early in your mind what you want and structuring your life to give yourself what you want. It's turning your long-term goals into short-term goals that allow you to focus on and do what you value most. If you practice discipline, the results will be truly amazing. Your performance will skyrocket. Obstacles will turn into opportunities, and you will learn to turn your setbacks into set-ups for success. The fastest way to improve anything is to add a little discipline (p,01)

In conclusion, discipline may be an investment that yields great results. Even if an athlete lacks the talent, he/she may still improve by applying more discipline to his/her sport (Hansel, 1994)

The swimmer employs the discourse of swimming being difficult and training often seems meaningless, and then states how he overcomes that difficulty.

In conclusion, child rearing could require a great deal of discipline. I am therefore wondering if the swimmer's grandmother is responsible for having taught his grandson all about discipline. After all it was her, whom at the same time had to raise three of her other grand children alone, that raised him.

#### **4.2.2 Family Support**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through receiving support from his grandmother as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**65 Researcher: ok. Now I'm interested to know about  
66 all the influential people in your career and how  
67 they were or still are influential.**

68 Swimmer: I mean uh, my gran has played an  
69 important role in my swimming career because no  
70 matter where I go, she'll like, you know, be there you  
71 know. But she's never seen me swim actually. She  
72 just hears but always she'll give me like money to go  
73 to, she supports me you know. I think she's the  
74 person that played an important role in my swimming  
75 career.

It seems as though the swimmer's grandmother rendered her swimming grandson support (Ln 73). This support seems to have taken a financial rather than an emotional shape (Ln 71-73). Even in the case of the latter, it appears as though the swimmer never feels he is alone since he believes that his grandmother is always there for him and with him (68-71).

Hansel (1994) believes that "Parental support takes understanding, consideration and compassion and it sometimes takes money" (p 7). He also suggests that the greatest influence is from parents and families by creating the environment in which children can excel. Parents might provide support to their swimming children through a variety of ways. They could aid an establishment of a routine and a habit of attending every workout as well as being on time. They could also provide support by praising effort and good sportsmanship as well as by assisting swimmers to focus on the good values that could be derived from the sport.

It has become a sporting norm for guardians to avail themselves to competition sites, particularly when their children are participating in that competition. They do this as a common and a predominant way of supporting their athlete children. However, the swimmer employs a discourse of different forms of support swimmers could appreciate from their families.

I am wondering if the swimmer's grandmother also rendered his grandson support by exhibiting the following: by helping him look beyond the present and towards his goals and allowing the swimmer to have big aspirations of his swimming career; by emphasizing the positive and eliminating the negative; by being patient since

swimmers develop at different paces; by not over emphasizing winning; by not making the swimmer feel inadequate of his performances when he did poorly; by making sure that the swimmer arrive to all practices and meets on time thus avoiding him to miss the benefit from proper warm ups and/or miss receiving important communications from his coach; by encouraging the swimmer to play other sports especially during winter since he could not access a heated pool; by teaching the swimmer the difference between critical instruction and negative instruction; and by helping the swimmer develop a strong sense of sportsmanship and positive self-image.

I am also wondering if the swimmer's grandmother's support was not fostered by her knowledge regarding the benefits of swimming, even before the swimmer himself could recognize them. Since she was raising her grandson in a township, she probably was aware of what could become of him if he did not have any extramural activities after school, since township life is usually not ideal for teenagers to grow in. Perhaps the swimmer's grandmother expressed her support in the manner that she did since it was the only way she knew how to do so.

#### **4.2.3 Coach's Support**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through support from his as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**76 Researcher: ok. Besides your granny who else is  
77 influential to your swimming career?**

78 Swimmer: Um the person that actually made me, I  
79 came to HPC the beginning of, the beginning of my  
80 swimming career, when I started swimming with  
81 other kids properly, it was S. B, my first coach. He's  
82 the person that used to push me very hard. Like I, I  
83 wouldn't wake up just sleeping and he'd come fetch  
84 me to come to training, and you know. I mean,  
85 everyday, well every time, like now when I get lazy  
86 to go to training I think of those, you know, those  
87 tough times I had with S. Like all the tough times,  
88 and I just think, and I always tell myself nothing is as  
89 bad as what I have been through. Like if I have a  
90 hard training day, I just compare it to S's work and I  
91 just do it. And that's how I manage to survive. That  
92 was the question I think?

