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Exploring the relationship between organizational structure and organizational responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of Karate South Africa regarding sport performance

**Sanhaviya S Sookrajh**

Student Number: 4075392

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Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

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Supervisor: Prof. L Leach

Co- Supervisor: Dr. M

Malema

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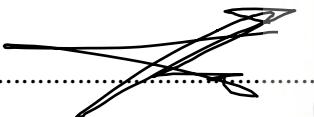
**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that: "*Exploring the relationship between organizational structure and organizational responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of Karate South Africa regarding sport performance*" is my own work, that 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.

Full name: **Sanhaviya S Sookrajh**

Date: **12 December 2022**

Signed.....



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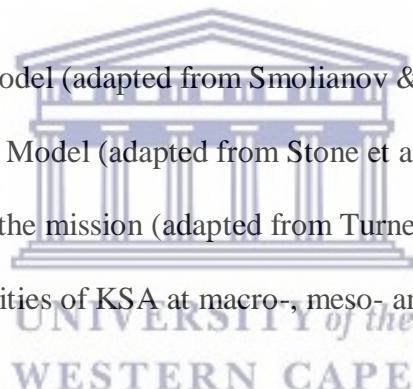
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## **LIST OF SCIENTIFIC ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>APM</b>	=	Athletic Performance Model
<b>GUT</b>	=	Grand Unified Theory
<b>HPM</b>	=	High-Performance Model
<b>KSA</b>	=	Karate South Africa
<b>LTCD</b>	=	Long-term Coaches Development
<b>LTPD</b>	=	Long-term Participant Development
<b>NSRP</b>	=	National Sport and Recreation Plan
<b>OPEX</b>	=	Operation Excellence Programme
<b>SANROC</b>	=	South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee
<b>SASA</b>	=	South African Sports Association
<b>SASCOC</b>	=	South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee
<b>UEFA</b>	=	Union of European Football Association



## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The organizational structure of Karate South Africa (KSA) has been successful in enhancing karate as a sport, by providing structural support.

**Aim:** The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational structure and the responsibility of KSA and, specifically, the perceptions of the executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of KSA regarding sport performance.

**Methods:** A qualitative study was conducted using an exploratory narrative approach. Twenty participants consisting of executive managers, national sport coaches and elite athletes were recruited through purposive sampling. Individual, in-depth interviews were conducted with executive managers, sport coaches and nationally ranked athletes from KSA in the nine provinces. Two theoretical models were used to underpin the core components of this study, viz., the High-Performance Model and the Athletic Performance Model. Given the present pandemic, social distancing and restrictions on travel, the data collection was undertaken via WhatsApp, Google Meet or Skype. The data was uploaded to Atlas.ti software (version 8) for coding and analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, organize, and describe the data from the interviews. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was enhanced through attention to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

**Results:** The findings indicated that KSA had negotiated many challenges over the decades, primarily within a context of voluntary, non-profit, organizational work with minimal funding. Data from the national executive indicated that KSA's main priority was to facilitate a structure that would enable athletes to participate in national and international competitions. This facilitation was successfully achieved by KSA in spite of the bureaucratic challenges experienced in finalizing affiliation to different organizations. It was envisaged by national executives of KSA that these affiliations were part of the requirements to create a pathway for elite athletes to participate in the Olympic Games. The perceptions of national executives,

coaches and athletes indicated that KSA faced increasing pressure to deliver on its responsibility to the athletes to achieve peak performance at the highest level of competition. The findings further suggested that although KSA facilitated competitions at local, national and international tournaments, KSA was not able to offer first-class training facilities and camps, provide effective coaching and secure financial support for national coaches and elite athletes. These components were perceived as the responsibility of KSA to its membership.

**Conclusion:** While there was acknowledgement by national coaches and athletes that KSA was a voluntary organization, there was an expectation for KSA to deliver on its roles and responsibilities in order to produce elite athletes at the highest level of competition. In this regard, KSA had made very good administrative strides to professionalize KSA. This meant overhauling its structures and standardizing the organization. Furthermore, this allowed athletes to participate by meeting world standards for the sport of karate. The results suggest that the KSA structure was standardized through a centralized approach. Although this centralized approach in restructuring was not received well by national coaches and athletes, executive managers still believed that if the appropriate structures were put right at the macro-level, they would eventually filter down to the micro-level for effective organizational functioning.

**Key words:** Organizational structure, sport performance, perception, karate, elite athlete, responsibility, support

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter begins by introducing the study and its context. Thereafter, the problem statement is described. The research aim, objectives and questions are presented, after which the significance of the study is discussed. Finally, the definitions of terms are presented, and an outline of the thesis is described.

Sport has numerous benefits that are well documented in the literature. Shearer (2014) believed that sport is one of the significant common elements that bring human beings together. He asserted that more people watch or play sports than other human activities. Several researchers have noted the potential for sport to positively impact communities (Sabbe et al., 2020; Schaillée et al., 2019).



In 2000, at the inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards, Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratic head of state, declared that "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination" (Mandela, 2000).

If sport is appropriately constituted, it can offer more to those who seek it for leisure and those who choose more seriously to compete. Hence, there is a call for proper sports governance. Sports governance alludes to what Blanco (2017, p. 106) calls "an emerging paradigm" that requires the participation of various stakeholders from government, corporates, academia and civil society to formulate, legalize and implement sports programmes for sports excellence and

development. For this reason, O'Boyle and Bradbury (2013) recommend that sports organizations have to become more professional and accountable in their operations.

According to Winand et al. (2013), the core responsibility of sports organizations is the competent performance of their athletes, the development of innovative activities for the athletes, and a commitment to offering essential sports services. Research by Nazari (2018) found that the structure and responsibility of a sports organization consisted of technical, human, perceptual and political skills. It is this structure that sports managers use to measure and assess their strategic objectives and determine their athletes' performances.

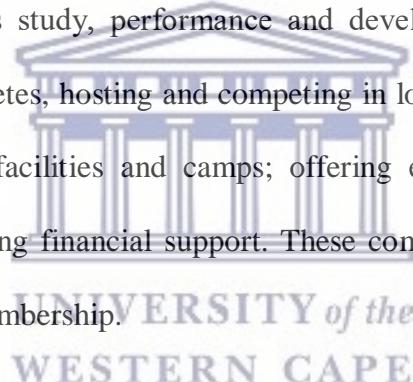
It is unknown whether Karate South Africa (KSA), the sport organization which is the focus of this study, has produced athletes of high-calibre through its present structure. It is, however, expected that such planning and structure be transparent to all stakeholders and interested parties. This study sought to explore the perceptions of athletes, coaches and executive managers to better understand KSA's structure, responsibilities and performance-related issues. This is considered important and necessary for current and future beneficiaries in the sport of karate in South Africa.

## **1.2. Context of the Study**

Karate South Africa (KSA) has a membership which exceeds 200 000, with more than 1400 organized clubs throughout South Africa (Karate South Africa, n.d.). Thus, it seems that the organizational structure of KSA has successfully enhanced karate as a sport by providing structural support. As KSA grows, the study raises important questions about enhancing karate as a sport through the current organizational structure and whether the necessary

organizational, human, financial and physical resources have been provided to reach the organization's goals. Sporting organizations in South Africa have become a vital part of society, and there is a need to practise strategic management to develop the athletes' elite performances. In their study of Danish elite sports organizations, Storm et al. (2010, p. 104) reported that managerial efficiency skills enhanced a nation's sporting success. This managerial efficiency is what contributes to the production of elite athletes.

According to Aćimović et al. (2013, p. 251), sports organizations have the responsibility to produce a different type of "product", which they refer to as "the product of sport". This refers to the production of physically fit athletes who excel in competitions as individuals or teams. Similarly, it is anticipated that all sporting codes, karate included, are responsible for producing a "product of sport". For this study, performance and development within KSA include identifying talented karate athletes, hosting and competing in local and national tournaments, providing first-class training facilities and camps; offering effective coaching; accessing scientific expertise; and securing financial support. These components are perceived as the responsibility of KSA to its membership.

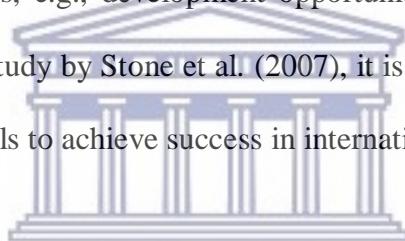


The former Minister of Sport and Recreation, Fikile Mbalula, stated that the strategic direction of sport and recreation in South Africa "...is continuously being evaluated and reinvigorated to ensure that we remain ahead of the curve and latest trends in the very competitive world of sport and recreation, and equally fulfil our strategic mandate" (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2011). These sentiments were recorded during the presentation of the Recreation Strategic Plan of South Africa (2012-2016), in which the strategic mandate was that of an active and winning nation.

Elite performance in sport is often not clearly defined, especially concerning factors

contributing to athletic performance (Lorenz et al., 2013). These may include support from family and coaches, training and preparation, and most significantly, the organizational structure that enables athletic participation. According to Winand et al. (2013), organizational-related sport service issues include travel, team cohesion, player selection, spectator management, coach-and-athlete interaction, and securing adequate funding. These factors have relevance for an organization like KSA, and it is anticipated that KSA will face similar issues, as Arnold et al. (2015) reported.

The researchers above found that organizational-related issues have been consistently identified as unique factors in achieving success (Winand et al., 2013). Other factors influencing success can be experienced personally, such as character, health, skills, experience and environment-related factors, e.g., development opportunities, operations and personnel (Stone et al., 2007). From the study by Stone et al. (2007), it is assumed that national athletes within KSA nurture similar goals to achieve success in international competitions.

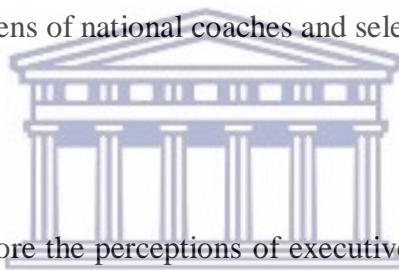


Therefore, in this study, the researcher sought to explore the perceptions of athletes, coaches and executive managers of KSA to understand the structure, responsibilities and performance-related issues. These are important considerations for current and future beneficiaries in the sport of karate in South Africa.

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

Studies by Wharam et al. (2020) noted that little research examining the relationship between the effectiveness of an organization's operations and elite sports performance had been undertaken. Thus far, the organizational structure of KSA has provided structural support and

a vision statement for its membership (Karate South Africa, n.d.). However, it is yet to be researched whether this organizational structure has achieved what Maitland et al. (2015) referred to as an organization's capacity to reach its goals by properly acquiring and using human, financial and physical resources. Some physical resources include identifying talented karate athletes from local and national tournaments, providing first-class training facilities and training camps, as well as high-performance coaching, and scientific expertise. Against this backdrop, the current study aimed to explore the organizational structure and responsibility of KSA by investigating the perceptions of the executive managers of its organizational structure. No research in South Africa has been conducted on karate that examines the elite sport policies, athlete development pathways, stakeholder cooperation and athletes' sport performances. The study further tried to understand the relationship between organizational responsibility and elite sport performance through the lens of national coaches and selected elite athletes.



#### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

The aim of the study is to explore the perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and organizational structure regarding sport performance.

#### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

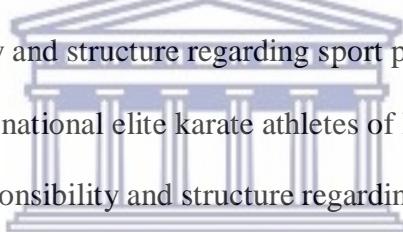
- Describe the organizational structure and responsibility of KSA at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels.
- Explore the perceptions of the executive managers of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding elite sport performance.

- Explore the perceptions of the sport coaches of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding sport performance.
- Explore the perceptions of national karate elite athletes of KSA, on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding their sport performance.

## **1.6. Research Questions of the Study**

The following research questions were derived from the objectives:

- What is KSA's organizational responsibility and structure at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels?
- What are the perceptions of the executive managers of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding sport performance?
- What are the perceptions of the national coaches of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding sport performance?
- What are the perceptions of national elite karate athletes of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding their sport performance?

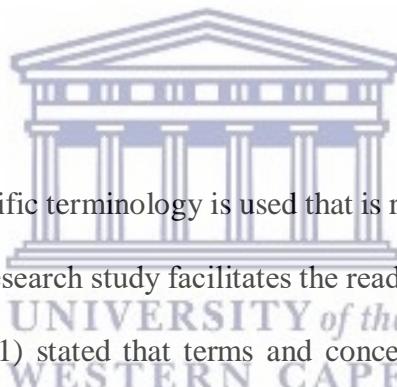


## **1.7. Significance of the Study**

All research studies are undertaken with specific aims in mind. Still, the general overarching goal of the research is to increase the extant body of knowledge and practice in a particular domain. Bolsmann and Burnett (2015) suggested that research capacity should be built in South Africa by encouraging postgraduate research in sports matters. They believed that this could lead to more meaningful studies in sports research. Research in karate has been limited to historical development and personal narratives of the sport in South Africa (Narkar, 2009; Resnekov, 2014). This study intended to build a foundation by filling the gap in the extant

research, as there is a need for a better understanding of the sport of karate and the national organization that manages the sport.

It is anticipated that this study will assist in further understanding the complexities of sport in South African society. It is proposed that academics and researchers will benefit from this study, because karate, as a specific sport, has not been researched in South Africa through a performance and organizational lens. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will enable the executive members in karate to more effectively address the challenges within the organizational structure of karate in South Africa, in order to facilitate optimal performance by the athletes. It is also possible that the ideas and concepts of organizational structure, responsibility, and sport performance generated in this study may be relevant for other sport organizations in South Africa.



### **1.8. Definitions of Terms**

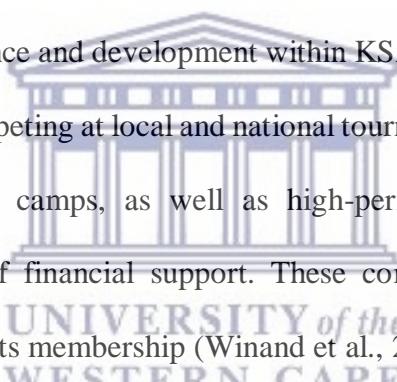
In any research undertaking, specific terminology is used that is relevant to the area under study. A clarification of the terms in a research study facilitates the reader's understanding of the study itself. DeVos and Strydom (2011) stated that terms and concepts are the building blocks of theory, and are the requirements of scientific knowledge. In this study, specific terms are defined specifically within the context of the present study for the benefit of the reader. The following section, thus, provides the definitions of core terms that are relevant to the study.

**Karate South Africa (KSA)** in this study refers to an organization that oversees the sport of karate in South Africa. It is the official body with an affiliation membership of over 200 000 and more than 1400 organized clubs in the different provinces of South Africa (Karate South Africa, n.d.).

In this study, **organizational responsibility** refers to the responsibilities that an organization like KSA has in place in order to achieve effective functioning and performance of the organization (Winand et al., 2013). These responsibilities include an ethical obligation to its membership to achieve excellence in karate.

In this study, an **organizational structure** is considered a framework of technical, human, perceptual and political skills within which sports managers measure and assess their strategic goals, including the factors that determine athletic performance (Fahlén, 2005; Nazari, 2018).

In this study, **sport performance** refers specifically to the performances of the elite athletes in karate who represent the sport at a national and/or international level (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). For this study, performance and development within KSA included identifying talented karate athletes, hosting and competing at local and national tournaments, exposure to first-class training facilities and training camps, as well as high-performance coaching, scientific expertise, and the provision of financial support. These components can be seen as the organization's responsibility to its membership (Winand et al., 2013).



The term **perception** is viewed by Leveaux (2017, p. 3) as an impression that one has, that is generally based on the understanding of something or someone. In this study, perception is understood as a manager, coach or athlete's impression of KSA's overall performance. Past experiences generally influence these perceptions and can shift, if the environment changes.

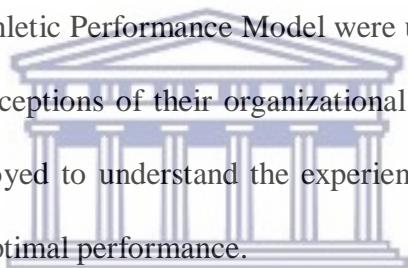
## **1.9. Thesis Outline**

### **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

In this chapter, the introduction and context of the study were presented. After that, the problem statement was described. The significance of the study within the South African context was offered. The research aim, objectives and questions were presented next. Through an annotated review of the literature, sporting organizational structures and responsibilities were described, and the notion of sport performance was unpacked using the works of Arnold et al. (2015), Glazier (2017) and Nazari (2018). Finally, the chapter breakdown for the study was outlined.

### **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

Chapter Two explores the theoretical framework used to conduct this current study. The High-Performance Model and the Athletic Performance Model were used to shape the study design and evaluate the managers' perceptions of their organizational responsibilities. The Athletic Performance Model was employed to understand the experiences of elite athletes and their career pathways to achieving optimal performance.



### **Chapter Three: Literature Review**

Chapter Three is an overview of the literature relevant to the core focus of the study. A brief discussion of the historical emergence of karate in South Africa against an apartheid context is provided, after which central ideas of organizational structure and responsibility are explored.

### **Chapter Four: Research Methods**

Chapter Four describes the research methods used to conduct the study. The rationale for implementing a qualitative approach using in-depth semi-structured interviews is provided. A description of the population, sampling, data collection tools, data collection procedures, data analysis, reliability and validity, and the ethical considerations of this study are also presented.

## **Chapter Five: Results and Discussion**

Chapter Five presents the results and discussion of the study, after the data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion, Recommendations and Summary**

In Chapter Six, the study strengths and limitations are stated and a conclusion to the study is presented. This chapter also offers recommendations, which will allow KSA to examine its organizational structure and responsibilities and enable its elite athletes to reach optimal performance. Finally, a summary of the study and the conclusion are presented.

### **1.10. Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the topic to be researched through a detailed presentation of the study's aim, objectives and research questions. In describing the context of KSA as a sporting organization, an orientation or background to the study was provided. In addition, a basic review of the literature on conceptual ideas and definitions of organizational structure, responsibility and sport performance was shared. The following chapter elucidates the theoretical framework for the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is the theoretical framework that guided this study process. Ravitch and Carl (2016, p. 46) promoted the idea that theory plays a vital role in the “process of designing and engaging” in research work. Three theoretical models are presented in this chapter. The High-Performance Model (HPM) developed by Smolianov and Zakus (2008), the Athletic Performance Model (APM) developed by Stone et al. (2007) and the Strategies to Achieve the Mission by Turner et al. (2018). The HPM covers organizational responsibilities at the macro-, meso- and micro- levels while the APM and Strategies model examine the deeper issues related to the elite athlete. In this study, three selected theories have been used to design the instruments for data collection and to illustrate the insights emerging from the results in the final chapter. In designing the interview protocol, these theoretical approaches were used to formulate the questions asked of the participants. These included questions on the organizational roles and responsibilities, elite athlete support, preparation for competition, organizational challenges, access to high-performance resources and support, and overall development within the sport of karate in SA. These areas were considered suitable, as they applied to all members in the organization, and were aligned with the study's main purpose. In presenting a description of the theoretical framework, the suitability of a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework for this study is proposed. This chapter concludes with a summary of the sport science theories used in the study.

### **2.2. Towards a Multi-Disciplinary Theoretical Framework**

Four dimensions of research theory that gives depth to qualitative research are provided by Collins and Stockton (2018). These include the clarity of the focus and organization of the study, how aspects of theory explain and limit meaning, how the study is connected to

established scholarship, and how strengths and weaknesses are identified. In this study, the selected theories clarified the core focus of the topic, including the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding sport performance within KSA, and how organizational structure enables the achievement of high-performance levels in the sport. This focus is in line with the purpose of the current research. In using these theories, it is argued that there is excellent value in studying sport systems as a “whole”, rather than evaluating the relative contribution of their constituent “parts” in isolation (Hulme et al., 2019).

Woratscheka et al. (2014) noted that, over the years, there have been ongoing discussions about how theories and concepts should explain the interrelationships between different role-players in sport. They believed that various approaches in sport management have not fully explained the interrelationships within sporting organizations. In this study, it is envisaged that both the management of sport and the theoretical components associated with athlete performance are important in the discussion of sport performance. It is proposed that the focus of this study requires a multi-dimensional framework incorporating human, financial and physical resources in order to achieve the organizational goals, as well as the necessary support to produce high-performance athletes. The two core components of this study are organizational responsibility and structure, on the one hand, and athletic performance, on the other. The selected theories discussed below effectively explain the meaning of both aspects of the study (Collins & Stockton, 2018). In this regard, Winand (2014) presented a unified model of sports organizations, which states that organizational performance is a combination of the “means and ends” of organizations. The “means” consist of what determines performance, including human and management skills. The “ends” refer to the organization's strategic goal(s), which is generally the production of elite athletes (Aćimović et al., 2013).

### **2.3. Trends in High-Performance Sport**

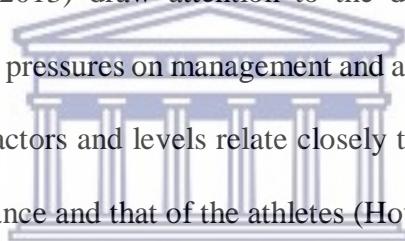
The evolution of high-performance sport can be seen in the move from the “athlete–coach–federation” relationship to including a team that comprises support staff in the form of physiotherapists, doctors, strength and conditioning coaches, psychologists, physiologists, biomechanists and, *inter alia*, performance analysts (Collins et al., 2013 cited in Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2017).

This study is in line with new trends in sport management, as suggested by Mereuta and Mareuta (2009). Their concept of “re-engineering” in the approach to organizational management requires the total involvement of top management and the ongoing cooperation of all departments and factors involved in achieving high-performance sport. Other theories that included the core components of organizational responsibility and athletic performance were also examined. Glazier (2017) presents a Grand Unified Theory (GUT) of multi-factorial sport performance and includes various interrelating physiological, biomechanical and psychological variables. This theory was not considered suitable because, as Rein et al. (2017) suggested, while this theory had clear merit, it had no specifications as to how the different constraints interacted with each other. Cardinale (2017, p. 160) concurs with Glazier that elite performers display unique mental and physical skills, characterized by the “complex interactions of multiple variables that, most of the time, are pushed to the limits of what is possible.” In his critique of GUT, Cardinale (2017) believes that GUT may only be confined to academic debate, because it is too complex for practical application.

Similarly, as Glazier advocates, Rein and Memmert (2017) favour and support the idea of unifying the various sub-disciplines of sport science into a single theory. These two authors’ critiques of Glazier’s GUT model emphasise that GUT is too ambitious. Hackfort (2017) has also noted that reflections from sport psychology and a scientific perspective are necessary to

complement this multi-factorial theorizing by Glazier (2017).

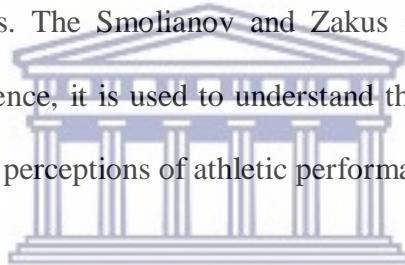
In keeping with a unified theory, Brouwers (2015) states that elite athlete development and performance involve several complex and multi-layered factors, which make them complex concepts. This study does not include a sport psychology or scientific perspective. Therefore, the GUT was not considered relevant, although it embraced the idea of a unified approach. Although Glazier's (2017) GUT promotes a more holistic understanding of sport performance across all levels of analysis, this study specifically refers to the responsibility of KSA as an organizational structure in promoting sport performance. The High-Performance Model (HPM) suggested by Smolianov and Zakus (2008) was considered relevant, because it includes social, environmental and economic aspects, which form an integral part of KSA. Furthermore, Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2013) draw attention to the dynamic environment in high-performance sport and the many pressures on management and athletes. In presenting the HPM, it is evident that the different factors and levels relate closely to each other and influence the organization's optimal performance and that of the athletes (Houlihan, 2013).



In the following two sections, the High-Performance Model (HPM) developed by Smolianov and Zakus (2008) and the Athletic Performance Model (APM) developed by Stone et al. (2007) are discussed. Although the HPM covers organizational responsibilities and athletic performance needs, the APM examines the deeper issues related to the elite athlete. In presenting these two models, it is evident that there is an inter-relationship between them, with HPM focusing on organizational and athletic performance. The APM considers the various factors that directly impact an elite athlete. Furthermore, the model suggested by Turner et al. (2019) encourages a person-centred approach, including the athletes' health and well-being. All three models contribute to a multi-dimensional organizational and athletic performance framework and are aligned with the study purpose.

## **2.4. The Organizational High-Performance Model**

At the most basic level, organizational structures provide the frameworks to help organizations proceed smoothly and function effectively (Arnold et al., 2015). In this study, the model by Smolianov and Zakus (2008) is used to understand the organizational structure of Karate South Africa (Figure 2.1). This model includes a *macro-level* layer with socio-economic, cultural, legislative and organizational support for a national sport system. The *meso-level* includes infrastructure, personnel and services enabling the delivery of sport programmes, and the *micro-level* consists of operations, processes and methodologies for developing individual athletes. The *meso-level* comprises training centres, as well as the nature of competitions and educational support offered. The *micro-level* considers funding and partnership development with other supporting agencies. The Smolianov and Zakus model has received scholarly validation in several studies, hence, it is used to understand the organizational structure and responsibilities of KSA and the perceptions of athletic performance by its members.



In line with the Smolianov and Zakus (2008) model, Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2017) note the influences of macro-, meso- and micro-level factors that contribute to the complexity of high-performance in sport. At the macro-level, factors include a country's economic, social and cultural components that directly impact sporting policies and athletic success. At the meso-level, the management of sport, policies and vision, at an organizational level, are discussed, and at the micro-level, this would mean nurturing and retaining athletes. These authors believe that high-performance sport has become a significant issue for sport and its many stakeholders, and is an under-researched subject (Smolianove & Zakus, 2008; Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2017).

