

**Juggling lecture halls and netball within a tertiary education setting in South Africa**

By

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to explore how student-athletes experience their dual careers (academics and netball) within a tertiary education setting. This was achieved by investigating their experiences through an ecological model that comprises of the student-athlete (individual) at its core, a Micro-system and a Macro-system. The five participants were purposively selected and required to be *bona fide* students. All five of the participants represented their country nationally, either at age group level or for the main national team. As a sample their academic year of study spanned from 1<sup>st</sup> year to honours or 4<sup>th</sup> year respectively. The participants were asked to map out their environment according to the model which then informed how they gave a written account (narrative) of their student-athlete experiences in relation to the past, present and future. A metaphor was then provided by the participants to describe their stories. These written accounts were then used to formulate the semi-structured interview questions that were used. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using a thematic analysis. The findings of the study provided a holistic and comprehensive understanding of how the participants experienced their dual careers within their milieus. It was found that the participants of this study all had difficulty with finding and maintaining balance. In addition to this the study uncovers the factors within their environment that add to or detract from balance. Among the key findings of this study was that all of the participants were aware of and affected by matters related to finances, whether it be the expectations around bursaries and the financial strain placed on parents and family members should these expectations fail to be met. The participants felt their options for free and safe expression of their concerns was limited and they desired a safe space to do so. Despite these challenges another key finding showed that there was an inherent belief that it is possible to succeed as a student-athlete, but success was also largely dependent on the support from family and the ability to function autonomously between the academic and sporting spheres.

**Key words:** student-athletes, dual careers, ecological model, netball, academics, Micro-system, Macro-system.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Participant 1,2,3,4 & 5	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
UP	University of Pretoria
NSA	Netball South Africa
SASCOC	South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee
SRSA	Sport and Recreation South Africa
USSA	University Sport South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SIT	Student Involvement Theory

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# CHAPTER 1

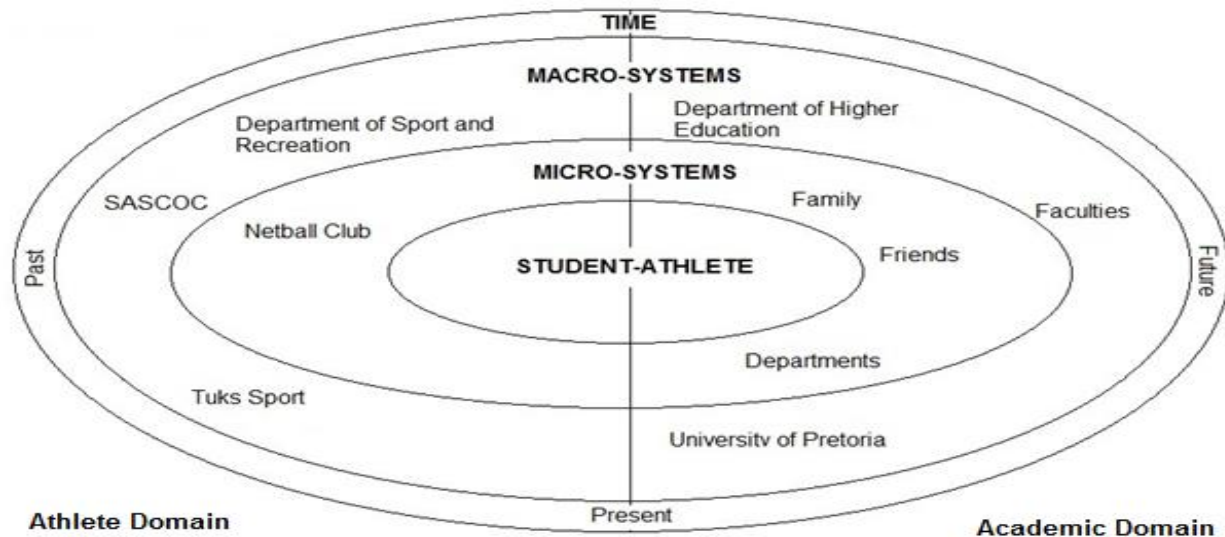
## BACKGROUND

### Introduction

The first chapter of this mini-dissertation will serve to align the reader with the setting, problem, questions, aims, objectives, motivation and structure of the study. This will give the reader an understanding of the overall context that the study is situated in.

### 1.1 SETTING

*To portray the research context of this study the holistic ecological model of Hendriksen, Stambulova and Roessler (2010) is employed as depicted in Figure 1.*



*Figure 1. Ecological Model*

This model consists of three dimensions being the (i) person-dimension (i.e. student-athlete), (ii) the systems-dimension (i.e., Macro-system, Micro-system) and the (iii) time-dimension (i.e., past, present, future) (Hendriksen et al., 2010). A brief description and application to the study of the three dimensions is to follow.



### **1.1.1 Person**

This dimension refers to a person at the centre of the holistic ecological model (Hendriksen et al., 2010).

With reference to this study the person in the centre of the holistic ecological model was a person living simultaneously within two domains; the student-athlete domains (i.e., identities).

### **1.1.2 Systems**

This dimension refers to the holistic ecological model consisting of two systems being the Macro-system and Micro-system. The Micro-system refer to settings and people that the student-athletes had regular direct contact with and that influenced the student-athletes, while the Macro-system referred to settings and people that the student-athletes did not have regular direct contact with, but still influenced the student-athletes (Hendriksen et al., 2010).

In relation to the student-domain the Macro-system for example entailed administrative settings and staff and academic departments and staff that the student-athletes had regular direct contact with and that directly influenced the student-athletes.

In relation to the athlete-domain the Macro-system for example entailed the sport setting of the University of Pretoria (UP), also known as TuksSport, as well as the TuksSport Netball Club (e.g., managers, coaches, team members) that had directly influenced the student-athletes.

Furthermore, the personal life (e.g., family, friends) of the student-athletes also formed part of the Micro-system. In relation to the student-domain the Micro-system for example entailed the Department of Higher Education and Training while in relation to the athlete-domain it for example entailed Netball South Africa (NSA), the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) and Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA).

### **1.1.3 Time**

This dimension refers to people living within time (i.e., past, present, future) (Hendriksen et al., 2010).

In this study it implied the student-athletes living within time; coming from somewhere as student-athletes (past), being somewhere as student-athletes (present) and going somewhere as student-athletes (future).

In summary, studying the student-athletes' experiences of being student-athletes is therefore imbedded historically (i.e., within time) and contextually situated (i.e., within systems).

## **1.2 PROBLEM**

University students typically experience a host of challenges and difficulties that are unique to the tertiary education milieu. These difficulties span across physiological, psychological, environmental, economic, emotional and social domains (Goktas, 2010). With that being said, people now have the opportunity to pursue various sporting aspirations while at the same time endeavouring to acquire academic qualifications at tertiary institutions. This adds a new and challenging dynamic to the university experience that student-athletes will go through.

Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) developed a model called the Transitional Model of Student-Athletes (Table 1) to depict the transitions that athletes typically go through. It is important to note that there are cases that will deviate from the model and all athletic careers are unique, but there are typical trends of transition that do generally apply as illustrated in Table 1. The focus of this study examines when student-athletes enter into higher education and are in the mastery level of their sporting careers. This table illustrates the transitions that athletes have gone through up until they have reached this point as well as the discontinuation point that follows.

The mastery or perfection stage is the level where athletes tend to reach their peak in terms of athletic performance and ability which coincides chronologically with the age that people start their university careers - this poses new and unique challenges for student-

athletes and adds an entirely new dynamic to the challenges that students would usually be presented with. While these student-athletes can often benefit from balancing the demands of both spheres, there are significant disadvantages that also need to be considered. These include, among others; rigorous training regimes, travelling to and from competitions, financial burdens, meeting coaches and teammate expectations and the pressures of performing well and mastering the sport. In addition to this comes the responsibility of honouring academic commitments and managing social relationships outside of sport and the classroom (Dubac-Charbonneau, Durand-Bush & Forneris, 2014).

Table 1

*Transitional model of student-athletes*

<b>Athletic Level</b>	<b>Psychological Level</b>	<b>Psychosocial Level</b>	<b>Academic vocational Level</b>	<b>Age</b>
Initiation and development	Childhood to adolescence	Parents, siblings and peers	Primary to secondary education	5-15
Development	Adolescence	Peers, coach and parents	Secondary education	15-20
Mastery	Young adulthood	Partner and coach	Higher education	20-30
Discontinuation	Adulthood	Family and coach	Vocational training occupation	30-35

Literature suggests that student-athletes often lack the coping resources and external support structures within their systems to succeed in both domains, not to mention also managing social and personal lives in amongst sport and study (Abedalhafiz, Altahayneh & Al-Haliq, 2010). Failure to effectively balance all of these commitments can potentially lead to a degree of disillusionment and identity confusion which can weigh heavily on the psychological well-being of an individual. This significantly increases the risk of student-athletes dropping out of university, premature retirement from their sport or both (Debois, Ledon & Wylleman, 2015). There are however, possible interventions that can improve the coping mechanisms of student-athletes and prevent drop out (Laureano, Grobbelaar, & Nienaber, 2014)

Tertiary institutions are recognizing the need to develop and implement programmes that are geared towards the support of student-athletes in both their sporting and academic endeavours (European Union, 2012). In 2004 a study was conducted to identify support structures that were in place across European Union member states and the following criteria in supporting student-athlete needs were identified: a) Academic departments and faculty providing opportunities for student-athletes to tailor their academic timetables to accommodate sporting commitments, distance learning options and being provided with flexibility in relocating to different campuses, b) Improvement of the sporting experience through the provision of sporting scholarships, elite development programmes and professional support staff, c) Universities making provisions for students once they have retired from their respective athletic careers by making study grants available and introducing new programmes to these students (Henry, 2013). This study was significant in that it not only identified pertinent student-athlete needs, but also addressed the types of policies and procedures that needed to be implemented to meet these needs. In addition to this it may also be pertinent to consider the timing of major tournaments by scheduling them during times of the year that aren't affected by exams.

### **1.3 QUESTION**

The aforementioned problem touches on the scope of issues that typically affect university students and how those issues can be compounded by the addition of the pursuit of an elite sporting career as well as the additional challenges that accompany

that pursuit. Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) developed a model to explain the transitions that athletes typically go through which allowed for this study to situate and further contextualise the transition phase that student-athletes are typically facing which is the mastery level.

The problem then further explains how student-athletes often lack the necessary coping resources to deal with a host of challenges as well as the implications thereof; among them being the risk of drop-out and premature retirement. To substantiate and validate that a problem exists there have been efforts to develop and introduce systems that assist student-athletes in coping with and even thriving within the tertiary education milieu.

The problem has provided justification for this research to explore the experiences and stories of how female student-athlete's (netball players) experience their dual careers. To do this the following research question has been formulated: **“How do elite student-athletes within a tertiary education setting in South Africa experience their dual careers?”**

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 Aims**

The aim in research refers to where one would like to be once the research has been concluded. What is it that the researcher actually wants to achieve with the study (Bryman, 2012). The aims of this study are twofold:

The first aim is to understand how elite student-athletes experience their dual careers within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. The second aim is to inform existing policy by assisting student-athletes to cope with the demands of sport and study.

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

Objectives refer to the specific steps needed to reach the aims of a study. It is the specified orchestration of the approach to a study (Bryman, 2012).

#### 1.4.2.1 *Literature*

This point of departure involves conducting an investigation into existing research on student-athletes in order to gain an understanding and communicate current trends to the reader while also identifying research gaps.

#### 1.4.2.2 *Inquiry*

The inquiry phase of this study will firstly seek to explain the selection criterion that was used in choosing participants for the study. Secondly the research methodology, design as well as ethical considerations will be described.

#### 1.4.2.3 *Interviews*

Once the participants have been identified and contacted they will be informed about the nature and key justifications of the research. They will then have the option to consent to participate in the study. Following that, interviews will take place using a semi-structured format. A narrative social constructionist approach will be used to examine the participants from an eco-systemic standpoint by implementing an ecological model as a means of portraying the context of the student-athletes.

#### 1.4.2.4 *Findings*

The data obtained from the interviews will then be transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis method. The findings obtained from the analysis will then be reported in the form of a mini-dissertation and published in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

### **1.5 MOTIVATION**

#### **1.5.1 Research Motivation**

##### *1.5.1.1 South Africa*

While there is a growing spectrum of literature on the student-athlete phenomenon internationally, the amount of research in South Africa is limited and the studies that have been done in South Africa have predominantly been done using quantitative methods

(Surujlal, van Zyl & Nolan, 2013). The reason for using South African participants is to expand on the limited research that exists on student-athletes in the country so that policy changes that may be informed by this research are context specific and can be understood from a South African perspective. This has provided justification for why this study is conducted from a South African perspective and following paragraphs in this section will provide justification for why this study focuses on female student-athletes, netball as well as the rationale for the methodology being used.

#### *1.5.1.2 Methodology*

The justification for a qualitative, narrative approach is exemplified by the limited number of studies done from this perspective. The one study that did have a narrative or “life story approach” did not limit the participants in terms of sporting code and so used student participants who partook in Olympic sports and or professional sport (Aquilina, 2013). Another rationale for this study is that much of the research on student-athletes at tertiary institutions has been analyzed quantitatively and there is therefore a lack of qualitative research on the subject (Abedalhafiz et al., 2010; Dubuc et al., 2014; Goktas, 2010; Jing Horng Lu, Hsu, Chan, Cheen & Kao, 2012; Lopez et al., 2015; Omar Fauzee, Don, Susterna, Saputra, Hanif, Abdullah & Shahril 2014; Richards & Aries, 1999; Surujlal et al., 2013). While the following are qualitative studies done on student-athletes they do not take into account the experience of the student-athlete through the use of narrative inquiry or experience over time like this study intends to do (Cosh & Tully, 2014; Mckenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). A qualitative narrative approach therefore will provide an alternative means of studying the student-athlete phenomenon and seeks to bring to fruition subjective information that has not necessarily been yielded through other methods

#### *1.5.1.3 Student-athletes and Netball*

The majority of studies done on student-athletes have not limited the participants or respondents to one sporting code exclusively and have participants from varying sporting codes (Abedalhafiz et al., 2010; Aquilina, 2013; Cosh & Tully, 2014; Dubuc et al., 2014; Goktas, 2010; Jing Horng Lu et al., 2012; Lopez et al., 2015; Omar Fauzee et al., 2014;

Richards & Aries, 1999; Surujlal et al., 2013). Mckenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) did not only include student-athletes in their study but also had sport and academic administrators and student-athlete employers as participants. While the study by Cosh and Tully (2014) mentioned having included one netball player as a participant they did not exclusively focus on netball. This study will exclusively analyze the experiences of elite netball players at a tertiary institution.

Given that most of the research on student-athletes incorporates a wide variety of sporting codes within respective studies and there is limited literature that focuses solely on one sport and no literature that has explored the experiences of student-athletes who are only female netball players - Further justification for the choice to explore female netball players is for the very reason that there is no research that exists currently that has used elite female student-athlete netball players as participants within a South African study. Another justification for this will be to inform further research on female student-athlete netball players and increase interest in this category of student-athletes.

### **1.5.2 TuksSport Motivation**

The findings of this study will be used to supplement and inform current policy that is geared towards supporting the unique needs of student-athletes within the netball programme as well as be applied to other sporting codes offered at University of Pretoria (UP) with the aim of better equipping student-athletes to cope with the demands of sport and academic commitments.

## **1.6 STRUCTURE**

Chapter 1 describes the justification and setting of the study in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the context of the research. It introduces the criteria that was used in the selection of participants and gives an overview of the problem, questions and aims and objectives of the study, which is then substantiated further via the discussion of the motivation of the study. Chapter 2 comprises of a review of the existing literature that exists on student-athletes and dual careers. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the position from which the study was executed. Quality and ethical considerations will



also be discussed here. Chapter 4 to 8 comprise of the results and analysis of the findings from the participants while chapter 9 provides an account of the findings of the research and how they substantiate, or contribute to the literature that was reviewed in chapter 2, this will serve the purpose of answering the research question of the study. Finally, chapter 9 will also discuss the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter introduced the research project by providing a rationale for this study by explaining the setting, introducing the criteria for the participants, exploring the problem and clarifying the research question, motivation as well as the aims and objectives for the research. Finally, an overview of how the study will be structured was discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will look to provide an account of the research that exists on student-athletes within tertiary education environments and how they manage their dual careers. The benefits and challenges that accompany the student-athlete role will be explored along with the role that coping plays in this environment. Considerations around identity and gender will provide further context and to conclude an investigation of existing programmes that are geared towards the management of student-athletes at tertiary institutions will be conducted.

#### **2.1 DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDENT-ATHLETE**

This chapter will explore and provide an account of literature that focusses on the student-athlete phenomenon (Abedalhafiz et al., 2010; Aquilina, 2013; Cosh & Tully, 2014; Dubuc et al., 2014; Goktas, 2010; Jing Horng Lu et al., 2012; Lopez et al., 2015; Omar Fauzee et al., 2014; Richards & Aries, 1999; Surujlal et al., 2013). The concept “student-athlete” for the purposes of this study encompasses a unique group of individuals who are studying at a tertiary institution towards a university degree while simultaneously participating in a sport across a number of different codes where athletes are considered to be respectively elite. There are however, many factors that differentiate between athletes who are registered across academic institutions, these include, race, gender, ability and standard of competition. These factors carry with them varying implications that are both shared and unique to the experiences of student-athletes; such is the nature of this phenomenon (Watt & Moore, 2001).

The amount of people who choose to pursue this route is indicative of the importance that is placed on receiving a tertiary education while also pursuing various sporting aspirations. In addition to this there have been increasing numbers of female participation in sport over the last 30 years (Steinfeldt, Zakrajsek, Carter & Steinfeldt, 2011) and there is a belief that student-athletes have developed certain skills and abilities that make them a valuable resource in teaching others important values that are likely to aid them in

adapting to the challenges of the real world. However, there are a number of demands placed on student-athletes that make them vulnerable to academic and athletic failure as well (Wycliffe & Simiyu, 2010). Demands that are being placed on elite athletes are becoming increasingly taxing as the level of professionalism and competitive standard across many sporting codes are becoming significantly greater. From a vocational point of view it is becoming increasingly difficult to establish a career path without a relevant tertiary qualification (Henry, 2013). This necessitates that tertiary institutions start to recognize the need to make provisions to accommodate such demanding ventures (Cosh & Tully, 2014; Henry, 2013; Lopez, Subijana, Barriopedro & Conde, 2015). Athletes are coming to the realization that professional sporting careers can be fickle in the sense that making a living from sport is an extremely competitive endeavour. Risk factors such as potential injury, a lack of financial support while moving up through semi-professional to professional ranks and limited career options after retirement almost necessitates the cause for pursuing the path of a student-athlete for many elite athletes (Aquilina, 2013).

