

**PERCEPTIONS OF CONSTRAINTS TO RECREATIONAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION: A  
CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)  
UNDERGRADUATE FEMALE STUDENTS**

A mini thesis research submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters  
of SRES in the Faculty of Community and Health Science.

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**May 2005**



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**KEY WORDS**

Female, students, Recreation, Recreational sports, Perceptions, Constraints, Gender, Culture, Stereotype, Gender relations.

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## ABSTRACT

The effects of attitudes and perceived constraints on behavior and the choices females make about involvement in recreational sports, exercise, and other physical recreation activities are important to consider if females' physical, social, and emotional quality of life is to be enhanced.

The present study has as its primary aim the exploration of the perceptions of University of the Western Cape (UWC) female undergraduate students with regard to constraints that influence their participation in recreational sports. A qualitative research design was utilized to explore participants' experiences of how physical and socio-cultural constraints have impacted on their participation in recreational sport at UWC. The data was collected through the process of five semi-structured focus groups with 50 female students, 18-26 years old who resided at UWC residences in the 2004 academic year. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants through mail invitations. Physical contact and follow up phone calls were made to check on participants and confirm attendance. Focus group discussions were also directed with the aid of three vignettes and cue questions to stimulate discussion. A thematic content analysis was carried out on the transcriptions of the data. The focus groups explored understandings of the roles of "recreational sports" in the lives of UWC female undergraduate students, as well as access, barriers and challenges with respect to participants' active engagement in recreational sport activities on campus.

From the findings two major themes and a number of sub-themes emerged, suggesting that most of the participants do not participate in any form of recreational sport activities on campus, despite agreeing that recreational sports activities were important. Physical constraints such as lack of time, lack of skills, lack of finance, lack of awareness of available recreational programs and administration barriers were the most constraining factors followed by socio-cultural constraints such as parental influence, cultural stereotypes, attitudes of others towards females' recreational sports, body image, fear for personal safety, lack of entitlement and ethic of care. Underlying these barriers to participation in recreational sport was relative powerlessness to request solutions due to values and norms. This study reveals that the availability of facilities and/ or the elimination of physical constraints is no guarantee that UWC female undergraduate students will engage in regular recreational sport programs unless antecedent constraints are specifically addressed.



**DECLARATION**

I declare that “**Perception of Constraints to Recreational Sport Participation: A case Study of Female Undergraduate Students at the University of Western Cape**” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

**Solomon Ghebremedhin Asihel**

**Signed:.....**

**May 2005**



## DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my parents my father Colonel Ghebremedhin Asihel and my mother Amleset Weldemariam.



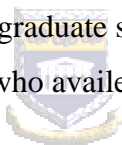
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To Carol Nonceba Mavuma, you have been a source of light and strength throughout this process. It has been so difficult; and, with out you, it would not be possible. I thank you for your patience and unconditional support.

I would like to thank my Supervisor Prof. D.E.M. Jones from the Department of Sport, recreation and Exercise Science (University of the Western Cape) for her scholarly advice, guidance and support throughout the process. It was truly an empowering experience.

My sincere gratitude goes to my co-supervisor Prof. C. Malcolm from the Department of Psychology (University the Western Cape) for his enthusiastic effort, guidance, and encouragement.

I would like to thank the resident female Undergraduate students, Sport Administration, and Student Affairs at the University of the Western Cape, who availed themselves for this study.



Special thanks to Prof. D. Meerkotter; the Dean of Faculty of Education; Prof. Keim Lees; and Mr. Jim Lees; who have assisted and supported me during my personal difficulties.

My sincere appreciation to Mr. L. Leach, Ms. V. Kensley, Mr. J. Edas, to the staff and students in the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise science (SRES), for their support during my stay.

I regard myself lucky to have good caring friends like the Brand family: Mum Rosa, Tobias, and Annette from Germany; Henok Goitom Solomon, Igor Lesco, Robert Mugisha, Sally, Jo Spaza, Saules family and the Ethiopian Community in Bellville for their emotional and material support they have provided.



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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Benefits of recreational sport and physical activity**

The benefits of participating in recreational sport activities are wide-ranging and most are available to everyone regardless of age or ability. Recreational sports and other physical activities are not simply things we do in addition to the rest of our lives. They comprise an interdependent set of physiological, psychological and sociological benefits that can sustain our growth and development.

Social benefits of active campus recreational sport activities include reduced adverse behavior(s) among youth, lower medical and social costs coupled with job opportunities and greater social cohesion and integration of the student population into the community. The National Intramural Recreational Sports Association [NIRSA], (2004) has indicated that recreational sports are an important component to students' quality of life on campus and to a University's recruitment and retention of students.

#### **1.1.1. Societal benefits**


It has been said that no aspect of human behavior which holds a greater potential for self-fulfillment than participation in recreation (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1989: 90). Recreation participation is usually social in nature (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993: 111-128). It is seen as a social context for the development of intimate relationship for expression of social identities. For example, Kelly & Freysinger (2000: 18) participation in recreation is recognized as having a social purpose, a means to the economic end of productivity, the personal goals of health, the social aim of building relationships, or some kind of growth or learning. Jones (1998:3) claims *“Recreation can also become a site of empowerment, is the establishment of formal partnerships*



*with women's organizations beyond the boundaries of recreation*". It can bring diverse social groups together and improve the social cohesion and inclusion of minority groups in other settings.

### 1.1.2. General health

A physically active lifestyle needs to be maintained if one is to realize many long-term health benefits. Immediate benefits include increased endurance, flexibility and strength. According to Rosenberger, Sneh, & Phipps (2002), health science studies also show that active persons are more likely to be better adjusted, perform better on tests of cognitive functioning, exhibit reduced cardiovascular responses to stress, and report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression. Hall (1990) claims: "*Recreational sport activities help to develop positive moods, such as in communicating and eating patterns and buffer the usual impact of more severe life crises on illness symptoms*".

**Cardiovascular disease and stroke:** Regular involvement in sport and active recreation has a great impact on the cardiovascular systems of participants.  Moderate to brisk physical activity is associated with lower rates of heart disease and stroke in men both with and without pre-existing heart disease studies. The Canadian survey conducted by Lemaitre (1995) shows the risk of having a heart attack reduced by 50% among post-menopausal women who partook in modest physical activity.

Increased physical activity was also strongly associated with reduced risk of stroke (Hu, Stampfer, Colditz, Ascherio, Rexrode, Willett & Manson, 2000), with brisk or striding walking pace was clearly associated with lower risk compared with average or casual pace walking. This effect was greater for those who exercised every day as opposed to only three times per week, and was similar to the effects achieved with drug therapy.

**Diabetes:** Increased physical activity has a tremendously positive impact on the development and course of diabetes. Researchers have concluded that increased physical activity appears to offer the greatest potential benefit in the primary prevention of Type II diabetes, particularly for those who have one or more known risk factors for the disease (Gudat, Berger & Lefebvre, 1994; Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Institute, 1995). Regular lifetime activity was one of the characteristics of diabetic patients with unusually long survival and few diabetic complications, while low physical activity levels were associated with the presence of all complications (Giacca, Quin Shi, Marliss, Zinman & Vranic, 1994).

**Cancer:** The effect of physical activity on the incidence of cancer is quite variable, with results depending on the type of cancer. Research has demonstrated that physical activity decreases the risks of colon cancer (especially in men) (Sternfeld, 1992), and breast and reproductive cancer in females (Blair, Kohl, Gordon & Paffenbarger, 1992). Females who have been active throughout their lives, as well as females who start to be physically active, significantly reduce their risk of breast cancer (Friedenreich, 2001). Females who were active participants in college recreational sport activities reported a lower lifetime prevalence of breast cancers and cancers of the reproductive system, and lower prevalence of diseases affecting the breast and reproductive system than females who were not participating in recreational sport and physical activities in college (Frich, Wyshak & Albright, 1987).

**Osteoporosis:** The development and maintenance of sufficient bone density to prevent osteoporosis are a particular concern for girls and women. According to Panush (1994), prolonged exercise has been found to increase bone density. Young females who increase their level of physical activity and calcium intake by a modest amount can reduce the risk of osteoporosis. The resulting reduction in hip fractures due to osteoporosis through increased “active recreation”, physical activity and



calcium supplementation could result in substantial savings (Osteoporosis Society of Canada, 1992 March).

When promoting the importance of recreational sport preventative health care, campus policy makers and recreational sport providers should consider the provision of recreational opportunities as a means to overcome sedentary behaviors. Success in promoting the importance of a physically active lifestyle, especially among university students who engage in sedentary lifestyles, will pay dividends to both individuals and to campus residents. Female colligates benefit through increased overall well-being and decreased health care costs, while the campus community benefits by reducing the health care burden of a sedentary society.

## 1.2. Background/Rationale of the Study

Many students choose a college or university for its academic merits, but another key factor in their decision is the recreational sports programs and facilities. The primary reasons students engage in recreational sports might be because they are fun, enjoyable, and varied (i.e., people can participate alone or with a group, or casually, moderately or vigorously), which goes a long way to overcoming sedentary lifestyle.

Jones (1995: 7) claims *“Recreation has a critical role to play in the integration of the youth into a society. Participation in all forms of recreation can cultivate sustainable involvement in arts and culture, thereby developing creativity, self-expression and can be used to acquire specific skills which can create jobs and generate an income”*. Recreational sport as a form of recreation improves the quality of our lives. Doing it makes us feel good. It is active, can be risky or safe, noisy or quiet, together or alone, inside or outside and we get to choose what we do.

Not only competitive sport but also “sport for all” and/ or recreational sport programs have become more popular. Currently, there is more pressure from international groups, such as the



World Health Organization, to advocate for the health of both males and females. Physical exercise and recreational sport activities can be used both as rehabilitation and prevention. Katzmaryk, Gledhill & Shephard (2000) estimated that over 10% of deaths in Canada could be attributed to the negative effects of inadequate physical activity. Death rates in sedentary individuals are approximately twice as high as for physically active persons (Blair, 1993). Many researchers believed that participation in recreation and sport also engenders benefits for individuals and communities (Alexandris & Grouios, 2002; Robert, 1993; Henderson, et al., 1989).

There is also evidence that colligate recreational sports can be constrained by the individual's attitudes, inaccessible environments such as administrative barriers, and a limited understanding of the possibilities can prevent female students from being included and reaping the usual benefits of recreational sports participation (National Intramural Recreational Sport Association [NIRSA] (2004).

A sociological, physiological, psychological, as well as a feminist perspective are the most essential aspects to consider for those of us who are interested in exploring and understanding perception of constraints to recreational sports participation in females' lives given that, recreational sports do not exist in a vacuum, but are shaped by the broader social context. Society is described as the organized life of people: *“society is the learned culture of individual socialization, the intimacy of primary relationship, the law and rules of the family, the learning of the school, the enforcement and protection of the polity, the production and distribution of the economy, and the celebrated consensus of the church”* (Kelly & Godbey, 1992: 24-25). In this case recreation and sports are also learned behaviors that have been routinized from generation to generation as a form of socialization.

A history of females' access to greater physical and athletic opportunity has been populated with barriers. *“Females have been oppressed in all societies throughout the world... both implicit*



*and explicit and has included, economic social, political, and sexual subjugation... even within the most developed countries”* (Henderson, Bialeschi, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989: 3). In the past, various individuals have condemned exercise and sport as unladylike and eminent physicians warned females against overstrain and sterility (The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, 1997).

Vogler & Schwartz (1993: 121) claim: *“Females' cultural tasks such as child rearing and home making, social mores of masculine-feminine sex roles and the deep-seated suspicion that vigorous sports were health hazard for women have discouraged females from participating in sport and recreation”*.

South-African researchers in the field of recreation have recognized the cumulative deprivation caused by apartheid in terms of the unequal distributions of recreational opportunity. For example, Jones (1998) who has, in various ways, examined the role of apartheid in the imbalances in physical infrastructure and the negative impact of unemployment, poverty and family destabilization and dislocation on recreation and leisure behavior patterns. Furthermore, traditional clichés like “females just aren't as physical as males” or “Sport is more important for males than for females” have discouraged the majority of females from participating in sporting and recreational activities (Jones, 1998; Hargreaves, 1997; Roberts, 1993). There is also evidence that females who were/are "overly" competitive have risked social stigma via non-feminine labeling (Aburdene & Naisbitt cited by Everhart & Pemberton, 2001). Traditional masculine values such as taking orders, ignoring pain, hitting your opponent, and the sexual exploitation of females have been encouraged in the male hierarchy of sport (Everhart & Pemberton, 2001). Therefore, females have historically struggled to gain balance, acceptance, and success by the negative attributes in which the broader socio-cultural context that discourages females' participation in sport and recreation.



Many researchers agree that there is not enough understanding of the way the constraints to recreation which females experience are constructed because constraints are as varied as females themselves. Henderson (1993: 33) classified constraints into two, namely structural (visible) and antecedent (less visible) constraints (for more details see chapter two). According to Henderson structural constraints are also called *intervening constraints*. She sees these as constraints that prohibit involvement but are open to intervention, such as lack of money, transport, facilities, skill and administration barriers. On the other hand *Antecedent constraints* are the results of the interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints that occur prior to considering the possibility of engaging in recreational activities. It is believed that females are more constrained than males due to their ascribed role in most societies. For example, the lack of time may be intensely experienced by females due to ascribed gender roles as wife, mother, and/ or daughter i.e., a “*priory*” context: a context within which a females' lives, dealing with intrapersonal and interpersonal issues that curtail participation into recreation.



The notions of antecedent constraints are the most problematic and a complex one. Especially for anyone who has assumed that addressing the physical constraints will automatically lead to an increased involvement of females in sport and recreation. Antecedent constraints might be independent of physical constraints because they are internal, personal, and less visible which relates to females' psychological state.

The main aim of the present study is to explore the perceptions held by female undergraduate students at UWC regarding the physical and socio-cultural constraints that influence their participation in recreational sport. Although many researchers have explored the constraints that various females experience to recreation participation, to date, no research has been done on the perceptions which female undergraduate students at UWC have about the constraints that impact on their participation to recreational sports.



### 1.3. Statement of the Problem

The problem defined in this study is based on the premise that participation in, and access to, recreation is shaped by socialization, education, norms, values, culture, religion, politics and policies that foster gender division and unequal power relations (Henderson, 1994; Hargreaves, 1997).

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) is one of the historically disadvantaged universities in the Republic of South Africa. It has also a proud history of involvement in the anti-apartheid movement. It is situated in Bellville South Metropolitan area in Cape Town. At the time of data collection (2004) UWC had 13,881 undergraduate and postgraduate students. There were 4,560 male and 6,416 female undergraduate students who are currently pursuing their studies in different faculties.

UWC has a range of sport and recreational facilities for students and staff. Participation in sport and recreation is considered important for the unity and educational process of students. The University has well-established formal sports programs that are traditionally played by male students. The sport and recreation facilities on campus are administered and coordinated by Sports Administration. The All Sports council (ASCO), which is affiliated to the South African Sports Union, represents the students' sports and cultural organizations (Hector Peterson, Information Brochure, 2005). There are also student run recreational programs. All students are offered opportunities to be participants and spectators in a variety of intramural sports, outdoor recreational activities, club sports, free recreation programs, fitness opportunities, and aquatic programs. These include basketball, volleyball, rugby, netball, softball, athletics aerobics, racquetball, tennis, squash and badminton.



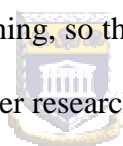


Recreational sports programs are designed to provide on-campus recreation opportunity for students, thereby enhancing their quality of collegiate life. However, participation of female students in recreational sport activities in the University recreational sport and sport programs is significantly lower than their counterpart males (UWC Sports Administration, 2004; UWC Sports Council, 2004; UWC Residence Sports League, 2004).

This study examines possible reasons for the situation.

#### 1.4. **Justification of the Study**

The results of this study will provide valuable insight into the perceived constraints to recreational sports participation held by female students at UWC. This might allow recreation planners to gain a better understanding of factors that influence UWC female students' recreational sports participation its use or lack thereof and the extent to which information obtained from the study can be utilized to recreational sport planning, so that the gaps discovered can be addressed. It will also provide valuable information for further research into in the field.



