EXPLORING HOW YOUNG WOMEN WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS NAVIGATE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN RECREATIONAL SPORTS

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My first sports day at school

DECLARATION

I, Dellicia De Vos ………………………………, hereby declare that the work on which this dissertation/thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

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My mother, whose hard work and sacrifice over the years have always been my motivation and driving force.

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PREFACE

My own story of participating in sports

I am sharing my own story of participating in sports because, as a woman with a vision impairment, my own participation has sparked my interest in this particular phenomenon and it has impacted my journey as a researcher.

I attended a special needs school for children with vision impairments in the Western Cape in South Africa and stayed in the hostel for 13 years, because I was from a different country, Namibia. During those 13 years, I was always involved in different types of sports.

When I was little, I did the 60m race. As I got older, I did all the sprint events, including relays and the field events. At my school, everybody had to participate in the inter-house event. The teachers demonstrated how to do the different field events. Our teachers were amazing, and they had so much patience with all of us.

Our practice sessions took place every morning and every afternoon before and after school. On the day of the inter-house event, the procession was quite a spectacle. We were all divided into different houses. The excitement and anticipation were always high. During those events, we learnt about teamwork, work ethic, healthy competition, and good sportsmanship. Most of all, we learnt about having fun and supporting each other. I loved those days!

We all trained and then they picked the top four to represent the house, and then on inter-house day, the first four of every race and event were chosen to represent the school at the inter-school events. For this event, we participated against other special schools in the Western Cape. It was not really a fair match-up if you compare the different types of disabilities, but we all took it in our stride. My school always won the trophy for best team spirit. Our athletes did well in the field events but it was a bit more difficult with the track events. I think this was because, for us, staying inside the lines while running took concentration, which slowed us down.

Every year after the inter-school events, there were the September Games. At these games, all the special schools for vision impaired children from across the country competed against each other. I was an average athlete but I remember once getting a diploma for third place in long jump. The games took place in different cities all over the country, and my aim was to make that team so that I could go on tour. Some of my friends were then chosen to represent the Western Province at the National Trials.

I also participated in other sports such as netball, goalball, dancing, and gymnastics when I was little. I did ballroom dancing and I always picked up the steps first. The teacher always used me to demonstrate the steps to the others. I also did ipi-thombi dancing, a type of African dancing to the tune of Shosholoza. I did the ipi-thombi dancing for many years and even toured to Namibia when I was ten and eleven. This was a very proud moment for me because my family could, for the first time, see something that I had learned at school. I loved the dancing.

Then there was goalball, which I thoroughly enjoyed and was really good at it. I made that team with ease. Most of our goalball tournaments were against the other school for the blind in the province. Most of the time, they wiped the floor with us because they were physically bigger and therefore stronger than us. In goalball, that is what is needed to score and win. They were also our only vision impaired opponents for netball, and then we always wiped the floor with them. Netball for me came naturally because (and I only discovered this after I left school) everybody in my family played it. It’s a huge thing in Namibia. At my school, I was the captain of the netball team just like my mom and my sister. I participated in netball, goalball and athletics until my matric year.

After matric, when I left school, my life changed dramatically. I had no friends and I no longer had the support and encouragement of the teachers and house mothers from school. I was unemployed and eventually decided to move back to Namibia where I landed my first job. The soccer club that my family was supporting decided to start a netball team. My sister joined the team and my mom and I attended all their practice sessions. Sometimes we joined them. My mom, despite her age, was brilliant. I then discovered that although I loved netball and

I could play, I was nowhere close to their level. They were fast and accurate, and I struggled to keep up with the movement of the ball. They would run, catch and throw the ball in one move. I had to concentrate on where the ball was, and when the ball was thrown to me, I had to stop, catch it, and then look for an open player. So every time I had the ball, the momentum of the game was slowed down significantly. I realised then why, years earlier at school, we were never able to beat the kids from mainstream schools. Although I enjoyed playing with my sister's team, I decided to rather just watch them play as I felt a bit self-conscious about slowing them down. I became an active spectator and was on a sports field every weekend watching my younger family members play soccer, rugby, and netball, and participate in athletics.

After three years in Namibia, I decided to move back to Cape Town. I got married and had my first baby. My husband was always a keen sportsman, so he always found ways to stay active and he was looking very good. I was doing nothing to lose the excess pregnancy weight. I always looked and felt like a frump next to my husband. Therefore, when my sister-in-law suggested we join a running club, I agreed immediately. She provided the transport. We joined the local club and went three times a week. Upon joining, I asked the management to inform the other members that I had a vision impairment and needed assistance when crossing the roads. They said I should just ask whoever is closest to me when I needed help. That didn't work because most of the time I was by myself at those crucial moments. I wasn't familiar with the routes. One night, it was raining, there were no streetlights and I couldn't see anybody in front of me or hear any runners behind me. I had no clue where I was, I couldn't see where I was going and I had no way of informing anybody that I was in trouble. That was my last run with the club. My sister-in-law had stopped running as well. I was disappointed because I liked the running. I enjoyed the freedom it gave me and I enjoyed having that time to be alone with my own thoughts. I never felt like part of the club and this was in complete contrast to my experience of doing sports when I was at school. Transport to and from the club was a huge problem because I was completely reliant on others. Then there were also my commitments as a wife and a mother of young children. All these compounding factors brought me to the decision to stop running.

I wasn’t doing any other form of exercise and so I became overweight again. I was unfit, unhealthy, and very unhappy with myself so when my husband’s niece asked me to start running with her again, I agreed. We didn’t join the club, we just ran by ourselves, using the same routes as the club runners. It worked brilliantly (for a while). This time, there were new running paths on the sidewalks, all along the old routes, so we didn’t have to run in the road. It was fabulous and I remembered how much I loved running. I lost weight again and I felt good and my fitness level and mental and physical health were improving. Unfortunately, my running partner stopped after a few months. This time, my mind-set was right and I decided to continue on my own.

The running paths were there and I was able to access them on my own. I was working from home so I started every day with a five kilometre run. It was breathtakingly beautiful, and I felt so blessed to have that privilege. Then I became ill and had to stop. I quickly reverted back to old, unhealthy habits. At the beginning of 2019, I was diagnosed with diabetes. The doctor told me to change my diet and incorporate exercise into my daily schedule. I tried my hand at lawn bowls with some other vision impaired people and I quickly got the hang of it, but the pace was too slow for my liking. Then I tried to play goalball again but it was too strenuous. It took me weeks to recover from that. We bought a treadmill and I used it to get started. Now I am running again.

My journey of participating in sport has not always been easy or continuous. All the obstacles that I faced through the years made me wonder about other women with vision impairments and their sports participation journeys. My own experiences also impacted my interpretation of the narratives of the participants’ journeys in this research.

ABSTRACT

Regular physical activity is important to improve overall quality of life (WHO, 2011). Improving the physical activity levels of persons with disabilities, however, has not received enough attention. Current global research has focused on identifying barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in recreational sport, but few of these studies were conducted in Africa and even fewer focused on the experiences of women with vision impairments specifically. Further, none of them foregrounded a focus on how participation in recreational sports might be facilitated. This study therefore aimed to explore how women with vision impairments navigate their participation in recreational sports.

Narrative inquiry was employed as the study design. Three young women with vision impairments from different communities in the Western Cape, South Africa, were purposely selected. Data was generated in the form of topical life stories and subjected to a rigorous, multi-layered analytic process. This involved 'narrative analysis' and 'analysis of narratives' to generate a single overarching theme: "Sport and life as interconnecting circles".

This theme revealed a reciprocal influence between sport and life. Here, 'life' refers to participation across the broad spectrum of everyday life. The findings revealed that the socialisation of women with vision impairments in their early childhood influenced their ability to navigate their participation in recreational sports. The presence of people as social champions in these women's lives contributed to facilitating the participants' participation in sports and highlighted the importance of the social inclusion of women with vision impairments.

The findings call for an embedded way of thinking about the social inclusion of women with vision impairments which allows for an organic evolution of participation in recreational sports. The implication is that sports participation for women with vision impairments would occur naturally and spontaneously if they were included in other spheres of life.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Disadvantaged communities:

A group of people (mostly from the same demographic) who lives in the same geographical area, with very low or no income and without most of the basic necessities such as adequate housing, medical care, and/or education.

