

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**ACCESSIBILITY OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS FOR STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
THE WESTERN CAPE**

A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister  
Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science (MA SRES) in the Department of Sport, Recreation and  
Exercise Science, University of the Western Cape

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Keywords

Disability, Persons with Disability, Accessibility, Recreation, Recreational sport,  
Constraints, University of the Western Cape, Students, Perceptions.

## ABSTRACT

*Participation in recreational sports can play a vital role in enhancing a student's life. Recreational sports are especially beneficial for students with disabilities as it aids in the facilitation of integration into mainstream society. The University of the Western Cape offers a range of recreational sports to their students but the question posed is, are these recreational sports accessible to students who are physically, auditory and/or visually disabled?*

*The aim of this research project was therefore to explore the extent to which the University of the Western Cape's recreational sport was accessible to male and female students with disabilities. The participants for this study were purposefully chosen according to the criteria set by the researcher. A qualitative approach was adopted using individual and telephonic interviews as methods of data collection.*

*The accessibility-related categories that were explored include physical, perceptual, financial and social accessibility. The following specific objectives were investigated: 1) the participants' interpretation of recreational sport, 2) the participants' past and current involvement in recreational sport, 3) the experiences which the participants have, of the extent to which the University's recreational sport was accessible to the disabled students. The five participants were full-time students at the UWC who were either physically, auditory and/or visually disabled.*

*Responses to the individual interview questions were linked to the themes. Data were described, classified and interpreted in the light of relevant literature. With respect to ethical considerations students were informed of the aim of the research, processes of data collection and that they could withdraw at any time. Preceding the interview, a consent letter was issued to the students requesting their voluntary permission for participation for this study. The*

*anonymity of the students and the confidentiality of the responses were guaranteed as much as possible. No names were linked with specific responses.*

*From the discussion it was noted that all the participants were involved in sports throughout their schooling careers yet none of them participated in any form of sport or recreational sport at the UWC. The findings from the perceptual accessibility and social accessibility categories suggested that a communication block between the participants and the UWC Sports Administration and the lack of finances were the main constraints to non-participation. The emerging themes that surfaced and negatively affected participation in recreational sports were the lack of skill and the attitude of significant others. This study revealed that recreational sport for students with disabilities may only be accessible once the UWC Sports Administration and the students with disabilities learn to communicate and once finances become available for both parties.*



## DECLARATION

I declare that “Accessibility of Recreational Sports for Students with Disabilities at the University of the Western Cape” is my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Shernel A. Wright

Signed .....

May 2007



## DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my grandfather, Cyril C. Wright. I hope you are proud of me.

Rest In Peace.

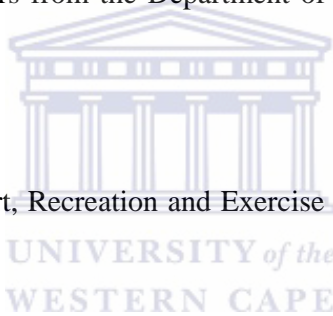


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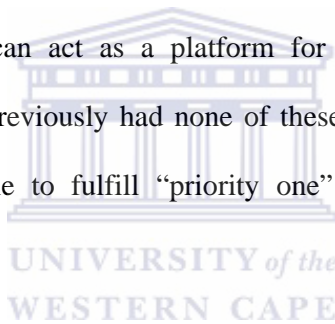
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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

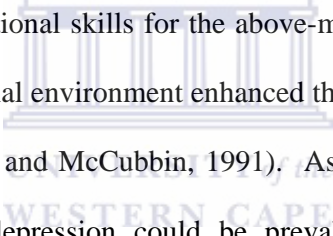
Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) have a common thread which is to make sport and recreation accessible to tertiary students. The main objective of the SRSA is to increase the level of participation of historically disadvantaged and marginalized groups of South Africa, including persons with disabilities in sport and recreation (RSA, 2002). The White Paper of the National Department of Sport and Recreation (2002) also states that according to “priority one” the South African Student Sport Union (SASSU) is obligated to implement this government policy on sport and recreation at tertiary institutions. Since the UWC is known as one of South Africa’s historically disadvantaged universities, it can act as a platform for sport and recreation to be made accessible to individuals who previously had none of these privileges. This initiative should help to facilitate SASSU’s role to fulfill “priority one” for South African students with disabilities.



The UWC is home to students from diverse cultures and as a means to embrace the diversity, recreational sport should be the foundation to rally and investigate these students from different backgrounds. In effect, students with disabilities are encouraged by the Sports Administration and the Office of Students with Disabilities at the UWC to be either participants and/or spectators of the recreational sports that are offered to assist them to cultivate an active lifestyle, and to facilitate their transition from high school to university.

During a disabled individuals’ developing years, he/she would have dealt with many psychological issues, but on entering a tertiary level of education, the individual is faced with a new and different social aspect. Although it is a legal requirement that students with disabilities be integrated into the daily activities of university institutions, the transition phase from a

secondary to tertiary level remains a tremendous struggle for them (Promis, Erevelles and Matthews, 2001). Walker (1999) recommends that recreational skills be developed as these skills aid in the facilitation of integration into mainstream society. It is in fact an objective of the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (RSA, 1997:55) to “develop and extend sporting activities for people with disabilities in both mainstream and special facilities, so that they can participate in sport for both recreational and competitive purposes.” Da Gama (2000) supports this view that recreation participation adds great value to the transition phase from secondary school to tertiary level for students with disabilities. He explains that recreation participation provides a relaxed and less inhibiting environment to acquire social and recreational skills in order to facilitate integration into mainstream society.



Besides acquiring recreational skills for the above-mentioned transition phase it is also acknowledged that the recreational environment enhanced the psychosocial development within a disabled person's life (Adams and McCubbin, 1991). As a person deals with the effects of his/her disability feelings of depression could be prevalent. Therefore to alleviate this depression and to enhance his/her psychosocial development, a therapeutic recreation specialist (a person that uses recreation as therapeutic means) should provide recreational activities as positive agents to deal with the psychosocial dimensions in a disabled person's life (Adams and McCubbin, 1991). Since recreational activities have been noted to be vital components to the quality of life, in this case the individual with a disability is given the chance to express his/her individual gifts and share interests with others (Walker, 1999).

For a disabled student this challenging transition from secondary to tertiary level could be gradually dealt with if a recreational sport is adopted for mainstream integration. However, this can only occur if there are infrastructures in place for students with disabilities to access recreational sports and thereby enjoy the benefits thereof.

## **1.2 Benefits of Recreational Sport**

Since the 1960's the pursuit of recreation has been growing increasingly, as there has been recognition of individuals needs for means to recreate (De Pauw & Gavron, 1995). In referring specifically to the South African situation, Jones (1995) stated that the experience of recreation could lead to benefits such as the enhancement of physical and mental well-being and ethnic values; facilitation of integration by breaking down social barriers and improvement of quality of life.

Almost 10 years later, the SRSA still upheld a similar belief. It proposes that the potential of recreation is “to promote ethnic harmony, leadership opportunities and the development of a healthy society” and encourages recreational participation as it is empowering to students with disabilities (RSA, 2002:16). The National Intramural Recreational Sport Association (NIRSA, 2004) highlights that recreational sports are forms of physical recreation which appears to be a vital facet in a student's quality of life on campus.

It is important that students with disabilities are encouraged and that opportunities are created for them to fully participate in all the physical recreational activities so that they can develop qualities and skills to personally empower themselves (Taub, 1999). This in effect will enhance their self-perception and broaden their perception of accessibility (Blinde and McClung, 1997). The Office of Students with Disabilities at the UWC understands these benefits and encourages the students with disabilities to be involved in the recreational programmes. In an interview conducted with Ilhaam Groenewald, Head of Department of the Sports Administration at the UWC (Personal Communication, 2005), it was mentioned that recreational sport is viewed as sport that is played on a social basis. In 2005 recreational sports such as dance, aquatics, mountaineering/hiking, judo, badminton, aerobics, softball and hockey, were made available by Sports Administration at the UWC to their students as a potential

platform to break social barriers, create a healthier society and enrich their quality of campus life [Sports Administration, (2005)].

As a university that is in a society of change, the UWC aims to offer students with disabilities the “specific help that they need to maximize their potential,” (UWC Prospectus 2005-2006:46). Recreational sport can be an agent of change to provide a means to acclimatize students with disabilities into campus life. This suggests that it is important to identify barriers that prevent the participation of students with disabilities in recreational sports in order to encourage and provide opportunities for social integration.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Within the legislation on sport and recreation in South Africa it is a legal requirement that students with disabilities be integrated into the daily activities of any university institution. One of the challenges that students with disabilities are faced with is acclimatizing from secondary to tertiary level. Since evidence shows that recreational sport are beneficial to a student’s well-being it is recommended that students with disabilities develop recreational sport skills to facilitate acclimatizing to campus life. It is therefore important to explore the various constraints that prevent these students from experiencing recreational sports at the UWC.

### **1.4 Research Question**

To what extent are recreational sports at the UWC accessible to students with physical, auditory and/or visual disabilities?

## **1.5 Aim of Study**

The aim of this research was to explore the extent to which recreational sports at the UWC were accessible to full-time registered male and female students with physical, auditory and/or visual disabilities.

## **1.6 Specific Objectives of the Study**

- To identify and understand the participants' interpretation of recreational sport.
- To describe the participants' current and past involvement in recreational sport.
- To explore the various constraints to participation in recreational sports at UWC as perceived and experienced by students with disabilities.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

In line with the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa (2000), students with disabilities deserve just as much freedom and opportunity for recreation participation as non-disabled students. Baartjes (2003) makes a pertinent statement regarding constraints being eliminated. He says that once all the constraints are eliminated then all the sectors of society, irrespective of the differences that exist among them can fully participate in recreational activities.

It was therefore important to identify the perceived barriers held by the students with disabilities to accessibility for recreational sports at the UWC with the intention of making recommendations to improve the situation. The recommendations could assist the Office for Students with Disabilities and the UWC Sports Administration with beneficial programmes for the students with disabilities.

## 1.8 Interpretation of Key Terms

**Accessibility** refers not only to the access and mobility but rather defined as the “ability to participate” eliminating the constraints to participation, (Griffiths cited in Assegaai, Chaka, Mohamed, Nyawo & Vena, 2002:31). Kennedy, Austin, and Smith (1987), view accessibility as avoiding as many barriers as possible that prevent participation.

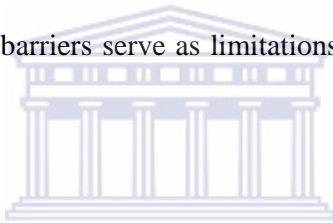
**Recreation:** According to Kelly (1996) recreation is the ability to restore mind, body and soul and is commonly linked with restoration offering refreshment. It is a means to an end, chosen for its own sake and is an outlet for creativity (Kelly, 1996). Recreation does not only include physical activity, it is more than recreational sport, it includes any activity that can in any way contribute to the general, health and well-being, social, economic and personal development of the an individual (Rainbow Draft Paper, 1995). The White Paper of the National Department of Sport and Recreation (2002:2) echoes that recreation “contributes to the improvement of general health, well-being and the skills of both the individual and society.”

**Recreational Sports** are forms of recreation involving physical activity whereby the participant may be involved on either a casual or regular basis. It aims at improving physical fitness and psychological well-being, which in turn contributes to the formation of social relationships (NIRSA, 2004). According to Jones (1998:10), “Recreation (even if we narrow it to recreational sport and dance) is a great deal more accommodating than competitive sport”. For the purpose of this study referring to recreational sports, it will be those offered at the UWC: dance, aquatics, mountaineering/hiking, judo, badminton, aerobics, softball and hockey, noting that some of these are sports as well.

**Perception:** Torkildsen (1986:120) states: “perception refers to the world as it is experienced-as seen, heard, felt, smelt and tasted. Consequently the way an individual perceives the world

will largely determine his or her behaviour”. “Behaviour is a function of one’s perception of the situation in which the attitude object is encountered,” (Fazio cited in Manfreda, Yuan and McGuire, 1992:158). In other words, the way in which persons who are visually impaired perceive recreational sport, would ultimately affect their participation irrespective of whether provision has been made.

**Constraints** in this instance prevent access or participation in desired activities (Kelly, 1996). According to Henderson (1991:31) “The opposite of constraints are freedom and opportunity.” She further states that although the absence of constraints does not guarantee freedom, the absence of freedom and opportunity create barriers in many areas of a person’s life (Henderson, 1991). As both constraints and barriers serve as limitations to participation, they will be used interchangeably.



## **1.9 Summary of Chapter One**

The introductory chapter outlined the objectives of the governmental policy and the mission of UWC which is to ensure accessible sport and recreation to marginalized groups like students with disabilities. This set the background of the study.

