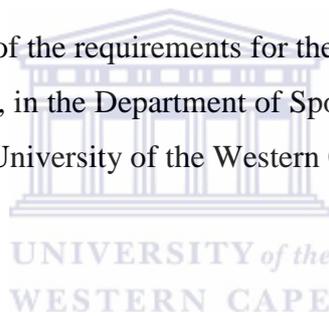


**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOCIAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE
SPORT PARTICIPATION: A CASE OF GYMNASTICS IN THE WESTERN
CAPE**

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2834764

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in Sport,
Recreation and Exercise Science, in the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science,
University of the Western Cape



Supervisor: Ms. S Titus

Co-supervisor: Dr. MEM Young

November 2015

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOCIAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SPORT PARTICIPATION: A CASE OF GYMNASTICS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

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Gymnastics is a sport code that develops basic motor skills, hand-eye coordination and provides participants with an opportunity to socialize and learn new skills. There are various social factors, such as a family's socioeconomic status or accessibility to sports facilities that may play a role in affecting levels of participation. The aim of this study is to investigate the social factors that have an influence on gymnastics participation in the Western Cape. To this end, a qualitative approach is adopted to collect data. This study also adopts the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) as the theoretical framework, and is used to analyse and interpret current social factors that directly or indirectly influence participation in gymnastics. The study's objectives were to ascertain which social factors hinder participation, and which social factors promote participation, thus, coaches, parents and gymnasts participated in focus group discussions. Key informant interviews took place with experts in the field of gymnastics in the Western Cape. A thematic analysis was conducted on transcriptions from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Social factors investigated in this study occurred in the chronosystem, macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem, and had both a direct and indirect influence on the gymnast's continued participation. These systems are defined by Bronfenbrenner (1995), as the environment of the individual, in which they grow and develop. The research findings of this thesis are used to draw conclusions and make specific recommendations for practice and further research. The information gathered in this study can assist all stakeholders within the field of gymnastics, such as parents, judges, coaches, gymnasts, and the supporting community which surround the participating gymnast.

KEY WORDS

Gymnastics, participation, sport, social factors, socioeconomic status, facilities, developing child, influence, ecological systems theory, federation

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that “*An investigation into the social factors that influence sport participation: A case of gymnastics in the Western Cape*” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree in any other university, and that the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Warren Covelé Lucas

November 2015



Signed _____



DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Renée Lucas and my sisters, Melissa Lucas and Raedene Lucas, with whom I have grown up and cannot imagine my life without. Mom, you are an inspiration to me. Your strength to overcome obstacles encourages me to always do my best. Thank you for providing for me, a life of opportunity, support, motivation and love, and thank you for teaching me the importance of honesty and perseverance, for without these principles, I would not have been able to stay true to myself.



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CATHSSETA: Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Seta for Education and Training Authority for the financial support provided to me from 2013-2015, to afford post-graduate studies. This project would not have been possible without this scholarship.

A special thanks to:

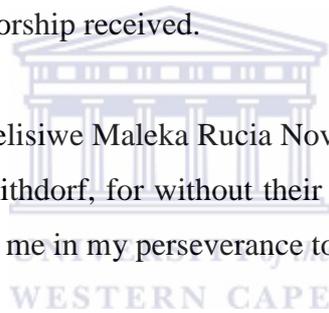
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TABLE OF CONTENT

<i>Title Page</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Declaration</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>v</i>
Table of Content.....	<i>vii</i>
List of Figures.....	<i>xi</i>
List of Tables.....	<i>xii</i>
List of Abbreviations.....	<i>xiii</i>

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.2.1 Governing Gymnastics Structures and Institution.....	5
1.2.2 Local Gymnastics Statistics.....	8
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	12
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	13
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	13
1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	14
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	14
1.8 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	15
1.9 INTERPRETATION OF KEY TERMS.....	17
1.10 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS.....	19
1.11 CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	20

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	22
2.2 OVERVIEW OF GYMNASTICS IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	23
2.3 THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	24
2.4 OVERVIEW OF GYMNASTICS.....	28
2.4.1 The importance of gymnastics.....	29
2.4.2 Gymnastics Disciplines.....	31
2.4.2.1 Artistic Gymnastics (MAG and WAG).....	33

2.4.2.2 Aerobic Gymnastics (AERO).....	33
2.4.2.3 Rhythmic Gymnastics (RHY).....	34
2.4.2.4 Trampoline and Tumbling (TRA and TUM).....	34
2.4.2.5 Acrobatic Gymnastics (ACRO).....	35
2.4.2.6 Rope-Skipping (RS).....	35
2.4.2.7 Gymnastics for All (GfA).....	35
2.5 PARTICIPATION.....	36
2.5.1 The importance of Sport Participation.....	37
2.5.2 The Sport Development Pyramid.....	39
2.5.3 Long-Term Participant Development.....	41
2.6 OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL FACTORS.....	45
2.6.1 Family.....	46
2.6.2 Facilities and Equipment (Apparatus).....	48
2.6.3 Socioeconomic Status.....	48
2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY.....	50
2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	55
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	56
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	57
3.3 RESEARCH SETTING.....	58
3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING.....	60
3.4.1 Sampling Criteria.....	61
3.5 DATA COLLECTION.....	64
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS.....	67
3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	69
3.8 REFLEXIVITY.....	70
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	72
3.10 CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	73
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	74
4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS.....	75
4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	78
4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	80

4.4.1 Chronosystem.....	80
4.4.1.1 Change in participation in gymnastics over a period of time.....	80
4.4.2 Macrosystem.....	84
4.4.2.1 Gymnastics is the basis for all sport codes.....	85
4.4.2.2 Stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about the sport of gymnastics.....	86
4.4.3 Exosystem.....	90
4.4.3.1 National and Provincial Government support to gymnastics federation....	91
4.4.3.2 Transportation system as a barrier to participation.....	95
4.4.4 Mesosystem.....	97
4.4.4.1 Family facilitation and support at gymnasium and gymnastics competitions	98
4.4.5 Microsystem.....	101
4.4.5.1 Importance of gymnastics and the gymnastics club.....	101
4.4.5.2 Facility and Equipment/Apparatus Accessibility and Safety.....	105
4.4.6 Individual (Gymnast).....	112
4.4.6.1 Physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development.....	113
4.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	115

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	117
5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	119
5.2.1 The Chronosystem.....	119
5.2.2 The Macrosystem.....	122
5.2.3 The Exosystem.....	124
5.2.4 The Mesosystem.....	1247
5.2.5 The Microsystem.....	129
5.2.6 The Individual (Gymnast).....	134
5.3 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	137
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	140
5.4.1 Recommendations for practice.....	141
5.4.2 Recommendations for further research.....	143
5.5 RESEARCHER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE QUALITATIVE PROCESS.....	144
5.6 STUDY LIMITATIONS.....	146
5.7 STUDY CONCLUSION.....	146

REFERENCES.....	148
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: Information Sheet.....	166
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form.....	169
APPENDIX C: Assent Form.....	170
APPENDIX D: Focus Group Confidentiality Binding Form.....	171
APPENDIX E: Focus Group Questions Gymnasts.....	172
APPENDIX F: Focus Group Questions Parents.....	173
APPENDIX G: Focus Group Questions Coaches.....	175
APPENDIX H: Key Informant Questions.....	176
APPENDIX I: Table of Findings.....	177



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: The relationship between sport governing bodies at national and international level.....	6
Figure 1.2: An organogram of structures of sport governing bodies in the Western Cape.....	7
Figure 1.3: The rates of participation in gymnastics, per Western Cape district from 2014 to 2015.....	10
Figure 1.4: The rates of participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape, per discipline from 2014 to 2015.....	10
Figure 1.5: Percentage data of gymnastics participation per gymnastics disciplines for the year 2015.....	11
Figure 1.6: Percentage data of gymnastics participation per Western Cape district for the year 2015.....	12
	
Figure 2.1: Shows the increase in the population in the Western Cape and Cape Town from 1996 to 2011.....	25
Figure 2.2: The districts of the Western Cape.....	26
Figure 2.3: Distribution of the population by age and sex, Western Cape 1996, 2001 and 2011	27
Figure 2.4: Ancient Egyptian gymnasts from the tombs of Beni-Hassan	28
Figure 2.5: The gymnastics family	32
Figure 2.6: The sport development pyramid	39
Figure 2.7: Details an approach, using the Ecological Systems Theory.....	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Rates of actual figures of participation per discipline, per district in the Western Cape 2014.....	8
Table 1.2: Rates of actual figures of participation per gymnastics discipline, per district in the Western Cape 2015.....	9
Table 2.1: Three census years displaying the rates of the population in the Western Cape for the years 1996, 2001 and 2011.....	25
Table 2.2: The districts of the Western Cape with area measurements in km ² and the population as of 2011.....	27
Table 3.1: Total participants of the study	63
Table 4.1: Focus Group 01 Parents	76
Table 4.2: Focus Group 02 Coaches	76
Table 4.3: Focus Group 03 Gymnasts	76
Table 4.4: Focus Group 04 Parents	77
Table 4.5: Focus Group 05 Gymnasts	77
Table 4.6: Key Informants of the Western Cape	78

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

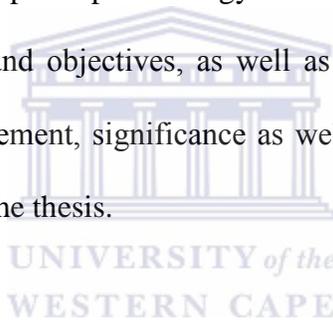
ACRO	Acrobatic Gymnastics
AERO	Aerobic Gymnastics
CoCT	City of Cape Town
DCAS	Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
FIG	Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
GfA	Gymnastics for All
ICESSD	Interdisciplinary Centre of Excellence for Sport Science and Development
IOC	International Olympic Committee
MAG	Mens Artistic Gymnastics
MVPA	Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity
PE	Physical Education
RHY	Rhythmic Gymnastics
RS	Rope-Skipping
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAGF	South African Gymnastics Federation
SASCOC	South African Sports Confederation Olympic Committee
SRSA	Sport and Recreation South Africa
TRA	Trampoline Gymnastics
TUM	Tumbling Gymnastics
UAG	Union Africaine de Gymnastique
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WAG	Womens Artistic Gymnastics
WC	Western Cape
WCGA	Western Cape Gymnastics Association
YMCA	Young Mens Christian Association

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background for the study topic under investigation, and provides insight into the history of gymnastics, rates of participation and factors that may be influencing gymnastics participation on a social domain. Specifically, an overview of the history of gymnastics is presented, both internationally and locally within the background of the study. The current sport structures in the Western Cape Province are displayed on an organogram presenting a hierarchy of sport governing bodies, and the rates of participation in gymnastics within the Western Cape Province, are presented as well. The aims and objectives, as well as the study's research question will be detailed. The study's problem statement, significance as well as a definition of key terms follows with an outline of each chapter of the thesis.



1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The sport of gymnastics is reported to have been practiced by the Ancient Greeks as a tribute to the gods of the arena ("History of modern gymnastics", 2014). Gymnastics, is a form of physical activity, and is an all-inclusive sport code that develops basic motor skills, hand-eye coordination and provides gymnasts an opportunity to socialize and learn new skills (Sands 1999; Dowdell 2011). The Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) is the oldest international sports federation. Established in 1881, the FIG has participated in the modern Olympic Games since its revival in 1896. The revival of the Olympic Games was majorly influenced by Baron Pierre De Coubertin (1863-1937), at the end of the 19th century ("History of modern gymnastics", 2014). At this point, only male gymnasts were allowed to participate in the Olympic Games. Women's

gymnastics was included in the Olympic Games in 1928 at the Amsterdam Olympic Games (“History of modern gymnastics”, 2014).

As time progressed, since the revival of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, the FIG had started to introduce new disciplines as the federation became more structured and better organized, under its aegis resulting in an increase in people who started to participate in the sport. In 1953, the FIG hosted its first inaugural Gymnaestrada festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and ten years later, in 1963, Rhythmic Gymnastics was introduced and a World Championship competition was held in Budapest, Hungary. Thereafter, in 1998, the FIG adopted Trampoline as part of its gymnastics disciplines. The FIG exclaims that the 1976 Olympic Games, which was held in Montreal, Canada, was when the attention of media started to focus on the sport (“History of modern gymnastics”, 2014). At present, the FIG has grown to host and govern seven disciplines of gymnastics namely; Mens’s Artistic Gymnastics, Women’s Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics, Acrobatic Gymnastics, Trampoline Gymnastics and Gymnastics for All. Each of these gymnastics disciplines requires the participant to perform exercises, skills and routines at competitions, with high levels of strength, balance and control (“Gymnastics”, 2014).

We are told that participation in sport provides young children and adolescents with an opportunity to develop on a physical, mental and social domain, thus resulting in the experience of many health benefits (Department of Health, 2010). Gymnastics is an excellent vehicle for the teaching basic motor skills and promoting health-related fitness in children of all ages (Coelho, 2010; Donham-Foutch, 2007). Adopting and leading a physically active lifestyle can assist in the prevention of heart diseases, obesity, cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes type 2, and depression (Jansen & LeBlanc, 2010). These well-known advantages are experienced by people who participate in sport and

physical activity, and it would appear that a lack of physical activity, may result in being at higher risk for coronary heart disease and other chronic conditions known as diabetes. Habitual physical activity contributes to an all-round quality of life, psychological health and increases the ability to participate in activities at work, and during leisure time (Mota, 1999). Additionally, participation in physical activities and sports among young people promotes social well-being, physical and mental health, academic achievement and skills such as team work, self-discipline and socialization (Moore & Werch, 2005). Gymnastics is one such activity, however, participation, in gymnastics, requires sufficient disposable income in order to afford the costs of membership fees, apparel and kit, equipment necessary for participation, and transport to and from training and competition venues.

One of the major benefits of gymnastics activity is that the gymnast's body experiences a wide variety of shapes, movement patterns, spatial changes and loadings (muscular and non-muscular) – all providing engaging and beneficial kinesthetic stimuli. Participating in gymnastics provides a unique movement experience not duplicated in any other human activity (Dowdell, 2011). The gymnastics learning environment includes the gymnasium, the apparatus and the equipment used during training. Gymnastics is unique in human movement in that it demands complex gravity defying body movements that require specific joint actions to be carefully aligned with the gymnast's space, direction, time and rhythm. According to Dowdell (2011), fundamental motor patterns, experienced by children participating in gymnastics are: static shapes and static-dynamic balance, jumping and landing, rolling, turning and twisting, hopping, skipping and galloping, crawling and climbing, and stepping and leaping.

A link between physical activity among adolescents and the family's socioeconomic status exists, due to the costs required for active participation to take place, thus, conflicting social factors is

commonly believed to exist (Kantomaa, Tammelin, Näyhä & Taanila, 2007). Those that intensively participate in physical activity, and sport, are thought of to come from high-income families with high parent education and a decreased likelihood of becoming inactive. Lower income families may limit their children's participation in sports that have high costs due to a lack of government subsidies. Various social factors such as a family's socio-economic status may be an important factor contributing towards a perceived lack in participation; a parent's social standing enables them to send their children to gymnastics as well as other sport codes. Parental influence plays a role in participation in sport as well, and may vary with socioeconomic statuses of different families. Parents from different socioeconomic status backgrounds may have quite different attitudes towards their children's physical activities and towards sport (Yang, Telama & Laasko, 1996). Evaluations of the association between socioeconomic status of the childhood family and physical activity have been reported to have an association between low socioeconomic status and adult inactivity, formally known as a sedentary lifestyle (Tammelin, Näyhä, Laitinen, Rintamäki & Järvelin, 2003).



Gymnastics is easy to understand, and anyone may participate. Gymnastics has generated interest in the international communities of physical education, sport science, physiotherapy, medical science, medicine, and health, for further studies, due to the benefits experienced through participation in the sport. The benefits offered by gymnastics include the opportunity to largely develop gross motor skills, and encourages exercise which aids in combatting obesity and reducing the risk of coronary heart disease and the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle. The principles of gymnastics that were founded in 1881 are just as valid today, as they form the basis of skills development in the sport.

There are currently no studies known to the researcher in the area of gymnastics and social factors within the Western Cape. Therefore, this study will focus on the social factors that have an influence on participation in the sport code of gymnastics, across different social settings from the perspectives of the gymnast, the coach, and the parent from gymnastics clubs located in different socio-demographic areas. Due to a scarcity of literature in this area of research, in South Africa, this study aims to make a modest contribution to the body of knowledge in the subject field.

1.2.1 Governing Gymnastics Structures and Institutions

Gymnastics in the Western Cape is ultimately structured under an organization known as the Western Cape Gymnastics Association (WCGA). In South Africa, each of the nine provinces has a governing provincial structure which manages and regulates competition, and participation. All of the provincial structures are affiliated to the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF), which is the national sport federation for gymnastics in South Africa. On an international level, each national sport federation is structured under their sport code's international sport federation. Gymnastics internationally is structured under The International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) which is a non-profit organization, and is the governing body for gymnastics worldwide. All international sport federations are affiliated with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is an international, not for profit and non-governmental organization, who organizes the Olympic Games held in Summer and Winter every four years. The IOC is at the centre of the world of sport, with international sport federations and Olympic Committees driving sport, competition and participation in all countries. Figure 1.1 (pg.6) shows a basic three tier organizational structure of sport in the world.

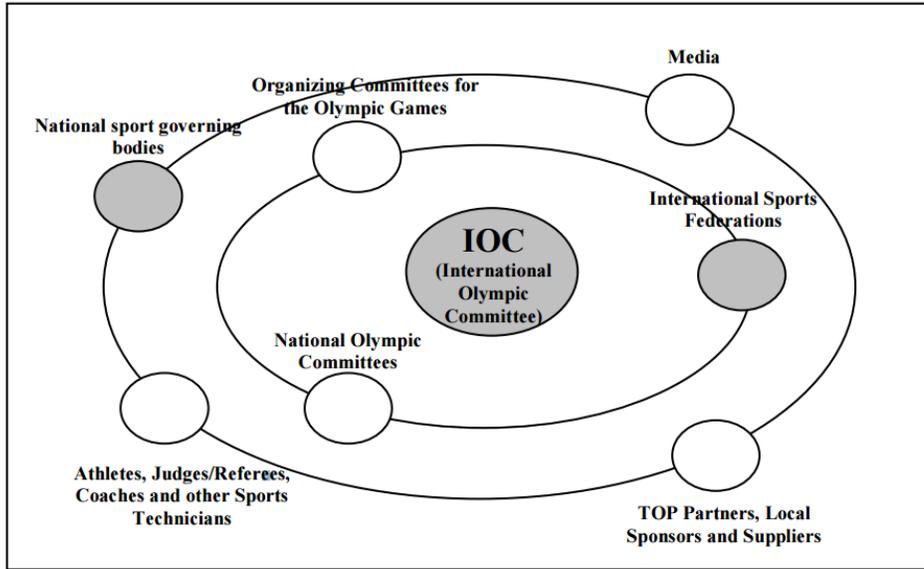


Figure 1.1 The relationship between sport governing bodies at national and international level (Source: Gómez, Opazo & Marti, 2008: 6)

It is said that sport governing bodies can refer to both a national level and an international level. Both of these levels, are a part of the international sport structure which promotes sport and sport development. Thus, means that all sport governing bodies are connected to the International Olympic Committee, and the rules, norms and regulations set by the International Olympic Committee (Gómez, Opazo & Marti, 2008). For the context of this study, the following organogram (Figure 1.2, pg. 7), developed by the researcher, will display the structures of sport governing bodies with South Africa and the Western Cape, where gymnastics is concerned.

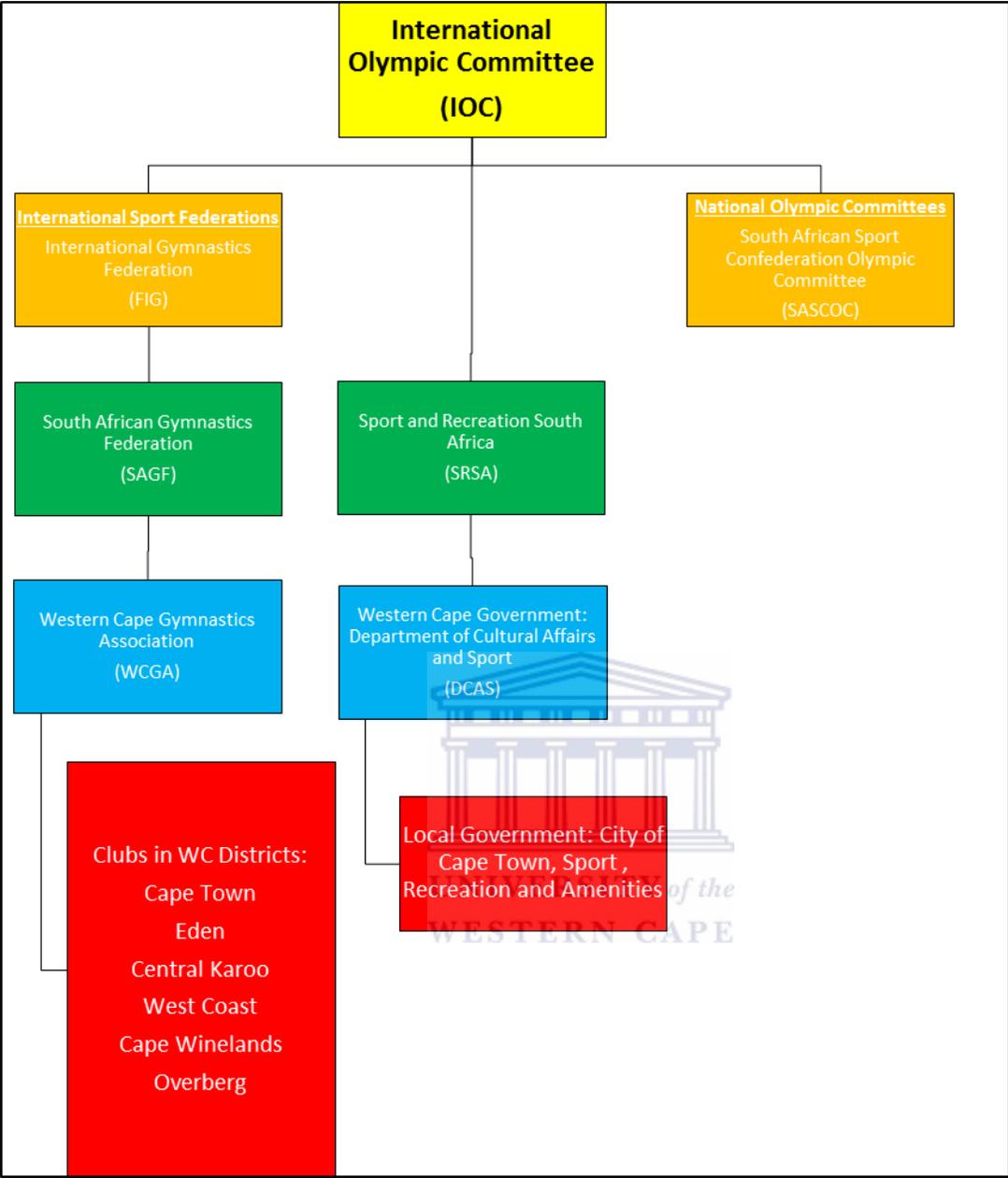


Figure 1.2 An organogram of structures of sport governing bodies in the Western Cape, for the context of this study
 *Organogram developed by researcher

All sport governing bodies are operating under the norms and regulations of the IOC. In South Africa, Sport and Recreation South Africa’s role is to develop opportunities for sport participation and to provide financial support to sport federations, contributing to the continuing of operations in order for participation in sport to be supported.

1.2.2 Local Gymnastics Statistics

The Western Cape Gymnastics Association hosts a District Trials competition for each district within the Western Cape. Below, are tables, bar graphs and pie charts, presenting the rates of participation per district, per gymnastics discipline, as per the records of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association.

The following tables (Table 1.1, pg. 8 and Table 1.2, pg. 9) provide an overview of participation data in competitive gymnastics since the inception of this study from 2014 to 2015. Raw data was made available to the researcher, by the Western Cape Gymnastics Association, which was tabulated in order to provide insight into the rates of participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape for 2014 and 2015.

Table 1.1 Rates of actual figures of participation per discipline, per district in the Western Cape 2014

2014	Cape Town (n)	Cape Winelands (n)	West Coast (n)	Eden (n)	Central Karoo (n)	Overberg (n)	Totals
Mens Artistic Gymnastics	168	36	1	9	0	0	214
Womens Artistic Gymnastics	580	93	34	110	0	0	817
Rhythmic Gymnastics	174	64	34	15	0	0	287
Acrobatic Gymnastics	98	0	60	0	0	0	158
Rope-Skipping	54	0	0	0	0	0	54
Trampoline and Tumbling	203	148	28	132	0	0	511
Aerobic Gymnastics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	1277	341	157	266	0	0	2041

Table 1.2 Rates of actual figures of participation per gymnastics discipline, per district in the Western Cape 2015

2015	Cape Town (n)	Cape Winelands (n)	West Coast (n)	Eden (n)	Central Karoo (n)	Overberg (n)	Totals
Mens Artistic Gymnastics	186	32	3	0	0	0	221
Womens Artistic Gymnastics	601	130	36	1	0	8	776
Rhythmic Gymnastics	225	34	37	19	0	23	338
Acrobatic Gymnastics	165		138				303
Rope-Skipping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trampoline and Tumbling	385	157	20	155			717
Aerobic Gymnastics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	1562	353	234	175	0	31	2355

By comparing the totals in both of these tables, it can be concluded that an increase in participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape has taken place between the periods 2014 to 2015. Currently, no gymnastics takes place in the district of the Central Karoo. The raw data provided by the Western Cape Gymnastics Association is presented using bar graphs to provide further insight into the rates of gymnastics participation, per Western Cape district, per gymnastics discipline, from 2014 to 2015 in Figure 1.3 (pg. 10) and Figure 1.4 (pg. 10). The displays of participation rates are presented using bar graphs and pie graphs.

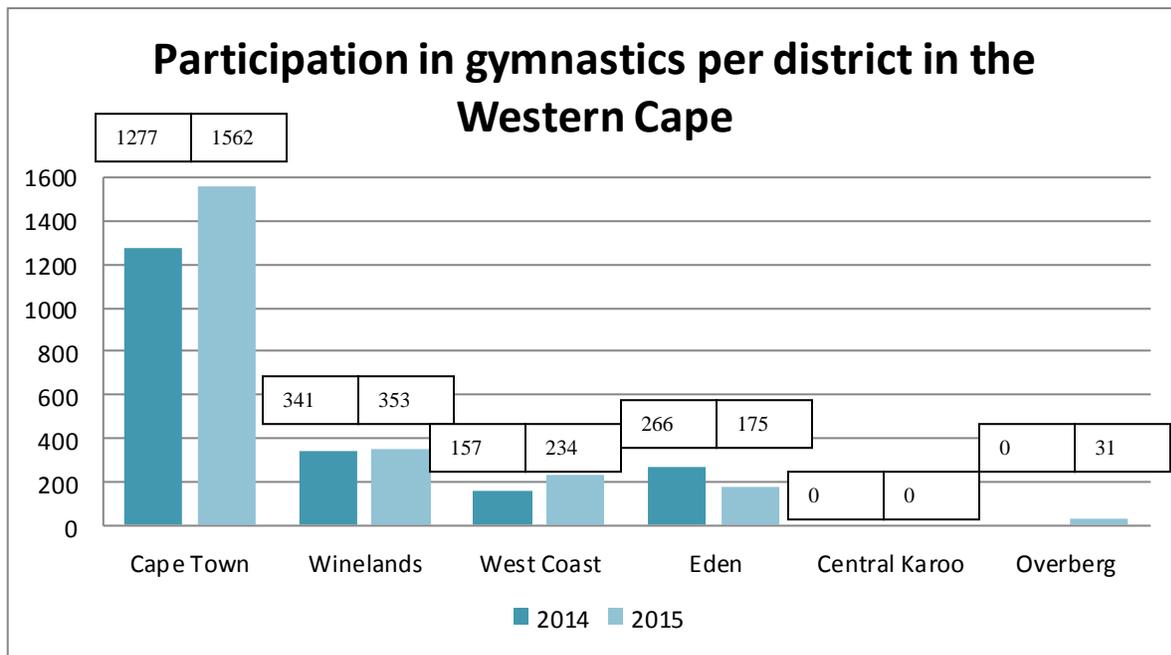


Figure 1.3 The rates of participation in gymnastics, per Western Cape district from 2014 to 2015

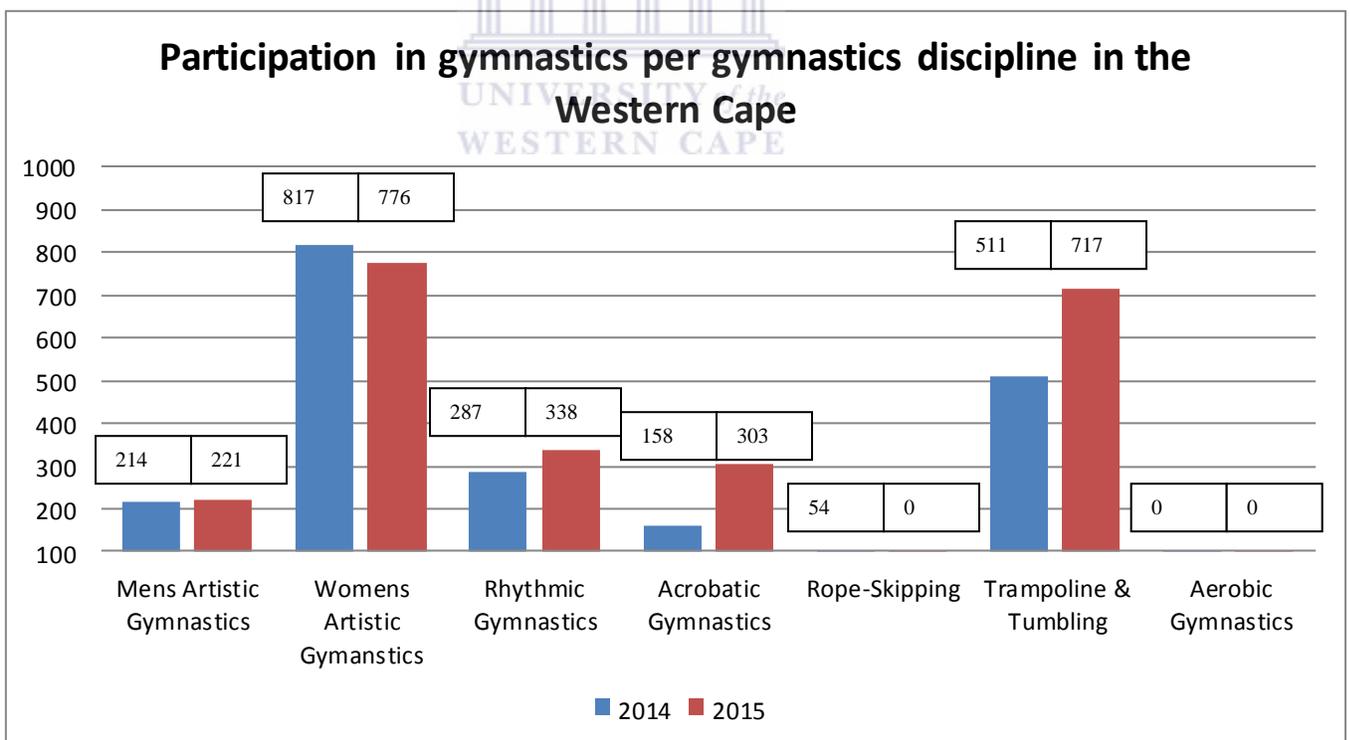


Figure 1.4 The rates of participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape, per discipline from 2014 to 2015

With regard to the rates of participation in gymnastics, in each of the districts of the Western Cape in the year of 2015, from the data presented in the above figures and tables, percentage data of participation in gymnastics, per discipline, and per district as per the records of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association, can be displayed. The percentage data that follows is derived from the raw data provided to the researcher for the benefit of this study.

In Figure 1.5 (pg. 11), the percentage data presented active participating and competing gymnasts, per gymnastics discipline within the Western Cape Province for the year 2015. Figure 1.6 (pg. 12) displays the percentage data of active participating and competing gymnasts per district in the Western Cape Province for the year 2015. Womens Artistic Gymnastics is reported to have the most participants. This discipline is practiced by 33% of the total gymnasts in the Western Cape. It is reported that Cape Town is the district with the highest rates of gymnastics participation most participants. For the period of 2015, 66.3% of the total gymnasts participate in gymnastics in the Cape Town district.

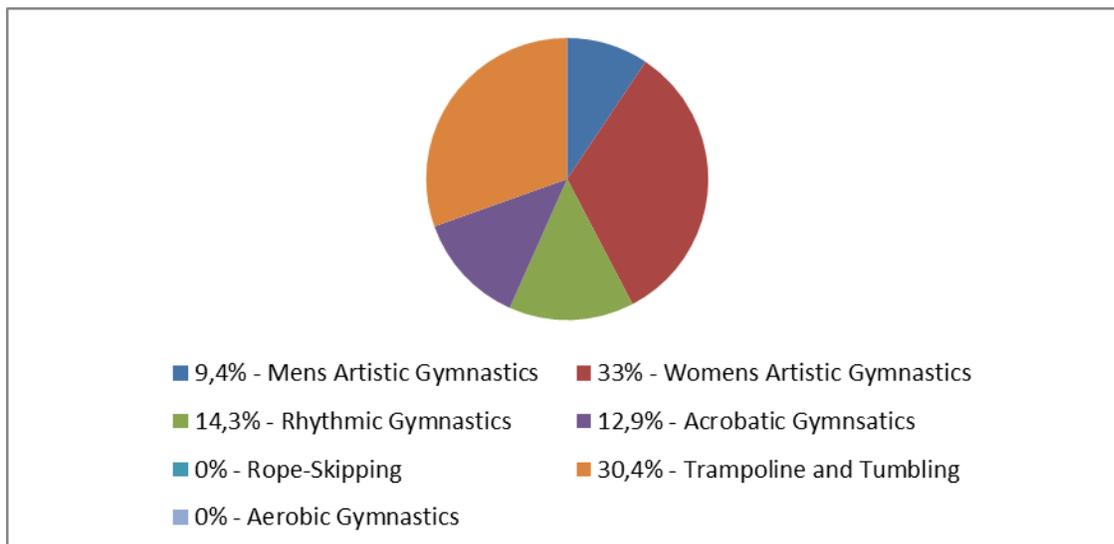


Figure 1.5 Percentage data of gymnastics participation per gymnastics disciplines for the year 2015.

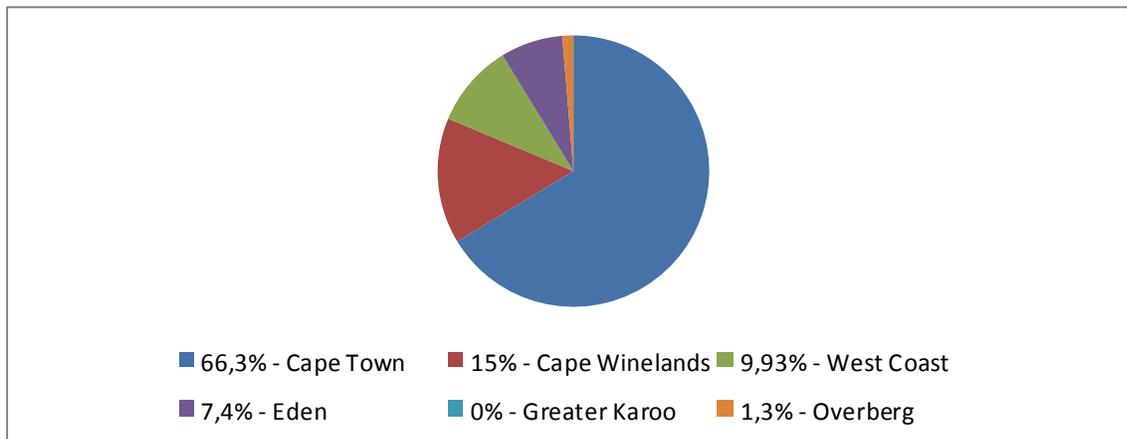


Figure 1.6 Percentage data of gymnastics participation per Western Cape district for the year 2015.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are many potential factors, which could potentially play a role in the hindrance or promotion of participation in sport, in the environment and within society. The developing child is dependent on his/her parents or guardians to provide for him/her (Carr & Weigand, 2001). One of the most prominent factors that stimulate and maintain an individuals' participation in physical activity and sport is accessibility and availability, on a social and environmental domain. There are many broad influences upon physical activity behaviour including intra-personal, social, environmental factors and these determinants vary across the life course (Sallis & Owen, 1998).

In many communities, it is known that boredom and inactivity among children who do not participate in sport can lead to experimentation with drugs and alcohol on the streets, also referred to as “substance abuse”. Sport can be an antidote to tend to become vulnerable to participate in negative social activities such as; cigarette smoking, substance abuse (drug or alcohol use), theft, breaking and entering, to name a few (Van Hout, Young, Bassett & Hooft, 2013). One of the reasons this occurs is due to a lack of physical activity and sport participation, and children use their

unconstructed/free time in negative ways. There may be no positive influence through participation in physical activity and sport. Sport provides many opportunities for socializing, physical activity participation and exertion, as well as fitness and skills development. Sport also creates an area for a child to physically and mentally develop and experiment with their skills and their abilities. Participation in sport provides participants with an opportunity to learn life skills such as team work, leadership, game plan and strategy, healthy competition and sportsmanship. A lack in participation in sport and physical activity may result in a child neither having the opportunity to pass time positively, nor the opportunity to develop and learn physical, mental, and sport-specific life skills, vital for development.

