

**An exploration of the factors contributing to gender inequality in  
athletics participation and leadership**

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## **ABSTRACT**

South Africa is widely known as an achieving sports country. Yet, issues of inequality and a lack of role models in women sport have plagued development of sport in South Africa. The study commenced with the leadership phenomenon as a background to the study and secondary sources were explored to provide a summative framework. This part of the research focused on generic leadership concepts, theories, approaches and styles. It was elaborated with leadership in the context of the sports industry and track and field (athletics).

The theoretical argument is that if South Africa has equal talent and opportunity South African women athletics should not have such poor performance record in terms of medals and world rankings. Women have been hindered in terms of access to sports participation in all different spheres of sport and the dominance of men in sport leadership positions is nothing new. The literature review indicates underlying factors such as gender stereotyping, socio-cultural expectations (and traditions), lack of media coverage, limited access to participation, limited education programmes and other initiatives. Women's athletics is in trouble when measured against the number of athletes competing in the international arena. Statistics shows that women consisted of only 25,4 % of the national team for major championships between 2007 and 2018. The overall status of women athletics in terms of development and performance is therefore a major concern. The primary research objective was to determine the underlying factors and primary reasons for inequality and the lack of professional female athletes and role models in women athletics in South Africa.

A qualitative research approach was followed to address the problem. A convenience sample of well-known female athletes, coaches and administrators participated in the empirical part of the study. Semi-structured interviews (n=16) were conducted, audio-recorded, transcribed and the data were analysed and reduced by means of a thematic analysis. The following six themes were identified from the data: athletics participation in South Africa, standards of women's athletics, gender inequality, female role models in athletics, reasons for the lack of female sports leaders and suggestions (ideas and innovations) for a management framework to address the situation.

The results confirmed a definite lack of female leaders in athletics. The problem originates with the lack of depth within the participation base of athletics especially at university level. The survey confirmed that women athletics is substandard and needs drastic improvement. Besides obvious reasons the underlying factors are the promising athletes leaving the sport. Lack of support, inadequate development and the weak motivation of athletics as a profession were given as primary causes. On the one extreme there is a lack of opportunities for children in rural areas and on the other spectrum athletic schools are too competitive and overly performance-driven. Both these extremes have a negative bearing on the longevity of potential athletic careers. The survey also affirmed that female athletes at the university level of athletics participation are in the greatest need of support.

The entire study enabled the researcher to develop a conceptual framework to address the problem. It consists of several levels (strategic and functional), a WADP (women athletic development and role model program) manager with three specific program areas, namely (1) an incentive program (RIBDP), (2) a change agent program and (3) a program with strategic events. The implementation of this framework demands national support and signed treaties to improve women athletics holistically. It is therefore concluded that athletics in South Africa can only benefit from an investment (implementation) in such a framework that will demand national-level sport leadership to produce professional women athletes to be and become women athletics role models.

## DECLARATION

I, Rikenette Steenkamp, hereby declare that this research for the degree, Masters (Human Movement Science), at the University of Pretoria, has not previously been submitted by me for the degree, at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all materials from published sources contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Date

.....

Signature

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

AR – African Record

ASA – Athletics South Africa

ASCOD – African Sports Confederation of Disabled

BEE – Black Economic Empowerment

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CEDAW – Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

EI – Emotional Intelligence

IAAF – International Association of Athletics Federations

IAPESGW – International Study Week on Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women

IDI – In-depth interviews

IF – International Federation

IOC – International Olympic Committee

MML – Multidimensional Model of Leadership

LSS – Leadership Scale for Sports

NOC – National Olympic Committee

NR – National Record

NSRP – National Sport and Recreation Plan

OPEX – Operation Excellence

SA – South Africa

SAAAB – South African Amateur Athletic Board

SAAAF – South African Bantu Amateur Athletic and Cycling Federation

SAAAU – South African Amateur Athletic Association/Union

SASCOC – South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee

SFISM - Swiss Federal Institute of Sports Magglingen

SRSA – Sport and Recreation South Africa

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA – United States of America

WR – World Record

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is widely known as an achieving sports country. Yet, issues of inequality have plagued development of sport in South Africa. Former sports minister, Fikile Mbalula, highlighted racial inequality issues and tasked the dominant sport codes to “shape up on sports transformation” (Dodds, 2016:1). Different discriminatory laws that had a significant effect on the entire South African sports system (SRSA, 2012) defined the apartheid era in South Africa (that lasted until 1994).

However, inequalities in South African sport are not limited to race but also extend to gender. The underlying tensions of gender inequality in South African athletics participation, for instance, are problematic and will be the focus of this study.

The term ‘athletics’ can be defined in more than one way. In South Africa it refers to the sport of competing in track and field events, including running and various jumping and throwing events (Dictionary.com, 2016). In some countries, however, ‘athletics’ refers to physical sport of any kind. This study will utilise the term to refer to the sport of competing in track and field events.

A sound sports culture needs development and implementation. However, sports development and performance are impossible without a fundamental participation platform. The National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP) stated a profound truth that “no country can expect to achieve and sustain success at an elite level without a strong participation base in the community as that is the beginning for every champion.” (SRSA, 2012:7). Yet, perceptions do exist that many South African sport stars, both male and female, have been demotivated to persevere due to a lack of sponsors and national support. A strong participation base for women’s athletics, which evidently is of strategic importance, can be generated by more innovative opportunities, government support, legislation supporting equality in sports, emphasis on women’s rights, promotion of the health and fitness evolution, and more publicity and media exposure for female athletes (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:170).

Within the South African context, there is a remarkable contradiction between talented South African female athletes and performance, while participation levels of



females are also significantly lower than those of males. Factors hindering gender equality in sport include the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions; a continued attention and focus on cosmetic fitness, which promotes appearance and beauty; trivialisation of women's sports; gender and fairness matters; unequal opportunities in organised and mainstream sports; insufficient support for athletes; and insufficient job opportunities for women in coaching and administration positions (Coakley & Burnett, 2014). The requirements of motherhood and societal expectations are additional factors contributing to inequality in sports participation (Leberman & Palmer, 2009:308). Ultimately, the concern is that women are directly and indirectly excluded from sports events on the basis of gender (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:171).

This dismal condition is a fundamental problem, signalling a need for change in terms of developing prominent and competent female role models in athletics in South Africa in terms of professional athletic performance, administration (business management and strategic leadership), coaching, conditioning, and mentoring. In addition, Coakley and Burnett (2014:192) maintain that changing the dominant gender ideologies in sport could provide a lasting solution for inequality in sport participation.

To contribute to the much-needed change in South African athletics, this study focused on determining the underlying factors and primary reasons for inequality in South African athletics participation, as well as on the development of female role models in athletics in South Africa.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Multicultural challenges in South Africa do exist that hinder women, for instance those in rural areas, to have access to sports activities and programmes (Nauright, 2013:568). These negative factors may have generated a destructive discourse that enforces the discourse that women athletes (both talented and not so talented) may not even consider themselves as potential professional athletes, sports role models, coaches, or sports leaders.

In terms of the healthy South African sports culture and wealth of available female talent, the female athletic resource is underutilised from a human science and a

sports industry perspective. South African women's athletics is in trouble, measured against the number of athletes competing in the international arena. For example, only two female athletes represented South Africa at the Commonwealth Games in 2014 (SASCOC, 2014). Thus, the picture of the development of athletes is a sombre one and the contenders for Olympic medals are few. The situation proves to be even worse when looking at the trend of sports leadership in women's athletics. There has been no improvement or growth in terms of prominent role models (as a dimension of leadership) for the current and new generation. The problem is aggravated by the mediocre vision and strategic plans of sponsors, athletic clubs, and the government.

The research problem is focused on South African women's sport leadership with an emphasis on role models for athletics. The study explores the need for role models and presents a framework for addressing the problem. The research question is therefore: *What are the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and role models in women's athletics in South Africa?*

### **1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of the study was to explore the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and role models in women's athletics in South Africa.

Objectives of the study included:

- To determine the status of South African women's sport leadership in athletics;
- To identify underlying reasons contributing to a lack of professional athletes and role models as perceived by male and female athletes;
- To develop a conceptual framework to address the problem.

### **1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review provides a thorough background to the problem in terms of gender stereotyping, socio-cultural expectations and traditions, lack of media coverage of women, limited access to active participation, and limited education programmes and initiatives as causes of under-representation of female sports leaders in African countries (Goslin & Kluka, 2014).

Gender has been a key discussion point among historians, and women's participation in sports has been no different (Nauright, 2013:565). As mentioned before, there are various factors hindering women's participation in athletics in South Africa. Cultural constraints, unequal access to resources, media coverage of women in sports, the emphasis on cosmetic fitness (promoting outward appearance and attraction), trivialisation of women's sports, fairness issues, participation opportunities, limited support for athletes, limited work positions for women in coaching and administration, as well as gender ideologies are among the factors that have a negative impact on women's sports participation and general inequality (Coakley & Burnett, 2014). This study will measure and investigate these factors (and others) to determine the primary causes for the current dismal condition of women's athletics participation and development levels.

Eliminating gender-based discrimination at all levels and stages of sport and recreation (Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, 2007) has become a social responsibility. There is an evident need to terminate improper stereotypes of and inaccurate perceptions on women's physical abilities, social roles and leadership capabilities, as illustrated by the following statement by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat (2007): "It appears, therefore, that the traditionally male domain of sport, combined with the masculine bias associated with business leadership could act as a constraint for mothers engaged in elite sport leadership" (Leberman & Palmer, 2009:309).

A review of the historic statistics of female participation at the Olympic Games between 1894 and 1981 revealed that the IOC had no female members during that period and had not allowed a women's 1500m race to take place at the Games until 1972 in Munich (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:179) as it was previously believed that long distance running is harmful to women's health. It is important to recognise these facts, as the ethos and values of the 'Olympia' stand for global, gender and athletic inclusiveness as an integral part of the games (Olympic.org, 2016).

The question arising is whether such factors, in addition to the South African history of isolation to global economic, political and sports isolation, contributed to the lack of South African women participating in athletics. It is noteworthy, though, that

recently there has been a remarkable improvement with regard to sport participation inequalities. The gap is being addressed, as demonstrated by the 2008 Olympic Games that included 175 events for men and 137 for women (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:179). Coakley and Burnette's (2014) futuristic view indicates that, considering the current rate of improvement, gender equity may be reached at the 2028 Summer Olympic Games.

Moreover, according to Burnett and Engelbrecht (in Coakley & Burnett, 2014:173), women haven't improved in reputation in terms of coaching and administration and are significantly underrepresented in decision-making positions in South Africa. Leadership in women's sports has its own bodies of thought. Laurent and Bradney (2007:120) define leadership as "the process of influencing people to accomplish goals". While women and men have different leadership styles and strengths, it is believed that women's tendency towards helping, supporting, encouraging and developing others in a group setting can contribute substantially to sports leadership (Leberman & Palmer, 2009:316). According to Vescio, Wilde and Crosswhite (2005:153), one of the major challenges in sport is to maintain participation and involvement of adolescent girls in sport and recreation. Most female athletes drop out of sport during their late adolescent years. Female mentors and role models might be instrumental in improving this situation. A mentor is defined as "an adviser, coach, guide or confidante who has a personal relationship with the mentee when he or she is facing challenging tasks" (Vescio *et al.*, 2005:155). A role model, on the other hand, can be defined as "a person whose behaviour, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people" (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Furthermore, politics has had a negative impact on athletics. In the past (as briefly referred to above), South African athletes were largely excluded from international competitions due to apartheid (Nauright, 2013:565). This might have contributed to the current level of performance of South African athletes, both male and female. An additional enemy is the legal discrimination against white athletes by means of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (Annual reports, 2004). To add, women in rural areas who are involved in sports participation and leadership might still be disadvantaged by their cultural background (Nauright, 2013:568).

The following extract from the recent statement by ASA (Athletics South Africa) is a good example which underlines the current status of women's athletics (Marx, 2015) in terms of their concerns related to female performances:

Dear All ASA Members

#### **Circular 26 of ASA 2015- ASA WOMEN COMMITTEE 2015 SURVEY**

The ASA women committee has a very difficult task to get women athletics up and running. The women committee wants to make a difference in the lives of female athletes, coaches and administrators. Currently the statistics for senior women athletics are very low in contrast with the senior male athletes...

Government funding exacerbates the problem even further. Some athletes, for example Sunette Viljoen, are outspoken about the pathetic treatment they receive. Apparently the OPEX programme does not reflect its purpose of "Operation Excellence" (News24, 2015), which places the performance of our athletes under immense pressure.

The research methodology that was followed to determine the primary causes for the current dismal condition of women's athletics participation and development levels, as well as the lack of role models in women's athletics, is briefly discussed next.

The study utilised a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research can be defined as an "array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:160). The small research population made it possible to collect data via semi-structured interviews with athletic role models, such as professional athlete agents/managers, professional athlete coaches, and professional athletes.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.5.1 Sampling**

The relatively small population made it possible to use non-probability key informant sampling by including well-known professional female athletic coaches, managers, administrators, and athletes of recent years. (Saunders, Lewis \* Thornhill, 2012:287).

### **1.5.2 Data collection**

Data collection can be defined as the “process of gathering or collecting information” (Zikmund & Babmin, 2010:59). For this study, data was collected via well-designed semi-structured interviews.

### **1.5.3 Data interpretation**

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and reproduced as a written document. The data were analysed and reduced to significant results by means of a thorough thematic analysis.

## **1.6 CHAPTER ONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the research problem and research question, as well as of the research aim and objectives set for the study. This was followed by a short review of the literature on gender inequality. The chapter concluded with a short outline of the methodology used for the study. Chapter 2 will provide more background to the research problem by exploring female leadership in sport.

## **CHAPTER 2: WOMEN IN SPORT**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 outlined the research problem, research aims, and the methodology used in this study. This chapter will outline and condense the concept of leadership as a background to the study. Multiple publications on leadership are indicative of the search for authentic and exemplary leadership. It is evident that the current global political, social and economic climate signals the need for 'true' leaders with integrity. This need for exemplary leadership must be seen in response to the current leadership pandemic in terms of "misleadership", referring to poor political decisions, cases of corporate scandals, wide-spread corruption, intentional state capturing, and resulting social disasters in a multi-disciplinary context.

This chapter follows an orderly logical sequence to build the argument that we can learn from conventional leadership frameworks and styles, but also need to adapt to the demands of our time. Multiple sources have been used as references and the current work by Van Zyl (2016) provides a thorough summative framework. The chapter will firstly cover the broad leadership concepts, and will then be narrowed down to leadership styles and sports leadership.

### **2.2 LEADERSHIP DEFINED**

Leadership is as old as humankind, but it has only been researched formally since the 1930s. The biggest improvement in the notion of leadership was the shift in focus from control to the establishment of a conducive environment in which people can flourish and be successful. There are many examples of this shift, such as Dearlove (2007) and Palmer (2008) who focused on leadership for production and operations success, Aaker (2003) who studied leadership styles of executive female administrators, and Abdullah (2009) who studied the relationship between positive leadership behaviours.

Defining leadership is complex due to the different world views, types of leaders, and different theories available. Leadership is therefore a generic term and, owing to its popular use and universality, there will never be a standardised or fixed definition for it (Vroom and Jago, 2007).

The conventional theory of leadership focuses on definitions related to influence. Drafke (2009:460) defines leadership as “the ability to influence the activities of others, through the process of communication, toward the attainment of a goal”. On the other hand, Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson (2011) define leadership as the use of power and influence to direct the activities of followers toward goal achievement. Table 2.1 below provides more related definitions.

**Table 2.1 Definitions of leadership**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Strydom & Smith (2011:116)	Leadership is <i>“the process by which a person exerts influence over other people, inspires them, and directs their activities to help them reach group goals.”</i> & Leadership is <i>“the process of influencing employees to work willingly towards reaching their goals.”</i>
Van Schalckwyk (in Thompson, 2009:155)	<i>“It involves developing a shared view of the destination you are aiming for and the route you intend to follow to get there ... a good leader ‘pulls’ the team by motivating and inspiring members to pursue shared goals.”</i>
Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly (1982:234)	<i>“Leadership is an attempt at interpersonal influence, directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of some goal or goals.”</i>
Golemman & Boyatzis (2008:2)	<i>“Leading effectively is, in other words, less about mastering situations - or even mastering social skill sets - than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need.”</i>
Vroom & Jago (2007:18)	<i>“We see leadership as a process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things.”</i>

From these definitions it can be deduced that leadership involves influence, inspiration and motivation to accomplish goals – personal and other. All leaders need followers; one cannot be leading if no one is following. Leading is highly associated with influence and therefore it refers to the capacity and potential to influence others (Vroom & Jago, 2007). The effectiveness of leadership is therefore measured by the capacity and potential to influence followers to accomplish specific goals (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1982) assert that outstanding leaders



are generally attentive to sources of power as well as the importance of perceived power. An additional factor that may contribute to effective leadership is clear communication, which has a direct effect on follower behaviour (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1982).

## **2.3 LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS**

### **2.3.1 Leadership skills**

There are multiple characteristics or personal traits associated with good leaders. Capable leaders have (and develop) specific skills, abilities and competencies to lead, motivate, and inspire followers. These skills need to be maintained and developed continuously, as leadership involves an ongoing process of learning, improving and adapting. Leaders who distinguish themselves as exemplary are often those who inspire, motivate and encourage followers to achieve beyond what they initially thought was possible.

Among the important leadership skills are the various dimensions of effective communication and vision. Communication is effective when an intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood (Business Jargons, 2019). Vision can be defined as the ability to see the bigger picture and to hold a mental picture of the future state of a person, subject or object. According to Grobler *et al.* (2011), competent leaders are assertive, supportive, courageous and cooperative.

### **2.3.2 Leadership responsibilities**

Good leaders take on multiple responsibilities on a voluntary basis. This is an important aspect that differentiates leaders from managers and followers. One primary responsibility of a leader is to create a positive environment for followers to grow and develop continuously (Grobler *et al.*, 2011). It is also necessary for leaders to define a clear vision of where the organisation or team is heading in the future, which implies the responsibility to plan functionally and strategically (Van Schalkwyk, 2011). An indispensable part of planning is therefore the setting of long-term and short-term goals for the management and allocation of resources, with the leader also bearing the responsibility to select appropriate individuals to cooperate with on the journey to achieve such goals.

Leadership responsibilities can be debated from many philosophical viewpoints, for example formally appointed versus spontaneous leadership responsibilities. The view of Kouzes and Posner (2007:26) can be regarded as summative and at the core of the most important responsibilities of outstanding or exemplary leaders. They identified the following five primary leadership responsibilities:

- *To inspire a shared vision.* This aspect is the envisioning of the future by imagining exciting and ennobling activities. This may also enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
- *To model the way.* This refers to a testimony by setting an example (to walk the talk). Personal power is important here to have a clear voice about personal values and aligning actions with shared values.
- *To ask questions.* Good leaders do not always go with the flow and they ask questions. This responsibility is referred to as challenging the process. Leaders will search for opportunities and innovative ways to change, grow and improve. Leaders will also experiment, take calculated risks and learn from mistakes.
- *To enable others to act.* Leaders want to see behaviour changes while fostering collaboration, and by building trust the leader strengthens others by sharing power and discretion.
- *To encourage the heart through respect and recognition.* Leaders recognise contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence and celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

These responsibilities can be integrated into a leadership framework referred to as exemplary leadership (elaborated upon in section 2.5.9).

### **2.3.3 Leadership excellence**

Leadership excellence is challenging because of its nebulous nature. There is a very deep crisis in human affairs world-wide, occurring at all levels, from the individual to the organisation, society and government. At the societal level, we just need to turn on any news programme to observe the breakdown of social structures. Even the United States of America is facing many uncertainties under a Donald Trump presidency, while almost every country in Africa has a leadership crisis. Insolvent countries, such as Greece, will now have to rely on all kinds of help.

It is expected that leadership demands will increase in all spheres of society, including the dawn of the next industrial revolution. The fourth industrial revolution will be even more innovative, exhibiting technologies such as green and lean thinking with the use of cyber-physical systems, smart communications, increasing use of social media, more entrepreneurial universities and decentralised decisions. The implications of this industrial revolution are immense and smart factories with short lead times and last-minute changes to production will allow operations to nimbly respond to disruptions. For the purposes of this study it is important to realise that modern technology and new innovations for athletes will also be deployed in the sport industry.

### **2.3.4 Critical leadership aspects**

Strydom and Smith (2011) identify the following critical aspects of leadership:

- The core of leadership lies in vision, inspiration and momentum.
- Leadership is linked to change (leaders are 'change-agents').
- Leading includes creative activity.
- Leadership is a personal activity.
- Leaders are more effective with 'buy-in' from followers.

The next section explores and synthesises the progression of leadership studies throughout history.

## **2.4 A REVIEW OF BROAD LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS AND THEORIES**

Leadership concepts have been present for many centuries, and from the Egyptian hieroglyphics can be traced back to 2 300 B.C. (Van Schalkwyk, 2011). A historic overview will lay a foundation to leadership concepts and will also highlight gaps in the current understanding. Historic and modern leadership theories, approaches, styles and myths will be included in the discussion.

The contingency theory argues that effective leadership is strongly related to the situation, which means that the right behaviour is determined by the situation and not by the personality of the leader (Van Schalkwyk, 2011). The 'Great Man theory', on the other hand, emphasises that leaders and followers are fundamentally different and that some people are born leaders. The 'Big Five Model' of personality traits and

the extraordinary qualities of the charismatic leader are also noted in the literature. The word charisma carries the meaning of superbly inspired gift and is associated with people that possess the potential to do phenomenal things (Van Zyl, 2016). Charismatic leaders, therefore, are believed to have a significant impact on their followers.

Van Zyl (2016:139) asserts that “charismatic and transformational leaders transform the values and priorities of followers, and motivate them to perform beyond their expectations”. Van Zyl (2016) also refers to new genre theories such as the transformational and transactional frameworks. According to these frameworks, all leaders are power wielders, but not all power wielders are leaders. The exchange relationship between the leader and follower is transactional, while transformational leaders change followers in terms of their values, higher purpose, and vision. Another new genre leadership theory is that of servant leadership, where the leaders are highly focused on the needs and wellbeing of their followers (Van Zyl, 2016) and have the willingness and ability to serve others.

A recent study by Van Zyl (2016:4-6) involved a leadership review in the African context in terms of the traditional theories and the new genre theories. Although the research was conducted in the South African context, which may influence leadership styles, Africa is very much integrated with the global world and forms part of the global revolutions and challenges. The study showed that Africans aspire to a more inclusive and participative leadership style, based on humane principles similar to ubuntu. These principles may also influence women’s sports role models and will thus be further explored in Chapter 3.

## **2.4.1 A historical overview of leadership theories**

This section provides an overview of earlier leadership theories as well as modern leadership approaches.

### **2.4.1.1 Trait theory**

The trait theory is one of the first recognised research studies on leadership. The birth of this theory took place in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was released between the 1930s and 1950s (Van Schalkwyk, 2011). The trait theory basically assumes that some people are born as leaders, while others are not. According to

the theory, certain people, born with specific traits and characteristics, ought to be more efficient leaders than others born without those traits. The theory was focused on identifying intellectual, emotional, physical and other personal traits of leaders, mostly by observing and analysing biographical data (Gibson *et al.*, 1982).

#### 2.4.1.2 Behavioural theory

With formal and recognised leadership research only introduced after the 1930s, earlier researchers were primarily focused on the examination of leader behaviour, based on the behavioural theory (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015). Behaviour theories distinguish primarily between two types of behaviour, namely people-oriented behaviour or task-oriented behaviour (Strydom & Smith, 2011).

Lewin and Lippitt (in Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015) introduced the democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles in the 1930s. The democratic leadership style allows the subordinate to take part in the decision-making process. In contrast, the autocratic leadership style grants the subordinate no liberty to take part in decision making, but is characterised by a top-down decision-making process (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015). The laissez-faire leader's behaviour, on the other hand, is characterised by little or no guidance and leadership is almost completely absent (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015).

Earlier leadership theories also include the Ohio State leadership studies from the 1950s that focused on the impact of the leader's behaviour on the follower's contentment. The University of Michigan's leadership studies took it a step further and focused on the impact of leaders' behaviour on group performances. Four categories of leadership behaviours resulted from these studies: leader support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis, and work facilitation (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015).

McGregor's theory X leadership method, which also relates to a behavioural approach to leadership, was introduced in the 1960s. Theory X restricts leadership to one of two approaches: The theory allows either a hard approach to leadership, which involves a top-down decision-making processes, or a soft approach where the subordinate is included into the decision-making process (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015).

### 2.4.1.3 Situation-leadership theories and approaches

Earlier leadership research includes Fiedler's contingency model from 1967 on leadership effectiveness (Welty Peachey *et al.*, 2015). According to this model, efficient and practical group behaviour depends on a positive balance and correlation between the leadership style and the situation (Strydom & Smith, 2011). Based on the contingency approach, Strydom and Smith (2011: 122) define effective leadership "as a process of analysing the situation, and then choosing the best leadership style to suit it". Desirable leadership outcomes are thus dependent upon the leader, the follower, as well as the situational factors, which include the external and internal environment. According to Vroom and Jago (2007), Fiedler's theory suggests that the leader should be positioned in a situation that is cooperative and supportive to his or her leadership style. Vroom and Jago (2007:20) also confirm Fiedler's significant research contribution to leadership in history by stating that "it is clear that Fiedler was a pioneer in taking leadership research beyond the purely trait or purely situational perspectives that preceded his contribution".

Table 2.2 below presents a few typical situational approaches to leadership.

