

**TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH  
AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN**

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PRETORIA

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been previously used in full or partial form at any other University for degree purposes.

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CCO Slattery

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Date



***“Telling women they are weak only makes them stronger.  
Telling women they are not good enough only pushes them harder.  
Women athletes are an impassioned, hardworking, and dedicated  
group of women who will persevere  
no matter what society’s hand should deal them.”***

***Author Unknown***

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# TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN

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## SUMMARY

Sport can have a profoundly positive impact on the world. It can unite diversity, extracts youthful communities from poverty and inject flaking nations with relentless spirit. Sport transcends barriers and mends people with tumultuous personal histories. Within this context, we examine the ability that sport has to direct the lives of women from an early age. Effectively operating beyond the limitations of a classroom, sport can teach essential life lessons. Women who compete in sport from a young age have the opportunity to actualise their innate potential, develop their intelligence, grow in confidence, fine-tune leadership skills and establish a sense of presence.

The aim of this investigation was four fold: (1) to explore the reasons why women who compete at an intense level in sport terminate their careers prior to reaching their full potential. (2) To identify the essential factors that impact heavily on women in sport: stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and other factors identified during the research. (3) To establish the similarities and/or differences between women who have terminated their careers and women who still compete at intense level, and (4) to identify coping strategies that may assist women to overcome the obstacles and persevere in their sporting careers.

A qualitative approach was adopted: 64 women filled out the questionnaires. They had all competed in first teams at provincial, national or international levels. Some had terminated their sporting careers; others were still competing. Through analysis of data, women in this study terminated sport participation because of decreased motivation and interest in sport, coach dynamics, academic pressure, development of injury and politics in the administration

of sport. The latter may be unique to South Africa following the demand for sport to be more representative of all population groups.

This study endeavoured to identify eco-factors that would possibly appear to play a key role in whether women continue in or terminate their sporting careers. Men's sports dominate the media in South Africa. There seems to be a direct correlation between the amount of coverage given to sportswomen and the number of women actively competing in sport. The media is an incredibly powerful tool and has the "potential to create and achieve an environment that promotes and supports the principles of equity." (Goslin, 2008: 300) Until the media makes a concerted effort to modify the imbalance, not much will change for women in the sporting world. Stereotypes continue to prevail. Society and media conform to portraits of women as mother, wife, sex symbol or career seeker. One of few sports brands to reverse this affliction is Nike: "Somebody will give her a doll. And somebody will give her a ball. And then somebody will give her a chance" (Nike "There is a Girl in America", 1996). The advertisement was never released in South Africa.

The media, however, can only be responsible for so much. Ultimately, parents have to take responsibility for their child's upbringing. During this study, differences in parenting styles and how these styles influence the longevity of participation were identified. The issue of how far to push a child to do something she/he does not want to do emerged as a regular theme. Results showed that within the group who were still competing; only 17% had parents who pushed them. Within the group who terminated their careers, 62% of them were driven beyond their will. Perceived peer acceptance was also identified as an influence contributing to the prediction of enjoyment and perceived competence in the sporting arena. Our coaches, their coaching methods and how they handle contemporary females also proved to have a profound impact on the termination or continuation of sport. Coaches provide encouragement, motivation and preparedness.

There appears to be little published research to substantiate why women continue sport at a tertiary level. From this research, however, it appears that an athlete who has a growth mindset and is focused on task orientation is more likely to continue sport over someone who has a fixed mindset and is more ego-orient.

# BEËINDIGING VAN SPORTLOOPBANE ONDER SUID-AFRIKAANSE SPORTVROUE

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## OPSOMMING

Sport het 'n uiters positiewe impak op die wêreld. Dit verenig diversiteit, lig jeugdige gemeenskappe uit armoede en gee flou nasies 'n onwrikbare gees. Sport oorkom hindernisse en maak mense met onstuimige persoonlike verledes weer heel. Binne hierdie konteks ondersoek ons sport se vermoë om vroue se lewe vanaf 'n vroeë ouderdom te rig. Deur in werklikheid buite die beperkinge van 'n klaskamer te werk, kan sport noodsaaklike lewenslesse leer. Vroue wat vanaf 'n vroeë ouderdom aan sport deelneem, het die geleentheid om hulle ingebore potensiaal te verwesenlik, hulle intelligensie te ontwikkel, groter selfvertroue te hê, leierskapsvaardighede te skaaf en die vermoë te vestig om hulleself te laat geld.

Die eerste doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om ondersoek in te stel na die redes waarom vroue wat teen 'n intense vlak in sport meeding, hulle loopbane beëindig voor hulle volle potensiaal bereik word. Die tweede doelwit was om die sentrale faktore wat 'n groot impak op vroue in sport het, te identifiseer: stereotipes, die media, onderrigmetodes en ander faktore wat tydens die navorsing geïdentifiseer word. Die derde doelwit was om die ooreenkomste en/of verskille tussen vroue wat hulle loopbane beëindig het en vroue wat steeds op 'n intense vlak meeding, te vergelyk. Die vierde doelwit was om hanteringstrategieë te identifiseer wat vroue dalk kan help om die struikelblokke te oorkom en met hulle sportloopbane voort te gaan.

'n Kwalitatiewe benadering is toegepas: 64 vroue het die vraelyste ingevul. Hulle was almal lede van eerstespanne op 'n provinsiale, nasionale of internasionale vlak. Sommige het hulle sportloopbane beëindig; ander neem steeds deel. Die ontleding van die data het getoon dat

vroue sport verlaat as gevolg van verminderde motivering en belangstelling in sport, probleme met afrigting, akademiese druk, besering en politiek in sport.

Laasgenoemde kan dalk eie aan Suid-Afrika wees as gevolg van die vereiste dat sport meer verteenwoordigend van alle bevolkingsgroepe moet wees.

Hierdie navorsing toon duidelik dat omgewingsfaktore 'n sleutelrol speel in vroue se besluit om hulle sportloopbane te beëindig of voort te sit. Manssport oorheers die media. Daar is 'n direkte korrelasie tussen die hoeveelheid mediadekking wat sportvroue ontvang en die getal vroue wat aktief aan sport deelneem. Totdat die media 'n gesamentlike poging aanwend om die wanbalans uit die weg te ruim, sal daar nie veel vir vroue in die sportwêreld verander nie. Stereotipes bly geld. Die samelewing en media eggo beelde van vroue as moeder, vrou, sekssimbool of loopbaansoeker. Nike is een van die min sporthandelsmerke wat hierdie plaag omswaai: "Iemand sal haar 'n pop gee. En iemand sal haar 'n bal gee. En dan sal iemand haar 'n kans gee" (vertaling, Nike "There is a Girl in America", 1996). Die advertensie het nooit in Suid-Afrika verskyn nie.

Die media kan egter ook net vir soveel verantwoordelik wees. Uiteindelik moet ouers verantwoordelikheid vir hulle kind se opvoeding aanvaar. Tydens hierdie studie is daar verskille geïdentifiseer in ouerskapstyle en hoe dit die langdurigheid van deelname beïnvloed. Die vraag van hoe ver 'n kind gedruk moet word om iets te doen wat hulle nie wil nie het as 'n gereelde tema verskyn. Resultate toon dat slegs 17% van die groep wat steeds deelneem ouers gehad het wat hulle gedruk het. 62% van die groep wat hulle loopbane beëindig het, is teen hulle sin gedruk. Gewaande portuuraanvaarding is ook geïdentifiseer as 'n invloed wat bydra tot die voorspelling van genot en gewaande bevoegdheid in die sportarena bydra. Ons afrigters, hulle afrigtingsmetodes en hulle hantering van hedendaagse meisies blyk ook 'n groot impak op die beëindiging van of voortgesette deelname aan sport te hê. Ons afrigters is hulle rolmodelle en meisies sal net streef om so goed te wees as wat ons afrigters hulle kan motiveer en voorberei om te wees.

Daar is geen vorige navorsing om te staaf waarom vroue op 'n tersiêre vlak met sport voortgaan nie. Hierdie navorsing toon dat dit blykbaar op passie neerkom. Die resultate

ondersteun die mening dat daar 'n groter waarskynlikheid is dat 'n atleet met 'n groei-denkgewoonte en wat op taakoriëntasie fokus met sport sal voortgaan as iemand met vaste denkgewoontes wat meer ego-georiënteer is.

## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH GOAL

In 1996 Nike Women had a print advertisement that read:

***"If you let me play sports***

***I will like myself more;***

***I will have more self-confidence,***

***I will be 60 percent less likely to get breast cancer;***

***I will suffer less depression.***

***I will be more likely to leave a man who beats me.***

***I will be less likely to get pregnant***

***I will learn what it means to be strong.***

***If you let me play sports."***

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

For decades women have been trying to reach gender equality with their male counterparts. Despite of the many international policy documents in the world – from the earliest, The Universal Declaration of human rights in 1948, to The IOC Dead Sea call for action, Jordan (Kluka, 2008: 30) – not much has changed in the lives on many women in today's societies. This gender inequality manifests strongly in sport. Thus, inequality in sport may be the major stumbling block to why women still do not reach their full potential in sport and are not empowered enough to take up their rightful place in sport. The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (1994) was precisely designed to publicize future initiatives and deliver a significant starting point for gender mainstreaming in sport (Kluka, Goslin & Steyn, 2012). This document highlights the ten ideologies required for equality and equity in women's sport and society (Kluka, *et al*, 2012). However despite this document and years of campaigning, changes in legislation gender imbalance still exists. (Kluka, *et al*. 2012). Therefore, equality and equity in sport mimics that of society, what we see in society is simply being seen in sport. The problem seems to arise in the fact that the process of change, executing the policies and declarations is the problem and taking the process from paper into reality is not as smooth as it should be. Kluka, *et al*. (2012) highlights where the change management

process has gone wrong and where the process has stagnated resulting in a lack of gender mainstreaming.

In the light of the above, this research identified the reasons why women who were competing at an intense level in sport – in either first team, provincial, national or international competition – suddenly terminated their sport when they entered or completed higher education. What is society doing to these athletes that have resulted in their sudden withdrawal from sport participation?

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Kluka, “The UN has increasingly recognised the importance of sport as a vehicle for positive social change” (Kluka, 2008: 99). In order for positive social change to occur, “people’s behaviour, practices and conditions have to change” (Kluka, 2007 & University of Pretoria RKD 352 class), this being the result of past theories, ideas and the perception of society changing over time. However, even in the case where so many policies have been created – the “Universal declaration of human rights in 1948, the Convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1979, Women and Sport Commissions (International Olympic Committee) in 2004 are simply three of at least twenty seven” (Kluka, 2008: 30) – to improve the social change and encourage women to participate in sport, women still have not fulfilled their rightful place in sport.

The problem is apparent where sportswomen terminate their sporting careers prematurely and then cease to engage in any other physical activity. The Sports Information and Science Agency (SISA) (1997) conducted a study that identified that 42% of men competed in sport compared to the 11,2% of women. Therefore, every four out of 10 males compared to every one out of 10 females compete in sport (Sport and Recreation Department, 2005: 4). Currently in Britain, 40% of girls drop out of sport by the time they are 18 years old (John, 2007).

The essential eco-factors that impact heavily on women in sport – stereotyping, the media, educational ideologies, inequality of access to coaches, financial support, sponsors and sporting opportunities, parental and peer pressure – have not yet been fully explored

internationally let alone in the South African context. The impact of these eco-factors on premature termination of women's sporting careers is not fully understood and explored.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

To determine why South African sportswomen terminate their sporting careers before reaching their full potential.

### **1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

In answering the above question the following aims were explored to identify the factors that influence women who competed in elite sport:

- (1) To explore the reasons why women who compete at an intense level in sport terminate their career prior to reaching their full potential.
- (2) To identify the essential factors that impact heavily on women in sport. These factors include stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and any others that may be brought up by the research.
- (3) To identify if there are any similarities or differences between two groups of women: those who have terminated their careers and those who are still competing in sport at an intense level. By comparing these two groups of sportswomen any common factors that each group experienced will be identified.
- (4) To identify coping strategies that may assist women to overcome the obstacles and continue with their sporting careers.

### **1.5 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY**

In this section, a few key terms that were used in this study are defined:

#### **INTENSE LEVEL:**

In the context of this study, an elite sportswoman is defined as any woman competing at a first team, provincial, national and/or international level at school or after school. In order to compete at this level, an athlete had to be chosen to represent their school (at the highest level), province, or country. To participate on an intense level, the athlete had to be training

most days of the week. She needed to be competing during the sport's competition season or, in some cases, all year round.

### **SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED THEIR SPORTING CAREER:**

This group of sportswomen stopped participation in competitive sport after school or during their university careers. "Termination of sport" will also be used in conjunction with the term "drop out in sport". The essence of this group is that they stopped their sporting careers during or just after their tertiary education years.

### **SPORTSWOMEN WHO STILL COMPETE IN SPORT:**

These women had continued competing in sport from school through university and even after tertiary education. They competed as full-time athletes or, in many cases, in addition to their full-time work careers. These women were 18 years and older.

### **THE ECO-SYSTEM OF WOMEN IN SPORT:**

The eco-system encompasses all the possible psycho-social and cultural factors that can have an impact on sportswomen in the sporting arena. An ecosystem is the working relationship between sportswomen and the factors that influence their psycho-social behaviour and their performance, therefore their external environment. This would encompass media coverage, stereotyping, parental and peer pressure, the role of the coach, the educational system and competition. Therefore, an ecosystem is defined by the network of interactions among sportswomen, and between sportswomen and their environment.

### **STEREOTYPES:**

A generalisation made about a group of people that is formed so that others may categorise them according to characteristics of all the members of a group. This is often based on an image of what people perceive the members of the group to be like and is in no way factual or true.

### **MEDIA:**

When referring to media, all forms of media technologies are referred to (internet, television, print, radio and advertising). This is used to transmit information, ideas and current affairs to

the public and thus is referred to as mass media. This plays an important role in leading public awareness on many different issues. Through the media, modern culture is being shaped as it is the media that decides what is portrayed and released into the public domain.

### **EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:**

The schooling system is viewed as the primary source of education in South Africa. This encompasses grades 1 – 12. In order to be accepted into a tertiary educational system, one has to pass the school system and get an university exemption in order to continue one's educational training.

### **“DROP OUT RATE” WILL BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH “TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREER”:**

In many sports (excluding gymnastics) many athletes only peak in their late teens and older. In endurance sports, peak performance may only be achieved in one's thirties. Thus, termination in this context refers to quitting one's sport prior to reaching one's peak performance.

### **GENDER**

The term gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and characteristics that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender is the fundamental component that establishes the attitudes of societies, and often governs all processes in that community. (FAO, 1997). Gender issues focus on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, place in society, interests and needs. Therefore “Masculine” and “feminine” are gender categories.

### **SEX**

The word sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Therefore “male” and “female” are sex categories.

### **EQUALITY**

Equality refers to the equal rights for people regardless of what factors they might have that are different. Equality states that because they are human they must be equal.

## **EQUITY**

Equity in sport suggests exercising of fairness and the treatment of social justice to decision making processes in all circumstances, individuals should be valued, have equal access to opportunities and have protected rights.

## **EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment means shifting from a situation of enforced powerlessness to one of power. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SUMMARY**

A detailed description of the methodology will be presented in Chapter 3.

The inclusive criteria for the terminated group in the study was as follows: the subjects were women who competed regularly at a first team, provincial, national or international level in their high-school or university years (12 to 25 years old), and they terminated participation in either their matric year or within the years during tertiary education.

Inclusive criteria for the continuing group were: women who were still competing in sport during their matric year, university years and past the age of 25. They were competing at a provincial, national or international level.

The design of this research is descriptive and is based on qualitative data received from a carefully designed questionnaire by the researcher, Claudia Slattery. According to Thomas, Nelson and Silverman (2005), a number of arrangements and scales can be used when formulating a questionnaire. In this questionnaire there were nine open-ended questions. Content analysis was used in order to analyse the information that was provided by the participants. Within the immersion/crystallisation style that was adopted, the following steps were adhered to: the familiarisation and immersion phase, themes-inducing phase, coding phase, elaborating phase and the interpreting and checking phase (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). Three partially close-ended quantitative questions were analysed according to a scale of “strongly disagree” through “strongly agree”. The frequency of the items were ticked and then placed in a pie chart to be analysed. There were two closed-quantitative questions with forced choices, and unordered response choices were analysed.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher (Claudia Slattery) and pilot tested on a sample of five women who were similar to those that would eventually receive the questionnaire to make sure all the questions were understandable and clear. The pilot was valid as it made sure it used elite sportswomen who were between the ages of 17 and 18 years old and competed at an intense level. The questionnaire was either e-mailed to prospective participants or given to them. The questionnaire was handed to roughly 150 athletes and only 64 were returned. The use of snowball sampling was used in order to get more participants involved. Researchers use this sampling technique if the sample for the study is very unique or is restricted to a very small subgroup of the populace. The social networking system, Facebook, was also used to get into contact with elite athletes in order to involve the most elite athletes possible in the study.

This type of sampling technique works through the process of recommendation. After identifying the initial subject, the researcher asks for help from the subject to identify other individuals with a similar trait of interest (Castillo, 2009). The advantages of snowball sampling are that the process of recommendation allows the researcher to extend to populations that are challenging to identify because of the unique characteristics that the researcher is looking for. The advantage of this process is that it is inexpensive, simple and cost-efficient. This sampling technique needs little preparation and requires a smaller workforce compared to other sampling techniques. The disadvantages of snowball sampling are that the researcher has little control over the sampling method. The subjects that the researcher can attain depend mainly on the prior subjects that were identified, thus it is not certain how representative the sample is. Sampling bias is also a concern of the researcher when using this sampling technique. Preliminary subjects tend to recommend individuals with whom they are acquainted, thus it is extremely likely that the subjects share similar behaviours and characteristics. It is therefore possible that the sample that the researcher will obtain is only a small subgroup of the entire population (Castillo, 2009).

A limitation of the questionnaire could have been its length and the detail required to complete it. Due to the time it took people to fill it in, it had to be faxed or e-mailed back to the researcher. This could have had limitations for athletes who did not have access to e-mail or fax machines.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

This study consists of six chapters, excluding the list of references and appendix. Chapter one begins with an introduction to the investigation. Its focus pinpoints the orientation to the study, the problem to be examined, clarification of terminology, summary of the research, methodology used and limitations of the study. Chapter two contains the literature study which looks at past research conducted around women and sports. It addresses the factors that affect the early termination of sporting careers and factors that contribute to the sportswoman's eco-system. Chapter three comprises of the methodology of the study. This includes the research approach, how the data was collected, analysed and interpreted. Ethical considerations are also addressed in this chapter. Chapter four contains the results from the questionnaire, as well as a graphic representation of all the results. Chapter five provides a full discussion and analysis of the results. Ideological factors that influenced the participation of women at an intense level are discussed. Chapter six is made up of recommendations for future research. Thereafter, the practical applications of the research results are addressed and a conclusion provided.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main limitation of this research study was that it is not a true reflection of the South African population. There were not enough questionnaires returned from Black, Asian, Coloured population groups. Thus, this research mainly looks at the White population, with a very small percentage of Black African and Asian participants.

To get a better understanding of the experience sportswomen are going through in South Africa, a focus group would really enhanced these results. In order to even better understand on what our sportswomen are experiencing a suggestion would be to look at only athletes who are competing on a national and international level, as these are really our top performing athletes.

Another limitation of the questionnaire could have been due to the length of the questionnaire and the detail required filling it in. Due to the time it took people to fill it in, it was required to be faxed or e-mailed back to the researcher, this could have had limitations for athletes who did not have access to e-mail or fax machines.

There is no benchmark in South Africa or internationally that has identified the dropout rate of either male or female sports, from secondary education to tertiary education and thus into the working lives. This should be identified in future research and to find out what is the difference between both genders. The research questionnaire may have been too long, which could have put participants off as it took too much time to complete. If it was shorter there might have been more participants' feedback. In depth interviews could have clarified some vague ambiguous statements of the participants. More research has to be done on this important topic because of the high dropout rate.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE STUDY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature study might seem rather thin at first glance. However, there is no need to duplicate the content in both this section as well as the discussion section. Much of the literature has been used in the discussion section to highlight important points.

The approach used when looking for literature to substantiate the research was firstly to look on the World Wide Web to determine what has been accumulated, the theories, opinions and research. From there, the literature research took on a more academic approach and journals, academic papers and books were consulted to accumulate all the information required to address the problem statement. Most of the information for this study was obtained from research journals and not from scholarly textbooks or from the internet.

There was a large amount of research accumulated from papers and journal articles that dealt with sportswomen, but not in the context of this study. All the information available looked at women in sport but did not focus on elite sportswomen. There was a vast array of information on the benefits of exercise on mental state such as it improves self-image, self-confidence and the general well-being of both males and females (Perry-Burney & Kwaku Takyi, 2002). The information available was rather generic, with similar studies done all over the world (including South Africa). However, these studies reported on the average woman who did exercise rather than women who practised sport. Information on elite sportswomen was very limited, whether in journal articles, books or on the internet. In the context of South African sportswomen there was no information available. Information on women reaching their full potential in the sporting domain was even less forthcoming and thus the search for reasons for terminating their sporting career were drastically lacking.

There was a large amount of information on children and the benefits of sport in the school system. Factors that contribute to the eco-system around a female and male child were thus more readily available, especially in the international context.

This research identified the ideologies that impacted a child (male and female) in the sporting domain, which would often provide characteristics to children who would continue sport from primary to secondary education. Therefore, these ideologies affect the eco-system of a child and would characterise children who become adults in the sporting domain.

Through this past research it became very clear that inequality in sport, stereotyping, the media, teaching the girls of today, parental, peer pressure and tertiary education were all parts of the eco-system of women in sport. Each part of the eco-system played a vital role in the development of sportswomen and if one of the factors was not addressed properly this often could result in the termination of a sporting career.

## **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.2.1 ADDRESSING THE INEQUALITY OF WOMEN IN SPORT**

In 1972, there was a change made to the 1965 Civil Rights Act in United States of America, and it was to address the sex discrimination in all areas of education, including athletics (Curtis & Grant, 2006). This change was known as The Title IX, which states that "On the basis of sex nobody should be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person, or otherwise be discriminated against in any scholastic, intercollegiate, club, or intramural athletics" (Curtis & Grant, 2006: 1). The aim of this law was equality on the athletic field between men and women, equitable funding grants and promotion of female participation in sports. Inequality of sport participation does not exist only between blacks and whites, but also between men and women. In South Africa, the post-apartheid situation has resulted in black women being affected most of all (Hargreaves, 1997). Even though the new South African constitution made provision for a gender commission, with the priority focused on girls, there has been very little practical evidence and improvement to date shown for this law change (Hargreaves, 1997). Within this research, gender inequality is defined as providing men and women with different opportunities because of their gender.

Thus, equality in this research is defined as "ensuring empowerment through conscious and committed provision of equal opportunities irrespective of ability, race, class, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and or cultural diversity" (Burnett, 2001: 76).

In South Africa, 35 years after the major international shift to rectify the position of women in sport, Roberts maintains that South African sport is “gender-biased, male-dominated and sexist” (1993b: 9).

The reasoning behind this statement is that men still hold many of the leadership roles within the national, regional and local levels in sport (Hargreaves, 2000) and according to Bennett (2001) this situation is still unchanged. This correlates with the extensive study of Kluka (2008).

Nothing seems to have changed as the years went by as Hargreaves (1999) noted that the needs of women still had not been institutionalised in either sport or society. The number of policies that have been written up since 1948 seems endless in the effort to combat inequality within sport (Kluka, 2008), yet little change is noted. The policies are there so can society really blame governmental departments for the inequality of women in sport? Perhaps the inequality of women in sports needs to be brought down a level. Instead of looking at only the sporting context one should rather look at society. It is not legislature and policies that will change the face of women in sport, but rather the individuals within this South African society.

Thus, the struggle for gender equality in sport is ultimately interconnected within the “wider social and political issues that form part of everyday life experiences of people” (Burnett, 2001: 76). Hall (1996) attributes this interconnect web that women are facing in today’s society to the fact that “it is hard to reframe social practices that have become social norms” (Burnett, 2001: 76)

It is thus social change that needs to be addressed. Social change is defined as “positive social change is a dynamic process by and through which people’s behaviour, practices or conditions become altered as a result of a paradigm shift involving ideas and perceptions in a society over time” (Kluka, 2008: 99). It is the South African society that is not escaping the predetermined ideas of where women belong. It is this society that will not release the idea that women can compete in the world of sports on an equal platform to men. A world where men’s and women’s sport are equally newsworthy; where it becomes the norm for women to compete in sport as a leisure activity and where women competing in sport on equal playing grounds becomes the rule and not the exception.

Until positive social change occurs on an international, national and regional level, all the policies and conventions that are held and re-written will fall short. Inequality in sport will continue to manifest unless South African society's beliefs, perceptions and behavioural change.

If paradigm does not change, the demand for women's sport will not change, the demand and need pertaining to broadcasting of women's sport will go unheeded, and the much-needed sponsors will fail to step up and come on board.

It is this topic that this research focussed on. It looked at how society is maintaining the inequality of women in sport and identify ideological practices that are preventing positive social change to occur in the South African context.

## **2.2.2 ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF WOMEN PREMATURELY TERMINATING THEIR SPORT**

Terminating one's sporting career affects both males and females. Very little published research focusing purely on women's termination of sport seems to exist. Therefore, in this research past studies that have considered both sexes were used to gauge the reasons for premature termination.

Often termination from sport is due to cumulative factors. Many factors become layers: tough parents and coaches, perceptions of a lack of abilities, lack of enjoyment and conflict from other activities all lead to a highly stressful environment (Wann, 1997). Wann (1997) identified that the most important factor leading to termination in sport was children not gaining fun from the activity anymore. In many cases this is the result of goals of the children and their parents did not correlate. The parents' goal of sport participation was focused on winning and on the child's ability rather than on the game and what the game teaches the child (Greendorfer, 1993). Another factor was the failure to fulfil the need for achievement. Sport can make a child feel successful. In some cases, where the child does not feel she gains success but that their abilities are inadequate, this leads to termination rather than a determination to improve (Robinson & Carron, 1982). This leads to a sense of failure and decreased self-esteem. If a child is not feeling good about personal image and ability in a particular sporting code, she is less likely to continue with it as it provides no gratification.

As children grow up they also want to experience different sports and activities and there is simply not enough time to do everything (Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). Finally, poor coaching – where coaches are abusive and aggressive – does not yield positive images of a fun and enjoyable environment and this leads to termination (Wann, 1997).

Previous research has shown that athletes' constant participation in competitive sport and their motivation to participate is affected by several psychological and social factors (Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989; Scanlan & Simons, 1992). According to Steyn (2001), psychological factors encompass intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Competitive sport participation has tended to focus on the extrinsic rewards (such as winning, prestige, recognition and approval from others) as opposed to the journey that it takes to become an athlete. Thus, the intrinsic rewards are not recognised and appreciated.

Since the modern world of sport has become a professional domain where “powerful social, economic and political forces” (Steyn, 2001: 11) are at stake, the extrinsic rewards are vital. The focus has shifted from the benefits of playing a game – such as improving one's self, increasing self-confidence, enjoying the game, and benefitting from the exercise and health rewards – to an extreme outcome orientation where winning becomes the only thing.

Sports Information and Science Agency (SISA) (1997) conducted a study that identified that “42,6% of men competed in sport compared to the 11,2% of women” (SISA, 1997: 4). Therefore, every four out of 10 men compete in sport, compared to every one out of 10 women. This correlates with research conducted in Britain, which says that 40% of girls drop out of all sporting activity by the time they are 18 (John, 2007).

Therefore, addressing the premature termination of women's sporting careers in children (and thus girls) will be discussed in the different socio-cultural factors that contribute to the ecosystem of women in sport.

While one factor might contribute more than another in terminating a sporting career, all factors play a role.

## **2.2.3 ESSENTIAL FACTORS THAT PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ECO-SYSTEM OF WOMEN IN SPORT**

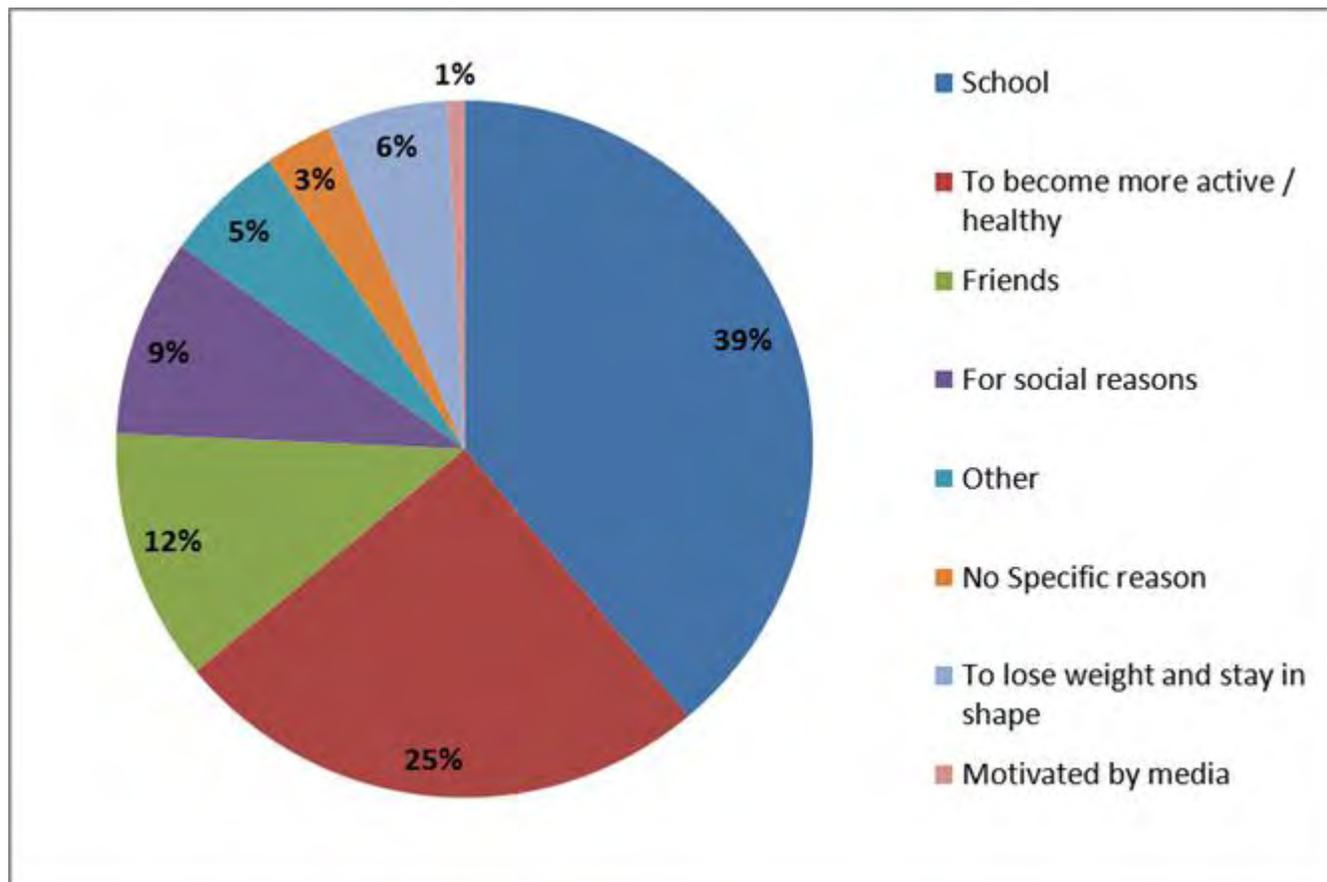
### ***2.2.3.1 Why do women participate in sport (motivation and motives?)***

Why do women participate in sport, what is it about sport that women enjoy and drives them to become serious athletes? “For female athletes to obtain the maximum benefits of sport in the physiological, sociological, and psychological domains, coaches and athletic directors must understand the variables which motivate these athletes to remain in sport after their initial exposure” (Stewart & Taylor, 2000: 3). Thus, it was very important to look at why women started participating in sport.

While there has been some research in the past around this topic, none looks directly at women. Most study men and women. Recent research was also very difficult to find. In South Africa, according to research by the Department of Sport and Recreation, Republic of South Africa (2005: 10), “females tend to be motivated by school experiences but also the promise of an active and healthy lifestyle”. According to the same research, the following table illustrates why women participate in sport.

FIGURE 2.2.3.1.2 MOTIVATORS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

(Department of Sport and Recreation, Republic of South Africa, 2005: 10)



One’s commitment to sport can be examined by identifying an athlete’s motivation level to participate in his/her chosen sport (Weiss & Weiss, 2006).

Scanlan, Russel, Beals and Scanlan (2003) suggest that an “athlete’s enjoyment, personal investments (such as time, effort and money), involvement opportunities (which are benefits to the individual), attractive alternatives (how attractive is another sport), social constraints (individual’s perceived obligation to significant others), and social support (positive regards from significant other) should predict athletes’ level of sport commitment or their desire and resolve to continue participation” (Weiss & Weiss, 2006: 310). This is otherwise known as The Sport Commitment Model (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons & Keeler, 1993). If enjoyment, personal investments, involvement opportunities, social constraints, and social support are positively related to sport commitment, participation will continue.

However, attractive alternatives are negatively related to sport commitment as one does not want to be lured into a different sport (Scanlan *et al.*, 2003). Through this commitment to sport, three different types of motivation to participate have been identified.

- (1) The first type of motivation is based on attraction factors and positive reasons for participating (Rusbult, 1980). Such reasons include enjoyment, low costs and few attractive alternatives (Weiss & Weiss, 2006).
- (2) The second type of motivation is called entrapment-based commitment. This is based around negative reasons for participation, such as lower enjoyment, increasing costs and lower benefits. However, these athletes generally feel that they have invested so much into their sport that they cannot quit and there are few other attractive alternatives. So, they carry on participating (Weiss & Weiss, 2006).
- (3) Athletes most likely to terminate sports fall into the third type of motivation, which is characterised by low commitment from athletes. It is called the vulnerable stage, as the athlete does not feel that there are many benefits to participating in that specific sport and thus they experience little enjoyment. They feel that their costs are high and, there are more attractive alternatives (Schmidt & Stein, 1991).

The aim is thus to motivate athletes to continue sport through attraction-based commitment procedures to limit their reasons for terminating sport. “Why do women terminate their sporting careers” may be due to motivating factors that are not strong enough to sustain long sporting careers. The reasons for the insufficient motivational and attraction levels may be imbedded in all the other eco-system factors that contribute to this state of affairs.

### **2.2.3.2 The role of the media**

The graph below illustrates how the media portrays the roles of women and men in South African advertising. On the right-hand side of the graph men are featured in adverts as sportsmen 100% of the time. On the left-hand side of the graph women are featured in adverts as domestic workers (looking and caring after the home or family) 100% of the time. Women are not even represented in advertisements as sporting persons (0%), which correlates with the number of men who are featured in an advert for cleaning the house (0%). This graph perfectly illustrates the scenario of sportswomen’s television coverage in South Africa, which is non-existent.

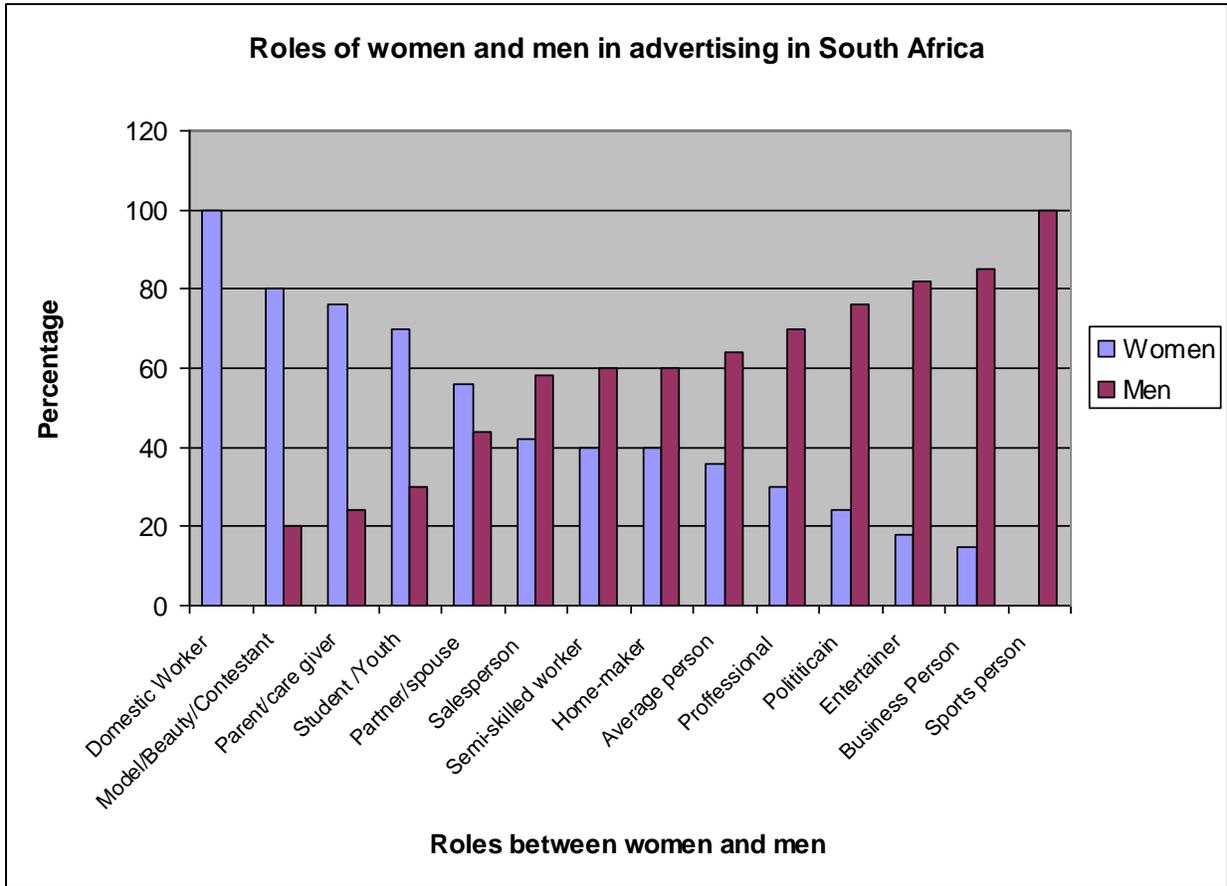


FIGURE 2.1 ROLES OF WOMEN AND MEN FEATURED IN SOUTH AFRICA ADVERTISING (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007: 42)

To understand the effect the media has had on sport one needs only to consider the Olympic Games. Coverage worldwide for the event in Athens increased by 15 000 hours compared to the event in Barcelona. It is thus easy to conclude that the Olympic Games have become a media event (Weingarten, 2004). Therefore, the best customer of the International Olympic Committee has become the television networks, which bring in 50% of its total budget through television rights (Weingarten, 2004). The ancient Olympic Games have changed over the years and the event certainly is not the same as it was when it began in roughly in 776 BC.

However, the modern-day Olympic Games cannot be without the television networks and the television networks can not be without the Olympic Games (Weingarten, 2004). With such an increase in the broadcasting of large sporting events it is easy to say that the media dominates – from print, to visuals, to sound – and is, therefore, is inescapable.

The print media creates a powerful sport product and has the ability to generate and accomplish an environment that endorses and funds the principles of equity. (SportScotland, 2004; George 2001). Therefore, the under-reporting of women's sport results in the printed media contributing to the general public's insufficient knowledge base in sport (Goslin, 2008).

This power has had media persuading the youth about what is "cool and uncool", what is for girls and what is for boys. Thus, before girls can develop their own identity, they have already been moulded into the pre-cast version of what society ascribes to being a girl. It is this power of the media that is preventing girls from developing their own identity and thus breaking free from the stereotypes (Stetson-Lee, 2008).

When media executives explain away the lack of women sports coverage due to its non-marketability, this only enforces the stereotype that men play and watch sports. Lack of media coverage has a butterfly effect: lack of advertising equals lack of consumers. Girls do not get the opportunity to find out more about women's sporting abilities and achievements and this ultimately denies our youth those female sporting role models (Stetson-Lee, 2008).

Within South Africa, the print and electronic media focuses on male sport and is more inclined to represent women athletes as "sexy", "mothers" or "having a feminine side" as opposed to recognising them in the professional or sporting arenas (Burnett, 1998). According to Lowe Morna and Ndlovu (2007: 42), South African women appear in advertisements in roles as the "domestic worker, model/beauty contestant, parent/care giver, and partner/spouse, while men are predominantly in categories such as sportsperson (100%), professional, politician, entertainer and businessperson". The butterfly effect gets worse, as the lack of women sports coverage decreases female opportunities to attract sponsorship which, in many cases, helps to further an athlete's career (Sport and Recreation Queensland, 2001).

It appears that only if the female athlete fits the media's perception of "femininity" will she stand a chance of gaining exposure and ultimately sponsorship. Sportswomen who are beautiful attract major endorsements and publicity (Birrell, 2000).

This can be illustrated by the numerous successful female athletes who have gone almost unnoticed by the media because of their "non-marketability" or supposedly unacceptable heavy builds (such as Lindsay Davenport), while less successful athletes who conform to the

stereotype are fêted as superstars (such as Anna Kournikova) (Sport and Recreation Queensland, 2001).

Women have forged a position for themselves in society and they are establishing a presence in the workforce that imparts a sense of accomplishment, individuality and power. However, while this is happening in today's society, the media is still not conveying the message. Until advertisements depict women in a realistic way, women will continue to be moulded by the media (Jacobson & Mazur, 1995).

“Women, as a whole, are making huge amounts of athletic progress that often goes unrecognised. One area where the examples of ignoring women's sporting achievements are very striking is the case of endurance events where women's performances are often equal to men's or surpass them” (Birrell & Cole, 1994: 54). This also has an effect on sportswomen not having role models to aspire to, which can be a huge factor in encouraging sportswomen to continue with sport. Looking up to someone who you think has done well and whom you can aspire to emulate can have an effect on continuation or termination. One could attribute the lack of sports coverage on television to the lack of women role models for sportswomen to aspire to. The above graph (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007) illustrates that there is a lack of television coverage for women's sport and there is a shortage of role models for women to aspire to. Thus, further research will need to be conducted in order to investigate this.

Finally, Goslin's (2008) research identified that reporting of male sport dominated print media and it appeared that even with the significance to gender equity in the South African White Paper on Sport and Recreation, inequalities still exist in the reporting of women's sport in South African newspapers.

### ***2.2.3.3 Stereotypes in sport***

In 1996 an American Nike advertisement read “Somebody will give her a doll. And somebody will give her a ball. And then somebody will give her a chance” (Nike “There is a Girl in America”, 1996). This very statement is a reaction to stereotyping, where girls play with dolls and boys play with balls. Society limits itself by giving in to such stereotypes, and it is these stereotypes that are culturally embedded.

Research conducted by Shropshire, Carroll and Yin (1997) in the United Kingdom found that already in primary school there was a difference between how girls and boys viewed physical activity. At this level boys were more willing to participate in physical education compared to their girl counterparts.

They also found that girls were negatively affected by environmental factors, such as cold weather, getting wet or simply just the process of changing from school uniform into gym clothes. In the discussion by Shropshire *et al.* (1997: 32), they said that one of the possible explanations for the lack of enthusiasm and negative attitude towards physical activity might be due to the “conceptualisations of femininity, and masculinity, [which] have traditionally been subtly influenced by the social stereotypes and expectations of the dominant ideologies”.

It is rather ironic that society socialises the girls of today into exhibiting attitudes and behaviours of conformity, reliance, and tameness with an unassuming nature, all very contradictory to what sport tries to develop (Shropshire *et al.*, 1997). It is a stereotypical truth that sport is considered a part of a boy’s developmental process, that it is an integral part of the socialisation process, and that if a boy does not participate, his masculinity is questioned. However, the opposite holds true for girls. A female’s sexuality may even be doubted if she participates in sport, and if she does not portray the stereotypical image of a girl or a woman (Sport and Recreation Queensland, 2001).

#### **2.2.3.4 Parental pressure**

Pressure has been categorised into parental pressure and peer pressure. Both might have an effect on participation in sports, either positive or negative, and thus the extent of each needs to be assessed.

The available information indicates that the termination rate in young women in sport is high (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2005). However, why do children and young women terminate their participation when they are competing at first team, national and international level? Why do many of these women stop sport when they get into matric or, at best, continue into their first year of tertiary education when they suddenly stop sport altogether? There seem to be underlying reasons for this termination.

One of the major reasons may be that of excess parental pressure for the women to cope with and their only escape is to quit. Hellstedt (1987) and Ryan (1996) identified that families of athletes who have become more involved in the sport may not be beneficial to the athlete's participation.

There seems to be a fine line between adequate support and too much support from parents and family. Hemery (1986) found that athletes who feel that their environment is secure and reliable, where they are supported and encouraged without being pushed by their parents, benefited from their involvement. However, this involvement becomes a problem when the athlete's parents have high expectations, which the child has to achieve (Wann, 1997).

This involvement also becomes a problem when the family's identity is based around the performance of the athlete and when the personal ambitions of the parents are projected onto their child to achieve what they, the parents, always sought to achieve but never did (Lee & MacLean, 1997). This is known as "over-identification". Thus, young athletes are subjected to pressure from their parents when there is a discrepancy between the extent of encouragement which they experience and that which they themselves desire (Lee & MacLean, 1997).

In the entrapment-based motivation discussed above, athletes who have feelings of obligations to their parents and teammates will continue their involvement. However, moving between entrapment-based motivation and attraction-based motivation occurs more easily if one is sitting between them both – in the vulnerable zone (Weiss & Weiss, 2006).

Thus, one would not consider a child's parents as a positive factor if the parents were the driving force. The driving force to participate has to come from the athlete himself or herself (Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

Research done by Carpenter (1992) and Scanlan *et al.* (2003) revealed that athletes who are competing for attraction-based reasons consistently reported "higher levels of social support from parents and coaches" (Weiss & Weiss, 2006: 321). Family and parental support therefore plays a big part in participation in sport.

Commitment is changeable from one season to the next and from one year to the next. As children grow up there are new “concerns” that seem to take over their lives (Scanlan *et al.*, 2003). These priorities may cause a “push-pull” (Weiss & Weiss, 2006: 320) effect on their sport, while they learn to balance their academic work, social engagements and their sport participation. However, “the need to demonstrate autonomy, competence, perceptions of support, constraints from parents or friends, and past experiences in both sport and physical education is at its greatest” (Weiss & Weiss, 2006: 320).

#### **2.2.3.5 The role of peers and friends**

There has been little research on the effect of peer pressure on the motivation to participate in sport. However, the research that has been conducted shows that peer relationships can play a role in the quality of the physical activity experience by the child (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, children and adolescents who exhibit high performance-related positive effect generally feel that they are regarded as competent by their peers on the sport field (Duncan, 1993). Research conducted by Ullrich-French and Smith (2006: 211) found that “peer relationships are particularly important to youth sport participation. Perceived peer acceptance predicted all the motivational indices, contributing to the prediction of enjoyment and perceived competence”. No research was found on the influence of peers on girls compared to boys in the sporting domain.

In order to be a top athlete, much of one’s time has to be spent doing that sport. This results in other sacrifices, such as not seeing friends, possibly not going out at night and generally living a very limited social life. Even though the athletes would have most likely developed friendships within their sporting community, it is a limited one (Kirk, O’Connor, Carlson, Burke, Davis & Glover, 1997). This could be another influence for the termination of women in sport.