Environmental influence:

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is an approved World Health Organization (WHO) framework that provides a definition of health and disability. The ICF recognises environmental factors for the important role that they play in a person's functioning. There are physical factors (such as climate, terrain, building design) and social factors (such as attitudes, institutions, and laws). Environmental factors could be facilitators or barriers to people's participation (CDC, n.d.).

Life/Everyday life

In this study, the terms life and everyday life are used interchangeably but refers to daily activities.

Participation:

In this study, participation refers to having consistently taken part in any kind of recreational sport as an individual or as part of a team for longer than at least one year.

Persons with disabilities:

Persons/people with disabilities or disabled people are people who have congenital or acquired physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that affect the way they participate in everyday life (UN, 2006). In this study, these two terms are used interchangeably.

Recreational sports:

Recreational sports refer to sports played for fun and enjoyment rather than for competition or payment. In this study, I use 'sports' and 'recreational sports' interchangeably.

Vision impairment/s:

According to the WHO (2007), vision impairment "includes both low vision and blindness". It also means that the eyesight cannot be fixed or corrected through the use of glasses or contact lenses. In this study, the participants used mobility aids such as white canes and a guide dog. Both vision impairment and vision impairments are used interchangeably in this study.

Young people/adults:

The National Youth Policy 2020-2030 (National Youth Policy 2020, 2020) defines youth as those people between the ages of 14 and 35. In this study, the focus will be on young women who are no longer in school, unemployed, or semi- or fully employed, which is why this study will focus on young women between 18 and 35.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DPO	Disabled People’s Organisation
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PE	Physical Education
SA	South Africa
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Professional or recreational sport, whether you play or watch it, is a part of our everyday lives. Participation in sport is recognised as a fundamental right, but its impact on the lives of persons with disabilities may be particularly relevant (Devine et al., 2017). Persons with disabilities taking part in sport report a sense of achievement, improved self-concept and self-esteem, better social skills, as well as increased mobility and independence (Devine et al., 2017). Regular, active participation in sport has many benefits (Devine et al., 2017). It boosts your self-esteem, promotes good health, and enhances emotional, physiological, mental, and psychological well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends doing moderate physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week (WHO, 2010) because of the benefits this has for a much better overall quality of life (Martin & Smith, 2002; McConkey, 2016).

However, despite the obvious benefits of regular physical activity, research shows that obesity and other related health issues of the world's population are at an all-time high, especially among people with disabilities because of the sedentary lifestyle they may live (Colgan, Bopp, Starkoff, & Lieberman, 2016; Holbrook, Caputo, Perry, Fuller, & Morgan, 2009). Listening to music, surfing the internet, and reading are preferred activities of people with vision impairments (Ajuwon, Kelly, & Wolffe, 2015).

The South African Census of 2011[1] revealed that 7.5% of the country's population had some form of disability, with 4 823 977 people having some form of vision impairment. Those with severe vision impairment were most disadvantaged in terms of education and employment opportunities (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) focuses on sports and recreational activities and

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[1] The Census data of 2011 is the last available data on people with disabilities in South Africa at this stage.

articulates that people with disabilities have the right to participate in sports and recreational activities (UN, 2006). In accordance with such a right, accessible venues and facilities should be made available to disabled people.

Recently, studies have been conducted in both the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands to highlight the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in sports (Jaarsma, Dijkstra, Geertzen, & Dekker, 2014; McConkey, 2016). Since these studies were conducted in developed countries, most of the participants were either working or students at university.

According to McConkey (2016), there is limited knowledge about the participation of people with disabilities in recreational sports. The focus appears to be more on performance, techniques, and the physical fitness of athletes, as was shown in studies conducted in Spain (Gutierrez-Santiago, Cancela, Zubiaur, & Ayán, 2012) and the United States (US) (Mastro, Swarts, Delobbe-Scott, Scott, & Statton, 2015). Participation in recreational sports and the factors that enable such participation have not received much attention. Few studies focused on this phenomenon from an African perspective. A Nigerian study by Ajuwon et al in 2015 and a South African study by Wright & Titus in 2013, are two such examples.

To address the plight of disabled people, the South African government launched the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2015 (Department of Social Development, 2016) after ratifying the UNCRPD in 2007. To operationalise Article 30 of the UNCRPD, the White Paper aims, among other things, to protect the human rights of persons with disabilities by removing barriers that prevent access to participation in sport by promoting and supporting the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

1.2 Experiential context of this study

An initial review of the literature indicated that the experiences of women with disabilities and their participation in recreational sports were not well represented. The sports participation of young women with vision impairments is the phenomenon under investigation in this study. Women's perspectives on this phenomenon were valuable because most of the previous studies reviewed focused on the different types of programmes and adaptations to programmes for vision impaired people (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Cadorette, Hodge, & Markham, 2014; Nyquist, Jahnsen, Moser, & Ullenhag, 2020) or the different devices (Colgan et al., 2016; Velázquez, 2010) that vision impaired people could use. The findings of such studies might be important to programme directors and service providers, but they do not help the people/women who cannot afford the devices and those who are not living in the US or Europe where these programmes are available. As a woman with vision impairment myself, I did not particularly find those articles helpful because I wanted to know if and how other vision impaired women were participating in sports and whether they were experiencing the same difficulties that I had experienced (see Preface).

My own experiences with this phenomenon meant that I knew that women with vision impairments construct ways to participate and I was interested in knowing how they had overcome any difficulties that they had faced. I was certain that learning from these experiences would be a key part of knowledge generation for understanding how vision impaired women's participation in recreational sports might be facilitated. This study seeks to identify the factors that enable young, vision impaired women to participate in recreational sports.

1.3 Rationale

The participation of school-going children and men with vision impairments has been frequently studied in the US (Arndt, Lieberman, & James, 2014; Haegele & Lieberman, 2016), but young women (after they leave school) have not received the same kind of focus. Given the important health benefits of participating in sports and disabled people's right to participate, this begs our attention. There are also vast differences between the African and Western contexts. Most disabled people on the African continent are extremely poor and have limited access to education and employment opportunities (Novak, 2017). While the participation of people with physical impairments and spinal cord injuries has received some attention (Jaarsma, Dekker, Geertzen, & Dijkstra, 2016; M.F. Yagmurlu, B. Yagmurlu, & Yilmaz, 2009), there has not been as much focus on the participation of people with vision impairments.

The general physical activity levels of people with vision impairment are much lower compared to people without vision impairments (Haegele, Aigner, & Healy, 2018). This and the fact that men with vision impairments are more active than women with vision impairments (Haegele, Zhu, Lee, & Lieberman, 2016) are well documented. There is little written about the experiences of women with vision impairments' participation in recreational sports.

The introduction has indicated how difficult it is for women with vision impairments to participate in recreational sports, yet simultaneously how valuable participation can be for their health. The significance of this study to the scientific community and to society, especially in the South African context, is that it will add knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of women with vision impairments. This knowledge would contribute to the gap in information that currently exists around this phenomenon. Furthermore, the knowledge could be used to enhance and better facilitate the inclusion and sports participation of women with vision impairments. With this gap in mind, the research question, aim, and objectives were constructed in the hopes of filling the gap. Listed below are the research question, aim, and objectives.

1.4 Research question

How do young women with vision impairments navigate their participation in recreational sporting activities?

1.5 Research aim

To explore the experiences of young women with vision impairments as they navigate their participation in recreational sporting activities.

1.6 Objectives

- To describe how young, vision impaired women navigate their participation in recreational sporting activities over time.
- To identify how opportunities for participating in recreational sporting activities emerge within vision impaired women's lives.

- To identify and describe the way personal, temporal, social, cultural, institutional, and political factors shape participation in these chosen sports.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature that builds on the background for my study, looking at pertinent issues that were revealed by a thorough review of available literature on vision impaired people's participation in recreational sports. I conducted searches of electronic databases such as EBSCLhost, Academic Search Premier, Africa-Wide Information, Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine Source, ERIC and Google Scholar. A full, overt exploration of the factors listed in objective three was not available in the reviewed literature. I took the decision to omit the exploration of each factor as a separate and distinct theme but to rather integrate them throughout the literature. I outline below the benefits of participating in recreational sports, barriers to participation, factors that enhance sports participation, self-efficacy and parents' comments on their children's activity level and health and the role of society and education on sports participation.