While student-athletes are faced with many challenges and demands that can prove to be a hindrance to sporting and academic achievement, not to mention severe adverse psychological and health effects (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010), this is not always the case for the dual career and there are studies that have been found to be contrasting in the face of studies that have highlighted the adverse effects of being student-athletes (Aquilina, 2013; Richards & Aries, 1999). The following section explores these benefits from the perspective of the student-athlete.

## **2.2 BENEFITS OF BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE**

These benefits have been discovered across a number of studies (Coakley, 2007; Eitzen & Sage, 2008; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). These include general health benefits, encouraging compliance with competitive and societal norms and rules which can be transferred into domains outside of sport, developing values and integrity while also contributing to good character traits, improved self-confidence and motivation, promoting social interaction and social skills, the creation of vocational opportunities within sport, the exposure to different life experiences and opportunities to establish coping mechanisms geared towards dealing with failure. In addition participation in sport has

created opportunities for athletes to assume various leadership roles which have been shown to improve self-confidence (Steinfeldt, et al., 2011), as well as have opportunities to network with prospective employers. Particular attention was paid to the following benefits.

### **2.2.1 Academic benefits**

As noted previously, these benefits were not limited to the sporting domain of the student-athlete context and extended into academic and vocational spheres. Studies showed that student-athletes were more inclined than non-athletes to get involved in campus life (Williams, Sarraf & Umbach, 2006) and are often just as, if not more ambitious than their non-athletic counter-parts when it comes to academic performance. They did not devote any less time to their academics and were equally concerned about their academic performance (Aries, McCarthy, Salovey & Banaji, 2004). In a study by Richards and Aries (1999) it was found that statistically academic performances did not always differ from non-athletes, student-athletes were equally involved in campus life and were able to develop and grow just as much as non-athletes. Aquillina (2013) proposes that in order for student-athletes to realize these benefits they need to achieve a level of equilibrium and balance. This is explored in more detail in the following section.

### **2.2.2 Sense of achievement and balance**

Embarking on a dual career will mean that there will be a whole host of obligations and considerations that need to be taken into account in both sporting and academic domains. The student-athlete will experience the typical trials and tribulations of non-athletes at university, of which include adjusting to a new social environment, career preparation and exploration as well as the expansion of intellectual prowess. Student-athletes however, will experience an additional host of obligations and responsibilities that involves rigorous training and conditioning, tournaments, travelling and rehabilitation if injured (Watt & Moore, 2001). Being successful in achieving a balance in both the academic sphere and the sporting realm were found to both be high priorities for student-athletes. These aspirations to achieve in both spheres tend to exhaust the required resources to do so (Mckenna & Lewis, 2004). By exhausting these resources there is also an increased risk of burnout (Gould & Whitley, 2009). A determining factor of student-athlete success at

balancing their dual career is whether they end up graduating or not. Participating has been found to benefit academic performance by keeping student-athletes alert and focused on their academics (Watt & Moore, 2013). This finding is supported by Aquilina (2013) who posits that having to concentrate on a number of different aspects can be beneficial in the sense that it can alleviate the pressure of exclusively focusing on sport or academics and provide an element of perspective to the lives of student-athletes. Student-athletes also reported that the combination of intellectual stimulation and the physical requirements of sport were important for the sustainability of inspiration and dedication in the long run. There was also value in the recognition of achieving a balance between sport and academics together with the acknowledgement of the importance of social interaction and relationship building outside of sport and academics. There was also evidence to suggest that some athletes found that when they solely focused on their athletics they sometimes only experienced minor progress, which turned out to be an immensely frustrating experience for them. There seemed to be a sense of comfort among student-athletes from the assurance that in acquiring tertiary qualifications they would have viable options to pursue once their sporting careers were over. This also allowed athletes to consider life after sport with relish instead of apprehension and avoidance. Lastly, some students found that they would perform better in their sport when the academic domains they were in exhibited some type of support and understanding for the sporting context that the student was in.

### **2.2.3 Character traits and personal attributes**

Student-athletes are also afforded the opportunity to transfer relevant character traits learned in their respective sports to their careers. Character traits like self-esteem, high work-ethic and integrity typically can contribute to effective performance in a work place environment (Weis, 2007). Additional attributes that contribute to academic and career performance are goal-setting, an understanding and awareness of the benefits of effective preparation and punctuality (Chen, Snyder & Magner, 2010). While there are significant benefits that can be realized by student-athletes, there are also many challenges that are typically experienced by student-athletes. The following segment considers these factors.

## **2.3 CHALLENGES OF BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE**

Most athletes are of the perception that a dual career is challenging and embarking on this type of career path comes with a distinctive set of challenges for student-athletes (Lopez et al., 2015). The requirement to suddenly balance rigorous training regimes, competition, social life expectations and demanding academic commitments can prove to be extremely taxing for many student-athletes (Gayles & Baker, 2015). These challenges tend to be exacerbated by limiting time constraints, pressures to maintain a certain level of both sporting and academic performance, feelings of stress and exhaustion and potential isolation from various social circles as a result of the expectations and pressure to meet training and academic requirements (Surujlal, van Zyl & Nolan, 2013). Due to the uncertainty that surrounds endeavouring to make a living out of playing sport, athletes experience the pressure of also establishing a contingency plan for their lives in case this does not become a reality or for the possibility of not having something to fall back on upon retirement (Stambulova, Engstrom, Franck, Linner & Lindahl, 2015). This presents with a number of challenges for those who do become student-athletes. One of the primary issues is being able to efficiently balance the commitments that come with being a student-athlete, which occur across sporting, academic, personal and social levels (Aquilina, 2013). A major consideration when it comes to balance in this context is time and commitment and the implications thereof.

### **2.3.1 Implications of time and commitment**

According to Astin's Student Involvement Theory (SIT) (1984), the student plays a key role in predicting the development that will take place in accordance with the efforts and resources provided by the tertiary institution. SIT puts forward the premise that in order to learn one must purposefully dedicate time and energy towards learning. This requires that the student directs resources of time, commitment and effort towards the learning environment as well as that the institution provides a learning environment that is conducive to learning. This entails going to classes, conducting research, engaging with faculty and lecturers, doing group work and participating in student activities (Wycliffe & Simiyu, 2010). This inevitably means that there is not always time for everything and the student-athlete is tasked with having to prioritise and "juggle" one's own expectations as

well as the expectations of others. Having to choose one commitment over the other can be very stressful because it can often mean either compromising one's success in a certain sphere or failing to meet the expectations of coaches, lecturers, friends or family.

### **2.3.2 Coaches expectations**

Coaches are under immense pressure to produce results as a means to retain their current positions and further their careers. This often filters down into the expectations they have of student-athlete commitment and participation which creates a precedent where student-athletes are often obliged to prioritize their sporting commitments and the expectations of the coach and the team over academics when time constraints are present (Wycliff & Simiyu, 2010). It was found that a coaching style that is overly demanding and lacks empathy is considered to have adverse effects on coping and self-efficacy (Gearity & Murray, 2011) and certain coaching styles can leave student-athletes more susceptible to stress and burnout (Isoard-Gauthier, Guillet-Descas & Lemyre, 2011). It is not only the expectations of coaches or their coaching styles that can cause emotional distress in student-athletes – the next segment of the chapter further explores the nature of the emotional challenges that typically face student-athletes.

### **2.3.3 Emotional challenges**

While the majority of challenges that student-athletes face are considerably different to the challenges of their non-athletic peers, there are a number domains that overlap. These include attaining academic competencies, developing social and interpersonal skills. In addition to that it is also important to acknowledge that students in general undergo a host of stress factors that affect them psychologically regardless of participation in activities outside of the academic domain. When extra-mural activities are added to that, a number of additional stressors are experienced. The same can be said for athletes who do not have academic commitments who also face significant stressors which include performance pressure, dealing with injury and potentially media attention (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010). It has also been found that student-athletes tend to be more inclined to engage in alcohol abuse than non-athletes which leaves them vulnerable to a host of high risk behaviour. Risk taking behaviours which have been proved to be

associated with high levels of alcohol intake are also associated with risky behaviour (Moore, Berkley-Patton & Hawes, 2013).

A study conducted by Dubuc-Charbonneau et al. (2014) which aimed to explore levels of burnout among student-athletes in terms of difference between gender, sport, year and course of study, found that female athletes experienced higher levels of emotional and physical exhaustion than males. It was also found that there were increased levels of emotional and physical fatigue among swimmers and basketball players, which resulted in the deduction that sporting environments do have an effect on burnout while in that same study it was found that type of academic demands and year of study yielded no significance.

#### **2.3.4 Academic challenges**

The student-athlete is placed in a somewhat precarious position in that effort and time is needed to meet academic requirements and overall student satisfaction at an academic institution is related to time spent on academics and performing well academically (Wycliff & Simiyu, 2010).

The academic performance of student-athletes is one that has come under scrutiny and it has been found that graduation rates among student-athletes are a measure that indicates whether student-athletes have been successful or not, so in other words as a measure of success or failure (Watt & Moore, 2001). Bowen and Levin (2011) posit that the athletics and sporting departments are a hindrance to academic success and that student-athletes are not subjected to the same admission requirements that non-athletes go through. This results in students who are less equipped to deal with the academic demands of certain courses which in no way benefits them or the institution. The prospect of graduation can be a motivating force that helps student-athletes persist towards academic success, however, from an academic point of view there has been evidence to indicate that student-athletes experience either adverse effects or no effects at all on academic motivation, development or ability to acquire and assimilate information (Wolmiak, Pierson & Pascarella, 2001).



### **2.3.5 Challenges of social perception and stigma**

There are also general stereotypes that student-athletes often endure. They are often construed as academically challenged and socially stunted, which impacts on the way that student-athletes view their own identities. On the other end of the spectrum they are lauded highly as sporting heroes who are revered by sporting fans and students which creates a perception of expectation to maintain that “hero” status. These contrasting viewpoints only add to the complexities and challenges that student-athletes have in establishing their own identities (Watt & Moore, 2001). The combination of both athletic and academic commitments amplifies the extent to which individuals will experience these stressors.

### **2.3.6 Social challenges**

Student-athletes typically find that they have to miss out on social activities in order to meet sporting and academic commitments because they feel that there is not enough time to engage in typical social activities at university. The student-athlete is then required to adapt to a degree of isolation that goes with foregoing various social activities which can often prove to be challenging (Goktas, 2010; Watt & Moore, 2001). This type of isolation may lead to stunted personal development as result of minimal contact with non-athlete counterparts and little or no involvement in extra-curricular activities outside of sport. Situations like this have been shown to lead to problematic and self-destructive behaviours like heavy drinking amongst student-athletes (Aries et al., 2004).

These stressors necessitate effective coping mechanisms. Without a means of coping that is constructive there are certain adverse health effects that may occur like stress-related diseases (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010). Depression among university students in general is an issue of importance. Depression negatively impacts on mood, behavior and thoughts. Studies of depression in a student-athlete context found that 21% of student-athletes reported symptoms that were consistent with clinical depression. The highest incidences of these symptoms were reported by female and first year student-athletes (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010).

## 2.4 COPING

Abedalhafiz, Altahayineh and Al-Haliq (2010) found that the most significant causes of stress were related to injury and illness which was followed by pressure to perform well during competitions and having altercations with coaches. Stressors such as these necessitate the use of coping mechanisms to overcome adverse situations. The success of a student-athlete is very much dependent on how they cope with stress that is linked to their roles and responsibilities (Surujlal, van Zyl & Nolan, 2013).

There has been evidence to suggest that student-athletes who have the ability to demonstrate and apply effective means of coping are able to achieve meaningful and constructive experiences as student-athletes. Coping can be defined as the alteration and adaptation of cognition and behaviour in order to deal with both internal and external demands that are deemed as being strenuous or too much for an individual's resources (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010). When stimuli from the environment are considered to be stressful and taxing certain psychological processes are called upon to alleviate and manage the unpleasant stimuli, these processes are typically known as coping. To clarify there are certain types of higher order coping that are agreed upon by researchers. These include problem-focused or approach coping, emotion-focused and avoidance coping (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010; Abidalhafiz et al., 2010).

Problem-focused or approach coping refers to a direct and purposeful attempt to address a certain issue, for instance planning and increased effort. Emotion-focused coping alludes to the effort that takes place in order to reduce the unpleasant effects of a stressful situation, this includes mechanisms such as self-blame and acceptance.

Avoidance coping involves behaviour and cognition that is geared towards disengaging from a stressful situation. It has been found that student-athletes more readily benefit from problem-focused coping as opposed to emotion-focused coping which has been recorded to yield detrimental results (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010). This finding was supported by Surujlal et al. (2013) who posited that student-athletes value freedom from worry (avoidance) and goal-setting (problem-focused) as efficient means of coping. It was also found that those who participate in team sports are more inclined than individual athletes

to utilize problem-focused coping techniques (Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010). It was found that coping mechanisms can however be improved on through the use of experiential learning programmes (Laureano et al., 2014).

## **2.5 IDENTITY**

The requirement of developing one's own identity as an individual apart from family in accordance with one's values is also something that needs to take place. The way in which someone sees themselves with regard to athletic identity is an important consideration with regard to determining continuity in a sporting context. Athletic identity is often an important factor in ascertaining the psychological and cognitive effects of being a student-athlete (Miller, 2009). Student-athletes often begin their university careers focusing almost exclusively on sport and academics, but as their careers progress and their involvement in competitive sport diminishes they end up broadening their interests and invest more in social interaction (Lally & Kerr, 2005). This suggests that student-athletes do not always view sport as the most important facet of their life.

### **2.5.1 Athletic identity**

Generally speaking, athletes who are able to have lengthy sporting careers have a strong athletic identity. An athletic identity can emerge and be sustained through social interaction as well as be developed intrinsically. It has been shown that there are significant differences in athletic identity between genders and racial groups. Male student-athletes were found to adopt a "jock identity" which entailed conforming to typically masculine norms, high risk behaviours and delinquency while female student-athletes are more inclined to focus on their academics, but also manage to be equally involved in extra-curricular activities (Chen et al., 2010).

Anderson (2004) discovered that athletic identity corresponded with four factors, these include; athletic appearance, importance of exercise, physical activity, competence and encouragement from others. The athletic identity of male athletes sometimes lends itself to high risk behaviours as well as minor and major forms of delinquency (Miller, 2008). On the other hand, there were findings to suggest that student-athletes with strong athletic identities valued their commitment to performing in their sport and would not compromise

that through engaging in nefarious activities like excessive alcohol and recreational drug use (Grossbard, Geisner, Mastroleo, Kilmer, Turrisi & Larimer, 2009). While a study conducted by Weis (2007) found that female student-athletes focused more time than males on academic endeavours, yet still made time for equal amounts activities outside of sport and academics which suggests that it is conceivably possible to achieve balance and success as a student-athlete.

### **2.5.2 Identity foreclosure**

Through positive and negative reinforcement elicited from the environment it can happen that a student-athlete will prioritize one element of the dual role over the other which will then further reinforce a certain type of identity. In the case of many student-athletes the sporting identity takes precedence of the academic one (Watt & Moore, 2001). In instances where the athletic identity overtakes the academic identity a phenomenon known as identity foreclosure occurs which is often detrimental to identity development. This is further substantiated by the tendency for athletes who identify strongly with athletic identity to pay little attention to other facets of life such as academics and social interaction; this can potentially put the student-athlete at risk of developing social problems (Chen et al., 2010). Student-athletes who have structured their entire identities around their respective sports leave little motivation to venture into other non-sport related roles (Goktas, 2010). Many athletes are immersed in a culture where it is believed that if one does not give of themselves fully to a sport then they cannot succeed at it. This type of thinking limits what a student-athlete gets involved in and can result in their self-esteem being contingent solely on their sport. In addition this makes it increasingly difficult for student-athletes who are faced with the task of formulating and establishing career goals and vocational pathways that are fulfilling and meaningful (Goktas, 2010).

Considerations of identity and how the student-athlete perceives themselves within their unique environment begs the question of how this is impacted by gender and the implications that accompany being a female student-athlete.

## **2.6 STUDENT-ATHLETE AND GENDER**

Since the 1970's there has been increased participation in sport by females which has been aided by federal commitments to serve the interests of both male and female athletes equally, this has invariably resulted in more female-student-athletes (Person, Benson-Quaziana & Rogers, 2001). To add to the diverse and intricate stressors that student-athletes typically face, there are gender role considerations to take heed of (Steinfeldt et al., 2011).

Female student-athletes for instance are confronted with societal expectations of performing accepted feminine roles together with balancing academic and sporting expectations. Among these additional challenges that female student-athletes face are related to body image whereby there is a concern among female student-athletes that the athletic physique that is typically obtained through sport does not correlate with what society deems to be what the female body should look like (Steinfeldt et al., 2011).

Another element of identity that needs to be mentioned is how student-athletes conform to gender norms. Gender norms are a prescribed set of specific guidelines that dictate to men and women how they are expected to behave within various social contexts. In a study conducted by Steinfeldt et al. (2011), it was found that while female student-athletes typically conform to equal levels of feminine norms as non-athlete students there is an element of conformity to masculine norms that are associated with male participation in sport. Among the norms that female student-athletes typically identify with are winning and risk-taking. To illustrate the extent of how female student-athletes are perceived, they are sometimes subjected to having their sexual orientation questioned for instance. This is due to the traditionally non-feminine characteristics that emerge out of competitive female sport. Stereotypes that implicate masculine character traits, rising levels of competition in female sport and other negative stimuli have been shown to cause noticeable eating disorders, nutritional issues, sexual harassment and sports-related injuries (Person et al., 2001; Steinfeldt et al., 2011).

Female student-athletes tend to share many of the personality and character traits of women who struggle with eating disorders. These similarities include vigorous discipline

and self-control, ambition, pre-occupation with body and looks, perfectionist traits and concern with how they are perceived by others. There seems to be a general perception among female student-athletes that if they are thinner they will perform better (Person et al., 2013). Rigorous training regimes and intense competitive scenarios call for proper, planned dietary sustenance. This is not always easy for student-athletes to maintain due to time constraints and busy academic and sporting schedules, so student-athletes struggle to maintain balanced diets which are pivotal to performing at their best academically and on the sports field. Without a balanced diet student-athletes are more susceptible to injuries and fatigue which both impact heavily on the dual role that a student-athlete is expected to perform at university. With regard to sexual harassment there have been incidences where female student-athletes have received unsolicited attempts to contact them through the exposure they have had in the media relating to their sport and performance (Person et al., 2013).

It can be concluded that along with the challenges of balancing a number of different roles at university and finding the time so too emerge the issues of identity and self-perception. This is also notwithstanding the issue of injury and how it causes self-perceptions to fluctuate. An athlete who is injury prone or dealing with injury may feel that their self-perception is under threat and may find themselves at risk of being exposed to a life where their identity no longer incorporates sport (Goktas, 2010). As a female student-athlete, historically speaking one would fall under a previously disadvantaged and prejudiced group. This carries with it a number of ideals, varying perceptions, negative stereotypes and current biases that female student-athletes still have to contend with today (Person et al., 2001). These biases and stereotypes typically cause people to view female student-athletes a certain way and in turn these athletes will begin viewing themselves differently. On the other hand in a study conducted by Goktas (2010) it was found that the student-athletes, who were susceptible to responsibility challenges and personal problems, experienced no social or emotional issues. Another finding was one that was related to gender whereby females were more inclined to experience difficulties relating to emotional and personal fears than males.

