

**An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete.**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete. Adolescent learner-athletes who had all transitioned from disadvantaged communities into the TuksSport High School and TuksSport High School Athletics Academy. This was accomplished through a case study research design which incorporated the use of collages alongside unstructured interviews. Each research participant was required to create collages, which represented their experiences as learner-athletes at the TuksSport High School. Once the collage making process was complete, each participant was interviewed individually, with the focus of the interview set on their completed collages. The researcher transcribed the unstructured interviews and then analysed them using thematic analysis. Through this process it was uncovered that the research participants had experienced significant challenges and opportunities at the TuksSport High School. The findings of this research study indicate that the participants had experiences that corroborated with, differed to or were unique to existing research that has been conducted.

**Key words:** Adolescents, case study, collages, disadvantaged communities, dual careers, learner-athletes, transition.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>CAPS</b>	National Curriculum Assessment and Policy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>hpc</b>	High Performance Centre
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SAFA</b>	South African Football Association
<b>SASCO</b>	South African Sports Confederation
<b>SRSA</b>	Sports and Recreation South Africa
<b>TSHS</b>	TuksSport High School
<b>TSHSAA</b>	TuksSport High School Athletic Academy
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

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**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Personal Prelude and Rationale**

I think it's safe to say that for me it began in primary school. I cannot recall a time attending school without some sort of sporting event or activity taking place after school hours. I remember always being involved in several sporting activities, which would take place during every afternoon of the week. I played soccer, tennis and attended a different school on Thursday's for rugby practice (my school at the time did not offer rugby as a sport). I also swam, ran cross country and did every event offered in athletics. I took to sport like a duck to water.

It was at this time that I was also training as a gymnast twice a week, and training would generally end late, between 18:00 and 19:00 o'clock. I received my South African colours for trampolining when I was twelve, and represented the country in several international competitions and events over a number of years. In primary school I loved my sporting endeavours. I enjoyed every moment of being on the field, or track, or court. I remember a belief I held, that the sporting events, races and various competitions were the reason for school being there.

Thinking back, I never experienced my various commitments as exhausting or obstructing with regards to my academic and/or social endeavours. I think it was through my parent's tireless involvement that I always had enough time and energy to complete my homework and attend to assignments and projects. I even had enough time at one point to attend pottery lessons once a week. I loved the idea of being a sportsman and even built a homemade high-jump set up in my back garden at home. Running was definitely my favourite though, it has always been my favourite, and is an aspect of my life I maintain to this day.

As a result my whole experience with sports developed a strong desire in me to always be active, to always participate and be involved. So when I attended boarding school for my high school years I carried with me a certain mind-set, a belief of being unbeatable and able to do everything without difficulty. I was proven wrong.

I came to realize that I could not take part in every sport, not even half of them. And at the end of the day my commitment to sport turned out to be a time consuming activity which resulted in a stagnation in my academics as I struggled to balance the two commitments. I never received much guidance, nor was it offered, in this regard. However I was lucky enough to realize this shortcoming in time, before it was too late, and managed to strengthen and further my academic career.

This realization occurred during my university years, where once again my perceptions were challenged. As a university student, I picked up my trampolining training immediately upon my enrolment. However, after an injury that left me unable to train for several months I realised that I could not fully commit to both domains without proper support in both my academic and athletic pursuits. Upon reflection I believe that if I could have received firm and realistic guidance during my high school development, regarding my sporting options and the importance of my academic future, I may have achieved a better transition and outcome in both spheres.

This made me think about other students at TUKS, especially learner-athletes, and how they balance their sporting and academic endeavours being so young. Do they have support? Did they receive guidance? How do they cope being a learner and an athlete, thus essentially occupying a dual career at such a sensitive age?

Through my experience, I believe that guidance and assistance in the development of both domains, through the transition of the various levels at school and university, has the potential to greatly influence an individual's future growth and understanding of their academic, athletic and personal capabilities. I decided that exploring the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete could possibly highlight and explain the unique situation these adolescents find themselves in.

## 1.2 Purpose of Study and Problem Statement

### 1.2.1 Why this study?

The purpose of this research study was to explore the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School (TSHS) learner-athlete. Adolescent learner-athletes who had all transitioned from disadvantaged communities into the TSHS and TuksSport High School Athletics Academy. By identifying the most prevalent themes that arise from our conversations, I will explore and present the experiences of the learner-athletes by unpacking the advantages and disadvantages (if any) of being a TSHS learner-athlete.

However, understanding the context in which the learner-athlete is situated is of vital importance, as this provides a complete picture of the environment and the factors involved (Henriksen, Stambulova, & Roessler, 2010). With this perspective a background is provided, against which the TSHS learner-athletes daily interactions and negotiations of their dual career roles can be better understood. The following section provides an overview of the TSHS setting in support of the purpose of this study.

#### 1.2.1.1 TuksSport High School

The TuksSport High School (TSHS) is an independent co-ed high school operating for learners from Grade 8 - 12. It is situated on the University of Pretoria's sports campus, and was founded in 2002 by the director of TuksSport Mr Kobus van der Walt, and Dr Joubert. Initially the TSHS was situated in a single basement classroom within the High Performance Centre (hpc<sup>1</sup>). At its inauguration the school had only 27 students enrolled. In its quest for a flexible and supportive model of teaching and learning through the years, the school has undergone numerous changes in its various stages of transformation (Jordaan, 2018).

Fifteen years after its opening the TSHS now accommodates over two hundred learners. The majority of learners attending the high school come from previously disadvantaged communities (Human & Human, 2016). The TSHS identifies disadvantaged communities as those to which opportunities for good educational institutions and formal training and/or

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<sup>1</sup> This is the format in which the official brand abbreviation of the High Performance Centre is displayed.

coaching facilities are limited (F. Hlobo, personal communication, February 23, 2017). These limitations have the ability to impede the athletic and academic talent development of prospective learners, therefore the TSHS aims to provide opportunities for individual talent to be realised (Human & Human, 2016).

The TSHS itself now resides within its own physical space, but it still shares its vision with the hpc, of offering a unique sporting and learning environment to its learners. The school is also afforded the services of the hpc, which include professional sport science and medical services (including sport psychology services). As it has grown over the years, the TSHS has made additions to the number of sporting codes it offers and the number of academies available to its learners. Private clubs and National Federations alike have come to recognise the high standard of training facilities, the tailor-made sport specific packages, and academic support and flexibility that has been offered by the school. South African Table Tennis, the South African Football Association (SAFA) and South African Rowing are some of the national federations that have partnered with the TSHS and the hpc.

#### 1.2.1.2 TuksSport High School Curriculum

The curriculum of the school aims to equip its learners with knowledge and skills that will aid them both on and off the sports field. Learners are prepared equally for their roles as future sport personalities, as well as within their chosen career paths. The National Curriculum (CAPS), which is offered by the Gauteng Department of Education, is presented to the TSHS students. This ensures that its learners will, by the end of matric (Grade 12), not only meet the requirements for a Senior National Certificate, but that they will also be able to achieve university exemption should they wish to pursue a tertiary academic career.

To enforce the importance of this academic pursuit, the TSHS, despite being a Sports School, emphasises a ‘No Pass – No Train’ policy. The TSHS’s typical school day operates from 9:15 to 15:15. Training sessions are set before and after the school day, thereby allowing for academic development and adequate recovery time in between training sessions (Human & Human, 2016).

### 1.2.1.3 TuksSport High School Sports Programmes

The sports programmes on offer at the TSHS are facilitated by the University of Pretoria, and are provided through the TuksSport Athletics Academy (TSAA). These programmes fall under the directorship of Mr Kobus van der Walt, and include; the TuksGolf Junior programme, TuksAthletics programme, TuksSwimming programme, TuksJudo programme, TuksTennis programme, TuksTriathlon programme, TuksSport Judo and the TuksFootball programme. Within all the sporting codes the school offers professionally recognised coaching that is internationally comparable. All members of these foundations are serviced from primary entry level, all the way through to Olympic and international levels.

### 1.2.1.4 TuksSport High School Residence

The TuksSport High School Residence (TSHSR) is housed within the TSHS. The TSHSR offers the learner-athletes two house parents, as well as a team of mentors who work with the learner-athletes on a daily basis throughout the year. The rooms within the TSHSR sleep between two to four learner-athletes in twin bunk beds. For the majority of the learner-athletes the TSHSR becomes home, as they are attending the TSHS on a bursary programme and come from varying and distant regions of the country (TuksSport High School, 2016).

### 1.2.1.5 TuksSport High School Dual Career Programme

The TSHS is the only high performance school in South Africa that simultaneously develops its pupils as learners and elite athletes. Consequently, this specialised school offers its pupils unique opportunities, as they are able to train and travel internationally, while still enrolled in the school. Being the only school of its kind in South Africa the TSHS offers unique opportunities and privileges, but with this come unique challenges and obstacles (de Swardt, 2015). By attending this school, learners automatically adopt a dual career lifestyle: that of a learner and that of an athlete. These pupils therefore assume a learner-athlete role, formally known as a 'dual career' (European Union [EU], 2012).

The term, 'dual career' refers to the challenge of combining a career as a high level sportsman or sportswoman with academics or work (de Subijana, Barriopedro, & Conde, 2015; EU, 2012). Embarking on a dual career involves an attempt to compete in any type of

professional or elite sporting field, while completing an academic course or attending an educational institution, or alternatively while working (Stambulova et al., 2015). The concept of dual careers will be further explored in Chapter 2.

Based on the unique schooling environment as described above, the sensitive developmental phase of adolescence, and the related demands of pursuing a dual career, it becomes clear that the TSHS learner-athlete may struggle to find balance in the development and management of their dual careers.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The most significant, as well as the majority of current literature available on dual careers is found predominantly in developed countries such as Germany, Finland, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Turkey (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012; Bradley & Conway, 2016; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Gayles & Baker, 2015; Göktaş, 2010; Ronkainen, Selanne, & Ryba, 2016; Ryba et al., 2015; Ryba et al., 2016; Sorkkila, Aunola & Ryba, 2017; Stambulova et al., 2015; Watt & Moore, 2001). Limited research has been done to explore dual career experiences in South Africa, a need therefore exists to better understand and support this population (Burnett, Peters & Ngwenya, 2010).

Adolescence in its entirety is seen as a period of transition (Lenz, 2001). It is a period during which responsibilities increase and begin carrying more meaning, where societal influence begins affecting personal behaviour, ideas and morals, and where identity with the concept of self comes into focus (Hurrelmann & Quenzel, 2015; Lenz, 2001). These stages of change are marked by certain developments, which include but are not limited to physical, cognitive and social changes that shape the way individuals come to view themselves (Magano & Gouws, 2013).

During this extended transitional period, individuals are required to become increasingly aware of their affect and behaviour, and regulate these aspects in accordance with their respective goals and consequences (Steinberg, 2005). Due to the nature of their rapidly evolving personality perceptions, social proclivities and comprehension of their own intellectual and behavioural capabilities, adolescents are at an increased risk of developing a

wide range of emotional and behavioural problems if balance is not achieved (Ryba et al, 2015; Steinberg, 2005).

As a result, of the number of challenges facing adolescents, one of the most formidable complexities becomes balance (Ryba et al., 2015). However, achieving this balance is a far more complex endeavour for the TSHS learner-athletes (Human & Human, 2016) as they are not only situated in their role as adolescent learners, but are also committed to an intensive high performance athletic career. As previously mentioned, adolescents attending the TSHS come from previously disadvantaged communities, making their adjustment to and understanding of this environment challenging in its own right. (Human & Human, 2016).

Concurrently, they face the complex endeavour of managing the entwined psychological and psychosocial changes occurring during adolescence, as well as the developments and expectations occurring amidst their academic pursuits (within the high school), and their high level sporting endeavours occurring within the TSAA. The complexity of this dimension extends further still, as these individuals reside in the shared environment of the TSHSR, with the nature of the hostel limiting privacy and personal space<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that achieving balance during adolescence can be challenging. However, as previously mentioned, for the TSHS learner-athlete it is more so, as achieving this balance is a key requirement if they are to successfully progress through adolescence and the development of their dual careers.

To better understand the nature of establishing stability through adolescence, and more specifically the challenge of this for learner-athletes involved in dual careers, it is important to unpack the areas of adolescent development which may present as problematic if adolescents are not supported through their dual careers. Psychologically adolescents are confronted with rapid, multiple vicissitudes (Weber et al., 2018). These include, but are not limited to shifting personal perspectives, self-awareness, self-image and psychological balance in relation to increasing responsibilities (Mineka & Zinbarg, 2006; Weber et al., 2018).

In terms of establishing their identity adolescents are required to combine multiple roles into a single, balanced and stable sense of self, while avoiding role engulfment (Magano &

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<sup>2</sup> In this study, the term TSHS will be used to refer to the overall system of the TSHS, TSHSR and TSAA, unless otherwise stated.



Gouws, 2013; Ryba et al., 2016). Social development is also viewed as a pivotal aspect through adolescence, due to the weight it carries in social, personal, behaviour and cognitive areas of development and learning (Ryba et al., 2016; Sameroff, 2009).

Finally academic and athletic development are crucial elements of consideration within adolescent development. This is due not only to the role these two fields play in dual careers, but also because of the magnitude of their impact on personal and social learning, knowledge and development, and the power their relative outcomes have in shaping adolescent's futures (Sitkowski, 2008; Sorkkila et al., 2017). These aspects of adolescent development will be further explored in Chapter 2.

Achieving balance for the TSHS learner-athlete is therefore a pivotal requirement in their dual career endeavours. Athlete career research has illustrated that obtaining balance in sport and the aforementioned other areas of life directly and indirectly influence the prevention of athletic dropout, as well as athletic identity foreclosure. However, achieving balance has been seen as vital, as it assists learner-athletes in coping with the junior to senior transition which occurs approximately around the ages of 16 – 18 years old (Ryba et al., 2016; Stambulova, et al., 2015). It is this junior to senior transition that athlete career literature indicates as a major source of concern regarding the successful integration of sport and education (Ryba et al., 2016), and one of the central aspects relating to the significance of this study. This is due to the intensification of training requirements, competitions, academic obligations, social developments and vocational career planning (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007; Ryba, et al., 2016).

These additional elements therefore significantly alter the typical experiences occurring for the adolescents attending the TSHS (Human & Human, 2016). These individuals are expected to perform in a highly competitive and professional sporting environment, while enrolled as full-time learners attending classes. This makes the experience of achieving balance far more intricate for the TSHS learner-athlete (Human & Human, 2016).

The challenge of achieving balance and managing a dual career arises from the different tasks the TSHS learner-athletes are required to complete, the different roles they need to fulfil and the time requirements placed on them. Part of their responsibilities entail completing homework, assignments and exams, while attending intensive training sessions in preparation

for national and international tournaments. These dual career experiences place additional demands on them when compared to the average learner-athlete, as the TSHS individuals are required to train in the mornings before school, as well as in the afternoons following the end of the school day (Human & Human, 2016). Therefore, what this necessitates is that part of the recovery period for these learner-athletes occurs during their hours of attending classes.

Training for the TSHS learner-athlete is year-round, and competing occurs on provincial, national and international levels during the academic year. As a result, balancing these two careers during a time of complex personal and social growth requires continuous preparation and dedication (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Human & Human, 2016). During this time, these adolescents still need to form a personal identity, establish and maintain friendships, and comprehend their role in the world they inhabit (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). Furthermore, with these adolescents being separated from their families for extended periods of time in such a demanding environment, additional challenges emerge on various developmental and personal levels.

Taking the abovementioned into consideration, this study, situated within the South African context, examining a population originating from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are all recipients of full sponsorships to attend the TSHS provides an alternative and unique perspective on dual careers.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

How do learner-athletes experience their dual careers within the TSHS and the TSAA?

### **1.4.1 Sub Questions:**

- What (if any) are the advantages of being a learner-athlete at the TSHS?
- What (if any) are the disadvantages of being a learner-athlete at the TSHS?
- Based on the advantages and disadvantages of being a TSHS learner-athlete, what (if any) are the possible guidelines that could be provided in order to ensure adequate support is offered in the successful negotiation of a dual career for a TSHS learner-athlete?

## 1.5 Overview of Structure

Chapter 1 introduces the setting, rationale and context of the research study. A brief discussion with regards to finding balance in adolescence, the transitional experiences within dual careers and the possibility of the culmination of these aspects leading to burnout is explored. Finally the research questions, aims and objectives are clarified.

Chapter 2 is an exploration of the literature review regarding dual careers and learner-athletes.

Chapter 3 introduces the research position through an exploration of its philosophical underpinnings, namely the ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology of the research study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research design, as well as the quality and ethical considerations made.

Chapter 4 presents the analysed results collected from the research participants. The findings are situated within existing literature.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the research findings with the purpose of addressing the research questions, with the conclusion of the chapter discussing the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an introduction to the research study and its rationale. The context and setting was outlined by providing a brief summary of the TSHS. The experiences learner-athletes face with regards to balance, transitions and burnout were explored. The final aspects of this chapter highlighted the questions, aims, and objectives of the study, and provided an overview of the research study's structure.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the relevant literature regarding adolescents involved in dual careers. A discussion surrounding the specified pathway, as well as the challenges it holds and the advantages it offers is provided. Finally the current stipulations set in place for supporting and guiding adolescents involved in dual careers are considered.

#### **2.1 Defining Dual Careers**

Dual careers in sport are defined by the EU (2012) as “the requirement for athletes to successfully initiate, develop and finalise an elite sporting career as part of a lifelong career, in combination with the pursuit of education and/or work as well as other domains which are of importance at different stages of life, such as taking up a role in society, ensuring a satisfactory income, developing an identity and a partner relationship” (p. 6). For the purpose of this study, the concept of dual careers will be used in this study to refer to the simultaneous combination of any sporting or athletic career with an academic or educational career. (Ryba, et al., 2015; Stambulova et al., 2015).

Dual career literature refers to ‘student-athletes’ as those individuals who are enrolled in secondary schooling (Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012; Stambulova et al., 2015) or those who are currently completing their tertiary education (Human & Human, 2016; Ryba et al., 2015). In this study, the term ‘learner-athlete’ will be used to refer to the participants, as they are currently enrolled in the South African secondary schooling system (Human & Human, 2016). The learner-athlete dual career, as previously mentioned, entails combining high level, or elite, sporting endeavours with academic or educational pursuits (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Ryba et al., 2016; Stambulova & Ryba, 2013).

The challenge of combining academic pursuits and elite sport in an effort to establish a dual career pathway has been recognised by the European Commission in order to promote sport development in a socially responsible manner (EU, 2012; Ryba et al., 2016). The prospects of

undertaking a dual career are seen as favourable, due to the fact that both sports and academics are recognised as significant. This allows for learners who are not willing or able to continue their sports, to still be able to leave school or university with a qualification or degree (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015).

However, commitment in both of these domains is highly demanding, and personally taxing in various personal and inter-personal domains. Some of the specific challenges faced by learner-athletes include role conflict, substance abuse issues, social challenges and weight management or eating disorders (Göktaş, 2010; Watson, 2003). As a result, the research available indicates a need for further exploration into this phenomenon in order to advance, promote and support the learner-athlete's dual career (Cosh & Tully, 2014).

The undertaking of a dual career requires learner-athletes to successfully integrate the initiation, development and finalization of an elite sporting career as part of a lifelong career, with that of their educational and/or vocational pursuits (EU, 2012). In order for a dual career to be successful, there are varying levels of requirements, disadvantages, advantages and dangers that need to be considered. These aspects require the attention of the learner-athlete and their interpersonal and context specific support structures within their environment (EU, 2012; Ryan, 2015).

The majority of current literature available has been conducted on student-athletes who are situated in the university or college context (see for example Caput-Jogunica, Ćurković, & Bjelić, 2012; Lee & Opio, 2011; Pavlidis & Gargalianos, 2014). Therefore the focus of these studies have been on student-athletes in an alternative development phase in comparison to the adolescent learner-athletes attending the TSHS, who are a part of this research study. However, Watt and Moore (2001) examined how research that has been conducted on dual careers can often be seen as transferable, and can provide a substantial understanding of the disadvantages and advantages involved, as well as the support required in the navigation of these endeavours. As a result international studies that have been conducted on university student-athletes can be seen as transferable, and can provide significant understanding regarding the disadvantages and advantages involved, as well as the necessary support concerned in dual careers (Gomez, Bradley & Conway, 2018; Watt & Moore, 2001). This will now be explored further.

## 2.2 The Dual Career Model

Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) put forward a developmental model illustrating the normative transitions faced by learner-athletes and student athletes alike, within their psychosocial, psychological, athletic, academic and vocational levels. The premise of this model was based on the understanding that the career of learner-athletes is not solely determined by the progression and development of their athletic level. Rather, the four levels mentioned continuously interact and affect one another throughout the adolescent's numerous developmental transitions. Therefore, it is understood that the effective navigation of these concurrent transitions of development may result in the learner-athletes experiencing the more beneficial aspects of their dual careers (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

The need for such a model is supported by literature indicating the strong coexisting, interactive and reciprocal nature of the transitions occurring within the athletic career, and the transitions occurring within the other domains of the learner-athletes' lives (Wylleman et al., 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010). As such, this model will be used in the present study in order to explore the advantages, disadvantages and supportive needs that learner-athletes face when taking part in dual careers.

Within this model, Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) state that dual careers commonly span between 15 to 20 years, with various overlapping occurring between the four levels in this timespan. The following section will present the most relevant literature regarding learner-athletes, and will integrate this literature with the four levels of the model. This will be done with the aim of providing a comprehensive and practical perspective of all the levels, as well as the advantages, disadvantages and support requirements of dual careers.

### 2.2.1 Athletic Level



*Figure 2.* Development process and transitions of athletic career. This model illustrates the development and transitional phases the learner-athlete passes through in their athletic career.