2.2 Benefits of participating in recreational sport

A study conducted with vision impaired adults (male and female) in the Netherlands (Jaarsma et al., 2014) identified the social, health, and psychological benefits of participating in recreational sport. It allows people to expand their social networks and for people with vision impairments to improve their social skills and interactions with others (Jaarsma et al., 2014). In the US, Ryan et al. (2014) reported that being physically active leads to a decreased risk of diabetes, better mood, improved overall physiological wellbeing, and improved cardiovascular fitness levels. Physical activity is also associated with significant mental health benefits because it reduces levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Researchers in Ecuador found that being physically active improved the autonomy, ability to compete, and self-esteem of people with vision impairments (Mocha-Bonilla et al., 2018). A study in the Ukraine with both male and female participants discovered that blind people had a very low perception of their own quality of life, but this perception improved after they were included in a sports programme (Roztorhui et al., 2018).

Despite all the obvious benefits of participating in recreational sport, people with vision impairments experience barriers that hamper their participation. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Barriers to participation

A number of studies employed the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (WHO, 2001) as a tool to identify barriers to participation. Jaarsma et al. (2014) used this model to categorise and report on the barriers to and facilitators of sports participation faced by people with vision impairments in the Netherlands. Their study revealed environmental barriers such as transport problems, not enough participation opportunities in their neighbourhoods, too few friends to exercise with, the cost of sports activities and equipment, and a shortage of qualified supervisors/coaches (Jaarsma et al., 2014).

In a commentary on disability and sports participation, McConkey (2016) commented on how the negative attitudes of health professionals have an adverse effect on the disability community. The general belief is that persons with disabilities should not engage in risk taking activities such as playing sport because of the limitations of their bodies (McConkey, 2016). A study by Wright and Titus (2013) that was conducted with disabled students at a Western Cape university revealed that the negative attitudes of physical education (PE) teachers at schools also has a negative impact on the future participation in sports of vison impaired people. These same findings were revealed in a study that was conducted in the US by Haegele, Hodge, Zhu, Holland and Wilson (2020) with young adults with vision impairments. Haegele et al.'s (2020) study further revealed that the people with vision impairments felt that their PE teachers' negative attitudes rubbed off on their classmates who bullied them and excluded them from participation.

Haegele, Yessick, and Zhu (2018) conducted telephone interviews with vision impaired female participants with the aim of exploring their lived experiences during their PE classes at their schools in terms of the intersections between gender and disability. The participants remembered being bullied, and they felt that the bullying took place because of their femininity and was further exacerbated because of their disability/vision impairment. The participants remembered how their teachers did not expect much of them and how they were excluded and excused from participating in PE lessons. At other times, they were only expected to perform on a much lower level than their peers. According to Haegele, et al (2020), this social exclusion can lead to self-exclusion and withdrawal. They also reported that having to do physical education activities with the boys watching and commenting had a negative impact on their experiences at times (Haegele, Yessick, & Zhu, 2018).

Persons with disabilities in the US reported that inadequate parental interest and support limited information about available community activities (Ward, Farnsworth, Babkes-Stellino, & Perrett, 2011). Social isolation, limited organised sporting activities, limited funding, insufficient knowledge and programmes (that included persons with disabilities), and the presence of a disability (Ryan et al., 2014) are some of the personal barriers that hamper participation for persons with disabilities.

Wright and Titus (2013) conducted a study at a university in the Western Cape with five student participants with physical and sensory disabilities to find out why they did not participate in any sporting activities that were on offer at the university. One female participant had a vision impairment. The participants reported that the available activities did not cater for their specific needs and they felt that they lacked the necessary skills to perform these sporting activities (Wright & Titus, 2013).

Despite the existence of these types of barriers, a number of vision impaired people regularly participate in sport. This regular participation shows that those who are participating have found ways to make it possible. The next section looks at some facilitators that enable participation.

2.4 Facilitators of sports participation

The literature revealed that some individuals, institutions, or organisations made adaptations and/or accommodations to enable the inclusion and participation (in sport) of people with vision impairments. These adaptations and accommodations are discussed below.

2.4.1 Positive attitudes

Studies in Nigeria (Ajuwon et al., 2015), the UK (McConkey, 2016), and South Africa (Wright & Titus, 2013) revealed the importance of the attitudes of people toward people with vision impairments. Wright and Titus' (2013) study revealed that some people with vision impairments who participate in sport have a positive attitude towards participation while others do not. It also revealed that the attitude of vision impaired people toward their participation in sport is influenced by those who initially introduce them to sport, such as PE teachers while at school.

2.4.2 Participating while at school

Participating in PE classes while at school plays an important role, as those who did not were less likely to participate in later years (P. Ponchillia, Strause, & S. Ponchillia, 2002; Reina & Ruiz, 2016; Wright & Titus, 2013). A study that was conducted in Finland with teens (boys and girls) with functional disabilities revealed that when organised sporting opportunities were available, the teens with vision impairments were the most active group in comparison to their peers with other functional disabilities (Ng, Rintala, Hutzler, Kokko, & Tynjälä, 2017). In the US, Armstrong, Lieberman, Prokešová, and Martin (2018) conducted a Physical Activity Barriers questionnaire with children (boys and girls) with vision impairments between the ages of 8 and 18. The results of this study highlight how the level of participation in sport correlates with positive benefits such as increased self-efficacy and fewer barriers to participation. These studies highlight the importance of having organised sporting opportunities for people with vision impairments.

2.5 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to self-belief and, according to Bandura (1997), has to do with how people feel and think about themselves and how these feelings and thoughts affect and influence their behaviour. Self-efficacy thus plays an important role when it comes to physical activity and people with vision impairment, and links back to levels of participation. Haegele, Kirk, and Zhu (2018) looked at self-efficacy as a motivational factor for physical activity and found that there is a positive link between these two factors. These sentiments are echoed by two other studies that also looked at the effect of self-efficacy on physical activity for people with vision impairment. These studies were conducted in the Ukraine (Roztorhui et al., 2018) and the US (Brian, Taunton, Haibach-Beach, & Lieberman, 2018) respectively.

In the next section, I will look at parents' inputs on the activity levels and health of their vision impaired children.

2.6 Parents' comments on their children's activity levels and health

Two studies were conducted in the US, by Columna et al. (2020) and Haegele, Aigner, and Healy (2018) respectively, where parents were asked to report on the health, physical activity levels, and sports participation of their vision impaired children. The 2018 study by Haegele and colleagues revealed that children with vision impairments were less active than their sighted counterparts and that their overall health status was poorer. In this instance, the researchers recommended the development of activities that cater for the specialised needs of children with vision impairments. In the study by Columna et al. (2020), parents reported that they are aware of the importance and benefits of physical activity for their vision impaired children, but that they lack the skills to assist and advocate for their children's participation. They recommended support programmes to facilitate and improve the physical activity of their families as a whole.

2.7 The role of society and education on sports participation

Ajuwon et al. (2015) reported that, in Nigerian society in general, people do not place a high value on sports participation, especially for women, and therefore none of the female participants in their study reported participating in any kind of sporting activities. It is clear from this that gendered dynamics in certain contexts can influence sports participation.

People with vision impairments who have acquired higher levels of education attached more value to and were more aware of the importance of sports participation (Łabudzki & Tasiemski, 2013). Another benefit of higher education levels among those with vision impairments is that they are able to acquire better employment and therefore can afford to pay for better opportunities to participate in sports (Jaarsma et al., 2014).

2.8 Conclusion

Most of the studies reviewed in this chapter were conducted in the US and Europe, where the context is very different from Africa. Most of them were also conducted with children, teens (still in school), and mixed gender groups (male and female). The 2018 study by Haegele, Yessick and Zhu (2018) was the only one that focused on women and their experiences during their PE classes. However, this study only focused on one area of their participation. Most of the studies focus on the physical activity levels of children/people with vision impairments, and not on how participation was actually navigated. Some also asked parents to comment on their children's activity levels.

It is clear that there are many barriers that hamper the participation of people with vision impairments in sports such as transport problems, cost of activities and equipment, inadequate funding, and limited opportunities and information. However, positive attitudes and previous participation are good facilitators of sports participation. We need to know more in order to facilitate the full inclusion of women with vision impairments into recreational sports participation.

This review has demonstrated that there currently is limited knowledge about some of these aspects (barriers and facilitators to recreational sports participation), often without a gendered perspective. There also does not appear to be an understanding of how this navigation happens longitudinally and in a complex context. The focus of the study presented in this thesis explored the process of navigating participation longitudinally with a focus on women, thus adding to the understanding of how sports participation could be facilitated in order to promote the inclusion of vision impaired women.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research paradigm, design, and approach of this study. I outline how I selected participants, how I gathered and managed data, and how I analysed and interpreted this data following a three-stage, in-depth process which ensured the credibility of the study findings. I also describe the ethical considerations that I adhered to throughout this study.