Final results of this study will be made available to various departments at UWC, i.e., Sport Administration, Student Affairs, the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science, the UWC Library and to participants of the study.

#### 1.5. **Research Question**

The main research question of this study is:

“What are the perceptions of female undergraduate students as to the constraints they experience to their participation in recreational sport at UWC?”

#### 1.6. **Aim of the Study**

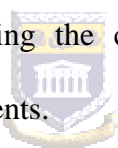
The aim of this study is to:

“Explore the perceptions of female undergraduate students regarding the physical, social and cultural constraints which shape and affect their participation in recreational sport at UWC”.

### 1.7. Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives for this study include:

1. To explore the way in which recreational sports are interpreted by the UWC undergraduate students.
2. To identify the physical constraints, as perceived by UWC female undergraduate students, to their participation in recreational sport.
3. To identify the social and cultural constraints, as perceived by UWC female undergraduate students, to their participation in recreational sport.
4. To identify recommendations for addressing the constraints to recreation participation as perceived by undergraduate UWC female students.



### 1.8. Interpretation of Key Concepts

Recreation: Kelly & Freysinger (2000: 18) has defined recreation, as "voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion". Furthermore, participation in recreation is recognized as having a social purpose, a means to the economic end of productivity, the personal goals of health, the social aim of building relationships, or some kind of growth or learning. For the purpose of this study recreation will mean recreational sports.

**Recreational sports:** These are forms of recreation that involve physical activity, which can take place through casual or regular participation. A recreational sport focuses on improving physical fitness and psychological well-being and can contribute to the formation of social relationships.

They can be performed through various supervised and/ or self-directed programs and activities (NIRSA, 2004). For the purpose of this study recreational sports will include all intramural sports that offer students an opportunity to participate in sport activities and/ or programs on a recreational level at the UWC, such as UWC Residence Sports League and Sports Clubs.

**Gender:** Hall (1990: 223) states that gender is a socially constructed set of power relations and central to women's lives. **Sex** and **gender** are frequently used interchangeably but the two terms actually differ in important ways. Basow (1992) claims “sex” is a biological term. According to Basow (1992) & Crawford (1995) people are termed either male or female depending on their sex organs and genes. Wodak (1997: 3) sees sex as the anatomical difference between men and women. “Sex differences” are the product of social negotiation and are culturally produced in the context of a pre-existing system of meanings in which difference is polarized. In contrast, “gender” is a psychological and cultural term, referring to one's subjective feeling of maleness and femaleness (Basow, 1992); the psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females (Wodak, 1997: 3). Gender may also refer to society's evaluation of behavior as masculine and feminine. The degree of masculinity or femininity is referred to as “gender role identity or sex typing” (Basow, 1992).

Given the socially constructed nature of gender, why do people believe in sex differences? The answer lies in a shared “**gender belief system**”: “*a set of beliefs and opinions about males and females and about the purported qualities of masculinity and femininity*” (Basow, 1992). Therefore, such a belief system shapes the way we perceive and evaluate others. For the purpose of this study gender will be referred to as the unequal power relationship between males and females at the UWC.

**Perception:** According to Torkildson (1986: 244) “*perception refers to the world as it is experienced-as seen, heard, felt, smelt, and tested. Consequently the way an individual perceives*”



*the world will largely determine his or her behavior*". For example in this study the way female undergraduate students at UWC perceive recreational sports provision may influence their participation, more than the actual form of provision.

**Constraints from a recreation perspective:** For the purpose of this study Henderson's (1993: 5) definition of constraints will be used. She sees a constraint as "*any relative and/or relevant factor that mitigates between some possible activity and preference or participation in that experience*". These include physical constraints, such as lack of facilities; lack of money; lack of skills; physical inability. They also include socio-cultural constraints, such as lack of sense of entitlement, the ethic of care, fear for health and personal safety, poor body image, restrictive code of dress and traditional beliefs about females and sport. All of these can prevent females from fully participating in recreational sports or at least shape the way they do participate.

Over an extended period researchers have studied the reasons why females do not engage to a greater degree in recreational sports. According to Henderson, et al. (1989: 117) a term that has been commonly used in the literature is "barrier"; a discrepancy between the actual and the desired situation. Constraints in a broad sense limit female's access and expressed preferences to recreation participation (Shaw, 1994: 18).

Crawford & Godbey (1987) have also categorized constraints into three categories according to the way that they affect the relationship between preference and participation as intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural. Their Hierarchical Model of recreation constraints suggests, *Intrapersonal constraints* involve 'individual psychological state attributes'.

According to Henderson (1993), *interpersonal constraints* are the results of intrapersonal interaction or the relationship between individual characteristics. For example, when people are unable to find others, with which to participate. Interpersonal constraints are considered as being the



most powerful factors that curtail participation such as lack of 'motivation' to participate. Both *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* constraints are considered as antecedent constraints to recreation participation.

*Structural constraints* are also called physical constraints that include cost, absence of transport, location, lack of skills, and scarcity of facilities. Structural (physical) constraints are intervening constraints, for example, for people who are constrained due to lack of transportation might be provided with transport.

**Combined effect of Physical and socio-cultural constraints:** Henderson (1993) called them: *Multidimensional and cumulative antecedent constraint coupled with the intervening (physical) constraints*. She pointed out like women; men are also challenged by physical constraints (e.g., lack of time). However, unlike men, for women, the lack of time may be more intensely experienced due to ascribed gender roles as wife, mother and/ or daughter. Furthermore, definitions of what it means to be a “feminine” woman in a society may result in socio-cultural constraints that create invisible barrier in making decisions about the “appropriate” behavior gender-related opportunities that may be available for recreation.

This is also true for less visible (antecedent) constraints such as 'a lack of entitlement', 'ethic of care' and 'fear for personal safety'. While both males and females are constrained by them, many studies have revealed that the impact of the combined effects of the “multi-dimensional and cumulative antecedent coupled with the physical (intervening) constraints” were more constraining for females than their counterpart males (Jones, 2004; 2001; Henderson, 1993; Henderson, et al., 1989; Shaw, 1985).

As an example of a set of antecedent constraints, Jones' (2001) study amongst students highlighted the way culture is reinvented and interpretations of womanhood and femininity are used



to control female's access to sports participation. In addition, Jones' (2004) study with the United Schools Sports Association of South Africa [USASA] found that 56% of the respondents in her studies agreed that cultural views regarding appropriate sport clothes negatively affected female learners.

### 1.9. Chapter Overview

In Chapter One the benefit of recreational sport, background for the study, statement of the problem and the overall aim as well as the specific objectives for the current study were discussed and detailed.

In Chapter Two a review of the literature that is relevant to the aims of the study are covered. All relevant quotes are placed in “*Italics*” between inverted commas.

In Chapter Three the methodology and methodological issues will be described. In addition to the aims, selection of participants and use of aids such as vignettes and cue questions are explained. The data gathering procedures, method of analysis and self-reflexivity of the discussion process are detailed.

In Chapter Four results and findings from the discussion groups are summarized. In this section relevant quotes are selected and displayed in “*Times New Romans*” between inverted commas so as to show it as separate from literature.

In Chapter Four results of the present study are discussed, summarized and their significance are explored.

Chapter Five conclude the chapter by highlighting the key issues raised and limitation of the study, further research and some recommendations are made.



## ***2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW***

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter reviews various sources of literature on females' constraints to recreation and sport participation in developed and developing countries, including South Africa. There is also a focus on young females' understanding of recreational sports' constraints to participation. Given the complexity and diversity of constraints to recreation and sport, this section of this study offers an explanation of physical and socio-cultural constraints to recreation in the lives of females and other factors contributing to it.

This chapter also explores the existing literature on how structural and antecedent constraints prevent females' participation in recreation and physical activity. It focuses on the reality i.e., what is, and tries to show how that reality defines and delimits what might be; the result of which has been the marginalization and devaluation of physical activity and recreation for females and the consequent suppression of their recreational sports participation.

Given the broadness of the field, this review of literature cannot provide the comprehensive coverage of all the relevant issues. It will therefore only focus on some of the physical and socio-cultural constraints such as scarcity of resources, personal characteristics, beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes that might negatively affect females' recreation preferences to participation in recreation and sport.

### **2.2. Physical constraints**

In early research examining constraints to recreation participation, some of the more commonly reported types of physical constraints are, temporal, economic constraints, lack of opportunities and facilities (Jackson, et al., cited in Shaw, 1994: 8). These researchers also noted



that females were particularly disadvantaged with regard to a number of these reported constraints.

The diversity of women's experiences and the fact that class, race and other social structures based on unequal power relations all affect the daily life experiences of females and consequently their access to recreation participation (Shaw, 1994: 10). Although intervention can address physical constraints such as lack of money, lack of skills and scarcity of facilities, it might not be enough without looking at the context in which constraints occur.

### 2.2.1. Lack of time

*Time scarcity* is the feeling that one lacks enough time to do all the things that one would like to do and has become one of the great problems facing many males and females (Scott, 1993). Various studies have documented that time constraints are the most frequently mentioned reasons for ceasing participation in recreational activities (Jackson & Dunn in Scott & Kim 1998). Lack of time is also noted as the most constraining factor to many people who want to participate in a variety of recreational activities (Jackson, 1994), and for not using Local Park and recreation services (Scott & Jackson, 1996).

A feeling of time scarcity is likely to mean that people will limit the amount of time they spend participating in any one activity. Moreover, a feeling of time scarcity is likely to result in people pursuing recreational sport activities that are even readily and accessible rather than constrained.

Horna, et al., cited in Shaw (1994: 10) have provided evidence that women are disadvantaged with regard to time for recreation because of household obligations and family commitments compared to their male counterparts. Raymore, Godbey & Crawford (1994: 101) also found that lack of time was the strongest barrier, followed by lack of money, scarcity of facilities and family concerns. Time budget studies have shown both employed and unemployed married





women have less time for recreation than their husbands (Shaw, 1985). In a later study, Shaw (1994: 10) found that lack of time was the most frequently reported “objective” constraint to recreation. Henderson, et al. (1989: 123-124) found that lack of time because of family obligations was noted by women as a primary barriers in early and later family stages.

### 2.2.2. **Lack of finance**

Not surprisingly, low income limits access to the resources and skills necessary to participate in a range of recreation activities. Finance is positively related to participation in many forms of recreation activities and use of public park and recreation resources (Scott & Munson, 1994). For example, the growth of outdoor recreation has also been attributed to a rise in the gross national product and personal incomes in South Africa (Kraus, 1997). Household sizes have decreased over the years and the percentage of married couples with children in the population has shrunk (Murdock, 1995). Simultaneously, the proportion of single-parent households has increased. Single-parent households typically have lower income, less mobility, and less free time than do two-parent households. Thus, single-parent households are likely to benefit from outdoor recreation opportunities that are close to home.

Coming from disadvantaged families' and/ or absence of sources because of income will mean that some disadvantaged female UWC students will lack the personal resources to participate in recreational sports activities of their choice.

### 2.2.3. **Lack of facilities**

According to Rosenberger, et al. (2002) facilities are all or any portion of buildings, structures, site improvements, complexes, equipment, roads, walks, passageways, parking lots, or other real or personal property located on a site.

Females and males might have good intentions when it comes to improving their health status through physical activity; unfortunately, these intentions are often not actualized. Since not everyone prefers the same type of recreational facility, a variety of facilities as options should be provided. Participation in informal recreation activities is dependent on availability and location of facilities. (Torkildsen, 1986: 241 & Jones, 1998: 6).

### 2.3. Socio cultural/ Antecedent Constraints

Socio-cultural constraints are also called antecedent constraints. According to Jackson (1988) socio-cultural constraints were considered found a useful concept adjunct to the existing conceptualization of recreation constraints. Socio-cultural constraints are seen as the most problematic constraints because they are less visible and therefore not considered to be significant. These include: cultural constraints such as, expectations, beliefs, code of dress, division of domestic tasks and appropriate behavior, sex stereotypes, concern for personal safety, feelings of being not entitled to recreation, personal and family responsibilities (ethic of care) and lack of motivation.



Females from different socio-cultural circumstances will experience recreational sport in slightly or significantly different ways. For example, it has been suggested that age, race, socio-economic status, employment, and religion are some factors, which need to be examined in terms of how different females' recreation is constrained (Henderson, 1991).

There is enough evidence from the literature to support Henderson's (1993) view on the notion of socio cultural constraints, Shaw cited in Jones (2004: 3) explores the link between scarcity of time, family commitments and domestic responsibilities. Henderson et al. (1989) found that the combined effect of lack of time and family obligations affected adult women mostly in early life stages because of child rearing responsibilities and later family commitment (ethic of care) such as parents and senior members in the family. This is also true with less visible constraints.

### 2.3.1. Socialization into recreational sport

According to Vogler & Schwartz (1993: 14) socialization is the process by which the individual gets into society and the society gets to the individual. It involves complex dynamic among psychological, social, and cultural considerations of learning and development (Cohen, 1993: 4). The process plays a key role in integrating the individual into society by transmitting cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next. In addition socialization is an influential process mediated by individuals, groups, and cultural practices. The outcome of socialization is the acquisition of an agreed-upon system of standards and values (Schilling, 1997; Cohen, 1993; & Basow, 1992). Socialization begins at birth and continues throughout life span (Vogler & Schwartz, 1993: 14). Through socialization, individuals learn in accordance with the expectations of others in the social order. Cohen (1993: 4), claim *“Although socialization is an interactive process... societal expectations are a critical element, responsible for shaping behaviour and conveying dominant beliefs, which often ultimately prevail”* .

Social learning theory Bandura (1997) is an explanatory model that has been used most frequently in sport socialization research. According to the social learning theory, the sex of significant others is important to modeling behaviors (Bandura, 1977; Bandura and Walters, 1963). In an effort to improve participation rates among females, studies have applied social learning theory to understand differences in male and female socialization. In most instances the social learning theory has been conceptualized through the assumption that three clusters of independent variables constitute primary influences on the dependent variable, active recreational sport involvement: (a) personal attributes, (b) socializing agents, and (c) socializing situations (Cohen, 1993).



McPherson cited in Cohen (1993: 9) claims “...*influence of significant others such as people or groups who, because of their prestige, proximity, and power to distribute love, reward, and punishment either consciously or unconsciously influence the sport socialization process*”. Family members, peer group members, teachers, coaches, and role models have been identified as major agents of sport socialization. (Cohen, 1993: 9, Vogler & Schwartz, 1993 & Basow, 1992). Childhood socialization into sport including recreational sports, are learned and often determined by the sex of the child. Vogler & Schwartz, (1993) claim, in American society, fathers have been expected to play ball with their sons.

Until recently girls have been expected to use their mothers as role models and play with dollhouses. Basow (1992) claims Female socialization steers girls into a maternal role, whereas male socialization steers boys into an employment role. Related to this differential role socialization is the encouragement of different attitudes, values, personality traits, and styles in males and females.



According to Cohen (1993) “*Learning is shaped by ideological beliefs pertaining to gender-namely, those that clearly distinguish what males are, do, and should be from what females are, do, and should be*”. He claims two outcomes from gender role socialization, produced by emphasis on differences between the sexes rather than on similarities: (a). Parents treat sons and daughters differently, and (b). We learn at a very early age to distinguish between male and female. Girls are expected to acquire or behave in accordance with traditional female roles of domestic chores rather than practicing sporting activities.

### 2.3.2. Gender stereotyping

Gender stereotypes are strongly held over generalizations about groups of people in some designated social category. Such beliefs tend to be universally shared within a given society and are

learned/ shared as part of the process of growing up in the society (Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003). Stereotypes might not be true for all females as a whole because they are over-simplifications, for example, netball is perceived as a female game but most females may not want to play netball.

For most people masculinity is associated with competency, instrumentality, and activity. Femininity is associated with warmth, expressiveness, and nurturance (Cohen, 1993; Henderson, et al., 1989; Crawford, 1997). Females are most often categorized as communal such as selfless and other-orientated (Henderson, 1989, Shaw, 1994). Men often are characterized as agentic such as assertive and achievement-orientated (Basow, 1992, & Calhoun, 1987).