The top layer of the model encompasses the various stages and transitions learner-athletes face in their athletic development. While the transitions faced by learner-athletes tend to be

unpredictable, there are a range of normative developments occurring throughout the athletic level. Aspects such as the organisational characteristics of the institution where the learner-athlete pursues their vocation, athletic expertise and age all impact the athlete in a normative manner. These factors are significant and should be considered when exploring the transitions of an individual's athletic level, as they are vital in comprehending the phase the individual may currently be in.

Included in this level are the three phases of athletic or talent development identified by Bloom (1985), which are characterised by specific transitions. The three phases are: the Initiation phase, the Developmental phase and the Mastery or Perfection phase. A fourth phase, the Discontinuation phase, was later added. The 'Initiation phase' occurs between birth and the ages of 12 and 13 years old. Within this period young athletes are introduced to organised sports and the identification of young talented athletes occurs. Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) state that in this phase a child becomes enthralled and absorbed in their sport at a non-identifiable moment. In this phase a child moves from a playful outlook to a more focused and serious perspective of their sport and their ability. The children who do not experience this realization have been seen to either continue their participation in the sport at some level, advance slower in their progress or terminate their participation entirely.

The 'Developmental phase' represents the second phase, and depicts the stage at which learner-athletes' dedication to their sport increases as the amount of training and degree of specialisation proliferates. This stage typically spans between the ages of 14 to approximately 17-18 years old. Personal values such as commitment and hard work have been seen as beneficial in attaining a higher level of play within this phase. It is also the point at which, enjoyment is no longer the sole reason for participation.

The third phase is viewed as the 'Mastery or Perfection phase'. At this stage learner-athletes begin to comprehend that their ability and talent is greater or more developed than most competitors in their sport. Within this phase they tend to take more personal responsibility for their practice and competition performances, with parents adopting a less active role. Usually occurring between the ages of 18 and 32 years old, it is within this phase that individuals attain their highest level of athletic proficiency. This stage is often characterised by athletes setting themselves apart from others; as unique, through their resistance of particular societal and social norms.

The ‘Discontinuation phase’ represents the fourth phase, and can occur from the age of 32 years old onwards. This phase was added to Bloom’s (1985) three-stage model after an increased amount of research indicated that an athlete’s transition out of competitive sports is a long and valuable one. The phase is characterised by a decrease in overall athletic performance, the occurrence of an injury or injuries and/or ageing. During this time, athletes will typically cease competing at the levels they had previously attained, but may still continue exercise or sports for recreational purposes. From this point onwards the focus is shifted, and more time and energy becomes devoted to thinking about the initiation of a new career in or outside of sports (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

### 2.2.2 Psychological Level



*Figure 3.* Normative psychological developmental stages and transitions viewed in terms of age. This model illustrates age-related phases a learner-athlete typically passes through.

The second layer in Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) model presents the normative psychological transitions as developmental stages with regards to age. These stages are: childhood (up to 12 years old), adolescence (13 to 18 years old) and adulthood (from 19 years old onwards). According to this model, the successful transitioning of learner-athletes moving from organised sports to the competitive sporting sphere is somewhat dependent on the successful psychological transitioning, development and readiness illustrated in this level.

A crucial aspect of adolescence is the development and construction of a balanced notion of self-identity. The value of this is highlighted in literature that has explored the positive and negative effects of a one-sided, or athletic focused identity. If professional athletes have a strong athletic identity, thereby defining themselves solely within their athletic role, they are at considerable risk of experiencing transitional complications when terminating their sporting careers (Gayles & Baker, 2015). This state of identity is also referred to as athletic identity foreclosure, which indicates a commitment to the role of being an athlete in the absence of exploratory behaviour in other areas of life (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017).



Involvement in other areas of life offers individuals experiences and information essential in making informed decisions regarding personal interests, values and skills (Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000). An individual’s exploration in other areas of life thereby facilitates the development of their coping strategies and confidence in their abilities to achieve success in adulthood (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017). Therefore the significance of the successful navigation of these psychological phases is warranted, as a well-rounded psychological perspective of self-identity is substantially beneficial in attempting to successfully transition through the various other personal levels, and challenges faced (Ryba et al., 2016).

### 2.2.3 Psychosocial Level



*Figure 4.* Learner-athletes psychosocial development and network. Model illustrating the normative psychosocial aspects of the learner-athlete’s development.

The psychosocial level comprises the third layer of the model, and represents the learner-athlete’s development within their social sphere, in relation to their sporting endeavours and network. Certain relationships are seen to play a significant role in the learner-athlete’s psychosocial transitioning. These include: the athlete-parent, athlete-coach, the parent-coach and athletic family relationships. Peer relationships are viewed as important throughout the majority of these phases of athletic development. However, the learner-athlete and parent, as well as the learner-athlete and coach relationships are believed to affect successful transitioning the most (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014; Wylleman & Lavalée, 2004).

The available literature concerning the immediate relationship between the learner-athlete’s psychosocial development and athletic development indicates two aspects. Firstly, the quality of the learner-athlete’s relationships will change over time, and secondly, the quality of the relationships will play a key role in whether or not the learner-athlete will successfully transition through the phases (Wylleman & Lavalée, 2004).

## 2.2.4 Academic/Vocational Level



*Figure 5.* Normative academic and vocational stages and transitions faced by learner-athletes. Model depicting the normative academic and vocational developments of learner-athletes.

The remaining layer of the model signifies the normative academic and vocational stages and transitions that the learner-athlete will pass through. Included here is the primary education to elementary schooling transition (6 or 7 years old), followed by the transition into secondary education or high school (12 or 13 years old) and the transition into tertiary education, which refers to college or university (18 or 19 years old). The final transition in this level is depicted as the transition into vocational training or professional occupation (which could occur at an earlier age).

The phases presented above illustrate normative transitions based primarily on age. What is not taken into account is academic ability, or other factors and difficulties involved. Each phase of this level includes its own host of disadvantages and advancements that the learner-athlete is required to successfully navigate in order for them to transition into the next phase (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

The ages at which this model indicates the stages and transitions occurring for the learner-athlete are tentative, as the learner-athlete may face unexpected events or disruptions, such as changing schools or moving homes. Although this developmental model does not include non-normative transitions (e.g., changing coaches, an unanticipated transfer to another team or a season-ending injury) or transitions where there were certain expectations that did not come to fruition (such as not making a certain selection, or not making the Olympic Games) – known as ‘non-events’ (Schlossberg, 1981) – which may also affect the nature of the learner-athletes’ participation in their athletic career – it nonetheless provides a framework from which the developmental, interactive and interdependent nature of transitions and stages facing learner-athletes can be situated and reflected upon (Wylleman et al., 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

## **2.3 Advantages Involved in a Dual Career**

Numerous studies have revealed that a dual career lifestyle has the ability to benefit learner-athletes on various levels (EU, 2012; O'Neill, Allen, & Calder, 2013; Pummell, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2008). It is possible for the two fields of sport and education to not only be compatible, but to complement one another (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). This can be seen through the physical demands and growth in place within the athletic career, and the educational or cognitive development provided through the academic career (O'Neill et al., 2013).

Such an endeavour can also prove beneficial to talented adolescent athletes who are interested in competing in elite sporting contexts, but who are not interested in becoming professionals who earn a living from their sport (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). Embarking on a dual career would allow such individuals to compete in the higher levels of the sporting world, while still developing their academic career in preparation for tertiary education.

### **2.3.1. Advantages within the Athletic Level**

The advantages within the athletic level are predominantly centred on the physical aspects experienced with exercise. The positive aspects resulting from physical exercise have been found to be numerous. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2003) these included the promotion of healthy muscle and joint development, and the cultivation and maintenance of healthy bone structure. Regulation of body weight, the efficient functioning of the heart and lungs and the reduction of body fat were all found to be positively affected by physical exercise (Martinsen, 2008; WHO, 2003).

Through physical exercise, learner-athletes are believed to increase their physical wellness, therefore directly benefiting from the time spent engaging in their sporting endeavours (Holt et al., 2011; Martinsen, 2008). Participation in the athletic or sporting spheres has also been found to be a positive factor in the development of other significant areas of the learner-athlete's life. These include better school attendance, reduced delinquency, higher career aspirations and improved social standings among peers (Gorton, 2010; White, 2005). Further advantages reported as a result of the participation in a dual career include: an increased

quality of academic work, the understanding of what a balanced lifestyle entails, and reduced levels of stress (Barber, Eccles & Stone, 2001; Gayles, 2009; Tekavc, Wylleman, & Erpič, 2015).

Participation in the sporting sphere also has the ability to develop goal-setting and leadership skills within learner-athletes (Lindstrom Bremer, 2012). Advantages within the athletic level therefore range from protection against certain physical illnesses, to fortification regarding certain psychological and emotional conditions (Piko & Keresztes, 2006). In addition the increased socialisation experienced through sporting involvement, assisting identity development and personal awareness, point to aided positive personal growth (Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). As a result the overall advantages of the athletic level are numerous, on the condition that this level is incorporated within a balanced lifestyle (Sorkkila et al., 2017).

### 2.3.2 Advantages within the Psychological Level

According to Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) model, learner-athletes display considerable psychological advantages as they transition through the various phases of their development. These advantages include, but are not limited to, an increased interest in other areas of life, self-confidence, gaining autonomy and the development of an athletic identity (Tekavc et al., 2015). Involvement in a dual career lifestyle has also been linked to an increase in crucial areas of learning and development, such as: openness to diversity and disadvantages, self-esteem, leadership skills, critical thinking, and other affective outcomes (Gayles, Rockenback, & Davis, 2012).

Donaldson and Ronan (2006) conducted a study in which they established a positive relationship between participation in sports and decreased rates of depression. In this study they also found that learner-athletes have higher rates of perceived competence. This study was then elaborated on in terms of the impact sports participation has on suicidal ideation. The findings indicate that learner-athletes reported significantly less suicidal ideation (Brown, et al., 2007).

The EU (2012) has also stated that the developmental advantages of a dual career within the psychological level include improved ability to develop the life skills applicable in sport, education and other areas of life. Involvement in dual careers therefore holds the ability to

facilitate holistic development in various areas of life, as well as provide increased self-awareness, thereby cultivating and reinforcing personal life skills (Hartmann, 2008; Ryba et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2005).

### 2.3.3 Advantages within the Psychosocial Level

The psychosocial advantages seen in dual careers vary from those experienced individually by the learner-athlete, to those experienced as the result of the influence stemming from the various relationships involved in dual careers. Due to learner-athletes consistent exposure to both the academic and sporting fields, they are offered the opportunity of developing individual, interlinked and group connections in two different domains of life (Ryba et al., 2016). These relationships may be formed with peers, coaches, teachers, mentors or significant role players in their lives, and all hold the ability of providing support and guidance through their endeavours (Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014).

In a study conducted by Feldman and Matjasko, (2005) it was reported that commitment and mutual trust were personal aspects that developed considerably through sports participation. During this type of participation learner-athletes may also be recognised by their peers, or other learners, and come to be acknowledged for their achievements and abilities regarding their sports (Gayles & Baker, 2015; Tinley, 2002). This may further assist in the development of the learner-athletes' self-esteem, popularity and acceptance amidst their peers and community, which could then lead to the creation of an intrinsic reward system (Gayles & Baker, 2015).

Certain relationships are seen to provide considerable psychosocial advantages for learner-athletes. Specifically, the athlete-parent, athlete-coach and the parent-coach relationships, which all positively enhance the transitioning within the developmental phases of learner-athletes (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). With respect to the athlete-parent relationship, parents who are involved tend to invest financially, emotionally and/or practically in their child's pursuits, thereby providing guidance for the learner-athletes within their sports (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Lindstrom Bremer, 2012). This type of involvement has seen advantages relating to increased autonomy and enhanced self-perception of sporting skill (Dorsch, Smith & Dotterer, 2015).

### 2.3.4 Advantages within the Academic/Vocational Level

Research indicates that the initial advantages of participation in sports, or more specifically in dual careers, is the increase in interest and motivation toward academics and overall schooling (Burnett, 2000; Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). This notion is supported by the evidence that learners involved in sports generally outperform their nonathletic peers in terms of academic performance (Gayles & Baker, 2015). Such an occurrence takes place due to the potential learner-athletes have of taking certain skills they have learnt in their sporting environment, and transferring them over to their academic environment (Hartmann, 2008). In this regard dual careers facilitate positive growth in both domains.

Literature also shows that participation in sports tends to produce lower dropout rates, improved academic performance and increased interest in attending university or college (Gayles & Baker, 2015; Hartmann, 2008). The increased interest in attending university was found in learner-athletes generally expressing higher educational aspirations than their nonathletic peers (Marsh & Kleitman 2003).

A broad overview of the literature regarding participation in high school sports benefiting academic endeavours suggests that learner-athletes are more likely to achieve higher grades, higher overall pass rates and generally improved academic performances (Broh, 2002; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). Based on this literature it could then be stated that these advantages appear to promote the normative transitioning within the educational/vocational sphere for the learner-athlete.

### **2.4 Disadvantages Involved in a Dual Career**

The dual career path presents unique challenges and obstacles, as, in an effort to combine elite sport with academics, a testing environment is created (de Subijana et al., 2015). Adolescents in this position are required to combine two separate roles that are barely compatible with each other: that of being an elite athlete and that of being a high school learner (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012). Global research has consistently established that elite athletes find it increasingly difficult to simultaneously reach their full potential in these two areas and achieve in their pursuits, as they progress through high school (Ryba et al., 2016).

The compound pressure present in combining an athletic and academic career leaves learner-athletes vulnerable to increased levels of anxiety, burnout, overtraining and stress overload, as well as various transition difficulties across development (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; O'Neill et al., 2013; Ryba et al., 2016).

#### 2.4.1 Disadvantages within the Athletic Level

Learner-athletes are faced with numerous disadvantages when it comes to achieving in their high-level performance environment. To begin with the level of dedication allocated to the athletic sphere has the ability to infiltrate and dominate the internalised beliefs learner-athletes may have of themselves (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017). By focusing the majority of their time and resources on their athletic development learner-athletes may come to believe that all of their time should be dedicated to their sporting endeavours in order for them to be successful (Cosh & Tully, 2014, 2015). This leaves limited time, if any, for the other areas of their lives, and could negatively skew their personal identities (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Gayles & Baker, 2015; Ryba et al., 2016). Due to this commitment, the occurrence of a non-normative transition (see Chapter 2, p. 17) such as a season ending injury also has the possibility of leading to significant emotional and motivational difficulties.

Participation in high level competitive sports elicits different levels and experiences of stress from learner-athletes (Patel, Omar & Terry, 2010). The perception for many learner-athletes regarding this stress is that it is similar to the stress they experience in daily life. However, certain stressors have been recognised as threatening and debilitating to adolescent learner-athletes. What this may lead to is the use of substances as a coping mechanism. Lisha and Sussman (2010) found that there are certain factors that increase the likelihood of increased substance use in athletes. These factors include: the competitive nature of athletes, the environmental influences present, stress drinking and the overarching culture linking and promoting the association between sports and alcohol.

The effects of physical exercise on physical wellbeing have been found to have numerous positive effects. However, the nature of dual careers appears to override these positive effects due to an increase in emotional factors such as perceived anxiety, depression and stress (EU, 2012). The effects on the physical body, brought about by these emotional aspects, have the

ability to negatively affect sporting and academic performance. These difficulties arising throughout the athletic level leave the learner-athlete at risk with regards to their successful transitioning and personal functioning (Göktaş, 2010).

#### 2.4.2 Disadvantages within the Psychological Level

Having been presented with a plethora of responsibilities and requirements at such a young age, these adolescents have a number of individual challenges they need to overcome. One of the more personal requirements in this period of time involves the formation and understanding of identity, as the years of progression through adolescence remain vital for the development and exploration of identity (Cabrita et al., 2014; Ryba et al., 2016). Due to the various requirements, the nature of the challenges faced by the learner-athlete, such as the development of an identity foundation, tends to become increasingly more complex (Ryba et al., 2016).

This is seen in a trend that has developed whereby learner-athletes focus solely on the development of their athletic identity, (Gayles & Baker, 2015; Horton & Mack, 2000; Ryba et al., 2016), which is defined as the degree to which an individual identifies with their athletic role (Brewer, van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). High level or elite careers in sport are usually brief, with retirement from elite or professional sporting careers typically occurring between the ages of 30 to 35 years old. Nevertheless, these short-lived careers still require an immense amount of dedicated time and commitment in order to develop sport-specific skills (Ryba et al., 2016). This level of commitment results in a number of learner-athletes becoming so immersed in their roles as athletes, that they will refer to themselves as athlete-learners, with the role of athlete dominating all else (Singer, 2008).

The abovementioned narrowed focus is a cause for concern, as studies have found that, especially in adolescence, there is always the possibility of losing touch with the value and significance of balance in the search for individualistic goals and objectives. (Aquilina, 2013; Gustafsson et al., 2007). This indicates a dangerous possibility of one-sided development, as research has indicated that in this highly demanding context, success in one pursuit often comes at the expense of the other (Ryba et al., 2016). Due to the significant importance of adolescence in the construction and formation of identity, a phenomenon such as this can



result in a considerably entrenched unbalanced sense of self (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Cabrita, et al., 2014; Ryba et al., 2016).

Learner-athletes who possess a one-dimensional athletic identity have higher expectations of themselves and experience greater pressure to succeed, which may in turn result in increased levels of athlete burnout and identity foreclosure (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Gustafsson et al., 2007; Stambulova et al., 2015). As a result, this has the potential to negatively sway their development on a personal and occupational level, compromising their psychological state, confidence and self-worth due to the validation of these aspects relying on the outcome of any sporting results (Ryba et al., 2016).

Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) model highlights the notion that the adolescent learner-athlete will face various transition levels. The disadvantages confronted at the psychological transition level are numerous, and do not occur in isolation. The holistic nature of this developmental model indicates a possible threat to the normative transitioning occurring in the remaining levels, should the transitioning of the psychological level be non-normative for the learner-athlete.

#### 2.4.3 Disadvantages within the Psychosocial Level

Some of the more challenging tasks facing learner-athletes involve achieving balance in various areas of their lives, such as: social activities, physical health, numerous relationships with coaches, family and friends and athletic success or lack thereof (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2013). Achieving balance in these pursuits is a task on its own, however these are areas of the learner-athletes life that often fall by the wayside and are disregarded (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). This is due to the fact that limited time and resources remain for other areas of importance as the learner-athletes attempt to successfully balance the requirements of their athletic or sporting careers with their academic career requirements. (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007; Ryba, et al., 2016).

As a result learner-athletes in general sacrifice a significant amount of time with their family and friends for their sporting commitments (O'Neill et al., 2013). This once again has the possibility of affecting the learner-athlete in a considerably negative manner, as time spent

with family and personal social networks carries significant weight in various personal areas (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2013).

The difficulties experienced at this level appear to have a substantial impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of learner-athletes. This has the potential to negatively affect the normative transitioning through the psychosocial level of learner-athletes, if it is not correctly facilitated (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

#### 2.4.4 Disadvantages within the Academic/Vocational Level

From the abovementioned, it can be seen that the demand that is placed on the learner-athlete requires a substantial amount of personal sacrifice. This is predominantly due to the time and resources needed in order to develop the required sporting or athletic skills necessary to compete at their level, regardless of other personal or environmental factors (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2013; O'Neill et al., 2013). Therefore, despite the majority of learner-athletes viewing education as important, they tend to prioritise their athletic career over the other areas of their life (Aquilina, 2013; Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Cabrita et al., 2014; Cosh & Tully, 2014, 2015; James, 2010; Watt & Moore, 2001).

This occurs as a result of the difficulty learner-athletes experience in reconciling their training and competition demands with the restrictions and requirements of their academic endeavours (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Ryba et al., 2016). Associated with this, is the direct reward system involved in being a high-performance athlete. Learner-athletes tend to be more attracted to what sport can offer, such as the alluring immediate success and the recognition received from fans, in comparison to the long-term advantages experienced in receiving an education for future vocational possibilities (Pavlidis & Gargalianos, 2014). As a result of the prioritization of their sporting career, aspects of the learner-athletes' academic endeavours, such as performance and achievement, can easily become adversely affected (Cosh & Tully, 2014; McGillivray, Fearn, & McIntosh, 2005; Ryba et al., 2016).

The extent of this sacrifice is not solely limited to their academic efforts however, as personal time is regularly given up for training and competitions (Gayles & Baker, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013). A possible consequence of this, in addition to the development of a one-sided identity, is that, in maintaining a sole focus on athletic development, the learner-athlete

becomes limited in their ability to make sound decisions on their future vocational endeavours (Cabrita et al., 2014; Stambulova et al., 2015) Consequently, learner-athletes who focus exclusively on their sporting endeavours compromise the growth and development of other skill-sets and areas of interest. This increases the risk of learner-athletes successfully transitioning within their educational/vocational levels (O'Neill et al., 2013).

Such a situation has the ability to impede career intentions and the possibility of learner-athletes developing their career maturity - which is the readiness to make responsible, reasonable and informed career decisions (Cabrita et al., 2014). In light of this, a large portion of learner-athletes intentionally withdraw from their dual careers, due to the concern that their sporting demands were consuming too much time, thereby restricting the time available for other areas of life (EU, 2012).

## **2.5 Supporting Those Involved in Dual Careers**

The advantages that dual careers offer can only occur if certain personal and circumstantial requirements are fulfilled in learner-athletes' lives. In a personal capacity, learner-athletes are required to cultivate competencies, skills and understanding in both domains in order to adequately cope with their career and life transitions (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Ryba et al., 2016; Stambulova et al., 2015). Furthermore, balanced support in their various domains is required if learner-athletes are to achieve success within their dual careers (EU, 2012).