**Table 2.2: Examples of typical conventional leadership models**

Leadership model/approach	Criticism against model
<i>Vroom-Yetton's model of leadership.</i> This model specifies which leadership decision-making procedures will be most effective in each of several different situations. Two styles are autocratic, two are consultative and one is joint decision oriented (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1982).	The model indicates that leaders can be trained; however, the model designates five clinical decision-making styles and provides 'diagnosis decision rules'.
<i>Fiedler's contingency model</i> (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1982).	The model does not believe in training to make or improve leaders. It focuses on how to change situations and not people, but proposes only three

	situational factors influencing leadership effectiveness.
<i>The path-goal model.</i> This theory (framework) suggests that it is necessary for a leader to influence the followers' perception of work goals, self-development goals and paths to goal attainment (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1982).	The foundation of this model is one motivation theory, namely expectancy motivation theory. It proposes that leaders will be motivational to the extent that this helps subordinates cope with environmental uncertainties. It focuses merely on styles.
<i>The situational leadership model.</i> This model of Hersey and Blanchard is very popular because it attempts to simplify the situation into four possibilities for leaders (French, 2009).	The popular model of Hersey and Blanchard is narrow-minded since leadership is much more than tell, sell, participate, or delegate.

## 2.4.2 Alternative modern leadership approaches

From these earlier leadership theories, newer and “modern” leadership approaches were birthed and established. In other words, earlier leadership approaches have laid the foundation for the development of the alternative, modern approaches which focus more on a combination of the trait, behaviour and situational leadership styles instead of on only one. Three of these alternative, modern approaches are discussed next.

### 2.4.2.1 Charismatic leadership

One of the modern approaches to leadership is the theory of charismatic leadership, which is based on unconventional and radical approaches to leadership (Strydom & Smith, 2011). This theory assumes charm, vision, and dedication as important attributes to leadership style. Former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, is one of the well-known examples of a charismatic leader (Strydom & Smith, 2011).

A charismatic leadership framework defines leadership by personality and charm, instead of relying on authority. Charismatic leaders seek to fulfil organisational goals by instilling devotion. They engender the trust of the people through visible self-sacrifice and take personal risks. Such leaders have the potential to elevate and transform an entire company (French, 2009). The dangers, however, are that cultic figures with a self-belief (somewhat arrogant) can use personal powers to create a personality-based followership that may misguide (even deceive) people.

#### 2.4.2.2 Transformational leadership

In 1978, Burns introduced one of the best-known leadership theories, namely the theory of transformational leadership. A more advanced and refined model was introduced by him in 1985. Like charismatic leadership, transformational leaders apply passion and energy at work to inject energy and enthusiasm into followers. However, transformational leadership, which has become a focal point in modern leadership research, focuses on the ability to identify the need for change, the ability to promote and produce positive change with the end goal in mind, and to transform followers into leaders themselves (Strydom & Smith, 2011). It involves a high level of motivation where the leader encourages the follower to reach his or her full potential in personal achievements, self-confidence, and self-actualisation, as well as to achieve specific goals. According to this model, four I's represent transformational leadership style (Strydom & Smith, 2011):

- *Idealised influence* – leaders behave in a manner that attracts followers and classifies themselves to be role-models;
- *Inspiration* – leaders inspire, motivate and encourage followers by means of challenging work;
- *Intellectual stimulation* – leaders encourage their followers to think differently, to challenge themselves to gain new perspectives, and to develop new ideas;
- *Individual consideration* – leaders focus on followers' individual needs, identify growing opportunities for followers, and mentor them.

Since the 1980s, there has been a serious change in the way leadership is perceived and anticipated. Transformational leadership focuses on effecting revolutionary change in organisations through a commitment to the organisation's vision (Barker,



Sullivan & Emery, 2006). Hybels (2007) maintains that this radical style of leadership is needed to break the yoke of oppression.

#### 2.4.2.3 Transactional leadership

The theory of transactional leadership is based on an arrangement between leaders and followers in favour of both parties in order to achieve their goals. The leader, who rewards the follower based on specific performances, stays in contact with followers for the purpose of exchange (Van Schalkwyk, 2011). The needs of both parties are satisfied by this leadership style, although their objectives and targets are different.

Transactional leadership bases itself on getting things done through structure and an organisational chain of command (Barker, Sullivan & Emery, 2006). The assumption is that rewards and punishment will motivate people. The transactional leader adopts a mere “telling” style and negotiates a contract with subordinates in terms of structures and a formal system for rewards and discipline.

## 2.5 LEADERSHIP STYLES

A review of the theories and models discussed in this chapter inevitably presents a rich array of leadership styles adopted by leaders. There is a plenitude of literature on modern-day leadership styles. As leadership is dependent on the situation, with multiple variables (Vroom & Jago, 2007), it is difficult to identify a singular successful leadership style. Successful leaders can adapt their leadership roles and styles according to the situation.

Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) identified three primary leadership styles, namely autocratic, participative, and delegative. Other relevant leadership styles found in the literature include servant leadership style, level 5 leadership style, feminist leadership, emotional and social leadership, spiritual leadership, exemplary leadership, and leadership measured by legacy. Each of these styles will be discussed briefly in the sections that follow.

### 2.5.1 Autocratic leadership style

In autocratic leadership, the leader is the main role player of the group in a manner that no decisions will be made, and no work will be done without the leader’s

presence (Van Schalkwyk, 2011:138). A leader that adopts an autocratic leadership style has much control over the group and the followers are in a position of severe dependence on the leader. This leadership style does not provide an opportunity for followers to take part in the decision-making process and requires high control from the leader. There is a definitive division between the leaders and the followers. It is not a popular leadership style due to its many weaknesses. Followers perceive it as controlling, dictatorial and oppressive (Johannsen, 2014). It is a leadership style which will be most effective in situations where there is little time or need for followers to participate in the decision-making process.

### **2.5.2 Participative leadership style**

The opposite leadership style to an autocratic approach is the popular democratic or participative leadership style. It is a highly favoured leadership style based on developing healthy working relationships (Van Schalkwyk, 2011:138). Democratic or participative leaders provide direction and guidance to members. The core of this leadership style is the provision of participation and input opportunities from all group members. Members have the opportunity to engage and share ideas; yet, the final decision will be made by the leader. The democratic/participative leadership style serves as a useful intermediate style between over-controlling leadership and, on the other extreme, a complete 'hands-off' leadership style with no control (Johannsen, 2014).

### **2.5.3 Laissez-faire leadership style**

The laissez-faire leadership style is "delegative" – all guidance or direction is minimised and there is little or no cooperation between leader and group members. As a rule, the laissez-faire leader uses management by exception and will only intervene in situations where problems become detrimental (Jones & Rudd, 2008). This leadership style is also known as a "hands-off" type of leadership. The leader is not in control of the decision-making process and this responsibility falls upon the followers. The effectiveness of this leadership style is debatable. According to Jones and Rudd (2008), the laissez-faire leadership style can also be described as a non-leadership style. This leadership style could be suitable in a working environment of highly trained, specialised and motivated group members (Johannsen, 2014).

#### **2.5.4 The servant leadership style**

This leadership style is practiced when the leader's primary focus is on the needs of his or her followers (Johannsen, 2014). Attributes of this leadership style are the positive use of power, moral development, emotional intelligence, and the development of relationships (Borland, Kane & Burton, 2014). Servant leaders put emphasis on developing others, good values, and morality (Johannsen, 2014). Characteristics of a servant leader are humility, authenticity, stewardship, meekness, protection, and interpersonal acceptance. This leadership style has an effect of ethical behaviour, positive mind-set, and self-belief of followers.

As service delivery has become more demanding in the fast growing, dynamic and nimble international service economy, and due to the growth of servitisation of manufacturing industries, service and stewardship related leadership models are becoming more applicable to all industries. With service delivery becoming increasingly uncertain (Yielder & Codling, 2004), leadership based on service quality, a process in which followers are influenced (serviced) by a leader, is beneficial to all, as it implies close customer contact, with the leader more present and involved 'in-the-field' (Foster, 2010).

#### **2.5.5 Level 5 leadership style**

Collins (2001) describes the level 5 leader as a leader at the highest level of leadership capabilities and effectiveness. The five levels of leadership include (1) highly capable individuals, (2) contributing team members, (3) competent managers, (4) effective leaders and (5) great leaders. Although the other four levels of leadership are in essence appropriate and necessary, the level 5 leader is incomparable. Collins (2001) argues that the level 5 leader is the most competent person and an unavoidable requirement for the transformation of an organisation. Level 5 leaders require the capabilities of all levels, the lower level capabilities as well as the significant capabilities of level 5. According to Collins (2001:71), "level 5 leaders blend the paradoxical combination of deep personal humility with intense professional will".

### **2.5.6 Feminist leadership**

Van Zyl (2016) points out the distinct differences between feminine leadership and feminist leadership. He asserts that “feminine leadership is characterised by the nurturing and caring behaviours attributed to women”, whereas feminist leadership is “more comprehensive, acknowledging the nurturing and caring behaviour of women, as well as the social, political and religious inequities women have historically faced. In addition feminist leadership is defined by its capacity for effecting social change” (Van Zyl, 2016:371). The concept of feminist leadership is linked to variables such as cultural and traditional practices, including women’s roles influenced by religion, social structures, and political structures, as well as feminine self-impressions. Feminist leadership shows that women have reached considerable success in political and organisational leadership worldwide, despite the suppression and challenges they faced regarding access to leadership positions.

### **2.5.7 Emotional and social leadership**

The concept of emotional and social intelligence plays a vital role in effective leadership. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008:2) affirm that “new studies of the brain show that leaders can improve group performance by understanding the biology of empathy”, underlining the crucial role emotional and social intelligence can play in leadership performances and success.

Emotional intelligence involves traits of empathy and self-knowledge that play a significant role in leadership. Sensitivity to other’s needs as well as the ability to understand motives and underlying reasons why others act in a particular way are signs of emotional intelligence, according to Goleman and Boyatzis (2008). In the same vein, Mayer and Salovey (in Hanin, 2011:341) define emotional intelligence (EI) as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. One of the latest discoveries in behavioural neurosciences is the presence of the so-called mirror neurons in the brain (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Mirror neurons enable a person to copy or portray emotions when he or she knowingly or unknowingly observes someone else’s emotion through their actions. This can be a powerful tool in the hand of a leader for changing the behaviour and emotions of followers as well as for prompting specific actions from followers. A study by

Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) which highlighted the effects of emotional signals in the delivery of messages to a group, followers or subordinates, serves as an example. The study entailed the observation of two different groups. One group received positive feedback, combined with negative emotional signals, while the other group received negative feedback, combined with positive emotional signals. The results of the study indicated that the group receiving negative feedback combined with positive emotional signals felt a lot better about their performance than the other group (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). These findings underscore the importance of emotional intelligence, as subordinates' experiences and feelings will affect their future approaches, performances and effectivity. Thus, socially intelligent leaders would characteristically be more approachable, playful, relatable, and less demanding.

In terms of the aim of this study it is important to realise that emotional intelligence is also of fundamental importance to high-performance sports coaches. The coach needs to create an environment for the athlete that will promote optimal performance. While some athletes prefer a more focused and unpleasant atmosphere, associated with anxiety, anger, and tension, other athletes might require a pleasant, comforting atmosphere, associated more with feelings of satisfaction, confidence, and joy to be able to perform well (Hanin, 2011). These needs are also not fixed and may vary. Therefore, the coach needs emotional intelligence to perceive, adapt, and manage emotions accordingly. Moreover, coaches face the challenge of expression and suppression of emotion display (Hanin, 2011). They are sometimes expected to suppress true feelings and to display a more appropriate emotional response in order to promote optimal performance. They also need to compose and maintain desirable and professional presentation. However, when coaches confront the challenge of faking emotions in the presence of their athletes and the public to require optimal performances from athletes, the display of these emotions can't appear forceful and unnatural, as this could have a detrimental effect on the athlete's performance.

Social intelligence is another important concept in leadership. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008:3) define social intelligence as "a set of interpersonal competencies built on specific neural circuits (and related endocrine systems) that inspire others to be effective". Evidently, the inability to get along socially in a working environment can

have a detrimental effect on a person's effectivity. For this reason, social intelligence is regarded to be another important skill requirement for leaders these days.

### **2.5.8 Spiritual leadership**

Literature frequently refers to the works of Louis W. Fry (2003) on spiritual leadership. Yusof and Mohamad (2014) refer to Fry to show that spiritual issues have been neglected in most leadership research. Spiritual qualities of leaders are commonly overlooked, and previous leadership theories with a primary focus on the physical and mental aspects of human interaction tend to neglect the spiritual component. Yusof and Mohamad (2014) provide an accurate definition of spiritual leadership. The authors refer to Anderson's (2000) view of spirituality as the intangible, life-affirming force in all human beings. Spiritual leadership thus requires new knowledge and leadership skills, but with the demonstration of a high level of emotional maturity and spiritual wisdom.

John Maxwell (2002) is known for his faith in the supernatural. He emphasises the fact that all of us influence at least 10 000 people in our lifetime. He further maintains that the average impact of leaders is a mere fraction of what it can be with effective leadership. Some important dimensions of his leadership principles are:

- A truly valuable vision must have God in it because only He knows your full capabilities (Maxwell, 2002).
- The leader must have personal power, leverage, and influence, and not rely on position. The purest form of leadership is nestled in personhood. Good character builds trust and respect and protects trust at all costs (Maxwell, 2002).

### **2.5.9 Exemplary leadership**

As mentioned earlier, Kouzes and Posner (2012) began their study on exemplary leadership in the 1980s. After thousands of case study analyses, interviews and thorough research, it was discovered that the basic behaviours and actions of leaders remained the same and are still relevant today. Leaders achieve their absolute best and achieve extraordinary things when they engage in what Kouzer and Posner (2012:15) identified as the five practices of exemplary leadership. This framework has very important cornerstones and has the potential to become the best

leadership model, especially when combined with other frameworks. Leaders engage in the five practices of exemplary leadership through the following actions (Kouzer & Posner, 2012:15): They

- *model* the way;
- *inspire* a shared vision;
- *challenge* the process;
- *enable* others to act; and
- *encourage* the heart.

#### **2.5.10 Leadership measured by legacy**

There is a strong belief that true leadership is measured by legacy. The ideal scenario for any leader is to 'get it all together' with a life of influence that may stand the test of time and exist for ever. Every person on earth has a legacy – all of us leave something behind. Multiple examples of leadership legacies exist, such as those of church leaders who are still showing the way forward.

The Biggs model is widely used to measure legacies. Biggs served Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, professional organisations, and non-profit organisations in 40 countries (Biggs, 2017). His notion is that leaders today should measure their success in terms of how many people they groom. He therefore confronts leaders in terms of the meaningful difference they make to the people in their lives. His legacy model comprises four challenging standards, namely character, choices, conduct, and consequences. From the world of athletics, Usain Bolt serves as an example. It may be a few years before such a role model will enter the scene, and his legacy in terms of the above standards will stay with us.

#### **2.6 LEADERSHIP MYTHS**

In the process of getting closer to authentic leadership perspectives, it is imperative to include an examination of the most common myths of leadership. One of the most common debates during the past few decades focuses on the differences between management and leadership. Most of the concerns are related to the dilution of the essence of leadership.

The seminal work by Nienaber (2010) sheds light on the vast number of confusing leadership views. In her summary of 80 leadership authors she illustrates the disturbing variety of leadership types, using a comprehensive content analysis of the literature (Nienaber, 2010). Some authors simply confine and dilute leadership by means of a few personal traits, such as charisma, making them a function of leadership. John F. Kennedy, for example, may have been the most charismatic person ever to occupy the White House; yet, few presidents got as little done (Goetsch & Davis, 2012). On the other hand, Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman were effective leaders, but they lacked charisma, which shows that such a confined and diluted definition of leadership is inadequate.

The well-known New York Times author John C. Maxwell (Maxwell, 2002) provides the following summary of leadership myths:

- *The entrepreneurial myth.* Although some leaders are enterprising, innovative and persuasive, they do not always maintain a long-term influence.
- *The knowledge myth.* Many obtain formal qualifications without ever becoming doers or practitioners. Hundreds of academics, philosophers and researchers have the ability of high thinking, but their ability to lead is very low. Intellect does not necessarily equate to leadership.
- *The pioneer and position myths.* The position does not make the leader; rather it is the leader who makes the position. Artificial influence due to authoritative position is certainly one of the biggest deceptions of leadership. Many historic liberation (political) movements ended in a power situation of forced governance that never worked. A drive for power is also a common trap where the motives of these leaders correspond to their questionable influence.

## **2.7 SPORTS LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is a fundamental part of all spheres of life. This section will deliberate on the importance of leadership within the sports industry. Firstly, the industry of sport will be defined and explained. Then the business of sport, which refers to the supply and demand of sport, will be discussed. Leadership in sports organisations will be explored next, upon which the difference between sports management and sports



leadership will be highlighted. Subsequently, a model for leadership effectiveness in the sports industry will be discussed, and finally the focus will be on the sports coach, who is strongly associated with sports leadership.

### **2.7.1 The industry of sport**

Every country focuses on the primary industries of its economy. Some countries may focus more on tourism than on mining, for instance. First world countries have more industries than developing countries. An industry can be defined by the “similarity of products and the similarity of economic activities”, according to Eschenfelder and Li (2007:1). The primary industry categories are manufacturing, service providing, and combinations thereof in the public and private sectors of the economy.

This study focuses on service delivery in terms of recreation, sport, and specifically African athletics. The sports industry forms a major part of the economy in most African countries (Omuojine, 2018). Meek (1997:16) provides a thorough explanation of the sports industry, stating that it “includes not only the economic activity of sports teams and recreational sports but also the spending of participants, spectators, and sponsors in connection with sport events”. Meek’s model of the sports industry consists of three main sectors: (1) sports entertainment and recreation, (2) sports products and services, and (3) sports support organisations (Meek, 1997). The products and services related to sport are subjected to supply and demand, as in any business. Bertman (2007:18) defines sport as “a sort of game, between or among human beings, directly engaging physical skills and/or powers in a competition whose goal is victory”. The author adds “each sport is a structure created by constitutive rules, which has a quantitative determination for victory and play may be facilitated by regulative rules policed by the absolute authority of a referee who judges the relation of action in the game’s play to the governing rules of the particular sport”. This definition brings about a clear understanding of the physical component and the measurable outcome of the game of sport. However, as mentioned earlier, there are additional components that contribute to the entire sports industry which, within the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is seen as a fast-growing entertainment industry.

Sports stirs up deep excitement and passion within spectators and players alike in countries around the world. Yet, it can mean different things to different people. To

one person sports is a venue for relaxation, whereas to another sports is a mode of personal recreation and fitness. To athletes sports provides an opportunity for high levels of personal achievements, and to professionals sports is a career that generates an income and simultaneously brings fame and prosperity. Sports provides a lucrative and continually growing marketplace, worthy of immense investments to business people. Facility developers and local governments, for instance, utilise it as a way of building revenue from tourists and local fans. From the above it is therefore evident that sports needs to be structured, organised, managed, and approached like any other business.

It is important to note that large companies also support sports in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) due to the health advantages and positive association with it. Corporate entities are therefore taking on the language of sport (Hanold, 2011), and businesses would consider embarking on sports development as part of CSR. Shields and Bredemeier (in Hanold, 2011:161) state that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century British boarding schools entrenched programmes that encouraged sports participation, primarily because it would help young boys in particular to become effective leaders in business, politics, and in life. Just like in sport, a corporate organisation must win a contract and compete for a target market (Hanold, 2011). There is thus a definite correlation between sport and a business organisation and as such, sports leadership and sports management are key components that contribute to the success of the sports industry.

### **2.7.2 The business of sport**

In the broad context, any exchange activity that entails a supply and demand function can be seen as an economic event. In the business of sport, this refers to the supply of sport and the demand of sport (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007). The value that sports men and women offer represents the supply dimension of this micro-economy and the value that the customer, spectator, and sponsor need from this process can be regarded as the demand dimension. The sports industry is therefore a dynamic market with multiple activities, businesses and organisations involved in producing, facilitating, promoting, or organising sports related activities (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007). Yet, any product has a life cycle, and while it may not seem obvious to the casual observer, the sports sector is constantly evolving in

terms of personal tastes, events, and technologies. The cyclical patterns of athletics can be observed over the long term and legendary athletes such as Usain Bolt influence the demand and spectator value at these meetings. Therefore, similar to any business, it is imperative that corporate strategists and managers deploy tactics to consider the elasticity of demand and supply in their sports organisations (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007).

### **2.7.3 Sports organisations**

Both public and private sports organisations need sustainability. A common goal for all sports organisations is the primary focus on the economic utilisation of resources and making a profit (with exception of non-profit sports organisations). This is important for the survival of the sports industry. All sports organisations depend on donors, sponsors, subsidies, and good business decisions. However, sport has a very important additional ingredient, namely the philosophy of health, winning, and building a winning culture.

The winning maximisation model for sport implies that the sports organisation, which represents a certain team, must focus on increasing and maximising winning (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007). However, this model does not imply that other goals are unimportant. Additional goals of a sports organisation include profit maximization, sales maximization, growth maximization, satisfying contributors and satisfying consumers (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007). Insufficient profit-debt and other factors can act as a hindrance and a limiting factor for a team to maximise wins on the field.

Other players in the sports system are all stakeholders related to health and sport such as gymnasiums, nutrition companies, media representatives, sports and medical specialists, as well as sport advertising agents from the government, community and private sectors. Each type of supplier differs in their primary and secondary goals, objectives, philosophies, management, membership, and leadership styles.

In South Africa there is currently a strong culture of voluntary sport support from the community at school level. This is fortunate, since the government has traditionally not met the expectations, being occupied with other political agendas that caused unethical conduct and mismanagement. Furthermore, the private sector is

increasingly getting involved in sports development, such as the very successful Varsity Sport initiative. This initiative is growing and most of the team sports obtain excellent television exposure. Several CEOs from large companies voluntarily took the initiative to promote sport at university level, with multiple benefits to all stakeholders. These leaders took the initiative and were not formally appointed to make it happen. They were the catalyst to many other role players who were not elected by others. Pfister and Radtke (2009:232) maintain that “sports leaders are elected rather than appointed and one consequence of this being that voluntary careers are subject to great uncertainty, with not only qualifications and competence playing a role but also a candidate’s networks and his or her ability to present himself or herself as an ideal leader”.

Sports organisations are more likely to have voluntary leaders in both lower and higher levels of organisational positions. Voluntary positions are also more common in sports organisations than in other organisations (Pfister & Radtke, 2009). Voluntary leaders have more liberty to make decisions, but also with fewer specific control mechanisms in place. This could raise a few concerns. Due to the higher possibility of voluntary leadership in sport, there is a higher risk of ‘misleadership’ and unprofessional leadership, with the additional risk of not managing the sports organisation as a business.

#### **2.7.4 Sports management and sports leadership**

Parkhouse (2005:3) defines sports management as: “the study and practice involved in relation to all people, activities, organisations, and businesses involved in producing, facilitating, promoting, or organising any product that is sport, fitness, and recreation related and, sport products can be goods, services, people, places, or ideas”. Parkhouse (2005) further suggests that the normal management functions of management are applicable to the sports context in terms of planning, organising, leading, and evaluating (control). While leading is viewed as one of the important management functions, it is the aspect that needs the most attention in any organisation.

However, although management demands the element of leading, managers are not necessarily leaders. Managers are characterised by their job descriptions and the responsibilities associated with certain positions. They have delegated authority, act

as imitators, and have a short-term view. They monitor subordinates and maintain the job. Leaders, on the other hand, are characterised by their inspiration, motivation, innovation, and vision. They have a long-term view with a focus on people (Strydom & Smith, 2011). The ideal situation for any business would thus be to appoint managers at important top-level positions who have leadership skills.

Numerous aspects contribute to good and effective sports leadership. As sport is a social activity, ideal sports leaders would be skilful leaders who are socially effective and possess a passion for sport, health and competition.

### **2.7.5 Sports leadership theory**

A comprehensive understanding of the theory of sports leadership is a central part of this study. Sports leadership research was first conducted by Chelladurai and Saleh in 1978 when they introduced the multidimensional model of leadership (MML) which focused on leadership effectiveness in the sports industry.

Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) argue that sports organisations can be viewed as formal (official) or informal organisations. When the sports organisation is viewed as a business, the coach is considered to take the managerial responsibilities within the organisation. The multidimensional model of leadership theorises a correlation between the behaviour of the coach, the expected behaviour by the athletes, the situation, and the performance outcomes. Chelladurai and Selah (1980) also developed the leadership scale for sports (LSS) which is an index of 5 dimensions of leader behaviour, namely training and instruction, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support, and positive feedback. These dimensions may be regarded as industry specific, and will be used and elaborated upon in this study.

### **2.7.6 The sports coach**

Sports leadership is also strongly associated with coaching, mentoring and instruction. Potgieter (2006:90) maintains that the leadership ability of a coach “has an important effect on the well-being and achievements of his athletes”. Most successful athletes can testify to the immeasurable influence of good coaches on young athletes. In fact, the one-on-one relationships between coaches and athletes often become life-long partnerships. The fact that athletes always remember their coaches emphasises the importance of coaches as role models. Sadly, many

talented athletes never achieve their full potential due to a lack of coaching or the lack of that special chemistry needed between a specific talented athlete and the right coach at the right time. Coaches with a passion for a specific sport will empower and develop themselves to be leaders for the international arena. In addition to equipping themselves with the fundamental knowledge and skills of conditioning, fitness physiology, biomechanics, injury prevention, rehabilitation, mental conditioning, and programming, among others, their focus will be on leadership. This implies a personal touch to take an athlete through the processes of maturity and good decision-making. In his book, *Introduction to Coaching Theory*, Thomson (1991:6) states the following regarding coaching:

In the past the often accepted role of the coach was to be a dominant, authoritarian leader with the athlete as a disciplined follower. In the modern world the athlete is exposed to wider views and his vocabulary has expanded to include the word “why?”

This aspect distinguishes coaches, as there can never be a one-size-fits-all approach. As different athletes require different approaches, each individual will need a tailor-made approach by a coach who keeps steadfast and consistent as a pillar of support, irrespective of whether things go well or not. A relationship is by definition part of coaching, and this implies trust, communication, and motivation (Potgieter, 2006). Thomson (1991) adds that successful coaches will also have the ability to adapt their leadership style according to the situation.