#### **2.2.3.6 The role of the coach**

Studies have examined the way children perceive their abilities in a sport setting. This research has shown that girls are more likely to underestimate their performance, credit their success (in physical activity) to external factors, such as luck or poor opposition, and are thus far less likely to view themselves as talented (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Williams & Gill, 1995).

On the other side of the coin, boys seem to attach their success to their ability and their failure to bad luck (Williams & Gill, 1995). These are known as attributes, “attributes address the causes of expectancy beliefs and how success and failure affect continued motivation” (Murphy, 2005: 11). The act of winning and losing actually means nothing but its how the athlete interprets these positive or negative outcomes that matter. This is known as the attribution theory. With this in mind, Coetzee and Viljoen (2002) identified that to keep children (girls or boys) in sport, the coaches had to highlight the children’s skill acquisition and the fun component of the sport if they wanted to meet the needs of the participants.

There is a need to know more about the teaching method that allows girls to develop the necessary skills that will change the way they view themselves and ultimately their ability to play sport. It is not just the coach’s ability to teach that can affect the child’s perception of herself, but also the parents’ influence upon the child’s “perceptions of competence through the feedback they provide for their child’s mastery efforts and performance outcomes” (Bengoechea & Streat, 2006: 196). It is this feedback from parents that conveys so much information to the child about her ability in a particular field (Bengoechea & Streat, 2006).

Teaching ability is not only an important coaching component; it is also the ability to make sport fun and to provide support.

Barnett, Smoll and Smith (1992) found that “95 percent of youths who played with more supportive coaches returned to play compared to the 75 percent of players of control coaches” (Weiss & Weiss, 2006: 320). Supportive coaches provide more enjoyment, less pressure and are able to develop the “love of the game”. Of the utmost importance is the performance climate that the coach creates. Does the coach focus on the athlete’s performance from an ego or task perspective and how does the coach make use of self-theories such as the growth – or fixed – mindset?

### ***2.2.3.7 The educational system and tertiary training***

There is a belief that there is no future in sport, and girls (and especially their parents) feel that schoolwork should not be compromised. In many cases parents feel that “schooling is long term, while sport is short term” (Kirk *et al.*, 1997: 61). Thus, when they enter their matric year or higher education, girls terminate their sport to embark on a life of education and a career that does not include sport.

Are parents preventing their daughters entering the next level of competition because they feel that education is more important than sport? It seems that society does challenge girls to choose between a career in sport and a career in an alternative field.

Kirk *et al.* (1997) identified that parents believe sport participation provides a break from their children's tortuous schoolwork; it provides time to relax, enables their children to be young and has a definite involvement in their capacities to concentrate. If Kirk *et al.* (1997) had shown this, is it not ironic that parents feel that sport is unnecessary or time-consuming in their daughter's matric year or when they hit tertiary education? Families who have children involved in first team, provincial, national and international competition require the whole family to be involved in that sport. Whether it entails parental transport girls to training and competition, time spent as a spectator, volunteering services, or raising funds these all end up placing enormous amounts of emotional strain, as well as requiring back-up from the family (Kirk *et al.*, 1997).

Why then, as soon as daughters gain more freedom – leaving school or starting to drive – do they move away from sport? Why, when they gain their independence, do women flee the sporting arena?

## **2.3 WOMEN PARTICIPANTS WHO CONTINUED IN SPORT AND THEIR COPING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES**

Coping strategies are defined as “conscious psychological and physical efforts to improve one's inventiveness in dealing with stressful events or reduce external demands, such as managing the environment” (Potgieter, 2011). Researchers have found a compelling connection between performance and coping strategies and have endeavoured to describe, clarify and foresee which coping behaviour is exercised after a performance (Conroy, 2002).

Through research that has been conducted, it seems rational to make a case that “high task orientation will certainly improve the ability to react and cope more positively with success as well as failure” (Potgieter & Steyn, 2010: 3) in sport.

This is substantiated by Roberts and Ommundsen (2007: 168) “when participants perceive mastery criteria (high in task orientation) to be operative in the sport context, motivation is optimised, participants are invested in the task, persist longer, performance satisfaction and

enjoyment are enhanced, peer relationships are fostered, cheating is lessened, burnout and drop out are reduced and athletes feel more positively about themselves”. Therefore, if an athlete feels they are getting a great deal of satisfaction out of sport, and it is about the benefits not just the end goal of success, then they are more likely to continue. A task-orientated athlete generally has more control of a situation.

Their focus is to improve their results based on their past performance and thus they tend to compete against themselves instead of other athletes. These types of athletes have higher self-esteem and, therefore, use problem-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused coping involves cognitive and behavioural efforts to change the problem during distress (Potgieter, 2011).

In order to improve one’s coping strategies as an athlete and to overcome obstacles with ease an athlete who is ego-orientated will not cope as well as an athlete who is task-orientated. The ego-orientated athlete will focus on winning and the end result while the task-orientated athlete will enjoy the journey and the process of getting to the finish line (Duda, 1993). An ego-orientated athlete therefore makes use of emotion-focused coping strategies. This involves controlling emotional responses caused by the problem (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Emotion-focused coping strategies are intended to dominate in situations supposed to be beyond the control of the individual (Lane, Jones & Stevens, 2002).

It also seems that a driving force for an athlete to continue sport is based on the ability to improve sporting ability, otherwise known as self-theories (Dweck, 2000; 2005). There are two mindsets: The entity theory or the fixed mindset, which means the athlete has a “certain talent and irrespective of whether they learn a skill or not, the talent remains the same” (Potgieter & Steyn, 2010: 4). Therefore, it doesn’t matter how much practising the athlete does, they do not view their ability as improving. The other mindset is the incremental theory or the growth mindset. Here the athlete “believes that they can grow and constantly develop their abilities” (Potgieter & Steyn, 2010: 4).

These athletes believe that they will improve their ability and talent through practice and training.

Athletes who view themselves as constantly improving in their abilities are more likely to continue spending the time practising and training than athletes who view their abilities as constant and never improving (Potgieter & Steyn, 2010).

Researchers have also highlighted that coping strategies could be the result of past experiences. An athlete who has always experienced success is going to approach a competition with a positive attitude. If that athlete loses in a competition they will attribute their poor performance to the fact that they did not try hard enough, or a factor that is not constant. An athlete who experiences failure on a more regular basis will attribute this failure to their lack of ability, unworthiness or a factor that is constant (Cratty & Pigott, 1984).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research methodology utilised for this study is explained and clarified.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The aim of this study was to understand why women who are competing at elite levels in South African sport terminate their careers before reaching their full potential. The aim thus was to understand the eco-system around female athletes and what factors contribute to the termination of their professional careers. Therefore, the focus was on personal experiences, to look at themes that emerge so as to understand the athletes' behaviour and responses to their eco-system (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996; Babbi & Mouton, 2003; Remenyi, Williams, Money & Swartz, 2005). Even though the researcher tried to get a full representative sample from the South African population, only white athletes responded, with the exception of a coloured and an Asian athlete. The researcher decided to include these two participants in the study because even though their race would affect possible opportunities they had, their overall responses as elite sportswomen were more important and vital in the bigger picture.

In order to reach the aim of the study, the research worked according to the qualitative approach. According to Hall and Hall (2004), qualitative research is in relation to the subject's world, paying attention to their speech, and allowing their speech to be heard in the final write-up. Using a qualitative research design addresses relevant issues in depth, allows openness between researcher and subject, and captures details that the subjects identify. Through this process, the information gathered was collected using categories of information that emerge from the data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This approach seeks "to measure what people have to say in their own words" (Patton, 1986: 22).

This research used an interpretive approach in order to understand the social world in which the subject lives and does not isolate events from one another (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Thus, it took into consideration the following: the subjects' experiences and what was real for them.

Using an interpretive approach allowed the research to be “guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world, and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 19).

Slogrove (1998); Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004); Marschan-Piekkari and Welch (2004) have recognised that there is a downside to qualitative research: the amount of time it requires. Often the duration it takes results in its impracticality. However, it seems that this downfall is outweighed by the benefits of qualitative research, describing factors that are brought to the surface and that can be questioned and reasoned, in-depth and with understanding.

Research participants’ responses can be studied to identify similarities and differences between groups. The patterns and themes identified can be used to explain concepts from the results of the participants’ responses to the questions. Thus, the approach of this study was not to test well-known concepts, but rather to explore relatively unknown areas. To achieve this, a qualitative research approach was most suitable.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

The aim of the study was to identify the factors that affected female athletes’ eco-systems that resulted in termination of their careers. Therefore, the best way to get this information was through a questionnaire. Interviews might elicit far more information from a participant, with more in-depth, quality information. However, there are limitations to the interview method as participants might not feel confident opening up to a stranger (the interviewer). Participants might not want people to know what experiences they have gone through and the interviewee would have detailed knowledge of what each participant has experienced. Trying to get interviews at times to accommodate both the interviewee and interviewer is also difficult (Babbi & Mouton, 2003; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). Therefore, it was decided that the best way to conduct this research would be through a questionnaire. Participants could complete it in their own time, all questionnaires were anonymous and the participant could go into as much detail as they felt they were willing to do. There are limitations to a questionnaire (Maloney & Ward, 1976; Babbi, 1995; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Frary, 2002; Babbi & Mouton, 2003; Polonsky & Waller, 2005).

A limitation of this questionnaire was that it was written in only English and the respondents were from a variety of cultural backgrounds and language groups and the semantic meaning of words used might have had different meanings for the respondents from different groups. This was addressed in the form of a pilot study before the questionnaires were sent out to the respondents.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and pilot tested on a sample of five women who were similar to those who would eventually receive the questionnaire to ensure all the questions were understandable and clear. This procedure helped to identify whether the questionnaire was suited to the identified sample and “ensures the data that were collected and suitable for the purpose of the study and a dry run data analysis be conducted” (Gratton & Jones, 2004: 127).

In data gathering, the respondents are required to give self-reports; therefore, the answers need to be honest reflections and contain complete truthfulness. However, these can be questionable.

This is even more applicable in cases where the questions are sensitive, where answers are “socially acceptable or unacceptable” (O’Neil, 2006: 110). To combat this, the respondents were made very aware that the completion of the questionnaire was anonymous and no one knew which questionnaire came from which athlete, or which athletes were involved in the study. It was made clear to the respondents that completing the questions truthfully was essential to provide correct information to the researcher. In addition to this, a written letter was provided with the questionnaire explaining why the research was being conducted and that, by filling in the questionnaire, they were helping future female athletes.

For this explorative research approach, where concepts were investigated and the content was not very well known and researched, it is far more important to get quality information from participants than a large quantity of information with little quality provided (O’Neil, 2006). Therefore, a questionnaire was the best approach to get the required quantity of participants, as well as provide the required quality of the information.

Questionnaires are used by many respondents to answer the same questions (Neuman, 1997). Getting many respondents to answer the same questions enables one to see the

different responses generated from the same question. From this deductions can be made of behaviour to factors in the eco-system of women in sport and concepts can be generated.

The design of this research made use of both descriptive and interpretive modes and was based on qualitative data received from a carefully designed questionnaire.

According to Thomas *et al.*, (2005), a number of arrangements and scales can be used when formulating a questionnaire. In this questionnaire there were nine open-ended questions. The survey was a mixed design in that it included content analysis, open-and-closed-ended questions, and a leirkert-type scale. Content analysis was used in order to analyse the information that was provided by the participants. Within the immersion/crystallisation style adopted, the following steps were adhered to: the familiarisation and immersion phase, themes-inducing phase, coding phase, elaborating phase and the interpreting and checking phase (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). There are three partially close-ended quantitative questions that were analysed according to a scale of “strongly disagree” through “strongly agree”. This was analysed using the frequency of the items ticked and then placed in a pie chart for analysis. There were two closed-quantitative questions with forced choices and unordered response choices were analysed.

Together with this, a quantitative dimension will assist to determine if there are differences between the two groups to get a better understanding of each phenomenon. A quantitative approach tends to focus on the analysis of “taking apart and examining the components of a phenomenon” (Thomas *et al.*, 2005: 346), whereas, the qualitative approach tries to find and understand the “meaning of an experience to the participants in a specific setting and how the components mesh to form a whole” (Thomas *et al.*, 2005: 346).

### **3.3.1 SAMPLE**

This research used 64 women of any race who were all 17 years or older. The number of participants in the group that terminated sport was 40 and the number of participants in the group that continued sport was 24. These girls lived in Gauteng Province. A purposive sampling strategy was utilised, as it is representative of the population that was being studied (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006).

It was also a deliberate search as the participants had to fit into the inclusion criteria in order to participate. The primary inclusion criteria was for the terminated group, which included: the participants had to be women who competed regularly and at an intense level in first team, provincial, national or international level in their high school or university years (12 to 25 years old), and who terminated in either their matric year or within the years during tertiary education. Even though the inclusion criteria stipulated that the women must have terminated in their matric year or within the years of tertiary education, the sample group did include women up to the age of 30 years old. This was because they terminated their sporting careers in the stipulated time. It was also very important that the women felt they did not reach their full potential and that they ended their sporting careers prematurely.

Inclusive criteria for the continuing group included: women who competed in sport during their matric year, university years and past the age of 20 years old. They did have to be competing at a provincial, national or international level.

The group that was still competing functioned as a “control” group or as a frame of reference for the terminated group; this provided a meaningful comparison for the research. The reason two groups were used was to aid the researcher and substantiate the reasons why women terminated their careers. Having a group that represented women still competing could identify similarities and difference both groups were experiencing. In some cases there were no differences experienced. Therefore, the continuing group acted as a control group. Without this group a true perspective of what South African women were feeling would not have been achieved. Thus both groups were used to substantiate any research that was concluded. Therefore, the data received from the terminated group were compared with the data from the continuing group. In a sense, the second group provided reference and context for the results.

Through snowball sampling a large number of participants were found, so if athletes knew other athletes competing at elite levels or if they knew of athletes who had terminated their sporting careers, and then they asked them to fill out a questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was given to a couple of women’s sports teams in different sporting codes who were representing South Africa.

The social networking system, Facebook, was also used to get in touch with elite athletes in order to involve the most elite athletes possible in the study.

Getting the questionnaires back from the athletes proved difficult. The researcher did not account for the number of questionnaires that were sent or received via the different modes of communication such as mail, e-mail or by hand. A limitation of the questionnaire could have been its length and the detail required to complete it. The questionnaire was either e-mailed to prospective participants or given to them. Due to the time it took people to fill it in, it was required to be faxed or e-mailed back to the researcher. This could have had limitations for those athletes who did not have access to e-mail or fax machines. The questionnaire was given to roughly 150 athletes and only 64 were returned thus a 43% return rate.

### **3.3.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Polonsky and Waller (2005) identified that in many cases the terms “analysis” and “interpretation” are often changed and interchangeable. However, each has a specific meaning. Data analysis takes place once the data has been collected. It is assembled in a way that is structured and can be looked at in-depth so that meaning can be made of it (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Polonsky & Waller, 2005). This was done after all data was collected. Data interpretation is the process where the researcher makes sense of the data (Polonsky & Waller, 2005). In this process, the researcher requires the ability to use critical thinking to interpret the data to produce actual meaning from all of the data. As this research is mainly qualitative, the focus was on the content (what was said) and the experience of the participants. However, quantitative data was also collected from the closed-ended questions. In this case, it was processed using frequency analysis to develop illustrative reports and to develop initial patterns of behaviour through specific themes.

The qualitative data from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using content analysis, which essentially refers to a method of studying and analysing the meanings of communications in a systematic and objective way. Specifically, interpretive or thematic content analysis (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Shaw, 1997; Donnelly, 2002; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Ritchie, 2003; Gratton & Jones, 2004) was used. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) identified two interpretive analytic styles. In this research the immersion/crystallisation style was adopted. Within this analysis there are five steps: (1) The familiarisation and immersion phase, (2) themes-inducing phase, (3) coding phase, (4) elaboration phase and (5) interpretation and checking phase (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002).

### 3.3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are reasons why ethics in research have to be applied: firstly, to ensure people who participate in the research are not harmed in any way, and, secondly, to make sure that the research is being conducted to the highest quality (Graziano & Raulin, 1993; Babbi, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Carney, Joiner & Tragou, 1997; Neuman, 1997; Van Schalkwyk, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Babbi & Mouton, 2003; Polonsky & Waller, 2005). This research followed ethical guidelines. Firstly, ethical clearance was received from the Postgraduate and Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria. Participation was completely voluntary. The participants never received nor were they promised any form of physical or psychological reward to participate in this research. The only reward was the satisfaction of participating in the study. Participants have the freedom to refuse or withdraw from the study without any penalties.

Participants were required to fill out a consent form prior to commencing the questionnaire. All information was kept confidential and no names were used. No names or personal information were recorded. No participant was harmed in any way, thus non-maleficence did not occur.

The participants were asked for their permission to use the data gathered from the interview in ways to help answer the research question. With this, the right to interpret, examine, publish and to replicate the data gathered, was established.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present all the results from the questionnaire in a systematic and clear format. The format of the research has been laid out to compare the women who have continued their sporting career – this group has been referred to as the continuing group – to the women who have terminated their sporting careers – this group has been referred to as the terminated group. These two groups were compared quantitatively and qualitatively.

Following this is a brief analysis and discussion of the results. The way it is presented also makes it very clear and easy to follow the results. It is very important to look at the relationship between all aspects of the research, how one question is related to another and how all the questions play a vital role in the interconnected web that makes up the research.

The results that came up in this study are important to the future of sportswomen and their sporting careers. At the start of this research the results that the researcher, and so many other people, expected were completely different to the ones that came up. It was not expected, for example, that the coaches' relationship with athletes would be the most important factor. Originally, politics and starting a family were the most obvious reasons. However, this research proved otherwise.

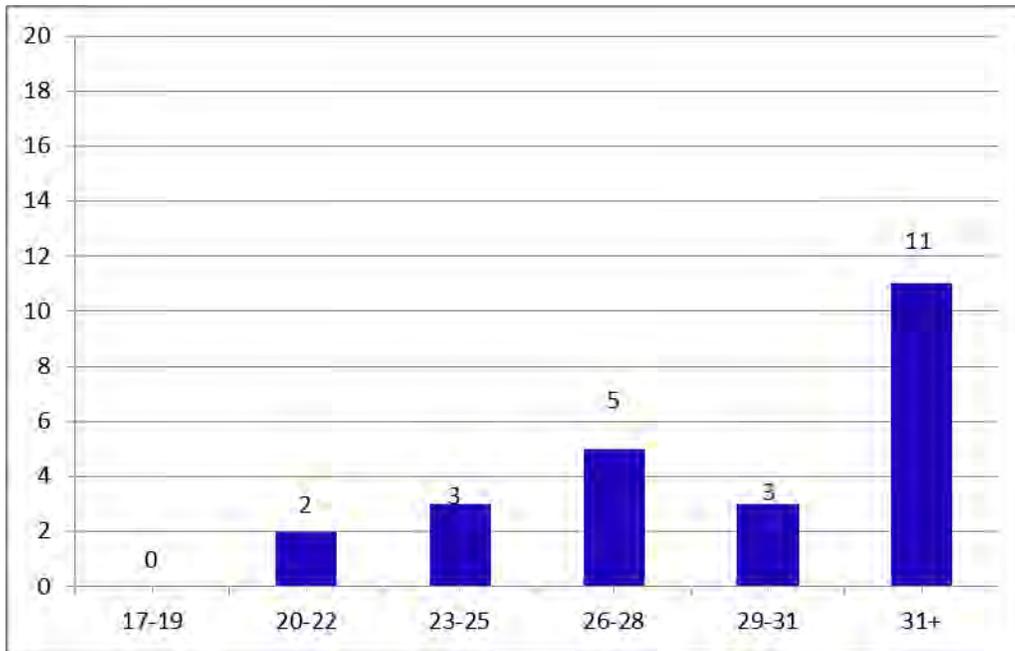
## 4.2 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

The first section looks at the participants' age, racial and participation level.

### AGES OF PARTICIPANTS

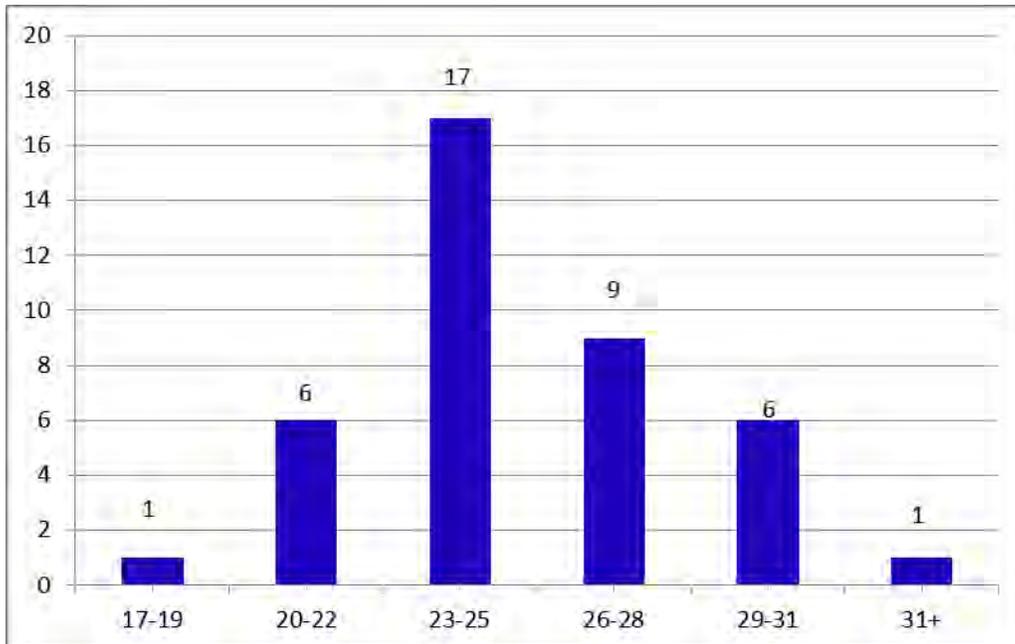
FIGURE 4.2.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

The number of participants in the research and their current age (n=24)



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

The number of participants in the research and their current age (n=40)

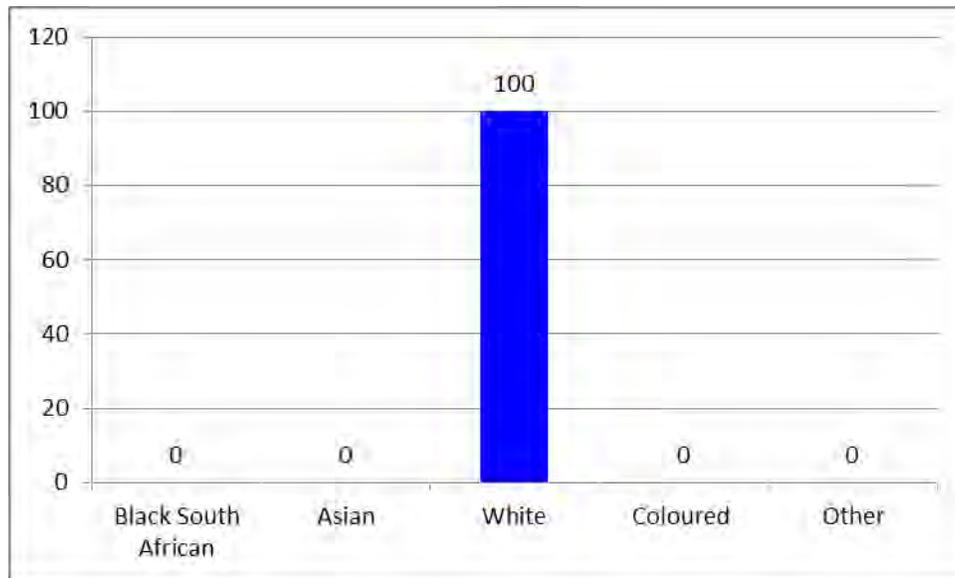


There were 24 respondents in the group of women who continued sport and 40 respondents in the terminated group. The graph illustrating the continued group shows that there were no participants between the ages of 17-19 years old and only one participant in the terminated group.

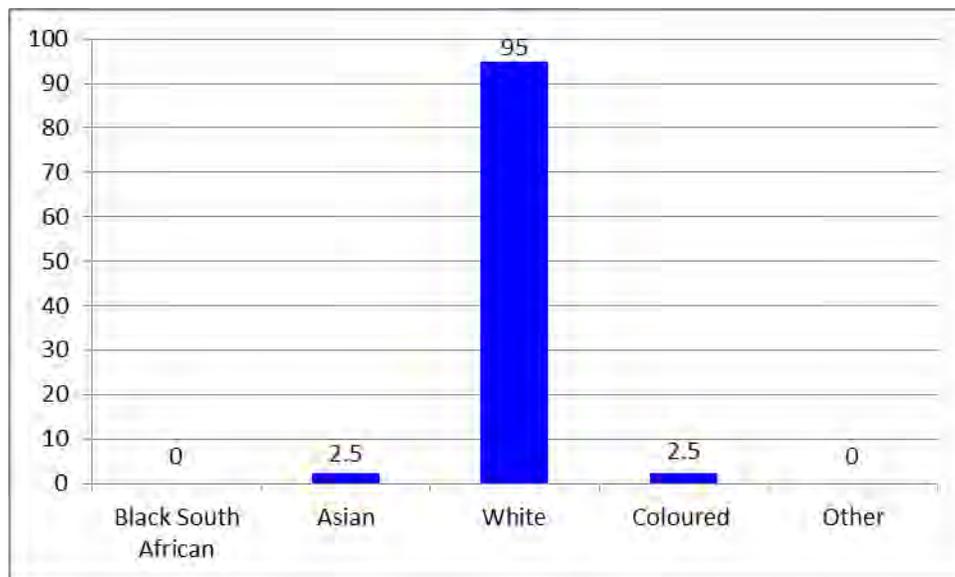
In the 20-22 year category, there were two participants in the continued group and six in the terminated group. In the 23-25 categories, there were three participants in the continued group and 17 in the terminated group. In the 26-28 year category five participants were in the continued group and nine in the terminated group. In the 29-31 year bracket, there were three participants in the continued group and six participants in the terminated group. The largest sample in the continued group was in the 31 years or older bracket, with 11 participants. In the terminated group there was one participant. This was because the inclusion criterion was aimed at women below the age of 30. The idea was to involve women who had a fresh memory of why they terminated their sporting careers, as this would provide more accurate results than someone who terminated 15 years ago. Another factor was that if they were older than 30 years of age, the apartheid years could have affected their exposure to sport. As South Africa was excluded from international sport during those years the data would not reflect South Africa after 1994.

## RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

FIGURE 4.2.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
The racial status of the participants (%) through self-report



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
The racial status of the participants (%) through self-report

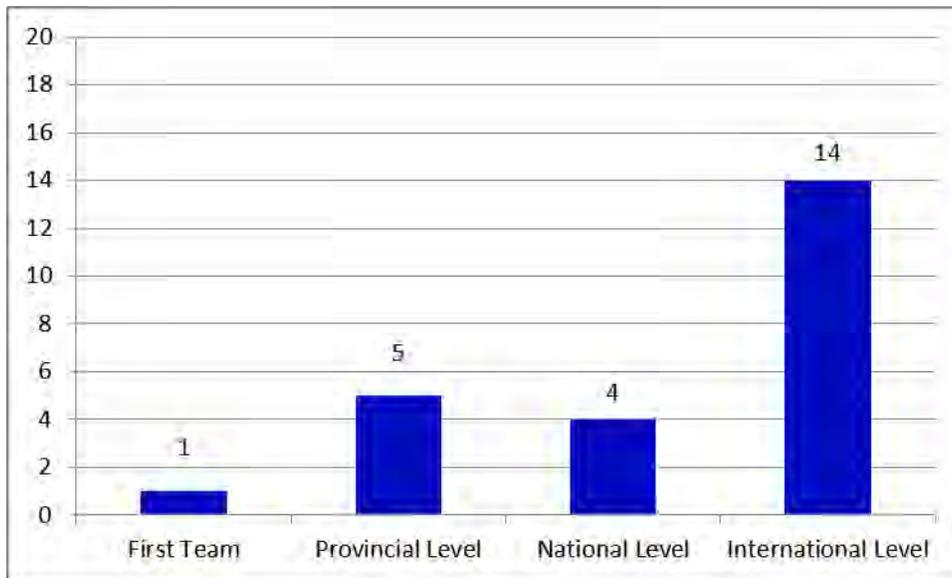


The above figures illustrate the racial status of the women who participated in the research. From the group of women who continued sport, previous graph shows that a full 100% of the participants were White. From the group of participants who terminated sport, 94% were White, 2,5% were Coloured and 2,5% were black African.

LEVEL AT WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS COMPETED

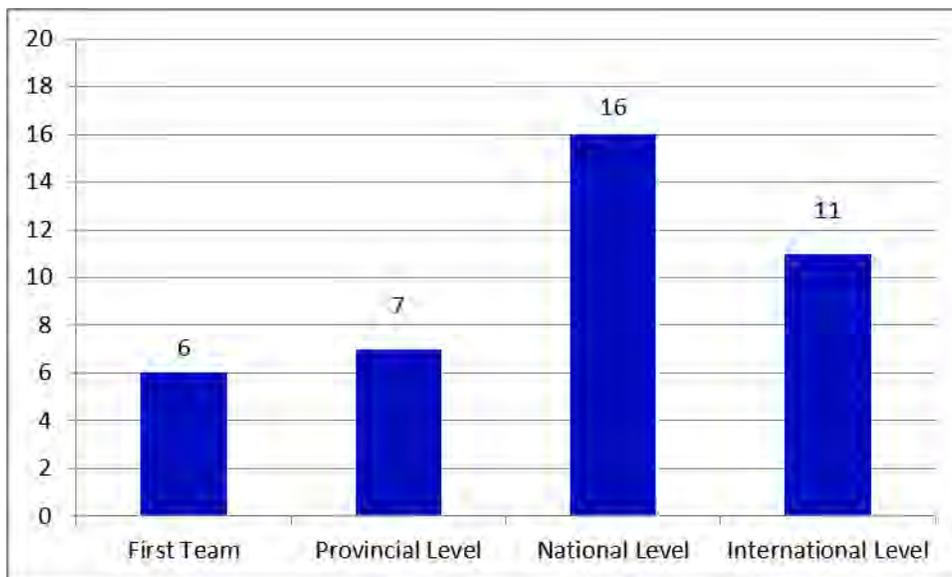
FIGURE 4.2.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

The level at which the participants compete in South African sport



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

The level at which the participants compete in South African sport



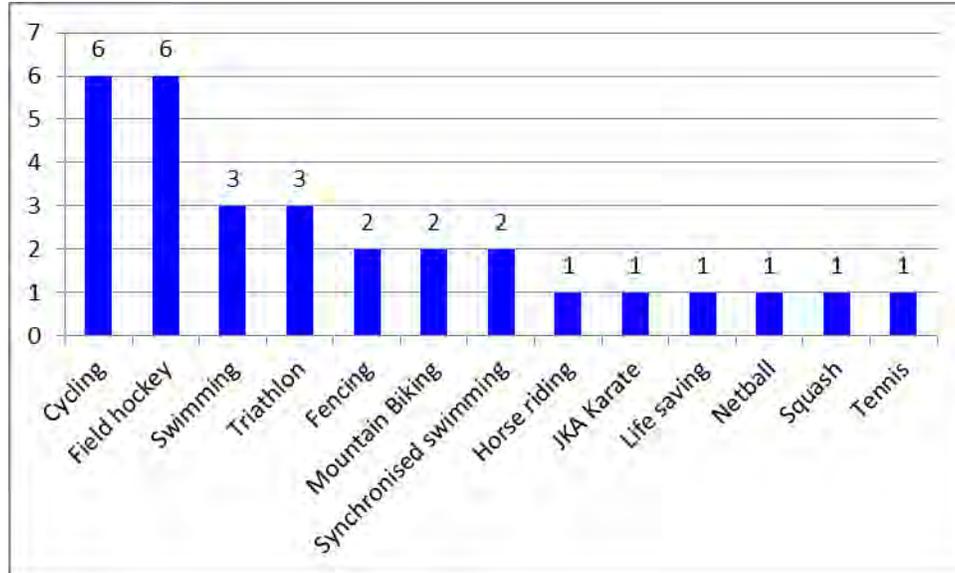
The previous graphs illustrate the number of athletes who competed at the various levels in South African sport. Women who continued sport only at a first team level comprised one athlete and in the terminated group there were 6 athletes. On a provincial level there were 5 athletes in the continued group and 7 in the terminated group. On a national level there were 4 athletes in the continued group and 16 in the terminated group.

On the international level there were 14 athletes in the continued group and 11 in the terminated group.

**SPORTING CODES IN WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS COMPETED**

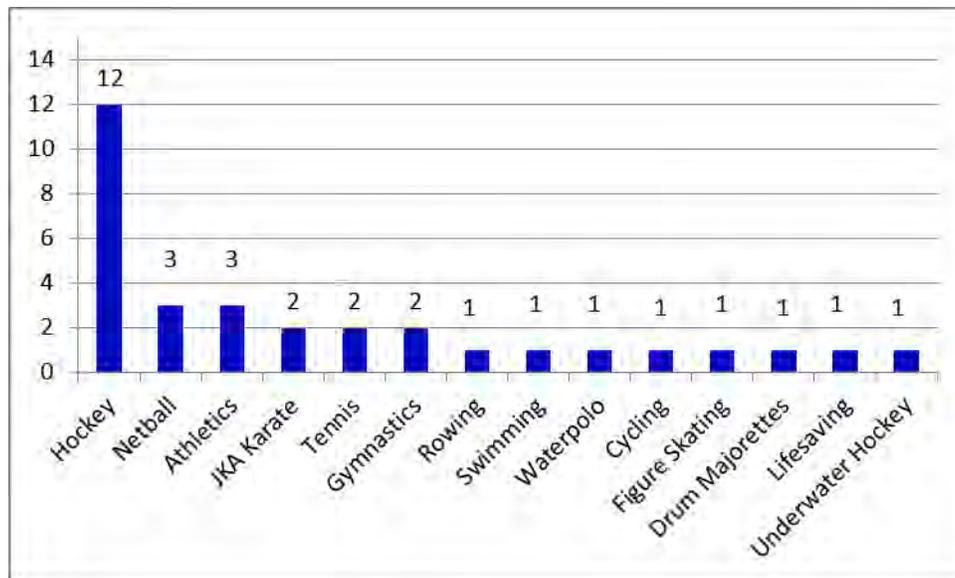
FIGURE 4.2.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

The number of athletes competing in various sporting codes



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

The number of athletes competing in various sporting codes



The above two graphs illustrate the different sporting codes in which the athletes have competed. These numbers do not correlate with the amount of athletes in the study as, in many cases, the athletes were competing in different sporting codes and on different levels.

In other words, athletes could be competing on a national level in hockey and on a provincial level in swimming; therefore, both sports have been taken into consideration.

In the group of women who continued sport there were six athletes who competed in cycling and hockey, three in swimming and triathlon, and two in fencing, mountain biking and synchronised swimming. There was one participant in each of the following sports: horse riding, JKA Karate, lifesaving, netball, squash and tennis. In the group of sportswomen who terminated sport there were 12 athletes who competed in hockey, three in netball and athletics and two in JKA karate, tennis, and gymnastics. Rowing, swimming, water polo, cycling, figure skating, drum majorettes, lifesaving and underwater hockey each had one participant.

### 4.3 WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORT?

TABLE 4.3.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT: Why the women participate in sport

<b>SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT</b>	<b>SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT</b>
Gives me goals to work for and gives me a sense of self-worth	Doing well in sport provides one with recognition
The physical and mental challenge	
Enjoyment of the competitiveness of sport	
Stay in shape	
Actualise talent	
The enjoyment of sport	
A sense of achievement	

The results of both groups were very similar and they are ranked according to frequency. The six themes came up in both the continued and the terminated groups. The only difference in the two groups was the women who are still competing came up with the theme “gives me goals to work for and gives me a sense of self-worth”. In the terminated group, the only other

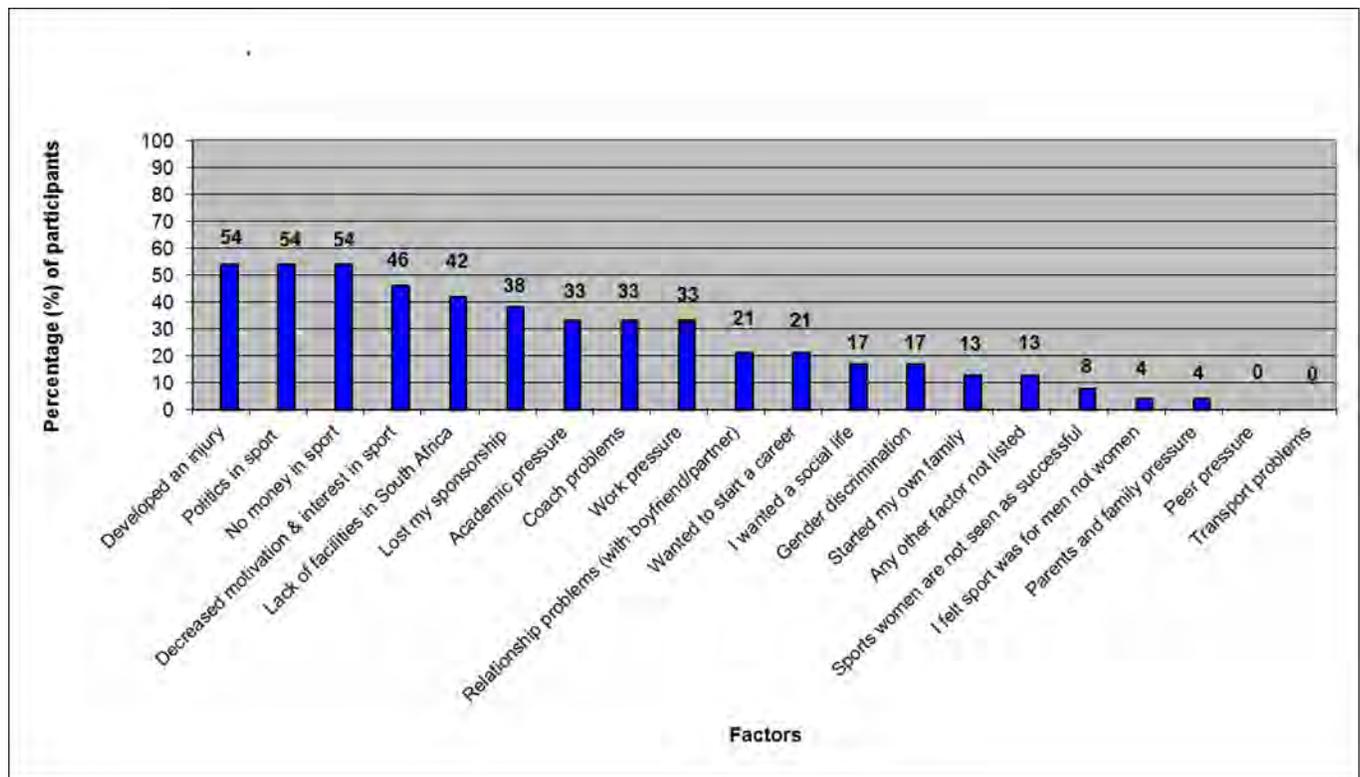
theme identified was: “doing well in sport provides one with recognition”. Otherwise the following themes came up in both groups: sport provides a physical and mental challenge, the enjoyment of competitiveness of sport, it enables people to stay in shape, actualises talent, enjoyment of sport and a sense of achievement.

#### 4.4. WHY DO WOMEN TERMINATE THEIR SPORTING CAREERS IN SOUTH AFRICA?

The figures below illustrate the different factors that have made women terminate or want to terminate their sporting careers. These factors have affected both women who have continued sport and those who have terminated sport.

FIGURE 4.4.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

While competing the following factors have contributed to thinking of terminating one’s sporting career.



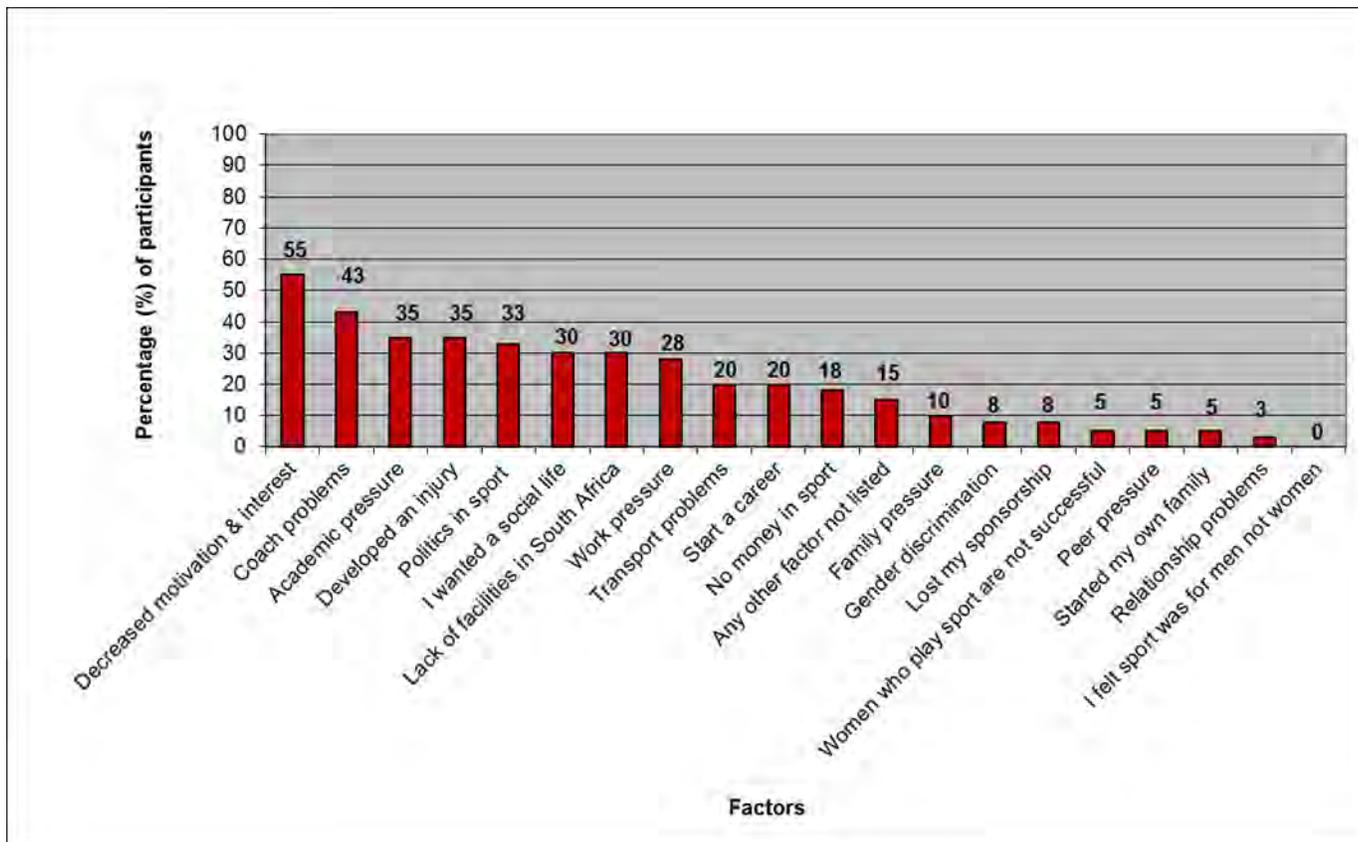
In the continued group, 54% identified that developing an injury, being affected by politics in sport and feeling that there was no money in sport at some time or another had contributed to wanting to terminate their sporting careers.

Decreased motivation and interest in sport affected 46% of the athletes, while a lack of facilities in South Africa affected 42% of athletes. A loss of their sponsorship impacted on 38% of athletes. For 33% of the athletes there was too much academic pressure, while the same number experienced coach problems and work pressure. Relationship problems with a boyfriend or partner or the fact that they wanted to start a career affected 21% of the athletes.

There were 17% who wanted a social life or who experienced gender discrimination. Starting a family was given as a reason for 13% and the same percentage athletes experienced a factor that was not listed. There was 8% who had the feeling that sportswomen were not seen as successful and 4% who felt sports was for men and not women or who experienced parents and family pressure. Nobody experienced peer pressure or transport problems.

## SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

The following factors have contributed towards termination of the sport careers.



The terminated group identified the following factors as reasons for terminating their sporting careers: 55% of the athletes had decreased motivation and interest in sport; 43% experienced coach problems, and 35% felt there was too much academic pressure or they developed an injury.

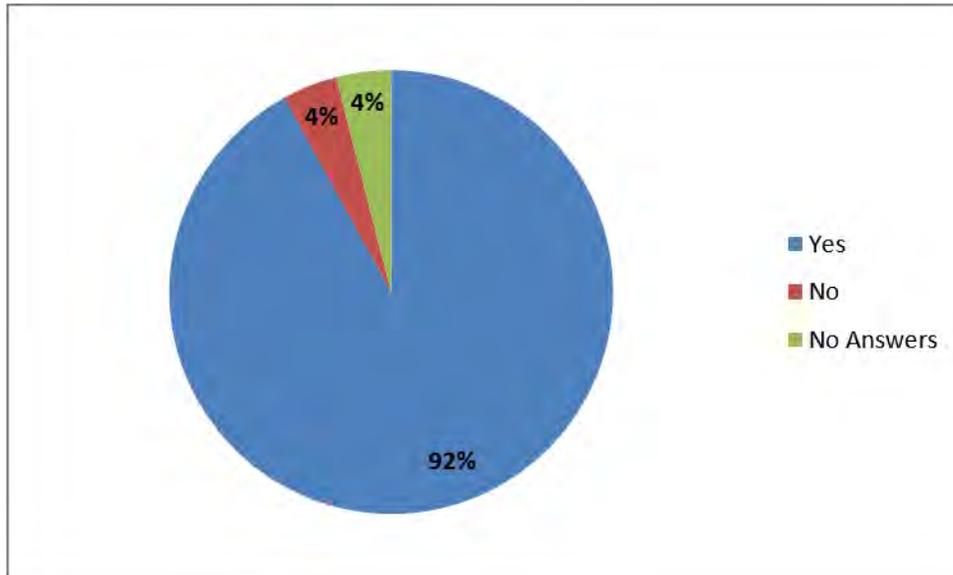
Politics in sport affected 33% while, 30% decided they wanted a social life or cited a lack of facilities in South Africa. Another 28% experienced work pressure, 20% had transport problems or wanted to start a career. Out of the group, 18% felt that there was no money in sport, 15% experienced other factors that were not listed, 10% experienced too much pressure from parents and family, while 8% experienced gender discrimination or lost their sponsorship.

There was 5% who had the feeling sportswomen were not seen as successful, experienced peer pressure, or started a family. Finally, 3% experienced relationship problems with a boyfriend or partner and 0% felt sports were for men and not women.