Thus, the problem of this study is to examine and interpret the social factors that exist which may hinder, or promote participation in gymnastics in order to provide insight into these social factors. Stakeholders within the gymnastics fraternity may use the information gathered to improve systems and continue to find lucrative methods of making participation in gymnastics possible for all.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.4.1 How do social factors influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape?

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate social factors that influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape, from the perspectives of the coach, the gymnast and the parent.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to:

1. To investigate reasons for participation in gymnastics within various communities in the Western Cape.
2. To determine which social factors hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics in differently placed communities in the Western Cape.
3. To determine which social factors promote opportunities for participation in gymnastics in differently placed communities in the Western Cape.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to investigate the current social factors that may have an influence on participation in gymnastics for the developing child, and highlight the various reasons that children participate in gymnastics, in the Western Cape. The benefits experienced by gymnasts include increased flexibility, enhanced general health, as well as improved postural control. Children participating in gymnastics benefit from improved cognition and become masters of academic activities and task orientations. Participation in gymnastics enables a child to experience a higher ability to focus on academics and sporting activities, thus, benefits the participating gymnast with goal setting and achievement thereof (Dowdell, 2011).

Participation in sport is important for physical, mental and socio-emotional growth of children. Participating in sport also contributes to overall health of the participant resulting in a decreased risk several chronic diseases, such as of coronary artery diseases and type 2 diabetes. Prolonged physical inactivity can pose a threat to livelihood due to conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, poor joint mobility and functionality, back pain due to poor posture alignment, and psychosocial

problems (Kamphuis, Lenthe, Giskes, Huisman, Brug & Mackenbach, 2008). Adolescents are encouraged to engage in three or more sessions per week of physical activities for at least 20 min or more and that require moderate to vigorous levels of exertion (Sallis & Patrick, 2010). Limited accessibility to gymnastics may be one of the barriers to active participation, indirectly preventing participation, as well as poorly maintained equipment and facilities which limit effective training in gymnastics; therefore this investigation can be used to assist clubs, coaches, sport government and federations with information regarding the social factors that promote participation, and the social factors that hinder participation in gymnastics.

Stakeholders may use this information to improve internal systems, and align efforts, funding and human resources to promote continued participation, as well as to promote the benefits of sport participation, thus creating a community of active and healthy children, mentally and physically, resulting in increased participation in gymnastics and enabling children to develop sport-specific life skills. In turn, an increase in participation in sport may possibly create a decrease in negative social activity and behaviour taking place within communities around the Western Cape among children and adolescents.

1.8 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A more detailed explanation of the research methodology is presented in Chapter Three. To summarize, a qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate for this study because it allows for the exploration of participant's understanding of the social factors that may influence participation in gymnastics. Thus, two methods of data collection were utilized to gather data, namely; one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. Data was collected by the researcher, from active participants within the Western Cape gymnastics fraternity. Parents, coaches and

gymnasts participated in this study, as well as key informants who were highlighted as experts in the field of gymnasts. Focus group discussions and interviews held with key informants were audiotaped.

- *Key informants:* Key informants of this study participate in the coaching of gymnastics, the administration of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association (WCGA) and volunteer as judges at many of the Western Cape gymnastics competitions, and are known as experts in the field of gymnastics within the Western Cape and South Africa. One-on-one interviews were held with each of the experts, and interviews were audiotaped. A detailed discussion about the social factors they have experienced to be considered when investigating participation took place as well as their experiences of their professional history within gymnastics as coaches, gymnasts and employees.
- *Focus group discussions:* A focus group discussion was held with a group of coaches in gymnastics from one gymnastics club located in the Cape Flats of the Western Cape. Two focus group discussions were held with gymnasts between the ages of 8-15 years old. One focus group took place in a gymnastics club located in the Cape Flats of Cape Town and another focus group was held in a gymnastics club located in the West Coast of Cape Town. Lastly, two focus group discussions were held with parents from gymnastics clubs in the Cape Flats and West Coast areas of Cape Town, Western Cape.

Data analyses followed the data collection, and themes were developed using the study's applied theoretical framework, the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The Ecological Systems Theory was used to guide the themes that emerged in this study. These themes were; the chronosystem, the macrosystem, the exosystem, the mesosystem, the microsystem and the individual. These themes were analysed and subthemes had emerged, which was used to define the way the social factors had influenced the gymnast directly, and indirectly, though these findings are

discussed further in detail in chapters four and five of this thesis. A more detailed explanation of the research methodology is presented in Chapter Three.

1.9 INTERPRETATION OF KEY TERMS

Gymnastics in modern usage refers to body movements and tumbling on, and using, various apparatus to execute skills demonstrating strength, balance, flexibility and coordination (Cornelius, 2006).

Sport participation is a means for children to acquire the national guidelines for physical activity, and is considered as a primary means of activity for many children (Visek, Achraati, Manning, McDonnell, Harris & DiPietro, 2015).

Socioeconomic status and position is defined as “an aggregate concept that includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures, as linked to both childhood and adult social class position” (Stockie, 2009: 3). Socioeconomic status is a composite measure that incorporates economic and social status. These are variables that include personal demographic area, as well as an individual’s broader environment. Though, the most important measurable variables to determine socioeconomic status are an individual’s income, education and occupation.

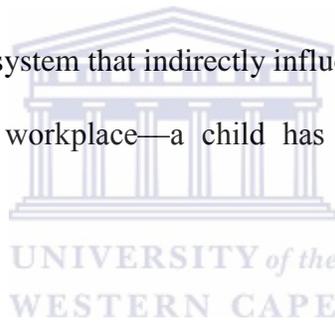
Social factors are things that affect lifestyle within the social environment, such as religion, family or wealth. These factors change as time lapses and progresses. These are also facts and experiences that influence an individual’s personality and attitudes (NCHHSTP Social Determinants of Health, 2014).

Ecological systems theory focuses on the development of a child within the environment he/she grows. This theory maintains that the environment and society have an influence on the socialization of the child during development (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The Chronosystem includes the dimension of time within the environment; development transitions over the life course of the person (Kline, McGehee, Paterson & Tsao, 2012).

The Macrosystem looks at the larger cultures and ideologies which may have an effect on development of the child (Berk, 2000).

The Exosystem is part of a larger system that indirectly influences the individual but is beyond their control, for example, a parent's workplace—a child has no direct influence on the mother's employment (Berk, 2000).



The Mesosystem looks at the interactions of the various settings within the microsystem. The mesosystem is the sphere that allows the different microsystems to interact with each other within the ecological systems theory (Berk, 2000).

The Microsystem the layer which the developing child comes into contact with first, it is also described as the most immediate of all the systems, to the individual, within the ecological systems theory (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The Individual/Gymnast with regard to the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) - every individual is embedded within the environments with which they interact thus, influencing development.

Individuals actively process and construct beliefs and perceptions of their environments and, in turn, interact with their surroundings based on those beliefs or perceptions (Kline et al., 2012).

1.10 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is primarily concerned with investigating various social factors that influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape, from the perspectives of the gymnast, the coach and the parent.

The layout of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter One outlines the background of the study, providing a brief overview on the history of gymnastics globally and provides a brief history of South African gymnastics. The rates of participation were examined for the periods 2014 to 2015. The statement of the problem is presented as well as the research question, research aims and objectives, followed by the significance of this study. A definition of key terms is provided, and an overview of chapters in this thesis is presented.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature, defining important concepts for the purpose of this study. The review of literature provides a description of the Western Cape Province which is located in the Republic of South Africa, an overview of gymnastics including a full definition of each gymnastics discipline, and presents the importance of gymnastics. Following this section is a working definition of participation and the importance of sport participation for children. An overview of social factors is presented covering concepts such as family, socioeconomic status and facilities and equipment. Lastly, this study's theoretical framework is described. The Ecological Systems Theory will be used to provide insight into the relationships between various structures

within the gymnast's lives in order to gain insight into the social factors that may influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape.

Chapter Three describes the research methods used in this study. This study is qualitative in its design, and the data collection and data analyses techniques are presented. The research sample is described as well as the research setting, providing a description of the gymnasium and the activities that take place there on a daily basis. Reflexivity and trustworthiness is described, and the study limitations and delimitations are revealed.

Chapter Four details the findings of this study. Each finding is represented by a theme with an accompanying subtheme(s). Each theme is defined based on literature and each finding which emerged is discussed and interpreted.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings of this study, conclusions drawn are presented and recommendations for further research is offered by the researcher. The researcher also provides a reflection of the qualitative research journey and concludes the study with a concluding summary. References and appendices follow this chapter.

1.11 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter contextualizes the topic under investigation which is to gain insight into the social factors that influence participation in sport, more specifically in the sport code of gymnastics, in the Western Cape. This chapter provided background literature to support the research inquiry. The problem observed was presented as a statement, and the significance of the problem was described. This chapter also described the research question, the aims and objectives of the study.

The next chapter provides a review of literature on the topics of gymnastics, participation, social factors and highlights the theoretical framework adopted for this study, from various studies and authors.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair.” (Nelson Mandela, Laureus World Sports Awards Ceremony 2000)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of literature with regard to factors that may influence participation in sport, more specifically gymnastics, and factors pertaining to society by providing an overview of gymnastics, followed by literature presenting the importance of gymnastics. Thereafter follows a description of each gymnastics discipline within the gymnastics fraternity. Literature pertaining to participation and the importance of sport participation is then followed by an overview of social factors. The most important factors that will be discussed in this chapter are those related to social factors, which include accessibility to facilities and equipment, socio-economic status, and certain family dynamics. These social factors may have a direct and/or indirect influence on participation in the sport of gymnastics.

A review of literature is central to the forming of an argument using academic texts because literature contributes to each chapter and section as seen in all academic research and dissertations.

A review of literature provides detailed research facts relating to the research topic and area of study, which supports rationale, and provides context to research findings. On its own, the selection of literature to review is a respected academic skill because literature should be relevant, current and pertinent to the topic under investigation and discussion (Zhang, Zhu & Cheng, 2011).

The adoption of a Theoretical Framework by Bronfenbrenner (1995) titled, “The Ecological Systems Theory” will serve as a lens through which to review the importance of gymnastics for the developing child, the influence of beliefs and culture within the community the child grows up in and to identify the current social factors facing the gymnast and the relatives in the gymnast’s life and surroundings, in his/her pursuit of a successful sporting career. The Ecological Systems Theory will be described in detail near the end of the review of literature.

For the purpose of this study, this review of literature will present prior research found in published and unpublished journal articles, theses and academic manuscripts in order for an investigation of current social factors that influence sport participation in the Western Cape, to take place.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF GYMNASTICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gymnastics in South Africa has been developed. The first gymnastics club in South Africa was founded in Port Elizabeth, in 1876. Following the formation of this club, was Cape Town Gymnastics Society in 1880 and the YMCA Gymnastics Society, which was also based in Cape Town, in 1884. In these years, gymnastics was practiced locally, and competitions took place amongst clubs. The Kimberley region established the Kimberley Gymnasium in 1884 and a club called the Pirates Gymnastics club followed in 1886. According to the South African Gymnastics Federation (2012), the first signs of competitive gymnastics were witnessed in the late 19th century.

It would be safe to assume that South African gymnastics was developing around the time that the FIG was established, and the modern Olympic Games were revived, though no relationship or connection existed yet.

International exposure of South African gymnastics took place between 1950 and 1960. The Apartheid racial policy boycotts had taken place in South Africa, which led to the suspension of South Africa from the international competition arena. Though, their membership with the International Gymnastics Federation was not terminated. In 1991, South Africa re-entered the International arena at the World Championships for Artistic Gymnastics which was hosted in Indianapolis, USA. After a total of 44 years of absence, South Africa competed at the 2004 Olympic Games, which was held in Athens, Greece.

At present, the South African Gymnastics Federation is the official governing structure of all the provincial gymnastics federations, and is an official member of both the International Gymnastics Federation and the African Union of Gymnastics (UAG). The South African Gymnastics Federation works closely with sport governing bodies of South Africa, as well as other international gymnastics federations, in order to generate ideas, channel financial and human resources, and upskill coaches to create increased opportunities for participation to take place on a recreational and competitive level (South African Gymnastics Federation, 2012).

2.3 THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Western Cape is situated on the south-western tip of the African continent. The city of Cape Town, which is also referred to as the “Mother City”, hosts the South African Parliament and is reported to be South Africa’s legislative capital (South Africa Year Book, 2014: 11). The Western Cape Province is also the fourth largest of the nine provinces in South Africa, with regard to area and population. Statistics South Africa provides statistical data of the population of the Western Cape, this is presented in Table 2.1 (pg. 25) and depicted on a line graph (Figure 2.1, pg. 25), from the 1996, 2001 and 2011 census. The age and sex distribution data of the population (Figure 2.3, pg.

27) was also adapted from the Statistics South Africa, Western Cape census, for the years 1996, 2001 and 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

Table 2.1 Three census years displaying the rates of the population in the Western Cape for the years 1996, 2001 and 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2012: 1)

POPULATION	1996 CENSUS	2001 CENSUS	2011 CENSUS
Western Cape	3 956 876	4 524 334	5 822 734

The following figure (Figure 2.1, pg.25) depicts the increase in the population (presented in Table 2.1, pg. 25) within the Western Cape for the period 1996 to 2011 on a line graph which was adopted from Statistics South Africa (2012). Line graph depicting the increase in population in the Western Cape (Figure 2.2, pg.26):

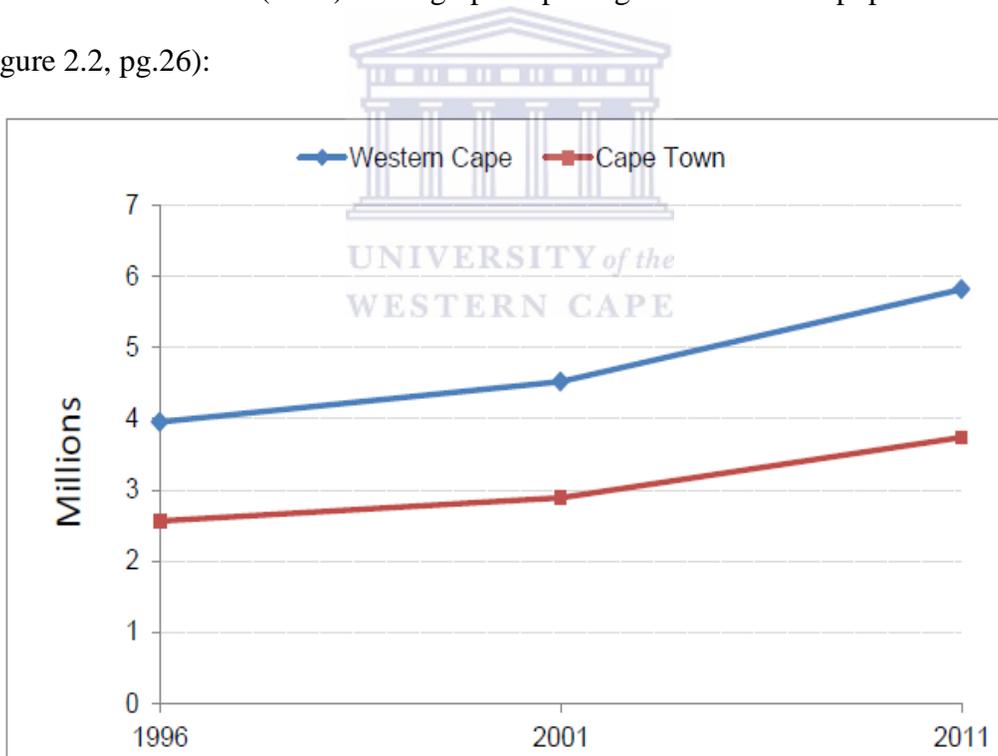


Figure 2.1 Shows the increase in the population in the Western Cape and Cape Town from 1996 to 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2012: 1)

The Western Cape Province is divided up into six districts namely; Cape Town district, Cape Winelands district, West Coast district, Eden district, Overberg district and the Central Karoo

district. Children participate in gymnastics from many of these districts however; the Central Karoo is the only district that has no active gymnastics participants. Figure 2.2 (pg. 26) shows the districts in the Western Cape Province.



Figure 2.2 The districts of the Western Cape (Districts, 2014)

The population as per each district in the Western Cape is presented in the table below (Table 2.2, pg. 27). The total population of the Western Cape is 5 822 734 people (2011).

Table 2.2 The districts of the Western Cape with area measurements in km² and the population as of 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2012: 13-14)

Name	Seat	Area (km ²)	Population (2011) (n)
City of Cape Town	Cape Town	2460	3 740 026
West Coast District	Moorreesburg	31 104	391 766
Cape Winelands District	Worcester	22 309	787 490
Overberg District	Bredasdorp	11 405	258 176
Eden District	George	23 331	574 265
Central Karoo	Beaufort West	38 854	71 011

Figure 2.3 (pg. 27) shows the pyramid graph, which indicates that the majority of the population is, is below 35 years of age.

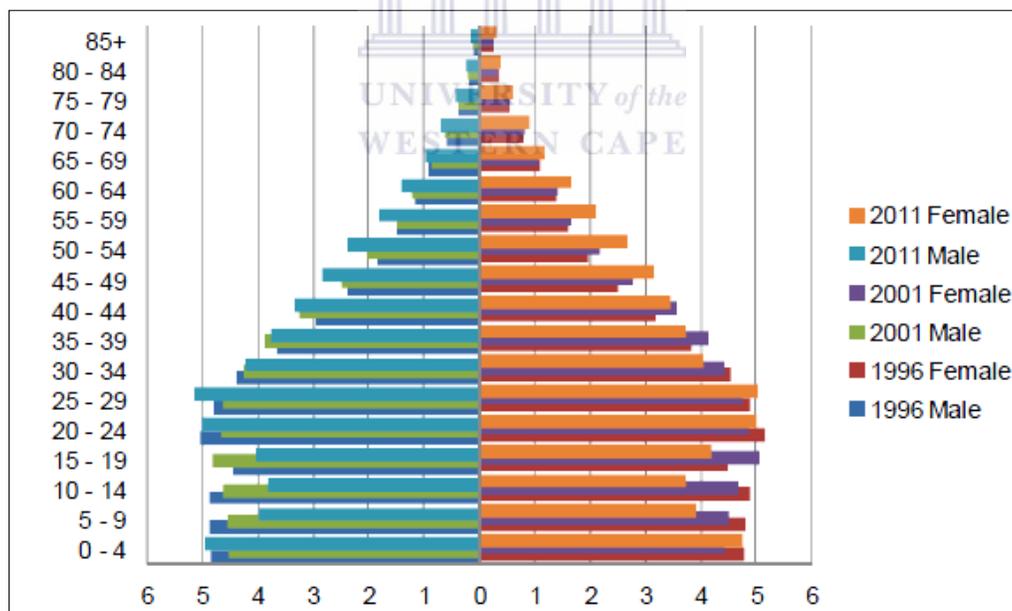


Figure 2.3 Distribution of the population by age and sex, Western Cape 1996, 2001 and 2011 (Source: Statistics South Africa, 2012: 2)

2.4 OVERVIEW OF GYMNASTICS

“Gymnastics” comes from the ancient Greek verb “gymnazo” meaning to train naked, it is reported in the 7th and 3rd centuries BC that young men trained and participated in physical activity, fitness and sport as part of physical education, which took place in the outdoor “gymnasion”, meaning gymnasium. These young men were supervised by their coaches whilst training (Russell, 2013). The earliest references to gymnastics activities have been found in paintings and engravings located at various sites within Egypt. According to Russell (2013), “most of them depict female performers tumbling and balancing and are dated from 2300 to 1000 BC”. It has been found in the tombs in Beni-Hassan that drawings showed pictures of people-like figures performing gymnastic-type physical skills such as tumbling, ball passing and juggling skills. These skills are performed frequently within the disciplines of Rhythmic Gymnastics and Tumbling Gymnastics. Figure 2.4 (pg. 28) displays the drawings seen in ancient Egyptian of the gymnasts performing skills in the tombs of Beni-Hassan (Russell, 2013).

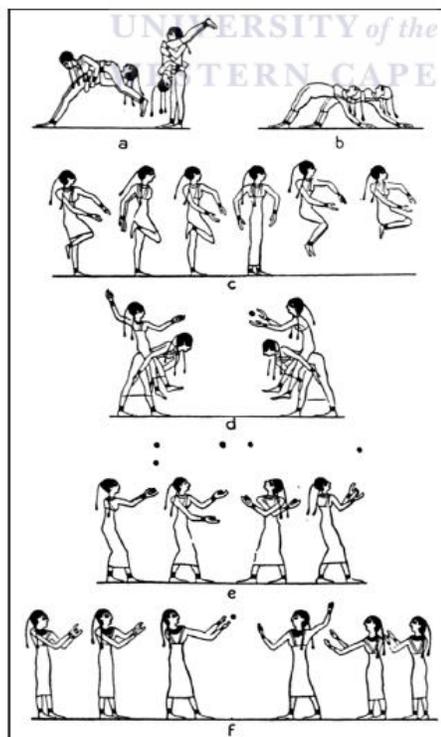
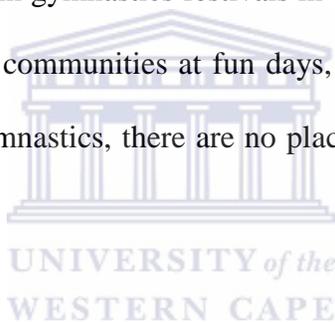


Figure 2.4 Ancient Egyptian gymnasts from the tombs of Beni-Hassan (Caine, Russell & Lim, 2013)

The sport of gymnastics is comprised of seven disciplines, namely artistic gymnastics (men and women), rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics, trampoline, gymnastics for all and aerobic gymnastics in which children participate on a competitive or recreational (non-competitive) level (Donti, Theodorakou, Kambiotis & Donti, 2011). Gymnastics can be categorized as a competitive or non-competitive sport depending on the discipline participated in. In competitive gymnastics, children compete against other children from different clubs, regions, and nationalities for ranking, placements, medals and awards. Non-competitive (recreational) gymnastics is operationally defined as the disciplines in which children practice regularly but do not compete against others in any formal competition on a club, regional or national level. Instead, gymnasts participating in non-competitive disciplines participate in gymnastics festivals in various parts of the world every two to four years, as well as within their communities at fun days, health days, sport promotion displays and events. In non-competitive gymnastics, there are no placements and awards given to gymnasts (Donti et al., 2011).



2.4.1 The importance of gymnastics

Participation in gymnastics, swimming and athletics is seen to benefit children with regard to learning physical education and physical literacy. Participation in gymnastics enables children to experience positive physical and psychosocial benefits. It is reported that this group of benefits are rarely attained elsewhere, therefore emphasizing the importance of participation in sport, for children (Dowdell, 2011). Gymnastics provides participants with an opportunity to participate in social settings, assisting with social education and experience (Sands, 1999). Gymnastics is viewed by some as an individual sport, though Dowdell and Holt (2005) report that due to the challenge and the time needed to learn specific gymnastics skills, the encouragement of the team is present and thus creating an opportunity for team-work to be developed among the gymnasts. The sport code of

gymnastics, provides an opportunity for any participant to learn about teamwork, sportsmanship, fair play, and dedication. Also, participation of children in gymnastics provides opportunities for coaches, trainers and community leaders to teach these characteristics to children in an area outside that of a classroom. However, due to the high level of difficulty of skills and routines found in gymnastics, the learning of these life skills is longer in comparison to other sport codes (Sands, 1999).

Gymnastics requires and develops a variety of different gross fitness abilities which includes muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, power, co-ordination, speed and agility, as well as balance and a developed kinesthetic sense (Dowdell, 2011). Participants in gymnastics experience many ways in which they are able to manipulate their body physically to perform skills on apparatus (Dowdell, 2011). The physical demands experienced by gymnasts, and the outcomes set for them, “places gymnasts among the leanest, strongest and most flexible of athletes” (Maffulli, King & Helms, 1994).

Gymnastics participants have average levels of aerobic (with oxygen) endurance, and high to very high levels of anaerobic endurance (Jemni, Sands, Friemel, Stone & Cooke, 2006), due to the routine and performance length being 120 seconds maximum, per apparatus. The intensity of gymnastics skills can be high, and due to the duration of performances to be limited to two minutes maximum, a gymnast does not experience enough duration of steady physical activity to activate aerobic endurance, as seen in athletes that participate in long-distance running sports. However, most sports codes are found to be anaerobic in their nature. Anaerobic endurance is described as endurance "without oxygen", and this takes place when athletes make use of the energy present in the muscle. In gymnastics, the short bursts of muscle strength are needed for power and execution of

skills whilst performing routines. Therefore, gymnasts develop high levels of anaerobic endurance (Dowdell, 2011).

Gymnastics-based skills and routine performances require strong abdominal and core body. The training to develop the core is unique to this sport. The gymnast makes use of upper and lower limbs, as alternating bases of support as well as locomotion. A conditioned core enables a gymnast to effectively execute gymnastics skills because the mid-body provides control and stability as the gymnast performs (Dowdell, 2011).

Participation in gymnastics can be recommended as a foundational activity for all children for gross motor skills development and the enhancement of fitness components of children. Gymnastics is a sport that offers participants the benefits of enhanced overall muscular strength, and muscular endurance (both aerobic and anaerobic), as well as flexibility, coordination, balance, speed and agility. On a cognitive domain, the gymnast may also experience enhanced focus, goal setting skills, and become oriented around the mastering of tasks (Dowdell, 2011).

2.4.2 Gymnastics disciplines

Russell (2013) describes “gymnastics” as an umbrella term, similar to the sport(s) of “aquatics”, simply because it encompasses not only a group of competitive sports but also many less formalized gymnastics activities in the fields of education, recreation and fitness (Figure 2.5, pg. 32).

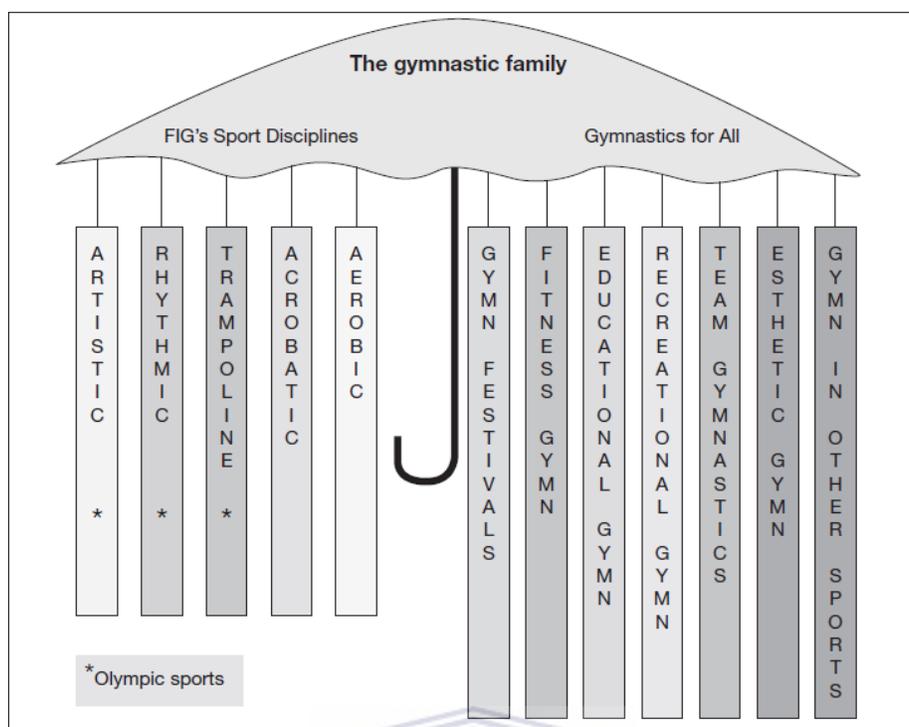


Figure 2.5 The gymnastics family (Caine, Russell & Lim, 2013: 4)

Gymnastics brings to mind those Olympic sports that gain wide media attention every four years namely; Men’s Artistic Gymnastics (with six apparatus: floor exercises, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars, and horizontal bar); Women’s Artistic Gymnastics (apparatus includes: asymmetric bars, balance beam, vault and floor exercise); Rhythmic Gymnastics with female gymnasts doing incredible manipulative skills with hand apparatus (ball, hoop, clubs, ribbon, and rope); and lastly Trampoline Gymnastics (TG) (Russell, 2013). According to Russell (2013), these sports represent a small percentage of the whole gymnastics community as there are several additional non-Olympic gymnastics disciplines such as; Aerobic Gymnastics and Acrobatic Gymnastics. Accompanying these disciplines is a large family of educational, exhibition and recreation gymnastics disciplines, grouped together under the moniker “Gymnastics for All.” Non-competitive forms of gymnastics are showcased every year in gymnastics festivals which take place in many countries, some with over 100,000 participants (Russell, 2013).

2.4.2.1 Artistic Gymnastics (MAG and WAG)

Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG): This discipline of the gymnastics family is the oldest form of gymnastics reported to be a popular Olympic sport. Men have competed in gymnastics since 1896 Athens Olympics and apparatuses since then have undergone extensive modifications, which has changed gymnastics radically. The traditional men's apparatus are floor exercise, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars and the horizontal bar ("Mens Artistic Gymnastics", 2014).

Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG): This is the most popular of all the gymnastics disciplines, despite injuries which can result due to the demands of strength, power, flexibility, agility and coordination and balance. A combination of technical precision and artistic creativity is required on four apparatus namely; floor exercise, balance beam, uneven bars and vault ("Womens Artistic Gymnastics", 2014). Routines performed in Artistic Gymnastics are short in duration, but require gymnasts to display high levels of strength, flexibility and endurance ("Gymnastics", 2014).



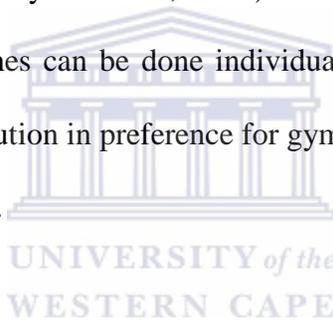
2.4.2.2 Aerobic Gymnastics (AERO)

Aerobic Gymnastics is perhaps the most dynamic and energetic of all the gymnastics disciplines. There are two new competitive sub categories namely aerobic dance and aerobic step which have been added to the competitive aspect of the sport. The roots of aerobic gymnastics are found in group fitness and aerobic classes of the late 1980's. Aerobic Gymnastics can thus be seen to be a fairly recent addition to the stable of the gymnastics disciplines. The basis of all aerobic routines lies in the performance and combination of seven basic aerobic steps and movements involving both the arms and the legs of the gymnast, namely; march, jog, skip, knee lift, jack, lunge, flic kick. The introductory aerobic gymnastics programmes often focus on mastering these movements ("Aerobics", 2014). Aerobic gymnasts may consist of both men and women who are able to perform

in individual routines, as well as in mixed pairs (one male, one female), trios or groups of up to six gymnasts (men and women mixed, men only, women only). Gymnasts in this discipline master skill emphasizing strength and flexibility and routines are 60-90 seconds in duration - the gymnast is thus required to have good aerobic fitness (“Gymnastics”, 2014).

2.4.2.3 Rhythmic Gymnastics (RHY)

Rhythmic gymnastics combines ballet and creative movements to music, and incorporates hand apparatus, namely ribbons, balls, hoops, ropes, and clubs in a choreographed dance-and-tumble routine. This discipline has a larger dance element than artistic gymnastics and is currently only competed in largely by women (“Gymnastics”, 2014). All skills and routines are displayed and performed on the floor, and routines can be done individually as well as in groups. In Rhythmic gymnastics, there has been an evolution in preference for gymnasts who display increased flexibility akin to contortion. (Russell, 2013).



2.4.2.4 Trampoline and Tumbling (TRA and TUM)

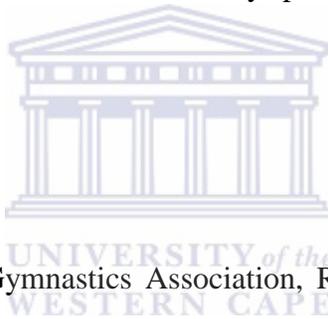
Trampoline: Trampoline Gymnastics consists of four events namely; individual trampoline, synchronized trampoline, double-mini trampoline, and tumbling. Routines are judged according to skill difficulty and execution of elements (“Trampoline”, 2014). Trampoline has new evaluation criteria for bounce and height (Russell, 2013).

Tumbling: Tumbling is similar to artistic gymnastics, with regard to the athlete performing a series of tumbling skills along an 84ft sprung floor, with most competitions making use of a rod floor (Russell, 2013). Tumbling routines consist of eight skills, and the gymnast has two different

routines to display at competition. One routine requires twisting elements, and the other requires somersault rotation elements (“Tumbling”, 2014).

2.4.2.5 Acrobatic Gymnastics (ACRO)

Acrobatics is the performance of extraordinary feats of balance, agility, and motor coordination and both men and women are able to participate in this discipline in groups of two, three and four, performing routines to music (“Gymnastics”, 2014). Acrobatics is associated with activities that make use of gymnastics elements such as acro dance, circus and gymnastics, but many other athletic activities such as ballet and diving may also employ acrobatics (“Acrobatics”, 2014). It is therefore found in many of the performing arts as well as in many sports events, including martial arts.



2.4.2.6 Rope-Skipping (RS)

According to the Western Cape Gymnastics Association, Rope-skipping is done by twirling and jumping over the rope. The skipping rope used usually has handles on it. Rope skipping routines are done to music and gymnasts/jumpers are evaluated by a panel of judges, during competition. Cardiopulmonary exercises require the gymnast/jumper to jump through, around or over the swinging rope during the execution of his/her routine, whilst executing skills and performing choreography. The gymnast/jumper can participate in different categories in this discipline namely; single rope, pairs, double dutch three and double dutch four (“Rope-Skipping”, 2014).

2.4.2.7 Gymnastics for All (GfA)

Globally, Gymnastics for All, seems to have quite a large scale level of participation. It enables people of all ages, and abilities to participate, but does not involve the winning of medals. It

involves group performances with participants ranging from 1 – 1000 and more, per group, per club, per country. Gymnasts from different disciplines all come together and perform in “mass routines” which take place in large arenas or stadiums to showcase talent and culture mixed together in originally choreographed gymnastics and dance routines (Mechbach & Wanenberg, 2011). This discipline brings people from all walks of life together in the name of gymnastics, talent showcasing, being its platform. (Mechbach & Wanenberg, 2011).

The Western Cape Gymnastics Association maintains that Gymnastics for All brings together gymnasts of all genders, ages, and cultural backgrounds to enjoy the diverse range of physical activities that gymnastics offers. Gymnastics for All contributes to personal health, well-being and fitness on physical, social and psychological level. The International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) remarks that the focus of Gymnastics for All is to concentrate on Fun, Fitness, Fundamentals, and Friendship (the four F’s). With this focus, routines can involve gymnastics and dance. Gymnastics for All therefore offers aesthetic experiences in movement, and provides spectators the opportunity to enjoy routines in a national and cultural context (Russell, 2013).

2.5 PARTICIPATION

Participation can be defined as the nature and extent of a person’s involvement in life situations. For psychological and emotional well-being, life satisfaction and a sense of competence, participation is essential. Skills development is among the benefits of participation (Engel-Yeger, Hanna-Kassis, & Rosenblum, 2012). Physical activity and recreation can be effective if participation takes place and if used appropriately in accordance with different age and abilities. It is reported that group activities improve interpersonal skills, independence, and results in the participant experiencing a positive self-esteem may improve the quality of personal life. This is similarly expressed by Koo

and Lee (2015) who state that the effect of recreation and physical activity enhances self-expression, self-fulfilment, human relationship, physical strength, aesthetic sense and creative expression.

Two major motives exist as predictors for participation in sport and exercise as well as increased physical activity. The first motive is that sports and exercise are fun and enjoyable, which thus creates a sense of immediate reward for the participant, similar to many recreation and leisure activities. Secondly, the investment motive exists in that individuals have the belief that, being physically active increases general fitness levels, which in turn result in good health, as well as a decreased risk of coronary heart diseases, and type 2 diabetes. A favourable physical appearance is also a common motivator for continued physical activity participation (Lechner, 2015).

2.5.1 The importance of Sport Participation

Globally, policy makers have found that sport and recreation is more than just “fun and games”. The Case for Sport in the Western Cape reports that sport and recreation is recognized as a fundamental right for children to play, and engage in physical activity and sport (De Coning, 2015). Sport can be regarded as an important factor contributing to the building of positive relationships between people and nations victim to the boundaries caused by differences in race, language, religion, and creed in a country. Various sporting and recreation activities hold significant potential for future growth, and social development (De Coning, 2015: 34). Several developmental theories are reported to point out the importance of sport participation for children’s self-esteem, health, education and skills development (Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009). Participation in sports and exercise is reported to have many benefits which include overall happiness, greater body image and physical attractiveness, improved health resulting in a decreased risk for coronary heart diseases, enhanced cognitive and

non-cognitive skills (discipline, self-confidence, stress management), and plays a role in teaching participants the skill of team-work (Lechner, 2015).