The most accepted leadership style within the sports context is a combination of an autocratic and a democratic leadership style. This combined leadership approach enables and empowers athletes in terms of their inputs and involvement regarding goals and procedures while leaving the final decision making and responsibilities to the coach (Potgieter, 2006).

## **2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter placed focus on the complex phenomenon of leadership. It explored leadership concepts, theories, approaches and styles as a foundation for this study and concluded with a discussion of leadership within the sports industry. The next

chapter will provide insights on women's sports leadership and the history as well as the current condition of athletics in South Africa, with the focus on women.

## **CHAPTER 3: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN ATHLETICS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

One of the primary research objectives of this study is to examine and determine the current status of athletics, particularly women's athletics, in South Africa. Since leadership determines this status, this chapter will give an historic overview of women in leadership globally and the challenges that women had to overcome in sports leadership. The focus will then be narrowed down to South African athletics, in particular the current status and level of performance of South African female athletes on the international arena, by examining statistics of team selections and performances. Factors such as the background of athletics in South Africa, legendary (previous and current) female athletes in South African athletics, the development of women's athletics, and the overall women's athletics status will be discussed and examined.

### **3.2 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SPORT**

This study focuses on leadership and role models in women's sport. Although most of the existing models and theories are applicable to both genders, women are created to be different (not inferior) to men. As women are created differently from men, women's sport also differs from men's sport in many ways. In this section, these issues are explored to better understand the phenomenon and to contribute to women's sports development in South Africa. This study is not about gender issues, feminism, or "women's day", but simply focuses on what is lacking in women's sport in South Africa.

The theoretical argument is that if South Africa has equal talent and opportunity, why does South African athletics have such a poor women's performance record in terms of medals and world rankings? For example: If we compare the 20 male track and field athletes who competed at the national South African championships over the

last ten years with the 20 female athletes of the same track and field events, the female athletes underperformed significantly.

The position of women in society has been a focus point for many decades (e.g. women in top management positions). Challenges and factors such as gender equality, women's empowerment, women's leadership, and equity will remain to exist as contributing factors in the pursuit of improving women's quality of life (Kluka, 2008). It is believed that women's sport is being transformed; yet, significant changes with regard to active professional coaching and role modelling are still imperative. Women's sports leadership is not a simple science and will remain a very relevant concept that still needs further exploration.

The next section will focus on women in leadership positions, female characteristics that contribute to leadership, possible challenges that women face in leadership positions, and the mix of apparent advantages and disadvantages that female leaders experience. Eagly (2007) highlighted that women can have certain advantages in leadership effectiveness especially in roles requiring stereotypical female characteristics such as cooperativeness and the ability to get along with others. Unfortunately, women are still lagging behind, with access to leadership positions demanding even more from female leaders than from their male counterparts. Pfister and Radtke (2009:229) highlight this concern by stating that "throughout the world, women are a small minority within governing bodies of organised sport". Sadly, the same applies to South Africa.

### **3.3 WOMEN IN SPORT**

For decades women have been hindered and handicapped in terms of access to sports participation in all different spheres of sport (Kluka, 2008). Women's presence in sport and their participation on coaching, administration and leadership level have been either insufficient or absent (Kluka, 2008). This part of the chapter will provide insight into when women started participating in physical sports activities, as well as when women started participating on sports leadership levels. In addition, this section will provide a historic overview of the universal and regional policies, declarations, actions and resolutions designed to provide leadership, direction and financial assistance for the development of sport, particularly focusing on empowering women in sport.



### 3.3.1 History of women in sport

It has been a troublesome and strenuous fight for women to be allowed to participate in male domain sports events and spheres (The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa, 1990). Although the modern Olympic Games commenced in 1896, women only started to compete in 1900, albeit in a limited number of events. Only since 1924 were women allowed to compete in a total number of 5 track events (The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa, 1990). However, women participating in various physical activities have significantly increased during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contradicting many preconceived beliefs and attitudes regarding women's physical capabilities (The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa, 1990).

Historic statistics of female participation at the Olympic Games between 1896 and 1981 revealed that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had no female members and also had not allowed a woman's 1 500m race to take place at the Games until 1972 in Munich (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:179). Ironically, the ethos and values of the 'Olympia' stand for global, gender, and athletic inclusiveness as an integral part of the games (Olympic.org, 2016), a significant fact to be noted.

The dominance of men in leadership positions in the IOC is evident. The following relevant data by Acosta and Carpenter (The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa, 1990:122) provide an overall picture of women in leadership positions in 1989:

- Of the women's teams' coaches, 43,3 % were female.
- Less than 1% of coaches of men's teams were female.
- Female administrators led 16% of women's programmes.
- Women held 29% of administrative jobs.

In 1998 the IOC requested all national bodies to increase women in leadership positions to 20% by 2005 (Pfister & Radtke, 2009). Subsequently, The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa (1990:116) reported at their first congress that "women's sports have indeed come a long way, yet on the other hand, may still have a long way to go".

### 3.3.2 Universal and regional policies, declarations, actions or resolutions related to women and sport

There have been many positive initiatives throughout the history of sport with the primary objective of improving the participation of women, enhancing female representation, and working towards an ultimate goal of equity of men and women in all areas of sport. Although these initiatives are significant, they also indicate a need for leadership to apply and implement them. A summary of these policies, declarations, actions and resolutions related to women and sport is presented in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1 Timeline of universal and regional policies, declarations, actions or resolutions related to women and sport (Kluka, 2008)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Policy/Declaration/Action/Resolution</b>
1948	Universal declaration of human rights (United Nations)
1978	Charter of physical education and sport (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – (UNESCO)
1979	Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) (United Nations)
1989	Convention on the rights of the child (United Nations)
1994	Brighton declaration on women and sport from the First World Conference on Women and Sport (International Working Group on Women and Sport
1994	Women and sport working group (International Olympic Committee)
1995	Beijing platform for action
1996	Manila declaration on women and sport from the ICHPERSD 1st Asian Women and Sport Conference
1996, 2000, 2004	IOC resolutions, 1996; 2000; 2004; 2008
1998	Windhoek call for action from the 2nd World Conference on Women

	and Sport (International Working Group on Women and Sport)
2000	Helsinki spirit from the EWS Conference
2001	Asian women and sport action plan from the 1st Asian Conference on Women and Sport (Asian Working Group on Women and Sport)
2002	Montreal communiqué from the 3rd World Conference on Women and Sport (International Working Group on Women and Sport)
2002	African sports confederation of disabled (ASCOD) policy on disabled women's and girls' participation in sport
2002	European Parliament resolution on women and sport 2280 (INI)
2003	Doha conference resolutions from the 2nd Asian Conference on Women and Sport (Asian Working group on Women and Sport)
2004	IOC World Conference on Women and Sport, Marrakech
2004	Women and Sport Commission (International Olympic Committee)
2004	MINEPS IV – Commission III
2005	European Women and Sport: Paris call for action
2005	UN International Year of Sport and Physical Education/UN Sport and Development Goals
2005	Yemen challenge from the 3rd Asian Conference on Women and Sport (Asian Working Group on Women and Sport)
2006	Kumamoto commitment at the Fourth World Conference on Women and Sport (International Working Group on Women and Sport)
2006	UN action plan on sport for development and peace
2006	UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
2008	“Accept and Respect” declaration from the International Study Week on Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women, partnered by IAPESGW and Sultan Qaboos University, Oman
2008	IOC World Conference on Women and Sport – Dead Sea call for action, Jordan
2012	IOC World Conference on Women and sport – Los Angeles, United States

Table 3.1 provides evidence of the quantity of policies, declarations, actions or resolutions in favour of promoting female participation in sport, which will now be elaborated upon.

- *1979 – Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) hosted in the United Nations*

This was one of the first universal declarations that acknowledged and reaffirmed a belief in constitutional human rights focusing on equal rights for men and women. Article 13 reports that all relevant measures should be taken to eradicate and disqualify any form of discrimination against women in different contexts. It also focuses on the equality of men and women regarding the same rights to participate in recreational activities and sport (United Nations, 1979).

- *1994/1998 – The Brighton Declaration, followed by the Windhoek call for action*

International initiatives and organisations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have affirmed the strong standing phenomenon that men are taking the dominant position in sports leadership positions. The Brighton Declaration in 1994, followed by the Windhoek call for Action in 1998, were both supported by the IOC, primarily to further the participation base and status of women in sport (Pfister & Radtke, 2009). The IOC also pressured national committees to increase, appoint, promote, and empower women in their sport organisations, with the aim of a 20% increase by the year 2005 (Pfister & Radtke, 2009).

Kluka (2008) asserts that the Brighton Declaration has been a fundamental and important declaration and an effort towards empowering women in sport. The primary concern, however, is that despite many efforts in various forms of declarations, action plans, policy documents, constitutions and acts, there is still little progress in the status of women in sport. This points to inadequate leadership in the application and implementation of these plans. Still, the Brighton Declaration played a compelling role in the comprehensive dispute on women and sport, as it presented an advanced global standpoint and emphasised the change needed for the establishment of women in sport (Kluka, 2008).

Kluka (2008:18) further states that “the issue of women and sport continuously remains on the agenda of global social change”. She confirms that the Brighton Declaration was an effort to affect social change in sport. However, for such a global, universal, social change to be possible and to be implemented successfully and maintain credibility demands certain management strategies, processes, operations and systems. The prominent lack of management processes and organised change explains the significant gap between the goals and the actual unsubstantial impact of the Brighton Declaration. Kluka (2008:19) maintains that a lack of leadership could be viewed as the core problem contributing to the current unfavourable state of women in sport, stating that “low levels of competent leadership responsible for managing the change process results in loss of corporate memory regarding the Brighton Declaration”.

- *IOC World Conferences on Women and Sport*
  - i. 1996 – 1<sup>st</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland (Title: Resolution of the 1st IOC World Conference on Women and Sport)

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) acknowledged and accepted the vision that the absolute Olympic goal and ideal cannot be achieved without equality for women within the entire Olympic Movement. This conference demanded the IOC, other international federations (IFs), and the national Olympic committees (NOCs) to contemplate and deal with gender inequality issues and to implement gender equality in all policies, operations and proceedings (International Olympic Committee, 2016). Certain practical and measurable recommendations were brought to the table to ensure equal opportunities for women involved in sport. For instance, it was recommended that specific committees be initiated with at least 10% female members to primarily design and implement action plans for the promotion of women in sport (International Olympic Committee, 2016).

- ii. 2000 – 2<sup>nd</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Paris, France (Title: New Perspectives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)

The purpose for this conference was to reflect on and examine the improvement and growth since the previous IOC meeting in 1996. Participants shared ideas, evaluations made and possible concerns that needed to be addressed. The primary outcome and conclusion was that women should preserve and uphold at least 20% of decision-making positions within the Olympic Movement by the end of 2005 (International Olympic Committee, 2016).

- iii. 2004 – 3<sup>rd</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Marrakech, Morocco (Title: New Strategies, New Commitments):

Participants at this conference agreed that very little progress had taken place and that the state of women in sport had been stagnant since their previous meeting in France in 2000 (International Olympic Committee, 2016). It was pointed out that new attempts were imperative. The conference document acknowledged and reaffirmed the goals established in 1996 and 2000 that the IOC, NOCs and the IFs should consist of 20% women in decision-making positions and boards by 2005. The primary focus was to encourage the integrated sports movement to counteract gender imbalances (International Olympic Committee, 2016).

- iv. 2008 – 4<sup>th</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Jordan (Title: Sport as a vehicle of social change)

This conference, which focused on the theme “Sport as a vehicle of change” (International Olympic Committee, 2016), indicated that sport should be used as a positive tool for addressing and fixing societal problems. The theme suggested that sport could be seen as a positive solution rather than adding to further societal issues. Participants adopted an action plan to work towards the goal of societal equity in sport.

- v. 2012 – 5<sup>th</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Los Angeles (Title: Together stronger – The future of sport)

The theme of this event was very similar to the previous conferences which highlighted the necessity for women and men to work together to break through barriers for women in sport (International Olympic Committee, 2016). The L.A. Declaration focused primarily on the need to bring more women into leadership

positions and the need for more partnerships that would promote gender equality in sport.

These international initiatives show that the domain of sport is indeed male dominated and confirm that it still poses as a long-standing and wide-spread obstacle for women in sport.

Clearly many initiatives throughout the history of sport were primarily aimed at furthering the participation of women in sport, enhancing representation of women in sport, and working towards an ultimate goal of equity of men and women involved in all areas of sport. The existence of all these policies, declarations, actions and resolutions related to women and sport also highlights the desperate need for female sports leaders world-wide, who would not only embrace these policies or attend these conferences, but would be active in project execution, programme roll-outs and ultimate effective implementation.

### **3.4 CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

There are various factors hindering female participation in leadership. Gender has been a key discussion point among historians, and female participation in sport has been no different (Nauright, 2013:565). It is evident from literature that, more recently, the number of women involved in sport, participating in sport, and women in leadership positions has increased; yet, an underrepresentation still exists (Depauw, Bonace & Karwas, 1991). The following sections will briefly expound on some of the factors that contribute to the lack of female leaders in general.

#### **3.4.1 Stereotypical perceptions**

What challenges do women face in leadership positions and what hindrances do women encounter in their pursuit of becoming effective leaders? Miner (in Eagly, 2007) establishes that leadership is usually portrayed in masculine terms and stereotypically associated with masculine qualities. Hanold (2011) confirms this concern by stating that “sport has historically been a site for (male) leadership development and continues to provide metaphorical significance within the context of today’s leadership”. This enlightens women’s challenge to compete with stereotypical perceptions of leadership skills and positions associated with masculine qualities. An example of a stereotypical perception is that women are seen as not

ideal or fit for a work position as they are more likely to be “unreliable” due to extra responsibilities regarding children and family (Pfister & Radtke, 2009).

### **3.4.2 Disfavour of female leaders**

Society might disfavour female leaders, which is another challenge faced by women in leadership. Eagly (2007:4) maintains that people sometimes dislike female leaders who display directive and assertive qualities, as such women may seem unfeminine. Females are therefore perceived to be non-effective leaders due to their femininity, but criticised and viewed as unfeminine when they are assertive. This makes it difficult for women to be effective leaders without experiencing some sort of discrimination. They are facing contradicting expectations regarding being socially accepted women and effective leaders (Eagly, 2007).

### **3.4.3 Societal expectations**

Natural differences in terms of male and female roles should have no bearing on superiority or inferiority. Yet, societal expectations of women include traits such as kindness, compassion, gentleness, hospitality and empathy, whereas from men society expects traits such as confidence, aggressiveness and intimidation (Eagly, 2007). Society thus seems to suggest that males are more natural leaders than females. Eagly (2007:4) confirms this, arguing that “people more easily credit men with leadership ability and more readily accept them as leaders”. As such, women face the challenge of finding a middle way for being effective in leadership, while simultaneously fulfilling the societal expectations of them. Coakley and Burnett (2014:178) confirm that the sports world is usually male dominated, male identified, and male centred, and indicate that as the reason for gender and fairness issues in sport. For instance, in a male-dominated social world, female athletes and coaches are justified in their sport only when they perform and act like men. In a male-identified social world, females in leadership positions are under suspicion concerning their abilities to perform and regarding how they managed to obtain such position. Moreover, in a male-centred social world, it is readily accepted that males are the centre of attention (Coakley & Burnett, 2014).



#### **3.4.4 Lack of sufficient support**

Coakley and Burnett (2014:181) mention that “female athletes in most South African schools and universities seldom receive the same support enjoyed by males”. South African female athletes could drop out of sport prematurely due to the lack of sufficient and fair support. In this regard, Nauright (2013:569) argues that “empowerment is the key theme that emerges in an analysis of sport development projects aimed at women”. It seems, therefore, that a lack of sufficient support could be a contributing factor to the problem of underrepresentation of female athletes competing on high level in South Africa.

#### **3.4.5 Cosmetic fitness**

Female athletes know that appearance and beauty play an additional role in their sports careers. Female athletes are advised to be strong and fast; yet, at the same time they are expected to be skinny and to look good (Coakley & Burnett, 2014: 174). Fulfilling these additional requirements adds extra pressure on high performance athletes and role models. It also has a ripple effect on the consumers of sports and could lead them to feel insecure about their bodies and could drive them away from any type of sports participation (Coakley & Burnett 2014:174). “When femininity is tied to physical attractiveness and sexual desirability, the women who accept the dominant gender ideology often make choices that interfere with sport participation” (Coakley & Burnett, 2014:175).

Bower and Hums (2013) conducted a study to examine career information of women working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. This study of 660 responses related to the greatest challenges of their job. The greatest challenges indicated by the respondents were grouped into five themes. The least favourable aspect of their job proved to be gender-specific challenges (488 responses), followed by time commitment challenges (139 responses) and communication challenges (33 responses) (Bower & Hums, 2013). Bower and Hums (2013:6) stated that “the greatest challenges were very similar to the least enjoyable aspects of the job as women were not respected, had continuous pressure to prove themselves, and were not taken seriously”. Other gender-specific challenges indicated in this study included aspects such as lack of females, stereotypes, and gender equity (Bower & Hums, 2013).

As mentioned, the second greatest challenge that women in this study faced was time related, and included the challenges of balancing work life and family life, as well as certain societal expectations placed on women. These challenges should affect women's leadership effectiveness significantly. The study indicated a lack in female co-workers and a gender equity problem which could also lead to limited female networking opportunities and female mentors. In this regard, Bower and Hums (2013:12) argue that, in terms of athletics, "the more female intercollegiate athletic administrators in the field, the more opportunities exist to have a support system for building mentoring relationships and networks that can lead to success".

To summarise, the challenges that women face in sports leadership are the fundamental reasons for the underrepresentation of females in management positions. These challenges include perceptions of gender stereotypes, lack of respect, lack of mentoring, limited role models, and other gender-specific challenges.

### **3.5 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAITS**

The fact that female leaders appear to be different does not imply that they are ineffective. Women may possess the same leadership abilities men do, and they may develop these skills the same way men develop theirs. However, gender differences provide different characteristics by default, without any discrimination between good or bad. Women leaders may have distinct leadership characteristics associated with the feminine side of womanhood. For instance, some dimensions of social, emotional and spiritual leadership may be more dominant among women than men.

Women are more likely to be nurturing towards their followers. Women's nurturing abilities are an attribute to transformational leadership, as women more easily tend to unify followers of different ages, experiences and education (Van Zyl, 2016). Another trait associated with women is their ability to listen to their followers, which make them more likely to be flexible and adjustable in their decision making (Van Zyl, 2016).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are various ways to define leadership, and different styles and approaches to good leadership exist. Modern approaches to leadership take behaviour as well as context and situation into consideration.

Women can adapt an effective leadership style appropriate to the context, as confirmed by Eagly (2007:2) stating that “given that leaders’ effectiveness depends on context, it is reasonable to think that stereotypically feminine qualities of cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration are important to leadership”.

Empathy has a compelling position within the 21<sup>st</sup> century of leadership literature (Hanold, 2011). Hanold (2011) enlightens the importance of empathy in producing positive awareness and feelings which encourage athletes to cooperate, which in turn promotes better performances. According to Hanold (2011:163), “women firmly believe that by helping each other, they are able to produce their best results”. The author also points out that, “in this sport context, the connections between empathy and performance begin to emerge in ways that have implications for leadership”. The 21<sup>st</sup> century organisations need leaders who can adapt. Sports have historically been associated with masculinity; however, the value of empathy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century could be one of the new leadership lessons within sport that pledges consideration by the 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders (Hanold, 2011). Women therefore have unique traits and attributes to contribute to worldwide leadership. The National Committee of the Olympic Academy of Southern Africa (1990:120) confirm that women can complement and contribute to leadership by stating that “for obvious reasons it is necessary to have the female influence in sport as women will have certain ways of communication that will be contributing to a balanced approach in leading the female athlete to positive sport involvement”.

## **3.6 ATHLETICS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **3.6.1 Background of athletics in South Africa**

Many factors influenced the early development and evolution of athletics in South Africa, as well as the formal establishment of structures within the sport (Steyn, 2015). A historic overview of athletics in South Africa will provide an improved understanding and foundation in the pursuit of addressing and answering the research problem.

The South African Amateur Athletic Association/Union (SAAAA) was established at a historical meeting on 26 March 1894 (Steyn, 2015) (Please see a copy of the notice of this first meeting in Annexure 2), and the first formal South African athletics

championships also took place in 1894. Although no law indicated that the initial SAAAA allowed only whites to participate at the athletics meeting until the apartheid laws entered in 1949, only whites competed under the SAAAA. South Africa had no athletes competing at the first historic Olympic Games that took place in Athens, Greece in 1896. South Africa also did not have any representatives at the second Olympic Games that took place in Paris, France in 1900. Although South Africa did not send an official team to the third Olympic Games in 1904 in St Louis, United States, it is recorded that three South African athletes participated in the marathon (Steyn, 2015).

The first South African cross-country race took place on 17 May 1901 (Steyn, 2015). A journalist, Emile Platnaeur, became the president and chaired the first organised meeting for the Spartan Harriers club, which led to the birth of cross-country in South Africa (Steyn, 2015). Emile Platnaeur played a significant part in the establishment of the middle-distance and cross-country events in South Africa. Steyn (2015:13) maintains that “he could truly be called the ‘father’ of the sport in South Africa”.

According to Steyn (2015:16), the social, economic and political activities in an area determined the formation of athletics clubs in South Africa, which were responsible for organised athletic meetings. Although prior to the apartheid era there was no official law against non-whites/coloured ethnic groups participating at the South African athletics championships, only whites participated at the SAAAA athletics meetings.

Labuschagne (2016:82) asserts that “the structures and dynamics of black athletes were, for more than a century, manipulated and dictated for political and related reasons”. It is therefore clear that the development of non-white South African athletes has been corrupted even before the apartheid era (Labuschagne, 2016). A separate and dissociated athletics federation, called the South African Amateur Athletic Board (SAAAB), was established in 1946 (Steyn, 2015). This federation was established for the non-white or coloured ethnic groups. The first recorded SAAAB championship was held in 1948. In the same year, the apartheid policy was officially introduced. The South African Bantu Amateur Athletic and Cycling Federation (SAAAF) was established for the non-white/coloured athletes in 1949, and from that

year the official South African athletics championships were open to the white ethnic groups only. The relationship between politics and sport in South Africa is evident. The apartheid policy forbade non-white/coloured athletes to compete with and against white ethnic groups until 1973 (Steyn, 2015). South Africa sent an all-white team to the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Italy. This resulted in South Africa's exclusion from the international sporting community, due to the clear racial strategy behind the team selection criteria (Labuschagne, 2016).

The first combined event between whites and non-whites/coloured athletes was held in 1974. However, discrimination still existed in that a separate meeting was held for whites only. The SAAAA allowed open competition to all South Africans only in 1977, while still holding whites-only and blacks-only championships (Steyn, 2015). From 1978, only one athletics championship open to all South Africans (men) was held. The first official women's athletics championship in South Africa was recorded in 1981 (Steyn, 2015). Labuschagne (2016) indicates that the normalisation of athletics in South Africa started to become visible in 1990, when some barriers were removed to at last move towards the achievement of racial equality within athletics in South Africa.

The SAAAB, however, would not allow their athletes to compete in the open championships until 1994. Consequently, some athletes left the SAAAB to compete at these championships (Steyn, 2015). Things changed drastically for South Africa in 1994 when the political system changed from apartheid to one of majority rule/democracy and South Africa was re-admitted by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF). All South African athletes have since been allowed to compete on the international arena and a single athletics body, Athletics South Africa (ASA), was established for all South African athletes.

### **3.6.2 The current status of athletics in South Africa**

To define the current status and prospects of South African (SA) athletics, Pretorius (2017:15) quotes a newspaper article stating appropriately that "the future is bright for SA athletics". SA athletes have shown significant performances in the past few years. SA's Wayde van Niekerk, for instance, broke Michael Johnson's 400m world record in a time of 43,03 seconds at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. In 2017, Wayde van Niekerk broke yet another world record in the 300m in a time of 30,81 seconds.

The online news service, Sport24, reported that “record-setting Wayde van Niekerk could be the athlete to take over track and field from Usain Bolt, according to the Jamaican sprint star himself.” Usain Bolt is one of the most influential athletes in history with a track record of 8 Olympic gold medals and 11 World Championship gold medals (Sport24, 2017).

Although the performance level of SA athletes has shown significant progress, certain challenges and difficulties remain within SA athletics. In 2017, certain high profile SA athletes started a “*#FillUpPotch*” movement and campaigned on social media to create awareness and attract support for the SA Senior Athletics Championship event held in Potchefstroom. According to Xabanisa (Cape Argus, 2017), this campaign was “led by 400m world record holder Wayde van Niekerk and South African record holder and Olympic finalist Akani Simbine – aimed at filling up McArthur Athletics Stadium for the SA Senior Championships in Potchefstroom in anticipation of the fastest 100m race to be run in this country”.

The initiative was led by Wayde van Niekerk, who said in an interview that they were fighting for their sport, and wanted to change the image of athletics in South Africa (Cape Argus, 2007). The campaign, which was supported by numerous local athletes, accentuates the desperate need for awareness and support in South Africa. It is a distressing concern that SA athletes feel the need to start such a campaign to create awareness and to gain publicity.

South Africa was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> on the medal table at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London, with Kenya in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and the USA in 1<sup>st</sup> place. This has been the best performance ever by South African athletes, who produced a total of 6 medals, 3 of which were gold medals (iaaf.org, 2017). Adding to this preeminent performance by SA athletics was the performance by the SA youth team at the 2017 IAAF World Youth Championship in Nairobi (iaaf.org, 2017). The under 18 national team was placed number 1 on the medal table. This seems to have been a transcendent year for South African athletics. However, for a holistic understanding of the current state of SA athletics, additional statistics need consideration.