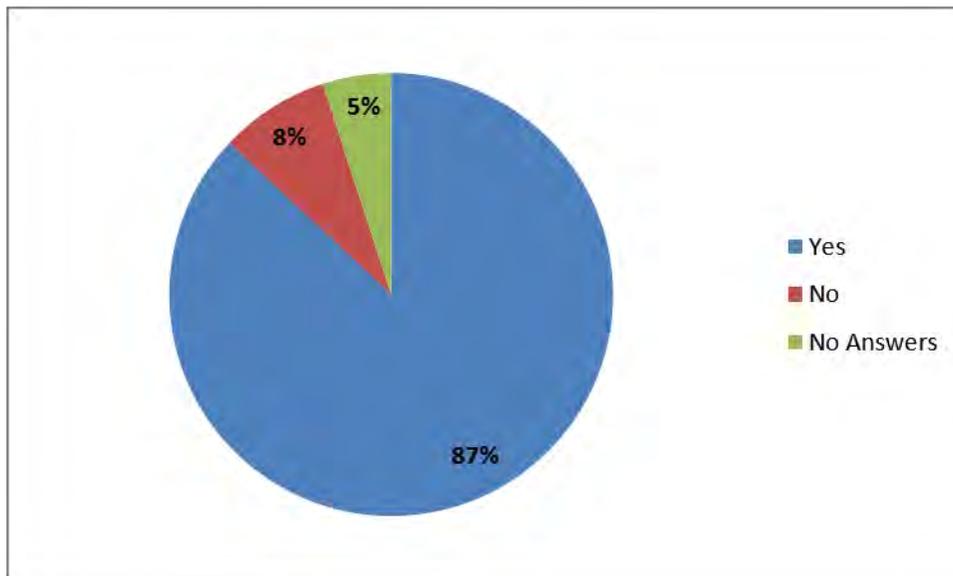
## **4.5 MEDIA AND SPORTS**

We can see in our everyday lives that media has a huge effect on our daily lives, infiltrating where people live, work and play. It fills a space dominated by advertising, cameras and what sells well to the public. The next questions looked at what athletes themselves feel about women in sport and the media attention paid to them.

FIGURE 4.5.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Do you watch sportswomen competing on television?

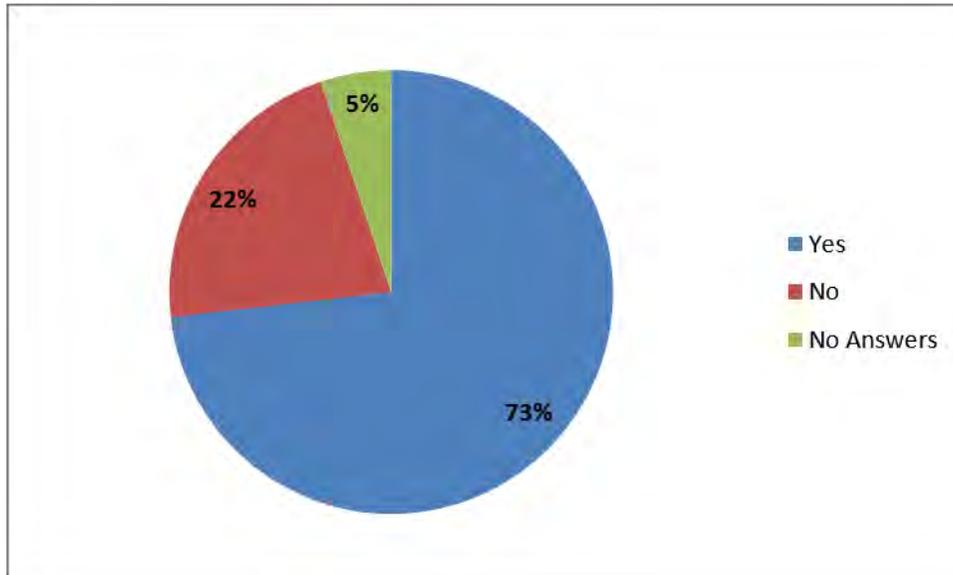


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Do you watch sportswomen competing on television?

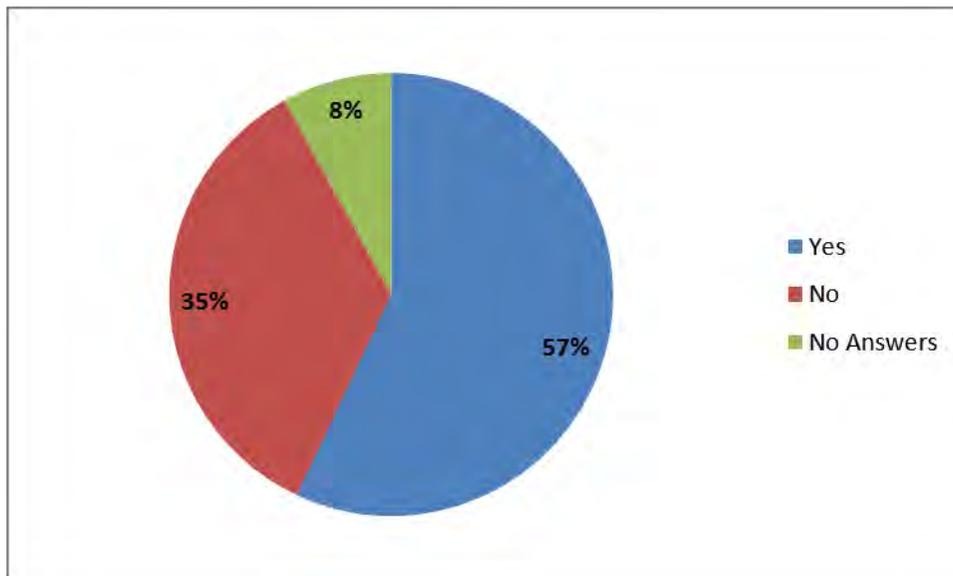


It is clear from the figures that women do watch other women competing in sport on television. Of the continuing group, 92% confirmed this compared to the 87% of the terminated group. Of the continuing group, 4% (compared to the 8% of the terminated group) said no. Of the continuing group, 4% compared to the 5% of the terminated group gave a negative answer. The next set of data appears to support this.

FIGURE: 4.5.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Do you have sportswomen role models?

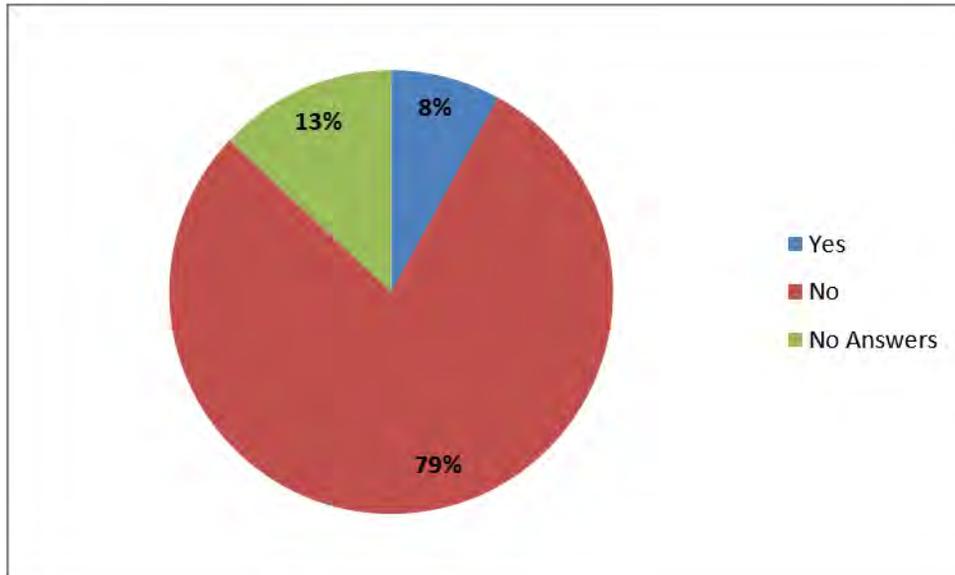


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Do you have sportswomen role models?

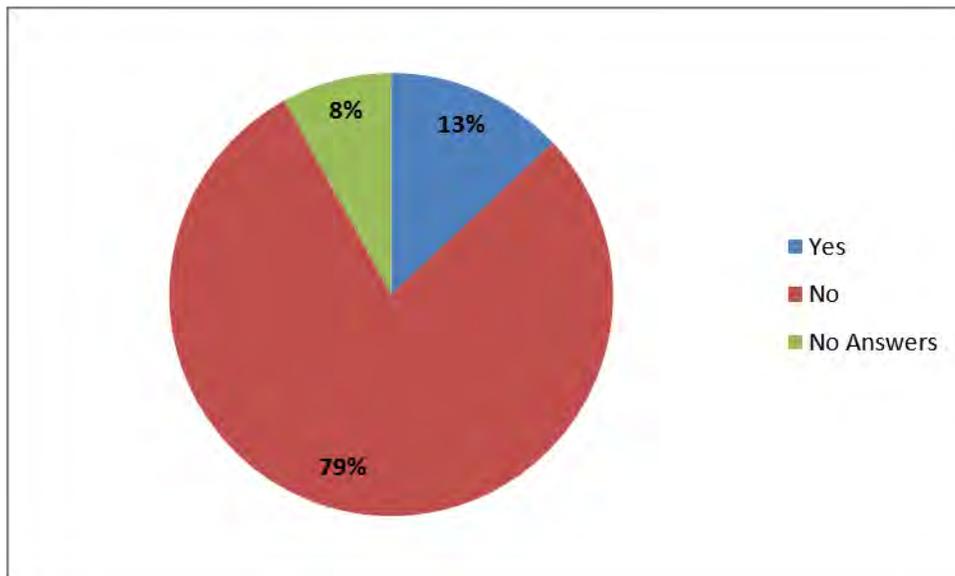


These two figures show a very different picture: 73% of the continuing group compared to 57% of terminated group have women role models. Of the continuing group, 21% compared to 35% of the terminated group have women role models. In the continuing groups 5% gave no answers, with 8% in the terminated group.

FIGURE: 4.5.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Do you feel there is enough coverage of women's sport?



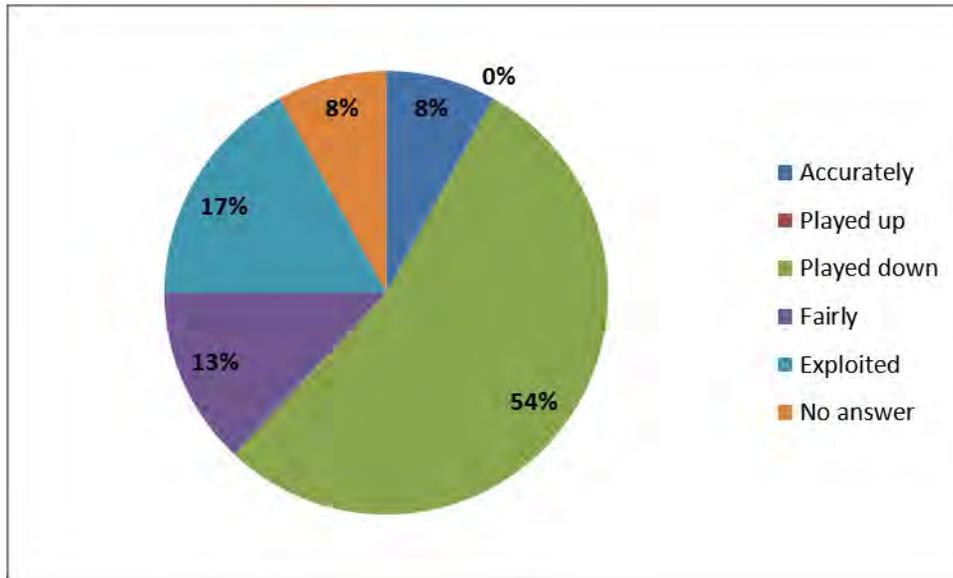
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Do you feel there is enough coverage of women's sport?



In both groups 79% of participants felt that there was not enough coverage on television for sportswomen. Of the continuing group, 8% compared to 13% of the terminated group felt that sportswomen do get enough media coverage and 13% of the continuing group compared to 8% of terminated provided no answer.

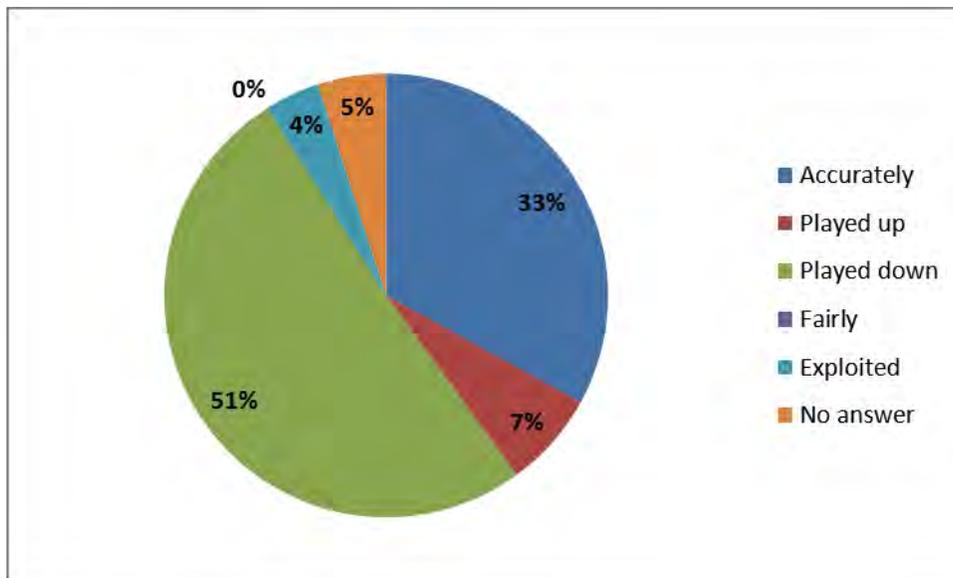
FIGURE: 4.5.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

How the participants in the research feel about how the media portrays sportswomen.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

How the participants in the research feel about how the media portrays sportswomen.



The questionnaire tried to identify if the participants in the research felt that women were portrayed accurately. In the continuing group, 8% felt sportswomen were accurately portrayed in the media, compared to 33% in the terminated group. No respondents in the continuing group and only 7% in the terminated group felt that sportswomen were played up in the media.

However, over half of both the groups (continuing group 54% and terminated group 51%) felt that women are played down. Of the continuing group, 17% felt that sportswomen were exploited in the media, with 4% in the terminated group feeling the same. Of the continuing group, 8% gave no answer compared to 5% in the terminated group.

The questionnaire asked the participants to name five sportswomen. This was to determine whether the participants could name more than one or two. In the two different groups the following sportswomen were named and the number of times they were named appear alongside.

<b>SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT: ANSWERS</b>			
<b>SPORTSWOMEN</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>SPORT</b>	<b>NUMBER OF APPEARANCES</b>
No Answers			15
Natalie du Toit	South Africa	Swimming	11
Penny Heyns	South Africa	Swimming	6
Anriette Schoeman	South Africa	Road Cycling	4
Cherise Taylor	South Africa	Mountain Biking	4
Paula Radcliff	Great Britain	Marathon Running	4
Robyn de Groot	South Africa	Road Cycling	3
Ana Ivanovic	Serbia	Tennis	3
Blanka Vlasic	Croatia	High Jump	3
Elana Meyer	South Africa	10 000m Running	3
Hestrie Cloete	South Africa	High Jump	3
Maria Sharapova	Russia	Tennis	3
Vanessa Fernandes	Portugal	Triathlon	3
Venus Williams	USA	Tennis	3
Yolande Speedy	South Africa	Mountain Biking	3
Zola Budd	South Africa	Running	3
Annika Sorenstam	Sweden	Golf	2
Emma Snowsill	Australia	Triathlon	2
Gunn Rita Dahl	Norway	Mountain Biking	2
Kate Roberts	South Africa	Triathlon	2
Lynette Burger	South Africa	Mountain Biking	2



Mandy Loots	South Africa	Swimming	2
Steffi Graf	Germany	Tennis	2
Anke Erlank/Moore	South Africa	Road Cycling	1
Anna Kournikova	Russia	Tennis	1
Colleen de Reuck	South Africa	Running	1
Yelana Isinbayeva	Russia	Pole Vault	2
Geraldine Pillay	South Africa	Runner	1
Grete Waitz	Norway	Marathon	1
Jelena Jankovits	Norway	Tennis	1
Kelly Holmes	Great Britain	Runner	1
Kirsty Coventry	Zimbabwe	Swimmer	1
Libby Trickett	Australia	Swimmer	1
Luciana Aymar	Argentina	Field Hockey	1
Lucie Zelenkova	Australia	Triathlon	1
Marga Fullana	Spain	Mountain Biking	1
Mariel Zagunis	USA	Fencing	1
Marion Jones	USA	Sprinter	1
Martina Navratilova	Czech	Tennis	1
Merissa van der Merwe	South Africa	Road Cycling	1
Natalie Grainger	South Africa	Squash	1
Natasha Badmann	Switzerland	Triathlon	1
Nicole Cooke	Great Britain	Road Cycling	1
Ronel van wyk	South Africa	Road Cycling	1
Sabine Spitz	Germany	Mountain biking	1
Serina Williams	USA	Tennis	1
Sonja Laxton	South Africa	Running	1
Tanith Maxwell	South Africa	Running	1
Tereza Marcel	Czech-Canadian	Triathlon	1
Tirunesh Dibaba	Ethiopian	Running	1
Yolande De Villiers	South Africa	Road & Mountain Biking	1



## SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT: ANSWERS

SPORTSWOMEN	COUNTRY	SPORT	NUMBER OF APPEARANCES
No answers			57
Natalie du Toit	South Africa	Swimmer	20
Venus Williams	USA	Tennis	17
Penny Heyns	South Africa	Swimmer	9
Serena Williams	USA	Tennis	9
Maria Sharapova	Russia	Tennis	7
Steffi Graf	Germany	Tennis	7
Elana Meyer	South Africa	Running	4
Paula Radcliff	Great Britain	Marathon Running	4
Pietie Coetzee	South Africa	Field Hockey	4
Annika Sorenstam	Sweden	Golf	3
Yelana Isinbayeva	Russia	Pole vault	3
Hestie Cloete	South Africa	High Jump	3
Marion Jones	USA	Sprinter	3
Anna Kournikova	Russia	Tennis	2
Geraldine Pillay	South Africa	Running	2
Justine Henin	Belgium	Tennis	2
Lindsay Davenport	USA	Tennis	2
Yolande De Villiers	South Africa	Road & Mountain Biking	2
Zola Budd	South Africa	Running	2
Amy-Jane Mundy	South Africa	Mountain Biking	1
Ashley Simon	Great Britain	Soccer	1
Blanka Vlasic	Croatia	High Jump	1
Charlene Hertzog	South Africa	Netball	1
Cherise Taylor	South Africa	Road Cycling	1
Dara Torres	USA	Swimming	1
Dominique Donnor	South Africa	Triathlon	1
Elana Zamolodchikova	Russia	Gymnast	1
Elsje Jordaan,	South Africa	Netball	1
Erica Sorenson	USA	Diving	1
Gail Foxcroft	South Africa	Equestrian	1
Irene van Dyk	New Zealand	Netball	1

Irina Slutskaya	Russia	Figure Skater	1
Kara Goucher	USA	Runner	1
Karen Roberts	South Africa	Field Hockey	1
Kerri Walsh	USA	Beach volleyball	1
Kimmie Meissner	USA	Figure Skater	1
Kirsty Coventry	Zimbabwe	Swimming	1
Lindsey Carlisle	South Africa	Field Hockey	1
Mandy Loots	South Africa	Swimming	1
Maria Butyrskaya	Russia	Figure Skating	1
Martina Navratilova	Czech	Tennis	1
Merissa van der Merwe	South Africa	Cycling	1
Nastia Liukin	Russia	Gymnastics	1
Lisbeth Trickett	Australia	Swimming	1
Paulo Pezzo	Italian	Mountain Biking	1
Rene Kalmer	South Africa	Running	1
Sahwn Johnson	USA	Gymnastics	1
Sasha Cohen	USA	Figure Skating	1
Silken Laumann	Canada	Rowing	1
Sunette Viljoen	South Africa	Javlin	1
Svetlana Korkina	Russia	Gymnastics	1
Tandi Gerrard	Great Britain	Diving	1
Tania Raats	South Africa	Mountain Biking	1
Yolande Speedy	South Africa	Mountain Biking	1
Yvonne Vermaak	South Africa	Tennis	1

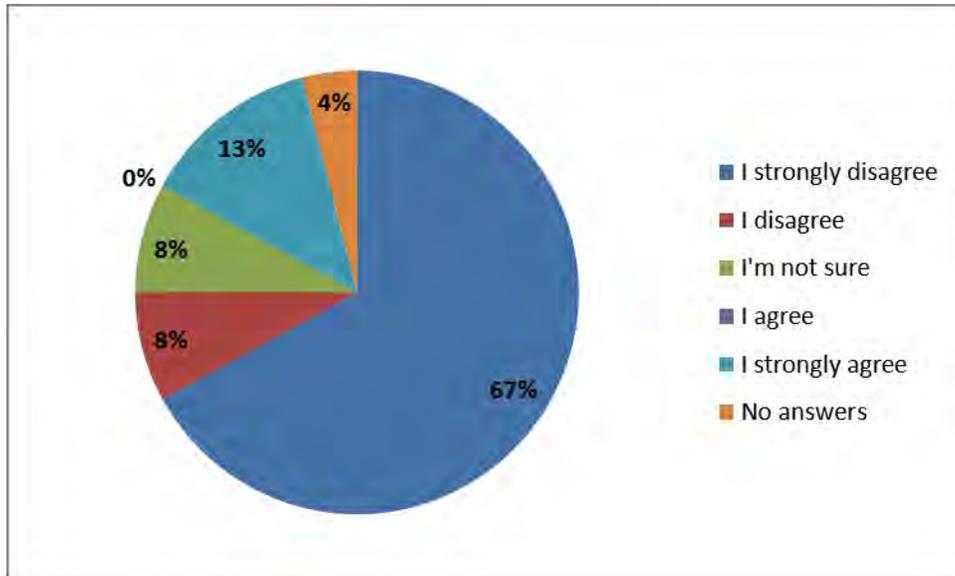
The athletes with the most mentions were Natalie Du Toit, Venus Williams, Serena Williams and Penny Heyns. These athletes get some of the most enhanced sports television exposure and that is most likely why so many women could recall their names.

#### 4.6. STEREOTYPES IN SPORT

We live in a society that feels comfortable with stereotypes. Thus, the following questions looked at the stereotypes that have emerged in relationship to women and sports.

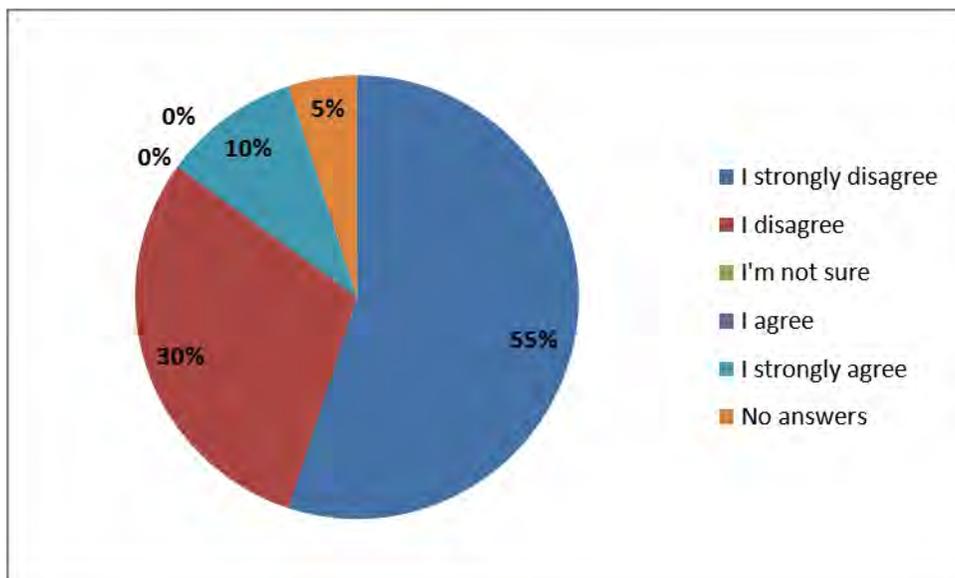
FIGURE: 4.6.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Sport plays an integral part in the development and socialisation of boys, but not girls.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

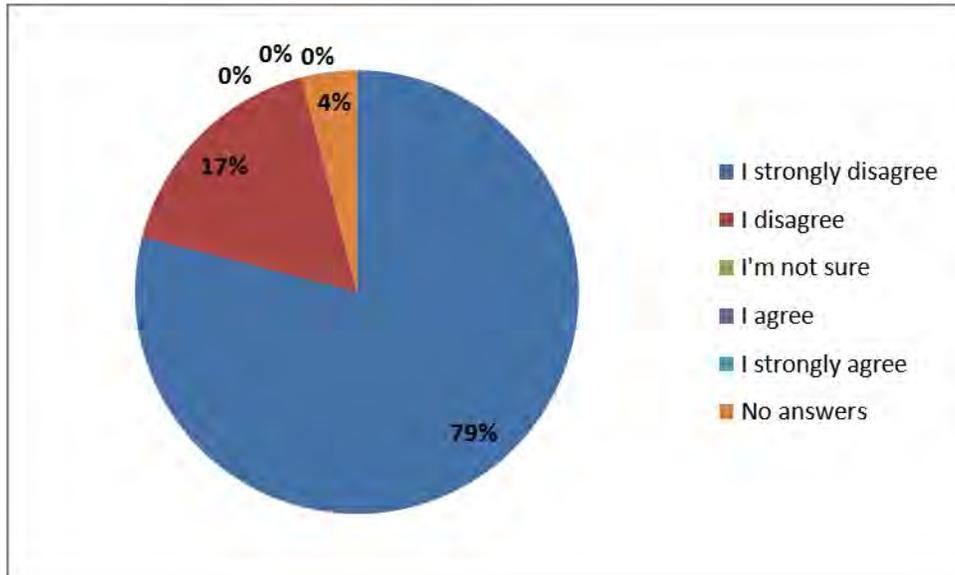
Sport plays an integral part in the development and socialisation of boys, but not girls.



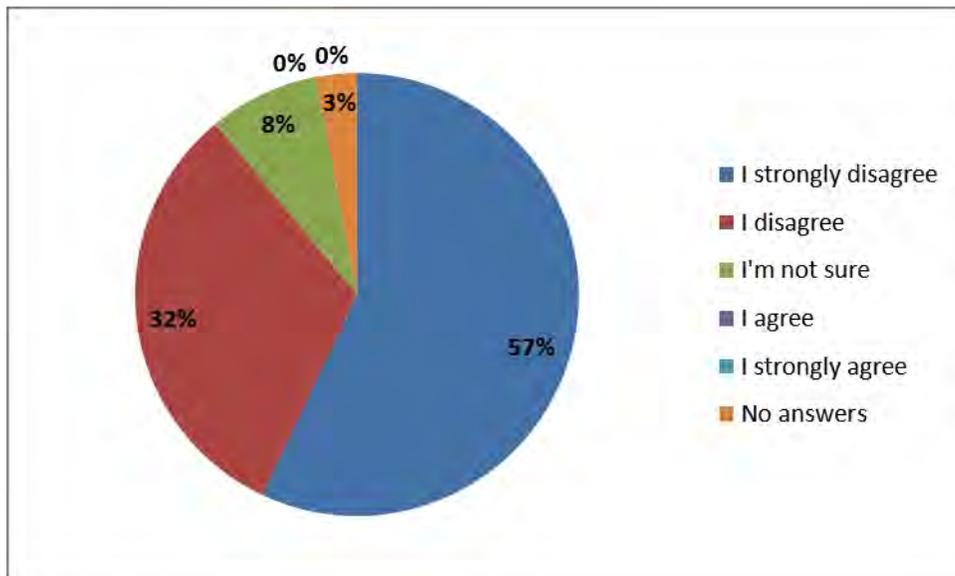
In the following explanations of each of the figures the responses “I disagree” and “I strongly disagree” and “I agree” and “I strongly agree” have been combined to give the total sum of disagreement or agreement. This total sum was then compared between both groups: the participants who continued sport and the participants who terminated sport.

In this pie chart, which asks participant to rate their reaction to the statement “Sport plays an integral part in the development and socialisation of boys, but not girls”, 75% of the competing group disagreed compared to 85% of the terminated group.

FIGURE: 4.6.2      SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
 Girls/women who play sport lack femininity.

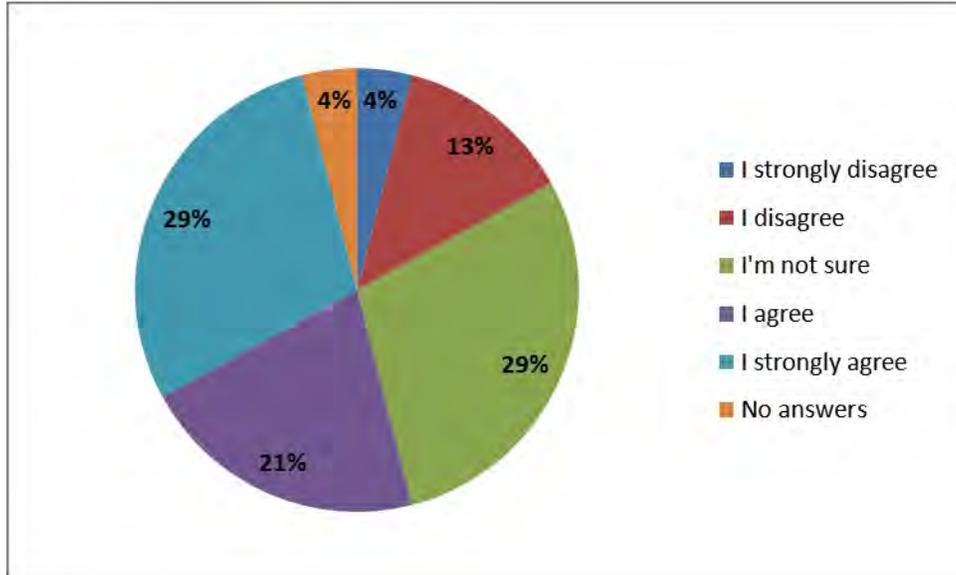


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
 Girls/women who play sport lack femininity.

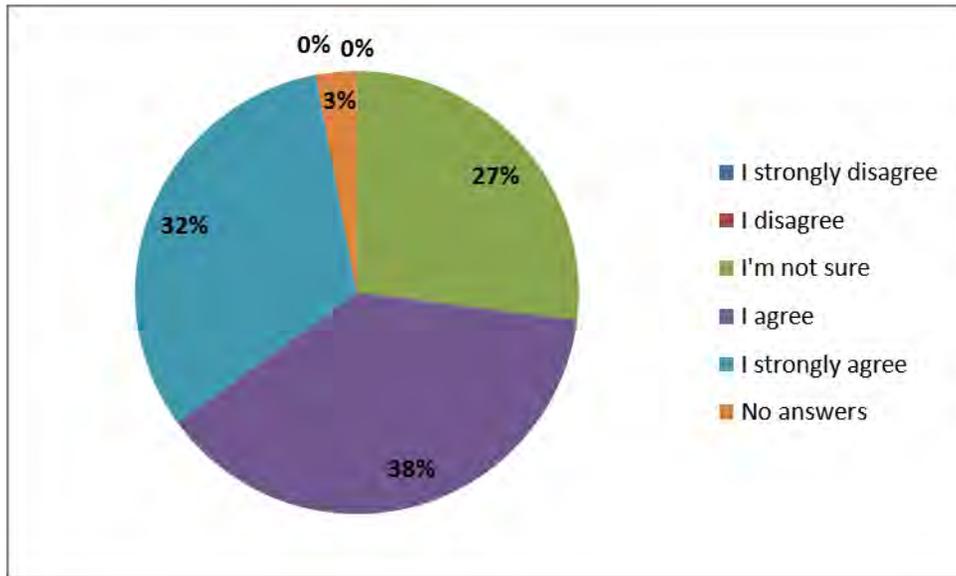


The chart shows that 96% of the competing group, compared to 89% of the terminated group, do not agree with the statement "girls/women who play sport lack femininity". A large proportion of the participants feel that women who play sport still are feminine.

FIGURE: 4.6.3      **SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:**  
 Girls should be encouraged to play soccer, cricket and water polo.



**SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:**  
 Girls should be encouraged to play soccer, cricket and water polo.

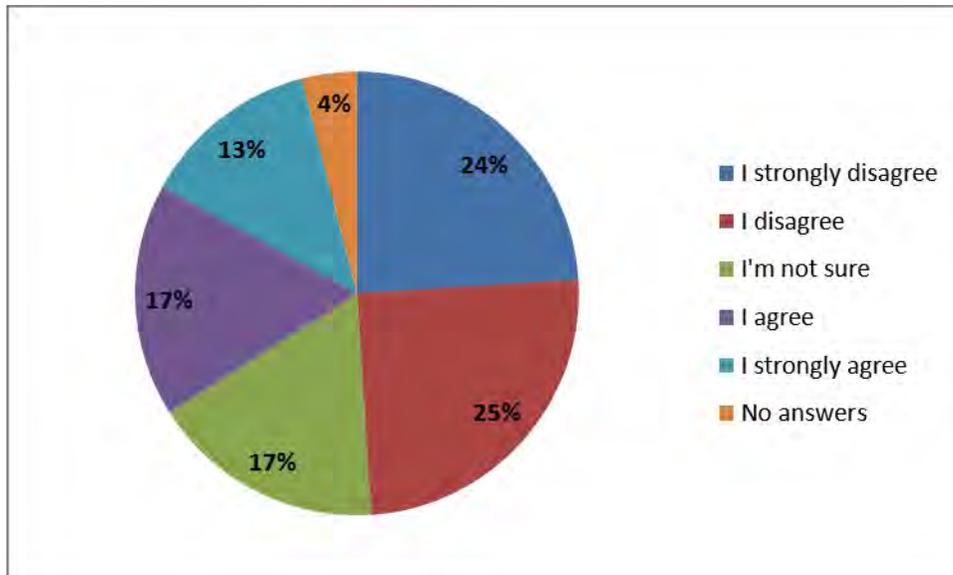


Traditionally, sports like soccer, cricket and water polo were male-dominated sports. However, over the years more women have started participating and competing in these sports. Today, in all of the above sports, there are women's World Cups as well as the traditional male World Cups.

So, this question asks women how they feel about other women competing in these sports. The response to this question was that 50% of the competing group, compared to 70% of the terminated group, agreed with the statement.

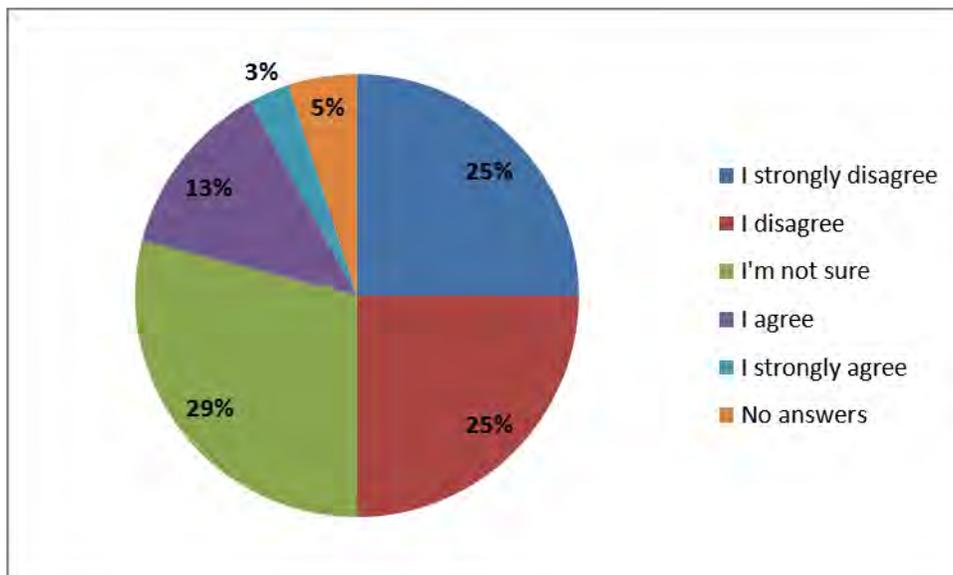
FIGURE: 4.6.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Only “beautiful”, model-like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

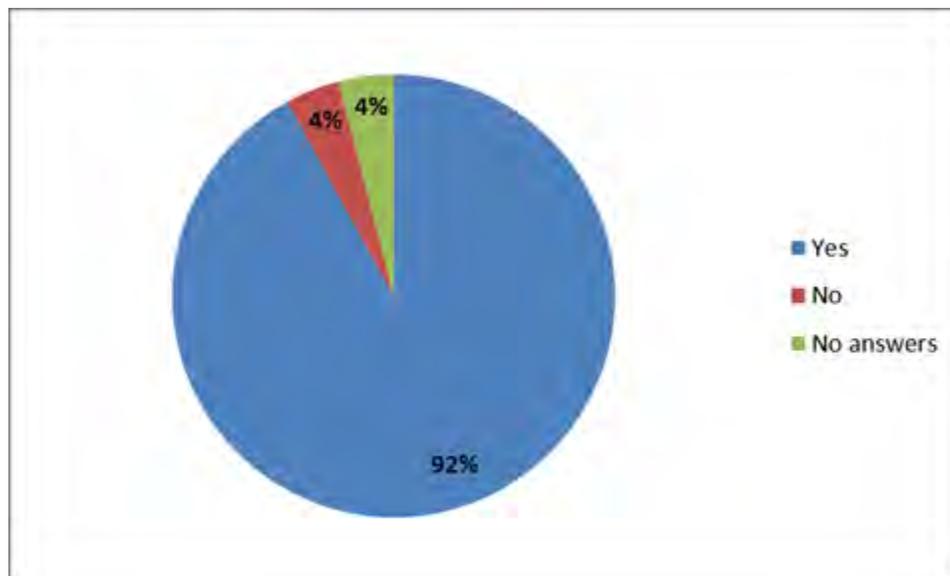
Only “beautiful”, model-like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships.



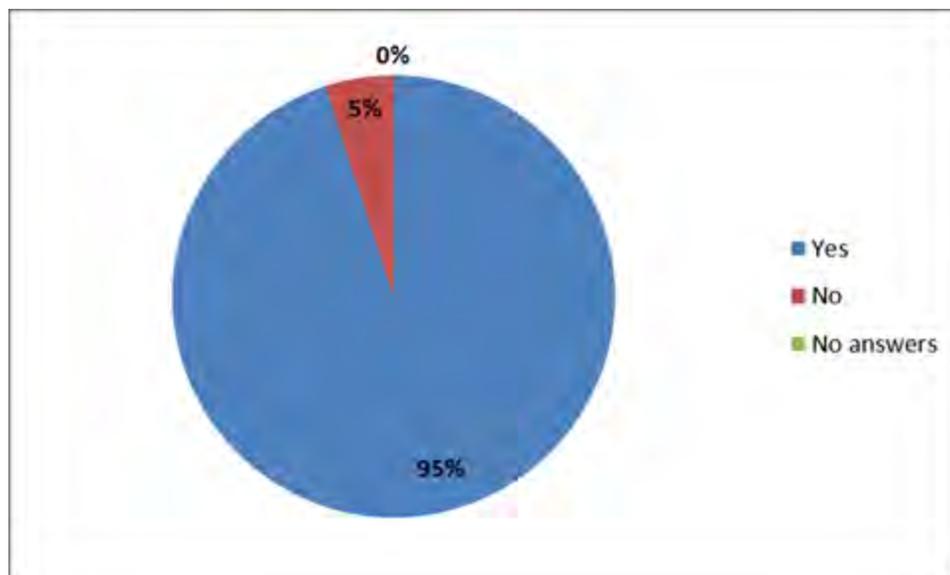
This statement did not get much support, with 30% of the competing group compared to 26% of the terminated group, strongly agreeing. In both groups, 50% of the women do not believe that appearances play an integral part in getting sponsorships.

## 4.7. PARENTAL PRESSURE

FIGURE: 4.7.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Did your parents support and encourage your participation in sport?



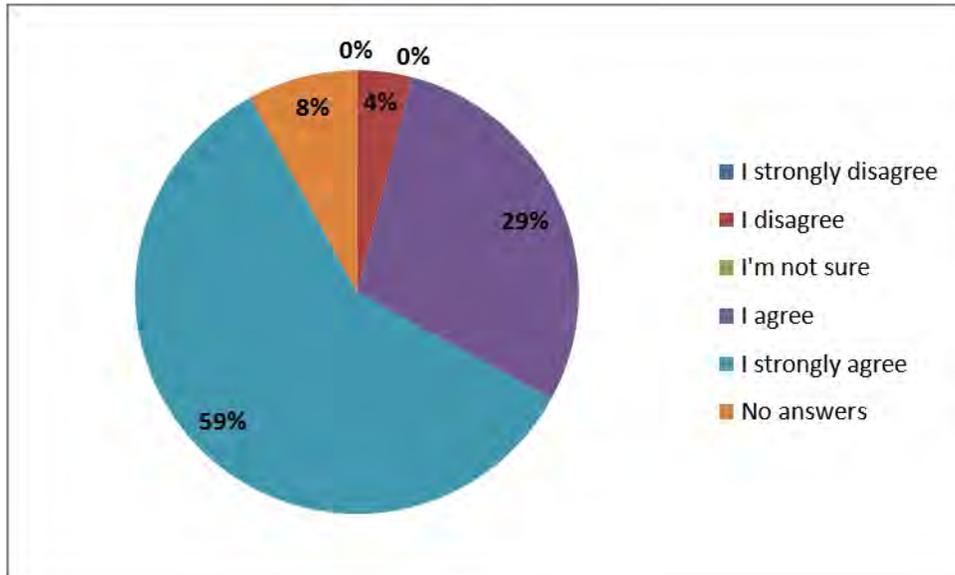
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Did your parents support and encourage your participation in sport?



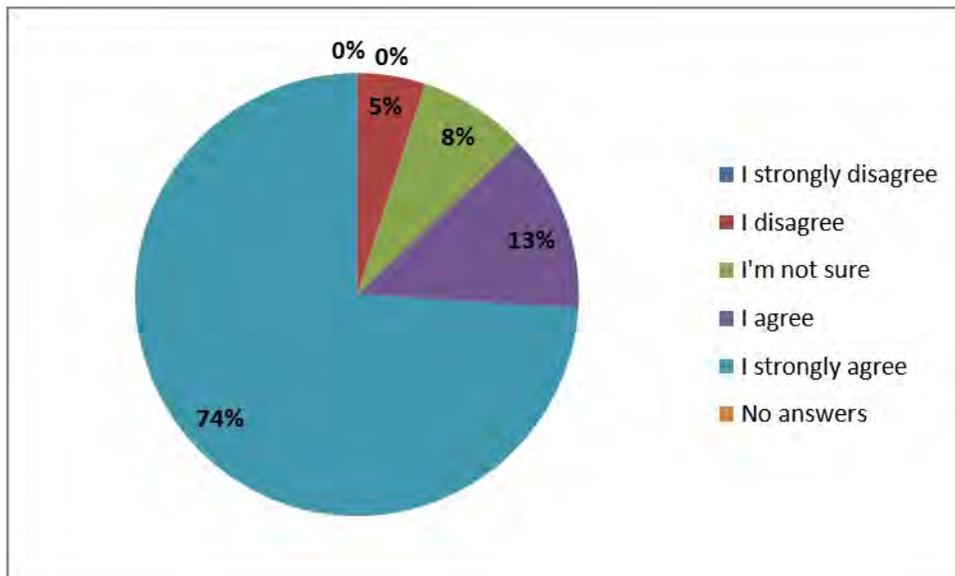
Parental support provides the child with confidence as they know they have the backing of their parents. In both groups there is a high percentage confirming this support.

Of the competing group 4%, and 5% for the terminated group, felt their parents did not support them. Of the competing group 4% (0% for the terminated group) had no response.

FIGURE: 4.7.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I had encouraging parents.



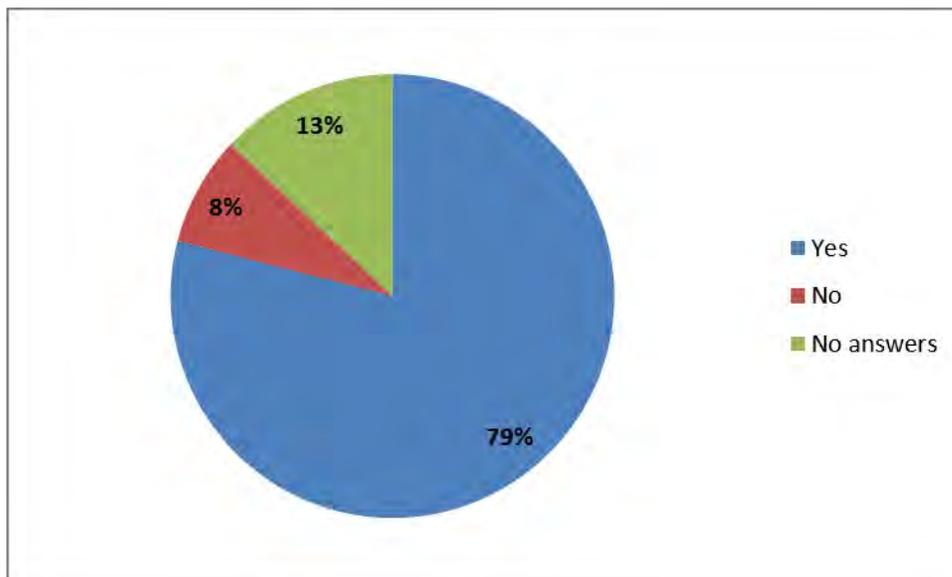
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I had encouraging parents.



Of the continuing group, 88% (87% of the terminated group) felt they had encouraging parents. Of the continuing group 4% (5% of the terminated group) felt they did not have encouraging parents. Of the terminated group, 8% provided no answer.

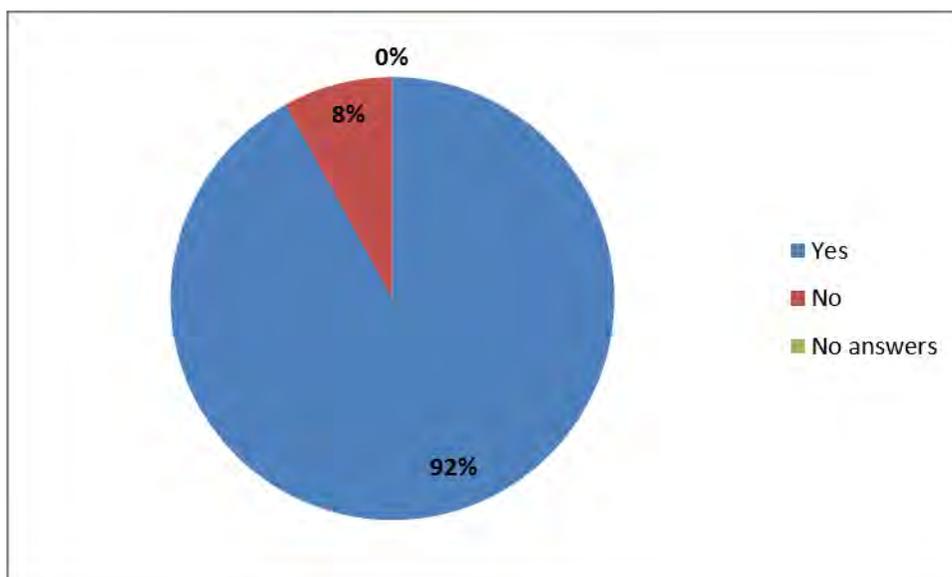
FIGURE: 4.7.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Did your parents transport you to the sports venues willingly?