Participation in sport and games enhances health and fitness of all citizens for development physically, socially and emotionally (De Coning, 2015), therefore there is a clear link between participation in sport and good health. Due to this relationship, various government departments and businesses are increasingly promoting the benefits of physical activity participation and corporate wellness. Citizens and employees are encouraged to participate in physical activity, sport and exercise programs, through campaigns, community tournaments and events (Maralack, 2014). With regard to school physical activity and sport participation, “it is argued that the growing emphasis on promoting fitness and health in schools is positive and is developing into a positive educational outcome” (Maralack, 2014). Life Orientation is a subject that forms part of the South African school’s curriculum, and this subject places an emphasis on the importance of exercise, promoting good diet, healthy lifestyle and participation in sport and recreation for school children, though this is not taking place in all schools as prescribed by the South African Department of Basic Education, due to the rationalization of physical education teachers, which have left schools without teachers who are qualified to teach physical education to learners, thus resulting in Life Orientation without the physical activity, unless the school has enough funding to afford their own Physical Educator/Sport Coach privately (Maralack, 2014).

Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) (2009) argues that sport and mass participation programmes, generate health benefits in two primary ways namely; through direct participation in sport, and through the use of participatory and spectator sport as a platform for communication, education and social mobilization. Regular sport and recreation activities may assist communities in

addressing some of the social issues of crime, alcohol and drug abuse, and health issues experienced such as diabetes, obesity, and coronary artery diseases. Sport and recreation can assist with the integration of members of a community, creating cohesion, comradery and a safe and friendly neighbourhood due to the activities that take place, and the participation of members of the community (SRSA, 2009).

2.5.2 The Sport Development Pyramid

The sport development pyramid explains the relationship between mass participation and elite participation in sport (Sotiriadou, Shilbury & Quick, 2008). The diagram which follows, Figure 2.6 (pg. 39), attempts to illustrate how individuals progress through continuous participation in sport. Four levels have been identified within the sport development continuum namely; foundation, participation, performance, and excellence.

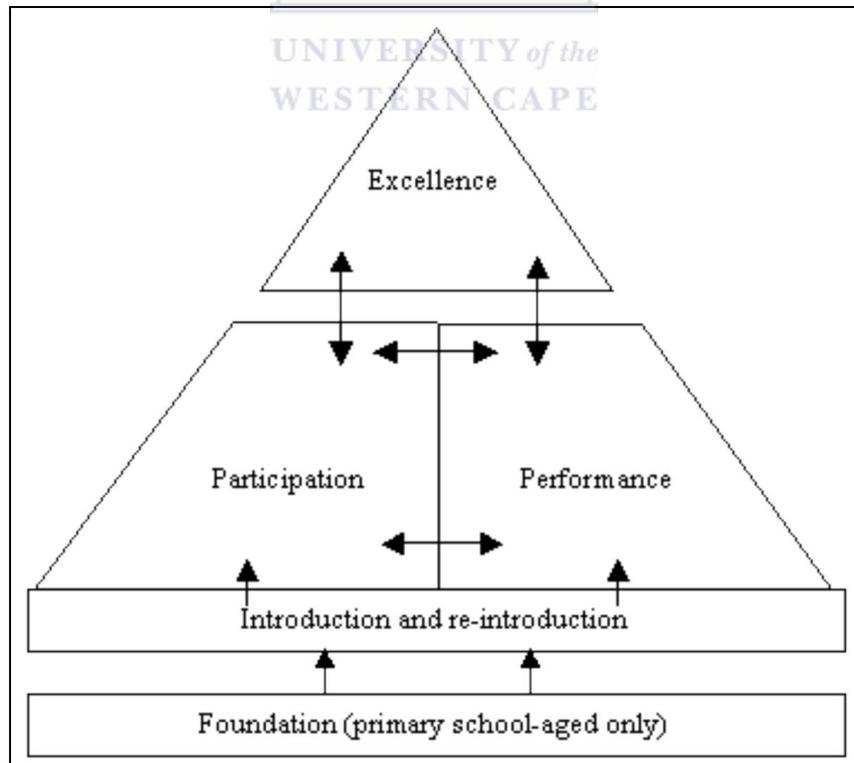


Figure 2.6 The sport development pyramid (Eady, 1993: 14)

Participation that takes place at a foundation level is where participation in sport happens at a school during physical education. At this level, an introduction to physical activity and movement takes place, which exposes the participant to basic movement pattern and body orientations. The participant learns these basic skills which provide a base for personal development and future participation in sport and physical activity.

At the participation level, the participant starts to regularly participate in a specific activity and typically for enjoyment. This can take place in school sport and club sport and the sport or physical activity is practiced by the participant on a more continuous basis.

The performance level of sport participation has a specific focus on the execution of skills and improvement of technique in one particular sport. Quality coaching is required for the participant to continuously improve and be supported in learning new sport-specific skills.



Lastly, the excellence level of participation forms the peak of the pyramid, where individuals reach sporting excellence. Participants in this area of participation are often regional or national competitors. Fewer people participate in this area of sport (Sotiriadou et al., 2008).

This pyramid model was designed with the aim of increasing the number of participants at each level of participation. According to Sotidriaou et al., (2008), the wider the base, the greater number of participants at each level above, in the pyramid model. Therefore, government makes resources available for foundation sport/mass participation sport which is at the bottom of the sport development pyramid in order to create a broad base, which may lead to the development of more champions.

2.5.3 Long-Term Participant Development in Gymnastics

The South African Gymnastics Federation, in collaboration with the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee, developed the Long-Term Participant Development (LTPD) model which proposes new philosophies in coaching and leading in the sport of gymnastics, toward sustained involvement of participants in gymnastics and sport, in general (LTPD, 2011). The South African Gymnastics Federation also commissioned the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model which aims at enhancing athlete participation with regard to excellence interaction and capacity in high performance sport training for all athletes (LTPD, 2011).

The LTPD model is aimed at promoting overall Physical Literacy, as well as at promoting the integrating and aligning of sport systems. “Physical literacy” is defined by Balyi, Way and Higgs (2013) as the mastery of fundamental movement skills and sport skills. A physically literate person is able to fluidly move with poise and confidence and is not limited to certain physical skills, and has the ability to perform a variety of skills in many physically challenging situations, and scenarios. The athlete is also very competent in perceiving all aspects of the physical environment whilst physically executing skills in sport. “He/she anticipates the movement needs or possibilities, and responds appropriately with intelligence and imagination” (LTPD, 2011: 9).

The Long-Term Participant Development plan identifies ten key factors that influence the model with regard to participation. For the purpose of this study; five influencing factors are discussed, as highlighted by Balyi et al. (2013), set out hereunder:

1. The Fundamentals- Developing physical literacy

Fundamental movement skills, such as running, throwing, catching, hopping, and bounding as well as fundamental sport skills can be considered to contribute to a child’s movement

and the development of the child's physical literacy. Children should learn fundamental sport-specific skills before attempting skills of a higher difficulty or more complicated sport-specific skills and strategies. Before growth spurts take place in adolescents, fundamental skills should be developed in order to benefit the sport participant with the execution of sport-specific skills. For participation in sports, physical activity and recreation activities to be enjoyed by participants, physical qualities are developed thus forming a participant's physical literacy, which the participant makes use of whilst participating in movement. Examples of sports that assist greatly in helping children to become physically literate are athletics, gymnastics and swimming.

Gymnastics is a sport used to encourage the learning of fundamental skills needed for physical literacy and the development of fitness components beneficial to participants, such as; coordination, speed, rotation, locomotion, balance, agility, major movement patterns and object manipulation, static and dynamic stretching and flexibility, as well as swings and springs.

2. Chronological Age vs. Developmental Age

In human development, chronological age in relation to developmental age is a factor that influences participation in sport. *Chronological age* is referred to as the actual time-measurement of anatomical development, and the number of years, months or days used to measure and determine a person's age whilst alive, since birth. *Developmental age* refers to the "child's relative position on a continuum" that begins at birth and ends at the highest point of physical maturity. During adolescence, changes in body structure and shape can be witnessed and reported due to growth spurts children experience during puberty. Thus,

hormones, genes, production of nutrients and socialization experienced within the environmental domain bring about anatomical, muscular, metabolic and neurological maturation and adaptation (Bailey, Collins, Ford, MacNamara, Toms, & Pearce, 2010). There is evidence to suggest that the development of fitness components differs from person to person, due to the non-linear and dynamic development that takes place during biological maturation (Bailey et al., 2010).

Developmental age is used to determine a skill level of a sport participant and is used by coaches and trainers to introduce aspects of training. The Long-Term Participant Development model outlines three categories namely; “early”, “average” or “late” maturers, which is used by coaches, and trainers to identify the developmental age of a sport participant. These categories assist coaches and trainers to develop exercise programs, as well as competition training plans appropriate to the developmental age and skill level of the sportsperson, as well as to the benefit of development of the participant.

3. Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development

Coaches and trainers must take into consideration the different rates at which an individual matures, on a physical, emotional, cognitive/mental domain. Gross motor skills also develop at different rates from person to person. “Coaches are encouraged to make use of a holistic approach to teaching and training athletes, by taking into account the psycho-social and emotional factors experienced by gymnastics participants on a day-to-day basis”.

4. Specialization

Successful athletes are reported to have participated in sport and physical activity from a young age, resulting in being multi-skilled as sportspeople. Children who participate in sport at a young age benefit from learning skills which enhance their physical literacy, thus creating a strong skill set foundation, assisting the sportsperson to achieve at a high level. There is much to be gained through early participation in sport and physical activity, as early exposure to a wide variety of sport contributes to “physical and movement attributes” essential for success in sport in later adolescent to adult years. These attributes are: agility, balance, speed, core body strength, stamina, flexibility, and eye-hand-foot coordination.

5. Trainability

The Long-Term Participant Development model is influenced by trainability. “Trainability is defined as the responsiveness of individuals to a training stimulus at different stages of growth and maturation” (LTPD, 2011: 15). Coaches are encouraged to be aware, when doing an athletes training programme and periodization, to capitalize on the best periods of trainability for successful execution of skills and elements and achieve optimal adaptation. The coach may use these periods to plan training programmes for the athlete to improve sport-specific skills, flexibility, and both muscular endurance and strength, as these fitness components are seen as qualities of training and performance.

To summarize, the LTPD model provides information for on-going education of stakeholders and sport participants involved in federation/club sport, physical education, school sport, community recreation, life-long physical activity as well as high performance sport, in order to optimize training for competition and displays.

2.6 OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL FACTORS

There are a number of key social/environmental factors that can potentially affect participation in sport, exercise and physical activity for children, adolescents and adults. Factors such as the family, geographical location, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, peers and identity, as well as educational background should be considered when reviewing participation in sport (Bailey et al., 2010). There are other factors that influence participation in sport and recreation activities such as time, culture, access to information as well as the availability of resources namely; equipment and facilities (Young, Potgieter, Goslin, Nthangeni & Modise, 2011).

The factors that have an influence on participation in physical activity, sport, exercise and recreation activities have been investigated by prior researchers, epidemiologists, sport scientists and economists, who have reported that they can be categorized into five general groups namely; individual socioeconomic demographic characteristics, environmental characteristics, peer influences, costs and direct financial and non-financial incentives (Lechner, 2015).

Researchers have documented that there has been a decline in physical activity amongst young people (Hardman & Stensel, 2004), which can be attributed to social, environmental and technological advances such as accessibility of high calorie foods, computer games and transport. Such advances have reportedly caused an increase in sedentary behaviours in young people (Fairclough, Stratton & Baldwin, 2002). Furthermore, the decline or lack of physical education at schools has contributed to the rise of sedentary behaviours as well (Hardman & Stensel, 2004), supporting the assertions that a decrease in sport and physical activity exists amongst young people. In addition, socio-economic status has become a factor, reported to have a potential influence on participation in sport and physical activity as well (Macdonald, Roger, Ziviani, Jenkins, Batch &

Jones, 2004). The environment is said to play a significant role in contributing to a decrease in physical activity. The resultant lack of sport participation (usually known to benefit an individual's health), has inadvertently resulted in an increase in obesity (Foster & Hillsdon, 2004).

Family, facilities and equipment and socioeconomic status are among the following social factors that are discussed in this review of literature in order to ascertain the influence that these social factors have on participation in sport, physical activity and gymnastics in the Western Cape.

2.6.1 Family

Parents are said to have quite a significant role to play in influencing their child's sport and physical activity participation due to the influence of modelling. The parent in a household provides a space for support on a financial and psychological level. It has been reported that disinterested parents affect a child negatively, especially if the child is in pursuit of physical activity and sport participation (Bailey et al., 2010). Neglectful parents are neither responsive nor demanding and there is little to no encouragement and supervision of the child's progress, attitude and behaviour. It is reported that young adults that come from neglectful families deploy maladaptive task-avoidant strategies (Titus, Rose & Roman, 2015). According to Titus et al. (2015), parents who met this profile did not provide structure or monitor children's behaviour and ultimately neglected the children's needs and well-being.

In social and psychological research, family members are reported to be the first social agency that the child comes into contact with as he/she develops (Kay, 2003). Therefore, the first point of socialization starts with the family of the child contributing to socialization, growth and development. The family influences the child's interest in sport thus, plays a role in the socialization

of a child into sport, and society as well. It can be said that the family largely influences the entire sport experience of adolescents and children (Bailey et al., 2010). The research of Kirk and MacPhail (2003) highlights how the roles of social positions are undertaken by members of the family, and in particular this research reports that the roles assumed by parents as these social positions, do have an effect upon the involvement and participation of their child in sport and do impact directly upon the continued participation of their children, or not.

It is said that a traditional structure of family has a more positive influence on sport and recreation participation of children, than a non-traditional family. Bailey et al. (2010) explains that a traditional family comprises of two adults, and that a non-traditional family is a variation of a two adult family i.e. single parent family, or guardians looking after children. The traditional family setting is seen to have a positive influence on sport participation because between the two adults, there is more time and financial resources available to support sport participation of their children, as well as manage daily activities regarding family life.

The family also has a major influence on the coaching process within sport and recreation. It is reported that the influence of the family on the process of coaching can affect participant development because the role of a parent largely influences the relationship between each stakeholder with regard to the participants continued participation in sport (Jowett & Timson Katchis, 2005).

In essence, research shows that the family has an influence on sport participation. It is said that children from a traditional-type family have more access to opportunities for participation than those from non-traditional families. It can also be said that those from a higher socioeconomic

background can access opportunities for participation easier than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, therefore a link exists between a parent's socioeconomic status and a child's level of participation in sport and recreational activities (Kay, 2003).

2.6.2 Facilities and Equipment (Apparatus)

A sports facility encompasses the equipment and buildings utilized for playing sports, or for participating in sport (Barghchi & Omar, 2014). In the work of Eime, Casey, Harvrey, Sawyer, Symons and Payne (2014), it is reported that socioecological models have been applied to qualitative studies in order to determine the multiple influences on participation in physical activity and sport among adolescents and children. These studies have found that environmental and social factors were important and should be considered as influences affecting low socioeconomic areas with regard to proximity of sport facilities, and accessibility of equipment for sport participants to make use of, whilst participating. Furthermore, intrapersonal (perceived skill and competence), interpersonal (support of peers and family), and organizational factors (i.e. school and community sport club environment) were also considered to be important factors influencing sport participation and physical activity.

Studies have investigated the relative importance of proximity to sport facilities and participation which impact a combination of actual travel times/distances to facilities or subjective perceptions regarding the supply of sporting infrastructure (Higgs, Langford & Norman, 2015).

2.6.3 Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Socioeconomic position is defined as “an aggregate concept that includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures, as linked to both childhood and adult social class position” (Stockie, 2009:

3). Socioeconomic status is one non-modifiable factor of interest that may influence physical activity. It is reported by Bailey et al. (2010) that the socioeconomic status of a child is the socioeconomic status of his/her parents and is said to have quite a significant effect on sport participation due to costs of membership of a sports club, apparel, transport and equipment. These costs are absorbed by the parents of the sport participant, if the sport participant is a minor, and socioeconomic status determines the affordability of parents, thus affecting their child's sport participation.

Children from a middle socioeconomic status who participate in sport have more support from their families than can be seen with children from low-income families (Kay, 2003). Children from low-income families struggle to continue participation due to the exorbitant costs involved, and a high dropout rate in sport and physical activity, can be witnessed (Rowley & Graham, 1999). Socioeconomic status variables include personal demographic area, as well as an individual's broader environment, though the most important measurable variables to determine socioeconomic status are an individual's income, education and occupation. Youth SES is categorized based on parent SES indicators of income, wealth, occupation and education (Stockie, 2009).

An adolescent's sport participation can be positively or negatively influenced by socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is identified as an environmental and social factor that may potentially have an influence on sport and physical activity participation (Green, Smith & Roberts, 2005). Socioeconomic status is also used as a determinant of social class. Social class creates a divide within society based on income, occupation, education level, and housing (Green et al., 2005). "Physical activity is among several health behaviours, known to be less favourable among people with low socioeconomic status (SES) compared with higher status counterparts" (Kamphuis,

Lenthe, Giskes, Huisman, Brug & Mackenbach, 2007: 71). Therefore it can be reported that children from high SES backgrounds have access to participate in more sports than those from low SES backgrounds. Interestingly, a link between negative social behaviour and sport participation has been found to exist with children, and is often more prevalent among those from lower SES backgrounds. (Wichstrom & Wichstrom, 2009).

Socioeconomic status plays a role in the fluctuation of participation of children in physical activity and sport, though the field is wide enough for more research to be conducted in order to clearly understand the relationship between socioeconomic status and sport participation of adolescents and children (Stockie, 2009).

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this study, Bronfenbrenner's (1995) Ecological Systems Theory will be used in order to explain the complexities of the phenomenon being investigated. In this case, the phenomenon being explored is the social factors that influence participation in physical activity. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to provide the author with an approach to interpret a subject of study, and provides the reader with a lens to view the phenomenon under investigation (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). A visual depiction of the Ecological Systems Theory (Figure 2.7, pg. 51) details the different systems found within society, by Bronfenbrenner (1995), with the individual/developing child at the centre of a group five concentric circles, namely; the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem.

This theory focuses on the development of a child within the environment he/she grows. This theory maintains that the environment and society have an influence on the socialization of the child during

development. The most immediate agency within the child's environment is the household he/she grows up in, and the family that surrounds the child.

According to Paquette and Ryan (2001), any changes or conflicts that occur within the child's environment will have a ripple effect throughout other layers. The ecological systems theory considers development of the child to involve the setting of the environment, society as well as the relationships that are developed through interaction with the child and of the child. This study will view the gymnasts' maturing body, the gymnasium/gymnastics club, immediate family, gymnastics community, home and family, neighbourhood, school, religious institution as well as community as factors that form part of the microsystem, which influence the development of the child, thus, contributing to factors which may influence participation in gymnastics. Factors within the each of the systems affect an individual in various ways.

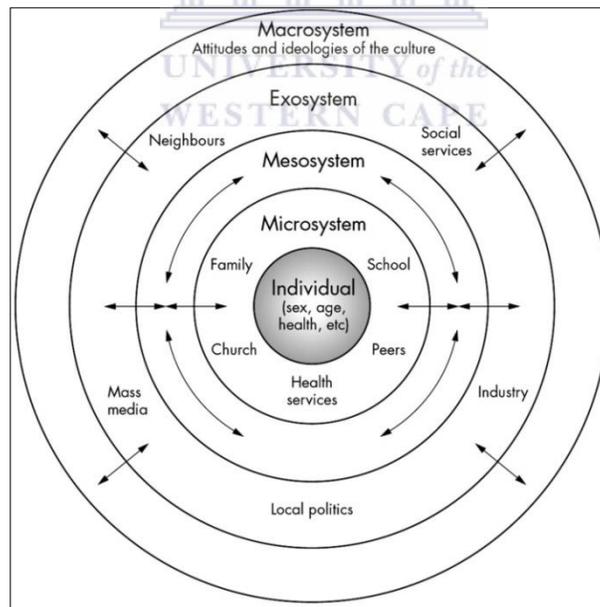


Figure 2.7 Details an approach, using the Ecological Systems Theory as a basis to explore how social factors affect a gymnast regarding participation (Bronfenbrenner, 1995)

In order to understand how the factors of the systems found within this theory influence the individual, the systems of this theory should be described in detail. For this purpose a description of each of the systems found in this theory are presented in the pages that follow.

The *microsystem*, is the layer which the developing child comes into contact with first, it is also described as the most immediate of all the systems, to the individual, within this theory. As mentioned above, institutions in the microsystem comprise of; the child's family, school, religious institution, neighbourhood and can include any health services that the family makes use of, which are all considered to be immediate settings with which the child makes contact frequently. The gymnastics club forms part of the developing child's microsystem in this study because the frequent visits to the club for participation in gymnastics contributes to the child's development on a physical, mental, social, emotional and psychological domain. The child's body is reported to form part of the microsystem as well, because various characteristics of the body have an influence on development. Health of an individual can be determined by the efficiency of the body's subsystems, and how they function within the environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001), therefore the environment may potentially be a factor influencing the development of the child.

“From genes to biochemical reactions on the cellular level, from enzymes to proteins, and from bones to skin, the body is an amazing collection of compounds and structures” (Paquette and Ryan, 2001: 6). It is said that if all the systems of the body are efficient and working, that one may be considered to be in good health. Participation in sport, exercise and physical activity, as well as good nutrition assists in maintaining health, and assists in the prevention of coronary heart diseases and type 2 diabetes (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The microsystem consists of influences which are bi-directional in nature. For example, parents have an effect on the beliefs of their children, and children have an effect on their parents in the same way. The relationship functions in both directions, therefore classifying the microsystem to have bi-directional influences. These bi-directional influences are the strongest of all the influences in this theory due to the closeness of the institutions to the developing child, therefore having a great impact on the development of the child. This is not to say that the interactions on the outer levels do not have an effect on the developing child, as they do impact the inner structures of the Ecological Systems Theory.

The *mesosystem* looks at the interactions of the various settings within the microsystem. The mesosystem is the sphere that allows the different microsystems to interact with each other. An example of the mesosystem is the interaction of the child's parents with the coaches at the gymnastics club at a fundraising day, or a parent-coach meeting. In essence, this layer connects many of the child's microsystems (Berk, 2000).

The *exosystem* is a link between two settings. These are settings where there is a link between an immediate setting and one in which the developing child does not play an active role in. For example, if a parent works unusual and fluctuating hours, the child is not directly involved in the parent's workplace, but directly impact on the parent's ability to volunteer at any of the child's school events. The exosystem is a system that the developing child does not have a direct influence upon, though it influences the developing child directly. Other institutions such as the government and the policies that are drafted by them, as well as the hospital board which governs the procedures of a hospital, can be found in the exosystem.

The *macrosystem* looks at the larger cultures and ideologies which may have an effect on development of the child. Culture is said to affect each humans at every moment and can be defined as the “specific manifestations of a social groups’ design for living, developed over the years to provide social structure for the group members’ life together” (Burger, 2005: 10). The macrosystem hosts the influence of cultural values, customs, and laws on the developing child (Berk 2000).

The last system of the Ecological Systems Theory is the *chronosystem*. In particular, this system encompasses the patterning of events that take place within the environment and society over a period of time. This system explains the dimension of time that the developing child find him/herself in as he/she grows. Transitions over the life course take place within this system as well. It is reported that elements within this system can be external, such as the birth of a sibling or even the death of a family member, or the elements of this system can be internal, such as the physiological maturation experienced as the child ages (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

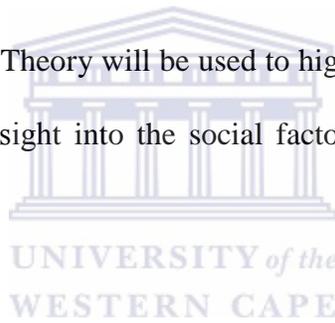


Society and the culture of the environment have an influence on the child’s development, therefore contributing to the beliefs, perceptions and socialization of the child with regard to his/her place within the community. Due to social factors being part of external forces, which are mostly considered uncontrollable due to its nature, participation within gymnastics may diminish or reduce; sometimes it may even grow, due to the adolescent or child being directly affected by forces occurring within the exosystem, within the mesosystem, within the microsystem. (Broffebrenner, 1995).

2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In summary, the sport industry is in contact with many social institutions and perpetuates cultural ideology through social relations. “Sports serve as a platform and as context for important everyday experiences, and they are related to every major sphere of social life within a society” (Coakley, 1994: 9). In more recent work, Coakley reflects, “After four decades of studying sports in society, I remain awed by the pervasive and nearly unshakable belief in the inherent purity and goodness of sport. Despite evidence to the contrary, many people combine this belief with two others: (a) the purity and goodness of sport is transmitted to those who participate in or consume it; and (b) sport inevitably leads to individual and community development” (Coakley, 2015: 403).

Therefore, the Ecological Systems Theory will be used to highlight the various structures within the gymnast’s life in order to gain insight into the social factors that may influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape.



The next chapter provides the methodological approach of this study. The research setting, research design and sample are described in detail. The researcher states the approaches to ensure trustworthiness of the study and provides an acknowledgement of thoughts, interpretations and assumptions for reflexivity. Ethics considerations are presented as well as the study delimitations and limitations. Following this is a chapter conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodological approach for data collection and highlights the steps used for the analyses of data to derive findings which are presented in chapter four. Methodology is an account of social reality or a component of social reality which extends further to what has been empirically investigated. This study investigates the influence of social factors on sport participation. In qualitative research, there are three major methodological approaches namely; post-positivist, interpretive and critical. For the purpose of this study, a qualitative exploratory approach is adopted to interpret how social factors influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape.

A qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate for this study because it allows for the exploration of the participant's understanding of the social factors that influence their participation in gymnastics. In addition, it provides the space for participants in this study (coaches, gymnasts and parents), to explain their experiences and perceptions of their social factors and their participation in gymnastics in their own words.

This chapter also outlines the research design and describes the research setting. A description of the gymnastics club selected for this investigation is provided. The criteria used for the sample selection is defined and the researcher presents details pertaining to the data collection procedure and explains the steps followed to analyse data, as mentioned in Chapter One. The approaches which were used to ensure trustworthiness is provided which is followed by an acknowledgement of own thoughts,

interpretations and assumptions for reflexivity. Study limitations and delimitations follow a presentation of ethics considerations of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this study is to investigate the social factors that promote or hinder participation in gymnastics, in the Western Cape of South Africa. To this end, an exploratory qualitative approach has been adopted. The intent of qualitative research is to understand particular social situations, events, roles, group interaction, and people's life experiences within social settings. Qualitative research enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place under investigation (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to generate information about perceptions and understandings that individuals have about their own experiences of a particular phenomenon within any given context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The phenomenon being studied is social factors and their influence on participation in gymnastics, in the Western Cape.

“The interpretive position assumes that the world is constantly being constricted through group interactions, and thus, social reality can be understood via the perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning making activities” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011: 5). The epistemological and ontological position of this study adopts an interpretive stance and to this end, the aim of the researcher was to understand and interpret the meaning of human interactions which is an underpinning philosophy of interpretivist research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

3.3 RESEARCH SETTING

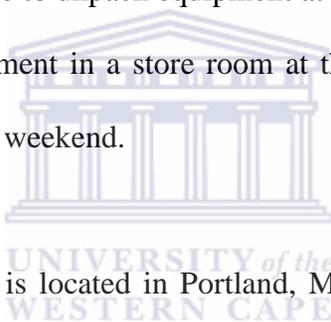
Guba and Lincoln (1994) are of the view that the researcher is able to learn more through a naturalistic method of data collection. In this study, the setting being researched is the gymnastics club in which the participants trained and practiced.

This research took place in different locations in and around the city of Cape Town. Mostly, research was conducted in gymnastics clubs, which are also known as gymnasiums. The gymnastics clubs that participated in this research was Giants gymnastics which has two branches, Giants gymnastics club in Mitchells Plain, and Giants gymnastics club in Blouberg.

To briefly describe the difference between the two clubs, and the areas they are situated, it must be noted that although both gymnastics clubs in this study operate under the same name, different challenges and opportunities are experienced due to their location. Giants Gymnastics Mitchells Plain is located in Mitchells Plain, which is largely a “coloured township”. It is reported that Mitchells Plain is one of South Africa’s largest townships located on the False Bay Coast between Muizenberg and Khayalitsha. Mitchells plain was largely created by the apartheid government in the 1970’s as a coloured township for middle-income families. The township was laid out in terms of the neighbourhood unit concept with large open spaces, localised public facilities and wide arterial routes. Various forms of housing were provided including, freestanding, semi-detached and duplex housing. However, by the late 80's and 90's, major areas of Mitchells Plain deteriorated into urban ghettos. Gangsterism and drug abuse has increased and a number of informal settlements has sprung up in the past several areas (Haefele, 2011).

Giants Gymnastics Blouberg is situated on the West Coast of Cape Town, along the shores of Table Bay and is often referred to as Bloubergstrand which means “blue mountain beach” in Afrikaans. Bloubergstrand is a residential area and attracts a large number of visitors and tourists, making it a more affluent area than a township. During Apartheid, Bloubergstrand was classified as a whites-only beach. The ruling was repealed in 1991 following the abolishing of the Group Areas Act (Garside, 1993).

Giant Blouberg is located on the West Coast of Cape Town and is making use of a church facility in which to practice gymnastics because they do not have their own stand-alone gymnastics indoor facility. Coaches and gymnasts have to unpack equipment at the start of their training week, and are required to pack away their equipment in a store room at the end of the week due to the church activities which take place over the weekend.



The other Giants gymnastics club is located in Portland, Mitchells Plain, which is located in the Cape Flats of Cape Town. This gymnastics club has a similar scenario to the Blouberg Giants gymnastics club, in that the facility they make use of - Portland Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre - is also used by other tenants. It is an indoor sports facility which is governed by Cape Town’s local municipality; The City of Cape Town and an array of tenants pay to make use of the venue for an allotted time. It is important to note that this venue is used as a centre to dispense government grants, pensions or other monthly stipends on certain days, to members of the community who collect their moneys there. Coaches and gymnasts need ensure that equipment is safely packed away when not in use due to the multi-purpose nature of the facility which they make use of for teaching gymnastics.

According to Creswell (1998) a data collection setting should be both convenient for the participants and guarantee them privacy and confidentiality. In this study, the most ‘appropriate’ and ‘natural’ setting for collecting data was in the gymnastics clubs for parents, gymnasts and coaches. In this case, from Mitchells Plain, the focus group discussions took place at the gymnastics club of the participants involved in the focus group, which were parents, gymnasts and coaches. From Blouberg Giants, parents of gymnasts and gymnasts participated in focus group discussions. At each of the gymnastics clubs, a private room was made available with sufficient tables and chairs available for focus group discussions to take place, despite facility and space limitations. The parents and gymnasts from Blouberg participated in focus group discussions at the church/gymnastics club in Blouberg, and the Mitchells Plain gymnasts, coaches and parents participated in focus group discussions at the indoor sport and recreation centre.

All key informants selected their own homes as interview venues. As the researcher, I travelled to each of the key informants’ homes. This assisted the key informant to feel more at ease and comfortable, and assisted in free expression of viewpoints and experiences in gymnastics.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

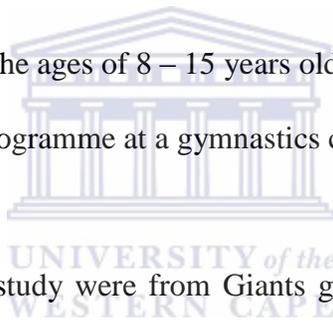
Gathering data is crucial in research as the data is meant to contribute to the understanding of the theoretical framework utilized in this study (Tongco, 2007). Purposive sampling was utilized as the sampling method for this study. “Purposive sampling is synonymous with qualitative research” (Palys, 2008: 697) Participants of this study comprised of gymnasts, parents of gymnasts and coaches of gymnasts. The type of purposive sampling, which this study adopted for the collection of data, was *criterion sampling*. Criterion purposive sampling involves searching for individuals who meet a particular criterion or who have had particular life experiences in a certain area (Palys,

2008). As previously mentioned in this study, coaches, parents of gymnasts and gymnasts participated in this study by taking part in focus group discussions which were held at their respective gymnastics clubs. Key informants were selected based on their experience and long-service commitment to the Western Cape Gymnastics Association and the South African Gymnastics Federation.

3.4.1 Sampling Criteria

Gymnasts were selected by their coaches to participate in the focus group discussions with the researcher to gather data for this study. The criteria for gymnasts to participate in focus group discussions were:

- Gymnast must be between the ages of 8 – 15 years old.
- Enrolled in a gymnastics programme at a gymnastics club for at least one year.



Coaches who participated in this study were from Giants gymnastics Mitchells Plain club. There were insufficient coaches from the Blouberg Giants gymnastics club to conduct a focus group interview. The criteria for the coaches to participate in focus group discussions were:

- Coaches needed to have a nationally recognized coaches certification under the South African Gymnastics Federation or the Western Cape Gymnastics Association.
- Coaches needed to be active in coaching gymnastics at a registered SAGF gymnastics club for at least one year.
- Coaches must be between the ages of 18 – 35 years old.

Parents who participated in focus group discussions in this study's data collection had participation criteria as well, which were:

- Parents must have a son or daughter participating in gymnastics at present.
- The parent's participating gymnast must have been enrolled in a gymnastics programme for at least one year.

A total of four key informants were selected from the Western Cape provincial database of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association for one-on-one, in-depth interviews of a semi-structured nature. The criteria for the selection of the key informants for this study were:

- Key informant must be a registered technical official, judge, coach or administrator at the South African Gymnastics Federation or the Western Cape Gymnastics Association.
- Key informant must be between the ages of 35 – 70 years old.
- Key informant needed to be a participating technical official, judge, coach, or administrator for at least ten years, working in the field of gymnastics and registered with the South African Gymnastics Federation or the Western Cape Gymnastics Association.

The Western Cape Province region (Cape Town) is the selected region for this study. This study collected data using focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Two gymnastics clubs participated in this study namely; Giants Gymnastics Club Mitchells Plain and Giants Gymnastics Club Blouberg.

Giants Gymnastics Club Mitchells Plain participants

A total of six gymnasts, six parents and four coaches from Giants Gymnastics Club Mitchells Plain participated in focus group discussions. A total of eight gymnasts, and six parents from Giants Gymnastics Club Blouberg participated in focus group discussions. Coaches from the Blouberg gymnastics club were not available for focus group discussions. A total of four experts in the field of gymnastics participated in one-on-one interviews as the key informants of this study. Therefore,

the sample of this study is 34 participants. Participants of this study are tabulated and totalled in Table 3.1 (pg. 63).

Table 3.1 Total participants of the study

Gymnastics Club	n
GIANTS GYMNASTICS MITCHELLS PLAIN	
Gymnasts	6
Coaches	4
Parents	6
GIANTS GYMNASTICS CLUB BLOUBERG	
Gymnasts	8
Coaches	.*
Parents	6
KEY INFORMANTS	
Key informant 1	1
Key informant 2	1
Key informant 3	1
Key informant 4	1
	n= 34

*Due to Coaches being unavailable, there were insufficient coaches from Giants Gymnastics Blouberg that were able to participate in the study.

These two clubs are not a representation of the whole gymnastics family within the Western Cape, however, this study's primary focus was to investigate the different social factors that may hinder or promote participation in gymnastics. While this case may be limited to these two clubs, this does not detract from the rich information gathered with regard to social factors that influence participation in gymnastics. With this being said, generalized statements or conclusions cannot be drawn for the entire province and gymnastics fraternity of the Western Cape. The researcher concluded the data collection process after Blouberg Giants gymnastics club and Mitchells Plain gymnastics club were

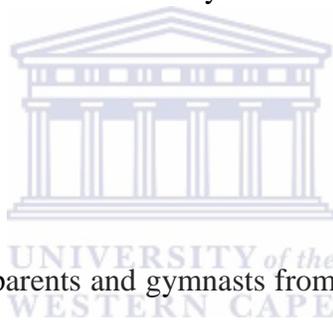
investigated and interviewed because theoretical saturation was reached. The need to explore other clubs did not emerge after theoretical saturation was reached.

The study only reflects information gathered from Gymnastics Clubs, parents, coaches and gymnasts within the Cape Peninsula area and cannot be applied elsewhere due to the difference in nature and dynamics of how each club, parent, coach and gymnast are affected by the social factors that they face, which is completely area-based and community specific. Two gymnastics clubs were investigated, which made the collection of data a manageable task, and assisted the researcher with creating a good rapport with the participants. The findings of this research will be made available to each stakeholder within the gymnastics fraternity of South Africa, and more importantly, the Western Cape.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

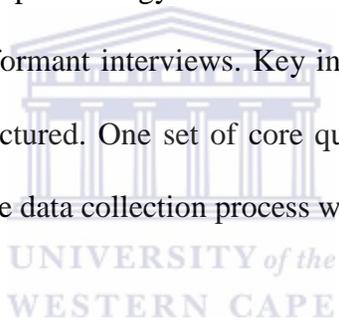
Data was collected from coaches, parents and gymnasts from a gymnastics club located in the West Coast and a gymnastics club located in the Cape Flats of Cape Town using focus group discussions and key informant interviews as the methods for data collection, with a purposively selected sample. Data was analysed using qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti, version 7.5.7, with pre-determined themes, based on the theoretical framework which guides this study.

These methods provided the opportunity for participants to express their interpretations, experiences, opinions and perceptions of participation in gymnastics, physical education, sports and recreation in their community (Flick, 2002).