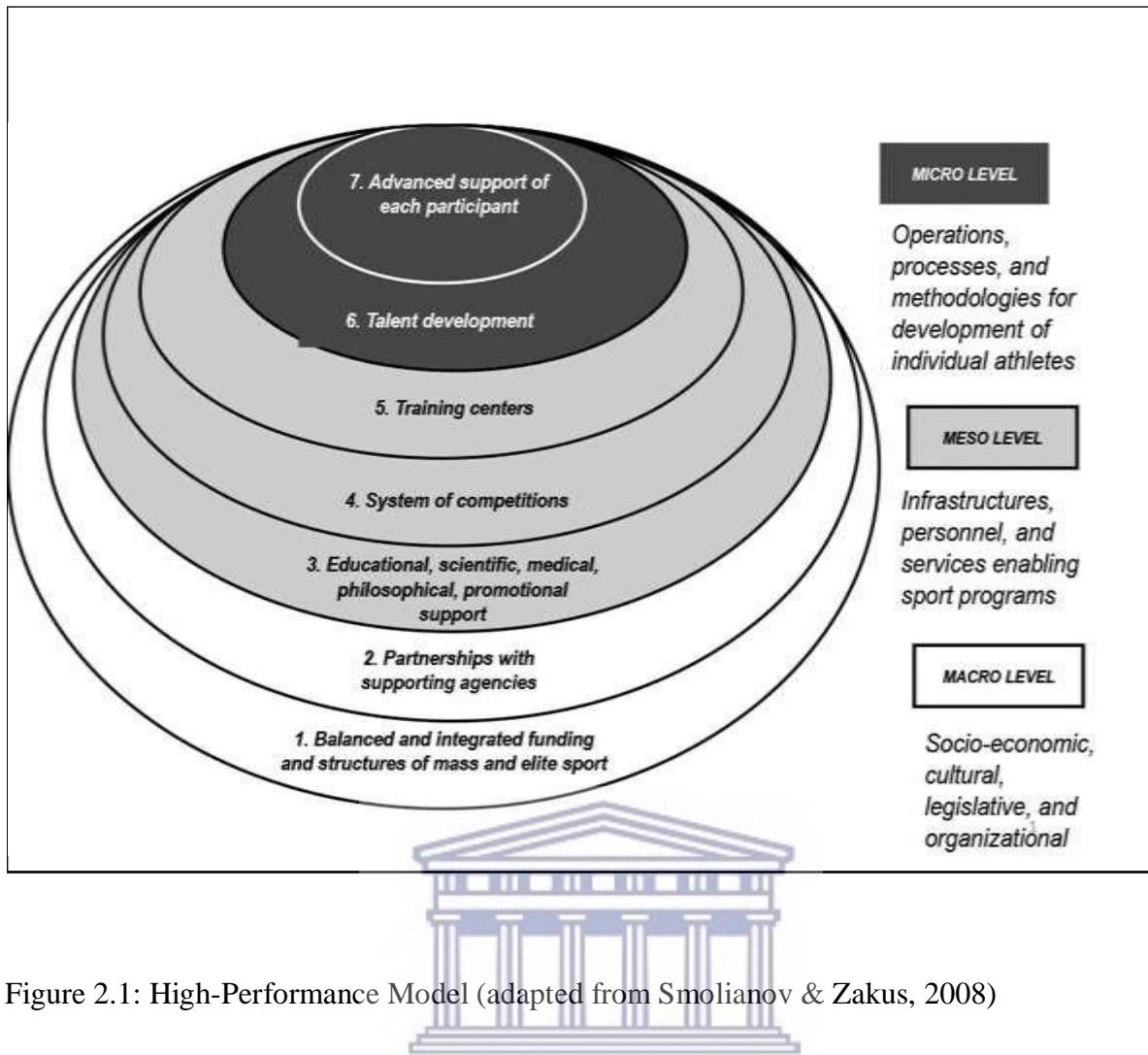


Figure 2.1: High-Performance Model (adapted from Smolianov & Zakus, 2008)

The Athletic Performance Model (APM) has been selected, because it considers the individual athlete and factors influencing performance. Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) and Rumbold et al. (2018), cited in Hulme et al. (2019), have stated that many organizational factors interact to influence athletic performance. A systematic literature review by Hulme et al. (2019) offers the usefulness of systems theory and systems ergonomic methods to maximise athletic performance. The authors note that systems ergonomics in sport would consider several factors, such as performance, health, safety and the individual's context. It is believed that this overall approach leads to understanding and optimising the functioning of sport systems, including their organizational structures, policies and processes (International Ergonomics Association, 2016, cited in Hulme et al., 2019). Hulme et al. (2019) found that the approach was helpful, especially

when sport systems become more complicated, competitive and technologically advanced.

## 2.5. Athletic Performance Model

Athletic development and performance in the context of this study would include elite sports policies, athlete development pathways and collaboration with KSA and other relevant stakeholders. For KSA athletes, elite sport performance is seen as multi-factorial, and includes a range of physiological, biomechanical and support variables that influence sport performance (Glazier, 2017; Hulme et al., 2019; Salmon, 2017).

The Athletic Performance Model was considered suitable for this study, because it aimed to understand the different factors that allow KSA elite athletes to reach optimal performance in karate (Stone et al., 2007) (Figure 2.2).





Figure 2.2: Athletic Performance Model (adapted from Stone et al., 2007)



Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2017) raise two critical questions about elite athletes within the context of high-performance, i.e., (1) how do athletes reach what constitutes the peak? and (2) how do athletes sustain their performance? In response to these questions, it can be proposed that the ten factors illustrated in the APM allow a better understanding of the elite athlete and the support required to achieve high-performance in karate.

Like the APM, the model suggested by Turner et al. (2019) also encourages a person-centred approach, including the health and well-being of athletes (Figure 2.3). After the vision and mission are determined, strategies are put in place to fulfil the mission and vision. Suppose the vision and mission are for athletes to achieve optimal performance, then a multi-disciplinary team with world-class facilities is considered critical in unlocking the true potential of athletes.

The term ‘culture’ is introduced, which includes the implementation of core community values. In the APM and person-centred approaches, dedicated time spent on training and improvement is crucial to achieve elite athletic performance (Menting et al., 2019).

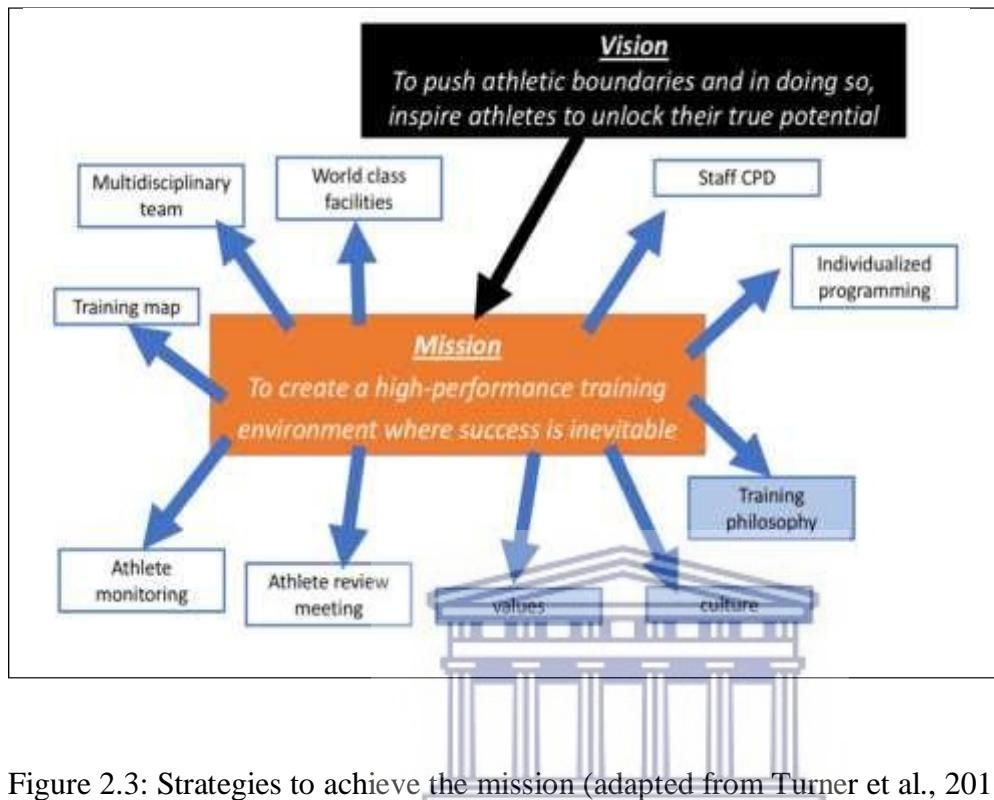


Figure 2.3: Strategies to achieve the mission (adapted from Turner et al., 2018).

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In their research, Bazyler et al. (2015) affirmed that factors such as training, monitoring and support, as presented in the above models, directly affected athletic performance. They recommend that sport coaches, strength and conditioning staff, and sports medicine professionals all play an important role in their disciplines to contribute to an athlete's development. They further note that managing external stressors in the athlete's daily life is an important component in optimising performance. Arnold and Fletcher (2013), in their review of literature on organizational stressors experienced by elite athletes, put forward a model that consists of a three-level hierarchical framework with five general dimensions: (1) factors related to the sport; (2) roles in the sports organization; (3) sports relationships and interpersonal demands; (4) athletic pathways and performance development issues; and, (5) the

organizational structure and climate of the sport. These categories also appear in the HPM and further address the organizational responsibilities and needs of elite athletic performance within KSA.

Houlihan and Green (2008) proposed that the characteristics of a successful athlete can be categorized as follows: contextual (support given to athletes); processual (competition opportunities and preparation for international events); and specific (provision of elite facilities, sport development, the provision of coaching, sport science and sport medicine support services). Furthermore, Arnold and Fletcher (2013) summarized how athletic performance can be impacted by organizational leadership and personnel, cultural and team, logistical and environmental, and performance and personal issues. According to Haff (2010, p. 42), a “multi-dimensional performance enhancement team” usually comprises sport physiologists, bio-mechanists, sport nutritionists, sport psychologists, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic trainers, physical therapists and medical doctors. Research by Nazari (2018) reported that the structure and responsibility of a sports organization consisted of technical, human, perceptual and political skills. It is this structure that sports managers use to measure and assess their strategic objectives and determine their athletes' performance.

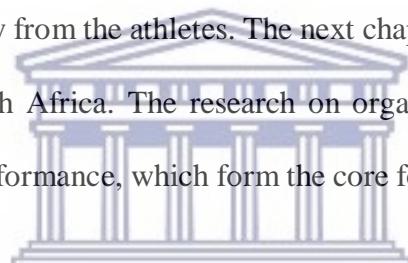
## **2.6. Summary of the Theoretical Approaches Used in the Study**

The three theoretical models presented in this chapter included the High-Performance Model (HPM) developed by Smolianov and Zakuš (2008), the Athletic Performance Model (APM) developed by Stone et al. (2007) and the Strategies to achieve the Mission by Turner et al. (2018). Cardinale (2017) maintains that there is a need to promote inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to studying sport performance. Furthermore, he notes a tendency towards mono-disciplinary approaches that have been used in the past. When used together, the suggested models for this study address the organizational, contextual and individual requirements needed to work efficiently. Turner et al. (2019) believe that performance models

can be used in sport to promote optimal performance. Additionally, De Bosscher et al. (2006) suggest that efficiency can be seen when comparing the available means of an organization and the results they achieve. These theoretical models assist in separating the different levels of organizational responsibilities within KSA and indicate which internal and external factors could impact KSA's elite athletes' performance. They also aid in understanding whether KSA has achieved the organization's strategic goals in providing essential services to its membership to achieve optimum performance.

## **2.7. Chapter Summary**

From the theoretical overview presented above, it can be deduced that understanding sport organizations and performance from a theoretical lens is complex and multifaceted, as several factors influence the decisions, beliefs and operations of sports organizations to achieve optimal performance, especially from the athletes. The next chapter presents literature relevant to karate development in South Africa. The research on organizational structure, roles and responsibilities and athletic performance, which form the core focus of this study, is reviewed.



## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1. Introduction

A literature review examines the existing scholarship or available bodies of knowledge in the research area under study (Mouton, 2001, p. 87). Mouton further states that a literature review allows the researcher to become familiar with updated information on the research problem and the opinions, theories and conceptual frameworks of other scholars who have conducted investigations in the same study area. Winchester and Salji (2016) note that a formal literature review is evidence-based, and an in-depth analysis of a subject is undertaken.

In keeping with this brief description of what constitutes a literature review, the current chapter examines extant literature on sports organizations and sports performance through an analysis of the sport system as a “whole”, linking both sports organizations and sports performance rather than evaluating the different “parts” separately (Hulme, et al., 2019). This would include the two major areas relevant to this study: sports performance and organizational structure. It is argued by Nazari (2018) that athletic performance is the core responsibility of an organization. Thereafter, sport organizations are the focus, and the discussion notes a need to move beyond the structural aspects of sport organizations.

This chapter begins with an overview of sport in South Africa and its intrinsic link with politics. In this section, it is argued that sport is a “social and political construction” (Blanco, 2017, p. 106). Thereafter, the origin and development of karate are discussed and the emergence of karate in South Africa is presented. It is noted that karate as a sport and the organizations that emerged were also subjected to the complexities of politics.

Karate is under-researched in South Africa and there is no research directly related to the topic of this current study. A literature survey on karate over the last two decades revealed articles ranging from functional diagnostics of karate athletes to physiological, anthropometric and fitness components, karate injuries, history and gender in karate. None of these articles reference the management of karate organizations or elite athletes' perceptions of organizational support for optimal performance (Appendix G).

### **3.2. Sport in South Africa**

Research on sport organizational development and performance in South Africa has mainly been linked to the political history of the country (Rademeyer, 2013), and race remains a dominant feature of South African sport (Bolsmann & Burnett, 2015; Sanders et al., 2014). Rademeyer (2014) explored South Africa's formal sports policy during apartheid. By the end of the seventies, the interaction between sport, politics and policies had created a very complex situation that directly impacted transformation issues in South African sport today.



Marjoribanks and Farquharson (2011) aver that sport is defined as a result of struggles, contestations and decisions within a society. Jacobs et al. (2019) and Rademeyer (2014), in their analysis of sport during apartheid, describe the development of alternative organizations that arose to promote sport in South Africa. In this regard, Rademeyer (2014) noted that in 1958, the South African Sports Association (SASA) was established to promote non-racial sporting bodies in South Africa. Four years later, the South African Non-Racial and Olympic Committee (SANROC) was borne out of SASA to advocate South Africa's expulsion from the Olympic movement. In 1973, the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) banded together from SASA and SANROC to amalgamate all the non-racial sporting organizations in SA. In addition, various international anti-apartheid movements joined forces with these

organizations to advocate equality in South African sport (Rademeyer, 2014). According to Wegner et al. (2020, p. 455), given the power of organizational identities, sporting organizations created “salient” identities for whom the sporting activity was considered “dissonant.” The authors used interviews to explore the identity forming processes of Black women runners in the United States. The study reported that members identified with the salient organization because they believed that it facilitated education and support, and connected them to existing running members who served as role models (Wegner et al., 2020).

Hoye et al. (2015) collected data on the various types of community involvement, selected demographic variables and social connectedness in sport. They found that involvement in sporting organizations was associated with increased levels of social connectedness. Sport involvement was found to be a predictor of social connectedness compared to non-sport community organizations. In South Africa, sport assisted in this social connectedness, and several dissonant organizations were formed to create a democratic sport system for all during apartheid (Sanders et al., 2014).

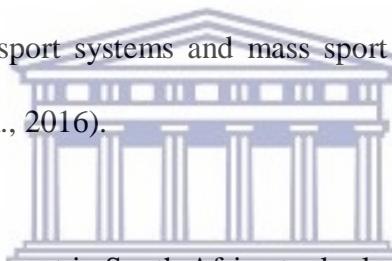


Labuschagne (2016) examined how white civil society and the National Party government utilised athletics, as a mechanism to enforce the policy of apartheid in South African society. His paper analyzed the historical relationship between politics and athletics in South Africa during the apartheid era. Similarly, research by Booth (1997), Jacobs et al. (2019) and Krotee and Schwick (1979) examined the impact of national sporting forces that removed South Africa from most international sports competitions, including the Olympic Games.

### **3.2.1. Sport Organizations in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

Research by Bolsman and Burnett (2015), as cited by both Booth (1998) and Desai (2010), reported that sport was significant and pervasive in South African society and that there was a race to transform sport in the post-apartheid era. In a similar study, Sanders et al. (2014, p. 5) examined the rise of non-governmental sport organizations in post-apartheid South Africa and noted that sport was not “totally free of politics.”

Alaj et al. (2018), in the context of Kosovo, found that systematic planning and investment in the construction of sport infrastructure and the promotion of sport organizations became the main priorities for developing sport in Kosovo. This also meant working non-politically through the organizational structure of sport organizations as per international standards. It was no different to national sport departments that started developing specific sport policies and organizations to develop elite sport systems and mass sport participation programmes (De Bosscher et al., 2011; Rees et al., 2016).



The supposed normalisation of sport in South Africa took place in 1990, when most previous barriers were removed in order to allow South Africa to send unified sport teams to compete internationally (Labuschagne, 2016). Burnett (2010) described the development of the democratic sport-system in the White Paper on Sport and Recreation (1996). She noted that this was the foundation for creating the National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP), which served as an implementation proposal for both elite and mass sport participation (NSRP, 2012). Underlying the core of the NSRP is the Transformation Charter (2014), which sought to provide equal opportunities, promote fairness and just behaviour in sport; ensure equitable resource distribution; and encourage empowerment and affirmation (SRSA NSRP, 2012; Department of Sport and Recreation in the Western Cape, 2014).

Fikile Mbalula, the then Minister of Sport and Recreation 2011, stated that the strategic

direction of sport and recreation in South Africa “...is continuously being evaluated and re-invigorated to ensure that we remain ahead of the curve and latest trends in the very competitive world of sport and recreation, and equally fulfil our strategic mandate” – which is that of an active and winning nation (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2011).

High-performance sport is listed as Goal 7 on the Top 10 priority list of the Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan for South Africa (2011). Grix and Carmichael (2012) suggested an approach they referred to as the “virtuous cycle of sport”. This theory supports the idea that investment in elite sport promotes mass participation - which most sporting nations adopt. In terms of the Sport and Recreation Plan, the South African government (2011-2015), on the other hand, opted to focus on investing in mass participation in order to promote elite sport development.



Groenewald (2014), in his literature review of online and printed material of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) and Surfing South Africa (SSA), found evidence that there were many policies for South Africa to create a strong, active and winning national high-performance sport system. These included innovations and structures that had improved the Operations Excellence Programme (OPEX), Long-Term Participant Development (LTPD) and Long-Term Coaches Development (LTCD) programmes of SASCOC (NSPR 2012, p. 19). However, despite ideal policy implementation, Rademeyer (2013) noted that one could not have predicted that dismantling apartheid in sport after 1994 would be so complicated.

### **3.3. Origin and Development of Karate**

In introducing the historical development of karate, it is argued that it has never been a fixed tradition (Tan, 2004). Research on the evolution of karate provides a critical understanding of karate's technical evolution and ideological foundations (Johnson, 2012). Authors such as Tan (2004) believed that contemporary and popular views of karate as a "martial tradition" were historical and politically complex, whilst Swennen (2009, p.4) spoke of a "fresh approach to understanding" the traditional art of karate. Johnson (2012, p. 63) referred to karate development as assimilating "structural and procedural differences" after its initial development in Okinawa.

Lachina (2018) suggested that karate has been recognized as an Olympic sport amidst the decline of traditional martial arts and the rise of a mixed martial arts culture. In this context, Lachina (2018) raised questions about the forces contributing to this robust expansion of karate. Additionally, Moening (2011) examined the rapid development of karate from Okinawa to Japan and found that karate evolved by incorporating new ideas from young Japanese students (Nichas et al., 2020). The university clubs and Shotokan schools of Funakoshi played a critical role in karate's rapid development. Krug (2001) averred that the expansion and demystification of karate resulted from an explosion of information globally.

Giampietro et al. (2003) suggested that karate, like other martial sports, had spread amongst the youth, with the number of athletes rising considerably around the turn of the century. These authors believed that karate was arguably one of the most popular martial arts practised worldwide. Modern non-contact karate tournaments of the World Karate Federation consist of two equally important karate disciplines: Kumite and kata. Kumite is a synonym for a karate fight and comprises executing freely chosen defensive and offensive techniques applied against an opponent (Koropanovski et al., 2011). The kata performance consists of prescribed sequences

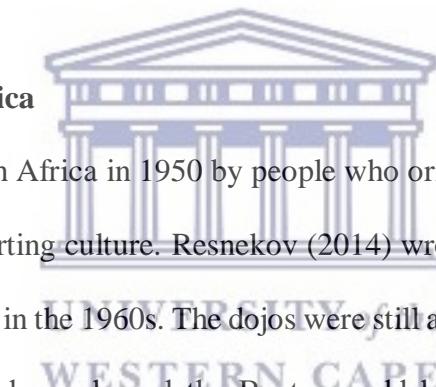
of defensive and offensive techniques. While following the prescribed movement sequences, the techniques are relatively formal, systematic, predominantly slow and mainly performed in relatively low postures (Imamura, 1998 as cited in Koropanovski et al., 2011).

From this discussion, it can be deduced that from the outset, karate was not merely the product of one nation or one culture, but rather the outcome of interactions in East Asia between groups sharing frequent and prolonged contact.

In the next section, the introduction of karate in South Africa is discussed, along with the challenges and development of KSA as an organization during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

### **3.4. Karate in South Africa**

Karate was introduced in South Africa in 1950 by people who originally emerged from the East and were interested in this sporting culture. Resnekov (2014) wrote about the time when karate had just started in South Africa in the 1960s. The dojos were still a tiny part of an apartheid South Africa, whereby, the “coloured people and the Bantu would have to train on different days compared to the white karateka”. Resnekov (2014) explored the resistance that was met, because the pioneers, Nellie and Johan, a married couple were of different race groups. Nellie Kleinsmidt was known as the grandmother of karate in Africa. Her challenges are described by Jones (2010) which included raids on her dojo by soldiers and constant harassment by the apartheid government were not uncommon.



The arrival of Japanese masters raised concern, because the apartheid government believed this would give people of colour power and an advantage over their supremacy. Narkar's (2009) book, "My Karate Odyssey" (2009) presents how his spirit as an athlete was developed under the harsh "apartheid" regime in South Africa. He stated that martial arts were linked to politics, because practically all existing organizations had to apply for a permit from the Minister of Interior to function normally. This permit would allow people from all races to join and practise the arts, which were done at so-called white schools only. The introduction of karate petrified the then Minister of Sport, Jan de Klerk, who saw this sport as an offensive art and, by falling into the hands of the disadvantaged, they could use it to fight against the oppressors (Narkar, 2009).

These pioneers initiated the development and expansion of karate to what today has become the sixth biggest sport in the country, with a membership exceeding 200 000 and more than 1400 organized clubs throughout South Africa. In South Africa, a similar strategy was used to form a "salient" (Wegner et al., 2020) karate group that developed in the 1960s through the persistence of a few men who practised karate on rooftops and in garages. According to Narkar (2009), this group travelled to Japan, where they had authentic exposure to the masters of the art. Top martial arts masters visited South Africa, and karate development gained momentum. However, it was not until 1964 that it became organized at a national level (Narkar, 2009).

On 19 May 1992, the Karate Association of South Africa (KASA) was formed, unifying karate as a sport amongst the various national karate bodies. Today, through the initiatives of KASA, all the various styles of karate and provincial structures are unified under one body, which controls karate in South Africa (Karate South Africa, n.d.). Karate South Africa was formed in June 2005, after the then Minister of Sport disbanded the previous body (KASA). The new body came into being under the supervision of the South African Sports Council. The vision of

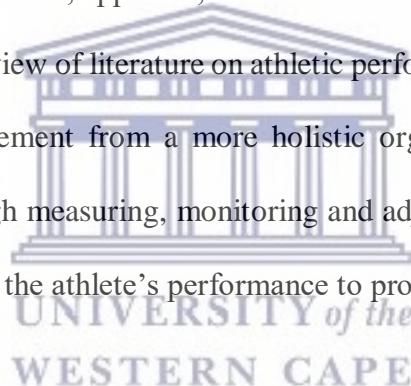
Karate South Africa is to develop the character and discipline of its members so that they can become sound leaders of tomorrow who will use the positive values of karate-do to serve the needs of South Africa with “diligence and distinction” (Karate South Africa, n.d.).

Narkar (n.d.) wrote that in 1992, South Africa was re-admitted to the World Karate Federation (WKF) mainly due to the progress made by KASA. A critical role played by KASA was the consolidation of existing karate bodies across South Africa. It was this initiative that led to South Africa playing host to the 13<sup>th</sup> World Karate Championships of the WKF in 1996 (Narkar, n.d.). Due to the turmoil and mismanagement in KASA, another new structure, Karate South Africa (KSA), was formed (Karate South Africa, n.d.). Once again, poor management resulted in lengthy court battles between the karate body and the Olympic governing structure. The World Karate Federation (WKF) supported KSA, the organization presently managing karate in South Africa. According to Pal et al. (2020), the WKF is the largest international sport karate organization with more than 10 million members in more than 190 - member countries and is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Karate was included in the sports programme of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 in the memorable 129<sup>th</sup> session of the International Olympic Committee, which was held in Rio de Janeiro on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016. Moreover, the Executive Board of the IOC agreed on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, to include karate in the sports programme of the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018 (Karate South Africa, n.d.).

The following section describes what constitutes sports performance management. Organizational issues and athletic performance are interwoven into this discussion of sports performance.

### **3.5. Sports Performance Management**

Badau et al. (2010) described performance management in sport as a concept used to enable team performance based on ideas of measurement and monitoring. In this regard, athletic performance is the core responsibility of an organization that would determine best practices through measuring, monitoring and adjusting organizational structures. In their research, Bazylar et al. (2015) stated that several factors affected athletic performance. These included coach-athlete relationships, occupations, genetic potential, environmental factors, and physical and social environments. They further noted that managing external pressures in an athlete's daily life was also an essential component in optimizing performance (Stone et al., 2007). Badau et al. (2010) described performance management as "a term used to improve team performance, based on measurement, appraisal, action and monitoring". O'Boyle et al. (2014) who conducted a systematic review of literature on athletic performance found few studies that examined performance management from a more holistic organizational perspective. Best practice was determined through measuring, monitoring and adjusting of performance, which created an optimal situation for the athlete's performance to progress (O'Boyle et al., 2014).



Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009, p. 429) tracked the "emergence, application and future of organizational psychology knowledge" in elite sports performance after the rapid development of elite sports worldwide. From an extensive narrative review, they found six lines of inquiry that reflected organizational issues in elite sports performance, namely:

- Factors affecting Olympic performance;
- Organizational stress in athletes, coaches and parents;
- Perceptions of roles within sports teams;
- Organizational success factors in sport and business;
- Performance environments in elite sports; and

- Organizational citizenship behaviour in sport.

In presenting the literature review for this section, the six lines of inquiry will be adapted to present a discussion on sport performance. The study by Wolfe et al. (2002) is also relevant in this context because they attempted to establish the most important determinants of athletic effectiveness and to examine how these factors interacted with one another. These researchers identified essential determinants of athletic success, including athletic performance on the field, student-athlete education, sports resources, and institutional support.

### **3.5.1. Performance Environments in Elite Sport**

Research indicates that elite sport consists of several factors, including a range of physiological, biomechanical and psychological variables that influence performance (Glazier, 2017; Hulme et al., 2019; Salmon, 2017). In this study, it is hoped that elite performance and development within KSA will include the identification of talented karate athletes, hosting and competing in local and national tournaments, exposure to excellent training facilities and training camps, as well as high-performance coaching, access to scientific expertise, and the provision of financial support. These components can be seen as an organization's responsibility to its membership (Winand et al., 2013). The study by Winand et al. (2013) considered high-performance sport as the top end of sport development. It included any athlete or team that competed at national or international level. The scope included Olympic and non-Olympic sports, and professional and amateur sports.

In their review of different approaches, Winand et al. (2013) noted that sport performance concerned ongoing, emerging competition, systems, cultural differences and training centres.

These centres should include high-performance institutes of sport offering advanced athlete preparation and support, performance analysis, strength and conditioning and lifestyle management, which they believed were priorities. In these processes, many organizations and stakeholders offered opportunities for competitions, training in specialised facilities, coaching and skills development, talent identification, selection, development and transition to higher levels of competition (Rees et al., 2016).

### **3.5.2. Organizational Citizenship Behaviour in Sport: South African Policy**

#### **Development for High-Performance**

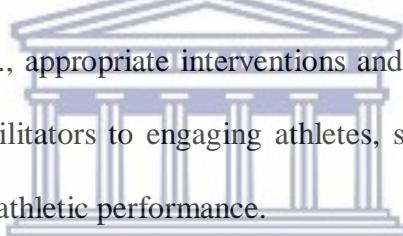
Between 2004 and 2012, the national coordination of high-performance sport in South Africa was restructured through various initiatives (Groenewald, 2014). The policy changes included the following key areas: national government leadership changes, as a result of a new governance model; Olympic structure (SASCOC) leadership changes, due to its quadrennial elections; policy changes that included the National Sports and Recreation Plan (NSRP); SASCOC's Operations Excellence Programme (OPEX); Long-Term Participant Development (LTPD); Long-Term Coaches Development and Athlete Qualifications Criteria; and the National Academy System Framework (NSPR, 2012).

Groenewald (2014) advises that high-performance sport must include quality management practices that will help to lay the foundation for preparing athletes for the highest levels of competition and “ensure monitoring and ongoing improvement” (Sothiriadou & De Bosscher, 2013, p. 98). The literature shows that high-performance sport extends beyond talented youth or senior athletes to sports administrators, coaches, sports scientists and sports centres that offer expert technical support (Badau et al., 2010; Winand et al., 2013; Wolfe et al., 2002). Yet another aspect of high-performance sport is the transition of athletes into elite sports. Apart

from the challenges experienced by ice-hockey athletes, a study by Bruner et al. (2008) suggested that practitioners, coaches and sport psychology consultants need to be aware of the transition experiences of athletes, not only when they retire from sport, but also upon their entry into elite sport.