### **2.5.1 Support within the Athletic Level**

Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) state that the successful transitioning of the learner-athlete through the phases of athletic development are contingent on the phase in which they find themselves in. At the athletic level, the phases of athletic development include: initiation, development, perfection/mastery and discontinuation. According to the literature, due to their age the learner-athletes of the TSHS are situated in the developmental phase of their athletic level. However, the learner-athletes of the TSHS fall out of their age bracket in this model, as they are situated firmly within the perfection/mastery phase of their athletic development. This creates a unique situation, as the coping strategies implemented by these learner-athletes, and the support offered, may not fit perfectly within a theoretical framework.

Effective coping and support for the learner-athlete is significantly dependent on the relationship between the disadvantages faced by learner-athletes and the resources available to them. In this regard, resources are understood as the internal and external factors that play a role in the effective transitioning that has been experienced, such as past personal and athletic experiences, as well as the professional support available (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014).

However, in order for the supportive structures to be effective to learner-athletes, they need to be fully integrated with the various domains of the learner-athletes' lives. According to the EU (2012), maintaining direct contact with learner-athletes, their parents, performance directors, managers, doctors, educators and other relevant stakeholders is necessary in the pursuit of supporting their athletic development and dual career endeavours. In line with this is the notion of balance, as this level has a tendency to consume learner-athletes attention, time and effort (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Ryba et al., 2016) Therefore learner-athletes should be facilitated in maintaining a balanced outlook when attending to their athletic endeavours, in order to prevent against role engulfment (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009).

### 2.5.2 Support within the Psychological Level

Psychological support occurs both personally and interpersonally for learner-athletes (EU, 2012). At a personal level, this refers to the support and cultivation of characteristics possessed by the learner-athlete (EU, 2012; Evans et al., 2009). At an interpersonal level this includes guidance and support on a more practical level (EU, 2012; Lally & Kerr, 2005).

Much of the adolescents' personalities will aid in the formation of their perceptual lenses, which will influence their notions of self-worth, and determine their appraisal processes. In this regard it has been suggested that, in order to facilitate learner-athletes learning and personal development within their transitioning through and out of high school, three conditions are required (Evans et al., 2009). Firstly, individuals pursuing dual careers should exhibit an attitude that demonstrates a willingness to grow and shift. This will provide them with the strength and coping ability needed to overcome the psychological challenges of a dual career. Secondly, these individuals need to be challenged in a way that allows for a shift in balance to occur, thereby initiating a change in their thinking to a higher more complex

manner of reasoning. Finally, to enhance growth, learning and development, learner-athletes require support from their environment (coaches, teachers, family, peers, administrations etc.) in their search for and acquisition of flexibility, elevated thought processes and personal endeavours (Evans et al., 2009).

Therefore, learner-athletes who are supported in the development of positive mind-sets and balanced self-perception, are more likely to succeed in navigating their dual career roles (O'Neill et al., 2013). In addition to this support, learner-athletes possess a need for awareness and empathy of their context from the support structures involved in their dual careers (Lee & Opio, 2011; O'Neill et al., 2013; Singer, 2008). These individuals should thereby be supported in maximizing the advantages of their sporting endeavours, while compensation is made for its potential costs (such as one-sided development) or the sacrifices that are required in other areas of life (EU, 2012; Stambulova et al., 2015). This can be achieved through providing psychological assistance in the form of personal development training courses, career planning and development, lifestyle management, educational guidance and information, and skills to prepare and cope with transition and change (EU, 2012).

Furthermore, available literature indicates that a significant number of adolescent athletes experience burnout in their quest for success in their athletic endeavours (Appleton, Hall, & Hill, 2009; Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002; Gustafsson et al., 2007). The risk of burnout occurring is especially pronounced during adolescence due to the challenging combination of intense physical demands and excessive psychological pressures faced when undertaking a dual career. The likelihood of burnout is increased when an adolescent's identity is narrowly defined and/or their self-worth is based on athletic achievement (Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002; Hall, 2006). Therefore, psychological assistance and guidance in this regard is necessary (Appleton et al., 2009; EU, 2012).

Finally, as previously mentioned, equal development is a requirement for the learner-athlete if balance is to be established. However, this can only be achieved by providing enough attention to all these areas, and in the learner-athlete receiving guidance in these pursuits through the relevant support structures (Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; EU, 2012).

### 2.5.3 Support within the Psychosocial Level

Literature indicates that learner-athletes pre-existing relationships have the potential to serve as valuable psychosocial support structures (Dorsch, Smith & Dotterer, 2016; Fredericks & Eccles, 2004). However the extent to which these relationships are considered beneficial and supportive is determined by the nature of the support involved (O'Rourke et al., 2011). It is therefore suggested the support from the learner-athletes significant relationships in this regard is warm (supportive, affectionate and sensitive), imbues positive affect and cultivates a mastery-focused motivational climate in order for these individuals to feel supported (Dorsch, Smith & Dotterer, 2016; Kanters, Bocarro & Casper, 2008; Laursen & Collins, 2009).

Learner-athletes have the potential to develop multiple social and personal relationships (Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014). Due to the nature of their demanding schedules however, these relationships should predominantly assist learner-athletes in a subjective and personal manner, thereby supporting them in achieving their short and long-term goals (EU, 2012). The importance of this is recognised when understanding the impact the formation or presence of negative relationships can have on learner-athletes dual career progression, or their personal development (O'Rourke et al., 2011).

A study conducted by Burnett, Peters and Ngwenya (2010) stated that learner-athletes in South Africa require suitable study times, as well as tutoring and welfare services in support of their dual career pursuits. This statement is also reflected in literature suggesting that tutors, mentors and teachers are able to provide psychosocial support for those undertaking a dual career path (Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; EU, 2012). Therefore, the relevant role players in the learner-athletes' dual careers form part of important relationships which assist these individuals with coping and successful navigation of their psychosocial development (Fryklund, 2012; Gayles & Baker, 2015).

### 2.5.4 Support within the Academic/Vocational Level

Due to the fact that learner-athletes are often left to navigate their academic pursuits on their own accord, this population is often unaware of the availability of existing academic support programs (Aquilina, 2013; EU, 2012). This often adds to the phenomenon of learner-athletes dedicating significantly more time to their sporting endeavours, while overlooking the

relevance and importance of other areas of their lives (Ryba et al., 2015). Therefore, it appears that learner-athletes require guidance and information when it comes to the navigation of their academic careers (Aquilina, 2013; Stambulova et al., 2015)

Comeaux and Harrison (2011) stated that the relationships learner-athletes establish with administrators, faculty members and peers (apart from those involved in their sporting environment) are directly related to academic success. The establishment of such relationships may offer opportunities in the form of mutual assistance, support, and formal and informal communication regarding academic goals. In addition, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) found that a personal characteristic linked directly with academic success is commitment - specifically, goal commitment. This aspect was seen as significantly influential in determining academic success.

In accordance with the difficulties faced in the academic careers of those undertaking dual careers, the EU (2012) recognises personal support as a necessary structure. Personal support is suggested in the form of tutors, personal development training courses, career discovery, planning, and development and coaching. Other forms of learning support systems which involve personalised and tailor-made strategies as a successful tool for benefiting and encouraging the learner-athlete to uphold their educational efforts, are also advised. The overarching theme of these guidelines suggests including the provision of guidance and information regarding subjects, academic programmes and future prospects for learner-athletes (EU, 2012).

## **2.6 Being an Adolescent Learner-Athlete**

Life transitions occur at various stages, and are understood as periods of time where significant changes are experienced (Lenz, 2001). These transition periods bring about instability and uncertainty which require individuals to develop new skills, make major adjustments and learn to handle new scenarios in order to successfully navigate the transition (Lenz, 2001; Wylleman et al., 2004). Such periods of change have been related to the occurrence of a single or multiple sets of events. These occurrences lead to a shift in the basic assumptions an individual may hold of themselves, as well as a social disequilibrium that is beyond the continual adjustments of everyday life (Wylleman et al., 2004).

Therefore, as previously mentioned, adolescence in its entirety is viewed as a transitional phase during which those experiencing it are required to make principal adjustments in various fundamental areas of their lives (Bucx & Wel, 2008). During adolescence reliance on others is seen to decrease as personal responsibility increases and autonomy develops in pursuit of an established identity (Lenz, 2001; Tanner & Arnett, 2009). At the same time though the establishment of certain relationships is necessary, and should be formed in the social and personal family spheres in order to assist in the cultivation of the adolescence' identity and coping mechanisms (Bucx & Wel, 2008; Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014).

The formation of adaptive, healthy coping mechanisms, is seen as a vital aspect of adolescence, due to the turbulent, rapid, fluctuating nature of this period (Lenz, 2001; Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014). The overall challenges involved in the transition through adolescence are varied and may create a challenging environment for positive youth development, as well as a grounded sense of self and stability (Tanner & Arnett, 2009; Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014).

### 2.6.1 Psychological Development

The psychological transitions facing adolescents are considered to be significant due to their rapidly demanding nature (Weber et al., 2018). As the psychological requirements during this period involve the development and establishment of new roles, personal perspectives and social understandings, adolescents often face a number of transitional challenges (Weber et al., 2018). Successful navigation of these challenges, and optimal development through adolescence is somewhat dependent on the level of accomplishment that was achieved regarding developmental tasks during infancy and childhood (Harris et al., 2015). The degree of dependency, motivation, environmental factors and experience are also some key factors that will influence the ease and manner in which an adolescent will negotiate through this period (Moksnes, 2011).

Nonetheless this period of transitioning into adolescence has been viewed as a vital period, as it is a time in which psychological problems begin presenting, or increasing, such as depression and anxiety (Moksnes, 2011; Weber et al., 2018). Psychologically, these aspects may present themselves during adolescence following an increase of stress and an inability to handle proliferated responsibilities (Mineka & Zinbarg, 2006; Weber et al., 2018). This



aspect of psychological well-being is of notable concern when considering learner-athletes, as these young individuals are required to manage numerous psychological demands including spatial separation from family and friends, mental and physical fatigue, training volume and time management difficulties, which could all lead to a reduction in mental and physical recovery (Weber et al., 2018). Learner-athletes are considered to have an increased risk towards developing psychological issues such as anxiety and depression due to their heightened psychological, physical and social demands, when compared to their non-athletic peers (Weber et al., 2018; Wylleman et al., 2004).

With regards to dual careers numerous studies have depicted the positive effect physical activity has on psychological well-being, and in turn the effect psychological well-being has on athletic performance (Edwards, Edwards & Basson, 2004; Edwards et al., 2005; Hartmann, 2008; Weinberg & Gould, 2007). However, certain aspects of athletic training can have detrimental effects on mental health, an occurrence seen in physical overtraining leading to a decrease in psychological stability (Edwards, 2007; Weber et al., 2018). This is of notable concern as the learner-athletes of this study are enrolled in intensive training programs, and may over commit themselves to their athletic development leading to an over-trained, exhaustive state of being, which could then affect their overall psychological faculty (Gustafsson, Hill, Stenling, & Wagnsson, 2015; Sorkkila et al., 2017; Weber et al., 2018).

In addition, adolescents have been seen to be particularly susceptible to the media and socio-cultural standards set regarding weight and body image (Chavez et al., 2014). Despite these unrealistic societal expectations being viewed as inaccessible, and understood as unhealthy, adolescents have nonetheless reported anxiety and body dissatisfaction regarding their self-perceptions (Chavez et al., 2014).

The link between body image and athletic involvement, or exercise, displays two opposing views. One perspective that forms indicates that exercise and a positive self-image are related to one another (Chavez et al., 2014; Weber et al., 2018). Within this view it is understood that athletes and individuals who are generally more active hold a more positive attitude regarding their own bodies than those who are less active (Chavez et al., 2014; Weber et al., 2018). These adolescents situated within this group also hold the belief that sports and physical activities are means by which to improve personal health and prevent certain health related issues (Chavez et al., 2014; Pummell, Harwood & Lavalley, 2008).

Another view that forms regarding adolescents and their body image indicates a negative relationship between sports or exercise, and adolescents self-perceptions (Chavez et al., 2014). Literature indicates that the socio-cultural influence of thinness and the self-evaluation concerning athletic success or failure can lead to a disproportionate anxiety relating to their perceived body size or image. Therefore adolescents may require assistance in this matter, in addressing the negative psychological or emotional impact such a perspective might cause, and improving the formation and understanding of their own individual body image (Chavez et al., 2014).

Therefore when considering psychological well-being in adolescence a number of factors should be taken into consideration. With regards to the TSHS learner-athletes this consideration extends further, due to their separation from their families for extended periods of time, their demanding training and competition schedules, and their high school academic requirements. This in turn leads to additional disadvantages concerning social support.

#### 2.6.2 Social Development

Interpersonal relationships during adolescence are considered important for social, personal and cognitive development (Ryba et al., 2016; Sameroff, 2009). As these relationships have the ability to develop increased personal awareness, broader perspectives and understanding, and characteristics such as empathy and emotional insight, they are viewed as significant during adolescence. The establishment of these relationships have also been seen as beneficial in supporting adolescents through turbulent periods (Ryba et al., 2016). Connection with friends, family and significant other role players or adults, such as mentors or teachers, has been seen to assist positive youth development through adolescence (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014). The presence of supportive adolescent friendships has also been linked with healthy adjustment to stress (Brady et al., 2010; Terzian, Moore & Constance, 2014), which could assist learner-athletes in particular with their increased exposure to stress (Weber et al., 2018).

Social relationships also have the ability to create inner and inter-personal conflict however (Brady et al., 2010). The connection between stressors within an interpersonal context, such as family, peer or romantic relationships, and symptoms of anxiety and depression in adolescence has been well established (Waaktaar et al., 2004). Adolescents are often faced

with conflicting demands and mixed messages from teachers, parents, employers, coaches' friends and themselves (Smith, 2007). The manner in which these individuals negotiate the path between their reliance on others and independence can often create significant levels of stress and feelings of isolation, especially in the presence of poor communication and problem solving skills (Smith, 2007).

Within dual careers, the athletic or sporting involvement, whether it be team or individual based participation, has the potential to provide a social network that could alleviate sentiments of anxiety, stress and loneliness (Chen, Snyder & Magner, 2010; Miller & Kerr, 2002). The supportive network that may form through this avenue of socialization may also assist individuals in traversing major life changes and transitional periods (Chen, Snyder & Magner, 2010; Coakley, 2007; Miller & Kerr, 2002). Due to the nature of dual careers however, time often used for socialization is compromised in order to fulfil academic and athletic responsibilities (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Therefore social relationships often break down, or are maintained exclusively within the context of the athletic sphere, thereby affecting the support network and social connections available to learner-athletes (Miller & Kerr, 2002; Petitpas, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2013).

A point of concern has been noted here, as this type of social restriction has been employed by some learner-athletes as a time management strategy, thereby providing themselves with more time for managing their athletic and academic demands (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Additionally, research indicates that this method of time management has also been employed by learner-athletes when dealing with role conflict and role overload (Miller & Kerr, 2002). This occurrence is warrant for concern, as social relationships and social development are important aspects of successful maturation, and offer an avenue through which significant pillars of support in the form of relationships can form, especially at such a crucial stage of development (Coakley, 2007; Miller & Kerr, 2002).

Consequently social relationships hold the potential to provide support, encouragement and furthered personal realization and development for learner-athletes (Chen, Snyder & Magner, 2010; Coakley, 2007). This is with the proviso however, that these relationships are not in conflict with the adolescents chosen path, and are flexible in their understanding of these individuals' respective responsibilities. The cultivation and maintenance of positive social relationships for learner-athletes is thereby viewed as significant in terms of their importance,

due to their ability to provide stability and support during transitional and turbulent times (Coakley, 2007; Miller & Kerr, 2002).

### 2.6.3 Identity Development

According to Erikson (1994) each stage of life is identified by a conflict between competing personal tendencies. During this period of transitioning through life stages, individuals are required to negotiate through opposing struggles if they are to continue through normal, healthy development (Erikson, 1994). Therefore, within the phase of adolescence, individuals are required to integrate several roles into a compatible and consistent self-identity (Magano & Gouws, 2013; Ryba et al., 2016). Failure to do so could lead to inner-conflict and confusion regarding their personal identity and who they are (Harris et al., 2015).

An aspect relating to the development of identity during adolescence is body image development. Research indicates that by the age of 6 both male and female children begin experiencing concerns regarding their body shape and weight in a manner that is similar to adolescent and adult apprehensions (Martin Ginis & Bassett, 2012). Therefore during adolescence, with the increase of hormones and socio-cultural influences, this aspect becomes a more pertinent issue that requires a positive, balanced outcome in order for healthy development to continue (Chavez et al., 2014).

The foremost concern in this area, especially in the field of sports and fitness, is the establishment of a negative body image (Brudzynski & Ebben, 2010; Chavez et al., 2014). As adolescence consists of significant physiological, cognitive and emotional changes, even minor body image concerns may increase and become overwhelming (Chavez et al., 2014). With regards to adolescent learner-athletes and their exposure to fully developed adult athletes in comparison to their physical development and self-awareness, the risk of developing a negative body image escalates (Chavez et al., 2014).

Adolescence is also a period of role establishment, which requires the formation of a consistent and stable self-identity (Harris et al., 2015; Magano & Gouws, 2013). When individuals are required to fulfil multiple roles, they may experience role strain, in which the participation or commitment to one role undermines the dedication or development in another role (Sitkowski, 2008; Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2018). Learner-athletes have reportedly

experienced role strain due to their competing demands within their academic and athletic roles (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Sitkowski, 2008).

Role fulfilment can be viewed as subjective however, and therefore can be viewed or experienced as flexible (Sitkowski, 2008). Engagement with a particular role can therefore be expanded or reduced depending on the level of commitment given to a role. Therefore learner-athlete's academic and athletic roles can exist in unison, if guidance is provided and balance is achieved between these two fields (Appleton, Hall & Hill, 2009; Sitkowski, 2008; Stambulova et al., 2015).

However, literature has also shown advantages related to sports participation and identity development. Involvement in dual careers has shown to provide the opportunity for the cultivation of a positive self-concept and locus of control (Sitkowski, 2008; Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). The development of self-belief, confidence and personal awareness has also been seen through involvement with dual careers (Harrison et al., 2018). Pertinent to this is the understanding that the development of a positive, healthy and balanced identity in learner-athletes is seen to be reliant on a number of factors, such as social, environmental and personal factors (Harrison et al., 2018; Sturn, Feltz & Gilson, 2011).

The above discussion leads to the understanding that identity formation during adolescence is a crucial aspect of their personal development. Moreover is the significance of this being a balanced development in learner-athletes, as they are at risk of role engulfment and identity foreclosure due to their challenging dual career commitments.

#### 2.6.4 Athletic Development

Research has indicated that daily physical activity, regular exercise and an adequate level of fitness can provide a level of protection against numerous negative psychological and physical conditions (Piko & Keresztes, 2006; Sundblad et al., 2008). Involvement in sporting, athletic or physical activities has proven beneficial in promoting positive perceived health and well-being during adolescence (Edwards, 2007), and has shown to be beneficial with regards to alleviating symptoms of anxiety, depression and self-esteem issues (Davidson, 2007; Salmon, 2001).

Research has also indicated positive links between athletic development and academic progression (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013). When individuals have excelled and developed in their sporting endeavours, through the attainment of training and competition goals, they reportedly experienced less stress and increased motivation within their academic pursuits (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Literature also shows that learner-athletes have the capacity to transfer life and work skills, developed and learnt through participation in sports, into their academic endeavours (Chen, Snyder & Magner, 2010; Weis, 2007).

Involvement in athletics or sports has the potential to cultivate character, discipline, sacrifice, and dedication in adolescents (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009; Sitkowski, 2008). The transference of these skills into their academic and personal lives has been viewed as beneficial on various levels (Weis, 2007). In addition, through their athletic career development learner-athletes have reportedly experienced personal development related to emotional regulation, goal-setting, social skills and self-knowledge (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009).

However, learner-athletes have also reported negative experiences through the cultivation of their athletic career. These included social exclusion, stress, negative group dynamics, negative peer interactions and harmful peer relationships (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009). Increased pressure in this domain has also resulted in increased aggression, burnout, substance use, low morality and self-esteem and dropout (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009; Shields & Bredemeier, 2001; Weiss & Williams, 2004). The challenging requirements experienced by learner-athletes in the progression of their athletic careers is significant, and holds the ability to negatively affect not only their overall sporting endeavours, but other areas of their life as well (Christensen & Sørensen, 2009).

It is therefore essential to facilitate positive youth development experiences and outcomes, through the consideration of adolescents developmental stages and the related demands and responsibilities placed on them (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). The positive establishment, growth and facilitation of learner-athletes athletic careers is consequently vital if they are to maintain progression through their personal development and dual career paths, as well as achieve balance overall.

### 2.6.5 Academic Development

Combining an athletic career with education has been a point of debate for some time (e.g. Brettschneider, 1999; Purdy, Eitzen & Hufnagel, 1982; Umbach et al., 2006). This is due to the complex and challenging nature of such an endeavour (EU, 2012; Tekavc et al., 2015). For learner-athletes situated in adolescence, in the initial stages of their dual careers, this combination can be overwhelming, and may lead to them losing sight of their academic and personal developments in pursuit of their athletic goals (O'Neill et al., 2013; Pummell et al., 2008; Sorkkila et al., 2017).

Literature has indicated the capacity that involvement in dual careers has to increase educational aspirations in learner-athletes, thereby encouraging school attendance and interest in attending university (Hartmann, 2008; Sitkowski, 2008; Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). Research has also found that learner-athletes tend, in general, to perform better academically than their non-athletic peers (Hartmann, 2008; Tower, 2008). Reduced drop-out rates have also been seen in learner-athletes, as they appear to be motivated to maintain attendance and good grades in order to ensure the continuation of their sport (Human & Human, 2016; Tower, 2008).