3.2 Research paradigm

The aim of this narrative inquiry was to explore the experiences of young women with vision impairments in recreational sports participation in order to construct new meaning around this phenomenon (Krauss, 2005). This exploration and construction ensued as a result of the interaction between myself as the researcher and my participants. I believe that reality for each of us was different, and therefore the theoretical perspective of this study was that of constructivism (Krauss, 2005).

Constructivism, according to (Cresswell, 2003; Cresswell & Cresswell 2018), is an inductive research perspective that seeks to elucidate "… the meanings others have about the world". In doing so, constructivist theorists look for 'complexities of views' and therefore rely heavily on participants' subjective views of the phenomenon being studied. Their views are subjective because their understanding of their experiences is influenced by their social and historical contexts. Open-ended questions are used to gather data by way of stories. Because I was seeking to make meaning of young, vision impaired women's lived experiences, constructivism as a research paradigm and narrative inquiry as a study design were best suited to achieve this goal (Cresswell, 2003, 2018). As a constructivist researcher, I acknowledge that my interpretations of the participants' stories are influenced by my own background and cultural and historical experiences (Cresswell, 2003, 2018). In the analysis section, I will show how I managed my bias in this study.

The next section focuses on the study design.

3.3 Study design

This study aimed to explore and understand the women's experiences of the phenomenon as stated above, as they emerged over time. Such experiences are best captured in the form of stories. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), stories are used to interpret and share our experiences in the world and to give our experiences personal meaning. They suggest that narrative inquiry is the study of experiences as story and, more importantly, provides a way of thinking about these experiences which is best generated using a qualitative research approach. Cresswell (2018) indicates that qualitative research can employ constructivist perspectives of meaning making of individual experiences to make knowledge claims and develop theories.

A qualitative narrative inquiry was identified as the most appropriate research design to investigate the lived experiences of the participants as told by them. We shape our lives and our views of ourselves and others through stories. We use stories to give others a glimpse of our past. As was shown above, this was appropriate given that a constructivist paradigm was employed. Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Cresswell (2018) state that narrative inquiry is a collaboration between the researcher and the participants, where the participants share their experiences through stories which are *retold* by the researcher. They also state that the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world and that by sharing our experiences, we become characters in our own and others' stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). Furthermore, they argue that through narrative work, we are depicting and understanding the experiences of the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). In 2013 Clandinin and Connelly published an updated edition of their earlier work.

Next, I will discuss the participant selection process.

3.4 Selection of participants

In order to find suitable, information-rich participants to participate in this study, purposive sampling was chosen as the most appropriate strategy (Cresswell, 2018). I needed to find young, vision impaired women who were participating or had participated in recreational sport. As a member of the vision impaired community, I had access to key informants who could put me in contact with people who, through their stories, could provide insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

I employed snowballing when one of my participants put me in contact with one of her friends who was a suitable candidate for the study.

Three participants were selected and deemed an appropriate choice for this study given the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon that occurs when using a narrative approach. Furthermore, the aim of narrative inquiry is to use the depth of understanding generated, to begin to understand a phenomenon and does not intend to generalize through the findings (Bitina, 2015). I will explain the pilot process in further detail in the data generation section.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, as stated before, all the participants had to meet the following criteria:

3.4.1 Eligibility criteria

- **Must have a vision impairment that would classify them as legally blind**[2]
  This excludes people whose vision could be corrected with contact lenses, corrective surgery, or prescription glasses. I purposely selected women with different levels of vision impairments to compare whether their level of impairment impacted how, when, and where they accessed and participated in sport. It is important to note that this applies also to whether the impairment was acquired or congenital.
- **Must identify as a woman**
  Although I would have been willing to interview any participant who identifies as female, I was only approached or put in contact with cis-gendered women. I also did not mind which sexuality these women identified as but all the participants in the study happened to be heterosexual.
- **Has participated in recreational sports on a continuous basis** (at least once per month) during the two years before the first interview

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[2] They must have a formal diagnosis from an ophthalmologist declaring them as blind or as having low vision where interventions such as glasses and contact lenses will not make a difference to their vision.

(Refer to the table in part one of the findings chapter (chapter 4) for a breakdown of the sports participation of the participants.

- **Have no cognitive impairments**
  None of the participants had any cognitive impairments and were able to tell their own stories.

Despite the fact that the last participant was no longer participating in sports, I felt that her experiences before she had to stop were still valid and valued in terms of discussing the phenomenon. Initially, I only wanted to focus on women from previously disadvantaged backgrounds who were between the ages of 18 and 35 years because I was curious about the participation of other young women with vision impairments who did not have the same financial means and who did not necessarily enjoy the same family support as myself. It was difficult to find suitable participants who met all the criteria, so I decided to expand my parameters. It was also not easy to find women between 18 and 35 who were actively participating in sport. I thus had to adjust the age criterion to include slightly older (up to 39 years old) participants. Because participants were sharing their stories retrospectively, I felt that their stories would still be relevant and information rich, and they met all the other criteria. I felt it was appropriate to include these stories because it allowed me to explore the phenomenon from diverse perspectives. The purpose of narrative work is to share stories that are not often shared and, in doing so, hear voices that are not often heard. These participants were selected because their stories and their voices have not been heard before (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Two of my participants came from disadvantaged communities but the third did not. Struggling to find suitable participants is a finding in itself and demonstrates, as was emphasised in Chapter 1, that vision impaired women’s sports participation needs more focus and attention. It also raises questions about the availability of opportunities for women with vision impairments to participate in sports.

In the next section, I will discuss the recruitment process.

3.5 Recruitment process

I contacted three local sports clubs to find out if they had members who were women with vision impairments. Two confirmed that none of their members disclosed having any disability and the third one informed me that they had an annual race in the area for which they recruited and trained vision impaired people from a local disabled people's organisation (DPO) (where my first participant was a member) to participate. The members of the DPO were, however, not part of the club. Them not being part of the club but only participating once a year calls attention to the issue of selected social inclusion that people with vision impairments experience.

The conversation with the local sports club led me to approach the particular DPO because they obviously had members who participated in sport. At the DPO, I was introduced to two suitable candidates for my study. I asked the one to participate in the pilot study and the other one to be a participant in the main study.

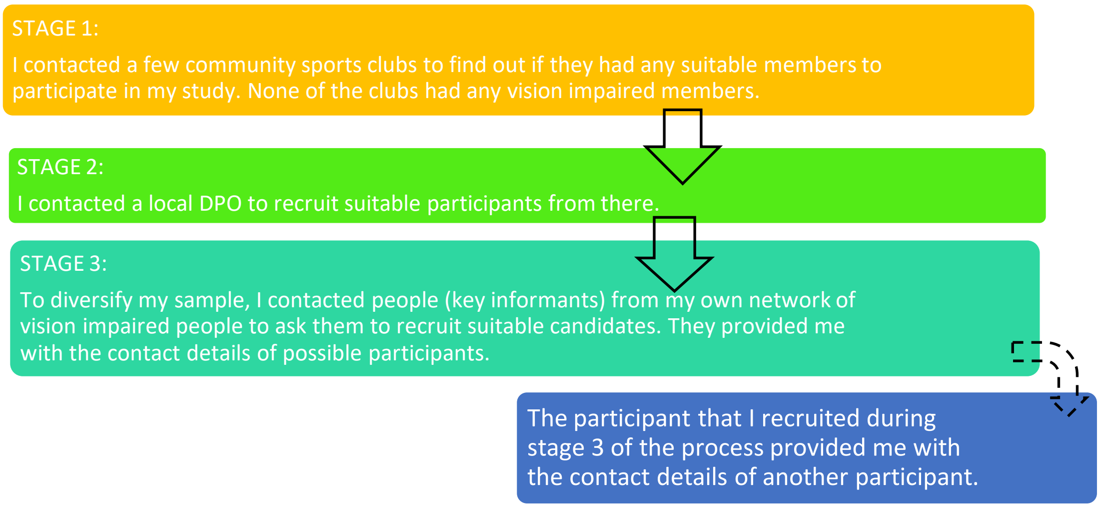
After the two women gave their permission to participate (refer to Informed Consent Form, Appendix D), all the subsequent meeting dates, times, and venues were mutually agreed upon by myself and the participants. Initially, there were three potential participants at the DPO, but after three failed attempts to meet with the third person, I decided to exclude her from the study. I also wanted to avoid having stories where sport was accessed in the same way (that is, through the DPO).