## **2.7 PROGRAMMES**

A key concept to consider when exploring how people experience being student-athletes is that behaviour is a product of the person within their environment (Watt & Moore, 2001). This statement highlights the importance and continuous evaluation of programmes that support the student-athlete endeavour. Hyland (2008) and Simon (2008) posit that tertiary institutions need to develop a university environment that is immediately incorporative of student-athletes within the academic culture.

### **2.7.1 Bursaries and recruitment**

Bursary opportunities to participate in sport while at university are difficult to obtain for student-athletes (O'Shaughnessy, 2009). This is a prestigious and rewarding bestowment, but is often tainted by the emphatic emphasis placed on winning and commercialization. The commercialization of university sport is evidenced through the presence of large corporate sponsorships and investments. This has implications on student-athletes whereby their personal needs are at risk of being ignored. They can be seen as mechanisms to attained financial benefit for the university through relentless and competitive recruitment regimes that often look to bypass academic entry requirements which results in the admittance of students who are unable to meet academic standards (Holman, 2007; Wolverton, 2009). This is further cause to develop and implement programmes that monitor recruitment practices and that prioritize the evident needs of the student-athlete.

### **2.7.2 Assistance and support**

In recognizing the significance of the various difficulties that student-athletes may encounter, tertiary institutions have started developing assistance and support programmes to better enable student-athletes to cope and manage with the stressful demands of a dual career (Henry, 2013; Lopez et al., 2015; Mckenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004). Mckenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) who explored the available support for athletes at a university in England found that athletes had three main areas of concern. These included; prioritizing both the student and athlete role, establishing an understanding with academic faculty and the experience of a general lack of support and

understanding. In addition to the finding that most athletes in fact find the dual career to be a challenging one, the study done by Lopez et al. (2015) which had the purpose of analyzing whether a career assistance programme at a university in Spain facilitated the dual career found that it was efficient in keeping athletes up to date with relevant information which resulted in academics being affected positively and an improved relationship with the Spanish Sport Council.

### **2.7.3 Holistic effort**

Henry (2013) proposes that in order to effectively confront the challenges that student-athletes face and allow them to exploit the opportunities of the dual role it needs to be acknowledged that it needs to incorporate a holistic effort. This means that efforts are required from the athletes themselves, coaches, governing sporting bodies at tertiary institutions as well as on a government level and faculty members to generate movement within a diverse infrastructure to inform policy and generated movement in catering to the unique needs of the student-athlete. Mckenna and Dunstan-Lewis (2004) also found that the student-athletes in their study valued high performance in both academic and sporting domains, but trying to meet the requirements of both often proved to be extremely demanding on personal resources and would sometimes result in student-athletes questioning the pursuit of their sporting aspirations. For these reasons student-athletes expressed a need for the academic contingent of their tertiary environment to be more receptive to the needs of student-athletes.

### **2.7.4 Collaboration and training of officials**

In addition to the above there has also been a recognized need for student affairs to take cognizance of the need to implement and facilitate practices that contribute to the assistance and holistic development of student-athletes. One of the measures that can be taken to address these needs would be the up skilling of student-affairs employees in how to manage requests and needs of student-athletes. For instance it has been stated that student-athletes are faced with having to manage a number of identities and roles as they try succeed at university, student affairs officials can be trained to better help manage students who are struggling with these issues. This would also mean the facilitation of inter-departmental collaboration across athletic and sporting contexts to achieve



sustainable and constructive long-term results for the student-athlete population (Person et al., 2013). The following quote by Kunath cited in Singh (1982) illustrates the effectiveness of a holistic effort to produce success, "Sports performances in international competitions and tournaments not only denotes the high level of efficiency of an individual sports person, but also gives expression to the overall efficiency of a nation, society and culture". This also applies to the academic structures of an institution as well as the need for structures in both athletic and academic domains to collaborate across contexts.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is evident that student-athletes are presented with challenges that span across academic, sporting performance, social and interpersonal domains (Aquilina, 2013; Dubuc-Charbonneau et al., 2014; Goktas, 2010; Stambulova et al., 2015; Surujlal et al., 2013). While that is the case, studies have also shown that there are recognized advantages and opportunities that come with being a student-athlete, but with the acknowledgment that there are certain structures within support programs and individual coping mechanisms that allow student-athletes to realize these benefits and with further research and improvement of certain support policies these opportunities can be better realized and exploited (Aquilina, 2013; Curtis, 2006; Henry, 2013; Lopez et al., 2015; Mckenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004; Surujlal et al., 2013). Existing research often yields contrasting results as to whether the student-athlete is ultimately beneficial or a hindrance to development. Given that many of the challenges and benefits that emerge from the student-athlete phenomenon it stands to reason that programmes need to reflect these contextual needs and benefits by catering to specific needs of student-athletes while also exploiting the benefits that are often available, but not always realized.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Through exploring how student-athletes experience their athletic and academic domains an ecological approach was used to provide a contextual framework which played a role as one of the bases of enquiry and also provided a reference point for the environment of a student-athlete.

This chapter will address the following; the position of the study in terms of the paradigm through which the inquiry took place, a description of the narrative method that was used, and a detailed overview of the process as well as ethical and quality considerations.

#### **3.1 POSITION**

In this section of the chapter I shall discuss the position of this study by explaining the various paradigms that can be used.

##### **3.1.1 Paradigms**

This study will follow a qualitative research inquiry, specifically a narrative research inquiry.

A narrative research inquiry can be situated within different paradigms as depicted in the following quotation by Anderson (1990, p.75):

Three umpires are sitting around over a beer and one says, “There’s balls and there’s strikes and I call `em the way they are”. Another says, “There’s balls and there’s strikes and I call `em the way I see them”. The third says, “There’s balls and there’s strikes and they ain’t nothin’ until I call `em”.

In all three instances there is an “umpire” (narrator), “balls and strikes” (reality) and a “call” (narrative). However, they also differ from one another, which I shall now explain in terms of the objectivist paradigm, interpretivist paradigm and constructionist paradigm:

### 1. Objectivist Paradigm

The first section of the quotation states “there’s balls and there’s strikes and I call `em the way they are” (Anderson, 1990, p.75). The assumption is that the “balls and strikes” (reality) exist externally from the “umpire” (narrator) and can be known through the “call” (narrative) of the “umpire” (narrator) that merely reflects this objective-external reality.

### 2. Interpretivist Paradigm

The second section of the quotation states “there’s balls and there’s strikes and I call `em the way I see them” (Anderson, 1990, p.75). The assumption is that the “balls and strikes” (reality) do exist externally from the “umpire” (narrator), but only the “seeing” (perception) of the “balls and strikes” by the “umpire” (narrator) can be known as the “call” (narrative) of the “umpire” (narrator) reflects this subjective-internal reality. This research project was situated within this paradigm as a means of portraying the subjective experiences of the student-athletes. Student-athletes experiences a dual career in a certain way and then give their own account of how they subjectively perceived their experiences.

### 3. Constructionist Paradigm

The third section of the quotation states “there’s balls and there’s strikes and they ain’t nothin’ until I call `em” (Anderson, 1990, p.75). The assumption is that the “balls and strikes” (reality) do exist externally from the “umpire” (narrator), however, through the “call” (narrative) of the “umpire” (narrator) the “balls and strikes” are performed into existence that is shaped by the context, audience and purpose of the “call” (narrative) of the “umpire” (narrator), thereby creating a constructed-narrative reality.

#### **3.1.2 Narrative**

Narrative can be described as “someone [the author of the narrative] telling something [a narrative] to someone [the reader of the narrative] about something [experience]” (Kearney, 2002, p.150) “in some context” (Lindsay, 2006), with the purpose of “bringing

a sense of order to the seeming disorder in our world” (Murray, 2008, p.111). In the case of this study, the storied experiences of student-athletes were investigated.

The narrative is characterized by the elements of plot (*mythos*), re-creation (*mimesis*), release (*catharsis*), wisdom (*phronesis*) and ethics (*ethos*) (Kearney, 2002). The plot in the storied experience of a student-athlete is the main feature and could be portrayed as a “balancing act” for instance. The re-creation involves the student-athlete telling and re-telling their lived experiences. They could experience catharsis through the release or sharing their stories and could gain wisdom and increased self-knowledge through telling their stories.

Firstly, a narrative is characterized as having a plot (*mythos*), which entails the author selecting events from the author’s life and sequencing these events into a coherent narrative (Kearney, 2002; Murray, 2008).

Secondly, a narrative is characterized as a re-creation (*mimesis*) of events in the mind of the author and is not merely a re-flection of external events through the narrative (Kearney, 2002; Sclater, 2003).

Thirdly, a narrative is characterized by the potential to establish release (*catharsis*), thereby allowing people to move from being merely bodily beings (*zoe*) to becoming human beings (*bios*) (Kearney, 2002).

Fourthly, a narrative is characterized by the emergence of practical wisdom (*phronesis*); practical wisdom whereby a person has navigated him/herself through life (Doan, 1997; Kearney, 2002).

Lastly, a narrative is characterized by the element of ethics (*ethos*), which entails allowing bodily beings (*zoe*) to become human beings (*bios*) through narrative (Kearney, 2002).

### **3.2 PARTICIPANTS**

In this section of this chapter I shall explain the sampling method, criteria, and the participants that will be taking part in this study.

### **3.2.1 Sampling Method**

For the intents and purposes of this study purposive sampling will be used. This type of sampling involves selecting people, documents, organizations, and departments which refer directly to the research questions. The research questions then serve to direct the researcher in terms of what groups of participants to use and the sample will be sought after with the aim of achieving prescribed research goals (Bryman, 2012). In this instance the Tuks netball squad was selected in order to answer the question, “how do student-athletes at a tertiary institution experience balancing their elite sporting and academic commitments?” This question was asked to gain a better understanding of how netball players at a tertiary institution experience their student-athlete roles as well as to further supplement existing policy on support for student-athletes.

### **3.2.2 Sampling Criteria**

As this study will focus on understanding how elite student-athletes experience their dual careers within a tertiary education setting in South Africa, the following selection criteria was used to select the research participants:

#### *3.2.2.1 Student Criteria*

The research participants needed to be *bona fide* students at a tertiary education setting in South Africa. This meant:

- a. Students officially registered with a member club of University Sport South Africa (USSA) at a higher education institution recognized by the appropriate national academic authority in the country (i.e. Department of Higher Education and Training) for a programme of at least 120 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) credits on National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5, and approved by that institution’s senate. This includes bridging courses, although only one (1) attempt at completing any bridging course will be allowed at any institution. Students enrolled for bridging courses must have a matriculation endorsement or a certificate of exemption issued by the Matriculation Board. This excludes students who

are enrolled for short courses or are registered for courses or modules or units of study that are less than 120 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) credits.

b. Students actively involved in pursuing his/her academic career, i.e. attending lectures, submitting assignments, writing tests and examinations in order to be promoted to the next level of study.

#### **3.2.2.2 Athlete Criteria**

a. The research participants need to at least compete in netball at a university level (Varsity Cup and USSA).

b. The research participants, who also compete in netball on provincial and national levels, will also be invited to participate in the research.

#### **3.2.3 Research Participants**

There were five participants who took part in this study, ranging from 19 to 25 years of age and studying at various levels ranging from first year to honours. They all represented their country nationally either at age group level or senior level.

### **3.2 PROCESS**

In this section of this chapter I shall give a detailed overview of the research process to explain how the research was conducted in a sequential process.

#### **3.2.1 Phase 1: Permission**

Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the UP Postgraduate committee and Ethics Committees and the study was conducted according to the guidelines set out by these committees. Further permission was obtained from the following entities:

1. Director of TuksSport (see Appendix A).

### **3.2.2 Phase 2: Invitation**

Once permission was obtained to conduct the research, the student-athletes were invited via an invitation letter to participate in the research (see Appendix B).

### **3.2.3 Phase 3: Information**

The student-athletes who indicated that they were willing to voluntarily participate in the research were contacted and an information meeting was scheduled. During the information meeting the student-athletes were provided with detailed information regarding the research. The student-athletes that were willing to participate in the research were provided with an informed consent form which they completed and signed (see Appendix C).

### **3.2.4 Phase 4: Preparation**

The preparation phase for this research project consisted of physical preparation, as well as reflective preparation.

1. Physical Preparation: The physical preparation for the research project entailed:

- a. Venue: Office 2-14 in the Sports Centre on the L.C. de Villiers Sports Grounds at UP
- b. Device: A dictaphone was used to record the interviews.
- c. Material: Interview Maps were created and given out to the participants to supplement the interviews. The necessary writing materials and refreshments were provided. (see Appendix D).

2. Reflective Preparation: Regular supervision sessions were arranged to discuss the interview process and approach. Upon reflection it was agreed that emphasis needed to be placed on getting the participants to situate themselves in their environment. It was agreed that a good way to do this would be to provide the student-athletes with a contextual map of their environments as well as to encourage the participants to use metaphors to supplement the narrative inquiry.

### **3.2.5 Phase 5: Research**

The research phase entailed the process of allowing the student-athletes to complete their ecological maps, where after interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted by the researcher in English, this was not the first language of any of the participants which was a limitation:

Participants Process:                   a. Ecological Maps

  b. Interviews

Researchers Process:                 a. Ecological Map

  b. Interview

### **3.2.6 Phase 6: Transcriptions**

The transcriptions were done personally by the researcher. The rationale for this was that it allowed the researcher to become more acquainted with the research data. Additional reasons for this were that the researcher was able to recognise certain nuances and non-verbal gestures in accordance with the data and to eliminate potential ethical dilemmas with regard to confidentiality such a participant being recognised for the information they divulge about themselves (Davidson, 2009).

### **3.2.7 Phase 7: Analysis**

The research data was analysed by means of a thematic analysis. This involved the identification of themes within narratives and examined the interplay between people and context (Bold, 2012). Thematic analysis is considered to be flexible in nature because it allows for both inductive and deductive approaches. An inductive approach begins with particular content and is then expanded upon to illicit wider generalizations until ultimately becoming theory and follows a more “bottom-up format.” This means that themes are related to the data. A deductive “top-down” method is more concerned with examining a component of the data through a predetermined theoretical lens (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the intents and purposes of this study an inductive approach was used.

To follow are a set of guidelines for conducting thematic analysis, while acknowledging that these guidelines are by no means hard and fast rules and serve to direct the analytic



process. The following set of guidelines were used in the analysis of the research data (Braun & Clarke 2006).

#### 1. Becoming familiar with the data

It is at this point where Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to the immersion of oneself in the data. This typically involves reading through the data set, taking notes and pinpointing emerging themes and patterns. Another means through which immersion can take place is through the transcription of the data. This serves as an added rationale for transcribing one's own data as it initiates the process of familiarising the researcher with the data.

#### 2. Generating of initial codes

This process is initiated when the researcher has become familiarised with the data and has drawn up a list of facets of the data that has appeared to be relevant to them. This is the point where coding can begin to take place. Coding is used to identify certain aspects of the data that appear to be of relevance to the researcher and allow for the data to be organized in a meaningful way. Data can be deemed to be relevant if it appears that it will form the basis of patterns emerging throughout the transcribed text. This deduction can only be made if equal and thorough attention has been provided to each data item.

#### 3. Searching for themes

Once the data has been coded, the codes will be arranged into a number of potential themes and then organising coded data sets accordingly within those broader themes. This process involves analyzing coded data so to combine certain codes to form an encompassing theme. This is done by considering similarities between codes and how they combine to form a main theme or a sub-theme. By this time the researcher will have an idea of what makes the identified themes significant with regard to the research.

#### 4. Reviewing themes

At this point there are two levels involved in finalizing your themes. The first level involves reviewing all the coded material that makes up the various themes and ascertain whether they form a coherent pattern. If they do form a coherent pattern, the researcher can then move to the next level. In level two the researcher needs to ascertain whether the thematic

map accurately depicts the meanings in the data set as an entirety. The researcher is then required to read the whole data set again to firstly ascertain whether the data sets work and secondly to pinpoint any additional data that may have been left out during previous phases. At the end of this phase the researcher will have a clear understanding of what the different themes are, how they relate and what they depict about the data.

#### 5. Defining and naming themes

This part of the process can only begin once there is a sufficient map of the data. The researcher will then delve into the various themes and capture the fundamental nature of what the theme is about. It is important to then assess how the themes contribute to the overall story as well as how they fit in with each other. By the end of this process the researcher should be able to identify what the themes are and what they are not. An effective way to test for this is to gather whether the theme can be described in a few sentences or not. If this proves to be challenging, there is a need for more refinement.

#### 6. Producing the report

Once fully established themes have been produced, the write up can then take place. The write up needs to be produced assimilate complex data and communicate it to the reader in such a way that its validity is vindicated. The identified themes need to be made evident and clear to the reader and they need to go beyond just description of the data, but to evoke an argument that addresses the research question.

### **3.2.8 Phase 8: Write**

The findings of this research study were written up in the form of a mini-thesis.

### **3.3 QUALITY**

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research study the following concepts were adhered to (Shenton, 2003):

Trustworthiness refers to the research being carried out in such a way that it adequately deals with the research question. Each step in the research process in this particular research study contributes to its credibility if adhered to properly. In the data gathering process the steps pertaining to the explanation of the interview map followed by the

completion of their own interview map and written accounts inform the interview questions that follow. This contributes to the credibility of the study in that the questions are formulated from the actual experiences of the participants themselves, as opposed to the researcher formulating the questions from his own experience or from what he deems may be relevant. This also contributes to the researcher achieving an early familiarity with the experiences of the participants over time and across contexts. To contribute further to the credibility of this study the researcher will also account for his experience of being a student-athlete through completing the interview map and providing written accounts of his experiences himself.

Transferability or external validity seeks to determine the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other scenarios. While it is often debated that it is difficult to ascertain transferability in qualitative studies due to various contextual implications, but if the aim of further informing policy on the management of student-athletes is considered, the findings in this research study can in some way inform further studies of student-athletes, even if only from methodological stand-point.

To further ensure the trustworthiness of this research study meetings took place with a supervisor in order to ensure that adequate learning and development took place. These meetings also ensured that required ethical and academic standards were upheld throughout.

### **3.4 ETHICS**

Approval for the commencement of this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities.

#### **3.4.1 Informed consent**

Participants were made aware that they reserve the right to pull out of the study at any time without fear of any form of ridicule or displeasure on the part of the researcher (DiCicco-Bloom & Grabtree, 2006). After being provided with all the relevant information about the research process and once they agreed to participating, they signed for consent to continue as a participant in the study. The participants of this study were 18 and older which meant that they could legally sign for consent themselves.

### **3.4.2 Anonymity**

Due to the manner in which this study was conducted, full anonymity could not be guaranteed as the researcher was aware of the identities of the participants. With that being said the researcher took every precaution necessary to ensure that the information that was disclosed by the participants will remain confidential. For instance the researcher made use of pseudonyms.