### **3.5.3. Sport Performance and Athlete Stress**

In their study, Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009, p.239-240) noted that “elite athletes do not live in a vacuum; they function within a highly complex social and organizational environment, which influences them and their performances”. The authors referred to this environment as the “twilight zone” surrounding elite sports, organizational culture, and climate. Furthermore, Purcell et al. (2019) examined the mental health of elite athletes. They suggested that sport administrators should also consider developing guidelines on the mental health of athletes and make them available to all relevant staff. These guidelines should include appropriate referral sources, i.e., appropriate interventions and responses (e.g., prevention programmes versus early interventions), facilitators to engaging athletes, such as support and encouragement, and linking mental well-being with athletic performance.



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### **3.5.4. Coaching, Coaches and Athlete Support**

The study by Gomes et al. (2018) explored the complex relationships amongst coaches' philosophies, perceptions and effectiveness criteria. The results of their study reported four main themes: (a) the importance of athlete motivation; (b) the importance of building a relationship with athletes based on personal respect; (c) the presence of high levels of cohesion amongst the team; and (d) the need for formal and informal rules that regulate the team's functioning. The authors concluded that there were several areas in which coaches did not establish a relationship between philosophy, practice and effectiveness.

The purpose of the study by Gearity and Murray (2011) was to describe the psychological effects of poor coaching reported by collegiate, professional and semi-professional athletes. The five themes derived from athletes' reports included poor teaching by the coaches and inhibiting athletes' mental coping skills. Similarly, McKay et al. (2008), cited in Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009), in a sample of elite British track athletes, highlighted five main stress categories, namely: training issues, harmful aspects of interpersonal relationships, governing body factors, environmental conditions in competition, and personal issues related to the organization. The aim of a South African study of female university athlete-coach relationships by Vollenhoven (2018) found that the behaviour of coaches had an influence on female athletes' psychological state, as well as performance.

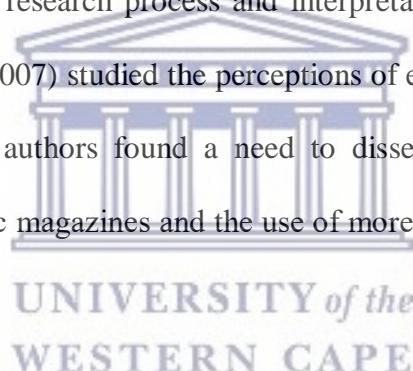
### **3.5.4.1. Coaches**

A study by De Weese et al. (2015) explored training programmes for strength and power in field athletes. The findings indicated that the athlete's adaptation and progress were directly related to the ability of the coach/athlete to create an efficient training process. This ability included understanding how exercises affected physiological and performance adaptation, optimising the transfer of training effect, and ensuring that training exercises had the maximum potential for carryover to performance. Furthermore, coaches must implement programmes with variations at appropriate levels (macro-, meso- and micro-levels). Such abilities amongst coaches ensured that fatigue management was enhanced and performance progress was optimized.

Additionally, Bateman and Jones (2019) examined the perceptions of six elite professional football analysts' relationships with their respective coaches. Semi-structured interviews utilizing the COMPASS framework that focused on conflict, openness, motivation, preventative strategies, assurance, support and social networks. The researchers found that elite

coaches were supported by a large group of support staff who would observe and collaborate on data to benefit the athletes. This study outlined the COMPASS Model, which the authors believed was transferable across all coach-athlete relationships.

On a more local level, Kubayi (2018) investigated the sport science perceptions and research needs amongst South African coaches. Using a cross-sectional survey design, a total of 202 (28 females and 174 males) purposively recruited South African coaches completed a validated questionnaire. These authors found that sport coaches needed to have a foundation of sport science knowledge in order to enhance their athletes' performance. Furthermore, coaches needed to have a basic understanding of nutrition, biomechanics, the physiological adaptations of training, and the scientific principles that form the foundation of training. More importantly, they needed to understand the research process and interpretation of the results. In another study, Williams and Kendall (2007) studied the perceptions of elite coaches and sport science researchers in Australia. The authors found a need to disseminate research findings via coaching clinics, sports-specific magazines and the use of more appropriate "lay" language in information dissemination.

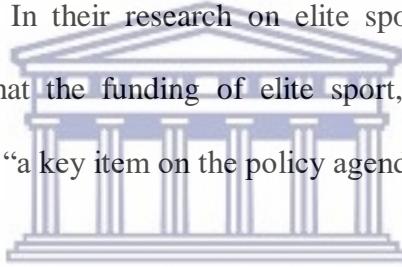


Mokoena and Dhurup (2019) explored the relationships between self-efficacy, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and satisfaction with life amongst a cohort of amateur sport coaches in South Africa. The findings reflected that sport organizations should invest time and resources into creating a fit-for-purpose amateur coaching workforce. The results supported the assertion that there was a strong link between amateur sport coaches' self-efficacy and their organizational commitment. Sport organizations were expected to be adequately prepared to enhance the sport coaches' efficiency and performance, when preparing athletes for competition. Arraya and Pellissier (2013, p. 98) maintained that production in the sport environment, and is "decidedly different from production in most other

markets”. They found that coaches who had an in-depth knowledge of their athletes’ characteristics (including goal-orientation, locus of control belief, confidence, physical capacity, and technical and tactical skills) could develop effective training regimens for teams in order to fulfil their goals. Furthermore, the coaches could alter their coaching style to enhance athletic productivity. Hence, sport managers and coaches should develop goal-setting programmes that are consistent with the reality of the team and the club.

### **3.5.4.2. Funding**

Generally, sport organizations are self-funded or partially funded and, at the same time, there is pressure for athletes to achieve. Sport managers often find themselves pressured to commercialize their sport and their organization in order to support athletes, and keep the public interest (Parent, 2006). In their research on elite sport policy, Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2017, p.1) found that the funding of elite sport, and a strategic approach to developing athletes represented “a key item on the policy agenda of many countries”.



A study by Groenewald (2014) aimed to assess the quality of management practices in high-performance swimmers in South Africa. It was found that the sport industry was faced with substantial challenges, such as financial, infrastructural, membership, drop-out, governance and coaching. Furthermore, the results from the Groenewald (2014) study recommended an organizational shift to a more professional service delivery in sporting organizations. Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) found that when there was an increased financial investment at the government level, national sport organizations became more accountable for key performance indicators. This also meant winning more medals at major international competitions.

In his thesis, Adom-Aboagye (2015) used qualitative research methods to explore the underlying factors regarding funding support for elite athletes in South Africa, based on the experiences and perceptions of elite athletes. The findings reflected that implementing significant funding support provided by the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee was good in theory, but not necessarily in practice. Overall, participants were grateful for the support received, but felt that specific changes needed to be considered when going forward in order to improve future performances. These changes included the selection process for funding support, delays in reimbursement, institutional arrangements for funding allocation and funding support for local and overseas athletes. For the current study, exploring how SASCOC supports karate's high-performance athletes would be most informative.

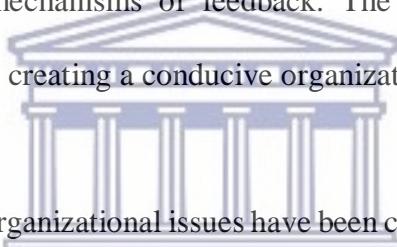
#### **3.5.4.3. Factors Affecting Olympic Performance**

An understanding of the sport policies in South Africa concerning high-performance athletes is important, when examining the factors affecting Olympic performance (Jacobs et al., 2019). These authors noted that South Africa was only allowed to re-enter the Olympic Games in 1992. The country went from attaining two medals at Barcelona to achieving ten in 2016 at the Rio Olympic Games. Jacobs et al. (2019) believed that this progress in sporting performance at the prestigious Olympic Games was laudable for a less developed country, as many challenges existed regarding the growth of mass participation sport and the development of a system to enhance elite sport policies and athletic performance.

Over the last two years, in the context of democracy, an unprecedented degree of interest has been generated in the sport of karate, due to its recognition as an Olympic Sport. Karate was included in the sport programme of the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 (Karate South Africa,

n.d.). More recently, karate was included in the Olympic Youth Games 2022 in Dakar, Senegal.

If KSA's vision for its elite athletes is international and Olympic participation, then an ideal situation for elite athletes in karate would be for this organizational structure to offer support for optimal performance by its athletes (Winand et al., 2013). In their qualitative study, Fletcher et al. (2011) interviewed thirteen national performance directors of Olympic sports on performance, leadership and management. The main issues that emerged from these interviews were concerns regarding the vision of the organization, factors that influence vision and sharing of the vision with its membership. The primary operational issues were financial management, strategic competition and planning, athlete selection for competition, and upholding the rules and regulations of the sport. The prominent human resource issues were staff management, lines of communication and mechanisms of feedback. The primary cultural issues were establishing role awareness, and creating a conducive organizational and team atmosphere.



Arnold et al. (2015) found that organizational issues have been consistently identified as unique factors in achieving Olympic success. Other factors influencing success were experienced at a personal level, namely personality, health, skills, experience and environment-related factors (Stone et al., 2007). The study by Winand et al. (2013) explored sport governing bodies in Belgium by assessing potential determinants of performance. It found that high-performance sport could be delivered by sport governing bodies that developed innovative activities for their members and were proactive in providing elite sport services.

The following section argues that it is essential to understand organizational influences on athletic performance with greater insight (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). Fahlen (2005) reported on the participants' perceptions of organizational structures in Swedish elite ice hockey. The findings showed that athletes' perceptions were related to the organizational positions occupied

by the members, resulting in tensions between the different organizational positions and the athletes. When considering the perception of the members of a sports organization or club, the impressions that the coaches, athletes or staff had of the organization were influenced by their past experiences (Milton et al., cited in Leveaux, 2017).

### **3.6. Sports Organizations: Moving Beyond the Structure**

When examining the literature on the management of a sports organization, Parent (2006) presents three significant approaches that can be used: Organization Theory, Organizational Behaviour and Strategic Management. Their study focused on Organization Theory, which dealt with the whole organization. Parent (2006) proposed several questions within Organization Theory that moved beyond the focus of a sports organization's structural aspects.

These included the following:

- What are the primary forms of organizations?
- How do organizations arise?
- How do organizations work?
- How can organizations become more efficient?
- Who controls the organization? and
- What is the role of the organization in society?

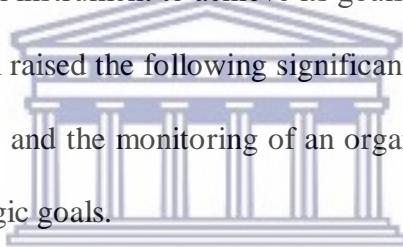


In presenting the literature on organizational structure, the above questions have been adapted and used as a framework to understand KSA as an organization. The first two questions on the form and origin of organizations have been adequately captured in the introductory section of this chapter. Research by Krug (2001), Narkar (2009) and Resnekov (2014) covered specific literature on how karate developed in South Africa within the apartheid context (Bolsmann & Burnett, 2015; Rademeyer, 2013; Sanders et al., 2014). In addition, Johnson (2012) and Moening (2011) addressed the origin and development of world karate.

The following discussion encompasses the rest of the questions posed by Parent (2006), which included understanding sport organizations and how they worked; the control and efficacy of sports organizations, and their roles and responsibilities to the athletes. It is proposed that in this study, an understanding of how organizations work can allow for better insights concerning KSA.

### **3.6.1. Understanding Sport Organizations**

According to Slack and Parent (2006), a sports organization can be viewed as a social entity involved in the sports industry that is focused on attaining certain goals, and is properly structured with clear rules and procedures. Grossi et al. (2005) considered the purpose of an organization as an instrument to achieve its goals. Lam's (2014) review of sports organizations in Belgium raised the following significant issues: the development of strategic goals and direction, and the monitoring of an organization's performance to ensure that it achieves its strategic goals.

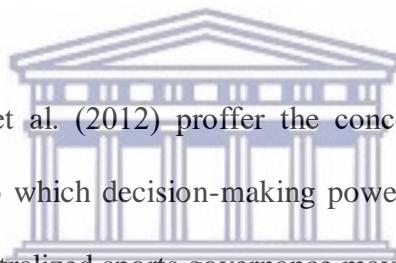


In the context of this study, the organizational structure of KSA is about how an organization's tasks “are broken down and allocated to employees or volunteers, the reporting relationship amongst the stakeholders, and the coordinating and controlling mechanisms used within the sports organization” (Slack & Parent, 2006 cited in Parent et al., 2012). Grossi et al. (2005) argued that organizations are multi- structured and have three dimensions: power, coordination and control.

### **3.6.2. How do Organizations Work?**

Three concepts are proposed by Parent et al. (2012) to better understand how sports organizations work. They believed that ideas of complexity, formalisation and centralisation would assist in describing the structural characteristics of organizations, how they worked and how they get managed. The components of an organization should include:

- Complexity: the degree of horizontal, vertical, and spatial differentiation of an organization;
- Formalisation: the documentation of rules, regulations, policies, procedures, job descriptions, etc., that dictate the working of a sports organization; and
- Centralisation: the degree to which decision-making power is vested in the hands of one or a few senior managers in a sports organization.



Ali et al. (2018) and Parent et al. (2012) proffer the concept of “centralization”, which essentially means the degree to which decision-making power is vested in a few managers.

Blanco (2017) believed that centralized sports governance may be viewed as more effective in countries where the national or central government tended to concentrate and centralize the powers, functions, responsibilities and resources of sports governing bodies. This could result in the development of elite sports, which allowed for winning numerous medals at the Olympics and the World Games. Blanco (2017) further advised that sports policy-makers need to find equilibrium of when to centralize and decentralize the system of sports governance, which he referred to as complementation. According to Lam (2014), a well-balanced and defined structure provided a solid foundation for any successful sports entity.

In this study, organizational responsibility refers to an organization's responsibility to achieve effective performance (Winand et al., 2013). These responsibilities include an ethical

obligation to consider social, environmental and economic outcomes that are considered an integral part of the organizational structure (Nazari, 2018).

### **3.6.3. Organizational Structure, Roles and Responsibilities**

Organizational structure describes an organization's formal reporting relationships, its allocation of responsibility and how roles and responsibilities are carried out among organizational members (Hao et al., 2012 as cited in Ahmady et al., 2016).

Researchers provide different ways of understanding the influence of organizational structure on responsibility. Ali et al. (2018) proposed four characteristics of organizational structure: complexity, formalization, centralization and integration, as discussed above. According to Panahi (2016, p. 88), these four components formed part of an organizational structure that was a method for “dividing, organizing and synchronizing organizational activities”. In his study, Panahi (2016) used a 30-item inventory of effectiveness with a sample of sports organizations, including board members, paid administrative staff, national coaches, elite athletes, international officials and scientific consultants. He found that the objectives, technology and human resources were considered the main pillars of any organization. From the research, it can be concluded that organizational structure may be considered a framework of technical, human, perceptual and political skills within which sports managers measure their strategic goals. An important part of strategic goals is to ensure athletic performance (Fahlén, 2005; Nazari, 2018).

According to Winand et al. (2013), the core responsibility of sports organizations is the competent performance of their athletes; the development of innovative activities for the organization's athletes; and a commitment to offering essential sports services. In addition,

Áćimović et al. (2013, p. 251) noted that sports organizations were responsible for producing physically fit athletes who excelled in competitions as individuals or as teams. Similarly, Arraya and Pellissier (2013) maintained that production in the sports environment differed from production in most other markets.

Lam (2014) stated that sports organizations and governing bodies at the local, national and international levels had similar roles and responsibilities as corporate boards, governments, or the judiciary. To this end, the outcome of a study by Mereuță and Mereuță (2009), on new trends in sport management, revealed that there was a need for sport management to undergo a radical change in the organization. They asserted that this could be done through re-engineering to increase both the health and the performances of trained athletes. Winand et al. (2013) also found that non-profit organizations faced increasing responsibility and pressure to become more performance-oriented in Belgium.



Gurianova and Mechtcheriakova (2015) maintained that it was the responsibility of organizations to create structures that co-ordinated the organization's activities (Ahmady et al., 2016), and controlled the actions of its members. In this study, the organizational structure is seen as one of the most significant responsibilities of an organization. In the next section, it is proposed that at the most basic level, organizational structures provide the framework-s to help organizations proceed smoothly and function effectively (Arnold et al., 2015). Organizational structure is thus a key component of organizational responsibility, if an organization has to function effectively (Lam, 2014).

### **3.6.4. Effectiveness of Sport Organizations**

In their study of organizational effectiveness, Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) found five composite effectiveness variables, namely, (1) the calibre of the board and external liaisons; (2) interest in athletes; (3) internal procedures; (4) long-term planning; and (5) sport science support. Lam (2014) stated that this was challenging, because a wide-range of requirements contributed to effectiveness. It also meant that all these variables must demonstrate effectiveness at every level. Moreover, Nazari (2018) investigated the effect of variables such as technical, human, perceptual and political skills on the sports managers' selection of managerial models. He found that understanding the general problems of the organization assisted managers in selecting the most appropriate management model. For effectiveness, managers should have special skills to perform their tasks with knowledge and experience.

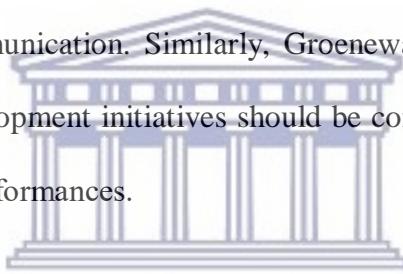
Blanco (2017, p. 110) proposed that “sports governance legitimacy” involved the collective efforts of all the sports stakeholders, such as the government, civil society, private sectors and industry, in the quest for viable sports policies, which would benefit all citizens. For Blanco (2017), all-inclusive sports governance was an essential quality of effectiveness and legitimacy.

### **3.6.5. Who Controls the Organization?**

Acimović et al. (2013) stated that to function efficiently, a sports organization must rely on general management knowledge and knowledge from management theory, as well as organizational, systems, economic and sport theory. They believed that these components could empower any manager to work in sports. Lam (2014) noted that although governance involved responsibility, rules and policies, communication and transparency, the core component of effective governance was decision-making. He contended that managers plan

organize, and conduct personnel policy, and manage human resources and control the attainment of goals.

Weinberg and McDermott (2002) conducted a study to examine critical factors in organizational success. They interviewed twenty sports and business leaders about their perceptions of organizational effectiveness in group dynamics, including leadership, group cohesion and communication. The results revealed that most sports and business leaders agreed on the factors relating to organizational success. The central leadership factors were leader characteristics, interpersonal skills and leadership skills. They also found that coaches, team managers and performance directors needed to possess a complex set of managerial skills, including inspiring and motivating others, building a unified team of administrators and technical staff, and maintaining clear lines of communication. Similarly, Groenewald (2014) postulated that the importance of professional development initiatives should be considered to improve the sports managers' and organizations' performances.



Áćimović et al. (2013, p. 252) suggested that managers contributed to the realization of set goals, and could be classified as “top-managers (head directors, sports directors), functional managers (marketing, financials), and operative managers (sector executives, coaches)”. Top managers were dedicated to coordinating work in sports organizations and monitoring and achieving all organizational functions. Functional managers were focused on conducting the processes and activities of management and organizational structures. Sports organizations need marketing, financial support, the maintenance of facilities and equipment, and supervision over administration and accounting. Operative managers supervise and ensure the realization of plans through their professional skills.

### **3.6.6. Sport Organizations, Politics and Citizenship**

It was posited by Blanco (2017, p. 106) that sports cannot insulate and alienate itself from the rigourintricacies and complexities of politics, because “sports itself thrives under the umbrella of politics”. A study by Payi (2009) focused on the organizational efficacy and effectiveness of processes and sporting infrastructure in Cape Town. The study found that sport can act as a catalyst to minimize tensions and maximize peace in the crime-ridden district of Khayelitsha. Keim (2003) examined sport for nation-building and social integration in South Africa. The author noted that facilities, equipment and trained instructors continued to be in short supply in poorer locations due to the legacy of apartheid.

Blanco (2017) systematically reviewed the literature on sports governance from January 2000 to January 2015. For sports governance to be legitimate, he found that it must engage all sports stakeholders, such as the government, civil society, the private sector and industry. These components must work together to develop sports programmes that benefit all citizens. Lam (2014) also contended that organizations should be accountable to the public, their stakeholders, and those who would be affected by their decisions or actions. In addition, Babiak (2007) found that inter-organizational relationships had become increasingly important for sports organizations. He explored partnership factors in a group of collaborating non-profit, public and private organizations. A conceptual framework that included the determinants of legitimacy, stability, necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity and efficiency was used. Babiak (2007) argued that the interdependence theory could be applied to manage sports organizations through inter-organizational partnerships.

Similarly, Bolsman and Burnett (2015), Burnett (2009), Phillips and Vanreusel (2014) and Rademeyer (2013) researched the opportunities and challenges that non-profit organizations encountered when using sport for development within the education system, in post-apartheid

South Africa. These authors found that sports organizations could fulfil a vital developmental role in alleviating issues of inequality and poverty. In addition, Labuschagne (2016) examined how white civil society and the National Party government utilised athletics to enforce the policy of separateness/apartheid in South African society. Moreover, Merrett et al. (2011) examined quotas' history and racial legacy in South African rugby and cricket. They confirmed that affirmative action for sports organizations had become a significant policy framework in building a post-apartheid society. According to Blanco (2017, p. 105), effective sports governance was a "source of national pride, joy and honour for a country and its people" and sports excellence meant "social, economic and political growth and development" for a country.

### **3.7. Chapter Summary**

In this literature review, a summary of the historical development of karate indicated that the sport started as an amateur sport. It was organized and managed by volunteers on a small scale within the context of apartheid. As an organization, KSA was only officially recognized by national and international karate bodies in 2005. The literature review suggests that karate as a sport and in the context of organizational management is under-researched in South Africa and internationally. Hence, attention to organizational roles and responsibilities and sports performance, which form the core concepts in this thesis, is warranted. It was found that researchers view elite sports performance as multi-factorial, including a range of required variables to achieve optimal performance in an elite athlete. In examining the roles and responsibilities of sporting organizations, the researcher noted that sporting organizations must offer essential sports services for the optimal performance of their athletes.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS

### 4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study's literature review was presented in which the core responsibility of sports organizations and factors affecting athletic performance were discussed. It was argued that the development of innovative activities for the organization's athletes and the commitment to offer essential sports services were critical to the structure and responsibility of a sports organization in order to achieve optimal performance by its athletes.

This chapter addresses the research methods, specifically regarding the study design, data collection and statistical analysis used in this study. A research design is a blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis based on the study's research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). This chapter provides a detailed description of the plan and procedure adopted to attain the following objectives:

- To describe the organizational structure and responsibility of KSA at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels;
- To explore the perceptions of the executive managers of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure with regard to elite sports performance.
- To explore the perceptions of sport coaches of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure with regard to elite sports performance.
- To explore the perceptions of national karate athletes of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure with regard to their sports performance.

A study by Atalay (2018, p 552) examined the methodological issues in doctorate theses in the

field of sport management in Turkey between 2007 and 2016. This study found that in most of the doctorate theses on sport management, there was no information on the research method, design and sampling method. The findings suggested that these components should feature in these advanced research studies and be completed in a “meticulous manner”. With this point in mind, this chapter discusses the research methods used in this study. The chapter begins by describing the research design used in this study. Thereafter, the sampling methods, data-generation methods, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical issues are explained.

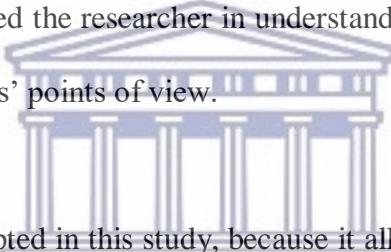
## **4.2. Research Design**

Scientific sport research has generally used approaches favouring experimental designs used in physiology or biomechanics, as suggested by Williams and Kendall (2007). Similarly, Olivier and Fishwick (2003) viewed research in sport science as historically grounded in positivist traditions. It would seem that the quantitative approach is the most common research paradigm, but interest in qualitative approaches has increased over the recent years (Bunniss & Kelly, 2010). Thus, as Smith and Gilbourne (2009, p 1) observed, “for some time, the qualitative inquiry has been recognised as a legitimate area of scholarship within sport and exercise science”.

In summarising the role of qualitative research in sport and physical activity, Brustad (2009) suggested that because sports involved an entirely human endeavour, meaning is generated within social and cultural contexts. He believed that qualitative researchers in sports played an essential role in uncovering the meaningful nature of this involvement. Despite this essential role, and as Stelter et al. (2003) noted, early approaches in sport science research were dominated by quantitative research. The natural sciences inspired these positivist methodologies. However, the authors needed to understand the lived meaning that emerges

from participants' experiences, which can be achieved through qualitative research approaches (Stelter et al., 2003).

According to Smith and Gilbourne (2009), a qualitative inquiry has been considered a justifiable area of scholarship within sport and exercise science. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) pointed out that the definition of qualitative research is highly contested and filled with tensions and uncertainties. They believed this is due to the open-ended nature of qualitative research, which included the kind of methods of sampling and analysis, which were very different from the presentation of quantitative research. Cresswell (2008) stated that qualitative research approaches allowed for gathering information that should lead to a deep understanding of the phenomena selected by the researcher. In the same way, Cohen et al. (2011) suggested that using qualitative research assisted the researcher in understanding the subjective world of the participants from the participants' points of view.

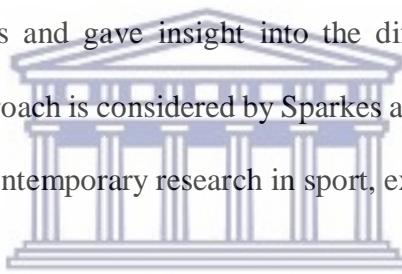


A qualitative approach was adopted in this study, because it allowed the researcher to explore the participants' experiences and the meanings they make of their perceptions. Creswell et al. (2013) stated that the researcher in qualitative research is the main instrument for data collection and analysis. In this study, the approach facilitated entry into the participants' inner worlds and lived experiences. This led to an understanding of the perceptions of KSA executives, coaches and elite athletes regarding sport performance in their own words. The researcher thus gleaned in-depth information on the participants' perceptions, beliefs and knowledge (Johnson & Chistensen, 2012) about organizational structure and responsibility for sports performance. Bruner et al. (2008) found that very little attention has been given to researching elite athletes in sporting organizations. They considered this a pivotal transition, when athletes became more dedicated and intense about their training.

### **4.3. Narrative Method**

A qualitative research approach was followed using a narrative method. Hoeber and Shaw (2017) believed that qualitative research methods had been increasingly used in sports management research over the last decade. They encouraged the introduction of alternative approaches, including community-based research approaches, indigenous methodologies, participatory action research, auto-ethnographies and narratives. Using other contemporary methods, they believed that Sports Management researchers could be inspired to challenge ways of knowing and researching.

The narrative research approach was selected, because it provided information about individual managers, coaches and athletes and gave insight into the different aspects of KSA as an organization. The narrative approach is considered by Sparkes and Smith (2014) to be the most dynamic and exciting area of contemporary research in sport, exercise and health.



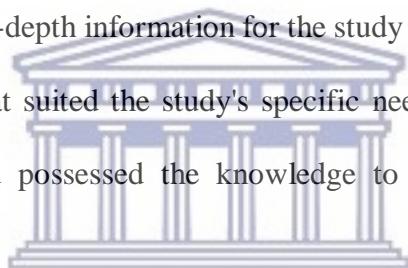
For the current study, the narrative-based approach recognized that participants lived in a world of stories and often recounted experiences as stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In this investigation, the narrative-based approach served as the overall design (e.g., narrative inquiry), a means for collecting data (e.g., asking participants to share stories) and a platform for disseminating the findings (e.g., presenting the findings as narratives). Stride et al. (2017) argued for the use of narratives to disseminate findings to key sport stakeholders, which is the intention of this study. In presenting a narrative approach, Kubayi (2018) found a need for sport scientists to translate scientific journals into easily understandable language. Using this approach, this current study ensured that the language used to present the findings was familiar to those engaged in sports coaching and development.