**93 Researcher: yes. And I remember you said S left  
94 and went back home.**

95 Swimmer: yes

**96 Researcher: and then what happened next after  
he left?**

97 Swimmer: when he left, I was a man. He taught me a  
98 couple of stuff, so...

**99 Researcher: you were what?**

100 Swimmer: a man, a “man”, and you know, I could  
face problems.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer’s coach acted as an anchor and a guru to the swimmer’s career since, in as far as the swimmer is concerned, the coach contributed much to the person he is today (Ln 78-81). It also appears as though when the swimmer’s inspiration to attend training occasionally deteriorated, his coach did not give up on him but encouraged him to return to training (Ln 81-84).

Moreover, there also exists an impression that, before he went back to his home, the coach had equipped the swimmer with certain skills that could aid his swimming career (Ln 84-87). Due to the latter, it seems the swimmer is matured enough to help himself out of the ‘tough times’ and ‘hard training’ days he occasionally experiences (Ln 89-91). His inner voice also always reminds him of the bad training days he had gone through and managed to conquer while he was still training under his first coach (Ln 88-89). Thus, through his coach, it seems the swimmer is equipped with positive self-talk (Ln 88-89), Problem solving (Ln 100) and decision-making skills (Ln 85-91).

It also seems as though the swimmer, through his coach, developed the ability to take personal responsibility of his swimming (Ln 89-91). And even though he acknowledges that swimming training is often ‘hard’, his first coach had exposed him to all the evils of a hard training day so much that he believes ‘nothing is as bad as what’ he ‘has been through’ with him (Ln 87-91).

Research shows that good athletes learn to use all of the people-resources around them to their advantage. Swimmers start at a very young age so this ability to learn

from and get support from adults and other young people is a very special ability. Great swimmers often seem to have this ability (Allen, 1995).

Consequently, the coach-swimmer relationship is crucial to a swimmer's development. Swimmers learn about the give and take of the relationship and to develop it with honesty. The relationship is mutual and swimmers also learn to give something back to the coach in order to maximize what the coach can offer them (Allen, 1995).

The relationship also goes through different stages as the swimmer matures. It often starts out with the coach knowing what to do and needing the young swimmer to be a good learner and listener. As the swimmer grows, he/she develops more of an understanding of him/herself as well as swimming and begins to have more feedback into the relationship and the training plan. Eventually the swimmer becomes a partner with the coach in getting the most out of training and performing (Allen, 1995).

Additionally, at some point there is a great level of trust between the coach and the swimmer. The swimmer does not need to question the coach or know the reason for everything the coach does since there is trust. This is important because in the busy life of a serious teenage swimmer, it is time wasting to be questioning every step of the swimming journey. Likewise, the coach develops trust for the swimmer such that he can take input from the swimmer knowing that the swimmer is giving hundred percent all the time (Allen, 1995).

The swimmer employs the discourse of how swimming coaches can impact a swimmer's career and/or life in general. He also utilizes the words 'survive' and being 'made a man' by his coach. The word survive may be perceived as a metaphor from the military world, which aims to communicate persistence. He as well utilizes the metaphor of being 'made a man' by his first coach. This metaphor is the one usually used by African boys when graduating out of initiation schools.

I am wondering if the coach did not notice some values (e.g. talent, discipline, potential, perseverance, a will to succeed, great work ethic that could become a foundation of the daily workout) the swimmer possessed that could aid the swimmer's success in competitive swimming. The coach probably also realized that the swimmer had given his best in competitive swimming on an emotional and physical level.

I am also wondering if the swimmer did not learn, from his coach, how to be self-confident through controlled independence. It is possible that as a young athlete his coach constantly challenged him to be independent within reasonable bounds. Hence, even today, the swimmer is able to rely on himself and knows how to thrive without the assistance in moments of greatest need. The swimmer probably also learnt, from his first coach, to control the controllable and to develop a chameleon-like ability to deal with the challenges of competitive swimming.