### **3.4.3 Disclosure**

Those who participated in this study were obliged to disclose any information that caused them to feel discomfort and they were made aware that they were allowed to exercise their right to withhold any information.

### **3.4.4 Confidentiality**

During an interview a participant could divulge information that has the potential to have a negative impact on their standing within a certain system and so the confidentiality of any information shared needs to be maintained (DiCicco-Bloom & Grabtree, 2006). Confidentiality differs from anonymity in that anonymity dictates that information shared can in no way be connected to the individual in question. Confidentiality limits the individuals who have access to the information that is known to be connected to the person in question and only that person can consent to the terms and conditions associated with who has access to their information.

### **3.4.5 Support**

If participants felt at all overwhelmed by the interviews or if something pressing emerges as a result of the interviews they have been given the option to seek the psychological services of Dr. Monja Human of the High Performance Centre (see Appendix E).

### **3.4.6 Storage**

In adhering to global guidelines, the data obtained in this study is kept for no less than 15 years in the Department of Psychology (Room 11-24) at UP, for archival purpose and for future research (see Appendix F).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion this chapter discussed the following in relation to the methodology that was used in this study. The position of this study took place from within an interpretivist paradigm and the research was conducted using a narrative inquiry. The approach to the research process was laid out in a sequential fashion and gave a step by step account of how the data was collected, transcribed and analysed. The means whereby quality was ensured was explained followed by an overview of the ethical considerations that were and will be adhered to after the completion of this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### (PARTICIPANT ONE)

##### Introduction

This chapter will describe how participant 1 (P1) has experienced her dual role as a student-athlete. Her experiences will be viewed through an eco-systemic lens that encompasses the student-athlete at the model's core, their Micro-system and Macro-system. After recording her story and having it read back to her, P1 was asked to give an account of the elements of her story that stood out to her, following that the researcher then pinpointed certain features of her story that stood out to him.

#### 4.1 BALANCING ON A TIGHT ROPE

##### 4.1.1 The belief that it is possible to balance on a tight rope (being a student-athlete)

There was an acknowledgment from P1 that one can succeed in doing both netball and academics in her context, but being successful at both meant only focusing on one at a time and being present. She went on to add that the ability to “balance on a tight rope” is dependent on focus and being able to plan ahead, *“Yes, just focusing on what you’re doing and planning and, but you can do both if you want to, you can.”*

#### 4.2 DECISION-MAKING

##### 4.2.1 The implications of making choices between academics and netball

P1 conceded that there are certain factors at play around choosing between sport and academics that make it difficult to make decisions. She goes on to express how it's difficult to miss even a day of lectures, *“in our honours degree, you have to be there 8:00 to 17:00 every single day, so to miss even one day it’s like putting in leave at work, you can’t just miss it.”* In addition to this she also experiences a lack of understanding that is present when choosing one over the other and the potential implications that accompany making that choice, *“So then you have to, netball doesn’t always understand if you say, no, and*

*you can't just at the academics say, listen, I'm going now, I'm not being here, you can't do that because you won't get your degree."*

P1 goes on to explain how she is more inclined to prioritize academics over netball and how choosing academics over netball comes with certain consequences and the potential of not being selected for games in the future, *"are you just like leaving the netball saying, okay, what will be, will be, if they don't choose you, they don't choose you, if they do, they do."* There is also a sense of acceptance that accompanies choosing academics over netball and it's a non-negotiable for her, *"but you have to pick the one that you know you can't be without, so."* P1 then goes onto contradict her previous sentiment that it is possible to succeed at doing both netball and academics, *"it's tough. I mean you have to choose: are you giving up your honours degree or are you just giving up an international test series? One of the two."* This is contradictory in the sense that if certain aspects of sport are chosen over academics – It could mean sacrificing academics altogether. It means that to her, doing both is conditional on making sacrifices in the netball sphere.

#### **4.2.2 Making choices to alleviate pressure in order to maintain balance on a tight rope**

At this point P1 came to the conclusion that doing both was no longer plausible for her and there was a distinctive point where she needed to make a decision. Despite the negative consequences that accompanied this decision there was a degree of acceptance, *"It was just too much doing both, but then I just had to make the choice that it's okay if the netball just says, "we don't pick you again, you have to deal with it, so then I made the choice to stay; do my stuff, my presentations, my work. And in the end, everything worked out."* By changing her context and sacrificing an element of netball, that choice allowed her to continue doing both in a manner that could be accepted which yielded an outcome that was satisfactory. A choice needed to be made in order to carry on doing both to a certain degree.

#### **4.2.3 Keeping your head above water by making choices and sacrifices best suited for the future**

P1 conceded that trying to do both in the current manner that she was could possibly result in failing in both spheres as opposed to compromising with regard to one sphere

and ensuring success, *“stay above water, to at least do one well instead of nothing. You’ve got to let something go.”* P1 does not necessarily see herself playing sport (netball) indefinitely, it’s something that she views as temporary and she therefore justifies her reasoning for making the decision to prioritize academics over netball, *“it’s hard, but you just got to weigh the pros and cons. I mean somethings in, you can’t play sport for the rest of your life.”* She then alludes to money being another motivating factor for her decision to prioritize academics, *“we love it, I mean you don’t want to give it up and you want to do it but there’s no money in it. You can’t do it forever, but then your degree – you need that, you need a job, you need to work, you need money.”*

#### **4.2.4 The emotional impact of making choices and sacrifices and the need for support**

In making these decisions there is also an element of trepidation and fear of letting one party down. It speaks to the emotional investment and toil it takes to make a choice between the two. In order to deal with the strong emotional responses that were elicited she relies heavily on her support system. *“They made everything happen, I mean if I’m struggling or if I need to, I mean the simplest excuse but if you need to tell your coach, “Listen, I really can’t make this.” Sometimes you need someone just to double check the sms and make sure it sounds as worse as it is (sic) or, so you need someone to check that or just need someone to motivate you or someone, yes. I mean they are the ones that made me stick to both this year, if it weren’t for them, I would definitely have given up either one of the two.”*

#### **4.3 PRIORITISING, PLANNING AND MAKING SACRIFICES IN THE FACE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS**

Here P1 alludes to time being a significant factor and that in order to do both she needs to sacrifice time in spheres that are outside of netball and academics and pay careful attention to how she allocates her time to various activities and how she plans in advance, *“if I know I’ve got training or this weekend there’s a game or training the weekend, there’s not enough time to study if you have a test let’s say on the Monday, I know I have to get up early, start studying early in time because you have to make time to go to training or for the game. The whole weekend you know, you have to plan ahead and start studying*



*ahead.*” It appears that sleep and adequate rest is one of the primary activities that gets sacrificed in order to meet sporting and academic commitments, *“so then Monday morning getting up early or even Sunday morning getting up early.”*

#### **4.4 FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AND BURSARY COMMITMENTS**

Upon receiving funding in the form of bursary funding or otherwise there are conditions that the student-athlete is bound by. In this case P1’s bursary is contingent on her passing her academics, failing that she is obligated to repay her bursary. This provides a further incentive for her to prioritize her academic commitments over netball. *“This is what [inaudible] – or if I don’t do this I have to pay back this money. I need this degree, I can’t just play netball. There’s no money in netball, so I was also this close to giving up netball entirely, so, yes.”* Financial security being a contributing factor to the choice made, or a fear of financial insecurity.

#### **4.5 SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

##### **4.5.1 The impact of having a support system**

The role of a reliable and caring support system has proved to be pivotal to decision-making where an environment is created that allows P1 to make choices without fear of disapproval or disappointment from her support system, *“or if you give up netball, it’s okay, you don’t have to play netball so they just tell you, no, it’s okay, so you can make the choice thinking clearly.”* Within her system these are the people she listens to and seeks advice from the most, *“my mom and my dad and my fiancé, pretty much, their opinions matter the most.”* The non-judgemental and unconditional support of these people allow her to make decisions free of pressure and guilt which contributes to her balancing on a tight rope.

##### **4.5.2 The importance of interpersonal relationships with key figures**

P1 spoke about unexpected circumstances and how meeting her academic requirements meant that she needed a representative to assist her, *“if I told him, listen, they phoned me now, we have a training camp this weekend that I didn’t know about. I can’t do this on Monday, can he help?”* This representative needed to have some degree of influence

within her academic environment in order to help, *“He’s always understanding, he’ll be like, “Listen, I’ll talk to Head of Department. I’ll try and make something work.”* She was also cognisant of the flexibility, support and understanding on the part of a key influence in the academic sphere and how it assisted her balancing on a tight rope, *“I wouldn’t have gotten this degree, well I’m not done yet but, without him. I mean he helped a lot and he was definitely very understanding.”*

## **4.6 BALANCE**

### **4.6.1 Maintaining balance**

P1 describes what success in both means for her. A level of ideal focus while playing netball and submitting academic work on time. Being able to focus fully on one without having the other detract from that, *“I mean when you’re on the field and you know you can focus on what you’re doing and game’s going well or sometimes not well, but still your game’s going well but still academics when you know your stuff is handed in in time, your marks are good.”* This ability to stay fully focussed on one activity at a time and stay in the moment contributes positively to balancing on a tight rope.

### **4.6.2 Making sacrifices in order to maintain balance**

P1 speaks about making sacrifices in terms of time and significant events and how there are aspects in her life that need to be compromised in order to meet netball and academic requirements, *“yes, there was a lot, I mean sometimes you just can’t go to a friend’s birthday party because you have to study because you know you’ve got a training camp the weekend.”* Sacrificing social life and family commitments is something that is common place, this is significant given the importance of her family as a support system. This is something that makes it difficult for her to balance on a tight rope, *“you have to miss out on some social life, mom’s birthday, you have to sit out and study because you have a game or training camp or something, or you have to give up some sleep – that’s also one major thing.”*

### **4.6.3 Maintaining balance through planning and adjusting to the unexpected**

Despite efforts to plan ahead, these plans change and cause disruption which means additional choices and sacrifices needing to be made, “*so we had to plan around that and make my deadlines fit that. But then during the year some netball dates changed because now you have it—the dates were set out as let’s say 2-10 August but there was never a date about a pre-departure camp.*” There is also a contention that there is a degree of inflexibility once plans are laid out on the part of academics, “*so then most of the time they can’t change it because I mean the whole faculty needs to be there or something.*” P1 acknowledged that in order to stay on track with a plan and maintain balance on a tight rope, additional sacrifices needed to be made.

## **4.7 MISSING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

### **4.7.1 Implications of missing academic commitments to meet sporting commitments**

Through the understanding she had and the relationship she built up with key figures within the academic sphere she was able to negotiate being absent for class in order to meet her netball commitments with the condition that she catches up what she had missed, but despite the understanding she fell behind and her academics suffered as a result, “*but in the end, I shot myself in my own foot because there was no other way of catching that stuff up.*” P1 then went on to acknowledge that there are certain academic commitments that one needs to present for regardless of leniency and the expectation of making it up at a later stage, *you can only see it in a book, so she was fine by letting me miss it but in the end the rules are there for a reason.* Here she also concedes that there are certain rules that are put in place within the academic sphere that are there to protect the academic interests of students.

### **4.7.2 Striking a balance between missing academic commitments and adhering to rules**

Contextualizing this balance for P1 involved the recognition that there is a reciprocal relationship between netball and academics, “*but in the end, they understand that you can’t even play netball, yes, without studying.*” She recalls instances where it appeared

easier to choose netball over academic commitments because there were less perceived repercussions on the academic side of things, *“that’s the thing is, most of the time they like, okay, no but I’ll just give you a letter.”* With that being said she went on to acknowledge that times have changed and one can no longer miss academic commitments as easily due to the rules in place and the realisation of what is at stake if academic commitments are neglected too often. Being able to balance on a tight rope means striking a balance between knowing when academics can be sacrificed for netball and vice versa.

### **4.7.3 Taking accountability for missing academic commitments**

There are instances where P1 has broken the rules in order to meet her netball commitments but in doing that she has conceded that she is accountable for the negative consequences that may arise from missing her academic commitments. She acknowledges the rationale for the rules being there and it is clear that she supports them and even relies on them at times given her previous experiences. Above all she concedes that the onus is on her to take accountability for her choices and the consequences thereof, *“I mean, if you miss five practicals, you’ll still be fine, nothing will happen, but the rules are there for everyone to be treated equally and for your own protection.”*

## **4.8 DEVELOPING TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS**

### **4.8.1 Gaining confidence through negotiating for best interests and development of interpersonal skills**

Over time she has developed an ability to negotiate a compromise that best suits her chances of managing both academics and sport, *“I mean now I’ll just walk up to her and say, listen, coach, I can’t be there tonight, I’m writing tomorrow. I’ve started studying beforehand but it’s just too much work, and if she’s not happy about it, I’ll be okay with it, no matter what she says because I know I did my part but I’m not going to make it or yes.”* It seems that through her confidence and being able to state her case more aptly has resulted in a better understanding between her and her coach, *“will only help me, I mean, if you’ve got more confidence, first of all, you can adapt easier as well, and I mean if I know I can’t miss this session tonight and she tells me, listen, you really can’t miss this*

*one, you can't.*" This understanding results in efforts to keep the sport environment happy by liaising with the academic environment. There seems to be give and take between both parties through the organisation and negotiation of students. The confidence and negotiation skills have allowed her to better balance on a tight and furthermore these are skills that can be applied across various contexts and environments.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

#### (PARTICIPANT TWO)

##### Introduction

This chapter will describe how participant 2 (P2) has experienced her dual role as a student-athlete. Her experiences will be viewed through an eco-systemic lens that encompasses the student-athlete at the model's core, their Micro-system and Macro-system. After recording her story and having it read back to her, P2 was asked to give an account of the elements of her story that stood out to her, following that the researcher then pinpointed certain features of her story that stood out to him.

#### 5.1 THE IMPACT OF SHARED MEANING

##### 5.1.1 Solidarity and comfort through shared experience

It appears that in the netball context she finds comfort in shared experience with her team mates and because experience is shared she is comfortable sharing her emotions, "*Just maybe different student-wise things, but like with the athlete part, we all have the same so like we know what the pressure is like and what we have to do to go through the pressure and just keep going.*" Her comfort levels of expression with others with shared experience is again indicated through the following, "*I have opportunities like my friends like we all actually experience the same things, most of us.*"

##### 5.1.2 Finding outlets for emotion in an environment where there are few opportunities to do so

P2 affirms her aversion to engaging with her emotions. This is significant because despite her aversion, having heard her story has allowed her to engage with her emotions to a certain degree. This also emphasized the fact that she does not often get the opportunity to engage with her emotions on a meaningful level, "*it's like, I don't really talk about my feelings to anybody, like I'll tell them, I don't like this, or, I like this, but otherwise I won't go deep into what I feel about something, so, I'll rather keep it to myself.*" This is especially

evident within the academic sphere, because she feels that because her academic experience is different from others, no one can really identify and therefore she is not comfortable opening up about it. *“So that’s actually the athlete part, that’s fine, the student part’s a bit difficult because not everybody understands what you’re studying.”* Despite acknowledging that there is a lack of opportunity to express herself in an academic context she has now brought up a scenario where she is able to express herself and where she is comfortable through shared experience with a “study buddy”, *“Like he knows, because he’s also an athlete but he only plays rugby instead of now netball. So he actually gets what I’m also, like what you feel like and how you feeling under the pressure to get things done.”*

### **5.1.3 Catharsis through making meaning via shared experience and social interaction**

There is a point in P2’s story where she realises that it is a need of hers to express her emotions. Being able to discuss her experience with people who understand her environment is something that is important to her, *“So then you know okay, I need to maybe be with the friends more to, with the social side cause now you can also then talk about your feelings of what you feel now with the athlete part because like we understand each other and what we are feeling at that moment.”* This allows her to make meaning through shared experience. Her experience can become situated through sharing her experiences and concerns while hearing the experiences and concerns of others. *“Maybe we all feel the same and then we can quickly figure out our problems so then it helps with the studies part so then you study less, not really as good but you’re not focusing that much on your studies because now you’re also focusing a bit on the athlete side so then you can feel like you’re solving problems at your athlete side.”* There are distinctive release points where she is able to take a step back and voice concerns with people who can identify with her scenario. This allows her to stay on her bike while on a floating bridge, *“and then you just explain it to everybody and then everybody understands so it helps also with, so everybody actually helps the athlete part to get that back to balance because sometimes you just don’t want to go to training because you’re frustrated with somebody, So that’s beginning to get better, your frustrations are coming out.”*

## **5.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF SUPPORT IN FINDING BALANCE**

### **5.2.1 Parental roles and support**

P2's parents seemed to have been assigned roles based on specific attributes which she deems suited to certain spheres of her experience, "So *she* (her mom) *actually helps a lot with that part (academics) and then my dad's with the athlete part again.*" She has allocated roles in such a way that she experiences enough support in order to ride her bike on a floating bridge, "so *they have a balance between which one is helping with what side.*"

### **5.2.2 The role friendships play in finding balance**

P2 states that her friends perform the following roles in her life and assist her in riding a bike on a floating bridge in the following ways; they assist her in alleviating pressure in a pressure-filled context, "*like, if I'm getting too much in with the student part, like if I'm studying too hard, you start feeling pressured and you're getting angry at yourself for stupid things you do, so then they help you like to go and relax a bit.*" Friends play a role in maintaining order and clearing her mind, "*to just get it back in order again so that you can just go and clear your mind and to then, you train also like we're doing individuals and then together.*" They contribute to the realisation that attention also needs to be paid to the sport side of things, "*just to get the athlete part up again also because now you're not really giving your attention to the athlete part.*" Through her friends she is reminded that for her to achieve balance she needs ordered variety. Too much time spent on one activity leads to pressure and stress whereas ordered attention to varying commitments adds to balance, "*so it helps bring the balance in so that you can just like, it's not going overboard with the studies now because you're freaking out.*"

### **5.2.3 Peer support on the academic front**

In regard to initiating and generating productivity she allows her "study buddy" to assist her. Together with her "study buddy" they devise methods that maximise productivity and efficiency. This increase in productivity on the academic front has allowed for more time to be spent on netball and therefore contributes positively to riding a bike on a floating bridge, "*that's my study buddy, he really helps me a lot like he will, let's say we are doing*



*an assignment because we usually do assignments together, then he will be like, come, we have to start now, the assignment, so he helps a lot with that part of getting the perfect amount of attention to each side.”*

#### **5.2.4 Support and expectations of the Macro-system**

There is acknowledgment from P2 that Netball South Africa (NSA) explores her student-athlete experience which has made her consider that there is support within her Macro environment, *“they like ask what you’re studying, if you feel like you’re studying what you want to study and how do you feel you’re being treated at the university, so they wanted to know how you feel about the way you play netball and your studies, so if you’re coping with everything.”* There is evidence to suggest that they have provided her with a platform through which she can voice her concerns and receive amnesty and support from the Macro sporting sphere. In this instance the sporting side has acknowledged the academic side, *“so I was like that helped a bit also because then you can tell them, okay, this is what I’m experiencing a bit more pressure than what I am at the netball, so they know not to pressure you too much also.”* She expresses appreciation for the transparent and direct communication from NSA. She also acknowledges that she has resources that appear to provide clear and direct feedback and guidance. This is important to her experience of feeling supported, *“so you get a clear picture, not like this dream picture you have of what you’re going to do.”* This understanding and transparent communication helps her ride her bike on a floating bridge.