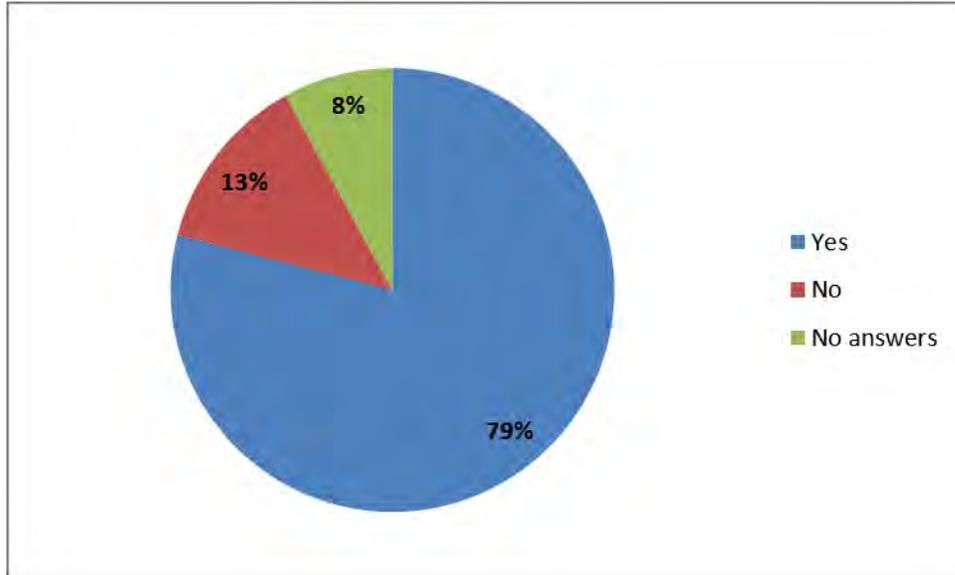
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

Did your parents transport you to the sports venues willingly?

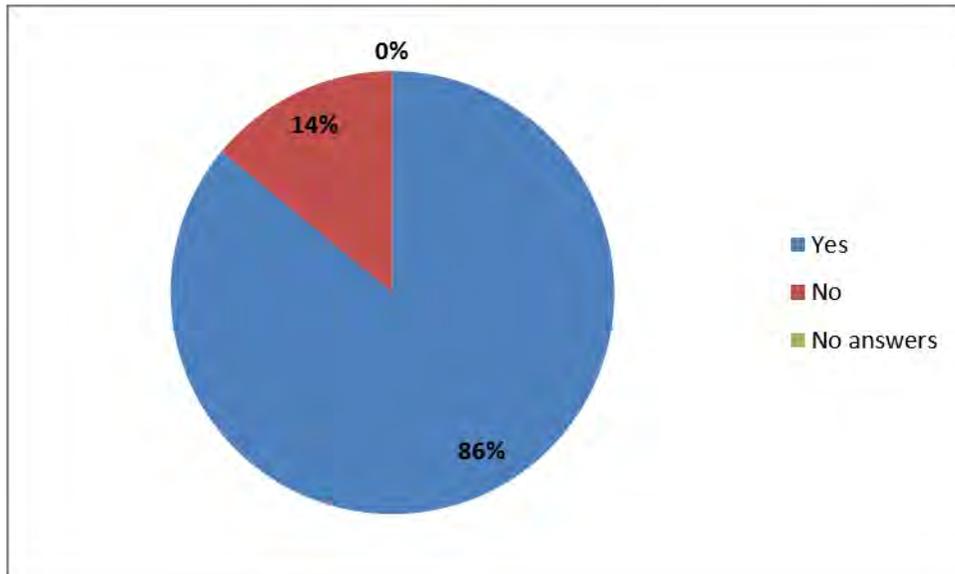


In these two graphs, 79% of the competing group compared to 92% of the terminated group, said their parents had willingly transported the athletes to sports venues. Of the competing group, 8% (compared to 8% of the terminated group) felt their parents did not transport them to sports venues willingly. Of the competing group, 13% provided no answers.

FIGURE: 4.7.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Did your parents attend matches/competitions as spectators?



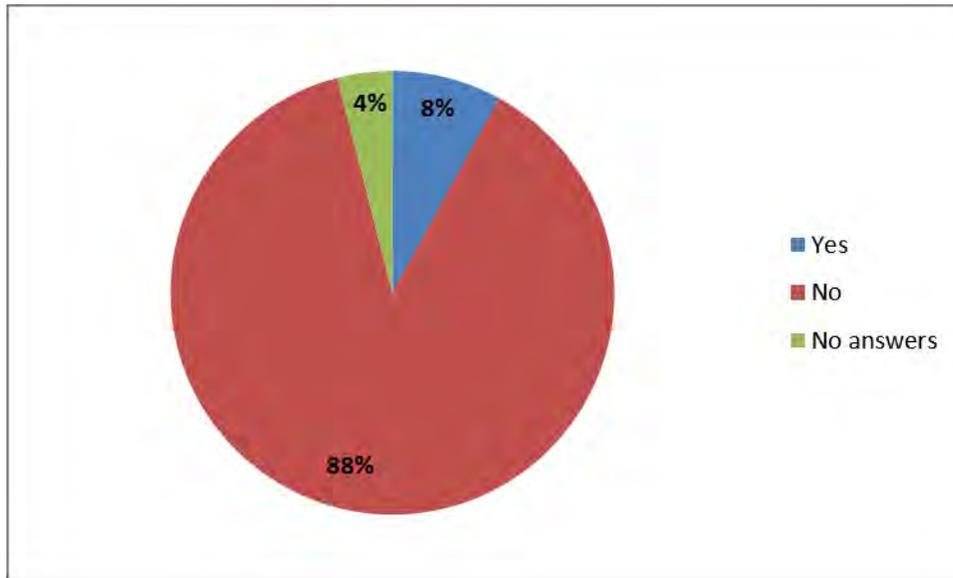
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Did your parents attend matches/competitions as spectators?



The figure shows that the 79% of the continued group identified that athlete's parents attended matches and competitions, with 86% in the terminated group agreeing. Of the competing group, 13% of the athletes' parents (compared to the 14% of athletes' parents in the terminated group) did not attend matches and competitions. Of the competing group, 8% of the athletes gave no answer.

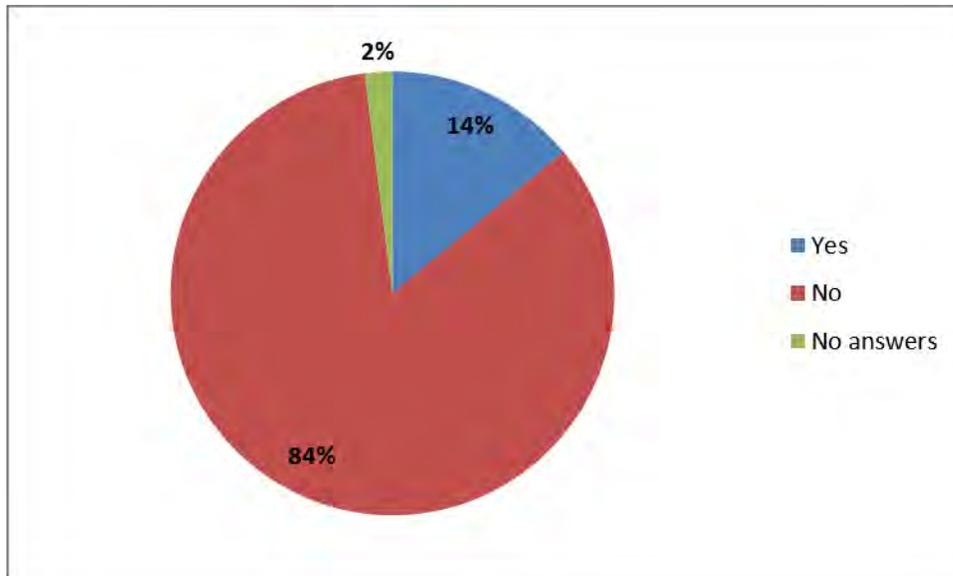
FIGURE: 4.7.5 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Did your parents react negatively toward referees/umpires/judges' decisions when you lost?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

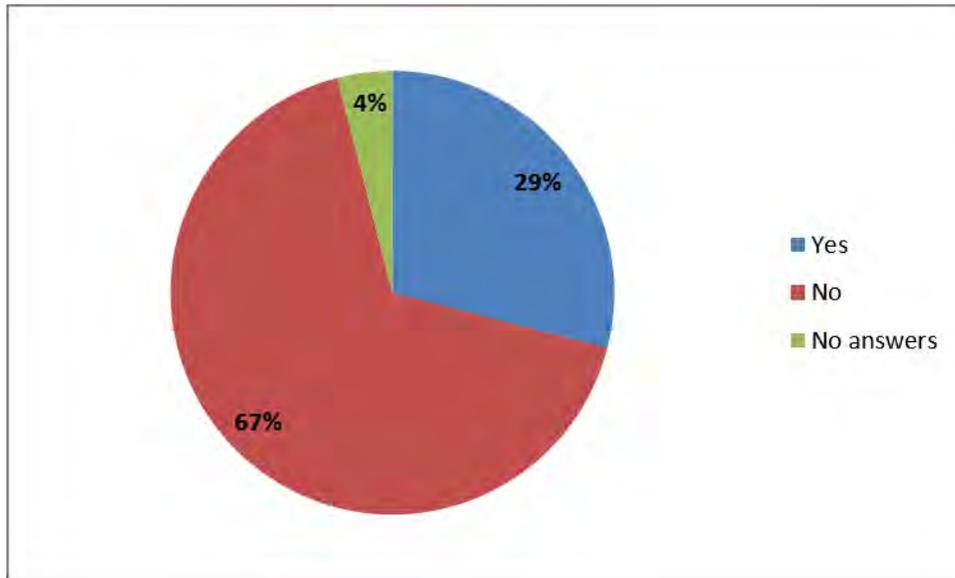
Did your parents react negatively toward referees/umpires/judges' decisions when you lost?



There is very little difference between the two responses, with 88% of the competing group and 84% of the terminated group, saying their parents never interfered with the final decision of the judges or umpires. Of the competing group, 8%, with 14% of the terminated group, said their parents did interfere with the final decision of the judges or umpires. Of the competing group, 4% and 2% of the terminated group had no answers.

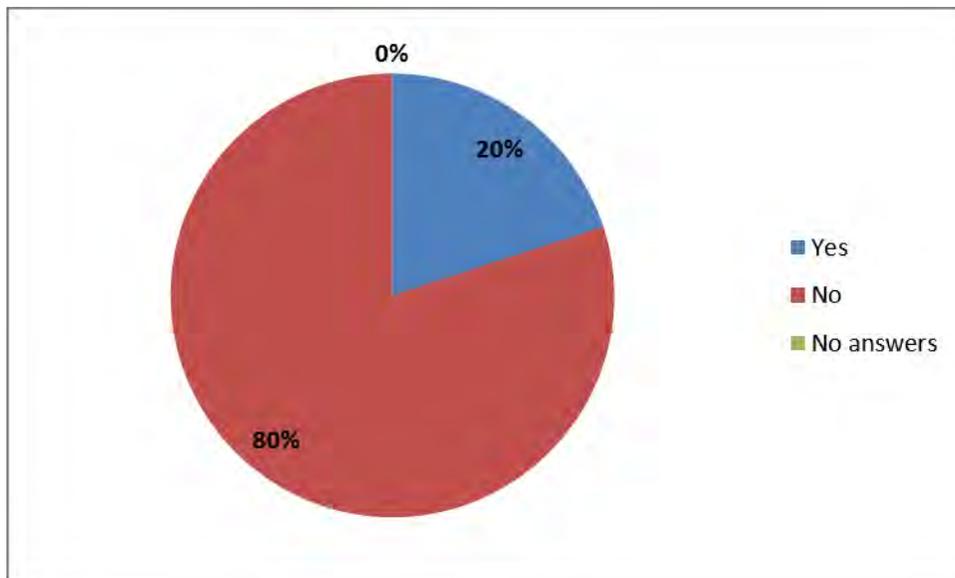
FIGURE: 4.7.6 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Did your parents get involved in the sport administration/regulation of your team?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

Did your parents get involved in the sport administration/regulation of your team?

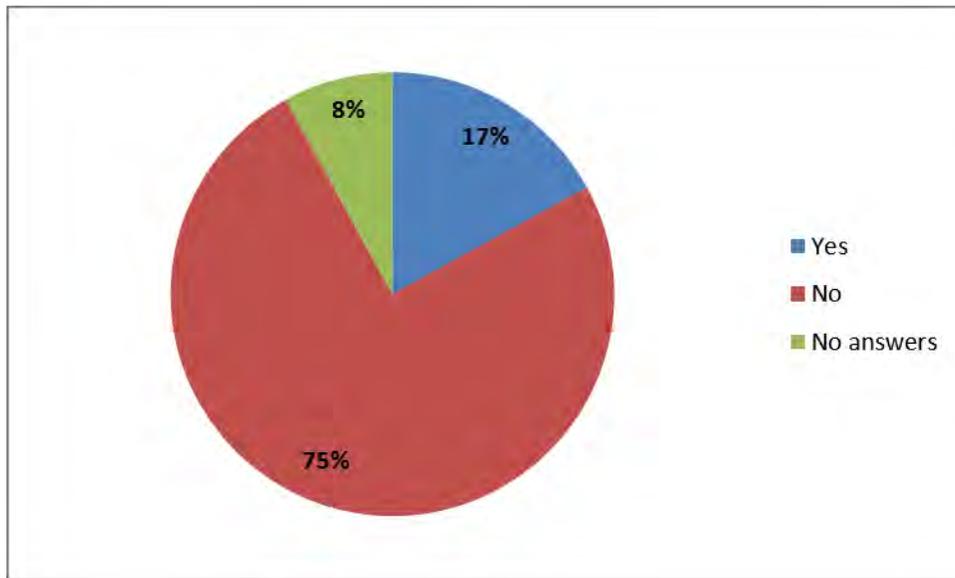


Parents are often the backbone to many sports teams and club teams. They get involved to support their children and they run the club to ensure their children get the best. The research shows that only 29% of the competing group, and 20% of the terminated group, had parents who got involved in the administration.

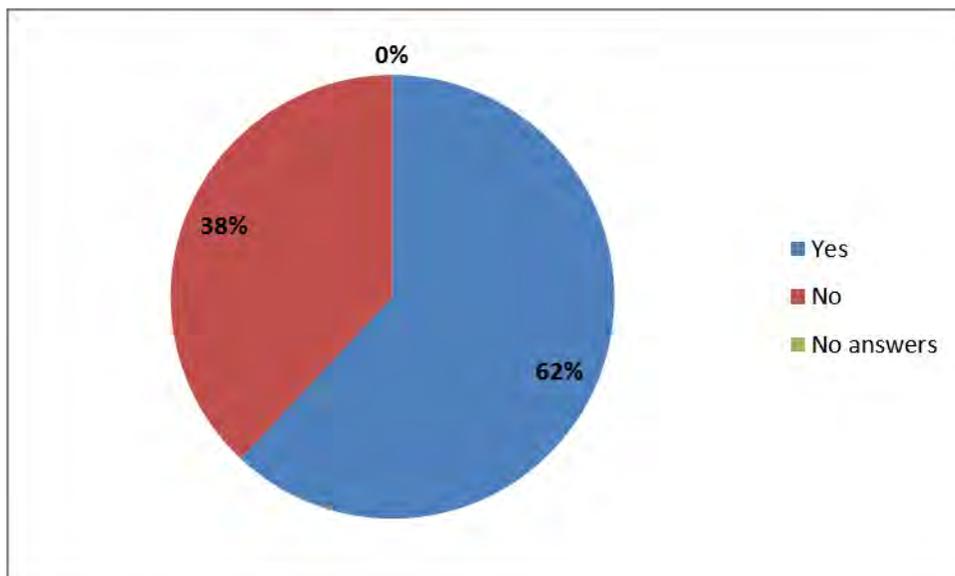
Of the competing group, 67% (80% of the terminated group) had parents who did not get involved in the administration. Of the competing group 4% never answered the question.

**PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS**

FIGURE: 4.7.7 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Did your parents make you go to training when you really didn't want to (for whatever reason)?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Did your parents make you go to training when you really didn't want to (for whatever reason)?

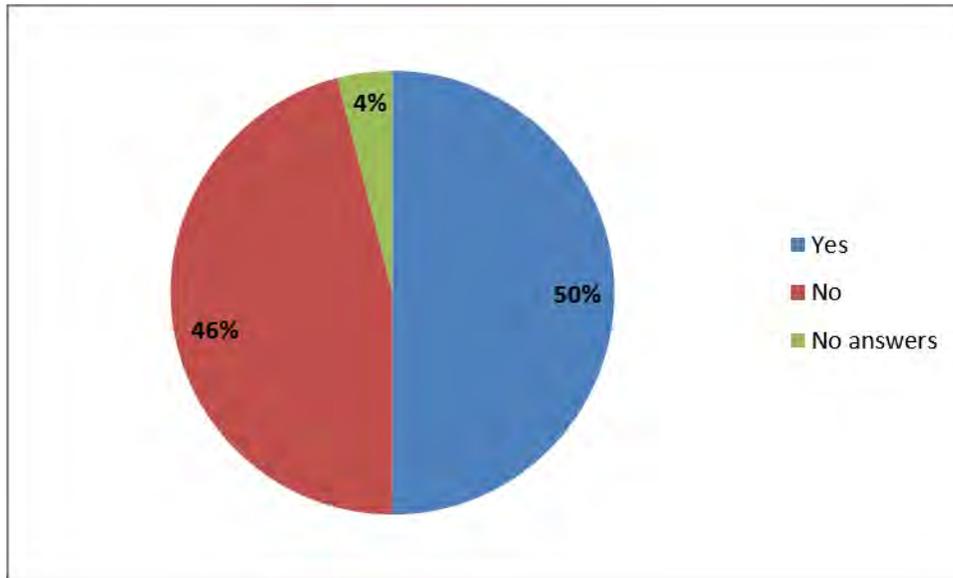


Is it good to push a child to do something they don't want to do? There are times one should not times when one should not. In these graphs, 17% of the competing group and 62% of terminated group were forced to go to training when they did not want to.

Of the competing group, 75% were not forced to go to training, 38% of the terminated group had a similar experience, while 8% of the continued group did not answer the question. These two figures are very different and could have an impact on an athlete's desire to want to stop sport.

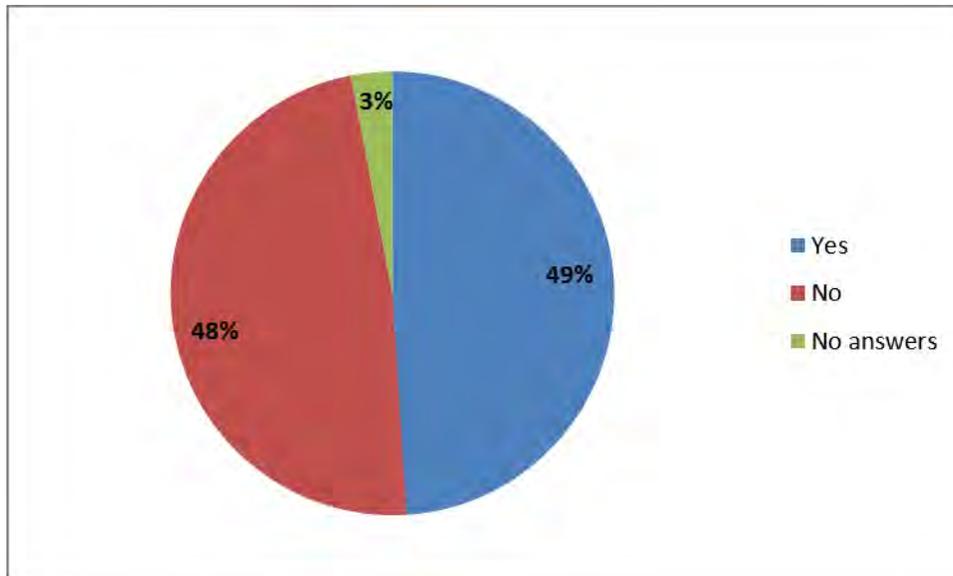
FIGURE: 4.7.8 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Did your parents have high expectations of you in the sports environment?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

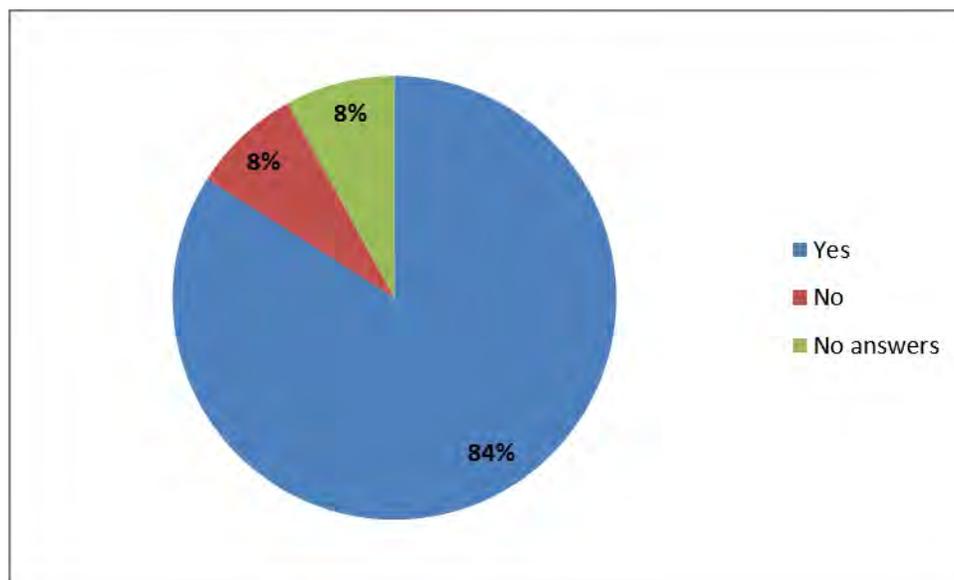
Did your parents have high expectations of you in the sports environment?



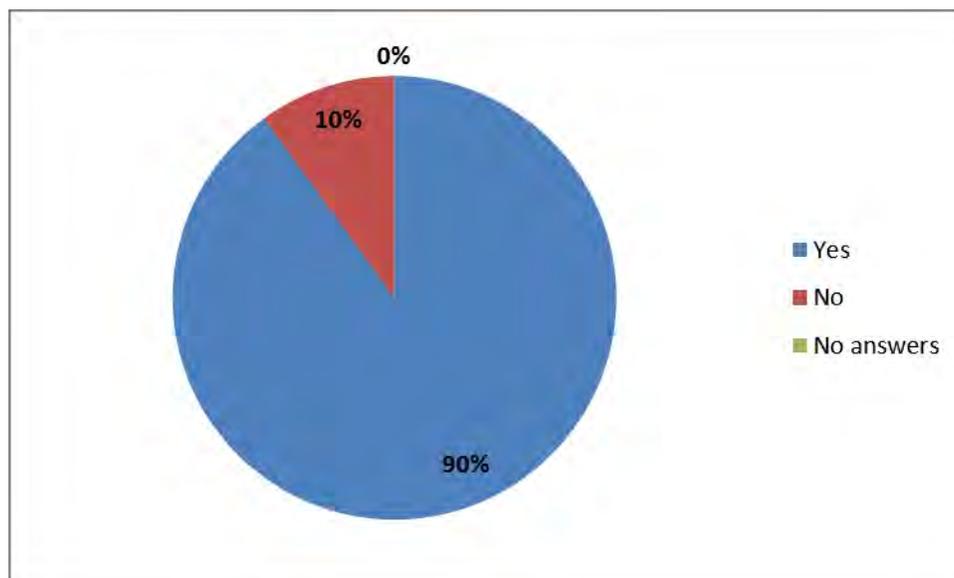
These two figures are very similar with only 1% difference. Of the competing group, 50% (49% of the terminated group) felt that their parents did have high expectations of them. Of the competing, group 46% (48% of the terminated group) felt that their parents did not have high expectations of them.

Of the competing group, 4% (3% of the terminated group) did not provide an answer. Thus, half of the sample felt their parents had high expectations, while the other half felt their parents did not.

FIGURE: 4.7.9 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Do you feel you meet their expectations?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Do you feel you meet their expectations?



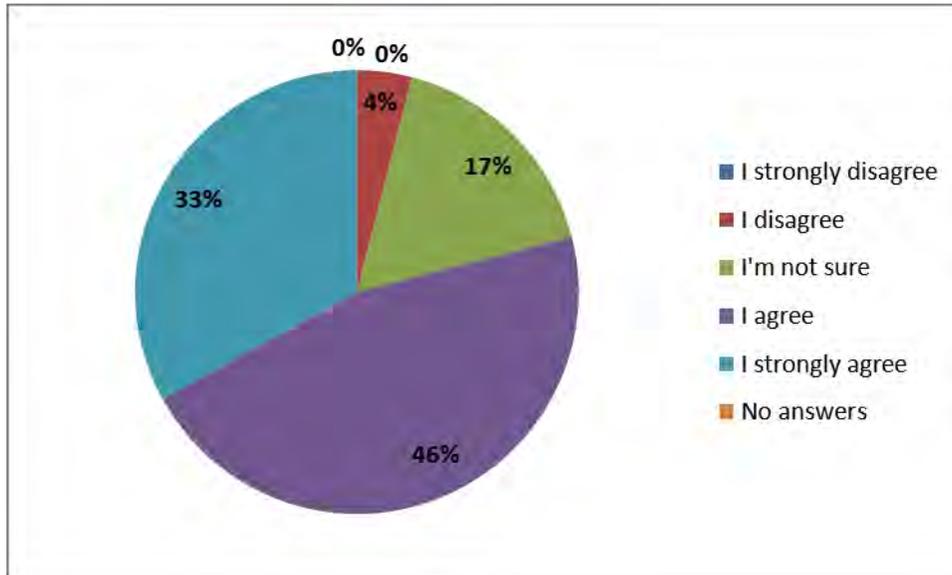
With half the sample of participants feeling their parents had high expectations, 84% of the competing group and 90% of the terminated group felt they did meet the expectations of their parents. Only 8% of the competing group and 10% of the terminated group felt they did not

meet the expectations of their parents. Of the competing group, 8% did not answer the question.

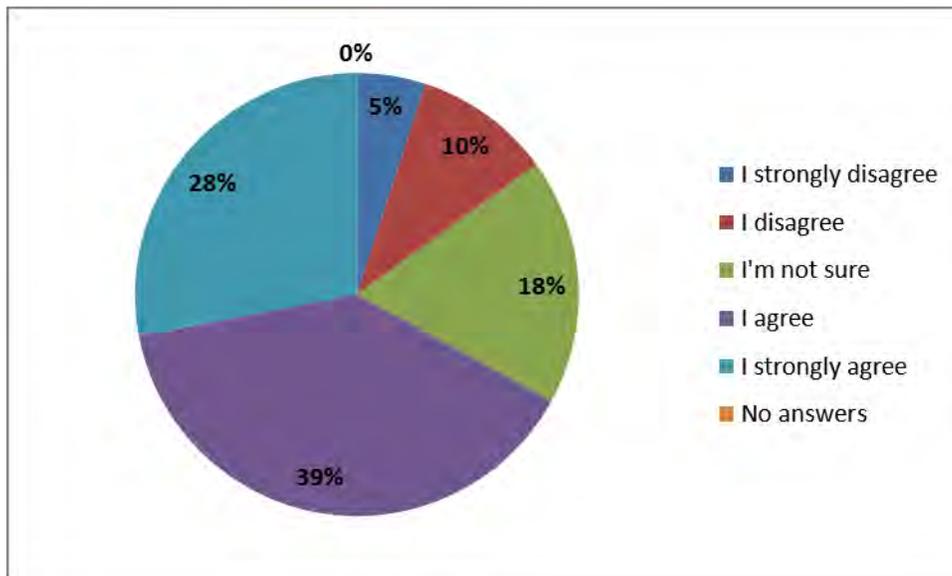
#### **4.8. THE ROLE OF PEERS AND FRIENDS**

The support group of the athlete has some influence on the athlete. The following questions asked the athlete how their friends influenced or did not influence their sport participation and how much support they received from them.

FIGURE: 4.8.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
My friends are always encouraging.



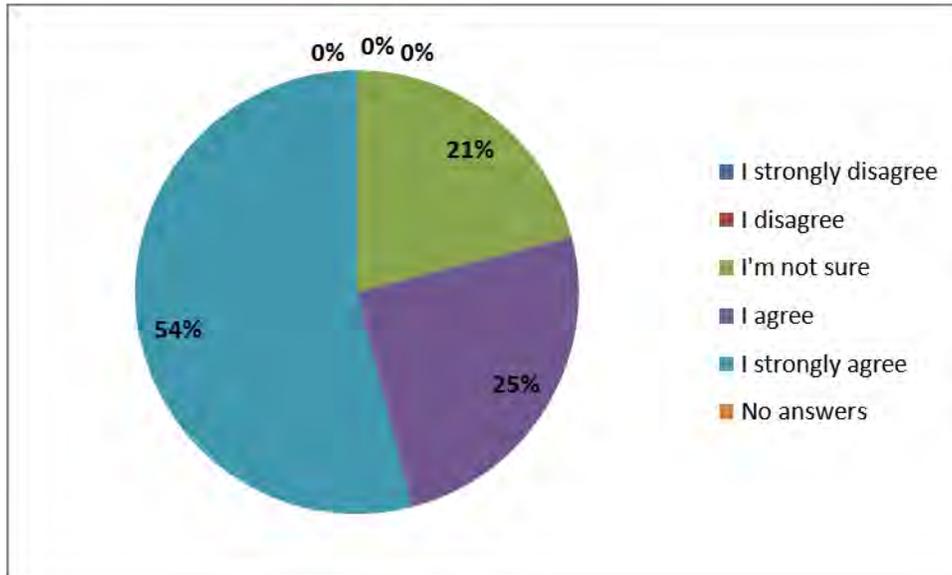
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
My friends are always encouraging.



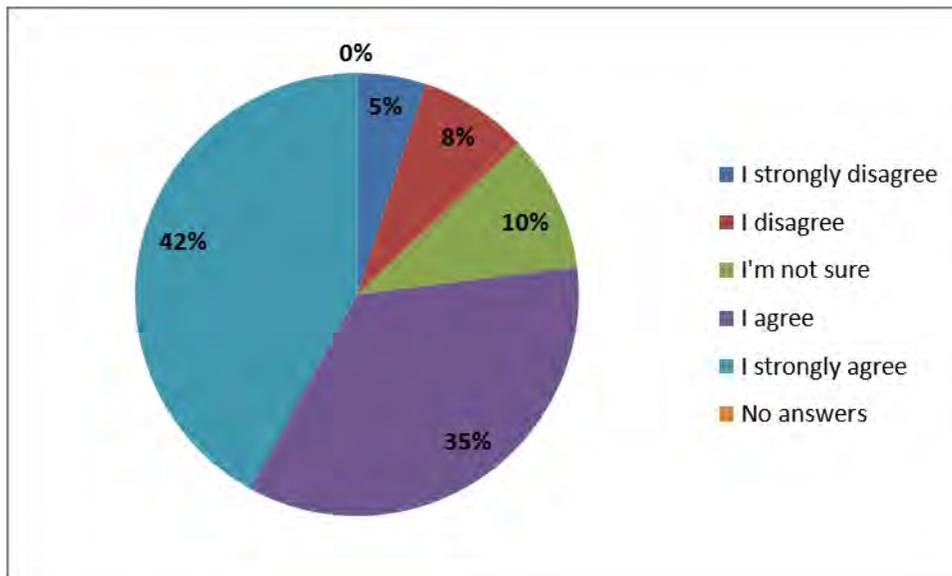
The responses "I agree" and "I strongly agree" were combined to give the total sum of agreement.

The above pie charts reveal that the 79% of the competing group found their friends encouraging; and 67% of the terminated group agreed. The competing group said that 4% of their friends were not always encouraging, with 15% of the terminated group feeling the same. The competing group said that 17% were not sure if their friends were always encouraging; and 18% of the terminated group were unsure. Everyone provided answers.

FIGURE: 4.8.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I had encouraging and supporting teammates and friends.

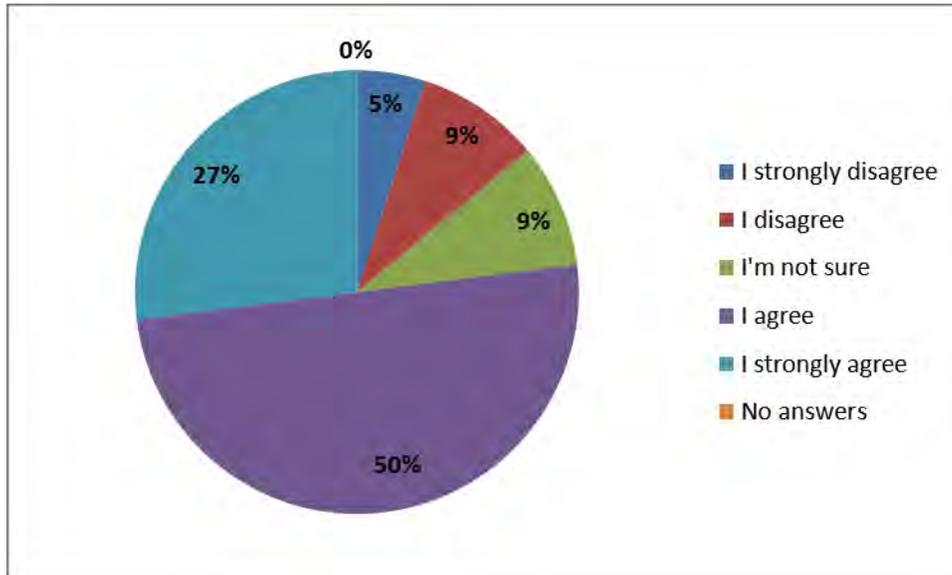


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I had encouraging and supporting teammates and friends.

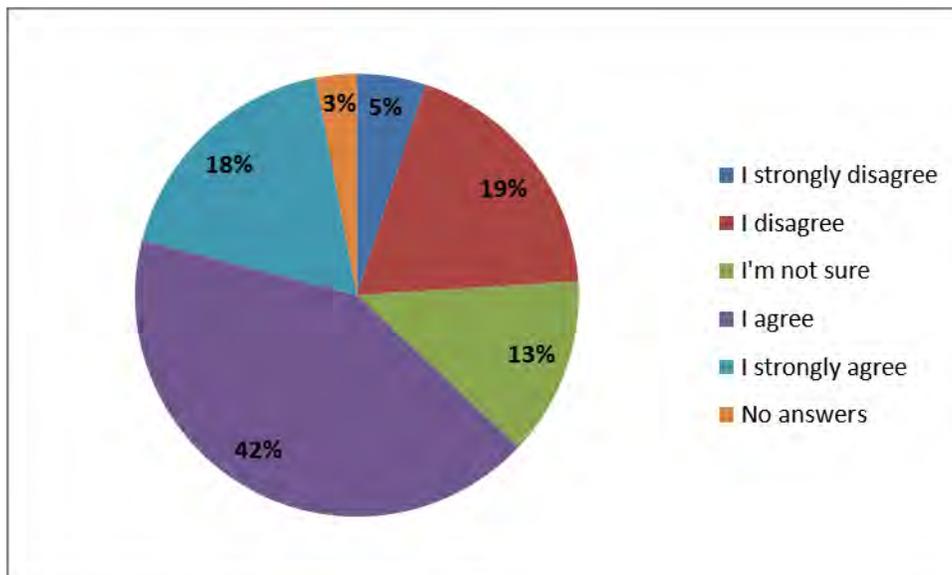


Of the competing group, 79% (77% of the terminated group) felt they had encouraging and supporting teammates and friends. No one in the competing group and 13% of the terminated group felt they did not have encouraging and supporting teammates and friends. Of the competing group, 21% (10% of the terminated group) were not sure. Everyone provided answers.

FIGURE: 4.8.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
My friends understood when I had to focus and could not go out.

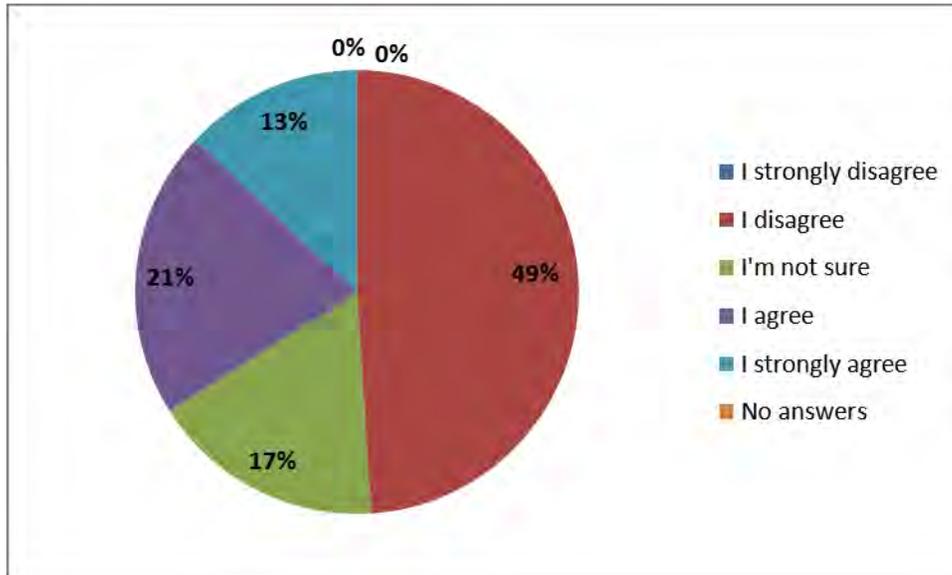


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
My friends understood when I had to focus and could not go out.

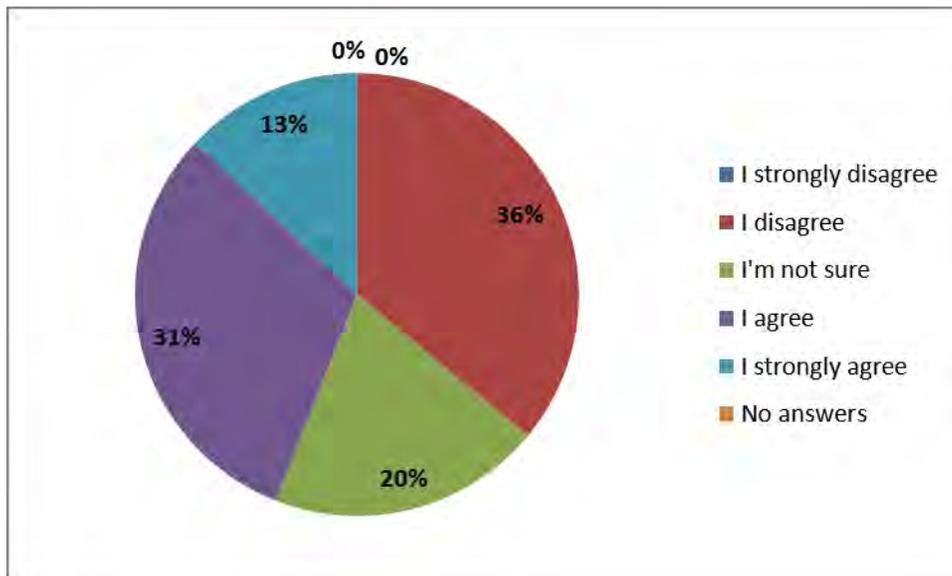


Combining the “agree” and “strongly agree” graphs indicates that 77% of the competing group, compared to the 60% of the terminated group, felt their friends understood that when they had to focus on their sport they could not go out and socialise. Of the competing group, 14% (compared to the 24% of the terminated group) did not feel their friends understood this. Of the competing group, 9% (compared to the 13% of the terminated group) were not sure. Of the competing group, 0% (compared to the 3% of the terminated group) provided no answers.

FIGURE: 4.8.4      SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
 My friends come to my competition to support me.



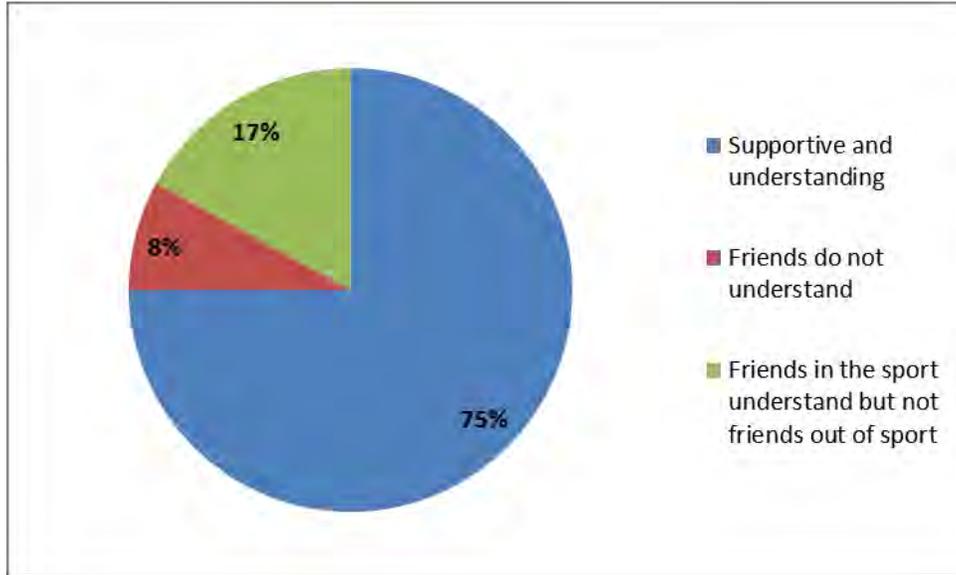
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
 My friends come to my competition to support me.



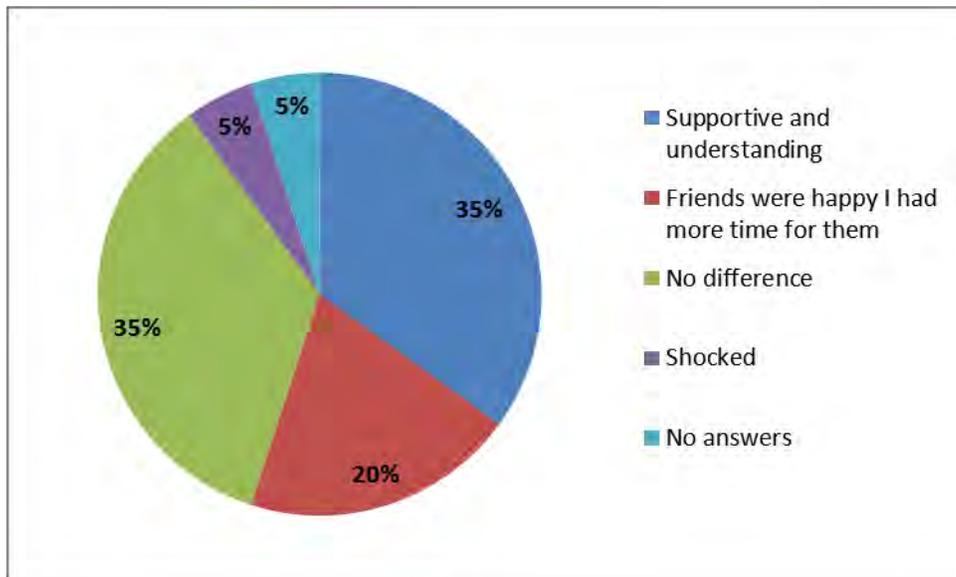
In the competing group, 34% said their friends supported them at competitions compared to 44% of the terminated group who felt the same. The competing group said that 49% of their friends did not support them at competitions compared to the 36% of the terminated group. The competing group said that 17% (compared to the 20% of the terminated group) were not sure if their friends supported them at competitions. Everyone answered the question.

The following two figures were developed to show how the friends of the athlete perceive this sporting life (current perception). The terminated group looks at what the friends feel now that the athlete has terminated their sports.

FIGURE: 4.8.5 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
 How the friends of the athletes perceive the athletes' sporting life.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
 How the athlete's friends felt when the athlete terminated their sporting career.



In these pie charts there is one common perceived feeling – support: 75% of the competing group of the friends were supportive and understanding while in the terminated group 35% of the friends were supportive of the athletes' decision to terminate sport.

In the continuing group, 8% of the friends did not understand while 17% of the friends in the sport understood but friends outside the sport did not understand as they felt the athletes missed out on a lot in life. In the terminated group, 20% of the friends were happy they could spend more time with the athletes, 35% experienced no difference, 5% were shocked by the decision and 5% provided no answers.

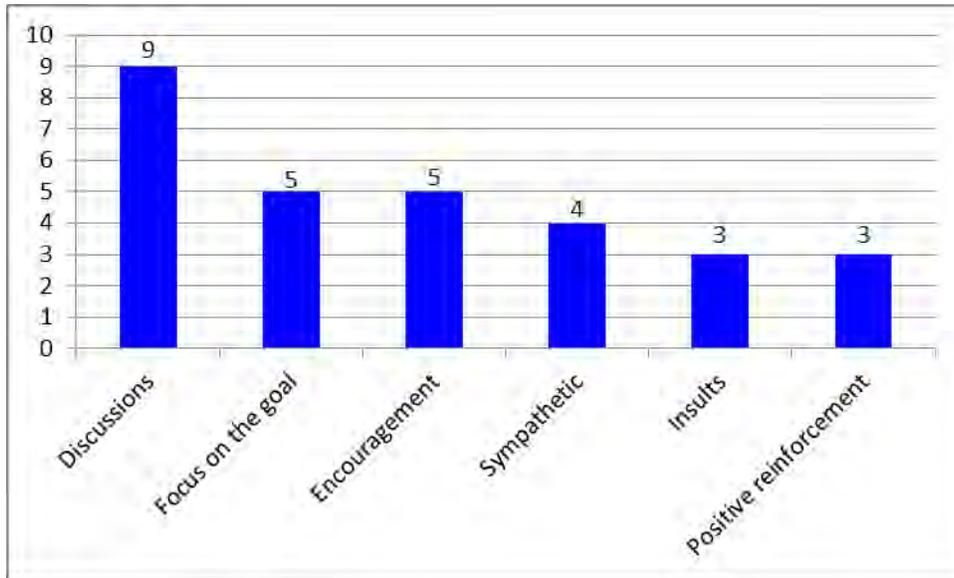
In both groups many of the athletes' friends were sporty women as well and understood the situation. Where the friends were not sporty, the majority of them still were supportive of their friend's decision to compete or terminate, but they also realised that there were limitations to aspects of their lives, such as social lives, whether they agreed with it or not.