On the other hand I am wondering if perhaps the coach felt obliged to show the swimmer compassion since he was aware of the swimmer's home background and perhaps also realized the vitality of the swimmer's need to reaching his swimming goals (e.g. building a future out of competitive swimming).

#### **4.2.4 Organizational Support**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through support from various organizations as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**101 Researcher: Any difficulties you might have  
102 experienced throughout your swimming career?**

103 Swimmer: um no, not that I can remember. Ok um  
let me think...

**104 Researcher: take your time.**

105 Swimmer: um obviously, I mean I can't spare  
106 eighty thousand Rand from, from my mom's pocket  
107 to stay at the HPC centre. I mean especially, I travel  
108 more than, more than fifteen times a year going all  
109 over South Africa and, which cost a lot and so, and



110 SSA helps me a lot and um the Gauteng, Gauteng  
111 sports and recreation, they paid for me to stay here  
112 and SSA pays for my swimming and stuff, so. And  
113 even now I still struggle with some money for  
114 going, going overseas. Like some tours I have to  
115 pay for myself, whereby I have to get sponsors from  
116 somewhere, so. But now, today I just got somebody  
117 I can speak to when I need something so it's ok. I  
118 don't struggle that much because I've got like SSA.  
119 They're trying to help me because I mean, from  
120 where they took me to where I am now, I don't  
121 think they are about to lose me because they already  
122 spend so much money on me, I mean and, ja (yes).

**123 Researcher: is that all the struggles you can  
124 think of or do you still need some more time to  
think?**

125 Swimmer: No, ja (yes) that's all I can think of.  
126 Actually that's the only little problem I have.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer is communicating that his family cannot afford some of the funds necessary to sustain his swimming career (e.g. staying and training at a swimming academy as well as travelling expenses (Ln 105-112). However, despite this 'little problem' (Ln 126), he is receiving financial assistance from different organizations that have invested in him (Ln 119-122). He also recently accessed assistance from another person if ever the need arise (Ln 116-117).

It also appears as though the swimmer is confident about the support he is receiving from the organization, as he believes that the organization has invested in him (Ln 119-122).

The swimmer draws on the discourse of the necessity of resources, (e.g. different kinds of sponsorship, especially financial assistance), required by swimmers to sustain their competitiveness in swimming.

I am wondering if the swimmer refers to problems as 'little' due to his buoyancy regarding swimming. Or is it perhaps that he is encouraged by those who believe in his potential that he considers problems to be easily manageable?

#### 4.2.5 Hard Work

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through training hard as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**127 Researcher: so what is your experience of the  
128 way you trained then as compared to now?**

129 Swimmer: I mean before training was not as tough  
130 as now. I mean now competitions are tough than  
131 before, so. Because the more competitive you get,  
132 you have to change your training and make sure you  
133 train hard so you can compete against tough  
134 swimmers like R and them so, ja (yes).

From the above extract it appears as though the swimmer had to make major alterations to his training program as he progressed in his swimming career (Ln 132). It also seems he is no longer a recreational swimmer; he is now more competitive and has the ambition to compete against some of the biggest names in professional swimming, hence the need to make these alteration. (Ln 131-134).

It is well known that it takes hard work and effort to succeed in swimming. As a result of the latter, swimmers experience down days and up days and cannot afford to dwell on the 'downers'. They are to put the latter behind and try to remain positive (Hansel, 1994; Hardy, 1989).

The swimmer employs history as he provides a brief description of four events; experiences of his training before and during his non-competitive swimming era and experiences of training before and during his competitive swimming era.

He also employs the discourse of the difference in training between competitive and non-competitive swimming.

I am wondering if, by training hard, the swimmer refers to: training frequently not to lose the feel for the water and to prevent his technique from deteriorating; maintaining the best possible technique at all speeds during his workout; performing specific technique work to reinforce good swimming skills; combining challenging and easy

work outs in training; or performing streams lines and leaving the wall consistently and with precision.

I am also wondering if the swimmer's training ethic is not due to his understanding that to achieve success in swimming, he needs to commit to hard work, to be consistent with his efforts in training and work to the limit of his talent and potential; and also that there exist certain skills that all elite swimmers need to master. The more he can refine these skills the better chance he will have of swimming to his potential, especially on competition days.