Academic success in dual careers has been linked to a number of personal factors however. These include a sustained ability to respond appropriately to the increasing demands presented in dual careers, and the capacity for transferring qualities such as discipline, perseverance and focus from the athletic domain into the field of academic performance (Hartmann, 2008; Sitkowski, 2008). In this manner a learner-athletes athletic and academic pursuits may be able to compliment and reinforce one another (Hartmann, 2008). The presence of a well-developed academic identity, which is understood as the level to which an individual identifies with their role as a learner or a learners' academic self-worth, is also implicated in academic success (Sitkowski, 2008).

However, managing a dual career has also been linked with a number of potential issues for learner-athletes, including difficulty in integrating academic pursuits with training and competition schedules, coping with mental, physical and emotional fatigue and making personal sacrifices (O'Neill et al., 2013; Pummell et al., 2008; Tekavc et al., 2015). As a considerable amount of time is spent preparing for, competing in and recovering from

national and international competitions, time spent on academics is sacrificed and often never regained (Grimit, 2014; Hartmann, 2008). This can lead to significant negative consequences related not only to a learner-athlete's academic development, but also to psychological issues, such as anxiety and a distorted self-concept (Sitowski, 2008; Sorkkila et al., 2017).

Learner-athletes have also been seen to relinquish their academic careers in pursuit of their athletic endeavours due to the professionalization of this career during high school (Sitkowski, 2008). At times learner-athletes have left school behind entirely, abandoning their academic pursuits in order to concentrate solely on their athletic career (Sitkowski, 2008). This type of decision, to end academics in pursuit of an athletic career, is often based on minimal information and influenced by relationships and role models that are not interested in the individuals' holistic development (Hartmann, 2008; Sitkowski, 2008).

The means by which learner-athletes respond to the academic requirements within their dual careers, whether it be positive or negative, is based on a multitude of factors. This has been seen in research indicating that the link between athletic involvement and academic performance is not as direct as it may seem (Hartmann, 2008; Stambulova & Ryba, 2013; Tower, 2008). Therefore, due to the significant role academic development plays in learner-athletes present, and future endeavours, the manner in which these individuals manage, and are assisted with its requirements, should be monitored.

The choice adolescent learner-athletes make when selecting the dual career path situates them in a specific population. Through this choice they are more likely to encounter increased disadvantages in their various inter-personal and intra-personal transitions than their colleagues. This may be due to circumstances involved in their various personal, psychological, academic/vocational, psychosocial and athletic transitions (Göktaş, 2010; Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004).

In general, learner-athletes will face the same challenges that the average adolescent learner will face regarding academic and social coping abilities (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). However, when elite sports or athletics are added to this, further demands are placed on this population: from the amount of time demanded for their practice times, meeting times, game schedules and travel times, to the recovery time needed for injuries and physical and/or



mental exhaustion (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). As a result, this limits their time available for attending to academic requirements, personal aspects of life or social engagements.

From the abovementioned, achieving balance for the TSHS adolescent is a complicated endeavour. However, realizing this balance is beneficial and necessary, for healthy development as well as the success of the adolescent dual career (Stambulova et al., 2015). Another concern relating to balance is burnout. Athlete burnout, also referred to as sport devaluation, can be conceived as a multidimensional condition, comprised of physical and emotional exhaustion, a diminished sense of accomplishment, and a negative and detached attitude towards sport (Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmén, 2010).

Smith (1986, as cited in Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004) put forward a cognitive-affective model of athlete burnout. This perspective views chronic exposure to stress as a catalyst for burnout. Smith (1986) stated that there are parallel relationships that exist between four elements of stress and burnout. The first relates to the personal and environmental resources available for meeting situational demands. The second element pertains to cognitive evaluations concerning demands and resources, as well as the consequences, and personal interpretation of these consequences when these demands are not met. The third and fourth elements of this model are born out of these appraisals, and are concerned with the physiological, coping and behavioural outcomes thereof. In line with this understanding, research examining athlete burnout has indicated perceived stress, defined as an inability to meet demands, as having a strong positive association with burnout. (Smith, et al., 2010).

The athletic setting is not the only area in which burnout can occur, as such a phenomenon also takes place within the academic setting (Sorkkila et al., 2017). Academic, or school burnout, is seen as an ongoing phenomenon over the course of the school career, with the onset involving reports of minor school-related stress, which then lead to the final stages of a serious burnout (Salmela-Aro et al., 2008). Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen, and Nurmi (2009), specified three components that make up school burnout. These aspects are similar to the characteristics of job burnout: exhaustion that is school-related (i.e., strenuous and demanding school work that leads to chronic fatigue), school-related cynicism (i.e., an impassive or uninterested attitude regarding school, and a diminished interest towards school

work), and an inadequate sense of self (i.e., decreased feelings of competence as well as a lack of success within school).

Therefore, the overall possibility of burnout can be expected to increase in conjunction with the simultaneous intensification of the athletic and academic career demands (Ryba et al., 2016). As previously mentioned, the increase in demands of these two areas occurs in the junior to senior transition, thus this period of the adolescent's dual career is one of heightened pressure and stress (Sorkkila et al., 2017). Literature has shown that junior elite athletes are particularly vulnerable to stress and burnout (e.g., Creswell & Eklund, 2006; Hill, Hall, & Appleton, 2010; Raedeke & Smith, 2001), and that dual career adolescents specifically experience increased pressure through their transition into upper high school (Salmela-Aro, Kiuru & Nurmi, 2008; Sorkkila et al., 2017). Hence, an important question that arises regarding this period of adolescent dual careers, is the extent to which one type of burnout may carry over to another setting over time, and whether the occurrence of, for example athlete burnout, will lead to an increased risk of school burnout and vice versa (Ryba et al., 2016).

Adolescents who drop out of their dual careers experience increased levels of exhaustion and health-concerns, as well as decreased levels of motivation and self-confidence (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015; Sorkkila et al., 2017). These aspects are often the result of failure to implement structure, such as goal orientation and balancing career demands alongside personal needs (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). Therefore achieving, or consequently failing to achieve balance, can be seen as a catalyst leading to either accomplishment in or failure of the adolescent's dual career (Stambulova et al., 2015).

### Conclusion

This chapter provided an exposé of the current literature available on the dual careers of learner-athletes. The representation of this literature was initiated with an introduction into the dual career perspective. A discussion on the advantages of a dual career, the disadvantages facing those undertaking dual careers and what is needed to support those involved in dual careers was presented. The discussions focused on the transitional developmental levels of the learner-athlete, namely the psychosocial, academic, athletic and psychological developments.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter contains a detailed exploration and explanation of the research design that was conducted in this study. Through the description of the philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of case study design, more specifically the ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology, the key perspectives of the research enquiry are demonstrated. The chapter also describes the rationale for participant selection, and how this was carried out. Finally, the chapter provides a detailed overview concerning the research design, as well as factors pertaining to the quality of the research study and the ethical factors involved.

#### **3.1 Paradigm Perspective: Post Modernism and Constructivism**

This research study is situated within the post-modern paradigmatic perspective of Constructivism. Post-modern thinking and writing in psychology initially emerged in the late 1950's, and early 1960's. The movement gained most of its traction through French theorists, in the 1970's, who were able to introduce it to a wider audience (Nath, 2014). This development arose in opposition to the dominant style of thinking at the time, that of modernism. The post-modern movement along with its approach to thinking and reasoning, are held under the single term of postmodernism.

Postmodernism features two characteristics; whereas previously an objective, accessible sense of reality and truth was acknowledged, postmodernism most notably presents the notion of a subjective, relative reality; secondly it recognizes writing, the verbal and non-verbal, and other variations of art form in cultural expression and meaning making (Becvar & Becvar, 2000; Nath, 2014; Ponterotto, 2005; Raskin, 2002). From this approach the notions of reality, truth, value and reason are understood to be socially constructed, a creation of linguistic practices (Becvar & Becvar, 2000; Nath, 2014). Such conceptions are therefore not absolute or static, but are subject to change, as they are viewed as plural, dependent and relative (Nath, 2014, Raskin, 2002). As a result people are viewed as the embodiments of their reality, as there is no absolute truth, rather it is described and constructed subjectively, in context, by those experiencing it (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Nath, 2014; Ponterotto, 2005;

Raskin, 2002). This explanation will benefit the further exploration into the approaches of constructivism and case study inquiry, which this study has incorporated in its approach to the phenomenon in question.

The concept of constructivism, as a psychological theory, originated within the ever expanding field of cognitive science around the 1940's through the postmodern movement. Following its conception, awareness of the approach was spread most notably by Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget just prior to his death in 1980 (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Raskin, 2002). This approach was born in response to the dominant, positivist way of thinking during that period. Therefore constructivism is fundamentally non-positivist, and as such adopts a relativist position assuming multiple, subjective and equally valid realities exist in contrast to the realism position held by positivism, viewing reality as single, objective, external and stable (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Krauss, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005; Raskin, 2002).

Through the lens of constructivism it is understood that people construct meaning by imposing order on their perceived nature of reality, that meaning is situated within cognition and not external aspects, and that information that affects pre-constructed cognitive systems is screened, translated, altered and then at times rejected by the pre-existing knowledge within the system (Krauss, 2005; Lythcott & Duschl, 1990). The knowledge that is ultimately cultivated and contained is then idiosyncratic and purposefully constructed (Krauss, 2005). Therefore sense-making is considered to be an act of analysis separate from any foundational reality, as it is viewed as a subjective process that organises experiences so they may be comprehensible, understandable and explainable (Guba & Lincoln, 2001; Krauss, 2005).

As a result, in comparison to positivism, where truth is viewed as independent of subject bias, constructivism emphasises human participation in the construction of truth and knowledge (Kim, 2001). Knowledge about reality then cannot be quantified or collected but through the interaction with those who have experienced it and created it through their individual, social and cultural systems (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2001; Mertens, 2010).

The perspective of the observer and the phenomenon of observation are understood as inseparable, as the nature of reality is relative. Constructivism also looks to highlight the importance of place, as it declares that meaning is created in context (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2001; Raskin, 2002). This can be viewed in the sense that understanding the

reality of the TSHS learner-athlete requires an awareness and comprehension of their context, as it is the environment in which their reality is structured. The process of knowledge and understanding is therefore inductive, idiographic and qualitative (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Raskin, 2002). This approach then provides an outlook that reality is subjective, and all constructed meanings reflect a point of view.

As this research inquiry is focused on exploring the lived experiences of the learner-athletes within their context at the TSHS, Constructivism was selected as its paradigmatic lens. In addition, this approach was selected due to the understanding that each learner-athlete holds their own perspectives, knowledge, truth and experiences that required exploration in order to construct meaning. From this paradigm the lived realities of each participant could be explored in depth, from their subjective perspective, thereby providing a thorough and comprehensive understanding of their dual career experiences at the TSHS.

## **3.2 Research Design**

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

A qualitative ontological underpinning assumes that an individual's reality is formed by their unique life experience, may be independent or dissimilar from another person's reality, and is constantly shifting depending on time and place (Fischer et al., 2008; Gelo, Braakman & Benetka, 2008). Therefore, approaching a research inquiry with such a position will entail a more in-depth exploration into the phenomenon in question, as reality and meaning is derived from subjective experience (Creswell, 2013; Killam, 2013, 2015).

Within a qualitative epistemology, reality and truth, or knowledge, is viewed as subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Killam, 2013; Leon, 2013). The world is seen as constructed and interpreted by the people experiencing it through their interactions with each other, as well as with wider social systems that are in place. Reality, and the experience and knowledge that exists within it, is therefore dependent on time, context and the individuals experiencing or living within that reality. These realities can only be viewed holistically, they cannot be controlled or predicted, and only a certain level of understanding about them can be attained (Fischer et al., 2008).

An emic epistemology is used within qualitative research, meaning that the researcher (interviewer) and research participants (interviewee) are seen to mutually influence each other (Killam, 2013). The researcher does not emphasize what is important and what is not, but rather focuses on local observations, categories, explanations, and interpretations. Consequently, such an approach is subjective, as the researcher's personal knowledge and understanding is used in the process of data gathering, and in the comprehension of the participant's interpretation of their experiences (Fischer et al., 2008).

Within qualitative enquiry the researcher is seen to be directly involved with the participants and phenomenon in question (Fischer et al., 2008). The researcher's values are present in the study from the onset of the research inquiry, as they guide the majority of the process, including the selection of the research topic, philosophical approaches and data collection techniques (Leon, 2013). Accordingly, the values and biases held by the researcher need to be addressed and excluded from the research process. This is achieved through transcendental subjectivity, which is an assessment of the researcher's influence on the process so as to ensure it does not interfere with the outcome of the study (Fischer et al., 2008).

Qualitative methodology is structured in an inductive reasoning process, which holds an interpretive and natural underpinning (Killam, 2013). From this approach, experience and subjective meaning is explored with the aim of presenting a specific conclusion (Fischer et al., 2008). A qualitative methodology can be set, for example, in a phenomenology, ethnography, case study design or narrative approach, to name but a few (Gelo et al., 2008).

As this research study was concerned with the lived experience of the TSHS learner-athlete in their context, it was situated in the qualitative paradigm, with a relativist ontology, an emic epistemology and a case study methodology. From an axiological perspective, the researcher was required to determine and explore his own values and biases relating to the research material. Due to his direct involvement and personal interaction with each participant, it was necessary for him to be aware of his own perspective before exploring those of the research participants. By doing so the researcher was provided the opportunity to work alongside the participants of this study as they constructed meaning out of their experiences as learner-athletes at the TSHS.

### 3.2.2 Case Study Design

This qualitative research study incorporated a descriptive; multiple case study design in order to explore and understand the dual career experiences of the TSHS learner-athletes. The approach taken by this research endeavour was viewed as a descriptive case study, as it provides a detailed depiction of the phenomenon in question within its context (Willig, 2013). In addition this research investigation also adopted a multiple case study design, as theoretical formulations are produced and refined through the comparative analysis of a series of cases (Willig, 2013).

The case study design was selected as it provides for a more detailed and deeper investigation into the phenomena in question (Rowley, 2002). Furthermore, due to the study's interest in exploration, insight and interpretation of a particular case, this type of research design was utilised (Merriam, 2009; Pate, Stokowski & Hardin, 2011).

A case study design promotes the richness, depth and complexity that is drawn from multiple events, which can help one understand the phenomenon of interest that is shared among diverse cases (Stake, 2000). However, a multiple case study risks reducing complex cases to a few comparable variables, resulting in the loss of the idiosyncrasies of individual cases (Stoecker, 1991). To mitigate this risk, Creswell (1998) suggests that no more than four cases be examined to allow individual cases to be adequately explored. Although not initially planned as such, this research endeavour incorporates the use of four case studies, in order to ensure the in depth, adequate exploration of each case.

Case study research can be used as a method for explaining real-life casual links, and so assisted the researcher in determining emotional and psycho-social experiences with actual events (Yin, 2009). Multiple perspectives can exist in case study research, as this approach is often used to explore one or more issues that are essential in understanding the system being examined (Cronin, 2014; Jones & Lyons, 2004). What this entails is that it is not only the participant's voice and perspective that is considered, but also the context in which their experience occurs (Cronin, 2014; Yin, 2009). The crux of this research study was the environment and context the learner-athletes were situated in. Therefore, along with the perspective of the learner-athletes, the context in which their experiences took place was also elucidated.

The use of multiple sources of data is essential in all types of case studies (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This denotes the use of various sources of information when forming an understanding of the subject matter. Within this study unstructured interviews, and the visual mode of enquiry of collages were incorporated as sources of data. The rationale for employing multiple sources is centred on the concepts of replication and convergence (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Cook & Campbell, 1979). This is the understanding that as the number of times a phenomena occurs increases, the more reliable it may be considered. In addition, convergence entails the use of multiple methods in order to support the evidence of the topics in question (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Yin, 2009).

Therefore, through the descriptive, multiple case study design, this research endeavour was able to produce a rich, detailed, context-bound, and insightful real-life account of the experiences of the TSHS learner-athlete that was able to produce and be situated in theoretical formulations.

### **3.3 Selection of Participants for Case Studies**

#### **3.3.1 Sampling Method and Criteria**

The selection of the participants was done using the nonprobability sampling method of purposive sampling (Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research in the identification and selection of specified cases rich in information associated with the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2013). Therefore, this sampling method was best suited to the study due to the fact that the participants were part of a very specific population and age group (Palys, 2008). This was in line with the study's aim, as the decision to include participants was based on defined criteria and specialist knowledge held by a specific population (Palys, 2008; Tongco, 2007).

The resident psychologist working at the hpc, and the principal of the TSHS were involved in the selection process. This step was taken due to their ability to provide information on the learner-athletes. The information assisted in terms of which individuals would be best suited in providing a rich description of the phenomenon in question.



There are a total of four female and eight male middle distance athletes in Gr 9 at the TSHS, all of whom are black (n=12)<sup>3</sup>. These athletes are currently in the process of transitioning from Gr 9 to Gr 10. The following sampling criteria was used in order to assist in the selection of four participants:

(i) *TuksSport High School:*

The learner-athletes needed to have been part of the TSHS from Grade 8 to Grade 10 as they would have been in the middle of their high school career with two years of experience at the TSHS.

(ii) *TuksSport Athletics Academy:*

The learner-athletes needed to have been a part of the TSAA from Grade 8 to Grade 10, and have been part of the middle distance athlete group (competing in the 800m and/or 1500m and/or 3000m and/or 5000m events), as they would have had two years of experience in the athletics academy<sup>4</sup>.

(iii) *TuksSport High School Residence:*

The learner-athletes needed to have been part of the TSHS Residence from Grade 8 to Grade 10, as they would have had two years of experience living in the residence.

(iv) *Language:*

The learner-athletes needed to be proficient in English.

### 3.3.2 Research Participants

Of the twelve middle-distance learner-athletes who were invited to take part in this research study, four agreed take part. These four participants are included in this study.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for invitation to participate in this research study

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for research permission from the TuksSport Athletics Academy

Table 1

*Research Participant Demographics*

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Residential Province	School Grade	Athletics Event
A	16	F	Black	KZN	10	3000m
B	16	F	Black	EC	10	5000m
C	16	M	Black	KZN	10	1500m & 2000m steeple chase
D	16	M	Black	EC	10	5000m

### 3.4 Data Collection and Documentation

#### 3.4.1 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviews were utilised to elicit participant narratives of their collages. By incorporating unstructured interviews the researcher was able to ask open ended questions in order to gain the subjective perceptions of the research participants concerning their experiences (Firmin, 2012). Unstructured interviews are initiated with a broad, open-ended question relating to the focus of the research, followed by questions related to the participant’s responses (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Unstructured interviews cater to the need for flexibility, as they prevent a rigid structure in which preconceived notions of the topic at hand might take the spotlight (Riessman, 2003).

Using unstructured interviews provided the opportunity for the participants to be the experts of their own lives, and allowed for them to inform the research (Doody & Noonan, 2013). For that reason, this method is often used to uncover—and learn of people’s beliefs, understandings, perspectives, experiences and the impact certain events, transitions or phenomena had on their lives. This format of interviewing allows for the provision of valuable information that is often not anticipated by the researcher or research inquiry (Magrath & Walsh, 2012). The unstructured interviews in this study were based predominantly on a conversation about a collage made by each participant which reflected their experiences at the TSHS. The unstructured interview consisted of one main question:

“Please tell me as much as you can about each of the pictures you chose for this collage, and why these pictures were chosen to explain your experience as a TSHS learner-athlete”.

From this point forward participants were allowed to talk openly about and express their stories related to the pictures in their collage and their relevant experiences at the TSHS.

### 3.4.2 Collages

The use of collage making accompanied with interviews has been viewed as an alternative and beneficial data generation technique that can be used effectively in all stages of qualitative research (Norris, 2012). Collage representations provide the opportunity for marginalized voices to be included in the research study, and encourages an array of linguistic and non-linguistic representations to communicate authentic lived experiences (Gerstenblatt, 2013). This method also provides an innovative approach towards engaging with and facilitating dialogue, and promotes the construction and dissemination of knowledge (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Gerstenblatt, 2013). Consequently engaging with collage making, the participants, in collaboration with the researcher, are able to construct representation and meaning out of the illustrative experiences depicted (Gerstenblatt, 2013). In addition, collages offer a means by which clarification and in-depth exploration can take place, leading to an increased embodiment of the data regarding the phenomenon in question (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Eisner, 2008; Norris, 2012).

Incorporating this method of data collection in research assists in uncovering hidden aspects of both process and understanding, thereby providing perspective into the unconscious aspects of the relevant perceptions (Kerwin-Boudreau & Butler-Kisber, 2016; Saroyan et al., 2004). This is seen in its ability to display how concepts are connected to one another, and expose the assumptions underlying thinking (Eisner, 2008; Kerwin-Boudreau & Butler-Kisber, 2016). In making the implicit explicit, collages also shift thinking to a deeper level, as they can compare and track the evolution of beliefs over time (Kerwin-Boudreau & Butler-Kisber, 2016).

Collages were therefore incorporated into this study as they allowed for an alternative way of exploring meaning and understanding (Eisner, 2008). The visual mode of inquiry, being collages, aided in communicating and representing ideas, they assist the research participants

in articulating relationships and facilitated the process of representing these aspects to the researcher (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). Collages also added to the research process as they increased the participant's voice and strengthened reflexivity (Vaikla-Poldma, 2003) as well as provided more embodied and accessible research results (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This method also provided a viewpoint from which the shift in self-awareness, perspective and understanding that occurred for the learner-athletes over time could be explored.

The collages were completed at the TSHS during a time that did not interfere with school or training commitments. They were created in a group setting. The material provided included a variety of magazines and newspapers. The participants were requested to indicate what their preferred magazines and newspapers were, as these were then obtained and provided, along with glue, paper and scissors from which the participants could create their collages.