Focus group discussions are a form of group interview that facilitates communication between research participants in order to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). Group discussions produce data and insights that would be less accessible without interaction from a group setting. This is also known as the group effect where group members engage in “a kind of ‘chaining’ or ‘cascading’ effect; talk links to, or tumbles out of, the topics and expressions preceding it” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002: 182)

Three different sets of cue questions for each group of participants were used to guide each focus group discussion. This was done in order to ascertain their perceptions with regards to the social factors influencing continued participation of gymnasts. Data was collected by conducting a total of five focus groups and four key informant interviews. Key informant interviews were in-depth and questions designed were semi-structured. One set of core questions was used for each of the key informant interviews conducted. The data collection process was as follows:



Step one: contacting the respondent

The researcher made contact with gymnastics clubs to build interest and present the research topic to each principal or head coach to ascertain participation commitment.

Step two: set time and place

Once interest was shown by respondents, a time and date was set to conduct the gymnasts’ focus group, the parents’ focus group and the coaches’ focus group at the particular gymnastics club. The same procedure was followed with regard to setting a date and time for interviews with key informants.

Step three: establishing rapport and neutrality

The participants were welcomed to the focus group and introduced to each other and the interviewer. For comfort and rapport, each participant and interviewer was called by their first names. Before the focus group commenced, an information sheet, focus group confidentiality agreement and consent/assent form was handed out, and explained in detail. An introductory round took place before the first question was asked, after which the topic of the thesis research was explained to the participants and the procedure of the focus group discussion was explained in detail. The interviewer presented guidelines explaining that there are no wrong answers, and that the participants may respond to the questions honestly and freely. The interviewer asked that no cross-talking take place. Participants were made aware that their participation in the focus group discussion was voluntary and that they are not obligated to participate if they do not want to. The interviewer announced that the focus group interview was to be recorded using a Dictaphone for reference and transcription. Participants agreed to, and understood this and each participant agreed to listen to each response and comment. Participants were also asked to treat each other with respect.

Step four: opening question and Step five: probe questions

The researcher begins the focus group discussion with an opening question. It is expected of participants to start sharing their experiences and opinions with regard to the questions being asked by the researcher. When questions were found to be difficult for the participant, probe questions were posed to the participants by the researcher. Probe questions were designed to assist the participant understand what was being asked. The researcher aimed to achieve a conversational dialogue to take place between participants, around the topics brought up by the researcher. The

dialogue was achieved by continuing to ask participants to expand on what they said, or to further explain their sentiments.

Step six: inviting a summary

During the course of questions and probing questions, a summary of what the participants' responses were, was given in the interviewer's own words, basically reiterating what has been said in order to clarify certain terms, and gain an understanding of the responses.

Step seven: concluding the interview

Interviewer asks the participants to reflect on the entire discussion and then offer their positions or opinions on topics of central importance. An oral summary between the participants and the interviewer took place in order to confirm questions asked, and responses which were given, and if anyone wanted to add a final comment before concluding the interview. When this was done, the interviewer asked participants if they were in agreement with the accuracy of the summary. Participants agreed and the focus group interview dissolved after the interviewer continued to thank the participants for being present for and sharing information within the focus group discussion.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Once the data was collected, the researcher commenced analysing the data. The voice recordings were played back and transcriptions of interviews and focus group discussions became the primary documents from which an analysis was performed to identify codes, themes and subthemes. The researcher made use of a thematic analysis. "Thematic analysis is, locating it in relation to other qualitative analytic methods that search for themes or patterns, and in relation to different epistemological and ontological positions" (Clarke & Braun, 2006: 79).

For the purposes of this study, data was analysed using a theoretical thematic analysis for both the key informant interviews and focus group discussions using the Ecological Systems Theory as a lens for interpretation of data to align key concepts/themes that may arise in this study. Data was analysed using qualitative data analysis software, Atlas.ti version 7.5.7., which assisted the researcher to collate and group codes.

The step by step procedure for the analysis of this study's data is as follows:

- a) Tape recorded data was transcribed verbatim. The permission from the participants allowed the researcher to record focus group discussions and interviews. The transcriptions were transcribed into English text.
- b) The transcripts were thoroughly read several times by the researcher.
- c) Transcripts were coded and analysed both during and after the data collection period, using Atlas.ti software (v7.5.7).
- d) Phrases, which related to a specific idea or question, was grouped together. Similar or related ideas were grouped together in thematic categories.
- e) The thematic categories were synthesized into a narrative summary. This narrative summary was aimed at reflecting the perceptions of the participants. The researcher used these categories to identify any themes from the data collected and then referred back to literature in order to build a valid argument.

Data was analysed until theoretical saturation is reached.

Following the theoretical thematic analysis, the data from the various data sets (coaches, parents and gymnasts) was triangulated, by conducting key informant interviews to gather more data, in order to create an overall and holistic understanding of the different kinds of social factors that occur from different perspectives. The benefits of triangulation include “increasing confidence in research data,

creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem” (Thurmond, 2001: 254). These benefits largely result from the diversity and quantity of data that can be used for analysis. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, data from different data collection methods such as interviews and focus group discussions, provide a deeper meaning and understanding of the research phenomenon and strengthen the research data by increasing the trustworthiness of the data. The key informant interviews added depth and served as a method of triangulation which contributes largely to the results of this study.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The purpose of qualitative research is to present an explanation of the personal experiences of participants of the study (Patton, 2002). Data collected in qualitative research methods should be verified in order to ensure that the research performed is trustworthy, thus ensuring reliability. Reliability in qualitative research can be achieved through four tactics, as reported by Guba and Lincoln (1994):

- Firstly, reliability can be obtained by making use of a structured process of interviews.
- Secondly, reliability can be achieved by ensuring that the recording of interviews takes place with a structured process as well.
- Thirdly, research reliability is often achieved when findings of the interviewer are compared with the findings of the interviewee.
- Finally, the use of a planning committee to assist in the design and administration of the interview program is another way that reliability can be achieved.

A variety of data collection procedures are outlined by Creswell (2009). It is recommended that the qualitative researcher makes use of at least two of these procedures for data verification. This study

adopted three data verification procedures to ensure trustworthiness and reliability of collected data.

Procedures utilized include:

- Triangulation: The researcher made use of multiple and different sources, methods, and evidence to form themes or categories and to corroborate findings. This study consisted of a total of two gymnastics clubs, five focus group discussions and four key informant interviews which formed the sample of this study.
- Member checks: The researcher made descriptions, interpretations, and findings available to participants in order to determine accuracy. Participants had two working weeks in which to respond with corrections. No corrections were received.
- Peer review or debriefing: A colleague and fellow post-graduate class mate, served as the researcher's peer reviewer, who was familiar with the phenomenon under investigation in this study. The peer reviewer of this study, supported the researcher and challenged the researcher by asking questions and inquiring about the interpretations of the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Also, this allowed the peer to identify any instances of biasness, as reported by the researcher.

3.8 REFLEXIVITY

This study adopts reflexivity in order to ensure that the researcher's assumptions and interpretations are accounted for as they influence the researcher, which inevitably influences research findings. "Reflexivity involves an awareness that the researcher and the object of study affect each other mutually and continually in the research process" (Haynes, 2012: 73). To this end, the researcher acknowledges all his preconceived assumptions about the research topic in order negate any bias which may influence the results of this study.

This research project attempted to investigate the social factors that influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape. The experiences and viewpoints from gymnasts, parents, coaches and key informants were regarded as the most valuable information for this study, as each of these stakeholders is involved in the participation of gymnastics in different aspects. This study made use of the ecological systems theory as the lens to interpret key findings of this research and to put into context the different levels of society that an individual forms part of, and how agencies within that society are able to influence the individual and vice versa, with regard to gymnastics participation.

Despite the contributions that this research makes academically and theoretically, the motivation for this research topic was personal to the researcher. As I embarked on this research journey, I had a few questions about the current state of participation in gymnastics, and wondered how social factors promote or hinder opportunities to participate in gymnastics. While growing up in Cape Town, I participated in gymnastics at club, regional, national and international levels. Over time I improved and progressed in skill-level and development. I was a member of the Western Cape gymnastics team for 9 years, and a member of the Protea South African team for 3 years. During the time I participated in gymnastics, I experienced periods of financial difficulty, accessibility to the sport facilities due to proximity or a lack of sufficient gymnastics clubs in the area, and I particularly struggled with access to convenient transportation to get to and from gymnastics practice, on time. As a result, I had the assumption that there were social factors that needed to be identified in order to gain insight to the influence these social factors may have on participation in gymnastics, currently. That was the personal impetus behind the research topic.

In this research study, personal and academic aims are thus intertwined. I attempt to create an increased awareness that may assist the federations and government to capitalize on opportunities

currently existing and channel their human and financial resources into creating more opportunities for participation. This will result in making gymnastics participation more accessible and affordable. Reflexivity requires sensitivity on the part of the researcher. The self of the researcher and his preconceptions pose an influence on the research (Haynes, 2012). The acknowledgement of the various motivations and assumptions of the researcher is important as they are likely to shape the way the research is conceived and interpreted, which affects the end product. The ontological position of the researcher is made known to the reader, which directly influences methodological approach, the interpretation of rationale and the theoretical position of the study.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With respect to ethical considerations, permission to conduct this research was obtained from the University of the Western Cape. Permission was also sought from the South African Gymnastics Federation as well as the Western Cape Gymnastics Association in order to gather data within the gymnastics fraternity. Once identified, the participants were invited to be part of the study. They were briefed on the aims and objectives of the study, the reason they had been selected, the importance of their participation and the value of their input to this research. It was explained to participants that their participation in the project was on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants were informed that should they agree to participate, they would be invited to sign a consent letter and a focus group confidentiality binding form which would be issued to the participants before the commencement of the focus group discussion.

For gymnasts involved in focus group discussions as part of the sample participants, informed assent forms were issued to them requiring parental consent before the study could commence. The

adolescent gymnasts were all under the age of 18 and therefore are minors. Once the permission of the participants received, the focus group discussions commenced and were audio-taped. All information was treated with the strictest confidentiality and the identities of participants were protected. Their names or personal information were not included in the reporting of the findings as pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Participants were given access to their transcribed information at their request and were encouraged to check transcripts and suggest any amendments of their transcripts. For ethical reasons, the names of the participants were neither recorded on the audio-tapes, transcripts, nor in the research thesis. All audio-tapes and transcripts will be discarded after 3 years. The researcher has kept a journal to track and store interview information and this journal is only available to the researcher and is stored in a locked filing cabinet along with the transcriptions and audio-tapes of the focus group discussions and interviews held with key informants.



3.10 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter provided insight into the methodological approach utilized in this study. The research design was described in detail and the sampling and population procedure was explained. Data collection steps were presented and the procedure for analysing qualitative data was provided. Trustworthiness was defined for this study, and reflexivity pertaining to this study was provided. Study limitations and delimitations were also highlighted.

The next chapter presents the research findings and a discussion of each finding takes place. The researcher provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework, which guides this study and displays the link between social factors and participation.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

“The strategic-political and ultimately moral-historical question is how to move towards understanding without ever forgetting, but to remember without constantly rekindling the divisive passions of the past. Such an approach is the only one which would allow us to look down into the darkness of the well of the atrocities of the past and to speculate on their causes at the same time as we haul up the waters of hope for a future of dignity and equality”

(Coombes, 2003: 1)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the different social factors that influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape. Therefore, this chapter represents the findings of the data collected for this study. The interview findings are presented qualitatively, using quotes and tables. Each theme, which emerged in this study, will be discussed. The presentation of responses from participants clarifies and expresses their experience concerning the social factors they encounter that influence participation in gymnastics.

Interview findings will be presented in sections of the predetermined framework and the themes which emerged. Data was collected, using semi-structured interview questions which were guided by literature and a pre-selected theoretical framework. There were five focus groups, comprised of three sample sets, namely; two gymnast focus groups, two parent focus groups and one coaches focus group, and finally, key informant interviews were conducted; with experts in the field of gymnastics. The key informants formed the fourth sample set of participant data, for this study.

There is a total of four different sets of data from the collected data, of participants in this study and their shared experiences as they relate to social factors and its influence on participation in gymnastics.

Data was analysed inductively using a content thematic analysis. As a result, numerous social factors emerged as experienced by the participants in this study. These social factors are found to have a direct and indirect influence on gymnasts' participation on five (5) different levels. For the purpose of this study, the levels of influence identified, which are based on the pre-selected theoretical framework of this study, will be described as systems, as depicted and found within the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). These systems guide the discussion of findings and are used to categorize themes that have emerged in this study, as they relate to the promotion or hindrance of participation. Thereafter, themes and findings pertaining to each section of the predetermined framework will be discussed in further detail, in this chapter.



4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants of this study comprised of gymnasts, parents of gymnasts, coaches within the sport of gymnastics and key informants, who have been identified as experts in the field of gymnastics. Each key informant was richly experienced in coaching as well as managing and administrating gymnastics clubs, federations and committees. To protect the anonymity of participants, pseudonyms will be used. Participants of this study are detailed in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5, and Table 4.6 (pg. 75-78). Although many of the participants in this study are female, this study's main focus and purpose was to identify and ascertain how social factors that influence participation in gymnastics.

Table 4.1 Focus Group 01 Parents

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Area</u>
Michelle	Female	West Coast
Natalie	Female	West Coast
Renee	Female	West Coast
Brent	Male	West Coast
Bernadette	Female	West Coast
Charmaine	Female	West Coast

Table 4.2 Focus Group 02 Coaches

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Area</u>
Davina	Female	Cape Flats
Jesse	Female	Cape Flats
Callie	Female	Cape Flats
Bonnie	Female	Cape Flats

Table 4.3 Focus Group 03 Gymnasts

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Area</u>
Blair	Female	Cape Flats
Serena	Female	Cape Flats
Jenny	Female	Cape Flats
Darota	Female	Cape Flats
Vanessa	Female	Cape Flats
Georgina	Female	Cape Flats

Table 4.4 Focus Group 04 Parents

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Area</u>
Elena	Female	Cape Flats
Caroline	Female	Cape Flats
Damon	Male	Cape Flats
Camille	Female	Cape Flats
Joy	Female	Cape Flats
Hayley	Female	Cape Flats

Table 4.5 Focus Group 05 Gymnasts

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Area</u>
Maggie	Female	West Coast
Addison	Female	West Coast
Arizona	Female	West Coast
Amelia	Female	West Coast
Miranda	Female	West Coast
Meredith	Female	West Coast
April	Female	West Coast
Stephanie	Female	West Coast

Table 4.6 Key Informants of the Western Cape

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>
Cristina	Female	SAGF and WCGA Official, Head Coach of gymnastics club
Lexie	Female	Judge and Head Coach of a gymnastics club
Faye	Female	SAGF and WCGA Volunteer and Coach
Rachel	Female	SAGF and WCGA Official, Head Coach of gymnastics Club



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WESTERN CAPE

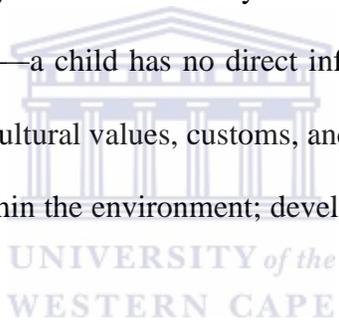
4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) states that individuals are embedded, fixed and encapsulated within environments and social settings with which they interact, and influence growth and development. The developing person actively processes and constructs beliefs and perceptions of their environments and, in turn, interacts with their surroundings based on those beliefs or perceptions. Therefore, people’s perceptions about their community influence their responses and interactions within it (Kline, McGehee, Paterson, and Tsao, 2012).

Bronfenbrenner (1995), who developed the Ecological Systems Theory (EST), explains that human development occurs from constant interaction over extended periods of time with other individuals and the environment. He provides five environmental structures, also described as systems, which

affect human development, namely: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Kline et al., 2012).

These are not separate and different systems, but rather a set of relationships that overlap, starting at the person's core (microsystem) and moving toward more distant relationships (Kline et al., 2012). At the microsystem level, the individual regularly comes in contact with the immediate environment, which includes family, friends, colleagues, and others. For the purpose of this study, the gymnastics club forms part of the developing child's microsystem. The mesosystem links the individual's microsystems together, such as a home and workplace, or home and gymnastics club. The exosystem is part of a larger system that indirectly influences the individual but is beyond their control (e.g., a parent's workplace—a child has no direct influence on the mother's employment). The macrosystem is composed of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk 2000). The chronosystem includes the dimension of time within the environment; development transitions over the life course of the person (Kline et al., 2012).



Data will be presented using the ecological systems theory as a lens for interpretation in order to better understand the environmental, social and personal influences, based on this theory, which may be affecting and influencing participation in gymnastics from the perspectives of the gymnast, the coach, the parent and the key informant, respectively.

4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The discussion which follows herewith begins with a summary of the section of the theoretical framework, theme as well as a summary of the findings. Thereafter, the discussion will elaborate on the findings presented in the summary. To this end, the findings were based on data collected from focus group interviews with gymnastics coaches, parents and gymnasts relating to factors that promote participation, as experienced by them. Arising from the thematic analysis of the focus group interviews, themes within each system of the theoretical framework have emerged. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the participants in this study.

4.4.1 Chronosystem

The chronosystem includes the dimension of time within the environment; as well as the developmental transitions which take place over the life course of the person (Kline et al., 2012).

For the purpose of this study, the chronosystem is used to document events that have taken place over time that may have influenced participation in gymnastics. The following themes have emerged within the chronosystem namely; change in participation in gymnastics over a period of time. Findings for each theme is discussed as findings are presented.

4.4.1.1 Change in participation in gymnastics over a period of time

Participants of this study engaged in focus group and key informant interviews. Questions asked were guided and based on the theoretical framework, particularly questions around changes which took place, specifically if there were any changes that were witnessed with regard to the levels of participation during the time that gymnasts were registered at their respective gymnastics clubs. From the experiences of the participants, Natalie reported that she had witnessed a growth in

participation throughout her involvement in the club. These sentiments are shared by other participants who have also witnessed an increase in participation. Rachel claimed that the increase in participation over time is as a result of inclusive practices. In addition, Cristina adds that policy reform and the addition of gymnastics disciplines over the years have led to an increase in participation. All of the participants were of the opinion that gymnastics participation has increased over the past ten to twenty years.

The following discussion elaborates on participants' experiences about the changes they have observed with regard to participation levels during their involvement at their respective gymnastic clubs

A parent participant, Natalie, expressed that she has witnessed an increase in participation in gymnastics because she had been one of the first parents of the club when it opened. Take for example this quote describing her initial experience regarding an increase in participation, noticed over a period of time:

“Watching the club, you know being one of the earlier...probably the veteran parents around the table... I mean when the club started it started with five, six kids...and literally I mean it's sitting now over a hundred or close to one hundred and fifty...I mean all the way...all the way through... Tiny tots, all the way. I mean from my experience at competitions those numbers also have grown you know...the competitions are taking longer to... the duration...the event lasts for longer and there's a whole lot more that needs to be fitted in, so I think more kids are taking up the sport”.

The observation of an increase in gymnastics participation at club level can be supported with the results provided from a national survey which was conducted in 2005 by the Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa, for South Africa's 2014 report card on physical activity for children and youth. The results of the survey indicate that one-half of adolescents were participating in one form of organized sport. The results from regional surveys, conducted in South Africa show that

less than 50% of children from rural areas participate in sport. Though, participation levels in urban areas were reported to be higher in urban settings, indicating that 66% of children participated in sport and recreation activities (Draper, Bassett, de Villiers, Lambert, 2014).

In retrospect, parents and key informants shared, that due to a change experienced in the South African constitution, “...gymnastics was never, to put it this way a “coloured” sport, it was a white sport”, says Damon, a parent participant in this study. Rachel, another expert in gymnastics, shares the same sentiments by reporting that, “Because they were forced to and they had to change. So I think, it’s good that everybody is included.” Cristina, one of the identified experts in gymnastics, also supports sentiments expressed by Damon and Rachel, and reported her experience with regard to an increase in participation due to inclusion as a result of the change in South African policy, saying:

“so if we go back to the eighties, like gymnastics was in all the white schools and most of the coloured schools from my understanding, but their participation was very separate, so you know, you had your white kids that would train, you know that would compete in all the federation activities and then you would have the coloured and maybe some black kids who would participate in very much the USSASA’s school programmes and it was kind of very separate, and then, you know with the change in South African history 1994/5, SAGF made a very concerted effort to bring everybody together so you know, I think from that point of view now you get everybody involved in the federation and also the demise and the fall of USSASA means that it was really only the federations activities that were going on.”.

The demise of the apartheid regime and its oppressive legislation meant that the first democratically elected government in 1994 had to embark on an inclusive process to establish unified sport policy, practice and governing institutions. (Maralack, 2014: 129). This literature is consistent with the experience of participants in this study with regard to inclusive participation due to a change in the South African Constitution which took place in 1994.

South African Government has established sport policies which enable an increase in participation in federation sport to take place.

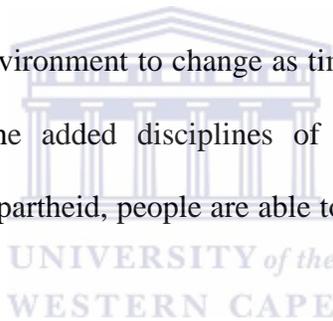
Cristina also expresses that she has witnessed an increase in participation due to the added disciplines hosted by the provincial federation. She adds that this contributes to making the sport more accessible on many levels and not only in competitive gymnastics, as is clear in the following excerpt:

“...from a community level because of the addition of all the additional disciplines, however, the fact that physical education is not in the school curriculum, has also been a complete detriment to gymnastics, because obviously gymnastics is a core component of it, so technically every kid who was at the school, although it was an affluent school, was exposed to gymnastics, so I don't know what the figures were like in the eighties, but it would be interesting, because obviously at that stage you could claim that every kid at least in a white school was doing gymnastics. So it's kind of a very varied changeover.”

This unexpected finding suggests that there has been an observed increase in participation. However, at the same time, it is noted that physical education (PE) is no longer part of the school curriculum. This observation has lead Cristina to believe that a decline in sport has occurred on a school sport participation level, though it is reported that there are no new, nationally-representative studies concerning PE in schools. In a recent study it is reported that youth aged 11-12 and 14-15 formed less than two-thirds of boys and girls, that participated in weekly PE classes. The median time spent participating in PE was reported to be between 30-40minutes per week (Draper, et al., 2014). It is said that the decline of school sport participation may be linked to the inclusion of physical education in the life orientation subject at schools and all schools are expected to implement this activity with at least one PE session per week per learner. However, it is also reported that school sport has become an optional activity at most of the economically disadvantaged schools in the country due to a lack of resources and facilities (Maralack, 2014).

This may suggest that participants in this study are consciously choosing gymnastics as an optional activity as there are reports from participants which suggest that the sport of gymnastics has grown due to the amount of gymnasts that are competing and that the competition events take up more time than they used to. Also reported by participants, was the increased accessibility of gymnastics, specifically with introducing added disciplines, to more than just the competitive community of gymnasts which has shown to be a positive finding for this study. The research conducted for the UNESCO/ICESSD African Sports Index study has confirmed that South Africa has experienced a fundamental policy shift with a comprehensive review of policies since 1994 (De Coning, 2015: 41).

Conditions of time allow for an environment to change as time lapses (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The federation is able to host all the added disciplines of gymnastics, in attempts to increase participation. With the demise of apartheid, people are able to participate in all sport codes in South Africa.

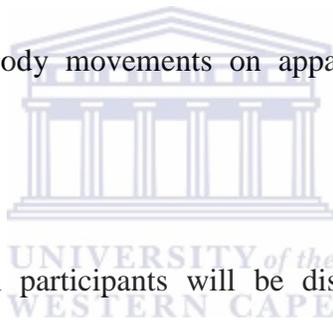


4.4.2 Macrosystem

The macrosystem is composed of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk 2000). For the purpose of this study, this system was used to explore opinions and beliefs pertaining to attitudes, ideologies and beliefs, including preconceived stereotypes, experienced in gymnastics. The following themes have emerged within the macrosystem namely; gymnastics is the basis for all sport codes, and stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about the sport of gymnastics. Findings for each theme are discussed as findings are presented.

4.4.2.1 Gymnastics is the basis for all sport codes

Many of the participants of this study were of the opinion that gymnastics was the basis for all sport codes. Participants declared that gymnastics incorporates all forms of movement, and that it contributes largely to the development of gross motor skills. Coaches expressed that gymnastics helped gymnasts both physically and mentally with pressures at school and at home. Coaches also agreed that participating in gymnastics allowed gymnasts to participate in all other sports successfully. Key informants concluded that gymnastics is a good foundation sport for gymnasts to learn major body movements such as flexion, extension, rotations, abduction, adduction and circumduction which contribute to twisting, turning, rolling and leaping whilst practicing basic elements and skills in this sport. This echoes the sentiments that “Gymnastics” in modern usage and competition generally refers to body movements on apparatus and tumbling on mats (Mood, Musker, Rink, 2006: 209).



In this section, perceptions from participants will be displayed regarding their opinions and experiences related to the benefits of gymnastics and how it forms a basis for all sport codes.

Expressions by Lexie, one of the key informants of this study shared:

“...because gymnastics is a grounding for all sport, so it is good for anybody to do it, try and push it from a young age. I always had a lot of kids who need occupational therapy who have low muscle tone; though they come to gymnastics and participate here. They see improvements in motor function and enjoy physical movement”

This point of view is shared by both Rachel and Cristina. Rachel expressed that, *“It is the basis for any other sporting discipline, I feel. So for me, you can’t do anything without gymnastics basically.”*

Similarly, Cristina also shared that, *“I think it’s one of the few sports that really works on almost everything, and it’s a very good foundation sport”*. Coaches who participated in this study, shared similar opinions which is clear from the following excerpt from Jessie as she expressed that,

“Gymnastics is the basis for all sporting codes and it also helps you physically and mentally...”

Sentiments were supported by Davina, a gymnastics coach who believes that, *“...if you do gymnastics then you are able to participate in whatever sport there is.”* This study found that both experts and coaches in gymnastics have opinions and experience with using gymnastics to establish a foundation of skills which can benefit the gymnast to perform in all sport codes. Participants’ views are supported by Dowdall (2011) who claims that gymnastics is an excellent vehicle for the teaching basic motor skills and promoting health-related fitness in children of all ages. The fundamental motor patterns that are best learned through a gymnastics education, are: static shapes and static-dynamic balance, jumping & landing, rolling, turning & twisting, hopping, skipping & galloping, crawling & climbing, and stepping & leaping (Dowdell, 2011). The gymnastics learning environment (via varieties of “fields of play” and apparatus) is unique in human movement in that it demands complex gravity defying body movements that require specific joint actions to be carefully aligned with the gymnast’s space, direction, time and rhythm (Dowdell, 2011). This affirms that the multitude of skills acquired in gymnastics stands gymnasts in good stead for participation in other sporting codes.

4.4.2.2 Stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about the sport of gymnastics

Participants of this study expressed their experiences pertaining to stereotypes. It was expressed by participants that gymnastics has been viewed as a “*white*” sport, or that it is a feminine sport. Some participants mentioned that people may think that gymnastics is a sport for people with a particular body type.

In this section, the concept of stereotypes and beliefs about gymnastics will be discussed, and direct quotes from data collected are displayed along with literature that supports the experiences of

participants. Rachel expressed her experiences around weight and the notion that overweight people cannot participate in gymnastics and shared that it is believed that,

“‘Fat people can’t do gymnastics’... We need to stop that, we need to encourage them, because that’s what they need. Because you find coaches, and I can also be guilty of that sometimes, but coaches are not going to worry because that child is never going to do that... but like I would do with the disability, work on their ability.”

Rachel elaborated that coaches can assist in encouraging physical activity participation in gymnastics because participating is not only fun, it also helps with weight control and living a healthy lifestyle. During another key informant interview, Cristina mentioned that she knew that there was a stereotype that, *“rhythmic is for really tall, skinny girls, so you know black African girls might say well it is not possible.”* This appeared to be one of the leading stereotypes contributing to a barrier in participation in gymnastics, where it has been expressed that gymnastics can contribute to weight loss if people could see past these stigmas and stereotypes. The gymnastics fraternity has the opportunity to break down impressions such as this, as such impressions indirectly deter people from participation in a sport that will assist in gross motor skill development, and help the participant achieve the required amount of recommended physical activity. In doing so, the levels of observed obesity will decrease and a direct improvement in overall health can be witnessed for the participant. In previous studies, there was evidence to suggest that pre-existing overweight and obesity can discourage sports participation (Turner, Perrin, Coyne-Beasley, Peterson & Skinner, 2015). It has been suggested that organized sports have an important role in assisting with the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity (Marques, Ekelund & Sardinha, 2015). These matters were not explored further as they went beyond the scope of this study.

Participants spoke about other stereotypical factors relating to race as well. The following excerpt suggests that racial stereotypes have a role to play in the hindrance of participation in gymnastics,

thus emerging as a theme for this study. Take for example this quote expressed by Damon, one of the parents who participated in a focus group discussion:

“...it was a white sport. It came down to us now, but because it is so expensive, people don’t actually go for it.”

Damon expressed that due to the change in the South African constitution and sport policy, non-white people can participate in gymnastics. He mentions that the cost of doing the sport is high, which is a deterrent to participation which he observed due to lack of affordability. These sentiments are consistent with literature by Shah and colleagues (2015), as it is explained that ethnic minority groups who reside in low socioeconomic status (SES) environments are even less likely to engage in physical activity (Shah, Ardern & Tamim, 2015).

Stereotypes around masculinity and femininity emerged in the analysis of the data and the following excerpts from an interview held with Cristina revealed that there are existing stereotypes in gymnastics defined by preconceived beliefs of femininity and sexuality which contribute to a hindrance in participation in gymnastics. Cristina expressed;

“they still view gymnastics as a...like they almost call it a “ballerina” sport or a “white girl” sport”

and further submitted,

“I know there is this exclusion to know that this is a feminine sport, but I don’t think I had that experience.”

In addition, she mentions,

“I think in some gymnastics disciplines we have the perception that it’s only for gay males, so that’s like could be an off putting factor.”

Society's expectations pertaining to gender and sexuality directly influence choices of people regarding participation in sport and physical activity. As found in previous articles, Hardin and Greer (2009) found that most sports are perceived as masculine (e.g., football, rugby, and basketball). Here, sports like volleyball and gymnastics are classified as feminine, and sports like soccer, cross-country, swimming, and tennis were categorized as gender-neutral. Research suggests that society prefers that male athletes participate in masculine sports and that female athletes participate in feminine sports (Jones & Cooley, 2014). Previous research has identified that athletic skills are categorized in terms of gender roles and that athletes who demonstrate muscularity, speed, and athleticism are likely to be classified as masculine, while athletes who wear glamorous clothing, who show emotion, who participate in judged sports, or who participate in sports with aesthetic elements are likely to be classified as feminine (Jones & Cooley, 2014). Boys/men are therefore encouraged to participate in masculine sports, while girls/women are encouraged to participate in feminine sports. There is pressure to "fit" into the gender social roles for both sexes with male athletes facing pressure to conform to masculine social roles and female athletes facing pressure to conform to feminine social roles (Jones & Cooley, 2014).

Spaaij, Farquharson and Majoribanks (2015) posit that gender is arguably the most visible site of inequality in sport. The contemporary literature on gender in sport is largely concentrated in three somewhat overlapping areas: masculinity and femininity; sexuality and homophobia; and bodily sex (including gender testing). It also, at times, looks at intersections between gender, race and class, though this is not a large focus. Similarly, gender equity, which used to be a key issue for sports sociologists, has been studied infrequently in recent years (Spaaij, Farquharson & Majoribanks, 2015). Gymnastics is a sport that is largely participated in by females, thus contributing to the image

of gymnastics being a feminine sport. This image could lead to a decrease in participation of males in the sport or could even completely deter males from participating at all.

Whilst sexuality and homophobia was not discussed further in this study. The perceptions of participants were that gymnastics may be a feminine sport. This may be the reason that there are a very few males who participate in the sport in comparison to the amount of females that do. This is evident by the demographic information of the sample. Many of whom are women. Clearly there is a lack of male participants in gymnastics and this could be linked to the notion found in Spaaij et al. (2015) about femininity, masculinity and sexuality. These topics were interrogated in the key informant interviews, though sexuality, femininity and masculinity were not the focus of the study, and was not seen as a social factor that directly impacts participation in gymnastics. Therefore it is not reported on in depth and can be discussed in future research.



4.4.3 Exosystem

The exosystem is part of a larger system that indirectly influences the individual but is beyond their control (e.g., a parent's workplace—a child has no direct influence on the mother's employment). For the purpose of this study, this system is used to explore and interpret the involvement of agencies that form part of the society at large, with or affecting the developing child participating in gymnastics. Agencies included National Government (SRSA), Provincial Government (DCAS), the Western Cape Gymnastics Association (WCGA) and the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF). In this section, their contributions to the area of sport, specifically in gymnastics will be presented as well as opinions and experiences from participants in the study. The following themes have emerged within the exosystem namely; National and Provincial Government support to

Federation; Federation support to Clubs, and lastly, the transportation system in the Western Cape formed part of the exosystem. Findings for each theme are discussed as findings are presented.

4.4.3.1 National and Provincial Government support to gymnastics federation

The Case for Sport in the Western Cape (2015) makes reference to a forward by Honourable Member, Minister of Sport; Fikile Mbalula, regarding the National Sport and Recreation Plan for the country of South Africa. According to De Coning (2015), the development of the National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP) was a major step forward and this framework is used as the key instrument for the implementation of a plan with a strategic focus to reconstruct and revitalize the delivery of sport and recreation towards building an active and winning nation that equitably improves the lives of all South Africans. “The NSRP, as the implementation plan of the policy framework for sport and recreation, is the foundation for an integrated, coordinated, functional and performance oriented sports system.” (De Coning, 2015: 71)

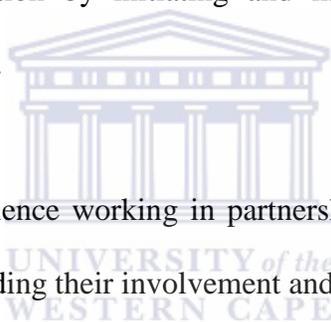


In this section, quotes from key informant interviews, and a focus group discussion with gymnastics coaches will be presented as they express their viewpoints regarding the support that government is providing to the Western Cape Gymnastics Association and the South African Gymnastics Federation.

Faye, a key informant of the study, expressed that she has witnessed government support in an area known as Mass Participation. She mentioned in the following quote that,

“...there was this thing I always said that there’s money for Mass Participation. But to get Mass on board, it needs money, government always said that they will provide the money for mass participation.”

Mass participation has been proven to get more people active and participating in sport than any other form of participation and is one of Sport and Recreation South Africa's main focus areas. Faye mentions that the Department for Sport and Recreation South Africa makes funding available for mass participation opportunities to take place and that this was one of the government's most important initiatives due to the health benefits that can be experienced by participants through actively participating in sport. According to De Coning (2015), with regard to the National Sport and Recreation Plan, namely building an active nation, the issues of health and wellbeing being dealt with by providing mass participation opportunities through active recreation; to maximize access to sport and recreation and physical education in every school; and the promotion of participation in sport and recreation by initiating and implementing targeted campaigns, are emphasized (De Coning, 2015: 72).



Cristina, who has extensive experience working in partnership with government on both national and provincial levels, reports regarding their involvement and support to the gymnastics fraternity:

“the districts tend to get funding from the government, and in general, all of our districts tend to use that funding towards especially clothing and transport for national competitions for those underprivileged kids, so because the clothing doesn't get given at a different price, and travel isn't at a different price, so funding will go towards at least assisting some kids to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate.”

Cristina explains that each of the districts receives funding in order to continue creating opportunities for participation: *“...from SAGF side I know they also use SRSA funding and Lotto funding and you know funding that they get to specifically create opportunities.”* Cristina further adds: *“...so initiatives that SRSA have done where they've got the schools tournament and that type of stuff and pay for the top kids to come might be a limited number. I think from that respect...and I especially see that in rope skipping... it really assist in order to give the kids the opportunity to take*

part. She continues to describe her experience within the Western Cape, as it is more pertinent to this study saying,

“But if I look in the Western Cape, there’s been other initiatives that you know, more recently, the government and city has brought in that really looks at far more recreation, like getting kids involved in some more recreational activities so you’re seeing far more growth and development in the sport happening, but in a recreation level, not necessarily in the competitions or anything like that but that doesn’t mean that they’re not involved in the sport”

Within the South African Gymnastics Federation, members (gymnasts, coaches and officials) need to be registered in order to compete, coach or officiate under the auspices of the SAGF and their respective provinces (South African Gymnastics Federation, 2014). The SAGF has four categories for membership namely:

- Category A = Competitive = R405.00
 - This is for a gymnast who is involved in any discipline under the auspices of SAGF from Level 1 upwards (all competitive levels). If a gymnast wishes to compete at district, provincial or national events, they must be registered in this category.
 - This is for a coach who is qualified from Level 1 and higher and who runs classes on their own.

SAGF receives R230.00, Province receives R130.00, Club receives R45.00

- Category B = Non-Competitive = R50.00 total
 - This is for a gymnast who is involved in any program in the sport at a level below Level 1 (Recreational). This includes awards schemes, Gym For All programs, Group Leagues as well as pre-schoolers participating in clubs and satellite pre-schools. A gymnast may not compete in a SAGF program if they are registered in this category.
 - This is for a coach who is qualified as Elementary or GL coach and who works as an assistant coach.

- If a member is only a judge they register as a category B.
- This is for a Supporter.

This category is purely non-competitive and makes no distinction between whether a member comes from an advantaged or disadvantaged background.