### **5.3 AUTONOMY, INDIVIDUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **5.3.1 The role of self-reliance and autonomy**

P2 expresses that there is a necessity to draw upon your own resources in order to meet requirements and be successful. There is a lot that needs to come from the student-athlete outside of prescribed support structures, routines and schedules. Here she advocates for a sense of self-reliance. She used the phrase *“like a bird”* earlier to describe this self-reliance, *“the thing why I say it’s like a bird because you had your scheduled training sessions and that’s it but if you wanted to do more, you had to do it on your own.”* She expresses that she perceived that players from certain schooling backgrounds may

have had preference in terms of selection. She also uses the analogy of “flapping wings” which alludes to her self-reliance and resilience to become a student-athlete in the absence of environmental aids that other student-athletes may have been privy to, “*so for me, being from a small school, I had to train harder to show that I can come and be an athlete here at Tuks also. So that also helped a lot, that’s why it’s that picture [inaudible] flapping your wings.*” “*Flapping your wings*”, in this context also refers to independence, self-reliance and autonomy.

### **5.3.2 Differentiating oneself from the rest**

In order for P2 to stand up and be counted, despite extenuating circumstances she needed to “step up and fly”, “*like I was put early in school so I’m now 19 as a second year, so I actually had to step up, yes, because I’m younger.*” Doing this meant that she had to find an inner strength which could elevate her and help differentiate her from her peers.

### **5.3.3 Taking control and aligning expectations and commitments**

When she experienced being pulled in different directions and after realising that this not in her best interests she took it upon herself to speak up, “*like I will then like tell them, okay, you must please just get a bit calmed down a bit because I really need to focus more on this.*” Here she alludes to the fact that she often places a lot of attention on the athletic side and perhaps needs to be reminded to focus on her academics, “*and then they’ll maybe like just remind me, “okay, come remember, give attention to your studies also.” “Riding a bike on a floating bridge”* is the metaphor she used to describe her experience and it refers to asserting herself, taking control of her environment and aligning her commitments accordingly.

### **5.3.4 Accountability for performance in a team environment**

There’s a standard of performance that is expected from P2 in relation to the performance of others. Pressure comes in when having to meet those expectations and not let other team mates down, “*it creates a bit of fear because I don’t want to disappoint, but it also helps you to realise okay you really have to step up now, because if you don’t step up you’re putting everybody else, you dragging them down like you’re the weak link then because you’re not stepping up.*” She goes onto explain that accountability is shared

between her team mates, *“you have to step up and you’re counting on them, so it’s for everybody the same.”* Assuming responsibility allows her to ride her bike on a floating bridge.

## **5.4 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO IMBALANCE**

### **5.4.1 Pressure to meet the expectations of parents**

P2 introduces her mother as a factor that causes imbalance and experiences consistent pressure to improve from her, *“with the Micro, it’s my mother because she wants me to, what’s that word? Improve - you know you have to get 80.”* She expresses the need to make her mother understand what she needs in order to maintain balance. Her mother’s expectations do not cater for ordered variety and attention to both sport and academics, *“and I’m like, “Remember, I have to also train, so there has to be a balance between you wanting me to study all the time and I also have to give attention to the athlete part.”* On the other side of the coin, her father has certain athletic expectations that are forced upon her and cause confusion and imbalance, *“they try to cancel each other out really, and I’m like, oh, you’re making me, confusing me there.”* This makes it difficult to ride her bike on a floating bridge.

## **5.5 DIETARY IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.5.1 Difficulty maintaining the correct diet**

P2 concedes that her current environment is not sustaining her dietary needs and in order to meet them it can be a time consuming exercise. She goes onto describe circumstances that require the procurement of sufficient dietary sustenance detract from maintaining a balance in other facets of her life, *“I always have to like remember okay, I have to go buy food, then I don’t focus on the athletic side, or those studies because now I’m hungry, because now I don’t want to think about anything else.”*

## **5.6 CONTEXT SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS**

### **5.6.1 Achieving context specific commitments on an ad-hoc basis**

The demands of the sporting side are dependent on the events that are associated with the sport at any point in time, *“like with some parts of them they demand more attention*

*like with the netball let's say in Varsity Cup, you need to be more adamant to come and train the whole time, you have to be focused when you train and you can't be thinking about something else.*" This is the same for the academic side of things. There are elements within both whereby intensity is increased depending on events and context within both. This requires varying degrees of commitment, *"and then with the study side, with the exams, you have to be more focused on studies because now you have to pass and you can't now focus on netball again."*

## **5.7 SOMETHING TO PROVE AND INVESTMENT FROM OTHERS**

### **5.7.1 The experience of being a baby bird and the pressure to prove others wrong**

P2's metaphor of a baby bird alludes to her young age relative to those she is competing against, *"because I'm now a baby, I'm younger than everybody else so that's why I said that I'm like a baby bird because now I need to step up my studies."* In order for her to meet her own expectations and disprove the fears of others something needs to come from the baby bird. It has to exceed expectations by stepping up and flying, *"because now the baby needs to step up because now she's younger than everybody, because that's also what they were afraid of, that I would maybe not be able to handle the student and athlete part of university now, because they said I'll maybe like crack under the pressure because I'm now younger than everybody and I won't be able to balance everything."* The doubt she experienced from others provided her with the motivation she needed to step up and "fly".

### **5.7.3 The power of investment, belief and expectations**

An understanding of her personal goals as well as capabilities resulted in key figures assisting with her development, *"a lot of the teachers at my high school like they would help me because of the athletics they knew like [inaudible] wants to go study and what I wanted to do."* There are also examples of experiencing belief and support from key figures in her system. *"So she wanted me to come to Tuks to come and play here so she was putting in more effort. Like getting other people to come and help practice, teach me new skills to develop more and that also caused then, so that I can get a bursary now."* The belief and investment she experienced from key figures in her environment allowed

her to start believing in her own ability. This was pivotal to what she then later achieved as a student-athlete.

## **5.8 LIFE AFTER NETBALL AND UNIVERSITY**

### **5.8.1 The need for guidance for life after netball and university**

There is an innate desire for P2 to know more about life after netball as well as to make sure she is adequately prepared for it through the decisions she makes now, *“so that will help bring the balance so that I will know what I’m going to be expecting when I stop studying and stop being an athlete.”* She experiences more support on the sporting side than on the student side. She has a need to express her academic concerns in the same way she does on the sporting side, there is also limited influence from a Macro perspective, *“they really help me but like I would maybe want to be like, “okay, let’s go into the more, into the student side, for now, I don’t feel like there’s something that’s going to help (Macro), I feel like it’s now, everything is fine, because the netball’s doing okay.”* She shows a desire to be exposed to more of the practical application of what she is studying. She expresses a need to be exposed to more from an academic perspective, *“let’s go to the economics people and be like okay, go and see how they do the work and how it works in their offices.”* She is also searching for transparent communication in terms what her studies are preparing her for and what she can expect to do with her studies and what her environment will be like when she starts working, *“so that part can be more like explained for my side so then I can get a balance of okay if I will be working in my future career, I would be working like this and this would be my work hours all the time.”* Another factor that she takes into account the longevity of her sporting career and what needs to happen once it’s over. She realises the need to start making provisions on the academic side now to make sure she understands what is expected of her in terms of the direction she takes, *“so then I can get to know that side a bit better because with the athlete side I know I’ll only be maybe playing until I’m 25 and then I’ll be coaching.”*

## 5.9 TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

### 5.9.1 Skills learned that can applied to other spheres of life

Here she attributes not cracking under pressure to the future. She could perceive that her future work environment is going to be pressure filled, *“well especially with the economic side of what people do in the business world like you have deadlines you have to meet.”* In order to do the work she is going to do one day she is going to have to be “cool minded”, *“to keep cool-minded and be like, okay, I can do this.”* This speaks about the approach that will be required in order to work and cope under pressure in her future work environment, *“just keep going, you don’t have to worry, you’re going to get it done.”*

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS

#### (PARTICIPANT THREE)

##### Introduction

This chapter will describe how participant 3 (P3) has experienced her dual role as a student-athlete. Her experiences will be viewed through an eco-systemic lens that encompasses the student-athlete at the model's core, their Micro-system and Macro-system. After recording her story and having it read back to her, P3 was asked to give an account of the elements of her story that stood out to her, following that the researcher then pinpointed certain features of her story that stood out to him.

### 6.1 ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

#### 6.1.1 Hardships of being away from home

For P3, being a student-athlete away from home is a challenge that evokes the most emotion and a challenge that she deems to be the most challenging, *“I think what brings up the most emotion in my life is that growing far away and like coming to Pretoria, one of the hardest challenges in my life is missing home.”* She goes on to elaborate in more depth about the particular challenges she finds difficult about being away from home, *“not in a sense that I get depressed or something, but certain moments during the week or so or for example, when I have to get on the plane from home again, and go through saying bye to everyone, it’s one of the biggest emotional challenges I experience.”* She then communicates that she struggles to feel understood and highlights that her relationship with her family is something she feels is special and unique, *“and I don’t think everyone always understands it because yes, there are a lot of people, but I don’t think all of them have the same relationship that they like I have with my family.”* She elaborates further by comparing the home sickness that she experiences with the home sickness that someone else may experience-her experience of being away from home is unique and difficult to understand for others, *“so I don’t think that everyone experiences the same extent of home-sick that I do. But I experience home sickness very much and to a very*

*great extent.*” The metaphor she used to describe her student-athlete experience is “juggling”. Being away from home and feeling misunderstood impairs her ability to juggle.

### **6.1.2 Sacrificing family time for netball commitments**

P3 exclaims that she is extremely family orientated, but she has to train. Training means that she has to be without her family and she’s caught in a position where all she wants is to go home but she feels obligated to stay and train. *“Say I’m training, although I’ll be alone and not have family to go to and so and so, what I actually want to do is to go home.”* She elaborates further by mentioning foregoing an opportunity to go home so that she could develop as an athlete. Even though she would rather go home she speaks about this as being logical for her and something that is necessary to achieve her goals. *“yes, for example, I’m done with the exams, so the first thing I would do is hop on the plane and go home but I have to stay because I have to train and I know I have to make the choice, I know I make the choice because I know for logical purposes, that is the best choice for what I want to do in life. I want to excel in sport, so that is the logical choice I have to make.”*

### **6.1.3 Adjusting to a new environment**

The challenge came in when she had to make the transition from visiting to actually realising that she lives in Pretoria now - It was a significant adjustment for her. *“I’ve been to Europe and America, so I know the world is very big, but I think that when I came to live here, changing that mindset from, instead of I’m not visiting here, I’m living here now.”* She goes on to mention that there is an element of vulnerability that goes with adjusting to a new place, *“being in such a big place, I felt so, I don’t know, vulnerable and not in control because I don’t know how certain things work or you get lost easily.”* In addition to this she places significance on the academic work load being far greater, *“and you just study and you do well, and here, the workload is more than twice the size, it’s so much work and you feel like, how am I going to get through this?”* Having to adjust to this new environment has made it difficult for her to “juggle” her commitments as a student-athlete.



#### **6.1.4 The new experience of university netball**

One of the first things that impacted P3 was the amount of players there were to choose from, this meant increased competition and increased difficulty of making the team. She also mentioned that one could not afford to get left behind, because it's extremely difficult to catch up, *"now here, the pool is massive, the competition is on, and you just don't have time to or you cannot fall behind because then you're done."* The perceived small margin for error means that if one falls behind it's very hard or even impossible to catch up to the rest again. She has a very concrete view of this – there's no room for error, *"then you missed your spot on start line or you fall behind on certain skills, then it's over."* The pressure that accompanies this small margin for error makes it difficult to juggle all of her commitments as a student-athlete.

### **6.2 TIME MANAGEMENT**

#### **6.2.1 The benefits of being able to compartmentalise priorities**

P3 speaks about how she has benefitted from her ability to compartmentalize and she elaborates on how she is able to not let other life events or concerns influence her performance on the court. She has the ability to focus on one thing at a time, *"yes, same with emotional problems, I can have, whenever I have issues with myself that I need to sort through, a lot of people when they have to now go and write exam or perform on a netball court, their emotional issues influence them and they themselves become emotional and what they have to do, their performance drops or something because of their problems and I don't experience that at all because I can have a problem, then I can go write exam and go to netball, whatever, forget about it and then when I'm back and I have time, I bring back the issue and then I'll work through it in my own time, in my own way."* This compartmentalization is an organic process whereby she automatically uses rational and logical reasoning in such a way that she does not use up attentional capacity, *"I do it almost on cue, I think I come to the decision to put something away for now, based on logical reasoning, It's irrational and illogical to sort of hamper on this emotional issue that I'm having, I'm not going to solve it now and while I'm thinking and worrying this, my other actions, what I'm supposed to do, is declining."* This ability to focus acutely on what

she is currently doing enables her to successfully juggle a host of commitments as a student-athlete.

### **6.2.2 Making time sacrifices**

P3 starts by contextualizing her limited amount of time, *“throughout the year it’s not, there’s rarely a weekend that I don’t have netball. We have tournaments and then the tournament is like eight or nine weeks long and each weekend you are playing so when that weekend you playing in PE, you’re going on Friday and coming back on Sunday or Monday.”* Due to her busy itinerary she expresses that she has very little time for other commitments, *“so there’s not really time for anything else.”* She acknowledges that her friends with very similar commitments to her do find time to socialise, but she struggles to understand how this is done and expresses her preference for focussing on academics and her netball, *“I don’t know how the girls fit in socialising, that those girls that do socials, but I really put in all of energy in my academics and my sport.”* She finds herself in a position where in order for her to continue juggling, she needs to put a few balls by the way side, otherwise she puts herself at risk of dropping everything.

## **6.3 MISMANAGED EMOTIONS**

### **6.3.1 Implications of poorly managed emotions**

Rationally P3 conceives that her emotions should not impact on her behaviour or ability to perform certain tasks, *“so logically, it’s irrational and it doesn’t make sense at all to have your emotions influence what you do.”* She expresses that allowing emotions to overwhelm you can have detrimental effects on you and your performance, *“it’s bad for you and it’s bad for what you have to do so it’s really not a logical thing to allow.”* P3’s ability to not let her emotions impact her performance assists her in her ability to “juggle” her commitments.

## **6.4 TRANSFERRABLE SKILLSETS**

### **6.4.1 What is learned and developed through being a student-athlete can be transferred to other spheres of life**

She concedes that her netball career is temporary in nature and that she needs to consider life after netball, but she also acknowledges the experience she gains from playing netball and how what she learns from netball can be translated into other facets of life, *“obviously, academics are more important because when I turn what 3,0 netball is going to be something of the past, However, I do believe my parents also encouraged me to get to this belief that sporting time and your time as an athlete is nothing, it’s such an extraordinary experience and even though it’s a short time of your life, that experience that you gain and the lessons you learn from it, it’s really priceless in your life, in all aspects of your life: your career one day and your job, career and job’s the same thing, your family life.”*

## **6.5 MOTIVATION**

### **6.5.1 Competition as a motivating factor**

P3 acknowledges that competition is something that has improved her performance in the past, *“I think I’m actually someone who thrives in competitions.”* She goes on to elaborate on how competition causes her to thrive. She has an understanding of the commitment and intentions of her peers and in order to keep up with them or be better than them she needs to prioritise training and preparation, *“the competition here, let’s take it for netball now specifically, is so much more than it was back home but I think that the fact that there’s competition, it’s good for me in the sense that it’s what drives me to do a little bit more because I know that when everyone, Coach hands us all our vacation or holiday programmes, everyone is going to do their programmes and they going to do it well.”* She feels motivation to do more than what her peers may be doing, *“so I want to be better so I have to do something that they not doing so I’ll do extra, an extra set or two or an extra session, extra two or three sessions a week.”*

## **6.5.2 Religion as a motivating factor**

She starts by putting into context the extent to which religion plays a role in her life. *“I think that, well, like I said, my religion and my faith governs everything I do.”* She then goes on to speak about her existence being too much to make sense of and religion satisfies that curiosity to a certain extent, *“because contemplating existence is too much, you can’t just do it on your own.”* This inability to understand the complexities of her existence seems to frustrate her but she seems to be comforted in knowing there’s something greater than her. This provides her with comfort when she cannot directly control something, *“Instead of trying by myself to be, instead of being unhappy about it and trying to figure out why and why does this person get to start and I don’t, I’d rather believe and I trust and I have peace in the fact that there’s a bigger purpose and a bigger picture at play here that I’m not aware about and that God is working in a way that I don’t understand because I don’t have the capacity to understand it.”*

## **6.6 EXPERIENCING CATHARSIS**

### **6.6.1 Achieving an emotional release through viable outlets**

P3 describes her experience of being a student-athlete as being a significant emotional journey, *“well, obviously it was a very great emotional, sort of, path.”* One of the strategies she used to cope with her emotions and make sense of them was to write. Through this she achieved a sense of catharsis. *“I started writing, like in a little diary, just writing stuff that’s irrelevant and nobody thinks about it twice, but I found comfort in writing and I don’t know why, still don’t know why.”* This was a platform through which she was able to express her concerns and frustrations and experience relief through doing so, *“I don’t do it as much as in the beginning but at the beginning I used to write everything that bothered me and I’d allow myself to deal with it and even cry if I wanted to and just write and honestly writing, knowing that no one else will read this except me.”*

## **6.7 SUPPORT SYSTEM**

### **6.7.1 The role and function of the support system**

P3 explains that her family is her primary form of support and that her mother is at the forefront of this support structure, *“definitely my family, for sure. Especially my mom, my mom talks to me like every day.”* One of the main sources of support that she relies on is being able to get home and be with her family. Her family have made this available to her whenever she needs which is a major comfort for her, *“and also my parents, my dad really supported me in telling me that if I wanted to take a weekend and just fly home because I missed them, it’s fine, I can.”* In addition to the support she receives from her family she also expresses gratitude towards her netball team for being a support in a way. *“so that really helped, also what really, really helped me was my team, not in the sense like they talking to me and telling me, “Oh, it’s okay.” Just like training made me, it helped, the netball helped.”* Being busy on the netball front keeps her mind occupied, but also consumes a great deal of time. In a way netball assists with the juggling, but can also derail it when it consumes too much time.