### **3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The unstructured interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were done by me (the researcher), as this offered me the opportunity to become more acquainted with the research data. An additional reason for personally carrying out the transcriptions was that I would be afforded the opportunity to recognise certain nuances and non-verbal gestures that occurred in the unstructured interviews, in accordance with the data. Personally handling the data also eliminated potential ethical dilemmas with regards to confidentiality (Davidson, 2009).

A thematic analysis approach was taken towards data analysis. The focus of the study was aimed at understanding the experiences of the learner-athletes. Taking this approach towards analysing the data assisted in explicating meaning and transitions within the narratives, thereby enabling this outcome (Willig, 2013). As thematic analysis holds a focal point on the content of a story, the "what" that is being told, it allows for the establishment of themes within an individual's story (Riessman, 2003).

With thematic analysis patterns, or themes, are able to be identified and reported within the data as it organises and describes the captured data in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This allows for the study to determine clear depictions of the various aspects of each

participant's experiences. An inductive approach towards the analysis of the qualitative data was used. This approach was selected as it allowed for the condensing of collected narratives into a concise summary format, and it provided clear identifiable links between the studies' stated objectives and the summaries produced from the raw data (Thomas, 2006).

### 3.5.1 Thematic Content Analysis

This followed the steps of thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006). These steps included:

#### Step 1: Familiarising yourself with the data

This step involved familiarising myself with the data, with the depth and breadth of the content. This was initially achieved through the verbatim transcription of the unstructured interviews that I conducted. Following this I did a repeated reading of the content collected in an active manner, which meant searching for patterns, meanings and perspectives within the data. The active reading and re-reading of data is viewed as essential in this step of thematic content analysis, as it forms the bedrock on which the rest of the analysis takes place. Through this process I was able to develop ideas concerning the data from which coding could begin.

#### Step 2: Generating initial codes

Once I had familiarised myself with the data an initial list was generated containing certain ideas regarding points of interest as well as what had been uncovered within the content. The main aspect of this step is the production of initial codes, which are seen as the most basic segment, or component within the raw data that can be considered in a meaningful way in relation to the focus of the study. As the purpose of this analysis was more 'theory-driven', due to the data being approached with a specific question in mind, the coding was done with the specified interest in mind. During this step it was important to keep in mind that the themes, which are developed in the next step, are broader, and therefore the codes that were generated in this step were more specific, and as such were done on a line-by-line basis. The coding was also done manually, as I used different colours within the transcribed content to identify different patterns.

### Step 3: Searching for themes

Once an extensive list of different codes had been generated across the data set, I began with step 3. This involved an analysis at a broader level, as I started searching for patterns within the codes and then collated similar codes into potential themes. This was done with the use of a table, as certain codes related to certain extracts from the transcribed data, and were therefore situated into segments of a table with other similar codes/extracts.

### Step 4: Reviewing themes

This step involved the refinement of the themes determined in the previous step. Patton's (1990) dual criteria for the assessment of categories, namely internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, was considered here. Internal homogeneity refers to the data within themes forming together coherently and meaningfully, while external heterogeneity points to the need for clear and identifiable distinctions between themes. These considerations directly relate to the two levels involved in this step.

The first level of this step requires a review of the coded data extracts, meaning the collated coded extracts forming each theme should be re-examined in order to ensure they all fit and form a coherent pattern. Once I was satisfied that the coded extracts produced comprehensible themes I moved on to the second level, which entailed re-reading the entire data set in order to consider the validity of the individual themes. This was to ensure that the thematic map as a whole accurately represented the meanings present in the data set. Following this review I moved on to the following step.

### Step 5: Defining and naming themes

In this step the themes that were going to be presented for this study's analysis, which had been constructed within the thematic map, were refined and defined further. Braun and Clark (2006) use the terms 'define' and 'refine' in this step to indicate the requirement of determining each theme's 'essence'. This meant clarifying what each theme was about, what all the themes together represent and identifying what aspect of the data was captured in each theme. An important aspect of this particular process was ensuring each theme was not too complex or diverse. In doing so I revisited the collated data extracts for each theme, and

organised theme into an internally consistent and coherent structure with accompanying narrative.

Following this I conducted a detailed analysis for each individual theme, identified the ‘story’ being told by each theme and how it related to the overall story being told about the data, and in relation to the research question. This process was carried out to identify any excessive overlap between themes, and any sub-themes that may be present. In order to complete this step I clearly defined each theme, ensuring it was evident what each theme represented, and what each theme did not represent.

#### Step 6: Producing the report

For this step to begin I needed a set of fully worked out themes, as this process involves the final analysis and write-up of the report. Imperative in this phase was ensuring that the analysis provided a logical, concise, non-repetitive, coherent and interesting account of the story being told within the data. Another important aspect considered at this point was that there was enough evidence within the data to support the themes that had been generated, meaning sufficient quotes were provided to demonstrate the presence of the themes. The completion of this step, and the overall analysis, was considered once it was evident that the data extracts were embedded within an analytic narrative that illustrates the story and experiences this study is aiming to depict.

### **3.6 Quality Criteria**

Qualitative studies present different issues related to the quality of the research, to quantitative studies. Due to the nature of this type of enquiry, issues of reliability and validity are replaced with a different form of quality evaluation, that of reflexivity (Murray, 2003). This is due to the highly subjective nature of the data, the multiple interpretations that exist within it and the incredibly diverse data produced. Therefore, issues surrounding reflexivity need to be addressed and dealt with throughout the interpretation process.

In order to attend to this issue, the researcher is required to acknowledge, as well as demonstrate this acknowledgment of their values and assumptions on the topic at hand (Murray, 2003; Willig, 2013). Furthermore, the most effective way of engaging in the

practice of reflexivity in a study is to describe, in as much detail as possible, the processes and methods whereby the information being presented was generated (El Harch, 2015; Willig, 2013). This is a continuous process that needs to be monitored throughout the duration of the research.

In order to ensure reflexivity, I, as the researcher, familiarized myself with the TSHS environment. Having worked with the learner-athletes of the TSHS for two years, in their environment at the school, I gained a unique and holistic perspective, and understanding, into their context. With the assistance of my researcher supervisor, and through journaling, I also explored my own experience as a learner-athlete, in order to predetermine my own understanding, perspective, belief, and value system in this regard. This allowed me to separate my experience from those of the participants, ensuring that their stories were not influenced by my own.

As the participants were under the age of 18 years old, permission was obtained from the TSHS<sup>5</sup>, as well as the parents of the participants<sup>6</sup>. Both parties were fully informed regarding the nature and purpose of the study being done, as well as the right each participant had to remove themselves from the study at any point with no consequence. Assent was gained from the participants themselves<sup>7</sup>.

The study was structured so as not to interfere with training time, school time or study hours<sup>8</sup>. Pseudonyms were used throughout the research study to protect confidentiality. The right to disclosure implies that participants have the right to decide what information they wish to share (Thomas & Hersen, 2011). This was respected throughout the research process.

If, at any point during the course of the study, the need for further psychological services became apparent, the participants were able to receive psychological support from the resident psychologist at the High Performance Centre, free of charge<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C for permission from the TuksSport High School to conduct research study

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for parental information and consent for their child to participate in research study

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix E for participant information and assent for participation in research study

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix F for ethical clearance from the Department of Research to conduct research study

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix G for psychological support provided throughout research study



Documenting and awareness of the researcher's influence on the process is necessary (Elliot, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). Therefore, in the study the biases and subjective viewpoints of the researcher were monitored through the process of journaling and regular supervision. These meetings also took place to ensure that the required ethical and academic standards were upheld throughout the research process.

All documentation and other sources of data was physically stored in locked filing cabinets, while all electronic data was secured with a password. Upon completion of the study, the records and data will be stored in accordance with the regulations set by the University of Pretoria, and will be kept for no less than 15 years in the Department of Psychology (Room 11-24) at UP, for archival purpose and for future research<sup>10</sup>.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, the research paradigm, which depicted the perspective of the study, was delineated. The chapter explored the philosophical assumptions of the study through a description of its ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. The research design was discussed in detail. To conclude, the quality and ethical issues concerned with the study were provided. The following chapter presents an exploration of the research findings.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix H for the University of Pretoria's storage form regarding research study

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the dual career experiences of the TSHS learner-athletes. However, experience can never be understood in isolation and the multifaceted and complex factors that influence young individual's behaviour should always be considered (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Hendry et al., 1993). Therefore in exploring the TSHS learner-athletes, various elements will be considered.

This chapter aims to highlight the advantages and disadvantages (if any) on various levels of being a learner-athlete currently enrolled at the TSHS. Burnard (1996) defined the interpretation of data as finding patterns as well as establishing differences and similarities in textual data. In the following section, the themes elicited from the data analysis will be presented, so that the most prevalent similarities with regards to the experiences of the TSHS learner-athletes can be highlighted. These themes were generated from the data analysis carried out on the unstructured interviews, which were based on the participant's collages<sup>11</sup>.

Wylleman and Lavalée's (2004) dual career model advantages the interpretation of the data in this research study, as a result the following section is structured in relation to the different levels within model. However, since a very specific sample group was selected for this study, unique themes that may not fit the authentic model may be added to certain levels. Although the framework of the dual career model was kept in its original format, the descriptive parameters of what these levels entail have been adapted to fit the purpose of this study and the unique characteristics of the research participants.

#### **4.1 Athletic Level**

According to Wylleman & Lavalée (2004) the athletic level includes the four phases of athletic development as identified by Bloom (1985), as well as the learner-athletes overall sporting growth and transitions. Within the interpretation of this study's results, the athletic level will be viewed as the structural context and subsequent enabling factors that may contribute to athletic development, rather than purely focusing on athletic progression as set

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix I for participant collages

out in the original model. This perspective was taken as the structural context has been strongly linked to the broadest and most distal issues that influence the attainment of goals (Holt et al., 2011). The following prominent themes surfaced:

#### 4.1.1 Amenities and Facilities

As early as 1974, studies have questioned whether economic factors attribute to sport performance (Grimes, Kelly & Ruben, 1974). Literature shows that financial barriers can be a significant determining factor in sport participation amongst children from low socio-economic status (LSES) families (Clarke, 2008; Holt et al., 2011). The lack of participation of children from LSES families seems to be partly due to a lack of financial ability to pay for registration and participation in sports (Holt, 2008), and also due to the restricted access in their environments to sport and leisure facilities (Gordon-Larsen, McMurray, & Popkin, 2000).

As previously mentioned the participants of this study all came from disadvantaged environments, and were all attending the TSHS under sponsorship. What this meant for some of the participants was that by attending the TSHS they were afforded access to certain services, amenities and facilities that were previously unavailable to them. The research participants made significant reference to previously lacking facilities in their past, whether it was inadequate training facilities, non-existent training gear or a deficiency in medical support. Participant B described her experience:

*“So when I came here that excitement and stuff made me realise that this is really life, this is life. Cause I never got Nike shoes... Even pocket money they (TSHS) give us... Getting massaged after training, I never had one (physio) at home... Having a Psychology (Psychologist), it’s my real life I never had one, but it’s my life... Athletics, massages, tracks, this is for me.”*

The provision of brand name clothing, as well as personal support services such as psychologists and physiotherapists has impacted Participant B’s experience of being a TSHS learner-athlete. Since experiencing her improved environment and what she is able to achieve through the additional support, Participant B believes that her new lifestyle is tailor-made for her and will contribute to her success. Humbert et al., (2006) explained how children from LSES families not only required physical facilities, but also expressed an increased need for

planned adult-supervised activities. This may be partially due to the safety concerns in LSES neighbourhoods, which has been linked to a decline in sport participation (Carver, Timperio & Crawford, 2008).

Participant C shared the enthusiasm regarding the extensive support received in his athletic development due to the unfamiliar availability of amenities and facilities. He communicated this experience by reflecting on the impact concerning the absence of such facilities before he joined TSHS:

*“Well home was hard in the township, sometimes we don’t have electricity, sometimes no water... at home I didn’t have the medical aid... I didn’t have training shoes, and I always wore school clothes when we went to athletics meeting because there was no sponsor, and we didn’t have money for it.”*

Holt et al. (2011) found that structural barriers, such as a lack of financial support, prevented young individuals from participating in sport. In their study they found that participants made specific reference to the inability to attain athletic clothing and gear, and how they are financially unable to overcome certain barriers of social and economic inequality.

Within this study, Participant C emphasised how since arriving at the TSHS the improved environment, and his access to facilities and athletic wear that were previously unavailable to him, have all supported his athletic development:

*“There’s no great school like this. Here in this school we don’t need nothing actually... I have clothes (training clothing) to wear now... Here at Tuks we have quality training Nike clothing, top quality ... Every month we get pocket money (from the TSHS)... There’s everything. You feel like someone important.”*

Participant D reflected on a similar experience with regards to the absence of facilities and amenities in his past, and the availability of such in his current context at the TSHS:

*“Where I come from I didn’t even have this... I didn’t have good facilities to train and get access to. They have warm water, showers... At home, even with athletics we didn’t have showers. You don’t have something like that you just get clean, you bath in a basin... No personal training... This was my first time doing gym work.”*

Holt et al., (2011) acknowledge the disadvantages involved with sport participation that children from LSES families face. These include but are not limited to financial, time and transport difficulties. It is therefore clear to understand how having limited or no access to adequate training facilities and amenities before becoming a TSHS learner-athlete, meant that the improved environment at the TSHS has provided Participant D with a context in which his athletic development can continue to grow and evolve.

Participant A, B and D have therefore all reported the positive effects they experienced regarding the access they now have to nearby professional training facilities, clothing and finances. In addition to this Participant C shared his experience regarding the positive impact the provision of medical aid, proper training facilities, and improved support structures has had on his athletic development:

*“Sports facilities, we have the track... We have everything, with the sports facilities. With hpc... Here we have physios. Whenever we are injured the coach says we must stop training and go to the physio...”*

Participant C continues to say that:

*“...I have a medical aid, we are sponsored by BestMed. So now I don't have to wait long at the hospital.”*

The accessibility of these aspects in Participant C's life has reportedly improved his training aspirations and future outlook:

*“I'm not worried anymore, I know it will be quick and easy. Because I know then if I am sick this week I will be better by this week then I can get more training in, so I know I can do more.”*

From this statement it can be seen that Participant C is less concerned with facing illness due to the availability of his medical aid, as it will no longer hinder his athletic progress in the same way it did before. Although limited research could be found on the specific correlation between LSES and sport performance, especially in South Africa, international studies agree that financial constraints and access to facilities limit the sports participation of children from such families (Clarke, 2008; Gordon-Larsen, McMurray, & Popkin, 2000; Holt, 2008).

Studies found that the majority of athletes in high-performance sport were from middle- to relatively affluent class households and that those from lower class to deprived households were disproportionately represented (Bernard & Busse, 2004; Collins & Buller, 2003). Even in cases where sport participation is made possible through funding, the sustainability of such participation should still be fortified as research shows that children with continued participation in sport reflect additional positive developmental outcomes than those with less sustained involvement (Holt et al., 2011; Zarrett et al., 2008). It is therefore understandable that the previous lack of access to facilities and amenities is a pivotal component in the experience of the TSHS learner-athlete.

#### 4.1.2 Food and health

Physical wellness can be defined as the action taken by learner-athletes in order to enhance their body's ability to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle through correct nutrition, physical exercise and self-care (Janse van Rensburg, Surujlal, & Dhurup, 2011; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). An appropriate diet is therefore considered to be a key component in achieving success within sporting endeavours (Beck et al, 2015). The type of food adolescents eat has a direct effect on their bodies, and is therefore important to regard when considering their physical wellbeing and athletic development (Magano & Gouws, 2013).

In a study done by Stokes et al., (2018) it was found that adolescents involved in sports generally fall short of essential nutrients for optimising their athletic development and growth. As such part of the TSHS dual career program involves a diet specially formulated by dieticians for elite athletes. An interesting discovery in this research study was that although food and health featured as a prominent theme for all the participants, the experience was not necessarily a positive one, as certain challenges arose therein. Participant A explained:

*“For me it’s tough. I don’t like eating vegies at all! I don’t like them and sometimes I don’t like the meat and if I don’t like the meat then I’m not going to eat! So it’s a bit of a challenge.”*

Participant B held a similar, less positive, perspective in terms of food, as she related her past experience at home to her current one within the TSHS context:

*“Well, Soweto – it’s where I come from and ya, well Soweto, we’re very poor at home, it was difficult, there’s not always food, sometimes we couldn’t get food, and then the food here... We don’t eat starch (at home), we don’t eat baked beans (at home). So sometimes I eat. It was difficult for me first.”*

Participant C also remarked on the difference between his new diet and his previous one, however he shared a positive and more beneficial experience in this regard:

*“Here at Tuks they organized the food that is healthy for sports people... I find it easy to eat (the new healthy diet).”*

By reframing his perspective on his new diet, and viewing it as an eating regime formulated to support individuals involved in sport with their athletic and physical development, Participant C was assisted with integrating this aspect into his lifestyle. Literature confirms that nutrition plays a significant role in the growth and development of athletes, especially in times of recovery and weight management (Spriet, 2000). Participant D reported a similar experience, as he stated:

*“Here we eat fancy food. It’s high food. Like it’s not that food we used to eat at home. Even if you go eat supper, it’s good food. It’s not the food you eat at home. And when it’s breakfast – whatever I’d like but when you participate you eat bacon. I love bacon. My family don’t know bacon at all.”*

The research participants therefore identified the alteration in nutrition as part of their experiences at the TSHS, and were able to embrace the change due to their understanding of the significance the new diet had in their lives. Individualised, day-to-day, dietary advice has been increasingly recommended, as athletes’ dietary requirements strongly depend on their specified sporting goals (Beck et al., 2015). Sufficient recovery after training, athletic performance, conditioning and avoidance of injury all rely on appropriate nutrition (Aoi, Naito & Yoshikawa, 2006).

It is important to note here that the physical development of adolescents centres mainly on health and nutrition, and constitutes the basis for further development in other areas of life (Magano & Gouws, 2013). Originating from disadvantaged environments may have resulted in the underdevelopment of this aspect of the adolescent learner-athletes lives, and is therefore important to establish in their continued growth (Magano & Gouws, 2013). Provision of nutrition in this regard relates to the advantages viewed in Wylleman and

Lavallee's (2004) model regarding increased wellbeing (EU, 2012; Gayles, 2009; Tekavc et al., 2015).

#### 4.1.3 Athletic adjustment

For the purpose of this study, athletic adjustment refers to the manner in which the TSHS learner-athletes are required to adjust to being professional athletes, with intensive training schedules. According to the literature (EU, 2012; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), due to their age, the learner-athletes of the TSHS are situated in the Developmental phase of their athletic level. However, in joining the TSHS dual career program the participants of this study accelerated their progression within their athletic level, from the Development stage to the Mastery stage. Therefore the learner-athletes of the TSHS fall out of their age bracket in this model, as they are situated firmly within the Perfection/Mastery phase of their athletic development.

As a result, according to research, the learner-athletes of this study have been required to transition into the Mastery phase of their athletic development earlier than expected (EU, 2012; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). This places additional strain on the learner-athletes of this study, as research has indicated that dual career drop-out usually occurs during the Developmental phase or at the initiation of the Mastery phase due to the intensity of the requirements (EU, 2012). Having been placed here at a younger age this further increases the risk of drop-out for the TSHS learner-athletes.

Therefore in addition to the normative challenges faced by these adolescent learner-athletes, arriving at the TSHS presented an increased array of adjustment requirements in their athletic endeavours that would need to be managed. A prominent theme relating to this adjustment that was discovered related to the athletic training schedule and its particular demands. Since human performance (in this case both athletic and cognitive performance) relies heavily on the biological sleep-wake rhythm, it can be negatively affected when athletes are sleep deprived. Sleep deprivation may cause, amongst other things, a decline in attention, motivation and vigilance (Davenne, 2009). Participant A shared the following difficulties regarding her experience of adjusting to the athletic schedule she was required to perform:



*“There is a lot of things I couldn’t cope with. I couldn’t get up in the morning because I wasn’t used to it. The waking up was tough and sometimes I couldn’t go training afternoons... Each and every single day, training twice a day, in the morning and afternoon.”*

This intensive schedule at the TSHS was one Participant A had not been involved in before, and therefore took a certain amount of effort in coming to terms with. Participant C shared a similar experience:

*“We didn’t do hard training (in the past), as we do in this school (TSHS). We just, we always went easy, did easy training...”*

It is clear from the above quote that the athletic adjustment to the TSHS dual career was something new to Participant A and C. This was identified by these participants as they were not accustomed to the intensity of the training in comparison to their past, where they were not required to provide such a significant amount of effort to achieve their desired results. The difficulty faced by the learner-athletes in adjusting to the TSHS training schedule is further reflected in Participant D’s statement:

*“It was very difficult in terms of training and in terms of adapting. Sometimes impossible!”*

However, for Participant D there was understanding and acceptance within this challenge, as he saw value in making this adjustment:

*“We’re not just training in the sake that we need to be fit. We are training for competition. We are training for things that can put us in that spot.”*

Baron-Thiene & Alfermann (2015) make reference to that fact that learner-athletes’ commitment to their athletic endeavours may come at the expense of academic development and performance. Despite the level of commitment required athletically, Participant D understood that the training was necessary in order to grow and compete as an elite athlete. This perspective assisted him in making this adjustment.

Despite the numerous disadvantages faced in making their athletic adjustment, research indicates that one of the advantages of participation in the athletic sphere of dual careers is the development of higher career aspirations in learner-athletes (Gorton, 2010; White, 2005). Participant A’s experience relates to this, as he shared:

*“In a few years’ time I see myself high, there is a bright future waiting for me outside, before this (TSHS) I didn’t know, but I can see it now, I believe it.”*

Participant D’s statement also indicates an ambition to achieve greater goals in the future:

*“We are training for competition. We are training for things that can put us in that spot.”*

The aspiration to achieve higher goals as described above links strongly to self-determination. This is a theme which will be discussed further on in this chapter and is therefore not elaborated on in this section.