Although I was using purposive sampling, I was drawing on the approach used in maximum variation sampling (Shaheen, Pradhan & Reddy, 2019; p. 30–31) which is to purposively look for variation in the sample. I was looking at specific criteria, but I wanted differences within each criterion. I was looking for slight nuances and shifts in terms of the way each participant fulfilled the criteria. Therefore, I was looking for slightly different ages, different kinds of vision impairments, and different living conditions to help me make sense of this phenomenon and not to focus on just one perspective. As members of the same DPO, the way in which the participants accessed sport was the same. Their stories of how they became members of the DPO were very similar as well.

I decided to move on to stage three (refer to Figure 1 below), of my recruitment strategy. This involved reaching out to my own network of friends and contacts to ask them if they knew any people who could possibly participate in my study. The intent was for these individuals to act as key informants. Asking my friends and other people for assistance in recruiting suitable candidates was allowed because, in this instance, they acted as key informants. In the end, they did not know who of the people they put me in touch with actually participated in the study.

Most of my contacts did not know any suitable people, but one person knew two possible participants. The second participant was therefore recruited through a key informant from my own network of people with vision impairments who were participating in sports but were much older so they could not participate in the study themselves. The key informant made the initial contact with the prospective participants to ask if they would be interested and if their contact details could be shared with me. The key informant did not have all the information about the study and therefore were not able to coerce the potential participants into agreeing to participate. After the key informant had permission to share the potential participants' details, I contacted them to introduce myself and my study to them. The one person declined and the other one agreed to participate. After my first meeting with this participant, she gave me the contact details of a friend of hers to contact as a possible third participant. This third person agreed to participate once she heard that the study was focusing on women's sports participation and so was recruited by way of snowballing.

After transcribing the interview data, it was decided that the stories of the three participants were generating enough significant insights to be able to theorise around this particular phenomenon from a narrative perspective and so I did not select any further participants. Narrative inquiry aims for the generation of meaning and understanding with respect to a phenomenon offering points of insights that can then be taken up and theorized further (Butina, 2015). Given the extent of data generation with the three participants and a review of their stories at the point in time during the research process, I decided that their stories offered enough depth to be able to begin to generate an understanding of the phenomenon of young women with vision impairment's navigation in recreation sports. The kinds of decisions are appropriate in narrative work which aims for depth rather than breadth and understands data saturation from the perspective of the participants' view of having shared what they constituted as the fullness of the phenomenon within their lives. This was confirmed with participants during member checking. The diagram below is a visual representation of the process that I followed to select suitable participants.



STAGE 1:
I contacted a few community sports clubs to find out if they had any suitable members to participate in my study. None of the clubs had any vision impaired members.

STAGE 2:
I contacted a local DPO to recruit suitable participants from there.

STAGE 3:
To diversify my sample, I contacted people (key informants) from my own network of vision impaired people to ask them to recruit suitable candidates. They provided me with the contact details of possible participants.

The participant that I recruited during stage 3 of the process provided me with the contact details of another participant.

Figure 1: Selection process

Next, I will discuss the process of data generation.

3.6 Data generation

The data was generated through a process of narrative interviewing, which included two separate interviews with each participant (please refer to Appendix A – Interview Schedule) where each participant was asked to share their life story, paying particular attention to how they had participated in sport. As I became more comfortable and familiar with the chosen method of interviewing, it became easier to conduct the interviews and to adapt the questions to get the stories that I was looking for. Having gone through the interview process in the pilot study, it allowed me to adjust and modify the interview questions and to become more confident in conducting the interviews.

All three participants were able to tell their own stories (in relation to the topic) in a comprehensible and sensible fashion, and in a language that they felt comfortable with. Two of the three participants chose to tell their stories in English, and the third one preferred to narrate her story in Afrikaans. I am fluent in both these languages therefore the process of data generation was not hampered in any way by the two chosen languages of the participants.

Both my pilot study participant and first participant in the main study agreed for us to meet at the offices of the DPO to avoid travelling. Every time we agreed on a suitable meeting date and time, the DPO was informed so that a suitable, on-site meeting venue could be organised. I interviewed my second and third participants at their places of work, which was their preference as it would save them from having to travel, incurring travelling costs, and from missing time at work.

I guided these interviews with the use of specified open-ended questions to ensure that the participants provided the necessary information that would enhance understanding of their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Cresswell, 2003). The interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' permission. I was aware that as a vision impaired person, I might miss or misinterpret some of the non-verbal cues of my participants, so I made a few field notes and memos to record my interpretation of the verbal and obvious non-verbal behaviours of each participant. In order to compensate for this shortcoming on my part, I relied heavily on my listening skills and the digital recordings to ensure that I did not overlook any information. I feel that the fact that I am vision impaired and that I was upfront about it enhanced the building of an open and honest relationship with each participant, which positively shaped the data generation process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). The participants felt at ease because they knew I could relate to what they were telling me.

I had two interviews with each participant that were transcribed (and translated from Afrikaans into English for one participant) after each interview. Two interviews were sufficient to uncover what was necessary to answer the research question as it related to each participant's narrative. Besides the two interviews, I also engaged in correspondence around the story with each participant through member checking which acted to further build each story. The data generated from the second round of interviews was combined with that from the first interviews, and was then analysed and interpreted (Butina, 2015).

In the next section I will describe the process that was followed to manage the data.

3.7 Data management

All interviews were recorded on a digital recorder that was kept in a locked cupboard in my office, to which only I had access. Each interview was transcribed verbatim to capture and manage the data, and to effectively prepare it for the analysis process. The transcribed interviews were saved on a password protected computer that only I had access to, and I only shared them with my supervisors as they were guiding me through the analysis process. The interviews in Afrikaans were transcribed and translated simultaneously.

I believe that doing the transcriptions myself allowed me to become more familiar with the data (the participants' stories) and thus enhanced my ability to analyse and interpret it better. As one of my participants preferred to share her story in Afrikaans, I had to translate her story from Afrikaans to English when I transcribed it. Plummer (2001) states that translation (from one language to another and/or from one cultural viewpoint to another) is closely linked with transcription. He warns, though, that translation could have a huge impact on the essence and intended meaning of a story and one would have to constantly check with participants to ensure that the true essence and meaning of their stories were captured and interpreted correctly (Plummer, 2001). I will talk about how I managed this 'translation' in the section on trustworthiness/credibility.

After the transcribed interviews and narratives were verified by the participants, they were coded and filed according to Plummer's (2001) three step method, which includes core files, analytical files, and personal logs. In this study, these referred to the separate files in which the recorded and transcribed interviews, the emerging findings, and my own notes and reflective memos of each interview and participant were stored. I used these files to do indexing which involved the development of themes that would allow easy access for analysing and archiving purposes (Plummer, 2001). I used the core files to store the unedited, original data in chronological order, and it was backed up separately. I kept the analytical files to organise data according to themes, new theories, and key concepts. These files would change constantly as new themes and concepts emerged and data was organised and re-organised accordingly (Plummer, 2001). In accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), that came in effect on 1 July 2021, all hard copies of interview transcripts were destroyed with a shredding machine. Next, I will discuss the data analysis and interpretation thereof.

3.8 Data analysis and interpretation

In this section, I discuss the processes of data analysis, which included narrative analysis and analysis of narratives that followed one another to interpret the gathered data (Kathard, 2003). Data analysis is the process in qualitative research where we examine the data for sense-making purposes (Butina, 2015). During this sense-making process, I kept my research question and objectives in mind. I became very familiar with the data while I was honing in on the parts that illuminated patterns and themes which, in turn, could supply insights to answer my research question (Butina, 2015). I focused on narrative analysis during the first part of the sense-making process.

3.8.1 Narrative analysis

While transcribing the recorded interviews, I often referred to my notes to check whether my interpretations were accurate. I also relied on my memory and recollections of my own feelings at the time of each respective interview, so I tried to do the transcriptions as soon as possible after the interviews were conducted, while everything was still fresh in my memory. My own memories and feelings supported the narrative analysis process because I was relying on them while I was interpreting the narratives. Because of my own background and culture, I continuously returned to the participants to have them check my interpretations of their beliefs and meanings, to avoid bias. Furthermore, I used reflexive journaling and the writing up of my own biography to help me think about my own positioning and perspectives. I did not code this in the data analysis but used the process of reflexive journaling in both the collection and analysis processes to take account of my own assumptions of the phenomenon and therefore heard the participants' voices well.