#### **4.9. THE ROLE OF THE COACH**

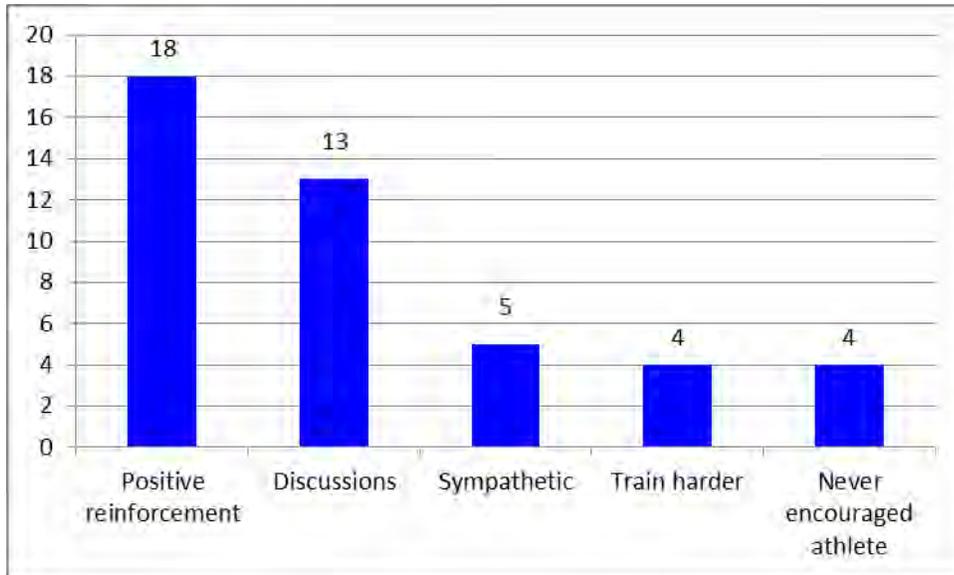
A coach can make or break an athlete and coaches play a huge part in the development of young athletes. They can nurture or destroy the athlete or make them love a sport or hate it. Thus, it is very important to look at coaches in this research: how the coaches have treated their athletes; their relationships and their coaching styles.

**QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

FIGURE: 4.9.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
How coaches encourage the athlete when they are losing



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
How coaches encouraged the athlete when they were losing



## **QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

The following results were accumulated through content analysis, immersion/crystallisation, familiarisation, immersion phase, themes-inducing phase and coding phase. Through this process the following themes emerged.

Below is a table which highlights the results from the bar graph above in order to give more in-depth understanding into how coaches encourage athletes when they were losing.

TABLE 4.9.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

<b>CONTINUED SPORTS</b>	<b>TERMINATED SPORTS</b>
<p><b>The coach discussed what was going wrong</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “He tells me to stay with the basics”</li> <li>• “Breaks down problems so we can tackle it bit by bit and from different angles”</li> <li>• “We have a good chat and discuss the plan of action”</li> <li>• “Reinforces what aspects are going well &amp; what we should continue doing”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach provided positive feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The coach encouraged playing as a team would lead to better performance”</li> <li>• “The coach would take the positives out and what we did right”</li> <li>• “The coach was always positive and kept our spirit up”</li> <li>• “The coach provided us with positive criticism”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach always kept the goal in sight, focused on the bigger picture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep working on the plan to achieve specific goals”</li> <li>• “He always helps me to focus on the bigger picture so that I don't beat myself up over the smaller races that I take part in, in preparation for a marathon”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discussed the weak points that needed to be worked on</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Told us that there was always something to learn from a game and sometimes even winning a game, when you didn't play your best was worse than losing well”</li> <li>• “Just told us that we are better than what we are showing”</li> <li>• “Gave me points on how to improve”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach always provided the encouragement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Offers words of encouragement”</li> <li>• “Encouraged to try new techniques and stretch ourselves in directions we didn't know we could!”</li> <li>• “Our coach will encourage us if we have been playing well and are still losing”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supportive and sympathetic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Told me to focus on where I was going”</li> <li>• “She never made me feel like I was a disappointment”</li> <li>• “Coach made me feel as though I did my best and never doubted me”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach was sympathetic</b></p>	<p><b>Train us harder to improve skills</b></p>



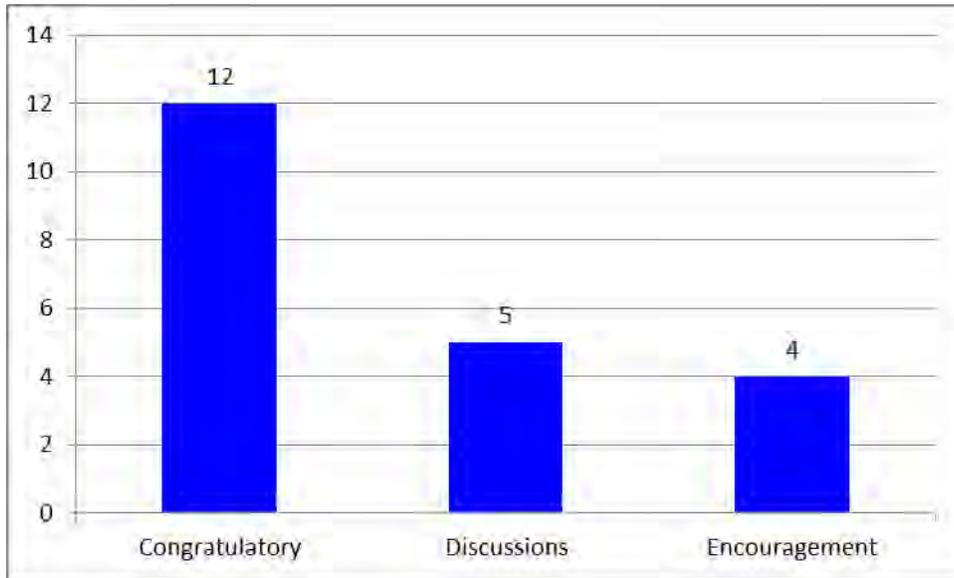
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Move past the disappointment”</li> <li>• “He never gives me any negative answer or tells me I had a bad race. His words "tomorrow is another day and you're only as good as your last race" that makes me want to be better at the next race”</li> <li>• “He was very supportive and always had a positive thing to say”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Put more pressure on me”</li> <li>• “Worked me harder during training”</li> <li>• “She always pushed us to be our best”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach insulted and never took any notice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I got older and more independent; losing was met with disappointment, even the silent treatment”</li> <li>• “He will insult me to get me angry”</li> <li>• “My current coach is very poor at any form of encouragement, and I will probably be competing for a different province next year just to have a different coach. The coach is only interested in certain members of the team”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Never gave encouragement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Tended to get angry with us”</li> <li>• “Coach would point out whose fault it was”</li> <li>• “Coach was disappointed”</li> <li>• “Coach would reprimand us”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach used positive reinforcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “He tells me what to do in a positive way - e.g. Move more or do a specific mood!”</li> <li>• “Always had a positive thing to say”</li> </ul>	

### 4.9.3 A COACH’S REACTION TO WINNING

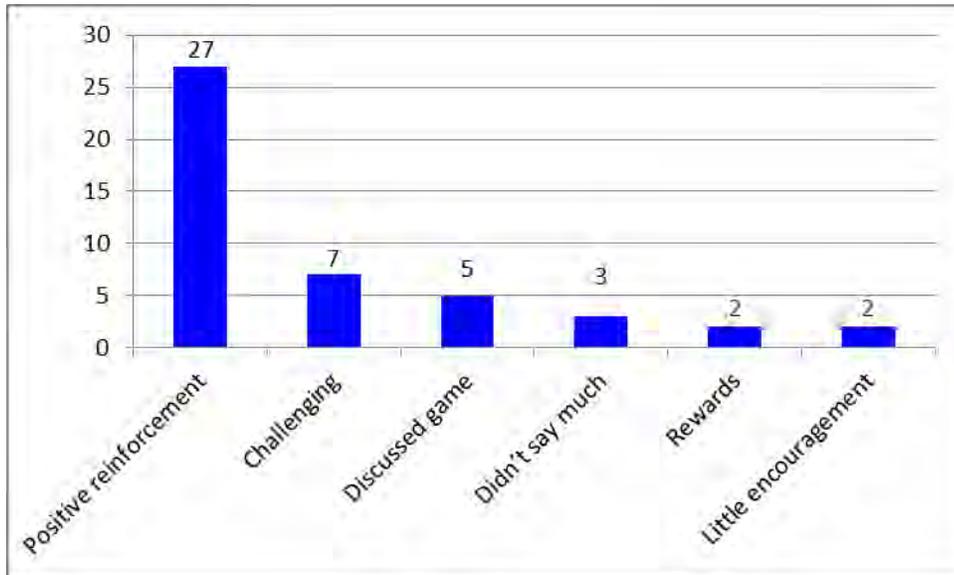
From the above responses, one can see how the coaches treated the athletes when they were losing. Was it any different when they were winning? If so, what other techniques were used? Looking at the bar graphs below we can see how many times the different themes came up:

**QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

FIGURE: 4.9.3.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Techniques coaches use when their athletes are winning



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Techniques coaches use when their athletes are winning



## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

TABLE: 4.9.3.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS  
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

Techniques coaches used when their athletes were winning

CONTINUED SPORTS	TERMINATED SPORTS
<p><b>The coach congratulated the athlete and provided much praise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “She is very positive and excited when we are winning”</li> <li>• “He uses a lot of praise”</li> <li>• “There is a general 'endorphin' rush amongst coach &amp; players &amp; thus the coach enjoys the winning but also keeps us humble”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach provided positive feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Told me I was wonderful and keep up training”</li> <li>• “Lots of recognition”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach discussed the performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Positive communication from sideline”</li> <li>• “Also still then tries to assist with shortcomings to get even better”</li> <li>• “Back to basics planning the next race and training for it. He keeps me focused on the bigger "picture" races and makes sure I stay on track”</li> <li>• “He was always calm and yet always said the right thing (positive)”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach challenged us to the end</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Did not let us get big heads”</li> <li>• “I never settled in a comfort zone”</li> <li>• “The game wasn’t over till the final whistle”</li> <li>• “Wasn’t overly proud”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach was encouraging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Gives me encouragement for the next race”</li> <li>• “Encourages us to keep doing what we are doing because it is working”</li> <li>• “He motivates me to do better”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discussed the game/performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The things I had improved on”</li> <li>• “Focused on specific goals I had achieved”</li> <li>• “Would tell me I could do better”</li> <li>• “Comment on the progress”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Didn’t say much</b></p>
	<p><b>Very little encouragement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Never gave a well done”</li> </ul>

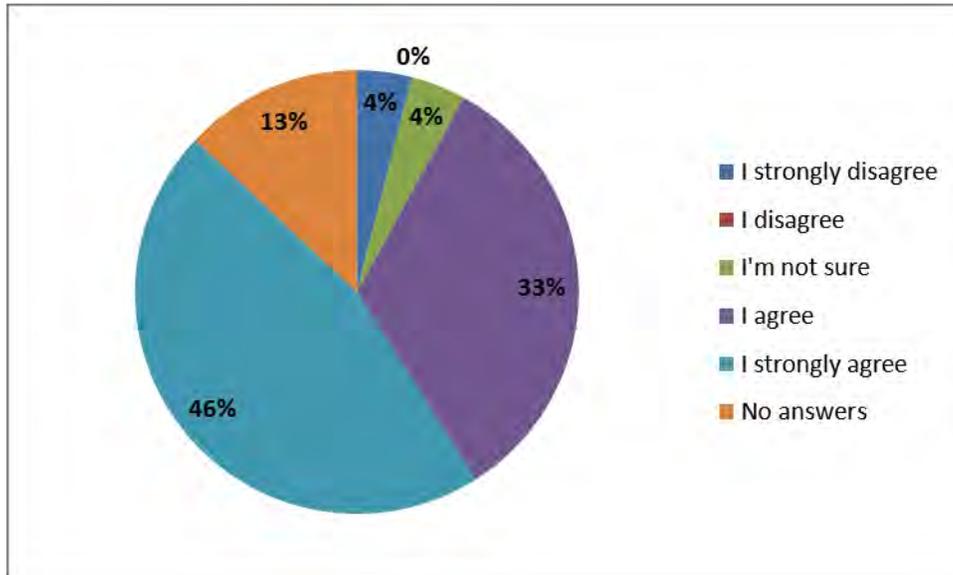
It seems that the techniques used between the two groups, the group that continued sport and the group that terminated sport are different. The coaches in the group that continued sport were far more positive and encouraging.

The coaches in the terminated group were far more negative. Even though they used positive feedback they didn't show their emotion. Therefore, this group of coaches relied more on words to explain how they felt than let their emotions.

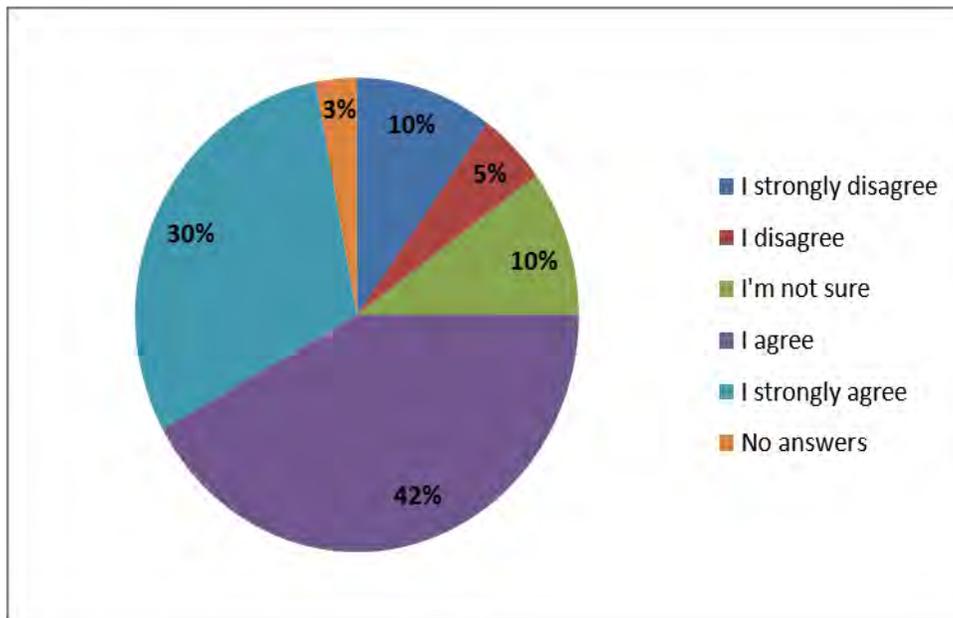
#### **4.9.4 COACHES' SUPPORT FOR THE ATHLETE**

Support and encouragement is always needed when training and competing. The coaches' support can affect performance and motivation. When the participants were asked "was your coach supportive of you (in and out of the sports environment"? The answers were as follows:

FIGURE: 4.9.4.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
My coach understands me and supports me.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
My coach understands me and supports me.



Of the continuing group, 79% felt they had a coach that understood and supported them, with 72% of the terminated group feeling the same. In the continuing group, 4% (15% of the terminated group) felt they had a coach that did not understand and support them.

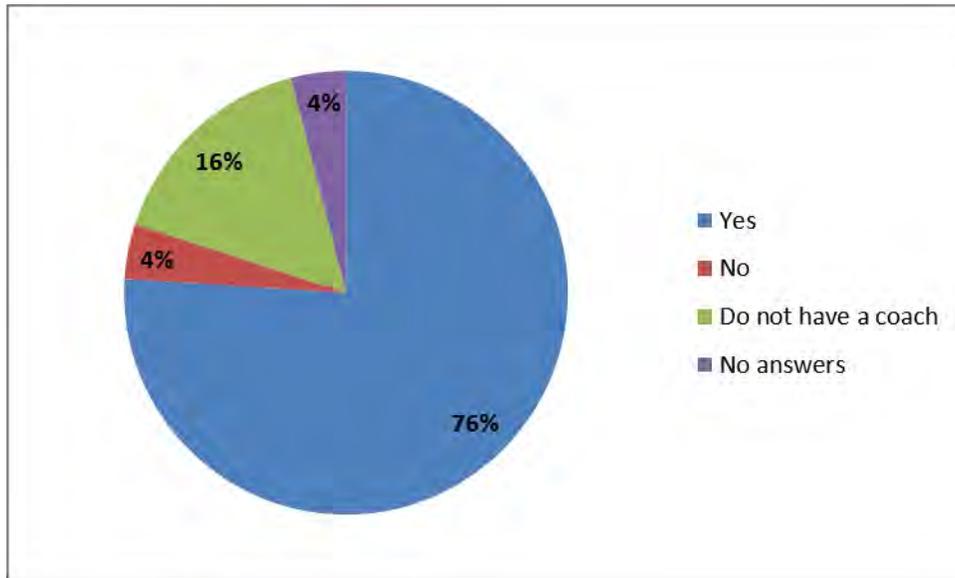
In the continuing group, 4% were not sure if they felt their coach understood and supported them, with 10% of the terminated group similarly unsure. In the continuing group, 13% (3% of the terminated group) did not answer the question.

The same question was asked, but in a slightly different way, and is discussed in another section of the questionnaire. It was rewarding to see how similar the results were: 76% of the continuing group, and 78% of the terminated group, felt they had a coach who understood and supported them.

**QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

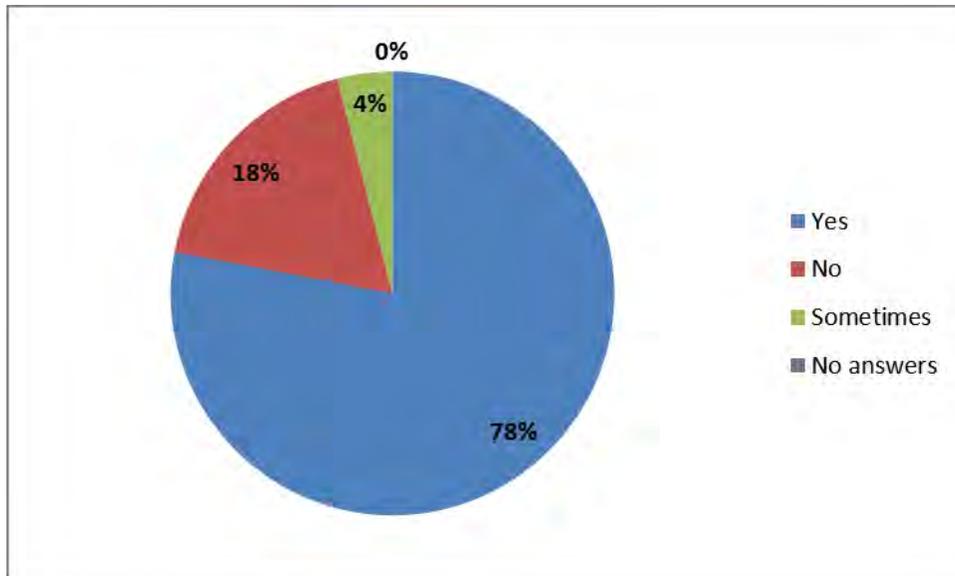
FIGURE: 4.9.4.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Is your coach supportive of you (in and out of the sports environment)?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

Is your coach supportive of you (in and out of the sports environment)?



Of the continuing group, 76% felt they had a coach that was supportive in and out of the sporting environment, with 78% of the terminated group agreeing. In the continuing group, 4% felt they did not have a supportive coach and in the terminated group 18%.

In the terminated group, 4% felt their coach was only sometimes supportive. In the continuing group, 4% did not answer the question.

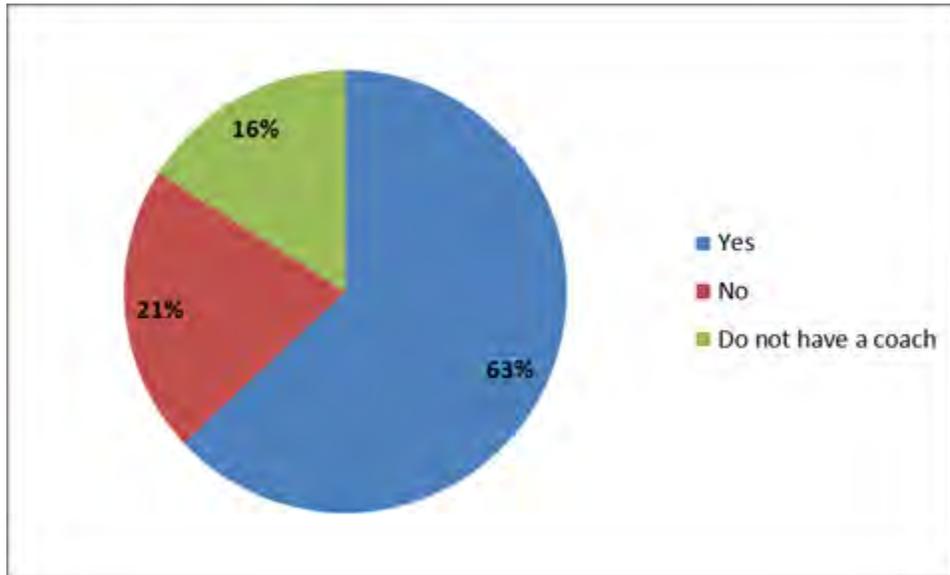
### **QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

Here are a few quotes used to describe the coaches:

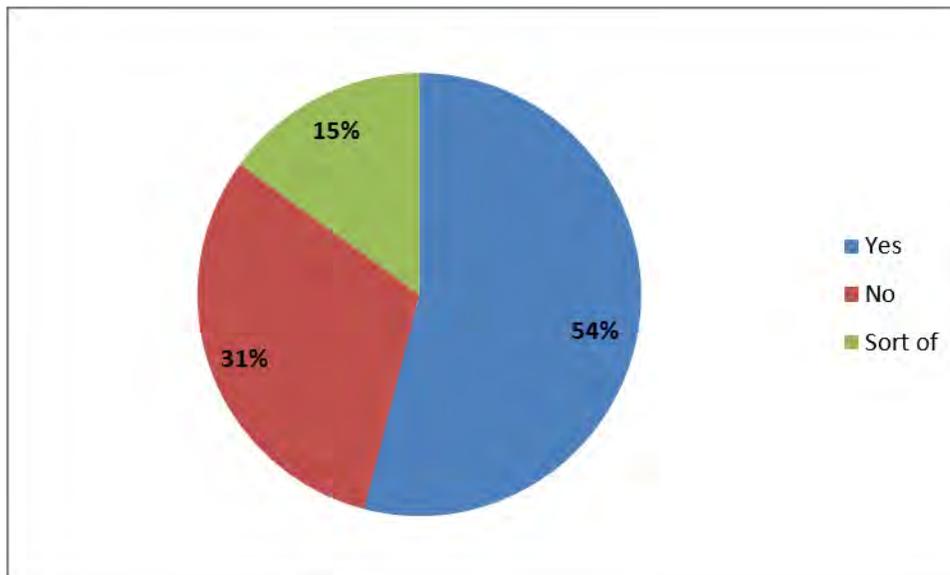
- “He wants to know about my life and he cares a lot about how I feel or am”
- “My coach is Russian so we do not have a friendship relationship”
- “Very supportive - He was always caring and supportive and understanding of me. He became a very close friend of my family.”
- “Very supportive - without it I would never have been able to progress to where I am now”

In order to be a really successful athlete, one needs a coach who can be the support structure of the athlete. The coach needs to be able to listen to the athlete and the athlete needs to be able to confide in the coach. All athletes have good and bad days; no event in one’s life can be completely isolated. If something happens to the athlete that the coach doesn’t know about, the coach might not react to the athlete in the appropriate manner. The question to the participants, “Did you feel you could confide in your coach?”, revealed the following answers:

FIGURE: 4.9.4.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Do you feel you can confide in your coach?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Do you feel you can confide in your coach?



In the continuing group, 63% of the participants and 54% who have terminated their careers, said that they could confide in their coach. In the continuing group, 21% and 31% of the participants who have terminated their careers, said that they could not confide in their coach. In the continuing group, 16% did not have a coach. In the terminated group, 15% of the participants felt they could “sort of” confide in their coach.

#### **4.9.5 TECHNIQUES USED BY COACHES**

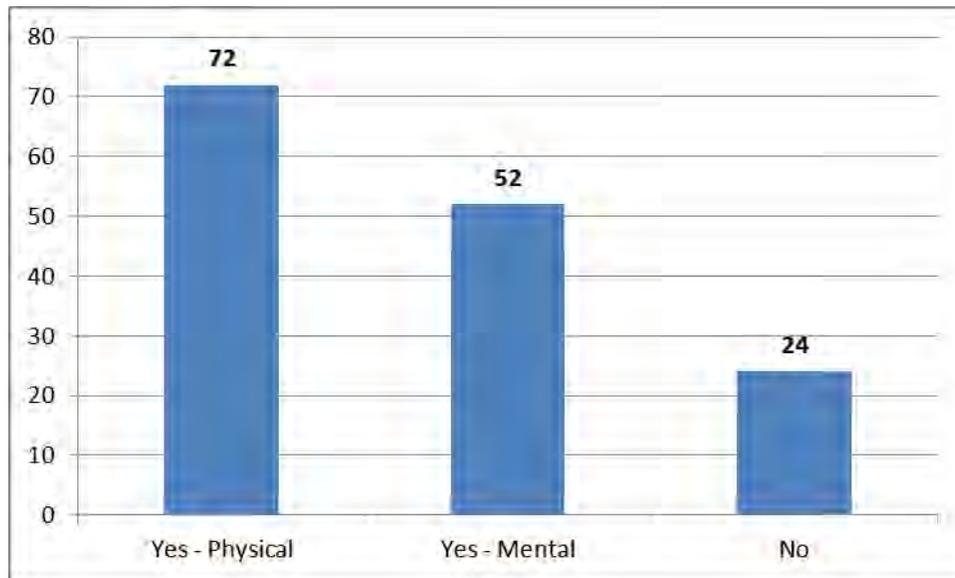
What emerges is that coaching isn't only about giving the athletes the skills and the fitness to carry out the performance during competition, It is also about the “extras” a coach gives to their athletes, whether it is psychological coaching, mental preparation, positive talking, visualisation or simple support no matter what the result is. Did the coach use different training methods to previous coaches the athletes had? We asked: “Did your coach use any specific techniques (mental or training) that worked for you?”. The answers are below:

#### **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

Participants could answer that they received both mental **and** physical training techniques, or that they only used mental **or** physical techniques. Due to this, the answers do not add up to one hundred percent (100%).

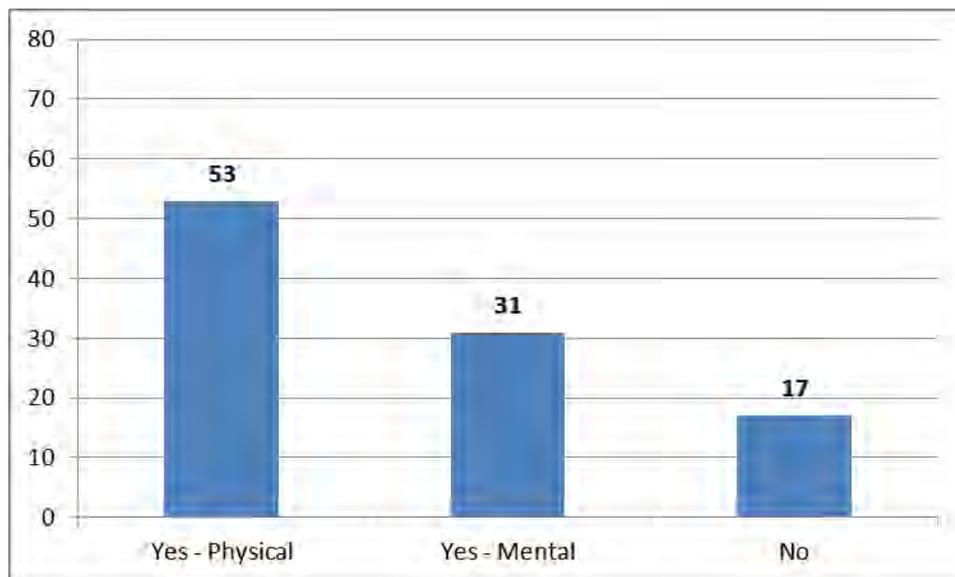
FIGURE: 4.9.5.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Does your coach use any specific techniques (mental or physical) that worked for you?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED:

Does your coach use any specific techniques (mental or physical) that worked for you?



From the two figures one can see that the competing group used physical training techniques more – 72% compared to 53% of the terminated group.

The same applies for the mental training techniques: 52% of the competing group use mental techniques compared to those of the terminated group, which is only 31%.

It is very interesting to see that 24% use no specific training methods in the competing group (17% in the terminated group). It is notable that the competing group makes use of more mental and physical techniques compared to the terminated group.

### **QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

TABLE 4.9.5.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

The use of mental and physical techniques

<b>Mental techniques</b>	<b>Physical techniques</b>
Visualisation exercises	Power training
Positive thinking	Keep things simple in terms of my training
Boosts my confidence	Interval training
Taught me to focus	Just hard work
Quiet time - self mental preparation	The training techniques are mostly heart rate based
Currently I use sports hypnotherapy	

SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED THEIR SPORTS:

The use of mental and physical techniques

<b>Mental techniques</b>	<b>Physical techniques</b>
Focusing on getting into the zone	Power training
Positive thinking	Hard training
Psychological training	Fitness and drills training
Listen to music and clear all thoughts	Strengths and weaknesses of each athlete
Visualisation exercises	Warm up programmes
Coach's experience	

### **4.9.6 DEFINING A COACH**

In order to identify the qualities of a coach we asked: "Describe your coach in no more than 25 words". Each quality is emphasised by terms the participants used to describe their coaches.

## **QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

TABLE 4.9.6.1 Five basic qualities a coach requires

<b>CONTINUED SPORTS</b>	<b>TERMINATED SPORTS</b>
<p><b>The coach needs to have technical knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sound technical skills”</li> <li>• “Knowledgeable person”</li> <li>• “My coach is a medical doctor who has a keen interest in coaching using the latest technology and training tools available. She is very analytical and structures training around the demands of the races using a very scientific approach”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach needs to have technical knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Good experience”</li> <li>• “Focusing on the strengths of the team”</li> <li>• “Good coaching skills”</li> <li>• “Very structured”</li> <li>• “Latest coaching and training techniques”</li> <li>• “Excellent player”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The coach as a person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Person who has the ability to make one feel good about oneself”</li> <li>• “Strives to understand her swimmers completely and help them at all costs to compete at their ultimate peak”</li> <li>• “He instilled positive vibes in me - to believe in myself”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach as a person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Very good at bringing out people’s strengths”</li> <li>• “Makes us feel good about ourselves”</li> <li>• “Encouraged us to reach limits beyond what we thought possible”</li> <li>• “Interested in each team member as a player and a person”</li> <li>• “Who wanted the sport to develop”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “He also is able to give encouragement &amp; lift one’s spirit when feeling down”</li> <li>• “Gives us encouragement”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Motivational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Always motivated all his athletes”</li> <li>• “Inspirational”</li> <li>• “Good leader”</li> <li>• “A driven competitive person who would accept nothing but the best at all times”</li> <li>• “Optimistic”</li> <li>• “Courageous”</li> <li>• “He was a man of honour and respect”</li> <li>• “Very influential”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The personality of the coach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My coach is a very enthusiastic person”</li> <li>• “Selfless individual”</li> <li>• “Realistic”</li> <li>• “Caring, focused and strict”</li> <li>• “Positive and driven person, with a lot of heart”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Always interested in my life”</li> <li>• “Supportive”</li> <li>• “Understanding”</li> <li>• “Warm”</li> <li>• “Was attentive to our needs”</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “He keeps things light-hearted to a degree and doesn’t pressurise me in racing or training”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Compassionate “</li> <li>• “Incredibly passionate”</li> <li>• “Honest”</li> <li>• “Big heart”</li> <li>• “Caring”</li> <li>• “Wonderful”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Dedicated and committed”</li> <li>• “Devoted to his sport”</li> <li>• “100% dedicated to helping me achieve my goals”</li> </ul>	<p><b>The personality of the coach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Positive”</li> <li>• “Energetic”</li> <li>• “Determined”</li> <li>• “True professional in every sense”</li> <li>• “Tolerant”</li> <li>• “Confident”</li> <li>• “Patient”</li> <li>• “Balanced”</li> <li>• “Dynamic”</li> <li>• “Approachable”</li> <li>• “Friendly”</li> <li>• “He gained the respect of everyone”</li> <li>• “Role model”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “He was committed to his decision to coach”</li> <li>• “He does everything for his athletes”</li> <li>• “Involved”</li> <li>• “Who gave everything of herself to her team”</li> <li>• “Focused”</li> <li>• “Expected 110% commitment”</li> <li>• “Love for the sport”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Discipline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Tough”</li> <li>• “Strict”</li> <li>• “Stern”</li> <li>• “Very firm”</li> <li>• “Tough at times”</li> <li>• “Pushed you knowing you could reach your potential”</li> </ul>

Participants, who did not have a relationship with their coaches, did not respect them and did not know how to communicate with them, described their coaches as follows:

- “Unsupportive of any problems encountered out of sport.”
- “Pushy, hard, strict, and as a result athletes got injured.”
- “Unable to act for athletes within sporting body.”
- “A military background, which he used in his training methods.”
- “Very manipulating in his training methods.”
- “Brutal hard training without complaints.”
- “I feel he lacked the maturity to help us develop beyond that level.”
- “Not easy to satisfy.”
- “Difficult to build a relationship with. In a way she was a perfectionist.”
- “My coach certainly wasn't enthusiastic.”
- 

TABLE 4.9.6.2 What advice would these participants give to a coach teaching young girls of today?

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTINUED SPORTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Four themes that came up</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TERMINATED SPORTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Six themes that came up</b></p>
<p><b>Build self confidence first in an athlete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I would say keep positive and keep building a player's confidence. You may have all the skill in the world but it is useless if the girl has no confidence. Always make a person feel good about oneself as this will give a person confidence and enable them to perform better.”</li> <li>• “Teach them to believe in themselves and their own abilities.”</li> <li>• “Coaches must first give girls confidence and let them love what they are doing.”</li> <li>• “Build their self-esteem.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide motivation to the athlete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Remain positive and ignore negativity”</li> <li>• “Be encouraging”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Girls need to be handled gently and with care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Remember that girls are more emotional than guys, they need to be handled/treated differently and must remember things that happen outside can easily affect their training.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide recognition to the athlete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Let them know if you recognise potential.”</li> <li>• “Know each one's abilities so you can take responsibility to improve each child's talent to the optimum.”</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Never scream at a young girl, it breaks them down, it doesn't build them up.”</li><li>• “Girls are emotional and they need to work with each other differently. To encourage her as a woman and a young sports star.”</li><li>• “A coach must encourage the GIRL and not the sports girl, i.e. The coach must understand that this girl has many aspects, personal and professional, to her the sport is only part of her being.”</li></ul>	
<p><b>Do not put too much pressure on the athletes and remember it must still be fun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Don't put pressure on them. Make it fun, otherwise the enjoyment will be taken out of it and that's when they will give up.”</li><li>• “Don't be so serious all the time, allow for bad days, always give what you would expect in return.”</li><li>• “To keep it fun and not put on any pressure at a young age. I feel that the first few years should be concentrated on building technical skills and that structured training only be introduced at a later stage when the athlete is ready to face the challenge of their own accord. Training to compete only after the age of 16.”</li><li>• “Do not push them too hard, they still need to find themselves, in life not just in sport. Sometimes being so hard on them could break them and they might give up that specific sport in general. Be hard but fair.”</li></ul>	<p><b>Respect and trust the athlete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “If your athlete trusts and respects you she will train hard to impress you.”</li><li>• “Be strict, but establish a sense of trust so that they know they can come to you with a problem.”</li><li>• “Be strict enough so they would listen and respect you, but be open enough to create a caring family-like atmosphere.”</li></ul>
<p><b>Listen to their problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “To listen to them and encourage as much as possible. Rather lose an athlete for one session than lose them in the sport completely.”</li><li>• “Encourage them and listen to their problems.”</li></ul>	<p><b>Make training and competition fun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “To focus on the fun to be had in the game”</li><li>• “It's not about winning; you must enjoy the sport you participate in”</li></ul>

<p>If they have felt strongly enough about something to actually come and speak to you about it then it is obviously very important to them.”</p>	<p><b>Listens to the athlete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Be sensitive to their needs”</li> <li>• “Tackle the athletes’ needs/pressures that exist outside of sporting environment”</li> <li>• “Listen to what is needed on a day-to-day basis so that sport training can fit in on a realistic basis”</li> <li>• “Be attentive to their needs”</li> <li>• “Know when to reward rather than only criticise”</li> <li>• “Be firm yet understanding”</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Support their athlete in all aspects of their life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Support the girls through this time and don't push them beyond their individual threshold”</li> <li>• “To be interested in the players as people first and then sportswomen”</li> </ul>
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**There was an interesting topic that also came up: “the male coach versus the female coach”, when working with girls and women. Participants said:**

- “If you have a male coach, don't assume that coaching males and females is the same. Sometimes the manner you could criticise a man would be hurtful and offensive to a female.”
- “Train girls like they are girls, not like they are men going to war.”
- However, another participant said you “can't give girls leeway simply because of their gender”.

**There is no need for:**

- “Harsh words and painful training methods.”
- “Don't push too hard because if you push too far the child will be put off.”
- “Don't be too hard on them if they don't perform every time.”
- “Try not to put down, but use constructive criticism.”

**The following topics came up and will be looked at in the analysis and discussion section:**

- “Be mindful about what you say to girls regarding body shapes.”
- “Teach girls life skills to deal with the many difficulties of today.”
- “Sport should be important to them but it shouldn’t rule their lives.”
- “Work on girls’ strengths.”
- “Pick players on the basis of merit not favouritism.”
- “Love your job as a coach.”

#### **4.10. TERTIARY EDUCATION FROM “OTHER-RELIANCE” TO “SELF-RELIANCE”**

This research aims to find out why women are terminating their sporting careers. Many of the women terminate their sporting career just after leaving school, while at a tertiary institution or shortly thereafter. These results illustrate when the women terminate their sporting careers.

TABLE: 4.10.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO CONTINUED SPORT:  
Detailed explanation on how their choice of academic study (tertiary education) influenced their sporting career

MAIN THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p><b>I chose my university and choice of study based on my sporting career</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I did go to the University of Johannesburg purely because it was the best place for me to develop my hockey. Of course the bursary made a difference but it was not the deciding factor in the matter.”</li> <li>• “I went to Stellenbosch University to study and to further my sporting career. The lecturers are usually quite understanding of sporting commitments and make allowances for tests missed.”</li> <li>• “My sporting career had a big influence on my choice of study. The only reason I studied sport science was to accommodate my sport. My true passion lies within the Health Science Faculty but my sporting hours and my goal to go to Olympics would not accommodate such an intense study course. Sport Science faculty understands when I need to travel and miss exams or tests.”</li> <li>• I did receive a study scholarship when I went to university. There is always then a pressure to perform. Otherwise you will lose the scholarship. I did however choose my study direction to accommodate my sporting career. But to still have the opportunity to study. If it was not for my sport performances I would not of been able to afford to study.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>I made time for both sporting commitments and academic commitments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I studied engineering and time is limited, however, I believe in both an active mind and body, and if I continued training during exams I found I did better. So there was never an issue during my tertiary education.”</li> <li>• “I fitted in my training and racing around my tertiary studies. I didn't miss tests or exams for sport. There were no sports scholarships at Wits when I was there. I never missed classes to train. I have an honours degree in education. The lecturers understood when I went away because otherwise I was always in class doing all my work on time and passing all my exams.”</li> </ul>

TABLE: 4.10.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED THEIR SPORT:  
Detailed explanation on how their choice of academic study (tertiary education) influenced their sporting career

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<u><b>Continued sport</b></u>	<b>Studying aided my sport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This was never really a problem, the university was very supportive.”</li> <li>• “Studying made it easier to row because we could train between lectures and often there was also great camaraderie amongst the varsity rowers.”</li> <li>• “Well suited to competitive training/competition as studies could be done part-time.”</li> <li>• “My studying did not reduce my sport in any way as I found I had more free time than ever before.”</li> </ul>



	<p><b>I studied Human Movement Science</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “I decided to do Human Movement Science so I could improve my skills in cheerleading and develop the sport in the country. This gave me the big advantage in maintaining my athletic competitiveness.”</li><li>• “I studied Human Movement Science at Stellenbosch (MBK) so it fitted my sporting career. It was no problem to get time off for tournaments and we were recognised with full sport colours by University of Stellenbosch for our achievements. The whole atmosphere at University of Stellenbosch is very conducive to sporting excellence and the facilities we had available to us as MBK students only added positively to my training. We could also be tested free of charge by the honours and Masters students in the biokinetics lab which was great and we had free access to the university gym as South African players.”</li><li>• “Actually my sporting career influenced my choice of academic study. All I wanted to do was sport, so I decided to take a Sports Science (BA) course, which provided time for intense sports careers. The two actually complemented each other - the course provided knowledge on sports and how to see sport from a scientific/academic view and sport was the experiment/practical side of the course. If I could turn back time, I would have studied something completely different, like animal sciences/nature - biological sciences. I regret my choice of study course -it is sport &amp; today I am not even doing it anymore.”</li></ul>
	<p><b>Tertiary education did not have any effect on my sporting career</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “It didn't affect it too drastically. My degree left me with plenty of time to train and I was able to travel for races on the weekend.”</li><li>• “It didn't really have an effect.”</li></ul>

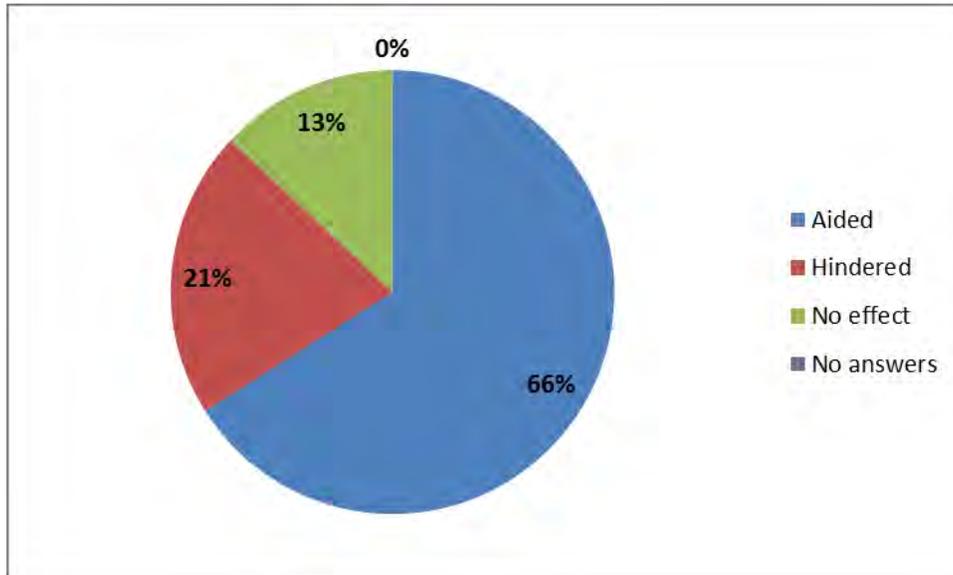


	<p><b>I had a scholarship which enabled me to continue participation and competition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I had a full scholarship in America and this enabled me to do what I love and get an international degree. I was also in a country where most tournaments are played so travelling was easy.”</li> <li>• “I am a medical doctor and managed to play throughout my academic career. A sports scholarship offered to me helped me to decide on which university to choose.”</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Terminated sport</u></b></p>	<p><b>Studying took up too much of my time and I had to terminate my sport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I realised I needed to focus on one thing only, and unfortunately that was my studies.”</li> <li>• “I started studying law so I couldn’t train as much as I used to. Because I had suffered so many injuries I was forced to give up but I started coaching three times a week.”</li> <li>• “Time constraints – I didn’t have time to practice/compete.”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Transport became a problem and I had to terminate my sport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Not having my own car when I was studying and time constraints.”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Lost my scholarship/financial problems so I had to terminate sports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My first year out of school I studied BSc and that took up a lot of time. I played social hockey and horse riding competitively, but lost my sponsorship during the year as I could not train enough and therefore stopped competing at the end of that year due to time &amp; financial constraints”</li> <li>• “I did not get a bursary for netball. This is one of the main reasons why I stopped. Because of financial reasons I decided to rather coach than play netball.”</li> </ul>

While the participants were at a tertiary institute what role did the sport have on their academic effort and results?

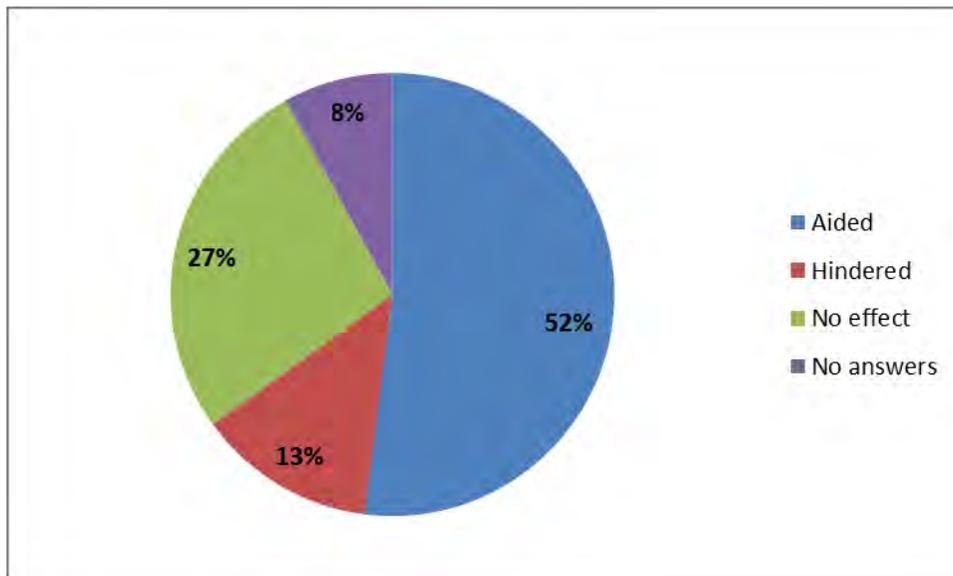
FIGURE: 4.10.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO CONTINUED SPORT:

How did your sport affect your academic effort and results?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED THEIR SPORT:

How did your sport affect your academic effort and results?



In the continuing group, 66% said that sport aided their academic effort and results, while 52% of the participants who have terminated their careers agreed. In the continuing group, 21% said that sport hindered their academic effort and results, with 13% of the participants who have terminated their careers concurring.

In the continuing group, 13% (27% in the terminated group) felt there was no effect. In the terminated group 8% provided no answers.