## **6.8 PERCEPTIONS OF THE MACRO-SYSTEM**

### **6.8.1 Experiencing a lack of trust and a disconnect from the Macro-system**

P3’s perception of the Macro-system is one of inaccessibility, which has made matters worse in that she doesn’t feel as though she can trust it with the concerns and issues that are important to her. It did not create the impression that it was where she could engage on an emotional level. *“It might’ve just made it worse because Macro-systems are big and the whole reason that I’m experiencing—having emotional problems about it, is because everything’s big and the Macro-system is also big so it just made it worse.”* In addition to this she feels that elements within her Macro environment contributed to the pressure she was already experiencing, *“like the university, it’s so big, the work they gave me was so much and big in comparison to last year so I think yes, they didn’t really play a role in helping me there.”*

## **6.9 COPING AND RESILIENCE**

### **6.9.1 The role of perception and coping mechanisms**

P3 demonstrates a degree of resilience and mental toughness in dealing with adversity whereby she allows for the appropriate measures to deal with adversity but elaborates that it is not a reason to stop or give up, *“that doesn’t mean I shouldn’t experience it as I shouldn’t grieve or be sad about it, it just means I cannot just stop because of it.”* Through accepting that hardship, sacrifice and loss are part and parcel of her experience, she is able to contextualise it and focus her attention on what is necessary, *“It’s bound to happen to me, more than once, no person can escape loss or hardship, I must just continue because it’s happening to everyone.”*

### **6.9.2 Rationality and resilience in the face of giving up**

The belief that giving up is not an option has provided her with the motivation to overcome adversity and strife. She is of the conviction that there is no space to feel sorry for oneself. Her expectations of herself are not to give up and to remain persistent, *“you just keep going, so if things get hard and you feel like you’re drowning, you just keep going until you feel like you’re not drowning anymore. That’s the logical thing to do, there’s no point in stopping and feeling, oh, my life is horrible.”* Rationality is very important to her and in her mind giving up is irrational. Rational thought advocates for adversity as being relative and inevitable, *“I don’t see how I’m continuing and just falling apart, it’s irrational. So just keep going because either way, no matter how you live, each person are bound to experience hardship and to experience loss.”*

## **6.10 OPPORTUNITIES**

### **6.10.1 Opportunities gained through playing netball**

Through having dual citizenship P3 has been afforded opportunities that have proved beneficial, *“so belonging to both countries and being able to play for both countries, really, really give me an overhand, a benefit that no other player has.”* This has allowed her to participate in international tournaments overseas and play provincially in South Africa which has substantially increased her exposure. She views the more exposure she gets

as something that is going to develop her and benefit her. *“I think I played the most netball in my life this year, more than all the other years my school is counted together and probably more than most players in South Africa, so it’s really a plus point.”*

## **6.11 GOVERNMENT**

### **6.11.1 The impact that government has had on being a student-athlete**

P3 sees a holistic picture in that what happens in government invariably shapes what she learns and will affect her career in some way, *“everything that government does, we end up discussing and everything we discuss is building our legal minds and shaping our own opinions that eventually we will take on in our careers.”* She acknowledges that decisions made at government level have an impact on her sporting and academic experience in that the bodies that govern netball in South Africa function under the auspices of government, *“also, like I said, government implements things like having to have number goals to reach transformation, affirmative action and yes, I can’t do anything about it, so I’m not going to go out and protest about it, but it does have an impact on my life, like I said, when they select a team for example, the rule in Gauteng Netball or at South African Championships, there must be two black persons on the court at all time.”*

**CHAPTER 7**  
**FINDINGS**  
**(PARTICIPANT FOUR)**

**Introduction**

This chapter will describe how participant 4 (P4) has experienced her dual role as a student-athlete. Her experiences will be viewed through an eco-systemic lens that encompasses the student-athlete at the model's core, their Micro-system and Macro-system. After recording her story and having it read back to her, P4 was asked to give an account of the elements of her story that stood out to her, following that the researcher then pinpointed certain features of her story that stood out to him.

**7.1 DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY**

**7.1.1 Development and opportunities gained through key parties**

Sadness comes over P4 as she realises that her time as a student-athlete is now coming to end. This suggests that it was an enjoyable experience for her. She also alludes to the people at various stages of her life that helped her along the way to where she is now. *"It's sad because I now I know I'm actually done with all of it but still it's a new phase I'm going to enter to, but also it realised me again how much everyone helped me throughout all these phases in my life from a young age up until literally where I'm sitting now, in university."* She goes on to place emphasis on the role significant people played in her development, which she looks back on with a degree of fondness, *"like I feel good after hearing about how everyone helped me again."* Here she touches on and realises that she is the product of the assistance and decisions of a holistic effort across Micro and Macro-systems, *"even if they weren't directly helping me, like example Netball South Africa, if they didn't choose me, made the decision to put me in the Protea team two years ago, I wouldn't be where I am now."* This holistic effort has impacted positively on her training efforts and has provided her with opportunities and exposure she wouldn't have otherwise had, *"I wouldn't be training as hard as I'm training now and I wouldn't already been living in England for five months and then next year I'm going to live in New Zealand"*



for eight months.” There are key individuals who have helped her “catch the worm” which is the metaphor she chose to describe her experience.

## **7.2 THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

### **7.2.1 The experience of invested interest from parents**

P4 has been shown what the required work ethic needs to be through the invested interest from her parents, *“My dad analyses games for me, yes, no, it’s so weird. Analyses games for me and tells me what I’m doing wrong and how I can correct it and, so I’m flabbergasted.”* This invested interest has provided encouragement and motivation for her to train as hard as she does, *“if it weren’t for those extra training sessions, it wouldn’t already put me on the path to do the extra training sessions.”*

## **7.3 THE ROLE OF FRIENDS**

### **7.3.1 The impact of invested interest from friends on emotional well-being**

P4 explains that there is a link between her friends and her emotional well-being. She appears to also draw a connection between her emotional well-being and motivation, *“because yes, without them, it wouldn’t be fine at all and I wouldn’t want to do it.”* The manner in which that she introduces her friends suggests that they are responsible for her emotional well-being in a way.

### **7.3.2 The importance of understanding within a friend circle**

She explains how she has come to be able to appreciate understanding within her friend circle by citing an example of when she’s been unwell and the expectation of how she wants to be treated if she isn’t feeling her best, *“you don’t want to mess with me when I’m not feeling well, then they just leave me alone so that’s great to know.”* She then goes on to further elaborate on the relationship she has with her friends, *“They know that side of me so if we just going out and I’m not feeling up to it or we just go out for coffee, they already know my state so they don’t have to, they don’t push my buttons so they know when to stay quiet and just to chill out with me even though they’re not saying anything.”* Admission into her friend circle also appears to be something that is conditional, *“so that’s great for incorporating them into my friends circle.”* According to P4 there is limited time

to meet new people and expand on one's friend group. This is because it is easier to arrange one's social schedule around people who have similar schedules, *"so with them as my friends and my teammates, they have the exact same schedule as I have and they know when we can go out, when we can meet up, when we have our sessions."* Above all feeling understood by her friends is important to her and assists her in "catching the worm", *"it's very important for me to be understood otherwise, I'm not bothered but they're going to be very unhappy after meeting with my bad side, not understanding where I'm coming from at that moment."*

## **7.4 INJURIES IN NETBALL**

### **7.4.1 Making provisions in case of injury**

In this instance P4 proclaims the importance of academics over sport in case of the event of injury bearing in mind that it can end a sporting career, *"well I definitely think that academics are more important than sport really because what if an injury occurs and you can't play sport anymore?"* She then expresses the need for a back-up plan should an injury occur which comes in the form of tertiary studies, *"Then you have nothing behind your name and you have to start all over and I don't think at an older age I want to study."* While she has not had to use her academic qualifications, she still prioritises them more highly than her netball, *"so I think to, even though it's not in my life at the moment but academics are more important and it's more important for me to have a degree behind my name and then go over to play netball."*

## **7.5 ORGANISATIONAL ABILITIES AND TIME STRATEGY**

### **7.5.1 Sacrificing sleep and being organised in order to meet the demands of a busy schedule**

In order for P4 to "catch the worm" and remain in control she emphasizes the importance that she places on being organised. In addition to this, the fact that she does not need much sleep and enjoys working at night assists her with her busy schedule, *"I'm a very organised person and I'm a night owl, if I can put it in that way."*

## **7.5.2 Time management ethos and strategies**

As mentioned previously P4's ability to remain organised is a major reason for her success in "catching the worm", *"that's fine with me and because I'm a very organised person, I get my things done immediately when someone asks me to do it."* She then describes an approach she uses to optimise time efficiency through her ability to multi-task, *"so during class times I will listen but I'll also do admin that Netball South Africa gives me to do."* Optimising the efficiency with which she uses her time is something that she is driven to improve on and succeed at.

## **7.6 THE DIET AND HABITS OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE IN RELATION TO RECOVERY**

### **7.6.1 Dietary implications and considerations**

Her schedule means very little time for recovery and meeting dietary requirements. This means that there are certain consequences for not maintaining the necessary diet, one of the most significant being that she is unable to recover properly, *"well with all the training sessions and with academics and everything, there isn't always a lot of time to recover well especially food-wise, especially in the evenings, after a two-hour training session, so that's definitely a part of me being tired because I'm not recovering well."*

### **7.6.2 Acknowledging the importance of leisure activities in relation to recovery**

Within her busy schedule she tries to plan in such a way that she is afforded time for recovery. A pivotal part of this recovery involves leisure and relaxation in the midst of a busy schedule, *"because yes, like you said, I'm a very organised person, each week we'll get a schedule from our coach with time slots in, that works better for us, in the morning so I would usually go to the earlier session so I don't have to rush to class and I can properly recover. Then I'll just chill for a bit because everyone needs their chilling sessions."* In order for her to make time for these leisure activities careful planning is required.

## **7.7 ADJUSTING TO CHANGE**

### **7.7.1 The transition from school to university**

One of the main features of P4's transition was the change of pace and increased workload. It soon became apparent to her that her perception of what was necessary from a self-discipline perspective had to be dramatically adjusted in order for her to meet her commitments, *“so yes, that’s very different from school days and then also at school you only train once a day, maybe three times a week where in university you will train three times a week for gym, three times a week on court sessions, two individual sessions and then as your own additional sessions that for, especially for me a shooter, I have to have extra shooting sessions to be more accurate.”* To conclude the adjustment has been as much mental as it has been from a physical increase in pace and commitments perspective.

## **7.8 MOTIVATION**

### **7.8.1 Understanding purpose and motivation**

Throughout the telling of her experience there is a clear and defined “why” to what P4 does. This has proven to be a key motivator in “catching the worm,” *“I didn’t make it for nothing, it’s just today I’m feeling down but I still have to go because there’s a reason behind it.”* She sees how every form of preparation can help her somehow in the future and she believes in her purpose for working hard. She takes great pride in doing extra work as it provides a degree of peace of mind, *“it’s obviously my job, but it’s also very calming for me to know, okay, you’ve put in this extra session.”*

## **7.9 FINANCIAL AID**

### **7.9.1 Bursary conditions and financial implications**

P4's bursary is conditional on her performance on the court and there are financial implications to not performing to a certain standard. Due to this, she feels an obligation to prioritise sport now because she does not want to put her parents under financial strain, *“so that is why sport, at the moment, is first in my life because I don’t want to put them under that pressure of paying back my bursary for the past three years.”* She then gives

an indication of what is at stake and speaks about the experience of pressure to not let it come to that, *“that is not on my agenda because it’s a lot of money.”*

## **7.10 COACHING STAFF**

### **7.10.1 The role of coaches and managers**

From early stages the coaching staff took a special interest in her and invested a great deal towards her development as a player. She recalls instances where she was pushed to her limit, but appreciated it because she believed that it benefitted her, *“no, since I’ve been at Tuks, they’ve really took me under their wing, they made the player I am today, maturely, emotionally, physically with their individual sessions, they push me to the limit. It was that hard but that’s how they got me to where I am today.”* She appreciates honesty and transparency about her performance and views honesty from others as something that can make her better, *“manager and coach always honest with me about my performance which is a great deal for me because if no one’s honest, how am I going to improve?”*

### **7.10.2 The importance of honesty and respect between player, coaches and managers**

An honest relationship means clear expectation and clarity to P4 and respect needs to accompany the honesty for it to appear sincere to her. Above and beyond this she believes that there is a certain manner in which honesty needs to be communicated, *“yes, it is very important. If you can’t be honest with me and don’t communicate with me, then I don’t think we’re on the same page and I don’t know if I’ve done something wrong or if that’s, I don’t know what she expects from me, but with that said, if you communicate with me and you’re going to be honest with me, you do it in a matter that is respectable.”* She goes on to provide another example of how she expects people to convey honesty and how she will react if that honesty is not conveyed properly, *“you don’t tell me for example, you played a horrible game and you cost the game for us. Yes, that’s being honest but that is not the way to go, then I switch off and I ignore you.”* In order for her to have the best chance of “catching the worm” the people who manage her performance as a player need to understand what manner of communication she will respond to best.

## 7.11 OPPORTUNITIES

### 7.11.1 Opportunities gained through Netball South Africa (NSA)

Here she speaks about the opportunities she was afforded through the NSA. She also mentions a coach who seems to have made a significant impact on her development, *“so because of them, they took me to the Common Wealth Games 2014, they took me to the Netball World Cup last year and from there they got an Australian coach who won two years in row: in 2007 and 2011 the netball, and last year, but she wasn’t the coach, and who won the Netball World Cup so I mean that is a lot of experience.”* She then draws a distinction between how the opportunities she was given through NSA and how that led to more opportunities, *“so if not for Netball South Africa once again, putting me into the team, I would never have met this coach from Australia and she’s the one with all the contacts in all the other countries.”* Her coach at Tuks identified the need and provided her as a solution or prospect for selection, *“told them, “Listen, if you need a shooter, this is your shooter, and they immediately contacted me, I was over there for five months.”* Through the opportunities afforded to her by Netball South Africa she was able to get opportunities abroad and receive financial compensation, *“they want you to go over,” so I mean, if it wasn’t for Netball South Africa, I would never have made these teams and I mean going to New Zealand, I’m making loads of money.”*

## 7.12 TRAVEL

### 7.12.1 Managing travel requirements and academics

P4 attests to how organised Tuks Netball have been in helping them prepare for when they are going to have to miss class for sporting commitments, *“you fill in the forms, you go and do it. So they are very organised in that way as well where there’s no sloppiness.”* Another area where she receives support in this regard is from her manager who has authority over arranging tournaments and time away from class, *“it’s our manager who runs the office really, so and she’s a very strict and firm person.”* There appears to be a situation where key individuals on both the sporting and academic side were able to cater an arrangement that suited her circumstances, *“and also when I went over to go to Bath,*

*England last year, my manager sat in with me, with Prof and we organised how I'm going to write my final exams last year."*

## **7.13 TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS**

### **7.13.1 Skills and discipline learned through netball and academics**

P4 explains that she is thinking about work and life after netball and what she perceives will be required of her, *"I think, if I'm really thinking into the future now, without any netball in the future, there will be mornings that you have to go in earlier."* She concedes that netball has helped her adapt and develop a mind-set that is conducive to spheres outside of netball, *"so some people aren't prepared for that yet, where this has prepared me to wake up early in the mornings, to be ready, to be organised, to go to work and do my job full out."* She elaborates on and draws a link between a transferrable skillset and approach that has been adopted, learned and applied to other spheres of life, *"so that's where, like a comparison can come in between those - with sport and jobs."* The two spheres seem to complement each other.

## CHAPTER 8

### FINDINGS

#### (PARTICIPANT FIVE)

##### Introduction

This chapter will describe how participant 5 (P5) has experienced her dual role as a student-athlete. Her experiences will be viewed through an eco-systemic lens that encompasses the student-athlete at the model's core, their Micro-system and Macro-system. After recording her story and having it read back to her, P5 was asked to give an account of the elements of her story that stood out to her, following that the researcher then pinpointed certain features of her story that stood out to him. The heading she chose to describe her experience is "a bird without wings".

#### 8.1 BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE IS POSSIBLE

##### 8.1.2 The inherent belief that one can succeed in sport and academics at university

Even with the amount of sport that P5 plays, she still believes that it is possible to do both sport and academics. To substantiate her view-point she provides an example of someone who studies a relatively difficult course and yet is still able to perform academically. She also alludes to there being a subjective motivational element that is required, *"like being a student, that it's possible to do both. I know one of my closest friends well, she's doing medical as well and she's doing her honours now so it is able, it depends on yourself, if you going to make time for yourself."* Success as a student-athlete and being able to "grow wings" means maintaining a sense of balance and an element of that balance has got to involve having time for yourself outside of sport and academic commitments, *"and having that balance we need to get to everything, have time, make time for yourself as well because it's important to get your own personal time as well."*



## **8.2 SUPPORT FROM NETBALL AND ACADEMIC SPHERES**

### **8.2.1 Disparity experienced between netball and academic spheres regarding support**

P4 explains that she experiences one sided support that drives the agenda of netball's interests, *"say they don't care, but you know, they don't really know what goes on in your personal life and they would rather only support you in the netball, which is bad because now, because they don't care, I wouldn't."* This is further substantiated in that she experiences that the university advocates for both spheres, whereas the sporting sphere is perhaps more one sided, *"and I think being a student, the support is much bigger because you represent your university, they will support you in both ways."* She is pleased by having experienced a degree of leniency on the part of the university when it comes to meeting commitments, there seems to be a degree of understanding, *"and that's great because a lot of, sometimes I feel like the other athletes, they get away with a lot more than, if you had to like put in, give an assignment or so on, they like, okay, understand, you can give in your assignment a little bit later."*

## **8.3 MANAGEMENT AND BALANCE**

### **8.3.1 The importance of achieving the right balance**

P5 is of the opinion that balance involves taking everything into account, all facets of life – it's extensive and exhaustive, *"good balance is everything, It's sleep, netball, friends, family, God, studies, everything."* To contextualise further she draws a distinction between what poor balance would look like in relation to social life and training, *"you can't have a big social life and never go to practice."* She speaks about the difficulty of maintaining balance and how easy it is to lose balance. She also speaks about the necessity of sacrifice and how it contributes to the holistic functionality of everything, *"the balance must be equal in both ways or in every element you, it's difficult sometimes to keep that balance like if you put it on a balance board but sometimes you will slip at like meeting up with friends or something but in life you need to make sacrifices sometimes for one thing to make one other thing work."* She attributes imbalance and remaining "without wings" to

the mismanagement of time, *“oh with the balance, It’s just, I think, time, because time is precious and if you mess with time, it’ll get to you.”* When talking about maintaining balance she refers specifically to friends and family, but also how beneficial it can be to have someone in your support structure who can identify with your experience first-hand as it creates an element of understanding and empathy. She acknowledges that success as a student-athlete is dependent on have others to support in certain capacities, *“I must say my friends and family as well, I know one of my friend, my best friend actually, we studied the same degree so she helped me a lot with the academic part as well and just, you need to trust your supporting system as well because if you go alone then sometimes you will fail.”*

### **8.3.2 Managing time and expectation as a student-athlete**

P5 speaks about how experience can positively contribute to managing life successfully as a student-athlete. And also how the structure of her curriculum and the nature of her studies in terms of less frequent class attendance lessens the pressure, *“okay obviously I have a lot of experience because I’m a fifth-year student now and doing my honours I only have, and now doing it over two years, I only have class every second Friday.”* She refers to a time where she found it more difficult to deal with the pressure due to her circumstances catering for less time to attend to all of her commitments. Getting through this time was dependent on the influence of others in various ways, *“but in my first year it was a bit of a struggle where I studied from home and it’s in Pretoria North so the time was limit but like I said, I could not have done it on my own.”* On the other hand she introduces an element of accountability and that ultimately the onus is on you to meet your commitments, *“but yes, it depends on yourself as well, to get to all your stuff, to make it work.”* In the midst of all this there are various expectations imposed her as well in the sense that if you are classed as a high performance athlete depending on certain criteria, there are certain expectation that go with it in terms of meeting commitments, *“so if you in that high performance group, they expect from you as well to be at the, they support you with the gym and all that stuff and the studies and so on.”*

## **8.4 RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE**

### **8.4.1 The role of religion**

P5 acknowledges that in her experience religion is a sensitive topic, but further than announcing her religion she does not elaborate but instead reverts to how Tuks Netball assisted her with her injury from a financial perspective, *“I know religion is a sensitive subject for a few people, but yes, I’m a Christian and I know like I had a difficult year this year actually because I tore my ACL last year with the first Varsity Cup and then Tuks Netball like contributed to pay actually my operation which is great because they supported my family as well and they knew like they need me back and I’m a bursary holder so they were supported in that.”* She believes that the events in her life are not solely in her control and that divine intervention has a role to play. She proclaims that her injury allowed for her to experience other aspects of her life which are important to her and this she attributed to divine intervention, *“and so then I just knew like it’s also God giving you a second chance and I knew when I like had a knee injury, through that process I actually made more time with my friends and get to know to, and academic as well and just to know like sometimes you wanted to plan out your path but like God directs the steps or the right path for you.”* Religion has been a factor that has assisted P5 “grow her wings.”