SAGF receives R24.00, Province receives R17.00, Club receives R9.00

- Category C = Competitive (PDI) = R50.00

- This is for a gymnast who is involved in any discipline under the auspices of SAGF from Level 1 upwards (all competitive levels) who is classified by their District/Province as coming from a current financially disadvantaged background. If a gymnast wishes to compete at district, provincial or national events, they must be registered in this category.
- This is for a coach who is qualified from Level 1 and higher and who runs classes on their own, who is classified by their District as coming from a current financially disadvantaged background.

SAGF receives R24.00, Province receives R17.00, Club receives R9.00

- Category D = School participant = R0 total

- This is for a gymnast who is involved in any discipline under the auspices of SAGF that is taught at their school. If a gymnast is registered in Category D they may only compete in an Inter Schools League Competition. If a gymnast wishes to compete in a SAGF competition they must upgrade to a Category A or C member.
- This is for a coach or judge who is an educator who only coaches or judges in a school and at Inter Schools League Competitions.

With regard to government support, it was found that Sport and Recreation South Africa and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, fully subsidize one of the categories in order to ensure

mass participation by school going children and adolescents. The subsidized membership is Category D which states that a gymnast registered in Category D may participate in Inter School League Competitions. It also stipulates that a gymnast will not be able to compete in the Federation competitions unless the gymnast changes Categories, either to Category A or C. In translation, a Category D gymnast is essentially competing separately to Category A and C gymnasts, therefore segregated from Category A and C gymnasts and in turn, segregated from the other disciplines under the Western Cape Gymnastics Association umbrella. Cristina elaborates and explains in a direct quote saying that,

“the completely government subsidized category allow gymnasts to participate in the SRSA competition...like the provincial government will pay for them to go, but they don’t take part in any of the federation competitions unless they will go up to category C.”

This government subsidy gives more people access to participation, which gives access to increased benefits to participants, like improved health and wellbeing and the opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity as recommended by researchers and sport and health practitioners. This subsidy allows for an increase in participation to take place as it has been found that the cost of participation hinders or leads to a decrease in participation in gymnastics, which has been confirmed in previous studies. The NSRP has identified five transversal issues that permeate every building block of the Plan, one of which is pertinent to this sub-theme: “To ensure equal opportunity exists for all South Africans to participate and excel in sport and recreation through the adoption of deliberate transformation initiatives.” (De Coning 2015: 73)

4.4.3.2 Transportation system as a barrier to participation

In this study, environmental factors emerged which play a role in the decrease or limitation of participation in physical activity, and sport participation. Participants expressed that their gymnasts encountered problems particularly with transport, i.e. getting to the facility to engage in physical

activity and gymnastics lessons. It is noted in research findings by Reimers Wagner, Alvanides, Steinmayr, Reiner, Schmidt and Woll, (2014) that proximity to sports facilities is a resource within the environment of the participant as this predicts their participation in physical activity (Reimers, et al.,2014). The fact that gymnasts have to make use of the public transport system in order to get to the training facility suggests that gymnasiums are outside a given community and that in order for a gymnast to participate, he/she is dependent on a mode of transport, whether public or private, to get to the gymnasium for training.

In a focus group discussion held with gymnastics coaches, it was found that particular problems are being experienced with regard to transport, affecting continuous participation for the gymnast. The following comments by Davina, relate to the difficulties experienced with regards to transport:

“They really want to come to gym but their parents are not there to bring them to gym and come fetch them, then they lose out and even though they might want to come back, they can’t due to transport. The parents are not doing anything to organize transport; they actually wait for us; phone the coach...”

This narrative also indicates that coaches experience parents to expect them to arrange transport to and from the gymnasium for their gymnasts, and that little to no effort is made by the parents due to work commitments. A lack of support to the gymnast has been reported. As parents must work in order to provide for the household, they are unable to facilitate transport and/or the time required to do so. This finding is consistent with, and supported by literature from Ruseski, Humphreys, Hallmann and Breuer (2011) as reported that a shortage of time often results from commitments to the family, and it is also dependent on employment status. Parents are at work, and are unable to transport their gymnasts to the gymnasium.

There are other transport related environmental factors that have emerged from this study. The transportation system functions on a macro level, outside of the control of any individual citizen within a society. Therefore, when the transport system is experiencing a strike, for example, it limits the mobility of the gymnast, parent or coach to travel using public transport to and from the gymnasium. Key informant Cristina advises about difficulties experienced with regard to the public transportation system,

“it depends what the public transport system is doing at the time, so you know obviously it is a complete hindrance when there are strikes or when there are delays, plus the cost factor for the parents having to pay for it, plus the safety issue.”

Cristina mentions that costs of transport and safety whilst travelling, were factors to consider with regard to participation and accessibility to gymnastics clubs and gymnasiums. This finding is consistent with literature found in Reimers et al., (2014) about the proximity of a facility and its relation to the concept of accessibility, in other words how easy it is to access a specific destination, in relation to physical distance or cost in general (e.g. financial or time resources). Due to an absence of nearby sports facilities, limited availability or low proximity, participation is limited, and may discourage participation in sport facilities outside their communities (Reimers et al., 2014).

4.4.4 Mesosystem

The mesosystem links the individual’s microsystems together, such as a home and workplace, or home and gymnastics club. For the purpose of this study, this theme is used to explore and interpret the links present in the developing child’s microsystems and how they interact with each other. In this section, a parent’s facilitation and contribution to a gymnast’s participation at the club and a parent’s involvement with fundraising will be presented as the mesosystem for the developing child. The following themes have emerged within the mesosystem namely; family facilitation and support

at gymnasium and gymnastics competitions. Findings for each sub-theme will be discussed as findings are presented.

4.4.4.1 Family facilitation and support at gymnasium and gymnastics competitions.

Another sub-theme which emerged from the focus group interviews and key informant interviews is the importance of support by parents and their involvement with the gymnastics club and competition. This broad sub-theme encompasses a parent's direct facilitation financially, and most importantly, morally. Parents facilitate their child's participation in gymnastics as they initially make the choices on behalf of their children. This is expressed hereunder by Renee:

“we initially put Maggie into gymnastics for the strength and just the general physical development of gymnastics I think is brilliant for children and for agility”

In the same focus group discussion, Brent reports that,

“I think the development of their strength, their motor skills, and also discipline, you know, what they're being taught here, I think it stems from the home and also then gets added here in the class room so I think physical development, discipline, the strengths which she mentioned before, and competitiveness; it's sort of a mixture that gymnastics sort of gives you and all round...”

It was found that parents are aware of the physical benefits of physical activity within the sport of gymnastics. Parents expressed that they wanted a place for their child to learn basic motor skills and develop physically within a safe and monitored sporting context such as the gymnastics club. Their support was also noted as an important factor for the developing child's enjoyment of the sport. This finding is consistent to the work of Allender, Cowburn and Foster (2006) as they report that, “enjoyment and support from parents were also crucial. Parents play a large role in enabling young children opportunities to be physically active.” It was also found by Allender et al., (2011) that

others with young children discouraged their children from playing in an environment perceived as unsafe.

Parents also expressed in a focus group discussion that the cost of participation in gymnastics increased as their gymnasts continued participating, year after year. In essence, Natalie expressed that extra classes, apparel and travelling increase in price. She says:

“As your kid progresses, the fees become more expensive and it is a, you know if you add up over the year what you could potentially have spent on classes, kits, competitions and if you are “cursed” with two kids, it can be very expensive. And when they have to go to out of town competitions, we’ve got to fund it ourselves and then if you’re also unfortunate enough that none of them are in Cape Town, then you actually then have to seriously reconsider, because there is only so much bread you can’t buy. And I think that could be a huge factor for continuing”

Participants reported that expenses within the sport continued to increase, as participation continued to progress. Participant’s quarterly membership fees increased, as well as the cost of apparel, equipment, choreography, and competition fees. It was expressed that the list of fees within gymnastics seemed endless, because their gymnast needed more than one leotard. Leotards are outsourced and are uniquely designed. Often, gymnasts needed sound and music software specialists to cut their floor music for their routines. As participation continued, the costs increased as well. This finding is consistent with those of Allender et al., (2011) as they report that, “on a simple level, barriers to participation in physical activity include high costs, poor access to facilities and unsafe environments.” Arguably, in an article by Tandon Grow, Couch, Glanz, Sallis, Frank and Saelens, (2014), parental support for physical activity is shown by encouraging, watching, and/or providing transport to physical activity multiple days per week improved children's activity levels by approximately 12 minutes of MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity)/day, and reduced sedentary behaviour by 19 minutes/day. Parental support and being present for the child had a

stronger effect. This strong relationship between parent support and child physical activity corroborates prior studies with mostly self-reported outcomes. (Tandon, et al., 2014)

In essence, a parent's involvement and interest in the developing child's participation in sport is crucial for growth and comfortability. Though, an opposing finding emerged with some of the other participants of the study. In fact, a parent from a second focus group discussion expressed that she was divorced and that she was the only parent with an active role in the child's life. In the following excerpt, Hayley mentions that she has experienced some struggles with being the only parent supporting her daughter, with no added assistance from the father, or family members. She continues to explain that:

“For me it was basically my husband walked out on me. But that was my goal; to see my child achieve something. It's just been me, nobody else, no family member, no support whatsoever, just me as a single parent at that moment”

Coaches shared sentiments as they reported to be regularly in contact with single parents or grandparents who have had to take over the care of the child due to the absence of the mother and father. The following narrative, by Davina, indicates the difficulty experienced by single parents and grandparents who are taking care of the child:

“so there are actually grandparents intercepting to be parents because I mean a grandparent getting pension, and I mean that pension is not just for grandchildren, the whole household at the end of the day, because there are maybe uncles not working and uncle is just at home, and they pay the kids school fees...”

This finding emerged and contributes to a difficulty experienced for continued gymnastics participation due to the lack of support in some of the gymnast's households. The importance of parental support is crucial to the growth of the developing person, and contributes to continuous participation in sport and physical activity. The richness of these findings are valuable in that the responses from participants allude to support various forms of physical motor development learned

in gymnastics and the costs of participation increasing as the gymnast progresses in the sport. The support of the family is required for continued participation in gymnastics to take place. This was an unexpected finding for this study.

4.4.5 Microsystem

At the microsystem level, the individual regularly comes in contact with the immediate environment, which includes family, friends, colleagues, and others. For the purpose of this study, the gymnastics club forms part of the developing child's microsystem. This system is used to explore the structures that form the developing child's microsystem; how they serve to provide opportunity for participation in gymnastics for the developing child, and how hindrances to participation occur. The following themes have emerged within the microsystem namely; Importance of gymnastics and the gymnastics club, Facility and accessibility, which includes the topic of apparatus and equipment - safety and availability thereof. Findings for each theme are discussed as findings are presented.

4.4.5.1 Importance of gymnastics and the gymnastics club

During focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the importance of the sport of gymnastics was a shared sentiment by many of the participants. Coaches, parents and key informants expressed that gymnastics is a good sport for social inclusion, that the gymnastics club is a great place to make friends and for the gymnast to develop social skills by interacting with other gymnasts whilst at training. Parents and key informants agreed that gymnastics was a great sport to teach the growing child discipline and to keep children active and out of mischief due to being occupied with learning skills and spending time constructively. Below are quotes by participants from this study that support these findings. Key informant Rachel stated:

“Gymnastics is so good for sport, because you can’t do it without being disciplined, you’ll cause injuries, you’ll do major harm. Its coordination, it helps kids with simple, simple coordination. If you look around, gymnastics is everywhere.”

Rachel mentioned that without having discipline in the sport of gymnastics, injuries were likely to occur. In an article by Sands and colleagues (2011), it was reported that, the rates of injury in gymnastics is a serious problem. Injury is reported to be harmful therefore all safety programs involve the prevention of unintentional threats of harm to the gymnast. Thus, safety and injury prevention are linked by intentional countermeasures in order to prevent the threat and likelihood of an injury, and reduce the damages that accompany injury (Sands, McNeal, Jemni & Penitente, 2011).

During the focus group discussion held with coaches, Davina expressed that participation in gymnastics had a positive influence on the growing child, and that the gymnastics club was a place where gymnasts could model a specific future for themselves by learning skills. Davina elaborated by saying:

“I would say that just the fact that being in a gym and being around positive people, I would say that that influences them already, to a point of like comparing with maybe what they might see in their community, people on the streets smoking...and then actually being in the gym and knowing that I want to be like Nicole, she’s coaching, she’s studying, she’s going forward with her life, not just being there and not indulging in...”

Here, Davina also describes how participating in gymnastics positively influences and supports the gymnast’s reasons to continue participation based on the example of people in the gymnastics club, who are coaching and teaching and sharing knowledge and information about the sport to their gymnasts. This is appreciated by both parents and gymnasts. Key informants expressed that coaches of gymnastics clubs become role models to their gymnasts because of their coaching methods and

their positive approach to sharing their knowledge of gymnastics in the gymnastics club. Take for example this following quote by Cristina as she expressed her experience, saying:

“I also think that in general coaches become role models, without even realizing it, so if they are in the community, serving their time, doing sports and naturally sharing, naturally you know being loving and naturally interested and kind you know people, that’s the image that the child is reflecting on and wanting to be like and to a degree they are mentors for the children as to how to ascribe to, so even if the kid’s parents are not home or not leading a good example, they’ve got an example of somebody who is a good example and they will maybe strive towards being that, even if their home situation isn’t very good, and I think that that alone you know, can help with teaching children what is right and what is wrong without naturally...you know without thinking consciously or directly talking to it.”

Coaches are unaware of the role they play the gymnast’s life. Coaches have the task of teaching a gymnast correct technique, and in doing so, the gymnast develops a sense of trust with the coach, and the coach becomes an important role model in the influencing of attitudes, and behaviours. With regard to leadership in sport, coaches have a significant role and influence on their athlete, in particular, youth athletes, mainly through the attitudes, values and beliefs they emphasize, the behaviours and actions they model, the goals and targets they set for their athletes, and the overall environment and culture they seek to create (O’Boyle, Murray, Cummins & Spencer, 2015: 174).

Participants in this study allude to the fact that coaches have the responsibility of creating a productive and positive environment for sportspeople to enjoy as they participate in sport. Due to the influential position the coach is in, and the opportunity for teaching and skills sharing the coach has, it is his/her responsibility to assist the gymnast in his/her endeavour to achieve and excel in the sport, and most importantly, to have fun. It is clear that coaches also play an advisory and educational role in the participants’ lives because they offer insight into morals, values and beliefs.

Parents expressed that they feel proud when they see their gymnasts achieving under difficult circumstances such as an underequipped gymnastics hall, and commended the coach for helping their gymnasts to achieve, regardless of the circumstances they faced. This showed that the coach plays a vital role in the personal success of the gymnast during in-competition and out-of-competition periods. Take for example the following excerpt from a focus group conducted with parents, as Elena expressed:

“And what is also nice is that we notice as parents, when they have a competition, and the girls go up to the podium to receive their medals and certificates or whatever it is, a lot of that talent are our children, Mitchell’s Plain, Giants, the disadvantaged children, children from broken backgrounds, poor backgrounds, and they go on to the podium there and they work with the broken equipment, and they’re struggling and have their social problems at home, but when it’s time to receive that awards; that certificates and the Giants kids go up there and then you can even see, say there’s ten Giants kids there then eight of those Giants kids are Mitchells Plain’s Giants kids...you know how proud you feel, despite everything and the hardships and circumstances, look at what they’ve achieved and it doesn’t just make them feel proud, it makes parents feel proud and the coaches feel proud because the coaches had to work with minimal resources and there the kids are”

Mitchells Plain is a community which has a previously disadvantaged background, and is located in the Cape Flats of the city of Cape Town, Western Cape. Members from this community struggle with high levels unemployment, a lack of education and high levels of negative social behavior that take place daily in the streets of this community. Parents in this study expressed that they experience a sense of pride when they see the hard work and determination of their gymnasts. Parents expressed how their gymnasts shine despite the disadvantaged position that they come from, and continue to achieve at gymnastics competitions, and often these gymnasts excel regardless of the lack of the equipment available for gymnastics training. The parents of this particular focus group maintained that their gymnasts strive and persevere for excellence in their gymnastics routines and conditioning. This finding can be supported as it is reported that the support of parents to their children regarding goals and aspirations are instrumental the in motivation of a child to succeed in

personal endeavors. It is also reported that the involvement of parents in the activities that children participate in predict positive effects on the parent-child relationship. Thus, the psychological wellbeing, including a healthy self-esteem and satisfaction with life, of the child, is improved when a parent is active in supporting the participation of their child in activities (Roman, Davids, Moyo, Schilder, Lacante and Lens, 2015). These gymnasts would excel further if they had access to better gymnastics equipment and facilities. The gymnastics club was found to lack sufficient equipment and apparatus for the coaches to teach gymnastics. It was also found that although equipment and facilities are lacking at this particular gymnastics club, gymnasts and coaches persevered through negative circumstances and were still able to achieve goals, in spite of their position socially and financially.

Thus, gymnastics can positively influence the gymnast, as the gymnastics club becomes a safety hub in which the gymnast spends unobligated time, thus keeping the gymnast away from negative social behaviours. The gymnast learns new skills at the gymnastics club from coaches that are dedicated to teaching gymnasts. The coach was found to be a positive role model to gymnasts because of their coaching methods and their positive approach to sharing information and knowledge of gymnastics. Parents of gymnasts reported that they feel a sense of pride when their gymnasts participate in competitions and win medals, in spite of the lack of equipment and apparatus at their gymnastics club. The support of the parent to the gymnast was found to be important for participation to continue in gymnastics.

4.4.5.2 Facility and Equipment/Apparatus Accessibility and Safety

Coaches, parents and key informants expressed their experiences with equipment safety and availability of facilities for training. Coaches, parents and key informants agreed that gymnastics

was a great competitive sport, but mentioned that there is a lack of appropriate facilities for competitive gymnastics training. In the following excerpt by Natalie, she expresses dissatisfaction with the kind of facility they are using for training purposes. She stated that:

“They are using a church here, I mean it’s kind of them to do that, but I don’t think it stands for any proper competitive gymnastics. You would have reached a level here and then you are going to just stay on that level.”

Natalie elaborated in another quote:

“...there is no facility at all in the whole of like the Blouberg area, I mean, let alone the fact that you need something obviously that’s big enough. I mean a church is not it, and as I say that limits you know where they’ll be able to go to.”

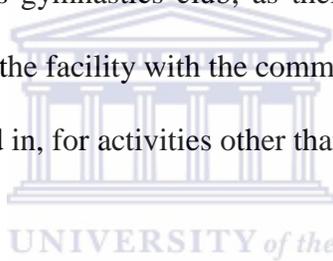
The Blouberg area, is a suburb on the West Coast of the city of Cap Town, and is historically an affluent area. The parents of this study reported that there was a lack of facilities for proper competitive gymnastics training to take place. Parents of this particular focus group maintain that the church is not a conducive enough facility for continued participation in gymnastics to take place. This finding is not consistent with the strategic objectives of the NSRP, which is to ensure that South African sport and recreation is supported by adequate and well maintained facilities. The NSRP notes that South Africa has a serious problem regarding the building, shared utilisation, equitable access and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities that have far reaching consequences for the transformation and development of the sport and recreation sector (NSRP, 2012). Unfortunately, facilities for gymnastics training are lacking in the Western Cape. Gymnastics coaches at gymnastics clubs are doing the best they can to host gymnastics and ensure continued participation in the sport by gymnasts as well as the continued support by the community and parents of the club, for the benefit of keeping the sport active in a particular area for children to participate. This finding indicates a possible hindrance in participation due to the lack of facilities available to host competitive gymnastics.

With regards to the use of municipal/government run facilities, coaches expressed that they were experiencing limited time for training due to the facility being used for multi-purpose activities.

Davina expresses her experiences in the following quote:

“We’re only allowed to gym an hour and a half in the week, twice, and then on a Saturday we are allowed to gym, beginners come in from 9-10am, and then everybody that’s competing comes in from 10-12.”

Parents of this gymnastics club shared sentiments in a separate focus group discussion, as they explained that their gymnasts must pack up the equipment after each session due to other activities taking place in the same venue after their training time. Damon expresses that, *“we have to compete with other things as well, you know...that the girls have to pack up after every session.”* This was a big concern for the parents of this gymnastics club, as their club had no space of their own for training, and that they had to share the facility with the community meaning that the facility needs to be left in the condition it was found in, for activities other than gymnastics to take place after.



Cristina reiterated that gymnastics was an expensive sport, and that the facility and apparatus requirements needed for hosting competitive gymnastics were difficult to meet due to high costs.

She elaborated in the following excerpt by saying:

“...gymnastics to me is an expensive sport in general just because it requires a hall, it needs to be indoors, and indoor facilities are really tough to find or get, artistic gymnastics you really need a dedicated hall, that next to impossible to get or if you’re going to do it at a cost it’s a hell of a lot of money and plus all the apparatus requirements...”

It was found that there are very few available halls that are suitable for hosting gymnastics in the Western Cape. It was also found that if the halls were available, they were very expensive, and usually did not have the apparatus requirements.

Safety as a social factor emerged as a finding that prevents participation. Safety around equipment, and the protection of gymnasts was discussed, as well as the safety of the area or environment in which the gymnastics club is based. Due to transport unreliability and the increasing crime rates within the Western Cape, parents, coaches and key informants shared their experiences with regard to their gymnast's safety in, and out of the gymnastics club, as a big concern impacting on continued participation for the developing child. Take for example this quote, as Cristina elaborated on some of the risks encountered in an area where one of the gymnastics clubs is situated:

“...we have the gym in Phillippi which is next to the bus and taxi rank, so when there's bus and taxi wars, the entire gym can't train, because they're right smack bang in the middle of it, and they can't even enter you know the area to train...”

These sentiments and concerns were expressed during an interview with Rachel as well, saying: *“If you think of Phillippi, if theres trouble there and they start burning tyres and things like that then the gymnasts cant go in and go and train there.”* Lexie shared a similar experience to Cristina and Rachel, and reported that her gymnastics club makes use of the Phillippi venue quite often, but before heading to Phillippi for training, she always needed to check if the area was safe before going through from the West Coast area. She explained in the quote below, saying:

“Well, we go to Phillippi often. I often have to check is it alright; is it ok today; are we safe; are we going to be all right, but I won't take them if I don't think it's safe.”

Environment safety is important for the protection of the members of society that reside in that area. Environment safety in a neighbourhood includes safety from crime, unreliable public transport systems and inconvenience caused by negative social activity. This finding is consistent with a study by Kamphuis and colleagues, where they examined lower rates of physical activity in disadvantaged areas and have demonstrated the importance of neighbourhood attractiveness, the accessibility and proximity of neighbourhood facilities, and neighbourhood safety (Kamphuis, Lenthe, Giskes, Huisman, Brug, Mackenbach, 2008). Therefore it is found that neighbourhood

safety directly impacts continued sport participation. In addition to environment safety, this study found that equipment safety was a factor affecting participation in gymnastics as well. In the sport of gymnastics, the gymnast performs skills on a variety of different apparatus. These apparatus need to be maintained to remain safe for the gymnast to execute skills safely with minimum risk of injury. Cristina reports that South African gymnastics clubs do their best to ensure safety in the gymnasium, but according to international standards, the clubs here do not meet safety requirements. Take for example this quote as she explained her recent experience:

“I think your big clubs that are established will be as safety conscious as possible, but for example, we had a visiting consultant from the UK out and we were in a gym in Brits, which is completely set up all the time, probably one of the nicest set up gyms, you know one of the really nicely set up gym in our opinion as South Africans, and then he walks and he said in the UK, no one will be allowed to set foot in it, because the wires that are holding the bars up are not covered by foam; there is concrete floor you know that’s free, and concrete, and look in the Western Cape we had a kid who came off the P-bars who happened to land on the one piece of area of concrete and now he’s paralyzed.”

This finding is consistent with research recommendations by Jayani (2014) regarding provision of adequate physical resources including facilities, equipment and maintenance which can help in influencing attitudes and facilitating program success. Proper facilities and equipment should be available to ensure the safety and health of the athletes (Jayani, 2014). With the lack of safe facilities and equipment, the chance of injury is higher, therefore clubs need to make provision and invest in protective equipment. One of the problems that emerged in this study was that clubs had difficulty with investing in protective equipment, due to its high costs. The following excerpt by Cristina explains:

“the cost of safety like mats and everything like that is so exorbitant that nobody can afford to actually like cover their gym perfectly as it’s supposed to be done.”

These findings are consistent with recommendations made in an article by Sands and colleagues (2011) as they report that safety solutions are often expensive simply because they require more of something. In gymnastics, the most common safety equipment is found in soft matting. Mats tend to be expensive and have limited life spans. However, an appropriate mat can make all the difference in reducing risk to manageable proportions (Sands, McNeal, Jemni & Penitente, 2011). Injuries occur frequently during training at the gymnasium and coaches of gymnastics clubs need to be alert when training is in session. The cost of equipment for safety in gymnastics is found to be expensive and with a lack of funds and needing fundraising, it is more challenging to the club and the parents of the club, as they facilitate their gymnast's participation.

Coaches however, are focused on increasing participation and making sure that more children enrol in the sport of gymnastics because of the benefits that gymnastics provides the growing child, such as, gross motor skills development and a supervised environment in which to engage with peers. In the coaches focus group discussion, it was expressed that the sport is growing, and more children are participating. The unfortunate circumstance that is being faced at the moment is that there is a lack of apparatus and equipment to host the sport of gymnastics. It was found that the lack of resources limits participation in the gymnasium, for example, gymnasts are limited to two turns on the apparatus. There has been an increase in participation but the amount of gymnastics equipment and apparatus has not grown to accommodate this. The following excerpt by Davina shows that their gymnastics club is currently struggling with a lack of equipment and apparatus:

“And we have very little mats as well, but the biggest thing I would say, if you want to increase the numbers, we need to have more apparatus, because there is no point in increasing, and each child gets two turns on the apparatus.”

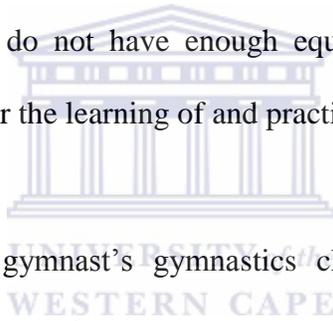
Davina continued about their club endeavours to increase participation by saying:

“we're trying to build gymnastics and create participation; increase participation, but we don't have equipment”

In the following quote, Davina expresses her frustrations with regard to the limited training time gymnasts are experiencing in the gymnasium due to having insufficient equipment and apparatus, by saying that:

“so it’s difficult training if you have so little, like each child gets twenty five minutes on an apparatus and they are probably like ten in a group, fifteen in a group, sixteen Level 1’s in a group so it gets to a point where you actually do get frustrated as a coach; out of everybody will have two turns on the bar and then the time is up so definitely I would say apparatus is a big part of what we need because we only have one beam that was donated before even I started coaching here and then Raedene actually gave us the old beams, so we have the two beams and then the little low beams, you understand, so it’s like keeping kids on the two beams.”

This study has found that the increase in participation in gymnastics is a benefit to the sport, however, some gymnastics clubs do not have enough equipment to provide each gymnast the required amount of training time for the learning of and practicing of skills and routines.



Parents have noticed that their gymnast’s gymnastics clubs are struggling with insufficient equipment and apparatus, and collectively meet to arrange fundraising events in order to generate income for the purchasing of new gymnastics equipment and apparatus. Damon expressed in the following quote how fundraising adds pressure and stress on the parents of the club:

“So that’s also a worrying factor and it’s added stress on us to fundraise I mean you can see that the equipment we have here; we have not the best of equipment; it’s run down; it needs to be serviced; we do not have enough, so we’re not happy with our equipment, so it’s a lot of added pressure to the parents”

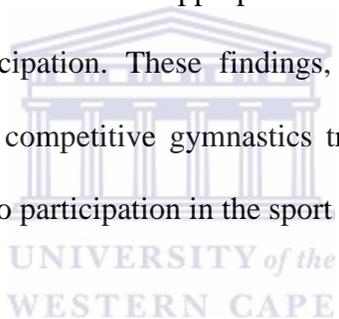
In a gymnast’s focus group discussion, Maggie acknowledges that parents are intervening with aims to raise funds for new equipment and apparatus. She reported that she had experienced difficulty with learning skills on alternative apparatus. Take for example the following quote, as Maggie expressed the reason that the club is in need of a proper gymnastics floor, instead of a padded floor:

“They are raising money, but I really really want them to help me with bounces on the floor and a spring floor and a table for when you’re getting to the higher levels...level five and a tumble track to practice my flic flacs”

Parents acknowledge that their gymnasts are working hard and doing the best they can with the equipment and apparatus available at their clubs. Damon stated that the gymnast perseveres, but with no equipment, saying:

“So what is the use the child is here working hard and now the club here does not have the equipment here.”

This finding reveals limitation on participation due to the lack of appropriate and safe equipment. From these focus group discussions, it has become apparent that there is a lack of funding, which can be seen as the main reason for the lack of appropriate equipment and apparatus in gymnastics clubs, hampering continued participation. These findings, in addition to not having a proper gymnastics facility conducive for competitive gymnastics training to take place, are the leading social factors causing a hindrance to participation in the sport of gymnastics.



4.4.6 The Individual (Gymnast)

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) states that “individuals are embedded within environments with which they interact to influence development. Individuals actively process and construct beliefs and perceptions of their environments and, in turn, interact with their surroundings based on those beliefs or perceptions” (Kline et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, this theme is used to explore the benefits of participating in gymnastics, from the perspectives of the coach, parent, key informant and most importantly, the experience of the gymnast. In this section of the discussion, the following sub-theme emerged: Benefits experienced on a physical, cognitive and socio-emotional level for the gymnast.

4.4.6.1 Physical, cognitive and socio-emotional benefits for gymnast

Participants of this study expressed their experiences pertaining to learning skills and the benefits of gymnastics training for the developing child. The perspectives from gymnasts, coaches, parents and key informants will be discussed accordingly. It was expressed by participants that gymnastics is a great sport for motor skills development, discipline, commitment and self-awareness. Key informants, Lexie and Cristina elaborated in the quotes to follow.

Cristina expressed that parents put their children into gymnastics because it is a good foundation sport to learn co-ordination and discipline. In the following excerpt, Cristina shared that:

“I think parents like their kids to do gymnastics, because it’s an all-round activity, so they learn you know, great co-ordination, they learn discipline, they learn to work as an individual, they learn to work in a team, I think it keeps them focused, and from a physical aspect it keeps them busy and I think it’s one of the few sports that really works on almost everything, and it’s a very good foundation sport, so ja, I would think that.”

Lexie shared similar sentiments to Cristina and expressed that:

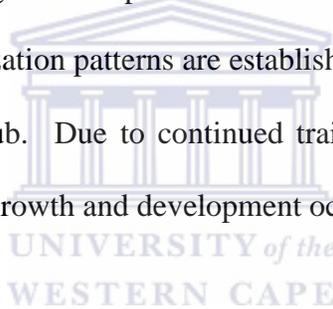
“Kids need it for anything, from a discipline point of view, from a self-awareness point of view, from a strength point of view, so there’s just a lot out there that the kids can get hold of so there’s a lot of sports that they can choose, whether they are going to choose gymnastics or not.”

Lexie and Cristina acknowledged the benefits of participating in gymnastics for the developing child. These benefits allow the child to become skilled physically, increase strength and improve co-ordination. In this sub-theme, an emphasis is placed on the concept of learning. One of the benefits outlined by Cristina was that it kept children busy and occupied as well. Lexie elaborated by stating that:

“They grow in strength, flexibility, self-awareness. It’s just been so good for everybody and as I said it’s grounding for all sports so they come in and they can do gymnastics and it will increase their flexibility for their karate, or their strength for their swimming. It’s just really good for anybody to participate from a real young age, and I think that it

would just benefit everybody if they come and do it.”

Lexie expressed that she thought that everybody could benefit from the fundamental skills that gymnastics teaches the developing child. In the work of Ginsburg (2007), it is stated that sport and play are so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child (Ginsburg, 2007). It is further reported by Ginsburg (2007) that participation in play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. He mentions that play is important to healthy brain development (Ginsburg, 2007). The relationship between children and sport activities appears to be a critical factor in psychological, physical, and emotional growth. The developing child experiences benefits that can only evolve through sport participation, during which socialization patterns are established through frequent contact with peers and coaches at the gymnastics club. Due to continued training and the learning of skills in the gymnastics club, musculoskeletal growth and development occur.



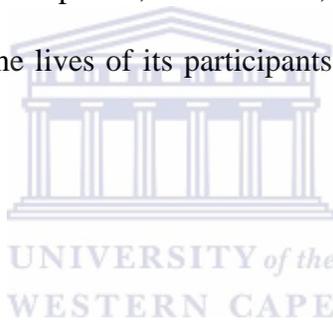
Parents are motivated by these benefits for their children. Take for example, the following quote from a focus group discussion held with parents, as they shared their experiences regarding some of the benefits that participating in gymnastics can provide for a developing child. Renee explained that:

“I would say we initially put Maggie into gymnastics for the strength and just the general physical development of gymnastics I think is brilliant for children and for agility, but again any sport, no sport is a waste of time and team sports as well I think also has a place in social, teaching them how to be with other people you know.”

It is found that Renee was certain that her daughter, Maggie, would benefit from participating in gymnastics on a physical and social level. As found in a study by Dowdell (2011), he reports that,

“one of the major benefits of gymnastics activity is that the gymnast's body experiences a wide variety of shapes, movement patterns, spatial changes and loadings (muscular and non-muscular) – all providing engaging and beneficial kinesthetic stimuli” (Dowdell, 2011). Participating in gymnastics provides a unique movement experience.

Dowdell (2011) also reports that gymnastic participation at a gymnastics club, is a wonderful laboratory for children to learn and practice goal setting, participate in team work, even though gymnastics appears to be an individual sport, as there is much intra-team encouragement in the gymnasium taking place during training. In summary, it can be found that participation in gymnastics contributes to skills development, socialization, provides an outlet for play as well as enriches and physically educates the lives of its participants in ways that are unreachable by most other activities and sports.

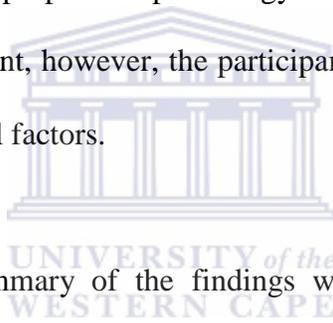


4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a discussion of the participant’s experiences of social factors which influence participation in gymnastics through the lens of the ecological systems theory. Each finding was discussed, in order to provide insight into the influence of social factors affecting participation in gymnastics within the chronosystem, the macrosystem, the exosystem, the mesosystem, the microsystem and as how social factors influence participation in gymnastics.

The responses from the participants showed that social factors do have an influence on participation, on different levels, which impacts the gymnast uniquely. With regard to the chronosystem, the change in participation in gymnastics is evident, as more disciplines of gymnastics are made available by the federation, for participation to take place. The change in the South African

constitution allows for all people to participate as well. Within the macrosystem, stereotypes do exist and were reported to have an influence on participation. The exosystem plays a significant role in the gymnast's participation, because the gymnast has no direct influence on the activities that take place within the exosystem. For instance, the availability of transportation is outside the control of the gymnast, thus impacts the gymnast directly in the pursuit of participation. The gymnast's parents and family are closely involved in the activities of the gymnastics club with regard to fundraising activities that take place from time to time, thus creating an active mesosystem between the gymnast's microsystems. The gymnastics club forms part of the gymnast's microsystem, as gymnasts frequent the gymnastics club to participate in physical activity. The gymnastics club lacked sufficient facilities to host proper competitive gymnastics training, which made training a difficulty for participants. At present, however, the participants in this study continue to participate despite the influence of these social factors.



The next chapter provides a summary of the findings which were discussed in this chapter, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research and practice are presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was guided by the research question which was to ascertain how social factors influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape. This research document comprised of five chapters. The researcher provided a background, introduction and motivation for the study in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, the researcher provided a review of literature which explored the effect of social factors on participation in sport. Specifically highlighted was the importance of sport participation and gymnastics and a description of the gymnastics disciplines was provided. An overview of social factors was presented and lastly, the theoretical framework that this study adopted, was outlined and defined. Chapter Three details the methodological considerations for this study, research approach and research design. A qualitative approach was selected to perform an investigation of the influence of social factors on sport participation, for this study. In Chapter Four, the results of the investigation are displayed and discussed, using the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1995) as the lens to interpret the findings of this study. This chapter outlines the key findings for each theme and offers conclusions and recommendations with regard to social factors that influence sport participation in the Western Cape.

This study made use of a qualitative approach in order to determine which social factors hinder participation in gymnastics, and which social factors promote participation. The researcher compiled interview questions (See Appendices E, F, G, H) relating to different social factors which influence participation in sport. The Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1995) was used

as a framework to guide the questions used in focus group discussions and key informant interviews, to gather data. The study incorporated five predetermined systems from the theoretical systems theory namely; the chronosystem, the macrosystem, the exosystem, the mesosystem, and the microsystem. In addition, the individual (gymnast), was included, as indicated by literature, as the final system for this study. Several themes became evident, each of which was discussed, e.g. changes in participation in gymnastics over a period of time, stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about gymnastics, National and Provincial government support to gymnastics federation, and physical, cognitive and socio-emotional benefits for gymnast.

Conclusions drawn from the patterns that have emerged from the data must be confirmed or verified to assure they are real and accurately reflect participant's view of reality (Wise, 2011). Drawing conclusions emphasizes the credibility of findings (Wise, 2011 and Creswell, 2003). This chapter will conclude the findings presented in Chapter Four, based on the systems found within the theoretical framework of this study; The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), which was used to interpret the influence of social factors on sport participation, in the Western Cape.