Due to the nature of dual career programs consisting of intensive athletic training protocols and consistent elite level competitions, learner-athletes often face significant adjustment in this area (Ryba et al., 2016). The majority of the participants of this study therefore experienced difficulty in adjusting to their relative training schedules at the TSHS. This was due to two factors however, one being the structure of their current TSHS dual career program, and the other being the relatively relaxed arrangement of their previous athletic training.

#### 4.1.4 Athletic Time Management

A significant amount of literature has indicated that one of the largest disadvantages for learner-athletes is reconciling the amount of time required from the athletic sphere – which relates to hours of dedication committed to training, planning, and performing - and the resulting effects of this on the learner-athlete (Brewer & Petitpas, 2017; Cosh & Tully, 2014, 2015; Gayles & Baker, 2015; Gomez, Bradly, Conway, 2018). Accordingly, the challenges relating to athletic time management have featured as a prominent theme in this study. Participant A explained how it was difficult for her at first to manage her training schedule:

*“It was a new schedule... So it wasn’t easy for me... Because I don’t have time here. We always training.”*

Dual careers demand time and effort to keep up with training schedules, academic requirements, as well as personal and social endeavours (Aquilina, 2013; Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). Participant A’s approach towards overcoming this challenge involved drawing up a schedule so that she could better manage her time in relation to her responsibilities.

*“I drew my timetable for weeks. My plan actually is scheduled for how I’m going to do my work here, because I found it very challenging. It’s a daily schedule.”*

In separate studies, Aquilina (2013), and Baron-Thiene and Alfermann (2015), confirmed that achieving time management is crucial in shaping academic and athletic success. For Participant A to complete her everyday requirements, in the midst of her training schedule, athletic time management seemed crucial:

*“So I know on this day, let’s say Thursday, I know I’m going to wake up and go training, and then I come back and then it’s showering and then it’s breakfast and then it’s school. After school I know, ok, I’m going to go training at quarter to 4 and then I come back I shower and eat and then I need to get ready for my study.”*

By employing athletic time management, Participant A has since managed to find a balance within her demanding schedule in order for her to attend to all her training requirements and various other responsibilities. The overall fatigue resulting from aspects such as mental focus, emotional strain and physical output can place strain and bring about negative effects in the other spheres of learn-athletes’ lives (Göktaş, 2010; Pavlidis & Gargalianos, 2014). Participant C shared his experience regarding this aspect of athletic time management:

*“It was quite difficult, because in my previous team we don’t train in the morning, only in the afternoon... So it was difficult for me to wake up and go to training, to adapt to that thing. It was quite difficult.”*

Training twice a day was different from the training schedule Participant C was used to, and therefore found the experience rather difficult to adjust to. His approach to dealing with this difficulty was similar to that of Participant A:

*“The thing is you must have time management to do this... You need time management, but it is still difficult. I still need to work on it.”*

Both Participant A and C realised the necessity of athletic time management in their pursuit of achieving their desired outcomes within the athletic domain of their TSHS dual career. Participant C is however still struggling with the above mentioned adjustment. Athletic time management may therefore represent a significant challenge within the TSHS dual career program.

It is understood that, on average, up to 40 hours a week is spent by learner-athletes participating in their selected sports (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). This has led some learner-athletes to refer to themselves as being 'time poor' (Aquilina, 2013; O'Neill et al., 2013). As can be seen from the abovementioned this aspect of their dual careers at the TSHS, reconciling the required time for their training, has been a challenge for the participants of this study. This is viewed as one of the possible disadvantages in the undertaking of a dual career (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015).

Being time poor also resulted in a need for academic time management for the participants of this study. However, research has revealed that some learner-athletes have demonstrated a high commitment to both their academic and athletic role (Jonker, Elferink-Gemser & Visscher, 2009). Furthermore, literature has found that learner-athletes' dual roles were not in conflict with each other, but rather provided the learner with additional energy to fulfil the demands from both spheres (Aquilina, 2013; Jonker, Elferink-Gemser & Visscher, 2009; Snyder 1985). Academic time management and its relation to the TSHS learner-athletes are discussed later in this chapter.

## **4.2 Psychological Level**

According to Wylleman & Lavallee (2004) this level signifies the developmental stages and transitions taking place at the psychological level. For the purpose of this study, the psychological level refers to the most proximal features on the individual level that impacted on the TSHS learner-athletes' experiences. An interesting find in this study was two psychological constructs that presented themselves; namely self-determination and guilt, which played a prominent role in the learner-athletes' psychological experiences at the TSHS.

### **4.2.1 Self-Determination**

The participants in this study repeatedly made reference to their self-determination to succeed. Self-determination is a psychological construct which can be defined internally or externally, and is at times influenced socially (Joesaar, Hein & Hagger, 2011; Mouratidis & Michou, 2011; Tower, 2008). For the purpose of this study self-determination is viewed as the internal motivation experienced and expressed, in the pursuit of personal goals that have

been set (Rich, 2017). The theme of self-determination, as a meta-cognitive skill, manifested itself through the manner in which the participants of this study accentuated their strong will in their desire to succeed despite adversity.

Besides the meta-cognitive skill of self-determination, other non-cognitive variables also seem to contribute to overall performance. Non-cognitive variables are defined as the “skills, values, and attitudes that may not be directly associated with intellectual ability” (Shuman, 2009, p. 4). Literature has shown that the presence of non-cognitive variables in dual careers can accurately predict academic and athletic performance across a set time span (Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Joesaar, Hein & Hagger, 2011). These variables include but are not limited to a positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, and the ability to set long-term goals (Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Grillo, 2011). Therefore the presence of such variables may indicate a greater likelihood of managing the adjustments and time requirements necessary in dual careers (Grillo, 2011). In addition, the responsibility to take ownership of choices and to act appropriately to challenging tasks so that a desired outcome can be reached has been highlighted by Baard, Deci and Ryan (2004) when exploring self-determination.

In terms of facing the challenges present in her dual career at the TSHS, Participant A highlighted how self-determination and taking responsibility mobilised her to succeed:

*“I was like, ‘You know what – I came here to TuksSports High School which is a sports school and I can do this’ ... Because from the beginning that thing is so powerful that it just drives you, so that when you make the decision that, ‘This is what I came here for, let’s do it – you’re standing in front of a mountain so let’s do it....’”*

She further stated:

*“You know what - I am going to do it, no matter how hard it is I’m going to go through with it ... I made the decision that I can do this.”*

Participant A’s self-determination provided her with the motivation to face her metaphorical mountain and overcome the difficulties she faced. Participant B confirmed the benefit of self-determination in her belief that failure, though it may come, would not define her or prevent her from ultimately succeeding:

*“When I got text books I was like, ‘You know what, I am going to study hard cause I never had any.’ Even if I don’t get it right, I will get it right. I know I will get it right. I will get*

*tired. Let's say I am doing a sum and then it's very difficult. I'll be like, 'I can do it. Let me take a break. I will come back and then I will do it... I always push to get past my challenges.'"*

Through the undertaking of dual careers, learner-athletes' self-regulatory abilities have been seen to improve, an aspect that has been regarded as a possible developmental benefit in this pursuit (EU, 2012). Through their utilization of self-determination, the participants of this study were able to self-regulate and negotiate their challenges in light of their positive self-beliefs and self-perceptions.

The processes and motivational components internalised by learner-athletes when negotiating what motivates them, and who they are as individuals in the fields of athletics and academics, was examined by Woodruff and Schallert (2008). Through their exploration it was uncovered that motivation and a balanced identity mutually influence one another, and cannot be separated when attempting to determine success in a dual career (Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). Both these aspects were found to be beneficial for individuals in the navigation of their dual careers (Grillo, 2011; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). Participant D exhibited a similar self-determination in this regard:

*"I am passionate, I'm sport, and I am willing to dedicate myself to everything I do. I don't have to know... I have skills and I like to participate. I want to do these things, I can... I can make it, big. Even bigger for what can come later."*

Involvement in dual careers has been linked to psychological advantages associated with mental health. These positive advantages on mental health are seen in increased self-esteem, emotional well-being, spirituality and future expectations (Gayles, 2009; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). The advantages extend further with consideration to overall wellbeing, an often neglected aspect when examining participation in sports at this level (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). As can be seen from the above discussion, the participants in this study experienced increased levels of self-esteem and positive future expectations, and utilized motivation and self-determination as a tool for adjustment through their dual career experiences at the TSHS.

#### 4.2.2 Guilt

As illustrated, the learner-athlete will encounter a number of transitional developments occurring simultaneously (Tekavc et al., 2015). If the learner-athlete is unsuccessful in their navigation of one of these levels it could have further negative psychological consequences, which in turn may lead to dropout (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). A novel find from this study was that the TSHS learner-athletes reported a negative psychological experience in their transitioning into their dual career - namely, guilt.

In transitioning out of a disadvantaged environment into the TSHS setting, the learner-athletes of this study faced difficulty in terms of leaving their family behind in an underprivileged environment, and immersing themselves within their new privileged context. With their newfound access to certain privileges that were previously unavailable to them, the participants were left with a sense of guilt and responsibility, for experiencing what was unavailable to their family members back home. Dealing with a sense of guilt may significantly impact the progression of a learner athlete through their dual career, as it has the potential to negatively affect their psychological adjustment (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2003). Participant B explains:

*“I really wanted to wear them (the sponsored shoes) but I thought about my family, about my brother wearing Nike shoes. Some I need to give to my brother yah, or I can give him and then he can sell them so he can make money to buy food in the home...”*

Participant B continues to highlight the guilt she experiences due to her newfound, privileged situation, and how this guilt has influenced her decision to give part of her gains in finance and clothing to her family:

*“It was difficult for me, because okay let’s say like now here we ate chicken. I didn’t eat because I’m wondering what my family ate and stuff. So I couldn’t eat... Even pocket money they give us, I just gave it to my mum. They (TSHS) gave us credit cards, so when I went home on Friday I gave them my credit card so they can buy things at home.”*

Participant D’s experience was comparable in this regard:

*“Whenever maybe I eat at the table like I’m thinking, ‘I wonder what my family is eating right now.’ Things like that. And whenever I switch on the aircon, because here in this*

*school we don't need nothing actually... Whenever I eat, I think about them. I was always worried."*

Participant A added to the theme of guilt, stating:

*"Yes they (my family) are proud of me. But I feel like I owe them, I feel like it's not enough."*

Understanding what her achievement and progress in her chosen path has meant to her family, Participant A still holds that she should be giving back more to them, due to what she has gained at the TSHS.

The participants of this study appeared to encounter significant difficulty in the guilt they experienced with regards to their improved environment. Negotiating their guilt in relation to the adjustment to their new context, is a necessary step to achieve however, as the participants of this study are in the process of their transition through the Perfection/Mastery/Elite level of their dual careers (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). Literature indicates the importance of this transitional phase, not only for the growth within the career development of learner-athletes, but also for the growth of life skills needed to balance the various areas of their lives, including their family spheres (Stambulova & Ryba, 2013).

### **4.3 Psychosocial Level**

According to Wylleman & Lavallee (2003) this level refers to the changes occurring in the learner-athletes psychosocial development, which includes peer-relationships, marital relationships, coach-athlete relationships, their athletic family and other interpersonal relationships significant to athletes. The results of this study indicated three main psychosocial experiences of the TSHS learner-athlete. The psychosocial components in this study, namely adjusting to social context, absent family as well as supportive role players, all strongly link to the importance of sense of belonging, and the subsequent influence belonging holds in shaping experience when adapting to an environment, in this case the TSHS.

#### **4.3.1 Adjustment to Social Context**

Part of the learner-athletes' process in their psychosocial development entails establishing and learning how to maintain and benefit from their various relationships with coaches,



administrators, peers and parents (Smith, 2007; Stambulova et al., 2015). These relationships are seen to play a significant role in the psychosocial support of learner-athletes. The importance of developing and understanding these relationships in order to benefit from them is reflected in the key role they perform in assisting individuals with their various transitions and adaptations faced in dual careers (Pummell et al., 2008; Stambulova et al., 2015).

Through this study it became clear that when arriving at the TSHS, the learner-athletes were disconnected, as they have come from different parts of the country, leaving their friends and family behind. Having to rebuild their support systems, and form friendships and other relationships has proven to be both difficult and beneficial to the participants of this study. Holt (2008) emphasise the importance of establishing consensual and informal relationship as they can provide, amongst other things, opportunities for mentoring. Participant A shared her experience of this difficult psychosocial adjustment - having to reintegrate into a group and establish herself as not only a learner-athlete, but also as a friend:

*“Sometime I feel like disappearing, like ‘Oh Lord please help me!’ I didn’t know anyone here so I was like ‘What am I going to do? If I don’t know anyone here how am I going to start my life... Sometime I was crying.’”*

Participant B also reflected on her past inter-personal social relationships. As she had been mistreated at her previous school, Participant B had developed a preconceived idea of interpersonal interactions, viewing them as being overtly negative:

*“Cause I didn’t have friends back then. They betrayed me. So I thought everyone was betrayed, so I was like, ‘Okay, so it’s like this. I will be alone’.”*

Participant D shared his perspective on his social relationships, a view that was also shaped through his past encounters:

*“But when I came here (the TSHS) I was scared because I thought I might be teased again, or get put down, or hurt or have my emotions to just be like used by everyone. I didn’t know if I could be accepted.”*

Despite the participants having faced difficulty in adjusting on a psycho-social level, literature indicates that a suitable form of psychosocial support for individuals involved in a dual career is the social support available to them in their current relationships (Cosh & Tully, 2015; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011). Therefore, learner-athletes who not only train

together, but also study, eat, socialise and live together, whether by choice or due to the structure of their dual career program, are able to benefit socially from their setting. This has been displayed in learner-athletes assisting each other in their realization of academic, sporting and common personal goals (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011). In addition, belonging to a social group that fosters positive interpersonal relationships has proven to be significant in developing general well-being (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004).

Consequently, as indicated through literature, learner-athletes are able to receive assistance from their peers through their contact within their setting. True to the beneficial nature of the above mentioned social support, Participant A stated:

*“I remember there was this girl, she came to me and she told me, ‘Just feel at home here. We all come from different provinces, different cultures, religions, so for you I understand, it’s going to be difficult. But I’m also from that situation, I’ve experienced this so I can assure you you’re going to be fine.’ And then those words – that’s when I realised that if I don’t change when am I going to change. I can’t stay quiet, I can’t be quiet forever. I need to have friends, I need to have true friends to help with books, with training, some encouragement and not judgement.”*

Research suggests that combining sporting and academic endeavours during adolescence offers the learner-athlete the opportunity to experience positive growth, with regards to the beneficial effects on socialization stemming from improved self-perception (Stambulova et al., 2015). In this light Participant A’s statement indicated an improved self-confidence geared towards forming beneficial social relationships.

Literature has also shown that the shared environment offered through certain dual career programs has the potential to offer a positive context in which adolescents can socialise and benefit from one another (Ryba et al., 2016). This became evident for Participant B upon settling into her environment, when she was approached by her peers:

*“Then they started coming to me, saying ‘You’re quiet’. And I was like okay and then I met my new friend, her name is Zoya<sup>12</sup>. And then, yeah, she’s my roommate also. She came to me and she told me about her life... And I even told her about my story. We have a lot the same, it was nice. And then we got that trust, and ya, it helped because now we speak about things.”*

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<sup>12</sup> Name changed to protect confidentiality

In addition to the other participants, Participant D also went on to discover positive socialisation:

*“I was (accepted), it was friendly and warm and all the people I met accepted me openly. Even if I’m like this, people loved me, they accepted me, they hugged me. I felt comfortable with them and I had joy. I didn’t even know there was a school like this that could have people like me. It was such an honour to be accepted with warm hands and I am happy.”*

Not only did Participant D feel accepted, but through other’s acceptance he was also able to appreciate his environment and personally adapt. According to Zauszniewski, Bekhet and Suresky (2010), the active process of understanding and adjusting to unchangeable situations is embedded in acceptance.

Literature suggests that there are the added psychosocial advantages of an expanded social network, improved peer relationships and enhanced support systems in dual careers. (EU, 2012; O’Neill et al., 2013; Pummell et al., 2008). Very early on Tajfel and Turner (1979), and more recently Hughes (2010), established that personal identity is strongly determined by group-belonging, and that the more an individual identifies with being part of a society, the more likely that individual would feel connected. It is evident that through their various encounters, the participants in this study benefited from their social relationships within the TSHS setting.

#### 4.3.2 Absent Family

Various studies found that parental involvement had a significant impact on enjoyment in, and objective measures of, performance in sport. This has been seen in both male and female athlete’s positively associating self-esteem and enjoyment in sport with parental support in sport (Dorsch, Smith & McDonough, 2009; Knight & Holt, 2014; Leff & Hoyle 1995). Studies on extramural activities and parental support also predict positive correlations between parental support and the amount of children’s involvement in such activities (Anderson et al., 2003).

In a study done to explore the pattern of parental involvement across career phases and career transitions in youth sports, Wuerth, Lee and Alfermann (2004) reportedly found increased parental involvement in athletes who had successful career transitions over a 12-month period

than athletes who had not managed to transition. Strandbu et al., (2017) displayed how parents are often the primary socializing agent for getting their kids involved in sport activities. Many athletes highlight the positive impact of their parent's supportive behavior on their athletic careers, especially the role they played in contributing to their transition to an elite level in sports (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Nicholls, 1984, 1989; Smith & Smoll, 2012).

Although parents may play a significant positive role in their children's sport development, parental involvement may range from under to over involvement (Hellstedt, 1987; Wuerth et al., 2004). Parents who are overinvolved may facilitate a disruptive role by which the learner-athlete feels pressured and which in turn may lead to low self-esteem and distress (Donnelly, 1993; Hollins, 2016; Wuerth et al., 2004). In literature, even dated sources<sup>13</sup> refer to under involvement by parents and how this may lead to learner-athletes feeling neglected, and lacking in emotional support which could lead to drop out (Gould et al., 1996; Hellsteadt, 1987).

However, from the above mentioned it became clear that one can assume the absence of parental involvement in sporting behaviour may have a significant effect on adolescents' experience of their athletic careers. Studies done reveal that the amount of attention invested in a child's sporting career may determine the level of parental involvement, and that the nature of the parent-child relationship significantly influences the level of parental involvement (Hellsteadt, 1987; Hollins, 2016; Wuerth et al., 2004).

These findings by Hellsteadt (1987), Hollins (2016) and Wuerth et al., (2004) are particularly relevant when considering the experience of the TSHS learner-athletes. It became evident through their conversations that a close and quality parent-child relationship significantly influenced the participant's dual career experiences. All of the participants in this study experienced significant difficulty adjusting to being away from their family, due to their longing for home and their parents. Participant A explains:

*"I miss home so much. When I first came here I was homesick! When you're so close to your family it's hard to just move to there for a long period of time. I couldn't cope sometimes, it was so difficult for me."*

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<sup>13</sup> Literature sources that illustrate the effect of absent parents on sporting behaviour were limited and difficult to find. However, the dated sources above still refer to applicable information and therefore the content was included in this study.

Participant B confirmed this in her experience:

*“It was very challenging because I couldn’t live without my mum. Coming here, it’s very challenging to be here.”*

Participant C expressed his difficulty in coping with being away from home, wanting to return as he was missing the context that he was used to:

*“Yoh, at first I felt like I can go home, because I’m not used to being away from home.”*

As previously mentioned, the learner-athletes in this study have been placed in the Master level of their athletic development by attending the TSHS. Although most adolescent athletes may display a significant degree of independence, parents still play a role in their development. It is especially during times of transitioning from one phase to another that parental support offers solutions to adolescents increasing developmental demands (Wuerth et al., 2004). Participant D confirms the challenge with regards to transitioning and the absence of parental support:

*“When I got here, I was just thinking about home. Back home. The transition, it was not nice and nice [at the same time]... I get homesick a lot.”*

Wuerth et al., (2004) state that positive support and encouragement is needed before, during and after transitional phases. However the relationship is defined, parent involvement seems to be multidimensional, consisting of varying levels of support and pressure (Leff & Hoyle, 1995; Stein, Raedeke, & Glenn, 1999). These include, amongst other things, behaviour and comments that demonstrates pleasure, and offer feedback and praise for performance (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Kidman, McKenzie, & McKenzie, 1999).

From this study it became clear that TSHS learner-athletes may benefit from more regular visitation or interaction with their parents. In addition, as part of their dual career introduction, it may be beneficial to desensitise prospective TSHS learner-athletes to the lack of parental involvement in terms of physical presence within their new environment.

#### 4.3.3 Support from Role Players

Learner-athletes can only achieve success in their dual careers if they benefit in conjunction with a balanced performance team situated within effective support services (EU, 2012).

Although the participants in this study did not specifically note their coaches as supportive role players, literature indicates that encouragement to improve individual effort has the potential to buffer parental and personal pressure on learner-athletes athletic performance (Dorsch, Smith & Dotterer, 2016; O’Sullivan, 2014). Duda and Hall (2001) admit a need to further investigate the effect of immediate environmental factors, such as coach and parental feedback on achievement. Gershgoren et al (2011) also indicated that few studies have been done to explore the need of such feedback, as well as the related environmental factors impacting on achievement.

However, as previously mentioned, the TSHS learner-athlete is situated outside of their age bracket according to literature (Wylleman & Lavellee, 2004). At their current age the participants of this study should be situated in the Developmental phase of their athletic careers. However, by attending the TSHS, these individuals are placed in the Mastery phase due to the nature of the TSHS dual career program. This creates a unique situation, as the coping strategies implemented by these learner-athletes, and the support offered by the TSHS, may not fit perfectly within a theoretical framework. Nevertheless, despite this unique age-characteristic the participants in this study found their teachers as pivotal supportive role players who meaningfully impacted on their experience as TSHS learner-athletes.