## **8.5 FINANCIAL AID**

### **8.5.1 Bursaries and the implications thereof**

P4 sets the context by alluding to how much financial assistance she received when she was younger, *“in my first year, like I mentioned in my, I didn’t get a lot at first but it was something so I was still privileged to have it.”* Achievements dictate the extent of the financial reimbursement that she received, *“and they manage you on what you achieve throughout the year and then you get paid more so.”* The result of her performance over time eased the financial pressure that was initially on her parents. It is significant to her that she was able to alleviate financial pressure on her parents through her performance and achievements, *“I got also accommodation as a high-performance athlete, they*

*contributed that so my parents don't even have to pay anything now. Compared to now and my first year."*

## **8.6 INJURIES**

### **8.6.1 The experience of being injured and the implications thereof**

When P5 needed expensive medical attention she was forced to consider her parents' financial situation and that it necessitated that she get a bursary in order to study. Without the bursary there would have been a significant amount of financial uncertainty and pressure, particularly in this instance where she required medical attention, *"like I said, like Tuks Netball as like a huge contribution to paying the operation which is very expensive and they supported my family as well because I know my mom, my mom was like in a panic for not being able to pay my operation and it was very need."* There was the option that she could have treated her injury through a public hospital, but she was not confident that the standard of medical treatment would give her the best chance of returning to her previous level of skill and performance, *"I could have gone to Steve Biko but it won't be sure like if I will be able to play netball again like at that high level."* She explains the importance of quality medical treatment when it comes to injury and recovering from that injury, *"so you need to get a good knee specialist and we went to Little Company of Mary and starting with rehab, I can go to Tuks physio as well, no paying anything so that helped me."* Her experience of injury came with significant financial and performance implications which were related to the longevity and success of her career as a student-athlete.

## **8.7 SUPPORT**

### **8.7.1 The experience of having a support system**

The experience of continuous support is important to her. It is meaningful to her that her family enjoy watching her play, *"Yes, obviously they like seeing me playing the sport that I love and when we play on television or here they will come, always be here and support."* She uses the metaphor of a "black wall" to describe how she experiences adversity and how support is particularly relevant when she experiences the "black wall". It is important

that she sees that her family believe in her, *“and I think when it’s a difficult times they need to step in and just support to get through that black wall or something just to, they need to trust in you more than you trust in yourself, so you can be able to achieve your goals and so on.”*

### **8.7.2 The importance of an interpersonal relationship with coaching staff and management**

P5 acknowledges the significance of their impact and the importance of a good working relationship when it comes to her performance. She also speaks about how conflict can detract from performance in her experience, *“yes, very big influence and me and my coach really have a good relationship, and I think for a player and a coach to have a good relationship, it contributes to your performance as well, because when you have conflict, I think you get a lack in your performance.”* She mentions how she appreciates the importance of a personal relationship and building rapport, as well as how she believes that this contributes positively to her performance on the court, *“so it’s important to have not just a relationship on court but off court as well, with a personal relationship as well.”* Having a relationship of understanding means that her opinion needs to be taken into account and supported in the face of loss and adversity, *“like after we lost the final in the Varsity Cup, our team got together and we spoke about what happened and so on and I could like tell her what went wrong and she like totally support my opinion and so on.”*

## **8.8 TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS**

### **8.8.1 Skills learned through netball are believed to be transferrable**

P5 has shown that she has considered the future by describing a working environment where she could apply the skills she has learned in both sporting and academic spheres. *“having a degree on paper as well and they know when you put on your CV you have sport highlights, I think there’s a lot of, I know where some of the coaches of like big Afrikaans schools, where the netball’s very good, they would come to me and say like, “okay, listen here, there is a job opening.”* She realises that having succeeded at being student-athlete she has a unique skill set that is sought after and will differentiate her from others. *“like you need to come to our school for the interview, I will talk to my Head.”* She

believes that the future will hold opportunities for her to apply this unique skill-set across contexts which will allow her to “grow her wings.”

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The following chapter will portray a summary of how student-athletes experience their dual careers within a tertiary education milieu. Their experiences will be contextualized through the eco-systemic model of Hendriksen et al. (2010) (see Chapter 1, p. 1) which has provided a lens to examine participant experience from a student-athlete (individual), Micro-system and Macro-system perspective. Participants have also provided overarching metaphors to describe their experiences from within their eco-systemic environment. This chapter will identify how the findings of this study confirm, or add to the information found in the literature review. According to the findings relevant recommendations will be drafted with the intention of informing current policy on the management of student-athletes. Finally any limitations that were encountered during the study will be addressed and recommendations for future studies will be made.

#### **9.1 FINDINGS**

The research question for this study was “how do elite student-athletes within a tertiary education setting in South Africa experience their dual careers?” (See Chapter 1, p. 5). The findings will be addressed from a student-athlete (individual), Macro-system and a Macro-system perspective where applicable.

##### **9.1.1 Participant 1 (P1) “Balancing on a tight rope”**

###### **Student-athlete**

Across P1’s experience there are factors that have either assisted her or made it more challenging to “balance on a tight rope”. From P1’s perspective she has an innate belief that it is possible to be successful as a student-athlete (see Chapter 4, p. 38). Given that she has been successful up until this point, her belief became a self-fulfilling prophecy and assisted her in achieving and maintaining balance. Achieving this success has meant making choices and prioritizing activities in such a way that they are aligned with her values and so that she can achieve what she has prioritized (see Chapter 4, p. 39). She

has made the choice to prioritize academics over sport because she values the opportunities academics can give her over the ones sport can provide (see Chapter 4, p. 39). This supports the findings of Aquilina (2013) who posits that student-athletes see sport as temporary and actively consider life after sport. This means that they realize the need to make provisions for their futures by placing emphasis on their academics. In terms of identity this contradicts the findings of Watt and Moore (2001) who posited that student-athletes typically value their sporting identities over their academic identities. What further incentivized this choice was financially related and her bursary funding was contingent on her passing her academic studies, this choice, however, meant disadvantaging herself when it came to team selection (see Chapter 4, p. 41).

In order to maintain balance she realized the need to make sacrifices, but she would choose to sacrifice sporting commitments over academic commitments. To continue maintaining balance P1 came to realize that while she needed to make sacrifices on the netball front, she also needed to make sacrifices outside of netball and academics. These sacrifices are necessitated by time constraints and have been a consistent feature throughout the findings and the implications thereof generally mean having to make sacrifices in order to meet sporting and academic commitments (see Chapter 4, p. 42). One of the main sacrifices that student-athletes talk about making is to do with their social lives as there is not enough time to make provisions for and meet social commitments (Aries et al., 2004; Goktas, 2010; Watt & Moore, 2001). While making these sacrifices and planning accordingly was at times a positive contributor to achieving balance, P1 concedes that there are certain situations that cannot be foreseen or planned for and in order to retain balance in these situations one needs to be able to adapt in an effective manner (see Chapter 4, p. 42).

Through negotiating busy sporting and academic commitments in order to maintain her balance, P1 had managed to develop certain organizational and interpersonal skills that can be applied across various life contexts and ultimately benefit her (see Chapter 4, p. 44). This is supportive of a key finding that supplements and confirms current literature in that the skills, values and traits learned through playing sport (netball) can be transferred



and readily applied to other spheres of life and can lead to opportunities for career advancement (Coakley, et al., 2008; Steinfeldt, et al., 2011; Weis, 2007).

### **Micro-system**

The role of a support system has been a critical component in “balancing on a tight rope”. For P1 having a supportive environment where she can make her own decisions and exercise autonomy free of fear of judgement from those closest to her. Non-judgmental and unconditional support are fundamental to P1 in maintaining balance (see Chapter 4, p. 41). From a support system perspective she also recognized the importance of having and building on her interpersonal relationships with people in her Micro-system who carry influence because they have the authority to assist in situations and generate movement where she has no authority. These authority figures had the jurisdiction to grant permission to miss class and other academic commitments which could contribute to balance, but if these leniencies were not managed properly it had the potential to result in impaired academic performance and therefore cause imbalance (see Chapter 4, p. 41). “Balancing on a tight rope” in this instance meant taking accountability and learning when academic commitments could be sacrificed for netball and vice versa (see Chapter 4, p. 44). The need for support has been evidenced through the development of support programmes within tertiary institutions which have been geared specifically to student-athletes (Henry, 2013; Lopez et al., 2015; Mckenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004).

#### **9.1.2 Participant 2 (P2) “Biking on a floating bridge”**

##### **Student-athlete**

From a student-athlete perspective P2 placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of autonomy, individuality and accountability. In her experience “biking on a floating bridge” means being able to draw on your own resources and skill-set outside of prescribed systemic support structures (see Chapter 5, p. 48). Due to being younger and coming from a less recognized school she felt compelled to prove people wrong and she was forced to rely on her own tenacity and drive to differentiate herself from the rest and be acknowledged by coaches and management, she referred to this as “stepping up and flying”. At this point she started recognizing investment and belief from those around her

and in turn began believing more in her own ability. She experienced a great deal of benefit in voicing her opinion and communicating her needs in an assertive manner. She also recognizes that accountability stretches beyond the management of one's own life and encompasses taking responsibility for performance from a team perspective (see Chapter 5, p. 49). This links with her coping style in that to deal with the challenges of being a student-athlete, various coping mechanisms came to the fore. Abidalhafiz et al. 2010; Proctor & Boan-Lenzo, 2010; Surujlal, et al. 2013 value avoidance (freedom from worry) and problem-focused (goal-setting) styles of coping in this context. In this instance P2 has demonstrated problem-focused coping.

The above serves as testament to succeeding at “biking on a floating bridge”, but P2 also addresses factors that cause imbalance. The experience of pressure to meet the high expectations of parents is something that results in frustration and despondency (see Chapter 5, p. 50). There are certain dietary implications to consider whereby in P2's experience she does not get the sustenance she requires to sustain her strenuous training schedule because doing so means sacrificing time that she doesn't have. A significant feature across the results was dietary implications in relation to rigorous training regimes, intense physical exercise and recovery (see Chapter 5, p. 50). Person et al., (2013) found that there wasn't sufficient time to make the adequate dietary provisions to allow for recovery and a balanced diet which increases the risk of injury, adds to stress and diminishes the standard of performance. Another factor that contributes to imbalance is the fluctuation of the intensity of commitment required between academics and netball. P2 stresses that in these instances it's difficult to plan and remain focused, and if one isn't quick to adjust and re-evaluate they are in danger of falling off the “floating bridge” (see Chapter 5, p. 50).

P2 experiences more support from the netball sphere than from the academic sphere and expresses an innate need for career guidance and preparation for life after university and netball (see Chapter 5, p. 52). While at the same time she also acknowledges that she has learned skills as a netball player that will stand her in good stead in the working world and other spheres of life (Aquilina, 2013; Coakley, et al., 2008; Steinfeldt, et al., 2011; Weis, 2007).

## **Micro-system**

P2 does not often feel comfortable enough to express herself on an emotional level, but still feels the need for an emotional release none the less. While rare, she speaks about the value of finding comfort and support from those who share her experiences as it is important to her that she feels understood before sharing her emotions with others. Through sharing her experiences and emotions she is able to make meaning and experience a sense of catharsis. Her friends form the basis of her support structure by helping her alleviate pressure, clear her mind and maintain “ordered variety” between academics and netball which assist her with “biking on a floating bridge” (see Chapter 5, p. 46). This supports the findings of Aquillina (2013), as well as Watt and Moore (2013) who posited that having variety could alleviate the pressure of having to solely focus on academics and sport. There is a degree of consensus in the findings that it is also important to have social interaction outside of sport and academics (Aquillina, 2013).

## **Macro-system**

P2 has expressed that she has had a positive interaction with the NSA in the sense that she has been able to establish communication channels with them that are transparent and direct and she acknowledges the NSA’s support that has come in the form of meaningful direction and guidance which has contributed positively to her ability to “bike on a floating bridge” (see Chapter 5, p. 48). The study done by Lopez et al. (2015) found that there was an improved relationship with the Spanish Sport Council as a result of keeping student-athletes well informed with relevant information.

### **9.1.3 Participant 3 (P3) “Juggling”**

#### **Student-athlete**

One of the most challenging aspects of P3’s student-athlete experience was adjusting to change. Major aspects of this adjustment were being away from home, sacrificing family time and the new experience of university netball, which involved feelings of being misunderstood, homesickness and being launched into an immensely competitive environment that she was not yet accustomed in the absence of her primary support

system. All these factors impaired her ability to “juggle” significantly (see Chapter 6, p. 54).

As a reactive response to the difficulties that accompany adjustment P3 attributes her capacity to deal with those factors to her ability to compartmentalize her commitments and remain in the present (see Chapter 6, p. 56).

This aligns with problem-focused coping styles which is one of the preferred styles of coping from a student-athlete standpoint (Surujlal et al., 2013). Along with her ability to compartmentalize comes the necessity for making time sacrifices, and for this means that socializing often has to fall by the way side (see Chapter 6, p. 57). This supports the findings of Goktas (2010); Watt and Moore (2001) who posited that due to the lack of time available, student-athlete choose to forego time for socializing. She also recognizes that even though emotions are part and parcel of her experience, there is no need for them to impact her performance, this seems to be an innate coping mechanism that has stood her in good stead. Her ability to focus on one commitment at a time without having other factors, thoughts and emotions impede her performance and the discipline she has to make certain time sacrifices has helped her “juggle” (see Chapter 6, p. 57). All these attributes that have helped her “juggle” and keep “balls in the air” have led to noteworthy opportunities that have allowed her to represent her country and participate in international tournaments overseas.

She often struggles to make meaning and sense of her experience environment and so she uses religion as a means of understanding her experience and environment when she otherwise not able to. In addition to her religious beliefs she is able to demonstrate rationality, resilience and mental toughness as another means to assist her “juggle” (see Chapter 6, p. 58).

### **Micro-system**

After having entered into an extremely competitive environment and managing to adjust P3 found that competitive environments got the best out of her performance wise. It is what pushes her to train harder and motivates her to perform at her best during match scenarios (see Chapter 6, p. 58). The presence a competitive identity was found in the

results and supports the findings of Person et al. (2001) and Steinfeldt et al. (2011) which posits that female student-athletes typically identify with norms of winning. From a performance perspective her teammates drive her to be better while from a supporting aspect her family assist her in a more holistic fashion by tending to her emotional needs. By being so far away from home she isn't always able to get that support in the way that she requires and takes strain as a result (see Chapter 6, p. 58). Student-athletes tend to assume distinctive athletic identities that are exhibited through their appearance, the value they place on physical activity, the competence they possess as netball players and the encouragement they receive from others to succeed (Anderson, 2004; Grossbard et al. 2009; Weis, 2007).

### **Macro-system**

P3's experience of the Macro-system is one lacking in trust and one that contributes to existing pressure and she is therefore unwilling to engage with entities within the Macro-system. Consistent with the findings of Henry (2013); Lopez et al. (2015); Mckenna & Dunstan-Lewis, (2004) who studied the available support at an English university there was evidence found in this study to suggest that there was an experience of a lack of support and understanding from the academic sphere. This finding encompasses dynamics within the Micro-system and Macro-system (see Chapter 6, p. 60). She is also aware that the decisions made at a government level do impact her indirectly, particularly through the laws put in place regarding players of colour.

#### **9.1.4 Participant 4 (P4) "The early bird catches the worm"**

##### **Student-athlete**

Abedalhafiz, Altahayineh and Al-Haliq (2010) found that the most significant causes of stress were related to injury and illness. A major concern for P4 is the possibility of injury, which has forced her to consider making provisions for if injury were to occur (see Chapter 7, p. 64). These provisions come in the form of placing emphasis on her academics to the extent that she prioritizes her academics over netball (Aquilina, 2013). Having said that she continues to prioritize both academics and netball very highly and in order to meet her commitments in both she has been required to develop and draw on certain resources

as well as make sacrifices in order to “catch the worm” (see Chapter 7, p. 64). In order to manage this all successfully she has had to sacrifice sleep in order to make time to meet her obligations (Aries et al., 2004; Goktas, 2010; Watt & Moore, 2001). She has also come to realize that making the time alone is not enough and utilizing that time efficiently through careful planning, her ability to multi-task and organization is what really makes the difference (see Chapter 7, p. 65).

The transition from school to university demanded a massive shift in mind-set in the sense that that P4 needed to be far more self-disciplined in her new environment. This transition came with additional challenges in the form of not having the time to source meals that provide the right sustenance with the most significant consequence being that she has not been able to recover properly from strenuous exercise. This was supported by the findings of Person et al. (2013). She concedes that in addition to making adequate time for recovery and leisure a sufficient diet is equally important (see Chapter 7, p. 65). To combat the constraining factors that were previously mentioned P4 acknowledges the value of understanding her purpose and motivation for doing what she does. Knowing and embracing the “why” behind her actions assists her with “catching the worm”. (see Chapter 7, p. 65). This motivation is intrinsic in nature whereby P4 is also bound by contractual bursary implications which has necessitated that she meets certain netball performance criteria (see Chapter 7, p. 66). As a result of her student-athlete experience P4 has acquired a mind-set that will assist her in other spheres of life (see Chapter 7, p. 68) (Aquilina, 2013; Coakley et al., 2008; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Weis, 2007).