Pretorius (2017:35), who further examined the statistics of SA athletics after the 2017 athletics season, asserts that despite the few star athletes that produced medals at the World Championships, “the rest of the picture looks sad”. According to

Pretorius (2017), only 5 athletes in South Africa are ranked in the top 5 in the world, compared to more than 50 from the United States of America (USA) and 30 from Kenya. When examining the events where SA athletes are ranked in the top 100 in the world, SA male athletes are on average placed 32<sup>th</sup>, while on average female SA athletes rank 50<sup>th</sup>, whereas USA male athletes are on average ranked 14<sup>th</sup> and female athletes 8<sup>th</sup> in the world. Consequently, Pretorius (2017:35) comments that, although it is encouraging that there is new life in SA athletics, it is wishful thinking to name the country in the same light as the USA. It is also important to take into consideration that 6 countries, namely the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Switzerland and Great Britain, withdrew their teams from competing at the 2017 IAAF World Youth Championship in Nairobi due to security reasons (Pretorius, 2017). The impact of this on the rankings cannot be overlooked.

Nonetheless, SA athletics has proved in 2017 to have much potential and many prospects. Remaining concerns about SA athletics include athletes having to take matters into their own hands to generate local support and awareness; the gap in the depth of the number of athletes that can compete against the top in the world; and SA women ranking on average only 50<sup>th</sup> in the world. If these matters can be addressed timeously, the future of SA athletics could be even brighter.

### **3.7 WOMEN'S ATHLETICS AND LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA**

This section commences with an overview of the historic women in South African athletics. Subsequently, it discusses the current situation of women's athletics and leadership in South Africa, and finally looks at the future of this sport.

#### **3.7.1 Historic women in South African athletics**

When did athletics start for women in South Africa? As mentioned, the first official SA athletics meeting took place in 1894; however, SA women's athletics only started officially in 1981. This is when the first official women's athletics championship in South Africa was recorded (Steyn, 2015), although some SA female athletes participated in events and meetings prior to 1981. Table 3.2 below presents a list of the names and dates of the first SA female athletes who triumphed in the different athletics events.

**Table 3.2 The first South African female athletes who triumphed in the different athletics events (Steyn, 2015)**

Event	Year	Winner	Event	Year	Winner
100 yards	1928	Ruby Muller	100 yards h	1928	Marjorie Clark
220 yards	1928	Ruby Muller	200m h	1972	Annatjie Boltman
440 yards	1936/7/8	Doris Morgan	400m h	1975	Hybrie Myburgh
	1967	Anne McKenzie	Cross-country	1963	Anne McKenzie
880 yards	1936/8	Doris Morgan	Cross-country U16	1970	Heleen Louw
	1967	Anne McKenzie	Shot put	1934	Eileen Crockart
1500 meters	1970	Agnes van der Linde	Discus	1934	Eileen Crockart
3000 meters	1973	Sonja van Zyl	Javelin	1935	Anne Robertson
5000 meters	1995	Juliet Prowse	High jump	1928	Marjorie Clark
10000 meters	1989	Ronel Scheepers	Long jump	1928	Bernice Steyl
2/3000m st	1999	Poppy Mhlambo	Pentathlon	1967	Elsa Nel
10km road	1981	Dianne Masyn	Triple jump	1991	Petrusa Swart
15km road	1981	Blanche Moila	Pole vault	1995	Elmarie Gerryts
21km road	1983	Blanche Moila	Hammer throw	1994	Louise Meintjies
42km road	1981	Sonja Laxton			
5000m walk	1990	Lizette Hunt			



The following subsections will briefly focus on a few legendary SA female athletes.

#### 3.7.1.1 Anne Elizabeth Mckenzie (Joubert) (Birth date in 1925)

Anne was one of the first women in South Africa to have left her mark as an athlete. Although she attempted multiple events, she was the first female to have ever attempted to participate in official cross-country, middle-distance events. Anne started her athletics career as a thrower rather than a runner, practicing shot put, discus, as well as javelin in 1948 (Steyn, 2015). She started running a few years later, at first competing in the short hurdles event and then starting middle-distance running, where she really left her mark as an athlete. She was multiple SA cross-country champion in 1963, 1964, 1966 and 1967. Anne also set multiple South African records in the 880 yards during her career (Steyn, 2015). Over the years, she successfully attempted multiple athletics events, including javelin, discus, shot put, 80m hurdles, 100 yards, 220 yards, 400 meters, 440 yards, 800 meters, 880 yards, 1 500 meters, as well as the mile. Anne was one of the first women in South Africa who achieved great success in her athletics career and she was awarded the 'Ester Brand' medal by the SAAAU for outstanding performances, participation and behaviour over a long period of time (Steyn, 2015).

#### 3.7.1.2 Sonja Laxton (van Zyl) (Birth date in 1948)

Following her first SA cross-country title in 1971, Sonja won another 6 titles during her career. She had a significantly extended career of 26 years and at the age of 48 she was still ranked in the top 10 female athletes in South Africa (Steyn, 2015). At the time, it was more common for athletes, especially female athletes, to compete in various events, due to the lack of competitors. As such, Sonja competed in the 800 meters, 1 500 meters, 3 000 meters, mile, 15km, 25km, and the marathon and set SA records in the 1 500 meters, 3 000 meters, mile and the marathon (Adno, 2000; Steyn, 2015).

#### 3.7.1.3 Zola Budd (Pieterse) (Birth date in 1966)

Zola Budd was a young South African athlete, well-known for running barefoot. She dominated the middle-distance events in the 80s. Zola Budd applied for British citizenship, on the grounds of her grandfather's British native land. She applied for

citizenship in the time when South Africa was excluded from international sporting competitions. This enabled Zola Budd to compete at the 1984 Olympic Games representing Britain. As a British citizen, she won the women's World Cross-Country championships twice in 1985 and 1986. She also broke the world record for the 5 000m twice in less than three years. Zola Budd passed on the baton of SA middle-distance running to Elana Meyer who continued to dominate for South Africa in the 90s.

#### 3.7.1.4 Elana Meyer (van Zyl) (Birth date in 1966)

Elana Meyer is one of the top female athletes South Africa has ever produced. She became a household name among the South African public, famous not only in her era, but remembered even today for her outstanding middle-distance running career. While the 80s belonged to Zola Budd, the 90s belonged to Elana Meyer as the queen of South Africa's women track stars (Steyn, 2015). She is the only SA athlete who has won an Olympic medal on the track, earned a world title on the road, and has set world records. Elana won the remarkable number of 29 SA titles in different middle-distance events between 1985 and 2001. She was awarded SA colours 30 times in her eminent career, while breaking 6 world records, 23 South African records and winning 30 South African titles in cross-country, on the track and on the road (Schaffer, 2008; Steyn, 2015).

### **3.7.2 The current state of women's athletics and leadership in South Africa**

SA women's athletics is in trouble when measured against the number of athletes competing in the international arena. The same can be said when measured against the standard SA men are competing at internationally.

Following an interview with SA record holder in the 400m hurdles, Myrtle Bothma-Grobler, newspaper reporter Wim Pretorius (2017) writes the following concerning the lack of female athletes performing at international standard: "Our school athletics are healthy. According to Bothma-Grobler, women must only take the next step to the senior level. Women's athletics may only need one person to reach a milestone for the rest to follow in their footsteps."

Pretorius's article further provides an updated view of the current standard of our female athletics performances in 2017. Only 3 female athletes achieved ASA's A-

Qualifying standard in comparison to 18 male athletes that qualified by the A- Qualifying standard to compete at the IAAF World Championships in London, August 2017 (Pretorius, 2017).

Furthermore, only 2 female athletes represented South Africa at the Commonwealth Games in 2014 (SASCOC, 2014). Evidently, the picture of the development of athletes is a sombre one and the contenders for Olympic medals are few. The situation seems to be worse when looking at the trend of women's sport leadership in athletics. There is no strategic plan for improvement or growth in terms of developing prominent role models (as a dimension of leadership) by the current and new generation. Moreover, women in rural areas that are involved in sport participation and leadership might still be disadvantaged by their cultural background (Nauright, 2013:568).

The following extract from the recent statement by ASA (Athletics South Africa) is a good example, underlining the current status of women's athletics (Marx, 2015) in terms of their concerns related to female performances:

Dear All ASA Members

**Circular 26 of ASA 2015- ASA WOMEN COMMITTEE 2015 SURVEY**

The ASA women committee has a very difficult task to get women athletics up and running. The women committee wants to make a difference in the lives of female athletes, coaches and administrators. Currently the statistics for senior women athletics are very low in contrast with the senior male athletes...

Women represented only 20% of the athletes at the annual 2015 IAAF World Championship held in Beijing (De Villiers, 2015). This shows that female athletes struggle to perform on the level of male athletes.

Table 3.3 below indicates the number of athletes selected to represent South Africa at the different international events from 2007 to 2018. Please note: The table only includes the following three major international competitions:

1. IAAF World Championships
2. Olympic Games

### 3. Commonwealth Games

**Table 3.3 Number of athletes selected to represent SA at international events from 2007 to 2018**

Year	Championship Details	Total of SA-team	Total men	Total women	Medals-men	Medals-Women	% of women
2007	11 <sup>th</sup> World Championships (Osaka, Japan)	33	21	12	0	0	36%
2008	Beijing Olympic Games (China)	27	21	6	1(Silver)	0	22%
2009	12 <sup>th</sup> World Championship (Berlin, Germany)	24	18	6	1(Gold) 1(Silver)	1(Gold)	25%
2010	19 <sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games (Delhi, India)	11	7	4	1(Gold) 1(Silver)	1(Gold) 1(Bronze)	36%
2011	13 <sup>th</sup> World Championship (Daegu, South Korea)	26	18	8	1(Silver) 1(Bronze)	1(Silver) 1(Bronze)	30,7%
2012	London Olympic Games (United Kingdom)	22	17	5	0	1(Gold)	22,7%
2013	14 <sup>th</sup> World Championship (Moscow, Russia)	30	25	5	1(Bronze)	0	16,6%
2014	20 <sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games (Glasgow, Scotland)	20	18	2	1(Gold) 1(Silver) 1(Bronze)	1(Silver)	10%
2015	15 <sup>th</sup> World Championship (Beijing, China)	33	27	6	1(Gold) 1(Bronze)	1(Bronze)	18,8%

2016	Rio Olympic Games (Rio, Brazil)	39	26	13	1(Gold) 1(Silver)	1(Gold) 1(Silver)	33%
2017	16 <sup>th</sup> World Championship (London, United Kingdom)	28	20	8	1(Gold) 1(Silver) 1(Bronze)	1(Gold) 1(Bronze)	28%
2018	Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (Australia)	13	10	3	2(Gold) 1(Silver) 1(Bronze)	2(Gold) 2(Bronze)	23%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25,4%</b>

(Brand South Africa, 2007/2015; En.wikipedia.org, 2017/2018; iaaf.org, 2017/2018; IOC, 2018; Ouma, 2018; SASCO, 2014/2016/2017; TeamSA, 2014; Timeslive, 2010)

Table 3.4 below compares the percentages of male and female athletes selected to represent South Africa from 2007 to 2018.

Please note: This table also includes only the following three major international competitions:

1. IAAF World Championships
2. Olympic Games
3. Commonwealth Games

**Table 3.4 Percentages of male and female athletes selected to represent SA from 2007 to 2018**

Year	% of men in SA-teams	% of women in SA-teams
2007	63,6%	36,4%
2008	77,7%	22, 3%
2009	75%	25%
2010	63,7%	36,3%
2011	69,3%	30,7%

2012	77,3%	22,7%
2013	83,4%	16,6%
2014	90%	10%
2015	81,2%	18,8%
2016	67%	33%
2017	72%	28%
2018	77%	23%
<b>Total average from 2007 to 2018</b>	<b>74,6%</b>	<b>25,4%</b>

(Brand South Africa, 2007/2015; En.wikipedia.org, 2017/2018; iaaf.org, 2017/2018; IOC, 2018; Ouma, 2018; SASCOG, 2014/2016/ 2017; TeamSA, 2014; Timeslive, 2010)

### 3.7.3 The future of women's athletics in South Africa

As indicated by the above statistics, the performance status of SA women's athletics is currently not on par with that of men's athletics in South Africa. Yet, the existence of South African athletics and its future are dependent upon both male and female athletes. This study aims to identify possible reasons for the backlog, as well as to find solutions for the restoration and betterment of SA athletics as a whole. The study theorises that appropriate and efficient leadership within SA athletics could support and contribute to the future of the sport.

According to Vescio, Wilde and Crosswhite (2005:153), one of the major challenges in sport is to maintain participation and involvement of adolescent girls in sport and recreation. In SA, most female athletes drop out of sport during their late adolescent years. It is during this period that it is imperative for leadership, in its different forms and components, to operate and function optimally.

It must be established whether leadership in the form of sincere mentoring and prominent role models can encourage young adolescent female athletes to stay in the sport. Vescio *et al.* (2005:155) define a mentor as "an adviser, coach, guide or confidante who has a personal relationship with the mentee when he or she is facing challenging tasks". A role model, on the other hand, can be defined as "a person

whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people” (Dictionary.com, 2018). Massengale and Lough (2010:7) maintain that “female athletes can more easily identify with women coaches and may gain confidence in their abilities as future sport leaders. The importance of female role models also extends to young men. Women in leadership roles demonstrate that sex does not predetermine advancement or success in the realm of sport”. From the above, it seems that mentors and role models are dimensions of leadership that could only strengthen and complement the future of athletics in South Africa.

Evidently, the concern that most SA women drop out of sport during their late adolescent years should be addressed through strategic support to develop young female athletes. This should be given priority by our athletic federation (ASA) to ensure a brighter future for women’s athletics in South Africa. However, this is easier said than done, because most South African government departments, public enterprises and municipalities are in dire-straits to find competent leadership. One way is to learn from, or benchmark against other leaders with success stories.

One example is the high-performance unit within the Swiss Federal institute of Sports Magglingen (SFISM). The unit cooperates with the Swiss Olympic organisation, who designed a uniform talent identification tool for all Swiss sports federations (Fuchslocher, Romann and Gulbin, 2013). This instrument is unique and uncommon in the manner that the selection criteria are not purely based on the competition results of developing athletes.

Fuchslocher, Romann and Gulbin (2013:11) raise the following concern regarding selection criteria that are primarily based upon competition results of junior athletes:

“... with this approach physically precocious young athletes who perform well in competition can receive federation support even though they may have limited long-term prospects. On the other hand, due to their delayed biological development, late developed athletes with high potential who perform poorly in current competition, can be overlooked for selection and potentially lost to senior elite sport.”

These authors add that a comprehensive process focussed on the “potential for success” at adult stage should rather be implemented. The Swiss high-performance

unit, in collaboration with the SFISM, developed such an instrument called PISTE that is based on the following 6 elements (Fuchslocher, Romann & Gulbin, 2013:12):

- *Competition performance* (performances at early and late junior stages)
- *Performance tests* (sport specific performance tests; general physical motor skills tests)
- *Performance development* (competition and performance tests over time)
- *Psychological factors* (achievement motivation; dealing with pressure)
- *Athlete's biography* (resilience; environment related to school and parents, etc; anthropometrics; body types; training effort; training age)
- *Biological development* (maturation; relative age)

This instrument can become a benchmark for ASA regarding talent identification and strategic support of young developing athletes, especially women, in South Africa. [Refer to annexure 3 for the comprehensive table of the PISTE instrument titled: '*Assessment criteria for the selection of young Swiss athletes and an estimation of prognosis validity in terms of success in elite sport performance*'.]

### **3.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 encompasses golden themes concerning women leadership in athletics in South Africa. The chapter provided a comprehensive description and analysis of the history of women in sport and the challenges women have faced globally in leadership, both in the past as well as at present. In addition, female leadership traits and the unique attributes of women were discussed. The chapter also explored the history and current status of SA athletics, narrowing down the discussion to the status and performance levels of SA women's athletics and what the future holds for the sport. The next chapter provides insight into the research methodology and design utilised to answer the research question.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the research methodology and design used in the study. Methodology can be described as specialised ways and means applied to master, learn and understand a field and specific topic better.

While most authors make a distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods, Plowright (2011) supports an integrated approach to research. Kluka (2008) refers to research methodology as the use of various methods and techniques to collect data in order to address the research problem and to draw purposeful conclusions. This chapter describes a variety of facets associated with the research method used in this study. It covers information about the specific research design and approach, the research instrument utilised, sampling, the target population, data collection, and data interpretation.

#### **4.1.1 Aim and objectives**

The primary aim of this study was to explore the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and athletic role models in South Africa. It is important for the future of women's sport in South Africa to address this problem. To accomplish the aim, the study was approached from a qualitative perspective whereby in-depth interviews were conducted with selected individuals.

The objectives of this study were:

- to determine the status of South African women's sport leadership in athletics;
- to identify underlying reasons contributing to a lack of professional athletes and role models, as perceived by male and female athletes; and
- to develop a conceptual framework to address (manage) the problem.

#### **4.1.2 Problem statement**

SA women's athletics (track and field) need female sports leaders and role models. One of the reasons why women's athletics under-perform is that there has been no improvement or growth in terms of prominent role models (as a dimension of

leadership) for current and new generation athletes to look up to. This situation is aggravated by the mediocre vision and strategic plans of sponsors, athletics clubs, and the government. On that account, this study set out to find the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and athletics role models in South Africa.

The next section explains the research design utilised to accomplish the aim and objectives of the study, including a description of the research population and research sample. Then the method of data collection is explained, followed by the data analysis section which describes the data transcription and open coding processes used during this study.

## **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), research philosophy is the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. Researchers may adopt a pragmatist position, based on their preferences regarding what is considered acceptable knowledge. Interpretivism, however, advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand the differences between humans in our role as social actors (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:137). In this study the researcher adopted a research philosophy leaning towards interpretivism, because the social world of sport is very complex.

It is believed that good research generates dependable data, derived in a professional manner, and which can be used reliably for guidance and instruction. Good and competent research will always offer a clearly defined purpose, a comprehensive research process, a well-planned research design, and a highly acceptable ethical approach (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). A well-designed research methodology is also crucial to address the research problem, as it will ensure that the research question is answered, and the research objectives are met.

Cooper and Schindler (2011:139) define research design as “the plan, process and structure of the examination, collection, measurement and analysis of data to answer the research question”.

The research design of this study was strongly influenced by its grounding in an inductive research approach. The purpose of an inductive research approach is to

get an improved understanding of the nature of the problem through the analysis of the data collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This research approach allows and creates space for alternative expressions, explanations and perspectives contributed to the researched field by following a less rigid research design.

Furthermore, this study was approached from a qualitative perspective, while the underlying design of the study is casual-explanatory. A casual-explanatory study focuses on understanding the underlying reasons for a certain phenomenon. This study focused on determining the reasons for the current lack of professional female athletes and role models in South Africa. Due to the multiple inter-related variety of the underlying reasons (determined in the research philosophy), it was decided that a qualitative research approach offers the best way to get to the truth behind the research problem.

Cooper and Schindler (2011:160) define qualitative research as an “array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world”. The objective of qualitative research is therefore to achieve an in-depth, detailed understanding of a very specific situation (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:160). Differently put, qualitative research explains the underlying reasons behind a specific situation.

#### **4.2.1 Research population**

Research population refers to the unit of analysis of the study, which is the entire group of people who will be the focus of the research. Boyce (in Kluka, 2008:175) defines target population as “a clearly defined group of individuals that have some characteristics, relevant to the investigation, in common”.

For the purpose of this study, the research population included participants involved on different levels and in different areas of SA athletics, such as coaches, managers, administrators, agents, journalists, and athletes. Criteria for participant involvement included being familiar and up to date with the sport of athletics, the politics of athletics, governance of athletics, athletics events and athletics performances. Very specific individuals were therefore approached to participate in this study, including well-known sports figures in their separate fields of expertise. Respondents such as

Olympic athletes, Olympic (also World Championship and internationally experienced) coaches, managers, media reporters and sports journalists, sports commentators, sports organisers and sports officials were targeted to contribute to the value, reliability and validity of the study. It was imperative that the target population was identified accurately to ensure meaningful findings. The selected respondents provided written consent to participate.

#### **4.2.2 Research sample**

Since the entire population cannot be studied, a representative sample of the population was selected. Cresswell (2009:178) argues that “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question”. The relatively small population made non-probability purposive sampling ideal. Purposive sampling is used when there is a definite purpose and intent to selecting the respondents (Plowright, 2011:43). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:287), non-probability purposive sampling is most commonly used when researching a small sample group. The sample for this study was purposefully and specifically selected from the South African athletics community. The sample size was also influenced by the availability of resources, willingness for participation, and time available to conduct and properly analyse interviews. It is believed that the smaller the sample size, the greater the detail and the depth of the information. It is expected that saturation of content was reached once 16 participants, comprising athletics coaches, managers, administrators, journalists and athletes of recent years, were interviewed. Purposive/judgemental sampling has therefore been used, where the researcher selected respondents very specifically based on accessibility and relevance to the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:287).

#### **4.3 DATA COLLECTION**

Preliminary to approaching the sample for a survey, the different types of data must be considered. Qualitative research usually entails narrative (non-numeric) data that may become difficult to manage and analyse. It was therefore ideal to do a pilot study prior to the empirical phase. Once the pilot study was concluded among relevant participants, several improvements were made to the interview guide.

Data collection can be defined as the “process of gathering or collecting information” (Zikmund & Babmin, 2010:59). The primary research for this study relied mainly on semi-structured interviews as the primary data source for analysing and determining the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and role models in South Africa. The primary research data were mainly obtained by audio recordings and field notes during the interviews to add contextual data to ensure sufficient data collection (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:394). The small population made it possible to do an in-depth qualitative study by means of semi-structured interviews with both female and male individuals involved in athletics. This approach offered the researcher the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the perceptions and personal experiences of the athletics population regarding athletics in South Africa.

The secondary research data utilised in the study provided a thorough background to the problem. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:304) define secondary data as “data that have already been collected for some other purpose...once obtained, these data can be further analysed to provide additional or different knowledge”. Relevant secondary data readily available in the public domain, including both quantitative and qualitative data such as articles, books, websites and documents, were therefore used to compose the literature review of this study.

Qualitative data is more likely to be obscure, elastic, and more complicated than quantitative data (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The fact that some qualitative results are difficult to be generalised to a larger population might be seen as a methodological weakness; however, it can also be seen as strikingly relevant when the study is highly focused and specialised, as in this study.

The purpose of the collection of qualitative data in this study was to gather particular data that would provide a detailed description of relevant topics, themes, and situations for a thorough understanding to address the research problem. In the context of qualitative research and the variety of data collection methods available, the method of semi-structured interviews was selected, as it allowed the researcher to gather in-depth data on the need for female SA athletes performing at an international standard as well as for female athletics role models in South Africa.

The measuring instrument was based on a well-designed (and pilot tested) semi-structured interview guide. In-depth interviews were conducted by means of this

guide. A research interview is a very purposeful conversation between two or more individuals and the interviewer leads the conversation by asking specific questions to which the participant willingly answers (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Interviews is the leading qualitative research technique used for collecting data and was considered the most effective technique to use in this study. The interviews were characterised by (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:374):

- an interview guide with several categorised questions/ themes;
- a specific sequence and clear wording of questions;
- a few set interview questions that addressed the objectives of the study; and
- open-ended questions.

Although the semi-structured interviews were guided by the main themes of the interview guide, each interview was different, depending on the flow of the conversation. The themes pursued in the semi-structured interviews were:

- The respondent's involvement in sport in South Africa.
- Opinions on the current participation base in athletics in South Africa.
- Perception of female level of performance currently in athletics in South Africa.
- Opinions on gender inequality in sport.
- Perceptions and personal experiences regarding female athletics role models/leaders in South Africa.
- Suggestions and possible contributions to female leadership in athletics in South Africa.

Interviews were conducted individually to enhance the validity of the results. As mentioned before, a pilot study was conducted to disclose flaws and gaps in the interview guide by conducting a few test interviews (Cooper & Schindler, 2011: 89), which also added to the validity of the study. Appointments for semi-structured interviews were made via e-mail, cell phone or telephone and were scheduled at a time and place convenient and practical for both the researcher and the participant. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research prior to the semi-structured interview; however, the informed consent form was signed at the interview. The individual, in-depth interviews (IDI) generally took between 20 – 60 minutes to complete (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:172). Most interviews were

conducted in a one-on-one and face-to-face format. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed ad verbatim.

#### **4.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Research data must be transformed into usable information. At the same time, data interpretation involves promoting and protecting data quality. Thus, data reliability and validity were considered very important in this study. Reliability refers to when the data collection techniques and data analysis procedures produce consistent and dependable findings and conclusions, while validity refers to the extent to which the research measures what it intended to measure (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed and reproduced as a verbatim written document with contextual data added for the researcher to recall the context and interpretations of interview moments. This made the subsequent processes of data analysis easier and more efficient. The transcription of each interview was done as soon as possible after the interview was conducted to avoid a hype of audio-recording interviews lining up to be transcribed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

Data transcription was followed by a data cleaning process. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:550), the data cleaning process can be defined as the process of “making sure that the transcriptions is accurate by correcting any transcription errors”. Each interview that was transcribed was saved on the researcher’s computer as a separate file and file name. To make the entire process of transcription more effective and practical, only the appropriate parts of the audio recording that were relevant and pertinent to the study were transcribed, while redundant conversation was eliminated for practical reasons. The researcher then compiled an interim summary and a transcript summary of key points that emerged as the interviews were conducted. This helped later stages of data analysis, such as identifying relationships between themes and categorising data. The data were analysed according to the themes identified during the study. Categorising data was guided by the research problem and research aims and objectives, but also by the interview conversations and transcriptions. The data were analysed and reduced to significant results by means of a thorough thematic analysis.