Basow (1992) claims that stereotypes are not fixed but respond, albeit slowly, to cultural changes. She identified at least three distinct stereotypes for females: (a) the housewife (the traditional female), (b) the professional female (independent, ambitious, self-confident) and, (c) the playboy bunny (sex object). For example, Messner (1992) points out that the use of derogatory names for female body parts as motivators in sport only helps to perpetuate the view of females as sex objects. Hoch (1980) states that the media and the advertisers have to take some responsibility for the objectification of females within the sporting culture. Furthermore, the use of television cameras to focus on attractive females so that the announcers can comment on their features during a sporting contest helps to aggravate the problem. All three subtypes are expected to be concerned with having and caring for children (Henderson, 1993).

Historically, much of the research conducted in recreation studies has ignored experiential differences between males and females (Henderson, 1990; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996). By contrast, feminist research places a critical focus on female roles in society and culture. Feminists suggest that the paradigm assumptions of research guide its impact on



society, and that the bias of feminist inquiry is its focus on creating wider opportunity for females (Henderson & Allen, 1990).

Blinde cited in Everhart & Pemberton (2001) females' sport has been defined and shaped by men's values, men's understanding of the world, and men's experiences-all of which suppress the development and expression of female values. Androcentric is a pattern of thought that takes male's experience of sport and recreation as a central, and studies and evaluates females experience by referring to those of men (Bella, 1989: 151). Sport activities are always intertwined with the structures, norms and ideals of a society; they always mirror society's gendered order and gender hierarchy. In many countries all over the world females have played a specific role in sport, but marginal in traditional games, dances and physical activities" (Everhart & Pemberton, 2001).

The effect the sporting institutions have on the attitudes of females has not been thoroughly researched. Blinde (1989) states that since Title IX legislation women's athletic programs have increasingly emulated the male model. The emphasis of the male sports model in women's sports has projected more traditionally masculine values on women's sport. These traditionally male values include but are not limited to an increased emphasis on winning, intimidation, aggression, commercialization, professionalization, and conformity. (Sabo cited by Everhart & Pemberton, 2001) argues, the compliance and obedience as well as the other socially constructed values that created the organized sporting culture continue to maintain it. He said that the young athlete of today is taught to accept the conservative values that are the cornerstones of the modern sports society.

According to Crawford, (1995: 13) men have more public power in most societies, controlling government, law, public discourse, and the academia as well as in sport and recreation. Tomlinson (1997: 3) points out that, men, through all spheres of the social system, largely determined women's participation in sporting activities. Regulations and policy practices and male



disapproval of women's recreation participation, and the control by men of space and location, have all restricted females' participation in sport and recreation. Roberts (1993: 10) states that women are not seen to earn the right or privilege to recreation and sport activities in the same way as men who are engaged in paid work. She claims that sport and recreation are essentially arenas for male social interaction, physical development and competition. This view is supported by Hargreaves (1997) & Jones (2003) who have conducted research amongst women in South Africa.

Investigations into gender and recreation have resulted in new insights about females' recreational experiences. For example Henderson et al (1989: 145) found that women assume more roles in the family and social structures as mothers and care givers, workers and housekeepers. In addition, they have less time available for their personal and “autonomous leisure”. In South Africa, emphasis on biological difference and masculinity is exacerbated by disparities between privileged and previously disadvantaged population groups (Roberts, 1993 and Jones 2001). Women especially, poor black, living in rural areas continue to be marginalized, with few facilities programs or pro-active planning strategies that aim to include them (Hargreaves, 1997 and Hargreaves & Jones, 2001). They therefore continue to be relegated to the role of spectators who service the recreation need of children and men (Shaw, 1997). Leary cited in Henderson et al. (1989: 126) claimed that the sex-typed individual is highly attuned to definitions of masculinity and femininity and is motivated to keep her or his behavior consistent with the sex-typed image by avoiding behaviors and attributes that violate that image. This is supported by Jones' (2001) study amongst UWC students.

Kelly & Freysinger (2000: 155) has pointed out that women serve as escorts (both paid and unpaid) and provide men with enjoyment through their presentation of self by focusing on physical appearance or dress and manner or behavior. He says that women are ornaments to men's presentation of status and power. In this way women become a form of recreation for men. It is for



this and other reasons that gender becomes an important research issue for many researchers especially in the context of recreational sport.

Researches have highlighted additional barriers to women's involvement in sport. These include inadequate street lighting, poor public transport, a lack of childcare facilities (Roberts, 1993), as well as cultural and religious factors such as strict codes of dress as propagated by certain cultural beliefs and religious teachings (Choi, 2000 & Jones, 2001).

### 2.3.3. **Body image**

Body image is an issue, which serves as an antecedent constraint to female's recreation in a variety of ways. First, societal pressure to achieve the ideal body image may constrain an individual into participating (Shaw, 1994). On the other hand, not having a body image that is consistent with societal expectations, may cause females to avoid or not participate in an activity (Cash & Henry, cited by Shannon, 1997; Dattilo, Dattilo, Samdahl, & Kleiber, 1994). Finally, body image concerns can reduce the enjoyment of participation in a particular activity (Frederick & Shaw, 1995).

To illustrate further, exercise and physically active recreation pursuits provide opportunities for the gap between a female's current body image and her ideal self to be narrowed (Davis & Cowles, cited by Shannon, 1997). In this way, body image discontent can motivate women into participating in an activity (Dattilo et al., 1994) or constrain females into these forms of leisure (Frederick & Shaw, 1995). It depends on the degree of choice females feel in working out to achieve a certain desirable “appropriate” body image. Furthermore, females more than males have more of a negative image. Henderson, Stalnaker, & Taylor cited in Henderson, et al., 1989: 129) found that body image was a major constraint to recreation participation for females. For example, over weight females may not want to participate in aerobic class, because they feel self-conscious about their weight.





Both females and males experience cultural pressures to look a certain way. The societal body image ideal for men is one of muscularity and strength (Drewnoski & Yee, 1987), while the ideal image for women is primarily one of thinness (Martz, Handly, & Eisler, 1995). Adherence to the traditional feminine may result in women adopting this societal expectation of thinness (Henderson, Stalnaker, & Taylor, 1988) and internalizing this as the ideal female body. The result is often the creation of a gap between a woman's current self and ideal self when her existing body image does not match the societal body ideal (Davis & Cowles cited by Shannon 1997). This shows that the problem regarding body image lies in the conflict between perception and reality. For example, masculine females might be viewed and/ or might view themselves as unladylike and/ or lesbians, and this entirely affects their involvement in sport and recreation.

According to Cash & Henry, cited by Shannon (1997, when body image is studied, women express the need to lose weight and to look slimmer as their key body image aspirations. These concerns appear to be aesthetic, existing more out of a desire to narrow the gaps toward achieving the ideal body than to be healthy and fit (Cash & Henry; Davis & Cowles, cited by Shannon, 1997). Some women attempt to narrow the gap through physical activity while others use dieting (Cash & Hicks, 1990). Narrowing the gap, even when physical activity is used, does not always produce healthy results. Growing numbers of females develop eating disorders in their attempts to achieve the ideal body (Martz et al., 1995). As can be seen from the literature, the problems with disordered eating might appear to negatively impact a substantial number of young females' participation in recreational sport activities because establishing healthy nutritional habits might enhance participation in recreation and sport.

Another issue surrounding body image is that the female body as an aesthetic object versus the body as a dynamic process (Franzoi, cited in Shannon, 1997). Research indicates that females are much more likely to focus on the aspects of body which are objectified such as legs, buttocks,



face and chest; whereas men will focus on the physical aspects of the body which serve instrumental functions such as coordination, health, and agility (Cash, Winstead, & Janda, 1986). For females then, attention is given to individual body parts, while males take a more holistic perspective. This difference in focus results from the way in which men and women are judged differently in society. This shows that societal attitude towards physical appearance may also affect self-esteem that can negatively affect participation in recreation and sport.

#### 2.3.4. Ethic of care

The ethic of care is defined as "An activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, of taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (Gilligan, cited in Henderson, 1993).

Gilligan (1982) introduced the concept of the "ethic of care" for the first time. It is characterized by feeling a sense of responsibility and commitment to others. Gilligan suggests that this ethic of care is a product of the social development of women, which concentrates on this sense of responsibility to others. Such socialization leads women to put the needs of others ahead of their own. Although this can lead to positive relation (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996), the ethic of care has been identified as a potential constraint to females' participation in recreation and sport (Henderson & Allen, 1990) particularly for married women (Harrington, Dawson, & Bolla, 1992).

The ethic of care is an antecedent constraint in that it results from socialization and pertains to a psychological state women possess. It is an intervening constraint when responsibilities and commitments for others interfere directly in decisions to participate in recreation on any given day. The ethic of care is embedded within the family structure and exists through family commitments which women experience (Henderson & Allen, 1990) and their role as primary caregiver



(Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991). Although, for many women, their role in the family is a major element of their identity (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1989), family role expectations and commitments can serve as a major constraint to recreation for females (Searle & Jackson, 1985). Placing family needs above their own may leave females with no time or energy for recreational sports. This raises the question of whether the ethic of care will be in jeopardy both as a constraint and a source of identity for females

It is further suggested that females focus on responsibility and commitment to others. They are socialized to take care of others and they see this as their responsibility. Torkildsen (1986; 235) noted that "Family commitments, particularly looking after children prevent many women from participating outside the home". This was supported by (Kelly & Orthner, cited by Henderson, et al., 1989: 122) who claim that for most married women, the family is the primary context for recreation expression and is highly valued by them.

Kraus (1997: 11) noted that since World War II, there has been a "strong drive by both girls and women in the United States and Canada toward playing a more equal role in varied aspects of community life". Outright discrimination or exclusion of females from participation in school and community programs has been challenged, particularly since the passage of Title IX in 1972. Despite these inroads, many women's participation in recreation is acutely affected by family responsibilities. This is also true to South Africa even after apartheid many some females feel they are constantly "on-call" and are often expected to put the recreation needs of others ahead of their own (Jones, 1998, Roberts, 1993). This shows that if recreational sports agencies in South Africa are to serve females better, more will have to be done to help them deal with personal and societal pressures.

Henderson and Allen (1990) explain that the ethic of care is only a constraint when satisfying the needs of others is self-sacrificing. It is possible then, that the ethic of care may be less of a



constraint for most female residence students (for those who are not married and are away from the family). Although there is a shift in roles in the family, and while this might release a female from many of the duties, they still experience difficulty to participate in recreational sports because of their perceptions of the constraints.

According to (Williams cited by Henderson, et al., 1989: 123) marriage and the monogamous nuclear family in the present form have been criticized by some researchers for being oppressive of women's freedom of choice. Harrington & Dawson (1995: 6) argue that a female's enjoyment can be constrained by feeling guilty about pursuing her own pleasure instead of attending to the needs of family. This is consistent with Torkildsen's (1986: 221) view; he called it felt needs: most females might have the desire to participation but have not yet expressed actively because of their roles in the family. (Kelly & Freysinger (2000: 155) claim that the social production labour of females is obligatory and implicated in the care of others, family members. Furthermore, women's productive labour is also configured around domestic obligation such as traditional role expectations. Henderson et al. (1996) claim that the ethic of care needs to be addressed through recreation education. Furthermore, the elimination of gender-imposed roles such as equal domestic division of labour with males might do much to improve the recreational involvement of females.

### 2.3.5. **Lack of Sense of entitlement**

Henderson (1993) describes a lack of sense of entitlement, as a constraint to recreation because a female feels guilty when she allows herself to indulge in personal recreation. In addition, Shaw (1994: 10) claims "*They also may not feel that they have the right to recreation for themselves*". For example, females are expected to put others' needs first and their own needs second. Bialeschi & Henderson (1985) claim, most females need to earn recreation. Females often do not believe that they have no legitimate right to recreation. This feeling of guilt constrains women and limits their choices to recreational sports activities to that which is around their homes



and family members. For example, a married woman with children will plan her recreational activities to be around the home or to include at least a family member. This in turn prevents females from fully enjoying recreation.

Thomsson (1999: 46) claims that several women in the study had no sense of themselves as persons other than wives or mothers. Harrington & Dawson (1995: 7) claim that women's lack of sense of entitlement and their ethic of care does not only lead to non-participation, but also limits enjoyment of chosen activities. Females choose the home and non-structured activities as the primary place and means of recreation expression, resulting in much of female's recreation being fragmented i.e., females do not feel entitled (Henderson, 1996).

Jones, (2001) claim females traditionally have not been allowed to participate in the same sporting events as men, because these activities are perceived as harmful to females' bodies. Roberts (1993: 9) has also noted that contemporary South African sport is gender biased, male dominated and sexist. Overall, female participants make up about one third of the sports population because of the triple oppression suffered by black females, as opportunities for sport and recreation are few. This might also contribute to many South African females experiencing a feeling of not being entitled to recreation and sports participation.

There is a consensus statement from various researchers in the field of recreation, that, when females take control of their lives and realize the value of their work (school or employed), and recreation, this constraint (sense of lack of entitlement) will be minimized (Henderson, et al., 1989: 126).

#### **2.3.6. Personal health and safety**

According to Henderson, et al. (1989: 129) "*Health is the concern to body, and changes in physical ability inhibit females from beginning or continuing to participate in some activities, for*



*example the body image, safety is also an issue females are cognizant in their recreation*". In the few studies that have explored the issue of fear of violence, the findings suggested that this constraint exists within many aspects of women's lives and manifests in varied forms (Francis, 1997; Shaw & Whyte, 1996; Whyte & Shaw, 1994). As suggested by Green, Hebron, & Woodward (1990) & Frances (1997), fear can be used as a form of social control even though the woman may not have directly experienced a violent incident herself.

In the literature on constraints, females' fear of violence and lack of personal safety during leisure experiences have rarely been considered (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; 1996; Whyte & Shaw, 1994). The threat of violence to women is pervasive within the culture and a "fact of life" to which most girls and women are socialized early (Buchwald, 1993; Herman, 1991). Females' fear concerning physical assault often goes beyond the violent act (i.e. rape) to include the stigma that accompanies the action (Gordon & Riger, 1991). The perceptions that somehow the females "asked for it" through her dress, location, or activity often lead to guilt and self-blame in herself and an unsympathetic society.



Henderson, (1993:36) has claimed that issues of health and safety are often implicit in the recreation constraints literature, but a number of females have identified the fears for one's physical and psychological health and safety as overt constraints. For example, many females accept that they cannot do certain activities or go alone to particular places, or participate at certain times of the night or day.

Fear of crime is a serious problem in South Africa. Unequal relationships between male and female mean that females are usually placed in positions subordinate to males. For many males in South Africa the experience of being men is closely bound with exerting power over females, making domestic violence a gender specific crime. For example, Vetten's (2000) statistics on rape show that 49, 289 rapes were reported in 1998. Furthermore, fear of crime is likely to be highest



among those who think they have the greatest chance of victimization, and those who worry the most about the consequence of crime, whether social, physical, emotional or economic.

Green, Herbon & Woodward Shaw (1994: 11) have provided compelling evidence that fear of violence is indeed an important factor constraining females' choices around sport and recreation. Lack of transport and inadequate transportation can further amplify the concerns for safety (Shaw, 1994). Females' recreation lifestyles are affected by their ever-present concern with emotional and physical safety such as where to park in relation to the recreation facility, location of facility, as well as the time schedule of recreation opportunities. These are important considerations for the involvement of females in recreation and sport (Henderson, et al., 1989: 129). Studies suggest that females experience a greater fear of violence than do males and will avoid activities or situations in which they feel unsafe (Henderson, et al., 1989).

In the light of this societal acknowledgement of females as objects of violence, a need exists to understand the influence of such a pervasive attitude on females' recreation and sports participation.



### 3. *CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY*

#### 3.1. **Introduction**

This chapter provides a rationale for the use of a qualitative methodological approach in the study. A qualitative examination of perceptions of constraints to recreational sport participation might inform our understanding of *how* and *why* structural and antecedent constraints curtail UWC undergraduate students from participation. In turn, this could provide useful information for intervention purpose.

This chapter deals with the methodological framework and details how the study was conducted and analyzed. The rationale for the qualitative method, information about the method of data collection, and self-reflective issues are detailed.

#### 3.2. **Rationale**



The methodological approach for this study is qualitative. Qualitative research methods have a long history in the social sciences and have made increasingly important contributions in the field of recreation. Much of the social science research on perceptions of constraints into recreation participation has been conducted using qualitative surveys investigating the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practice of participants (Shaw, 1994; Henderson et al, 1989). These studies rest on the assumption that changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of people lead to behavioral changes to participation in recreation. This study locates itself within a qualitative framework in an attempt to understand some of the complexities of perceptions of constraints to participation into recreational sports that involve behavior change.