#### **4.4. Research Setting**

The research was carried out on Karate South Africa (KSA), with the head office of the organization located in Johannesburg. Permission to interview the executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes, from the nine provinces of SA, was obtained from the executive board of KSA (Appendix B). A comfortable research setting was created for all participants that encouraged their unrestricted expression of ideas and opinions. Every interview was performed in either an online or face-to-face environment.

#### **4.5. Sampling of Participants**

A research population like KSA presents a large group of persons with attributes or traits that the researcher wished to study (Best & Kahn, 2003). In this study, suitable participants were those who provided the most in-depth information for the study (Oliver, 2013). The researcher was able to build a sample that suited the study's specific needs. Individuals were selected whom the researcher believed possessed the knowledge to respond to the study's main objectives (Cohen et al., 2011).



Teddlie and Yu (2007) postulated that purposive sampling techniques were primarily used in qualitative studies and may be defined as selecting individuals, groups of individuals or institutions that would be best suited to respond to the research questions asked in the study. National executive managers, national coaches and elite athletes were purposively selected for the semi-structured interviews, because they were considered key informants. Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 170) described key informants as those “who would be able to supply specialist knowledge, based upon their position or relevant experience”.

A purposive sampling method was used to identify participants for the semi-structured

interviews. The target population for key informants was defined as national, provincial and local level karate managers, elite karate coaches and karate administrators who held, or had held, key positions in karate in South Africa. It was assumed that these key informants would have an in-depth knowledge of the interrelationship between karate management and the sport of karate. Welch et al. (2002) referred to these key informants as elite interviewees. Generally, this referred to participants who occupied senior positions, had extensive experience within an organization, interacted with people at different levels, and had international exposure. In this study, access to the executive of KSA had to be carefully and patiently negotiated, because executive members were suspicious of the study's purpose.

Twenty participants were selected through purposive sampling until data saturation was reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The selected participants matched the criteria for describing their perceptions of the organizational responsibility and structure for sports performance in this study (Oliver, 2013). This included four current national executive managers, six current provincial sport coaches from the nine provinces; two past national executive members of management who had served the organization within the past ten years; and eight nationally-ranked athletes from KSA. In this study, the sample size was determined to afford the best opportunity for the researcher to reach data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). Data saturation was achieved when the researcher could not obtain any new information that was relevant in responding to the critical questions asked in the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

#### **4.6. Delimitations of the Study**

The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to determine the sample selection is described in the following section.

#### **4.6.1. Inclusion Criteria of the Study**

The study included current national executive members who served in KSA for at least two years and past national executive members and sport coaches who served the organization within the last ten years. The elite athletes included those individuals who had represented the country at international tournaments over the last five years. In this study, only the top ten ranked athletes aged above 18 years or older were included in the sample.

#### **4.6.2. Exclusion Criteria of the Study**

Excluded participants were athletes who had not competed at national or international levels and those under 18 years of age. Coaches not involved in coaching at the national level were excluded from the study. National executive managers with less than two years' service on the national executive committee of KSA were also excluded from the study.



#### **4.7. Data Collection Procedures**

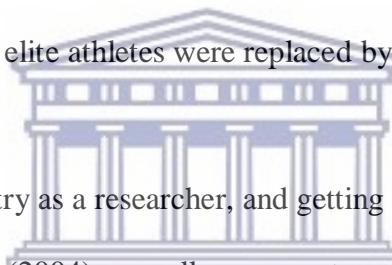
According to Olivier and Fishwick (2003), qualitative studies on sport can include structured interviews, content analysis and pre-determined sample sizes, at one end and unstructured sport ethnographies, at the other. McMillan (2014) suggested that semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and allowed the researcher the freedom to introduce new lines of enquiry during the interview. Smith and Sparkes (2016) noted that the interview was the most widely used method to collect qualitative data in sport and exercise science. They cite Jachyra, Atkinson and Gibson (2014, p. 568), who suggested that if “there was an epistemological lingua franca in qualitative research on sport, then it was interviewing”.

In this study, semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility, giving the researcher the freedom to modify questions or to add to the interview process (Cohen et al., 2007). Semi-structured

interviewing is considered an essential approach to exploring the construction of meaning in a natural setting. Alshengeeti (2014) averred that interviewing as a tool for data collection was intended to explore and describe the ‘quality’ and ‘nature’ of how people experienced and understood their behaviour.

#### **4.7.1. COVID-19 and Online Interviewing**

In researching the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on universities in the United States, Blankstein et al. (2020) found that higher education institutions had to urgently re-think teaching and learning strategies and rapidly move to online teaching, learning and research. In this study, there was also a need to shift the research to online technology in two ways: supervision and research methodology. Therefore, face-to-face interviews with executive managers, national coaches and elite athletes were replaced by online interviewing.



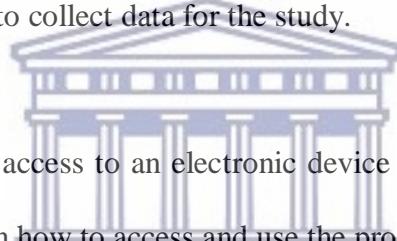
The strategy of gently gaining entry as a researcher, and getting familiar with the organization as suggested by Shenton and Hayter (2004), as well as access to national executives, coaches and athletes, was not possible in the context of the lockdown during the pandemic. With state-enforced social distancing and restrictions on travel during the data collection phase, interviews were completed via WhatsApp, Google hangout, Zoom and Skype (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019).

End-to-end Encryption in Google Meet and WhatsApp calls ensured that communication between researcher and participant for all meetings were encrypted. This closed environment ensured confidentiality and anonymity of participants during the interviews.

The only disadvantage experienced, while using this approach, was technical problems, such as internet connectivity and power load-shedding. The distinct advantage of conducting online interviews was that the researcher could easily access participants from all provinces across South Africa at a minimum cost. This format provided a safe space for participants and the

interviewer to be in their own homes. The researcher developed a rapport with participants through open communication and negotiated breaks. Hamilton (2014) noted the advantage of available visual cues and flexibility for participants during online interviews.

Participants were allowed to repeat answers and questions without the pressure of direct face-to-face contact (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Deakin and Wakefield (2013), in their research on the use of Skype for interviewing, found that “synchronous online interviewing” was a helpful supplement or replacement to face-to-face interviewing. Furthermore, Janghorban et al. (2014) noted how the online interview had overcome geographical, physical, financial and time constraints. These researchers asserted that the modern-day researcher had several technological options available to collect data from participants. During the COVID-19 state restrictions, the researcher used online platforms to collect data for the study.



All participants in the study had access to an electronic device with internet access, and were technologically knowledgeable on how to access and use the programme (Hamilton, 2014). In a psychosocial study by Hanna (2012), a flexible approach was used to conduct semi-structured interviews. For those participants who opted to use Skype, it was found that using Skype as a research medium had the same benefits as traditional face-to-face interviews (Bundon & Clarke, 2015).

#### **4.7.2. Interview Schedules**

The interview format for the executive managers and coaches was developed using the main areas illustrated theoretically by Smolianove and Zakus (2008). These included the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of the organizational structure. It also included questions about infrastructure and personnel, operations and the development of athletes, which formed part of the critical questions in this study. The opening and introductory questions contained

information about the managers themselves, e.g., “Can you tell me about your history in KSA and how you were appointed as an executive member?” (Appendix E).

The interview guide for the athletes focused on the variables needed for optimum performance as an athlete. These variables were adapted from the models by Stone et al. (2007) and Turner et al. (2019) and included coach-athlete relationships, occupation, genetic potential, environmental factors, and physical and social environments. Biographical information was elicited on age, gender, participation level, affiliation, occupation and geographical location. Information about athletic performance at national and international levels formed part of the introductory section of the interview e.g., “Can you tell me about your history as an athlete and how did you become an ‘elite’ athlete?” (Appendix E).



Questions to measure the organizational structure of KSA included probes about the level of competition and the nature of the support given to the sport of karate at the individual, local and national levels of competition. Questions around funding, training, administrative and management processes were also asked. Participants' suggestions on how athletic performance could be managed and supported within the present organizational structure were also sought.

#### **4.7.3. Documentary Analysis**

There has been an increase in research reports and journal articles that mention documentary analysis as part of the research methodology. According to Bowen (2009), organizational and institutional documents have been used commonly in qualitative research. In this study, the researcher used the Constitution of KSA, the mission and vision documents, and other relevant documents referencing the organization's roles and responsibilities on the KSA website.

An analysis of the documents listed in Table 4.1 below provided a context for the study and introduced questions that the researcher needed to ask the participants. These documents

provided additional insights which enabled a deeper discussion of the themes that emerged from the data. It also served as a tool to confirm evidence in the data about the organizational structure of KSA.

Table 4.1: Online Documentary analysis

<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Themes</b>
KSA website	Introduction to organization  Organizational structure	Identifying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- history of KSA</li> <li>- examining existing structure</li> <li>- roles and responsibilities of members</li> </ul>	Infrastructure at macro-, meso- and micro-levels
Constitution	Governance of KSA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- macro-level</li> <li>- meso- level</li> <li>- micro-level</li> </ul>	Establishing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- aims of KSA</li> <li>- KSA rules</li> <li>- Membership rights and obligations</li> <li>- Status of dojos</li> <li>- Provincial structures</li> <li>- Affiliation with WKF and UFAK</li> <li>- Recognition of certification</li> </ul>	Legislation  Tournament planning  Membership at national and provincial levels  Participation in competitions (national and international)
Policies	Safety of organization and membership	Examining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disciplinary procedures</li> <li>- Code of conduct</li> <li>- Gender awareness</li> <li>- Safety of organization and membership</li> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Harassment and abuse</li> <li>- Communication protocols</li> </ul>	Organizational support  Organizational challenges  Organizational development and transformation

Through document analysis, the researcher used aspects of the constitution, during interviews with managers and coaches, and checked if they corroborated specific issues. The researcher found that working through the Constitution of KSA did not necessarily mean that

the visions embellished in this document were being realised. The Constitution also allowed the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the organizational structure of KSA.

In working through the documents, it was also possible to verify the interview data collected, especially from the executives of KSA. The Constitution was easy to access and readily available on the KSA website.

#### **4.8. Pilot Study**

A pilot study was undertaken, because it allowed the researcher to prepare and assess the interview schedule and techniques used in the study. It also assisted the researcher in evaluating her readiness and capability as a qualitative researcher, before conducting the interviews. Moreover, the pilot study allowed the researcher to adjust and revise the interview schedules (Majid et al., 2017). Additionally, it helped affirm and sharpen the interview questions (Kim, 2011). The pilot study revealed repetitions in the athlete interview schedule, which were subsequently deleted. The questions to the executive managers were reworked to allow for more significant discussion. Furthermore, the pilot study made the researcher aware of prompts to elicit more detailed information, and was also valuable in alerting the researcher to the interview duration and times, when interviews should be scheduled, e.g., business hours were not necessarily appropriate, as the interviewee could be interrupted by business calls during the interview process. It also allowed the researcher to establish the approximate time taken to interview the participant.

#### **4.9. Data Analysis**

For this study, Thematic Analysis was used as a foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) because it provided a highly flexible approach that was modified for the needs of this study as well as a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun &

Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). The thematic analysis offered a more accessible form of analysis and was also used to summarize key features of the large dataset collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It also forced the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handle data, and helped produce a clear and organized final report (King, 2004).

ATLAS.ti software was used to organize and analyse the data. Coding was systematically done, and the data was coded and organized in order to categorise data with similar characteristics (Grbich, 2007). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that it was a method of identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a dataset. In this study, the thematic analysis used five stages in analyzing data: (a) organization and preparation of the data; (b) obtaining a general sense of the information; (c) the coding process; (d) developing categories or themes; and (e) interpretation of the data (Butina, 2015). The data was transcribed from the video recordings. Patterns were noted on the transcript margins, and a general sense of the information received was recorded. All names, locations of the interviewees and other details that could identify the participants were deleted at this stage. The last stage was the interpretation of the data within the generated themes. These themes, as well as the sub-themes are illustrated in detail in Table 5 of the next chapter.

#### **4.10. Trustworthiness and Rigour**

For qualitative research, researchers Guba and Lincoln (1982), cited in Anney (2014), proposed that credibility should replace internal validity, that external validity is replaced by transferability, reliability by dependability, and objectivity by confirmability. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), although the importance of validity is evident and accepted amongst quantitative researchers, validity has been an issue of dispute amongst qualitative researchers.

In a study that examined Master's students' theses in Tanzania, Anney (2014) identified the challenges of trustworthiness in ensuring the genuineness of qualitative enquiry in their studies. It was found that most of the students' dissertations incorrectly employed the quantitative trustworthiness criteria, such as reliability and validity in order to ensure the rigour of their qualitative research dissertations (Anney, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited in Nowell et al. (2017) refined the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research to explain validity and reliability. In this study, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were used.

#### **4.10.1. Credibility**

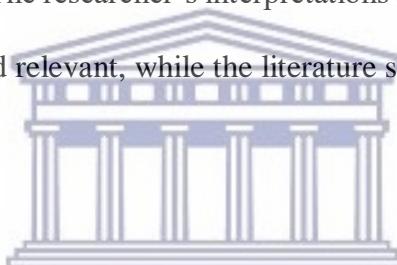
Credibility in this study was achieved through member checking to test the findings and interpretations with the participants. As a final step, member checking allowed the researcher to establish the fit between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). In addition, data drawn from the participants was correctly interpreted and presented (Anney, 2014). This study collected thick descriptive data from interviews with elite informers, i.e., executive managers, national coaches and athletes. Credibility was also established by using relevant theoretical perspectives to develop the interview schedules and analyze the data.

The researcher understood the field of research intimately. Ramson (2015) cites Flyvbjerg (2001, p 83) in suggesting that by placing oneself in the context, an "advanced form of understanding" occurred, as the researcher had direct access to the viewpoints, opinions and attitudes of those being studied. While this may be true, Cohen et al. (2000) cautioned that the researcher should balance their involvement with detachment, keeping sufficiently close and distant, simultaneously.

Yet another way to establish credibility is triangulation. In this study, triangulation involved using multiple and different methods to verify the data collected (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Two methods were used to corroborate data: semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis.

#### **4.10.2. Transferability**

Transferability was achieved through purposive sampling and obtaining thick descriptive data. In this study, transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research could be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. The researcher used theoretical and conceptual ideas drawn from the literature to demonstrate confirmability to justify how and why decisions were made. The researcher's interpretations and findings were derived from the data, and where possible and relevant, while the literature supported the discussion.



#### **4.10.3. Confirmability**

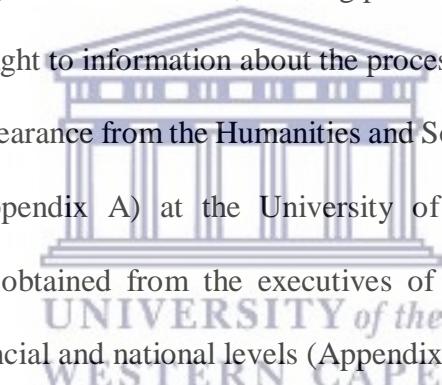
Confirmability in this study was concerned with ensuring that the data and interpretations of the findings were not created in the researcher's mind. After careful transcription of recorded data, the write-up was completed from the collected data.

#### **4.10.4. Dependability**

Dependability was established through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, data transcription, transcript storage, member checking, and the use of the ATLAS.ti application to assist in data analysis, as well as an audit trail and thick, detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences. Dependability further involved the participants evaluating the findings, as well as the interpretation and the recommendations in order to ensure that these were all supported by their data (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

#### **4.11. Ethics Considerations**

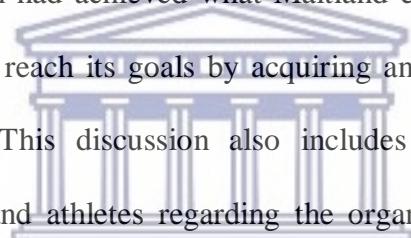
Ethics considerations are imperative during the research process to ensure the authenticity of the study. Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p 262) referred to these as “ethics in practice” or “ethically important moments”. As a researcher, all interactions with participants needed to be ethically appropriate. Ellis (2007) referred to another type of ethics called “relational ethics”. In this study, mutual respect, dignity and connectedness between the researcher and the participants were acknowledged to comply with relational ethics. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) used the term “procedural ethics” to describe the process of seeking approval from the Research Ethics Committee, before undertaking the research (Appendix A). In this study, such procedures entailed obtaining informed consent, assuring privacy and confidentiality, the right to exit at any stage, and the right to information about the processes and purposes of the study. This study obtained ethical clearance from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HS20/9/14, Appendix A) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Thereafter, permission was obtained from the executives of KSA and sport coaches and national athletes at the provincial and national levels (Appendix B). An information sheet was also provided to the participants (Appendix C). Thereafter, written consent was obtained from the participants to participate in the study and to record the interview sessions (Appendix D). Participants were informed that their involvement in the study would be voluntary and that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. They were assured that their anonymity would be protected using alpha-numeric coding, when note-taking. Furthermore, should the study results be published, the participants’ identities would be protected. Data obtained in the study will be stored for at least five years at the UWC data repository, with access provided only to the researcher and study supervisors. After the stipulated period, the data will be destroyed.



#### **4.12. Chapter Summary**

This chapter justified and described the qualitative research approach for the study. It was noted that twenty participants were selected through purposive sampling, providing a sample that consisted of KSA managers, national coaches and elite athletes. The online data gathering techniques selected for the study were described, including semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis of reports and ranking sheets of KSA. Thematic Analysis was used as a suitable approach to present the data after the ATLAS-generated themes.

In the next chapter, data and discussion about the organizational structure of KSA are presented to establish if this organization had achieved what Maitland et al. (2015) referred to as the capacity of an organization to reach its goals by acquiring and using human, financial and physical resources properly. This discussion also includes the perceptions of national executives, national coaches and athletes regarding the organizational influences on sport performance.

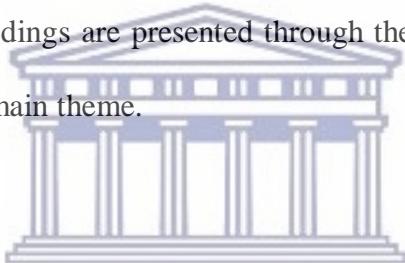


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## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and organizational structure regarding sport performance. This chapter reports on the data from executive members, national coaches and athletes to achieve the objectives of the study. The study's objectives were to describe the organizational structure and responsibility of KSA at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels and to explore the perceptions of executive managers, national coaches and athletes on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding elite sport performance. This chapter begins with a description of the study participants, after which the findings are presented through the use of five main themes and emerging sub-themes for each main theme.



### **5.2. Study Participants**

A total of 20 participants were involved in the study, drawn purposively from the different provinces of South Africa, as per the inclusion criteria. Table 5.1. is a description of the participants who were interviewed. To maintain anonymity, the following pseudonyms were used for each participant, with a number allocated to each participant (EM 1 - 4 for executive members; NC 1 - 6 for national coaches; EA 1 - 8 for elite athletes; PNC 1 for the past national coach; and PEM 1 for past executive member).

Table 5.1: Organizational Description of the Study Participants.

<b>Participants of the study</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>Description of participants</b>
Executive Members (n = 4)	EM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These participants were members who represented the organization and facilitated the roles and responsibilities for its membership</li> <li>- They had served the organization in the past 10 years and had worked alongside each other in promoting karate at regional, national and provincial levels</li> <li>- They facilitated national and provincial communication and were directly involved in the selection of national coaches and promoting tournaments</li> <li>- All executive members were karate athletes who had achieved significant accolades during their competitive years</li> <li>- They were passionate about karate and were inspired to give back to the sport</li> <li>- The age range of the participants was from 62-66 years</li> </ul>
National Coaches (n = 6)	NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These participants were the bridge that connected the roles and responsibilities with sport performance</li> <li>- National coaches were past athletes who had transitioned into the position of national coach</li> <li>- They were recruited by the executive members or were selected through an application, offering their voluntary services and knowledge to elite athletes</li> <li>- These participants had been involved with elite athletes, both nationally and internationally, and were accredited with the qualifications which allowed them to coach at both national and international tournaments</li> <li>- The age range of the national coaches was from 24-55 years</li> </ul>
Elite Athletes (n = 8)	EA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These participants were elite athletes aged 18 years and older, competing in the senior divisions for both Kata (form) and Kumite (fighting) karate styles</li> <li>- They are within the top 10 ranked athletes in South Africa and have actively participated and medaled in regional qualifying and national ranking tournaments</li> <li>- The average age of these participants is 23 years</li> <li>- These athletes are identified by the term ‘elite’ or ‘national’, as the national coaches have selected them more than once to represent the country, at an international level</li> <li>- The selected athletes came from the different provinces of South Africa</li> </ul>
Past Members (n = 2)	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These participants are members who have served either as coaches or officials of KSA</li> <li>- These participants offered information regarding organizational formation, methods used by the organization, and the changes that have occurred since they participated in KSA</li> </ul>

### **5.3. Presentation of Findings**

Table 5.2 illustrates the themes generated from the data. These themes relate to the macro-, meso- and micro-levels illustrated in the organizational model of Smolinov and Zakus (2008) and the Athletic Performance model of Stone et al. (2007). The table presents the main themes and sub-themes generated by the data retrieved from the participants.

Table 5.2: Themes and sub-themes generated from the study data.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Structure Levels</b>	<b>Sub Themes</b>
1. Infrastructure and Legislation	Macro- and meso-levels	1.1 Roles and responsibilities 1.2 Centralized infrastructure 1.3 Partnerships 1.4 Voluntary roles 1.5 Amateur-to-professional status
2. Organizational Support	Micro-level	2.1 Facilitation 2.2 Coaching
3. Tournament Planning	Meso-level	3.1 Communication protocol 3.2 Talent identification 3.3 Ranking and selection 3.4 Competition preparedness 3.5 Competition stress
4. Organizational Challenges	Micro-level	4.1 Funding 4.2 Contested selection and transparency 4.3 Transition to elite competition 4.4 Fitness testing
5. Organizational development and Transformation	Macro-level	5.1 Community outreach 5.2 Racial and gender equity 5.3 International Exposure

#### **5.3.1. Main Theme 1: Infrastructure and Legislation**

Infrastructure in this study refers to how a sports organization creates optimal facilities for athletes to train and compete. Nagy and Tobak (2015) noted that infrastructural development was essential in order to provide adequate sport services. KSA executives and national coaches were asked about the infrastructure of KSA and how it was developed and managed.

From the responses, four sub-themes were generated, including roles and responsibilities, centralized approach, partnerships, and voluntary roles.

### 5.3.1.1. Sub-Theme 1: Roles and Responsibilities

This sub-theme explored the structure of the organization and the roles and responsibilities of its membership at the different operational levels. The roles and responsibilities of KSA revolved around a centralised organization structure. Figure 5.1 is an adapted representation of the roles and responsibilities within a centralized structure such as KSA.

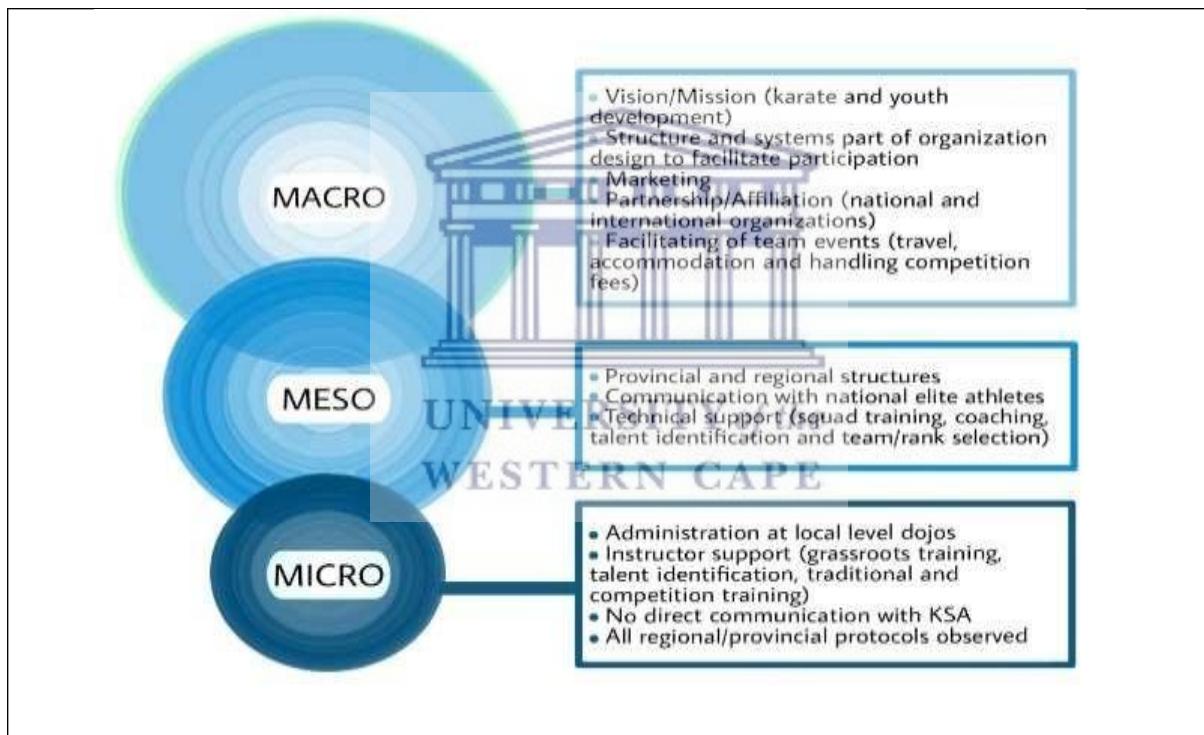
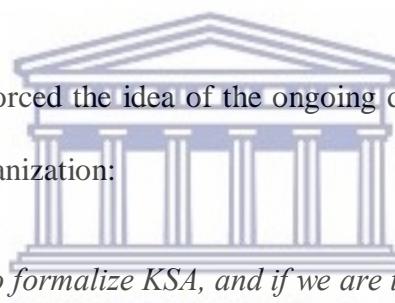


Figure 5.1: Roles and responsibilities of KSA at macro-, meso- and micro-levels (adapted from Karate South Africa, n.d.)

Valenti et al. (2020) referred to the macro-level (the country), the meso-level (the sports programme offered) and the micro-level (where the athletes featured). At the macro-level, KSA, a non-profit organization, has made great strides in formalizing its organizational structure, roles and responsibilities within a largely voluntary context, with minimal funding support from the national sporting body of South Africa (Karate South Africa, n.d.). At a meso- level, KSA communicated its decisions to the provincial and regional levels. Executive members saw the above roles and responsibilities as critical to the effective functioning of KSA, which for them was “*the official organization for South African karate.*” [EM1]. According to them, this meant “*Implementing the new rules, and ensuring that tournament rules were being followed in every respect – it was challenging for the athlete and KSA as well.*” [EM4].



The following comments reinforced the idea of the ongoing development of the structure of KSA and the growth of the organization:

“*It has taken us years to formalize KSA, and if we are to facilitate international participation, formal structures are necessary.*” [EM1]

“*The role of the organization is to continuously create opportunities for athletes to ensure the growth of the sport.*” [EM4]

“*Athletes, athletes, athletes – “Athletes first” that's our cliché, and you need a fully functional organization to support athletes.*” [EM3]

“*The main responsibility is our membership, which is the athletes – without them, this KSA structure will be pointless.*” [PEM2]

From the above comments, it was clear that the main focus of KSA was to maintain and continuously update its roles and responsibilities, as executives of the organization. At all three levels of the infrastructure, there was an interest in the athletes who formed the core membership. Responsibilities and decisions were cascaded from the macro-level to the meso-level (provincial) and then to the athletes at the micro-level. A core role was “*to arrange*

*activities such as tournaments, seminars, and coaching and refereeing courses throughout the country.”* [EM1]

The following comments by [EM2], [EM1] and [EM3] explained how KSA paved the way to what it takes for an organization to achieve elite performance. They believed that this role and structure were essential to follow, as it built the foundations of experience and knowledge for its members:

*“Perhaps the most significant advantage and support is the organizational structure that makes some systems possible. The specific roles and responsibilities are set out in a constitution, and there is a formal structure with officials being delegated the different roles and duties.”* [EM2]

*“KSA is the sixth biggest sport in the country with a membership which exceeds 200 000 and...more than 1400 organized clubs throughout South Africa.”* [EM1]

*“We clearly need to develop a structure that will promote elite athlete.* “[EM 3]

According to the executive members, KSA has been continuously growing as an organization, which meant overall growth for karate as a sport in South Africa. At a meso-level, national coaches and provincial leaders were informed about decisions taken at the macro-level. Provincial leaders formed part of the general council of KSA. [EM3] asserted that what the discipline of karate, as a sport, demands of its athletes, would also contribute to developing leaders who would serve the country with “*diligence and distinction.*” This vision shifts the emphasis from performance to promoting karate as a life skill.