I read the transcription of the first interview and did 'member checking' by going back to the participants to ensure that I had captured all the details of their stories correctly in the second interview (Butina, 2015, p. 195). The transcribed interview data was used to do the initial analysis. Firstly, I arranged each transcribed interview in chronological order. After that, I tried to identify themes from the different interviews of each participant. I asked myself, “what is this person’s story about? What made her participation in sports possible?” These questions helped me to identify the different themes for each story and to construct the plot for each. Narrative analysis involves the construction of a plot where events are woven into a coherent narrative that organises situations and events in the person’s life to explain the denouement (or outcome/resolution) of the plot (Polkinghorne 1995). I employed his concept of an ‘emplotted narrative’ (p. 5) to develop the different plot lines. The participants’ stories were re-constructed and represented chronologically in a plot with a beginning, middle and end (Polkinghorne, 1995). There was a constant back and forth between the plot that I was constructing and the interview data (Cresswell, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1995). I started with the outcomes and then worked backwards to organise the plot (Polkinghorne, 1995). The result was the development of research stories that will be presented in the first part of Chapter 4 (Polkinghorne, 1995). I cleaned up the stories by employing narrative smoothing. This process entails getting rid of any unnecessary information, that is, those details that were irrelevant to the outcomes of the stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

As I went back and forth between the transcribed interview data, the recordings, and my notes, to ensure that I correctly captured the essence of the stories and that my interpretations reflected the personality of each participant, I had to consciously decide which information was necessary and which information I could omit from the stories. This process was reciprocal, from the stories to the themes and then back to the stories for the in-case analysis, trying to emphasise and show what was unique in each story.

3.8.2 Analysis of narratives

Once the narrative analysis was completed, I conducted the cross-case analysis using the key ideas developed initially. At this stage, the key ideas were organised into codes and categories. This was a rigorous, complex, and reciprocal process that involved looking across and within the three stories, while simultaneously engaging with theoretical perspectives that influenced my interpretations and analysis of the data. I used Kathard's (2003) developed ideas regarding this process. Figure 2 below demonstrates the complexities of the analytical process.

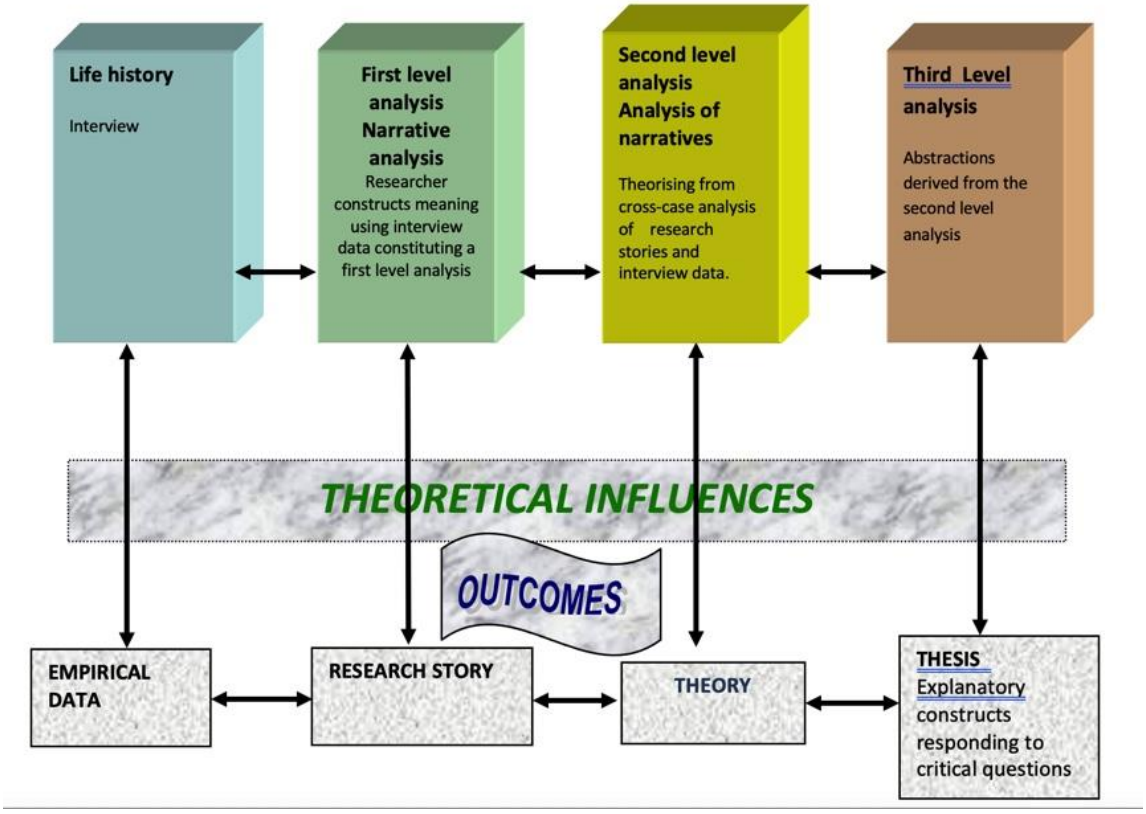


Figure 2: The processes involved in the analytic process (taken directly from Kathard, 2003, p. 105)

One over-arching theme emerged that related to all three stories. I used an inductive process of generating codes and categories that were united in a single theme. This analysis was a long and tedious process as I had to continuously move back and forth between the three stories and the interview data, and between first level and second level analysis.

In the next section, I discuss the concept of trustworthiness.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Achieving trustworthiness is very important in the qualitative research paradigm. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) posit that validity, reliability, and generalisability are not criteria that narrative inquiry relies on. Instead, in narrative studies, the concepts of verisimilitude, utility, credibility, and transferability (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Loh, 2013) are more appropriate.

Verisimilitude, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2005, p. 1367), is "the quality of seeming to be true or real". In narrative inquiry, verisimilitude is achieved when the story seems believable and alive, and the researcher can, through the writing, take you into the world of the story (Cresswell, 2007). Combining my own experiences of this phenomenon as a woman with vision impairment with what I know from other women, these stories appeared as being possible to be true and real. I therefore believe that I have succeeded in achieving verisimilitude through my interpretation and depiction of the participants' stories.

Utility speaks to the usefulness of a study (Loh, 2013). This study is both useful and important in broadening our understanding of the phenomenon in question as it looks at the phenomenon from a different perspective and it allows for the voices of the participants to be heard as they share their experiences in their own words.

Credibility was achieved by returning to the participants after each interview had been transcribed. The data generated from the second interviews was combined with that from the first interviews, which was then analysed and interpreted to compile the women's narratives. Once this process was completed, I returned to the participants to read and discuss my analyses and interpretations of their narratives with them and to allow them the opportunity to participate in the process of data generation.

Plummer (2001) refers to this part of the data generation process as member checking. In the instances where I misinterpreted or misrepresented information or part of a story, the participants corrected me, which allowed me the opportunity to correct the errors. After member checking, all three participants were happy with how I had captured their stories because I was able to capture the true essence of what they wanted to convey. I also checked the details in the stories with them and they rectified the parts where I had incorrectly captured information, such as dates and the names of people.

The personal logs relate to trustworthiness and credibility where I kept my own research notes and memos capturing my own reflections and changing opinions (about the participants and the situation over the course of the study), my fears and anxieties about the research process, my progress, and my motivations (Plummer, 2001). I have also used an audit trail to capture the activities and reflections of the research process. The audit trail in conjunction with the notes and memos were used to establish credibility.

Transferability is achieved by providing “rich, thick descriptions”, which refers to giving “a highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and in particular, the findings of a study” (Butina, 2015, p. 195). I achieved transferability by giving ‘rich’, ‘thick’ descriptions of each participant and their contexts where they lived and participated in sport, so readers are able to compare the contexts of this research to their own. I used the participants’ own words as quoted from their interviews to construct the narratives and to present findings.

In the following section, I discuss the ethical considerations that I adhered to.

3.10 Ethical considerations

This study complied with the principles laid out in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013). It was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town. (Please refer to Appendix F for a copy of the approval letter from the HREC).

3.10.1 Full disclosure

Each participant was informed that this study was towards my thesis for obtaining my Masters in Disability Studies degree from the University of Cape Town.