#### **4.2.6 Determination**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through being determined as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**135 Researcher: As a person who swims, do you  
136 sometimes experience challenges that maybe  
137 want to become a pain in what you do?  
138 Sometimes you find yourself having struggles  
139 that might be tough on your swimming or maybe  
140 even want to threaten your career if I might  
say...**

141 Swimmer: No. I don't, I don't think I have those  
142 kind of problems because the reason why I'm here  
143 is because of coming to swim. So everything is just  
144 swimming. That's why we move out from home and  
145 our parents let us to move out from home because  
146 they know we come here to train and nothing is  
147 important except training. That goes for all the  
148 sports here at the HPC. So that's why I'm like  
149 struggling to answer your question because I mean,  
150 I don't have those kind of problems. Maybe it will  
151 be school like, sometimes whereby I went to world  
152 champs for like two months or so, whereby I have  
153 to, let's say I got exams, I'll have to reduce all my  
154 swimming you know, but I've never had those times  
155 were I'm struggling because there's always a  
156 solution.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer's determination enables him not accommodate inconveniences that could hinder his competitive swimming career (Ln 141-144). It also appears as though his parents are aware of the latter since they allow him the chance to leave home to a place where this determination could be nurtured (Ln 144-147). And even when it appears as though the swimmer has to

possibly reduce his swimming training due to being a scholar, he always finds a solution to this inconvenience (Ln 150-156).

The swimmer applies the discourse of resilience in the midst of difficulties (e.g. striking a balance between school and swimming) that might negatively impact his competitive swimming.

I am wondering if the swimmer learnt about being determined from the conditions he was exposed to as a Black male township teenager.

#### 4.2.7 Setting Goals

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through setting goals as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**157 Researcher: where do you think your swimming  
158 career is headed?**

159 Swimmer: At the moment I got short and long-term  
160 goals, whereby the long term goals is the ones that  
161 um as I said, I need to make a life out of them and  
162 even the short term ones are steps to, to, to get to the  
163 long term ones. Like now for instance, I want to  
164 qualify for world champs in December, where world  
165 champs would be in Melbourne. Those people are  
166 the people I see that are going to be, that I'm going  
167 to have to fight against to get my long-term goals.  
168 So that's why I say, you know, the short-term goals  
169 I just build up just to go. I know I won't come  
170 anywhere at the world champs. Maybe I'll make  
171 semi-finals or whatever but I'm not looking for a  
172 medal or anything. Hopefully maybe it will come.  
173 The other short-term goal is maybe for 2008  
174 Olympics, Beijing. That's where I want to get a  
175 gold medal for um the, that's where the real long-  
176 term step starts. That's where I want to get a gold  
177 medal for 4 by 100 medley relay. Hopefully I'll be  
178 with Ry and all of them and um get the individual  
179 medals by myself, and that's where I'm planning to  
180 start my, my, I can't say. I don't know how to say it  
181 but like um a step to my long-term goal, to make  
182 life out of swimming. And 2008, I mean 2009,  
183 that's when I want to be like the world champion  
184 Like, I want to be like well known, like Ro and Ry  
185 and everybody. And 2012 that's, that's I think  
186 where my long-term is, the goal, the real goal of  
187 that, to be like the world record holder, ja (yes).  
188 And that's when I can stop swimming, start settling

189 down and making business.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer is putting plans for success into his hands by setting goals (Ln 159-160). It seems one his plan is to utilize short-term goals as building blocks to achieve long-term goals (Ln 160-162). It also appears as though he recognizes the hard work that will have to accompany these short-term goals in order to arrive at the long-term goals (Ln 163-165) and also considers the reality of what could be the outcome of the goals he has set for himself (Ln 169-172).

The swimmer, it also seems, aspires to be amongst the top performing swimmers in South Africa, when they earn a gold medal in the 2008 Olympic Games, as one of the goals he has set himself (Ln 176-178). The latter, it seems, will be a stepping-stone to the 'life' he is actively creating from swimming (Ln 177-182). Additionally, it appears as though before he discontinues swimming to become an entrepreneur, he aspires to be famous (Ln 182-189).