Qualitative methodology provides well-grounded, rich descriptions explanation of the process occurring within local context. It recognizes that reality is socially constructed and attempts



to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings, which people bring to them. Henderson (2000: 50) claims “*qualitative data generate rich, valid, detailed, process information that leaves the study participants perspectives intact and provides an insiders view to better understand a phenomenon under the study*”. It is also suitable to measure aspects of barriers to recreation participation (Jackson & Witt, 1994: 324). Qualitative research involves a process of reduction and obstruction, which may eventually reach a point where the context in which the research question is posed, completely disappears. It therefore, excludes the meaning and purpose that humans attach to their activities.

Qualitative research provides the opportunity to the individual cases to be presented and analyzed and given meaning within a particular context. Furthermore, qualitative approach concentrates on word and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations (Kruger, 1994).

Many researchers in the field of recreation have used a qualitative methodological approach to study constraints to recreation (see for example, Shaw, 1994; Henderson, 1993; Henderson et al, 1989). In this study a similar methodological approach will be adopted and focus groups used as the method of data collection. This will enable the research to discover interpretations of recreational sports and to uncover the interaction of significant perceived and real constraints that influence participation in recreational sport. Qualitative research attempts to redress the imbalance by focusing on the situational and structural contexts and thereby including differential variables and at the same time provide valuable contextual information and insight into human perceptions. The intention is not to quantify data or test a hypothesis. In addition, the nature of this study seeks to address such questions as "why" and "how" perceived constraints affect participation in recreational sports.



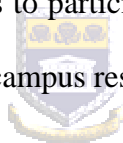
### 3.3. Aims of the Study

The central aim of the study is to obtain qualitative data concerning female undergraduate students' perceptions of constraints to recreational sports participation at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The study examines the physical and socio-cultural constraints within the context of availability and accessibility of recreational sport programs on campus and the barriers that prevent female students from participating in these.

### 3.4. Methods of data collection

#### 3.4.1. Sampling/profile of participants

A sample of 50 female undergraduate students from UWC was purposely selected, depending on their availability and willingness to participate. They were selected from the general female undergraduate students who resided in campus residences in the year 2004.



According to Greef (2002: 311) “*purposive sampling creates conditions for easy, important for productive conversation, make participants comfortable talk to each other and serve the researcher's goal*”. In purposive sampling, participants are selected according to specific criteria identified by the researcher (De Vos, 2001).

The decision to purposively sample students in residences that varies from each other on the particular attributes was made in light of the goals and constraints of the current study. The selection included five focus groups, which comprised ten students per group. This equaled a total of fifty UWC female undergraduate students ranging from 18-24 years old and/ or average age 22.8 included in the present study. Participants were recruited from nine Residences at UWC (Liberty,

Cecil Esau, Basil February, Coline Williams, Casinga, Ruth First, Hector Petersen, Dos Santos, and Gorvala).

UWC is historically a black university. All participants were blacks (or in apartheid categories, 'Colored' and 'Africans'). Participants were all undergraduate students as it was felt that they might be more willing to discuss issues of recreation and sport than their postgraduate fellow students.

Out of a total of fifty, thirty of the informants do not participate in any recreational programs on campus. Ten of the informants have children (two in each group) and they do not participate in any recreational programs on campus. They were purposively selected to gain broader information on the constraints brought about by their roles as mothers. A further ten (two in each group) regularly participate in campus recreational sport programs. This group was selected to facilitate and elaborate on the benefits and availability of recreational sports programs on campus, not withstanding the constraints. .



Eighty percent of the participants were in a relationship (boy friends). Most of them have reported that they have not been exposed to recreational sports programs. They were exposed to sports through television programs such as SABC, newsletters and magazines.

The data was collected through focus group discussion questions aided by cue questions and vignettes.

### 3.4.2. Focus groups

Focus groups, located within the qualitative paradigm, were the chosen method of data collection for this research. The focus group method in this project has allowed access to discussions about the different types of constraints and their manifestations that would have been difficult to obtain by other means. Focus groups have been defined as involving a group of



individuals who interact with each other and seek information that is more profound than is usually accessible than when using other methods of data collection (Goldman, cited in Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Among the qualitative methods, focus groups could be meaningful in the case of a new topic to a population (Greef, 2002: 291).

The focus group is usually conducted in a series of groups with persons who possess particular characteristics, which are needed for the research topic (Krueger, 1994). Focus groups are a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue, product or service (Greef 2002: 305). *“They are carefully planned discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest”* (Kruger cited in Greef, 2002: 306). The number of participants varies and there is no agreement upon the ideal amount, but the literature suggests using a minimum of six up to twelve individuals (Krueger, 1994). In the current study ten females were used in each of the groups.

A focus group discussion allows access to research participants who may find one-on one; face-to face interaction “scary” or “intimidating”. For example, in the study of Madriz, cited in Denzin & Lincoln (2000: 835) one of her participant suggested, *“I'd rather talk this way, with a group of women... When I am with an interviewer, I feel intimidated, scared. And if they call me over the telephone, I never answer their questions. How can I know what they really want or who they are?”*. This shows that focus group discussions maintain a safe environment for participants where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same gender and socio economic backgrounds. Morgan & Spanish (1984) noted that focus groups give the researcher an opportunity to observe participants engaging and interacting.

The use of focus groups can vary considerably and there may be different levels on disclosure. In addition, the researcher has less control over group discussion, which can result in detours in the discussion and the raising of irrelevant issues (Kruger, 1994; Morgan & Spanish,



1984; Stewart & Shamadasani, 1990). Focus groups have been criticized for failing to provide hard data and that the data elicited may not be representative of the larger population. They also tend to rely heavily on group dynamics as this influences the success or failure of the group in providing data. This may have been a limitation of the current study, in that it relied on the group to be able to discuss the topic. Participants were all female and it was felt that they might discuss the topic more openly with a female as opposed to a male facilitator. They may have felt reluctant to participate because of the sensitivity of the subject. I was a male researcher among females and it also appears they were not sure to discuss and uncover their barriers to participation at the beginning. However, conducting a group discussion in the participant's setting (UWC) might have reduced the degree of social distance between the participants and myself.

My stay at UWC as a student and having lived in student residence for five year provided me with the opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of the social context shaping the lives of the participants. Prior to the discussion schedule, I had personal interactions with each of the participants to brief them about the aims and objectives of the study. In addition, I kept in touch through follow-up telephone calls. This has enhanced the participants' understanding of the study objectives. This also led to the development of trust which ultimately increased the chances of more honest exchanges, as have emerged in the analysis.

As a researcher, I had to deal with a number of tasks within the focus group during the discussion process. Krueger (1994) identifies listening, moderating, observing, and analyzing using an inductive process as some of the tasks of the researcher in the focus group. My role as a facilitator assured that the group discussion flowed naturally but that the subject at hand remained on the research topic and that the group members do not divert from the topic.

An important component of focus group is reflexivity, as “ *the analysis would include an in-depth study of the event, experience or topic in order to describe the context of the experience and*



*the ingredients or components of the experience*” (Kruger, 1994: 20). This is discussed in greater detail under the heading of “Self-reflexive issues of the researcher”.

Greef (2002: 317-318) points out that the location of the groups must meet the needs of both the researcher and participants and should be comfortable and non-threatening to hold discussions and capture data. A convenient place for the majority of the focus group discussions was held at Liberty Recreational Hall. Only one focus group discussion was held in one of the participant's room, as Liberty Recreational Hall was not available due to a meeting being held there.

### 3.4.3. **Vignette**

Vignettes are pre-constructed scenarios, which are intended to stimulate discussion and debate in a non-threatening, non-intrusive way. Stewart & Shamdasini (1990) recommended the use of various aids. The subject may use vignettes to project their anxiety to those of the characters in the stories (Strebel, 1994). This study employed the use of vignettes (see appendix D) in order to facilitate and initiate discussion and allow subjects to explore relatively threatening material. Three vignettes were developed based on previous research conducted by Henderson (1993) in the field of recreation - North America.

The vignettes were highlighted with constraints to participation such as the relationships between participation and preferences. The females in the story were confronted, by barriers to recreation participation such as lack of money, family commitment and fear for personal safety. Each vignette was followed by discussion questions such as: What do you think? If you were the person, what would you do? Does this apply to you? Furthermore, any topic, which was not spontaneously covered, was also addressed by asking cue questions.

### 3.4.4. **Discussion and cue questions**

In this study there were three main discussion questions (see appendix A) and eight sub questions under the main questions designed to obtain information on the topic. They were also compiled in order to have some degree of comparison among groups, and ensure that the conversation flowed and group members did not divert from the topic. Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) claim that the facilitator is very influential in the role that they assume within the focus group setting, and can influence and direct the discussion. I was very active in directing, as the participants would often deviate from the question or discussion issues that are not directly relevant to the research topic and/ or the discussion question. It is, therefore, important that I had to be observant of group dynamics thereby applying the necessary skills to facilitate the discussion.

Each of the three main discussion questions were handed to participants on separate colored pages. Answering each main question within about 5-8 minutes was compulsory for all participants before the group discussion commenced. The reason for the chosen method was threefold. Firstly, it gives participants an opportunity to write down their thoughts, which they would be reluctant to verbalize. Secondly, it might provide participants with a chance to think about the discussion question that would prepare them to actively engage within the group discussion. Thirdly, as a researcher it was important for me that everything said was documented on paper. For example, some of the participants might speak softly and might not be clearly recorded.

In this study thirteen cue questions (see appendix B) were designed to facilitate the discussions. The cue questions were used when there was a break in the discussion and when the participants deviated from the focus of the study.

### 3.5. Ethical considerations



Firstly, permission for the study was obtained from the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science at the University of the Western Cape where the participants are studying. Participants were asked to read and sign the consent letter (see Appendix D). I gave letters of consent to participants a few days prior to the discussion session and these were duly signed by them and returned to me. Physical communications and follow up phone calls were made to ensure their availability to participate in the study on the pre-arranged date.

Participants were briefed on the aims and objectives of the study. What needs to be known, why and how they have been selected and how their opinions and observations are important to the study. Participation was on a voluntary basis and they were informed that they might withdraw any time. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were assured. All information was treated with great sensitivity.

Each focus group discussion lasted approximately three hours (180) minutes and discussions were audio taped only with the permission of participants, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in the process of analysis and dissemination of findings. The transcribed interviews are kept confidential, and no names were obtained. Although the findings are going to be widely disseminated, if the respondents so wish, they will be given access to their transcribed information. The data were handled and completed by myself.

### 3.6. Document review

According to Silverman (1992) documentary material itself is data in its own right that captures a distinctive version of social reality. In this study, some documents were to be examined. Unfortunately, there are no written reports and adequate statistical information and/ or database that shows e.g., yearly participation rates of female undergraduate students at the UWC. Instead, information has been collected via informal conversation through sport administrators and student





affairs such as the Sports Council, Central House Committee (CHC), and Students Representative Council (SRC), who are involved in organizing sport and recreation programs at the UWC in 2004.

They were questioned regarding the extent of current facilities, the level of utilization of these facilities, and the recreational opportunities that can be pursued by female students at the UWC. They were also questioned on the perceived inadequacy of facilities and affiliated fees to meet potential increases at UWC. There was concern expressed in that the participation of females in the University's sport and recreation program is significantly lower than their male counterparts. The informal discussions held with the various representatives (Sports Administration and Student Affairs) have helped the researcher to understand and glean information about the recreational sports facilities, existing programs, and possible reasons for lower rate female students' participation in recreational sports on campus. This has been informative for the current study.

### 3.7. Data analysis

Riley (1990) refers to this as the “*hear what your data has to say*” stage. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involves generating themes, categories and looking for patterns. Initially, the tape recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher with pauses, hesitations, unclear speech and noises indicated. This enabled the researcher to obtain a clearer understanding of what had been communicated. The focus group discussions and transcriptions were both done in English.

The texts were read and re-read many times to get the sense of the dominant themes. A detailed analysis of the broad female undergraduate students' constraints to recreational sport participation was not done, but general features were noted to give a broad categorization of issues those participants in the current study focused upon. Categories were not regarded as mutually

exclusive and thus a number of quotations were applicable to more than one theme. This categorization method is one of many ways to explore constraints to participation.

The verbatim and written statements were then coded and the broad categories were generated. Four main categories were developed: (1) Interpretations of recreation, recreational sport and sport (2) physical constraints (3) socio-cultural constraints and, (4) possible recommendations. After these specific categories were identified from the focus group discussions, what followed was sorting and counting the frequency of occurrence of the identified themes within the categories to look for relationship between categories.

The transcriptions were also again studied to assess whether selected quotations corresponded with the themes. Once the final themes and sub themes were generated and quotations that could best illustrate the particular view were selected. The next stage of analysis involved examining whether the aims of the study were achieved. This was done by examining the available literature on perceptions of constraints to recreation participation and was compared with the existing data. In other words, data was analyzed for the themes that emerged from the discussions and was guided by the aims of the study. I was satisfied that the data gathered were useful in providing an insight of the constraints to participation and was therefore informative and credible.

### 3.8. Self-reflexivity

I, as a researcher, was aware of my own interests and needs within the focus group, and needed particular information for the research project. The agenda was to obtain relevant information and would therefore facilitate the discussion accordingly, to elicit specific information that was needed to address the research topic.

At the beginning of every discussion within a group, there was greater difficulty discussing the topic and the participants often had to be prompted for short answers. I, as a researcher, was



using the vignette and cue questions to encouraging submissive individuals to participate, and as a result, participants may have initially felt reluctant in attending to the subject raised and had vigorous arguments. I maintained eye contact, handling some interruptions, anticipating the next question, and relate new information to previous information.

I noted that in each groups there was significant perceptual differences as well as differences between participants, females adhering to more 'traditional' values and those females who have taken on 'modern' values. For example, some of the participants accept recreational sports as a males' arena. Furthermore, each group was also a combination of the following:

- (a) Those who don't know about all the available recreational sport programmers and opportunities on campus, but would like to know and take part if conditions were more favorable to participate and those who are not totally interested to know and take part.
- (b) Those who would be interested in going in recreational facilities but would not like to participate.
- (c) Those who currently participate and would like to spend more time doing recreational sport activities.



I, as researcher, monitored the group dynamics involved in the discussions. In each focus group there appeared to be more responsiveness from participants who are currently involved in recreational sport programs on campus. The vignettes and cue questions have motivated those who were reluctant to engage in the discussion. Even though those who are not currently involved in campus recreational sport were not as active participants as those who took part (shy and speak softly), they were able to assert themselves and would often challenge the dominant ideologies by asking questions. The researcher was also able to balance the participation of individuals in the groups, by keeping one or sub group participants from domineering the group.

As participants were selected purposively, many new themes such as maternal roles, socialization, cultural stereotypes about females, the attitude of some UWC males toward some females, and issues around UWC sport management were among topics discussed. Informants shared more ideas from their personal thoughts and experiences. Information from various perspectives flowed naturally.

### 3.9. Validity

An in-depth description and rich understanding of issues and sources of data from focus group discussions might enhance the validity of the research. According to Brenner, Brown & Carter (1985) validity, with its concern for what being measured, is directly relevant to the research interview. Therefore, as a researcher, it was important to demonstrate the extent to which the questions measured what they were to measure.

The UWC undergraduate students interpreted their own perception of barriers to recreational sport participation during the discussion to clarify their contributions to the study. During this process the researcher shared with the groups some of the responses of the participants and requested them to comment on the accuracy of interpretations of their initial responses, which were elicited during the cue and vignette investigation. This attempt at respondent validation confirmed the researcher findings about the meanings that emerged from the data.

Furthermore, informants were drawn from nine UWC residences and with the diversity of participants it is also hoped to greatly strengthen the validity. During the initial analysis, attention was given to minority opinions that may not fit or which contradict each other. The researcher therefore searched for alternative explanations for the data collected by actively looking for and discussing those elements in the data that contradict the emerging explanation and was satisfied with the themes that were generated in my final analysis.