TABLE: 4.10.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED THEIR SPORT:

Detailed explanation on how their choice of academic study (tertiary education) influenced their sporting career

SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORTS	SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORTS
<b>SPORT AIDED MY ACADEMICS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most definitely helped me. It was brilliant stress relief and I actually found I could focus better once I had my 'fix'.</li> <li>• "I believe it aided my results &amp; I qualified with top marks in one of my majors."</li> <li>• "It aided it, in that the more successful you are on the sports fields the more motivated you are in studies. It was also a discipline, managing time constraints on both sides. Once again it comes down to balance that you have to attain."</li> <li>• "I was never strong academically, but as soon as I started achieving results on the sports field my academics improved as well."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I better planned my day (everyone needs a break! And trained in my break."</li> <li>• "After training, I felt a bit tired, but fresher and I slept better."</li> <li>• "I performed well academically at school and I believe the balance between work, sport &amp; drama promoted this."</li> <li>• "Taught me to have good time management and because of this I didn't waste time when I had to study so it probably aided my results."</li> <li>• "You have to have good management skills in order to fit everything in and still succeed."</li> <li>• "Significantly improved my studies by being a good stress outlet."</li> <li>• "It kept me disciplined so I know how much time was required to succeed."</li> <li>• "Sport taught me to be diligent, committed, focused &amp; to work hard. From that point of view it really benefited me."</li> <li>• "I think it aided in achieving good academic results. Also, once you're striving to be successful in sport, it was natural to strive to be successful academically as well."</li> </ul>

<b>SPORT HINDERED MY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “At this moment it has affected my academics but not because I cannot cope. It is purely because varsity would not grant me supplementary tests when I was away on tour, which thus forced me to deregister last year. I am however reregistered for this year, but am taking fewer subjects.”</li> <li>• “My academics were affected particularly around the time of SA Nationals and overseas trips. I usually focused on the sport and caught up on academics in the off-season in order to pass.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It gave me other stuff to focus my mind on rather than varsity work. I would train instead of study and focus on races instead of tests or exams.”</li> <li>• “I guess hard training does hinder your academic results to some extent considering that your time is divided and your full attention is not always with your studies. Also training hard means that sometimes you were really tired.”</li> </ul>
<b>SPORT HAD NO EFFECT ON MY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “No, it did not affect my academics, which were important. I made sure I worked hard &amp; passed. Sport was fitted in between. I used sport to commute.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I was always very focused on my academics despite being very involved in sport. It therefore did not have a significant impact on my academic effort”</li> <li>• “At school it just meant you'd get home at 7pm and have to do homework later than usual. It was an added stress, but I think it promoted time management and appreciation for free time.”</li> </ul>

In many schools sport is enforced. It is also easy to do, as everything is organised by the teachers, so all one really needs to do is pitch up at the practices and matches. However, when one enters tertiary education everything from training to competition is the responsibility of the participant. Thus we asked the question “Explain how leaving school had an effect on your sporting career?”

TABLE: 4.10.5 SPORTSWOMEN WHO CONTINUED SPORT:

Detailed explanation on how leaving school had an effect on your sporting career

MAIN THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. <b>It had no effect on me</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It made no difference. My parents transported me all over, wherever I needed to be, and once I was responsible for myself, I was able to continue this, as I was used to the lifestyle.”</li> <li>• Don't think it affected me in any way. I was not looking forward to socialising or parties, etc at varsity. My running continued in the same fashion.”</li> <li>• “I competed in middle distance athletics XC running at school and after school started competing in longer 10 and 20km races to keep up my fitness. It was only about a year later that I started MTBiking and another few years before I started competing really seriously. So I guess leaving school had no relevant effect on my sporting career.”</li> </ul>
<p>2. <b>It is harder as one has to become responsible for one's training</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It was up to me to get all my training sessions. There were more sessions and we had to do them alone, which required a lot of discipline. I had to take responsibility and manage my sport myself.”</li> <li>• “Whilst at school you are dependent on the system and the staff to a certain extent to ensure your participation at the correct level. After school you are totally responsible for your future involvement in sport, with little additional support structures.”</li> <li>• “School was a very nurturing environment where we were ushered into teams, known amongst the provincial selections, and had strict training schedules. I left school for a much more challenging academics world and I grew up!”</li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>I developed as a person and started doing more</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Leaving school with a great base made the transition to university a little easier. It did not affect me negatively at all but actually allowed me to develop.”</li> <li>• “I actually started doing sport. I hardly did any sport while at school. I am a severe asthmatic and this was only diagnosed as an adult. Once this problem could be managed, my sport career developed.”</li> <li>• “I decided to start cycling after I left school, because I had a hockey incident during school and did not want to continue playing after I left school. So my sport changed completely.”</li> <li>• “In my first year of study I made the SA Junior and African Junior champs in discus. It boosted my career a bit and inspired me just to do better and go further.”</li> </ul>

<p>4. <b>I stopped sport or scaled down on my sport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Initially, after leaving school, I only played sport at a social level.”</li> <li>• “I narrowed down the sports I was involved with to only the sports I was expected to do at varsity for my scholarship. I was no longer involved in other sports, such as hockey. I only focused on the aquatic sports.”</li> <li>• “After I left school I stopped all sport until I was in my thirties.”</li> </ul>
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TABLE: 4.10.6 SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED THEIR SPORT:  
Detailed explanation on how leaving school had an effect on your sporting career

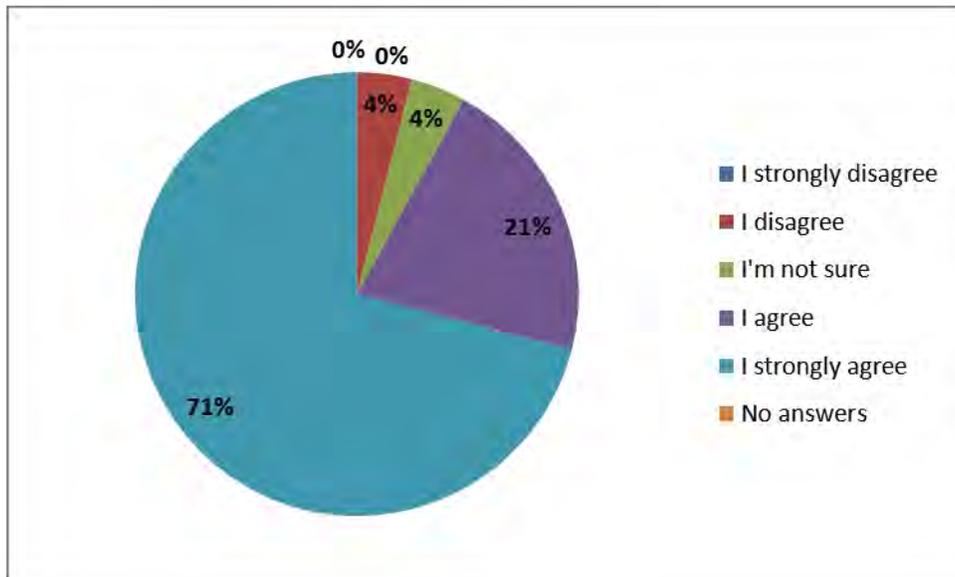
MAIN THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. <b>I stopped sport after leaving school</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Lost contact with a lot of sports as they weren't available elsewhere.”</li> <li>• “By leaving school I left behind my competitive spirit.”</li> <li>• “Had a terrible effect; completely stopped training. I think the lack of routine was a major factor. Also the transition is a complicated one, I feel it's a very difficult time. For me instead of my sport giving me a constant /direction, it became completely lost.”</li> <li>• “There was not as much support and guidance after school. You had to motivate yourself, which I struggled with.”</li> <li>• “You are almost ‘forced’ to participate in sport at school. It is your own responsibility after school. You have to find out by yourself where and when.”</li> <li>• “Actually having to take myself to training and get into a team that had a high turnout for trials, was a shock for me and it was a reality check. To see other, better girls try for the same position was scary.”</li> <li>• “Leaving school meant the end of my sporting career purely because I had no commitment to sport and I enjoyed the freedom to be ‘lazy’.”</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.</b> <b>University demands were too much</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Tertiary education is a lot more serious, as you need to build your career (and it is expensive). I realised that, and only trained socially, or when I had the time.”</li> <li>• “It ended quite shortly after school. During my university years I continued to play Action Netball socially but when entering the corporate world my jobs did not allow me to make any of the games (I finished work too late).”</li> <li>• “It is harder to compete after school. Life's demands are higher and costs are high too.”</li> <li>• “When you come to varsity nobody gives you recognition, motivation, a fun-filled team and spirit. It’s something varsity lacks.”</li> <li>• “Physically, university level sport enhanced me, but emotionally (team members &amp; coaches) it ruined me. I am an only child, so I try to avoid conflict - emotionally I wasn't ready and that had a negative effect on my sporting career.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b> <b>Moved away from “home”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “When I left school I had to leave my home country in order to get a tertiary education and the motivation to play and fund myself became less and less.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>No future in the sport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I had to consider my future. In SA there is no future in figure skating.”</li> </ul>

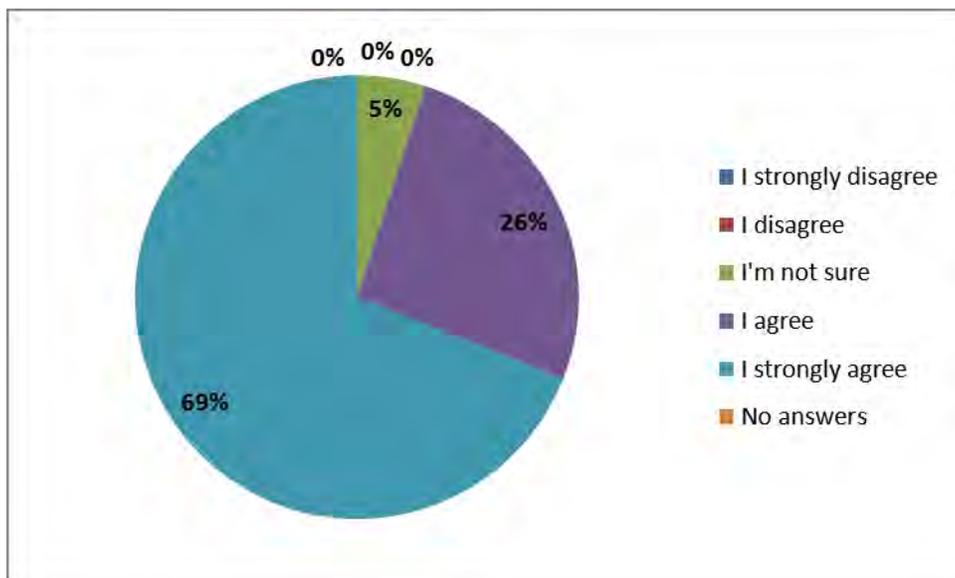
#### 4.11. COMPETITION AND SPORT

The following figures focus on what each athlete believed they put into their sport, considering the individual in relation to their sport. They look at the physical level, but also consider the mental and emotional levels. These questions aim to find out what each athlete really thought of themselves in relation to their sport and their sporting environment.

FIGURE: 4.11.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I competed to the best of my ability.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I competed to the best of my ability.

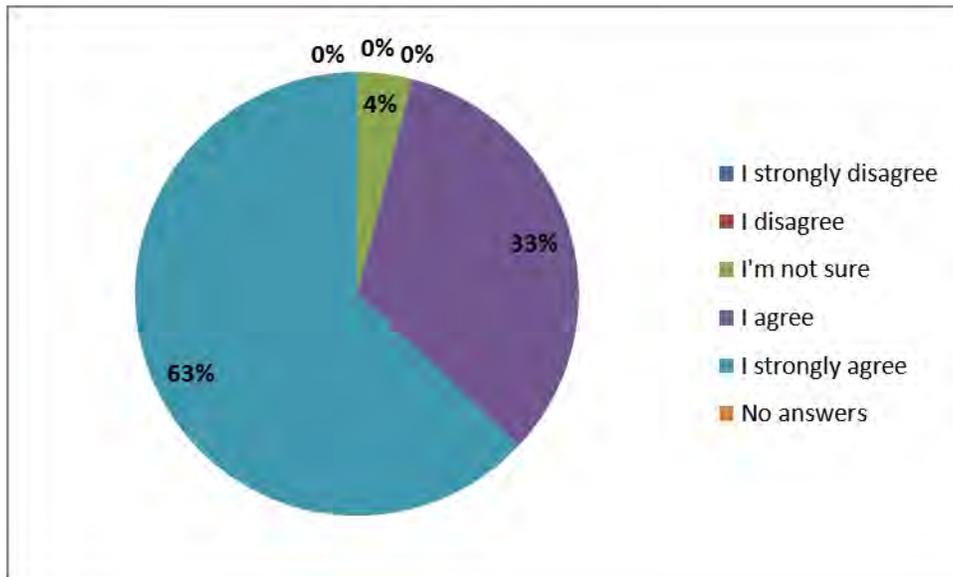


In the following figures, the responses “I agree” and “I strongly agree” were combined. Within the continuing group, 92% felt they competed to the best of their ability, while 95% of the terminated group felt the same.

Of the competing group, 4% felt they did not compete to the best of their ability. A few were unsure, with 4% in the competing group and 5% in the terminated group saying so.

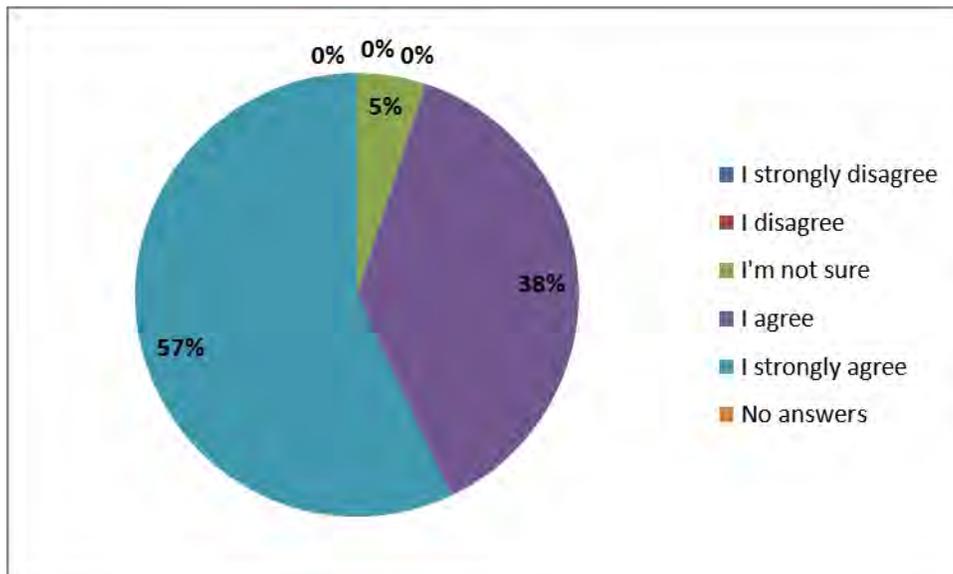
FIGURE: 4.11.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

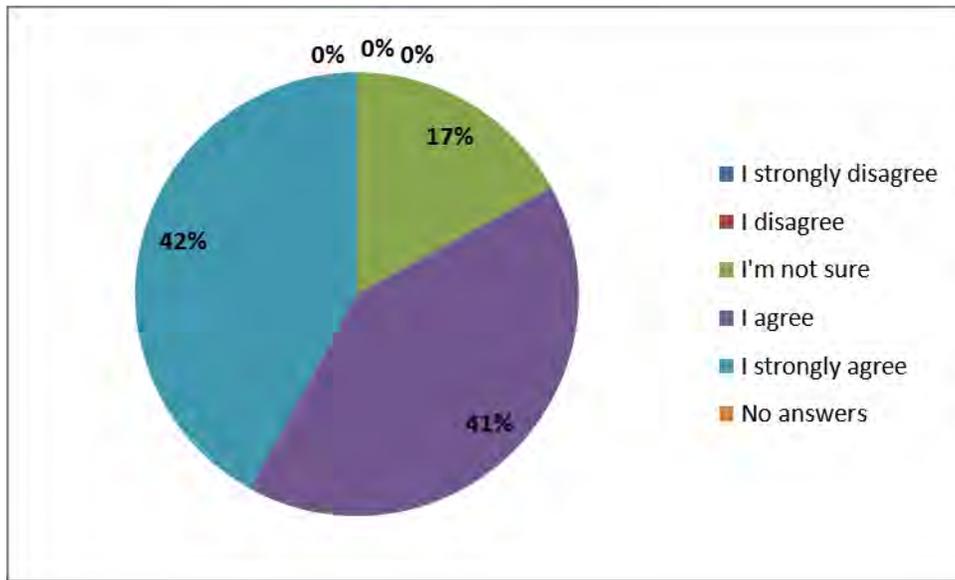
I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport.



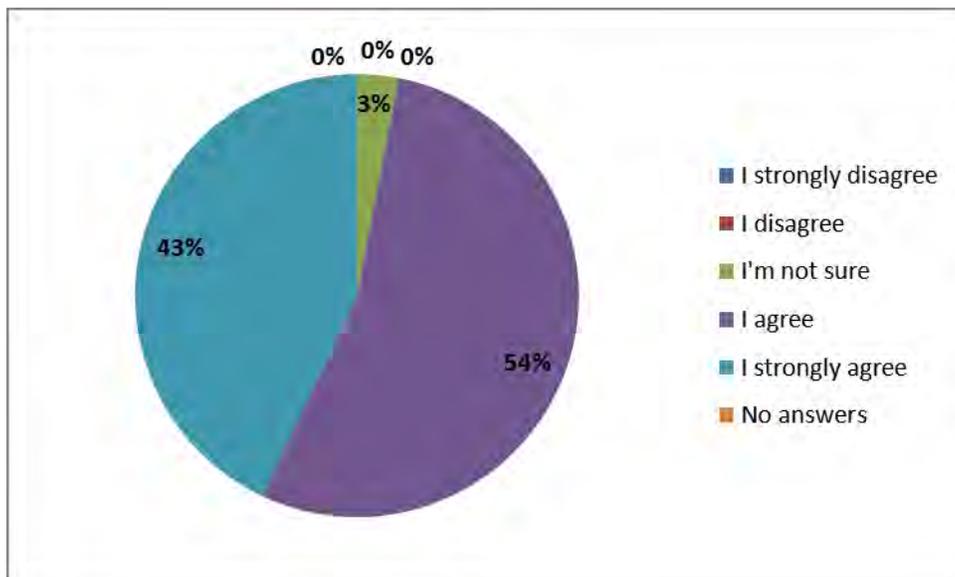
An overwhelming 96% of the continuing group and 95% of the terminated group felt they put their heart, soul and mind into sport.

Of the continuing group, 4% (5% of the terminated group) were not sure. In both groups, no one disagreed with the statement.

FIGURE: 4.11.3 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I was mentally strong.

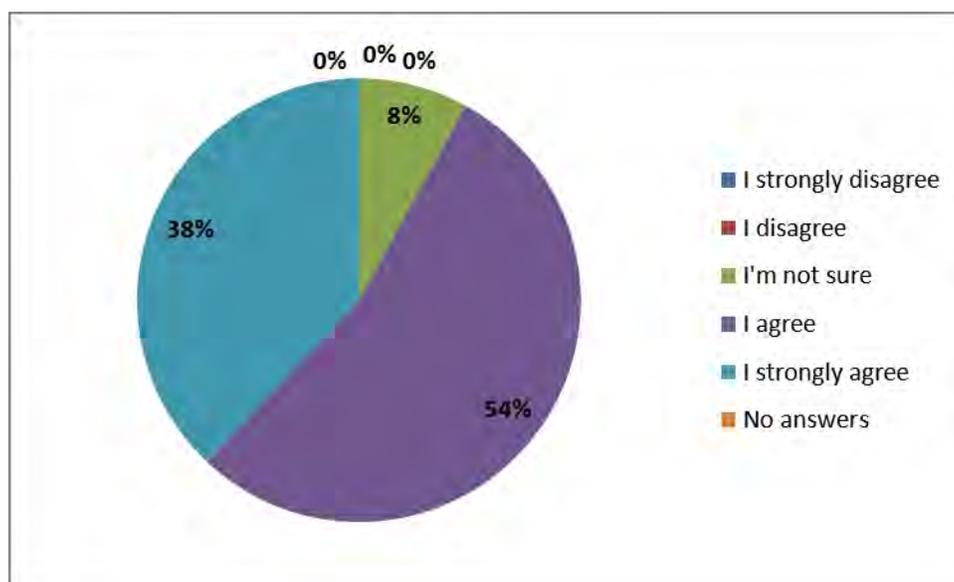


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I was mentally strong.

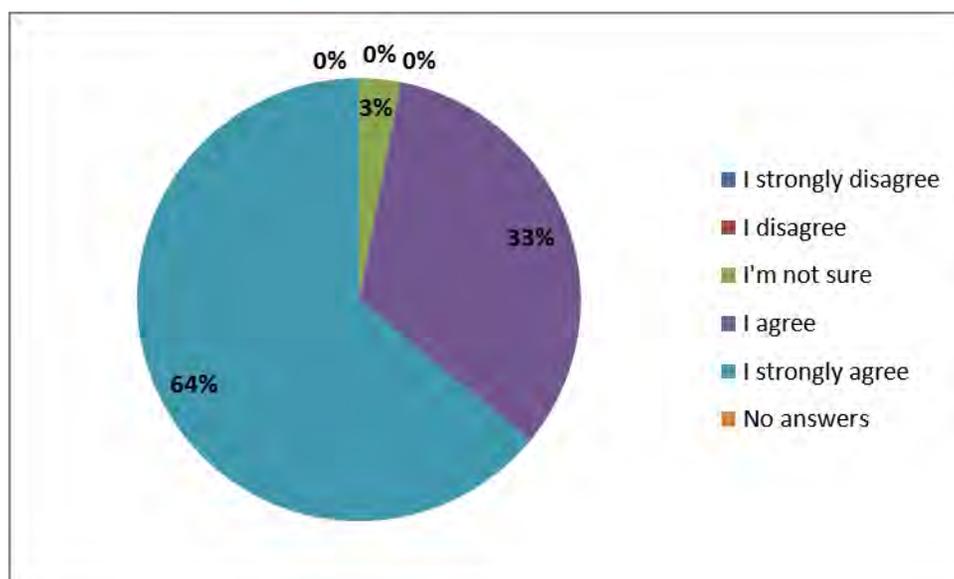


Of the continuing group, 83% felt that they were mentally strong, and in the terminated group 97% felt so. This 14% difference was interesting to note as it showed that the women who are still doing sport are less confident mentally. Of the continuing group, 17% (13% of the terminated group) were not sure. In both groups no one disagreed with the statement and everyone provided answers.

FIGURE: 4.11.4 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
Physically I am/was strong.

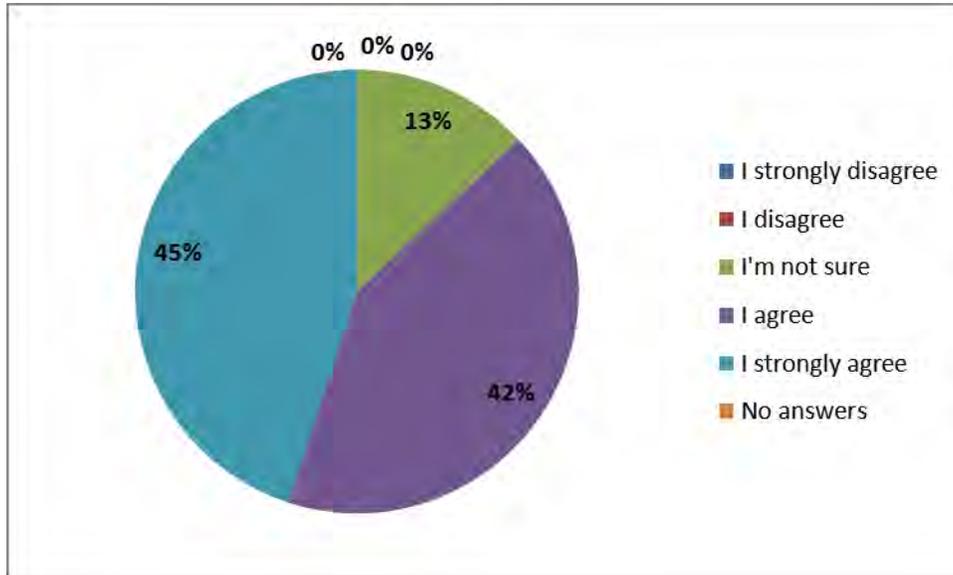


SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
Physically I am/was strong.

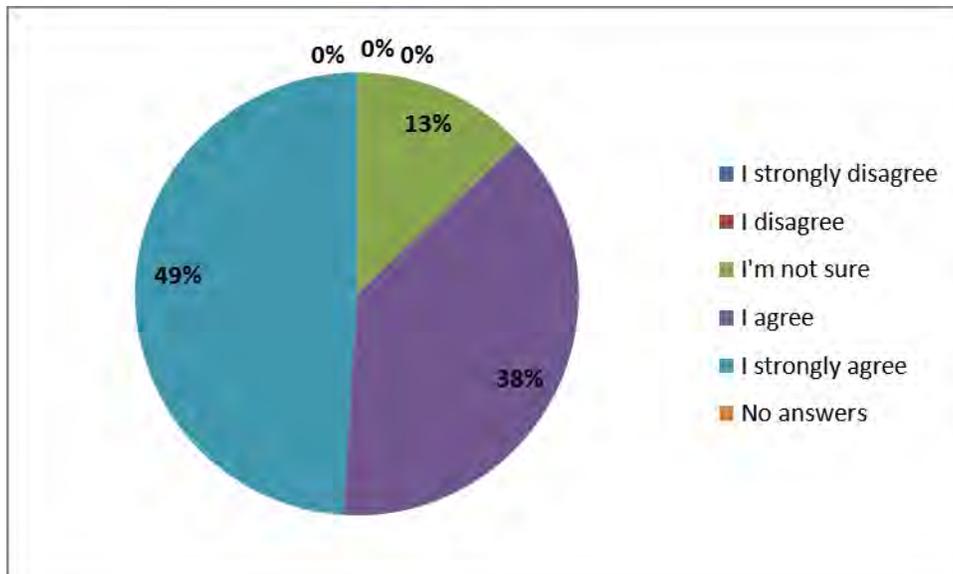


Out of the continuing group, 92% felt that they were physically strong while 97% in the terminated group thought so. In both groups no one disagreed with the statement and everyone provided answers. Of the continuing group, 8% (3% of the terminated group) were not sure.

FIGURE: 4.11.5 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I compete for myself.



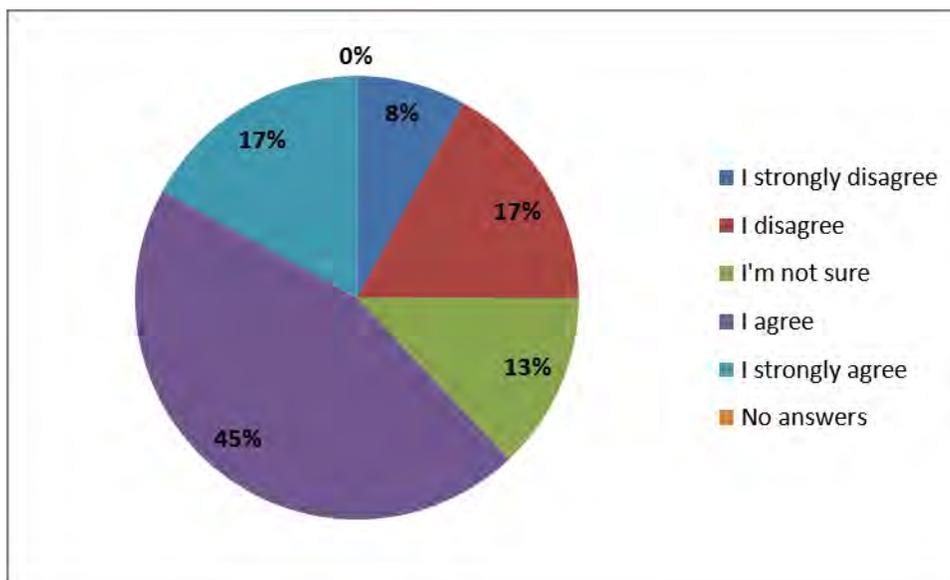
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I compete for myself



Of the continuing group, 87% felt that they competed for themselves, with 87% in the terminated group agreeing. In both groups, no one disagreed with the statement and everyone provided answers. In both groups 13% were not sure.

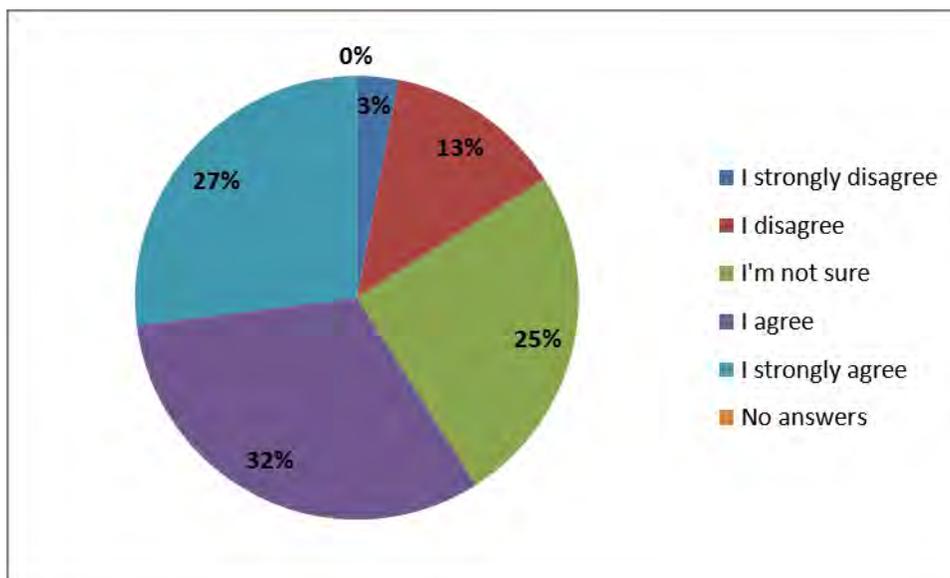
FIGURE: 4.11.6 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

I wanted to prove to others that I was the best.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

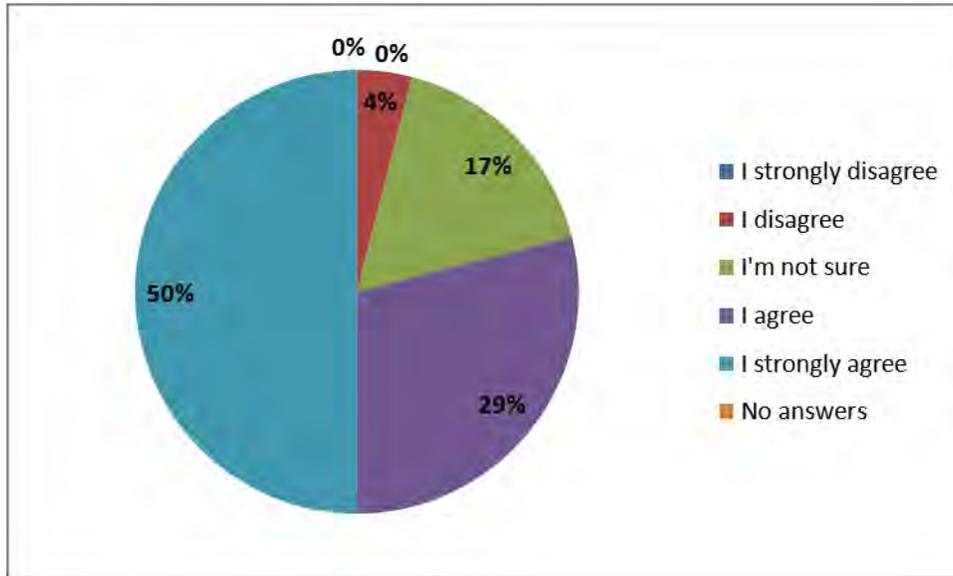
I wanted to prove to others that I was the best



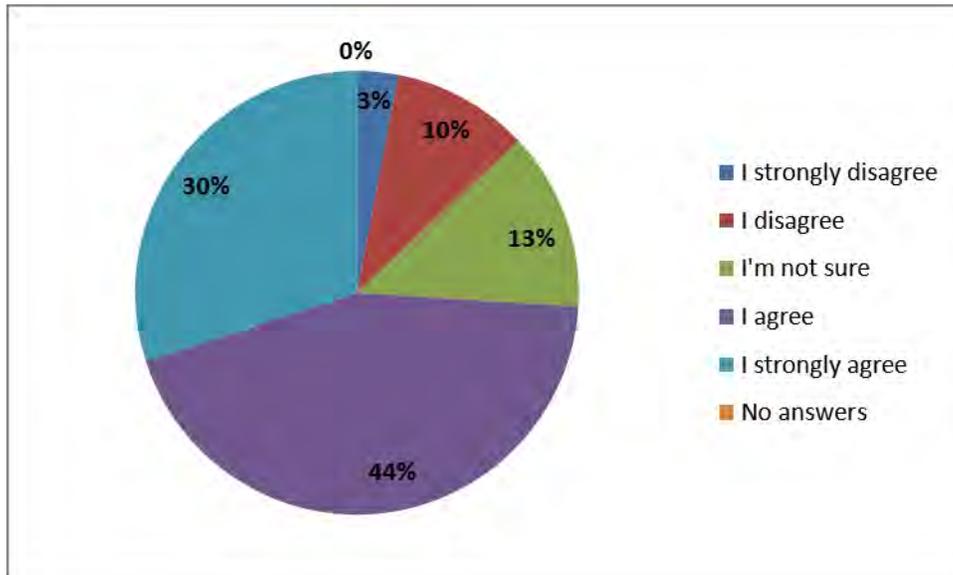
The desire to prove to others that they were the best was indicated by 62% of the continuing group and 59% of the terminated group.

Of those disagreeing with this statement, 25% were from the continuing group and 16% were from the terminated group. Of the continuing group, 13% were not sure and in the terminated group 25% were unsure. Everyone provided answers.

FIGURE: 4.11.7 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I feel I could do better.



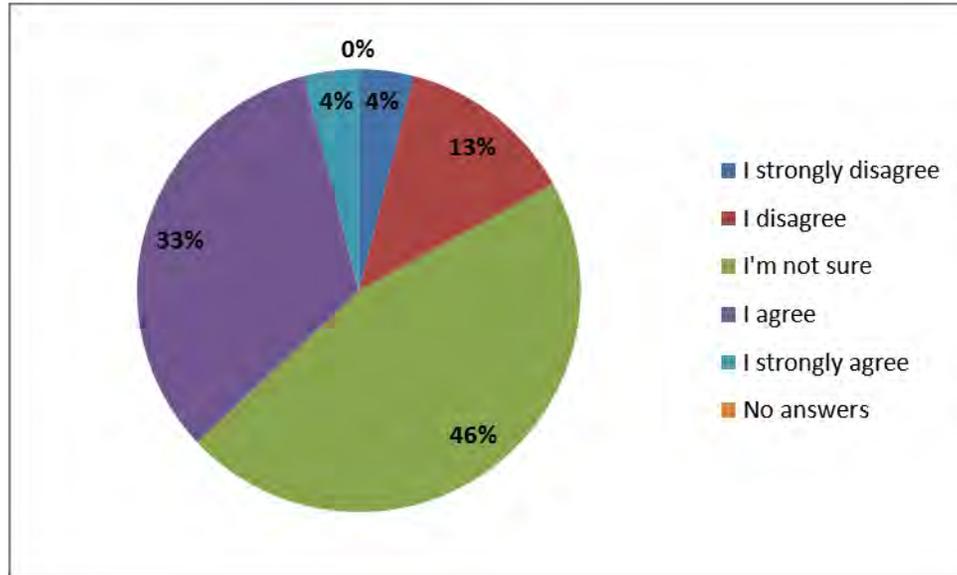
SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I feel I could do better.



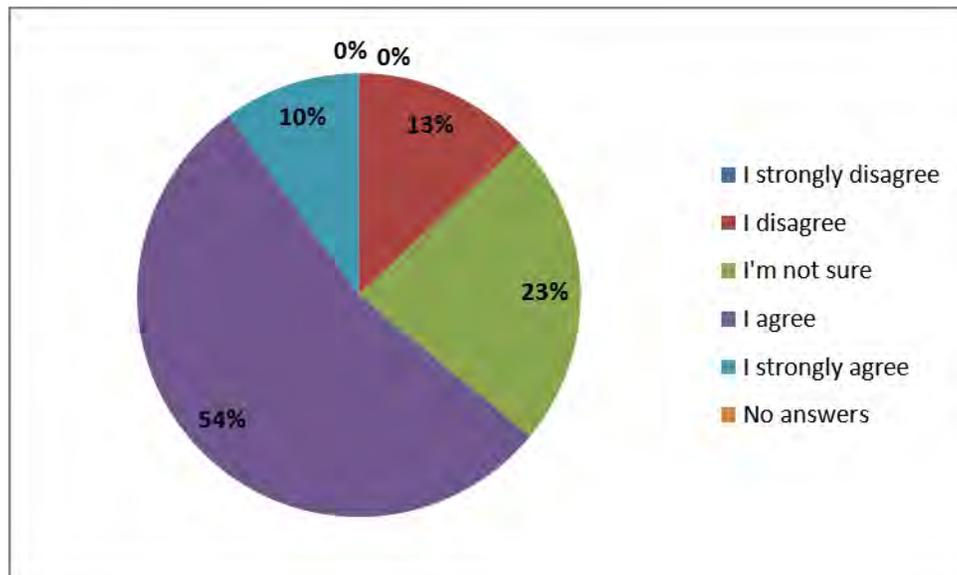
In the continuing group, 79% felt they could do better while in the terminated group 74% agreed with this statement. In the continuing group, 4% (13% in the terminated group) felt

they could do better. In the continuing group, 17% were not sure and in the terminated group 13% were unsure. All respondents answered the question.

FIGURE: 4.11.8 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
I am at the top of my game.



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:  
I am at the top of my game.



In the continuing group 37% felt they were at the top of their game, while in the terminated group 64% felt so. In the continuing group 17%, and in the terminated group 13%, felt they were not at the top of their game. In the continuing group 46%, and in the terminated group

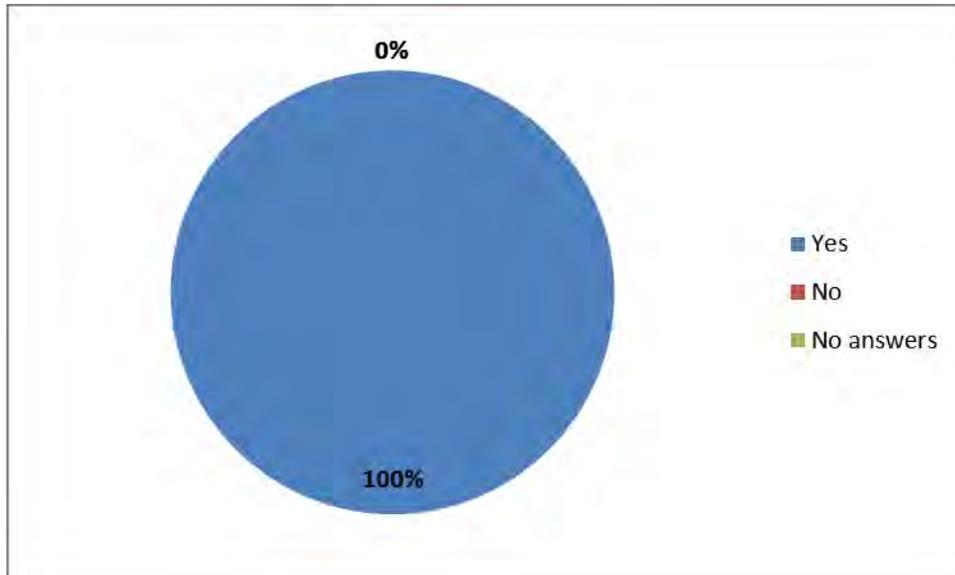
23% were not sure. This is a large percentage of women who were not sure if they were at their top of their game. If 23% had not reached their full potential, what was their reason for stopping? It is thus true that a large number of our top sportswomen are terminating their careers prior to reaching their full potential in the sporting domain.

## 4.12 INFLUENCE OF SPORT ON WOMEN AND THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

If an individual can look back at something they have done and can say it "benefited me in some way or the other" then it was worth doing.

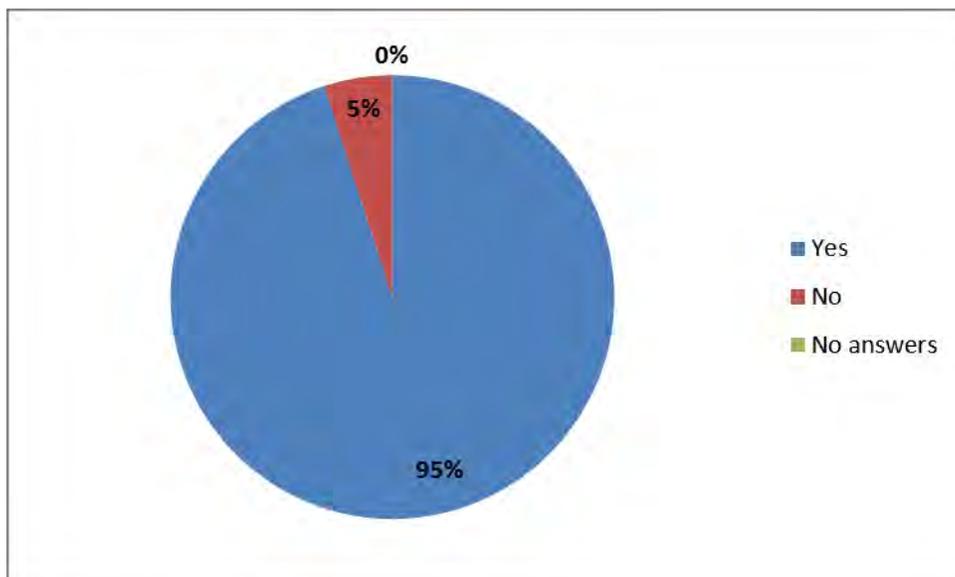
FIGURE: 4.12.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Do you think that having been successful sportswomen has enhanced your life and image?



SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINAED SPORT:

Do you think that having been successful sportswomen has enhanced your life and image?



Within the continued group every single sportswoman said that sports had enhanced their lives. No respondents disagreed with this. In the terminated group, 95% of the sportswomen felt that being a successful sportswoman had enhanced their life and image, while 5% did not agree with this.

TABLE: 4.12.2 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORT:

Detail of the impact and benefits sport has on one's life and image

SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORTS	SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE TERMINATED SPORTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Definitely. It's really good for self-confidence. I feel that people who try hard/excel in sport are generally hard workers, and it helps one to try hard/excel in other aspects of life, not just sport!”</li> <li>• “I feel it has enhanced my life. It has brought a sense of achievement to my life and has taught me many life lessons. It has proved to me that if you want something bad enough and are prepared to work for it you can achieve it.”</li> <li>• “Absolutely! I cannot imagine my life any differently. My running has helped me become a confident person. I have learnt so much and been fortunate enough to travel to many different countries around the world. I have also been able to learn more about myself and try to correct my weaknesses through running.”</li> <li>• “Oh yes, in all kinds of ways. I am so motivated, happy and just love what I do and who I am. I'm in shape and me looking good means a lot. I want to feel good about myself at all times and with what I do, I can. I have also met so many people and friends through this lifestyle and would not change it for anything. I am also much more confident in life.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Definitely, it taught me discipline, tenacity &amp; how to enhance my strengths and address my weaknesses. It taught me humility, time management, to focus and how to set realistic goals and push myself physically and mentally. It also taught me how to deal with setbacks and how to celebrate hard work and reward. My sport being a team sport was one of the main things that appealed to me as I thrived on being part of a successful unit and setting and reaching goals together.”</li> <li>• “Yes, I think that playing in a team sport teaches you how to work with other people, socialise in a big group, and achieve group goals. It was really fantastic for my self-esteem. My self-image improved; I felt proud of my achievements, as I allowed myself to achieve personal goals. I was also in great shape, which automatically improves your self-image. I would encourage every woman to play sport or find some activity they can excel at.”</li> <li>• “Sport in general has been a vital part of my life and moulded me into the person I am now. Sport teaches you many life skills that you can't learn in the classroom or from a textbook. What I have learnt from sport is priceless and the decisions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quotes that really stood out:</b></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Absolutely, but in the context of life not the way it should have. If women were not discriminated against and life had been fair and equal I should be retired as a wealthy and far better known sportswoman.”</li> <li>• “Yes and no. Being a sportswoman has taken me around the world, made me independent, taught me discipline, perseverance, etc. and I also found identity in it. But, at the same time, I was not able to experience my teenage years as a teenager or experience student/varsity life, all which is a part of life.”</li> <li>• “It has allowed me to make lifelong friends around the country. I have been able to experience trips overseas that I probably would not have been able to do. It helps me lead an active, healthy lifestyle and I also appreciate the fact that there is a process towards achieving a goal &amp; it is not handed to you without hard work.”</li> <li>• “Yes, when you do sport with a good attitude kids look up to you. I learned a lot about myself and how I would like to be seen. Sometimes I wasn't a nice person. I did not like what I saw and went over the situation again and decided how I would handle it in the future so I will be seen as having good sportsmanship.”</li> </ul>	<p>that I have made in terms of sport I wouldn't change. Sport has taught me to be a team player and that in life you need other people and the more people you have to help, your goal can be more obtainable. You learn to share your ideas, views and fears, thus teaching you people skills. You learn to deal with success and failure in two ways: as a team and as an individual. It has made me a more confident person; I have teaches you how to set goals and what it takes to achieve them. It has always taught me how to be hard-working, as what you put in you will get out.”</p> <p><b>Responses from the two (2) people who said that sport hadn't enhanced their life:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “No, not really. Because everyone sees me as a sporty woman and they don't understand why I left netball. So I feel like I made a mistake, but I don't want to return to that life I had (I never enjoyed it).”</li> <li>• “Not sure; perhaps amongst like sportswomen but to others not involved in that sport, not so much.”</li> </ul>
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### 4.13 COPING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

How do these participants manage to balance life amidst work, family and sport commitments? As one grows up, priorities change. How did these women balance the challenges of life, growing up and managing to carry on everything while competing at a professional level in sport? Ultimately, there is no balance and it is not easy to accommodate all the demands. Every single participant said it was difficult but confirmed that one could manage. The following themes came up:

TABLE 4.13.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:

Themes that were identified to help participants manage balance life (in between work, family and sport commitments):

MAIN THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p><b>Training in the morning and evening</b> <b>This makes the day long but it's the only way</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I do most of my training early in the morning. I wake up at 4:30, and train from 5:00-6:30, at the latest. My workday is quite long (8:00-18:30)."</li> <li>• "I have adjusted my schedule to train early in the morning, &amp; get to work later (which my company understands)."</li> <li>• "One has to set aside dedicated training time."</li> </ul>
<p><b>It's very tough and often you don't balance your life, it's about sacrifice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "With great difficulty. In some situations it's not about balance but about sacrifices."</li> <li>• "Balance is not achieved! I generally have to make tough choices and often there is something that will be sacrificed."</li> <li>• "My social life definitely suffered as cycling is a single-minded lifestyle sport."</li> <li>• "I also had to give up a lot."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-discipline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It is a matter of self-discipline, commitment to employees as well as to oneself."</li> <li>• "I wake up at 4:00am to train, otherwise won't fit all my work &amp; mothering duties into the day."</li> <li>• "It's all about discipline."</li> </ul>
<p><b>It's about planning, time management and routine</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It's all about time management."</li> <li>• "Being very organised and utilising time sensibly."</li> <li>• "This is where planning, goal setting and structure become critical."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supportive family</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I have a partner who helped me train and was very understanding and supportive."</li> <li>• "I have a very supportive family."</li> <li>• "I think I am lucky that my family has always supported me and my friends accept my training."</li> <li>• "You HAVE to have an understanding and supportive husband!"</li> </ul>

#### 4.13.2 HOW DID THE ATHLETES MANAGE TO OVERCOME THE ABOVEMENTIONED OBSTACLES AND CARRY ON COMPETING AT THE LEVEL THEY DO?