3.10.2 Informed consent

As this study seeks to understand the lived experiences of women with vision impairments with regard to their participation in sports, it did not pose any physical danger to the participants. An information sheet (see Appendices B and C) explaining the study and an informed consent form (Appendices D and E) in English and Afrikaans (without any jargon) were read to each participant to explain the study. As my participants were blind and had low vision, these documents were made available to them in electronic format, as per their preference. Two participants preferred electronic format over braille, and the third participant did not have access to the internet and could not read large print any longer and was therefore happy for me to read all the documents to her.

I made sure that each participant understood the information sheet and consent form. Due to their vision impairments, two of the participants gave both verbal (which was digitally recorded) and electronic consent to confirm their willingness to participate and that they understood that their participation was voluntary. The third participant, who is not completely blind but has very low vision, gave written consent instead of electronic consent as she did not have access to a computer.

The participants were given opportunities to ask questions and address any concerns relating to the study. I answered any questions they had before asking them to give consent. The contact details of the study supervisors and the research ethics committee were shared with each participant in case they had any concerns about the ethical conduct of the study or the researcher.

3.10.3 Autonomy

To ensure that participants practiced their right to choose whether to participate in the study free from any coercion or interference, the purpose of the study was explained in detail to each of them. The participants were recruited as explained above in the section on participant recruitment. I acknowledge that the key informants were known to me. The focus shifted to the participants (not the key informants), who either agreed or declined to participate in the study. The key informants were asked to keep the names that they shared confidential and have no idea who eventually agreed to participate in the study.

Once I met with the participants and explained the study to them, they were given an opportunity to withdraw from the study if they had felt obliged to participate when they were contacted by the key informants. Participants were also informed that withdrawal would have no negative consequences for them. Those who decided to continue were assured that the information they provided would only be used for the purposes of the study, that their identities would be protected, and that their personal information would not be made public without their permission. Any other identifying information was also changed.

3.10.4 Privacy and confidentiality

The informed consent form outlines the protection of the identities of all participants. Any personal information such as first names or the names of places or organisations was changed in consultation with the participants. Each participant and I decided together whether to change any other details that might reveal their identity (which could have implications for the truthfulness of the story), or whether to omit those details altogether (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). All three participants were happy with the way their stories were told and they did not want to omit any details. In the instances where details were changed, it did not hamper the truthfulness of the stories.

The contact details of the participants were kept confidential. The hard copies of the collected data were kept in a locked cupboard in my office at work and I was the only person with access to my office. My supervisors and I were the only people who worked with the hard copies of the transcribed interviews, but all copies were only kept by me. All electronic data was backed up, password protected, and stored away under lock and key, and I was the only person with access. Through this, I ensured the safekeeping of the participants' information. To ensure the safekeeping of the personal information of the participants, all hard copies of transcripts were destroyed by way of a shredding machine. Please refer to the sections on Data Management regarding adherence to the POPIA.

3.10.5 Risks and benefits

Even though I went to great lengths to change details, given the depths of the stories and the uniqueness of the sports participation of some participants, it may still be possible for people to identify them. The participants were aware of this risk, but were not concerned about it since they did not believe any harm could come of it.

Participating in this study was time consuming for the participants. To minimise this risk, all interviews were scheduled at times and places (their places of work) that suited the participants best, and I travelled to meet with them. The participants were made aware that they would not receive any payment for their time as this could be seen as coercion and could have hampered the integrity of the study.

The participants' stories will enhance our understanding of the lived experiences of people/women with vision impairments and the participants might experience emotional benefits as a result. They might have felt good about sharing their stories and having someone listen to their stories (Plummer, 2001).

Participants were not given any refreshments during the interviews but they each received a small gift as a token of appreciation for participating in this study. I was planning on giving each participant a bound copy of their stories but once I got to know them, I realised that I would have to provide each of them with an electronic version of their stories instead to enable them to read and appreciate their own stories in a format that is accessible to and convenient for them.

3.11 Dissemination

I have already shared some of the preliminary findings at public disability events. The findings of this study will be shared in collaboration with the participants (to ensure that they are happy with what is being shared), with the DPO where the one participant was part of the pilot and the other participant for the study were recruited. It will also be shared with other undergraduate and postgraduate students doing the Disability Studies programme. I plan to write journal articles in order to share the findings with a wider audience.

In Chapter 4, I present and discuss the findings.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

This is a two-part chapter. In Part 1, I will present each participant's narrative that emanated from the narrative analysis. Part 2 of this chapter is dedicated to my interpretation of the narratives presented in the form of a thematic analysis.

4.1 Part 1: Narratives

Table 1 below is a representation of the biographical information as well as information about the vision impairments of the three participants. I would like to point out to the reader that the information in this table is represented in the order in which the three narratives will be presented and not in the order that the participants were recruited. I have chosen to represent the narratives from what I consider as least to most successful in terms of navigation of sports participation. I am hoping that the arguments that this study is making will be clearly demonstrated in the way that the narratives have been presented.

Table 1: Participant biographical descriptions

Age	Type of vision impairment	Education	Employment	Race	Participation
MELISSON					
32	Acquired in her 20s as a result of an in-operable, benign brain tumour. Melisson has blurry vision and rapid deterioration of her eyesight.	Mainstream School Gr 12[3] Completed 1st year of a business administration certificate at a college.	Unemployed Training to become an Orientation and Mobility Instructor.	Coloured[4]	None currently. Had to stop playing goalball due to health issues.

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[3] In the South African schooling system, Grade 12 is the final year of high school before entering university or seeking full-time employment.

[4] In South Africa, "coloured" is a racial denomination that refers to people with mixed racial backgrounds. Coloured people in South Africa speak mostly Afrikaans and sometimes English.

KARLA					
35	Leber's Disease (congenital). Karla was partially sighted as a child but is now blind and uses a guide dog.	Special school Grade 12 Diploma in Massage and Reflexology Degree in Sociology	Part-time administrator at sports club for persons with disabilities Part-time reflexologist at a private practice	White	Goalball Weekly exercise programme with 3rd year Sports Science students at a local university.
DAPHNE					
39	Blind since birth	Special school Grade 12 Degree in Journalism	Teaching blind kids computer skills. Part-time radio presenter	Coloured	Rally navigating, tandem cycling, occasional treadmill running

4.1.1 Melisson's story: Sport became the light that guided me out of the darkness

I don't like sports but it certainly had its use in my life

For the first couple of years of my life, I stayed in Bonteheuwel with my parents and two younger sisters. When we lived in Bonteheuwel, my parents were very active in sport. My mom used to play cricket with her colleagues from work and my dad played soccer, but when we moved to Mitchell's Plain, they stopped because transport became a problem. Me, I never liked sport. I can't run, that I know. In primary school, they would pick me for the inter-house practice team for athletics but for some or other reason, I never went to practice and then I didn't make it for the team.

In high school, I decided to join the girls' soccer team even though I didn't like soccer and I didn't know how to play, but it was a good excuse to get out of a boring class. So I did it. I signed up and I went to a couple of practice sessions and even played a few games, but we lost every game we played against other schools because we were so unfit. I think I played for a month or so and then I stopped playing because then I became tired of running and practicing. I just hated it, the practicing after school, so I made up a story to tell the teachers and I didn't have to play anymore.

My whole world came crashing down

After school, I attended a college to do a course in office management. My first year went well but at the beginning of the second year, I found out that I was pregnant, so I decided not to register for that year. When my baby was five years old, my boyfriend and I got married and the next year my second baby was born. Everything was going well. I was working, I had my two beautiful, healthy children, I had a husband, and I was healthy. I then decided to take a break from working to spend time with my kids, so I resigned. During that time, I found out that my husband had been cheating on me, but I decided to carry on as if nothing had happened. At the same time, I was struggling with constant headaches that just kept getting worse and my eyesight became very blurry. After many tests and many doctors' visits, I was referred to Groote Schuur Hospital. Here again, I went for scans and tests, and eventually was told that I had a tumour on my brain the size of an apple and it was pressing on my optic nerve. This was the reason for the headaches and for my blurry vision. The doctors had to do an emergency operation to relieve the pressure on my brain and they removed a small part of the tumour. Initially, they thought that the tumour was cancerous but later on they said it wasn't. They have since discovered that the tumour can't be removed because it has a lot of blood vessels which can't be touched. My choices were either to remove the tumour and die or leave the tumour in and eventually become completely blind. I decided that I wanted to be there for my children even if I couldn't see them, so the tumour is still in my head.