In addition this chapter gave an account of the benefits recreational sport participation yields as evidence suggested they enhance the students’ quality of life. The overall aim and specific objectives were clearly stated and the statement of the problem was discussed. Furthermore the interpretations of key terms were described, as they were important to the study.



## **1.10 Overview of Chapters**

Chapter Two presents the literature review relevant to this study. All quotes are acknowledged and placed between inverted commas.

In Chapter Three the methodology is discussed. The selection of participants, data gathering procedures, method of data analysis and reflexivity are described.

In Chapter Four the discussion of results is presented. The relevant quotes made by the participants are presented in “Italics” and placed between inverted commas.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis by highlighting key issues and making some recommendations.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature sources concerning the accessibility of recreational sports for students with disabilities. This includes literature based on, firstly, disability and the models of disability. Secondly, the literature on the framework of the accessibility model pertaining to recreational sports. This includes the effect of perceptual accessibility, physical accessibility, financial accessibility and social accessibility on the choices disabled people make about their recreational sport participation.

### **2.2 Disability**

Disability is a complex term and has undergone many interpretations. It has been defined as (i) “the loss of the ability to perform in the range considered normal for a human being,” (Hagedorn, 2001:166), (ii) “...an illness or impairment in the biomedical approach, with most emphasis falling on curing the disabled individual,” (iii) “...a tragedy or object of sympathy and charity,” (iv) “...a form of human indifference or deviation from the social norms of the acceptable levels of activity performance,” (DPSA, 2000a:5). These definitions referred to people with disabilities as being disadvantaged and needing handouts because of the way certain bodily structures were not socially accepted. All these interpretations have been superseded and replaced by the preferred version for defining disability, “disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitation and participation restriction,” (WHO, 2001:2). According to Hagedorn (2001) and WHO (2001) impairments are the occurrences of problematic bodily functions or structures. In other words impairment can be described as the loss or damage of body organ that affect physiological or psychological functioning (Kielhofner, 2005). Activity limitation refers to the individual having difficulty to execute activities. Participation restriction refers to real life situations that an individual may encounter.

Disability Sport South Africa (DISSA) (RSA, 2002) which regulates the participation of sports on all levels for persons with disabilities, and under its umbrella recognizes several types of disabilities. As this study only includes students with the following types of disabilities (i) hearing impairment, (ii) visual impairments and (iii) physical disability, the literature will focus on these impairments.

### **2.2.1 Hearing Impairment**

Hard of hearing and being deaf are both types of auditory disorders yet are different in definition. Deaf refers to a “hearing loss that is insufficient for comprehension of auditory information” irrespective of the use of a hearing aid. Hard of hearing refers to the “loss of hearing that makes speech solely through the ear difficult but not impossible” and can be overcome with the use of a hearing aid (Craft, 1990:155). The development of alternative communication is encouraged in order for the deaf individual to understand and interpret information. At a young age children learn to lip read whether they have hearing aids or not (Hundermark, 2004). Students who are hard of hearing need to concentrate harder during class time irrespective of a hearing aid because they tend to lip read in order to fully grasp what is being said. Recreational activities for students who are hard of hearing are considered to be an excellent method to facilitate communication and enhance both productivity and individual growth (Lieberman, 2003; Coco-Ripp, 2005).

### **2.2.2 Visual Impairment**

Visual impairment is the total or partial loss of sight (DPSA, 2000b). When an individual has lost his/her eyesight, then he/she is blind. Most blind people experience many challenges one of which is the difficulty of moving from place to place (DPSA, 2000b). Students in tertiary settings, who are visually impaired, need to engage in some form of independent training in order to acclimatize to the environment and be able to access

recreational programmes and reading material in Braille enabling them around campus (Promis et al., 2001; DPSA, 2000b).

### **2.2.3 Physical Disability**

Physical disability also known as mobility impairment refers to a condition that limits an individual's ability to move about and perform activities of daily living (DPSA, 2000b). An example of physical disability is paraplegia which is a disabling condition resulting mainly from spinal cord injuries affecting the lower limbs (Assegai et al., 2002). The degree of difficulty to move, in this instance, is much different than a visually impaired person's experience. Since the "body represents the obvious source of disability it is often devalued and viewed as a limiting force in an individual's life," (Blinde & McClung, 1997:328). Due to the visible disability society's expectations impede the opportunity to maximize physical prospects of participation. Having a disability may affect the individual on a personal and a social level (Iwasaki & Mactavish, 2005). Recreation participation may mitigate the negative impressions students with disabilities, especially those with mobility impairments, might have by enhancing self-confidence and social skills acquisition (Da Gama, 2000).

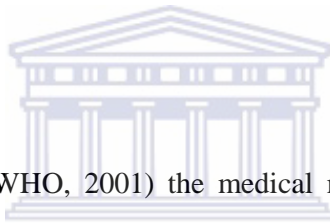
It's unfortunate that the causes of disability whether it is at birth, a disease or trauma such as motor car accidents cannot be controlled by the individual. While causes cannot be controlled, perceptions about disability can be guided to be viewed in a much more positive light.

### **2.3 The Models of Disability**

The medical, social and biopsychosocial models of disability play a role in the perception of disability. Each of these models view disability differently yet are all relevant. Respectively, the first two models are conceptual models and the latter a model of integration.

### 2.3.1 The Medical Model of Disability

According to the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (RSA, 1997) disability has historically been regarded as a welfare issue and the responsibility of “caring” for people with disabilities have been viewed as the responsibility of society and the government. The organizations that are structured for people with disabilities and run by non-disabled persons form the biomedical model better known as the medical model of disability. The medical model of disability aims to provide treatment or to create an alternative to “begging”. Its philosophy is to help people with disabilities as part of the “deserving poor”. As disability continues to be regarded as a “personal tragedy” the stereotypical viewpoint yields the perception that persons with disabilities are “objects of pity or in need of charity,” (Barton, 1993:43).



According to the ICF (WHO, 2001) the medical model views disability as a health condition or a feature of the person that requires the intervention of professional medical care to “correct” the problem. In this case the medical model highlights that medical treatment is the primary and only intervention to relieve severe disability. The medical model of disability is also based on a linear “cause and effect” perspective of disability by which the “patient” needs treatment from the doctor. Thus it focuses on dependence and the nature of the impairment which results in designing programmes without the consultation of the disabled people. These programmes seldom addressed their social needs and instead isolate them from mainstream society. This simultaneously disempowers them and denies them political, economical and social rights. The medical model of disability places emphasis solely on the individual needing treatment without societal changes. It ultimately leads to the perception of disabled people being weak or needing assistance, and not being able to function independently. The dissatisfaction created by the medical model of disability resulted in the social model of disability (Hundermark, 2004).

### **2.3.2 The Social Model of Disability**

The social model of disability was developed internationally by people with disabilities who assembled to mobilize and organize themselves. This model aims to develop a strong civil movement controlled completely by persons with disabilities. The disability rights movement internationally has declared disability a human rights and development issue (RSA, 1997).

The social model of disability is based on the belief that the discrimination the individual with disabilities faces is a socially created phenomenon and has nothing to do with the impairments of that person with a disability. The disability rights movement has deduced that the “cure” to the “problem” of disability lies within the reconstruction of society. This implies a paradigm shift in how we perceive disability. According to this model, it is the staircase that disables the wheelchair user rather than the wheelchair. This view is supported by Ari Seirlis, the National Director of the Quadriplegic Association of South Africa (QASA) who claims that “environments make you disabled, not the fact that you use a wheelchair” (Seirlis, 2003:1). In his view the “lack of access is what makes me disabled more than anything else” (Seirlis, 2003:1). Society increases activity limitation by failing to recognize the ability of the individual with a disability.

The social model of disability can be used to draw attention to the barriers in society experienced by disabled people (DPSA, 2000a). The identification of these barriers within society serves to ease the facilitation of social integration for people with disabilities. This is not to say that an individual’s impairment could not affect the degree to which an activity is executed. In an attempt to coalesce vital points from the medical model of disability and the social model of disability the biopsychosocial model was developed (WHO, 2001).

### 2.3.3 The Biopsychosocial Model

Both the medical model of disability and the social model of disability highlight that “disability is a complex phenomena” and it could be viewed as problem of the person’s individual features and the social environment (WHO, 2001:9). The synthesis of the valid points from either model gave rise to the biopsychosocial model which indicates that both impairments and the environment could contribute to disability. This model recognizes disability to be much more complex than the linear “cause and effect” view portrayed by the medical model of disability. Yet it does not consider disability entirely as a socially-created problem. The biopsychosocial model describes disability not just “an inevitable consequence of something which has happened to an individual, but a result of a combination of adverse factors in the individual’s life, including medical, physical, psychological and social factors” (Hagedorn, 2001:13).

The biopsychosocial model is an “integrated, holistic approach dealing with the physical, psychological, social and environmental aspects of the individual’s situation” (Hagedorn, 2001:120). This model focuses on the different aspects affecting the disabled individual. With effect the disabled person recognizes his/her need to take responsibility of his/her life (Kielhofner, 2005). Coleridge states that, “the process of attitude change starts with the disabled people” (1993:23). Furthermore, Coleridge (1993) emphasizes that the initial social change had to come from the people with disabilities. For instance, if a disabled person viewed him/herself as a victim he/she was more likely to be treated like a victim. On the other hand if a disabled person claimed his/her own disability and perceived him/her as positive and able to contribute just as an able-bodied person, this perception would be mirrored. This had not eliminated society’s restrictions upon disabled people’s lives. Society and the environment in which the disabled people were placed needed to “come to terms” with disability, (Coleridge, 1993). The demands of society for persons with disabilities to lead as “normal” lives as

possible should be adjusted instead, to the environment tending to the needs and aspirations of the persons with disabilities (Barton, 1993; Kielhofner, 2005).

Perceptions are to a certain extent guided by the models of disability. The medical model of disability stigmatized disabled people as being weak and dependant on others. It claimed that individuals with disabilities need medical treatment. On the other hand the social model of disability reinforced the importance of social integration for disabled people by mobilizing themselves and demanding the reconstruction of society. As a sole entity, neither the medical model nor the social model deals appropriately with the problems associated with disability. Disability is known to be a matter of complexity and is a constant interaction of the individual's features and the individual's environment. The biopsychosocial model in fact synchronized important points from the above-mentioned models while accommodating factors such as the cause of disability and the environment. This model does not believe that disability is completely based on either the features of an individual as the medical model suggest, nor does it believe disability to be completely a socially-created problem as the social model suggests. The medical and the social models of disability were not completely rejected instead were integrated to serve as a holistic approach of disability. The biopsychosocial model aimed to facilitate people with disabilities accepting and taking ownership of their disability together with society adjusting to the needs of the people with disabilities.

These three models play a role in the way disability is perceived. For instance Barton (1993) and Kielhofner (2005) believe that the physical environment needs to be more accommodating for people with disabilities. Supplementary to their viewpoints and specifying an area within the environment Griffiths (cited in Torkildsen, 1986) dictated that the key factor influencing recreation participation is accessibility.



## **2.4 The Accessibility Model**

The Accessibility Model enabled recreational programmers to identify obstacles which might preclude persons with disabilities from activities. This model is used as a framework for this study as it encompasses relevant issues that people with disabilities experience.

The Accessibility Model (Appendix B) of which Torkildsen (1986) applied to the field of recreation, illustrated the four factors that either hindered or promoted opportunities for recreation participation, thus identifying potential barriers that the recreational participant might face. A recent research study conducted by five occupational therapists used this model to illustrate the barriers disabled people had regarding recreational accessibility in Nyanga, South Africa (Assegaai et al., 2002). In this instance accessibility was not only defined as access and mobility but also as the “ability to participate,” (Griffiths cited in Assegaai et al., 2002:31). Griffiths proposes that people with disabilities are capable of everyday involvement if their accessibility is not hindered. Therefore, the situation needs to be adapted and/or potential constraints need to be minimized for the disabled sector of society to be accommodated. Accessibility gives rise to opportunity and the freedom for recreation participation, thereby fulfilling one of the SRSA’s objectives for making sport and recreation more accessible to all South Africans, including disabled people. The distinct themes of the Accessibility Model include firstly, perceptual accessibility; secondly, physical accessibility; thirdly, financial accessibility; and fourthly, social accessibility.

### **2.4.1 Perceptual Accessibility**

“Perception is the process by which information about the world, as received by the senses, is analyzed and made meaningful” (Oxford concise medical dictionary, 2002). Torkildsen (1986:244) contextualizes this by referring to perception as the “world, as it is experienced- as seen, heard, felt, smelt and tasted.” Furthermore, he subdivides perceptual

accessibility into (i) awareness, which is the information available; (ii) attraction, which was the advertising and marketing and; (iii) motivation to participate in recreational sport. The awareness of the availability of recreational sports and the recreational facility, affects the participation levels.