Various authors noted that the roles and responsibilities of sporting organizations contributed to providing essential sport services for the optimal performance of the athletes (Haff, 2010; Rees et al., 2016; Winand et al., 2013). The data showed that national executives of KSA clearly understood the relationship between infrastructure and optimal athletic performance (Menting et al., 2019). In his attempts to identify how the formalization of a member club in United States competitive swimming relates with athletic performance, Wharam et al. (2020) notes that to

date, there has been little research that has looked at the relationship between operational efficacy and high-level athlete performance .

### **5.3.1.2. Sub-Theme 2: Centralized Infrastructure**

An important advantage of a centralized approach noted by Blanco (2017), is that the recruitment and training of athletes and selection of coaches was systematic. In this regard, KSA executives had developed guideline documents describing the policies relating to the recruiting of coaches and the training of athletes (Karate South Africa, n.d.). From the participants' responses, it could be said that a centralized system of governance meant that KSA was able to offer its membership the quality of services that ordinarily may not have been possible without the present structure. This included the professional development of athletes and access to national and international participation, as suggested by the participants:

*“Participating at the highest level would not have been possible for our athletes, if we did not run a tight ship.”* [EM1]

*“The executives at the macro- level are in the know, all of the time, and can take a decision and, more importantly, follow through with the provinces and, finally, with the athletes.”* [EM3]

*“The head has to be strong, otherwise, the body will be weak – at an executive level, we have to keep many things together, especially with the changes that we have experienced at national and world karate levels.”* [NC2]

Executive members believed that, when the macro-level was functioning effectively, then it impacted positively on operations at the meso- and micro-levels. [EM3] and [PEM2] explained how each provincial president had the facilities to relay information to their respective regions:

*“Provincial presidents sit on the general council and directly access the executive council.”* [EM3]

*“Provincial presidents are entirely informed about all decisions taken at the general council.”* [PEM2]

Blanco (2017) supported the idea of centralized governance in sport, where a top-to-bottom approach was used. National executive managers and coaches believed that strengthening and building KSA, at the top, had favourably impacted and influenced the development of karate in South Africa at the micro-level. Similarly, Smith and Smolianov (2016) found that most sports organizations aimed to develop participants at the micro-level by utilizing the resources created at the macro- and meso-levels. The executive members also stated that the top-to-bottom approach had allowed them to consistently develop the infrastructure as per SASCOC and WKF requirements.

### **5.3.1.3. Sub-Theme 3: Partnerships**

The National Sport and Recreation Plan (2012) outlined that the management and funding of mass participation and elite sport in South Africa, fell directly under the auspices of the government. However, [EM3] noted that “*karate is not recognized as an elite sport, like rugby, athletics or cricket by the government.*”



According to the executive members, successful partnerships had been achieved at the governmental level with SASCOC, at a continental level with UFAK, and at the international level with WKF:

“*Karate is recognized by the national sports body SASCOC.*” [EM3]  
“*KSA is also affiliated with the Union of African Karate Federation (UFAK), the governing body of sports karate of about 50 countries of karate federations in Africa. UFAK is a continental non-governmental organization.*” [EM3]

Although karate was not recognised as a major sport, there was recognition given by SASCOC, which enabled KSA to become members of other organizations, such as UFAK. This is an important partnership, as it was the entry-level for engaging in international associations and

competitions with other African countries. At this level of participation, credibility and shared knowledge was achieved amongst its members. KSA was a member of WKF, which was the highest organization for karate internationally. According to participants:

*“WKF is a member of the Olympic Games fraternity – nobody in South Africa is recognized as such, and KSA is an official member.”* [EM1]

*“KSA is in good standing with WKF, and that relationship has made it possible to compete at this international level. We are connected and are getting there.”* [EA4]

[EM3] stated that there continues to be a “*direct working relationship with WKF*”, and it would seem that the involvement of the president of KSA, as a technical member of the WKF and president of the Commonwealth Championship, enabled the transition to a professionally recognized organization. [EA2] noted that a “*critical responsibility is to ensure that athletes have international exposure.*”

*“Travelling to different international tournaments, and negotiating participation with other countries. To enable qualifying participation - now, it is possible to get to the Olympic Games, largely, because of the relationship between KSA structures and WKF.”* [EA2]

*“KSA has allowed us to compete nationally and internationally, within correct administratively structures.”* [EA5]

These partnerships had enabled participation at national and international levels. Both [EM1] and [EM4] mentioned that the essential role was to “*serve*” the athletes within a fully recognized and legitimate structure. KSA, as an organization, has managed “*to work through the struggles of the past and cleared the mess*” [EM1]. All executive managers believed that the governing body of karate should be free from politics, because it is essentially “*managers, coaches, and athletes who occupied this space.*” [EM4]

The participants acknowledged that KSA had implemented systems that were fine-tuned and

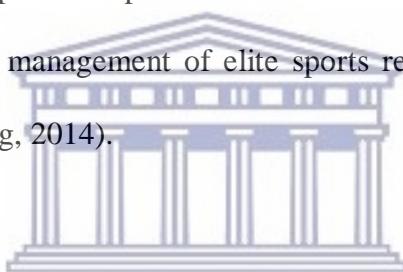
improved yearly. They recognized the efforts being made to improve, and to offer more to the athletes and to karate as a sport:

*“KSA has arrived at a critical space, to move towards what they want sports to look like at an international level. The WKF level is the aspiration. The Olympic Games are an incentive to pull together organizational aspects, and tidy up the house.” [EA1]*

*“We have done exceptionally well, despite the challenges at the local government level, to recognize one of the fastest growing sports in this country.” [EA3]*

National athletes agreed that KSA had provided them with a legitimate structure within which to pursue the sport of karate to the highest level.

Although KSA has established partnerships with essential role-players to advance karate as a sport, the final legislation and management of elite sports resided with the South African government (Keim & De Coning, 2014).



#### **5.3.1.4. Sub-Theme 4: Voluntary Roles**

When asked about the human resource capacity of KSA, an executive member referred to KSA as a voluntary, non-profit organization with partial funding from the national government. The responses from a national executive revealed that KSA has a strong volunteer ethos:

*“It is a full-time job, although I work as a voluntary member, because there's no pay, no stipend, no financial allowance, except for travel and accommodation, when I travel on behalf of the organization. Hence, it's a huge sacrifice and comes with enormous love and passion.” [EM1]*

KSA executive managers and national executives were passionate about and committed to their organization's mission. Misener and Doherty (2009) studied the impact of organizational capacity on a non-profit community sports club in fulfilling its strategic goals. They found that solid human resource capacity was required in these organizations, without which the sports

services would be compromised. One of the central human resources was adequate volunteer capacity.

Taylor and McGraw (2006) explored human resource management practices in non-profit sports organizations. They found that, despite the need to become more strategic in human resource management, only state sports organizations in Australia had formal human resource management systems in place. KSA was a non-profit organization, but the roles and responsibilities were taken seriously, even though there was no remuneration. This voluntary effort was not easy to manage, as suggested by EM1:

*“We have nine provinces affiliated with karate in South Africa - all are very active; hence my life ....is incredibly busy. I attend to issues that emerge on a daily basis with provinces, that's why I say the job is very, very hectic and I have been at it for a very long time.”* [EM1]

Although there was pressure from these voluntary roles, when asked about what drives their voluntary commitment in the sport, [EM1] and [EM3] said that they needed to “*give back unconditionally*” what the sport gave to them. This was where their “*enthusiasm and inspiration came from*” [EM4]. In understanding voluntarism, through a review of several researchers, Ranjan et al. (2021, p. 195) defined the term as “an individual dedication of personal time, energy, knowledge, and skills towards the benefits of other people, groups or causes.” From the data, it was found that executive members of KSA were fully engaged in their work and were the critical voices of its membership. In their research on understanding control in voluntary sports organizations, Byers et al. (2007) found that long-standing members were committed to performing a lot of work. Similarly, long-standing executive members in KSA appeared to take more control and spend enormous amounts of time ensuring that the organization was functional.

When asked how they got to become voluntary national coaches, the data revealed that all coaches had been national athletes at some point, and a few of them continued to participate in national and international levels of competition. These coaches were often recruited and approached by executive members, before taking on coaching positions:

*“I grew up as an athlete in KSA and started coaching at my local dojo, and my experience allowed me to progress into a national coach position.”* [PN1]

*“I was approached by my national coaches who told me...as a senior athlete, I am allowed to coach the divisions below me. I was excited and nervous at the same time, to serve as a coach, although I did not follow any official process. I went in with what I learned from them.”* [NC2]

*“I was lucky to have my dojo Sensei as my national coach. Therefore, he recommended me to the council, which resulted in me being chosen. I felt honoured to be a coach.”* [NC6]

While for [PNC1], it was a natural progression to become a coach, others like [NC2] and [NC6] were noticed by senior coaches, as having the potential to be national coaches. All national coaches started coaching or instructing athletes voluntarily at the local dojo level, and then progressed to regional, provincial and national levels. The national coaches in the study have written coaching exams, either at WKF level or exams administered by KSA. From the responses, it could be said that national executives and coaches provided a voluntary service, because they are committed to the sport and were inspired to give back in order to keep the sport alive. When asked about the progress made by voluntary KSA members, [EM1] expressed the following:

*“KSA has become a powerful professional organization purely through voluntary services, provided by a band of dedicated administrative officials and coaches.”* [EM1]

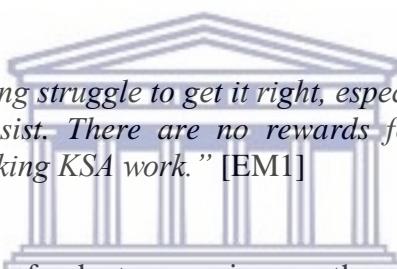
A profile of the national coaches suggested that all of them moved from being outstanding athletes to voluntary coaches. A few have continued to participate competitively. Some national

coaches believed that being an outstanding athlete helped them better understand the sport and the athlete they coached. However, Beilock's (2010) study of who constituted the best coaches found that the best athletes did not necessarily make the best coaches, based on personal interests.

The next sub-theme discusses how KSA moved from an amateur status as an organization to a professional one representing karate in South Africa.

#### **5.3.1.5. Sub-Theme 5: Amateur to Professional Organizational Status**

Executive members were asked about KSA's development from an amateur organization to a professional one. The following response was received from [EM1]:



*"It has been a long struggle to get it right, especially when you have to call on volunteers to assist. There are no rewards for the officials, but they are committed to making KSA work." [EM1]*

Closely linked to the above idea of voluntary service was the push to professionalize KSA, so national athletes could access international competitions. Byers (2009), in a study of voluntary sporting organizations, found that as much as these organizations started small, they were constantly under pressure to commercialize and professionalize their approaches regarding roles and structure. In this regard, [EM3] said:

*"We know that to keep this sport and this organization alive, we must professionalize KSA and our athletes." [EM3]*

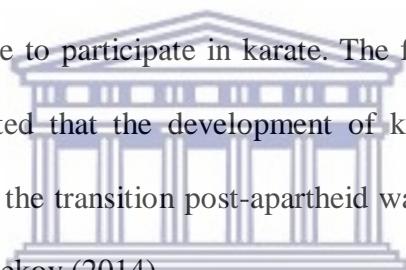
*"This meant formalizing its constitution, policies and procedures, and developing its operations post-apartheid, according to the standard requirements by SASCOC and WKF." [EM3]*

As a voluntary organization with minimal government support, the perceptions of the executive managers of KSA demonstrated that they worked hard to develop its strategic goals and vision,

because of external pressures. Schulz (2011) also noted that non-profit sports organizations had to change how they operated. This change included making these organizations more professional and modern, in managing their membership and services. Wharam et al. (2020) contended that the formalization of sport occurred when organizations moved away from being amateur in their structure and administration.

From the data, it can be said that KSA, as a voluntary organization, was forced to “professionalize”, because of external factors. These factors enabled its athletes to represent South Africa at international tournaments.

Historically, KSA started as a community sports organization, whose important goal was to provide opportunities for people to participate in karate. The following data from executive managers and coaches suggested that the development of karate as an organization was impacted by apartheid and that the transition post-apartheid was not easy, as noted by Jones (2010), Narkar (2009) and Resnekov (2014).



*“It has always been an uphill battle bringing KSA to where it is now – from the apartheid days to the post-apartheid era, it has always been a struggle, especially after apartheid. We are now proud that all the standards required at an international level are being met.” [EM2]*

Groenewald (2014) reported that between 2004 and 2012, the national coordination of high-performance sports in South Africa was restructured through various initiatives (Burnett, 2010). For KSA, this meant restructuring to suit the requirements of the South African government, UFAK and WKF. KSA executive managers were forced to review the old organizational structure and develop new strategic goals to suit a democratic country. The data from participants suggested that, alongside the pressure from the government and partner organizations, KSA also experienced general global pressure to participate at the Olympic

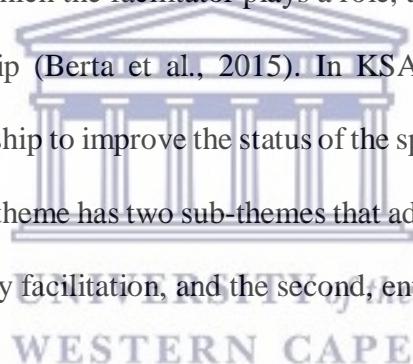
level.

*“With the excitement of karate, as an Olympic sport, came the pressure to get our house in order and give our athletes a fair chance to participate.”* [EM1]

As part of the restructuring from an amateur sport to a professional one, KSA executive managers indicated that they experienced organization suspensions, the imposition of restrictions; recreated links with national bodies, and, at the same time, managed a new structure that was workable, and in line with SASCOC and the WKF, which officially provided the rules and regulations for competition (Anglos, 2017).

### **5.3.2. Main Theme 2: Organizational Support**

Facilitation is an approach in which the facilitator plays a role, and the act of facilitation has a ripple effect on its membership (Berta et al., 2015). In KSA, facilitation happened when executive members took leadership to improve the status of the sport, as suggested by executive managers of KSA. This central theme has two sub-themes that address how support was offered to elite athletes. The first was by facilitation, and the second, entailed coaching support.



#### **5.3.2.1. Sub-Theme 1: Facilitation**

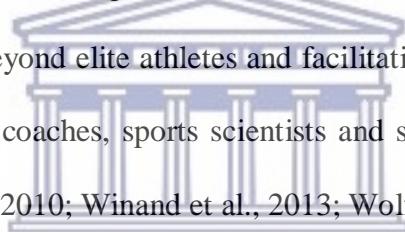
Executive members were asked how KSA as an organization supported their elite athletes. One of the participants expressed that KSA provided support to its athletes through facilitation.

*“We support athletes through facilitation. We facilitate various programmes and arrangements - the organization of those programmes is huge and takes a lot of manpower and a lot of time, so it's very time-consuming.”* [EM1]

Facilitation included involvement in national meetings, providing feedback and filtering the decisions to all affiliated provinces, as noted by [EM1]:

*"We have nine provinces affiliated with Karate South Africa - all are very active hence my life....is incredibly busy. Discussions are held virtually daily with provinces from around the republic. I attend to issues that emerge daily. That's why I say the job is very hectic."*

The data from participants suggested that KSA has offered opportunities to athletes for competitions through facilitation. This facilitation included transitioning to higher levels of competition by national athletes, which meant affiliation, planning at different levels, implementing change at an organizational level, communicating these changes to their affiliated members and monitoring the progress of the change. Since KSA was linked to the continent and internationally, KSA ensured that these policies facilitated athletes to proceed beyond the national level. While facilitation may allow athletes to participate in international tournaments, optimal performance requires several other components. As suggested by the theoretical models (APM and the Strategies to achieve the Mission), as well as the literature, high-performance sport goes beyond elite athletes and facilitation. It includes the presence of efficient sports administrators, coaches, sports scientists and sports centres that offer expert technical support (Badau et al., 2010; Winand et al., 2013; Wolfe et al., 2002).



When national coaches were asked how KSA facilitated their roles as national coaches, participants mentioned that KSA facilitated the writing of coaching exams or compulsory courses which enabled them to continue in their role:

*"I was appointed by the KSA head coach, technical convenor and the head of the director of coaching at KSA squad training. The accreditation course must be done yearly because the rules change yearly." [NC6]*

*"So basically, with every tour, there are examinations that take place - we are informed about the examinations, and, if you were selected for the tour, you had to take the examination and pass, and only once you've passed were you able to coach the athletes." [NC3]*

A study of amateur sport coaches in South Africa found a need for organizations to enhance

coaches' competencies when preparing athletes for competitions (Mokoena & Dhurup, 2019). National coaches also believed that KSA facilitated their work as coaches, which allowed them to progress towards international coaching opportunities:

*"KSA has constantly improved its structure to progress to higher levels of affiliation, so coaching had to be part of this progress." [NC2]*

*"The support given by KSA is the opportunity for coaches and athletes, to express their talent or skills." [NC6]*

An essential part of the strategic goals of KSA was to serve its membership (Karate South Africa, n.d.). KSA national coaches and athletes believed that the core responsibility of KSA was a commitment to facilitate essential sports services to its membership. Several essential sports services were required to achieve optimal performance, and Mujika et al. (2018) noted that exercise training, recovery, nutritional information, psychological skills and skill acquisition were essential for performance. Another important service offered to KSA athletes was the facilitation of training camps and team-building during tournament preparation:

*"I think it's only in the past 3 years that KSA started with training camps and team-building sessions." [EA5]*

*"From time to time, we invite leading personnel in coaching and to motivate and share their international skills with our local athletes and officials." [EM1]*

While facilitation by KSA was positively accepted, national athletes and coaches expressed their concerns about the ongoing policy and rule changes demanded of them:

*"Athletes struggled when they moved away from WKF rules. KSA had to really step up. Both athlete and coach need to be conversant with these rules every time there is a change." [NC5]*

In respect of changes, [NC3] said that it was far easier for the coaches to adapt:

*"Coaches are far more adapted to changes through online seminars, but athletes have yet to deal with the technical changes because competing is hard*

*enough for them. They are also comfortable with old techniques.”* [EM3]

*“I fulfilled duties that I felt were necessary as a coach. I equipped myself accordingly and took all the necessary examinations, kept myself updated with the rules, and implemented it during my coaching.”* [NC3]

The data from participants suggested that KSA offered opportunities for competitions through facilitation. This facilitation included transitioning to higher levels of competition by national athletes. National coaches also believed that KSA facilitated their work as coaches, by offering examinations to enable certification, which allowed them to progress towards international coaching opportunities. The data from national coaches and athletes noted that while there was appreciation for the facilitation endeavours by KSA, there was still a need “to create a high performance training environment where success is inevitable.” (Turner et al., 2018).

### **5.3.2.2. Sub-Theme 2: Coaching**

A coach is a person who assists athletes in improving their performances to the maximum level possible (Uzum, 2018). About high-performance coaching, data from national coaches and athletes suggested that they were not given exposure to this support:

*“Unfortunately, a national coach, who has only been with the athlete at a few squad training sessions, and who has not related with his athlete, over a significant period cannot coach his athlete with any significance on tournament day.”* [PNC1]

*“I rely on dojo coaches my whole life. Friends and others support me, but no support from KSA national coaches.”* [EA5]

*“At local and provincial levels, coaches who are primarily instructors understand their athletes’ performance styles and can advise them while fighting on the floor.”* [EA2]

Andrew and O'Connor (2011) maintained that effective coaching involved three elements: the coach, coaching skills and the environment. In the case of KSA, the data suggested that national coaches were not familiar with their athletes. The coaching environment was essentially local

and provincial, where much of the coaching happened. Hence, these coaches were essentially instructors. According to Dunkerley (2016), an effective coach can take significant decisions, empower players and work with supporting technical staff. However, national coaches in KSA got involved just before a competition and were unfamiliar with the athletes.

The responses received from national coaches suggested that they have the knowledge and skills to develop an athlete to compete at an international level:

*“I attend all competitions because I want to know my athlete, how they prepare, and how they think.” [NC4]*

*“I need to bond with the athletes, the set of tools they are coming with, their personalities, strengths and weaknesses; otherwise, I cannot work with them fully. That’s super important for a coach.” [PNC1]*

*“As a coach, I need to equip myself with scientific knowledge about injury prevention, communication, nutrition, goal setting, athlete development and psychology. Unfortunately, this upgrading has not been done in KSA.” [NC3]*

KSA national coaches believed that they had the necessary coaching skills (Andrew & O'Connor, 2011) and know what it takes to be an effective coach. Kubayi et al. (2018), in assessing stressors in South African sport coaches, found that the scientific aspects were critical to assisting athletes to improve their skills. The study by Bennie and O'Connor (2011) examined the perceptions of athletes and professional coaches in the Australian team sports context. They found that a coach's personality and his/her technical knowledge and beliefs formed the foundation of his/her communication, planning and management skills. Those unfamiliar with their coaches in the KSA believed that national coaches were not in a position to advise them on the floor, because they had not bonded with the national coaches. Regarding technical knowledge, a study by Bateman and Jones (2019) found that elite coaches were supported by a large group of support staff, who would observe and collaborate data to benefit the athletes.

According to executive managers, KSA did not have the:

*“funding capacity to offer these critical services (technical, psychological, nutritional) to its national coaches or athletes.”* [EM1]

A study of amateur sport coaches in South Africa found a need for organizations to enhance coaches' competencies when preparing athletes for competitions (Mokoena & Dhurup, 2019). Whilst upgrading knowledge through coaching courses at sports and high-performance institutes was appealing to some KSA national coaches, a research study in South Africa found that there could be implementation problems in transferring academic scientific knowledge to practice. Similarly, Krkeljas et al. (2017) examined the perceptions of South African coaches and athletes in understanding the value of sport science research in enhancing athletes' performance. It was found that although coaches and athletes believed that aspects of sport science could be beneficial, there were challenges in combining sport science and actual practice. Furthermore, as experienced by KSA, such endeavours included the cost of hiring sports scientists, unpacking the scientific language used and the relevance of the academic knowledge to practice. According to [EM1],

*“In the past, we have sent coaches to sport science centres, but we require funding to implement what was learnt; not everything they learn is relevant to our context.”* [EM1]

A national coach [NC6] asserted that preparation for international competition was inadequate, and stated that KSA national athletes did not get the same support given to other national sports like athletics, rugby or cricket. Moreover, KSA national coaches believed they could benefit from more professional and scientific input. This was in keeping with the findings of a Turkish study by Uzum (2018) that examined the perceptions of coaches' skills and knowledge of athletes from different sports, including karate.

*“I had to support an international athlete without the technical assistance afforded to other sporting codes.”* [NC6]

*“No coach from KSA knew how I looked like before the competition. I was the leading prospect in Egypt, but there was no interest in my international preparation.”* [EA3]

*“Squad training is very superficial. It’s a big group, and each coach does their own thing. There is no opportunity for follow-up from KSA coaches.”* [EA5]

According to [PNC1], “*the relationship between coach and athlete was missing*”. For him, the one-weekend squad training provided by KSA was not enough to assist national athletes in preparing for world competitions. [NC5] felt that the “*the recent introduction of more league sessions with the national athletes contributed to better tournament preparation and closer relationship with athletes*”. On the other hand, elite athlete participants [EA1] enjoyed the squad training because “*In these sessions, I had exposure to different fighting styles and different athletes.*” [EA1]



[NC3] referred to the absence of teambuilding before competition:

*“Teambuilding means everyone supports each other and feels completely loyal to the country they represent. This plays a vital role in any sport. Athletes need to see each other as an important part of the national federation.”* [NC3]

[EA2] believed that national athletes had not acquired an “*international identity without adequate coaching*”:

*“I don’t think I had the necessary fitness and karate competence, especially for the international competition. I was underprepared mentally and psychologically, not knowing what to expect and having no strategy in place – I fought alongside a coach, who was clueless about my strengths and weaknesses, and unable to advise me.”* [EA2]

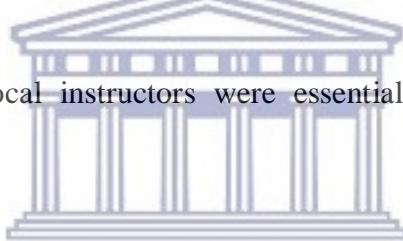
Coaches were expected to understand the needs of all athletes under their care. These statements demonstrated a strained relationship because of the lack of adequate interaction

between coach and athlete. There was no time given to build those relationships. Frigout et al. (2020) explored strategy and decision-making in karate and found the issue of decision-making by karatekas, was core to scoring points and winning. For [EA2], “*no strategy was in place.*”

Yet another challenge for national coaches was the instructors' intense coaching. The following statements illustrated that senior athletes were not receptive to new ideas, offered by the national coaches. They had developed a particular style and were loyal to their dojo instructors. It would seem that there was more engagement and preparation at the local and provincial levels:

*“No disrespect to our coaches, but I don’t know you, you know? My Sensei is everything I need in preparation and when competing – so on the floor, I will listen but not really execute.”* [EA5]

[NC5] and [NC6] believed local instructors were essentially involved with tournament preparation because:



*“This is where most of the dedicated training and preparation takes place, [NC6] generally at the provincial level and, finally, at the national level.”* [NC5]

The local dojo preparation of national athletes also impacted athletes when competing, as expressed in the following responses:

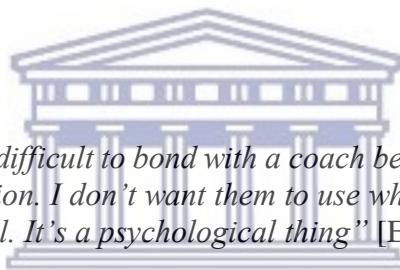
*“At senior level, the athletes know that they can do it better – they are tough to coach, because they are very loyal to their instructors’ teaching. Definitely not open to change and different approaches.”* [NC6]

*“It’s not about blind loyalty, it’s about who knows me, who knows what to say to me when I’m under pressure or cornered.”* [EA2]

Otte et al. (2020) noted that in coaching, the manner and type of information the coach chose to communicate with athletes impacted the athletes' performance. This included effective

feedback, which was impossible, when athletes were not receptive to national coaches' advice. Mesquita et al. (2010) also found that all components of psychology, education and sport science were necessary to provide professional feedback. Being athletes themselves, the national coaches of KSA had knowledge and skills of the sport, as they had experienced the sport themselves. However, national coaches and athletes felt a need to professionalize coaching in KSA. They wanted to become more scientific in their approach to coaching and try to match world standards. This meant that the coach's personality, technical knowledge and beliefs would form the foundation of communication, planning and management skills, as Bennie and O'Connor (2011) asserted.

KSA national coaches were unable to build a strong relationship with their athletes, as experienced by [EA8]:



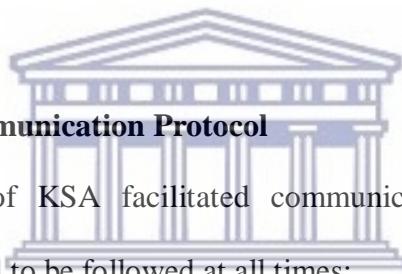
*"Sometimes it's difficult to bond with a coach because I know he's coaching my rival in the division. I don't want them to use what they've learnt against me at the regional level. It's a psychological thing"* [EA8]

Woerkom (2010) found that effective coaches built close interpersonal relationships with their athletes while keeping some distance simultaneously. For KSA elite athletes, establishing a relationship with the national coach, meant that skills and techniques would have to be shared. Research by Bateman and Jones (2019) provided evidence that the quality of the relationship coaches have with their athletes was directly related to the success that the athletes attained. Vollenhoven (2018) found that when coaches and athletes work together to achieve goals, successful relationships develop and the achievement of goals by athletes is more likely. Alternatively, unhealthy athlete-coach interactions, according to Shipherd et al. (2018) can result in athletes exhibiting problematic behavioural patterns both on and off the field, as well as poor cognitive and affective states.