This study poses a research question, which was developed after conducting a review of literature for this study. The objectives of this study were explored to answer this study's research question.

The research question of this study is:

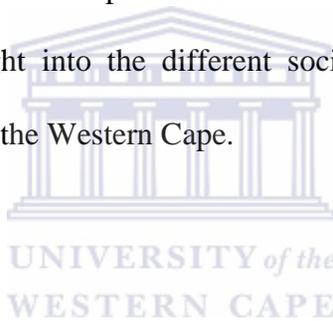
1. How do social factors influence participation in the Western Cape?

A thematic analysis was conducted in order to explore the nature of the data collected from the participants, by hosting focus group discussions and conducting key informant interviews, and to draw conclusions on the findings from gathered data. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of social factors on participation in gymnastics from the perspectives of the gymnast,

coach, parent and key informant. In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were identified in Chapter One:

1. To investigate reasons for participation in gymnastics within various communities in the Western Cape.
2. To determine which social factors hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics in differently placed communities in the Western Cape.
3. To determine which social factors promote opportunities for participation in gymnastics in differently placed communities in the Western Cape.

The summary of findings which follows is presented within the framework detailed earlier, in order to allow the reader to gain insight into the different social factors that have an influence on participation in gymnastics, within the Western Cape.



5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Participants of this study shared their experiences with regard to the different social factors, conditions and situations that promoted and prevented participation. Also, participants expressed their reasons for participating in the sport of gymnastics. Parents, coaches and key informants contributed to this study.

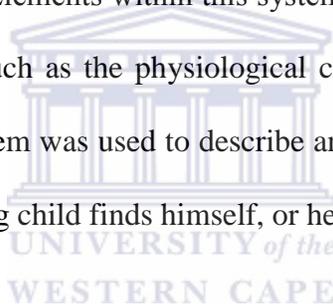
5.2.1 The Chronosystem

The first system highlighted the participant's experiences with regard to a change in participation observed over a period of time. The chronosystem was explored in the following ways:

1. Participants were asked their opinions and experiences with regard to how participation has changed over a period of time.

- a. Parents specifically spoke about their experiences from the time their child joined a gymnastics club.
 - b. Coaches shared their experiences with regard to their gymnastics classes and competitions growing every year.
 - c. Key informants shared similarly to coaches, as they have been involved in the sport of gymnastics for over ten years, as administrators, coordinators and coaches.
2. Participants were asked what their thoughts were regarding the reason they think that a change in participation. has been experienced.

A definition by Paquette and Ryan (2001) refers to the chronosystem as the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments. Elements within this system can be either external, such as timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a child. In this study, the chronosystem was used to describe and interpret changes within society and the environment that the developing child finds himself, or herself in.



Experiences with regard to changes that took place over a period of time, as an influence on participation in gymnastics, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. Democracy allows for increased participation in any sport code for any citizen in the Republic of South Africa.
2. The removal of Physical Education from the school curriculum is to the detriment of gymnastics,
3. Community centers do not offer gymnastics lessons to the children of the community for free any longer.
4. The Western Cape Gymnastics Association has made all disciplines under the gymnastics sport umbrella, available for participation through expansion.

Findings indicate that participants in this study experienced a positive change in participation in gymnastics over a period of time, as an increase in children participating in gymnastics has been witnessed or observed by parents, coaches and key informants at club and provincial level. According to participants in this study, this is due to the change in the South African Constitution in 1994. Therefore it is found that there has been an increase in participation as a direct result of the Republic of South Africa becoming a democratic country and that access to gymnastics is easier.

With regard to school-gymnastics participation, it was found that there is a possibility that gymnastics is not practiced at schools due to physical education no longer being a part of the school curriculum. It was found that due to rationalization of physical education from the South African school curriculum since 1994, there is less participation in gymnastics and physical activity taking place at school as a result of this. Therefore should children want to participate in a sport, it has to take place outside of the school day and in the unobligated time of the child. Often the unobligated time of the child clashes with work time of the parent.

Community centres which used to offer free physical activity and sporting opportunities to children no longer do so. Should children want to participate in gymnastics, they need to go to a gymnastics club, and register as a gymnast in one of the categories of the South African Gymnastics Federation.

It is an ongoing endeavour of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association to increase participation in gymnastics. There is capacity, to a degree, to host each of the disciplines, namely Mens Artistic Gymnastics, Womens Artistic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Rope-Skipping, Gymnastics for All, Acrobatic Gymnastics and Trampoline Gymnastics.. Within the Western Cape, all eight of the gymnastics disciplines are available, and accessible. .

According to Johnson (2008), the chronosystem represents a time-based dimension that influences the operations of all the systems of the ecological systems theory. Johnson (2008) reports that the chronosystem refers to short- and long-term dimensions of the macrosystem in which the individuals exist. This representation of the chronosystem is supported by Kline et al. (2012) who refer to the chronosystem including the dimensions of time within the environment; development transitions over the life course of the person. There is a current and active National Sport and Recreation Plan which endeavours to guide sport governing bodies, and to create increased opportunity for participation to take place in sport and physical activity.

5.2.2 The Macrosystem

The second system highlighted participant's experiences with regard to gymnastics-related stereotypes, and preconceived beliefs around participation in gymnastics, as well as gymnastics as a basis for other sport codes. This system was explored in conjunction with the study objectives and participant's opinions and experiences were recorded in the following ways:

1. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked their opinions with regard to stereotypes and cultural attitudes experienced in the sport of gymnastics.
2. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked what their thoughts were regarding gymnastics as a basis for all sport codes.
3. Participants were asked whether they thought that stereotypes and different cultures and attitudes of gymnastics promoted or hindered participation in gymnastics.

A definition by Berk (2000) refers to the macrosystem as the outermost layer in the child's environment. While not being a specific framework, this layer is comprised of cultural values, customs and laws. The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem have cascading

influence throughout the interactions of all other layers (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the macrosystem is used to describe and interpret cultural attitudes, stereotypes and beliefs about the sport of gymnastics, as a possible influence on sport participation.

Experiences with regard to preconceived beliefs and stereotypes about gymnastics, cultural attitudes and gymnastics being a basis for all sport codes, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. Gymnastics was found to assist with skills in other sport codes, and that it provided a good sporting foundation.
2. Gymnastics was found to be an expensive sport.
3. Stereotypes of limitations to participation of particular body types, exists in gymnastics.

Findings in this study showed that participation in the sport of gymnastics would benefit skills, foundation and development in other sport codes. It was found that parents of this study experienced gymnastics to be a “white” sport, and that it is expensive. Participation in gymnastics with regard to fees and expenses, is quite costly as parents are required to pay quarterly membership fees (per school term), competition entry fees, travelling (to and from gymnastics training, and to and from home to competition venues), apparel fees, equipment fees, medical expenses and nutrition expenses.

Stereotypes were found to exist in the sport of gymnastics. The stereotype experienced more frequently was that gymnastics is for a certain body-type. It is found that stereotypes of gymnastics can have a negative influence on participation as it creates a sense of exclusion, whereas gymnastics is for anyone and everyone.

According to Kline et al. (2012), the macrosystem is composed of cultural values, customs and laws. This research is supported by Johnson (2008), in previous research reporting that the

macrosystem is thought of as the “social blueprint” of a given culture, subculture or broad social context and consists of values, belief systems, lifestyles, opportunities, customs and resources embedded therein. According to Johnson (2008), the macrosystem is considered to apply a unidirectional influence upon the individual, microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem.

5.2.3 The Exosystem

The third system highlighted participant’s experiences with regard to transportation within a certain area/demographic region, national and provincial government support to the gymnastics federation as well as federation support to clubs and gymnastics participants. This system was explored in conjunction with the study objectives and participant’s opinions and experiences were recorded in the following ways:

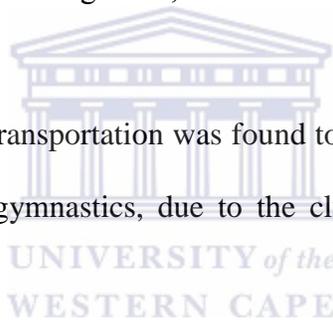
1. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked their opinions with regard to travelling to and from gymnastics practice as well as how they transport themselves to competitions.
2. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked what their thoughts were regarding National and Provincial Government involvement and support to gymnastics federations and clubs.
3. Participants were asked what their view was of the federation’s support to gymnastics club participants.

A definition by Paquette and Ryan (2001) refers to the exosystem as the layer that defines the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. The structures in this layer, impact the child’s development by interacting with some structure in his/her microsystem (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the exosystem is used to present, describe and interpret society

at large, including the transportation system in the Western Cape, and the involvement of Government in support of the gymnastics federation, and the federation's support to gymnastics club participants.

Experiences with regard to the transportation system, and government support, as well as federation support to gymnasts, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. Government was found to be involved in and supports the federation's endeavours to increase participation by providing financial support for mass participation opportunities.
2. The federation provides different fee categories to support and accommodate gymnasts from a "previously disadvantaged background," or those who are in a low socio-economic status (SES) classification.
3. The cost of travelling and transportation was found to be exorbitant and there was difficulty experienced in getting to gymnastics, due to the club not being close to the gymnastics participants.



It was found that Government supports the gymnastics federation on a national and provincial level with regards to funding and equipment. It was reported by participants, specifically key informants, that Government makes provision and supports the federations activities to increase participation through mass participation. It was also found that Government supports the federation by subsidizing one of the registration categories, namely: School-Sport Gymnastics. This category (Category D) is free to any school-going pupil, participating in gymnastics at their school. This gymnast may compete in Inter-School League competitions, which are also fully subsidized by the National Government of Sport, Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA).

With regard to the registration fee categories of the federation, gymnasts from a previously disadvantaged background, and area/district, may pay a lower registration and competition fee due

to being in a low SES classification. The federation shows support to the participating gymnast and parent by having this category available and accessible. This category is called Category C. The federation has four categories in total. Category A is for gymnasts who are neither previously disadvantaged, nor in a low SES background. Accordingly, this category of gymnast pays a higher registration fee.

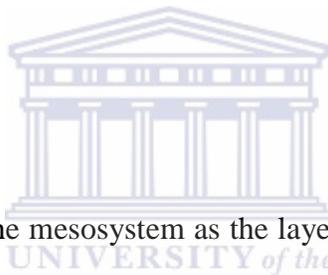
Transportation was found to be one of the factors directly influencing sport participation. Due to the high costs of transport, both public and private, parents expressed that they were experiencing financial strain and difficulty with getting to and from the gymnasium. Parents also expressed that travelling with public transport outside of peak times, was a risk and considered to be unsafe and dangerous, due to crime in the area. Coaches expressed that if there was uproar, chaos or gang fights in the area then it would directly impact upon participation because gymnasts would not be able to get to the gymnasium or community centre safely. Coaches reported that this has a direct and negative impact on participation, and makes the teaching of gymnastics difficult and stressful.

In the research of Johnson (2008), it is reported that the exosystem represents the larger social system, and encompasses events, contingencies, decisions and policies over which the developing person has no control, or direct influence. It was reported by Johnson (2008) that the exosystem also applies a unidirectional influence that directly and/or indirectly has an impact on the developing person. This research is supported by Kline et al. (2012) who similarly report that the exosystem forms part of a larger system that indirectly influences the developing person, and is beyond their influence and control. Therefore the initiatives of the government and the federation, as well as the transport system have an influence on the continued participation of the gymnast.

5.2.4 The Mesosystem

The fourth system highlighted the connections between microsystems of the gymnast. For example, the parent's involvement in the gymnasium or the gymnasium coaches visiting the gymnast's school for talent identification. This system was explored in conjunction with the study objectives and participant's opinions and experiences were recorded in the following ways:

1. Parents were asked about their contributions to fundraising of the gymnasium, on an organizational level, and support level.
2. Coaches were asked about their strategies in making members of the community aware of gymnastics and the benefits of participation.
3. Parents and gymnasts were asked what their views were regarding school support of the participating gymnast.



Paquette and Ryan (2001) define the mesosystem as the layer that provides the connection between the child's microsystems. For the purpose of this study, the mesosystem is used to highlight the connections between the parents and the gymnasium, the coach and the neighbourhood, the school and the gymnasium and the support of each microsystem to the gymnast.

Experiences with regard to involvement of parents the gymnastics club, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. The social position of parents financially influences participation in gymnastics.
2. There was a lack of school support to the participating gymnast.
3. Expenses of participation in gymnastics increase as the child progresses in the sport.
4. The engagement in negative social behavior and activity of parents causes absence and a lack of support in the gymnast's life.

It was found that parents social position is one of the main factors influencing participation in gymnastics. An additional finding was that a parent essentially decides which sport to let their children engage in, and that the affordability to participate in a certain sport is pre-determined by a parent's social position.

It was found that a lack of school support in gymnastics exists, and a lack of exposure of gymnastics to schools as the sport of gymnastics was not recognized at all schools and gymnasts were not receiving sports colours from their schools for participating in gymnastics.

The longer a gymnast participated in gymnastics, the more the expenses of participating in this sport escalated. Parents experienced this to be one of the difficulties faced with allowing their children to continue to participate. Fundraising activities then become a necessity in order to generate funds to absorb some of the increases in gymnastic equipment costs, travelling costs as well as fees support for gymnasts and parents who are unable to pay fees. It was found that parents of the club, as well as coaches join in on fundraising activities of the club.

Particularly in a focus group discussion held with parents from the Cape Flats, it was reported by one of the participants, a grandmother to a participating gymnast, that the engagement in negative social activity of parents, such as drug and alcohol abuse, led to the parent of the gymnast not being present in the gymnast's life and activities. It was found that grandparents or other family member's support of the participating gymnast was important for continued participation in gymnastics.

Johnson (2008) reports that, "the mesosystem, simply stated, comprises of the linkages between Microsystems." The mesosystem involves bi-directional influences between the structures found within the microsystem (Johnson, 2008). This research is supported by Kline et al. (2012), who

refers to the mesosystem as the system that links the individual's microsystems together, such as home, workplace, school and church, to name a few. Therefore, the gymnast's family, the gymnasium and the community interact with each other thus creating a link between microsystems, resulting in a mesosystem interaction.

5.2.5 The Microsystem

The fifth system highlighted participant's experiences with regard to the gymnasium and the importance of participating in gymnastics. In this summary of findings, experiences of equipment and apparatus safety and availability are shared. This system was explored in conjunction with the study objectives and participant's opinions and experiences were recorded in the following ways:

1. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked their experiences with regard to gymnasium equipment safety and availability. The availability of apparatus was a topic under discussion as well.
2. Participants (parents, coaches, and key informants) were asked what their experiences were with regard to proximity and accessibility of the gymnastics club, as well as their experiences of public and facility safety.
3. Participants were asked what their view was of the role of the coach in the gymnasium and community.

A definition by Paquette and Ryan (2001) refers to the microsystem as the layer closest to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact. The microsystem encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with his/her immediate surroundings (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). Structures in the microsystem include family, school, neighbourhood, or childcare environments. At this level, relationships impact the child in two directions – both away from the

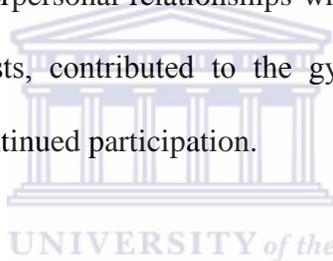
child and toward the child. Paquette and Ryan report that Bronfenbrenner calls these *bi-directional influences*, and that they occur among all levels of the environment. The interactions of structures within a layer and interactions of structures between layers, is key to this theory (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on the child, however, interactions at outer levels can still impact the inner structures (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the microsystem is used to highlight the importance of gymnastics, the availability of gymnastics apparatus and equipment, the safety of the gymnastics equipment, apparatus and facility, as well as the safety of the coach and gymnasts at the gymnastics club. In this study, the microsystem will also highlight the role of the coach and the impact a coach has on their gymnasts, and the community.

Experiences with regard to the importance of gymnastics and the gymnastics club, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. Gymnastics was a fun way to spend unobligated time, and that doing gymnastics keeps children fit and active.
2. The gymnastics club was a comfortable place for gymnasts which had a home-like environment, for gymnasts.
3. The growth of the sport is a challenge due to violence and other crime in particular areas, as some gymnastics clubs are located in areas classified as unsafe.
4. There was a lack of safety of gymnastics club facilities and equipment.
5. There are not enough gymnastics facilities for proper competitive gymnastics training to take place. At some facilities, the gymnasts and coaches have a limited time for training as they make use of a multi-purpose facility to practice gymnastics.
6. Not enough schools offer gymnastics as a school sport.

7. Any person, able-bodied or disabled, can participate in gymnastics as accessibility to gymnastics is possible and promoted through a discipline called, Gym for All (previously known as Gymnaestrada).

Gymnasts in this study expressed that they experienced the sport of gymnastics to be a fun sport. It was shared that the physical activity was a good way to learn skills and participate in competitions. Parents agreed that gymnastics was a great opportunity for their children to make friends outside of school. Gymnasts expressed that travelling together with their gymnast peers to competitions, was an experience they would want to repeat every year because of the places they are able to visit, together. It was found that the interpersonal relationships which developed in the gymnastics club, for both the parents and gymnasts, contributed to the gymnastics club having a “home-like” environment, which influenced continued participation.



It was found in this study that violence or other crime in the area in which the gymnastics club is located, has a direct and negative influence on participation in gymnastics participation as it was reported by participants that when strikes or riots take place, the gymnasts experience travelling complications and the area becomes unsafe.

In a focus group discussion with coaches, it was found that gymnastics is practiced at multi-purpose facilities that are functioning under the auspices of an external entity, which caused frustration to parents, gymnasts and coaches. Gymnasts assist in setting up the apparatus and equipment before training commences, and once training is concluded, gymnasts assist coaches with packing the gymnastics equipment away. Coaches reported that when other activities take place at this multi-purpose facility, their equipment is at risk of being misused and vandalized by the other tenants of the venue. It was reported by gymnasts and coaches that they often have to clear up, or tidy up

before training can begin, due to the condition they find the facility in. Coaches expressed that this frustrates them, because having a dedicated gymnastics venue would ensure that training time would be used effectively for skills development, conditioning and routines training and testing, and not for cleaning up behind others.

Parents expressed their experience, regarding a lack of infrastructure and facilities available for competitive gymnastics training to take place. Gymnastics facilities were reported to be very expensive, by key informants. It was also mentioned that gymnastics equipment and apparatus were expensive as well. To secure a permanent venue for gymnastics is rare indeed. Key informants shared that facility costs are high, and that the requirements for equipment and apparatus safety are not being met in the venues that are currently being occupied. Key informants, parents and coaches reported that the current gymnastics clubs are not properly equipped with safety equipment such as landing mats and foam pits. It was identified that this is a current problem experienced at all gymnastics clubs and community centres. It was also reported by both parents and key informants of this study, that there is a lack of suitable facilities for gymnastics occupancy, in certain areas.

This study found that there are schools in the Western Cape, which do not award excellence in sports colours to their pupils for the sport of gymnastics. It was reported by a gymnast in a focus group discussion that her school does not recognize this sport within the school sport spectrum, and this is why she was not awarded excellence in sport colours. Gymnasts expressed that they are aware that other sports are recognized and acknowledged, and that athletes participating in soccer, rugby, cricket and netball, to name a few, are awarded sport colours. Parents and gymnasts agreed that gymnastics should be offered at school, though some parents expressed sentiments that schools may not be equipped to host gymnastics as a school sport. Parents agreed that gymnastic-type

physical activity at school would be of benefit to learners and would lead to improved fitness, concentration, health and social skills. Coaches highlighted that schools are not in a position to offer gymnastics because of the equipment and space needed. It was highlighted by key informants that school teachers do not have the coaching skills needed to teach children gymnastics skills such as, forward rolls and cartwheels, to name a few.

Key informants and coaches emphasized that gymnastics is for everybody and it was highlighted by key informants that anyone, regardless of age, race, creed, religion, lack of religion, ability, disability, body-type, and experience, can participate in gymnastics. This study found that gymnastics promotes inclusion and accessibility, by making all eight gymnastics disciplines available in the Western Cape. In particular, Gym for All is a discipline that was spoken about in depth during a key informant interview with Rachel. Rachel has many years' experience in training people from any community, age and ability. Rachel teaches dance and gymnastic movements in the form of routines and displays, to ensure that skills in gymnastics are being learned, while at the same time physical activity takes place. She reported that this is an effective way to get people moving, and experiencing the benefits of physical activity, while having fun. Cristina, another key informant of this study, stated that recreational gymnastics and gym for all will be where more opportunity for participation will take place. Cristina reports that the government is in support of mass participation opportunities.

According to Kline et al. (2012), the individual comes into regular contact with structures in the environment at the microsystem level. These structures include family, friends/peers, colleagues, school, church, and neighbourhood, to name a few (Kline et al., 2012). Research done by Johnson (2008) supports this definition of the microsystem, and states that “the microsystem is defined as the

pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief". This layer forms the set of structures that the developing person has direct contact with, and the influences between the developing person and these structures are reported to be bi-directional as well (Johnson, 2008). Therefore the gymnast is influenced, and influences structures found in the microsystem (Johnson, 2008).

5.2.6 The Individual (Gymnast)

The sixth system highlighted the gymnast-participants viewpoints and experiences with regard to their actively participating in gymnastics. This system was explored in conjunction with the study objectives and participant's opinions and experiences were recorded in the following ways:

1. Gymnasts were asked their experiences were with regard to skills development and conditioning.
2. Gymnasts were asked their experiences with regard to any benefits that they may have experienced through participating in gymnastics.
3. Gymnasts were asked what keeps them participating in gymnastics.

It has been reported that the ecological systems theory has been renamed as the *bioecological systems theory* (Härkönen, 2005). According to Härkönen (2005), a child's own biology is referred to as the primary microenvironment that is the fuel for development. Bronfenbrenner maintains that because the child develops or is developing, the interaction with the environments acquires a complex nature (Härkönen, 2005). The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his/her immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers his/her

development (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). Therefore, the gymnast's own experience of gymnastics may contribute to the continuation of participation in gymnastics. The gymnast's experience physically, cognitively and socio-emotionally was investigated.

Experiences with regard to the benefits of participating in gymnastics, from the perception and view of the gymnast, gave rise to the following key findings:

1. Benefits are experienced on a socio-emotional level.
2. Gymnastics is important for physical skills development.
3. The motivation received from the coach and parent/guardian, plays a role in the motivation of the gymnast and has a positive influence on perseverance.

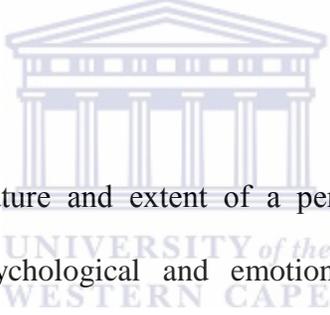


Gymnasts that participated in the focus group discussions shared that by participating in gymnastics, they began to experience improvements and positive changes in the way they relate to their peers, and in how they felt about themselves. All gymnasts shared sentiments regarding a “*boosted self-esteem*” through participation in gymnastics. It was found that gymnasts learned and grew in confidence to perform because the regular practice of routines in the gymnasium led to improved skills and abilities. Participating in gymnastics also provided gymnasts the opportunity to meet other children who shared the same passion for gymnastics.

Gymnasts reported that the sport of gymnastics was a physically demanding sport, but beneficial for skills development and physical development, particularly muscular strength, muscular endurance, overall flexibility, coordination, balance, power, speed and agility. It was found that participating in gymnastics provided the opportunity for gymnasts to learn new skills on the different gymnastics apparatus. Gymnasts reported that learning new skills helped them to progress in the sport to higher

levels, making them stronger, which gave them a competitive advantage during Western Cape Trials and South African National Games tournaments.

With regard to motivation, it was found that the coach of the gymnastics class, and the parent/guardian of the gymnast each have a role to play in the gymnast's motivation, on an internal and external level. Gymnasts expressed that the support of their family, their gymnastics peers and coach were important for their enjoyment of the sport, as well as for their success in execution of gymnastics skills. It was found that gymnasts benefit from the support of the coach and parent/guardian, as it helps with confidence, and perseverance. Gymnasts reported that they are able to continue and persevere as long as their coach and family believe in them and their gymnastic ability.



Participation is defined as the nature and extent of a person's involvement in life situations. Participation is essential for psychological and emotional well-being as well as for skill development, and contributes to one's life satisfaction and sense of competence (Engel-Yeger, Hanna-Kassis, Rosenblum, 2012). Physical activity and recreation can be effective if participation takes place and if used appropriately in accordance with different age and abilities. It is reported that group activities improve interpersonal skills, independence, and results in the participant experiencing a positive self-esteem and other benefits of a psychological nature. In a study by Koo and Lee (2015), it is suggested that a wide range of physical and recreational activities can promote physical, psychological, social and emotional function as well as improve the quality of personal life. The effect of recreation and physical activity enhances self-expression, self-fulfilment, human relationships, physical strength, aesthetic sense and creative expression (Koo and Lee, 2015).

5.3 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study set out to examine the research question: How do social factors influence participation in gymnastics in the Western Cape?

To this end, participants (coaches, parents and gymnasts) were invited to participate in focus group discussions, and key informants were invited to participate in one-on-one individual interviews. The interviews with key informants adopted semi-structured questions based on literature. The focus group discussion adopted the same format as key informant interviews. Questions were guided by the theoretical framework which was used to shape this study, the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1995).

From the findings, it can be concluded that:

- The Chronosystem

1. With regard to the chronosystem, an increase in gymnastics participation has occurred due to a change in the South African Constitution since 1994. In addition to this, gymnastics disciplines have expanded and are more accessible, making participation easier and more accessible within the Western Cape Province.
2. The removal of physical education has had a negative influence on levels of participation in gymnastics and physical activity.
3. There is accessibility to all the gymnastics disciplines

- The Macrosystem

1. Gymnastics is a good foundation for developing gross motor skills, physical strength and endurance, and flexibility to assist children to excel at other sports.

2. The stereotypes experienced in gymnastics do have a potentially negative influence on participation in gymnastics, though it cannot be concluded that stereotypes actually do reduce participation in gymnastics.

- The Exosystem

1. Transportation and the lack thereof contribute to difficulty experienced in participating in gymnastics. Due to the lack of proximity of the gymnastics club, travelling takes place. The cost of travelling has an impact on the coach, and parent of the gymnast, whether travelling was done in a private or public capacity.
2. There is a risk to personal safety when travelling to the gymnasium using public transport, and this risk contributes to a decrease in participation in gymnastics, as gymnasts, parents, and coaches may find difficulty in getting to the gymnastics class.
3. The gymnastics federation provides a lower registration and competition fees for gymnasts, and parents who are currently financially disadvantaged, or who have been previously financially disadvantaged. The federation offers a lower rate in Category C of their fee structure.
4. Government has fully subsidized one of the fee categories of the gymnastics federation, namely Category D, thus eradicating the cost factor of participation in gymnastics. This category allows school-going children to participate in gymnastics for free, if it is offered at their school as a school sport.
5. Government is investing financially, to grow participation and create opportunities for participation in gymnastics on a recreational and mass participation level.

6. There is no conclusive evidence of school support of the gymnast. Some gymnasts reported to be supported by one or two of their teachers, and some gymnasts reported that gymnastics is not recognized as a school sport at their school, resulting in not being awarded excellence in sport colours from the school.

- The Mesosystem

1. There is parent involvement in fundraising activities and planning of such activities, due to the continuing increases in costs that go hand in hand with continued participation.
2. A social factor that affects a gymnast's participation is an absent parent.

- The Microsystem

1. Gymnastics clubs/gymnasiums are not adequately equipped for the proper safety of gymnasts due to the high cost of safety equipment, and the low financial reserves at club level.
2. The gymnastics club provides a sense of belonging, not only to the gymnasts, but to the coaches, and parents as well, due to the interpersonal relationships developed through their gymnasts participating in gymnastics together.
3. There are insufficient facilities within the Western Cape, to host training for competitive gymnastics. Finding a suitable venue is a struggle and costs are exorbitant.
4. Danger in the area of the gymnastics club's location contributes directly to a decrease in gymnastics activity, and makes the gymnastics club inaccessible when the area becomes unsafe.

- The Individual (Gymnast)

1. Gymnastics is a sport that orientates and develops a child physically, cognitively and socially as well as emotionally.
2. Children experience a boost in self-confidence and self-esteem through participation in gymnastics.
3. The coach and parent/guardian support and play a role in the motivation of a gymnast, to continue participation and overcome difficulties experienced when learning new skills and in execution of routines.

In the next section of this chapter, recommendations will be made for further research as well as recommendations to benefit practice.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are being made on the basis of the findings with regard to the influence of social factors on participation in gymnastics. Below are recommendations for further research, and recommendations for practice.

5.4.1 Recommendations for practice

- Chronosystem

1. Coaches of gymnastics clubs should keep a record of their participating gymnasts as time passes by. This may allow coaches to monitor the trends in participation, and will enable coaches to identify when participation decreases, and when it increases.

- Macrosystem

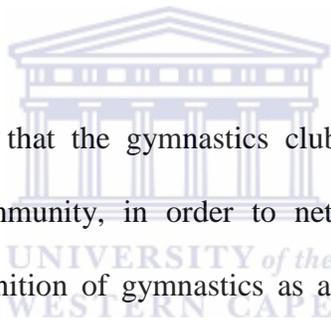
1. It is recommended that Western Cape Gymnastics Association assign a specific focus to gymnastics clubs at the beginning of each year, to create an atmosphere and culture which encourages gymnastics clubs, and associated stakeholders, to promote participation, and exhibit displays of a Gymnastics for All nature, which promotes fun, fitness, fundamentals and friendship. These principles emphasize inclusion of all people, regardless of age, sex, ability or disability.
2. It is recommended that the federation emphasizes the benefits of gymnastics to all stakeholders and other sport codes, as gymnastics training can assist in performance in other sports.
3. It is suggested and recommended that gymnastics clubs (in each of the districts) in the Western Cape, meet together, perhaps once or twice a year, to host mutually beneficial festivals, fundraisers and events. Partnering up will enable gymnastics clubs to reach more people within the communities; gymnasts will be able to work together with a variation of different skills, routines and displays. Networks within the communities will grow and the benefits of participating in gymnastics can reach more people. This will provide coaches with the opportunity to engage with creative practices and choreography which will assist in the development of routines for competitive gymnastics (womens artistic gymnastics floor routines, aerobic gymnastics, acrobatic dance and gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics).

- Exosystem

1. It is recommended that the Western Cape Gymnastics Association work together with sport governing bodies, regarding future dialogue about the facilitation of gymnastics apparatus and equipment.
2. Key informants were aware that the government will continue its initiatives regarding mass participation and recreational gymnastics. It is suggested that gymnastics clubs drive this and collaborate with one another to create gymnastics displays and create a more welcoming environment for movement and physical activity, to take place, instead of only driving competitive gymnastics.

- Mesosystem

1. It is recommended that the gymnastics club make contact with the surrounding schools in the community, in order to network, and create a relationship that promotes the recognition of gymnastics as a sport in the area. This may assist in encouraging gymnasts as their schools will start to recognize their achievements in gymnastics, and become more involved by encouraging the pupils of the school to participate in gymnastics as well.
2. This study found that there is a need for gymnastics and physical activity to take place at school as it will benefit the pupil with regard to spatial awareness, improve strength and endurance, weight control, assist in anxiety and stress management, increase self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



- **Microsystem**
 1. A key informant suggested an “adopt-a-club” campaign. This entailed a more established club, to assist a struggling club by sharing equipment, apparatus, and through collaboration in this way, gymnasts will be able to form new gymnastics relationships. By merging with other gymnastics clubs to assist in facilitation and provide equipment and space to train, gymnasts will have another microsystem which forms part of their environment.
 2. Western Cape Gymnastics Association administration systems can be better utilized to plan and schedule events, thus resulting in efficient communication to all clubs and staff with regards to competitions and other events and the establishment of partnerships with other facilities to host competition events and training camps.



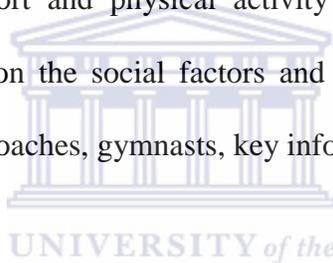
5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

- From the findings, there is a need to conduct further investigations in order to ascertain the influence of social factors on sport participation in the Western Cape, and on a larger scale, in South Africa. There is a dearth of literature detailing the complex mechanisms of the ecological systems theory which could assist the researcher to provide further insight into the effect that social factors have on sport participation.
- It is recommended that further research takes place by increasing the number of participating gymnastics clubs, thus increasing the sample size considerably, by including gymnastics clubs from other districts within the Western Cape, in order to gauge a more holistic view of the influence of social factors on gymnastics participation in the Western Cape Province.

- Further research is recommended to explore the individual within the ecological systems theory. An opportunity exists to gain further insight into the biological and psychological factors, in addition to social factors, that may influence participation in gymnastics in the form of a further investigation.

5.5 RESEARCHER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE QUALITATIVE PROCESS

The utilization of a qualitative research design was necessary due to the exploratory nature of this study. A qualitative approach was undoubtedly the most viable research method for this study, due to the nature of the information sought and the complexities and variations of social factors experienced in the pursuit of sport and physical activity participation. This study sought the experiences, views and opinions on the social factors and their indirect and direct influence on participation in gymnastics, from coaches, gymnasts, key informants and gymnasts.

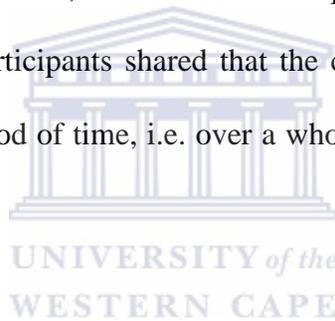


It was useful to use the pre-determined systems within the Ecological Systems Theory, which formed the theoretical framework for this study, as a guide for this research. This enabled the researcher to design questions pertinent to the different aspects of society as depicted in the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), for the four different sets of participants namely; the coaches, the parents, the gymnasts and the key informants.

The willingness shown, by the participants of this study, assisted in facilitating the collected data. Participants were keen to contribute to this research and agreed to being recorded, via Dictaphone. It is important to note that the findings presented in this research only apply to a set of purposefully selected participants. The study findings are pertinent to the Western Cape Province context and generalizations cannot be applied elsewhere. As the researcher, I believed that children and young

adults want to participate in sport, physical activity and more specifically, gymnastics. This research study was born from the idea that social factors may play a role in the hindrance or promotion of participation. In addition, as the researcher, I wanted to understand participant's reasons for participating in gymnastics.

From my experience of this study, as the researcher, I found that during the interview and focus group discussion processes, the participants of the study spoke explicitly and freely. This provided an opportunity for conversation and assisted in a holistic understanding of the participant's viewpoints. Participants provided strong views about having witnessed a decrease in physical activity and participation in gymnastics, as well as their experiences with a witnessed increase in competition gymnastics. Some participants shared that the competitions are taking longer to end, and are running over a longer period of time, i.e. over a whole weekend, when before it used to be just one day of competition.



It was clear, during the data analysis of this study, that social factors were present in the hindrance, and promotion of participation in gymnastics. These social factors were unpacked in the fourth chapter of this study.

This study presents an opportunity for further research. Perhaps inviting more clubs, parents and gymnasts to participate, would have broadened the field of research and results, substantially. A shortcoming of this study is possibly that, as the researcher, I could have invited more clubs within Cape Town to participate in this study, especially clubs from other districts of the Western Cape. This would have broadened results and findings of this study considerably and would have provided richer data. Participants' views could have been challenged further, for more depth, though the

amount of participants in focus groups did not allow for in-depth and personal discussions. This study provides useful information with regard to awareness of social factors and their influence on gymnastics participation to the federations, clubs and gymnast parents. This may provide an opportunity for these stakeholders to create a better environment and atmosphere to facilitate continued participation in gymnastics, though due to my inexperience as a researcher, I missed opportunity and foresight to motivate and probe for answers to questions around practical improvements that can be made, with the current resources that are available. Even though this may have been a missed opportunity, the data collected for this study is rich and considerably valuable.

5.6 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Due to being a member of the National Gymnastics Squad and representing Western Cape Gymnastics team for ten years, knowing experts in the field may provide familiarity which would be a challenging aspect of this study. Some experts within the South African Gymnastics Federation now reside in Durban and Johannesburg, which disqualified their participation in this research. The availability of the experts, coaches, parents and gymnasts was limited due to the demands of the sport and training times, in-competition and out-of-competition periods. Difficulty was experienced with regard to access to information of the rates of participation. It was a challenge to set interview times for key informants as well.

5.7 STUDY CONCLUSION

The study reveals that there are particular social factors that influence participation in gymnastics. These factors include influence parent support and facilitation, gymnastics training facilities and equipment, personal gymnast motivation, training times, government support and facilitation to federations and gymnastics clubs, and difficulties experienced with proximity of the gymnastics

club, and transportation to and from the gymnasium. The results of this study provided insight into the current social factors that influence participation in gymnastics and offered recommendations for further research and practice. The results and findings of this study can be utilized by government sport departments and gymnastics federations as well as clubs within the Western Cape, to improve financial output due to the awareness of the impact that social factors have on continued gymnastics participation for the developing child.

In conclusion, this study provides insight to the factors encountered by participants in society in pursuit of gymnastics participation. This investigation aims to create awareness, and provide information with regard to the current social factors that are influencing gymnastics participation within the Western Cape.