### 3.10. Reliability

All processes were documented during the research process. As my understanding of the setting became increasingly refined, any changes in the design created were described. Therefore thorough notes and a diary that records the research design decision and the rationale behind it were kept. The research findings on perceived constraints and use of information are sufficiently detailed and analyzed with respect to the literature review to ensure reliability.

### 3.11. Conclusion

To gain relevant research information about females' constraints to recreational sports participation is not an easy task. It can be complex and subjective. Furthermore, it is a very sensitive issue due to the less visible cultural and societal expectations that are imposed on females.

In this study, the focus group method has helped the study participants to interact verbal and non-verbal communications. This has allowed to interplay their perceptions of constraints to recreational sport participation and helped participants share opinions that have stimulated discussions without any change and modifications of participating individuals.

Participants had an opportunity to share insights and discuss the diversity of perceptions after the formal discussion session. For example, after consenting, student informants had to share different personal and intimate information that resulted on their lower participation into recreational sport participation in campus.

#### 4. *CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS*

##### 4.1. **Introduction**

This chapter represents the results of the study in the form of qualitative thematic analysis. The discussion included the participants' experiences, perceptions of constraints that curtail informants' involvement in recreational sports and possible recommendations.

The data collected from five discussion groups (August-September, 2004) are displayed and discussed. Transcriptions have been highlighted where they are appropriate to the discussion. The quotations alongside each of the themes have been taken from the discussion transcripts and are of UWC's female undergraduate informants' comments that have been selected as illustrative of the issues that emerged. Verbatim responses (quotes) have been placed in 'Times New Roman' between inverted commas to distinguish them from the literature.

The discussion focuses primarily on the aims and objectives of the study, namely:

1. Participants' interpretation of recreation, recreational sports and sport,
2. Perceptions of physical constraints,
3. Perceptions of socio-cultural constraints and
4. Possible recommendations to redress the problems are provided.

##### 4.2. **Interpretations**

The first objective of this study was to explore the way in which female students interpret recreation, recreational sport and sport. Respondents hold particular beliefs of what recreation, recreational sports and sports are. They have brought this understanding to their experiences and their understandings thereof are shaped by these experiences. One important element in this study the extent to which their experiences fit with their perceptions of constraints to recreational sport



participation and what recreational sport ought to be.

#### 4.2.1 Recreation

As interpreted by the respondents, recreation constitutes all forms of activities that are performed for “pleasure” or “fun”. It can include “playing games”, “painting”, “drawing”, “outing”, reading “books” and “magazines”, and “watching television”. Most respondents agreed that recreation was a means of “socialization”, such as “meet new friends” to better know each other and “share experience”. Respondents view recreation as “free time” to use in relatively freely chosen ways, when the obligations of studies have been met. Haywood, Branham, Spink, Capenerhurst & Henry (1995) pointed out that recreation is a range of activities in which people choose to participate during their free time. Whilst several informants felt they can only recreate when they have free time, some of them believe that they can also recreate when they are even busy at their studies: “I listen to music while I am busy studying... it keeps me concentrate” (Focus Group Four, September 16, 2004).



Several informants, eighty percent of them reported that they only engage in passive recreation (non-user informants<sup>1</sup>) and twenty percent of them engage in active recreational sports activities (user informants<sup>2</sup>). In other words Physical exercise was far less pronounced: “I would love to participate in recreational sport such as basketball but I have personal problem” (Focus group Four, September 16, 2005). (... I prefer to watch movie or read my books than playing sport” (Focus Group Three, September 7, 2004). This finding is consistent with Romney cited in Torkildsen (1986: 151), who claims that recreation is not a matter of *motions*, but rather *emotions*: it is a personal response; a psychological reaction; an attitude; approach and a way of life.

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<sup>1</sup>Non-user informants are those who do not participate in any kind of recreational sport activities on campus.



#### 4.2.2 Sport

From the data sport is viewed as “competitive”, in a game form that has specific “design”, “structure” and “format” that has “rules”, “regulations” and “time span”. Several informants suggested that sport as “competitive” that possesses “masculine qualities”. The following statement epitomizes this: “You know...sport is aggressive... it was purposely designed for males... we are naturally very soft...and we have also health related issues” (Discussion Group three, September 07, 2004). This is supported by Wimbush cited in Deem (1986: 74) who argued that females' own sense of well-being, health and fitness is vital to whether or not to engage in sport.

Informants felt that playing sport as a female might result in several negative consequences such as playing sport makes “unladylike”. The following statement was made: “...I don't like to participate in sport because sport is masculine and masculine females are not attractive any more...they are exposed to gossips and insults by their community”(Focus group Four, September 16, 2004). This is also in agreement with the findings of Graydon & Talbot cited in Dem (1986: 75), they have both noted that females who participate in sport are supposed to be 'feminine' and if they are not then they are exposed to insults and derision.

Several informants interpreted sports as: “Sport serves only for skilled individuals only, mostly men and very few women who aim to get rewards such as money, status and recognition” (Discussion group Five, September 24, 2004). This is also consistent with the finding of Deem (1986: 65), who, in her Sheffield study suggests that sport, even in the contemporary industrial societies, is still largely dominated by men at every level, from those for whom sport is a way of earning a living to those who are spectators.

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<sup>2</sup>User informants are those who participate in campus recreational sport programmes occasionally or regularly on campus.

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The data revealed that having fun is a primary motivation factor to participation in sport. One among the user informants suggested the following: “I was playing soccer and I dropped because sport is not fun any more...” (Discussion Group three, September 07, 2004). User informants who cease participation felt that they might play sports, if practices could be made to be more “fun”, if they could get “more playing time”. This is consistent with Ewing and Seefeldt (1988) who reported that sports participation declines dramatically and steadily...an analysis of their data suggests that having fun is the prime motivation for participating in sports and a lack of fun is the prime reason for dropping out.

#### 4.2.3 Recreational sports

Informants discussed recreational sport in the light of recreation: “Recreational sports are mainly for fun...they are not designed for competition...just for fun” (discussion group Two, September 16, 2004). Discussion groups suggested recreational sports as “non-competitive sport” mainly for “pleasure”. They can be also organized for a group of people as a means of “socialization” and “interaction”. The data revealed, anybody regardless “skill” and “ability” can participate. Informants reported that recreational sports as “all forms of sporting activities” that are organized at “recreational level”. Informants see recreational sports that occur when participants have free time and access to do whatever sporting activities they please. And, this can only occur outside the hours of schoolwork i.e., during the free evenings, holidays and weekends.

Of fifty informants, eight participate regularly and five occasionally and the other thirty-six do not participate at all in any of the recreational sports programs on campus. The majority of the informants would like to participate but couldn't get their recreational sport choices satisfied. “... No varieties of recreational programs in campus... for example there is no cricket for ladies,



rowing, water polo, tug-of-war and other forms of recreation that we can enjoy according to our choices”(Discussion group two, September 3, 2004).

The data revealed that recreational sport as 'non-serious' in nature, the greater the freedom allowed to participants to choose a recreational sport activity seems to provide the greater potential to recreate seemingly, the quality of many recreational sport activities is dependent on participants' freedom of choice and the purity of the recreational element in the game: “...I have three friends in campus, we like to play ground tennis, we really enjoy it because there is no pressure imposed, I mean no matter who wins...” (Discussion Group Two, September 16, 2004). This shows the subjective definition, combining a sense of having freedom and experiencing enjoyment, seems to define recreational sport best.

The above findings are in agreement with the Council for the Advertisement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS] (2003), that suggests the purpose of recreational sport programming is to enhance students' fitness and wellness, knowledge, personal skill, and enjoyment by providing opportunities for a variety of activities to choose from and through which students can learn and practice leadership, management, program planning and interpersonal skills.

There was a consensus statement among the discussion groups: “recreational sport has to fall under recreation not sport” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004) because “it is fun” (Discussion Group Two, September 16, 2004). “Unlike sports, there is no wariness when losing a game and the probability of getting injured and violence is lower” (Discussion group two, September 3, 2004). Interestingly, both user and non-user informants felt that recreational sports as a beneficial and appropriate activity for females on campus. One user informant suggested: “Whenever I get stressed of my studies... and other personal problems, I always go to the gym or play my basketball, and I feel better” (Discussion group Four, September 16, 2004). This is in agreement with Hossler & Bean (1990), in *The Strategic Management of College Enrollment*, wrote that



recreational sports (i.e., informal recreation, games, intramurals) have been endorsed by institutions for their value in helping students maintain good physical health, enhancing their mental health by providing a respite from rigorous academic work, and teaching recreational skills with a carryover for recreation time exercise throughout life.

The data revealed that recreational sports as more “inclusive” than sports: “I would love to play recreational sport because there isn’t fear, pressure and discrimination attached.... only fun” (Discussion group Four, September 16, 2004). This is in agreement with Jones (1998) who claims that recreation is a better site than sport for the empowerment of females. Her argument goes a long way to explaining that recreation better accommodates the effects of cultural and religious constraints on women than sport and that recreation is more flexible than sport for providing equal opportunities for women.

#### **4.3 Perceived Physical barriers to participation**

Questions asking student informants about their participation in recreational sports and why recreation is perceived less accessible to some females than some males revealed how discussions become centered on visible (physical) barriers that curtail their participation in sport and recreation. Student informants were of the opinion that the extent to which resources one had available such as time, skill, money, transportation, facility and administration barriers for sport and recreation were important considerations when looking at constraints that affect participation.

##### **4.3.1 Perceived Scarcity of time**

A feeling of time scarcity is likely to mean that participants will limit the amount of time they spend participating in any recreational or sporting activities. Firstly, the majority of student informants claimed that they have no time to participate in recreational sports because of academic work, such as: assignments, tests and exams. “Most of the recreational sports activities at UWC take



place occasionally, during the day while we are busy on our schoolwork...” (Discussion group one august 27, 2004). With regard to the schoolwork they were of two opinions during the discussion. Those who perceive there is no time for participation and those who believe that there is enough time and/ or if necessary they can manage to make time so that they can participate in recreational sports. Few of them reported that they could make time as far as the willing to participate is in place. The following dialogue took place among females in one of the focus groups. It shows differing views about whether lack of time was an issue for them and how that could impact on their involvement in sport and recreation.

Participant 1 “No we don't have enough time”

Participant 2 “Yes, sometimes we have to work on assignments and tests”

Participant 3. “That's laziness, we have time we can make it”

Participant 2. “No, no not laziness! I think when I participate I have wasted time. I go to aerobics for two classes then have to miss because of studies, then when I go back I can't cope because they learn new things. Then I feel I am wasting my time”

Participant 8. “I think ... it is all about “Time Management”, we can make a time, I mean we can't study 24 hours a day”.

Participant 6. “Most of the Guys participate in sports, they have also to study...but, I think as females when we have free time, we like to stay in our rooms doing the washing, cleaning and cooking to visitors and friends....” (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004).



This dialogue shows differing views about whether lack of time was an issue for them and how that could impact on their involvement in recreational sport. As can be seen from the dialogue two findings emerged i.e., time appears as both physical and socio-cultural constraint. First, many informants reported that, if there is time for males in campus there should also be time for females. “We come here to study like guys, no other commitment except our schoolwork” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). This statement illustrates that time might constrain all students regardless of gender at UWC. However, in discussions of time informants displayed that there is not enough time due to the study pressure “tests assignments and exams”. This is in agreement with Henderson (1993), she sees physical constraint as equally constraining factor (depending on the context) to recreation participation for both males and females.

Secondly, time appears as a socio-cultural constraint. Informants uncovered the issue of gender role “being a female” was highlighted and discussed in the light of time. Several informants reported that “to be a female” is considered as a “servant to the family”. The data seems to suggest that there is not enough time when they are at home because of the conflicts of gender role obligations, typically related to young siblings such as “child care” and house work. “After school, I had to stay in the house to look after my younger siblings, clean and cook for the family...even at UWC I have those kinds of feelings, I prefer to stay in my room...” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2005). As can be seen from the statement, to some females, to have free time might be perceived as to stay at home and care for others.

Informants with children reported that they do not have time for themselves because they have to look after their children. “... After school...I have to be in my room do my schoolwork and look after my child. You would have to find someone to baby-sit? I can’t afford” (Focus group Three, September 7, 2004). Deem (1982) noted that one of the biggest predictors that a female will have a limited recreation time is having children. This is also supported by the findings of Show



(1994); Henderson (1993); Crawford and Godbey (1987), who all claim lack of time may be more intensely experienced by females than males due to ascribed roles. Henderson called this, “*a priori*” context, a context that deals with females' interpersonal and intrapersonal issues before they consider participating in recreation and sport.

#### 4.3.2 Perceived lack of facilities

Informants reported that, although there are relatively available facilities on campus, existing facilities do not meet their initial expectations. Several informants cannot engage in sporting activities because the facilities they were looking for simply did not exist. The following statement was made: “The existing old facilities don't cater for females, they need to be maintained...” (Discussion group One, August 27, 2004). Several informants suggested that they would participate if they would get separate facility that caters for the socio-cultural needs, such as a segregated environment closed off from male counterparts. “It is not chill to gym with guys and checked by every one...” (Focus group Three, September 07, 2004). This implied that they are not familiar or comfortable with some of the facilities. “The gym is too small it can't accommodate both males and females...some guys have attitudes. “I always hear unpleasant words from guys that I don't want to say it now about some females who took part in the gym that discourage you to join...”(Focus group One, August 27, 2004). This shows that informants do not feel comfortable when they gym with males, there might be some derogatory words or attitudes and sexual harassment at the facilities. Furthermore, “... No changing rooms in most facilities such as on tennis, netball and soccer fields” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004).

#### 4.3.3 Perceived lack of money

In discussion of their financial background, informants displayed that involvement in recreational sports at UWC requires “registration”, “affiliation” and transportation fees” that the



majority UWC informants do not have: "I just don't have the money to go gym, and I sure don't have the money for recreation supplies". (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004).

Discussion groups realized the implications of cost and they were all unhappy and emotional when discussing this specific issue. The participants in the focus groups experienced considerable problems with transportation, registration and transport costs and fees to access facilities. The following statement was made: "We do have a gymnasium, but we have to pay to use it. This is unfair because we are paying our course fees and registration. This should cover gymnasium fees ... we came from disadvantaged families" (Discussion group One, August 03, 2004). Informants are reluctant to join different sport clubs but they cannot afford the registration and transportation fees. For example, "R250" is required to join the UWC rugby team" (registration fee) and "R20" for transportation. "Yo! Some times I feel like going to the gym to exercise while listening to the music, but it's just too costly, the price"..." (Focus group Two, September 16, 2004).

The study revealed that the relatively high cost of recreational sport participation is one of the main barriers for the majority of informants. The lack of money at their disposal restricts the possibilities and the freedom of informants, including participating in recreational sports activities. Furthermore, parental income has also affected the expenditures necessary to pay. "I'm looking at swimming because they say it will be available for free, my parents are not working". This is in agreement with the findings of Howard and Crompton (1984) who in their study claim that people in the lowest income category of their study were the least frequent users of recreation facilities. Constraints on recreation are related to socio economic status.

#### 4.3.4 Perceived lack of skills

The data seems to suggest that most informants are reluctant to take part in recreational sports activities. Given their own self-perception that they did not have the necessary skill to do so.



“...I would like to join the female volleyball team but I don't know how to play” (Discussion Two, September 3, 2004). Whilst this can be the general issue of informants related to non-participation in recreational sport at UWC, there were also some issues specific to the high school they come from.

Informants' sports options at high school level were typically limited or nonexistent. “We lack of skills ... depends on the high school you come from. In Black schools we were not introduced to most recreational sports. For example, ... swimming, ... when we come here we are not interested” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004). As research demonstrates, participation in sporting activities during childhood is the biggest predictor of involvement during adulthood. Greendorfer (1991) argues that having limited opportunity to participate in sport and recreational activities at earlier ages also limits future participation.

Importantly, when thinking about participating in recreational sport, for most participants the immediate and predominant association was with sports that are traditionally played by females such as netball and aerobics. The data seems to suggest a positive relationship exists between participation and participants' skills. The following statements were made: “...If you don't know how to play, it is very embarrassing to start it because people can make you a joke...it doesn't make you feel good” (Discussion group Four, September 16, 2004). The study revealed that informants' lack of skill is a contributing factor to cease and not to start participation, actually affects their choices to take advantage of recreational sport opportunities on campus.