Perception does not only refer to the awareness of the facilities, where it is situated as a means of attraction or motivation for attending the recreational activities, but it also refers to the assessment of one's own capabilities in relation to the recreational sport being offered. This is supported by the Process Model of Attitudes of Fazio (cited in Manfreda, Yuan & McGuire 1992:158) which suggests that, "behaviour is a function of one's perception of the situation in which the attitude object is encountered. Perceptions exert influence by controlling the information that is processed. Attitudes toward the object influence behaviour by affecting the perception of the situation." In this instance, recreational sport would be the "object" and the person with the disability, behaves according to his/her perception of the situation. If the disabled person's assessment of his/her ability is low then he/she will avoid a similar situation because of the fear of failure.

The "low assessment of ability would consequently lead to avoidance through the fear of failure" (Haywood, Kew, Bramham, Spink, Capenerhurst & Henry, 1995:147). The fear of failure and humiliation are significant factors in whether a person with a disability decides to become physically active (De Pauw & Gavron, 1995). This feeling could be the same for an able-bodied person. However, a person with a disability that has low self-esteem, the fear of attempting a challenging physical activity may be greater. For example, if a person with a physical disability perceives that he/she could not engage in adapted basketball because he/she could not shoot, the fear of embarrassment could de-motivate and negate any skill ability this

person might actually have and thereby reducing his/her chance to experience new sports activities.

From an external and internal perceptual perspective the above-mentioned factors play a significant role in a disabled person's life. However, there are other factors from a physical and tangible aspect that affected people with disabilities and their participation in recreational sports.

#### **2.4.2 Physical Accessibility**

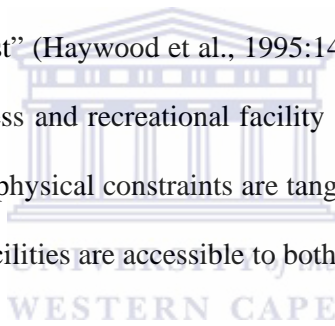
Physical accessibility is probably the most common term associated with the notion of accessibility (Haywood et al., 1995). The view that physical accessibility is all encompassing of "accessibility" is supported by Promis, Erevelles and Matthews (2001) and Rimmer, Riley, Wang, Rauworth and Jurkowski (2004). For example, the lack of accessible facilities and transport are frequently referred to as the barriers to accessibility.

Torkildsen (1986) explores physical accessibility including the mode of transport, travelling distance, location and distribution of facilities. The availability and method of transport could affect recreational participation positively or negatively (Kennedy, Austin & Smith, 1987). A lack of transport often prevents people with disabilities from enjoying the benefits of recreation.

Gibson, Macintyre, Wood, Kemp and Pearson (1997) report that the travelling distance involved in transporting disabled people to and from a facility can be problematic. According to De Pauw and Gavron (1995), persons with disabilities do have difficulty accessing opportunities in sport and recreation programmes. The expense (time and money) and the distance (to and from the location to participate in recreational sports) were a few of the factors

that affect recreational sports opportunities. The further the distance traveled to a specific venue the more expensive it becomes to engage in recreational pursuits. Once again, Promis et al., (2001) and De Pauw and Gavron (1995), also report that the lack of accessible transport and facilities are two of many reasons for the low levels of participation in recreation.

Although a balance had to be struck between equal access to and the adaptation of facilities, the cost benefits need to be taken into consideration. The way in which older facilities were constructed was not meant to cater for disabled people. The re-designing and reconstruction of these facilities are often too expensive. Therefore the constraints and “inequalities of access” for recreation will continue to escalate unless “concerns about equity outweigh the concerns about cost” (Haywood et al., 1995:147). A study conducted by Rimmer et al., (2004) confirms that fitness and recreational facility owners place a “greater priority on profit than accessibility.” Thus physical constraints are tangible obstacles but financial backing is needed to adapt and ensure facilities are accessible to both able-bodied and disabled persons.



### **2.4.3 Financial Accessibility**

Griffiths (cited in Torkildsen, 1986) raises the issue of financial accessibility regarding recreation and subdivides it into hiring charge, pre- and post-activity costs and transport costs. According to Kennedy, Austin, and Smith (1987), it escalated far beyond the means of the disabled person, as job opportunities were too few to finance any recreational activities. This meant that disposable income was just sufficient to make ends meet, and the additional cost for recreational activities could not be catered for.

It is noted in a study by Kennedy, Austin, and Smith (1987) that the lack of transport for persons with disabilities often prevents disabled people from experiencing the benefits of recreation. Almost twenty years later and little had transpired regarding the transportation costs

as it was still viewed as an economic barrier which directly affected the access to recreation facilities (Rimmer et al, 2004). This could affect certain students with disabilities who do not live at the UWC residences, meaning that they would have to pay additional costs to be transported home.

Irrespective of whether disabled students paid for public transport or the hiring of specialized transport, the financial burden remained disheartening. The hiring charge for specialized equipment for a specific recreational sport was another aspect that was quite expensive. For example, physically disabled students that wished to participate in aerobics would require specialized equipment that could include supported steps, additional bars for support and/or special balls, the utilization of which depended on the weakest muscle group that needed support, (Sherrill, 1998). This was supported by Rimmer et al., (2004) who wrote that the adapted equipment for recreation was quite costly resulting in its unavailability to the participants. The hiring of special transport and equipment definitely placed a financial strain on persons with disabilities and affected their decision of participating in recreational activities.

Gibson et al., (1997) propose the introduction of sympathetic pricing structures that could encourage disabled people to participate in recreational sports. For example, the entrance fee at a user-friendly facility could charge disabled people less than able-bodied persons. In the study Rimmer et al., (2004) conducted, it was noted that persons with disabilities had to pay the same membership fee as their non-disabled counterparts. Sympathetic pricing structures could apply to this situation as a means to lighten the pre- and post activity costs for participating in recreational activities. In turn encouraging participation and increasing social interaction.

#### 2.4.4 Social Accessibility

In Griffith's model (Torkildsen, 1986) social accessibility pertains to uncommitted time, socializing, programmed content and the management policy of the facility. According to Griffith (cited in Torkildsen, 1986) the management aspect is the key factor as it is viewed as the beginning-to-end process. This meant that it determines whether the facility is used to its full potential, and also whether it enables participation and satisfying experiences to occur. He further explains that "the presence or absence of facilities and opportunities, their accessibility, quality, pricing structures and policies" has considerable persuasive influences on the participation in recreation (Griffith cited in Torkildsen, 1986:248). For example, if the recreational programmes being offered are of quality and meet the needs of the specific target group, they will be sought after.

To maximize socializing between able-bodied individuals and persons with disabilities, the concept of reverse integration (Brasile cited in Promis et al., 2001) is suggested. Introducing this new concept of "reverse integration" would shift the focus from disability to ability. "Reverse integration provides a context" where persons without disabilities participate alongside persons with disabilities concentrating on the execution of skills required when participating in a recreational sport (Brasile cited in Promis et al., 2001:41). If management introduces this concept (Brasile cited in Promis et al., 2001) the social interaction between persons with and without disabilities could increase. For this to take place successfully, a proper facility for the desired recreational sport will be needed. Social interaction could be further enhanced by the type of recreational sport being offered. Interacting in an activity that required less skill and participation of everyone, increases the level of satisfaction and positive experience. Smith and Theberge (1987) stated that the expectations of satisfaction in an activity are directly affected by prior positive experiences.

However, to experience this fulfillment during participation there needs to be sufficient time available to do so. The time allocated to engage in an activity may serve as a constraint. Busby (1997) reports the primary reason for not continuing participating in a recreational programme is the lack of time. A study that was conducted by Ghebremedhin-Asihel (2005) reveals that the lack of time serves as a limiting factor to those who wish to engage in recreational activities. According to Smith and Theberge (1987), discretionary time is a social variable and is determined by the way that opportunity cost is related to the value of free time. For a student the cost of opportunity being weighed was the constructive study time versus recreational pursuit. In Ghebremedhin-Asihel's (2005) study, there seemed to be a lack of time for students to participate in recreational sport since work or studying took first preference.

## **2.5 Summary of Chapter Two**

The medical, social and biopsychosocial models of disability illustrate the way in which disability is perceived. The biopsychosocial model synchronizes important points from the medical and the social models of disability while accommodating factors such as the cause of disability and the environment. The biopsychosocial model aims to facilitate people with disabilities accepting and taking ownership of their disability together with society adjusting to the needs of the people with disabilities.

There are interrelated factors that affect the choices people make regarding recreational participation. The perception of one's ability; the awareness of the facility recreational sports takes place; the location of the recreational sport facility; the available finances to participate in recreational sport; and the implementation of the management policy to provide recreational sports were some of the factors that contributed to an individual's choice and participation level in recreational sports. Griffith (cited in Torkildsen, 1986) developed a model that helped identify the barriers that prevented participation in recreational sports.

Each component of the Accessibility Model outlines potential constraints for students with disabilities not to participate in recreational sports. Therefore the perceptions from persons with disabilities at the UWC about the perceptual, physical, financial and social accessibility to recreational sports were investigated. The methodology of this study is reported in the next chapter.





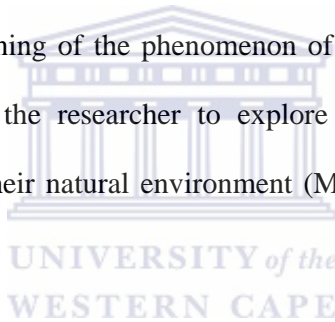
## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Qualitative methodology was used in this investigation with individual interviews being the method of inquiry. This chapter commences with the rationale for using a qualitative research design followed by the methods of data collection. Thereafter, a description of the data analysis is presented. Finally, the trustworthiness and the ethics of this study are discussed.

### 3.2 Study Design

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Primarily, a qualitative approach attempts to understand the meaning of the phenomenon of the perceptions of the participants (Creswell, 2003). It allowed the researcher to explore the multifaceted perceptions that individuals experience within their natural environment (Miller & Dingwall, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).



For this study, this approach attempted to provide both an understanding of the perceptions of the participants as well as awareness of the research problem. It further aimed to provide in-depth descriptions of a select group of people, providing their personal perspectives of, as well as their recreational practices. The exploratory questions from the one-on-one in-depth interviews with the students with disabilities provided the researcher with a rich data base and valuable insight. The personal encounter allowed the participant to elaborate on his/her perception of his/her accessibility to recreational sport as a disabled student.

The most suitable approach that gained an “insider’s perspective” of the world seen through the eyes of a person with a disability and to measure aspects of barriers to recreation participation is through qualitative methodologies, (Kleiber, Brock, Lee, Dattilo & Caldwell,

1995; Jackson & Witt, 1994). Hence, the barriers were identified to bridge the gap of exclusion by re-conceptualizing inclusion for persons with disabilities (Gilles, 2004; Promis et al., 2001). The focus of this study was to ascertain the extent to which recreational sports were accessible to persons with disabilities at the UWC. Therefore the questions “what” and “how” as perceived constraints that hinder the accessibility for participation in recreational sport were important as they guided the individual interviews for the data collection.

### **3.3 Methods of Data Collection**

#### **3.3.1 Selection of Participants**

A sample of five disabled students was purposefully selected. The participants in this study included three full-time male students and two female students studying at the UWC. The target group was made up of one hearing impaired male student, one visually impaired female student, two physically impaired male students and one physically impaired female student. Purposive sampling entailed selecting participants according to criteria that the researcher had established (De Vos, 2001). The criteria for this study were set on the basis that the students with disabilities have only visual, auditory and physical impairments. The reason for selecting these disabilities as the inclusive criteria was to gain perspectives about recreational sport accessibility from students with different types of disabilities under the umbrella of disability simultaneously, diverting from accessibility relating just to wheelchair users. As a researcher, I have encountered the terms “accessibility” and “disability” to be associated with disabled persons using wheelchairs. This study however, focuses on highlighting other disabilities and voices the perspectives about recreational sport accessibility among students with visual, auditory and physical impairments. Therefore the exclusion criteria encompass wheelchair-users. At this point it is important to mention that students with intellectual impairments were also part of the exclusion criteria, as it required more of a psychological setting which would defocus this study from its original objectives. The fact that

none of the participants played sports or recreational sports was established after interviews were conducted and not based upon criteria set by the researcher. The participants were identified with the assistance of the Student Counseling Department at the UWC and the assistance of the Chris Hani Residence matrons, where most of the disabled students resided.