Tesch's (in Creswell, 1994:154-155) descriptive method of open coding was used as a guideline for analysing the textual data in this study. As such, the following steps were followed during the systematic and thematic process of data analysis:

1. The researcher attains a broad understanding of the data collected via interviews by reading through all transcriptions and noting ideas while reading.
2. The researcher selects one interview and then asks more specific questions about that interview, such as "What is it about?", and then makes notes of underlying content and ideas.
3. The researcher repeats step 2 with all interviews, after which similar topics are grouped together and formed into a column.
4. The topics are abbreviated as codes and the codes are written next to appropriate sections of the texts.
5. The researcher selects descriptive wording for the topics and categories and also reduces the number of topics by merging them.
6. The researcher finalises the abbreviations for each category and alphabetises the codes.
7. A preparatory analysis is performed as the data connected to each category is put together.
8. If necessary, the existing data is recorded by the researcher.

#### **4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter explained the research methodology and design utilised to investigate the need for female sports leadership in SA athletics. The research sampling, method of data collection, research instrument utilised and the data analysis process were specified in this chapter. The chapter also elaborated on the importance of a thorough thematic analysis process of data obtained in this study. Chapter 6 will discuss the analysis and interpretations of the analysed data.



## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided a thorough description of the research methodology and design used in this study. This chapter contains the qualitative analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from 16 semi-structured interviews.

### **5.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Data analysis started with a review of the interview transcriptions. Then a transcript summary was conducted of every interview. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:554), “a transcript summary compresses long statements into briefer ones in which the main sense of what has been said or observed is rephrased in a few words”.

Subsequently, the thematic analysis process commenced. The transcript summaries assisted the researcher in recognising apparent themes and identifying possible relationships between themes that have emerged from the interviews. The themes identified were also guided by the research problem and research aims and objectives.

Miles and Huberman (in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:565) argue that “recognising relationships and patterns in the data, as well as drawing conclusions and verifying these, are helped by the use of data displays”. Data displayed in this chapter encompassed organising and assembling the data into summary diametric or visual display, in pie chart figures and tabular form (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Zikmund and Babin (2010:355) define tabulation as “the orderly arrangement of data in a table or other summary format showing the number of responses to each response category, tallying”.

The researcher developed a logical coding scheme. Furthermore, an interpretive approach was combined with basic quantitative analysis (using numeric values to prioritise narrative data) to address the research question. This approach enabled the researcher to quantify the qualitative research to assist with the interpretation of data. The results of the thematic analysis will be presented and interpreted in section 5.4 of this chapter.

The thematic data analysis process followed in the study was guided by the fundamental principles and phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006:87). Table 5.1 presents the phases of thematic analysis that were followed in the data analysis process.

**Table 5.1 Phases of thematic analysis**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description of the process</b>
<b>1. Familiarising yourself with your data</b>	Transcribing data, reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.
<b>2. Generating initial codes</b>	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
<b>3. Searching for themes</b>	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
<b>4. Reviewing themes</b>	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
<b>5. Defining and naming themes</b>	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each them.
<b>6. Producing the report</b>	The final opportunity for analysis: Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research objectives and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006:87)

### **5.3 VALIDATION OF INTERVIEWS**

Data quality is of immense importance for the validity of a study. Hence, the selected participants invited to take part in this study were very specific individuals in terms of the convenience sample taken from the population. The researcher selected individuals that were involved in different areas and on different levels of athletics. To confirm reliability of the data, a summary was compiled of all the interviews

conducted. The tabulation summary of the interviews displays and indicates the homogeneous nature of the group that took part in this study with its specific objectives.

The summary of interviews makes it very clear that participants were involved in 9 different channels, 5 different codes, and on all 4 stages of athletics development. Moreover, all participants in this study were shown to have a high level of competence, status, knowledge, and experience in their specific fields within athletics in South Africa. Thus, the researcher conducted interviews with a homogeneous group of leaders, although diverse in terms of sex, age, athletic events, and level of experience, to ensure that new perspectives, ideas and observations will be obtained from the data. Table 5.2 below represents the demographic data of participants in this study.

**Table 5.2 Summary of participant demographics**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>CHANNEL OF INVOLVEMENT (Can be involved in more than one channel at a time)</b>	<b>ATHLETIC CODES</b>	<b>INVOLVEMENT STAGE/LEVEL</b>
Male (8) = 50%	Current coaches (10) = 62,5%	Sprints (7) = 43%	Senior level (11) = 68,7%
Female (8) = 50%	Current athletes (3) = 18,7%	Hurdles (10) = 62,5%	University level (8) = 50%
	Administrators/Management (6) = 37,5%	Middle & long distances (5) = 31,2%	High school level (6) = 37,5%
	Media representatives (2) = 12,5%	Jumps (5) = 31,2%	Primary school level (5) = 31,2%
	Sport psychologists (2) = 12,5%	Throws (4) = 25%	
	Event manager (1) = 6,25%		
	Commentator (1) = 6,25%		
	Technical official (1) = 6,25%		
	Ex-athletes (8) = 50%		

The participant demographics shown in Table 5.2 indicate that the selected participants were experienced and credible leaders in their sport. Table 5.3 below provides justification of their substantial reference.

**Table 5.3 Justification of substantial reference**

REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Former or current WR <sup>1</sup> holder	2	12,5%
Former or current AR <sup>2</sup> /NR <sup>3</sup> holder	6	37,5%
Olympian (coach/athlete/manager)	7	43%
Major championship medalists <sup>4</sup>	4	25%
Coached WR holder	2	12,5%
Coached NR holder	2	12,5%
Involved in management at ASA <sup>5</sup> level	5	31,2%
Full-time involvement in athletics (Career)	9	56,2%
Involved for 30+ years	7	43%
National sport photographer of the year	1	0,6%
Involved in rural areas development	3	18,7%

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 substantiate that participants in this study had a high level of competence, status, knowledge, and experience in their specific fields within SA athletics, although they were diverse in terms of sex, age, athletics events, and level of experience. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the interpretation of the results within each theme identified.

## 5.4 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The following six primary themes were identified following data transcription and thematic analysis:

<sup>1</sup>WR- world record (on youth/junior/senior/master's level)

<sup>2</sup>AR- African record (on youth/junior/senior/master's level)

<sup>3</sup>NR- national record (on youth/junior/senior/master's level)

<sup>4</sup>Major championships include Olympic Games; World Championship (Indoor & outdoor); Commonwealth Games

<sup>5</sup>ASA- Athletics South Africa

- Athletics participation in South Africa
- Current standard of women's athletics in South Africa
- Gender inequality in athletics in South Africa
- Female role models in athletics in South Africa
- Reasons for the lack of female sports leaders in South Africa
- Suggestions/ideas/innovations for an athletics framework

#### **5.4.1 Theme 1: Athletics participation (AP<sup>6</sup>)**

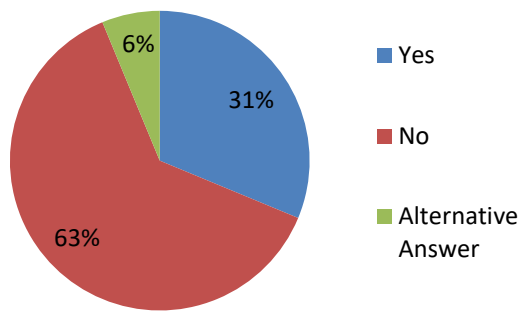
In this study, athletics participation (AP) is seen as a fundamental component of the overall state of athletics currently in South Africa. The number of athletes participating, at whichever level of athletics, is an indicator of the well-being of the sport. The study examined the participation base on 4 various age groups. Granted, it is logical that recreational participation will be higher than on a professional/international/intentional level. However, the aim was to determine the participation base of each level and to indicate which level is a possible concern for the state of athletics in South Africa.

Basic involvement with athletics starts with participation. The participation base in this study is seen as the pool of athletes currently practicing athletics in a recreational or intentional manner. The bigger the pool of athletes, the more the opportunities for athletes to develop and grow into high performing athletes at an appropriate stage and age. Accordingly, AP is a very important and fundamental component of this study.

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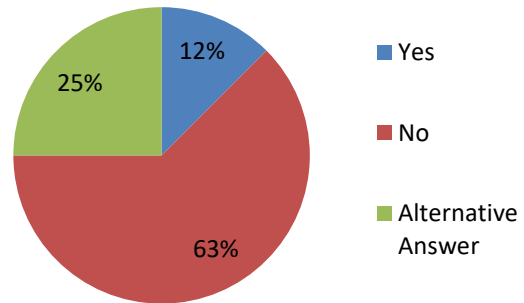
<sup>6</sup> AP – athletics participation

Figures 5.1 to 5.4 below illustrate the strength of AP is at the discrete levels.



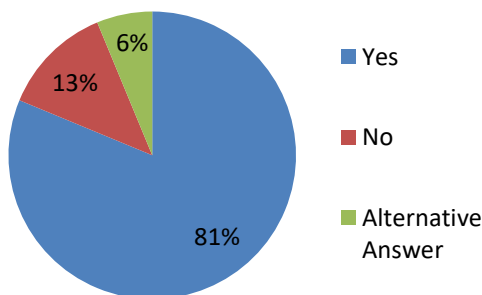
**Figure 5.1 AP at primary school level (PL-level)**

It was indicated by 31% of the participants that athletics participation is a problem at primary school level (PL-level<sup>7</sup>).



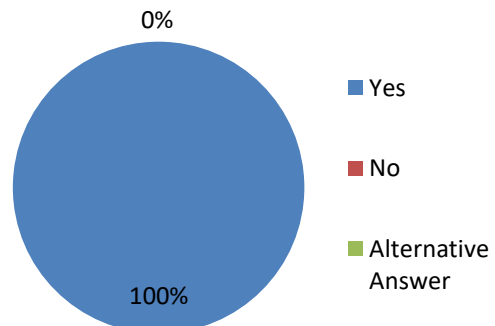
**Figure 5.2 AP at high school level (HL-level)**

It was indicated by 12% of the participants that athletics participation is a problem at high school level (HL-level<sup>8</sup>).



**Figure 5.3 AP at university level (UL-level)**

It was indicated by 81% of participants that athletics participation is a problem at university level (UL-level<sup>9</sup>).



**Figure 5.4 AP at senior/professional level (SL-level)**

It was indicated by 100% of participants that athletics participation is a problem at senior level (SL-level<sup>10</sup>).

<sup>7</sup>PL-level – primary school level

<sup>8</sup>HL-level – high school level

<sup>9</sup>UL-level – university level

<sup>10</sup>SL-level \_ senior level

The most common alternative answers (AA<sup>11</sup>) on PL-level and HL-level reflected that the participation level depends on the area and the type of school. This is emphasised by a participant in the following statement:

I want to just answer yes but I have to elaborate a little bit in the sense that I say yes there is but not in all schools, not in all demographics in South Africa. I think primary school level there is still a lot to be done in the rural areas where I think there is a lot of talent, but they do not necessarily have the structures, opportunities, competitions that the so-called all-whites schools have. But at the same time, I do think that at the so-called all-white schools I do think that too much emphasis is put on competition and not in developing athletes.

Participants further divulged that participation is declining at the later stages in high school, as can be seen in the following statement:

I would definitely say the high school, because that is where a lot of and especially when you look at the girl athlete that's where we lose a lot of girls to athletics either due to peer pressure or social economic circumstances. But I would definitely say if you look at the participation at primary school level versus high school level, so the transition from primary school to high school there it is lacking. Yeah it declines.

Regarding AP on UL-level, participants indicated that participation is good, however not good enough, especially with reference to South African women's participation. One participant said the following regarding UL-level AP: "*No, women levels is not good enough.*" In the same vein, another participant argued: "*No there is not enough, not in our country. There are many more that can.*"

Furthermore, higher levels of participation among boys/males than among girls/women were indicated, as expressed by the next participant: "*Yes I think there are more men than women definitely yes.*" Another participant confirmed this by stating the following:

If you go look at the statistics of the past 10 years then men, if I must guess...the teams that I was in, then it is more than double the amount

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<sup>11</sup>AA – alternative answer

in the teams for example, if I remember correct 2016 Olympic Games there was only 4 women athletes in the team, more or less, in a team total of 30 and the rest were all men.

The following subsections will discuss the strength of AP at each of the critical levels in more detail.

#### 5.4.1.1 AP on primary school level (PL-level; age 6 – 12)

PL-level participation in athletics is most likely to be the first point of contact that kids have with all kinds of sport. The primary goal at this level, which is very important for participation on other levels, should be first exposure, orientation, development of skills, and coordination.

The researcher observed that the question regarding AP at different levels of athletics was interpreted subjectively and vastly different.

The data retained from the interviews indicated that only 31,25% of the respondents agreed that AP, at this level, is a problem. However, most respondents who felt that participation is a problem at this level stated that, even though the quantity is fairly good, there are other concerns worth mentioning. The following concerns were acknowledged:

- Athletics is too specialised at this level. AP is not focused on skill development, coordination and fun. Rather, the focus is on performance, especially in certain areas and schools.
- When kids are in a system where AP is highly specialised and performance driven from a very early stage, it could lead to problems at later stages of AP, effecting premature withdrawal from athletics. For example, overtraining and burnout syndrome can be a result of early stage intense training, and could lead to premature retirement. In addition, young over-trained athletes have a higher risk of injuries, which could also affect long term athletics participation. Hence, overtraining and burnout syndrome could have an impact on athletes' motivation to train and stay involved in athletics.
- AP is subject to the school and the area. It is stronger in certain urban area schools, while in rural areas there is a lack of AP and exposure.



- The previous point indicates a contrasting concern regarding AP at this level. On the one hand, athletes get pushed too hard in the urban areas where there are high levels of AP, leading to premature withdrawal from athletics. On the other hand, there is a lack of exposure and AP opportunities for young athletes in rural areas. These athletes have a backlog from early stage development and growth. The concern is that certain kids will get overlooked and never get involved in athletics, while other athletes who do get involved at a later stage will lack basic skills due to their insufficient exposure.
- The athletics season is becoming shorter at this stage. Winter sports (such as rugby, cricket, hockey and netball) are a threat to AP at this level as kids are pressured to start with the winter sports codes early in the year. This tendency of athletes being lost to winter sports threatens proper athletics development on this level.

Figure 5.1 also indicates that 63% of the respondents believed that AP at PL-level is not a concern. Furthermore, the quantified data retained from Figure 5.1 indicates that PL-level AP is the second healthiest phase (after HL-level) in South Africa. This could be explained by the perception that this level has the highest number of participants.

#### 5.4.1.2 AP on high school level (HL-level; age 13 – 18)

The data in Figure 5.2 indicate that only 13% of the respondents believed that AP is a problem at this level. Figure 5.2 also depicts that this level is the healthiest level regarding AP in South Africa currently, as the participation base appears to be most sufficient at this stage.

Nonetheless, a significant 25% of the respondents gave an alternative answer (AA) to this question. The AA, together with the 13% of respondents who agreed that this level is a problem, mentioned the following concerns:

- At this level, AP is a concern in rural areas where there is not enough exposure.
- Other concerns at PL-level also applied at this level, especially the high focus on performance, winning, and competition. It was also mentioned that winter

sports are a threat to athletics. There is too much pressure on kids to do both and the seasons are overlapping.

- Even though the participation base is still good at this level, it is a concern that it starts to decline during later stages of this level.
- Although participation is good, it is not good enough and could be better.

#### 5.4.1.3 AP on university level (UL-level; age 19 – 25)

Figure 5.3 indicates that in South Africa AP on this level is of much greater concern than during the previous two stages. It shows that 81% of the respondents believed that AP at this level is a threat to South African athletics. The gap from HL-level to UL-level is significantly greater. Respondents stated the following reasons for such a high level of concern:

- The participation base at this level is significantly smaller than at high school level. As such, AP is not sufficient in quantity on this level, while depth is also a serious problem, especially with women at UL-level.
- It is at this level where most South African athletes (both women and men) withdraw from athletics. Participation declines as athletes get older.
- Inequality at this level is a consequential concern.
- A significant number of youngsters peak at school, whereafter multiple factors lead to a loss of interest and motivation to stay involved in athletics.

The 13% of the respondents who debated that AP is not a problem at this level in South Africa emphasised the admirable initiatives currently introduced, such as the relatively new Varsity Sports initiative which enhances AP at this level. They believe that the future of athletics is looking brighter because of this and similar initiatives.

However, according to the data depicted in Figure 5.7 below, the participation base that is most deficient and of biggest concern is at UL-level AP. UL-level is the stepping stone to SL-level participation. When athletes drop out of the sport at this level, it has detrimental effects for SL-level AP. Yet, it is at this level where South Africa loses most of their athletes from the sport. For this reason, depth within AP can be considered as a serious concern at the SL-level.

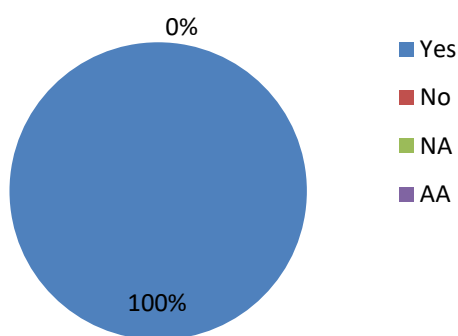
#### 5.4.1.4 AP at senior level (SL-level; age 25 – 35)

Figure 5.4 indicates that 100% of the respondents concur that the participation base is presently insufficient and inadequate at this level in South Africa. Besides AP being of great concern to the overall well-being and future of athletics in South Africa, it also explains and confirms the lack of female participation and development. AP at SL-level is perceived to be the worst regarding depth within the participation base, especially regarding women in South Africa.

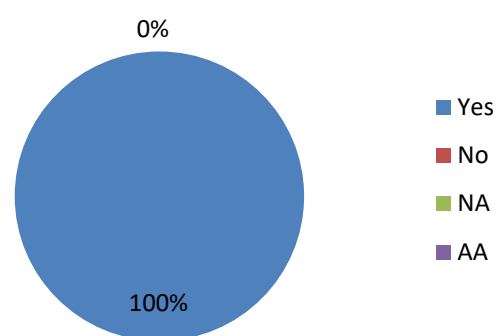
It is also a concern that athletes possibly retire before their peak age. A respondent, particularly experienced in the field of sports media, confirmed this concern in an article on athletics participation, stating:

The average age of medallists at World Championships and the average age of, I checked the gold medallists and all the medallists was between 25 and older. Our problem in South African athletics is most of our promising athletes quit before they get to 25.

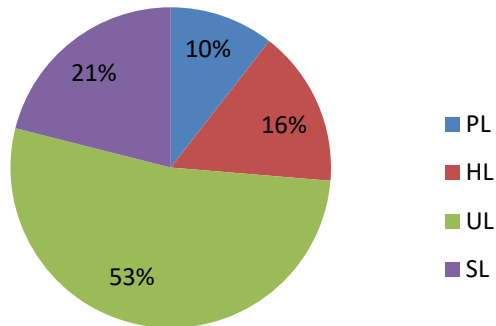
Figures 5.5 and 5.6 below elaborate on inequality between men and women within the South African athletics participation base, while Figure 5.7 indicates the levels of biggest concern.



**Figure 5.5 Inequality in AP**



**Figure 5.6 Underrepresentation of women in AP**



**Figure 5.7 Level of biggest concern**  
(some mentioned more than 1 level)

Summary of Figures 5.5 to 5.7:

- All participants agreed that there is an inequality in the participation base between men and women (majority is men).
- All participants agreed that there is an underrepresentation of women in athletics participation.
- The participants had different opinions on the level which was of greatest concern to South African athletics:
  - PL-level: 10% agreed that this level is the biggest problem. (Reason: Respondents argued that this is the root of the problem. If AP at this level had been healthy, then the foundation of athletics would be better and it would have a ripple effect on the later stages).
  - HL-level: 16% indicated that this level was of biggest concern. (Reasons: High schools in the rural areas do not get exposed to athletics. HL-level experiences a problem at later stages, while AP already starts declining from PL-level).
  - UL-level: 53% saw this level as the biggest problem. (Reason: Most athletes drop out/retire from the sport between ages 19 and 25, especially women.)

- SL-level: 21% felt that this level faced the biggest problem.  
(Reasons: There is no depth in senior level athletics. It is difficult to be a professional athlete).

#### 5.4.1.5 Current inequality (IEQ<sup>12</sup>) and underrepresentation of women in AP

As indicated in Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6, the entire group of respondents agreed that there is an IEQ and an underrepresentation of women within the AP base in South Africa. One of the objectives of this study was to determine the real status of South African women's sport leadership in athletics to enable appropriate suggestions. Within the leadership context, the problematic issue is that women AP in SA is increasingly falling behind, rather than improving. The fact that South Africa has an inadequate participation base of women puts immense pressure on the few athletes currently involved. It necessarily means fewer leaders and role models due to the fact that there is an insufficient and declining pool of athletes to begin with.

#### **5.4.2 Theme 2: The current standard of women's athletics (WA<sup>13</sup>) in South Africa**

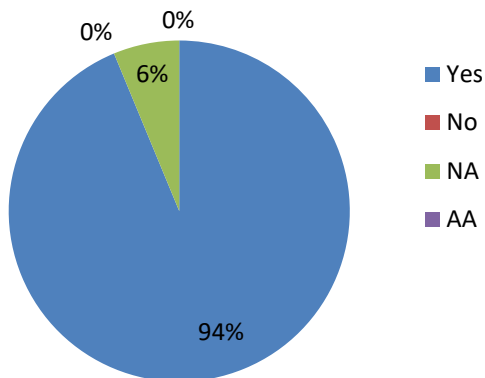
As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is an objective of this study to determine the current status of South African women's sports leadership in athletics. The next theme that was identified from the data analysis was the current standard of women's athletics performances and must also be viewed in the context of sports leadership.

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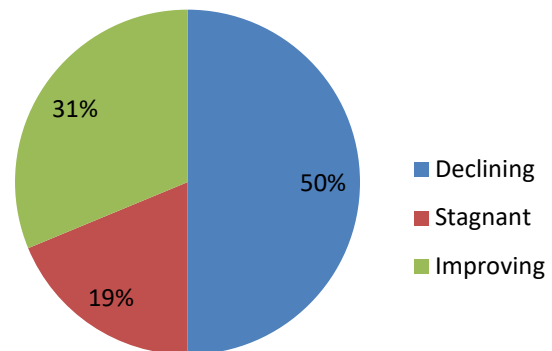
<sup>12</sup>IEQ - inequality

<sup>13</sup>WA – Women athletics

Figure 5.8 and Figure 5.9 below focus on the South African women's athletics standard (WAS<sup>14</sup>) and indicate whether it is currently improving, stagnating or declining.



**Figure 5.8 WA improvement needed**



**Figure 5.9 WA stagnant/declining/improving**

Summary of Figures 5.8 and 5.9:

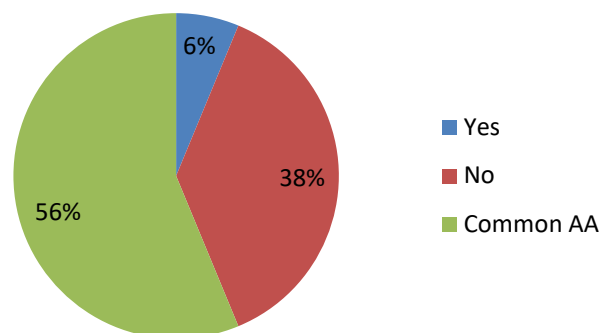
- A significant 94% of respondents agreed that WAS needs improvement.
- Respondents indicated the current WAS as follows:
  - Declining: 50% agreed that the WAS is currently declining.
  - Stagnant: 19% agreed that the WAS is currently stagnating.
  - Improving: 31% agreed that the WAS is currently improving.
  - Declining or stagnant: 69% agreed that WAS is either declining or stagnant.
  - Improving or stagnant: 50% agreed that WAS is either improving or stagnant.

The results conferred from the data reveals rather shocking and even scandalous feedback. It is evident from Figure 5.8 that WAS needs improvement, as it shows that 94% of the respondents agreed that this was the case. However, the respondents did not agree on whether the standard is currently improving or

<sup>14</sup> WAS – women's athletics standard

declining. It was indicated by 50% of the respondents that it is currently declining, while 19% said that it is stagnant and 31% indicated that it is improving.

The interview guide included an admissible question on whether WA is currently world class (WC<sup>15</sup>) caliber. Figure 5.10 below shows the results on whether South African women's athletics (WA) is currently considered WC. This must also be viewed in the context of leadership.



**Figure 5.10 Current world class status of women's athletics**

Summary of Figure 5.10:

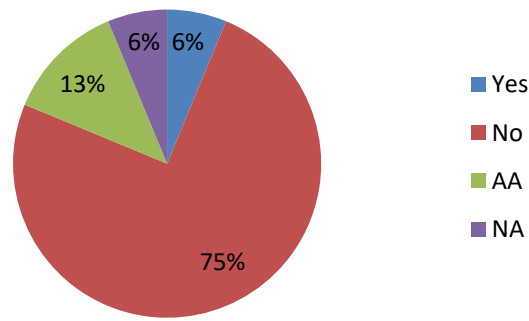
- No: 38% agreed that WA is NOT currently WC.
- Yes: 6% agreed that WA is currently WC.
- AA: 56% agreed on the following unique AA:
  - Yes and No. South Africa does have WC women athletes, but there are not enough – depth is a problem.

As mentioned above, the data in Figure 5.10 indicate that the largest group of respondents gave a common answer to this question – 56% of the respondents answered with a corresponding AA. The perception was that South Africa has WC women athletes; however, South Africa does not have enough women athletes competing at that level.

Figure 5.11 below shows how many respondents regarded athletics as a professional career. This must also be viewed in the context of women's sports leadership.

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<sup>15</sup> WC – world class



**Figure 5.11 Athletics as a career/profession in South Africa**

Summary of Figure 5.11:

- Yes: 6% agreed that athletics is a career option in South Africa.
- No: 75% agreed that athletics is NOT a career option in South Africa. (It is seen as a hobby in South Africa).
- AA: 13% agreed on the following AA:
  - It is personal. Some can do it as a profession but others not. It depends on how good you are.
- No answer: 6% did not know an answer to this question.