Moreover, swimmers usually set short and long term goals for their whole swimming year. They set many goals since the more goals they set, the more chance for success they have. These goals are specific and include variables such as numbers, distances, times, places and dates. Recording times or mileage gives them an indication of how much progress they have made. Setting goals also aid athletes overcome the fear of failure. Without goals athletes' aspirations often abate. More over, goal setting is considered, by many coaches, the most valuable skill to be learned in swimming. (Rowan, 1959; Rutemiller, 1995).

The swimmer employs history by sequencing events in the following manner: short-term goals as building blocks to long-term goals; receiving a gold medal at the 2008 Olympic Games; being the world champion by the year 2009; being a world record holder, discontinuing swimming and becoming an entrepreneur by the year 2012.

The swimmer also applies the phrase having to 'fight against' again as a metaphor that can be perceived to be used by the military, African initiation schools and the medical fields, which aims to communicate persistence. He also uses the discourse of the planning required by swimmers during and after competitive swimming.

I am wondering if the swimmer realizes the importance of setting goals since he is aware that swimming without purpose will become monotonous and repetitive before too long, especially during early morning workouts and on very cold days. Perhaps he even acknowledges that human beings need justification for their actions, and that it is human nature to feel the need for accomplishment and that the reward of completing a task worked hard at is often what humans strive for.

#### 4.2.8 Self Trust

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through trusting himself as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**190 Researcher: what if there are other Black  
191 swimmers who were scared like you in the  
192 beginning when you had to swim against White  
193 people, where the atmosphere you talked about  
194 the last time was...**

193 Swimmer: I mean it's general things, the  
194 nervousness and stuff. It comes naturally. It depends  
195 on where you are from, so I can't really advice on  
196 that you know. I can just say you know trust  
197 yourself. Trust in yourself and everything will be  
198 ok, if you really trust in yourself.

From the above narrative it seems as though the swimmer suggests that self-trust is vital to being a swimmer (Ln 196-198). It also seems he believes self-trust breeds capability (Ln 197-198).

The swimmer also seems to perceive swimming competitions as naturally anxiety provoking (Ln 193-198), hence he recommends self trust to the latter.

The swimmer employs the discourse of the vitality of intrinsic motivation required by swimmers.

I am wondering if the swimmer, when speaking of self-trust, is not implying to: trying to achieve and if failing knowing that it was the nature of the task or circumstances or just plain bad luck, not his lack of character that is to blame; accepting failure as an

opportunity to learn from the experience; learning from failure and trying again with more energy, being more committed and having greater determination than before; accepting a challenge and achieving it using the best of his ability; believing not only in his ability to swim perfectly or better than other people, but believing that he comprise as good a chance as anyone to achieve success; having the courage to strive and to face whatever the outcome.

#### **4.2.9 Role Modelling**

It seems as though the swimmer is able to continuously persevere in competitive swimming through being a role model as demonstrated by the following narrative:

**199 Researcher: ...and now you think swimming is  
200 pretty much mixed...?**

201 Swimmer: yeah (yes)

**202 Researcher: why do you say that?**

203 Swimmer: I mean, I believe people like me; we set  
204 an example for most Black people outside there, to  
205 show that everybody can do swimming and, you  
206 know, it's not just for white people and um I don't  
207 know. Uh what was the question again?

**208 Researcher: I said you think swimming is mixed  
209 as far as races are concerned...**

210 Swimmer: ja (yes) as I said, olden days we only saw  
211 T and them and I mean, there was no black, there  
212 was no black swimmer, there was no South African  
213 black swimmer and I mean you know. So as I said,  
214 people like me, we're setting very good example to  
215 like, to like the black townships especially.  
216 Especially, I'm from the township you know. I'm  
217 not now from an urban area trying to speak for  
218 Black people so, I'm from where they are and you  
219 know, speaking from experience, which makes a  
220 very big difference so, ja (yes).

From the narrative above it appears as though the swimmer responds to the posed question by targeting a Black audience when raising awareness and emphasizing that everybody can swim and that swimming is not just for White people (Ln 203-207). Since he is addressing a Black audience, it also seems he strongly believes that his opinion will embrace a positive impact since he is experienced about the subject

matter and is also a Black swimmer (Ln 216-220), hence he believes he serves as a role model to most Black people, particularly those from the townships (Ln 213-215).