KSA athletes attributed their tournament preparation and success to their local instructors, whom they saw as their coaches.

### **5.3.3. Main Theme 3: Tournament Planning**

Within this main theme, four sub-themes are discussed, including the communication protocol used by KSA when informing its membership about tournaments. The sub-theme of talent identification explores the system used by KSA to identify the talent of its athletes. Tournament planning generally begins with ranking and selecting athletes, which is the next sub-theme. Following that is the question of competition stress which form the final sub-theme in this section.



#### **5.3.3.1. Sub-Theme 1: Communication Protocol**

The executive management of KSA facilitated communication. According to [EM4], communication protocol needed to be followed at all times:

*“Core to the centralized structure is the strict adherence to a communication protocol.” [EM4]*

*“Generally, communication happens via social media and normal communication from the general secretariat’s office. We have a vibrant website that shares information online. We call regular meetings at least once a month to update our affiliates so that they know what’s happening in the field.” [EM1]*

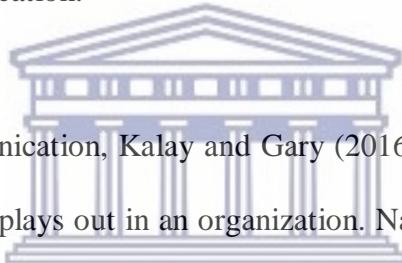
Communication started from the executive to presidents of the provincial bodies, national team managers, regions and finally, dojos. This system was put in place to ensure order and consistent information flow. From documentary analysis (Karate South Africa, n.d.) and data from participants, it was deduced that KSA instituted strict communication guidelines and all protocols were expected to be followed:

*“Should a member wish to write to the organization, or set up meetings with the executive committee, he or she needs to follow the protocol.” [EA3]*

*“KSA insists that communication line protocol has to be maintained and get extremely sticky about the process.” [PEM2]*

Kalay and Gary (2016) found that within a centralized structure like KSA, the lines of communication were narrow, and information had to flow from the executive and general council levels to the province, the regions and districts and finally, to the dojo level.

Ali et al. (2018) considered centralization a feature that focused on decision-making processes. On the other hand, in their investigation of the relationship between organizational structure and department communication, Renani et al. (2017) found that centralization and formality were reasons for poor communication.



Apart from the lines of communication, Kalay and Gary (2016) also noted that a centralized approach indicated how power plays out in an organization. National athletes mentioned that KSA belonged to the membership:

*“KSA belongs to the athletes and not the executive members.” [EA6]  
“There is just too much power at the top, and no athletes are represented at the executive level. KSA is nothing without the athletes.” [EA5]*

From the responses by national athletes, it seemed that some athletes had updated communication about international tournaments and could prepare for tournaments. However, for others who were not technologically connected, communication was not possible.

When executive members were asked about the communication gap, the following response was received:

*“With this system, there is proper functioning at the top level and there is a clear focus on the vision and mission. The decisions taken are uniform and are cascaded to the provinces and the regions, then the local dojos.” [EM4]*

[EM1] believed that this system “*was about regulating the processes, not controlling them*” and noted that it would be impossible to manage over 1 400 dojos in the country. When asked if this was power located within the executive members, [PEM2] responded that this was the most functional approach because:

*“We are too busy to deal directly with issues that can be resolved at the provincial or regional district levels.”*

*“Because of the growing membership and to allow our membership participation internationally, we needed to ensure that the structure at the top, is developed per world karate standards. We have a system to manage the provinces, which manages regions and local dojos. We needed to fix the structure at the macro level; this is our role as KSA.”* [PEM2]

When asked why national coaches or athletes queried information because they did not have pathways to access it, [NC3] commented:



*“There is always a delay in receiving information from the management; even when issues are raised, it won’t matter anymore by the time it’s addressed.”*  
[NC3]

According to [NC3], communication was clear about the qualifying tournaments, ranking of athletes and international events:

*“Well, firstly, a yearly calendar is drafted and communicated. Then athletes are expected to attend training camps and tournaments at their own expense to obtain ranking points and selection to various international events.”*

This was done systematically and athletes and coaches were expected to plan and prepare to reach peak performance just before an event.

However, there were challenges, as illustrated by national coaches who felt that communication from KSA was not timeous and was not always efficient in appointing coaches for tournaments:

*“Poor communication from KSA. You never know if you are selected to coach and there is no assurance that you will be working with the athletes for an event.” [PNC1]*

*“You never know on time if you have been selected as a coach for a particular event or you are informed too late.” [NC4]*

From the coaches' responses, it can be said that communication was considered a huge challenge, especially if there was uncertainty about being selected for an event. Although national coaches were experienced, there were high-pressure levels when required to arrange travel costs. More importantly, it was impossible to bond with the athletes in the team, at such short notice. Like the national coaches, EA6 also mentioned that there was very little preparation time, especially for international competitions:



*“Knowing very late if you have been selected, especially if you are 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> ranked and when it is not so clear. So, the question is when and how to peak for competition – an athlete can't be competition fit all the time.” [EA6]*

*“We would be told three weeks before a competition. Then there is the scramble for relevant gear, travel funding, and getting physically fit. It is impossible to remain at peak fitness throughout the year.” [EA2]*

### **5.3.3.2. Sub-Theme 2: Talent Identification**

Talent identification in KSA occurred mainly at the level of dojos and occurred randomly for most athletes. The question of when and how talent identification happened in KSA elicited the following responses by national coaches and athletes:

*“The local dojo plays an essential role in identifying talent, and the instructors generally work with these athletes at a local level.” [NC4]*

*“In 2014, my dojo coach saw my potential. “He can surprise us”, and his focus was on me – he knows my weakness and strength. Only at the senior level, the focus is stronger by national coaches.” [EA7]*

The talent and potential of most of the participants were noticed at junior levels and mainly by their local dojo coaches. Transitioning from junior to senior allowed them full recognition by national coaches and officials at national competitions.

*“My kumite breakthrough only happened in 2014, when I started to be recognized as a potential ranked athlete, and it was my first time, under a senior division.” [EA7]*

*“It has been a long journey to change from another style and then adjust from full contact.” [EA8]*

*“I started with traditional karate, and got my black belt. I won my first national tournament in 2013. In 2015 I won a gold medal at the All Africa Games and tournament in 2015.” [EA4]*

Participants expressed the different ways in which they were identified as having talent. Another way in which talent identification occurred was when athletes made transitions that included style changes, and moved from traditional karate to competition participation. A study

by Sheik (2010) investigated the talent identification process of karate athletes in Iran. This study's results revealed no pattern for talent identification as experienced by coaches and athletes. The findings in KSA also suggested that several factors led to talent identification. In addition, Kaynar (2019) examined the talent selection methods of Turkish athletes, and found that the most effective method to identify talent, was to apply several physical, mental, body and genetic composition tests. Kaynar (2019) described random talent identification as “natural selection” because this approach was not scientific. In this natural selection approach, potential athletes in KSA were initially noticed by local instructors, and were selected when they observed potential talent in an athlete.

### **5.3.3.3. Sub-Theme 3: Ranking and Selection**

In their study, Kalen et al. (2021) aimed to explore differences in the selection strategies of a national team. They found that the selection strategy was linked to long-term success, and decisions should be carefully made. According to Johnson (2010), many factors were considered before making selections. These included judgements and measurements of quality to ensure fairness.



In KSA, ranking was used as a factor for selection. Athletes achieved points through participation in competitions, and medal achievements in tournaments. The top four ranked nationally, were regarded as elite athletes. National coaches and executive members often monitored these athletes. When asked about the journey to being a ranked athlete, [EA3] was clear about the hard work and dedication that it took to achieve any form of success:

*“Years and years of hard work, this is not something you can achieve overnight. Winning does not come early or easy.” [EA3]*

*“So, it’s been a long journey to be ranked top three in the country.” [EA1]*

There were no shortcuts to success. As noted by [EA6], “*Shortcuts result in short success, if any at all*”. According to [EA3],

*“The more you sacrifice the more time you will have to perfect yourself in this sport. Dedication is key. You must train at least 5 – 6 days a week and at least 2 hours of training and, if you can squeeze in more than one training session per day, you have to do that as well.” [EA3]*

The responses from the national athletes indicated the level and intensity of commitment to the sport. There were no quick fixes to getting ranked in the country's top ten. When KSA introduced league tournaments, it meant a fairer chance for the top ten-ranked athletes to improve or maintain their positions. Although executive members and national coaches noted that selection was based on an athlete's rank, national coaches had very little involvement in the selection process. [PEM2] asserted:

*“The ranking system has technically always been the way athletes were chosen into teams, like in the past, those who were selected were those who won consistently, and now those who are selected are the top 2 top 3 who win consistently.”*

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According to [NC4], “*as a coach I am not a selector and I didn’t have any say in the selection process*”. [PNC1] expressed similar sentiments, and stated that “*there was no consultation with the coach and if there was, it happened very infrequently.*”

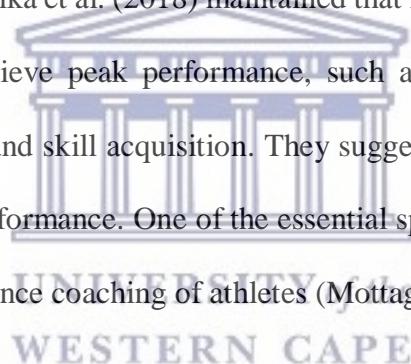
This system of scoring is not uncommon in other karate federations globally. According to [EM1], the Karate Federation of Hong Kong also used a cumulative points system, to calculate karate athletes' performance in competitions at home and abroad.

#### **5.3.3.4. Sub-Theme 4: Competition Preparedness**

When asked about athletic preparation for major international tournaments, [EA8] asserted that there was no special preparation for any tournament:

*“We just do basics – now preparing for WKF means bioscience for analysis and fitness. This is a provincial initiative, no other areas have this academy. KSA does not offer you this technical help.”* [EA8]

Apart from a few squad training sessions, which included coaching at regional and national levels before competitions, KSA did not provide training in specialised facilities, coaching and skills development, as Rees et al. (2016) recommended. The “multifactorial” components referred to by Glazier (2017), which included physiological, biomechanical and psychological variables for peak performance (Salmon, 2017), were not available to national athletes for international competitions. Mujika et al. (2018) maintained that many elements were necessary for athletic preparation to achieve peak performance, such as exercise training, recovery, nutrition, psychological skills and skill acquisition. They suggested integrating all of these as key factors to achieve peak performance. One of the essential sports services that was lacking in KSA, was the high-performance coaching of athletes (Mottaghi et al., 2013).



Groenewald (2014) advised that high-performance sports must include quality management practices, that would help lay the foundation for preparing athletes for the highest levels of competition, as well as, ensuring monitoring and ongoing improvement (Sothiriadou & de Bosscher, 2013). Data from national coaches and athletes indicated that exposure to first-class training facilities were not available to all national athletes. The training camps were not adequate or effective enough to prepare athletes for international competitions. When executive managers were asked about this, the following responses were received:

*“We would really like to offer these, but unfortunately, we do not have the funds to provide these services.” [EM1]*

*“In my fifteen years of serving as a coach, I have never had the opportunity to work with a support team, like the way other sports like rugby or soccer in South Africa.” [NC2]*

Haff (2010) found that an elite team required a multidisciplinary approach to enhancing performance. KSA national coach, [NC2], noted that KSA did not provide these essential services. For optimal performance, athletes needed exposure to experts such as physiologists, bio-mechanists, nutritionists, psychologists, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic trainers, physical therapists and medical doctors (Haff, 2010).

#### **5.3.3.5. Sub-Theme 5: Competition Stress**

One challenge that elite athletes mentioned was the mental stresses of competing. In this regard, all KSA national athletes interviewed, struggled with balancing studies, work, family and sport:

*“Most of us have full-time jobs, and some of us are married and have children, so it is tough to get funding and manage the preparation for tournaments.” [EA4]*

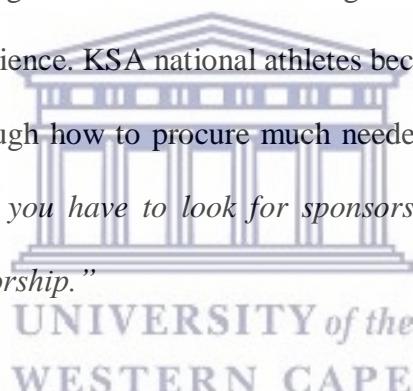
*“I am still a student and depend on my parents for financial support – balancing my studies and preparing for competitions can be a tricky balancing act.” [EA1]*

Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009, p. 239-240) posited that “elite athletes do not live in a vacuum. They function in a highly complex social and organizational environment, which influences their performances”. The statements by elite athletes confirm Fletcher and Wagstaff’s (2009) view that athletes lived in a complicated social environment. Similarly, the Athlete Performance Model developed by Stone et al. (2007) noted several factors that impacted athletic performance, including coach-athlete relationship, occupation, genetic potential, environmental factors, and physical and social environments. In their strategies model, Turner et al. (2018) also encouraged a person-centred approach, which emphasized the health and

well-being of athletes. In addition, KSA athletes experienced mental stress because they were under-prepared for competitions, and did not feel supported by national coaches with whom they were unfamiliar. National athletes mentioned that the support of an expert technical team to enhance their mental and physical preparation for international competitions was inadequate or non-existent.

According to [EA4], “*there were no opportunities to strengthen yourself mentally although you may have been physically fit for the competition.*”

Kilic (2020) examined karate athletes' psychological resilience and stress coping strategies in Turkey. He found no relationship between age and strategies to cope with stress. Özdemir (2019) also found that psychological resilience differed regarding gender but did not differ in terms of age and sporting experience. KSA national athletes became stressed weeks before the significant event thinking through how to procure much needed finances. For [EA7], it was “*heartbreaking – you qualify, you have to look for sponsorship. Training is not effective because your concern is sponsorship.*”



Although the study by Purcell et al. (2019) suggested the development of guides to assist the mental health of athletes, Litwic-Kaminska (2020) found that techniques learnt in mental training were hardly used to accomplish a medal. In this study, KSA national coaches and athletes mentioned that technical and mental tournament preparation were components of coaching, and should form part of their preparation for tournaments. The aim of the research by Kurtovic and Savova (2016) was to explore how the performance of karate athletes could be influenced using psychological techniques during karate trainings. The results confirmed

that the model of combined physical and mental training for athletes improved their physical skills and optimized performance during competitions. Similarly, the findings of a study on the importance of motivation in sport achievement by Djurovic et al. (2020) noted the psychological aspect of motivation as one of the most important factors for optimal sport performance.

However, O’Neil and Steyn’s (2007) study of South African endurance events athletes, found that these athletes improved their performances on their initiative, and coaches did not have much impact on how they performed. Responses from the KSA national athletes suggested that most national athletes “self-managed” their mental and physical preparation for international tournaments, with no psychological support from KSA. This was evident in the response by [EA5]:



*“Much of the mental and fitness preparation is self-managed. I started with meditation and grounding techniques in 2014.” [EA5]*

KSA elite athletes also experienced environmental stress as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as expressed by [EA1]:

*“When you live your life for karate, COVID-19 restrictions meant no training, although KSA did have Zoom sessions. Mainly I missed the competitions and travelling to national and international tournaments”*

*“The lockdown really got to me – I felt depressed and the occasional Zoom sessions were not the same. I felt uninspired.” [EA1]*

Research by Elliot et al. (2021) aimed to explore the impact of COVID-19 on youth sports in South Australia. These researchers used a conceptual model that included themes of “recognising struggle”, “reconnection”, “re-engaging” after COVID- 19 restrictions, and “re-imagining sport” after the COVID - 19 lockdown. They found the need for sporting organizations to offer recovery programmes to their athletes. KSA national athletes struggled

to “re-imagine” karate after the lockdown level was reduced, as noted by [EA3] and [EA5]:

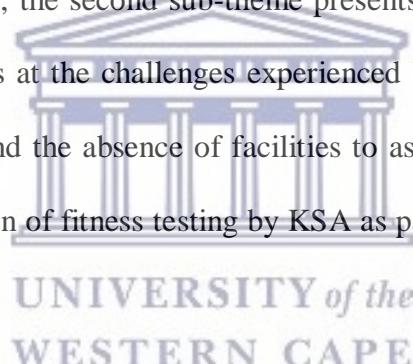
*“It was tough getting back to training and competition, especially following all the protocols in place by KSA.” [EA3].*

*“It was difficult to go back to intense training sessions, and competition again – a huge adjustment after over a year of no contact with karate, as I knew it.” [EA5]*

KSA was responsive to all COVID-19 protocols stipulated by SASCOC, as captured on the official website (Karate South Africa, n.d.).

#### **5.3.4. Main Theme 4: Organizational Challenges**

National executives, athletes and coaches experienced several challenges. Four sub-themes are discussed in the following section, including funding as a major concern that impacted all participants. Linked to funding, the second sub-theme presents athletes' unfair selection and ranking. The third theme looks at the challenges experienced by athletes transitioning from amateur to elite competition and the absence of facilities to assist these athletes. The fourth theme examines the introduction of fitness testing by KSA as part of the selection process for international competitions.

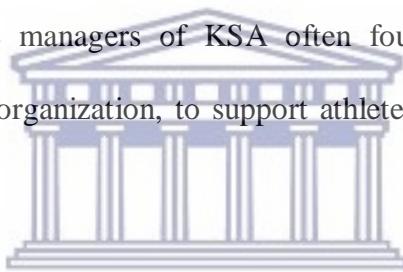


##### **5.3.4.1. Sub-Theme 1: Funding**

According to the executive members, KSA was a recognised federation. At present, it is the only officially recognized organization responsible for organized karate in South Africa, under Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) guidance. Swart et al. (2014) suggested that such a federation depended on human and financial resources to serve its membership properly. Swart et al. (2014) found that the country could not meet the high administration costs of promoting sports, after analysing the South African government's spending on sport, with particular reference to the mass participation programme.

Adom-Aboagye (2015) study also found that funding by SASCOC to national swimming athletes needed to be re-visited. KSA relies entirely on external funders such as the government, the National Lottery and corporations as their primary sources of revenue. According to Bowman (2007), financial capacity is important for a non-profit organization because it assists in the organization experimenting, with new strategies and allows different ways of working, based on the organization's needs. From the data received, from all three data sets, it is clear that KSA did not have the financial capacity to initiate any programme, that could have enhanced the sporting achievements of its national athletes.

Unstable funding exercised a significant influence on all operational areas of KSA. Generally, sports organizations are self-funded or partially funded; at the same time, there is pressure for athletes to achieve. Executive managers of KSA often found themselves pressured, to commercialize their sport and organization, to support athletes and keep the public interest (Parent, 2006).



Moyo et al. (2020) found that more minor sporting codes in South Africa that were not as professionalized as some major sports codes were seen as semi-professional. In the case of KSA, some government funding was made available, at the national level to develop the sport. Funding was a major issue for KSA, because there was no official sponsor for this sport. With government grants at their barest minimum and COVID-19 superseding all funding, KSA “*did not receive any funding for 2020-2021*” [EM1]. More recently, Grix et al., (2021) noted that the financial impact of COVID-19 on professional sports had been immense.

The data illustrated that KSA identified funding as a significant problem, and every effort was being made to secure funds. However, as suggested by [EM3]:

*“As long as karate remains a “secondary” sport in South Africa, athletes will never be able to get much funding support by KSA because of the status of the sport.”* [EM3]

*“Sponsors want to see some connection between what they put in and a return for that investment in advertising, and television coverage with their brand logos at major tournaments.”* [EM2]

It was evident that company investment depended on the global popularity of the sport. National coaches and athletes called for the effective monetization of karate as they believed this was the only way to develop the sport. Funding strategy in South Africa appears to be focusing only on those elite sports with highly successful 'win medals' approaches. Unfortunately, karate is not one of those sporting codes.

[NC3] mentioned that even the coaches and referees who attended the tournaments were those who could afford it, and “*they pay to work on the floor*”. They believed that if karate was monetized, it would be possible, to support the best athlete and coaches, in international competitions. An executive member expressed the following about funding:

*“Funds have always been an issue; it impacts those who volunteer and those who participate.”* [EM4]

*“You need a lot of money to become a coach or referee accredited – it takes money to travel to the tournaments when you are selected as a coach. At times I have been partially funded for travelling and examination costs, but largely a coach has to pay their way through.”* [NC5]

Participants also iterated that funding, or the lack thereof, was one of the most significant barriers to participation and competition success. According to [EA6], funding needed to be put in place for elite athletes by KSA, through a proper structure of sponsorship:

*“Finances are a massive thing. Being older, it gets more difficult because you cannot depend on your parents to subsidize you like in the past.”* [EA6]

*“I can confirm that I spend about R250 000.00 per year, including going to an African and World Championship, in that year. Now imagine, there was some*

*type of reward/incentive for being the best athlete in the country, instead of the sport just draining your money, from month to month.” [EA3]*

*“You must be willing to put aside +/- R6000.00 a month, just for karate tournaments alone, and this does not include your dojo fees, extra training, other training facilities memberships, special diets etc. Something that is not achievable by many athletes, regardless of their talents.” [EA3]*

National athletes noted that participation in karate was expensive, because it was not a sponsored sport in South Africa. Essentially, the athlete had to pay for training equipment, travel, accommodation and competition fees. Without funding from the government, KSA national athletes were under no obligation or pressure to perform. Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) found that national sports organizations would become more accountable, when there was increased financial investment at the government level.

#### **5.3.4.2. Sub-Theme 2: Contested Selection and Transparency**

Funding was closely linked to the selection, and [EA3] described how a lack of funding could mean unfair selection for tournaments:

*“If you as an athlete are struggling with this, then KSA won’t hesitate to call up any athlete who has the finances. I have been in this situation more than once, where I struggled to get the money on time, and the next person ranked below me got called for the position.” [EA3]*

*“Selection is linked to finances. If an athlete cannot pay for the cost of a tournament, he cannot get the points he needs to get a better ranking. So it is an ongoing disadvantage for these athletes when they miss out on competing.” [EA2]*

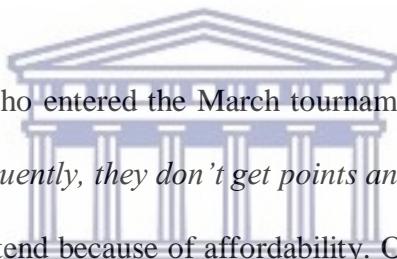
Furthermore, [EA3] contended that karate had become so expensive that only individuals with money could afford to attend all the tournaments. Then the best athletes often stayed at home. [EA2] noted that there was a direct link between ranking and affordability. It was only through tournament participation that athletes get points awarded to them.

It was found that affordably determined ranking and selection, and not necessarily merit, as noted by [NC3] in the following statement:

*“If an athlete did not have the funding, the 10<sup>th</sup> ranked athlete who could afford it was selected.”*

*“It doesn’t guarantee that the selected athletes are necessarily the best and only affirms that these athletes could afford it.” [NC5]*

[EM4] also argued that a huge difference existed between “*a township karateka who can only pay R50 registration to a club compared to the more affluent clubs that charge up to R400. So, it is a struggle for black athletes, especially without the support of a committed sponsor*”. [PNC1] noted that “*the present selection process simply widens the gap between the haves and the have-nots.*”



According to [NC5], athletes who entered the March tournament and won medals, and after that, “*they are not there; subsequently, they don’t get points and are not ranked*”. He said that these athletes were unable to attend because of affordability. Other national coaches also had similar opinions about ranking and selection:

*“We were opening the door for only a specific group of people, but we missed out on a big group that could contribute to KSA.” [PNC1]*

Coaches believed that the system needed to ensure that the playing field got levelled to create opportunities for the “*huge percentage of the population that we have not reached*” [NC5]. When asked about coach involvement in the selection process, [NC5] and [NC4] noted that the process was not entirely transparent:

*“A lot of talented people are missing. Right now, the athletes are coming from the same dojos, the same areas, same wealth structure.” [NC5]*

*“Using this ranking system becomes enabling for those who can afford it and drives a crack, between those who have and those who don’t. So, it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts – the wedge gets driven deeper by using this system of ranking and selection.”* [EA2]

There was a sense that KSA had overlooked many potential athletes because of their ranking and selection approach, and poorer athletes were systematically excluded.

#### **5.3.4.3. Sub-Theme 3: Transition to Elite Competition**

Closely aligned to talent identification was monitoring athletes from a junior amateur division to national status. When asked about the transition from being an amateur athlete to a professional one, participants [EA5] and [EA8] expressed the following sentiments:

*“I was already recognized during my junior years by my dojo instructor...recognition only at a senior as a professional, when I won medals at All Africa Games and UFAK. The transition was quick and I did feel completely overcome, because I did not know what to expect.”* [EA5]

*“No one told me about the pressure when competing at a professional level. As a junior athlete, it’s a huge jump, for which I was unprepared.”* [EA8]

The data suggested that in terms of national or international participation, some athletes began competing at a very young age, while others made their launch very late in their karate careers.

Moreover, most of these athletes transitioned with the assistance of instructors, from their local dojos.

*“I did not quite understand what it was to be an elite athlete, in terms of world standards. Being a young elite athlete, I only understood that I was one of the best in my division in South Africa. I had no idea about strategies – just the skills passed on to me by my instructor at the dojo. Basically, I did not have an identity as a professional Kumite athlete.”* [EA2]

From these statements, it can be implied that KSA did not have a policy to monitor transitioning athletes or prepare them for serious competition. In a study by Bruner et al. (2008) that explored

the challenges experienced by ice-hockey athletes, it was found that the transition of athletes into elite sports required support from the organization. The researchers found that practitioners, coaches and sports psychology consultants should be involved when an athlete moved from amateur to elite status. Bruner et al. (2008) further noted that transitioning experiences were equally important when an athlete retired from sport.

For many KSA athletes, entry into elite sport meant being part of the national team, as expressed by [EA7]:

*“I was excited and very proud to be chosen to represent South Africa. It suddenly occurred to me “Wow...” I have a chance at the ultimate Olympic Games.” [EA7]*

When karate, as an Olympic sport, was introduced in the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games, “KSA national athletes were inspired by the opportunity to strive towards this ultimate level of participation” [EM2]. According to Barreiros and Fonseca (2012), it was a significant “landmark” in the progress and achievement of an athlete, when they had the chance to represent their country, as part of a national squad. The authors believe that the Olympic Games and World championships were the highlights of their careers for most athletes.

#### **5.3.4.4. Sub-Theme 4: Fitness Testing**

As part of the selection for international tournaments, KSA introduced a fitness testing component over the last two years. Although national coaches and athletes supported the idea of fitness testing, they contested the scientific validity of the testing, which consisted only of endurance ability testing. Anglos (2017) found that alongside physiological fitness components, other karate-specific skills like techniques, coordination and reaction time were also necessary for establishing a standardized fitness test for karate athletes.

Although participants received this favourably, several participants questioned the validity of the tests, to allow or disallow participants from competing, even if they were ranked number one. According to [EA1]:

*“Even if you are currently ranked 1 ... if you fail the fitness test, you will not be included in the team, and an athlete who is ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, could be selected if he passes the fitness test.”*

*“Even if you have the financial back-up and you are ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, but not the fittest. This is the fitness measure being used at present.”* [EA1]

Participants believed that these fitness characteristics may not necessarily predict successful performance. [EA4] and [EA2] questioned the relevance of the measures used, and [EA4] raised similar questions about fitness testing by KSA:

*“This has been introduced lately. There are questions around fitness testing: is this test a measure of fitness for karate specifically? Who designed the test? Did we get the help of sports scientists to develop these tests? It can be argued that endurance testing like running for 4kms, is for a road runner, not a karate athlete or weightlifting, for that matter. So, the relevance and design of the test, raise several questions. The idea of fitness testing is a huge stride in karate – it is the right move, but the execution needs to be spot on.”* [EA2]

*“What criteria were used? How did they select the exercises for fitness? How was this decided? Does the fitness level equate to medals at an international level? If the fitness test is not passed; you are taken off the team, but there is no evidence to suggest how this test was arrived at.”* [EA4]

Although fitness testing was seen as a great idea, the practical application was not relevant:

*“In the last fitness test, only one factor was tested - endurance. Other aspects like BMI, speed and agility were overlooked entirely. What KSA needs is to get the right people for the right job. Also, Kumite and kata were subjected to the same testing.”* [EA6]

*“I don’t think it would be that clear cut, or that black and white. Just because you can do more push-ups than me, doesn’t mean you will beat me in the ring.”* [EA8]

These responses suggested that KSA should consider fitness testing as a compulsory criterion for international participation. However, the fitness tests should be professionally designed and

include all aspects of fitness related to karate. The next section introduces the final main theme of the study.