Thus, from Figure 5.11 it becomes clear that athletics was perceived to be a hobby in South Africa rather than a profession or a possible career, as 75% of the respondents agreed that athletics is not accepted or perceived as a possible career/profession in South Africa. Consequently, athletics is not managed and approached professionally. It can be argued that if athletics is not approached professionally, the athletes would not do so either, which could also contribute to the overall state of WA currently in South Africa.

The next theme is related to gender inequality (IEQ) within different dimensions of athletics.

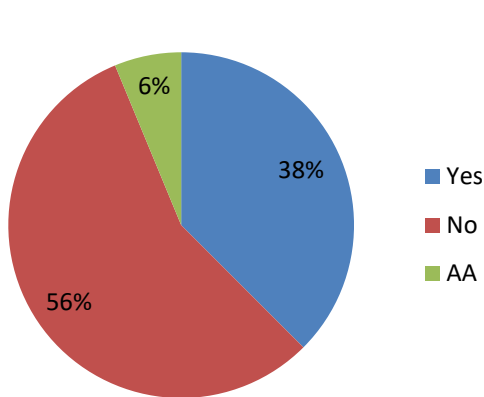
#### **5.4.3 Theme 3: Gender inequality (IEQ) in SA athletics**

As indicated earlier in Figures 5.5 and 5.6, it is evident that there is a definite underrepresentation of women in athletics compared to men. From Figure 5.7 it is

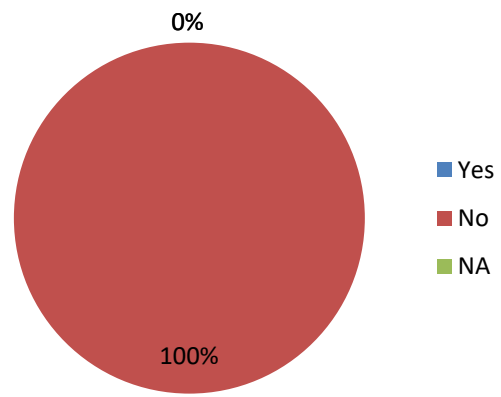


clear that female participation is in the minority in comparison to men, especially in terms of AP at UL-level and SL-level. This section shows whether there is obvious discrimination against women in different areas of sport.

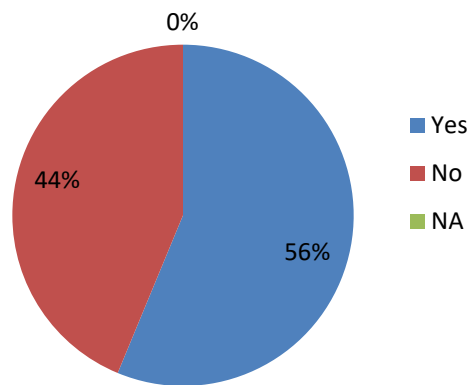
Inequality could be the result of various components, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Figures 5.12 – 5.17 illustrate IEQ within different areas and dimensions of athletics in South Africa.



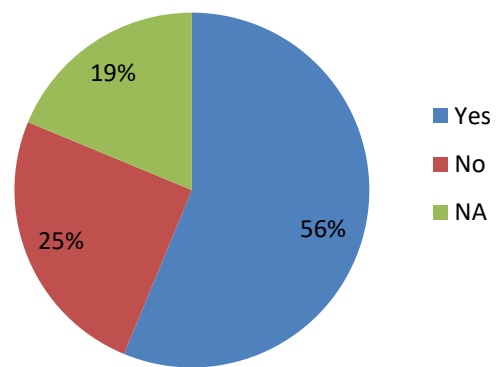
**Figure 5.12 IEQ in tertiary support**



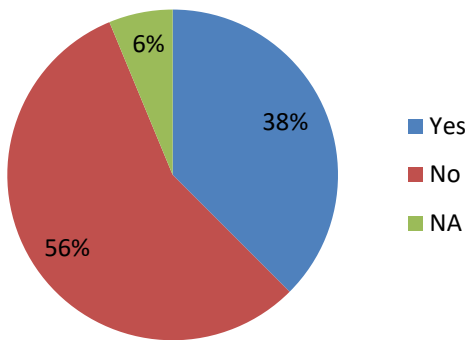
**Figure 5.13 IEQ in access to facilities**



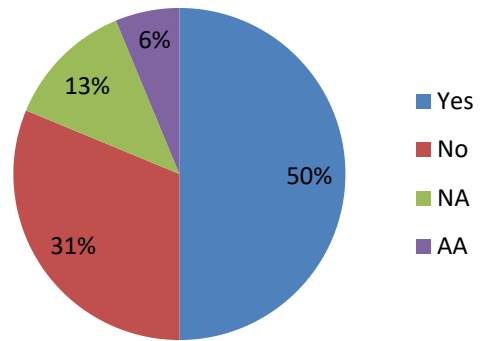
**Figure 5.14 IEQ in sponsorships**



**Figure 5.15 IEQ in salaries**



**Figure 5.16 IEQ in publicity**



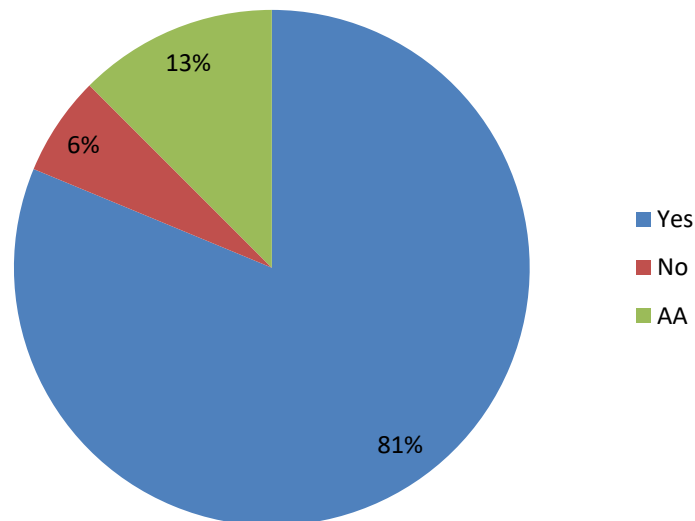
**Figure 5.17 IEQ in job opportunities**

Summary of Figures 5.12 to 5.17:

- Tertiary support: 38% agreed that there is gender IEQ in tertiary support.
- Facilities: 0% agreed that there is gender IEQ in access to facilities.
- Sponsorships: 56% agreed that there is gender IEQ in sponsorship.
- Salaries: 56% agreed that there is gender IEQ in salaries.
- Publicity: 38% agreed that there is gender IEQ in publicity.
- Job opportunity (coaching and administration): 50% agreed that there is gender IEQ in job opportunities.
- Job opportunities: 6% responded with the following AA:
  - There is no IEQ within administration, but there is IEQ within coaching.

According to the data depicted in Figures 5.12, 5.13 and 5.16, IEQ is not evidently present within tertiary support, facilities and publicity. In fact, there is no apparent IEQ in the area of access to facilities, as 100% of the respondents agreed on no IEQ in this area. However, Figures 5.14, 5.15 and 5.17 above show that IEQ is more noticeable in the areas of sponsorships, salaries, and job opportunities. Transparent discrimination and IEQ are thus not clear in all areas of athletics. Yet, where it is present, it might to a certain degree contribute to the current lack of female athletes.

In the context of this study, it was also important to examine whether athletics is perceived as a male dominant sport, perhaps female dominant, or an equal sport. Figure 5.18 below shows the extent to which the South African community perceive athletics as a male dominant sport, a female dominant sport, or an entirely equal sport.



**Figure 5.18 Athletics as a 50/50 (equal) sport in SA**

Summary of Figure 5.18:

- Equal: 81% agreed that athletics is a 50/50 (equal) sport.
- Male dominant: 6% agreed that athletics is not a 50/50 sport (male dominant).
- AA: 13% responded with the following AA:
  - It is supposed to be an equal sport, but it is not so in South Africa.

Figure 5.18 made it clear that athletics is accepted as a 50/50 sport, meaning that it is as much a female sport as it is a male sport. While a significant 81% of the respondents agreed that athletics is a 50/50 sport, the respondents who answered otherwise also mentioned that even if it is not the case, that is how it is supposed to be in South Africa and worldwide.

The theme that will be examined next focuses on the characteristics of an athletics role model as a dimension of leadership.

#### 5.4.4 Theme 4: Female role models (RMs<sup>16</sup>) in SA athletics

Table 5.4 below presents the specific RMs identified by each respondent during the interviews.

**Table 5.4 Individual role models (RMs) in South Africa**

<b>INTERVIEW NR</b>	<b>NAMES OF SPECIFIC ROLE MODELS IDENTIFIED</b>
1	Caster Semenya; Wenda Nel; Rikenette Steenkamp
2	Magda; Geraldine Pillay (AA)
3	Caster Semenya, Rikenette Steenkamp
4	Sunette Viljoen, Caster Semenya
5	Wenda Nel; Sunette Viljoen
6	Caster Semenya; Wenda Nel; Sunette Viljoen
7	Alyssa Conley, Carina Horn; Rikenette Steenkamp; Caster Semenya
8	Wenda Nel
9	Neutral answer (NA)
10	Rikenette Steenkamp; Wenda Nel; Caster Semenya
11	Wenda Nel
12	Sunette Viljoen; Elizna Naude; Rikenette Steenkamp
13	Caster Semenya; Sunette Viljoen
14	Caster Semenya; Sunette Viljoen; Rikenette Steenkamp; Gena Lofstrand; Justine Palframan
15	Rikenette Steenkamp; Wenda Nel, Caster Semenya
16	Wenda Nel
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF DIFFERENT NAMES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF TIMES ROLE MODELS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS</b>
11	Caster Semenya (8) Wenda Nel (8) Rikenette Steenkamp (7)

<sup>16</sup>RM – role model(s)

	Sunette Viljoen (6) Geraldine Pillay (1) Magda (1) Allyssa Conley (1) Carina Horn (1) Elizna Naude (1) Gena Lofstrand (1) Justine Palframan (1)
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Table 5.5 shows the average age group of the identified SA RMs.

**Table 5.5 Age of South African RMs**

<b>Specific RM</b>	<b>AGE (2018)</b>
Caster Semenya	27
Wenda Nel	30
Rikenette Steenkamp	26
Sunette Viljoen	34
Geraldine Pillay	41
Magda	-
Alyssa Conley	27
Carina Horn	29
Elizna Naude	40
Gena Lofstrand	22
Justine Palframan	25
<b>AVERAGE AGE</b>	$301 \div 10 = 30,1$

From Table 5.5 it was apparent that specific names were repeated by most respondents. Two respondents, both inordinately involved in various areas of athletics, identified surprising individuals. However, in most cases, highly successful individuals were repeatedly mentioned because they are highly visible and currently well known.

A respondent made a very relevant statement by emphasising the need to explore the succession of female role models:

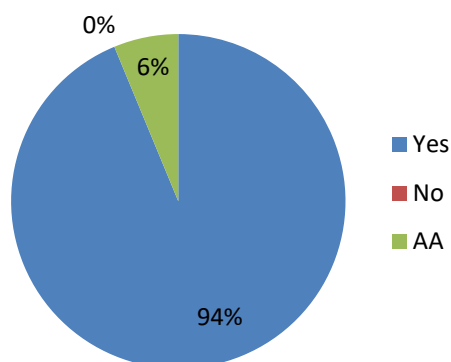
You know it is a bit of a problem in the sense that also we've got to stop looking at a few of the athletes, female athletes as the only kind of big role models, because they are also getting older and they are not going to stay in the sport forever.

Logically, athletes who are very successful at present will be known about by the public, which increases the likelihood that they would be perceived and accepted as RMs. The respondent made it clear that South Africa should not only focus on a single person to be the role model (RM) within athletics. Instead, we need to focus on various individuals. Another respondent made the following relevant statement:

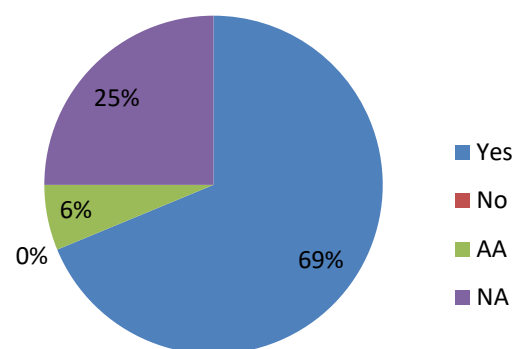
I definitely think that in everyday life, you get different kind of role models. It is also kind of like being an example, it is someone that is an example to me on how they treat others and the compassion, gentleness and love that they treat other people with, I think that is what being a role model is about.

The above indicates that there are different kinds of RMs in South Africa who should be recognised, invested in, and embraced.

Figure 5.19 below displays the demand for athletics RMs in South Africa as perceived by the participants, while Figure 5.20 shows whether respondents saw themselves as RMs in athletics.



**Figure 5.19 Need for female RMs in SA**



**Figure 5.20 Are you a RM?**

Summary of Figures 5.19 and 5.20:

- Yes: 94% agreed that there is a need for female RMs in South Africa.
- AA: 6% responded with the following AA:
  - South Africa has female RMs, but they are not celebrated. The younger generation/public/community is not familiar with the SA RMs .
- RM: 69% see themselves as RMs.

Figure 5.19 indicates that there is currently an urgent need for female RMs in SA athletics, as the data display that 94% of the respondents agreed on this. Only one respondent replied to this question with an AA, asserting that South Africa does have RMs, but that they are not celebrated, embraced or empowered, and thus often not recognised.

The primary characteristics of a true RM will be reflected on next. Being a true RM is considered an important function of leadership. Table 5.6 provides the defining characteristics of a RM in the context of women’s athletics.

**Table 5.6 Defining a true RM**

<b>A TRUE RM IS SOMEONE WHO... (COMMON CHARACTERISTICS)</b>	<b>FREQUENCY RATE MENTIONED</b>
... performs well.	<b>4</b>
... overcomes challenges/setbacks/disappointments/struggles (comes back after setbacks/doesn't give up).	<b>4</b>
... motivates/inspires/gives back; reaches out to others; makes a difference; teaches.	<b>7</b>
... is successful; has money/wealth	<b>3</b>
... is visible/in the public eye/exposed/open/seen/prominent; others look up to.	<b>8</b>
... is approachable; gets to know younger athletes; spends time with followers; interacts in a kind way with others (respect).	<b>6</b>
... is relatable/others can identify with.	<b>3</b>

... believes in what is right; has morals/values/norms; sets an example; shows honesty/humility/compassion/sportsmanship; fights for the sport.	<b>10</b>
... is passionate/enthusiastic.	<b>2</b>
... possesses athleticism/expertise/abilities/technique.	<b>1</b>
... is dedicated/hard working.	<b>2</b>
... breaks through barriers; thinks big; has a positive mindset.	<b>3</b>
... is authentic; his or her own person.	<b>2</b>
... makes the most of every opportunity/experience.	<b>2</b>

Summary of Table 5.6:

Respondents characterised a true RM as:

1. someone who believes in what is right, has morals/values/norms, sets an example, is honest (does not cheat in the sport), shows humility, compassion, sportsmanship, and fights for the sport;
2. someone who is visible, in the public eye, exposed, open, seen, prominent, and a person others look up to;
3. someone who motivates, inspires, gives back, reaches out to others, makes a difference, and teaches;
4. someone who is approachable, gets to know younger athletes, spends time with followers, and interacts in a kind way with others (respect); and
5. someone who overcomes challenges, setbacks, disappointments and struggles (comes back after setbacks/doesn't give up).

The next two tables elaborate on unique statements by respondents that are relevant and important to take into consideration.

**Table 5.7 Unique comments on RMs**

<b>UNIQUE COMMENTS ON RM:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are different types of RMs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a female RM it is important how you dress.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to celebrate the “real” RMs, the ones that overcome real life challenges behind the scenes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a RM doesn't stop at the performance/on the track.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a RM is not being an overnight success.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMs aren't big talkers but get things done.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everyone has what it takes to be a RM. It is great responsibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMs should do motivational speeches/talks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We cannot focus on one athlete to be a RM for an entire country.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The media can make or break you as a RM.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A RM should be an ambassador for a healthy lifestyle.</li> </ul>

**Table 5.8 Participant quotes on RMs**

<b>INTERVIEW NR</b>	<b>RELEVANT/STRIKING/INTERESTING QUOTES ON RMs:</b>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“You cannot really say what is a role model until you have spent time with that person.” “But a role model is actually much more than that and you can only really identify if somebody is a role model for yourself if you know that person much better and spend time with that person which is not always possible with these sports stars.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“There is just not enough of them.”</i></li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ek dink definitief in alledaagse lewe het jy verskillende rolmodelle uhm dit is ook net half ‘n voorbeeld ... dit is iemand wat vir my ‘n voorbeeld is van hoe hulle ook mense hanteer en half met die deernis en sagmoedigheid en uhm liefde waarmee hulle mense hanteer ek dink dit is ook mense wat ‘n rolmodel kan wees.”</i></li> <li>• [translation] <i>“I definitely think that you have different role models in everyday life ... it can be someone who is an example to me in for example how they treat people with love and affection, I think they are the people who can also be a role model.”</i></li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... maar ek dink as daar meer rolmodelle is, dan sal vroue-atletiek optel.”</i></li> <li>• [translation] <i>“... but I think if there are more role models, then</i></li> </ul>

	<i>women will take up athletics.”</i>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ek dink nie dit is die atleet se verantwoordelikheid nie, dit is ook nie die coach se verantwoordelikheid nie, ek dink dit is ASA wat moet inkom en sy atlete moet bemark sodat vrouens kan ‘n leier, meer ook ‘n rol ook kan speel in die jongmense se lewens ... die skole gaan besoek, gaan praat met kinders. Ja dit gaan vir my oor bemarking ...”</i></li> <li>• <i>[translation] “I don’t think it is the athlete’s or the coach’s responsibility, I think it is ASA’s responsibility to market its athletes for females to play a leadership role in the lives of young people ... to visit schools, talk to kids. Yes, to me it is about marketing...”</i></li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... daar is nie regtig rol modelle nie.”</i></li> <li>• <i>[translation] “... there are not really any role models.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“... daar was definitief in die 80’s definitief baie meer rolmodelle, maar uhm ons sukkel vandag.”</i></li> <li>• <i>[translation] “... there were definitely more role models in the 80s, but we struggle nowadays.”</i></li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... sometimes we wait for somebody to win a medal and then only they become a role model, but when you look at their struggles, their little struggles and little obstacles that athletes daily have to overcome and successfully overcomes ...”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I would say we have enough, but again we are not celebrating them, that’s why they are unknown to the young people. If we as a nation, the people in the media, because they are the most powerful people they can make or break you ...”</i></li> <li>• <i>“We have to make them household names.”</i></li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... a role model is not just a good performance on the track, it’s also how you behave from the track.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“A lot of athletes make a mistake, they think a good performance that is where it stops. It’s more than that. You’ve got to inspire.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I think it is very important that we start getting female role</i></li> </ul>

	<i>models in sports.”</i>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I am disappointed by my role model.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“... honest I don't believe in role models, I don't do role models. No. Like really? Maybe like outside, I like for example people like my granny or something who I see as role models or my mother.”</i></li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... not everybody has what it takes to become a role model and not everyone can be a role model, but for the few that are there, it is a great responsibility and it is a great reward as well.”</i></li> </ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The athletes is actually ashamed that they do not get the exposure that we had so that the country can learn them or get to know them yup.”</i></li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“But I don't think there's enough role models in men and in women but especially in women because what pulls people to a sport is the role models.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“... it doesn't have to be the best athlete in the world, but if this is a person that is very prominent.”</i></li> </ul>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“They can't take away experience. You know and being a role model is your life experience, teaching people or just taking back what you have learned from it and putting it back. It is not necessarily the performance.”</i></li> </ul>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“You know it is a bit of a problem in the sense that also we've got to stop looking at a few of the athletes, female athletes as the only kind of big role models, because they are also getting older and they are not going to stay in the sport forever.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Because we have a problem with having enough women at that level.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I think there is a need for the Federation to help create them, not actually trying to push them away from our sport.”</i></li> </ul>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“... your aims right in life, you're focuses and things like that, then your role models can do a very good job, because that is what we need in athletics. We really need these role models to</i></li> </ul>

	<i>come back and reach out and teach youngsters.”</i>
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The respondents' definitions of a true RM are regarded very important, as RMs are essentially part of the leadership who can potentially elevate and revive SA women's athletics. From the data it is evident that there are different kinds of RMs, and that each type of RM has its specific place and function. For the purpose of this study, the most common and most important characteristics of true RMs in athletics were analysed and investigated.

According to Table 5.6, the most common and therefore most important characteristics that people want to see in a RM are:

- a belief in what is right, high morals/values/norms, setting of a good example, honesty, humility, compassion, sportsmanship, being prepared to fight for the sport;
- visibility in the public eye, being exposed/open/seen/prominent, being someone others look up to; and
- motivation, inspiration, giving back, reaching out to others, making a difference, and teaching others.

The most common characteristic traits required by RMs, as indicated by the respondents, are somewhat surprising and are related to deeply rooted values and a belief system. While the respondents emphasised the importance of being prominent, visible and known by the community, as well as being motivating, encouraging and inspiring, their view on the importance of performance was unexpectedly less prominent. Yet, Table 5.6 shows that performance on the track is still an important component and should not be neglected. Furthermore, although Figure 5.20 indicates that 69% of the respondents see themselves as RMs, none of them mentioned their own names when asked to identify RMs in South Africa.

The next theme is focused on the primary reasons and causes for the current state of SA women's athletics (WA).

#### 5.4.5 Theme 5: Reasons for the state of women’s athletics in South Africa

Table 5.9 and Table 5.10 below represent and prioritise the primary and secondary reasons for the lack of South African women in sport leadership.

**Table 5.9 Primary reasons for the current lack of women’s sports leadership (WSL<sup>17</sup>) in South Africa**

<b>MOST COMMON REASONS FOR THE CURRENT LACK OF WSL IN SOUTH AFRICA</b>
1. Socio-cultural expectations and traditions (cultural)
2. Motherhood and societal expectations
3. Physiological changes in women; biological reasons/challenges such as periods and bigger breasts which are uncomfortable for women/girls
4. Lack of support – financial, emotional (especially during times such as puberty for women), and structural
5. Lack of exposure for women; lack of RMs; lack of sports marketing
6. High qualifying standards (QS <sup>18</sup> ): QS/selection criteria demotivate female athletes in South Africa.
7. Overtraining of girls; peaking too soon in school; burnout syndrome
8. Injuries
9. Loss of motivation; distractions; changed priorities
10. Perception of women sport as being too masculine

**Table 5.10 Secondary reasons for the current lack of WSL in South Africa**

<b>UNIQUE/SPECIFIC REASONS FOR THE CURRENT LACK OF WSL IN SOUTH AFRICA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of life partner support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter sports threatening athletics, especially in schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many distractions for girls at university level (UL-level)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promising SA athletes not being nurtured</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup>WSL – women’s sports leaders/leadership

<sup>18</sup>QS – qualifying standards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• u/23 championships being terminated</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation (Athletics is a lonely sport.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional pressure on women/girls in sport to be pretty to be successful</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's emotions standing in their way</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of mental toughness</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of medical support for athletes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletics being an amateur sport in South Africa</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National body being too focused on short-term achievements/medals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's sport not being taken seriously</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes not being experienced enough to compete in front of huge crowds</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of training camps/symposiums/workshop</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men dominating leadership positions (discrimination against women; women not being empowered)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No depth</li> </ul>

The data illustrated in Table 5.9 confirmed the expected, predicted and previously researched reasons for the current lack of WSL in South Africa, as identified earlier in the literature review. From Table 5.9 it is clear that the respondents substantiated cultural, socio-cultural, and South African traditions as primary influences on WA in SA currently, together with motherhood and societal expectations.

The reasons for the lack of WSL in SA which were identified and confirmed are valid and addressing them of high priority within the context of this study. The objective of the study was to identify and confirm the issues mentioned in the literature review which have a negative impact on WA development and standard in SA at present.

A very important aim of this study was also to identify and discover causes that are conceivably less noticeable and clear, but equally important, and to find ways to address them in this study. Table 5.10 indicates that a lack of support is a major concern when it comes to WA in SA. Female athletes in general have more challenges than men. Emotional support, for instance, is a greater need when it comes to female athletes, especially during the puberty phase. Moreover, certain cultures in SA make it very difficult for women to participate in sports, especially from

a later stage. It is frowned upon and not accepted in certain cultures and traditions to play sports. In addition, society has expectations of women to have priorities and responsibilities other than sport. Biological challenges that women face during the uncomfortable stage of puberty also discourage young female athletes to participate.

However, it was important for this study to establish which of the challenges and issues that had been identified and confirmed are unique to SA women. Physiological changes that women experience, for instance, are not unique to SA women, whereas the lack of support during this phase of change could be a gap in the SA athletics system.

Whereas the data presented in Table 5.9 substantiates and supports the primary causes of the research problem, secondary causes of the problem are identified in Table 5.10. Certain secondary causes, when considered to be practically easier to reconstruct and adjust, can become primary priority to SA athletics.

Table 5.10 also identified idiosyncratic reasons for the substandard state of WSL in athletics at present. Some of these secondary causes and concerns that can be adjusted uncomplicatedly should be of high priority to the governing body (ASA).

Secondary causes that can be addressed promptly include:

- Adjustments of QS
- Standardised selection criteria
- Retrieving u/23 national championships
- Increased workshops/symposiums/training camps

The following section will focus on the final theme identified in this study, namely possible suggestions and recommendations to address the research problem.

#### **5.4.6 Theme 6: Framework suggestions, ideas, innovations and priorities**

The tables below represent highly common suggestions, less common suggestions, and unique recommendations mentioned by the respondents.