In South Africa sports role models may play a considerable social role, as the country is continuously dealing with major challenges relating to social decay predominantly that affecting the youth. They have the capacity to fulfil significant roles that may promote and maintain a smooth functioning of the country's social order. Additionally, sports role models surfacing from challenging backgrounds may possibly have greater effect on the youth at risk. By obtaining certain positive outcomes, they may influence youth to make positive life choices due to the potential they have to positively influence other people's lives (Brown, 2005; Roberts, 1986).

The swimmer utilizes the discourse that people of all different ethnic groups can swim.

I am wondering if, as a sports role model, the swimmer also realizes his ability to serve as a source of aspiration to children and South Africa's youth and that he also is capable of serving as a source of motivation and example of success.

#### **4.3 SUMMARY**

Chapter four aimed to answer the research question from the interviews that were conducted and transcribed. The swimmer identified twelve factors when telling about two narratives of continued perseverance in competitive swimming despite fear, lack of facilities and harsh training conditions and continued perseverance in competitive swimming through performance and discipline, family, coach's and organizational support, hard work, determination, setting goals, self-trust, and role modelling.

The following chapter will integrate the research findings of the study with the literature, and will also discuss the results and the analysis of the interviews. Limitations and recommendations to the study will also be elicited in chapter five.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter integrates the research findings of the study with the literature. It also discusses the results and the analysis of the interviews. Limitations and recommendations to the study will also be elicited here.

#### 5.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

From the reviewed literature surfaced the following:

A study concerning a psycho-cultural analysis of the self-concept of the Black competitive swimmer suggested that psycho-cultural factors influenced the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people (Campbell, 1974). This lack of participation was also attributed to a complexity of socio-cultural variables such as age, education, income, ethnicity, and sex, and was also equated to the lack of Black role models in competitive swimming (Campbell, 1974; Jackson, 1991; Larson, 1975; Mael, 1995; Pendleton, 1975).

Physiological factors, such as a body type which was not buoyant, longer limbs and narrower hips, wider bones and narrower muscles and considerably less subcutaneous fat, were also linked to Black people's lack of participation in competitive swimming (Ghesquiere, 1971; Mael, 1995).

The absence of Black swimmers among top performers in swimming competitions also provoked lots of interest when viewed in structural and compositional terms. Structure and composition were considered a limiting factor for Black people's success in swimming. Lung capacity, internal organs, morphology, bone and the amount of fat were suggested to be important factors, which affected Black people directly and indirectly in swimming. Additionally, the literature hypothesised that Black people were less flexible and exhibited poorer stroke mechanics such as stiff shoulders, straight arm entry, zigzag body motion and bent legs in the kicking action once they learnt how to swim (Mael, 1995).

On the side of economics, the literature attributed the lack of participation in competitive swimming by Black people to the cost of money needed for pool admission and swimming lessons that most Black people could not afford; inadequate transportation, the unattractiveness and the need to repair existing facilities; inaccessible facilities and educationally appropriate swimming programs; and segregated swimming pools and beaches or an absence of swimming facilities near home (Lawson, 1975; Loy, 1969; Mael, 1995; Pendleton, 1975).

Additionally, an informal conversation concerning the lack of participation by Black people in competitive swimming yielded the following: Black swimmers, if part of a mixed class, exhibited a tendency to seize attending training sessions once the group had learned the initial stages of swimming, thus demonstrating a tendency to become discouraged upon witnessing other swimmers continuously performing better. Hence, regardless of their socio-economic status, these swimmers took longer to swim as compared to any other ethnic group and neither reached top ranks nor provincial level (S. Ban, personal communication, March 16, 2005).

## **5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

After listening to the videotaped and reading the transcribed interviews, the message of the swimmer's narrative for me was: continued perseverance in competitive swimming despite fear, lack of facilities and harsh training conditions, as well as continued perseverance in competitive swimming through performance and discipline, family, coach's and organizational support, hard work, determination, setting goals, self-trust and role modelling.