### **3.3.2 Research Setting**

This research explores the intersection of students, disabilities, recreational sport and the UWC Sports Administration. The setting being researched is the UWC recreational sport and the access students with disabilities have to the recreational sport offered by the UWC Sports Administration.

### **3.3.3 Data Collection Setting**

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003) “qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.” An alternative meaning suggests that qualitative researchers investigate the interpretations of the participants’ views in their (participants’) natural setting. In accordance to this the interviews were held in one of the rooms at Student Counseling which were familiar and frequently visited by the participants together with people at the Office for Students with Disabilities (Du Plooy, 2002). These Student Counseling rooms are located on the same floor as the Office for Students with Disabilities. The students with disabilities are accustomed to this setting as they meet at the Office for Students with Disabilities regularly. These rooms are situated on the second floor within the Community and Health Sciences (CHS) Faculty at UWC and the CHS building has an elevator leading to these rooms.

As a means to ascertain information about the actual recreational sport availability and accessibility to students with and without a disability, two staff members from the Sports

Administration were informally interviewed. The Head of the Sport Administration at the UWC, Ilhaam Groenewald and Senior Sports Administrator, Edwin Wyngaard were willing to provide information about the recreational sport accessibility for the students at the UWC. The information obtained from these staff members was merely to gain an understanding about the actual status of the recreational sport availability to the students at the UWC. Furthermore, the data was not included in the data analysis process as the focus of the study aimed to highlight the perceptions of the students with disabilities and their perspectives on recreational sport accessibility.

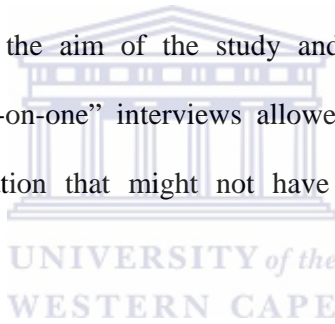
### **3.3.4 Individual Interviews**

This investigation was conducted by individual interview process as a method of inquiry (Flick, 2002). Although interviews are generally considered as two people having a conversation, a researcher knows that it “involves a set of assumptions and understandings about the situation which are not normally associated with a conversation” (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). The individual interview sessions lasted approximately an hour. Each interview was conducted in English as each participant felt comfortable expressing themselves in this language. The purpose of the interviews was to provide a better understanding of the lived experiences of certain individuals.

For the students with disabilities, especially the student with a hearing impairment, one-on-one interviews allowed the interviewer to identify whether to elaborate on a question being asked. In addition, the interviewer could sense, by the reaction of the interviewee whether to precede with posing sensitive questions about his/her disability (Shuy, 2003). The student with the hearing impairment needed the researcher to speak louder and to prompt the interviewee to repeat and clarify certain questions.

### 3.3.5 Procedure

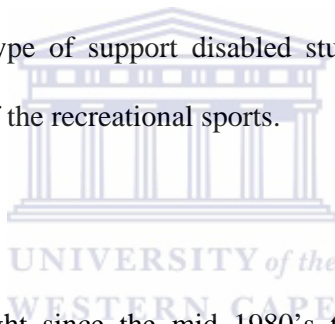
A list of cue questions was prepared so that key issues concerning perceptual, physical, financial and social accessibility, were addressed and that the interview flowed logically (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). The participants were asked if they were interested to volunteer in a research study. The willing participants' were aware that they were expected to share their experiences and perceptions about the accessible recreational sport available to them. The participants were made aware of the procedure of the interview process and that it would be recorded. The interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants to ensure all information was captured. In this way the interpretations of the participants were not misinterpreted by the researcher. At the beginning of the interview sessions, the participants were informed of the aim of the study and reminded that participation was voluntary. The selective "one-on-one" interviews allowed the individual to disclose more personal and in-depth information that might not have been exposed in a focus group discussion.



In an attempt to confirm certain issues that arose within the individual interviews telephonic calls were made to each participant (October – December 2006). These informal telephonic interviews were to add to the value of the data. Telephonic interviews were focused and short interviews and considered "less personal" than one-on-one interviews (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Nonetheless, it added to the credibility of this study as a rapport had been established prior to the telephonic interview. The telephonic interviews were short-lived as it lasted approximately thirty minutes. Each participant was requested to elaborate on and clarify certain issues (Appendix D). Participants were also requested to speak coherently and slowly as written notes were taken as a means to record the data.

### **3.3.6 Documentation**

Documents regarding accessibility of recreational sports for disabled people were consulted. The policy documents such as the “Athlete’s Guide to Sport” and the “UWC Sports Administration Sports Policy” were reviewed and obtained by the Sports Administration at the UWC. Other documents such as the UWC Prospectus 2005-2006 and the sports categorized sports codes that provided information as to which recreational sports were available and the provision made for persons with disabilities at the UWC were sourced from the Sports Administration and the Office of Students with Disabilities at the UWC. The information gathered from these sources provided data regarding the management structures and facility utilization for the sport and recreational sport at the UWC, the existing recreational sports offered at the UWC and the type of support disabled students received if they showed an interest in participating in any of the recreational sports.



### **3.4 Trustworthiness**

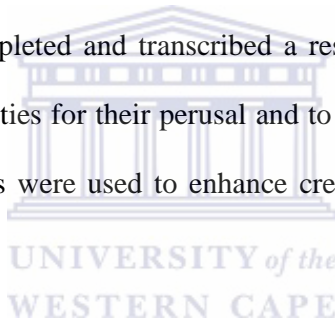
Criteria have been sought since the mid 1980’s to assess the rigour of qualitative research (Flick, 2002). Furthermore, Flick (2002) transmitted the idea of trustworthiness and credibility to be more suitable criteria for qualitative research than these referring to validity and reliability that are used in qualitative research. Cromie, Robertson and Best (2003) support this by substituting validity and reliability with credibility and trustworthiness to emphasize the descriptions and perspectives produced in qualitative research.

The strategies for achieving trustworthiness and credibility for this study included triangulation of data, prolonged engagement with informants and member checks. Triangulation of data included the individual interview method; the telephonic interview method; and documentation from the Office for Students with disabilities and the Sports

Administration and in the form of note taking while interviewing (Olshansky, 2005; Flick, 2002).

A trusting research-participant relationship had developed since the beginning of writing proposal. The first step was to ascertain the amount of people willing to disclose information about themselves and their recreational involvement. It was important that I as the researcher kept in contact with the volunteers for the study until the proposal was passed. This results in the credibility of the study being increased due to prolonged engagements with the participants.

Member checks were conducted by the participants to review the data. Once their individual interviews were completed and transcribed a research report was submitted to the Office for Students with disabilities for their perusal and to ensure that the interpretation made sense to them. These strategies were used to enhance credibility and trustworthiness of this study.



### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using a thematic approach. The foundation of the analysis was guided by the participants' responses from the individual interview sessions and the informal telephonic interviews. Once all the sessions were concluded, the data was transcribed, coded and put into the pre-determined themes.

These pre-determined themes were based on the framework of Griffiths' accessibility model. The pre-determined themes were (i) perceptual accessibility lending itself to what the participants think about the awareness of-, attraction of- and motivation to participate in recreational sport; (ii) physical accessibility encapsulating aspects of the facility (the stadium at UWC) suitability for the involvement for the desired recreational sport; (iii) financial

accessibility including all the charges affecting recreational sport participation; and (iv) social accessibility encompassing the management of the stadium as well as the opportunities created by the recreational sport being offered. Other emerging themes such as the lack of skill, the attitude of significant others and sense of independence were also identified.

As the analysis phase continued, the objectives of the study were in constant review to ensure that the aim of the study was achieved. This was accomplished by assessing the compilation of literature on recreational sports participation of disabled students in comparison to the data being presented. While the existing data were being analyzed, other appropriate themes emerged that added value to the aim of the study.

### **3.6 Reflexivity**

Throughout the research process as the researcher, I was aware of my influence within in each interview session. The agenda of the interviews was to ascertain relevant data pertaining to the aim of the research study. I, as the researcher, was constantly aware of my interests within each interview session and steered each interview accordingly.

Each interview started with obtaining the demographics of each participant to gain a better understanding of the person who was sharing his/her personal experiences with me, as the researcher. In the interviews with Josh, Bheki and Nosizwe, the participants with physical impairments, there was a definite willingness and eagerness to communicate resulting in a constant flow of questions being asked and answered.

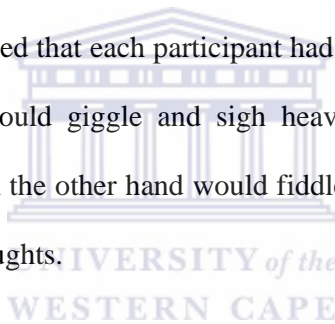
The interview with Kay started as a challenge because this was the first interview session, and interacting intimately with a visually impaired individual did not come natural to



me. As the interview progressed, I, as the researcher became more at ease and could reconcile myself to the situation becoming more focused at the task at hand.

Riaan has a hearing impairment and his interview was extremely enervating. As the researcher, I had to listen intently because he tended to mumble at times. Questions had to be repeated and elaborated upon to convey the correct message in order to attain appropriate feedback. I, as the researcher, had to constantly be aware of my facial expression while listening to Riaan intently, so that the impression of intensity was not misinterpreted as confusion.

As the researcher, I noticed that each participant had different ways of expressing her or himself. For instance, Kay would giggle and sigh heavily before expressing feeling that affected her negatively. Josh on the other hand would fiddle with his walking aid from time to time before expressing deep thoughts.



It was important that I maintained eye-contact at appropriate times and reciprocate certain behaviours to make the participants feel more at ease when sharing their recreational sport experiences with me, the researcher.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

For this study to be conducted permission was granted by the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science and from the Senate Higher Degrees Committee. Permission from the Registrar to access records and from the Office for Students with Disabilities was attained to find the sample population.

Each participant was requested to sign a written letter of consent which was given to them before the interview. Participation was on a voluntary basis and participants were briefed on the aims and objectives of the study, the importance of their opinions were to the study, and that they may withdraw at anytime. With their consent a tape recorder was utilized and they were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity in the analysis of the data and the reporting of the findings. This was stated in their consent letters. Furthermore, to protect the identity of the participants pseudonyms were provided. Each participant could read his or her own transcript of their interview with the option of requesting that any response be omitted or the way in which it is reported be changed. With respect to the student with a visual impairment, the transcript was read to her by they researcher in keeping with confidentiality and anonymity assurance.

### **3.8 Summary of Chapter Three**

Chapter Three discussed the method of inquiry and the importance to the study. It explains how a qualitative approach was relevant to ascertain interpretations and experiences of recreational sports from the participants.

As a qualitative research involved investigations based on a natural approach this study utilized a research setting that was relaxed and familiar to the participants. The process of data collection took the form of individual and telephonic interviews and administered in the natural setting. The analysis of the data was done thematically. The transcriptions were studied and revised to ascertain whether the quotations and themes were consistent with each other. The quotations were grouped then placed with the correlating pre-determined themes of the accessibility model.

This chapter looked at the importance of trustworthiness, reflexivity and ethical consideration. Triangulation, prolonged engagements and member checks were the strategies for achieving trustworthiness for the study. Reflexivity is essential throughout the process of investigation from the point of contact with the participants to the written product, as I as the researcher, have had an impact on the participants especially during the interview process. It was imperative to obtain ethical clearance in order for the investigations of this study into accessible recreational sport for students with disabilities to take place. The next chapter presents the results of this study guided by the pre-determined themes and highlights all the emerging themes, namely the lack of skill, attitudes of significant others and a sense of independence deduced from the interviews.

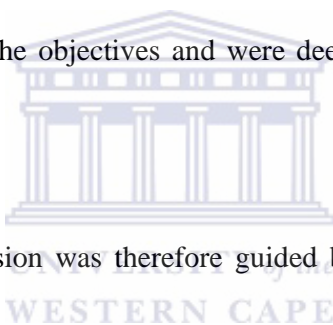


## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presented the results and findings of this research study in a qualitative thematic form. It further discussed the participants' perceptions, interpretations and experiences of recreational sports at a tertiary institution. It is important to note that pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

The participants' quotes are presented in italics, to distinguish them from the literature within the discussion section. Only the comments that pertained to the themes are quoted verbatim. The students with disabilities at the UWC highlighted issues that were not part of the themes yet coincided with the objectives and were deemed appropriate to the aim of the study.



The focus of the discussion was therefore guided by the objectives of the study and these:

- Identified the perceptions and understanding of recreational sports,
- Described the participants' current and past involvement in sports/ or recreational sports and
- Explored the various constraints to recreational sport participation perceived and experienced by the students with disabilities at the UWC.