### **5.3.5. Main Theme 5: Organizational Development and Transformation**

Within this final main theme, three sub-themes were identified. The first explores the vision of KSA to enhance youth leadership in South Africa through karate. The second sub-theme discusses the transformative efforts made by KSA, at executive and athlete levels to address gender and racial equity. The final sub-theme illustrates the importance of international exposure to reach optimal athletic performance.

#### **5.3.5.1. Sub-Theme 1: Community Outreach**

When asked about how KSA partners with other stakeholders, it was found that there was a plan in place to impact the youth of South Africa through karate:

*“KSA has partnered with corporates and social organizations to create awareness about karate as a sport.” [EM1]*

Endeavours were being made to make the sport of karate marketable that resulted in the sport being desirable by the public. With this being done, there was hope that sponsors would approach KSA to fund the outreach programmes to neglected communities. [EM4] shared his experience as a council member of the executive:

*“KSA is constantly planning and relooking at how it can improve the sport. There is constant monitoring. Change is not always received well, especially now that KSA has recognition by WKF.”*

*“I offered myself and volunteered to take on the development teams, so that the foundations of an elite athlete could be built for future tournaments, but I gave my idea, and that was it.” [PNC1]*

*“We are sponsored regionally and have a training centre supporting the top 10 in preparation, rehab, and equipment. But this is just our province. I don’t know about other provinces.” [EA8]*

When asked if there was a link between the provincial academy and KSA, [EA7] stated that no relationship existed between KSA and the provincial academy, only the local coaches who worked with them. [EA8] further mentioned that the academy also provided technical assistance in pre-competition “*bio-science analysis and fitness*”. This indicated that KSA was yet to work with its members, on a micro level, to achieve constant support throughout the provinces.

Linked to community outreach was funding to support such initiatives. National athletes believed that KSA should embark on fundraising campaigns and introduce branding and advertising at major tournaments:

*“It is the only way to keep the sport alive.”* [EA7]

*“We should be allowed to advertise sponsors on our gear, try to get television coverage – this is what sponsors want to see.”* [EA2]

*“Relationships with other companies will make it easier to get sponsorship.”* [EA8]

Regarding procuring funding, participants felt that KSA should monetize the sport by encouraging partnerships with corporates. [EA3] noted that KSA should financially invest in the interests of the top athletes in the country:

*“The government provides funds for all sporting codes from the regional level up to the national level, and as the level increases, the funds increase. Karate should be part of that funding pool.”* [EA3]

KSA recognised the need to develop the funding structure of the organization and had appointed a commission that was specifically geared towards procuring funding:

*“We now appointed a branding advertising and sponsorship commission to endeavour, to land cooperate sponsor/s on board.”* [EM1]

*“There is no development training for athletes, especially in the township and rural areas; it’s very sad, believe me... on that, zero. Elite athletes move forward, especially those who can afford to attend nationals and leagues. But, remember, there are many elite athletes who can’t afford to go to nationals, so they don’t get the points and are left behind.”* [NC6]

KSA has committed itself to development initiatives, as noted in the interviews with executive members. However, national coaches believed this aspect of KSA’s vision has yet to materialize.

### **5.3.5.2. Sub-Theme 2: Racial and Gender Equity**

When asked about how the structure had transformed its organization, [EM1] acknowledged the absence of black karate athletes in KSA. According to [EM3],

*“We are focusing on development in two areas, technique (coaching and referring) and addressing the racial quota. In the 1970s, karate was a popular sport in the black townships and in 2013 kasi karate was alive in South Africa.”* [EM3]

[EM3] believed that black karate athletes moved away from the sport, because they had no access to funding from KSA or other sponsors.



*“The funding problem broke their spirit and they never returned.”* [EM3]

From the data, it can be deduced that karate was a sport, in which people of colour actively participated from the 1960s. [EM4] described the participation and contribution of black karate in South Africa, citing the names of those who contributed to the development of karate “*during the dark days of apartheid*”. These included “*Shihan Alpheous Sabela, and Nellie Kleinsmidt, who overcame severe obstacles to promote karate in South Africa*”.

Jones (2001) wrote about the racial and gender-related struggles experienced by Nellie Kleinsmidt, during the apartheid era and how she overcame these as a woman of colour, to

become a successful leader and manager of karate in South Africa. Executive members mentioned that KSA had made every endeavour for its organizational structure to be representative of the country's different races. According to [PEM2], the racial and gender profiles at the executive level had changed:

*“At present, nine black Africans are part of the executive and general council of KSA. This says a lot for equity, when compared to the pre-KSA days.”* [PEM2]

While the development of karate athletes of colour remains the core vision of KSA, the serious lack of funding and the commercialization of karate had side-lined athletes of colour and class. As aptly noted by [EM4], “*KSA has not side-lined any black athlete; the commercialization of karate has*”.

Burton (2015), in a review of women in leadership positions within sports, found that there was a lack of women, in management roles and that masculine behaviour was suited to the kind of leadership required in sport. In a study by Imeson (2017), coaching as a career by females was explored. It was found that women held very few head coaching positions in sport. Regarding gender equity, the data indicated that KSA had made the necessary effort, to include women on the executive committee and the general council (Karate South Africa, n. d.).

In keeping with transformation, Goslin et al. (2007) explored the idea of diversity in South African sports federations. They found that diversity management was only confined to affirmative action, and recommended diversity policies and training programmes for organizational transformation. According to Dove et al. (2016), it continues to be a challenge to transform South African sport, to be more representative of the country's racial composition. The authors cited the Transformation Status Report of 2013, which found that transformation attempts in the last two decades were superficial and not practical. For KSA, racial and gender equity continues to be a priority in the future.

### **5.3.5.3. Sub-Theme 3: International Exposure**

Coaches and athletes mentioned that the best way to improve athletic performance was to expose athletes to international training. The theme of exposure covered the experience and the knowledge that needed to be acquired, by national coaches and elite athletes, to achieve optimal performance. When asked how KSA could contribute to their performance, national athletes asserted that more international exposure was necessary:

*“We need to compete for more, fight more, fight overseas, have more floor time, jump the border and get exposure to other international athletes, their styles and international coaches. We need international training camps, for selected elite athletes. Take the 1<sup>st</sup> /2<sup>nd</sup> to these camps and expose them to an international scene.”* [EA5]

*“KSA should offer more time on the floor – we want more friendly matches with other countries. European circuit fights are held every second weekend.”* [EA8]

Most national athletes felt that they needed exposure to international coaches, to get some experience about what is required at international competition levels:



*“There needs to be some sort of master plan for Team SA – this may mean more exposure to international coaches. Bring the experts to SA and allow athletes the opportunity to experience international coaching.”* [EA6]

[EA6] also mentioned that there were huge gaps in preparing for international events:

*“Are we up to the standard of international athletes? No, we have a long way to go. I feel that SA does not have an international identity as a competing country. We need to look deeper into international preparation for performance. Are we good only in SA, what about overseas?”* [EA6]

Purwanto et al. (2022) in their evaluation study of karate coaches in Yogyakarta, found that the ability of coaches strongly influenced achievement. They cited several abilities, which included the mastery of karate techniques, coaching certification, mastery of competition rules and the

use of science and technology.

Furthermore, there was a call for more engagement by KSA with the local dojos, which would eventually feed into the national level.

*“That is where it starts (equipment, venue for training, promote karate at the local level, funding for struggling dojos and ranked athletes.” [EA7]*

#### **5.4. Discussion**

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and organizational structure regarding sport performance.

From the above data presentation, it can be proposed that there was a close nexus between organizational responsibility and the structure of KSA and athletic performance. The perceptions of executive managers, national coaches and athletes were in line with the literature, that sports organizations are complex systems, and athletic performance is multi-factorial and multi-layered (Hulme et al., 2019). The following section describes how the organizational responsibility and structure of KSA either, enables or inhibits athletic performance, as perceived by executive managers, national coaches and athletes at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels.

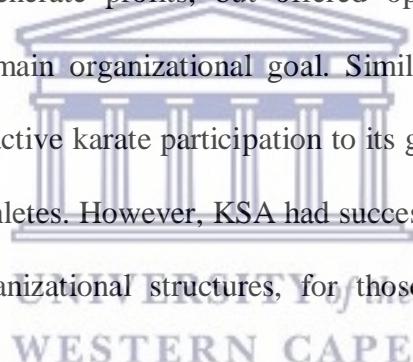
##### **5.4.1. Macro-Level**

###### **5.4.1.1. Non-Profit Governance**

The data indicated that KSA was a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization with marginal national funding at a macro-level. Baruh and Ramalho (2006) examined the difference between profit and non-profit organizations. They found that business organizations focused mostly on

economic and financial criteria, whereas non-profit organizations tended to emphasize human and societal outcomes. This was true for KSA, as the vision of the executive members, was for students to become leaders of the future and serve the country with diligence and distinction. Through documentary analysis, it was verified that the official vision and mission of KSA was about developing leadership skills and the outstanding character of its members. The implication of this vision was that sport performance does not feature directly, as part of the mission and vision of KSA (Karate South Africa, n.d.).

The purpose of the study by Rossi et al. (2020) was to investigate if non-profit sports clubs in Germany were affected by the growth of the commercial sports market. They found that in contrast to profit-based sports providers, non-profit sports clubs were voluntary organizations, that did not endeavour to generate profits, but offered opportunities for active sports participation, which was the main organizational goal. Similarly, at a macro-level, KSA, through its structures, offered active karate participation to its growing membership, many of whom were not competitive athletes. However, KSA had successfully, facilitated competition opportunities through its organizational structures, for those athletes who were serious competitors in karate.



The results indicated that at the macro-level, KSA at present is driven by one primary strategic goal, i.e., to establish structures and systems to facilitate participation at the highest level of competition. These structures described the roles and responsibilities at the three levels and made possible affiliation and partnership, with the national and international sports body, SASCOC, UFAK and WKF (Karate South Africa, n.d.). KSA national executives understood their roles and responsibilities as officials of KSA. From the data it can be deduced that KSA did not succeed in monitoring the athletic performance of its elite athletes. The data from national executives, coaches and athletes suggested that KSA achieved only one of its strategic

goals, which was to facilitate athletic participation on the continent and internationally, for those intending to qualify for the Olympic Games.

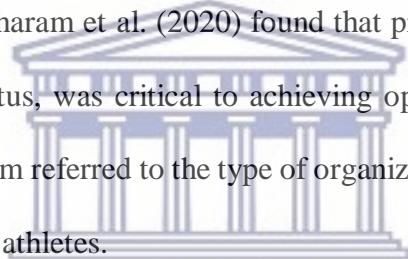
At the meso-level, communication with provinces and regional structures was facilitated. Competitions were organized to facilitate participation. Technical support was offered and ranking and selection were determined at the meso-level. Training support for all athletes took place at this level. There was no direct communication with the macro-level or micro-level available to athletes. Dojos were expected to communicate through the provincial meso-level. The findings suggested that talent identification occurred at this level. Furthermore, dojo instructor support was especially significant. The local instructor is the first person of contact to engage with the athlete. At the micro dojo level, the athlete is guided through the initial phase of training before participating in provincial tournaments. It is therefore not surprising that athletes form a special bond with their instructors and are unable to relate to coaches at the national level. For KSA, talent identification occurred at a micro-dojo level, and elite athletes' potential was recognized and nurtured here. The transition from being an amateur, to an elite athlete, primarily took place at the local level. Henrikson et al. (2010) noted that some sporting contexts could successfully help young athletes transition to a more elite national level. In the case of KSA, the factors that influenced talent discovery and development of the study participants, was mainly at a micro dojo level.

#### **5.4.1.2. Pressure to Professionalize**

In outlining the continuous improvement journey of a voluntary organization, Dunn and Mathews (2001) found that pursuing excellence was no longer an option for voluntary organizations. KSA national executives and coaches experienced pressure from its membership who expected KSA, to perform like a professional organization, in athletic performance support. National coaches and athletes reflected this pressure, even when they were fully aware

that KSA executive managers worked voluntarily.

Shilbury and Ferkins (2011) noted that changes in an organization in sports federations, were often linked to a move away from a volunteer-driven organization, to take on a more commercial identity. These authors referred to this process of transformation as “professionalization”. The data in this study suggested that the constant demands exercised by national and international imperatives forced this change. To be accepted by SASCOC, UFAK and the WKF as a legitimate organization, KSA had to meet changing administrative demands and in the process, became more professionalized. The data indicated that there was a need to professionalize KSA and in so doing, professionalize the coaches and athletes. This was the only way to keep growing the sport which allowed elite athletes to participate in international competitions. In their study, Wharam et al. (2020) found that professional bureaucracy, and a move away from voluntary status, was critical to achieving optimal sports performance. He further noted that professionalism referred to the type of organizational structure that was most suited to the production of elite athletes.



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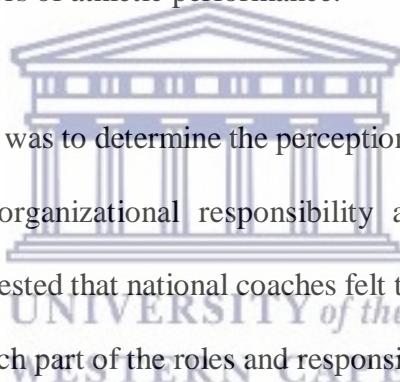
A study by Dowling (2014) examined the lived experience of one participant in sport governance transition from an amateur to a profit culture. Dowling (2014) referred to this transition as “two worlds colliding”. KSA had to transition to professionalize, to enable its athletes to participate in national and international competitions, with marginal funding, within a non-profit context. For many elite athletes, the lack of funding denied them access to participate at an international level.

#### **5.4.2. Meso-Level and Funding Challenges**

At this level, communication and technical support were considered critical enablers of optimal athletic performance. National coaches and athletes believed that access to the executive was

impossible with a centralised structure, except at the provincial level. On the contrary, KSA executives believed that this system was about regulating the processes, not controlling them and a centralized approach is needed, to manage the growing number of dojos.

Valenti et al. (2020) conducted a study that examined the effects of financial support, human resources, coaching provision and foundation phase activity on the international success of fifty-five UEFA women's national football teams over seven years. The study found that, amongst other things, the performance of athletes could be significantly predicted, if specially designed coaching was provided. Further, the economic status of a country and the amount of talent, were also factors that predicted performance. For KSA, specialized coaching with full technical support for international competitions, recognition and funding at the national level appeared to be the main inhibitors of athletic performance.



The third objective of this study was to determine the perceptions of the sport coaches of KSA, on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding sport performance. The findings suggested that national coaches felt that the optimal performance of KSA elite athletes was very much part of the roles and responsibilities of KSA. They believed that these were not being adequately met. National coaches acknowledged, however, that KSA had put together procedures and structures, to facilitate relevant partnerships. The fundamental partnership had been completed with the national body SASCOC, which managed all sports in South Africa, and WKF, which governed karate internationally.

KSA had succeeded in networking with the continental organization (UFAK). Another development area came from KSA national coaches, who believed they could benefit from more professional and scientific input. In their evaluative study of karate coaches in Yogyakarta, Purwanto et al. (2022) noted the many dimensions in the elements of karate

coaching. These included challenges in competition, aspects of self-improvement, capacity building, maintaining authority, communication skills, careful decision-making, and many other supporting dimensions, all of which were core to the successful performance of the athlete. In KSA, national coaches were not exposed to these different elements of coaching.

Du Plooy et al. (2020) investigated the leadership challenges, experienced by the head coaches of elite South African rugby teams, that compete on an international level. It was found that coaches experienced significant environmental, relationship and personal leadership challenges. Some of these challenges were unique to the South African context. Similarly, national coaches in KSA also experienced financial problems, problems bonding with the athletes, and lack of resources and scientific coaching knowledge.

The findings revealed that national coaches received partial or selective funding from KSA. Wicker (2017) noted that very little research had been conducted on voluntary coaches and referees. The findings in this current study confirmed that coaches “pay” to coach the national teams. This would mean that the commitment of KSA national coaches went beyond voluntarism. This implied another level of professional coaching in sport. Surujlal (2014), in a study of the management of professional sport coaches in South Africa, found that a range of human resources functions was required, which included recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, job security and labour relations.

To this effect, national coaches mentioned the idea of the commercialization of karate to generate income for KSA. Koppad et al. (2017) noted that the commercialization of sport involved using sport to generate income. In this regard, they believed that KSA should identify revenue growth drivers as a priority and that sports marketing was the key. Sedky et al. (2022) examined the role of sports marketing in attracting audiences towards less popular sports. They

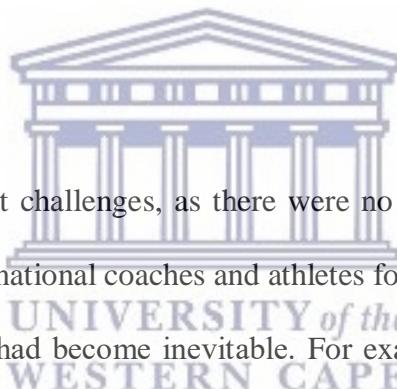
found that sports media, sports advertising, star athlete and sports sponsorship could assist in procuring funding for lesser known sports codes. National coaches and athletes believed that such initiatives should be made by KSA, to generate much needed funding, to support athletes at international competitions.

#### **5.4.2.1. Voluntarism and Professional Bureaucracy**

In their study, Wharam et al. (2020) aimed to identify the relationship between the formalization of a swimming club in the United States and elite performance. They found that “professional bureaucracy” was important to produce elite athletes. This meant reducing volunteer staff to professional staff and commercializing the sport. The current study's data showed that serious efforts had been made to formalize KSA structures and responsibilities. Unlike the Wharam et al. (2020) study, KSA executives and coaches had continued to serve the organization voluntarily. Like the findings in the Hall et al. (2003) study, KSA relied on the commitment and dedication of volunteer staff (executive managers and coaches) and their teamwork to carry out their roles and responsibilities. KSA executives had had long standing relations with the organization. Similarly, as suggested by Wegner et al. (2020), a greater understanding of long volunteer involvement in non-profit organizations was required to explain voluntarism.

The data suggested that KSA was driven by a group of highly committed volunteers who had assumed responsibility for the organization. National executives believed that KSA, as an organization, had continued to develop and progress, because of the immense human resource capacity that it was able to pull together. KSA executives viewed human resource capacity as the strength of KSA. Additionally, executive managers who were once athletes of this sport, were prepared to work voluntarily and put in many hours of hard work, to give back to karate as a sport.

In their study Wegner et al. (2020) noted that volunteer work was a critical dimension in successful voluntary sports organizations. Wicker (2017) reflected on existing research, examining volunteerism and volunteer management in sport, from an individual, institutional, multi-level, and policy perspectives. Her overview of the literature found that much research had been completed on the motivation, commitment, and satisfying experiences of individuals. Ranjan et al. (2021) suggested that, most world sports organizations and sports events were run by volunteers, hence an interest in researching volunteer motivation and satisfaction. Like in the Wegner et al. (2020) case study, the present KSA volunteer executives had a long-standing and significant relationship with KSA.



#### **5.4.2.2. Funding Issues**

Funding was one of the biggest challenges, as there were no corporate sponsorships. There were consistent suggestions by national coaches and athletes for KSA to monetize because the “commercialization” of karate had become inevitable. For example, Previati (2020) found a positive impact of managing fan engagement on the financial outcomes for sports teams. The data indicated that KSA had not given enough attention to securing funding for athletes and coaches.

Blanco (2017) suggested that a centralized sports body had greater access to funding and resources, especially if executive members were aligned with the national government. Unfortunately, although KSA was wholly aligned with national, continental and international organizations, there was no access to the kind of desired funding from the national sports body, SASCOC. For South Africa at present, only selected sports receive funding and karate is not

considered a priority sport. National executives stated that in terms of infrastructure capacity, the sport of karate was not recognized as a major sport by the government of South Africa. They believed that mass and elite sporting participation in sport was the government's responsibility and a focal policy was funding support. The government was also responsible for creating sports policies, funding infrastructure development, and designing programmes for the general development of sports (Banerjee, 2011, cited in Swart et al., 2014). As reported by Keim and de Coning's (2014, p.158) comparative study of sport and development policies across 10 sub-Saharan African countries, there was a need for "political commitment and leadership" by government.

The data from national executives revealed that financial capacity was the greatest challenge for KSA. This was a consistent perception across all participant responses in the study. According to the executive managers, increased funding in the future would mean infrastructure stability, through hiring new paid staff. More funding would further mean offering coaching support for athletes by developing exclusive training centres. Most importantly, it would mean directing funds to support athletes and coaches for international competitions. As noted by Bowman (2007), without financial capacity, a non-profit organization would not be able to develop and support new ideas. Without financial support, KSA executives believed that they were unable to explore new strategies to assist their athletes, to achieve excellence in performance.

#### **5.4.3. Micro-Level**

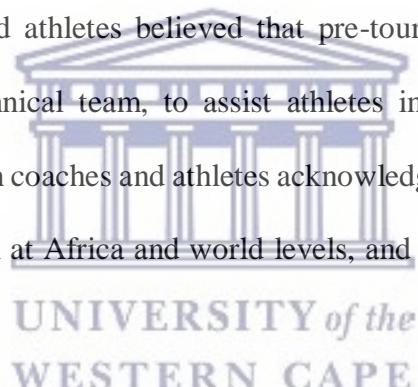
The fourth objective of this study explored the perceptions of national karate participants of KSA on the relationship between organizational responsibility and structure regarding their sport performance. The athletes formed the core at this level of the KSA. Swann et al.'s (2015) definition of the elite athlete bears similarity to how national athletes in this study could be

described.

#### **5.4.3.1. Athletes First**

The profile of elite athletes suggested that they competed and were winners in international and national tournaments. They prepared for sporting events mainly on their own. These athletes had extensive experience in competing and spent time, training for the sport. Essentially, ranked athletes were committed to karate as a sport. The data from executive managers indicated that athletes were a priority. However, there appeared to be a focus on putting systems and structures in place, because a fully functional organization was needed to support athletes.

A significant inhibitor to performance was the preparation of athletes for international tournaments. Both coaches and athletes believed that pre-tournament preparation could be intensified with an entire technical team, to assist athletes in developing an international identity as a karate athlete. Both coaches and athletes acknowledged that national athletes were under-prepared for competition at Africa and world levels, and lacked a professional identity as athletes.

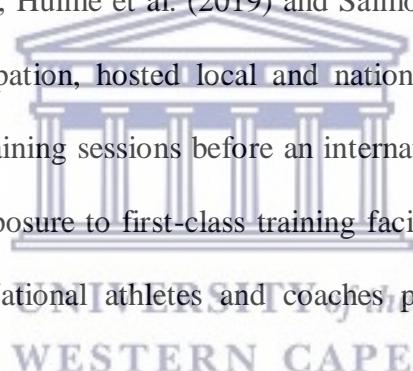


Haan and Sotiriadou (2019) analyzed the multi-level factors affecting the coaching of elite women athletes. They found that macro-, meso- and micro-level factors contributed to the success of elite athletes in the code of rowing. Pal et al. (2020) noted that karate was the world's most popular form of martial art, and like any competitive sport it focused on high performance. According to the national athletes, athletic performance was dependent on, and inter-related to all these variables, as noted in the models by Stone and Stone (2007) and Turner et al. (2018).

In examining the roles and responsibilities the data noted that KSA was not offering essential

sports services for the optimal performance of its athletes. Brocherie et al. (2021) noted that the landscape of elite sport had vastly changed over the years. They suggested the creation of athlete-centred structures, which included advanced sport science facilities and materials for performance optimization. Such a facility would consider all the factors related to athlete's performance, health, and overall well-being. For all KSA athletes, optimal performance would mean what Menting et al. (2019) referred to as multiple pathways, toward achieving elite athletic performance.

National coaches and athletes viewed elite sport performance as multi-factorial, including inter-related physiological, biomechanical and psychological variables that impacted optimal performance in an elite athlete. This finding was in line with the research by Bedford and Salmon (2019), Glazier (2017), Hulme et al. (2019) and Salmon (2017). Although KSA had successfully facilitated participation, hosted local and national tournaments, and exposed athletes to occasional squad training sessions before an international event, there was a clear lack of scientific expertise, exposure to first-class training facilities and training camps, and poor provision of funding. National athletes and coaches perceived this support as the responsibility of KSA.

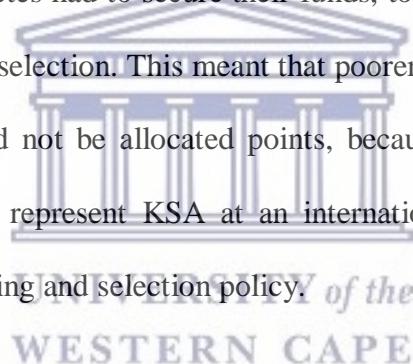


Training and preparation for international tournaments and funding featured as major organizational pressures inhibiting athletic performance. This specifically included the organization's lack of financial support for the national athlete, the intensity of squad sessions, the provision of systematic scientific coaching and technical support, and the lack of training facilities. In summary, athletes were not supported financially. The findings in Groenewald's (2014) study suggested that the sports industry in South Africa was unable to support high-performance athletes, even in the major sports codes because of financial challenges. For KSA elite athletes, the financial, mental and physical preparation for international tournaments was

largely “self-managed”. This was also the core finding by O’Neil and Steyn’s (2007) in their study of South African endurance athletes.

According to Dijkstra et al. (2014), a sports organization must “prioritize” and “optimize” the medical and coaching teams that manage their elite athletes. It was found that the health of the elite athlete within KSA was not being managed optimally, especially for those who sustained serious injuries during tournaments. The study by Pal et al. (2020) concluded that there was a problem of significant injury in full-contact combat sports like karate. Their research suggested the need to develop specific injury prevention strategies in this sport. KSA did not provide the requisite support to those who experienced injuries during tournaments.

The findings revealed that athletes had to secure their funds, to participate in all tournaments to score points for ranking and selection. This meant that poorer athletes who could not afford to travel to tournaments would not be allocated points, because of their non-participation. Athletes with the potential to represent KSA at an international level were subsequently excluded from the present ranking and selection policy.



From the above discussion, it can be said that understanding the relationship between KSA and the sport performance of its national athlete is complex, and is influenced by several factors. It is proposed that the perceptions of executive managers, national coaches and athletes, about organizational structure and optimal athletic performance were integral to the macro-, meso- and micro-components suggested by Smolianov and Zakus (2008).

## **5.5. Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the key themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis. It was found that as an organization, KSA historically evolved from being a traditional, utterly volunteer-driven model, to a more professional model, still primarily run by volunteers. This shift had also seen increasing pressure from national coaches and athletes for scientific expertise, exposure to first-class training facilities and training camps, and the provision of funding. These initiatives were only possible if KSA had the much-needed funding to offer its members the support required to achieve peak athletic performance. The next chapter presents the summary, recommendations and conclusion of this study.



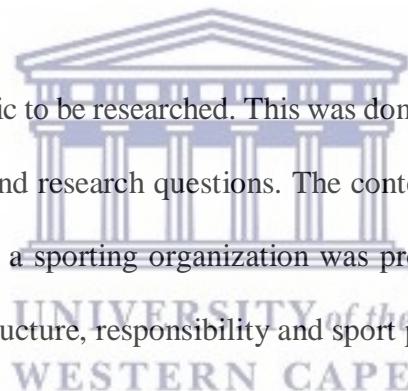
## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of KSA, on the relationship between organizational responsibility and organizational structure regarding sport performance. In this chapter, the research objectives of the study are re-introduced with corresponding themes from the data. The strengths and limitations of the study, and a conclusion for the study are provided. Recommendations are offered based on the study's main findings, after which future research suggestions are proposed and an overall summary of the study is presented.