**Table 5.11 How can South Africa improve general AP?**

<b>TOP/MOST COMMON SUGGESTIONS</b>
<p>1. <u>Increase support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial – sponsorships/incentives</li> <li>• Invest more time in the sport.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <u>Increase exposure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Live broadcasting</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Take hands with the media.</li> <li>• Remind people of athletics.</li> <li>• Athletes should become household names.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <u>Focus on/invest in development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural areas</li> <li>• Get school sports healthy.</li> <li>• Talent identification on PL-level and HL-level</li> <li>• Skill development on PL-level</li> </ul>
<p>4. <u>Create RMs in South Africa</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use RMs to promote athletics in South Africa.</li> <li>• Bring legends back to athletics.</li> </ul>
<p>5. <u>Create more opportunities for athletes &amp; coaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• international competitions</li> <li>• opportunities to train with WC athletes</li> </ul>
<p>6. <u>Improve/create a coaching system in SA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase coaching involvement.</li> <li>• Increase payment of coaches.</li> <li>• Incentives for coaches</li> <li>• Recognition</li> </ul>
<p>7. <u>Get the community and masses involved and informed.</u></p>
<p>8. <u>Be clear and consistent with QS and the procedures according to which teams are selected.</u></p>
<p>9. <u>Bring back u/23 national championships.</u></p>



10. Host more 1-hour meetings (Shorter programme meetings).

**Table 5.12 More specific suggestions for improving general AP**

<b>MORE SUGGESTIONS</b>
Empower a younger generation.
Encourage athletes; give recognition.
On PL-level, bring back longer athletics seasons. (Winter sports should not take over.)
Create an athletics culture/tradition in South Africa.
Start with mini-athletics on PL-level.
Equip athletes to market themselves, e.g. teach them how to speak in interviews, etc.
<b>SUGGESTIONS DIRECTED TOWARDS ASA (THE NATIONAL FEDERATION):</b>
Manage athletics more professionally.
Take ownership of athletics and be clear on your vision, mission, goals, and where you want to go with the sport.
Communicate better with athletes and coaches.
Be clear & consistent with qualifying standards and the procedures according to which teams are selected.
Support athletes.
Recognise/encourage athletes; do not demotivate athletes.

**Table 5.13 How can South Africa uplift WA in South Africa?**

<b>MOST COMMON/TOP SUGGESTIONS</b>
Change the perception of women sport in South Africa (especially in black communities).
Increase exposure, publicity, women campaigns and marketing.
Use, create and empower female RMs and use legends in the sport.
Encourage and recognise women.
Increase special support for women (financial, emotional and physical).
Bring back u/23 championships.

Increase women's clinics, workshops, symposiums.
Identify coaches who can work with girls.
Create incentive-based systems for women.
Create opportunities where women are invited to bring ideas and speak up without fear.
Introduce a mentoring system.

**Table 5.14 Most common concerns regarding WA in South Africa**

<b>MOST COMMON/TOP CONCERNS THAT RE-OCCURRED IN THE INTERVIEWS</b>
Primary school athletics seasons are too short.
Winter sports threaten athletics.
PL-level athletics is too highly focussed on performance and winning, with too little focus on skills development and enjoyment. This leads to burnout at a later stage in athletics.
Coaches and management are too old, resulting in a lack of young generation involvement, especially on full-time/professional basis.
The failed coaching system in South Africa includes the QS system, payment system, and a system of no incentives.
Kids are presently less active.
Crime in South Africa contributes to a lower participation base.
TV sports broadcasting in South Africa is never at prime time. (After 10pm)
The South African athletics community does not work together.
There is a need for healthy rivalries/competition in women's athletics.
South Africa needs more RMs.
ASA is not proud of athletics.
Athletics is not managed professionally.
QS for major championships and team selection criteria demotivate athletes.
The average retirement age of South African athletes is 24, while the average WC performance age is between 26 and 32 years.
South Africa does not develop black talent enough.

Table 5.11 provides a summary of the most common suggestions mentioned by all the respondents. It confirms the comprehensive importance of support to athletes. Athletes have a need for different types of support; thus, an entire support system is crucial for the proper development of athletes and for the achievement of high performances at a professional level.

The actual challenge is how to implement the above-mentioned suggestions, some of which are less complicated than others. The researcher will prioritise suggestions and provide recommendations accordingly. The above-mentioned suggestions will be integrated and considered in Chapter 6, in order to compile an athletics framework.

## **5.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the study results were presented and thoroughly analysed. From a thematic analysis of the data it became apparent that women's athletics leadership is currently underrepresented and needs to improve radically in South Africa. Athletics participation in general is a fundamental component of athletics and was confirmed to be a concern. Furthermore, primary and secondary causes for the substandard state of WA at present were confirmed in this chapter. This chapter also guided the researcher to firstly define a true role model and secondly to indicate what South Africans want to see in an athletics role model. This will help the governing body and the athletics community to invest and empower the correct type of individuals. Moreover, certain suggestions were summarised in this chapter that will guide the researcher in the next chapter to give relevant and appropriate suggestions for improving women's sports leadership in SA athletics. The following chapter will also include conclusions and recommendations for further study, based on the thematic analysis as presented in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 it was theorised that the development of sport in South Africa is plagued by issues of inequality which entails that there is currently in athletics an underrepresentation of female sports leaders and athletes. Earlier chapters also postulated primary causes for the lack of women's sports leaders in a South African context. Socio-cultural expectations, political history, motherhood, and societal expectations were indicated to influence the level of involvement of SA women in athletics. Other underlying and secondary reasons for this problem have been identified and discussed in the previous chapter, which highlighted that, despite possible foregoing efforts to uplift women in athletics in South Africa, a marked gender imbalance in athletics persists.

The research question for this study was formulated as:

*What are the underlying reasons for the lack of professional female athletes and role models in women's athletics in South Africa?*

Based upon the abovementioned research question, it was postulated that:

- A need exists to explore for women sports leaders as role models in South African athletics.
- South African women's athletics is in trouble when evaluated on the international arena.
- There is a lack of improvement or growth in terms of prominent role models (as a dimension of leadership) in South African women's athletics.
- The mediocre vision and weak strategic plans of sponsors, athletic clubs and the government contribute to the current situation.

Postulations were confirmed and presented in the interpretation of results. Certain underlying reasons for the lack of women's sports leadership were established in the previous chapter.

In Chapter 1 the aims and objectives of the study were formulated as follows:

- To determine the status of South African women's sports leadership in athletics;
- To identify underlying reasons contributing to a lack of professional athletes and role models as perceived by male and female athletes; and
- To develop a conceptual framework to address the problem.

Conclusions and recommendations will consequently be presented according to the above-mentioned aims and objectives.

## **6.2 OVERALL CONCLUSION**

Results of the study confirmed that a definite lack of female sports leaders in athletics exists. The problem starts with the depth within the participation base of athletics, especially at university level. The current state of women's athletics performances is substandard and needs to improve. It is apparent that South Africa has world class female athletes; however, it does not reflect when female athletes compete at that level. Expected causes contribute to the current state of women's athletics, but underlying reasons are also responsible for the current lack of female sports leaders as role models in athletics. Promising athletes that drop out of the sport prematurely should be a major concern. Furthermore, lack of support and the fact that athletics in South Africa is not recognised as a profession or a possible career were shown to be two of the primary causes for athletes dropping out of the sport. Athletics in South Africa is managed unprofessionally and therefore approached as an avocation.

A contrast exists within athletics participation and athletics exposure in different areas of South Africa which invariably affects the health of athletics at a professional level. There is a lack of opportunities for children in rural areas and the concern is that a pool of talent will be overlooked and will never get an opportunity to develop basic athletics skills. An additional concern is that when athletes from rural areas get exposed to athletics at a later stage in life, these athletes have already missed out on the fundamental developing stages of athletics skills, which might jeopardize their ultimate growth and potential. On the other spectrum of athletics participation, it is a concern that in urban areas, previously known as Model C schools, there is a tendency of extreme and intensely focused athletics competitions. The immense pressure placed on kids from an early age is a major concern. Premature pressure

affects the longevity of athletics careers. A highly performance-driven approach to training and competition makes athletes more prone to overtraining syndrome, career ending injuries, and the lack of motivation and passion to stay involved in the sport.

Athletics role models can have a positive impact on athletics in South Africa, but it is important to identify and support those individuals that will effectively influence a younger generation. Being a true role model requires more than performing on the track, but also involves a responsibility off the track. A reconstructed definition of a role model in the athletics context was compiled from the primary data and derived by the researcher. A true role model in sport can be defined as follows:

A sports role model is an individual who holds a deeply rooted belief system with moral values such as honesty and humility. He or she is a prominent individual who is highly visible to the community and consistently in the public eye. Such an individual performs well in his or her specific field, sport and other disciplines, but also accepts the responsibility of giving back by serving the community by different means. A role model serves spontaneously but has an agenda to inspire, motivate and teach others in the community to excel in athletics, but also in life. A role model overcomes challenges and struggles and has a willingness and an openness to get involved in the community. A true role model empowers others and displays traits of leadership in terms of servanthood, authenticity and exemplary dimensions.

Athletics in South Africa can only benefit from an investment in effective leadership in the form of women's athletics role models.

### **6.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES SPECIFIC CONCLUSION**

The following summary of the aims and objectives of the study is presented as the final part of the research process. These factors are also fundamentally part of the final conceptual framework.

#### **6.3.1 The status of South African women's sports leadership in athletics**

The current standard of women's sports leadership in SA athletics is substandard and unsatisfactory. Although there is no obvious discrimination against women, an

underrepresentation of women in athletics still exists. Only 25,4% of the national athletics team selections during 2007 – 2018 consisted of women. Hence, a discrepancy between men and women athletes representing the national teams clearly exists. The inadequate depth of the participation base negatively affects the chances of the pool of athletes of becoming athletics performers, role models and leaders. The data depicted that there is a desperate need for female role models in South Africa. Therefore, public and private sectors concerned with sport should invest, identify, and empower role models to uplift women's athletics in South Africa.

### **6.3.2 Underlying reasons contributing to the lack of professional athletes and role models as perceived by male and female athletes**

Underlying reasons that contribute to the lack of professional athletes and role models as perceived by male and female athletes include the following:

- The current qualifying standards for national team selections for women are unreasonably high. The selection criteria demotivate female athletes in South Africa.
- Girls are over trained at high school level with many girls peaking too early.
- Primary school level athletics is too focused on performance rather than on generating a passion and enforcing skill development.
- Winter sports (e.g. netball and hockey), especially at schools, are a threat to athletics participation.
- Male life partners do not always support women's athletics, which negatively affects women's involvement in the sport.
- The athletics culture defines itself as an amateur sport; therefore, it is rarely considered as a profession. Hence, athletics is not taken seriously or managed professionally.
- The national body (ASA) is too intentionally focused on short-term achievements that don't provide women the opportunity to grow as athletes over time.
- Athletics is a lonely sport, which explains the need for support and recognition.
- The termination of the u/23 national championships is a concern in terms of bridging the gap to senior level.

### **6.3.3 A conceptual framework for addressing and managing the problem**

A conceptual framework was developed to address, manage, improve and control the issues identified in the research problem. The goal of this conceptual framework is to prioritise and organise the steps in the approach to address the primary factors obtained from the empirical survey in a specific, logical, strategic, and functional sequence. The conceptual framework is therefore a management tool for organising the practical ideas and solutions that could address the problem.

Considering the following should lead to an improved approach to address the problem of WA and WSL in SA:

- Primary causes
- Secondary causes
- Primary priorities for short-term improvements
- Suggestions for an incentive programme
- The conceptual framework to address the problem of women's athletics in South Africa

Figure 6.1 below illustrates the primary and secondary causes for the lack of SA women in athletics and presents the primary priorities identified for short-term improvements to address the problem.



**THE PROBLEM:**  
**LACK OF SA WOMEN IN ATHLETICS**

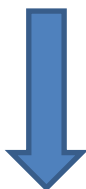


**PRIMARY/FUNDAMENTAL**  
**CAUSES:**

- Cultural reasons
- Motherhood & social expectations
- Physiological changes in women/puberty
- Lack of support
- Lack of exposure /publicity/marketing

**SECONDARY/UNDERLYING**  
**CAUSES:**

- Qualifying standards/selection criteria too tough
- Overtraining girls/girls peak too soon
- Termination of u/23 national championships
- Winter sports threaten athletics
- Lack of training camps



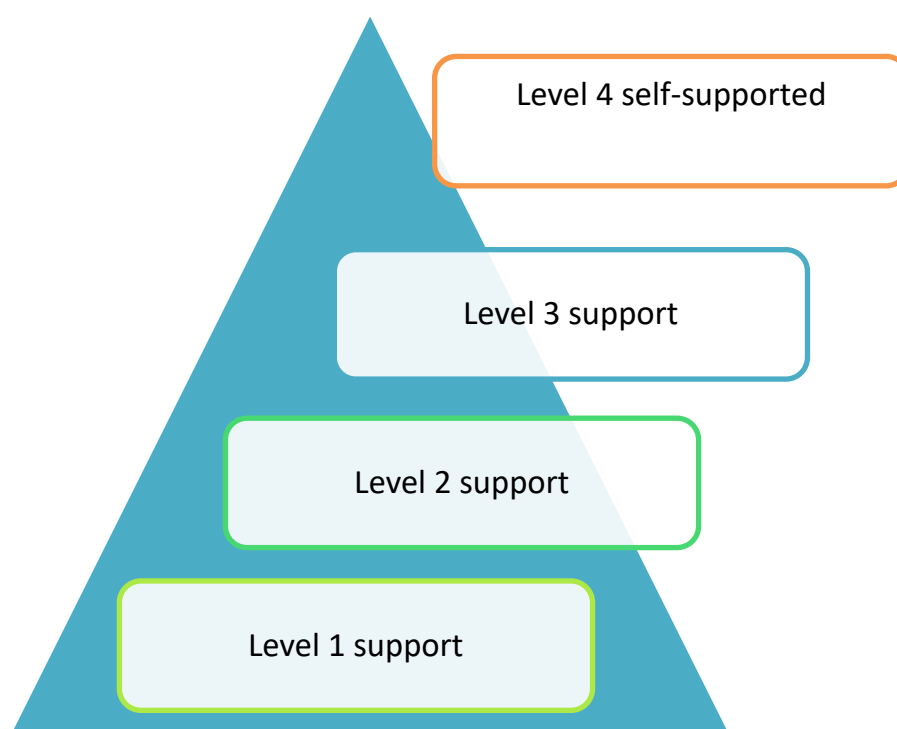
**PRIMARY PRIORITIES FOR SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS:**

- Bring back u/23 national championships
- Increase number of workshops/training camps/symposiums
- Increase and include promising women in team selections
- Focus on hosting 1-hour meetings with shorter programmes

### Figure 6.1 Primary and secondary causes and priorities for short-term improvements

Data obtained in the survey affirmed that the South African female athletes at the UL-level of athletics participation are in the greatest need of support. By combining the data (from interviewee 1, 2017) and the experience of the researcher, the reverse incentive-based development programme (RIBDP<sup>19</sup>) (or a similar conceptual framework) could be derived that should address this weakness.

Figure 6.2 below shows the levels of support in the proposed RIBDP for female athletes.



### Figure 6.2 Reverse incentive-based development programme

This programme targets the athletes in greatest need of support, as identified by the primary data obtained. These are the talented young athletes (e.g. school or provincial champions) and those who were selected (recruited) based on their commitment and long-term interest. The RIBDP is a crucial stepping stone for athletes to make the transition from junior athletics to senior athletics: from being a

<sup>19</sup> RIBDP – reverse incentive-based development programme

local athlete to becoming an international athlete, and from being a dependant athlete to becoming an independent and self-supported athlete. This programme will only apply to athletes from the age of 17 and onwards. It will enable athletes to pursue a possible professional career and encourage them to grow and obtain sponsors external to the programme. The RIBDP is not a sponsorship where there are limitations and exclusivity between the athlete and the programme. An average of 20 athletes will be identified each year for a predetermined level of support. The goal is for athletes to progress from level 1 to level 4 as regulated and adjusted according to the budget.

It is suggested that Athletics South Africa (ASA) identifies 20 promising female athletes each year between the ages of 17 and 26. The following suggested classification system guidelines for the programme (level 1 – 3 athletes) may apply:

1. Female athletes from ages 17 to 26.
2. A minimum of 8 athletes from rural areas.
3. The candidate needs to show talent and a definite long-term interest in athletics. A recruitment interview must be part of the selection process.
4. The moment that athletes sign another commercial contract, such as shoe contracts from sports companies with significant financial value, the support-based income (that will be adapted each year) is automatically terminated.
5. Only matric athletes or university level athletes are considered and accepted. No requirement to be registered at a university should apply.

### **Level 1 support**

Classification system guideline for level 1:

1. Talented young female athletes in need of financial support for coaching, fitness, health, travel, and medical expenses.
2. Athletes that are seriously injured and unable to compete and in need of financial support for covering medical bills.

Level 1 is the highest priority and the highest level of support. This level is applicable during the stage when most SA female athletes are lost. This is also the stage when athletes are most in need of support. An athlete already considered world class and signed with sponsors does not need support from a national body. The goal of this programme is to support athletes with the potential to become world class but need

time to grow and develop. As mentioned earlier in this study, most medallists at major championships are between the ages of 25 and 30. The proposed RIBDP programme is focused on retaining and developing those athletes.

However, there are challenges to this initiative that need to be addressed. It is a concern whether these athletes will be motivated to progress when they receive significant support at the lowest level of performance. Hence, the programme needs boundaries, such as a limitation of 1 – 2 years on level 1 support. The scope of support should be basic but must enable athletes to have their needs met, such as payment for coaches, running shoes, and a basic salary to live on. A signed contract to this end will be of great value and motivation to athletes.

As mentioned before, the programme should not limit athletes to obtain additional sponsorships. On the contrary, it should be encouraged because athletes will not stay on this level due to progression or exclusion from the programme.

### **Level 2 support**

Level 2 support involves a smaller scope than level 1. As the athlete's achievements in terms of performances, sponsorships, bursaries and participation money increases, the need for support will decrease. The goal would be for the athlete to receive support to collectively obtain a higher income than on level 1.

The suggested classification system guidelines for level 2 are:

1. Athletes that successfully progressed from level 1.
2. Athletes that have study bursaries from a university.
3. Any late developing and talented athletes with or without minor sponsorships or means of support.
4. Talented athletes with health or injury problems.

### **Level 3 support**

This level is the final stage with the least amount of support. On this level, only athletes on the brink of qualifying for national team selections are supported.

The suggested classification system guidelines are:

1. Semi-professional athletes who already have other avenues of support.
2. Athletes who compete on the international arena up to world challenge level.

3. Athletes who also get participation money from events but still need to cover travel expenses.
4. Athletes who are working towards official shoe contracts or other major sponsorships.

This is the level at which athletes can be allowed to be supported for the longest period to help sustain them prior to level 4.

#### **Level 4 – self-supported**

This level is the ultimate goal of the programme, namely to release athletes to be professional and independent. The official support from the programme is terminated.

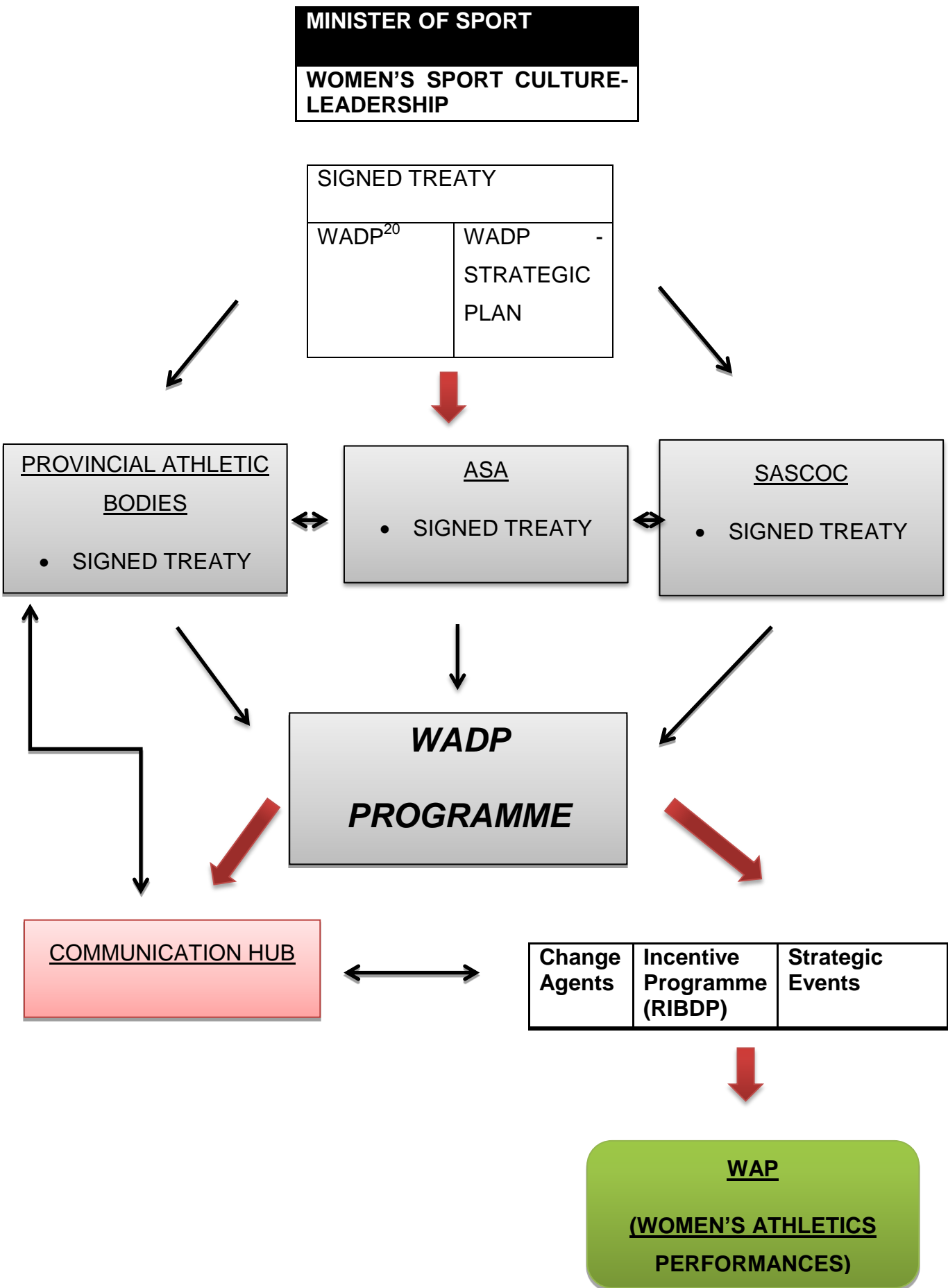
The suggested classification system guidelines are:

1. Athletes who progressed through the RIBDP system and obtained other means of income such as shoe contracts with retainers and bonuses.
2. Athletes who are competing internationally, such as at diamond league level.
3. Athletes who are professional and have other commercial sponsorships with additional means of income.
4. Athletes who often represent national teams and are regarded as world class.

The programme should, however, never exclude recognition support from the national body. Once-off recognition bonuses for national records, world records and international medals should still be given to these athletes. Moreover, athletes who have successfully advanced from a level 1 to a level 4 athlete by means of this system could be encouraged to invest in and sponsor a level 1 athlete of choice to show gratitude and in that way give back to athletics in South Africa.

It is suggested that the talent identification and selection criteria for the RIBDP programme is benchmarked and guided (improved) by Fuchslocher, Romann and Gulbin's (2013:12) strategy to support developing talent, as indicated in their study, "Assessment criteria for the selection of young Swiss athletes and an estimation of prognosis validity in terms of success in elite sport performance", also referred to earlier in this study in Chapter 3.7.3. (See also Annexure 3).

A support programme like the proposed RIBDP programme has tremendous potential if it is managed well. There are many hidden advantages, such as recognising athletes, mentoring opportunities, transparency, motivation, and metrics. On the other hand, athletes who do not need support anymore sometimes qualify for assistance. Since this issue is such a significant problem, it is a crucial component of the conceptual framework for addressing the problem of women's athletics in SA, depicted in Figure 6.3 below. It is suggested that, within the framework, it becomes a central and integral part of the WADP (Women's athletics development and role model programme) management responsibility.



<sup>20</sup> WADP – women's athletics development and role model programme

### **Figure 6.3 The conceptual framework for addressing the problem of women's athletics in South Africa**

The secondary and primary research results of the study indicate the significance of a few critical components to be included in the proposed framework. The framework, as indicated, is a mere management and visual tool to highlight the priorities of issues to be addressed in a logical and managerial order or sequence. It is therefore important to commence with leadership and governing bodies. Figure 6.3 indicates three main levels, as discussed next.

- The commitment of the minister of sport is imperative. Verbal talk and promises will not suffice, and the framework therefore suggests a signed treaty between government and the other governing bodies such as ASA, the South African Sports Confederation, the Olympic Committee (SASCOC<sup>21</sup>) and the provincial bodies. By implication, it is ideal that such a signed document results from a culture of sport (women's sports culture leadership), because values precede action. Consequently, it will be spontaneous and not legally forced. This document (to be signed by government officials) should consider two main dimensions, namely (1) a WADP (women's athletics development and role model programme) and (2) a WADP strategic plan.
- The treaty will specify the roles and responsibilities of the different governing bodies. The accountability of the minister cannot be delegated, but the responsibilities of ASA, SASCOC, and the provincial bodies related to the treaty will be delegated. It is suggested that a WADP programme manager be appointed to assist these bodies with this delegation, coordination and communication.
- The WADP programme manager will be the central point of action. He or she will be responsible for the practicalities of implementation. Figure 6.3 indicates this role as the central point of communication. He or she will also create a communication hub for regular meetings and for promoting all types of communication between stakeholders. Besides the importance of communication due to the scope of this treaty, the continuous frustrations regarding communication between athletes, coaches, and governing bodies

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<sup>21</sup> SASCOC – South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee



is another good reason for introducing such a hub. The second leg of WADP management comprises the medium-term priorities and activities to be implemented. These should be in line with the treaty but will be very specific in terms of change agents, the RIBDP programme, and other initiatives in terms of strategic events (functions, workshops, meetings, etc).