Informants displayed a fear of being injured when there is not the necessary skill to participate: “When I was playing netball, I got injured then I stopped” (discussion group One, August 27, 2004). The data seems to suggest informants' fear of the consequence of participation could be either (a) self-consciousness: looking “stupid”, feeling “inadequate” when participating; (b) A risk of injury, given their perceived lack of the necessary skills, they may be hurt of injury





whilst participating. For some, this also translated into concern that this may subsequently negatively impact on their studies.

Not all agreed. Playing and exercising regularly in planned and organized recreational sport programs also enhances the necessary skills. “Practice makes perfect”. However, the data seems to suggest “scarcity of resources”, “opportunities”, and “lack of willing to act” (participate) were considered as the most constraining factors to acquire skills.

Lack of skills was perceived as a matter of learned from a system that denies equal opportunities such as 'Apartheid'. “I don't like to gym, I have never tried before. I wish, but am not familiar with the apparatus either, there was no equal opportunities for us...” Roberts, (1993) in her article called “Women and Sport” indicated that there have been no attempts in South Africa to restructure the allocation and distribution of resources so that may be shared by all. This shows that allocation and distribution of resources might also play a great role in skill acquisition.

#### 4.3.5 Perceived lack of confidence



Linked to the above barrier, an overall lack of confidence prevented informants from engaging in sport and recreation at UWC. Most informants would not be reluctant to participate in recreational sport programs, if they had confidence: “I can't play with a group of people, wearing short and with out skill...I am shy...” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). The lack of confidence was often felt in relation to appearance such as: Looking different from the 'majority' when participating in sport and recreation, both in terms of physical attributes such as color of skin, body shape the clothing which is worn during the activity. Examples raised in the discussion include informants feeling self-conscious about their body shape. Some UWC “Xhosa” and “Zulu” males will get embarrassed to seeing them wearing shorts and skirts whilst playing soccer. The following statement was made by one of the participant: “You know, before I do this and that, I have to make sure whether others will be happy about that” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004).

Informants felt that some of the activity offered on campus such as “aerobics and soccer” are not at the level they expected. In particular, this was an issue for non-users when they join aerobic class for the first time: “If you join aerobics for the first time, you get confused and they start laughing at you, very embarrassing...” (Focus group Two, September 03, 2004). Informants are reluctant to participate but they are also seeking an environment that catered their lower ability.

The data revealed that lack of communication skills was also a key barrier to participation. Informants were reluctant to take part in recreational sport given their own self-perception they did not have the ability to communicate properly with other language speakers: “We don't have the same language...for most of us English and Africans are not our first language...even if we start, we can't communicate properly during a game situation...” (Focus group Four, September 16, 2004). According to the data with those for whom English or African their first language, some (Xhosa or Zulu) will lack confidence in their ability to communicate with others whilst participating in-group recreational sport activities. Informants who lacked confidence with regard to the above were reluctant to participate.



#### 4.3.6 Lack of awareness of available programs

According to the data, informants cannot even start to consider recreational sport activity if they are not aware that there is an option available to them. Informants were not aware that there were recreational sports on offer that could cater for their specific needs: “I have no idea whether there is a squash court” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004).

Several informants reported, they get information informally through their friends. “Recreational sports activities are not well advertised as Bashes<sup>3</sup> on campus...unless you have friends who knows about...”(Focus group One, August 27, 2004). This was an issue for 1<sup>st</sup> year

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<sup>3</sup>Bashes are occasional intertwinement programmes that are organized by the student bodies such as Student Representative Council (SRC) and Central House Committee (CHC) as a means of students socialization at the uwc.



students in particular: “During the orientation day there is no much details...they don't tell you where to go and who is responsible for what”(Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). For some there was there was an overall lack of confidence in gathering or seeking out information, or were uncomfortable about asking for specific needs such as a female-only environment.

#### 4.3.7 Perceived administrative barriers

The following issue was not specifically explored, yet was a concern to the student informants who perceived it as a constraint to their involvement in recreational sport at UWC.

The data seems to suggest that “UWC Sports Management” would have little or no understanding of their needs. “... They don't expect much from females' sport, more money is always allocated to males' sports such as soccer, rugby and cricket. They invest where they can claim prizes” (Focus group Two September 03, 2004). User informants felt that they are not treated equally with their male counterparts: “...When guys ask for some thing! They do it quick, quick, and quick but when we ask for something it takes a lot of time... “ (Discussion group One, August 03, 2004).

Informants felt being rejected from campus recreation and sport programs. For example, they were excluded from participating in some recreational sport events: “Recreational sport tournament that was held in 2004 in memorial of the late Landile, chairperson of the UWC Sports Council (2003); we were excluded in this tournament, only males participated” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004).

When questioned about the available recreational sport programs at UWC, majority reported that there are relatively some recreational sports programs in campus but there are no females' “solid teams”, “regular trainings” and “more attention is given to males' sport”. On their discussion of recreational sports programs, most of the recreational programs are implemented “rashly”



without any preparations. User informants reported that there are no meetings prior to participation. For example, “If women's day is on Monday, we will be informed before one day to prepare.... we just do it for the sake of doing it, we had no fun” (Focus group One, August 03, 2004).

Informants reported complains about some of the athletes who currently represent UWC in different competitive sports are from outside such as “rugby”, and “cricket”. Informants raised this issue because they felt management is investing money for outsiders. The data implied that informants are reluctant to participate, if they are provided with varieties of opportunities: “There is not even proper training and tournaments for us, they are not properly organized. The management does it for the sake of doing it, not for us. Its just not fun” (Focus group Three, September 16, 2004).

User informants felt they might be expected to have the ability to undertake specific sports: “We are capable of doing any sport like guys, in fact we might do it better but no opportunity...” (Focus group Three, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004). This is consistent with Duncan cited in The President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports Sport (1997: 39); who claims that females' activities may be different (such as jumping, rope, swinging on the bar, performing complicated dance routines); they still require agility, co-ordination, strength and intentional focus. Furthermore, females also possess the physical capabilities to perform well in all kinds of movement activities. What they may lack is the social support to do so.

#### 4.4 Socio-cultural constraints

Having dealt with the more physical (visible) constraints, which Henderson (1993) calls structural constraints; informants displayed less visible (socio-cultural) constraints, referred to by Henderson as the antecedent constraints, they discussed how they impact on their recreational sports involvement: “.... Males feels intimidated with a successful female.... even if you earn better. They



put you onto another level. You are not a female any more; culturally you are not supposed to act better than males anyway. This is how they view you in our culture and society, so you have to keep the balance”. (Discussion group Two, September 2004).

A key barrier in behavioral change might be the socio-cultural beliefs of some of the informants at UWC. Those beliefs are seen to exclude to majority of the informants the possibility of participation in recreational sports at any level.

The data seems to suggest that this issue tends to be more of an issue for most of the informants due to socio-cultural expectations and beliefs. “In my culture, it is not acceptable to expose the female body by wearing shorts and skirt...” (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004). This was also more related for some informants who follow the Muslim faith and some Christian (with children): “My religion doesn't allow me to expose my body...if I do so, it is Haram<sup>3</sup>...”(Focus group Five, September 24, 2005). It was felt that their religion stipulates that females are not to undertake sport (seen as appropriate for males only) as well as to what the activity may entail such as appropriate clothing. For some, there was an expectation that running of the household and caring for the family should take precedence over, and possibly exclude extra-curricular activities including recreation and sport. “Our society views sport as males' arena. There is also a belief that girls who participate in sport can lose their virginity. Therefore, in my culture I have to help my mother in the house...” (Discussion group Two, September 3, 2004). Majority of the discussion groups reported that recreational sports such as “soccer”, “rugby”, “karate” and “boxing” are perceived by their own society as “males' sport”. Within this, there was a belief that participation in sport was not an appropriate activity, given other priorities such as family commitments.

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<sup>3</sup>Haram is an Arabic word that refers to unacceptable behaviour.



Informants reported that they have been thought by their parents to be obedient, quite and respect others, way back from childhood. Majority of the informants reported that they should adhere to their cultural norm and societal expectations: “If somebody beats you, you don't have to fight back, you have to cry for help” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004). According to the data females are restricted to a certain time they have got to be in and a lot of other things such as “appropriate behavior”. Several informants felt that there is much more freedom for males than females in the family: “...When it comes to culture whether you like it or not you have to accept everything as it is, if not you are not part of your family. No way out!” (Focus group Three, September 07, 2004).

The data seems to suggest majority of the informants were not encouraged by their parents to take part in sporting activities. “...Even if I wanted, it is unusual as a female to play males' sport such as soccer in my community” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). The data shows that informants are not encouraged by their communities to take part in sporting activities. This is in agreement with Duncan's (1997); she claims that, sports that require more vigorous movements and greater use of space are often socially coded as masculine. This is also consistent with Henderson et al. (1989) who assert that, unlike males, females are more constrained when we examine the impact of combined effects of the *multi dimensional cumulative antecedent constraints coupled with the (physical) intervening constraints*, such as the *Ethic of Care*.

Not all informants agreed. User informants hold different opinion; their community and parents support them to participate in 'traditional female sport' such as “netball” but “not in soccer” or “rugby”. The data seems to suggest that user and non-user informants participation is influenced by the attitudes of their own parents. Kelly (1981) claims that the family is still the predominant focus for females, in spite of the changes and transitions they may experience. Henderson et al.



(1989) support this view that the family as it exists has been the central life interest for many females.

#### 4.4.1 Socialization/parental influence

Informants' parental participation in sport and recreation was not specifically explored, yet was of concern to some of the student informants who perceived it as a barrier to their involvement in recreational sport on campus.

McPherson, Curtis & Loy (1989) claim, most studies in socialization into primary and secondary sport roles indicate that the family is the earliest and most persistent-socializing agency, especially for females. The data seems to suggest that parental involvement and non-involvement in sport and recreation activities were predictors of informants' participation in recreational sport or not. The following statement was made by one of the user informants: "My Dad was playing cricket. My mother likes to watch sport not to play. My parents always support and encourage me to play my netball" (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). Only six informants discussed about fathers' sport participation that did not exist for mothers. Several informants reported that their parents (mothers and fathers) never participated in any kind of sport: "I have never ever seen or heard my mother playing or talking about sport participation" (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). The data seems to suggest that mothers' lack of athletic visibility could be a contributing factor in constructing the gender stereotype notion that females are inherently less athletic (weak) than their male counterparts. This is in agreement with Kelly (1996) who sees 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as stereotypical attributes associated with society's conception of gender. For example, sport is one of the institutional settings in which this is sustained.

Several informants reported that their parents (mothers and fathers) never participated in any kind of sport. "None of my parents play sports; they always support me to work hard on my studies,



not in sporting activities so that I can get a nice job...” (Focus group Three, September 07, 2004).

According to the data the parental influence on behavior also increases as informants progress through to University. The data seems to suggest that parents do not always recognize the value or worth of their children participating in recreational sport activities, their emphasis is on academic achievement and the pursuit of a 'good' job instead of involvement in recreational sport activities.

In discussion of their parents' sport and recreation participation histories, informants displayed knowledge about constraints faced specifically by their mother's to sport and recreation participation. Constraints to mothers' lack of participation were related to having to fulfill other demands typically related to 'women's work' such as “housework” and “childcare”. However, instead of informants recognizing these constraints as barriers to mothers' participation, informants talked of mothers as less athletic than fathers. “I wouldn't imagine my mother could play sport like my father does...” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004).

While informants identified gender role constraints in the ways they talked about their mothers' sport participation, their interpretations were interestingly gleaned through the same gendered lens that limited their mothers' access to sport and recreation in the first place. “Next to my mother I am responsible to the family...”(Focus group Four, September 16, 2004). According to social learning theory, the sex of significant others is important to modeling behaviors (Bandura, 1977). This is also supported by McPherson, et al. (1989), he claims, most studies in socialization into primary and secondary sport roles indicate that family is the earliest and most persistence-socializing agency, especially for females. However, when the data is examined in-depth majority of the informants tend to learn more of their mothers than their fathers. This finding is also consistent with Basow (1992) view that female socialization steers girls into a maternal role. This is also supported by Kelly (1996) who claims that images of appropriate activities are inculcated





through early child-rearing practices and different movement experiences...such as fashion home; and motherhood are the key themes of an idealized 'femininity'.

#### 4.4.2 Attitudes and expectations 'significant others'

Negative attitudes and expectations of 'significant others' such as parents, friends, teachers and coaches have prevented informants from participation in recreational sport on campus. The data seems to suggest that these people have an important role to play in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of those close to them (informants). This generally occurred when the significant others themselves did not consider sport and recreation to be appropriate behavior either due to cultural or traditional considerations or a perceived lack of value in participating in sport and recreation. The attitudes, therefore, often filtered down to those informants around them.

Informants uncover their frustrations and fears experienced on campus in their endeavors to engage more meaningfully in recreational sport. “Management seems to have the conception that sports like soccer and rugby are only for the guys. They do not see each and every sport on campus should be accessible to each and everyone. Even though we are playing 'male sports' we do not receive equal treatment to the guys” (Focus group One, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004). This epitomizes the way sex stereotyping of certain sports translates into gender inequality: “I think we are taken as weak (for sport) but okay for washing dishes”

Informants reported that some males at UWC have negative attitudes towards some females: “If you play soccer on campus, guys will see you as lesbian...”(Focus group One, August 27, 2004). The data seems to suggest that some males tend to 'trivialize', 'marginalize' and 'homosexualize' female athletes rather than appreciating their strength, skill, and dedication. This is consistent with the findings of McPherson et al. (1989). He claims that there are discriminatory processes within sport; the explanation suggests that there is social stereotyping by males to



females; they judge some personal characteristics of females to be more important for success than others.

The data seems to suggest, negative attitudes of other people towards females recreational sports tended to manifest in informants' in two ways due to either: (1) an underlying sense of disapproval, for example, "Guys think sporting activity is inappropriate for females". (2) There seems a refusal to let female informants even consider sport as possibility by giving seemingly important advices such as "You have a beautiful face and legs, don't ever think to play soccer, you will be full of scratches and bruises...sport is not for you". This is also consistent with McPherson, et al. (1989) who claim that female participation in sport at any level is perceived that it can masculinize a female; particularly her facial and upper-body appearance and these beliefs are perpetuated in the sex role socialization.

Importantly, also, some informants had taken part in sport on campus in the past and very reason they had stopped participating had been because of some forms of harassment. The following statement have been made: "We do not feel free in our gym ... the space is small ... the guys checkout our legs and it is discouraging" (Focus group One, August 27,2004)

The data seems to suggest that informants are, understandably, reluctant to participate in sporting activities again. A fear of the potential for sexual harassment in a number of levels: (1) Sexual abuse, this could be either physical or verbal. Informants feared that they would be targeted because of their sex (being females). "Some of the guys when they steer at you? Very scary!" (2) An underlying senses that informants are not welcome to participate.

#### 4.4.3 Perceived body image

The data seems to suggest that an informants' thinking about their body is developed over a lifetime. Such attitudes are formed (and re-formed) as a result of the influences of a range of



factors, including: cultural traditions, and attitudes of friends and relations. “Ya I feel so bad about my body shape, my boyfriend always tells me I am not attractive with short and vest” (Focus group Four, September 16, 2004).

According to the data informants use their physical appearance: weight and body shape as a measure of self worth and physical attractiveness, they seem to place a far greater emphasis and importance on their physical appearance. “I was one of the best players in netball when I was 1<sup>st</sup> year, I was also the second shortest in the team. I know I can still play but my friends told me that I am over-weight and I am not attractive anymore...I stopped since then” (Focus group Two, September 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2004). (Kerr & Charles, Orbach, Wimbush cited by Deem, 1986) point out that females are over-concerned with their weight and may not want to expose their weight because they are felt to be ugly and not sexually attractive. There is also a very real fear even from females who have a more positive body image, that they will experience sexual harassment as their sport-runners and joggers are especially likely to suffer from this. Furthermore, The data seems to suggest that other peoples' negative attributes have negatively impacted on their involvement and impacts further that on informants' psychological well-being. Raymore and Godbey (1994) found that individuals with low self-esteem are vulnerable to unfavorable opinion (in this case not to participate in recreational sport activities), and often will appear to remain passive rather than expose themselves to situations where they may be vulnerable to interpersonal threats such as people laughing at or criticizing them.