In the quantitative research the participants were asked to tick any one of a list of obstacles (such as politics in sport, injuries experienced, coach problems, etc.). Here the participants expand on how they overcame these obstacles.

- 1) Changed my training
- 2) Changed my coach
- 3) I pay for all my sport
- 4) Try and ignore the politics
- 5) Follow proper rehab programmes after getting injured
- 6) Mind over matter

TABLE: 4.13.3. SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT:  
How athletes managed to overcome the abovementioned obstacles

MAIN THEME	QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS
<b>Changed my training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Previously I would train twice in a day, but when I got married and started my own business, I started training once a day.”</li> <li>• “I decided to take on a coach to help motivate me and to give me some direction and to have some structure in my training. I also started a Pilates class to help gain strength, thereby taking strain off my lower back.”</li> <li>• “Vary my sport - do cross-training.”</li> </ul>
<b>Changed my coach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I was eventually able to leave my coach and find someone who better suited my aspirations &amp; goals.”</li> <li>• “The coach is trying to manage players better.”</li> <li>• “Coach problems have been resolved by changing to different training squads.”</li> </ul>
<b>I pay for all my sport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My husband and I have been paying for most of our sport although we did get some funding for the Olympic venture. As we both work, it just meant that we would spend our money on fencing and not on things like a holiday.”</li> <li>• “The financial/sponsorship side is the most difficult for me - if it wasn't for my parents I would not be competing now.”</li> <li>• “Money is still a problem. I took four months' unpaid leave to focus on my sport.”</li> </ul>

<p><b>Try and ignore the politics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I try to ignore the politics involved in sport and selection; I only want to retire when I am ready to.”</li> <li>• “The gender discrimination was a profound factor for discontinuing and is still a very prominent and forceful factor in my opinion.”</li> <li>• “Unfortunately, politics does play a major role in athletics and it was just recently that I experienced it first-hand.”</li> <li>• The politics in sport really affected me psychologically – and very hard; I am still trying to deal with it.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Follow proper rehab programmes after getting injured</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I have had several injuries, but sought professional help to overcome them.”</li> <li>• “I have attended many hours of rehab with an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist to sort it out.”</li> <li>• “I’m currently going for a lot of tests to try and sort out everything.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mind over matter</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You can make it work or let it get to you, it’s all about mindset.”</li> <li>• “I am a hard worker with a lot of self-motivation and dedication.”</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first objective of this research was to explore the reasons why women who compete at an intense level in sport terminate their career prior to reaching their full potential. The second objective was to identify the essential factors that impact heavily on women in sport. These factors include stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and any others that may come up during the research. The third objective was to identify if there are any similarities or differences between the two groups of women: those who have terminated their careers and those who are still competing in sport at intense levels. The fourth objective was to identify coping strategies that may assist women to overcome the obstacles and continue with their sporting careers.

The following chapter discusses all the results in detail that appeared in chapter 4.

### 5.2 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

#### AGES OF PARTICIPANTS

In the research groups the majority of women who continued sport were older than 31 years of age. The reason was that these are the women who have continued sport and are still participating and competing. The aim was to find out what the difference is between these women and the women who terminated their sporting careers.

The women who terminated sport were mainly in the 23-25 year-old age bracket. It is during these years that the majority of women finish university and start a working career.

As these are elite sportswomen, their passion and time have been spent on sports for so long that it begs the question why their sports faded into the background during those years. What made these women move away from sport completely?

The aim of the research was to find out why these women terminated their sporting careers. Thus the aim was to identify women of any race between the ages 17-25 years old who terminated their sport careers. Some women were older because they filled in the questionnaire but they had terminated their sport between 17-25. The participants had to be women who competed regularly at a first team, provincial, national, or international level in their high-school or university years (ages 12-25), and they had to have quit in either their matric year or within the years of tertiary education.

There were cases in the terminated group where women were older than 25 years, but they were still at university, thus they were included in the research. In a few cases, women were older than the prescribed age, but they had terminated their career before the age of 25.

### **RACE OF PARTICIPANTS**

The biggest shortcoming of the research was that the research focused on one racial group in South Africa and is therefore not true of the South African population. However, there was no reason other than that the only women who returned their questionnaires happened to be White. The questionnaires were given to 40 Black elite athletes, including the whole Banyana Banyana soccer team and the whole South African Athletics team that competed at the Berlin World Championships 2009, but none were returned.

Thus, this research has become focused on one section of the South African population group: White women with a couple of Coloured and Asian participants. This has a benefit as later research can focus on athletes of other races (Black, Coloured, Indian, etc.). The results can be compared to see the different obstacles that each race faces in becoming the next South African elite athlete.

One would expect to find some differences as culture could have an influence over women continuing or terminating their sports careers. According to Burnett and Molinero (2002: 263), “a complete understanding of the underlying processes influencing withdrawal [of sports] requires consideration of potential cultural variations and further investigation on influencing factors”. South African history has identified Black women as being the most “forgotten” race. In South Africa, these women most probably identify with different realities to White South African women. In the past, Black women have had limited access to sport as they suffered discrimination because of their class, colour and gender.

## **LEVEL AT WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS COMPETED**

The idea behind the research was to look at elite athletes. These are athletes who had been chosen to represent a school, province or country. These are the athletes who are committed and passionate about sport. There was a wide spectrum of athletes in each group, both in the terminated and continued sport group.

This was a benefit to the research as all elite levels have been covered to identify why these women have terminated their sporting careers. The highest level at which a participant competed was the level they were placed in as a person competing at an international level is likely to have experienced each level and thus only their highest level was taken into consideration.

## **SPORTING CODES THAT THE PARTICIPANTS COMPETED**

In the research, there are 15 different sporting codes in the continued group and 14 different codes in the terminated group. Some women competed in more than one sport. Using a wide range of sports is beneficial as it provides a broad spectrum of what is happening within South African sports. The research focused on any sport. The more sports that were included, the wider the analysis could be. The aim was not to identify sports codes where women were terminating their sporting careers, but to identify trends across the different sporting codes. Generally, the same sports were in both the terminated and continued categories.

## **5.3 WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORT?**

According to past research conducted by Martin (1997: 4), sport participation is a function of several factors, including “personal fulfilment, encouragement from others, high perceived ability, prestige and recognition, and hopes for an athletic scholarship”. This research highlighted similar factors for participation in sports and the following key themes were identified in both the groups.

### **FIRST THEME: WOMEN ENJOYED THE SUCCESS GAINED FROM SPORT**

Martin (1997) identifies five categories of rewards believed to be important in the continuation of sport participation.

These rewards are: “intrinsic enjoyment, anticipation of extrinsic rewards, satisfaction derived from other’s approval, avoidance of punishment resulting from non-punishment, and the maintenance of an identity anchored in sports” (Martin, 1997: 2). There were two types of rewards that Martin identified that were also identified in this research: “anticipation of extrinsic rewards” can be illustrated by the answer from one of the participants – “I loved to win”. She loved receiving acknowledgement from winning. The next reward – “satisfaction derived from other’s approval” – can be illustrated by a participant’s answer, “I thrived on succeeding” and “It’s a good feeling when one excels or achieves something”.

### **SECOND THEME: WOMEN ENJOYED THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPORT**

The women in the research all thought of themselves as competitive people and they “loved the feeling of competing” and “loved the adrenalin”. Within the continuing group, 62% of the group, and 59% of the terminated group, wanted to prove to others that they were the best. With the desire to compete comes the ability to formulate goals and work towards them. Participants said they were “driven by goals”, and that they “enjoyed the idea of training towards a goal to better my own performance”. This finding is also in alignment with extrinsic rewards and satisfaction derived from approval that Martin identified (Martin, 1997: 2).

### **THIRD THEME: PARTICIPATING FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF SPORT**

According to Stewart and Taylor (2000: 3), the results from their study which looked at why women participate in sport showed that “83% listed ‘having fun’ as one of their top five reasons for sport involvement”. This correlates with Shaw’s (2001) study which concluded that women enjoy challenging themselves physically, and this then became a vehicle for challenging minds, their role in society and their acceptance of social norms and dictates. Thus, the women in this research identified that sport challenges them both physically and mentally and that’s why they love it.

However, subconsciously it also provides them with the identity to stand out from the crowd and identify themselves as sportswomen because sport has given them the tools to do so and not be afraid of the consequences and ridicule.

#### **FOURTH THEME: SPORT IS A CHALLENGE**

Women enjoyed the physical and mental challenges of sport. The world of competitive sport is comprised of physical challenges; this is exactly like life. Sport also has obstacles, such as injuries and improving one's fitness, strength and ability to make one's body go faster.

The mental challenges include rising when one has been defeated and preparing one's mind for competition. In this research, 79% of the continuing group compared to 84% of the terminated group wanted to prove to themselves that they were the best and thus mentally and physically they had to meet the challenge to prove that they were right. A participant said that "the challenge to be the best was a driving force" and women found "the challenge of competing against others" quite hard. However, "there are new challenges every day" that keep these women motivated to participate.

#### **FIFTH THEME: THE ATHLETE IDENTIFIED THAT SHE HAD THE TALENT**

The participants felt if they have the talent they should utilise it. A participant said "I was blessed with the natural ability and a bit of talent to run" and that is what motivates her to continue. Martin's (1997) research identified that high perceived ability was also a factor. In the study of Martin's (1997) only 10% of the participants had perceived themselves as good athletes and, therefore, they continued sport.

#### **SIXTH THEME: THE WOMEN LIKED TO STAY IN SHAPE**

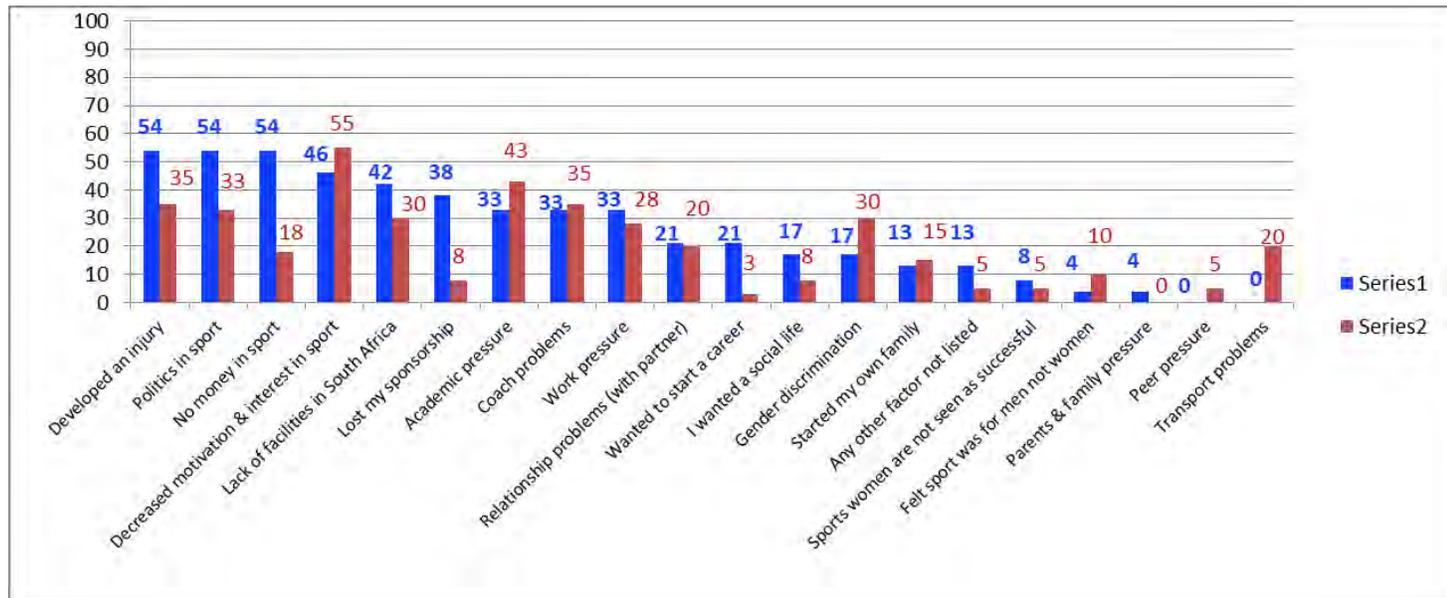
Women like to train their bodies. This correlates with the South African research conducted by Sport and Recreation South Africa (2005) where to lose weight and stay in shape constituted 5,6% of the results. These women also know that their sport provides them with the ability of "being fit" and "being physically active". Cronan and Scott (2008) noted through their research that women who were training to compete in a triathlon all did it for the primary purpose of weight loss. However, by the end of the programme, women were able to redefine the purpose and the ideal look of the female body.

They were able to escape from the Madison Avenue standards of women's beauty and instead focus on the importance of their physical abilities. Thus, women do sport to keep in shape, but ultimately when they "get into" the sport they learn there is far more than just losing weight. They discover themselves as individuals and thus redefine what beauty is to them.

## 5.4 WHY DO WOMEN WHO COMPETE AT AN INTENSE LEVEL TERMINATE THEIR SPORTING CAREER PRIOR TO REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL?

FIGURE 5.4.1 SPORTSWOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT VERSUS SPORTSWOMEN WHO TERMINATED SPORT:

While competing, the following factors have contributed to thinking of terminating one’s sporting career:



Series 1 = Continued group

Series 2 = Terminated group

### CONTINUED GROUP

The women who are still competing in sport find the following factors have affected their decision at some time or another to carry on or terminate their sport.

The three most common factors (by a significant amount) were that they developed an injury (54% compared to the 35% of women who terminated sport), politics in sport (54% compared to the 33% of women who terminated sport) and no money in sport (54% compared to the 18% of women who terminated sport).

## **TERMINATED GROUP**

This is very different to what is identified in the group that terminated their sport. The three main reasons why women terminated sport were due to a decreased motivation and interest in sport (55% of the terminated group compared to the 46% of women who are still competing), coach problems (43% of the terminated group compared to the 33% of women who are still competing) challenges and academic pressure (36% of the terminated group compared to the 33% of women who are still competing).

Within the terminated group the factors that lead them to termination all fit into a common theme: the athlete cannot control these factors. For example, if the injury is serious they may not be able to return to competitive sport. If one doesn't get chosen for a team there is no reason to continue. If one is receiving no money how does one live? According to stats by Leonard (1996) the odds of women going from competing in high-school sport to university sport is between the ranges of 0.03-0.07%, the average being 0.07% in the United States. Therefore, 99% of all high-school athletes will not participate in college sport and will terminate their sporting career. These figures are staggering. Douglas (1997: 96) has stated that the reasons for termination are "other activities, aversive events, injury or illness, low perceived ability, other's influence, no interest, and lack of success and opportunity".

One common theme, a lack of properly qualified coaches in South Africa, seems to encompass the three most common factors for termination of sport (decreased motivation and interest in sport, coach problems and academic pressure).

A decreased motivation can be attributed to coach training being monotonous, no different training techniques, no variation to training and competing, and the coach not knowing how to motivate the athlete. Coach challenges can contribute to the athlete's behaviour and desire to carry on. The possibility exists that academic pressure may also be linked to the coach not giving time off to the athlete when required, such as during exam periods.

Coach challenges were the second-most common factor for stopping sport. As described above, coaches retiring and new coaches simply did not gel with the athletes. They did not provide the athlete with the motivation and support that they required. In other cases, the new coach did not believe in the athlete. If a coach does not believe in their athlete, a lack of communication and a breakdown in the relationship.

To highlight this point, two quotes from respondents were: the coach “has the ability to make one [an athlete] feel good about oneself” and a coach should “strive to understand her swimmers completely and help them at all costs to compete at their ultimate peak”. However, in cases when old coaches and athletes’ relationships did not seem to work anymore it was mainly due to pressure from the coaches and the girls maturing to women. An example from one of the respondents was: “encourage them [your athlete] and listen to their concerns. If they have felt strongly enough about something to actually come and speak to you about it then it is obviously very important to them”. These women would stand up for themselves and this would ultimately lead to personality clashes and coaches not wanting to let the girls mature and create an identity outside of sport for themselves. This is not a problem only in South Africa. A study conducted with Spanish athletes by Molinero, Salguero, Tuero, Alvarez and Marquez (2007) identified the same results in their study. The second-most frequent reason for attrition in their study was dislike for the coach.

A properly qualified coach should know the reasons why children participate in sport from the start. They participate because “it’s fun, it provides fitness, provides a domain where children can be with other children – affiliation needs, skill improvement, the need for achievement, improves self-esteem and it’s exciting” (Wann, 1997: 49). If these seven factors can be present in the sporting life of a child, and thus an athlete, then they will continue sport (Wann, 1997). This research correlates with the findings in this research; it is about the coaches and their coaching ability.

The participants in this research highlighted the relationship between the coach and the athlete. Participants said their coach “made us feel good about ourselves”, “encouraged us to reach limits beyond what we thought possible”, they were “interested in each team member as a player and a person”. If a coach can have a great relationship with their athlete, then they will produce true athletes.

As soon as a child, and thus the athlete, starts to find that she is experiencing any of the following factors – “no longer having fun, failing to fulfil their need for achievement, failure to gain self-esteem benefits, conflicting activities or poor coaching” (Wann, 1997: 53) – they will terminate their sporting careers. Therefore, in South Africa coaches need to be trained to

make sure all seven factors are present in their training methods so that sportswomen of tomorrow continue sport.

Butt and Molnar (2009: 241) identified in their research “career termination is not voluntary”. Most often the athlete is forced to leave while she is still in the aspiring stage of her career. In many cases a coach falsely builds the athlete up for success. In other cases, coaches would say to athletes “if you work hard, you will get into the team”. However, at the end of the day it was the athlete with the ability who got into the team, not about the amount of hard work and effort. Findings in this research showed that there were athletes who definitely experienced this type of relationship with their coach. Respondents said that their coaches were “unsupportive of any problems encountered out of sport”, they were “pushy, hard, strict, and, as a result, athletes got injured”, they were “unable to act for athletes within a sporting body”, they felt “he lacked the maturity to help us develop beyond that level,” and “my coach certainly wasn't enthusiastic”. These are all ways that athletes who terminated sport felt about some of the coaches who had trained them.

The lack of motivation was made worse when academic pressure just got too much and thus it was easier to quit sport than to juggle all the different activities. In cases where an injury occurred and they could not carry on training to the level they were used to, this created a lack of interest and thus termination of their sports. In the case where politics affected the motivation of the athletes, there were participants in the study that did not make the teams because they were not the right colour as, according to South African Sports policies, there are quotas for black, coloured and white people in a team.

Motivation to continue lags drastically when one is being chosen for a team based on colour and not ability. This may be a unique finding in the South African setting and may not be corroborated in international studies.

In one case, the national women's water polo team was not awarded its South African colours because Swimming South Africa felt that women playing water polo was not a recognised sport. Thus, there is only so much one can do and only so much effort that can be spent on a sport with little to no recognition which will surely result in a lack of motivation. Lack of motivation was greater when there were transport issues. Due to moving out of “home”,

young women often did not have access to their own transport and thus could not get to training or matches. This struggle to get to all the activities resulted in them ceasing their training and changing their focus in life.

Finally, the main reason all these women competed in sport was because it was fun and they enjoyed it. However, by the time they had finished, the fun in the sport was also finished. Sport was just not fun anymore. This can also be linked to the coach. It is the coaches' responsibility to keep the athlete interested, to make training fun and enjoyable. The minute this goes, so the passion and drive to continue ceases. When one does not have these, performance also decreases. Other factors become more important, and parts of one's life that were not important before – like partying, going out with friends and having fun in social arenas – suddenly become far more important. Thus, lack of motivation must not be looked at in isolation but must be considered in association with all other reasons for terminating the sport.

Academic pressure and development of an injury were the third-most common factors for terminating their sporting careers. When these women went to study further, the pressure to pass, to achieve and succeed academically, made it hard to carry on with their sport. When these women decided to continue their education, they generally went into degrees or education that took up too much of their time to compete at a national or provincial level anymore. Thus, time constraints became a problem. This is not a problem only in South Africa according to Molinero *et al.*, (2007). The same was found in their study where the most frequent reason for attrition was time constraints.

In the case of injury development, if the coaches did train the athletes too hard, or if they used incorrect training principles that could have led to injury, then our coaches were not enhancing the performance of our athletes, but rather hurting them and causing them to prematurely terminate their sporting careers.

Politics in sport was the fifth-most common factor for terminating sports. As soon as the athletes take sport more seriously, the politics of the sport start to reveal itself. When politics are seen in sport, then sport can ultimately become less fun.

Then it is not necessarily the fastest or the best athlete who gets chosen to be a part of the team, but the athlete who is a specific colour, or an athlete who has a good relationship with the team selector. Thus, politics are driving the women of tomorrow away and resulting in our top sportswomen terminating their careers. Of all the top South African rowers who were participating five to seven years ago, not one is still competing because of the politics in the sport. Another very good example is the Caster Semenya story, where politicians and Athletics South Africa were shown not to be handling their athletes correctly and how the conduct of the politician can lead to athletes wanting to terminate their sporting careers.

Other factors that came up were lack of facilities in South Africa. In order to move to the next level and compete with the rest of the world, the South African athletes needed better facilities to train in, such as heated pools, better equipment, safer environments, better coaches, ice skating rinks, etcetera. These facilities are either run down, not maintained or South Africa simply does not have access to what the rest of the world has. Thus, South Africa cannot compete on an international scale.

Finally, there is no money in South African sport. Some of the athletes wanted to start a career outside sport, to move onto the next stage of their lives, earn money and make it in the business world. To earn a living training and racing is very hard in South Africa and thus many women drop out at an early stage. They know going into the business world they will make money and live a comfortable lifestyle.

How do the sportswomen who continue to compete balance work, study, competition and family life? The answer is very interesting. It appears not to be about balance but about sacrifice. Many say that they never reach a state of balance. It requires juggling one's life, waking up early, training late and trying to fit it all in. It is about self-discipline, planning, time management and routine. It requires a supportive family and friends. In many cases the significant others are the support structure in the women's lives that enables them to live athletic lives.

## 5.5 MEDIA AND SPORTS

In a recent international mountain biking sporting event, The Cape Epic which took place in Cape Town, South Africa in early April 2011, there was full and sometimes even live coverage. In a 30-minute broadcast at the end of each day, women were only given a maximum of 30 seconds' coverage. This event is gruelling for men, and there is a large percentage of men who do not finish. Women teams often come in the top 50 teams and yet get no coverage at all. There was no extra coverage even when a South African woman won the event that year. When South African women are winning international events and still not getting media exposure, how will women in sport ever get any recognition? This section will look at both groups of women as similar answers came up.

Media and television have become inescapable parts of our lives. To ignore it is virtually impossible. According to Gender Schema Theory (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002), it is through personal experience that individuals learn what acceptable characteristics of masculine or feminine traits are. This happens from a very early age and the personal experience, together with societal cues that are observed in everyday life, instils in children norms for how men and women should behave, what is acceptable and what is not in relation to their gender.

Societal cues, such as the predominance of advertisements, portray and interpret society's definition for roles of masculinity and femininity. These exposures assist individuals in forming their own gender schema, which affects the processing of future gender messages (Martin & Halverson, 1981; Nathanson *et al.*, 2002).

Societal cues, such as the predominance of advertisements, portray and interpret society's definition for roles of masculinity and femininity.

Thus, the first years of a child's life are shadowed by constant advertisements which start forming the way of their lives, what to consume and what not. Commercials that show boys playing with cars and girls playing with dolls produce diverse tastes and preferences for each sex (O'Barr, 2005). Thus, the media suggested what both girls and boys should play with. New parents raising the children of tomorrow are bombarded with the media subconsciously telling parents what their children should be playing with and are thus starting the first

interaction between media and gendered topics. What is acceptable and what is not has been drilled into women from a very early age. It is thus very hard to break free from the boundaries and constraints of the media and fly into the realm of the “unacceptable”, such as competitive sport. It is challenging to create our own meaning of being a sportswoman and breaking the boundaries to create our own picture of what women can and will do.

The research results have identified the following:

### **WOMEN FEEL THAT THERE IS MORE COVERAGE OF MEN’S SPORT THAN THERE IS OF WOMEN’S SPORTS**

In this research, the researcher found that 79% of the respondents said there was not enough media coverage of sportswomen. “On average, men’s sports receive 90-95% of media coverage and women’s sport receives the remaining 5-10%” (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 14). Research conducted by Goslin (2008) supports the findings of Stetson-Lee, concluding that male sports coverage far surpasses that of women’s sports reporting.

The 5% of total televised sports coverage has been relatively recent, though, as the year “1992 marked the first year that total coverage of women’s sports surpassed the total coverage of sports that featured animals, such as horses and dogs” (Angelini, 2008: 16). In the article by John (2007), she identified that “when you look at the results in British sport, we’ve got great role models – Ellen MacArthur, Paula Radcliffe – but it’s not getting through to young girls”. This could be attributed to the fact that only “5% of media sports coverage is of women’s sports” (John, 2007: 28). Of the participants in this research, 92% of the continuing group and 87% of the terminated group watched sportswomen on television. This is a high number considering the myth that there is not a market for women’s sports on television. Goslin (2008) also highlighted the fact that women’s sport has been under reported in print media and has affected the overall public’s knowledge on women’s accomplishments on the sport field.

“There is a general misconception that women are not interested in sports, which actually is not true” (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007: 41). In this research, both groups were asked if they could name five sportswomen.

The results showed that 64% of the participants could actually name five sportswomen and 36% of these sportswomen could not name five sportswomen. It was interesting to see that one of the sportswomen who probably has the most media coverage as a South African was named the most in the research: Natalie Du Toit was named by 32 participants, followed by Venus Williams who was named by 17 participants, and Penny Heyns with 15 participants.

Therefore, over the years even though the growth of women's sport has been significant, the print media has unfortunately not kept up with it, leaving reporting of women's sport far back in the distant behind men's sport (Goslin, 2008).

### **MEDIA EXPLOITS WOMEN; SPORTSWOMEN WHO ARE BEAUTIFUL GET MORE MEDIA COVERAGE; SEX SELLS**

"Only 'beautiful', model-like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships" was the statement, and 30% of the competing group compared to 26% of the terminated group strongly agreed with it. In both groups, 50% of the women did not believe that appearances played an integral part in getting sponsorships.

Sports media tend to portray sportswomen one-dimensionally: they focus on the stereotypes which emphasise "'feminine' bodily features (the sportswoman as a sex object, and individual trying to be beautiful for men)" (Brandt & Carstens, 2005: 236). The sportswoman's body is a "signifier for sexual difference and the ideology of gender differences can be considered as a trademark of the sports media" (Brandt & Carstens, 2005: 236). When sportswomen are televised, they tend to place the attention on individual sports (gymnastics and figure skating) as opposed to team sports (hockey and water polo). The focus seems to always stress the allure and grace of the athlete as opposed to the strength, stamina and endurance of the athlete (Koivula, 2001).

It is interesting to note the women's sports that have the most airtime are generally the sports that focus on beauty and overall attractiveness of the participant, as well as the sport itself (Koivula, 2001). On the other hand, media also tend to use women to attract people to their product. In many cases advertisements place women in an advert simply to draw attention to the advert even when there is no relationship between the woman and the product being advertised (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007).

It is necessary to point out that women understand and know that advertisers try to use them to sell product and “advertisers exploit women’s sexuality to sell their products” (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007: 44). However, women consent and agree to involve themselves in such adverts. The main reason for this is that sportswomen generally do not make as much money as sportsmen and “the women who present themselves in a sexy manner tend to make more money than those who do not have the benefits of sex appeal to accompany their talent as accomplished athletes” (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 11). Thus “women resort to more unique ways to pay the bills and continue pursuing their passions if they are not going to be compensated for their talent alone. Sometimes the talent part is not necessary for earning a living if the female athlete’s image is marketable enough by itself” (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 11). This leads on to the next theme that was highlighted in the research.

The researcher has noticed that it appears women’s netball, rugby and soccer all appear to be getting more airtime these days, at least on SABC. Thanks to SPAR, this increased airtime may be linked to the commercial branding of a product or business. Possible future research could focus on the changes and the rate of change in South African media.

### **WOMEN ARE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR LOOKS RATHER THAN THEIR ABILITY**

How do the participants in the research feel about “how the media portrays sportswomen”? In the continuing group 8%, and in the terminated group 33%, felt sportswomen were accurately portrayed in the media. No respondents in the continuing group and only 7% in the terminated group felt that sportswomen were played up in the media. However, over half of both the groups (continuing 54% and terminated group 51%) felt that women are played down. Out of the continuing group 17%, and 4% in the terminated group, felt that sportswomen were exploited in the media. No answers were received from 8% in the continuing group and 5% in the terminated group.

In the research that Stetson-Lee (2008) conducted, one of the participants commented on another competitor (a female cyclist): “she’s not one of the top racers in the country or the world, but she has a selling point – she has a hot body and the sponsors love that” (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 11).

Thus, as a sportswoman, a good athlete will be noticed and most probably receive media coverage. However, if an athlete is beautiful and good at their sport then they will get a lot more attention (Stetson-Lee, 2008).

Thus, to place the picture of sportswomen versus sportsmen in the media: “men cycling images are of fast, strong and courageous riders. Women’s images are of fast, strong and sexy riders” (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 12). This quote rounds off the theme that was identified in the research.

### **GIRLS WHO PLAY "TOUGH" SPORTS, SUCH AS HOCKEY, ARE ALSO PERCEIVED BY BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS AS HARDCORE OR SOMETIMES EVEN LESBIAN**

Traditionally, sports like soccer, cricket and water polo were male-dominated sports. However, over the years more women have started participating and competing in these sports.

Today, in all of the above sports, there are women’s World Cups as well as the traditional male World Cups. So, how do women feel about other women competing in these sports? The response to this question was strong: 50% of the competing group, compared to the 70% of the terminated group, agreed with the statement.

There are a couple of reasons for this. Bias towards certain sports types is certainly one, but one of the main reasons is the present “body-image paranoia” (John, 2007: 28). Women seem far happier doing exercise than sport as sport may “bulk up their physique” (John, 2007: 29). The young athletes coming through the system seem to be more concerned about putting on muscle and gaining large muscular legs than their performance. On the other hand, if women are seen to achieve in sport, they are going to be seen as different to the traditional view of femininity and will be putting themselves at risk of being labelled “tomboyish” or viewed as anything but female with a feminine body and characteristics (Ellis, Riley & Gordon, 2003). Thus, “adolescent beauty and femininity are seen as incompatible with sport” (Ellis *et al.*, 2003: 233).

There has been a noticeable decline of men participating in sport, because men want to go to the gym at times that suit their work and lifestyles, whereas organised sport doesn’t

necessarily fit into the lifestyle times of most working and socialising men. There are also the “body beautiful” men who go to gym to look at women and vice versa. Therefore, the gym has become more of a social event than an exercising event. The development of gyms has, therefore, had a negative effect on the numbers of men competing in traditional sport.

### **NOT ENOUGH WOMEN PRESENTERS AND JOURNALISTS PRESENTING ACCURATE RESULTS IN WOMEN SPORTS**

The research conducted by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found that broadcasts of women’s sports were generally contradicting the verbal commentary when presented. The visuals would show women’s skills, strength and expertise in the sport, but the commentator would use negative suggestions that the women was not putting enough effort into the sport and ultimately came to the conclusion that they were unsuited for the sport (i.e. that they were in some respect weak, inferior, or incapable, that the sports in which they participated were not true sports) (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). This same research also identified where the commentary was really positive about female surfers; the visuals presented with the commentary pictured the women as “decorative sex objects, unsuited to any endeavour as active and demanding as the sport” (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988: 19). In the same sense many sports magazines “construe biased (even false) images of professional sportswomen, purely for financial gain. And, one can argue, it is not as if journalists are unaware of their skewed reportage” (Brandt & Carstens, 2005: 242).

One aspect that journalists rarely cover is the context of women in sport. The stories they print rarely reflect the realities of women in sport. “For example when the media presents stories about the Women’s National Football Team not performing well at international competitions, it neglects to mention the social, cultural, financial and technical challenges they encounter way before they get to the competition and the limited access to resources they face compared to their male counterparts” (Pambazuka News, 2009).

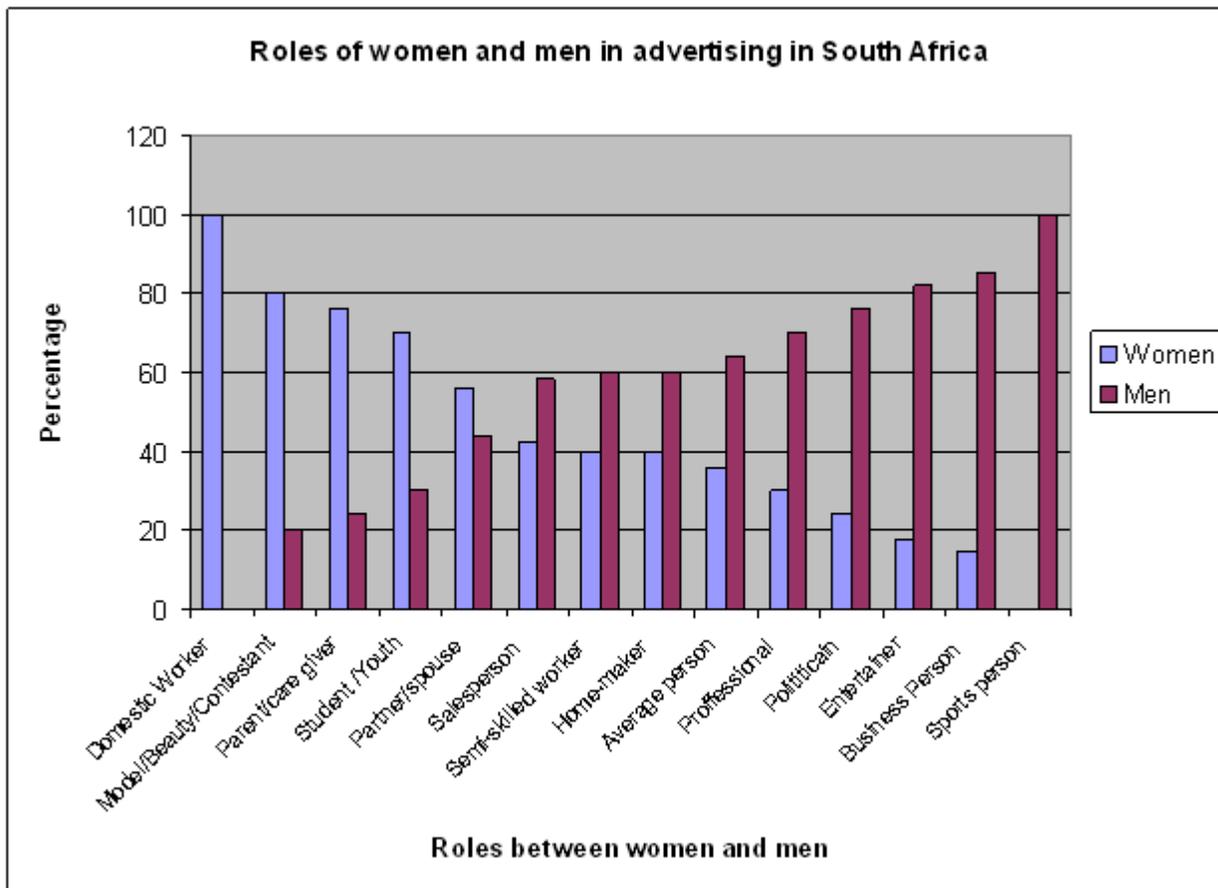


Figure 2.1 ROLES OF WOMEN AND MEN FEATURED IN SOUTH AFRICA ADVERTISING (Lowe Morna & Ndlovu, 2007: 42)

Through this illustration sportspeople are only represented by men, with a staggering 99%, while not even 1% of women are represented as sportswomen. The contrast is rather amazing. While there have been adverts with Natalie du Toit, Rika Geyser and Penny Heys, this is less than 1% and thus not depicted in the above graph.

It is evident from this research that sportswomen do not feel that women get enough media coverage. The results found in this research correlate with past research on the topic. In principle, breaking the cycle of the lack of sports coverage for women is a necessity for girls to feel valued in sport. The development of women sport role models for female athletes can serve as a primary step (Massengale & Lough, 2010). The biggest step that could be taken is for the media to aid and uplift the importance of women sport.

## 5.6 STEREOTYPES IN SPORT

The social beliefs that society constructs regarding behaviour and personality characteristics are taught to both girls and boys at an early age and are widely accepted with no actual evidence to support their validity (Holtzman, 2000). These stereotypes that have been so widely accepted are then reinforced into the new generation of children that are growing and learning about their environment, often through unconscious processes, such as adverts on television. They are still making an impact on the child and the viewer, thus reinforcing the gender roles of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not (Angelini, 2008). In the research, four stereotypical questions were asked (e.g. girls/women who play sport lack femininity). These types of stereotypical ideas have to some extent become the current culture and in some cases they have become the norm for society to live by. Theberg (1994: 191) found the following:

“The potential for sport to act as an agent of women’s liberation, rather than their oppression, stems mainly from the opportunity that women’s sporting activity affords them to experience their bodies as strong and powerful and free from the male domination.”

Thus, using sport as a medium for women to express themselves in different environments, men can actually dissolve these stereotypical truths and encourage women to take their interests to a new level in the sporting world.

One stereotypical truth says sport is considered part of a boy’s developmental process and it is an integral part of the socialisation process; if a boy does not participate, then his masculinity is questioned. However, the opposite holds for girls. In this research, the sample groups were asked the following questions:

### **SPORT PLAYS AN INTEGRAL PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIALISATION OF BOYS, BUT NOT GIRLS**

In the competing group, 75% felt that sport plays an integral part in the development of boys as well as girls. In the terminated group, 85% felt that sport plays an integral part in the development of boys and girls.

The majority of the women in the research felt that sport was very important in the socialisation processes for both boys and girls. An interesting article by Graskog (1992) identified through his research that women's focus on sport participation is somewhat different to men's.

In many cases they started because they wanted to lose weight, but once they got involved in the training their focus shifted and they gained "a greater sense of personal competence, higher self-esteem and self-respect – all of which are ritually reaffirmed in their interaction with fellow triathletes, particularly when training together" (Graskog, 1992: 87). The attributes they gained all help social situations and thus if the women had participated in sport at younger ages, these attributes might have all been learnt then. Graskog (1992) also recommended that sport might offer women a space to redesign gender roles and gender identities in ways different to men. Yarnal, Hutchison and Chow (2006: 135) noticed that women use their bodies as "sources of power and freedom from dominant discourses". The statement is particularly true in the context of sport, especially when women are away from the male gaze (James, 2000).

The next stereotype has been discussed in the media section but will briefly be looked at here. As described above, male athletes are portrayed as strong, disciplined and competitive, while female athletes are portrayed as emotional, graceful and passive (Laberge & Albert, 1999; Koivula, 2001). Thus, men are taught manliness through sport and women are taught that strength and toughness are not attributes that women should strive to achieve (Cronan & Scott, 2008). The graph that illustrated the results of the statement "girls/women who play sport lack femininity" illustrated that 79% of the competing group strongly disagreed with the statement while 89% of the terminated group did not agree with the statement. The majority of the group did feel that women who played sport were still feminine, which was a positive outcome. Stetson-Lee (2008) made a good argument that when women excel in the sporting world (and even the business world), they tend to express their power and strength in this world while still maintaining their feminine image. They do this by engaging in a "hyper-feminisation process like adding jewellery and makeup, taking up modelling, and strongly associating themselves with their husbands, boyfriends and kids" (Stetson-Lee, 2008: 11).

This phenomenon is often seen in the cycling world where cycling teams add pink to their cycling kits. Examples of this are Subaru-Gary Fisher, 2007 mountain bike team, and Team Velo Bella (Stetson-Lee, 2008:11).

Messner (1994) said that “sports have always been considered a man’s domain”. In the graph that illustrated how women feel about other women competing in previously male-dominated sports, the response showed that 50% of the competing group, compared to the 64% of the terminated group, strongly agreed that women should compete. Within the competing group, 17% (compared to 8% of the terminated group) thought women should not compete in these sports.

Stetson-Lee (2008) identified in her research that there was a difference in the portrayal of a male cyclist compared to a female cyclist. She says “male cyclist’s images are of fast, strong and courageous riders. Women’s images are of fast, strong and sexy riders” (2008: 12). This goes on to say that “the portrayal of female cyclists can be seen as more degrading than the men since the attention is based more on physical appearance and not on their talent and ability”. The graph for “only ‘beautiful’, model-like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships” shows that 49% of the competing group and 50% of the terminated group strongly disagreed with this statement. Therefore, half of the South African sportswomen do feel that talent overrides beauty. This is a positive outcome in the South African sports context and seems to be changing when one compares it to the research by Stetson-Lee.

## **5.7 PARENTAL PRESSURE**

Parental pressure is defined in this study as the amount of motivational control the parent has on the child-athlete relationship to compete in sports, to achieve at a certain level, and continue sport participation (Hellstedt, 1990). Children are more likely to experience great pleasure and feel less nervous in sports when parents have realistic expectations, they provide support and offer confidence toward their child’s efforts, and give positive feedback regarding athletic performance (Hamstra, Cherubini & Swanik, 2002).

However, parents who are critical of their children’s performances and focus on them winning tend to have children who exhibit higher levels of cognitive anxiety, believe less in their abilities and worry about their performance (Collins & Barber, 2005).

One also finds the extreme, where parents tend to be controlling, use offensive comments, hold unrealistic performance expectations and push their children in inappropriate ways. This can reduce a child's independence, intrinsic motivation to participate in sport, and can even lead them to drop out (Fraser-Thomas, Côte &, Deakin, 2008; Holt, 2008b; Holt, 2009).

Of the terminated group 95%, and 92% of the competing group, said their parents support and encourage the participation of sport. Past research shows that when a child perceives the parent and child relationship as positive then the child will have increased enjoyment, perceived competence and self-determined motivation in sport (Ullrich-French & Smith, 2006). In this study, very high numbers of athletes felt that there was the required support and encouragement.

Of the terminated group 92%, and out of the competing group 79%, said their parents transport them to the sports venues willingly. Generally, boys have more sports engagements than girls and consequently there are greater parental expectations for achievement. This creates a problem as, in many cases, parents are less willing to give up time and resources for their daughters to succeed in sport (Ellis *et al.*, 2003).

In this research the parents in the sample were quite involved in the child's lifting to and from events. It is very important that a parent takes the time to transport their daughters around and not only to focus on their sons' sporting achievements.

Of the terminated group 86%, and out of the competing group 79%, said their parents attend the competitions or matches. In the terminated group, 84% said their parents did not react negatively toward the referees/umpires/judges when the athlete lost, while 88% of the competing group agreed.

These results are very positive as many parents can get too involved and emotional about the outcome of their child's performance. It is often the case that negative involvement can include parents slating officials, "using blasphemy in front of enthusiasts and participants, furiously confronting coaches about a child's playing, and intimidating or actually instigating physical harm of officials or coaches" (Hamstra *et al.*, 2002).

Only 20% of the terminated group and 29% of the competing group said their parents got involved in the sport administration and regulation of the team. As many schools and club organisations in South Africa are run and operated by the parents of the athletes, these numbers seem quite low. However, maybe by not getting involved in the operations of the club this results in less parental pressure on the athlete.

This was noted in Hamstra *et al.*, (2002: 37) where it states “a low perception of parental pressure has been shown to be predictive of increased enjoyment in youth athletes”. A recent unverified media report on the 702 radio station discussed research on injuries to boxers, which found that having a father in the corner correlated very highly with the injuries that occurred in the ring.

Of the terminated group 62%, and out of the competing group 17%, have parents who made the athlete train when they did not want to. This is also significant. Past research shows that “sporting families need to find a balance of understanding, support and encouragement of maximal effort.

Parents who pressure their children excessively run the risk of eliciting a negative response and need to be aware of the possibility that excessive pressure to participate may result in parent-child conflict or youth sport withdrawal” (Hellstedt, 1990: 138). In this study, 50% of the parents had high expectations of the athletes and 84% felt that they met their parent’s expectations.

A general observation about society across the world is highlighted in past research by Ellis *et al.*, (2003), which suggested that girls’ sports involvement is closely monitored. This means that only if the parent is happy with where their daughter is going, they know what activity they will be doing, who their daughter is going to be with and what time they will return, will they let them go. Parents are generally more lenient with a boy and not so demanding of every detail of his whereabouts. This could be viewed both positively and negatively. However, in terms of this research extreme control over the child, especially the girl, can have negative ramifications (Ellis *et al.*, 2003).

In hindsight a question that was not asked was: “What about parental participation in sport, past or present?” This could have highlighted the upbringing, environment (sporty parents or not so sporty parents), and social interaction of the family home.

## 5.8 THE ROLES OF PEERS AND FRIENDS

According to Brustad, Babkes and Smith (2001), it is during early adolescence that peers are very influential peers, then have a considerable amount of influence on a child’s motivation. In this research conducted, 75% of the continued group felt they had more encouragement and support from their friends compared to 35% of the group who terminated their sporting careers. Ellis *et al.*, (2003: 233) said “the images that peer groups attach to physical activity strongly determine adolescent girls’ willingness to participate and display their sporting ability. It seems that females are keen to be involved and excel in sports that have positive social benefits for them.”

Of the terminated group 77%, and of the competing group 79%, felt that they had support of family and friends. In both cases, the groups are very similar. Of the terminated group, 67% of the same athletes who terminated their sporting careers felt their friends were encouraging, while 79% of those still competing feel that they have encouraging friends. Those still competing have far more encouraging friends. Findings in the literature find that children younger than 10 years old generally rely on adult feedback; however, over the age of ten years they rely more on the feedback of their peers. Thus, as a child grows older peer feedback is more important to them than adult feedback (Vazou, Ntoumanis & Duda, 2005). Thus, encouraging friends could help motivate athletes to continue sport. The researcher notes that 60% of the terminated group and 77% of the competing group strongly feel their friends understand that they have to focus on their sport and in many cases cannot go out and party. This large difference shows that support of the athletes when they could not to go out with friends might have an effect on why these women continued their sport.

Finally, only 44% of the terminated group and 34% of the competing group have friends who watch them compete. The findings in this research correlate with past research.

According to Ullrich-French and Smith (2006: 211) “perceptions of peer relationships are particularly important to youth sport motivation. Perceived peer acceptance predicted all the motivational indices, contributing to the prediction of enjoyment and perceived competence in combination with other social relationships”.

## **5.9 THE ROLE OF THE COACH**

### **5.9.1 A COACH’S REACTION TO LOSING AND WINNING**

The following question was important in order to identify if there was a difference in the coaching style and personality of the coach when the athletes were winning or losing.

#### **GROUP STILL COMPETING: LOSING**

For the competing group, it was interesting to note the “coach discussed what was going wrong first, tried to keep us to stay with the basics”, “they break down problems so they can be tackled bit by bit and from different angles.” Then the coach always “kept the goal in sight, focused on the bigger picture”. It was important to focus on the bigger picture so that one doesn’t beat oneself up over the smaller events. The coach “always provided words of encouragement”. “The coach was sympathetic, however made sure one moved past the disappointment and only at the end would the coach use positive reinforcement and always had a positive thing to say.” This is in line with the research by Weiss and Weiss (2006: 320) that found that “95% of youths who played with more supportive coaches returned to play”.

#### **GROUP STILL COMPETING: WINNING**

For those still competing in sport it was interesting to note that the results identified the first and foremost action their coach would take was to congratulate the athlete and provide much praise. The coach “was very positive and excited when we are winning”, then provided the positive feedback and encouragement. This is substantiated by research from (Daley, 1978; Weis & Freidrichs, 1986), which says that coaches can aid the most favourable athletic performance when they make use of positive feedback and reinforcement strategies.