Participant A conveyed her experience with some of the support she has received since being a learner-athlete at the TSHS:

*“They do understand, if I tell the teachers ok I’m writing tomorrow so please no homework today, she’ll be like ‘Fine I understand, you can go study for your test, because you know what? It’s difficult for you guys’.”*

Throughout the development of the learner-athletes’ athletic careers, the coaching staff and administrative staff are customarily involved to a large extent (Aquilina, 2013; Stambulova et al., 2015). This is an integral support structure through which learner-athletes are helped to cope with the demands placed on them and are able to receive support in their athletic pursuits. With the aid of these structures, learner-athletes are able to plan more efficiently, train more frequently, and receive assistance in acquiring extended professional support in the form of extra coaching, psychologists and mentors etc. (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2014).

In addition literature indicates the importance of providing dedicated learner-athlete counsellors in order to reduce the risk of psychological burnout and distress (Gomez, Bradley & Conway 2018; Humphrey, Yow, & Bowden 2000; Mazerolle & Pagnotta 2011). Participant B's experience reflects the effect of such a service, with the TSHS mentors being able to provide their assistance if they are needed:

*“...and I know I can do this at the school cause they also support this... Let me say I've got mentors (at the TSHS) to help me if I'm in need.”*

Participant C confirmed the experience of support he has received in his current dual career endeavours at the TSHS:

*“They (the teachers) will always assist me if I need assistance. They, they understand with the training...”*

The leniency and understanding exhibited by his teachers reflects what literature has indicated, that in order for learner-athletes to be successful within their dual career path, integrated support structures are required, so that individuals such as the participants of this study are able to attend to their various demands. Participant D confirmed the findings of supportive role players further, by stating:

*“They give us inspirational quotes to keep us moving... I love these school teachers... They are strong... In sport, I feel encouraged by my coach. He supports me. It has helped. I can say I can do it all now, they (the TSHS) have helped me do it.”*

Studies have indicated that learner-athletes tend to experience conflict between their academic/learner and athlete roles (Kamusoko & Pemberton 2013; Levine, Etchison & Oppenheimer, 2014; McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis 2004; Miller & Kerr 2002). This has been seen as a result of lack of integration between their academic and athletic pursuits (Comeaux 2010). Therefore to reduce the risk of conflict between these two roles structures are required to be in place to assist with the resolution of the various responsibilities involved in both avenues (E.U, 2012). From the above discussion it can be seen that the TSHS structure is situated in such a manner that the learner-athletes are supported and encouraged in both domains.

#### **4.4 Academic Level**

Wylleman & Lavellee (2004) depict this level as the stages and transitions occurring throughout the academic and vocational aspects of a dual career. These comprise of the transition into primary education, the stage of high school or secondary education, the transition into university or college (higher education), and the transition into a professional occupation and/or vocational training. It became clear through this study that the academic environment and requirements of the TSHS influenced the experiences of the learner-athletes with regards to the pursuit of their dual career. Two very prominent themes came to the fore.

##### **4.4.1 Academic Adjustment**

For the purpose of this study, academic adjustment refers to the experience of adjusting to a specific academic environment and having English as the single medium language for instruction. The participants of this study came from different schools in various regions of South Africa, where they were taught in their specified home languages. Therefore, by attending the TSHS these individuals were required to adjust not only to learning in a new academic structure and environment, but also a new language. This adds significant weight to the challenges facing them already, as due to their various responsibilities within their athletic setting, these learner-athletes are often left feeling fatigued, limiting their capacity for concentration.

Research has shown that while the athletic career development of learner-athletes is typically managed by coaching staff and those involved on an administrative level, the academic career development and planning is left almost solely up to the learner-athletes themselves (Aquilina, 2013; Stambulova et al., 2015). Participant C indicated the significant difficulty he had adjusting to an academic program coming from an educational background where schooling was done in a native language, i.e. Zulu:

*“I used to be taught in Zulu. Ja, umm, so I need to adapt to being taught in English, but, I couldn’t speak like proper English. So I had to adapt... I failed the whole year, my first year...I just learnt it (English) by myself, and I used to ask one of my teammates how to say this in English, then they told me, then I learnt how to say it.”*



Participant B confirms the difficulty in adjusting to an academic language of pure English having previously relied on her mother for support in translation:

*“Well, you see, if I didn’t understand, my mum would explain it in my own language and then I would write it in English exactly just like the textbook says. My mum would say, ‘No, this thing is like this,’ and then she would explain and I would take a book and write my own answers...”*

She continues:

*“I never knew how to talk English but I understood and I wrote, like I can write kind of English and stuff but to talk it, it was too difficult for me...”*

In addition to language barriers, the participants in this study also experienced difficulty adjusting to the academic setting because of physical exhaustion due to intensive and extensive training demands. As Participant B explains:

*“So Monday mornings after training, I would sleep (in class) because I was tired. Most days was like that.”*

The difficulty in maintaining academic performance and progression in the midst of an elite athletic program has been identified in dual career literature (Aquilina & Henry, 2010; Christensen & Sorensen, 2009; Ryba et al., 2016). In the process of attempting to maintain development in both fields, learner-athletes often experience mental and physical exhausted, alongside increased levels of stress and anxiety (O’Neill et al., 2013; Ryba et al., 2016). Participant A supported this notion of having to adjust to academic classroom demands while being exhausted:

*“It was difficult because if I woke up early in the morning at that time here, at TUKS (for morning training), and then when I come back in class I wasn’t even concentrating.”*

It should be noted however that cognitive factors may not be the only determining factor contributing to learner-athletes’ academic adjustment and success. Simons and Van Rheenen (2000) found that four non-cognitive factors, namely feelings of being exploited, academic self-worth, self-handicapping excuses as well as background and academic preparation variables, contributed significantly to learner-athletes’ academic performance.

However, despite difficulties in adjusting to a structured and more formal academic setting, the participants in this study seem to benefit from the TSHS's culture of encouragement and guidance to succeed, as Participant B stated:

*“Compared to my school, they didn't do that....Here at this school, the way I was hungry for education, they taught us... At school they encourage us...Other schools don't have homework period, but we at this school are privileged to have homework period... They give us inspirational quotes to keep us moving...I improved a lot in Maths, Geo, Business, because they are there, like – “Do you understand - have any questions?”*

Encouragement played a significant role in academic adjustment for the participants in this study. This motivational component has also been recognised by Jonker et al., (2010), who defined it as “the extent to which learners are self-efficaciously, autonomously, and intrinsically motivated to attain a specific goal” (p. 1606). This metacognitive component is viewed as part of a learner-athletes ability to self-regulate, and is understood to include the knowledge about and awareness of one's own thinking (Jonker et al., 2010).

In addition, research proves that academically successful learner-athletes are more able to transfer traits necessary for athletic performance to their academic lives; therefore they respond better to the increased demands placed on their time management and achieve more success in both spheres. In summary, it seems that success breeds success and that a firm belief in the ability to perform academically and a strong academic identity may well be the mobilising factor in academic success amongst learner-athletes (Simons & Van Rheenen, 2000).

#### 4.4.2 Academic Time Management

Not only are learner-athletes expected to adjust to strict and intense training schedules, but these individuals may find additional challenges in adapting to a new environment. With the TSHS being an elite performance, dual career high school, the learner-athletes are faced with an environment they have never known, in addition to the challenges involved with transitioning into new living arrangements (Emrich et al., 2009). In this regard, athletic time management as previously discussed, and academic time management are strongly interlinked. Research has found that the temporal demands made by athletic programmes may not only hinder the learner-athletes' social lives, but can lead to a decline in academic

performances (Fryklund, 2012; Göktaş, 2010; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2011; Singer, 2008).

Participant A confirmed:

*“Feeling like sleeping because I woke up early in the morning, pretending like I’m hearing the teacher...”*

Participant D expanded on the difficulty he faced in managing his academic times appropriately, since exhaustion plagued his ability to focus and maintain balance:

*“Imagine I wake up at 5! What’s good is that school starts at 9:00. Train early then you go to school. You first sleep in class. Sometimes you can concentrate and sometimes you can’t, cause you’re too sleepy. Then you come back. It’s like its rotating.”*

Gaston-Gayles (2004) confirms that the demands of the athletic training schedule may take away time from the learner-athlete that could otherwise be spent on academic endeavours or on free leisure activities. Another issue relating to academic time management which arose from this research study was that of fostering new discipline and skills to cope with the academic demands presented at the TSHS. This was as a result of some of the participants of this study not facing as strong academic demands in their previous school settings. Participant C explains:

*“In my previous school learners had no discipline; we used to get free periods every day. We did learn and study, but we didn’t do studying as we do here at Tuks.”*

Simons and Van Rheenen (2000) acknowledge the tendency of learner-athletes to increasingly commit themselves to their athletic pursuits while disengaging from academic preparation, leading to poor academic performance. In such instances it was found that learner-athletes may easily use self-handicapping excuses by blaming athletic demands for underperformance in school, instead of acknowledging their own lack of academic effort. Despite the difficulties experienced with regards to academic time management, some participants managed to structure their days in order to overcome time challenges. Participant A explains:

*“I have time management, it’s my balance. I drew my timetable for weeks... My plan actually is scheduled for how I’m going to do my work here, because I found it very challenging.”*

Time management with regards to attending to academic requirements has been recognised as a supportive need in dual careers (Emrich et al., 2009). Dual career programs should therefore assist learner-athletes with time management, due to the overall demanding time

schedule of their programs it is acknowledged as a significant disadvantage (Emrich et al., 2009; Gaston-Gayles, 2004). In addition, establishing time management is viewed as a necessity if success is to be achieved in a dual career, due to the nature of this aspect linking closely with the foundation of balance (Emrich et al., 2009; Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Pummell et al., 2008). As a result, through her establishment of time management Participant A was able to ease the challenging nature of her responsibilities.

Despite the above disadvantages, research shows that, although not always the case, learner-athletes may receive time management support from administrators of athletic programs (Klem & Connell, 2004; Rhodes & Nevill, 2004; Stanton-Salazar, Vasquez, & Mehan, 2000). Literature also indicates that in some instances, learner-athletes have reported less stress due to their physical outlet through sports, and stated that this may contribute to better academic performance (Henriksen, 2010; Skirka, 2000; Stambulova, et al., 2015). Participant C explained how support in the form of understanding and flexibility assisted him in his adjustment to the academic environment and academic time constraints at the TSHS:

*“Because in the morning we come at 9:00, so it’s supposed to be 8:30 but we have training in the mornings so they know so then its ok, they are ok if we come at 9:00. And they are always understanding about competitions.”*

Lindahl (2011) displayed how the provision of idiosyncratic and flexible support for learner-athletes in their dual career commitments is essential if they are to succeed as athletes, and as individuals in their personal lives. Participant D confirmed the positive experience through supportive and understanding teaching staff:

*“Even if you don’t understand they will make you understand... I feel supported and encouraged by the teachers when it comes to academics.”*

In conjunction with existing literature, the participants of this study have confirmed that academic time management is a pivotal challenge, and not an easy one to overcome when involved in a dual career. Considerations about time management guidance and support may be crucial in ensuring successful transitioning, as well as the achievement of balance for the TSHS learner-athletes.

## Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysed results collected from the research participants. It displayed a summary of the research findings collected, with the aim of addressing the research questions of this study. These results were explored in relation to consistency, inconsistency and uniqueness with regards to current literature, and were presented in the form of quotes from the participants in order to enhance legitimacy.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### Introduction

This chapter will display a summary of the research findings collected, with the aim of addressing the research questions of this study. These findings will first be presented in a summary table, reflecting the themes uncovered through the research process. These results are organized alongside their relative advantages or disadvantages, if there were any, as experienced by the learner-athletes of this study. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion concerning the recommendations for the TSHS based on the findings, limitations of this study, as well as future recommendations for further research.

Table 2

*Discussion of findings in terms of advantages and disadvantages related to the TSHS Dual Career.*

<b>ATHLETIC LEVEL</b>	
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
<b>Amenities and Facilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved amenities in the form of training facilities, training clothing and coaching expertise which enhanced development as more means were available in the pursuit of athletic goals.</li><li>• Athletic support (in the form of physios, psychologists and mentors) assisted in continued sporting development</li></ul>	

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical aid assisted in keeping learner-athletes on track with development, and lessened worries surrounding illnesses.</li> <li>• An improved environment (electricity, showers and consistent running warm water) aided in self-perceptions, future ambitions, personal growth and development</li> </ul>	
<b>Food and health</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and balanced dietary intake, increasing health and athletic development.</li> <li>• Improvement in dietary variety available to the learner-athletes following their enrolment at the TSHS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in adjusting to dietary variety and requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Athletic adjustment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased aspirations regarding future outlook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustment to athletic program experienced as intensive and challenging.</li> <li>• Demanded more effort and energy.</li> <li>• Physical exhaustion, doubt and uncertainty regarding their ability to succeed.</li> </ul>
<b>Athletic time management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of ability to succeed and grow, as well as increased discipline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in adapting to new dual career schedule and new requirements.</li> <li>• Achieving balance in their athletic time management was challenging due to extensiveness of new requirements.</li> <li>• Required to design detailed timetables and develop increased discipline around new responsibilities and training regimen.</li> <li>• Underdeveloped or lack of time management meant difficulty in adjusting, and at times missed responsibilities due to feeling overwhelmed.</li> </ul>

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
<b>Self-Determination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased self-belief, self-awareness, flexibility, determination and willingness to succeed.</li> <li>• Increased discipline in line with reaching personal goals,</li> <li>• Improved time management</li> <li>• Increased aspirations for the future</li> </ul>	
<b>Guilt</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made their families proud.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of guilt related to new found privileges, which included clothing, food and housing (electricity and running warm water).</li> <li>• A strong desire to share these privileges with their families, experienced feelings of guilt, as their families were still situated within their disadvantaged environments.</li> <li>• Believed they owed their families due to the manner in which their families had supported them in reaching this point in their lives.</li> <li>• Skipped meals due to feelings of guilt.</li> <li>• Shared or gave their money and/or sponsored clothing to family members back home, to sell or use for themselves, due to feelings of guilt.</li> </ul>
<b>PSYCHOSOCIAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
<b>Adjustment to Social Context</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity within student body at the TSHS that provides a space for acceptance, co-habitation, and team work.</li> <li>• Participants were all approached by other learner-athletes, and were introduced into the setting and the culture of the TSHS.</li> <li>• The learner-athletes were also able to adjust and feel more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt afraid, anxious, apprehensive or unsure of their social environment and how to connect within their social environment or establish themselves within their social environment.</li> <li>• Feelings of isolation, loneliness and at times a desire to disappear.</li> <li>• Difficulty in beginning their new journey.</li> </ul>



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comfortable.</li> <li>• These interactions assisted them in realizing their responsibility in engaging with their environment and program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past social experiences had been negative (betrayed by friends, teased, used by others etc.) and so expectations were tainted</li> <li>• Participants all originated from different parts of the county, different regions, cultures and backgrounds, they all spoke different languages which made connecting in the social setting challenging.</li> </ul>
<b>Absent Family</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arriving at the TSHS was difficult due to the significant amount of distance between the participants and their homes and family leading to a strong desire to return home initially.</li> <li>• Had never spent an extended amount of time away from their home or family before attending the TSHS.</li> <li>• Felt homesick, and felt as if they could not cope without their family.</li> <li>• Many came from single parent households and so felt as if their one parent was their entire support structure and reason for their success, therefore without them they felt as if failure was imminent.</li> <li>• Difficult to remain at the TSHS without close or immediate access to their families.</li> </ul>
<b>Support from Role Players</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers were understanding, flexible and accommodating to intense schedules, also provided support and encouragement in the form of motivation</li> <li>• Additional time provided for studying to take place by reducing homework and allowing extra time for preparing for tests.</li> <li>• Mentors provided to assist learner-athletes, thereby increasing support.</li> <li>• Training/athletic coaches provided support, encouragement and understanding.</li> <li>• Participants felt they could succeed due to the various avenues of</li> </ul>	

support provided by the TSHS.	
<b>ACADEMIC/VOCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
<b>Academic Adjustment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted in adjustments to TSHS context through support and encouragement of the teachers, through this participants were motivated in adjustment and growth in academic endeavours.</li> <li>Increased motivation to succeed due to the TSHS structure, and the professionalism of the teachers as reported by the learner-athletes in comparison to the structure and teachers at their previous schools.</li> <li>Shift in perspective allowed for view of academic program as a privilege.</li> <li>Reported improved marks in some of their subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largest challenges related to the language of education, as the TSHS academic course is presented in English meaning the participants were required to learn an entirely new language (as none of them spoke English, or were proficient in the English language prior to them attending the TSHS) while learning entirely new subjects being taught in an entirely new syllabus.</li> <li>Made use of family members, teammates and friends in acquiring new language.</li> <li>Experienced difficulty tending to new and increased academic requirements in conjunction with sporting endeavours.</li> <li>Physical and mental exhaustion, resulting in difficulty with concentrating, and sometimes sleeping through certain classes.</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Time Management</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in adjusting to attending school straight after early morning physical regime.</li> <li>Slept through initial classes or feigned attention in order to avoid getting into trouble.</li> </ul>

### 5.1 Recommendations for the TSHS

Based on the above findings the following recommendations can be generated in assisting the TSHS in their support of their learner-athletes:

5.1.1 The learner-athletes displayed a desire to give back to their families financially, by handing over the money provided to them through their bursaries, for their use at school. This indicates a possible need for financial awareness, budget training, and financial responsibility. Through basic financial education learner-athletes may be able to invest or save part of the allowance, thereby benefiting themselves and their family. Emotional support can also be provided with regards to the guilt experienced by the learner-athletes due to the financial benefits received.

5.1.2 Diet is of vital importance in athletic development and overall health. As some learner-athletes indicated difficulty adjusting to their new eating regime there may be a possible need to follow up and ensure that those who are new to the school are managing their dietary intake. Information sessions can be provided, possibly by a dietician or nutritionist, in order to educate the learner-athletes about the role food plays and its importance in athletic development.

5.1.3 The participants of this study experienced a significant amount of uncertainty upon initial entry into the TSHS. They reported that there was no formal or informal day of introduction into the school for new pupils, which created feelings of stress, isolation and loneliness. There also appears to be a need for assistance regarding the learner-athletes adjustment out of their disadvantaged environments into the TSHS environment. This may indicate a possible need to follow up with learner-athletes regarding their overall adjustment to the program, in order to ensure that their personal adjustment does not require an extended period of time, thereby hindering their progress. As some learner-athletes may feel uncertain in approaching prefects, mentors or faculty, this may need to be an undertaking the school assumes. A possible recommendation is to therefore follow up with learner-athletes (through mentors or individual psychotherapy with a psychologist) with regards to their adjustment to their environment. This can be achieved through the establishment of support groups for those arriving at the school, or evenings incorporating social games that allow for introduction between the learner-athletes, providing a space for them to establish themselves and get to know one another. A possible recommendation is also to provide a day of music and/or games (individual and team) for the learner-athletes to interact and introduce themselves. This can be done on a school day, at the end of a week or on a weekend, thereby allowing the learner-athletes an opportunity to get to know one another in a non-threatening, inter-active manner.

5.1.4 A significant need displayed by the participants of this study related to time management. As this was identified as the key to achieving balance within their program it is an aspect vital to their success. Therefore there is a need for the provision of time management training regarding their time management through the initial months or period of adjustment to the TSHS and its program. Follow up classes, or individual meetings can then be arranged in order to ensure classes are not being missed, academic progress is not being affected, time management is improving and adjustment is continuing.

5.1.5 The participants of this study experienced difficulty in leaving their families behind in order to attend the TSHS. This experience negatively affected their ability to adjust to their environment, to connect with others and to establish themselves in their dual career roles. The learner-athletes also experienced emotional difficulties related to the sense of loss perceived by leaving their families behind. A possible recommendation is to therefore provide “family days”, possibly once a term, for families to come to the school and spend a day/night/weekend with their children. Alternatively the TSHS could facilitate letter writing sessions once a month/once every two weeks that the learner-athletes could send home to families to assist them in maintaining and strengthening contact. In here the learner-athletes could include pictures of their relative events/achievements etc. The TSHS could also assist with this adjustment through the mentors/psychologist, aiding the learner-athletes in how they could keep their families close (through pictures/photos/establishment or embodiment of family values etc).

5.1.6 While extra lessons for maths were reportedly offered, the participants of this study did not have access to additional English classes or a sufficient introduction to the English language. As the learner-athletes of this study all came from different regions of South Africa, they all spoke different home languages. This led to the participants experiencing significant difficulty in their adjustment to their academic environment, as English was the academic language of instruction. As a result this hindered their academic development and progress. Therefore, further support could be offered in the form of additional English lessons or tutelage, which would potentially lessen the academic adjustment faced. Hence a possible recommendation is to provide additional English classes, and follow up on progression through additional help (can be done through mentors). This seems to be an essential need for the learner-athletes in the midst of the other challenges facing them in their various adjustments at the TSHS.

## **5.2 Contributions to Research**

5.2.1 The research study presented has contributed to and supported previous literature surrounding dual careers and the learner-athlete model. With the majority of current literature available on dual careers being done in developed countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany to name a few (see Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012; Bradley & Conway, 2016; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Gayles & Baker, 2015; Göktaş, 2010; Ronkainen, Selanne, & Ryba, 2016; Ryba et al., 2015; Ryba et al., 2016; Stambulova et al., 2015), this study offers an original perspective. As previous studies have been carried out in developed countries, this study situated within the South African context, exploring a population stemming from disadvantaged backgrounds, provides a unique outlook.