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Firstly, it is recommended that the proposed conceptual framework be tested, refined, and developed into a model.

Secondly, the findings of this study raised several questions regarding the entire system of sport and recreation within athletics and presented the following opportunities for further research:

- Investigate how the South African athletics system can change the deeply rooted cultural misperceptions concerning women participating in sport.
- Explore how finances and funding can be monitored and generated to enable the support required by female athletes.
- Compare and identify gaps between the South African athletics system, from grass-root level to professional level, to international systems that are particularly successful, for example the United State of America.
- Develop a framework that guides the introduction of fair and consistent selection criteria which will all together give women athletes more opportunities to represent their country and to grow as athletes.
- Develop a communication tool that will assist in sharing consistent information between ASA and coaches/athletes.

Figure 6.4 below represents recommended change agents for uplifting and empowering women's athletics in South Africa on each of the four critical levels.

### PL-LEVEL

- Athletics season lasts for 5 – 7 weeks (all schools at the same time).
- Mini athletics and games, only team competitions.
- Educated coaches (being regulated) who focus on skills development.
- Kids encouraged to participate in all kinds of sports.
- No records, national championships or bursaries allowed at this level.
- Kids' competitions categorised by size rather than age.
- No status to individual performances, with overall recognition given to teams.
- Equipping coaches in rural areas.
- Money and investment focused on increasing participation base and reaching kids in rural areas.



### HL- LEVEL

- Athletes only specialise in a specific event from age 16.
- No high intensity training until the age of 16.
- Coaches educated and regulated.
- HL-UL level coaches interlinked, especially with matric athletes.  
UL-level coaches to visit schools training and start connecting athletes to the university system.
- Prestige and status of national championships increase with age groups, no real recognition given to national champions from age 13 to16, while recognition increases from age 17 onwards.
- Mentoring and counselling system in place for girls in sport at each school.
- Top 10 and Top 12 teams: ABSA table awards points more easily to matric athletes to encourage participation.



### **UL-LEVEL**

- Definite connection between UL coaches and HL coaches.  
UL=SL, implying the same coaches on these levels.  
Only full-time coaches.
- Several 1<sup>st</sup> year meetings and 1-hour meetings.
- Increased specialised training and intensity.
- Athletics mentoring system between final year and 1<sup>st</sup> year students/athletes.
- Pride in and recognition for u/23 championships title – should have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest prestige in SA athletics.
- Twenty promising female athletes from ages 17 to 26 identified annually by ASA for the reverse incentive-based development programme (RIBDP) to receive support from ASA.



#### SL LEVEL

- Highly specialised training.
- Full-time athletes; full-time coaches.
- Contracted athletes to receive no more support from the RIBDP.
- Coaches at this level to meet with governing body once a month for giving feedback on the training group progress.  
Goals and objectives to be agreed upon together.
- Classification system introduced for recognition as a professional athlete and professional coach.
- Qualifying standards and selection criteria to be clearly communicated to coaches 6 months prior to competitions.

**Figure 6.4 Change agents to uplift women's athletics in SA**

#### **6.5 FINAL STUDY SUMMARY**

This study attempted to understand the underlying reasons for the lack of female athletics leaders in South Africa. It also amplified the desperate need for role models in SA women's athletics. The findings identified underlying reasons for the problem. These issues should become primary priority to SA athletics. This topic was approached holistically but was simplified and specified as the study developed.

The literary review on "leadership in sport" and "women's leadership in athletics in South Africa" laid the foundation for this study. The primary data indicated six focused factors to be addressed, namely the athletics participation base; women's athletics standard; gender inequality in athletics; female role models in athletics; the causes for the lack of female sports leaders; and suggestions to address this problem.

Recommendations were made with reference to the literature review as well as the narrative data obtained from the interviews. This chapter concluded the study by summarising the findings and presenting a conceptual framework. Finally, conclusions were drawn and recommendations made for possible future research on this topic.

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***Annexure 1:***  
***ASA WOMEN COMMITTEE 2015 SURVEY***



ATHLETICS SOUTH AFRICA NPC  
Reg No 2006/034767/08  
Athletics House, No. 3, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Houghton Estate, Johannesburg, 2198  
Tel: (+27) 11 880 5800 Fax: (+27) 11 788 6872 / (+27) 11 442 3091  
P O Box 2712, Houghton, 2041; asa@athleticssa.co.za; www.athletics.org.za

11 June 2015

Dear All ASA Members

**Circular 26 of ASA 2015 – ASA WOMEN COMMITTEE 2015 SURVEY**

The ASA Women Committee has a very difficult task to get women athletics up and running. The women committee wants to make a difference in the lives of female athletes, coaches and administrators. Currently the statistics for senior women athletics are very low in contrast with the senior male athletics.

The women committee did design a survey they wish to distribute to the provinces for their inputs which enable them in the ASA women strategic plan. Please assist us in your valuable inputs to compile the survey and send it back before or on 17 July 2015 to [antam@athleticssa.co.za](mailto:antam@athleticssa.co.za).

Regards

*(Not signed due to electronic sending)*

Anta Marx

On behalf of the ASA Women Committee

Aleck SIKHOSANA (President)  
Pieter LOURENS (Chair Track & Field)  
Esther MALEMA (Additional)

Dr Harold ADAMS (Vice President)  
Dorah MNGWEVU (Chair Athletes)  
Shireen NOBLE (Additional)

Jakes JACOBS (Chair Cross Country)  
Ntathu GWADISO (Additional)  
Jazz MNYENGEZA (USSA Rep)

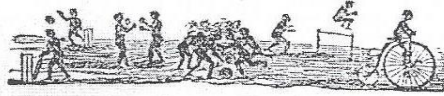
**Board Members**  
James MOLOI (Chair Road Running)  
Mottlatsi KEIKABILE (Additional)  
William MOKATSANYANE (SASA Rep)

**Honorary Members:**  
Mervyn KING  
Mileki GEORGE



***Annexure 2:***  
***Notice of the first meeting of the South African  
Amateur Athletic Association (SAAAA)***

1894 to 1909 ~ 1896



# South African Amateur Athletic Association

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WILL HOLD THEIR

## FIRST MEETING

UNDER THE PROVISIONALLY ADOPTED RULES, ON

**SATURDAY & EASTER MONDAY,**

24th and 26th MARCH, 1894,

ON

**THE WANDERERS' CLUB GROUNDS,**

KRUGER'S PARK, JOHANNESBURG,

COMMENCING EACH DAY AT 2.30 P.M.

---

The objects of this Meeting are:—

*First.*—To establish the S.A.A.A.A. on a firm basis.

*Second.*—To hold a General Meeting of Representatives from all centres of Sport, to finally pass and confirm the Rules, which have been provisionally adopted, and under which this Meeting is being held. Copies of these Rules will be sent to all Athletic

*Notice of the First Meeting of the South African Amateur Athletic Association*

1896

SA ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS — KIMBERLEY

EA Barber won the 880-yards in 2:11.1 with H. Trollip winning the 1-mile in 4:52.0.

***Annexure 3:***

***Assessment criteria for the selection of young Swiss athletes and an estimation of prognosis validity in terms of success in elite sport performance.***

***Assessment criteria for the selection of young Swiss athletes and an estimation of prognosis validity in terms of success in elite sport performance.***

Assessment criteria	Subcriteria	Estimated prognosis validity	Recommended assessment methods	References
<b>Competition performance</b>	Performance at early junior athlete age	*	Competition results, coaches evaluation	[7, 40]
	Performance at late junior athlete age	****	Competition results, coaches evaluation	[41, 42]
<b>Performance tests</b>	Sport-specific performance tests	****	Objective tests, coaches evaluation	[43]
	General physical motor skills tests	*	Objective tests	[43]
<b>Performance development</b>	Competitions and performance tests	****	Competition performance, performance tests over time	[7]
<b>Psychological factors</b>	Achievement motivation	****	Coaches evaluation, questionnaire	[23, 24, 44, 45]
	Dealing with pressure			[46]
<b>Athlete's biography</b>	Resilience	****	Coaches evaluation, questionnaire	[47]
	Environment (parents, school)	***	Questionnaire	[27]
	Anthropometrics and body type	***	Body measurements	[19]
	Training effort	**	Questionnaire	[5]
	Training age	**	Questionnaire	[5]
<b>Biological development</b>	Maturation	**	Body size measurements	[13, 32]
	Relative age	**	Month of birth	[35, 48]

***Annexure 4:***  
***Semi-structured interview guide***

***Semi-structured interview guide:***

**1) Demographic questions:**

- What is your name & surname?
- What is your age?
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- What is your marital status?
- What is your current employment status?

**2) Respondent's involvement in sport in South Africa?**

- How would you describe your involvement in sport?
- What is the duration that you have been involved in sport?
- Are you involved in athletics in South Africa?
- What is your personal highest achievement in sport or athletics?

**3) Respondent's opinion on the current participation base in athletics in South Africa?**

- Do you think there is a sufficient participation base in athletics in South Africa in the following age groups:
  - a) Primary schools (age 6-12)
  - b) High School level (age 13-18)
  - c) University level (age 19-25)
  - d) Professional level (age 25-35)
- What age group do you think the participation base is most deficient and lacking?
- Do you think there is an inequality in the participation base between male and female athletes in athletics today?
- Is there an underrepresentation of female athletes representing South Africa in athletics today?
- If yes to the previous question, in your opinion what is the underlying reason for this?

**4) Respondents' opinion on female level of performance currently in athletics in South Africa:**

- Do you think our female athletes' performance level is world class?
- Do you think our female athletics overall performances need to improve?
- Do you think this current condition is improving or rather declining?
- Do you think female athletes have confidence to pursue a professional athletics career in South Africa? Motivate your answer.

**5) Respondents' opinion on gender inequality in sport:**

- Do female athletes in South African schools & universities seldom receive the same support as males?
- Do you think women experience inequality in the following areas:
  - a) Access to facilities?
  - b) Availability of sponsorships/bursaries?
  - c) Salaries?
  - d) Publicity?
  - e) Job opportunities in coaching & administration?
- Do you think women are seen as invaders of male turf in athletics?
- Do gender ideologies contribute to the lack of women participating in athletics?

**6) Respondent's opinion on female athletic role models/leaders in South Africa:**

- Can you identify possible female role models in athletics currently?
- If yes, why would you identify these athletes as role models and what in your opinion is a true role model?
- Do you see yourself as a role model in South Africa? If yes, why?
- Do you think there is a need for female athletics role models in South Africa?

**7) Respondent's suggestions and possible contributions:**

- In your opinion how can South Africa be pro-active and develop a proper participation base?

- How do you plan on investing in South African athletics?
- How do you think can South Africa promote gender equality in athletics and improve overall female performances?
- Is there any other additional information that you want to share?

Thank you!



***Annexure 5:***  
***Coding (Chapter 5)***

## **Coding (Chapter 5)**

Codes that are applicable to all themes

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Yes	Y
No	N
Neutral answer/ "I don't know"/No answer	NA
Alternative answer/ Unique answer	AA

### **INTERVIEW NUMBERS:**

Please note that the participants demanded on confidentiality.

1. Interview 1
2. Interview 2
3. Interview 3
4. Interview 4
5. Interview 5
6. Interview 6
7. Interview 7
8. Interview 8
9. Interview 9
10. Interview 10
11. Interview 11
12. Interview 12
13. Interview 13
14. Interview 14
15. Interview 15
16. Interview 16

Codes: Theme 1

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Athletics participation	AP
Senior level (also professional level)	SL
University level	UL
High school level	HL
Primary school level	PL

Codes: Theme 2

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Women's athletics standard	WAS
Women's athletics	WA
World class	WC

Codes: Theme 3

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Gender inequality	IEQ

Code: Theme 4

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Role model	RM

Code: Theme 5

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Qualifying standards	QS
Women sport leaders/ leadership	WSL
Role models	RM

Code: Theme 6

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Athletics participation	AP
Qualifying standards	QS
Women's athletics	WA

***Annexure 6:***  
***Example of an interview transcription***

### Transcription of interview :

Interviewer: Rikenette Steenkamp

Interviewee: - (Confidential)

Date of interview: 23 August 2017

Start time of interview: 10h42

End time of interview: 10h56

Location of interview: Coffee shop

Language: English

### Transcription of interview:

#### **1) Demographic questions**

- What is your name & surname? - (Kept confidential)
- What is your age? 61
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? Teachers education diploma
- What is your marital status? Married
- What is your current employment status? A professional coach

#### **2) Respondent's involvement in sport in South Africa**

- How would you describe your involvement in sport? I am a professional coach and I coach some of the top athletes in South Africa.
- What is the duration that you have been involved in sport? Since 1986 as a coach prior to that I competed, so you can go work it out.

- Are you involved in athletics in South Africa? **Yes, I was also during that time involved as a professional, professional rugby as a strength and conditioning expert between 1997 and 2005.**
- What is your personal highest achievement in sport or athletics? **That is very difficult to say, let's say I was involved with a number of athletes that set national records, even two of them set world records...uhm... also during my time as a strength and conditioning coach, I was part of the Blue Bulls team that won the Curry cup three years in a row.**

### **3) Respondent's opinion on the current participation base in athletics in South Africa**

- Do you think there is a sufficient participation base in athletics in South Africa in the following age groups:
  - a) Primary schools (age 6-12) **Yes, because most primary schools have athletics as a sport.**
  - b) High School level (age 13-18) **Yes**
  - c) University level (age 19-25) **No**
  - d) Professional level (age 25-35) **No**
- What age group do you think the participation base is most deficient and lacking? **(Interruption...phone call). University level, because of that it is carried over to the lost one. People think it is the lost one but it is a lack there that carries over to that part.**
- Do you think there is an inequality in the participation base between male and female athletes in athletics today? **Yes**
- Is there an underrepresentation of female athletes representing South Africa in athletics today? **Yes**

- If yes to the previous question, in your opinion what is the underlying reason for this? **Probably a cultural reason. The environment doesn't see women at the adult level participating in sport it is not being expected of them.**

#### 4) Respondents' opinion on female level of performance currently in athletics in South Africa

- Do you think our female athletes' performance level is world class? **No**
- Do you think our female athletics overall performances need to improve? **Yes**
- Do you think this current condition is improving or rather declining? **Sho, if I look over it a period of 20 to 30 years it is declining. It is maybe stagnant the last ten years, but if you look at the 80s of this country in my opinion now it is higher with out having researched it but I think.**
- Do you think female athletes have confidence to pursue a professional athletics career in South Africa? Motivate your answer. **No. Why? Repeat the question.** Do you think female athletes have confidence to pursue a professional athletics career in South Africa? **Because the normal expectation is for women to finish whatever they are doing, get married, raise children, have a family and people will sometimes just frown upon the fact that women would like to pursue a professional career in athletics age 25 to 30 years old. Not only in athletics, sometimes you even find it being a professional person in any field. Do you think it is only in South Africa? Probably not, it is not only in South Africa, I think there is countries that is much better, I think the United States is already much better, Britian you can see it but although it is something that I haven't really researched. But if I look around me I perceive it that way.**

#### 5) Respondents' opinion on gender inequality in sport

- Do female athletes in South African schools & universities seldom receive the same support as males? **Probably not.**



- Do you think women experience inequality in the following areas:
  - a) Access to facilities? **No, I wouldn't say that.**
  - b) Availability of sponsorships/bursaries? **Yes maybe.**
  - c) Salaries? **Yes**
  - d) Publicity? **No, I think those that perform well get equal publicity I would say.**
  - e) Job opportunities in coaching & administration? **Sho.** Such as coaches at Tuks? **No, I have never experienced that women that would like to coach, we've got some female coaches there, and I don't think there is an inequality in that.**
- Do you think women are seen as invaders of male turf in athletics? **No**
- Do gender ideologies contribute to the lack of women participating in athletics?

## 6) Respondent's opinion on female athletic role models/leaders in South Africa

- Can you identify possible female role models in athletics currently? **Yes, well obviously we do not have a huge number of senior performers, female performers, so they are definitely less of them but I think those who perform well get good publicity. Caster Semenya is regularly on television interviews, yourself, Wenda Nel. So those who are performing well. There is just not enough of them.**
- If yes, why would you identify these athletes as role models and what in your opinion is a true role model? **You see, we need to question that because normally people, if somebody is visual then you think they are role models because you cannot really say what is a role model until you have spent time with that person. If I just have to read about them, or see them from time to time on television I would like what I see and then it makes them a role model.**

But a role model is actually much more than that and you can only really identify if somebody is a role model for yourself if you know that person much better and spend time with that person which is not always possible with these sports stars. You see them from time to time, that perform well and they interview them and now you like what they say and then you say now they are my role model.

- Do you see yourself as a role model in South Africa? If yes, why? **Probably Yes, because I am a coach I work with young people and I spend a lot of time with them and I perceive that some of them, I have an impact on their lives the feedback that I get from them from time to time.**
- Do you think there is a need for female athletics role models in South Africa? **Yes definitely.**

## **7) Respondent's suggestions and possible contributions**

- In your opinion how can South Africa be pro-active and develop a proper participation base? **Well opportunities, specifically in the area after school there need to be more opportunity, participation opportunity in saying that the fact that on national level we don't send enough athletes to international competitions because if that door is closed what will motivate you to carry on. So I think opportunities here at the higher level. More support and opportunities.**
- How do you plan on investing in South African athletics? **Well I am currently investing a lot of my time, is not actually investing time, I like doing it but by doing that I do invest my time in youth and young people. You see it is a personal passion that I have, I like to help people achieve their dreams, I really enjoy doing that and sport has a lot to do with that. So in that sense I think that I contribute and help people to achieve their dreams.**
- How do you think can South Africa promote gender equality in athletics and improve overall female performances? **Again I don't think there is in any way an obvious discrimination or an obvious lack of support, I think we just need to**

be more aware of the fact that the women needs more encouragement as a said from a cultural perspective, that's the broad culture in South Africa it is not only to specific culture groups may be in our African culture it is worse for women to perform. But even in the European-based culture it is also a bit of a problem so I think by addressing it and speaking about it and make females more aware that you can have a family life and participant in sport, why not?

- Is there any other additional information that you want to share? I am mostly involved in sprints and hurdles, and there is so much talent in this country and I would really like to be more involved to these talent and help developing it, specifically in female sprints and hurdles.

Thank you!

Additional information added at a later stage:

A reversed incentive based programme for South African athletics should be applied. This idea entails supporting athletes that need the support the most. The athletes need to show some sort of talent and promise to make it at a later stage in athletics. It is important to support the athletes in a time when they are still growing and maturing into their potential. The Botswana athletics supporting system is based on such a principle that seems be a very practical proposition. (Not in direct words).

***Annexure 7:***  
***Example of an interview transcription summary***

## **Summary of transcription: Interviewee number 1**

**Male**

**(Hurdles & Sprints)**

**Context:** Midmorning interview, public place

**Reason for substantial reference:** Professional coach. Currently coaching world class athletes (including NR holders and WR holders). Involvement: 32 years.

### **1. Athletics participation**

**Is this a problem?** Yes on university level and professional level. Inequality in participation is a problem.

**Inequality in participation?** Yes

**Underrepresentation of women?** Yes

**Reason?** Cultural. SA-environment not accepting.

### **2. Women's level of performance**

**World Class?** No

**Need improvement?** Yes

**Currently improving?** Stagnant

**Is athletics a career in SA?** No

**Quote:** "The environment doesn't see women at the adult level participating in sport it is not being expected of them."

### **3. Gender inequality**

**Tertiary support IEQ?** No

**Facilities?** No

**Sponsorships?** Yes

**Salaries?** Yes

**Publicity?** No

**Job opp (Coaching & Admin)?** No

**Is athletics a 50/50 sport?** Yes

#### **4. Female role models**

**Identify role models?** Caster Semenya, Wenda Nel, Rikenette Steenkamp

**Quote:** "...well obviously we do not have a huge number of senior performers, female performers, so they are definitely less of them but I think those who perform well get good publicity." "There is just not enough of them."

**What is a true role model?**

"You cannot really say what is a role model until you have spent time with that person." "But a role model is actually much more than that and you can only really identify if somebody is a role model for yourself if you know that person much better and spend time with that person which is not always possible with these sports stars."

- Time spent
- Identify with
- Perform well

**Are you a role model?** Yes

**Is there a need for women role models?** Yes

#### **5. Suggestions**

**What can SA do?**

- Opportunities
- International competitions
- Support
- Invest more time

**How to promote gender equality?**

-Women need more encouragement

(Not only a problem in SA also in Europe)

**Add info?** SA do have much talent. He himself is willing to help develop female sprinters and hurdlers.

**Additional information added at a later stage:**

A reversed incentive-based programme for South African athletics should be applied. This idea entails supporting athletes that need the support the most. The athletes need to show some sort of talent and promise to make it at a later stage in athletics. It is important to support the athletes in a time when they are still growing and maturing into their potential. The Botswana athletics supporting system is based on such a principle that seems to be a very practical proposition. (Not in direct words).

***Annexure 8:***  
***Informed consent document for research participation***





## **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR RESEARCH**

### **PARTICIPATION**

#### **Topic and working title of study:**

An exploration of the factors contributing to gender inequality in athletics participation and leadership.

The purpose of this form is to acquire permission from the individuals whom decides to take part in this study and to provide all necessary information on the study. This consent form outlines the research study to help you decide whether you want to participate or not. Information such as, what you will be asked during the study, how the study will be conducted, as well as your rights as research participant.

#### **Purpose of the study:**

South Africa is well known as an achieving sports country. Development of sport in South Africa is, however, plagued by issues of inequality. Sport development and performance is impossible without a fundamental participation platform. The contradiction between performance and talented South African women athletes is remarkable. The underlying tensions of inequality in sport participation in South African athletics are problematic and will determine the course of this study. Perceptions do exist that many women and men sport stars lost interest to persevere without sponsors and national support in South Africa. Perceptions also do exist that within the South African context participation levels of females are significantly lower than men.

This dismal condition is a fundamental problem signalling a need for change in terms of developing prominent and competent female role models in athletics in South

Africa in terms of professional athletic performance, administration (business management and strategic leadership), coaching, conditioning and mentoring.

To address (or contribute to solutions for) the comprehensive research problem could have significant effects. It has the potential to revive the South African athletic industry.

The semi structured interview questions will be aimed at determining the status of South African women sport participation and leadership in athletics and to identify underlying reasons contributing to a lack of professional athletes and role models in athletics in South Africa.

The research study invites you to take part in this study because you are currently or used to be involved in athletics in South Africa in some manner and is in need of your insight and contribution.

**How many will participate in this study?**

Approximately 15 to 20 participants will take part in the study.

**How long will it take to partake in the study?**

If you agree to partake in the study the semi-structured interview will take between 45min – 60 min

**What will happen during the study?**

During this research study, the researcher investigator will conduct a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview questions will be aimed at the participant's basic involvement, participation and insight on athletics in South Africa. The questions will aim at the respondent's opinion on the current participation base in athletics, current female level of performance, gender inequality in sport and female athletic role models/leaders in South Africa in athletics.

**During this study:**

1. You will be asked to sign the Informed Consent Document for Research Participation.
2. You as the participant will be given a copy of the document for your records

3. The Research investigator will conduct a recorded semi-structured interview lasting a maximum of 1 hour. See the next section for information about the storing of audio recordings.
  - a. The location of the interview will be private space to assure confidentiality, most likely a private office on campus.
  - b. You as participant are free to skip any questions that you would prefer not to answer; and you may end your participation at any time.

### **Audio Recording**

One of the aspects of the study involves making audio recordings during the conduction of the semi-structured interviews. The data must be transformed to usable information. The audio-recorded interviews will be subsequently transcribed and reproduced as a written document. The data will be analysed and reduced to significant results by means of a thorough thematic analysis.

Yes  No    **I give permission to make audio recordings of me during this study.**

### **What are the risks of the study?**

Due to the confidentiality measures in place, there are no predictable physical, legal, financial or psychological risks. However during the interview and it being of nature of a semi-structured interview you may be asked to answer questions that might cause the participant to feel uncomfortable. Please note: You as participant has the liberty to skip any question at any time or to end your participation at any time during the interview.

### **Will it cost me anything to participate in this study?**

You will not have any costs for being in this study.

### **Will I be compensated for participating in the study?**

You will not be payed or compensated in any way for participating in this research study.

### **Does the researcher have any financial interest in this study?**

I, Rikenette Steenkamp have no financial interest in this study.

### **What about confidentiality?**

All information gathered from the interviews will be treated as highly confidential. Interviews will also be audio recorded and research records will be stored securely. Researcher will remove any personal identifying information as the participant requests.

### **Is being in this study voluntary?**

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. It is your choice if you want to take part in this study. You won't be penalized or lose any benefits if you choose not to participate.

### **What if you have any questions?**

Please feel free to ask any questions. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact me:

#### **Researcher**

Rikenette Steenkamp

(+27) 79 519 3088

[rikenette@gmail.com](mailto:rikenette@gmail.com)

#### **Supervisor**

Dr Engela van der Klashorst

Engela.vanderklashorst@up.ac.za

#### **Data Storage**

Data will be stored at the department of Sport and Leisure for a period of 15 years.

### **Utilisation of Results**

Results will be used for my masters dissertation, publization, academic journals.  
Data also may be used in futher research.

### **Statement of consent:**

I have read the above information, I consent to take part in the study.

Subject's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of subject)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

### **Statement of Person Who Obtained Consent**

I have discussed above points with the subject or, with the subject's legally authorized representative. It is in my opinion that the subject understands the procedures, risks and benefits involved in participating in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person Who Obtained Consent (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)