#### **TERMINATED GROUP: LOSING**

From the terminated group a number of themes came up. The first theme was the same when the athletes were winning: the coach provided positive feedback.

In this case the coach encouraged playing as a team (in team sports), the coach would identify positive work that had been done and highlight through encouragement to get the athletes to believe that they were the better team/athlete and that the one who wants it most will win. Ultimately, coaches who broke athletes down were not as effective as coaches who were positive and optimistic. The second-most frequent theme was the coach discussed the weak points that needed to be worked on. A participant said that their coach “told us that there was always something to learn from a game and sometimes even winning a game, when you didn't play your best was worse than losing well”.

### **TERMINATED GROUP: WINNING**

From those who terminated their sporting careers, the following themes came up. Most of the coaches provided positive feedback to the athlete, which encouraged them to carry on playing as they did. Other coaches kept the athlete challenged right until the end, the coach never settled in a comfort zone and often used terms such as “the game isn't over till the final whistle”. Coaches discussed the game/performance during half-time or after the race was completed when they looked at what had improved and focused on specific goals that had been achieved. In few cases the athletes said the coach did not say much and provided very little encouragement. It is these two last themes that athletes would discourage in future coaches.

There were a couple of athletes who said their coach never gave encouragement, their coach tended to get angry with them, they would point out whose fault it was that they lost and they were disappointed with the athletes. In some cases, the coach insulted and never took any notice of the athletes. According to Weis and Weis (2006), coaches who were more controlling only had a 75% player return. Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1978) and Smith and Smoll (1983) identified that if the athlete viewed the behaviour of the coach positively then success, effort, self-esteem and sport enjoyment was greater than if the behaviour of the coach was viewed as negative.

### **5.9.2 COACHES AND SUPPORT**

This relates back to the relationship between the coach and the athlete. If there is a positive and strong bond between the two then it will lead to good performance. If there is no relationship, the outcomes will often be low.

The results were not very impressive and were relatively low (70% range) for all athletes, whether they were in the terminating group or the continuing group. Therefore, if only 70% of the athletes felt their coach was supportive on and off the field or court then there is a 20-30% unsatisfactory coaching relationships. The same sorts of results were identified regarding the ability of athletes to confide in their coaches. The results were not high; only in the 50% range. The continuing group showed a higher rating than the terminated group, which was interesting. The ability to confide in one's coach and the support that a coach provides to an athlete are very much related. If an athlete feels confident that no matter what they tell the coach, the coach will provide his or her support, then the athlete will feel confident that she has the coach's support no matter what.

### **5.9.3 TRAINING TECHNIQUES**

For the competing group, 45% said their coaches used specific training techniques, and 33% said their coaches made use of mental techniques as well. In both cases, these numbers seem rather low as all the participants are or were elite athletes. One would expect their training to be scientifically prepared to get the best results possible out of these athletes. Even more frightening is the paucity of mental training. It appears that women athletes competing in elite sports in South Africa are getting very basic mental preparation and support to aid their physical training.

Among the terminated group, 48% said their coaches used specific training techniques, while 28% said their coaches made use of mental techniques as well. In both groups the coaches use similar techniques. Mental training would encompass anything that requires focusing, such as getting into the "zone", positive thinking, psychological training, relaxation and visualisation exercises, and sports hypnotherapy. Physical techniques include training the physical body, such as power training, specific drills, interval work, and heart-rated based training.

### **5.9.4 DEFINING A COACH AND IDENTIFYING A COACH'S ROLE**

Coaches have very special roles to play in the development of children. They impact children in such ways that children will remember their coaches for the rest of their lives.

At an international conference on organised sport in the lives of children and adolescents, Biddle (1999) stated that it is important to understand that "it isn't what you do (with female

athletes)... but how you do it". Therefore, participants of this research were asked to summarise their coach. Through this study the researcher identified that a coach requires a variety of skill sets:

*A coach requires the technical knowledge and experience of the sport. This has to be conveyed to the athlete in structured organised training programmes. A coach should know themselves before they try to push their athletes, to encourage and motivate them to their ultimate limits and they need to do it in the best interest of the sport. They can never forget they are dealing with people and being attentive to their athletes' needs is vital. They need to be positive and energetic people that can pass their energy, commitment and passion to their athletes. They need to be determined yet approachable and patient.*

The seven key qualities that researchers have identified are highlighted below in bold and a short description is provided to illustrate each quality.

**A coach needs to have technical knowledge:** Without the technical knowledge a coach cannot really coach. This comes from experience in the sport, having played the sport themselves, either currently or in the past. They need to have some knowledge of training techniques and sport science to understand the effects of training.

**The coach as a person** who needs to be able to bring out people's strengths and encourage their athletes to reach limits beyond what was thought possible. The coach must be **motivational and a good leader**, who can be inspire his/her athletes. Coaches must also be able to show their emotions and provide support, **be compassionate and be attentive** to the needs of the athlete. A coach's personality needs to **gain the respect** of everyone they coach and they need to be a role model for the athletes.

Finally, **self-discipline** is required as there are times when a coach should be slightly tough and firm, taking charge and telling an athlete what is required of them to perform at their best. This is supported by the work of Petitpas *et al.*, (2005), which says that developing young athletes requires supportive coaches interacting with the athlete. It is the quality of the relationship formed between the athlete and the coach that leads to positive outcomes.

“Sharp shooter and ballet dancer, spelling champion and botanist, applauded for being both smart and strong, she is a mistress of excellence” (Badolato, 1998: 33).

This account describes a young girl starting her school career feeling highly able in all parts of her life. She has an optimistic awareness of her abilities and is equipped to demonstrate her talents both inside and outside the classroom. Badolato (1998) noted that females in childhood feel certain and at ease in displaying their skills on the playing field. The future seems so dazzling and encouraging for girls such as the one described above, yet something seems to go dramatically wrong, described by Davis and Rimm (1998) as what happens to this talent in girls?

Thus, female physical education teachers and coaches of girls and women could potentially be a “powerful role model for many young women who are athletically talented” (Ellis *et al.*, 2008: 233). Therefore, in the future we need to identify how coaches should be training their athletes to prevent termination of their sporting careers. Athletes themselves have provided advice on how to train and coach female athletes coming through the system. The following two statements summarise all the key themes:

- *“The coach must be dedicated to these athletes as he/she is probably the most influential person in the athlete’s life.”*
- *“Try to work with the whole person.”*

It is interesting to note that, while all themes are very important, the two groups highlighted different key themes.

There is reason to believe that most valuable responses came from the women who have continued sport as these themes might identify the reasons that kept them competing through all the obstacles and challenges.

The themes that were recognised by those still competing in sport are identified as: First and foremost, a coach needs to build self-confidence in an athlete. As one athlete says: “Keep building a player's confidence. You may have all the skill in the world but it is useless if the girl has no confidence”.

Always make a person feel good about themselves as this will give a person confidence and enable them to perform better, “teach them to believe in themselves and their own abilities” and build their self-esteem.

This has been supported by much research, Ellis *et al.*, (2003) noted in their study that girls who attended a special academy for sport did not believe that they had a special athletic talent as they attributed their success to factors other than their own skills and ability. Girls need to be handled gently and treated with care as girls are more emotional than boys, and the coach must remember things that happen outside the sports arena can easily affect their training. Do not put too much pressure on the athletes and remember it must still be fun. Make it fun, otherwise the enjoyment will be taken out of it and that's when they will give up; don't be so serious all the time; allow for bad days; always give what you would expect in return; and do not push them too hard as they still need to find themselves, in life not just in sport. Sometimes being so hard on them could break them and they might give up that specific sport. Be hard, but be fair. Finally, listen to their problems, listen to them and encourage them as much as possible. Rather lose athletes for one session than lose them in the sport completely.

Those who terminated their sporting careers highlight the following themes and techniques coaches should use to train the girls of tomorrow: Provide motivation to the athlete; remain positive toward the athlete, and always be encouraging. The reasons women participated in sport was because they were recognised for their success, so recognise the athlete's success; let them know if you recognise potential in them, and know each one's abilities so that you can improve each child's talent to the optimum.

Respect and trust the athlete; if the athlete trusts and respects the coach they will train hard to impress; establish a sense of trust so that the athlete knows they can come to the coach with a problem. Make training and competition fun; this is so important, especially at a young age. It's not about winning; the athlete must enjoy the sport to participate in it. If they enjoy the sport, they will succeed and if they are having fun then they will want to participate. This is supported by Stewart and Taylor (2000), who identified in their study that too much focus on winning and not enough on fun can result in athletes terminating their sporting careers. Listen to athletes. Be sensitive to their needs; and know when to reward rather than only criticise.

Support the athlete in all aspects of their life; support the girls through their developmental time and do not push them beyond their individual threshold; it is important to be interested in the players as people first and then as sportswomen. If female athletes have male coaches, do not assume that coaching males and females is the same.

Sometimes the manner which one would criticise a man would be hurtful and offensive to a female; train girls like they are girls, not like they are boys going to war. However, another participant said one “can't give them leeway simply because of their gender”. This is supported by the research that Garcia (1992) did, which concluded that coaching behaviours that in the past had been acknowledged by males, or seen as acceptable with all athletes, might be considered mean, rude, unfair and not encouraging enough by female athletes today.

Through the research participants highlighted the importance of not using derogatory, abusive and negative training techniques. Participants said there is no need for “harsh words and painful training methods”, “to push the athlete too hard, because if you push too far the child will be put off”. A coach should not be “too hard on an athlete if they don't perform every time”. Lastly, “try not to put down, but use constructive criticism”.

Six important points were brought up and need to be highlighted. Participants of this study said to remember these points as they are core to being a good coach:

The six identified tips for future coaches:

**1) “Be mindful about what you say to girls regarding body shapes”**

This is a sensitive issue when dealing with girls who are developing, and women. In today's society where being thin is what is “in”, one should not tease about weight or shape. An example from one participant in the study: She needed to lose 15kg to get into the South African Squad for lightweight rowing. She pushed herself for a whole month, eating practically nothing, and training long and tedious hours. When weigh-in came she had lost 14,8kg. According to the coach it was not enough, she needed to have lost 15kg and she was dropped from the squad. Subsequently, she terminated her career.

From another perspective there is a very specific cut-off for lightweights and maybe she should not have been trying for that class.

However, this boils down to how a coach should interact with girls “it isn’t what you do (with female athletes)...but how you do it” Biddle (1999). There could have been better ways to handle this, which would have kept the girl motivated and determined to train and compete. Therefore, this was a serious coaching blunder and the situation should never have been dealt with in this manner.

**2) “Teach girls life skills to deal with the many difficulties of today”**

The greatest life lessons can be learnt in the sporting domain, lessons such as leadership, sportsmanship, failure, success, hard work, determination, passion and honesty. The coach needs to take the time to highlight an event when young athletes have learnt lessons, as these lessons will filter through into adulthood and guide them on how they develop into adults.

**3) “Sport should be important but it shouldn’t rule their lives”**

Developing girls should be allowed to be girls. They should be allowed to go out to parties, be with friends and enjoy school activities. It is a combination of all these activities that makes a girl into a woman. There must be a balance and with balance a girl will enjoy her sport, see value in it and carry on.

**4) “Work on girls’ strengths”**

It is so important for girls to have self-confidence. The minute they are confident in themselves, they are proud and achieve what they want to. Thus, a coach must “work on girls’ strengths”, let them know it, let them be proud that they are good at something and congratulate them when they succeed.

**5) “Pick players on the basis of merit, not favouritism”**

So many times in the sporting and non-sporting world, the person who gets chosen is not necessarily the best and right person, but the favourite one. This has a huge effect on athletes who think – and know – they are the better player. If this happens to an athlete a couple of times that athlete is not likely to carry on as they will not be chosen.

## 6) “Love your job as a coach”

There is nothing better to an athlete than having a coach who is passionate. The energy the coach has for the sport so often transfers to the athlete.

A coach should identify the weak points; work on them until they become the athlete’s potential strong points. A coach should always be supportive and sympathetic to the athletes. An athlete cannot win them all and thus the coach needs to keep the athlete focused on where they are going and keep the bigger picture in sight. It is vital that the athlete is not made to feel like a disappointment and the coach should never doubt the athlete. Comfort the athlete if it is required. At the end of the day one has to realise that sometimes training harder and smarter will improve skills and make you the ultimate athlete.

As a coach, one’s reactions to athletes who have lost or are on a losing streak, must always be in light of the bigger picture. This illustration is worth a thousand words.

In this investigation the following themes were identified:

- To have good, sound technical knowledge;
- To have the ability to connect with athletes;
- To be able to motivate athletes;
- A personality that reflects selflessness, reality and care.
- To be dedicated and committed to their athletes

## 5.10 TERTIARY EDUCATION FROM “OTHER-RELIANCE” TO “SELF-RELIANCE”

The classic saying that “a sound mind in a healthy body”, *Mens sana in corpore sano*, (Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau) still holds some truth. It is this saying that encompasses the next section. Even our classical writers on education, such as Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau, have all emphasised their view that the development of the mind needs to be balanced by the development of the body (Bailey, Armour, Kirk, Jess, Pickup, Sandford & Bera, 2009).

In the research that was conducted the same trends applied to both groups (the group that terminated and continued sport) through university.

These women – whether they were in the terminated or the continued groups – carried on because of the passion for sports. They made time and were determined to carry on. The women who did eventually terminate their sport, terminated for a completely different reason. The women who terminated their sporting careers during university found reasons to stop and were not as passionate as the other women. It is for this reason that two different headings “Tertiary education and sports” and “other-reliance to self reliance” have been encompassed into one. The research has identified that the same themes emerge. When leaving school and going to university, the responsibility is on the individual to carry on with sports. There is no obligation to the school or the parents’ choice and thus one can see how both these headings go hand in hand.

### **Women who maintained sport throughout their university careers**

They thought that sport directed them, aided their academic work, or gave them a chance to have an academic career as well as a sporting career.

It is interesting that in both the terminated and continued groups, the women who did carry on sport through their university career all found time for sport and all benefited from it. There is no real difference between these groups. They all found a way to maintain their training and many based their academic study on sporting degrees. Commitment to sport and academics was achieved.

Even though some of these women eventually terminated their sporting careers (for whatever reason) they said going to university did not affect their sports. Their comments include:

- *“The university was very supportive.”*
- *“Studying made it easier to row because we could train between lectures and often there was also great camaraderie amongst the varsity rowers.”*
- *“Well suited to competitive training/competition as studies could be done part-time.”*
- *“My studying did not reduce my sport in any way as I found I had more free time than ever before.”*
- *“I studied engineering and time is limited, however, I believe in both an active mind and body, and if I continued training during exams I found I did better. So there was never an issue during my tertiary education.”*

In this case we see that tertiary education just carried on as in every other non-athletic person's experience. In the next theme that was identified, the women's sporting careers directed their field of study.

- *"I decided to do Human Movement Science so I could improve my skills in cheerleading and develop the sport in the country. This gave me the big advantage in maintaining my athletic competitiveness."*
- *"I studied Human Movement Science at Stellenbosch (MBK) so it fitted my sporting career. It was no problem to get time off for tournaments and we were recognised with full sport colours by US for our achievements."*
- *"Actually my sporting career influenced my choice of academic study. All I wanted to do was to do sport, so I decided to take a Sports Science (BA) course which provided time for intense sports careers."*
- *"My sporting career had a big influence on my choice of study. The only reason I studied sport science was to accommodate my sport. My true passion lies within the Health Science Faculty but my sporting hours and my goal to go to the Olympics would not accommodate such an intense study course. The Sport Science faculty understands when I need to travel and miss exams or tests."*

These last comments show that a sport scholarship actually enabled athletes to further their academic education.

- *"I had a full scholarship in America; this enabled me to do what I love and get an international degree. I was also in a country where most tournaments are played, so travelling was easy."*
- *"I am a medical doctor and managed to play throughout my academic career. A sport scholarship offered to me helped me to decide on which university to choose."*

Thus, for these women sport was as much a priority as their academic education. It is not surprising as we know from past research that there is a link between exercise and cognitive outcomes. Together they improve mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and enthusiasm for learning (Bailey *et al.*, 2009). These women knew that sport helped them perform academically, thus they maintained the mind/body balance.

They had been given an opportunity to play professional sports, to participate at a competitive level at university and they made it happen.

The women who terminated their sport at tertiary education terminated for the following reasons:

#### **Studying took up too much of my time and I had to terminate my sport**

- *“I realised I need to focus on one thing only, and unfortunately that was my studies.”*
- *“I started studying law so I couldn’t train as much as I used to. Because I had suffered so many injuries I was forced to give up but I started coaching 3 times a week”.*
- *“Time constraints – I didn’t have time to practise/compete.”*

#### **Transport became a problem and I had to terminate my sport**

- *“Not having my own car when I was studying, and time constraints.”*

#### **Lost my scholarship/financial problems so I had to terminate sports**

- *“My first year out of school I studied BSc and that took up a lot of time. I played social hockey and horse riding competitively but lost my sponsorship during the year as I could not train enough. I therefore stopped competing at the end of that year due to time and financial constraints.”*
- *“I did not get a bursary for netball. This is one of the main reasons why I stopped. Because of financial reasons I decided to rather coach than play netball.”*

These women either went into an academic study area that did not allow for time or didn’t seem passionate enough about their sport to insist they carry on. From the outside it seems that laziness and the feeling that “I have been there, done that” comes into play and it was easier to stop than carry on. These women also did not carry on at a social level; they just terminated. Transport problems certainly do affect training but this challenge can be overcome if the women really want to carry on. Losing a scholarship reduces motivation to compete and this lack of motivation is hard to overcome.

Through this research one can conclude that if athletes have passion they will compete and participate. In the sample group there was an athlete who was studying to be a doctor and she maintained participation. There was also an athlete who lost her scholarship but found another way to maintain her sport. It can be done but it's up to the individual and whether they have the passion and drive to compete.

There is no past research to substantiate why women carry on sport at a tertiary education. However, from this research, it appears to come down to passion. In the abovementioned examples it was about whether the women had passion for their sport. Terminating sport does not necessarily happen because one goes to university but because of a change of focus in life, wanting to try something new and also past experiences with the sport, coaches and environments.

## **5.11 COMPETITION AND SPORT**

The results between the two groups are very similar. These only reflected a couple of percentage points difference and are not large enough to gain an understanding of why one group is different to the other. The figures that reflected the biggest difference were in the graph that asked if they were mentally strong: 83% of the continuing group felt so while 97% of the terminated group agreed.

The following statements: "I competed to the best of my ability, I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport, I was mentally strong, physically I am/was strong, I compete for myself, I feel I can do better, I am at the top of my game" all centre around the self-theories. A self-theory is the "perceptions of the participant's sporting ability" (Dweck, 2000: 205). All these figures identify that the athlete felt they had put the effort into their sport and felt they had ability. In self-theories there are two perceptions, either entity theory (mixed mindset) or incremental theory (growth mindset). It is the participants who display a growth mindset who generally continue sport as they feel there is always room for improvement. If you put in the effort, your skill will improve and your talent will increase (Dweck, 2000). It is also reasonable to argue that sport participation by athletes with a high growth mindset will continue as they can react constructively to success and failure in sport (Steyn, 2001).

It was interesting to note that the general pattern in the above figures showed that the terminated group generally agreed more with the statements (by a small amount) compared to the continued group. This could be because these athletes had more of a fixed mindset, while the continued group who are still competing felt that they were always improving, and this growth mindset showed there was reason to continue sport.

The two questions that identified whether ego or task orientation was at play and could have any influence on continuation or termination in sport were: “I wanted to prove to others that I was the best” and “I am at the top of my game”. In both cases the continuing group had higher results than the terminated group. Ego orientation is defined as “the tendency to view success relative to performance of others” (Steyn, 2001: 13). These people use sport to improve their own special status and prominence. Task-orientated individuals would use sport as a process in personal improvement and would focus primarily on self-improvement. It is interesting to note that the continuing group scored higher in showing themselves off to others and thus had higher ego orientation than those of the terminated group.

When looking at the task-orientated questions: “I competed to the best of my ability, I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport, I was mentally strong, physically I am/was strong, I compete for myself”, the continued group generally also scored higher (four out of six times). For the question “I feel I can do better”, 79% of the continued group agreed compared to the terminated group with 74%. This is a task question and an indication that the terminated group felt much more incomplete than the girls and women who continued sport.

From the above, the following can be concluded in this investigation: an athlete who has a growth mindset and is focused more on task orientation is likely to continue sport over someone who has a fixed mindset and is more ego-orientated.

## **5.12 COPING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES**

It is evident through this research that coping strategies were used to overcome the negative aspects that each and every sportswoman was confronted with. The biggest obstacle that was highlighted was the lack of balance in one’s life. The themes that were identified to reduce the lack of balance in their lives were:

- Training commenced in the early morning or evening, which made one's day long.
- Sacrifices have to be made in order to compete.
- Self-discipline is imperative.
- Planning, time management and routine were key elements in getting everything done.
- A supportive family is essential.

When sportswomen were confronted with obstacles, they overcame them by:

- Changing their training structure
- Changing their coaches
- Paying for all the expenses associated with their sport themselves
- Trying to ignore the politics
- Following a proper rehabilitation programme after getting injured
- Mind over matter; making it happen

### **5.13 SPORT INFLUENCE ON THE WOMEN AND THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION**

According to Perry–Burney and Kwaku Takyi (2002: 20), who asked female athletes if sport participation influenced how they think and feel about themselves, and if it had improved their self-esteem and image of themselves, “ninety percent said yes”. This study, 95% of the terminated group agreed that sport had enhanced life and 100% of the competing group feel that sport has enhanced life and image. In recent years, Gould and Carsons (2008) have identified that there is not enough research that has focused specifically on how sport may enhance positive youth development.

There is no doubt that sport enhances the women of today, as participants in the research have revealed. “It taught me discipline, tenacity and how to enhance my strengths and address my weaknesses”. “It taught me humility, time management, to focus and how to set realistic goals and push myself physically and mentally”. “It also taught me how to deal with setbacks and how to celebrate hard work and reward”. “Being a team sport was one of the main things that appealed to me as I thrived on being part of a successful unit and setting and reaching goals together” (participant in the research). Giving the opportunity to girls and women to play sport thus enhances the women of tomorrow.

It teaches one so many life lessons that cannot be learnt in the classroom. “Playing in a team sport teaches one how to work with other people, socialise in a big group and achieve group goals” (participant in the research).

It is well known that there are lessons that are required for working in business in later life and if attained while at school, the athletes leave school with far more than just an academic education. Thus, for the women in this research, sport, in general, had been a vital part of their lives, moulding them into the people they became. What these women have learnt from sport is priceless and “the decisions that they have made in terms of sport many wouldn’t change” (participant in the research). All of the above is supported by past research. For example, a Holt *et al.*, (2008b) study, which was conducted on a high school soccer team, found that through sport the athletes learnt about teamwork and leadership.

In a Camiré, Trudel and Forneris (2009) study, high school athletes believed sport participation allowed them to develop a number of skills and attributes, such as communication and self-efficacy. They felt these attributes could be transferred to other life domains. Sport has been shown to allow youth to learn life skills. These life skills have been defined as the skills that help youth succeed in the different environments in which they live. They can include behavioural (effective communication), cognitive (effective decision-making), interpersonal (assertiveness) and intra-personal (goal setting) skills and can also consist of dispositions, such as self-confidence and self-esteem (Danish, *et al.*, 2004).

The results from this study have correlated with many other studies and highlighted many other and different aspects. This study has identified that there are a multiple of reasons why women terminate sport, challenges sportswomen face and how these women handle these challenges. As all the results have been discussed the next section includes the summary and conclusion for this study.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION SUMMARY

#### 6.1 REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS

The research identified five reasons why women terminate their sporting careers: (1) decreased motivation and interest in sport (55%); (2) coach problems (43%); (3) academic pressure (36%); (4) injury (35%) and (5) politics in sport (33%). These factors all support one common theme: an absence of properly qualified coaches in South Africa.

#### 6.2 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

It is evident through this research that a direct correlation exists between the number of women who participate in competitive sport and the amount of time allocated to sportswomen on television, radio and in print. Until the media amends its focus on male sports, little will change in women's sporting arenas. To a large extent, the media determines everything in sport, wielding power and influence over society at all levels. In turn, its impact on women and the role models it creates, cannot be ignored. If girls of today had greater media access to inspiring female sports leaders who break down the stereotypes of female athletes, then the girls of tomorrow would idealise sportswomen and encourage – even require – more generous media coverage. The butterfly effect still exists: lack of media coverage results in lack of sponsorship, and so fewer women adopt sport as a career.

#### 6.3 STEREOTYPES IN SPORT

Stereotypes continue to dominate in the media – and therefore influence perceptions held by society. Despite the presence of women who participate at a competitive level and have broken down barriers between what was traditionally considered male and female sports, greater society has not. Women are still categorised according to the typical mother, wife, sex symbol or career seeker. She always looks glamorous and seldom sweats. Until commercial brands support a wider spectrum of female role models, current stereotypes will prevail.

Until more adverts – like Nike's 1996 "There is a Girl in America" – filter into society, make an impact and break society's constructs, advertising will continue to endorse popular stereotypes.

## **6.4 PARENTAL PRESSURE**

There is a fine line between a parent who is involved in their children's sporting lives and a parent who is too involved. This study has identified benchmarks for, for example, when it is and is not appropriate to push a child to do something they don't want to do. The results show that within the group still competing, only 17% of them had parents who pushed them to train when they did not want to. This can be compared to the group who have terminated sport: 62% were forced to train against their will. Parental enforcement can result in early sport termination.

## **6.5 THE ROLE OF PEERS AND FRIENDS**

The findings in this research correlate with past research, according to Ullrich-French and Smith (2006: 211) "perceptions of peer relationships are particularly important to youth sport motivation. Perceived peer acceptance, predicted all the motivational indices, contributing to the prediction of enjoyment and perceived competence in combination with other social relationships".

## **6.6 THE ROLE OF THE COACH**

This research has proved that our coaches, their coaching methods and handling the girls of today have a profound impact on termination or continuation of sport. Our coaches are their role models and girls will only aspire to be as good as our coaches can motivate and prepare them to be. It is not as one-dimensional as communicating a training programme to an athlete. It is embedded in the nature of the coach-athlete relationship on and off the field. Coaches have a deep impact on each individual they work with. The coach is in the position to mould an athlete to become a better or stronger person when faced with challenges, fear or failure and to learn valuable life lessons from sport. As a point of interest, in the sport of ice-skating it is common for an athlete to marry their partner or coach.

This is not surprising, given that a partner or coach works with an intense understanding of the athlete's emotional and physical well-being. A successful coach-athlete relationship surpasses the limitations of a training programme – it falls outside the box and boundaries are broken.

As the research identified, the methods employed by the coach keeps an athlete motivated, or not. Keeping abreast of training research and making use of technology show positive results.

Where training is monotonous and long, a key factor to performance and an enduring sporting career is the coach's ability to find innovative ways for the athlete to overcome mundane effort and continue to push boundaries.

## **6.7 TERTIARY EDUCATION MOVING FROM “OTHER-RELIANCE” TO “SELF-RELIANCE”**

This research identifies passion as a key factor in women who continue to participate at a tertiary level. Terminating sport is not necessarily because one goes to university but rather because of a change of focus in life and wanting to try something new.

## **6.8 COMPETITION AND SPORT**

The results of this research endorse the opinion that an athlete who has a growth mindset and is focused on task orientation is more likely to continue sport over someone who has a fixed mindset and is more ego-orientated.

## **6.9 COPING STRATEGIES AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN SPORT**

The research showed that for women athletes, life balance is elusive. Juggling work, family and sport commitments requires continual sacrifice. The women who continue to do sport have highlighted that, in order to cope with everyday obstacles and responsibilities, they have had to make some major adjustments. These include a change in training structures, different coaches or paying all the expenses associated with their sport themselves.

Others cited having to ignore politics or independently find an effective rehabilitation programme after being injured. Sheer determination to succeed and mind over matter was also raised as a common point.

The reward, ultimately, was simple gratification, success and a true sense of empowerment. Through sport, these women have learnt that anything can be achieved.

Sport is a vehicle to realising the depths of one's true potential, self-actualisation, increased self-esteem and defining what it means to be a woman.

## **6.10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This has been such an interesting study, and the results are very different to what was expected. However, this research is the first of its kind in South Africa to look at why elite sportswomen are terminating their career.

Future recommendations would be to look at the Black, Asian and Coloured population groups and compare this research with these other population groups. The results would probably raise very different issues and would identify some of the barriers that these women are experiencing in the sporting world.

Other recommendations are to look solely at national and international athletes as this would also highlight slightly different challenges being experienced at the top end of South African sports.

A suggestion for further research should be what the impact of gyms is on women's sport. Have these made a difference on the number of women competing in sport?

Another recommendation is to compare two elite groups of athletes: men versus women. This would enable one to see if different themes in the different genders are occurring, or whether women experience similar obstacles to men.

One can't help thinking that much of what is being highlighted in this research applies equally to men. However, what could be expected is that the obstacles highlighted by this study would probably only be applicable to the male, non-mainstream sports, such as triathlon, squash, cycling, tennis, hockey and swimming. This is primarily because television and print media are solely focused on the mainstream male sports, being soccer, cricket and rugby in South Africa.

It would be interesting to see the effects of the lack of television coverage provided for sportswomen in South Africa and how it affects the sportswomen and youth of tomorrow.

Finally, has the emergence of gyms (such as Virgin Active and Planet Fitness) actually affected the increase or decrease in women's traditional sport? Does gym make traditional sport seem more fun and viable or is going to the gym much more appealing to the women of today?

## **6.11 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

Theoretical research is very important in any science. It is what society, government and sporting bodies do with this information that makes the research worthwhile or not.

This research would be most useful to coaches of athletes. It would give them a better understanding of what children need (girls and boys). It highlights the "to do's" and the "do not's". It would guide more coaches and could possibly result in more sportswomen continuing their careers. The development of a specific course aimed at coaches could also work.

This research should also be useful to sporting bodies, as through research one can prove that coaches need special training in order to be a really good coach. It is not a simple task and not everyone has the ability to do so. Even more, it would challenge the premise that if you were an athlete in the past you would make a good coach. There are many aspects that make a good coach and it is so important that a coach nurtures these aspects to develop their young athlete.

Research such as this could aid television and media coverage and put more pressure on media companies to broadcast more women's sport, publicise results and inform the public about what women are achieving on the sports field. More importantly, it would highlight that giving television time to women in the sporting domain enables our girls of tomorrow to see other women achieving these results and to have role models to look up to.

It could also provide "the media" with motivation to focus and spend money on women in the sporting domain as women comprise 50+% of the population and in reality probably control the bulk of household spending.

## 6.12 CONCLUSION

Five reasons why women terminated their sporting careers that emerged from their results were: decreased motivation and interest in sport (55%); coach problems (43%); academic pressure (36%); developed an injury (35%) and politics in sport (33%). These factors all fit into one common theme: lack of properly qualified coaches in South Africa. From this research it is evident that our coaches need to be properly qualified in order to take on the huge role of coaching future athletes. The coach needs to be able to bend the barriers of stereotypes, and work with women outside the context of what society accepts as truth. It is the coach who needs to keep the athlete on track when demotivation strikes because lack of television coverage results in lack of sponsorship deals. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure coaching styles, techniques and methods are up to date with international standards in order to motivate athletes, and it is the coach who has to have the ability to push the athlete past comfort levels. While focusing on all of this the coach must ensure that the athletes keeps focused, have fun and still have an interest in sport. As athletes get older, and pass through different stages of growth, it is important for the coach to know when to push and when to stand back, when academics at primary and tertiary education take preference and when sport is paramount in their lives. Thus, it is not an easy job being a coach, and in no sense should this role be taken lightly. Therefore, our coaches of today need to be far more than just a coach and they need skills in the sport psychology, sport science and teaching domain. It is these skills that our universities need to be teaching our future coaches.

Other factors that impact heavily on women in sport are gender stereotyping that is deeply embedded in the social, cultural and educational systems of South Africa. For example, in 1996 an American Nike advert read: "Somebody will give her a doll. And somebody will give her a ball. And then somebody will give her a chance" (Nike, "There is a girl in America", 1996). This is an example of a statement that strives to counteract the existing discriminatory stereotyping of gender in our society. The media is also one of the culprits by giving much more prominence to men sport than women sport in their overall coverage (Burnett, 1998).

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Biographical Information and Questionnaire's**



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

# Termination of sporting careers among South African sportswomen

*(Women who have continued sport)*

Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences  
Center for Leisure Studies  
2008

**Please assist us by completing this questionnaire to your best ability**

Indicate with an "X" in the shaded area which box is applicable to you.

**1.1 How old are you?**

17 –19	
20 –22	
23-25	
26 -28	
29 -31	
31 - <	

**1.2 I would describe myself as:**

African	
Asian	
White	
Coloured	
Other	

Fill in the empty boxes with as much information as possible

**2.1 Which sport are you competing in and at which level?**

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>TEAM</b> <i>You were competing for:</i>	<b>YEARS</b> <i>Competed for:</i>	<b>AGES</b> <i>At which you were competitive:</i>
First Team			
Provincial			
National			
International			

**2.2 In your own words describe why you participate in sport at a competitive level**

**2.3 Describe how you have managed to balance your life (between work, family and sport)**

**2.4**

Indicate with an "X" in the shaded area which box is applicable to you.

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I'm not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
I compete to the best of my ability					
I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport					
Mentally I am strong					
Physically I am strong					
I compete for myself					
I want to prove to myself that I am the best					
I want to prove to others that I am the best					
I feel I can do better					
I am at the top of my game					
I have encouraging parents					
I have encouraging and supporting team mates and friends					
My coach understands me and supports me					

**2.5 While competing have any of the below factors contributed to you thinking of terminating your sporting career?**

(Place an "X" in the 'Yes' box if it is applicable to you. You can "X" as many boxes as necessary)

	Yes
Academic pressure	
Coach problems	
Decreased motivation and interest in sport	
Gender discrimination	
I developed an injury	
I felt sport was for men not women	
I felt women who play sport are not seen as successful	
I wanted a social life	
Lack of facilities in South Africa	
Lost my sponsorship and couldn't afford to carry on competing	
No money in sport	
Parents and family pressure	
Peer pressure	
Politics in sport	
Relationship problems (with boyfriend/partner)	
Started my own family	
Transport problems	
Wanted to start a career	
Work pressure	
Any other factor not listed	

**2.5.1 How did you manage to overcome the above mentioned obstacle and carry on competing at the level you do.**

3.0

Indicate with an “x” in the shaded area which box is applicable to you

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I’m not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
Sport plays an integral part in the development and socialization of boys, but not girls					
Girls/women who play sport lack femininity					
Girls should be encouraged to play soccer, cricket and waterpolo					
Only 'beautiful' model like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships					

### **MEDIA AND SPORT**

4.0

Indicate with an “X” which box is applicable to you

	Yes	No
Do you watch sportswomen competing on television?		
Do you have Sportswomen role models?		
Can you name 5 elite sportswomen? Elite Sportswomen 1 _____ Elite Sportswomen 2 _____ Elite Sportswomen 3 _____ Elite Sportswomen 4 _____ Elite Sportswomen 5 _____		
Do you feel there is enough coverage of women’s sport?		

4.1

**How do you think women are portrayed in the media?** (*Accurately / played down / built up /exploited*)  
*Please explain in as much detail as possible*



## TEACHING THE GIRLS OF TODAY

### 5.0 In the box next to the question describe your coach/coaches

	<b>Please explain in as much detail as possible</b>
How does your coach encourage you when you are losing?	
How does your coach encourage you when you are winning?	
Is your coach supportive of you (in and out of the sports environment)?	
Does your coach use any specific techniques (mental or training) that work for you?	
Do you feel you can confide in your coach?	
Describe your coach in no more than 25 words	
What advice would you give to a coach teaching young girls of today?	

### PRESSURE (PARENTAL AND PEER)

6.0 Indicate with an “X” which box is applicable to you

	Yes	No
Do your parents support and encourage your participation in the sport of your choice?		
Do/Did your parents transport you to the sports venues willingly?		
Do your parents attend your matches / competitions as spectators?		
Do/Did your parents get involved in the sport administration / regulation of your team?		
Do/Did your parents react negatively toward referees / umpires / judges decision when you lost?		
Do your parents have high expectations of you in the sports environment?		
Do you feel you meet their expectations?		
Do/Did your parents ever make you go to training when you really didn't want to? (for whatever reason)		

6.1 What did your friends think of your commitment to sport?

*Indicate with an “x” in the shaded area which box is applicable to you*

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I'm not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
They are always encouraging					
They understand when I have to focus and can not go out					
They come to my competitions to support me					

6.2 How do your friends support your sport participation/not support you?

*(Please give as much detail as possible)*

### FORMAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION

Fill in the empty boxes with as much information as possible

7.1 Please explain in detail how your choice of academic study (tertiary education) influences/d your sporting career? (Time constraints, travel, scholarships, and examinations)



**7.2 How did/does sport affect your academic effort and results? Does it aid or hinder it? Please explain.**

**From 'Other-reliance' to 'Self-reliance'**

**8.0 Please explain how leaving school had an effect on your sporting career?**

**9.0. Do you think that having been a successful sports woman has enhanced your life and image?**

Thank-you for completing the questionnaire.  
It is much appreciated, your feedback will aid our academic research



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

# Termination of sporting careers among South African sportswomen

*(Women who have terminated sport)*

Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences  
Center for Leisure Studies  
2008

**Please assist us by completing this questionnaire to your best ability**

Indicate with an “X” in the shaded area which box is applicable to you.

**1.1 How old are you?**

17 –19	
20 –22	
23-25	
26 -28	
29 -31	

**1.2 I would describe myself as:**

African	
Asian	
White	
Coloured	
Other	

Fill in the empty boxes with as much information as possible

**2.1 When you were competing in sport at which level/s were you competing?**

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>TEAM</b> <i>You were competing for:</i>	<b>YEARS</b> <i>Competed for:</i>	<b>AGES</b> <i>At which you were competitive:</i>
First Team			
Provincial			
National			
International			

**2.2 In your own words describe why you participated in sport at a competitive level**

**2.4 In your own words describe why you stopped participating and competing in your sport**

**2.4**

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Indicate with an "X" in the shaded area which box is applicable to you.

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I'm not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
I competed to the best of my ability					
I put my heart, soul and mind into my sport					
Mentally I was strong					
Physically I was strong					
I competed for myself					
I wanted to prove to myself that I was the best					
I wanted to prove to others that I was the best					
I felt I could do better					
I was at the top of my game					
I had encouraging parents					
I had encouraging and supporting team mates and friends					
My coach understood me and supported me					

**2.6 Did any of the below factors contribute to your termination in competitive sport?**

(Place an "X" in the 'Yes' box if it is applicable to you. You can "X" as many boxes as necessary)

	Yes
Academic pressure	
Coach problems	
Decreased motivation and interest in sport	
Gender discrimination	
I developed an injury	
I felt sport was for men not women	
I felt women who play sport are not seen as successful	
I wanted a social life	
Lack of facilities in South Africa	
Lost my sponsorship and couldn't afford to carry on competing	
No money in sport	
Parents and family pressure	
Peer pressure	
Politics in sport	
Relationship problems (with boyfriend/partner)	
Started my own family	
Transport problems	
Wanted to start a career	
Work pressure	
Any other factor not listed	

**2.5.1 If you ticked "Any other factor not listed", please give details below and explain**

### STEREOTYPES IN SPORT

**3.0** Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements  
*Indicate with an “x” in the shaded area which box is applicable to you*

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I’m not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
Sport plays an integral part in the development and socialization of boys, but not girls					
Girls/women who play sport lack femininity					
Girls should be encouraged to play soccer, cricket and waterpolo					
Only 'beautiful' model like sportswomen get endorsements and sponsorships					

### MEDIA AND SPORT

**4.0** Indicate with an “X” which box is applicable to you

	Yes	No
Do you watch sportswomen competing on television?		
Do you have Sportswomen role models?		
Can you name 5 elite sportswomen? Elite Sportswomen 1 _____ Elite Sportswomen 2 _____ Elite Sportswomen 3 _____ Elite Sportswomen 4 _____ Elite Sportswomen 5 _____		
Do you feel there is enough coverage of women’s sport?		

**4.1** **How do you think women are portrayed in the media?** (*Accurately / played down / built up /exploited*)  
*Please explain in as much detail as possible*

## TEACHING THE GIRLS OF TODAY

**5.0 In the box next to the question describe your coach/coaches**

	<b>Please explain in as much detail as possible</b>
How did your coach encourage you when you were losing?	
How did your coach encourage you when you were winning?	
Was your coach supportive of you (in and out of the sports environment)?	
Did your coach use any specific techniques (mental or training) that worked for you?	
Did you feel you could confide in your coach?	
Describe your coach in no more than 25 words	
What advice would you give to a coach teaching young girls of today?	

### PRESSURE (PARENTAL AND PEER)

6.0 Indicate with an “X” which box is applicable to you

	Yes	No
Did your parents support and encourage your participation in the sport of your choice?		
Did your parents transport you to the sports venues willingly?		
Did your parents attend your matches / competitions as spectators?		
Did your parents get involved in the sport administration / regulation of your team?		
Did your parents react negatively toward referees / umpires / judges decision when you lost?		
Did your parents have high expectations of you in the sports environment?		
Do you feel you met their expectations?		
Did your parents ever make you go to training when you really didn't want to? (for whatever reason)		

6.1 What did your friends think of your commitment to sport?

*Indicate with an “x” in the shaded area which box is applicable to you*

1 = I strongly disagree; 2 = I dis-agree; 3 = I'm not sure; 4 = I agree; 5 = I strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
They were always encouraging					
They understood when I had to focus and could not go out					
They came to my competitions to support me					

6.2 When you stopped competing how did your friends react? *(Please give as much detail as possible)*

### FORMAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION

Fill in the empty boxes with as much information as possible

7.1 Please explain in detail how your choice of academic study (tertiary education) influenced your sporting career? (Time constraints, travel, scholarships, and examinations)



**7.2 How did sport affect your academic effort and results? Does it aid or hinder it? Please explain.**

**From 'Other-reliance' to 'Self-reliance'**

**8.0 Please explain how leaving school had an effect on your sporting career?**

**9.0. Do you think that having been a successful sports woman has enhanced your life and image?**

Thank-you for completing the questionnaire.  
It is much appreciated, your feedback will aid our academic research



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Participation information letter**



## **RESEARCH STUDY TO DETERMINE THE TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN**

Dear Participant.

This study is being done as part of a M.A.(Human Movement Science). The primary aim of this study is to determine why women who compete at an intense level in sport terminate their career prior to reaching their full potential. The second aim is to identify ideological factors (such as stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and others that may come up through the research) that could be influencing the participation of women at an intense level in sport.

To accomplish these objectives, the study is divided in to two phases that will occur at different times. The first phase consists of you completing a questionnaire that will take 30min – 1hour to complete. The second phase, will not require everyone's participation. Ten participants shall be selected to complete an in-depth interview that will take approximately 90min – 2hrs. During this interview participants will be asked questions about their experiences in sport, what made them terminate their career, influence of the media in their sporting lives and the influence of their parents on their sports.

The information found will be used for research purposes and will be published in a research dissertation. The information might also be used for further research and possibly a part of future publications. However, you will remain anonymous and any information that might identify you will remain strictly confidential.

Please indicate on the consent form if you prefer that this information only be used for this study and not for further research reports. I cannot give any rewards, monetary or otherwise, for your participation in this study and your participation is completely voluntary, However, if you like I will provide you with an abstract of the results once the study is complete. Your participation in this study will help a great deal in understanding why women who compete at an intense level in sport decide to terminate their sporting careers.

If you are prepared to participate in this study, please complete and sign the accompanying consent form. Please will you fax/e-mail the completed questionnaire to: *Fax: (011) 882-7251 E-mail:claudia @zanet.co.za*

Claudia von Tutschek



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Consent Forms**



## **Biographical information**

*Please fill in*

Age:

Population group:

School:

University/tertiary education:

Sport:

Years of participation:

Level of participation:

**Consent form**

***WOMEN WHO HAVE CONTINUED SPORT***

MA (HUMAN MOVEMENT SCIENCE):

TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Dear Participant.

We are asking you to be apart of the above-mentioned research so that we can try and identify why women who have been competing in sport at an intense level (first team, provincial level, national level and or international level) have terminated their sporting career prior to reaching optimal performance. With this we are also trying to find if identify ideological factors (such as stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and others that may come up through the research) are influencing the participation of women at an intense level in sport. This research will be conducted by Claudia Carla Olga von Tutschek and is promoted by Prof. B.J.M. Steyn.

Participants need to be at least 23 years old. If you participate in the study you will be required to complete one questionnaire. This will be e-mailed/faxed/given to you by hand to fill out; it will take about 30 – 60 min to complete.

After all the data has been collected you may be randomly selected to be interviewed by Claudia von Tutschek. This will be an in-depth interview covering the questionnaire in which you will be asked to expand on the questions and give more information. This will last between 90 - 120min and at the venue convenient for you.

If you participate in this study you will be increasing the understanding of why the women of today are not continuing their sport as they get older.

Participation is completely voluntary and all information will be kept confidential. The results will be reported in a group format. The data may be used for future research, but no names will be kept with the data. If you decide to participate you can withdraw at any stage of the process and your data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about the study please do not hesitate to call me on 082 596 3147.

Signing your name means that you agree to participate in the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(name), agree to participate in this study 'TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN'. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and confidential. I understand that I can withdrawal at any time and that the nature of the research has been explained to me. If I have any queries I can call Claudia von Tutschek on 082 596 3147.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Biographical information**

***Please fill in***

Participant Code:

Age:

Population group:

School:

University/tertiary education:

Sport:

Years of participation:

Level of participation:

### **Consent form**

MA (HUMAN MOVEMENT SCIENCE):

TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN

#### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Dear Participant.

We are asking you to be apart of the above-mentioned research so that we can try and identify why women who have been competing in sport at an intense level (first team, provincial level, national level and or international level) have terminated their sporting career prior to reaching optimal performance. With this we are also trying to find if identify ideological factors (such as stereotypes, the media, teaching methods, and others that may come up through the research) are influencing the participation of women at an intense level in sport.

This research will be conducted by Claudia Carla Olga von Tutschek and is promoted by Prof. B.J.M. Steyn.

Participants need to be between the ages of 17-31 years old. If you participate in the study you will be required to complete one questionnaire. This will be e-mailed/faxed/given to you by hand to fill out; it will take about 30 – 60 min to complete. After all the data has been collected you may be randomly selected to be interviewed by Claudia von Tutschek. This will be an in-depth interview covering the questionnaire in which you will be asked to

expand on the questions and give more information. This will last between 90 - 120min and at the venue convenient for you.

If you participate in this study you will be increasing the understanding of why the women of today are not continuing their sport as they get older.

Participation is completely voluntary and all information will be kept confidential. The results will be reported in a group format. The data may be used for future research, but no names will be kept with the data. If you decide to participate you can withdraw at any stage of the process and your data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about the study please do not hesitate to call me on 082 596 3147.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_(name), agree to participate in this study 'TERMINATION OF SPORTING CAREERS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTSWOMEN'. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and confidential. I understand that I can withdrawal at any time and that the nature of the research has been explained to me. If I have any queries I can call Claudia von Tutschek on 082 596 3147.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date