Recommendations were provided by the participants to address the current issues to enable recreational sports to be more accessible to them.

### 4.2 Discussion of Results

The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which recreational sports at UWC were accessible to full-time registered male and female students with physical, auditory and

visual disabilities. The participants drew from their experiences which shaped their perceptions and understanding. As the discussion about the results and findings progress the students display their experiences and the extent to which they felt that recreational sports at UWC were accessible to them.

Within the results section the first objective of this study which was to ascertain the participants' interpretation of recreational sports will be discussed. Thereafter, the responses to the accessibility model as discussed in Chapter Two will be detailed as follows: firstly perceptual accessibility secondly, physical accessibility thirdly, financial accessibility and fourthly social accessibility.

#### **4.2.1 Participants interpretation of Recreational Sports**

Each participant interpreted recreational sports differently yet came to the same conclusion. In response to what their understanding is of recreational sport each participant seemed to interpret recreational sports as interacting in a sport for enjoyment and not for competition. The participants drew from their own experiences as it shaped their understanding of what recreational sport ought to be and therefore their interpretations were very subjective.

Riaan had been involved in sports like swimming and volleyball throughout his school career. His interpretation of recreational sports is that it is "*less competitive*" than sports. Kay's experience is really different from Riaan's as she was forced into athletics at primary school level, and had developed a negative attitude towards sport. Upon entering university her attitude changed. She realized that being involved in sports helps the body to relieve stress. Kay attempted playing cricket for the blind in her second year of varsity and through that experience she believes that sport "*has its benefits*". She feels that sport requires "*physical training*" to be fit for competitions whereas recreational sport is "*playing sport for fun*" and

competitions are not necessary. Although school sport affected Kay and Riaan differently their understanding of recreational sport were similar.

Josh was in a similar situation to Kay, in that he attended boarding school that required all the scholars to play sports. The exception is that he learnt to enjoy playing sports. He believes that recreational sport, like Riaan, is “*not as competitive*” as sports and like Kay, also feels that it is played for “*fun.*”

Bheki was a very active sportsman throughout his school career, and has the desire to see fellow sportspeople (male, female, able-bodied or disabled people) to achieve their sporting goals when participating in the sport of their choice. He interprets recreational sport as a “*means to recreate*” by playing your favourite sport. Nosizwe like Bheki was also very involved in sports at school. She was very competitive then in netball and soccer and in her spare time enjoyed working out in the gym. She interprets recreational sport as being a “*relaxed*” version of sport. She believes it to be “*not as exciting*” and “*not as competitive*” as sport.

During the interview process with each participant it was noted that each participant described recreational sport as a “*sport you play*” either for “*fun*” or “*sport*” being played on a “*less competitive level*”. All the participants began their description with the word “*sport*” as opposed to activity. This was an indication that the participants understood and agreed that recreational sport is a combination of recreation and sport. The participants’ understanding of recreational sport is in line with the National Intramural-Recreational Sport Association (NIRSA) (2004). It is the mission of NIRSA to provide education and development and quality recreational services to students and professionals alike within higher education. NISRA states that recreational sports are forms of recreation involving physical activity.

The participants used terms like “*less competitive*”; “*not as competitive*”; “*playing sport for fun*” and a “*means to recreate*” to describe recreational sport. This signified that they were of the understanding that not everyone wished to be competitive whilst playing sport but would like to participate in a sport for enjoyment. This is consistent with Jones (1998:10) who reports that recreation specifically in the South African context “even if we narrow it to recreational sport and dance, is a great deal more accommodating than competitive sport”. The participants’ perceptions hold true to the South African perspective of recreational sport that it is more accommodating than sport.

#### **4.2.2 Perceptual Accessibility**

Perceptual accessibility pertains to the awareness of the facilities, where it is situated as a means of attraction or motivation for attending the recreational activities. It also refers to the assessment of one’s own capabilities in relation to the recreational sport being offered. The following analysis of perceptual accessibility indicates the participants’ viewpoints concerning the Sports Administration at the UWC and accessible recreational sports.

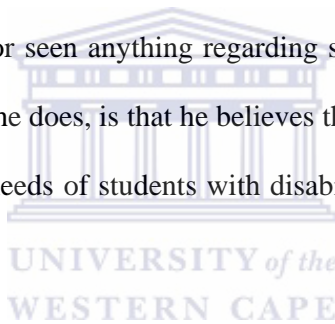
##### **4.2.2.1 Awareness of recreational sport**

The participants reported their perceptions about the awareness that the Sports Administration at UWC created for disabled students to participate in recreational sport. Riaan feels that the UWC Sports Administration does not “*know how to communicate*” with students with disabilities. Riaan had enquired about sports he could participate in, and had received only negative feedback. He feels that the matter could have been dealt with in a more sensitive manner.

Kay feels that “*they haven’t included*” recreational sports for her as student who is visually impaired. Kay would prefer one-on-one or individual activities rather than team

sports. Although she tried playing cricket for the blind, she thought that tennis for the blind or shot-put would suit her more and that is why she feels that the UWC Sports Administration has not catered for her.

Bheki believes so strongly that *“they’ll (UWC Sports Administration) never care”* and therefore will not make an effort to inform the students with disabilities about the accessible recreational sports. Bheki has studied at the UWC for more than four years. Upon entry into university he expected it to be like the word implies *“universal”*. Bheki was an active sportsman and expected to continue in that fashion at university, despite his physical impairment. He had only been exposed to advertisements about *“mainstream sports like soccer and rugby”* and had not heard or seen anything regarding sports for students with disabilities. The reason Bheki feels the way he does, is that he believes that the UWC Sports Administration does not consider the sporting needs of students with disabilities the way he expected them to do.



Riaan’s feedback, Kay’s preference and Bheki’s expectation leads to their understanding that the Sports Administration at the UWC has not made enough effort to effectively communicate the type of recreational sports available for the participation of students with disabilities.

#### **4.2.2.2 Attraction to play recreational sports**

The responses show that UWC sports administration does not make much use of advertising as a means of attracting participants to their recreational sports programmes/events. The participants claim that they hardly ever see any advertising done. Bheki believes that *“advertising exists”* but he has not *“seen a postcard”* marketing recreational sports. Bheki has seen advertising about sports specifically for able-bodied sportsman but claims that he has not



seen recreational sport specifically advertised for students with disabilities. Josh experienced a similar situation in that he had not “*seen or heard*” advertising of recreational sports. In addition to that he mentioned that he would only participate in recreational sports that were “*interesting*” to him. Josh has an interest in sports like volleyball, swimming and chess. In other words it would seem that Josh would only be on the lookout for advertisements of sport or recreational sports that are of interest to him. The responses from Josh and Bheki claimed that the UWC Sports Administration had not successfully attracted students with disabilities to participate in recreational sports.

According to Kay, the UWC Sport Administration attempted to initiate recreational sports programmes as she had attended a meeting two years ago during her first year at university. She could not decide whether she could commit to playing in any sports, as she was unsure as to whether she would have time to do so. In this instance the data revealed that the UWC Sport Administration is “*trying*” to advertise recreational sports for students with disabilities.

The onus of making students with disabilities aware of the recreational sports opportunities does not only rest with the UWC Sports Administration. Students with disabilities need to make them (UWC Sports Administration) aware that as students who would like to participate in recreational sports, they would like to see more marketing done advertising recreational sports for students with disabilities. The UWC Sports Administration should be informed about the needs and the motives for students with disabilities to participate in recreational sports.

#### 4.2.2.3 Motivation to play recreational sport

From the participants' responses it is evident that they held positive intrinsic motives as their driving force to participate in recreational sports. Intrinsic motivation refers to reaping rewards like satisfaction, enjoyment and competence from participating in any form of physical activity (Potgieter, 1997). For example, Riaan stated that he "*enjoys working in a team*" as he feels that he is capable of encouraging his "*teammates*" while playing a sport, which demonstrates the rewards like enjoyment and competence while interacting in a physical activity. Riaan's experiences illustrate the many benefits that can be enjoyed while participating in any form of recreation. Benefits of recreation include skills development of the individual, building social relationships and creating leadership opportunities (SRSA, 2004; NIRSA, 2004). Riaan displays leadership qualities by taking the initiative of encouraging his "*teammates*". Simultaneously, he is building social relationships with his teammates.

As can be seen from above, most of the motivating factors presented by Riaan were actual benefits of participating in recreational sports. Recreational sport participation yields more benefits such as the enhancement of physical and mental well-being and ethnic values; facilitation of integration within society; improvement of quality of life; promoting ethnic harmony; and developing a healthy society (Jones, 1995; RSA, 2002). It was noted that the participants wished to partake in these types of sports, as they are aware of some of the benefits.

Although Josh followed a mandate at boarding school to engage in sport, he adopted a positive outlook on sport participation from his teachers. When asked about his motivation to play recreational sports he maintained that it "*frees your mind.*" In other words Josh believes that to "*free your mind*" is a way to restore the mind. Since recreational sport stems from recreation, characteristics like (i) restoring mind, body and soul, (ii) contributing to personal development and (iii) improvement of general health will also hold true to recreational sport,

(Kelly, 1996; SRSA, 2004). His perception of linking recreational sport to recreation and his motive is consistent with Jones' (1995) South African perspective that recreation can lead to benefits such physical and mental well-being.

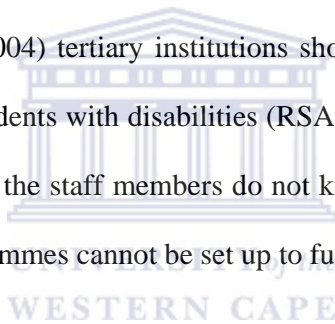
In another instance, Kay made reference to her attitude toward school sport. She says she "*started to do introspection*" whereby she experienced enjoyment while participating in cricket for the blind. This ultimately led to the conclusion that "*there is nothing wrong with sport*". She adds that although she "*was forced into it*" at school level she now realizes "*there are benefits to playing sport.*" In her case, personal enjoyment was Kay's intrinsic reward as her perceptions changed through internal encounters via introspection.

While Kay's situation was driven by internal motives, Nosizwe's experience was based on extrinsic motives. Extrinsic motives are the opposite of intrinsic motives in that they are shaped by the social environment (Potgieter, 1997). She complained that the sports being offered by the UWC Sport Administration were mostly "*mainstream sports*", and that "*you don't really get motivated!*" In Nosizwe's case, the UWC Sport Administration formed part of her social environment and since the sports codes could not accommodate her sporting needs, it resulted in her being de-motivated. The responses show that the four out of the five participants are motivated by the benefits of recreational sport and that it encompassed having fun without competition.

Within the perceptual accessibility category the findings indicated that a communication block existed between the UWC Sports Administration and the students with disabilities who participated in this study. This conclusion was based on the following findings: firstly, the participants were unaware of the type of recreational sports available to them and secondly, they reported that from their perspective as students with disabilities, the advertising regarding

recreational sports for disabled students done by UWC Sports Administration should be more effective. The responses of all except one of the participants showed that they possessed intrinsic motivators to interact in recreational sports.

The general perception of the participants was that the UWC Sports Administration should involve disabled students much more than what they were currently doing. In an interview with Ilhaam Groenewald (Personal communication, 2005), the Head of the Sports Administration, it was revealed that the only recreational sport that caters specifically for students with disabilities at that time was cricket for the blind. She also stated that none of the disabled students had expressed their desire to be involved in any form of sport or recreational sports. According to SRSA (2004) tertiary institutions should provide recreational sports for marginalized groups such as students with disabilities (RSA, 2002). As Groenewald (Personal communication, 2005) stated, if the staff members do not know that there is a need among the students with disabilities, programmes cannot be set up to fulfill that need.



From the interviews with the participants and the Head of the Sports Administration it seems as though there is a communication block. The participants do not know what recreational sports the UWC Sports Administration offers, and the Sports Administration is not aware of the participants' needs. Despite the communication block it seems as though the participants are motivated to participate in recreational sports despite their non-involvement in any recreational sport. It would seem as though their school sport experience has still left the desire to be physically active. As the discussion proceeded in this chapter, the data yielded more aspects that prevented students with disabilities from participating in recreational sports.

### **4.2.3 Physical Accessibility**

The stadium at the UWC is the facility where most of the recreational sports are offered, yet it is not easily accessible to people with disabilities because of its location and the way in which it was designed. The participants gave their descriptions as to how the stadium was inaccessible to them. Contrary to previous research by Promis et al., (2001) and De Pauw and Gavron (1995), lack of transport was not viewed as an inhibitory factor to recreational sports participation.