5.2.2 In addition, the predominant focus of prior research has been focused on the student-athlete experience. (Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Cosh & Tully, 2014; Gayles & Baker, 2015; Göktaş, 2010; James, 2010; Lee & Opio, 2011; O'Neill et al., 2013; Pavlidis & Gargalianos, 2014; Ryba et al., 2015). Therefore, by placing its focus on the adolescent's experience of being a learner-athlete, this research offers further insight into another area of this field that is somewhat limited.

5.2.3 This study found that achieving balance in their various pursuits in the dual career environment was indeed a challenge faced by all research participants. Difficulties the participants faced in this regard included attending to all their dual career responsibilities, anxiety related to coping with their demands, adjusting to their dual career schedule and maintaining the personal aspects of their lives. The key to realizing this balance and maintaining their progress as learner-athletes was time-management, which was a strategy utilized by the research participants.

5.2.4 A finding illustrated in this study was that the academic staff working in conjunction with the athletic responsibilities of the learner-athletes, and the tailor made environment structured around meeting their demands, led to the learner-athletes feeling supported and encouraged in their pursuits.

5.2.5 The study uncovered additional advantages in the undertaking of a dual career for learner-athletes from disadvantaged communities. Due to the participants growing up in disadvantaged environments, their arrival at the TSHS offered additional advantages aside from those usually seen in learner-athlete dual career programmes. These advantages included improved nutrition, accommodation, environmental, financial and apparel advantages. These advantages had a great impact on their athletic development in the form of nutrition, professional training gear and structured training programs. Their appreciation of how their improved environment benefited their growth as learner-athletes extended, and resulted in eliciting a form of guilt.

5.2.6 A unique perspective offered by this study is that of the shared environment, with the learner-athletes being housed in a hostel setting. This was seen to benefit the research participants as this structure allowed for some of the participants to connect with their peers and form social support networks. Other research participants reported gaining motivation and perspective from this shared environment, which assisted them in making their adjustments.

5.2.7 A further challenge faced by the learner-athletes, unique to this research enquiry, was the requirement of learning a new language in order to continue their academic endeavours. With the primary language of the TSHS environment being English, and the learner-athletes having come from areas of South Africa where English is not the first language of many cultures, this was an additional adjustment they faced. Having grown up in a non-English environment, all the participants of this study also mentioned the fact that they were required to learn English while pursuing their academic careers, in English. Although this is a contribution specifically aimed at research within the South African context, the understanding that language used as an academic medium in the transference of knowledge may be a crucial consideration for other countries, who may accept students from various nationalities.

### **5.3 Limitations**

There were various limitations present within this study.

5.3.1 Firstly, the research participants consisted of two African females and two African males. Therefore it may be problematic to generalise the results, as different population and demographic groups may have different experiences and different needs.

5.3.2 The collage making progress and interview process was conducted in English. English is the second language of the research-participants. Therefore the participants of this study may have been limited in their ability to express themselves and discuss the full nature of their experiences.

5.3.3 The TSHS learner-athletes who took part in this research study were all in Grade 10. This situates them in specific developmental stage regarding their age, with specified developmental tasks and therefore different experiences in comparison to other age groups. If similar research was conducted with learner-athletes in different grades, different experiences may have been discussed depending on their grade, age and developmental level.

5.3.4 The research participants were all solely involved in athletics. As such learner-athletes involved in other sporting codes may be presented with different dual career programs, resulting in alternative experiences and supportive needs.

5.3.5 The research participants all stemmed from single parent households. This situated them within a particular family system with specific family dynamics. Therefore learner-athletes from two parent households may have alternative family dynamics, resulting in different experiences in terms of development, support and adjustment.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

5.4.1 Future research could include different races within the same sport codes to note if a difference in demographics leads to a difference in experiences. By extending the parameters of the study to include the dual career experiences of individuals involved in other sports more generalizable results may be produced.

5.4.2 Conduct process (interviews and collages) in the participant's native tongue, or with use of an interpreter. This may provide greater insight into the phenomenon in question.

5.4.3 A longitudinal study could be conducted, in order to explore how experiences change over time.

5.4.4 Future studies could involve learner-athletes who are all within the same sporting codes at the beginning (Gr 8) middle (Gr 10) and final (Gr 12) years of their high school dual careers, in order to compare expectations, experiences and coping strategies.

5.4.5 Future research could also investigate the effects of parent-child relationships on the dual career experiences of learner-athletes in both single and two parent households. This may provide a clearer picture on the effects of these type of family dynamics, whether there is a difference between the two and how to better connect both types of family systems to the individuals attending the TSHS.

### Conclusion

This research study aimed to develop an understanding into the learner-athletes' dual career experiences within the TSHS. From these experiences, guidelines were developed in order to further assist and enhance the learner-athletes' experiences within these environments. The chapter summarized these findings and provided recommendations for the TSHS based on the results. The chapter concluded with a discussion concerning the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.



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## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH INVITATION



#### SECTION A

#### RESEARCH INVITATION

Dear Learner-Athlete,

I am a MA (Counselling Psychology) student at the University of Pretoria. The topic of my research project is: **“An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSports High School learner-athlete.”**

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 learner-athletes experience their dual careers within the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy.

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.

Dr. Liana Kruger, from the Student Counselling Unit, Department of Student Affairs at the University of Pretoria will be my supervisor for this research project (Email: [liana.kruger@up.ac.za](mailto:liana.kruger@up.ac.za)).

Kind regards

Mr. Dean Sutherland  
Researcher

Cell no.: 083 452 1648  
E-mail: [deanrobertsutherland@yahoo.com](mailto:deanrobertsutherland@yahoo.com)

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Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Departement Sielkunde  
Lefapha la Bomocho  
Kgomo ya Seekolotši



UNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
UNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Psychology

## SECTION B RESEARCH CONTACT

I hereby acknowledge that I am interested in participating in the MA (Counselling Psychology) research project of Mr. Dean Sutherland: "An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSports High School learner-athlete."

I hereby grant Mr. Dean Sutherland 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

---

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Departement Sielkunde  
Lefapha la Bomocho  
Kgomo ya Sekolotso

## APPENDIX B

### TUKS ATHLETICS ACADEMY RESEARCH PERMISSION



Faculty of Health Sciences  
Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute

SEMLI Sports Psychology  
Marteleze van Graan  
Practice # 0486043

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HPC building  
Sports Campus, University of Pretoria  
Bumalo Street, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0083, South Africa  
Tel number: +27 12 484 1749  
Email: kem.foureses@hpc.co.za

29 August 2016

#### Consent letter

I, Mr. Lindsey Parry (Technical Director: Tuks Athletics Academy) am aware and hereby grant permission to Dean Sutherland (student no. 29030715) to use the adolescent athletes affiliated with the High Performance Centre (hpc) for his research study. I grant him permission to make use of the premises of the hpc to conduct the necessary interviews needed to complete his MA Counselling Psychology research project with the proposed title of:

**"An exploration into the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete."**

For any inquiries please feel free to contact me.

Regards



Mr. Lindsey Parry

Technical Director: Tuks Athletics Academy

## APPENDIX C

### TUKSSPORT HIGH SCHOOL RESEARCH PERMISSION



Faculty of Health Sciences  
Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute

SEM/LL Sports Psychology  
Marteleeza van Graan  
Phone: 83485040

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HPC building  
Sports Campus, University of Pretoria  
Bumela Street, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0083, South Africa  
Tel number: +27 12 426 1743  
Email: kerl@barroco@up.ac.za

29 August 2016

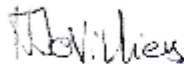
#### Consent letter

I, Mrs. Hettie de Villiers (Principal of the TuksSport High School) am aware and hereby grant permission to Dean Sutherland (student no. 29030715) to use the athletes affiliated with the High Performance Centre (hpc) and the TuksSport High School (TSHS) for his research study. I grant him permission to make use of the premises of the hpc to conduct the necessary interviews needed to complete his MA Counselling Psychology research project with the proposed title of:

**"An exploration into the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete."**

For any inquiries please feel free to contact me.

Regards



Mrs. H. E. de Villiers  
(Principal of TuksSport High School)

Sports Campus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HPC Building  
University of Pretoria, Private Bag, 200, Hatfield 0028, South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)12 426 1711 x1118  
Fax: +27 (0)12 426 1711 x1118  
Email: [ma.teleza.vangraan@scmf.co.za](mailto:ma.teleza.vangraan@scmf.co.za)  
[www.fhsc@up.ac.za](mailto:www.fhsc@up.ac.za)  
[www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)

Fakulteit Gesondheidwetenskappe  
Letapha la Otsaense tša Maphele



## APPENDIX D

### PARENTAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT



Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Psychology

#### SECTION A RESEARCH INFORMATION

Dear Parent / Guardian,

The following information is important regarding a research project at the TuksSport High School. Once you have read through the information in Section A, and you are willing to allow your child to participate in the research project, please complete Section B.

**Information:** I am currently registered for my MA (Counselling Psychology) degree specializing in Sport Psychology, at the University of Pretoria. Part of my training is to conduct a research project.

I am interested in middle distance athletes' dual career experiences within the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy. This is the proposed focus of my research project.

Dr. Liana Kruger, from the Student Counselling Unit, Department of Student Affairs at the University of Pretoria will be my supervisor for this research project. Her contact details are 012-420-2333 or [liana.kruger@up.ac.za](mailto:liana.kruger@up.ac.za)

**Title:** The title of the study is: "An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete."

**Permission:** Permission has been given by the principle of the TuksSport High School and the director of TuksSport Athletics Academy for the research to be conducted.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to understand how your child experiences their dual career roles within the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy, and to inform existing policy with the aim of assisting learner-athletes to cope with the demands of sport and study.

**Procedures:** This research project is qualitative in nature and will require your child to complete the following procedure:

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Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Departement Sielkunde  
Lefapha la Bomocho  
Kgomo ya Seekolotši

1. To participate in a collage making session that will be held in a group format at the TuksSport High School. All material will be provided. This will not interfere with your child's schooling and/or athletics programme.
2. During this period your child will be required to create collages based on their experiences at the TuksSport High School. These collages will be used to guide the unstructured interviews to follow. Therefore these collages will be collected and kept by the researcher for this purpose.
3. After the collage making session has been facilitated I shall conduct a one-hour unstructured interview with your child at the TuksSport High School, focussing on the content of the collages your child made. These collages will help provide insight into their personal experiences within the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy.

The unstructured interview will be audio taped for the purpose of transcribing the interview accurately for analysis. Confidentiality will be respected throughout our meetings. The results from this study will be made available to you, your child and the resident sport psychologist at the High Performance Centre, Marteleze van Graan.

**Dual Roles:**

During the study I will have dual roles: Firstly your child will experience me in the role of a facilitator during the creation of the collages, and secondly he/she will experience me as the researcher during the interview process. The interplay between these roles will be handled with sensitivity as to avoid any confusion or discomfort on your child's part.

**Risks:**

There are no perceived physical or psychological risks involved by partaking in this study as the programme and interviews are psycho-educational in nature. However, should your child wish to discuss what he/she has learnt from their experience, support services will be available at the High Performance Centre by the resident sport psychologist (Marteleze van Graan) at no cost.



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Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Psychology

- Benefits:** There are no financial gains for participating in the research, but your child may benefit personally in terms of sharing their experiences and providing data that can better inform current policies in place supporting learner-athletes.
- Rights:** Participation is voluntary. Your child 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 your child wishes to withdraw their participation. All possible identifying characteristics will be altered or omitted from the research report and/or research article.
- Material:** After completion of the research, data will be stored in the Department of Psychology at University of Pretoria for 15 years for archival purposes.
- Researcher:** If you need further clarity or more information, my contact details are as follows:
- Name:** Dean Sutherland  
**Cell no.:** 083 452 1648  
**E-mail:** deanrobertsutherland@yahoo.com

Researcher: ..... (Mr. D. Sutherland)  
Date: .....

Research Supervisor: ..... (Dr. L. Kruger)  
Date: .....

---

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Departement Sielkunde  
Lefapha la Bomocho  
Kgomo ya Sekekolotši

## SECTION B RESEARCH CONSENT

I, ..... (Full name and surname) hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the research information in Section A.

Please indicate whether you give permission to allow/decline your child from participating in this study by marking the appropriate statement:

I <u>give</u> permission for my child to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I <u>decline</u> permission for my child to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Parent / Guardian: ..... (Signature)

Date: .....

## APPENDIX E

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND ASSENT



**Faculty of Humanities**  
Department of Psychology

#### SECTION A RESEARCH INFORMATION

Dear Learner-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 adolescent's experiences of dealing with the demands of being a learner-athlete at the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy.

Dr. Liana Kruger from the Student Counselling Unit, Department of Student Affairs at the University of Pretoria is the study leader of my research project. She can be contacted at: [liana.kruger@up.ac.za](mailto:liana.kruger@up.ac.za).

**Title:** "An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete."

**Aim:** The primary aim of this study is to understand how learner-athletes experience their dual careers within the TuksSport High School and TuksSport Athletics Academy, and to inform existing policy with the aim of assisting learner-athletes to cope with the demands of sport and study.

**Process:** You will be required to create collages within a group setting depicting your experiences as a learner-athlete at the TuksSport High School. Based on your collages, I shall conduct an individual interview with you to explore your experiences of being a learner-athlete in more depth.

**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 (Marteleze van Graan) at no cost. Her contact details are [marteleze.vangraan@hpc.co.za](mailto:marteleze.vangraan@hpc.co.za).

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Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Departement Sielkunde  
**Lefapha la Bomocho**  
Kgomo ya Seekolotši

(Marteleze van Graan) at no cost. Her contact details are [marteleze.vangraan@hpc.co.za](mailto:marteleze.vangraan@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 learner-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:** Dean Sutherland  
**Cell no.:** 083 452 1648  
**E-mail:** [deanrobertsutherland@yahoo.com](mailto:deanrobertsutherland@yahoo.com)

**Researcher:** ..... (Mr. D. Sutherland)

**Date:** .....

**Research Supervisor:** ..... (Dr. L. Kruger)

**Date:** .....





## SECTION B RESEARCH ASSENT

I, ..... (Full name and surname) hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand this research information.

Please indicate whether you would like to participate in this study by marking the appropriate statement:

I agree to participate  
I decline to participate

Participant: ..... (Signature)

Date: .....

# APPENDIX F

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

### RECOMMENDATION REGARDING TITLES OF THESES/DISSERTATIONS/mini-DISSERTATIONS,

### APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS/CO-SUPERVISORS

THIS FORM MUST PLEASE BE TYPED AND SUBMITTED TO THE RESEARCH ETHICS / POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE.

<p>Student number: 29030716</p> <p>Surname: Sutherland</p> <p>Course e.g. MA: MA Counselling Psychology</p> <p>Department: Psychology</p>	<p>Title: <i>nr</i></p> <p>Initials: DR</p>	<p>a) SUPERVISOR: Please state staff number (if a person outside the University is nominated, a CV and motivation should be attached to the proposal)</p> <p>Dr. L Kruger 4156734</p> <p>b) CO-SUPERVISOR: n/a Please state staff number (if a person outside the University is nominated, a CV and motivation should be attached to the proposal)</p>	<p>ROUTE</p> <p>1. SUPERVISOR: Signature: <i>[Signature]</i> Date: 31/07/2018</p> <p>2. DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH/POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE Signature: <i>[Signature]</i> Date: 31/07/2018</p> <p>3. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Signature: <i>[Signature]</i> Date: 02/08/18</p> <p>4. FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS/ POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE: Where applicable (to approve research proposal/thesis; change of title; appointment or change of internal/external supervision-supervisor) Signature: <i>[Signature]</i> Date: 11/07/18</p> <p>5. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION: Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>
<p>Please ensure that the title is grammatically correct. Please do not type the full title in capital letters.</p> <p>For notification of the faculty board, please mention:</p> <p>THESIS: DISSERTATION: _____ mini-DISSERTATION: X</p> <p>Current research title: An exploration into the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete: A narrative study</p> <p>New research title (to be approved): An exploration into the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete</p>			
<p>APPROVAL:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ethical clearance to be considered by the Ethics Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Appointment of external supervision-supervisor (motivation and CV attached)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change of supervisor/co-supervisor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research proposal and title to be considered by the Postgraduate Committee (where applicable)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Editorial change of title</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (mention): _____</p>			



## APPENDIX G

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI SA FORTHWA

Faculty of Health Sciences  
Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute

SEMLI Sports Psychology  
Marteleze van Graan  
Pretoria +27 168013

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HPC Building  
Sports Campus, University of Pretoria  
Lunenburg, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0003, South Africa  
Tel number: +27 12 464 1745  
Email: [tel.memois@hpc.co.za](mailto:tel.memois@hpc.co.za)

21 October 2016

#### Consent letter

I, Marteleze van Graan (Head: Sport Psychology, SEMLI), the resident psychologist at the High Performance Centre at the University of Pretoria, am prepared and willing to see the participants in the study of Dean Sutherland (student no. 29030716) on an individual basis if the need for individual sessions arise. These services will be rendered free of charge.

**"An exploration into the dual career experiences of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete."**

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marteleze van Graan', written over a horizontal line.

Marteleze van Graan  
(Head: Sport Psychology, SEMLI)

Sports Campus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HPC Building  
University of Pretoria, Sports Hub, Hatfield 0003, South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)12 464 1711 / 1240  
Email (sef): [marteleze.vangraan@semli.co.za](mailto:marteleze.vangraan@semli.co.za)  
Email (sport): [sef@semli.co.za](mailto:sef@semli.co.za)  
LR: [www.sef.co.za](http://www.sef.co.za)

Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe  
Lefapha In Dzaloane tsa Mphahlele

## APPENDIX H

### STORAGE



#### Declaration for the Storage of Research Data and / or Documents

I, the principal researcher, Dean Sutherland and supervisor, Dr. L. Kruger of the study, titled, “An exploration into the dual career experience of the TuksSport High School learner-athlete”, will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above-mentioned study in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of Pretoria.

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: January 2016

Anticipated end date of study: October 2018

Year until which data will be stored: 2033

Name of Principal Researcher	Signature	Date
Dean Sutherland		

Name of Supervisor	Signature	Date
Dr. L. Kruger		

Name of Head of Department	Signature	Date
Prof. David Maree		


**APPENDIX I**

**PARTICIPANT COLLAGES**


(To follow on next page)

**PARTICIPANT A**

# MY LIFE BEFORE



At home I didn't have a medical Aid when ever I was sick I went to public hospitals and wait hours before I get treatment.



I didn't have ~~homemade~~ quality training, shoes and I always wore school clothes which ever we had. At school we had PE lessons but we had to wear school uniforms. I was used to run bare footed. I had no form before.


Physio when you were injured used to take you water and bowl and put a little bit of water and put it on the part where I'm feeling pain.

Sports facilities were not developed and we did not have athletic tracks. I was self motivated because I wanted to need for athletic stuff. I was in a primary school. No psychologist.


Previous school four more didn't get help. At the time were from but parents were poor. I was injured and I was in the hospital for a long time before I got help.

# NEW LIFE BEGINNINGS


## AT TUKS




At TUKS you get good meals for a healthy. Specific healthy food just like you are a sports person.



quality training shoes and quality Nike clothing and also psychologists who tells you about when competing.



Good life! Thank you for doctor! When you sick and you always a updated about your health, you get physiotherapy when you injured.




At TUKS you get good sports facilities such as sports grounds, Athletic tracks.

HAPPINESS There are fun events that are organized and we are to have new people and know each other better.

About Education why makes it proud. When ever I do something I get help from members.

# THE DREAM IS REAL

What I would like to achieve



I would like to become a professional athlete also achieve more at academics. I would also like to have my own sponsor. I want to become a professional athlete. Get in every distinction's subject that I do.











**PARTICIPANT D**

Before Light Love

“I live by the words: “It’s going to be alright.””

# Sport

I was very good at my sport the problem I did not have facilities to train and get access, no messages no training some time because of no external motivation and dangerous places scared to get kidnapped cause its not a safe environment.

Education

Primary School I was doing fine till I arrived at high school when I got challenged because the teacher did not teach us that was full of corruption and bullies I was feeling the world was taking me but I thought

My life at Home

poverty at home

- its been a hard time for me that time - some times I had to sleep with an empty stomach not knowing when it will come the next meal with come from food when it comes to compete I was hungry and starving my mother could go out looking for money but my brother we eat even though we did not have that much we appreciated what we have on our home cause we think of beggars out here who want what we have more than we do

Talsport High School

“If you want to succeed, you need to love the life you live, and be grateful for what you have every day.”

# DO

My Changing life through acceptance and joy

my life at Talsport high school changed a lot through my studies and life in general its been a nice 8 months so long having friends, mentors, good teachers psychology, coaches the kitchen staff and our lovely principal of course at first I was so scared that people were gonna treat us badly because of my homosexual life but you know what the psychology helped so much to cover my life I was accepted because I am they didn't judge they loved me and supported me through my journey, and my school life is nice the teacher are helping through my studies and my coach and my mentors helps me through athletics and went to gym and won a gold medalist that made me so special and I appreciate the school the academy cause I am happy than ever before I have fun in my day I have my own rooms my own pocket money and I love being here its an opportunity of a life here that have been blessed with Thank you Talsport high school

everything by yourself  
Challenge but victory forever  
love  
friendship make me stronger

Competition  
Tough and enjoyable

I see places I haven't seen before with is a great thing adventure

“In life, success doesn't come to you, you have to go out there and get it.”

My destiny

What The future holds for me

Decision I make

yes  no

When I see my self in the future I see myself as someone who is successful I want first place the world and enjoy other things before opening down and staying in our life I want study medicine and later when things are done and I see how good I am

I want to be an actor when I grow up cause I have passion to and I want to dedicate myself to it one day and be famous

I see my self as a star

My direction

PORTUGAL GERMANY  
BELGIUM GREECE  
SPAIN ITALY