The data suggests cultural traditions are difficult to resist, especially as they are reflected in informants' everyday relationships. They reinforce and perpetuate stereotypes with which they compare the reality of their own body. Similarities between the 'ideal' and their own bodies are commended and differences are considered unattractive. This is consistent with Jones (2004) who claims females' socio -cultural expectations such as social role, status, and treatment in the society



shapes their behavior. For example: “Muscular females are not attractive and it is not the ideal body for females. If you are muscular, others will think you are lesbian” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). Stereotypes influence the types of recreational sports in which informants are likely to participate. Not only are sports labeled masculine or feminine, those females who participate in recreational sports are also subject to being labeled and stereotyped as either masculine (lesbian). Informants also reported that they feel “shy” to participate in recreational sports on campus. This is also in agreement with Rosenberg (1989) who asserts that individuals with low self-esteem have a tendency of describe themselves as shy and react to situations with tension.

A further finding is that attitudes about gender-appropriate sports, masculinity, and femininity are influenced by perceptions in the same way as body image; for example, participation in certain recreational sports such as soccer is often represented on campus as unfeminine this might show denial of equal opportunities to participation. This is supported by “(Lumpkin cited in Everhart & Pemberton, 2001) he claims that women and girls have not been provided equal opportunities in sport and recreation because of (a) perceptions relative to physiological differences between the sexes, (b) societal norms and attitudes, and (c) organizational rules and support.

The data reveals attitudes of people with whom informants have a close relationship are influential in two ways. First, in reinforcing a stereotype by positive comments/conversations regarding the ideal body type. Secondly, through comments of 'perceived' differences from the ideal, especially if these comments concern themselves, comments such as “You should lose a bit of weight” and/ or “She looks so good now that she has lost those extra pounds” can engender a negative body image. A negative body image can lead to a loss of self-confidence, eating disorders or social/behavioral problems. This is consistent with (Wiese-Bjornstal cited in The president’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, 1997) that suggests female athletes may be at high-risk group for developing either disordered eating patterns or actual eating disorder such as anorexia and



bulimia (in this case UWC recreational sports in which low body fat is encouraged such as running and swimming).

According to some informants recreational sports might be a liberating experience; a chance for some females to be in control of their own bodies. “I enjoy my netball because it keeps me in shape” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004). However, when informants start to develop attributes that are perceived to be masculine, for example “muscle bulk” and “competitiveness”, they are often subject to a type of harassment that comes of stepping outside the conventional range of idealized female bodies. For example, some UWC males have been asked some user informants whether they have a “girlfriends”. This is in agreement with the findings of (Graydon & Talbot in Deem, 1986), they have both noted, women who participate in sport are supposed to be 'feminine' if they are not then they are exposed to insult and derision.

#### 4.4.4 Perceived ethic of care



The basis for family commitment rises from socio-cultural expectations: “Back home after school I have to cook, clean the house, do the washing and look after my family, I am used to that... I mean even at UWC I cook for my boyfriend and friends...I am used” (Focus group Three, September 07, 2004). Informants with children reported that they have more responsibility than those without. For example, they have little or no time for themselves because of maternal responsibilities. “I can't live my child alone and play, I wish I can take him to the class” (Focus group Five, September 24, 2004). This is consistent with Henderson, et al.'s (1989) who claim, many females consider their roles as mothers to be their most important contribution to society.

Study evidence seems to suggest that informants do not make free choices; even if so they consider whether the choices they have made please other people. “Whenever I made a choice I need to consider others such as my family and friends for their approval, if not, I will be in a

problem...” (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004). Shannon (1997) supports this; she claims the ethic of care is an antecedent constraint in that it results from socialization and pertains to a psychological state females possess. It is an antecedent constraint when responsibilities and commitments to others interfere directly in decisions to participate in recreational sport on any given day. The ethic of care is embedded within the family structure and exists through family commitments which females endorse.

#### 4.4.5 Perceived fear for health and personal safety

Safety is a concern to all the discussion groups. While few of them believed UWC as safe compared to other areas in Cape Town, most of them do not agree. “... I can't go to the gym during the evenings because I can get raped.” (Focus group Two, September 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2004). Fear for personal safety is always an issue for females and seriously influences the choices about. Henderson (1993:36-37) points out that issues around safety, violence and harassment have a negative impact on females' participation in sport and recreation in ways not experienced by males. The following comments were made:



“When you gym at the same gym with guys, even at UWC, they start looking at you and when you are finished, they follow you especially in the evenings, I do not feel secure” (Focus group One, August 27, 2004).

“Yes, if men see you (outside) in the evening, even at UWC, you are not stronger than they are, they can take advantage. You start thinking bad things will happen (Focus group One, August 27, 2004).

Study evidence suggests that there are still some cases of rape that happened to female students at UWC. The following statement was made by one of the informants: “I wish but I can't. In Basel February Residence one female student was nearly raped while she was showering this

year?” (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004). Several informants have also reported that they can't join to some of the recreational sport activity programs because of the time schedule. For example, “Judo, Karate and some times Aerobics took place during the evenings (19h00-20h00 pm) and/ or early mornings (5h00-6h30 am) when it is dark” (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004).

The data seems to suggest that the number fear of crime, violence, financial problems and lack of mobility (inadequate transportation) have also amplified the concern for personal safety. Majority of the informants seem to accept these fears as their daily life and do not want to question the freedom of participation that is being lost. “It's more of females' problem, it seems no one mind about it...”(Focus group One, August 27, 2004).

While informants acknowledged their fears, they also talked about how important these recreational sport activities were to them. “ You see I would like to think that I take enough precautions and participate but I will still have fear and panic while engaging in these activities. You tell me how am I going to enjoy?” (Focus group Three, September 07, 2004). Many of them voiced that they can't participate although they recognized the benefits they felt the risks outweighed them. “Yo! We have only one small gym, obviously you have to exercise with males, soon as you started, they start checking-out your legs and body, the way they stare at you? Very much scary and also follow you especially during the evenings... I had to stop going” (Focus group Two, September 03rd, 2004). This is consistent with Henderson (1993), who claims that the fear of sexual assault from going out at night or participating recreation activities by oneself is omnipresent on many women's minds. She adds that the psychological safety that women seek in not being harassed in public places also presents a problem in many women. Shaw (1994) supports this view that the fear of sexual assault from going out in the evening or participating in recreational sport by one self is omnipresent on the female mind.



According to the data, the importance of having someone nearby anchored informants' personal health and safety when participating in recreational sport was loudly pronounced. However, some have also identified, they wish to enjoy the solitude, the independence, and the freedom from their recreational sport experiences. Some enjoyed going with other friends, but again, the large majority chose to go with female friends rather than their boy friends. The data seems to suggest that several informants reject the potential for physical risk and accept the need to have group of female companion if not a male partner. This is consistent with in other research (Shaw, 1994; Henderson, 1993).

The second theme to emerge from the study was informants' perceptions about the societal messages that are sent about females' involvement in outdoor activities, particularly if done alone. Informants remarked strongly on the injustice of the gender-based messages that seemed to favor the outdoors recreational sports as a males' place to be and that females do not have the same right to be in that environment. From the discussion, society sends messages that females bring the violence on themselves by being outdoors, especially if alone. For example, one informant reported: "Nobody seems to mind so much if a male goes hiking but if a female does, a lot of noises..."(Focus group Three, September 03, 2004). Another informant said, "Am sorry! I think society acts like if you put yourself in that position, then it's your problem"(Focus group One, August 27, 2004). Most informants felt that they have as much right to go out as a male does but they don't think society defends that.

Informants' perceptions about the negative messages often centered on the idea that females were not capable of being in recreational sporting activities, particularly without a partner. These messages suggest that females are vulnerable so need to be "careful" if they choose to be outside and that the message may even suggest that outdoor females are "lesbian" since they are with other females in recreational sport settings. For example: "I think part of it is the whole stereotype of our





society that men are different and we aren't capable of doing stuff and we are not considered as individuals but possession..." (Focus group Two, September 03, 2004). Informants reported, society delivered message when they were young girls that they should not be doing things by their own, they should probably have a man with them and that will make them safe.

Not all agreed. Although some informants voiced a need to do the activities on their own but they are also not sure. For example, user informants voiced: "Anyone can participate as far as precautions are in place. I don't go exercise after 5:00 pm" (Focus group Two, September 3, 2004).

"For my health and well-being, it is important that I recreate and do my activities that I enjoy but I will make sure I have some one with me or I do my activities during the day" (Focus group Three, September 3, 2004).

The data seems to suggest that although they felt they could do things on their own, in the same sentence, they spoke of the extra effort they made to keep themselves from being assaulted or put in a dangerous situation. In each case, they made some compensation or adjustment to minimize the situation. This is in agreement with Bialescki & Hiks (1998); White & Shaw (1994), who claim, many of the females negotiate strategies to cope with their fear of violence. These strategies however, do little to reduce the high anxiety levels often experienced by the females.

#### 4.4.6 Recommendations

Recreational sport should give opportunities, which ensure that all females feel they are valued and truly welcome, able to participate in any recreation activity they choose. Informants reported more opportunities and variety of activities that contribute to their fitness and wellness: "...no varieties of recreational sports like rowing, bowling, tug-of-war". Free of charge access to facilities, equipment and programs were a concern of all participants: "We have to access to all facilities and programs free of charge". This is consistent with NIRF (2004); the concept of

inclusive recreation is based on providing necessary individual adaptations, accommodations, and supports so every person can benefit equally from a typical recreation experience in the community.

When funding is available programs and services that provide a variety of options to meet different needs might be possible. Informants recommended: “Equal allocation of funds for both females' and males' sport and recreational sports on campus”. This is in agreement with Draft Women and Girls Sport and Recreation (1997), provision of resources and opportunities for development and growth for both males and females should be equitable.

Facilities and spaces that are accessible and easy to use by everyone are for most, and motivate participation. Informants recommended that: “existing facilities in campus are old, they should be maintained and renovated such as gym size, changing rooms and tennis ground courts”.

Access to information may include any process for example, available recreational programs and/ or project which will educate females and males about the way in which gender inequalities are constructed and promoted in recreational sport: “recreational sport programs should be well publicize as well as there should be workshops particularly on issues of gender and some negative attitudes of some males towards female sport on campus”. (Thorne cited by The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sport (1997: 46) suggests recreational sport professionals and adults must actively intervene in the face of discrimination. They should confront issues of sexism and prejudice.

Access to participation involves the provision of opportunities to acquiring skills to participate in all levels of sport and recreation: “Good and qualified coaches should be organized to help us improve our skills”. They have also reported there is not emphasis on training of females as coaches: “We need to be trained as coaches and leaders”. The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sport (1997) claims professionals should give males and females equal access and



attention, they should be trained and play important positions. In addition both should receive feedback to help improve their skills

Safety of settings and quality programs can bring females with different abilities together and promote and encourage understanding, respect, and friendships. Informants recommended: “There should be a tight security on campus, some males seemingly violent from outside have access to come in and out”

Constrictive feedback helps in modifying program that does not meet the need of participants. Informants recommended: “There should be a transparency and fair communications, we need a suggestion box where we can express our comments and feelings...”

#### 4.4.7 Summary of results and discussions

*Interpretations:* From the present study, one of the characteristics of sport at UWC, it is very top level orientated. The term sport is related to performance and competition that idealize, promote and reward most males and very few females. From the study, if sport is to prosper and become more inclusive on campus to females’ development, there is a need to know a great deal more about such things as “fun”, how to maximize skill development and ways to make sport more intrinsically rewarding for female participants engaged at all levels. Not only campus sport is biased to males, but also the socio-cultural value (less visible constraints) in which females are grounded is the most constraining to involvement, for example, stereotypes towards females who participate in recreational sports. Not only in terms of participation in sport but also several informants reported that they have never been spectators to any kind of sport. This is also in agreement with (Dietz-Uhler et al. cited by McGinnis, L., Seungwoo, C. and Julia M., 2003) who reported that among a sample of college students, an equal number of males and females who consider themselves to be sports fans, but males identify more strongly with being sports fans than do females.

On the other hand, recreational sports were discussed in the light of recreation. They were viewed non-serious sporting activities that cater more females than sports do. However, the need of inclusive recreational sports opportunities were the concern of all informants. According to the data recreational sports are those that are equally (for males and females) available on campus for those who wishes to participate. Evidence of the study suggests almost all informants are reluctant to take part in recreational sports programs, as a means of interaction and development (physical and mental). The current study has epitomized Jones (1998) view.

*Reasons for not participating:* Several informants focused up on the fact that recreational sport had never been a part of their own culture to exercise, despite agreeing recreational sport and physical exercise were important. For some, physical exercise does not seem to be important for social distinctions and affecting their status and prestige because they perceived it as “unfeminine”. Informants reported that the older generations (particularly mothers and female relatives) are not interested in exercise and sport because of family commitments. The motives of relatively few informants, who engage in campus recreational sports seem to be ‘functional’ and it is either for relaxation or fun.

The current study indicate that physical (structural) constraints such as lack of time, lack of money, lack of facilities, lack of skills, lack of awareness of available programs, administrative barriers as well as socio-cultural (antecedent) constraints such as socialization, stereotypes, negative attitudes of 'significant others', perceived body image, ethic of care, lack of sense of entitlement and personal safety curtailed UWC female undergraduate students' involvement in recreational sport programs on campus. Lack of money, skills and administrative barriers followed by less visible constraints, and negative attitudes of “significant others” were the most constraining variables.



*Physical constraints:* The current study has explored physical barriers as intervening. Henderson (1993) claims, the visibility of the physical constraints makes possible to address them more effectively and readily through some intervention strategy. For example, it may be possible to build more facilities, provide transportation, free entrance to access resources, skill development workshops for skill acquisition and allocating equal or more funds at UWC. But, this might not be enough unless the combined effect of physical and socio-cultural (visible and less visible) constraints are explored and dealt with.

Many researchers agree that there is not enough understanding of the way that recreation constraints which females experience are constructed (Jones, 2004; Henderson, 1993). The current study supports the notion of ‘context’ in which constraints occur. Not all physical constraints are intervening. For example, lack of time appears as physical and socio-cultural constraint. Lack of time as physical constraint might be intervened by providing knowledge of “Time Management”. Secondly, lack of time appears as a socio-cultural constraint, because of ‘social roles’ such as family commitment and childcare. In this case, it would mean that time is not always structural (physical) but also antecedent (socio-cultural) constraint. Therefore, the study revealed that lack of time should be seen as ‘some times intervening’. Furthermore, physical constraints are dependent of each other. For example, lack of money might result in lack of transportation and/or fees to access gym facility; this in turn can impact on the level of skill one would have. However, physical constraints are more related to procedural difficulties posing participation obstacles to female students on campus such as allocation of fund and program limitations. The lacks of knowledge about the positive effect of physical activity and available recreational sport programs are also connected to the lack of motivation and are barriers to involvement. It is not only barriers, which are the obstacles for females who want to be involved in campus recreational sports; it is also the lack of encouragement, of positive restrictions and attractive role models on campus.



*Antecedent constraints:* The notion of antecedent constraints is an extremely useful one. Especially for anyone who has assumed that addressing the physical constraints will automatically lead to an increased involvement of females in recreational sport. From the current study, antecedent constraints refer to those constraints, which come first before females consider participation, *a Priory* context (they influence the desire to participate, even before a physical constraint becomes an issue). For example, ‘child care’ and ‘appropriate clothing’. For example: “I have no problem but I am not supposed to wear short and skirt”. This shows that antecedent constraints are independent of physical constraints and will continue to exist even if physical constraints are addressed. In the current study, socialization, negative attitudes of others towards females’ recreational sports are constraints that curtail informants’ involvement in campus recreational sport. The traditional opinion that “females should stay home” was particularly strong with some informants. An issue of body image or the female ideal was another barrier to involvement. Several informants reported that the pressure to stop sporting “unfeminine” activities grew the older they got. They felt they would not get a partner if they start and/ or continue participation because they will be viewed as “lesbians”. Traditional attitudes about the role and behavior of females are transported and put into practices in socialization and are constantly produced and reproduced in everyday life. In this process, the families or the parents are of great importance because they are the role models of own daughters.