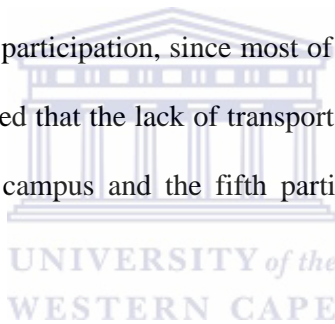
#### **4.2.3.1 Recreation facility and transportation**

From the responses it would seem that the participants were not well-informed about all the activities that took place at the stadium at the UWC. Two out of the five participants claimed that they were unaware that it was used for recreational sports programmes. They were under the impression that only sport matches like rugby and soccer took place at the stadium. They also thought it to be a meeting place for orientation of first years at UWC. For example, both Josh and Riaan used terms like “*not informed*” and “*I did not know*” about the purpose of the stadium as a recreational facility. Once again the lack of awareness arises.

Nosizwe on the other hand was “*approached by athletes*” to participate in athletics and by default she learnt more about the significance of the stadium. While she had visited the stadium she found the facility itself to be inaccessible. Nosizwe has a physical impairment and needs a walking aid. She pointed out that “*ramps existed*” yet it was too “*steep*” and it had “*no railings for support*” and that it “*serves no purpose*”. Bheki also feels that the stadium is “*inaccessible*” for him as a student with a physical disability. He explained that the gym’s location in the stadium is not user-friendly for disabled students. He further explained that the entrance has no ramp which makes it difficult for him to enter the gym as he finds it easier to walk up a ramp. Nosizwe and Bheki have learnt from their experiences and developed their

perceptions of the stadium being an inaccessible recreational facility which serves as a barrier for them. Their responses seem to be linked with previous studies conducted by Promis et al., (2001) and Rimmer et al., (2004) which indicate that the lack of accessible facilities is a barrier for recreational sport participation.

According to Kennedy, Austin, and Smith (1987), the availability of transport could affect recreational participation positively or negatively. In this instance the lack of transport had not affected the participants' decision to engage in recreational sports since they did not require the transportation. Contrary to other research, transportation therefore does not pose as a problematic issue given the circumstances of the situation. Generally, transportation was not perceived to inhibit recreational participation, since most of the respondents resided on campus or nearby. The findings suggested that the lack of transport was not problematic since four out of five participants resided on campus and the fifth participant lived in close proximity to campus.



#### **4.2.3.2 Inaccessible location of stadium**

The participants view the stadium to be located in a remote setting. Kay and Josh agree that they experience similar physical barriers of which the tired effect of moving to and from the stadium was most restrictive. Josh has a physical impairment and walks much slower than his able-bodied peers. He explained that by the time he reached the stadium, he felt tired and “*out of breath*” and that he needed to “*sit down*” because it took him “*so long*” to get there. He also explained that if he had an hour free between lectures, he would not be able to participate in any recreational sport at the stadium because his physical impairment delays him. Kay, on the other hand just described the stadium as being “*too far*” and when she attempted to go to the stadium it left her feeling “*tired.*” Kay is visually impaired and the route to the

stadium disorientates her therefore she needs to be accompanied by friends to go to the stadium as she had not memorized that route on campus.

Bheki has a physical impairment and relies on his walking aid. Bheki retorted questioningly, “*What would I be doing there in the first place?*” as he feels that it is “*unnecessary*” to go to an “*inaccessible venue.*” The data seems to suggest that the existing recreational facility does an injustice to students with disabilities who wish to participate in recreational sports.

The UWC community is a society in change and aims at helping students with disabilities to reach the maximum potential to ensure that their special needs are tended to (UWC Prospectus 2005 – 2006). The infrastructure of the stadium at the university is an old facility and had not been constructed to cater for disabled students. Groenewald (Personal communication, 2005) stated that there are insufficient funds to reconstruct the stadium. This facility would remain inaccessible to the disabled students unless the university finances the alteration of the stadium to accommodate them.

#### **4.2.4 Financial Accessibility**

Financial accessibility includes activity costs and hiring costs. The following analysis of financial accessibility indicated the participants’ financial experiences and their perceptions regarding hiring equipment and activity costs. In addition the participants displayed their perceptions of finances being a constraint to recreational participation.

##### **4.2.4.1 Activity costs**

The participants seem to understand that as in any other sport it can be expected to be charged to play recreational sports. Josh understands that equipment and dress code, be it

formal or informal, accompany participation in any sport yet personally he would “*not be able to pay*” a fee for recreational sport participation. Kay mentioned that she could not “*afford the expense*” to participate in any recreational sports. Nosizwe also indicated that she would like to finance her recreational sport, like everyone else, if she “*had the money to pay*” for it. The participants reasoned that academic costs like printing of assignments and their special apparatus takes first preferences when budgeting. The findings suggest that the participants understood the expectancy of being charged for engaging in recreational sports but cannot afford such expenses.

#### **4.2.4.2 Lack of finances**

The findings suggest that finances play a pertinent role in the participation of recreational sport. Josh and Bheki expressed that the lack of finances discourages them from pursuing recreational sport and that finances serves as a constraint. For example, Josh mentions that he is from a “*disadvantage background*” and that the lack of finances is a factor that “*discourages*” him from engaging in recreational sports. Bheki also stated that the lack of finances “*would prevent me from playing*” recreational sports. Kay feels the lack of finances is “*a big problem*” as she cannot “*rely on her disability grant*” she receives because it would not be sufficient if a recreational sport is added to her list of expenses. As it is Kay solely relies on her disability grant and it is insufficient to cater for recreational sports involvement. The participants expressed that finances are perceived to be a constraint to recreational sport participation. This is consistent with Ghebremedhin-Asihel’s (2005) findings that the lack of finances for recreational sport was a general trend that affected all the students.

#### **4.2.4.3 Hiring of specialized equipment and transport**

Four of the five of the participants view hiring their own transport and equipment “*extreme*”. Kay believes that she cannot adopt the attitude: “*I’m disabled, I cannot pay*” for



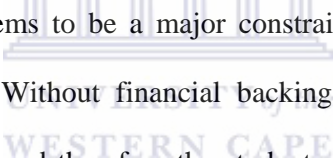
anything, instead she reckons that if the specialized equipment is “*affordable*,” she’ll pay for it herself. The data seems to suggest that the participant wishes to be financially independent. Nosizwe communicates that as a student with a disability she requires much more finances than able-bodied students to enjoy the benefits of recreational sports since she needs specialized equipment to “*adjust to the pressures of mainstream society*.” However she believes that if “*the university provides special equipment for other people and it’s usually for free, surely they can do the same for us!*” From Nosizwe’s viewpoint it can be deduced that there should be equity among students regarding equipment distribution. Rimmer et al., (2004) corroborated that specialized equipment for recreational sport is quite costly.

It should be kept in mind that the participants have different types of disabilities. For instance Riaan has a hearing impairment, Kay has a visual impairment and Josh, Bheki and Nosizwe have physical impairments. Therefore each one of them would require different adapted equipment according to their type of disability. For example, Riaan illustrated that if he engages in swimming, “*when you get on that box, you can’t hear*” therefore in order to begin “*you get a light*” as the signal. Riaan was a swimmer and as a means to communicate with hearing impaired students at school galas, they would use a light to signal the start of the competition. He uses this as an example as he would like to participate in aquatics. On the other hand, Josh, Bheki and Nosizwe would require a gradual declining staircase with elevated railings to assist them getting in to the pool.

The adapted equipment specifically tailored for the type of disability of each participant would be costly too hire for a specific recreational sport. On the whole, the participants feel that the university should take responsibility for providing special transport and equipment for students with disabilities. Most of the participants rely on disability grants and in the event that

specialized equipment for recreational sport is required, they would not be able to cover the hiring cost for the specialized equipment.

The general feeling expressed by the participants was that the lack of finances often restricts them from engaging in recreational sports. In an interview with Edwin Wyngaard (Personal communication, 2007), Senior Sports Administrator at the UWC Sports Administration, it was noted that the infrastructure of this facility does not allow them to fulfill the needs of the disabled students who wish to engage in recreational sports. Wyngaard (Personal communication, 2007) also stated that the university has to endorse financial policies to alter the infrastructure, in order to fully accommodate the students with disabilities at the UWC Sports Administration.



The lack of finances seems to be a major constraint among the participants and the UWC Sports Administration. Without financial backing the UWC Sports Administration cannot alter their infrastructure, and therefore the students with disabilities cannot experience the benefits of participating in recreational sports. Furthermore, the added anomalies such as specialized equipment and transport for students with disabilities cannot be catered for by the UWC Sports Administration due to the lack of finances. As the discussion proceeded in this chapter, the data yielded the factors that affect the participants' social accessibility in relation to participating in recreational sports.

#### **4.2.5 Social Accessibility**

Social accessibility encompassed socializing with able-bodied students, uncommitted time and the management policy concerning sports for students with disabilities (Griffiths cited in Torkildsen, 1986). The following analysis of social accessibility indicate the participants perceptions about their perceived lack of time, socializing opportunities specifically with able-

bodied peers in recreational sports participation and the management policy for students with disability.

#### **4.2.5.1 Lack of time**

The lack of time served as an important factor in relation to recreational sport participation. The concerns of uncommitted time in relation to recreational sport affected the female participants negatively. Kay and Nosizwe expressed that their academic “*workload took first preference*” and played a role not engaging in recreational pursuits. In keeping with the findings from Ghebremedhin-Asihel (2005), it was illustrated that the lack of time served as a limiting factor especially among female students to partake in recreational pursuits as they regarded academic work of more importance. The male participants however, reported that they would schedule provision for recreational sports within their usual timetable. For example, Josh explained that he had “*lots of time*” to play recreational sports because he lived on campus. Bheki and Riaan would seize the “*opportunity*” to play recreational sports and “*reschedule*” around their study time.

#### **4.2.5.2 Socializing opportunities**

The participants had made reference to the motivating factors for them pursuing recreational sports. Another motivating factor that arose among the participants to pursue recreational sports is the desire to interact with other students. For instance, Riaan communicates that he “*wants to participate*” with people who are able-bodied students, should the opportunity arise. He further states that he wishes to participate with “*people who do not have hearing impairments*”. Bheki states with reassurance that he is quite capable of interacting with able-bodied peers. He states with confidence that he “*can choose*” the type of recreational sport to participate in and that he would “*like to participate*” with able-bodied peers. By their responses it seems as though recreational sports would serve to facilitate the

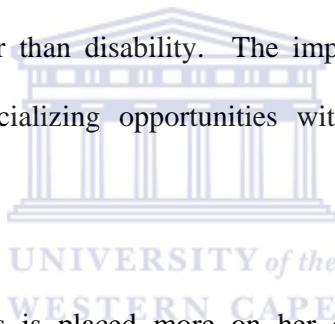
socializing with able-bodied students. This is in keeping with studies conducted by Promis et al., (2001) and Rimmer et al., (2004) that found that recreational sport participation to be a good socializing opportunity especially with able-bodied people.

Although the participants feel the need to interact with other students, mixed opinions about interacting in recreational sports with their able-bodied peers were expressed. Nosizwe pointed out that she cannot be introduced to playing recreational sports and socializing immediately with “*a mixed group*” as she will “*feel intimidated*” at first. She claimed she will feel more comfortable interacting with “*people who have disabilities even if it’s different*” to hers. Further to this, Kay sarcastically remarked as follows, “*Like I can play with able-bodied people. Even if I played blind cricket, someone must run for me!*” In this instance two issues arose, the participants’ perception of their own ability as well the need for appropriate skills.

Perceptual accessibility and social accessibility are interrelated in terms of the disabled student’s perception of their own capabilities affecting their socializing with their able-bodied peers. For example in Nosizwe’s case, the fear of humiliation would lead to her abstaining from participating in any recreational sport. According to the Process Model of Attitudes (Fazio cited in Manfreda, Yuan & McGuire, 1992) the “behaviour is a function of one’s perception of the situation in which the attitude object is encountered.” In this instance, recreational sport would be the “object” and the person with the disability, behaves according to her perception of the situation. In Nosizwe’s case, her pattern of behaviour to abstain from recreational sport participation derives from her interpretation of being physically incapable to interact with able-bodied people. Her assessment of her ability is low therefore she avoids interacting with able-bodied students because of the fear of failure.

Furthermore Nosizwe reported that she would feel uncomfortable being among “*people who can jump and people who can run*” because her physical impairment would limit her level of participation. In this instance, the lack of skill proves to be a deterrent that negatively impacts on recreational sport participation (Jones, 2004).

It is important to note the type of disability that recreational participants possess in order to know what type of recreational sport would most likely suite their capable needs. Nosizwe would unlikely be participating in recreational sports that require her to run or jump. The strength lies within the arms and therefore it would be more appropriate for her to play wheelchair table-tennis where the reverse integration could be implemented, and the focus would thus be on ability rather than disability. The implementation of reverse integration would optimize Nosizwe’s socializing opportunities with both able-bodied and disabled students.