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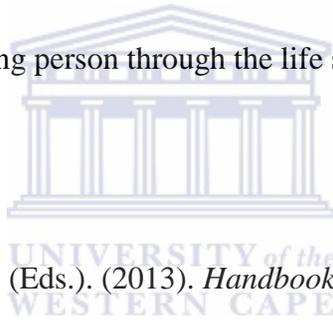
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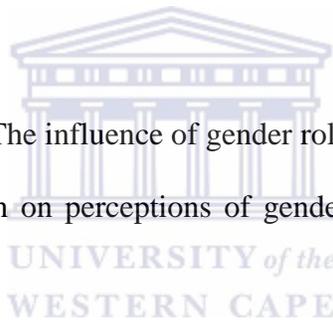
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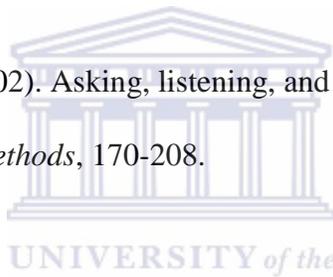
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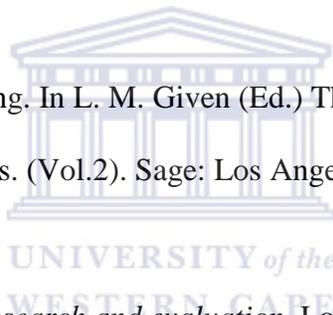
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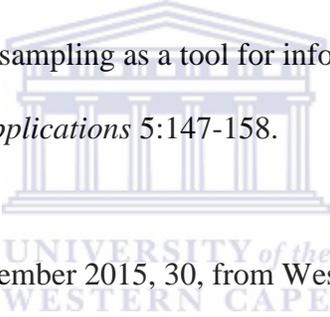
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INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Research Project: *An investigation into the social factors that influence sport participation: A case of gymnastics in the Western Cape.*

What is this study about?

This is a qualitative research project being conducted by, Mr. Warren Lucas, at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project. You are a possible candidate to participate in the study because: a) you are a participating gymnast and registered at a club under the Western Cape Gymnastics Association or b) you are a parent of a gymnast or c) you are a coach of a gymnast/s. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the social factors that may hinder or benefit participation in gymnastics, in the Western Cape.

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

You will be asked to participate in an interview to discuss the topic researched. The discussions will be recorded with your permission. All data obtained, transcriptions and recordings will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous. Your participation in the study will make a valuable contribution to the management and development of elite athletes in South Africa. The interviews will take place at neutral venues suggested by yourselves during a time period that is suitable to your schedule and will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time. For those who may be unable to attend a face to face interview, video-conferencing can be arranged and this too shall be recorded, with confidentiality and anonymity assured.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your name will not be used in the data collection procedure, rather pseudonyms would be used. Data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and storage areas, using identification codes only on data forms, and using password-protected computer files. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

What are the risks of this research?

There may be some risks for participating in this research study. The study may include risks that may be better described as things that could make the participant feel uncomfortable such as disclosing information that you don't want to share. You may then ask to move to the next question and are under no obligation to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Other than that there are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is designed to benefit each participant, the WCGA (Western Cape Gymnastics Association), the SAGF (South African Gymnastics Federation) and CATHSSETA (Culture, Arts, Technology, History, Sport Sector Education and Training Authority) to possibly evaluate equality within club gymnastics for adolescents regardless of social standing/status and to provide a more community oriented approach to promote healthy living and active lifestyles in a fair way and promoting social cohesion. Your participation will also help the researcher to learn more about the current social factors gymnasts face today, as well as how the parents manage this at home, and how the coach manages this at the gymnasium during practice. Other people might benefit from this study through improved management structures for elite athletes within South Africa to ensure improved performances and participation in the future.

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

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

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

HOD SRES: **Prof A Travill**

Email: atravill@uwc.ac.za

Supervisor: **Miss S Titus**

Email: sititus@uwc.ac.za

Co-Supervisor: **Dr. MEM Young**

Email: myoung@uwc.ac.za

Study Coordinator: Mr. Warren Lucas

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Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Science:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.



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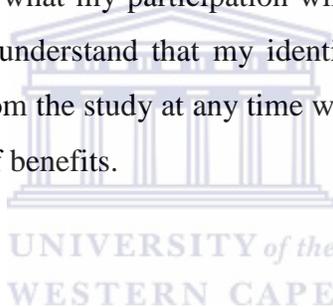
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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: *An investigation into the social factors that influence sport participation: A case of gymnastics in the Western Cape.*

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.



Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinators:

Study Coordinator Name: **Mr. Warren Lucas**

Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2350

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Email: warren.lucas@live.co.za



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ASSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: *An investigation into the social factors that influence sport participation: A case of gymnastics in the Western Cape.*

I, _____ (Full Name of gymnast), understand that my parents/guardian have/has given permission for me to participate in the above study under the direction of Warren Lucas. My participation in this project is voluntary and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time without penalty and loss of benefit to myself.

Participant's name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardians Name: _____

Parent/Guardians Signature: _____ Date: _____

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

Study Coordinator Name: **Mr. Warren Lucas**

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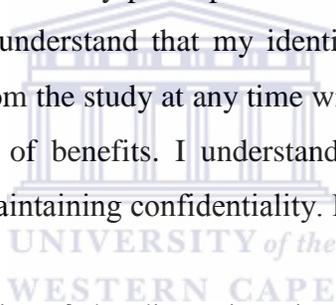
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FOCUS GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY BINDING FORM

Title of Research Project: *An investigation into the social factors that influence sport participation: A case of gymnastics in the Western Cape.*

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits. I understand that confidentiality is dependent on participants' in the Focus Group maintaining confidentiality. I hereby agree to the following:



I agree to uphold the confidentiality of the discussions in the focus group by not disclosing the identity of other participants or any aspects of their contributions to members outside of the group.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Study Coordinator Name: **Mr. Warren Lucas**

Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2350

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Email: warren.lucas@live.co.za

Focus Group Questions for Gymnasts

System	Your Study	Question
Chronosystem	Conditions of time	How long have you participated in gymnastics? What about gymnastics keeps you coming back over the years?
Macrosystem	Culture and attitudes in gymnastics	How does gymnastics teach you discipline and perseverance?
Exosystem	Coaches, family, friends, team-mates	How does your coach and parents motivate you? How does your school support you in your gymnastics career? Are your peers (school friends and home friends) interested in your gymnastics and competitions? How do they support you?
Mesosystem	mediator	What do you think can be done, by your club, to promote the benefits of participation in gymnastics? How does being a part of your club make you feel?
Microsystem	Gymnasium	What does your club do to support you during training, competition and team-building?
Individual	gymnast	What challenges do you face by participating in gymnastics? Does this interfere with school, homework and study time, family time? What do you dislike about gymnastics? Has gymnastics changed your attitude? What do you think can be done by your club to help with overcoming some of the obstacles we spoke about?

Focus Group Questions for Parents

System	Your Study	Question
Chronosystem	Conditions of time	<p>How long has your child participated in gymnastics?</p> <p>Why does your child continue to participate in gymnastics?</p> <p>Why do you think it is important for your child to participate in gymnastics/sport/physical activity?</p> <p>What is your opinion on how participation in gymnastics has changed over the years?</p>
Macrosystem	Culture and attitudes in gymnastics	<p>What are your ideas of social factors?</p> <p>How do you think social factors have influenced participation in gymnastics?</p> <p>What are your ideas of the social factors that contribute to dropout?</p> <p>Which social factors, do you think, promote participation in gymnastics? (Keep gymnasts coming back)</p>
Exosystem	Coaches, family, friends, team-mates	<p>What are your opinions around physical activity, exercise and sport for children?</p> <p>How do you motivate your child to continue participating in sport/gymnastics and physical activity?</p>
Mesosystem	mediator	What does your child's gymnastics club do to promote the benefits of participation in gymnastics/physical activity in the community?
Microsystem	Gymnasium	What do you, as parents do to facilitate your child's involvement in gymnastics?

Individual	gymnast	<p>Are you involved in any kind of physical activity? If so, what do you do for exercise and recreation?</p> <p>As a parent, how concerned are you about the social factors that influence your children as gymnasts?</p>
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Focus Group Interview Guide for Coaches

<u>System</u>	<u>Your Study</u>	<u>Question</u>
Chronosystem	Conditions of time	How has participation in gymnastics, changed over the past 10 years? What do you think are the reasons for this?
Macrosystem	Culture and attitudes in gymnastics	How do you think social factors have influenced participation in gymnastics? Has the culture of the sport changed as a result of social factors?
Exosystem	Links between social settings: Coaches, family, friends, team-mates	What social factors, of your knowledge, are facing your gymnasts? What are the social factors affecting your gymnast's parents?
Mesosystem	Interconnections between Microsystems	What do you propose, can be done from a club level, to promote the benefits of participation in gymnastics?
Microsystem	Gymnasium	What would you say are the difficulties in participating in gymnastics? What does the club do to equalize opportunities for the gymnast's, regardless of socio-economic status? What does your club offer to the community or gymnasts to keep them from engaging in anti-social activities such as drug use, gangsterism drinking, smoking, technological advances?
Individual	gymnast	As a coach, what are the benefits of participating in gymnastics? As a coach, how concerned are you about the social factors that influence your gymnast?

Key Informant Interview: Core Questions

<u>System</u>	<u>Your Study</u>	<u>Question</u>
Chronosystem	Conditions of time	<p>How has participation in gymnastics, changed over the past 10 years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think, are the reasons for this? • How do you feel about this?
Macrosystem	Culture and attitudes in gymnastics	<p>Why do you think people participate in gymnastics? What are the benefits of participating in gymnastics?</p> <p>How does gymnastics promote inclusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if the gymnast is a complete beginner? <p>What are the stereotypes that you have either heard or experienced that you think may negatively affect participation in gymnastics?</p> <p>What kind of cultural factors have you experienced that may have inhibited participation in gymnastics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think gymnastics attire may influence participation in the sport. <p>What experiences have you had around disable-bodied persons doing gymnastics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this affect participation?
Exosystem	Links between social settings: Coaches, family, friends, team-mates	<p>Competitions are sometimes outside of town, how does this economically affect the competing gymnasts and parties involved (coaches, parents, supporters, association/federation)?</p>

Mesosystem	Interconnections between Microsystems	<p>How accessible is gymnastics? Have you experienced gymnasts travelling to training, using the public transport system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think this influences their participation?
Microsystem	Gymnasium	<p>What are the barriers experienced regarding facilities and equipment safety?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you experiencing around the issues concerning safety of gymnasts while training at the gymnasium? <p>What does the federation/association/club/center do to equalize opportunities for the gymnast's, regardless of socio-economic status?</p> <p>What does the federation/association/club/center offer to the community or to gymnasts, to keep them from engaging in anti-social activities such as drug use, gangsterism drinking, smoking, technological advances, to combat sedentary lifestyles?</p>
Individual	Gymnast	<p>As an expert in the field, how concerned are you about the current social factors that influence your gymnasts in their gymnastics career?</p> <p>Are there any recommendations or suggestions that you may have or improvements that you would like to see take place within the sport to promote participation and its benefits for children?</p>

THEME	CHRONOSYSTEM: CONDITIONS OF TIME				
SUBTHEME	Change in participation in gymnastics over 10 years				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics			<p>FG 001 – 1:39 <i>“Watching the club you know being one of the earlier...probably the veteran parent around the table... I mean when the club started it started with five, six kids...and literally I mean it’s sitting now over a hundred or close to one hundred and fifty...I mean all the way...all the way through... Tiny tots, all the way. I mean from my experience at competitions those numbers also have grown you know...the competitions are taking longer to... the duration...the event lasts for longer and there’s a</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:1 <i>Well, ok, so if we go back to the eighties, like gymnastics was in all the white schools and most of the coloured schools from my understanding, but their participating was very separate, so you know, you had your white kids that would train, you know that would compete in all the federation activities and then you would have the coloured and maybe some black kids who would participate in very much the USSASA’s school programmes and it was kind of very separate, and then, you know with the change in South African history ninety five / four / five, SAGF</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An increase in participation in gymnastics has been observed. ❖ Participation increase due to change in South African Constitution since 1994

			<p><i>whole lot more that needs to be fitted in, so I think more kids are taking up the sport”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:104 <i>“And because gymnastics was never, to put it this way a “coloured” sport, it was a white sport”</i></p>	<p><i>made a very concerted effort to bring everybody together so you know, I think from that point of view now you get everybody involved in the federation and also the demise and the fall of USSASA means that it was really only the federations activities that were going on. If you wanted to be involved in gymnastics, then that’s where you could take part.</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:2 <i>“so if we go back to the eighties, like gymnastics was in all the white schools and most of the coloured schools from my understanding”</i></p>	
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics			<p>FG 004 – 4:106 <i>“it was a white sport. It came down to us now, but because it is so expensive, people</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:23 <i>“there would be a bus organized, all the gymnasts would get on the bus with the few</i></p>	<p>❖ Parents want to travel with gymnast to competitions outside of</p>

			<p><i>don't actually go for it."</i></p>	<p><i>coaches and judges that were responsible, and parents stayed at home, waved goodbye and off you went and you were supervised by your coach and your judge. Nowadays, that next to never happens, parents want to travel with their kids, so then it becomes an additional financial burden, because you have to be able to pay for the whole family to go with."</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:2 <i>"I think it's a lot more difficult to get the kids up and going and they're lazier than what they were ten years ago. We do always have the ones that says... Oh, I'm tired, I don't want to do it, because they don't want to come to gym, they want to go</i></p>	<p>Western Cape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Children are lazier than before. ❖ The removal of Physical Education from the curriculum is to the detriment of gymnastics participation ❖ Technological Advances contributing to a decrease in participation in sport ❖ Gymnastics used to be offered at community centres for free. ❖ Expansion of disciplines has created an increase in participation in gymnastics.
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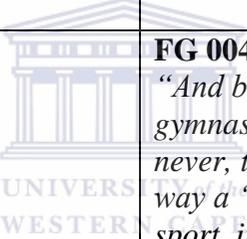
				<p><i>home and watch tv and stuff like that.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:1 <i>“I think we’ve seen a big increase in participation from a community level because of the addition of all the additional disciplines, however, the fact that physical education is not in the school curriculum, has also been a complete detriment to gymnastics, because obviously gymnastics is a core component of it, so technically every kid who was at the school, although it was an affluent school, was exposed to gymnastics, so I don’t know what the figures were like in the eighties, but it would be interesting, because obviously at that stage you could claim that every kid at least in a white school</i></p>	
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		 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>	<p><i>was doing gymnastics. So it's kind of a very varied changeover."</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:1 <i>"Because from a gymnasts point of view there's been a lot of changes from the child; how the child is growing up in the last ten years, because now we have to deal with ipods and tablets and they want to stay home do that rather than come to gym."</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:8 <i>"I can give you another thing about gymnastics, like when I first was introduced to gymnastics was at a community center, because those days, they were skilled, they were gymnast trained there. So at the community center would be one day ballet, one day</i></p>	
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				<p><i>gymnastics, one day art, things like that, so people did that. And we did competitions then with them, but now things have changed also, its no longer that way, so their kids have also missed out on it. And it was free.”</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:2 <i>“South Africa being what it is, with their diverse cultures, you can’t really expect to get top grade gymnasts in all cultures.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:9 <i>“the person was paid by the CoCT., to coach. Now they wont do that, cause coaches need to be paid. It was there for the community. And experts doing it. And now its non-existent. We tried it with the legacy program but</i></p>	
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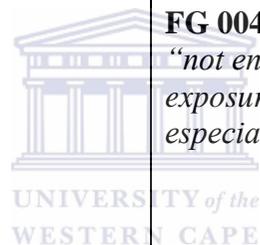
				<p><i>the money has run out now... ”</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:4 <i>“Apartheid days really caused that split where people are all over the show but the sport hasn’t followed you. I think the only sports that followed people are soccer and netball.”</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>			<p>FG 004 – 4:106 <i>“And because gymnastics was never, to put it this way a “coloured” sport, it was a white sport.”</i></p>	<p>KI 002 – 7:4 <i>“the coaching has changed, because you learn new things and new ways on how to coach the skills; how to deal with the different children, how to deal with the different parents, so it’s quite broad when it comes to coaching.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:16 <i>“So we all know that sport is one of the leading contributors to you know the decrease of racism and a feeling</i></p>	<p>❖ Change from apartheid to post-apartheid has benefited inclusion and accessibility.</p>

			<p><i>of you know national pride.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:5 <i>“with the change in South African history ninety five / four / five, SAGF made a very concerted effort to bring everybody together so you know, I think from that point of view now you get everybody involved in the federation and also the demise and the fall of USSASA means that it was really only the federations activities that were going on.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:22 <i>“Because they were forced to and they had to change. So I think, its good that everybody is included.”</i></p>	
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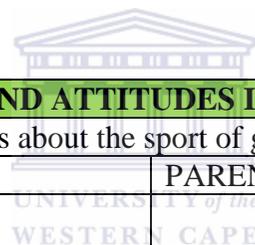


THEME	MACROSYSTEM: CULTURE AND ATTITUDES IN GYMNASTICS				
SUBTHEME	Gymnastics is the basis for all sport codes				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:56 <i>“Gymnastics is the basis for all sporting codes and it also helps you physically and mentally with all that pressure”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:59 <i>“Because if you do gymnastics then you are able to participate in whatever sport there is”</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:42 <i>“I mean came from OT requirement for improving gross motor so that’s how we got to this sport”</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:31 <i>“I think it’s one of the few sports that really works on almost everything, and it’s a very good foundation sport”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:5 <i>“I think it’s the same, because gymnastics is a grounding for all sport, so it is good for anybody to do it, try and push it from a young age, I always had a lot of kids who need occupational therapy who have low muscle tone; they just come in just to do it”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:15 <i>“It is the basis for any other sporting discipline, I feel. So for me, you can’t do anything without gymnastics basically.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Doing gymnastics assists with skills in other sports. ❖ Occupational Therapists encourage gymnastics participation to develop gross motor skills. ❖ Gymnastics provides a good sporting foundation.

<p>Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics</p>			<p>FG 004 – 4:90 <i>“A social factor that bothers me a lot is that interest in the sport because everything revolves around soccer and rugby and cricket; they get more exposure than gymnastics.”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:98 <i>“not enough exposure and especially at school”</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:9 <i>“the fact that physical education is not in the school curriculum, has also been a complete detriment to gymnastics, because obviously gymnastics is a core component of it”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:21 <i>“I did talent ID yesterday, one class of twenty children, not one girl could do a cartwheel. I went to two schools; the one school had a sports person there, she does different things with them and then I went to another school and they don’t have anyone, which they need. They need someone to push it.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The decline of physical education and physical activity at school is to the detriment of gymnastics participation. ❖ Not enough exposure for gymnastics.
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>				<p>KI 001 – 6:52 <i>“There are also foundations out there that you know are linked with gymnastics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Foundations promoting the benefits of participation in gymnastics and



				<i>because they see the benefits, especially rope skipping and their entire organization is about providing the opportunity of sport and gymnastics, especially rope skipping to kids, underprivileged kids.”</i>	providing opportunities to children.
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THEME	MACROSYSTEM: CULTURE AND ATTITUDES IN GYMNASTICS				
SUBTHEME	Stereotypes and preconceived beliefs about the sport of gymnastics/Transformation				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics					
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics			FG 004 – 4:106 <i>“it was a white sport. It came down to us now, but because it is so expensive, people don’t actually go for it.”</i>	KI 001 – 6:34 <i>“they still view gymnastics as a...like they almost call it a “ballerina” sport or a “white girl” sport”</i> KI 001 – 6:35 <i>“I think in some gymnastics distance we have the perception that it’s only for gay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gymnastics is viewed as a “white” sport. ❖ Gymnastics is an expensive sport. ❖ Gymnastics is for girls. ❖ There’s a perception that gay males do gymnastics.

			<p><i>males, so that's like could be an off putting factor."</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:36 <i>"rhythmic is for really tall, skinny girls, so you know black African girls might say well it is not possible"</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:32 <i>"gymnastics makes you short."</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:33 <i>"Oh my kid is not going to do gymnastics because it stunts their growth and it causes all these you know back problems."</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:18 <i>"I know there is this exclusion to know that this is a feminine sport, but I don't think I had that experience."</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:37 <i>"Fat people can't do</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gymnastics is for a certain body type. ❖ Gymnastics stunts growth.
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				<p><i>gymnastics”, We need to stop that, we need to encourage them, because that’s what they need. Because you find coaches, and I can also be guilty of that sometimes, but coaches are not going to worry because that child is never going to do that... but like I would do with the disability, work on their ability.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:26 <i>“Leaders of different disciplines. They want to stick to boes and stay in their little box. “I’m a WAG coach, and I have nothing to do with the TRA coach”. Instead of working together, we are all here for the good of gymnastics”</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>					



THEME	EXOSYSTEM: LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL SETTINGS INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING THE MICROSYSTEM				
SUBTHEME	National and Provincial Government support to Federation				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:35 <i>“I’m grateful to DCAS for giving us a double mini; we have a double mini, so we’re very happy about it”</i></p> 		<p>KI 001 – 6:6 <i>“the government and city has brought in, that really looks at far more recreation, like getting kids involved in some more recreational activities so you’re seeing far more growth and development in the sport happening, but in a recreation level, not necessarily in the competitions or anything like that but that doesn’t mean that they’re not involved in the sport.”</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:1 <i>“Drastically. You know there was this thing I always said that there’s money for Mass Participation. But to get Mass on board, it needs money,</i></p>	<p>❖ Government supports mass participation gymnastics, and provides opportunity and resources.</p>

				<i>government always said that they will provide the money for mass participation.”</i>	
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:67 <i>“It was last year that we go the ribbons from DCAS, we got the tramp. And we got the ribbons and we got the ropes as well, so we’ve been using that you know; sometimes it’s cardio, sometimes it’s teaching the beginners how to skip... coordination. You know, so but it’s like ok you guys, you are giving me this; ok then we can use the ribbons for like dance to express ourselves, but we need a beam seriously, and a springboard and a horse because then we would not need to travel all the way to Phillipi if that is the case, you’re not allowed to or whatever</i></p>	<p>FG 004 – 4:93 <i>“there’s not enough interest in the sport; there’s not enough support for gymnastics”</i></p>	<p>KI 004 – 8:34 <i>“Take the money for the EPWP and even if you can educate 12 people in a decent way to go out there and do decent work with children. Get them on a level where they at least have some diploma or some degree at the end of the day, that they feel they can fall back on, cause a certificate course is a waste of time.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Government not supplying the equipment needed. ❖ EPWP fund is not being utilized effectively by City/WCG DCAS.

		<p><i>it will be but our big concern is the venue”</i></p>			
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>				<p>KI 001 6:1 <i>“But if I look in the Western Cape, there’s been other initiatives that you know, more</i></p>	<p>❖ Government is investing in growing the sport on a recreational</p>



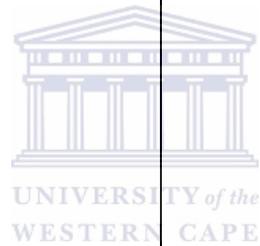
				<p><i>recently, the government and city has brought in, that really looks at far more recreation, like getting kids involved in some more recreational activities so you're seeing far more growth and development in the sport happening, but in a recreation level, not necessarily in the competitions or anything like that but that doesn't mean that they're not involved in the sport"</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:25 <i>"so initiatives that SRSA have done where they've got the schools tournament and that type of stuff and pay for the top kids to come might be a limited number. I think from that respect...and I especially see that In</i></p>	<p>level/mass participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Government subsidizes one of the categories of the federation, to increase participation.
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				<p><i>rope skipping... it really assist in order to give the kids the opportunity to take part.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:54 <i>“the districts tend to get funding from the government, and in general, all of our districts tend to use that funding towards especially clothing and transport for national competitions for those underprivileged kids, so because the clothing doesn’t get given at a different price, and travel isn’t at a different price, so funding will go towards at least assisting some kids to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:55 <i>“...from SAGF side I</i></p>	
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				<p><i>know they also use SRSA funding and Lotto funding and you know funding that they get to specifically create opportunities.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:61 <i>“the completely government subsidized really competition and so that was the SRSA competition I was talking about where they pay; like the provincial government will pay for them to go, but they don’t take part in any of the federation competitions unless they will go up to category C.”</i></p>	
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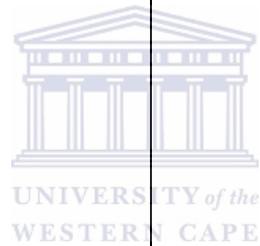


THEME	EXOSYSTEM: LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL SETTINGS INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING THE MICROSYSTEM				
SUBTHEME	Federation support to Clubs				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics				<p>KI 001 – 6:38 <i>“I mean like Western Cape is one of the few provinces that pretty much does all the disciplines, which means that there is an opportunity for everybody.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:8 <i>“I think we’ve seen a big increase in participation from a community level because of the addition of all the additional disciplines”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Federation makes all disciplines of gymnastics available and open for participation.
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics			<p>FG 004 – 4:91 <i>“I mean you get nothing from the government...no aiding...”</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:18 <i>“having eight different sports under one umbrella is really tough, because you’re expected to grow and develop, create coaches, have the programme going in all basically eight</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consequences of expansion regarding human and financial resources. ❖ Coaching education is not strict enough. ❖ Category A-C

				<p><i>different types of sport”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:49 <i>“I don’t believe that the education and training for the coaches is strict enough and there are too many people who are coaching unqualified or with not enough qualifications, and I also think that most of the clubs out there don’t have any insurance, I don’t even think they have public liability insurance.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:19 <i>“So that makes it I think very very difficult, plus, like I see in the Western Cape, we have to organise three different weekends, four different weekends of competitions to cater for all the disciplines,</i></p>	<p>inconsistency.</p>
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				<p><i>so that's four times hall hire, four times more judges cost, four times apparatus cost, four times medics, four times everything, just to run a district competition, just to cover all those disciplines, so it's a huge financial burden to do that."</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:33</p> <p><i>"From my side, I did try and do the ones I knew there was a problem; I tried to do the category C, we do have category C out this way, but they're making a new ruling now which I don't think is quite fair. There was a new ruling for category C and I think, I personally think that was a little bit unfair because I do have one mom for instance, she has two kids at the</i></p>	
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				<p><i>gym and it becomes quite a lot for her she was in category A for both of them and I think that they could have been in category C.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:49 <i>“very difficult from a club point of view to get assistance, I can tell you now for example, talking gymnaestrada, because WC got money for the other disciplines, so it was very difficult for us, gymnaestrada, to get funding to have any participants from the Western Cape going to Gymnaestrada, which is very sad for me. I just need to tell you how difficult it is to get funding.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:56 <i>“And I am upset when the office doesn’t take</i></p>	
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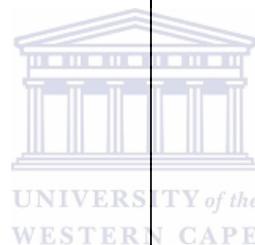


				<p><i>care, when I am not on the mailing list and my kids have now missed out on this passed competition. Its little things.</i></p> <p><i>If systems are not up and running then how do we expect participation in the sport to continue.”</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>		 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>		<p>KI 001 – 6:53 <i>“what the province does, is they have a different entry fee, so if you’re from an under privileged background, then you will pay sometimes a third of what is deemed as affluent, and it doesn’t go by colour of your skin, it goes by financial, so you can be any colour, if you are financially in a problem you will pay the lower entry fee, the lower registration fees, the lower everything; if</i></p>	<p>❖ Gymnasts pay competition entry and Western Cape fees based on categories, to accommodate SES or the previously disadvantaged.</p>

				<p><i>you are financially sound, you will pay the higher one”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:48 <i>“I think we do a lot. Look the main thing is, we are always looking for money, we go to DCAS, the Lotto, the CoCT, we even go to companies, to assist us with different programmes”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:52 <i>“The schools don’t pay anything, the schools are free. They can enter, but they can only enter school sport gymnastics, the children cant do anything else. Once they are registered under the schools, and they are going to participate through the schools, that’s all they can do. Then of course you have your Category A, B and C.”</i></p>	
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				<p>KI 004 – 9:53 <i>“Well it helps, because if R295 is Category A, and the other categories are R90, and the Schools don’t pay, then that is a big help.</i></p> <p><i>The schools sport gymnasts can only do the schools comeptitions, so they cant compete in level 1, 2 and 3 because they are registered as school sport gymnasts (Category D).”</i></p>	
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THEME	EXOSYSTEM: LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL SETTINGS INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING THE MICROSYSTEM				
SUBTHEME	Transportation to and from the Gymnasium/Cultural differences in different areas				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics					
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:18 <i>“They really want to come to gym but their parents are not there</i></p>		<p>KI 001 – 6:44 <i>“it depends what the public transport system is doing at the</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cost of public transport is high ❖ Cost of private transport is high

		<p><i>to bring them to gym and come fetch them, then they lose out and even though they might want to come back, they can't due to transport. The parents are not doing anything to organize transport; they actually wait for us; phone the coach..."</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:48 <i>"We travel with pa then pa will charge per head maybe thirty rand up and down; so that will be me and her type of thing; we'll phone around and say ok does that one have a lift and say ok just send the child with the money whatever, so that child doesn't miss out."</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:41 <i>"you must go to Town Center and you</i></p>		<p><i>time, so you know obviously it is a complete hindrance when there are strikes or when there are delays, plus the cost factor for the parents having to pay for it, plus the safety issue."</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:30 <i>"the language was different. Our kids didn't even want to open their mouths, because they speak Afrikaans, and the kids from Gordons are so rah rah rah. So they would just sit... and feel a bit different."</i></p> <p>KI 004 9:32 <i>"Another problem I have is with my gymnasts from Khayelitsha, they don't often understand what I am saying, so I have problems with them, I really have to demonstrate and show</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Public transport safety is an issue ❖ Culture and language differed from area to area, creating a barrier. ❖ No means to get to gymnastics club. ❖ Gang fights and crime in the area prevent participation in sport as children are not able to travel to gym/community centre.
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		<p><i>have to take a Phillipi taxi”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:40 <i>“If we should be in Phillipi, because if you don’t have somebody to take you, you must go to Town Center and you have to take a Phillipi taxi and it’s dangerous”</i></p>		<p><i>them. And yet they still don’t understand. Like we had the fun gym, we even had the pictures there and still, I need to go demonstrate and show them this is what I want. So that is a big factor. The language problem with my children from Khayelitsha. Its very difficult.”</i></p> <p>KI 003 - 8:27 <i>“Nowadays if children want to do gymnastics, it’s a very expensive sport, they will need to travel wherever they need to be, because they can only go to the affluent clubs, there’s no other gymnastics clubs....”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:45 <i>“Yes, especially there at Netreg, because when there’s shooting and things like that</i></p>	
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				<p><i>then the kids cant come to the community center... when they have gang fights then the kids cant come to the community center, they cant come to class and this affects their continuous participation in the sport, big time.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:55 <i>“my kids can’t come from Mitchells Plain, because there’s always something happening, then there’s taxi violence, then theres this and that, then the children can’t reach the gym”</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>				<p>KI 002 – 7:29 <i>“we’ve got MyCity so it’s a little easier, you can just get on the bus and go...”</i></p>	



THEME	EXOSYSTEM: LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL SETTINGS INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING THE MICROSYSTEM				
SUBTHEME	Adopt-a-Club, Funders and Sponsors				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	FG 005 5:29 <i>"I would like a sponsor like Spar or Pick & Pay or something to give us serious money to buy other sprung board proper sprung floor. And a bigger hall."</i>				
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics		FG 002 – 2:30 <i>"Giant as they are an NGO and that funding...I understand that they're struggling and the money that they have currently will only allow them to facilitate them for this year is going to last them for this year. I know that, but like sometimes I feel like you know we're getting the results here in Mitchell's Plain, but then I sometimes feel like</i>	FG 004 – 4:115 <i>"Financial like helping the girls when it comes to competitions where they need to especially go to other provinces, get a sponsor or something to help them.</i>	KI 004 – 9:7 <i>"And another thing for me is, I would like to see those big clubs, having the community clubs, if you have children, like kind of feed into those clubs, so at least that child will have the opportunity to go further and do competitions.</i> <i>Like a pay it forward type of system</i>	

		<p><i>I'm not getting enough support from them...."</i></p>		<p><i>Like adopting a club, kind of thing. I know we have been trying this for years. But more should be done. But then again, it comes down to money, and that is the problem, that's the major problem we have."</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>		 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>		<p>KI 001 – 6:51 <i>"I think there are certain clubs who will do as much as possible and to assist kids from under privileged backgrounds, but they're also limited as to how much they can do; how much they can afford to do, because in the end it's their income and it's a business."</i></p>	

THEME	MESOSYSTEM: INTERACTION BETWEEN MICROSYSTEMS, WHICH AFFECT DEVELOPING CHILD DIRECTLY				
SUBTHEME	Parents/Peer involvement with the gymnastics club				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics					
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 003 – 3:52 <i>“Most of my friends doesn’t come watch me.”</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:9 <i>“I tell my friends that I do gymnastics but they don’t exactly...they don’t understand, they don’t support me...ok, but they know that I’m going to a competition and they wish me well good luck.”</i></p>	<p>FG 002 – 2:11 <i>“grandparents that are looking after their grandkids because mommy is not there, daddy is not there, mommy’s busy doing drugs”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:4 <i>“It’s difficult to keep your kid at the gym, if the parents are not supportive , not as many parents who are interested in spending that four hundred and thirty rand, a term for their kid”</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:44 <i>“I do you think that your social position or your social disposition is going to affect your child in many ways, because if it’s a struggle in any way...if the child is hungry or if the child does not have the correct clothing for instance for the gym practice or if the child doesn’t have the correct transport or whatever the case may be it’s going to be very difficult for that child.”</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:42 <i>“But if the child or person doesn’t have that family support, then they’re just going to sit back and do nothing.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Social position of parents influence participation in gymnastics. ❖ Negative social activity of parents, causes absence in gymnast’s life.
Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for	<p>FG 003 – 3:53 <i>“my friends show a lot of interest,</i></p>		<p>FG 001 – 1:68 <i>“The cartwheel thing that you had</i></p>	<p>KI 002 – 7:26 <i>“I’m lucky I’ve got parents that are very</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Displays in the community creates

gymnastics	<p><i>especially my friend Lene. Every Wednesday and Thursday then they ask me; what did you do in gymnastics... ”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:47 <i>“my new friends that I have they also used to do gymnastics, but they dropped out, and they keep on asking when is your next competition, as they would like to watch me.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:50 <i>“The friends that I got now, they actually ask me during intervals to do the splits, cartwheels and forward walkovers and then we like do PT straddle position, then they ask me to do the splits.”</i></p>		<p><i>the other day, a lot of people came around and met on an open field outside and it was a community thing and everybody was participating; it was a fundraising type of thing ... ”</i></p>	<p><i>supportive”</i></p>	<p>awareness about gymnastics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Peer support through interest.
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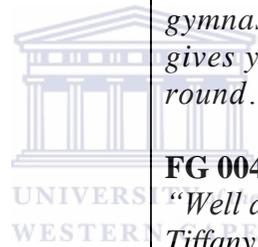
THEME	MESOSYSTEM: INTERACTION BETWEEN MICROSYSTEMS, WHICH AFFECT DEVELOPING CHILD DIRECTLY				
SUBTHEME	School support shown to gymnast and gymnastics club				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	FG 005 – 5:7 <i>“like when I get the certificate or medal they announce it”</i>				
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics	FG 005 – 5:8 <i>“My school doesn’t actually support me at all; it isn’t a registered school sport so they don’t recognize it at that school. Like for us in high school, if you qualify for Western Province or Western Cape and you’ve got like the national competition, then you can get an award; such as, the big one is the yellow thing around your blazer and I can’t get that, because gymnastics isn’t recognized, even though its an Olympic sport a lot of people do it but they dont</i>			KI 004 – 9:39 <i>“We couldn’t even get the parents involved because the parents weren’t interested”</i>	❖ Lack of school support and recognition of the sport of gymnastics.