The present study supports the three approaches reviewed by Shaw (1994: 8-18). Literature indicates that various constraints in females' lives limit their access to recreation participation and limit their expressed preferences for certain recreation activities as well as participation (Shaw, 1994:12). Other researches also indicate that recreation itself and recreation participation can have constraining effect on females' lives by re-enforcing traditional gender relations and ideology about femininity (less visible). While the relationship between constraints is complex, these two types of



constraints were broadly conceptualized as consisting of constraints to recreation (restricting participation) and constraints 'through' recreation (re-enforcing socially-based restrictions on females' lives). These create '*invisibility of perceptions; about constraints*' (Jones, 2004) because they shape the choices, preferences and patterns of females recreational sport experiences.

Henderson (1993) claims: "*part of the inability to understand constraints on women's recreation may be due to an inadequate and narrow definition of constraints that has focused primarily on intervening and structural aspects of constraints, the constraints that are evident and visible in women's life*" such as providing sports facilities. This was also further explored by Jones (2004), she claims that the dilemma that some sports administrators in South Africa experience when they incorrectly assume that the presence of sports facilities will mean the presence of females in sport and recreation. This shows that more effort needed to explore on the combined effect i.e., the multi-dimensional antecedent constraints coupled with the physical intervening constraints.



## 5 *CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

### 5.2 Conclusion

Qualitative researchers have greatly extended the identification of the range of constraints that affect people's recreation, and, indeed, their lives as a whole (particularly, researchers, usually working within a feminist framework such as Shaw, 1994; Henderson, 1991; & Deem, 1986). Thus, much of the work on constraints from a qualitative perspective was initially aimed at uncovering constraints related to females' recreation. This study also has followed this strand to explore the perception of constraints to recreational sport participation as perceived by female students at universities.

In the current study, many of the discussion focused on constraints to participation. The low rate of involvement lays in the lack of appropriate recreational sport facilities, lack of skills, awareness of programs, and in the high prices (fees) for many of recreational sporting activities offered on campus. From the current study, informants are struggling to study and they have no money. Besides, the administrative barriers are also additional procedural barriers to females' involvement on campus recreational sport activities. It is believed that these physical barriers can also curtail male students' involvement in similar ways on campus. But, the 'hidden' barriers for females make it more difficult. In principle, some sport facilities such as soccer fields are open and free of charge for both male and female students on campus, but who is using more often, males or females? The gender role and gender order, which manifest the less visible antecedent constraints such as the ethic of care, lack of sense of entitlement and fear for health, seem to be a great importance. Because, they prevent most females from doing sport based on cultural norms and values. They also present ideals of what to be a female, which are attractive for females because they promise social acceptance. From the current study, it is expected that females be the





housekeepers and care takers. When this is done in addition to studies (High School), it is logically that there is neither much time nor energy left for recreational sport. Additionally, the father is the head of the family he does not want his daughter (non-user informants) to participate in recreational sport. The reasons for such attitudes may differ, depending on informants' social class and where in South Africa they were raised and/ or lived. One common factor may be that sport and exercise might not fit in to the general picture of 'femaleness' there for should not be encouraged. Further, the barriers that exist for UWC undergraduate female students with relation to recreational sport involvement, seem to be the same as other females out side campus, they are much more difficult to face or to overcome, because the barriers seem stronger. They are closely connected to the situation of women in society and the societal perceptions of femininity and masculinity and of femininity and masculinity behaviors.

The present study epitomized the distinction that Henderson (1993) makes between the more visible structural (physical) and less visible (antecedent) constraints. While female and male can experience similar constraints (more of structural) to recreational sport, when explored the combined effects of the antecedent and structural constraints, it becomes more evident why recreational sport is perceived to be less accessible to female students than their male counterparts at UWC.

As discussed earlier, females' daily lives such as social roles (expectations), status and treatment in society are connected to how they are able to experience recreational sport makes the investigation of females' recreational sport constraints a complex one. Why a complex one? Jones (2004), when she presented the findings of this study to the Institution of Environmental and Recreation Management (IERM), she claims two reasons: First, a problem with exploring how physical constraints combine with the multi-dimensional and cumulative effects of antecedent constraints (i.e., constraints that occur before females consider to participation); and secondly, it is



about the way people 'hide' behind culture, religion and society to mask their own fears and prejudices about creating real opportunities for equal, even if different ways for females to engage in sport and recreation. In other words, the reality is that even if one addresses the physical (structural) constraints, unless one considers the context in which constraints occur, so that socio-cultural constraints are acknowledged and simultaneously dealt with, very little will change and efforts to address gender inequalities in sport and recreation at UWC will be thwarted.

### 5.3 Limitation of the study

The research study had as its broad aim was to explore the perception of constraints of UWC female undergraduate students in relation to recreational sports and participation. The main objective of the study has been met, although the exploration in this area is by no means exhausted. The qualitative methodology, with its emphasis on description rather than measurement of social phenomenon, was appropriate for eliciting informants' perception and experience regarding recreational sports participation at UWC.



The focus group method has inherent limitations, as the dominant group members may have influenced others within the group. It was noted that some informants lacked assertiveness and did not speak out easily possibly due to socio-cultural issues such as traditionally black females were thought to respect others by not making eye contact or speaking to them. This may have resulted in responses that were not entirely spontaneous and were influenced by considerations of social desirability. However, there were debate and argument among the group members indicating that group participants did voice their opinions freely.

The results of the study were influenced by the relative ability of I, as researcher, to elicit information from participants, interpret the data collected, and determine what is important and relevant for the study. My lack of extensive experience in-group facilitation, and an in-depth

knowledge in the area may have impacted on the process of assessing and examining the relevant data.

As a male facilitator among females, it is possible that I may have influenced informants' level of comfort during the discussion sessions. Consequently, participants may have reserved some relevant information they could speak to a female facilitator.

The sample included almost from all the UWC residence students, of which the majority were specifically blacks and coloured. However, undergraduate female students who reside outside UWC residences were not included in the study (there may be other extra experiences), therefore results may not be generalized. Although valuable information is gained, a rapid assessment technique does not obtain much depth. The issue of language differences and barriers between the participants and I, as a researcher, was addressed at the outset of the study but may have influence the ability of the informants to express their views accurately.



#### 5.4 Further research

The first priority of subsequent research should be to provide a more comprehensive, refined approach to gathering data regarding the impact of physical and socio-cultural constraints on recreational sport participation patterns.

Much could be learned from a developmental approach to the study of constraints on recreational sport. Physical and, most importantly, the less visible socio-cultural constraints are more related to societal and cultural norms such as gender role. Do perceptions of constraints on recreational sport participation change over a relative period of time on campus (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year)?

The recognition of the sub-category of physical and socio-cultural constraints on recreational sport open new possibilities for further study of constraints on recreational sport on campus primarily in three directions: (1) factors affecting the perception of each constraints on

recreational sport at UWC; (2) the relationship between constraints on recreational sport and behavior, and (3) the impact of perception of constraints on recreational sport on academic achievement.

Finally, future research in the area of physical and socio-cultural constraints on recreational sport should attempt to measure *real* constraints and determine the extent to which real constraints are related to the perception of constraints. Furthermore, although some physical constraints appear as physical and socio-cultural constraints such as time, they may serve, a different function in the perception of constraints because of their real life nature. Research should attempt to determine where differences in outcomes of the two types of constraints might exist, whether each type of constraints carries with different behavioral outcomes.

### 5.5 Recommendations

As can be seen from the benefit of recreational sport and physical activities (chapter one), students who participate in recreational sports tend to develop positive behavior, awareness of strengths, increased tolerance and self-control, stronger social interaction skills, and a better healthy life style; all-maturity gleaned from recreational sports experiences.

Henderson & Bialeschki (1995) examine historical social constraints on females' recreation activities. Following this description, the effect of contemporary feminism and suggestions for inclusive programming for the 1990s and beyond are included. The author suggests that professionals must consider all the possible programming options that may appeal to females with a myriad of interests and needs. This is further explored by Jones (2004); she claims, unless antecedent constraints are exposed, unpacked and made visible, constraints will continue to be relegated to the realm of perception, neither to be acknowledged nor addressed satisfactorily (it is not enough to deal with only physical constraints).



It is the responsibility of recreational sport professionals and role models to create a vibrant climate, which brings about positive behavioral, academic and social outcomes at UWC. This might include the creation of adequate culturally sensitive recreational sport services for females. According to [CAS], (2003), the recreational sports program should incorporate students learning and must enhance overall educational experiences. Inclusive recreational programs might minimize constraints and increase rate of participations in recreational sport programs. Based on the results of the current study, the following recommendations are provided.

### 5.5.1 Recreational sport programs

The recreational sports programs in campus must explore and identify relevant and potential constraints to female students' participation in recreational sport, learning and development. These outcomes must provide programs and services that encourage positive achievement such as intellectual growth, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, achievement of personal and educational goals such as leadership style.

The overall recreational sports program should include:

- Informal programs to provide self-directed, individualized participation that accommodates the desire of female students to participate in recreational sport for fitness and enjoyment.
- Equitable participation opportunities should be provided for male and female students, and when appropriate, co-recreational activity should be offered. Opportunities to participate at various levels of ability should be made available (e.g., beginner, intermediate, and advanced).
- Sport clubs should provide opportunities for female students to organize around a common interest. Opportunities should be available for a variety of interest focused on a recreational

ports within or outside campus. Instructional programs should provide females with learning opportunities, knowledge, and skills through lessons, clinics, and workshops.

- Special events to introduce new recreational sports, or related activities that are unique in approach or nature from traditional programs.
- Outdoor programs and activities that provide female students with opportunities, to enjoy natural environments and experience new challenges.
- Fitness programs that provide opportunities and voluntary assistance in personal exercise programs. This voluntary program should motivate female students to assess their levels of fitness and maintain a positive fitness lifestyle. Individual assessment should be available for participant feedback.
- Extramural sports that provide structured tournaments, contests and meets among participants from other institutions.



### 5.5.2 **Healthy behavior**

Female students choose behaviors and environments that promote health and reduce risk such as the relationship between health and wellness and accomplishing lifelong goals and exhibits behaviors that advance a healthy community

### 5.5.3 **Interpersonal relationship**

Developing and maintaining satisfying interpersonal relationships with female students such as establishes mutually rewarding relationships such as:

- Listening and considering female students' points of view
- Treating female students with respect

It is also important to appropriately challenge unfair, unjust, or uncivil behaviors of other individuals or groups on campus that undermine females' experience in developing healthy relationships.

#### 5.5.4 **Diversity**

Females need others to understand and appreciate their social role in a society. It is very important to understand the impact of diversity on females' lives, personal belief system and roles of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors:

- Within the context of campus, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, the recreational sports program must nurture environments where commonalities and differences among female students are recognized and honored.
- Recreational programs must promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens on understanding of females' own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. Recreational sport programs can also be used as a means to educate respect about commonalities and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.
- The recreational sports programs must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse student population, in particular female students when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

#### 5.5.5 **Assessment and evaluation**

- The recreational sports program must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. The program must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to

determine whether and to what degree the program participation goals and, learning and development outcomes are being met.

- The process must employ sufficient and sound assessment measure to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from female students and other affected constituencies.
- Evaluation of female students and institutional needs, goals, objectives, and the effectiveness of the recreational sports program should occur on a periodic basis.
- A representative cross-section of appropriate people including female students representatives from residences on campus should be involved in reviews of the recreational sports program on campus.
- The recreational sport program must evaluate periodically how well female students they complement and enhances the effectiveness of the program.
- Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing female students' performance.



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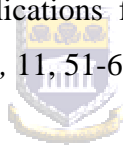
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## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.2 Appendix A: Discussion questions

#### Discussion Question One

Recreation means different things to different people.

(a) What does the term recreational sport mean to you?

(b) Are there any recreational sports programs on campus? If yes, what are these?

c) Do you participate in any of them? Which ones?

(d) What other kinds of recreational sporting activities do you do?

(e) Are there any recreational sports you are not currently doing at UWC and would like to do?

### **Discussion Question Two**

There are Common obstacles to participation in recreational sport, which both males and females experience. But there is a feeling that sports are less accessible to females.

(a) Do you agree? If yes, why? If not, why not?

(b) Do you personally experience obstacles to participating in recreational sports?

(c) If yes, what kind of obstacles? Let us discuss.

### **Discussion Question Three**

We discussed what we understand by recreational sport, and we discussed the types of obstacles you experience to participating in recreational sports at UWC.

What recommendations would you make to those planning recreational sports on campus to encourage more female students to take part?



## **7.3 Appendix B: Cue questions**

### **Cue Questions**


The following relevant cue questions will be used. Depending upon the situation these cue questions can be also presented as a form of vignette to stimulate discussions.

Cue Question to Discussion Question One

(a) How does it differ from recreation?



Cue Questions to Discussion Question Two

- (a) Do you feel shy to participate in recreational sports? If yes, why?
- (b) Do you have enough time to participate in recreational sports of your choice?  
If no, why not?
- (c) Do you experience transportation problem?
- (d) Do you think lack of skill can prevent you from participation?
- (e) What about financial problems such as, fees too high?
- (f) Do you feel that you are entitled to participate? If no, why not?
- (g) What are your social expectations? Do you think they can prevent you from participation? If yes, how?
- (h) Are there any obligations, which prevent you from participation?
- (i) In your culture, are you allowed to take part in any form of physical activities?
- (j) What are you expected to do in your culture? Do you think these can influence to your recreational sports participation? 
- (k) Do you have a feeling of being unsecured? If yes, why?

**Cue Questions to Discussion question Three**

What would you like to recommend in terms of: access, opportunities, facilities, facility design, allocation of funds, planning the programs, and equal treatment.

**7.4 Appendix C: Consent letter**

**DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, RECREATION & EXERCISE SCIENCE**

3 May 2004

I am research student from the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science. I am inviting you to be a part of a study, which will be identifying the perceptions which female student at UWC have of the constraints they experience to participating in recreational sport on campus. If you would

like to be a participant in this project, you will be one of 10 other female student involved in a discussion group in which you will be able to share the obstacles you feel that female student experience to participating in recreation sport on campus. There will even be an opportunity to make recommendations to improve the situation (if you feel that is necessary).

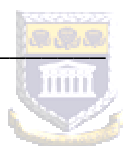
The group discussion will be 2 hours long and participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. The discussion will be audio – tape-recorded, but you may ask the tape to be switched off at time during the discussion. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to link you to the research project.

If you have any questions or complaints about this study, you may contact Prof. Jones on 959 2350.

Statement of agreement to participate in the research study.

I have read or it was read to me and fully understand the contents of the informed consent form. All question regarding this study have been to my satisfaction in the language that I understand. I also understand that my rights are protected and the records will be kept confidential. I freely and voluntarily choose to be part of the research study.

Respondent's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Witness's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The extra copy of consent form is for you.

## 7.5 Appendix D: Vignette

The following vignettes (Scenarios) were used to elicit discussions.

### *Vignette One*

Selamawit, (age 22) is a married female with one son (age three) who is currently 4<sup>th</sup> year full time student in the Faculty of Economics and Management Science at the University of Asmara – Eritrea. She stays in one of the University residence called Embagaliano; unfortunately her husband works in Nakfa, which is which is far from Asmara to support his wife and son. When she was 1<sup>st</sup>



year (before she get married) she used to participate in some of the recreational activities on campus. Currently, her son is her chief source of enjoyment as her relatives and friends live in the same community. Between studies and taking care of her child, she has little time for any thing else.

### *Vignette Two*

Shannon (age 25) is a full time student in the Department of Psychology at the university of Pretoria. She is unmarried and has no children. She is dedicated to her studies. She would like to play basketball regularly, but she is also hesitant to play alone and commit regular time. She has a fear of her own personal safety i.e., in case she gets raped when she plays alone. She currently participates informally, only when her boyfriend or some high school friends accompany her.

### *Vignette Three*

Dabbie (age 24) is a single full time student in the Department of Law at the University of Free State. She also work part time at the shop rite and live on a fixed income. She has no support from her family and she is basically by her own. She would like to join the gym, which is 20 km. away from where she lives. She does not have access to regular transportation as well as cannot afford the entrance fee. She enjoys her music as active as she can be with her friends.



## 7.6 Contact Details

My details:

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