In Kay’s case emphasis is placed more on her disability than on her abilities to participate in recreational sport. The concept of “reverse integration” shifts the focus from disability to ability. The policy of reverse integration (Brasile cited in Promis et al., 2001), concentrates more on the execution of skills than on the disabling factors. The implementation of reverse integration could be best illustrated in the cricket for the blind situation whereby Kay focuses more on the ability to bat than on the inability to run. Both able-bodied and disabled students may participate provided the focus is based on the positives rather than the disabling negatives of the situation. It could further increase the social interaction between Kay and her able-bodied peers.

#### **4.2.5.3 Management policy**

The management policy regarding sports for students at the UWC exists as an informal document (Sports Administration, 2001). It stipulates the different sports and recreational sports codes that take place at the stadium and at different locations on campus.

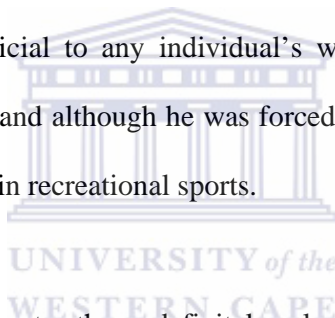
The participants' responses indicated that they were unsure as to whether a management policy existed for disabled sports at UWC. Josh and Kay communicated that they were unsure that "*such a policy existed*" for students with disabilities. Although Riaan and Nosizwe were not sure if such a management policy existed as well but they were of the opinion that the Sports Administration is "*trying*" to accommodate students with disabilities.

Riaan described his encounter with the volleyball team players of UWC. He attempted to practice with them and removed his hearing aid. As a result he felt he could not cope with the fast movement due to the fact that he could not hear and follow instructions and guidelines given. That led Riaan to believe that the UWC Sports Administration is attempting to accommodate students with disabilities where possible. Nosizwe referred to her encounter with the athletes that approached her to join the athletics team. She further explains that she believes that certain sports coaches are available to assist students where possible with queries about the sports that exist at UWC.

There are three additional themes that emerged from the interviews that are as relevant to the constraints to recreational sports participation. The two negative themes are the lack of skill which was briefly touched on in the previous section as well the attitudes of significant others. The third theme added a positive outlook from a disabled student's perspective. This was the sense of independence which participation in recreational sport can offer.

#### **4.2.6 Attitude of Significant Others**

It had been noted that sports or recreation participation correlated to the support of significant others (Busby, 1997). These significant others could be parents, peers, teachers and coaches. Two participants indicated that they were “*forced*” into playing sports at school. Kay had a coach as the significant other and he affected her decision to despise sports at a young age. The hard and insensitive manner in which the teacher coached her, negatively affected her perception and participation in recreational sport or any other physical activity. Only upon her entry into university level, had she changed her attitude towards sports in general. Josh attended a boarding school where it was mandated in the curriculum that each scholar should participate in at least two sporting codes. This mandate however, instilled in him the belief that interacting in sports was beneficial to any individual’s well-being. In Josh’s instance, the teachers were significant others and although he was forced to play sport, it positively affected him and he continued to engage in recreational sports.



The attitude of significant others definitely played a role in the lives of these respondents. Although both respondents were forced to be involved in sports at a young age, the manner in which it was conducted determined the reactions and perceptions of these respondents. Respectively, the Kay was coerced into sports therefore it negatively affected her perception of recreational sport participation, but Josh reverently played sports thus viewed recreational sport participation more positively.

#### **4.2.7 Sense of Independence**

Kay believes that she cannot adopt the attitude: “I’m disabled, I cannot pay” for anything. The data seems to suggest that she wishes to be financially independent. People with disabilities instinctively strive for a certain level of independence so that they can control their environment to a certain measure (Kennedy, Austin & Smith, 1987). Hagedorn (2001) further

emphasized that applying learning opportunities to achieve personal goals could influence one's environment. Instinctively, this culminates in achieving independence. Contrary to the medical model of disability that created the perception of disabled people being weak or always needing assistance and unable to function independently, Kay exhibits the need to be independent and achieve personal goals to positively influence her environment.

### **4.3 Conclusion of Discussion of Results**

A key finding of this study is that although different pre-determined themes of the accessibility model exist namely, perceptual accessibility, physical accessibility, financial accessibility and social accessibility, these should not be considered in isolation of each other. Instead, these pre-determined themes need to be viewed interchangeably and in an integrated way along with the emerging themes to fully understand the concept of accessibility. The discussion that follows makes reference to the established constraints which outweighed the facilitating factors for recreational sport among students with disabilities.

The integration of the pre-determined themes of the accessibility model and the emerging themes highlighted facilitating factors and constraints which played a role in recreational sport participation of students with disabilities. Four out of the six facilitating factors seem to be intrinsically related. As previously mentioned the constraints outweighed the facilitating factors and need to be minimized when considering the recommendations in order for students with disabilities to enjoy the benefits of recreational sport.

There are barriers within society that restrict the disabled students' integration into society. The barriers regarding recreational sports that relate to this study are as follows:

- Inaccessible recreation facilities
- Inconvenience of recreational facility location



- Communication block between the UWC Sports Administration and the participants, regarding awareness, advertising and management policies of disability sport and recreational sports
- Coercive force from significant others to engage in sports
- Lack of finances preventing disabled students from participating in recreational sports

The constraints affect, to a certain measure, the extent to which disabled students may participate in recreational sport. There are internal factors that affect the disabled individual's involvement in recreational sports as well. Below are the internal limitations that the disabled students encounter:

- Lack of skills
- Perceptual incompetence
- Feelings of intimidation
- Lack of time to engage in sport perceived by female respondents

The internal constraints and facilitating factors are a combination of aspects that influence the life of an individual with a disability. The internal facilitating factors that were identified are listed below:

- Intrinsic motivation to play recreational sports
- Reverent influence from significant others to play recreational sport
- The desire to interact with able-bodied peers
- Allocation of time from male participants to engage in recreational sport
- Achieve personal goals and become financially independent

The facilitating factors encourage individuals with disabilities to take responsibility for their own lives. Although disabled students in this study have taken initial steps cognitively, the accumulation of internal and external constraints continues to be a deterrent for students

with disabilities to freely pursue recreational sports on campus. In the following section the results will be used to highlight the relevance of each of the three models of disability outlined in Chapter One in addressing the constraints students with disabilities experience in accessing recreational sports.

#### **4.3.1 Application of the Models of Disability within the Accessibility Model's Framework**

The following three models of disability will serve as a framework for this discussion: the medical model of disability, the social model of disability and the biopsychosocial model. The biopsychosocial model serves to address the potential barriers within the accessibility model and provides a means to minimize the constraints that limit recreational sport participation among disabled students. By considering the participants' responses about accessibility in the light of the biopsychosocial model the prospects of achieving a more successful outcome is enhanced, as the constraints are not dealt with in a "cause and effect" manner but from a holistic viewpoint. What is meant by this is that the biopsychosocial model could be the best model to transform the identified constraints into more accessible opportunities for students with disabilities.

The biopsychosocial model synthesizes valid points from the medical and the social models of disability which respectively depict the impairment and the environment as contributors towards disability. The biopsychosocial model combines the medical treatment from the medical model and the reconstruction of the society from the social model, and then adds the physiological and psychological aspects from the individual with the disability. The biopsychosocial model further describes disability as a combination of factors thus offering a holistic viewpoint of disability which includes the medical, physical, psychological and social factors. It encourages people with disabilities to take ownership of their lives and adopt a

dignified and worthy attitude of who they are. It rejects the “cause and effect” system of the medical model’s view of disability whereby the doctor treats the “patient” with an attitude that induces habits of dependency and weakness. Simultaneously, the biopsychosocial model proposes that the disabled person’s environment needs to accept disability and adjust to the aspirations of people with disabilities. This is partially consistent with the social model of disability except that the biopsychosocial model does not accept the environment as being the sole entity for disability.

The characteristics of the biopsychosocial model to a large extent address the interests of the participants. By applying this model it will empower and affect the participants more positively than the other two models of disability. For example, Kay mentioned that if the hiring cost of equipment for disabled students was affordable, then she would be willing to pay for it. Kay displays the need to be financially independent and while the medical model induces the habit of dependency, the biopsychosocial model commends this type of independent behaviour as it cultivates a much more dignified attitude.

The other three participants, Josh, Bheki and Riaan communicated that recreational sports would give them the opportunity to interact with other people and socialize with able-bodied students. Essentially this indicates the desire of the participants to engage in team recreational sports. Should the medical model of disability be applied in this situation, recreational programmes would likely be prearranged by management without consulting the participants and ascertaining their preferences. This would effectively deny them their social rights. On the other end of the continuum should the social model of disability be applied to the same situation, the demanding action would be for society, referring to the UWC to develop more inclusive programmes for students with disabilities to participate in. The biopsychosocial model is a combination of factors and in this instance social and psychological factors are

illustrated. Applying the biopsychosocial model gives these participants a platform to exercise their social rights and signifies that they are capable of making their own decisions.

It is important that the participants know that they have the freedom to speak and the freedom of choice. In Kay's instance, her teacher had forced her to participate in sports at primary school level and she was not given that freedom of choice. Due to this incident she had a pessimistic viewpoint on all types of sports and has never participated in any sports thereafter. As Kay entered tertiary level of education her perception of sports had changed and she realized that the involvement of sports yields benefits and does not do any harm. Kay willingly reflected on her attitudes about sports and this resulted in her viewing sport participation more optimistically. In Kay's situation the teacher scarred her with a negative impression of sports by enacting mannerisms dictated by the medical model of disability. In the same way that the doctor imposes his hierarchy of intellectual power, and dictates to the "patient" what is best, so does the stern teacher which resulted in this negative attitude in Kay. However, Kay unknowingly applied the biopsychosocial model and transformed her negative experience into something positive.

Each participant reveals a different experience. In Nosizwe's case, she ascribes her feelings of intimidation to participate in recreational sports with able-bodied students to her physical attributes. Unlike her peers, Josh, Bheki and Riaan, who would like to participate in recreational sports with able-bodied students, Nosizwe would prefer to interact with disabled students at first. She feels the integration process with able-bodied and disabled students should occur gradually within recreational sports. Nosizwe cannot walk without her walking aids and she perceives her physical attributes to be a challenge on its own without having to deal with the likes of able-bodied students. While the medical model of disability would instill the perception of disability being a personal tragedy, the social model of disability would

monopolize on society's inability to accommodate students with disabilities and also blame society for activity limitation regarding recreational sports. The biopsychosocial model however, would acknowledge Nosizwe's psychological adjustment and physical limitation. Furthermore the application of this model would encourage the environment that she's placed into, to uplift her morale by initiating recreational sports just for students with disabilities.

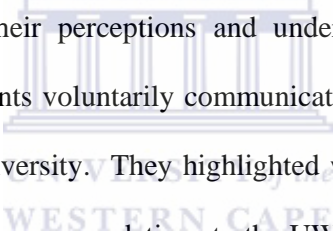
In the light of the findings, the application of the biopsychosocial model lends itself best to understanding of the participants' physical, psychological and social factors, as it is most consistent with the needs and interests as expressed by participants. They aspire to be more independent, proactive, interactive, and to take ownership of their own lives. The participants feel that they need to be included and represented within a hierarchy where it matters most.



## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to explore the extent to which recreational sports were accessible to students with physical, visual and auditory disabilities and to ascertain what they perceive to be barriers in their pursuit of recreational sports. The framework of the accessibility model as used by Torkildsen (1986) guided the process of gathering information therefore accessibility was subdivided into the following categories, perceptual accessibility, physical accessibility, financial accessibility and social accessibility. Emerging themes such as the lack of skill, attitudes of significant others that arose served as constraints to access recreational sports as well.



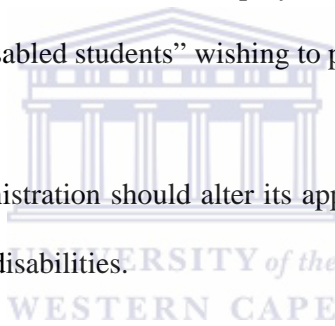
Participants expressed their perceptions and understanding of recreational sport in relation to sports. The participants voluntarily communicated their involvement in sport, both current and prior to entering university. They highlighted what motivated them, what limited them and also made imperative recommendations to the UWC Sports Administration as to how inaccessibility could be transformed into accessibility. Despite the university's attempt to be inclusive and accommodate all students, disabled students seemed to be in the minority and to a certain extent are overlooked in terms of recreational sport accessibility.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the participants' which encapsulates the advice to the UWC Sports Administration and what they think should be done in order to ensure that recreational sports are more accessible for students with disabilities at the UWC. The recommendations were made on the basis of the participants' perceptions concerning the perceptual, physical, financial and social constraints to recreational sports at the UWC.