<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>	<p><i>support it... ”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:44 <i>“If we don’t have enough money to go to a competition they help us and last year one of my teachers, my grade three teacher, she bought me this, the leotard that I have now.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:17 <i>“I get training with her and my school helps us with money problems”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:15 <i>“my principal bought me and my sister and my friend Laeeqah and most of the children that attends Giants, they bought our tracksuits.”</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:10 <i>“our old school, when I went to nationals last year, regional nationals because I</i></p>				<p>❖ School teacher shows support to pupil participating in gymnastics</p>
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	<i>was regional, they gave me two hundred rand!"</i>				
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THEME	MESOSYSTEM: INTERACTION BETWEEN MICROSYSTEMS, WHICH AFFECT DEVELOPING CHILD DIRECTLY				
SUBTHEME	Family facilitation and support at gym and gymnastics competitions				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics			<p>FG 001 – 1:8 <i>"we initially put Rebecca into gymnastics for the strength and just the general physical development of gymnastics I think is brilliant for children and for agility"</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:10 <i>"I think the development of their strength, their motor skills, and also discipline, you know, what they're being taught here, I think it stems from the home and also</i></p>		❖ Parent directly influenced child's participation in sport

			<p><i>then gets added here in the class room so I think physical development, discipline, the strengths which she mentioned before, and competitiveness; it's sort of a mixture that gymnastics sort of gives you and all round... ”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:77</p> <p><i>“Well at home Tiffany enjoys gym so much but she can't be here twenty four seven, so with certain things she struggled with like bridging, gym ball, pull up bars, I even built a beam in the garage. she was doing her pull ups and she's got the gym balls and the yoga mats for stretching and she</i></p>		
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			<p><i>cartwheels the whole bladdy house full. So, when she's not at gym, she is sorted with gym at home, ...for me, it's assisting and helping with the gyming. "</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:79 <i>"doing cartwheels in my kitchen...and down the passage, doing floor routines in the front room, I'm watching something...granny look here, granny look here, watch here; then I say it's ok Ansen, do it, then I'll watch. And outside, actually in the road with friends, she will do cartwheels and handstands"</i></p>		
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:44 <i>"what I do is: Like say if a parent comes to me and says I can't pay that four</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:58 <i>"As your kid progresses, the fees become more expensive and it is</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:22 <i>"But even if you took rope skipping, which is the cheapest sport, or aerobics, if you want</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Expenses increase as child progresses in the sport. ❖ Inability to pay

		<p><i>hundred, so then what I will do is I will send an email, or I'll make the parent write a letter to say that "I'm not able to pay the full amount but I can pay forty rand a month", then I will send them an email to say that I already told the parent that it is fine, and it won't be that Giants will say no you can't compete, you can't go the competition...they will maybe pay that entry fee for the child but what they will do is; they won't allow kids to gym if they're not paying at all, so they need to get a commitment from the parents, even if it's a five rand, but they are willing to pay for the entry fee and to allow the kids to compete"</i></p>	<p><i>a, you know if you add up over the year what you could potentially have spend on classes, kits, competitions and if you are "cursed" with two kids, it can be very expensive. And when they have to go to out of town competitions, we've got to fund it ourselves and then if you're also unfortunate enough that none of them are in Cape Town, then you actually then have to seriously reconsider, because there is only so much bread you can't buy. And I think that could be a huge factor for continuing"</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:80 <i>"For me it was</i></p>	<p><i>to compete in the sport, then you still have the cost of your leotard, your tracksuit, your competition entry fees and then you do the district trials and then you have to get your...you go to the provincial competition which is another set of entry fees, and a tracksuit and then once you've qualified from the provincials, you then go to the nationals, and that involves a new leotard, a new tracksuit, entry fees and generally travel, and in this day and age, with the economy how it is, and people's earnings how it is, like it is just not affordable to do that anymore."</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:25 <i>"The parents could never see a competition. Their</i></p>	<p><i>fees by parents.</i></p>
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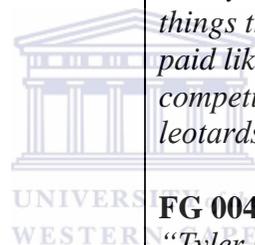
		<p>FG 002 – 2:5 <i>“I can understand that the parent, you can’t, there’s nothing you can do about the money situation and that present moment so rather to take the kid out and then bring them back, but very often it’s not that they come back.”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:20 <i>“there’s a lot of single parents and sometimes you know they don’t even get that income from the dad so they work alone”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:27 <i>“so there are actually grandparents intercepting to be parents because I mean a grandparent getting pension, and I mean that pension is not just for</i></p>	<p><i>basically my husband walked out on me. But that was my goal; to see my child achieve something. It’s just been me, nobody else, no family member, no support whatsoever, just me as a single parent at that moment”</i></p>	<p><i>parents were never at a competition. There was no parent support. Due to no transport. The entry fees were fund raised.”</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:26 <i>“You work so bloody hard to raise funds. Economically, these parents couldn’t afford it. So their parents never saw a competition.”</i></p>	
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		<p><i>grandchildren, the whole household at the end of the day, because there are maybe uncles not working and uncle is just at home, and they pay the kids school fees...”</i></p>			
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>			<p>FG 004 – 4:56 <i>“...at the end of the day it’s worth it. You know for the seven years, if I look back, for me, I sacrifice that money, sometimes it’s not easy but you see the results at the end of the day and see how focused they are where the sport is concerned and you never know where the sports can lead them. One of these days they can also be coaches.”</i></p>		

THEME	MICROSYSTEM: GYMNASIUM				
SUBTHEME	Importance of gymnastics and the gymnastics club				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 003 – 3:1 “Every year you go different places”</p> <p>FG 003 – 3:35 “Actually what I like about gymnastics is I like doing new things and I like travelling to different countries and places and I like competing against other people. I’m very competitive.”</p> <p>FG 005 – 5:15 “It feels like I have a place to go and I feel at home, and I have friends here. Giants and I feel I can be there for other people and when they’re struggling with something.... Then I can help them and I can be there”</p>	<p>FG 002 – 2:50 “To have some hand in teaching that child, that reward is enough than money or whatever; just to see that child coming to you and saying hi teacher I got gold or something like that and it’s like that joy in that child’s face, that’s enough.”</p> <p>FG 002 – 2:51 “Some parents who appreciates it and that comes to you saying thank you for coaching my child, thank you for believing in the child, look where she is now or maybe you didn’t think that the child will be able to do it earlier in the year; that is more of a reward for me as a</p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:36 “the social aspect of new friends...”</p> <p>FG 004 – 4:14 “I think it also keeps them active”</p> <p>FG 004 – 4:15 “It keeps them out of mischief”</p> <p>FG 004 – 4:16 “she loves it and it keeps them busy and active”</p> <p>FG 004 – 4:22 “so she enjoys coming to gym so that she can be active here and have friends that she can talk to on her level”</p> <p>FG 001 – 1:32 “I mean came from OT requirement for improving gross motor</p>	<p>KI 004 – 9:16 “Gymnastics is so good for discipline, because you can’t do it without being disciplined, you’ll cause injuries, you’ll do major harm. Its coordination, it helps kids with simple, simple coordination. If you look around, gymnastics is everywhere.”</p> <p>KI 003 – 8:12 “You cant be in isolation if you do gymnastics, you start off at a club so you will always be included in a group of people”</p> <p>KI 004 – 9:20 “Gymnastics is fun. Its sociable.”</p> <p>KI 001 – 6:65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The social aspect of new friends. ❖ Keeps children active. ❖ Gymnastics is fun. ❖ Travelling to different places for competition. ❖ Gymnastics is a comfortable and homely environment to be in.

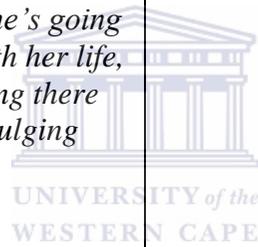
		<p><i>coach and just to know that the child didn't maybe think she can do it and here she did, that uplifts the child herself by saying: I can do this, I want to continue."</i></p>	<p><i>so that's how we got to this sport, but other things, you know, like wanting your kids to be active in something"</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:63 <i>"The first thing about gymnastics is that it has got to be fun."</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:44 <i>"something to keep her mind from all the negativities that she has...."</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:68 <i>"coaches motivate them as well telling them you didn't succeed now but you know, you'll get there"</i></p>	<p><i>"I think it's a very big indirect thing that comes from that. Ja, and most people will say that you're much more than just a gymnastics coach, you're like a life coach for children."</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics</p>			<p>FG 004 – 4:94 <i>"Mitchell's Plain, gymnastics.....How's a sports like this going to thrive in an area where...I'm not going to sugar coat; there's</i></p>	<p>KI 004 – 9:3 <i>"And also, people ran out of Judges because we have so many children just doing level 1's. Two is we don't have those</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Growth of sport is a challenge due to violence and other crime in specific area. ❖ Socio-Economic

			<p><i>violence in the area; there's different contributing factors".</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:52 <i>"through the club, it's a lot of money and I am not a pensioner yet so it's sometimes very stressful, because I don't always have the money to pay certain things that need to be paid like club fees and competition fees and leotards and all that"</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:49 <i>"Tyler has been recruited through the school programme. If it didn't happen like that, I wouldn't have known that there was a gymnastics club here"</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:48 <i>"My eldest just finished now the end of last year, but that was due to school</i></p>	<p><i>qualifications. If you enter ten children and you don't have a Judge, your club needs to pay R500 like a proxy. So that is going to be, like for our little clubs starting, is going to be a major problem. Per child."</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:23 <i>"Like you were saying, transport, fees that they cannot afford at these clubs and now that the community clubs are not going anymore, we also going to be losing out on our gymnasts."</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:21 <i>"I did talent ID yesterday, one class of twenty children, not one girl could do a cartwheel."</i></p>	<p>Status as a social factor preventing continued participation in the sport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Clubs without officials require each gymnast to pay a proxy along with competition fees for judging. ❖ School commitments. ❖ Lack of disciplines available to continue participation.
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			<p><i>commitments. Going to grade five”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:50 <i>“she was just struggling a little bit in grade four...we had to stop something, but unfortunately it was gymnastics which was sad”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:56 <i>“She may change disciplines though but that brings another issue because we’ve got no tumbling close by”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:57 <i>“economically, that’s also a reason for dropping out.”</i></p>		
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>		<p>FG 002 – 2:46 <i>“I would say that just the fact that being in a gym and being around positive people, I would say that that influences them already, to a</i></p>	<p>FG 004 – 4:39 <i>“we had a pact that we made between the two of us: when your school work suffers, your great love gymnastics has got to go, so you have to</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:64 <i>“I also think that in general coaches become role models, without even realizing it, so if they are in the community, serving their time, doing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coach is seen as a role-model to gymnast and community. ❖ Parent motivation.

		<p><i>point of like comparing with maybe what they might see in their community, people on the streets smoking...and then actually being in the gym and knowing that I want to be like Nicole, she's coaching, she's studying, she's going forward with her life, not just being there and not indulging in..."</i></p>	<p><i>keep your grades high in order to stay in gymnastics"</i></p>	<p><i>sports and naturally sharing, naturally you know being loving and naturally interested and kind you know people, that's the image that the child is reflecting on and wanting to be like and to a degree they are mentors for the children as to how to ascribe to, so even if the kid's parents are not home or not leading a good example, they've got an example of somebody who is a good example and they will maybe strive towards being that, even if their home situation isn't very good, and I think that that alone you know, can help with teaching children what is right and what is wrong without naturally...you know without thinking consciously or directly</i></p>	
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				<i>talking to it."</i>	
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THEME	MICROSYSTEM: GYMNASIUM				
SUBTHEME	Facilities and Accessibility				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics				<p>KI 001 – 6:39 <i>“basically the solution for a gymnastics is your gym for all and in fact it can even be any size, any type, any age, any religion....and you can find a solution within it, because there really are kind of no rules, so you can make the rules up yourself.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:7 <i>“And the other thing with gymnastics is that it used to be for artistic men, women and rhythmic until the nineties, even ninety nine or even two</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Accessibility using Gym for All. ❖ Accessibility through Rope-Skipping.

				<p><i>thousand that it was only those three disciplines and then trampoline, tumbling, aerobics, acro all came in to the federation and so that expanded like how accessible gymnastics is, because you know, and then rope skipping came in much later as well, about two thousand and five, joined the federation, and those disciplines I think have made it more accessible to everyone, because like rope skipping you only need some ropes and you do it outside or wherever”</i></p>	
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics		<p>FG 002 – 2:36 <i>“We’re only allowed to gym an hour and a half in the week, twice, and then on a Saturday we are allowed to gym, beginners come in from 9-10am, and</i></p>	<p>FG 004 – 4:120 <i>“we have to compete with other things as well, you know...that the girls have to pack up after every session”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:62</p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:46 <i>“I think your big clubs that are established will be as safety conscious as possible, but for example, we had a visiting consultant from the UK out and we were in</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Safety of Facilities for participation of gymnastics to take place. ❖ Equipment to be packed away after each session

		<p><i>then everybody that's competing comes in from 10-12. So it's like their hour is allocated to the amount of fees they pay. So it's like, like I even offered, I offered that will it be allowed that I come in on a Friday afternoon after classes, and then come and coach, the 4's and up because they need... an hour and a half; it's not enough, twice a week and two hours on a Saturday and two hours in the afternoon, you understand? And they were like no, we first get the fees in before...."</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:7 <i>"When they were shooting in Eastridge, most of our kids come from</i></p>	<p><i>"They are using a church here, I mean it's kind of them to do that, but I don't think it stands for any proper competitive gymnastics. You would have reached a level here and then you are going to just stay on that level."</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:64 <i>"there is no facility at all in the whole of like the Blouberg area, I mean, let alone the fact that you need something obviously that's big enough. I mean a church is not it, and as I say that limits you know where they'll be able to go to."</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:20 <i>"a handful of schools and I mean offer it"</i></p>	<p><i>a gym in Brits, which is completely set up all the time, probably one of the nicest set up gyms, you know one of the really nicely set up gym in our opinion as South Africans, and then he walks and he said in the UK, no one will be allowed to set foot in it, because the wires that are holding the bars up are not covered by foam; there is concrete floor you know that's free, and concrete, and look in the Western Cape we had a kid who came of the P-bars who happened to land on the one piece of area of concrete and now he's paralyzed."</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:30 <i>"Whenever there was riots and things like that, I just used to lock up the door, and say "lets carry on"..... The</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Transportation System prevents accessibility to gymnasiums due to strikes/riots or travelling complications. ❖ Improper Facilities for competitive gymnastics ❖ Limited time for training at current facility ❖ Danger in area of gym facility preventing participation. ❖ Lack of facilities in certain areas. ❖ Not enough schools offer school sport gymnastics.
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		<p><i>Portlands/Eastridge, the one that are doing competitive gymnastics, because they walk over some school, so they won't be able to come to gym, so that also affects them participating."</i></p>	<p>FG 004 – 4:98 <i>"not enough exposure and especially at school"</i></p>	<p><i>gangsters have certain times that they are going to perform. They are not constant. I didn't allow it to interfere when I used to have my gym club"</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:31 <i>"At the moment, the prevention at the moment, again, transport is going to come up, getting to the facilities"</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:46 <i>"when they have gang fights then the kids cant come to the community center, they cant come to class and this affects their continuous participation in the sport, big time."</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:47 <i>"If you think of Phillipi, if theres trouble there and they start burning tyres and</i></p>	
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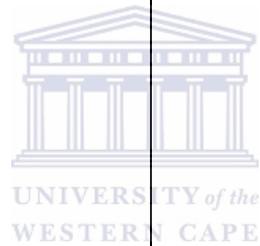


				<p><i>things like that then the gymnasts cant go in and go and train there.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:45 <i>“we have the gym in Phillipi which is next to the bus and taxi rank, so when there’s bus and taxi wars, the entire gym can’t train, because they’re right smack bang in the middle of it, and they can’t even enter you know the area to train”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:31 <i>“Well, we go to Phillipi often. I often have to check is it alright; is it ok today; are we safe; are we going to be all right, but I won’t take them if I don’t think it’s safe.”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:22 <i>“I went to two schools; the one</i></p>	
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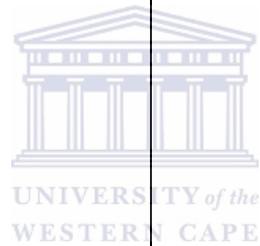


				<p><i>school had a sports person there, she does different things with them and then I went to another school and they don't have anyone, which they need. They need someone to push it."</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>		 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>		<p>KI 001 – 6:40-41 <i>"In almost all gymnastades and gym for life events and everything like that, SAGF has had a team, like there's pretty much always been people with disabilities in it, but I don't think it's something that is being catered for enough. I work with children you know with Down's syndrome and Autism and what I find with them, is that if the family has the wish for them to be involved, then they push for them to get involved, no matter what the barriers</i></p>	<p>❖ Gymnaestrada promotes inclusion of all.</p>

				<p>are.”</p> <p>KI 002 – 7:18 <i>“We’ve got two boys, three boys that are fetal alcohol syndrome”</i></p> <p>KI 003 – 8:24 <i>“I played games with all of them so that I could include all of them. I played relay races, and I played volley ball, and I used to lay out circuits for them. There was never an exclusion of any child, they were always accepted”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:21 <i>“And even somebody with disabilities, you can make them move. You can get somebody in a wheelchair for instance, someone can do a handstand and they can hold you. Just being able to move. Just being able to be a</i></p>	
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			<p><i>part of it is inclusion for me.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:35 <i>“I love coaching the disabled! I simply love it, because we coach what they are able to do.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:54 <i>“That’s our mass participation, that’s our gymnaestradas, our festivals, that kind of thing. The Gym for All. And that is from Pre-school right through your senior citizens.</i></p> <p><i>Like it says, Gym for All. That’s where our motto comes in, our four F’s: fun, family, fundamentals, fellowship?</i></p> <p><i>Gym for All is a</i></p>	
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				<p><i>program within gymnastics for all. So it is an event, which is a discipline called gym for all. So that is where they do sequences, where they compete and they get evaluated, bronze silver, gold. Its in teams large or small, big groups or small groups. A gymnast can compete on their own in a festival and not a competition.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:11 <i>“Gymnastics also caters for people with disabilities and so, you know, learning to deal with people who are different than you, be it race, culture or even physical difference, that teaches you a lot as in life skills, so I think that’s fantastic.”</i></p>	
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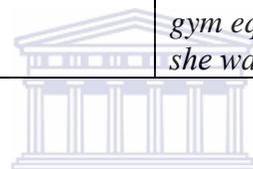
THEME	MICROSYSTEM: GYMNASTICS CLUB				
SUBTHEME	Apparatus and Equipment at the gymnastics club (Availability and Safety)				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics			<p>FG 005 – 4:107 <i>“And what is also nice is that we notice as parents, when they have a competition, and the girls go up to the podium to receive their medals and certificates or whatever it is, a lot of that talent are our children, Mitchell’s Plain, Giants, the disadvantaged children, children from broken backgrounds, poor backgrounds, and they go on to the podium there and they work with the broken equipment, and they’re struggling and have their social problems at home, but when it’s time to receive that awards; that certificates and the Giants kids go up</i></p>		

			<p><i>there and then you can even see, say there's ten Giants kids there then eight of those Giants kids are Mitchells Plain's Giants kids...you know how proud you feel, despite everything and the hardships and circumstances, look at what they've achieved and it doesn't just make them feel proud, it makes parents feel proud and the coaches feel proud because the coaches had to work with minimal resources and there the kids are"</i></p>		
Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 005 – 5:27 <i>"They are raising money, but I'm really really want them to help me with bounces on the floor and that. A spring floor and a table for when you're getting to the higher</i></p>	<p>FG 002 – 2:31 <i>"so it's difficult training if you have so little, like each child gets twenty five minutes on an apparatus and they are probably like ten in a group, fifteen in a</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:21 <i>"if you look at it, the cost of equipment and those kinds of things, its actually impractical in my view as a school sport"</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:21 <i>"gymnastics to me is an expensive sport in general just because it requires a hall, it needs to be indoors, and indoor facilities are really tough to find or get, artistic</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gymnastics is an expensive sport due to equipment and facilities costs. ❖ The standard of the equipment differed from

	<p><i>levels...level five and a tumble track to practice my flic flacs”</i></p>	<p><i>group, sixteen Level 1’s in a group so it gets to a point where you actually do get frustrated as a coach; out of everybody will have two turns on the bar and then the time is up so definitely I would say apparatus is a big part of what we need because we only have one beam that was donated before even I started coaching here and then Sonia actually gave us the old beams, so we have the two beams and then the little low beams, you understand, so it’s like keeping kids on the two beams.”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:32 <i>“we’re trying to build gymnastics and create participation; increase participation, but we don’t have equipment”</i></p>	<p>FG 004 – 4:96 <i>“So that’s also a worrying factor and it’s added stress on us to fundraise I mean you can see that the equipment we have here; we have not the best of equipment; it’s run down; it needs to be serviced; we do not have enough, so we’re not happy with our equipment, so it’s a lot of added pressure to the parents”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:118 <i>“I mean you know like Swartklip sports hall; I mean there’s a lot of equipment there, it doesn’t get used and the hall gets vandalized, things get stolen; they’ve got equipment that could have come to us and we could have used it, not to say that we just want, but I mean it is wasted. I all</i></p>	<p><i>gymnastics you really need a dedicated hall, that next to impossible to get or if you’re going to do it at a cost it’s a hell of a lot of money and plus all the apparatus requirements.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:47 <i>“the cost of safety like mats and everything like that is so exorbitant that nobody can afford to actually like cover their gym perfectly as it’s supposed to be done.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:28 <i>“The kids from the Southern Suburbs were so different from the kids from the Cape Flats. And there were privileges. They had better equipment than us on the Cape Flats.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:44 <i>“its expensive</i></p>	<p>area to area.</p> <p>❖ Equipment Safety is lacking.</p>
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		<p>FG 002 – 2:33 <i>“And we have boys gymnastics and no P-Bar.”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:36 <i>“And we have very little mats as well, but the biggest thing I would say, if you want to increase the numbers, we need to have more apparatus, because there is no point in increasing, and each child gets two turns on the apparatus.”</i></p>	<p><i>government stuff, not a private club, their stuff is lying there and not used”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:100 <i>“So what is the use the child is here working hard and now the club here does not have the equipment here.”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:41 <i>“Social Factors to me would be where you live, is it easy for you to get there, is there somebody who will fetch you and take you, is there somebody who would provide you with a meal, who is funding this, clothing... that to me is social factors.”</i></p>	<p><i>equipment, and how do I know that P-Bar is still standing in Langa, in what state are those roll-out matts, who’s jumping on that trampoline?? Is that trampoline still safe, so I have major issues with community centers”</i></p>	
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>			<p>FG 004 – 4:83 <i>“Cara has been getting gymnastic related presents, gym ball, weights and uncle I don’t know</i></p>		

			<p><i>what the things are that she mentioned she wanted, but we'll get you something and then sometimes she gets money and then the thing that she wanted was maybe the grips or something or whatever, so her idea of birthday and Christmas presents is gym equipment that she wants</i></p>		
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THEME	INDIVIDUAL: THE DEVELOPING CHILD				
SUBTHEME	Difficulties experienced in gymnastics with regard to skills and training				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 003 – 3:1 <i>“I like to experience new things on the apparatus. New tricks, like front summersaults”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:5 <i>“it keeps me fit and if you do gym then you always have enough energy to do the stuff</i></p>		<p>FG 004 – 4:28 <i>“And like I say, also even with their attendance, the more they are at gym the more they learn the new things and they become better at what they are doing.”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:30 <i>“the more they are at</i></p>	<p>KI 002 – 7:24 <i>“I enjoy teaching them to do stuff on the bar and on the beam.”</i></p>	<p>❖ The opportunity to learn new skills on apparatus.</p>

	<p><i>on the apparatus.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:36 <i>“it keeps me fit and if you do gym then you always have enough energy to do the stuff on the apparatus.”</i></p>		<p><i>gym the more they learn the new things and they become better at what they are doing.”</i></p>		
<p>Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics</p>		<p>FG 002 – 2:38 <i>“We’re only allowed to gym an hour and a half in the week, twice, and then on a Saturday we are allowed to gym, beginners come in from 9-10am, and then everybody that’s competing comes in from 10-12. So it’s like their hour is allocated to the amount of fees they pay. So it’s like, like I even offered, I offered that will it be allowed that I come in on a Friday afternoon after classes, and then come and coach, the 4’s and up because</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:52 <i>“clearly the time factor is huge...I’ve got two kids at gym, one is quite you know academically adept or astute/smart and the other one is your average kid, so you know we do need to spend more time compensating for amount of time spent here, because it’s the training itself, there’s other areas of involvement”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:14 <i>“the personal participation, the older you get, the</i></p>		<p>❖ Time as a factor that negatively affects participation (Too little time for training).</p>

		<i>they need... an hour and a half; it's not enough, twice a week and two hours on a Saturday and two hours in the afternoon, you understand? And they were like no, we first get the fees in before...."</i>	<i>more personal time you have to put into it"</i>		
Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics	<p>FG 003 – 3:10 <i>"When I was on the beam and I did cartwheels and I fell off the beam on the mat, and then I thought, no man I can't do this, but then I thought, wait... but I can. I just kept on practicing and Simone kept on telling me that I can do it"</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:4 <i>"Donna was standing there and she helped me to go into cartwheel; she just helped me slowly and put me down again"</i></p>	 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>		<p>KI 004 – 9:24 <i>"I think gymnasts are a breed of their own. They would welcome the people. And I find that the older gymnast will always go and assist the new gymnast, I think it becomes a family. Like for us in Gym for All, its fun, friendship, fundamentals, and fellowship."</i></p>	❖ Coach Motivation

	<p>FG 005 – 5:6 <i>“like what she does she stands with me and she just gives me a very nice look and I just know that she’s always going to be there for me, no matter what”</i></p>				
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THEME	INDIVIDUAL: THE DEVELOPING CHILD				
SUBTHEME	Benefits experienced on a physical, socio-emotional and cognitive level				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 005 – 5:2 <i>“Well, it teaches you to remember things and it teaches you to behave.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:21 <i>“Not to brag because it makes me feel special because some people always tell me that I’m one of the top gymnasts.”</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:13 <i>“It makes me feel like I’m the person whose</i></p>	<p>FG 002 – 2:52 <i>“I know the pressures and I would say that for any child to develop that type of work ethic to be able to do what needs to be done and to be independent you know, to learn that skill of independence, to know that ok today I have to do my school work, then go and play, I would say that that is something</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:37 <i>“very positive, her confidence is booming now.”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:28 <i>“I’ve seen with regards to Naeela and the other gymnasts a dedication, perseverance, lots of hard work, and they are very disciplined as well.”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:16 <i>“she loves it and it</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:28 <i>“I think parents like their kids to do gymnastics, because it’s an all-round activity, so they learn you know, great co-ordination, they learn to work as an individual, they learn to work in a team, I think it keeps them focused, and from a physical aspect it keeps them busy and I think it’s one of the</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boosted self-confidence through participation ❖ Gymnastics teaches the developing child about discipline, respect and obedience. ❖ A good foundation sport and all-around activity ❖ Learning perseverance by

	<p><i>standing out. Unique.”</i></p>	<p><i>that no one can teach you, but that is something that you develop on your own and it is something that you carry with you forever”</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:61 <i>“gymnastics helps the self-esteem.”</i></p>	<p>keeps them busy and active”</p> <p>FG 001 – 1:2 <i>“She just loves it, she loves gymnastics...does hand stands all the time and ...at home upside down on the couch and wherever they can....”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:3 <i>“they like tumbling and even at home they are continuously on their heads or on their hands so I think it’s a natural inclination and they love their sport and what they do here”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:4 <i>“I think mine likes the competitiveness of it. We started at home, you can start in baby groups, where I went with her and just did baby stuff, and that’s</i></p>	<p><i>few sports that really works on almost everything, and it’s a very good foundation sport, so ja, I would think that.”</i></p> <p>KI 001 – 6:30 <i>“so they learn you know, great co-ordination, they learn discipline, they learn to work as an individual, they learn to work in a team, I think it keeps them focused, and from a physical aspect it keeps them busy”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:6 <i>“Kids need it for anything, from a discipline point of view, from a self-awareness point of view, from a strength point of view, so there’s just a lot out there that the can kids can get hold of so there’s a lot of sports</i></p>	<p>doing gymnastics/sport</p> <p>❖ Participating in gymnastics helps with self-esteem.</p>
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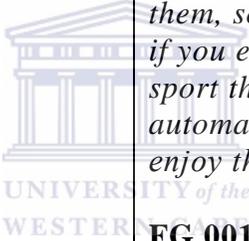
			<p><i>all she wanted to do.”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:6 <i>“My answer would be so that they don’t sit at home and watch tv, that they physically do something and they’re active. I mean it will go for all sports, gymnastics is obviously just by choicebut that would be why I think its important.”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:36 <i>“it’s been a major boost for her confidence, you can see she’s more confident in what she does. Gymnastics and school work as well.”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:7 <i>“I would say we initially put Rebecca into gymnastics for the strength and just the general physical development of</i></p>	<p><i>that they can choose whether they are going to choose gymnastics or not.”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:7 <i>“They grow in strength, flexibility, self-awareness. It’s just been so good for everybody and as I said it’s grounding for all sports so they come in and they can do gymnastics and it will increase their flexibility for their karate, or their strength for their swimming. It’s just really good for anybody to participate from a real young age, and I think that it would just benefit everybody if they come and do it.”</i></p> <p>KI 002 – 7:8 <i>“Discipline as well. It also helps with discipline with the</i></p>	
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			<p><i>gymnastics I think is brilliant for children and for agility, but again any sport, no sport is a waste of time and team sports as well I think also has a place in social, teaching them how to be with other people you know.”</i></p> 	<p><i>children. I see a lot of that; kids don't know how to stand in a line and stuff like that because some of them are maybe home schooled or at different schooling systems where it's not like that, so it definitely helps them in every way.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:16 <i>“Gymnastics is so good for discipline, because you cant do it without being disciplined, you'll cause injuries, you'll do major harm.”</i></p> <p>KI 004 – 9:11 <i>“its for wellness, its for good health, and things like that. But I think that the main reason why, because they can, theyre capable.”</i></p>	
Social factors that hinder opportunities		FG 002 – 2:68 <i>“My child was</i>	FG 004 – 4:34 <i>“There's been times</i>		❖ Eating disorder due to negative

<p>for participation in gymnastics</p>		<p><i>bulimic. She won gold and then after getting the medal, she sat down and someone said: I dunno why you won, you're so fat. She's not fat, she's got this broad cheeks, she's got muscle; and she's only eleven; I only found out two months; I noticed the weight loss and the being sick. So I took her to the doctor and social doctor. So I think that might also be contributing"</i></p>	<p><i>when during competitions amongst the gymnasts; sometimes you find the one pushing the other one down and you know, even though they're kids, they can be very nasty, but then she has learnt to overcome things like negativity and like I said it's boosted her confidence quite a bit and also at school as well, because I mean the same thing happened at school as well and I mean in all walks of like you find other kids picking on other kids"</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:50 <i>"she was just struggling a little bit in grade four...we had to stop something, but unfortunately it was gymnastics which was sad"</i></p>		<p>perception of identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gymnasts become bitter to one another because of the competition factor.
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Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics					
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THEME	INDIVIDUAL: THE DEVELOPING CHILD				
SUBTHEME	Achievement/attitude/beliefs and behaviours/growth				
OBJECTIVES:	GYMNAST	COACH	PARENT	KEY INFORMANT	FINDINGS
Reasons for participation in gymnastics	<p>FG 005 – 5:19 <i>“I don’t all the time do so well in Maths. My mom says that I have to stop one day of gymnastics, but to me its like school doesn’t really matter to me, its just basically gymnastics is my life.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:32 <i>“I was always like a negative person, like I can’t do that, I can’t, I dunno, but now, like my mommy will always like tell me stay positive and things like that and now I’m a positive</i></p>	<p>FG 002 – 2:43 <i>“because like I’m trying to build it and make sure that, even if a kid gets to level six and they want to leave, you know they can come and coach you know they can come and judge, we can still be mentors to them when they go to school”</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:53 <i>“especially now with my eldest daughter getting involved in coaching; you know helping at competitions, so there’s actually physically a lot of time that’s given or required to continue”</i></p> <p>FG 004 – 4:9 <i>“It gives her structure. She’s not very sporty, she’s not athletic, she is now finicky...you know and she’s been enjoying it. It’s taught her discipline and she just grew from one strength to the next,</i></p>	<p>KI 002 – 7:16 <i>“I’ve got a fifteen year old now. She’s been with me since she was six, so now I’m prepping her for judging, coaching; and I’ve got the support of her parents as well because they said she must also give back at a later stage.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The parent plays a big role in positive influence of the gymnast ❖ Growth potential in gymnastics.

	<p>girl.”</p> <p>FG 005 – 5:24 <i>“I think since I started gymnastics I’ve been helping a lot of people. I used to be selfish but I’ve started helping more people.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:7 <i>“I like competing against other people.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:27 <i>“What I dislike about gymnastics is doing conditioning. It’s painful, it’s tiring, but it keeps you fit, it helps you do new elements in your Bar routine, Beam, Floor and Vault. It makes you become stronger.”</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:2 <i>“Well, it teaches you to remember things and it teaches you to behave.”</i></p>		<p><i>but like I said she started with ballet and she chose gymnastics.”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:67 <i>“we also motivate them by competing in gymnastics with them, sort of doing handstands with them, doing cartwheels with them, so they, I think if you enjoy the sport they will automatically also enjoy the sport”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:34 <i>“parental influence as well. Why do you choose this sport for your child, because we do choose it, initially!”</i></p> <p>FG 001 – 1:43 <i>“I chose gymnastics because Amy was just always running around and hanging from things, and</i></p>		
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	<p>FG 003 – 3:39 <i>“my ma like motivates me to come, to succeed. My goal this year is to get a gold medal. Last year which I didn’t receive, so she motivated me to come every Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturdays to training so I can get better.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:40 <i>“if I come second or third, then my mommy would say that I should try harder by gyming and practice and then I can like also come first. Like last year I came first in Nationals and I’m proud of myself because my mommy like keep on saying try harder, try harder then next time you’ll come first you will get that gold medal. And I was like thinking I</i></p>		<p><i>supple, so it was a no brainer.”</i></p>		
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	<p><i>don't know, but last year, I actually got the gold medal."</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:41 <i>"my mommy motivated me last year. After I got the first place at the club competition my mommy told me you can work harder, you can, you can, then I got gold and I played in the top ten at South Zone"</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:42 <i>"My mommy motivated me by telling me that there's no such word as "I can't", I must push myself and my daddy told me that when he was smaller then someone took that away from him, they shot him in his leg, and also my daddy told me that I must go for gold."</i></p>				
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	<p>FG 003 – 3:29 <i>“Gymnastics changed my attitude because when I was smaller I liked to fight. I didn’t even care if you’re a girl or a boy, I liked to fight. Sometimes if the girls are rude I will tell them I don’t like your manners, don’t let me hit you. But most of the time I say I’m going to leave you, you’re small, I’m not going to hit you.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:30 <i>“I used to be very shy, and not so much around people and now I am confident and intelligent.”</i></p> <p>FG 003 – 3:31 <i>“I used to be a tomboy. In grade four I used to swear a lot and I never liked anyone I’m like.....from grade</i></p>				
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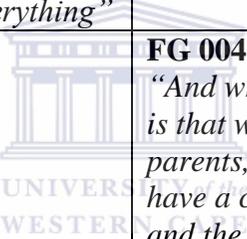
one to four I used to have a multi-personality and then here at gym then I'm like this sweet girl and when I'm school, then I'm like "are you f-ing crazy???" and I'm like a tomboy and then sometimes I used to play with boys and the boys say: kom speel met ons, like that, and then gymnastics changed everything. It taught me how to act like a girl and then finally in grade five I started to wear school skirts."

FG 003 – 3:34

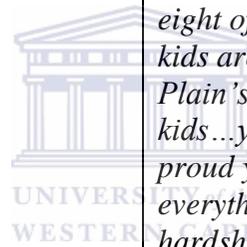
"Gymnastics changed my attitude in making me more self-confident. I never used to like being with a lot of people. I always used to be one sided if I don't know the people and I'm too scared to talk to that



	<p><i>person just in case that person tells me no, "I don't know you" and that's all I've got to say actually."</i></p> <p>FG 005 – 5:25 <i>"I'm starting to coach, I'm starting to guide other people which makes me feel amazing."</i></p>				
<p>Social factors that hinder opportunities for participation in gymnastics</p>		<p>FG 002 – 2:15 <i>"maybe at home they don't have that person they can look up to, so sometimes they try and find someone they could look up to and that person can influence them to do the wrong thing also then to leave gym, so it is disappointing because you know you're trying to get the kids involved in something and you speak to them and make it known that,</i></p>	<p>FG 001 – 1:54 <i>"There's age, I also mentioned that she is fifteen now and I'm kinda going like you know...I'm really not going to become an Olympic gymnast so what's a good time to quit."</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bad influence and/or example at home ❖ Age as a social factor to hinder participation.

		<p><i>you know, gym is a positive thing for you to do and often they just stay away, 'I want to be on the street and be free.'"</i></p> <p>FG 002 – 2:2 <i>"the moment they hit a certain age, everything goes, their attitude, how to perform, everything"</i></p>			
<p>Social factors that promote opportunities for participation for gymnastics</p>	<p>FG 005 – 5:12 <i>"Well it makes me feel happy and comfortable in the group and I've made lots of friends here and I'm happy and comfortable."</i></p> <p>FG 005 - 5:14 <i>"It's like a second family; I've known everyone for so long"</i></p>		<p>FG 004 – 4:108 <i>"And what is also nice is that we notice as parents, when they have a competition, and the girls go up to the podium to receive their medals and certificates or whatever it is, a lot of that talent are our children, Mitchell's Plain, Giants, the disadvantaged children, children from broken backgrounds, poor backgrounds, and they go on to the podium there and they</i></p>	<p>KI 001 – 6:63 <i>"I think like gymnastics in itself like indirectly lends itself to that, because if the kids are involved, first of all they are busy at the gym, so they are naturally not on the streets and they're also naturally learning to follow rules and learning to follow commands; they're learning to respect authority, they're learning to, a degree work on their</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gymnastics gives children an alternative. ❖ Sense of belonging.

			<p><i>work with the broken equipment, and they're struggling and have their social problems at home, but when it's time to receive that awards; that certificates and the Giants kids go up there and then you can even see, say there's ten Giants kids there then eight of those Giants kids are Mitchells Plain's Giants kids...you know how proud you feel, despite everything and the hardships and circumstances, look at what they've achieved and it doesn't just make them feel proud, it makes parents feel proud and the coaches feel proud because the coaches had to work with minimal resources and there the kids are"</i></p>	<p><i>own; they're learning to achieve goals; and also to a degree because they're interacting with a vast difference of people, they will like learn from their experiences as well and what they see other people doing and want to achieve towards that, so I think naturally, and also because you're having to be fit and healthy and all of that like you naturally don't get involved in it."</i></p>	
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			FG 004 – 4:70 <i>“it motivates them and it’s a very good role model for the kids.”</i>		
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