### **6.2. Chapter Summaries**

Chapter One introduced the topic to be researched. This was done through a detailed discussion of the study's aim, objectives and research questions. The context of the study was described and an introduction to KSA as a sporting organization was presented. Conceptual ideas and definitions of organizational structure, responsibility and sport performance were shared.



Chapter Two presented the theoretical ideas which contributed to an understanding of sports organizations and sport performance. In this chapter, it was argued that elite sport performance was complex and multifaceted, as several factors influenced the decisions, beliefs and operations of sports organizations to achieve optimal performance by the athletes. The organizational model of Smolinov and Zakuš (2008) the Athletic Performance model of Stone et al. (2007) and the Strategies to achieve the Mission by Turner, et al (2018) were used were discussed, which also informed the design of data collection and analysis.

In Chapter Three, a review of the literature was undertaken. This review noted that karate, as a sport and organizational management, was under-researched in South Africa and internationally. For this reason, the review explored organizational roles and responsibilities and sport performance, which formed the core concepts in this thesis. In this chapter, it was proposed that elite sport performance was multi-factorial and required a range of variables, to achieve optimal performance in an elite athlete.

Chapter Four argued for a qualitative research approach to the study. It described the approach in selecting the participants, which consisted of KSA managers, national coaches and elite athletes. The online data-gathering techniques selected for the study were described, including semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis of reports and ranking sheets of KSA. Thematic Analysis was applied as a suitable approach to present the data, after using the ATLAS ti software programme.



Chapter Five reported on the data from executive members, national coaches and athletes to achieve the objectives of this study. The key themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis formed the core of this chapter. The themes were presented in relation to the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, as illustrated in the organizational model of Smolinov and Zakus (2008) and the Athletic Performance model of Stone et al. (2007).

### **6.3. Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

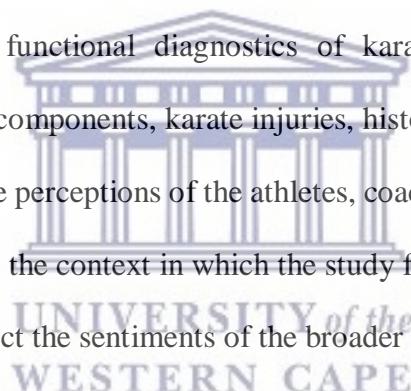
The following strengths were noted in this study:

- Research in sport science is historically grounded in positivist traditions. This study used an interpretivist, qualitative approach, which added to a research inquiry that has become recognised as a legitimate area of scholarship, within sport and exercise science.

- This study contributes to research about elite athletes, to which very little attention has been given, especially in a South African context (Bruner et al., 2008).
- Because karate is under-researched in South Africa, and there is no research directly related to sport management and performance in the sport, this study makes an important contribution to the body of research about karate by exploring the perceptions of elite athletes, executive managers and national coaches regarding optimal sport performance.

The key limitations in this study were the following:

- There is a lack of specific literature on karate research in South Africa and globally. No studies were completed that referred to the management of karate organizations, or elite athletes' perceptions of organizational support for optimal performance. Articles on karate only covered areas from functional diagnostics of karate athletes to physiological, anthropometric and fitness components, karate injuries, history and gender in karate.
- Equally important is that the perceptions of the athletes, coaches and managers involved in this study helped to provide the context in which the study findings could be explored and interpreted, and do not reflect the sentiments of the broader karate membership of KSA.

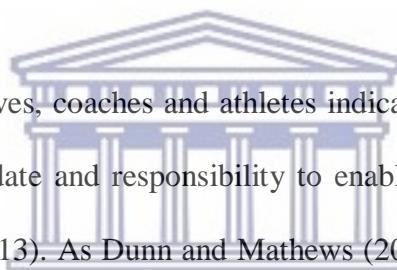


#### **6.4. Conclusion**

Within the context of this study, the results indicated that the sports industry in South Africa generally faces substantial challenges, such as financial, infrastructural, membership drop-out, governance and coaching. In this regard, it can be concluded that, historically, KSA had successfully navigated many challenges over the decades, primarily within the context of a voluntary, non-profit organization with minimal funding. It was found that increasing competition, globalization, and continuous changes in the market and technology, had forced

the management of organizations to re-strategize to overcome significant challenges. KSA continually changed and reworked its strategic goals as and when the need arose, especially in post-apartheid SA and, more especially, after the acceptance of karate as an Olympic sport.

The affiliation by KSA to UFAK and WKF indicated the administrative strides made to professionalize KSA. This allowed athletes to participate, by meeting world standards for the sport of karate. Both coaches and athletes recognized the endeavours of KSA to professionalize its organizational structure, as required by UFAK and WKF. This meant overhauling its structures and standardizing the organization. KSA was standardized through a centralized approach. Executive managers believed that if structures were put right at the macro-level, it would filter down to the micro-level.



Perceptions of national executives, coaches and athletes indicated that KSA faced increasing pressure to deliver on its mandate and responsibility to enable the athletes to achieve peak performance (Winand et al., 2013). As Dunn and Mathews (2001) noted, tracking excellence in sport was no longer an option for voluntary organizations, but a necessity. While there was acceptance by national coaches and athletes that KSA was a voluntary organization, there was an enduring expectation for KSA to deliver as a professional organization, especially on its vision to produce elite athletes at the highest level of competition.

Overall, the findings suggest that although KSA facilitated competitions at local, national and international tournaments, KSA was not able to offer first-class training facilities and camps, provide effective coaching and secure financial support for national coaches and elite athletes. Invariably, these components were perceived by the karate membership as the key responsibilities of KSA.

## **6.5. Recommendations**

The following inter-related recommendations emerged from the findings of the study. These included recommendations for KSA, government and policy-makers, and recommendations for future studies.

### **6.5.1. Recommendations for KSA**

It is recommended that KSA embarks on a process of professionalizing its structures. This would mean a move from decades of amateur status, to completely formalizing the organization at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels of functioning. KSA has historically evolved from a traditional, solely volunteer-driven organization to a more formal organization, which is still, however, run largely by volunteers.

- A shift to a more “hybrid” model, as suggested by Shilbury and Ferkins (2011).

This would include both volunteer and more paid staff. Ranjan et al. (2021) found that voluntarism in the sports industry was a critical component of sport events and sport organizations. However, as long as KSA remained a voluntary organization, it would not come close to becoming professionalized beyond education, training and policy perspectives (Seippel, 2019).

- KSA needed to acknowledge that several factors contributed to the capacity of an organization to achieve its goals.
- There is a need for KSA to ensure that national coaches have the necessary theoretical and practical insights to offer effective coaching to national athletes.

Mesquita et al. (2010) recommended a new interactive approach, which they referred to as

“coach education”. They believed that an expert coach was influenced by interaction, coaching experiences, observing peers and sharing ideas with other coaches. For KSA, this approach is necessary, as it would allow coaches and athletes to have maximum learning experiences through theory and practice.

- KSA needed to monetize the organization to be able to provide effective services to its members.

The commercialization of karate meant that KSA must make serious efforts to procure funding through corporate sponsorships. This would enable KSA to attract and financially support poorer athletes, who may have been excluded from elite competition.

- It is recommended that KSA consider new funding approaches.

These approaches would provide the much-needed stability to support national coaches and athletes, engage in development initiatives; strengthen human resources by developing the capacity to recruit paid staff, and engage in long-term planning. Acquiring funding would ensure that KSA is fulfilling its primary responsibility, i.e., offering its membership the kind of support needed for peak performance.

### **6.5.2. Recommendations for Government and Policymakers**

Research indicated that sport became institutionalized in several countries and was very much part of the government’s responsibility (De Bosscher et al., 2011; Jacobs et al., 2019; Sotiriadou & De Bosscher, 2017). At a policy level, it is recommended that:

- Karate as a sport in South Africa should be given the same recognition as athletics, soccer, swimming or rugby.

This would include elite funding and enabling the growth of karate as a national sport in South Africa. Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2017, p.1), in focusing on elite sports policy, found that elite funding and a strategic approach to developing athletes represented “a key item on the policy agenda for many countries.”

- There is a need for sport stakeholders and policymakers to respond to the changes being made by organizations like KSA.



As suggested by Jacobs (2019), there is a need for government to relook sport and funding policies in South Africa. In her study on elite South African sport policies, Jacobs (2019) calls for future empirical studies to investigate the implementation of the sport policies of South Africa.

### **6.5.3. Recommendations for Future Research**

This study found that, in South Africa, karate is considered a secondary sport and its funding by the national government is marginal.

- Future research needs to be conducted on how sporting organizations like KSA manage their roles and responsibilities as a non-profit, voluntary organization, especially when these organizations are under constant pressure from their members to monetize sports

governance.

- Further research needs to be conducted on the role of long-standing volunteer members in KSA.

These members played a critical role in providing essential services to developing karate in South Africa. Byers (2009), in researching voluntary sports organizations, found that this was a growing field of research that required more attention and comparison. Wegner et al. (2020) believed that it is important to understand the underlying factors in successful volunteer sports organizations. These authors raised an important question about its members, “why do volunteers create enduring relationships with sports organizations?”



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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



18 November 2020

Ms SS Sookrajh  
SRES  
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Ethics Reference Number: HS20/9/14

**Project Title:** Exploring the relationship between organisational structure and organisational responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of Karate South Africa regarding elite sport performance.

**Approval Period:** 29 October 2020 – 29 October 2023

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

**Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.**

*The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.*

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Patricia Josias*

Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

Director: Research Development  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X 17  
Bellville 7535  
Republic of South Africa  
Tel: +27 21 959 4111  
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



# Karate South Africa

117 Kenneth Kaunda Drive  
Northway, Durban North, 4051  
Mobile +27 82 55 77784  
Email: [president@karate-sa.org](mailto:president@karate-sa.org)  
[www.karate-sa.org](http://www.karate-sa.org)  
Facebook: Karate South Africa

17 March 2021

Student: Ms. S Sookrajh  
University of Western Cape  
Student no. 4075392  
MA Sports Recreation & Exercise Science

Supervisors:  
1. Prof. L. Leach  
2. Mr. M. Malema

### Re: Permission to conduct research

Dear Sanhaviya

It was an absolute pleasure meeting you today and being enlightened with regards to the background of your Master's degree and research project titled: "Exploring the relationship between organizational structure and organizational responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of Karate South Africa regarding elite sport performance" that you wish to pursue with the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

As a matter of interest I have no hesitation in granting you permission to conduct your research with the various Karate South Africa (KSA) official's viz. executive managers, sport coaches and ranked athletes who are affiliated under Karate South Africa that you allude to in respect of your study. However note KSA does reserve the right to refute any request for privileged information.

Kindly forward us the CHS Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Clearance Number (for record purposes).

As President of KSA I assure you of my assistance and extend my best wishes to you for huge success with your studies.

P. Sonny Pillay - Hanshi (8<sup>th</sup> Dan)

President: Karate South Africa (KSA)  
President: Commonwealth Karate Federation (CKF)  
Member Technical Board World Karate Federation (WKF)  
Member Technical Board All Africa Karate Federations (UFAK )

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

Cell: +27 82 55777 84  
Mail: [president@karate-sa.org](mailto:president@karate-sa.org)  
Web: [www.karate-sa.org](http://www.karate-sa.org)

Affiliated to:



President: Sonny P Pillay, Vice President: Sydney Hoaneane  
Act Secretary General: Leonardo Cutto  
Treasurer: Shari Lakaram, Technical Convener: Brando Pillay

## APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**  
Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa  
**Tel:** +27 21-959 2409 **Fax:** 27 21-959 3688  
**E-mail:** [4075392@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:4075392@myuwc.ac.za)

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of the study:** *Exploring the relationship between organizational structure and organizational responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes of Karate South Africa regarding sport performance.*

#### **What is this study about?**

This is a research study that will be conducted by *Sanhaviya S.Sookrajh* (student number: 4075392) at the University of the Western Cape. The purpose of this research project is to explore the perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches, and elite athletes on the relationship between organizational structure and responsibility regarding sport performance. I am inviting you to participate in this research study, because I believe that you will be able to provide us with meaningful information regarding your perceptions of the organizational structure and responsibility of Karate South Africa, and the association to sport performance.

UNIVERSITY of the  
**WESTERN CAPE**

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

Permission/consent will be requested from you to participate. Thereafter, you will be in communication with the researcher to clarify any concerns about the study, as well as to arrange a scheduled interview via web-conferencing. You could select any application available and convenient to you, e.g., WhatsApp, Google hangout, Skype or Zoom. You will then be in a recorded interview for approximately 45 minutes, where you will be asked questions which are focused on your perceptions of Karate South Africa, either as an athlete or person of management.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

To ensure your anonymity, numeric codes will be used in place of your name, and only the researcher will have access to the identification key. To help protect your confidentiality, all information transcribed will be stored and password-protected

by the researcher and supervisors. If the study were to be published, your anonymity will be protected. Information gathered will be destroyed after a period of 5 years.

### **What are the risks of this research?**

There may be some risks from participating in this research study. Some of the known risks that may result from participating in the research are psychological, social and emotional. Participants might feel reluctant and concerned about personal involvement. If you are uncomfortable about answering certain questions, you are free to withdraw from the study or refuse to answer specific questions with which you are uncomfortable. The results and information received will be solely for the purpose of the study, and no details will be discussed outside of the study. We will nevertheless minimize such risks and act promptly to assist you as a participant, and guarantee that your participation will be strictly confidential. If you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise, during the process of your participation in this study, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional, for further assistance or intervention.

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant, however, your perceptions and experiences will help enhance the body of knowledge of how KSA is structured and operates as a sporting organization. This research is one of the first on karate in South Africa and will provide a foundation for research that is done in the future. This research is also designed to help contribute to KSA as an organization, and to assist in improving and gaining visibility for the sport, which may provide better sport opportunities in the future. The results will help those in management, athletes, sport coaches, karate instructors, karate clubs, and the ministry of sport to better understand what Karate South Africa is doing and should be doing as an organization.

### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop

participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

### **What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by *Sanhaviya S. Sookrajh* of the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact:

Ms. Sookrajh (Sunny)  
Cell: 0605279759  
Address: Westville North, Durban  
Telephone: n/a  
Email: [4075392@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:4075392@myuwc.ac.za)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant, or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department: Prof Andre Travill  
Department of Sport, Recreation & exercise Science, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
[atravill@uwc.ac.za](mailto:atravill@uwc.ac.za)

Dean CHS: Prof Anthea Rhoda  
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
[chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za](mailto:chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za)

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (REFERENCE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_)

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville  
7535  
Tel: 021 959 4111  
e-mail: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

## APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

**Tel : +27 21-959 2409 Fax : +27 21 959 3688**

**E-mail: 4075392@myuwc.ac.za**

### CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** *Exploring the relationship between organizational structure and responsibility: Perceptions of executive managers, sport coaches and elite athletes in Karate South Africa regarding sport performance*

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits. I also understand that the interview will be audio-recorded. I have been informed that the audio-recordings will be stored in a safe place and that it will be destroyed five years after the research was completed.

I agree to participate in the interview: ..... .

I do not agree to be interviewed .....

I agree to be audio-recorded .....

I do not agree to be audio-recorded .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's signature: .....

Date: .....



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## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<b>Semi-structured Interview schedule for past and current national and provincial executive members</b>	
<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Opening questions and additional optional prompts</b>
Question 1	Can you tell me about your history in KSA? How were you selected? What are the roles and responsibilities of KSA? How do you contribute to the responsibilities?
Question 2	How does KSA support its members? Funding/Training?
Question 3	How does KSA facilitate tournaments/competition?
Question 4	What are the challenges experienced in KSA? Personal vs collective? Are the members vocal about their challenges faced?
Question 5	How can KSA further develop for future/current generations?

<b>Semi-structured Interview schedule for past and current national coaches</b>	
<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Opening questions and additional optional prompts</b>
Question 1	Can you tell me about your history in KSA? How were you selected? What are the roles and responsibilities of KSA? How do you contribute to the responsibilities?
Question 2	How does KSA support you as a coach? Funding/Educational?
Question 3	How does KSA facilitate tournaments/competition? How does KSA communicate with its members?
Question 4	What are the challenges you have experienced as a coach?
Question 5	How can KSA further develop for future/current generations?

<b>Semi-structured Interview schedule for current elite athletes</b>	
<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Opening questions and additional optional prompts</b>
Question 1	Can you tell me about your history as an athlete in KSA? How did you become ‘elite’?
Question 2	How does KSA support you as an athlete? Funding/Training?
Question 3	How does KSA facilitate tournaments/competition? How do you find out about these tournaments (communication?) How do you prepare for tournaments/competition?
Question 4	What are the challenges you have experienced as an athlete?
Question 5	How can KSA further develop for future/current generations?

## APPENDIX F: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTION

TRANSCRIBED 5 AUGUST 2021	INTERVIEWER
ELITE ATHLETE TRANSCRIPT	PARTICIPANT EA

### Question 1

Tell me about your journey as a ranked athlete? How did you become an elite athlete?  
*Years and years of hard work, this is not something you can achieve overnight. While some individuals might think that there is a shortcut to this, they are gravely mistaken. Shortcuts results in short success, if any at all. Commitment is really important and you must be willing to sacrifice so much and your time and dedicate it to your sport. The more you sacrifice the more time you will have to perfect yourself in this sport.*

### Talk to me about your training schedule

*You to train at least 5 – 6 days of the week and at least 2 hours of training and if you can squeeze in more than one training session per day then you have to do that as well. Over and above all this you will have challenges that is out of your control despite how much effort and time you have put in, but real athletes doesn't let this demotivate them instead it fuels them to work even harder. Once this barrier is broken then you start going into the ranks of the top athletes that win no matter the circumstances.*

### Question 2

What is the support given from KSA?

*I would have to note that I have been part of KSA since 2005 when I was selected for the national team for the first time. Since then the support from KSA has just been spiralling downwards and it is at its worst now. Currently I don't see any support from the national federation at all and in fact the federation is blatantly making money off all the athletes who is doing their best to be part of the national team. Up until 2012 we as athletes were still the main focus of the organization but shortly after that things changed so much and became complicated to a level where hardly anyone wants to be part of the organization. As a member of the national team I can't even provide evidence that KSA has helped over the past 8 – 9 years.*

Your biggest challenge appears to be financial?

*The notice period before an international event 2 – 3 weeks and then KSA informs the athletes that they need to pay a deposit of at least R15 000 – R20 000 in the time span of a week and if you as an athlete struggling with this then KSA won't hesitate to call up any one to take your place who has got the money and that in itself should prove the loyalty of KSA towards their athletes. I know this because I have been in this situation more than once, where I struggle to get the money in time and the next person gets called for the position in the team and the only reason I was not replaced is because the other person also didn't have the money and they are forced to wait on me. When the athletes ask the travel agency for a trip breakdown and costs then their position in the team gets threatened because they ask too many questions. This is absurd the way this national organization is operation.*

### Question 3

How do you prepare for tournaments? Who notifies you about them, do you prepare with the team selected?

*I train much harder before tournaments and ensure that my fitness level is high. I make sure that my eating plan is followed strictly and that I get in the necessary vitamins. My instructor informs me of the tournaments for the year and the dates and we prepare accordingly. I make sure that I get as much fight preparations as possible. I do these preparations with a training partner and my instructor only. Unfortunately, my region and province does not have the necessary training programmes in place for their athletes to prepare them for tournaments properly and this goes up all the way to a national level. There are too many hidden agendas and political motivations between different styles and provinces.*

#### Question 4

What are you challenges faced as an athlete?

*The current state that the sport is in can easily break you as an athlete, because you can train as hard as you can but step on to the tournament floor then the judges has political motivation driving/forcing them to push another athlete over the best athlete. Karate has become so expensive that only individuals with money can afford to attend all the tournaments and then the best of the athletes many times stay at home. For individuals, you must be willing to put aside +/- R6000.00 a month just for karate tournaments alone and this does not include your dojo fees, extra training, other training facilities memberships, special diets etc. I can easily say to have a healthy karate career you must be willing to put at least R12 000.00 a month aside to invest in your karate career and this is something that is not achievable to many athletes regardless of their talents.*

#### Question 5

How KSA can further develop for the future/current generations?

*KSA can start to financially invest in the interests of the top karatekas in the country at least as they are the ones who keeps the standard high of karate in this country. Government provide funds for all sporting codes from regional level up until national level and as the level increases the funds increases and yet KSA always claims that everyone is working for free and there is never any funds for the athletes even the ones on their way to a world championship. If KSA sets a goal for karate to be a top athlete that give them financial benefits then the race to be the best will change immensely. I am making this statement because I can confirm that I spend about R250 000.00 per year including going to an African and World Championship in that year. Now imagine there was some type of reward/incentive for being the best athlete in the country instead of the sport just draining your money from month to month. Also keeping in mind that karate doesn't bring income unless you open a dojo or teach extra classes for other athletes and even this KSA makes difficult for us top athletes because you can't teach anyone that is not affiliated by KSA otherwise you will penalized/suspended by KSA. KSA can't own you as an individual and should stop acting like they own karate in this country. There are many ways that KSA invest in the athletes but every idea they came up with for the past 5 years just involved the athlete giving out more money otherwise he/she will jeopardize their chances of making the national team.*

## APPENDIX G: TABLE OF KARATE-RELATED RESEARCH ARTICLES AND THEMES

Theme	Research articles
Physiological	<p>1 Tabben M, Chaabene H, Franchini E et al. (2014) The influence of karate practice level and sex on physiological and perceptual responses in three modern karate training modalities.</p> <p>2 <u>Apostolos S Theodorou (2015) The effect of plyometric exercises on repeated strength and power performance in elite karate athletes</u> Journal of Physical Education and Sport ® (JPES), 15(2), Art 47, pp. 310 - 318, 2015 online ISSN: 2247 - 806X; p-ISSN: 2247 – 8051; ISSN - L = 2247 - 8051 © JPES</p> <p>3 Nikookheslat, S. D., Faraji, H., Fatollahi, S., &amp; Alizadeh, M. (2016). Physical and Physiological Profile of Elite Iranian Karate Athletes. International Journal of Applied Exercise Physiology, 2322-3537www.ijaepl.com Vol.5 No.4 Received: July, 2016 Accepted: November, 2016 Available online: December, 2016</p> <p>4 Filingeri, Davide &amp; Bianco, Antonino &amp; Bde, Daniele &amp; Daniele, Zangla &amp; Bd, Antonio &amp; Paoli, Antonio &amp; Palma, Antonio. (2012). Is karate effective in improving postural control?. Archives of Budo. 8. 149-152. 10.12659/AOB.883521.</p> <p>5 Urbinati, Keith &amp; Vieira, Agnelo &amp; Papcke, Calue &amp; Pinheiro, Renata &amp; Nohama, Percy &amp; Scheeren, Eduardo. (2017). Physiological and Biomechanical Fatigue Responses in Karate: A Case Study. The Open Sports Sciences Journal. 10. 286-293. 10.2174/1875399X01710010286.</p> <p>6 Helmi Chaabène, Emerson Franchini, Bianca Miarka, Mohamed Amin Selmi, Bessem Mkaouer, and Karim Chamari (2014) Time–Motion Analysis and Physiological Responses to Karate Official Combat Sessions; Is There a Difference Between Winners and Defeated Karatekas? International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance, 2014, 9, 302 -308 http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/IJSPP.2012-0353 © 2014 Human Kinetics, Inc.</p>
Anthropometric	<p>1 Nichas, A., Shaw, B., Millard, L., Breukelman, G., &amp; Shaw, I. (2020). Kinanthropometric attributes of elite South African male kata and kumite karateka. ARCH BUDO, 16.</p> <p>2 Shariat, Ardalan &amp; Shaw, Brandon &amp; Kargarfard, Mehdi &amp; Shaw, Ina &amp; Lam, Eddie. (2017). Kinanthropometric attributes of elite male Judo, Karate and Taekwondo athletes. Revista Brasileira de Medicina do Esporte. 23. 260-263. 10.1590/1517-869220172304175654.</p> <p>3 Sánchez-Puccini MB, Argothy-Bucheli RE, Meneses-Echávez JF et al. (2014) Anthropometric and physical fitness characterization of male elite karate athletes</p> <p>4 Fritzsche, Jürgen &amp; Raschka, Christoph. (2007). Sports anthropological investigations on somatotypology of elite karateka. Anthropologischer Anzeiger; Bericht über die biologisch-anthropologische Literatur. 65. 317-29. 10.1127/anthranz/65/2007/317.</p>
Components of fitness	<p>1 Ravier, Gilles &amp; Grappe, Fred &amp; Rouillon, J. (2004). Application of force-velocity cycle ergometer test and vertical jump tests in the functional assessment of karate competitor. The Journal of sports medicine and physical fitness. 44. 349-55.</p> <p>2 ISIK, Ozkan &amp; Doğan, İlkay &amp; Cicioglu, Ibrahim &amp; Yıldırım, İrfan. (2017). A new approach to Special Judo Fitness Test index: Relative index. International Journal of Human Sciences. 14. 4219-4225. 10.14687/jhs.v14i4.5100.</p>
Karate Injury	<p>1 Macan J, Bundalo-Vrbanac D, Romić G. Effects of the new karate rules on the incidence and distribution of injuries. Br J Sports Med. 2006 Apr;40(4):326-30; discussion 330. doi: 10.1136/bjsm.2005.022459. PMID: 16556787; PMCID: PMC2577531.</p> <p>2 Arriaza, Rafael &amp; Leyes, Manuel. (2005). Injury profile in competitive karate: Prospective analysis of three consecutive World Karate Championships. Knee surgery, sports traumatology, arthroscopy : official journal of the ESSKA. 13. 603-7. 10.1007/s00167-004-0593</p> <p>3 Pal, Sajjan &amp; Joginder, Yadav &amp; Kalra, Sheetal &amp; Sindhu, Dr &amp; Scholar,. (2020). Injury profile in karate athletes – a literature review. 6. 1150-1155. 10.31838/jcr.07.09.211.</p>

Gender History and	<p>1 Pinar Guzel (2020) Implications for gender (in)equity. African Educational Research Journal. Vol. 8(3), pp. 618-626, September 2020. DOI: 10.30918/AERJ.83.20.136, ISSN: 2354-2160</p> <p>2 <a href="#">Paul Bowman (2016)</a> The Marginal Movement of Martial Arts: From the Kung Fu Craze to Master Ken. working paper, presented at a Research Group Meeting at Waseda University, Tokyo, in March 2016, as part of the research project 'East Asian Martial Arts as Global Culture: Transmission, Representation, and Transformation in Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom.</p> <p>3 Denise E.M. Jones (2001) In Pursuit of Empowerment: Sensei Nellie Kleinsmot, Race and Gender Challenges in South Africa, The International Journal of the History of Sport, 18:1, 219-236, DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/714001485">10.1080/714001485</a></p> <p>4 Kudláček, Michal &amp; Frömel, Karel &amp; Groffik, Dorota. (2015). Gender differences in preferences of martial arts in Polish adolescents. Archives of Budo. 11. 227-234.</p> <p>5 Chloe Maclean (2015) Beautifully violent: the gender dynamic of Scottish karate. Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in Global Perspectives on Women in Combat Sports, on 26/08/2015, available online: <a href="https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9781137439352">https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9781137439352</a></p> <p>6 Albena Alexandrova<sup>1</sup>, Radoslav Penov<sup>2</sup>, Lubomir Petrov<sup>1</sup>, Kostadin Cholakov<sup>3</sup>, Stefan Kolimechkov<sup>1</sup> Competitive bout model as a tool for estimation of female karateka specific endurance. European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science ISSN: 2501 - 1235 ISSN-L: 2501 - 1235 Available on-line at: <a href="http://www.oapub.org/edu">www.oapub.org/edu</a> Copyright © The Author(s). All Rights Reserved. © 2015 – 2018 Open Access Publishing Group 30 doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1321742 Volume 4   Issue 9   2018</p>
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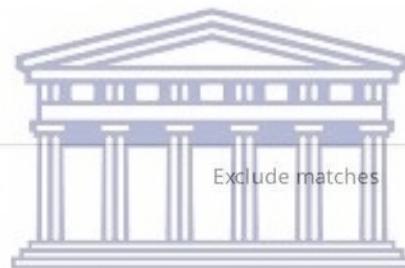
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