The following suggestions were communicated:

- Recreational sports should be played “before entering into competitive sports to integrate, especially the disabled students, into specific sport.” In this way the students would not feel intimidated and de-motivated when engaging in competitive sport for the first time.
- It might not be necessary to have two coaches for this to take place; one person could coach both able-bodied and disabled students provided that he/she could communicate with disabled students and coach them according to their special needs.
- The UWC Sports Administration should employ the expertise of a “disabled person to address the matters of disabled students” wishing to participate in recreational sports.
- The UWC Sports Administration should alter its application of the management policy to include students with disabilities.
- The emails that advertise sports and recreational sports should state that, “anyone who wishes to participate in sport should feel welcome to join” irrespective of their abilities (or disability). In this way no-one would be excluded from the sport they wish to engage in.
- The policy for disabled sports at the UWC should be applied differently and the disabled students should be consulted in the planning of programmes. The reason for this is that it concerns the disabled students and they know what they require and what they want. It was also advised that whatever facilities need to be constructed for students with



disabilities that these be discussed with professionals, teachers and include the disabled students because they know their needs best.

These recommendations made by the participants are valid but the recommendation that needs prioritizing is the employment of a person with a disability at the UWC Sports Administration to tend to the sporting matters of students with disabilities. The reason for the employment of a person with a disability is that being in similar situation, the employed person should understand the needs the students with disabilities have and in that way be their voice. Based on the results of this study it is recommended that the biopsychosocial model be adapted by the UWC Sports Administration as it has a holistic approach to dealing with the above-mentioned constraints. In this way the biopsychosocial model will provide guidelines for the UWC Sports Administrators to offer an integrated approach to adequately address the interests and the needs of the students with disabilities to ensure that recreational sports are accessible to them. This model lays a platform for the students with disabilities to exercise their social right. It also acknowledges their physiological indifferences; recognizes their psychological autonomy; and cultivates behaviour of independency. Furthermore, the model provides insight for UWC Sports Administration into the societal constraints that exist for the students with disabilities.

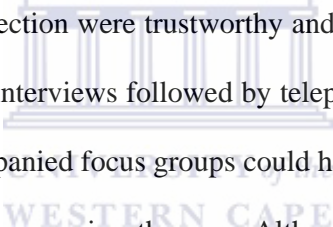
The application of the biopsychosocial model allows for the following to be investigated: The perceived societal constraints like inaccessible recreation facility, the inaccessible location of the stadium and the lack of finances experienced by disabled students and by the UWC Sports Administration. In effect each constraint can be taken into consideration to obtain a suitable solution. According to the biopsychosocial model the initial social change has to come from people with disabilities. The employment of a person with a disability, who can effectively communicate on behalf of the students with disabilities at the



UWC Sports Administration, should encourage communication between the UWC Sports Administration and the students with disabilities. Effectively a consensus can be reached as to how recreational sports can be made available to them and by what means this can be achieved.

### **5.3 Limitation of the Study**

This study aimed to explore the extent to which recreational sports at the UWC were accessible to students with disabilities. The main objectives of this study were met, although the field of accessibility of recreational sports for students with disabilities needs yet to be explored further. The qualitative approach which puts emphasis on description and in-depth perspectives was appropriate for extracting experiences and views from participants for this study.



The methods of data collection were trustworthy and generated in-depth insight into the task at hand. Indeed individual interviews followed by telephonic interviews obtained valuable information, however the accompanied focus groups could have created more discussion among the participants to unearth more emerging themes. Although focus group discussions would have allowed for group interaction and insight to the perspectives of the barriers to participation in recreational sport and recreational practices of the participants (Flick, 2002) it was unfortunate that it could not be fully utilized due to the unavailability of the participants. Attempts to arrange focus group discussions were therefore unsuccessful.

In conclusion, notwithstanding the valuable contribution that this study can make to understanding, the unique constraints which students with disabilities face in their efforts to participate in recreational sport, it is felt that the individual interviews did not produce the desired in-depth information required to truly strike at the heart of the problem of this study. In addition, the relative inexperience of the researcher contributed to the sense that the opportunities for deeper exploration were not taken advantage of. Despite this limitation this

study does show that there are numerous unanswered questions concerning constraints which students with disabilities face. This makes it imperative for further research to be conducted in this much neglected area of disabled students' accessibility to recreational sport.



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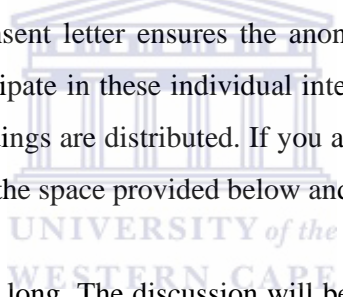
**7. APPENDICES**

**7.1 APPENDIX A: Letter of Consent**

***ACCESSIBILITY OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE***

**CONSENT LETTER FOR STUDENTS**

The Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science at the University of the Western Cape has been successful in securing funds for a project to investigate the perceptions of the constraints and opportunities with regard to recreational sport participation of persons with physical disabilities. If you are willing to participate in this research project, you will be asked to participate in two individual interview sessions. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This consent letter ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of your responses. If you agree to participate in these individual interview sessions you will be invited to read the report before the findings are distributed. If you are willing to be a part of this study please sign this consent form in the space provided below and return it to me.



The interview will be two hours long. The discussion will be recorded using an audio-tape and at any moment you may ask for it to be switched off. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to link you to specific comments.

**If you have any questions of complaints about this study, you may contact Shernel Wright on (021) 697-3462 or 084 8111 510.**

**Statement of agreement to participate in the research study**

I, -----, am willing to participate in the project. I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may withdraw at any time, that the responses will be treated in confidence, and that names will not be linked to specific responses.

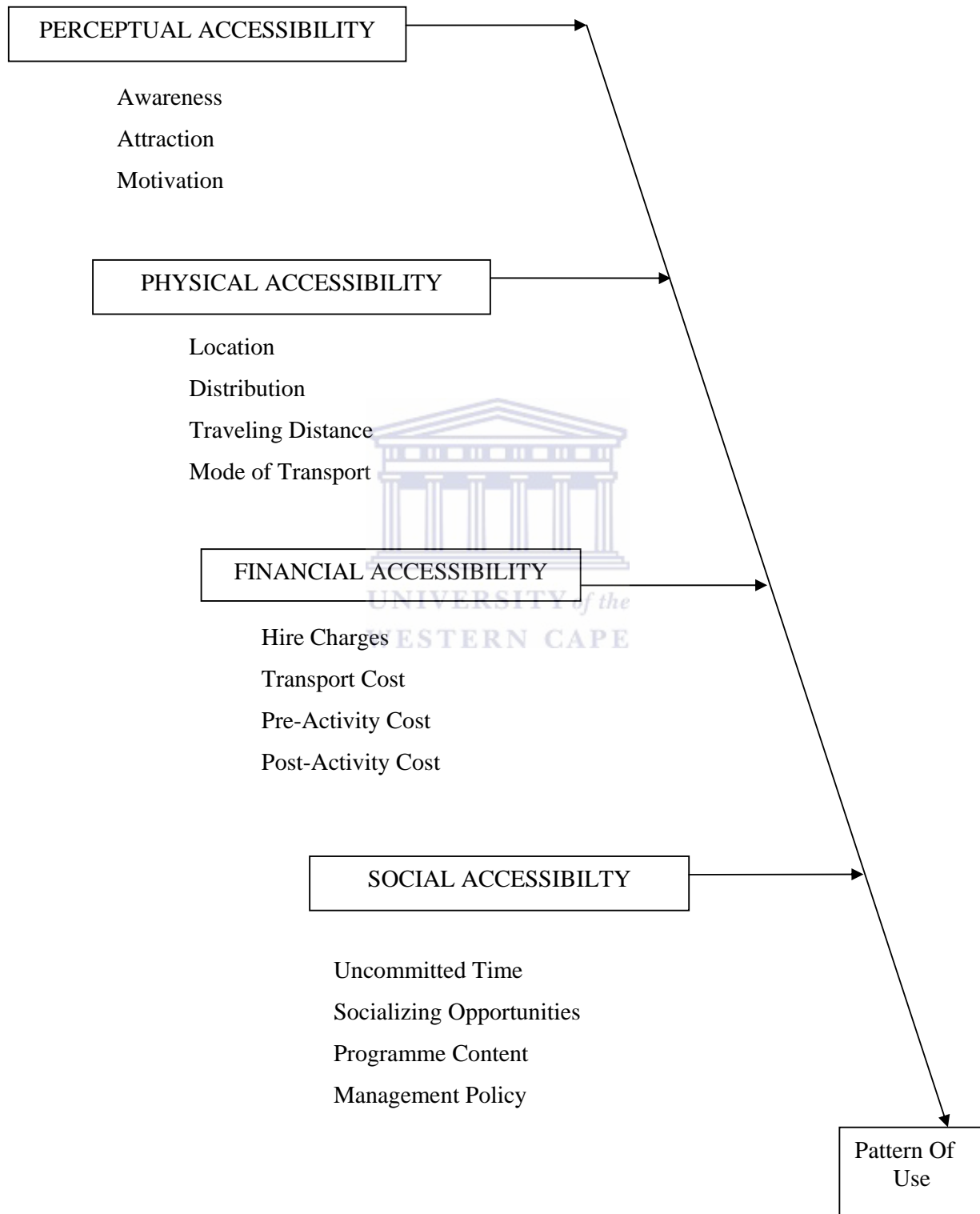
Date: -----

Signature of student: -----

**The extra copy of the consent form, which is attached, is for your records.**



**7.2 APPENDIX B: Accessibility Model: Source from Griffiths (cited in Torkildsen, 1986)**



### **7.3 APPENDIX C: Individual Interview Guide**

#### **RECREATIONAL SPORT ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

##### PERCEPTUAL

1. What is your understanding of sport, recreation and recreational sport?
2. Name the various sport, recreation and recreational sport you participated in prior and/or during varsity.
3. In your opinion, has the Sport Administration made students aware of the recreational sports available to disabled people?
4. What would attract you to participate in a recreational sport?
5. What would be the motivating factors that would lead you to participate in recreational sport?

##### PHYSICAL

1. How were you informed about the recreational facilities that cater for disabled students in and around the campus area?
2. Describe the location of the various facilities.
3. Would transport inhibit your ability to participate in recreational sports?
4. How would you travel to the recreation facility?
5. What are your experiences travelling to and fro from the recreation facilities?

##### FINANCIAL

1. If you interacted in recreational sports, how would it be impact on your financial situation?
2. Comment on whether or not you perceive finances to be a constraint to participating in recreational sports.
3. How do you feel about hiring your own specialized equipment to participate in a specific recreational sport?
4. How would you feel if you had to hire your own transport for recreational sport?

##### SOCIAL ASPECT REGARDING RECREATIONAL SPORT

1. Elaborate as to whether you consider time to be a constraint regarding participating in recreational sport.
2. How would you personally associate recreational sports and socializing opportunities?
3. In which way would the programme content influence your decision to participate in recreational sport?
4. In your opinion, what effort has the Sports Administration made to inform students about management policy concerning disability sports programmes?

## 7.4 APPENDIX D: Telephonic Interview Guide

### ELABORATE ON RECREATIONAL SPORT ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

#### (A) PERCEPTUAL

1. What would be the motivating factors that would lead you to participate in recreational sport?

#### (B) PHYSICAL

1. How were you informed about the recreational facilities that cater for disabled students in and around the campus area?
2. Describe the location of the various facilities.
3. What are your experiences travelling to and fro from the recreation facilities?

#### (C) FINANCIAL

1. If you interacted in recreational sports, how would it be impact on your financial situation?
2. Comment on whether or not you perceive finances to be a constraint to participating in recreational sports.
3. How do you feel about hiring your own specialized equipment to participate in a specific recreational sport?

#### (D) SOCIAL ASPECT REGARDING RECREATIONAL SPORT

1. How would you personally associate recreational sports and socializing opportunities?
2. In which way would the programme content influence your decision to participate in recreational sport?
3. In your opinion, what effort has the Sports Administration made to inform students about management policy concerning disability sports programmes?

Questions for:

Kay: B2 B3 C2 C3 D1 D3

Nosizwe: B2 C2

Josh: B1 B3 C2 C3 D2 D4

Riaan: A1 B2 C2

Bheki: B2 B3 C1