### **5.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study explored the swimmer's narrative regarding his experience(s) as a Black competitive South African swimmer despite difficulties (e.g. inequalities), particularly those pertaining to the code of swimming. Narrative analysis was used as the research method and six videotaped semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed. The analysis identified twelve factors that influenced the swimmer's experience(s): fear, lack of facilities, harsh training conditions, performance and discipline, family support, organizational support, coach's support, hard work, determination, setting goals, self-trust and role modelling. Following are factors from the swimmer's narrative that correlates with the literature reviewed.

#### **5.3.1 Fear**

While telling of his experience regarding being frightened of competing against White swimmers, it seemed the swimmer was conveying the message that being a Black male and not having access to a heated pool during winter inflicted some complications on his swimming career. He however had resolutions on how the latter could be controlled. He suggested training with adequate effort during the summer season and also provided the options of running and playing soccer during the winter season. It also appears as though he was raising awareness that swimming training requires more discipline as compared to soccer since swimming an individual but not a team sport.

It also appears that Pendleton (1975) was right, that the lack of participation in swimming by Black people is due to social factors such as ethnicity and sex as well as the lack of facilities and various economic factors. These factors were also highlighted by the swimmer, in his narrative, as playing a major role in the lack of participation in swimming by Black people.

### **5.3.2 Role Modelling**

From his narrative regarding being a role model, it appeared as though the swimmer deemed himself a role model, especially representing Black people in the sport of swimming. It seemed he was targeting a Black audience when raising awareness and emphasizing that everybody can swim and that swimming is not just for White people. It also seemed that he strongly believed that it would make a huge difference that this awareness was coming from him since he is experienced about the subject matter and is himself a Black swimmer.

In addition, According to Loy (1969), it is of great importance to have acceptable Black role models participating in swimming. He believes that Black role models in swimming could illustrate the value of swimming success and thereby increase the expectations that Black youth, too, might reap tangible benefits from the sport

The literature also suggested that, in South Africa, sports role models might play a considerable social role, since the country is continuously dealing with major challenges relating to social decay predominantly affecting the youth. These role models could fulfil significant roles that might promote and maintain a smooth functioning of the country's social order. Moreover, sports role models surfacing from challenging backgrounds might possibly have greater effect on the youth at risk. By obtaining certain positive outcomes, they might influence youth to make positive life choices due to the potential they have to positively influence other people's lives (Brown, 2005).

### **5.4 SUMMARY**

It is evident that the reviewed literature only partially answered the research question. As a result, I (the researcher) based on listening and transcribing the collected data, conclude that the swimmer's narrative was of a unique nature in an attempt to answering the research question. Following are limitations and recommendations to the study.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.5.1 Limitations**

The following limitations were recognized for the purpose of this study:

- Only one Black South African male competitive swimmer was investigated.
- The swimmer in this study might not be typical of all Black South African swimmers.
- Results from this study cannot be generalized to all current or future Black South African swimmers.
- Interpretations and conclusions in this study were a result of the experience of the researcher; other researchers or readers might arrive at different conclusions.
- It was difficult to organize information in the absence of a hypothesis and to conclude how much detail to put into the text.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations**

Several questions and ideas for further studies were raised by this research.

Recommendations for future research include:

- Exploring experiences of Black South Africans (swimmers and non-swimmers) in other communities about the lack of participation in swimming by Black people.
- Investigating perceptions of Black South African females about the lack of participation in swimming by Black people to understand participation patterns.
- Investigating perceptions of other micro cultural groups about participation and/or their lack of participation in swimming in order to better understand participation patterns.
- Further investigating the economic factors that affect participation of different micro cultures in swimming.

- Investigating the effects of apartheid on Black people's lack of participation in swimming.
- Investigating the role of the family and Black role models on Black swimmers.

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## Appendix

23/03/2007

To whom it may concern.

Herewith credentials on Lekgowe Thipe's thesis

I was given an opportunity to edit and proofread Lekgowe Thipe's thesis under the following credentials.

Name: Faith Modise  
Degree: B.A Publishing  
Still completing: B.A Languages  
Name of Institution: University of Pretoria.  
Contact Details: 083 689 5565/012 346 8933

I am currently an assistant editor of Blackmoon Advertising and Research's electronic magazine that is circulated among their clients on a monthly basis

Regards  
Faith Modise