### **Micro-system**

While P4 has relied heavily on her own inner resources and skill sets she has also been able to “be the early bird and catch the worm” through the help of key individuals in her life. She attributes a great deal of her success to the holistic and personal efforts, honesty and mutual understanding of coaches, management and friends (see Chapter 7, p. 66). A significant part of this effort has come in the form of invested interest from her parents which has played a key role in her motivation to succeed (see Chapter 7, p. 63). Wycliff and Simiyu (2010) found that coaching styles that are overly demanding and lack

empathy relate to stress. P4 in this case has experienced the adverse and has benefitted from the invested and supportive coaching styles of her coaches.

She places emphasis on open and honest relationships with those around her as it sets clear boundaries and expectations between parties. This has played a significant role in having to miss academics for netball travel requirements in that clear expectations have allowed to plan accordingly in order to “catch the worm” (see Chapter 7, p. 67).

### **Macro-system**

P4 acknowledges her Macro-system and NSA in particular as an entity that has provided her with life changing opportunities whereby she was afforded that chance to play netball and get exposure overseas while also receiving considerable financial compensation (see Chapter 7, p. 67).

#### **9.1.5 Participant 5 (P5) “Bird without wings”**

Core to P5’s belief system is the belief that it is possible to be a student-athlete and make a success out of netball and academics simultaneously. This belief has stemmed from seeing other student-athletes succeed as well as from her own experiences of success (see Chapter 8, p. 70). This is possible through viewing balance from a holistic lens that encompasses all aspects of life which is not without the necessity of sacrifice (see Chapter 8, p. 71). The ability to selectively make sacrifices and manage time well has helped her “grow wings”. Being considered an elite athlete comes with a great deal of expectation in the sense that people impose their ideals of what a student-athlete needs to portray, which contributes significantly to the pressure that is experienced (see Chapter 8, p. 72).

P5 believes that there are also elements of her life that she has no control over and as a result she subscribes to religious divine intervention in the sense that there are reasons for why things occur. This has been a source of comfort, particularly while she experienced injury and financial strain at a time when the longevity and success of her netball career was at stake (see Chapter 8, p. 73). To conclude there is a firm belief that the skills P5 learned are transferrable and will stand her in good stead for the future (see Chapter 8, p. 75) (Coakley, et al., 2008; Steinfeldt, et al., 2011; Weis, 2007).

## **Micro-system**

Previously it was stated that P5 values balance that encompasses holistic balance. Her experience of the netball sphere has proved to be conflicting in the sense that its interests have appeared to be self-serving while the academic sphere is more accommodating towards the netball sphere (see Chapter 8, p. 71). The findings of Henry, (2013); Lopez et al., (2015); Mckenna and Dunstan-Lewis, (2004) both support and contradict these findings in that P5 has experienced a degree of understanding and support from the academic sphere but experiences a lack of support and understanding from the netball sphere. She experiences further conflict due to her bursary being reliant on her netball performance – this increases that amount of control the netball sphere has over her (see Chapter 8, p. 71). This supports the findings of O’Shaughnessy (2009) who’s inquiry demonstrated the emphasis that universities place on winning through the business-like recruitment of top talent, resulting in the human element being neglected and the expectation that sport must be prioritized over all else.

Her support system has played a major role in helping her “grow her wings”. It has helped her overcome adversity and built a basis from which she can believe in herself (see Chapter 8, p. 74). To benefit the most from her relationships with coaches and management she has expressed the need for rapport building and personal relationships that extend beyond the superficial and “business-like” (see Chapter 8, p. 75). Managing coach’s expectations is also a significant consideration in that student-athletes feel pressure and an obligation to prioritize coaching staff and team expectations (see Chapter 8, p. 72). This supports the findings of (Isoard et al., 2011; Gearity & Murray, 2011; Wycliff & Simiyu, 2010).

## **9.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO LITERATURE**

This section will focus on themes that emerged that did not feature in this study’s literature review and were prevalent across the results. One of the trends that was identified was that there is an inherent belief that it is possible to make a success as a student-athlete, but success is relative to the subjective view of the student-athlete. While bursary considerations were mentioned as a supporting finding, there was evidence to suggest that student-athletes experience a great deal of pressure to meet a certain standard of



performance as athletes as well as ensure they pass academically so not to place further financial burden on their parents. While the literature discusses the support system in terms of formalized organizational support from academic and sport management, the participants of this study placed a great deal of emphasis on their families being key components of their support structure and motivation to succeed. To add to the support perspective the participants placed a significant amount of emphasis on the importance of experiencing meaningful interpersonal relationships with key figures within their respective systems – there was a general need to move away from the business-like, formal nature of interaction that they reported experiencing. The role of religion emerged as a central theme not only from a support perspective but also to allow for making meaning of and understanding their world. There was evidence to suggest that there is a deficiency of viable and safe outlets for student-athletes to portray vulnerability and discuss concerns that are emotionally charged and sensitive in nature. The participants expressed a need for a viable outlet to express issues of this nature and expressed that they were only comfortable doing so if they felt they could truly be understood and that the people they confide in share similar experiences to them. The emotional impact of leaving home and a primary support base was emphasized by the participants and the adjustment to life at university and a fast-paced, elite netball environment demanded mental toughness, resilience and the need for a new support base away from home. To conclude the participants hardly eluded to elements within their Macro-system, this could be due to a lack of awareness of the impact of the Macro-system and the possible lack of a hands-on approach from the Macro-system when it comes to the management of student-athletes. The only participants who eluded to the Macro-system were those who had international playing experience. Another disconnect was observed between the sporting sphere and the academic sphere whereby there was not much evidence to suggest any significant communication or collaboration. The onus is very much on the student-athlete to manage themselves in relation to the two spheres in an autonomous fashion.

### **9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings of this study this section will propose a set of recommendations that could be used to supplement current policy that is used to manage netball players who are registered students at this institution.

Given that these participants struggled with finding balance and a lack of time was one of the main contributing factors it would be recommended that efforts be geared towards equipping these student-athletes with time management skills that will help them better utilize the time available to them.

With regard to support systems, there was a general trend in the results where families formed the corner stone of their support systems. It may be pertinent to consider ways of creating more opportunities for family to play more active roles when it comes to the support of student-athletes, particularly where families live far away.

The participants of this study also placed a great deal of emphasis of on experiencing meaningful interpersonal relationships with management, coaches and their teammates. In light of this, purposeful and directive team building activities geared towards establishing meaningful interpersonal relationships would be useful as part of the programme.

Another trend was the emphasis placed on religion as a source of comfort and meaning. Encouragement and support should be given to student-athletes to practice their respective religions as they see fit.

The importance of having variety emerged as a trend. In light of this it is important that student-athletes experience activities outside of academics and netball that add meaning and fulfillment to them.

A trend emerged whereby the participants expressed a need to be able to express their concerns in a safe environment. It would be useful to provide these student-athletes with options that provide them with opportunities to freely voice their concerns and provide them with the emotional support they need.

The results provided evidence to suggest that the participants require dietary plans that match their strenuous training regimes. It may be useful to provide assistance in providing meal plans and equipping the student-athletes to efficiently use them.

It was common trend amongst the participants that they would actively consider life after academics and netball, particularly in terms of the careers they would pursue. It may be useful to offer support to student-athletes in this regard.

#### **9.4 LIMITATIONS**

This section of the chapter will provide an overview of the limitations that became apparent in this study.

The sample used for this study was not representative of the general demographic of South Africa as the participants comprised of Caucasian female student-athletes. A recommendation would be to have included a group of participants that were more representative of the general demographic.

Even though the interviews were conducted in English, it is not the first language of any of the participants which may have had an impact on the ease at which they were able to express themselves.

### **Conclusion**

This research study sought to explore the experiences of student-athlete netball players within a tertiary setting in South Africa. Their experiences were examined through an ecosystemic lens so to add structure and context to the investigation of their environments and how they experience them. This chapter highlighted the findings of this study and how they supplemented and contributed to the existing literature in Chapter 2. In addition, limitations were identified, along with recommendations for future research.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**RESEARCH PERMISSION**



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**TuksSport**

19 April 2016

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: CONSENT LETTER**

I, Kobus van der Walt: Director of TuksSport, hereby grant permission for Mr Ian Hartley (student no:13301099) to use members of the women's Netball team from the University of Pretoria, as participants in his research study. I grant him permission to make use of the sports offices at L.C. de Villiers to conduct all the interviews needed to complete his MA research project with the proposed title of:

**“Juggling lecture halls and sport activities (Netball) within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study”**

Signed

Date:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director TuksSport: Kobus van der Walt

19 April 2016

Sport Centre, Room 2-72  
University of Pretoria  
PRETORIA 0002  
Republic of South Africa

Tel: +27 12 420 6062  
Fax: +27 12 362 0682  
Enquiries: Val Moodley

Email: kobus.vanderwalt@up.ac.za  
www.up.ac.za

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH INVITATION



... 2016

### SECTION A RESEARCH INVITATION

Dear Student-Athlete,

I am a MA (Counselling Psychology) student at the University of Pretoria. The topic of my research project is: **“Juggling lecture halls and netball within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study”**.

I would hereby like to invite you to consider participating in this research project, as the purpose of this research project is to explore how student-athletes experience their dual careers within a tertiary education setting in South Africa.

If you are interested in participating in this research project, you please need to sign the “Research Contact” section of this letter, as this will grant me permission to convey more detailed information to you regarding the research project.

Once I have given you more detailed information regarding the research project, you can finally decide if you are willing to participate voluntarily in this research project. I also want to assure you that anonymity and confidentiality will be upheld during the entire research process.

Prof. Lourens Human, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria will be my supervisor for this research project (Email: lourens.human@up.ac.za).

Kind regards,

Mr. Ian Hartley  
Researcher

Cell no.: 071 6042 411

E-mail: imhhartley@gmail.com

**SECTION B  
RESEARCH CONTACT**

I hereby acknowledge that I am interested in participating in the MA (Counselling Psychology) research project of Mr. Ian Hartley: **“Juggling lecture halls and sport activities (netball) within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study”**.

I hereby grant Mr. Ian Hartley permission to convey more detailed information to me regarding the research project, with the purpose of making an informed decision regarding my participation in this research project.

.....

.....	.....	
Name & Surname	Signature	Date

## APPENDIX C

### RESEARCH INFORMATION PARTICIPANT



... 2016

#### SECTION A RESEARCH INFORMATION

Dear Student-Athlete,

The following information is important regarding a research project at the University of Pretoria. Once you have read through the information in **Section A**, and you are willing to participate in the research project, please complete **Section B**.

**Information:** I am currently registered for my MA (Counselling Psychology) degree at the University of Pretoria, where I am required to do a mini-dissertation. I am interested in people's experiences of dealing with the demands of being a student-athlete at a tertiary institution in South Africa.

Prof. Lourens Human from the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria is the study leader of my research project. He can be contacted on [lourens.human@up.ac.za](mailto:lourens.human@up.ac.za).

**Title:** "Juggling lecture halls and netball within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study".

**Aim:** The primary aim of this study is to understand how student-athletes experience their dual careers within a tertiary education setting in South Africa and to inform existing policy with the aim of assisting student-athletes to cope with the demands of sport and study.

**Process:** Group interview:

- 1) Firstly information pertaining to the nature and aim of this study as per this document will be conveyed to you before you agree to sign consent to participate in this study.
- 2) Once consent has been signed, you together with the rest of the group will then have the interview map explained to you
- 3) You will then be requested to fill in the interview map as how it pertains to your own life.
- 4) Following on from step 3 you will be asked to write about the following areas:
  - Your experience of being student-athletes
  - Describing the interplay between being a student-athlete and the Micro-system over time and how it contributes to your experience.
  - Describing the interplay between being a student-athlete and the Macro-system over time and how it contributes to your experience.

ii) Individual Interviews:

- 1) The written protocols and completed interview maps will then be used to inform the interview schedule that will be formulated according to the subjective information provided by each participant.

**Risks:** Should you feel that you have endured psychological stress during this procedure psychological services will be available to you at the High Performance Centre by the resident counselling psychologist (Dr Monja Human) at no cost. Her contact details are [aremonja.human@hpc.co.za](mailto:aremonja.human@hpc.co.za).

**Benefits:** There are no financial gains for participating in the research, but you may benefit personally in terms of sharing your experiences and provide data that can better inform current policy in supporting student-athletes.

**Rights:** Participation is voluntary, meaning it is your choice whether you want to participate or not. You may withdraw from participating at any time without negative consequences for doing so.

Confidentiality: All information will be treated as confidential. Anonymity will be assured, and the data will be destroyed if you wish to withdraw your participation. All possible identifying characteristics will be altered or omitted from the research report, meaning none of your personal details will appear on the research report.

Data: During the period of the research the data will be stored on my personal computer that only I have access to. After completion of the research, data will be stored in the Department of Psychology (Room 11-24) at the University of Pretoria for 15 years for archival purposes, as well as for future research.

Researcher: If you need further clarity or more information, my contact details are as follows:

Name: Ian Hartley  
Cell no.: 071 6042 411  
E-mail: imhhartley@gmail.com

Researcher: ..... (Mr. I. Hartley)

Date: .....

Research Supervisor: ..... (Prof. L.H Human)

Date: .....

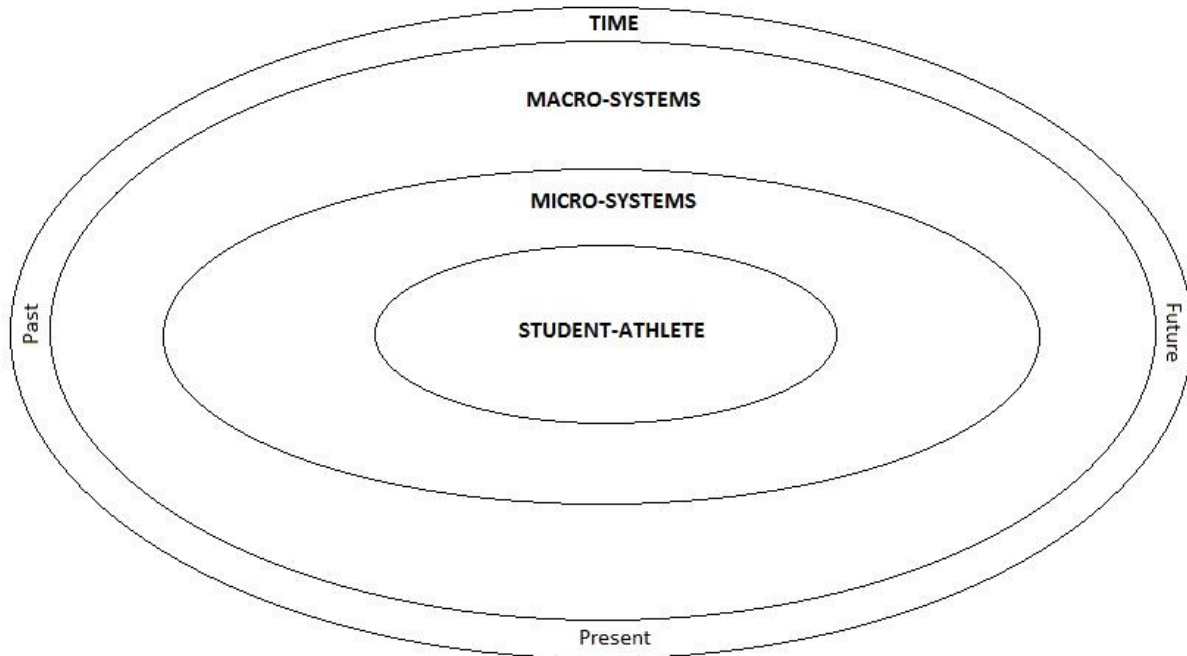
Head of Department: ..... (Prof. D. Maree)

Date: .....

## APPENDIX D

### RESEARCH PREPARATION

#### Interview Map



- Step 1:** (i) **Group format:** The interview map will be explained to the participants in relation to:

**Student-Athlete:** Refers to the centre of the model that operates within time and systemic domains.

**Time:** Refers to where the student-athlete has come from, where they are currently and where they are going in the future.

**Systems:** Are comprised of Micro-systems and Macro-systems. Micro-systems refer to the systems that the student-athlete will have direct contact with. These include: departments, family, friends and the TuksNetball Club. Macro-systems have a definite influence on student-athletes, but are not in direct contact with them. These include: TuksSport, SASCO, Department of Sport and Recreation, Department of Higher Education, University of Pretoria and academic faculties.

- (ii) **Group format:** Once Step 1 has been completed, the participants will be given a clean "interview map" and asked to complete it with information from their own lives on all four levels.



**Step 2:** **Group format:** Participants will be asked to give a written account of their experiences of being student-athletes within time (past, present, future) and systems (Micro-system, Macro-system). The questions will be aligned to the “interview map” in the following format:

- 1) Can you describe your experience of being a student-athlete?
- 2) Can you describe the interplay between your experiences of being a student-athlete on the Micro-level over time?
- 3) Can you describe the interplay between your experience of being a student-athlete and the Macro-level over time?

**Step 3:** **Individual format:** Once Step 1 and Step 2 are completed individual interviews, based on the completed “interview map” and written accounts, will be done with the participants with the purpose of exploring the information obtained from the “interview map” and written accounts.

## APPENDIX E

### SUPPORT



TuksSport (Pty) Ltd. t/a hpc | Reg. No. 2001/020098/07  
Burnett St. | Pretoria | P.O. Box 14622 | Hatfield | 0028  
Tel: +27 (0) 12 362 9800 | Fax: +27 (0) 12 362 9890  
E-mail: [info@hpc.co.za](mailto:info@hpc.co.za) | [www.hpc.co.za](http://www.hpc.co.za)

19 April 2016

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Dr Monja Human, Head of Sport Psychology at the High Performance Centre (hpc) at the University of Pretoria, am prepared and willing to see the participants in the study of Ian Hartley (student number: 13301099) on an individual basis if the need for individual sessions arise. These services will be rendered free of charge.

The title of Ian Hartley's study is:

“Juggling lecture halls and netball within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study”.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Human'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dr Monja Human  
Counselling Psychologist  
(Head of Sport Psychology, hpc)

**APPENDIX F**  
**STORAGE FORM**



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

I, the principal researcher, Ian Hartley and supervisor, Prof. L. H. Human the supervisor of the study “**Juggling lecture halls and netball within a tertiary education setting in South Africa. A narrative research study,**” will be store all the research data and / or documents referring to the above-mentioned study in the Department of Psychology (Room 11-24), Humanities, University of Pretoria for archival purposes, as well as for future research.

**We understand that the storage of the mentioned data and / or documents must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this study.**

Start date of study: **Jan 2016**  
Anticipated end date of study: **Nov 2016**  
Year until which data will be stored: **2032**

<b>Name of Principal Researcher</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ian Hartley		

<b>Name of Supervisor</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Prof. L. H. Human		

<b>Name of Head of Department</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Prof. D. Maree		