I never told my husband that it wasn't cancer, so while I was still in hospital he decided to move in with his girlfriend. I think he was scared to be stuck with a wife that needed constant care. So there I was, sick, going blind, without a job, without a husband, and with two children to take care of. My world came crashing down around me and there was nothing I could do about it. Although I had accepted the fact that I was never going to have my sight back, I became depressed because I had no idea what my life was going to be like once I left the hospital. I was worrying about my children, and how was I going to look after them and provide for them, and I didn't even have a place to stay because we used to stay with my mother-in-law.

Adapting to a new way of life

My kids and I are now staying with my parents. The social worker at the hospital told me about The White Cane Society. I had never heard of this place before and I didn’t even know that you could still do stuff even though you’re blind. I didn’t even know if I could still work now that I was blind, so I agreed to go to The White Cane Society because I wanted to find a way to provide for my children again. I didn’t want to have to rely on my parents the whole time.

In January 2017, I started at The White Cane Society. I was nervous because I had no idea what to expect. I had never seen so many blind people in one place before. At first, I would laugh at them when they walked into stuff because it was funny and also because, although I was also technically blind, I didn’t “see” myself as blind at that time.

I guess I was still “looking” at the world through the eyes of a fully sighted person, maybe because I was still pretending that I could see. The White Cane Society was a huge place, and it was very confusing trying to find my way around at first. It was the blind people who then guided me. They became my friends. I had never really had friends before but now I have many friends and the fact that they are blind doesn’t matter at all.

With them I can be myself, I don’t have to pretend that I can still see, and I don’t have to feel ashamed that I can’t. Being at The White Cane Society made me stronger and more confident. I found a new purpose in life, I managed to take things day by day, and I learnt new skills as I went along. The more I learnt, the more my confidence grew and the easier it became to adjust to my new reality. Having all the other blind people around me, some of whom also became blind later in their lives, made it easier for me to accept my disability because I knew there were others who were able to do so before me. I became a new person and I was finally able to get over the heartache of losing my sight and my husband.

The White Cane Society opened the doors to so many new things in my life. Armed with my newfound strength and confidence, I even allowed myself to experience new things like playing sports, which I always thought I hated. So when they said we could play blind cricket, I said ok, I’ll try it. It’s not a problem if I try something that could be fun.

The practice sessions were on Saturdays and Sundays, and I thought that because I had nothing to do on Saturday and Sunday afternoons anyway, why not? The White Cane Society organised everything and they collected all of us from our homes that first Saturday, but the other team didn’t show up at the venue. I was a bit disappointed but mostly relieved because I honestly felt like I had dodged a bullet because I was nervous as I didn’t know how to play cricket. When they dropped me at home, Mr Brown, the sports convener, said that they would pick me up the following Saturday again, so I asked him why. He told me that we are still going to practice but we are going to practice another sport. There were not enough players to form a female cricket team and there would also not be any other female teams to play against. The one or two ladies who were there were going to play cricket with the guys.

I found a new love

The other sport was goalball and I loved it! My new friends had always spoken about this game that they played called goalball. A goalball team consists of only three players, so it made more sense to focus on goalball instead of cricket. I didn’t know anything about it, but it sounded so exciting. I fell in love the moment I saw the others play and I wanted to try it immediately. At first, they explained how the game works and all the rules. I played a few rounds without a blindfold, and then they blindfolded me and it became more difficult, but I loved every second of it.

I couldn’t wait for the next Saturday and the next practice session. I wanted to learn more to become better at the game. Sometimes we played games against the boys and we would always beat them. Winning made it more fun so we would always make bets with the boys, but when we played actual games, the boys didn’t play around; they would beat us about 9 to 2, but that didn’t matter. I still loved it!

We played a couple of tournaments against other teams. Our organisation only had three female players so the three of us represented the organisation at all the tournaments. The tournaments were organised by the different organisations in the region. The driver from The White Cane Society picked all of us up every week for practices and for the games.

I remember this one time we were playing a tournament, but the one team never showed up. We were supposed to play three games and because we only had one girls' team, the three of us had to play all three games with only 15 or 20 minute breaks in between and those breaks seemed to be over so quick. We came second that day. I was so tired and my arms felt dead but I didn't mind the tiredness or the soreness; I just wanted to know when we were going to play our next game. That's how much I loved goalball. I was so excited about goalball; I told my family all about it and I even brought my daughter with to some of our practice sessions. My family thought I was crazy for willingly throwing my body around just to stop a ball, but I didn't care what they were saying because I enjoyed playing goalball and it changed my mind about sports in general.

Another health setback

My love affair with goalball was cut short, though, because at one of our tournaments, we had to play three games again and after the second game, my legs were numb. I rubbed my legs and then I played the third game.

After that third game, I couldn't move at all. I went home and then my knees started swelling and I thought maybe it would get better after a couple of days but it didn't. My knees and my ankles were swollen and paining all the time. Eventually, I went to the doctor and was told I have inflammation. The tablets that were prescribed didn't really work and I wasn't getting any better.

I went to several doctors and again had to go through several tests and eventually they told me…

I have arthritis. It's in my hands and arms as well, actually my whole body. There are days when I can't even get out of bed, when my mommy and my sister have to wash me and dress me. I have fallen many times and I now have this weird way of walking because I am trying to balance myself so that I don't fall. I tried to keep playing goalball but it became too much for me, so I had to tell them that I can’t play anymore. I was heartbroken because I really enjoyed playing but it just became too painful.

I used to say I hate sport but now I love it

When I stopped playing goalball, I felt that I still wanted to be involved in the game, so when I was asked to get a new girls’ team together, I said yes. I was very keen and said that I would find new players and practice with them and give them advice and so on. I thought that this would be a perfect way for me to stay involved in the game that I love so much, but finding new players proved more difficult than I could have ever imagined.

The ladies are just not interested in “running after a ball”, as they put it, but I will keep looking out for new people to join the team. I hope I will find three ladies to at least make up one team.

My life started differently and for most of my life I was convinced that I didn’t like sport. I was convinced that it was a waste of time and energy, and I preferred to use my time differently. Then life happened and I became blind. I came in contact with an organisation that assists people like me, who have lost their sight. At this organisation, I was introduced to other people who, just like me, had to learn to navigate a sighted world as blind people.

I learned so much about myself, that I was strong and capable of doing anything that I put my mind to. Playing goalball was one of those things. I just wanted to play all the time. Who knew that sport would play such an important role in my life? It helped me to adjust to and accept my new reality. My whole mind-set about sport has changed. I love it.

4.1.2 Karla’s story: With a little help from my friends

Sport isn’t really my thing; maybe if my introduction to it had been more positive, things could have been different

I am the only daughter and youngest of three children. My eldest brother and I were born with an eye condition called Leber’s disease, which we inherited from our mother and I will definitely pass it on to my children. At this point in time, I can only see light and dark, but when I was little, I could see much more so I did pre-school at a mainstream school in Rustenburg.

I started Grade 1 at Vredehoek School in Gauteng which is a special school for vision impaired children. I stayed in the hostel and became used to the routine quite quickly. In the first week, the teachers told us we had to practice for the sports day. In Grade 1, you only do the 60m race.

When it was my turn, I told them that I can’t run outside because the sunlight is too bright. They didn’t want to hear anything and insisted that I run, so I did, full speed, straight into a trash can. The bin went flying one way and I went flying the other way. Luckily, I didn’t break anything but my six-year-old ego was badly bruised and the teachers got the fright of their lives. After that day they never asked me to run again and so I never did. The only other time in primary school that I tried my hand at sports was in Grade 4 when all the girls had to try out for the netball team. By that time, my eyesight was even worse than it had been in Grade 1 and I still had the problem with the sun, so the netball didn’t work for me either because I couldn’t see enough to catch the ball. It didn’t really bother me because I preferred the arts and culture stuff, and sport was never really my thing anyway.

In Grade 5, my parents sent us (my brother and I) to Louis Braille School in the Western Cape. The transition was fast and painless because we had been through that whole process before, so we were used to going away from home to attend school. Before we knew it, we were not the new kids anymore. At this school, the teachers never really forced me to participate in sports. So, at first, I didn’t really do any sports. But the teachers were actually taking a different approach all along.

They gradually introduced different sporting codes to us during our PE[5] periods. Swimming was one. The school had a swimming team and they organised swimming galas, but I was never part of the team. The PE teacher, who was also the coach of the swimming team, tried to teach all of us to swim but I never really liked swimming because I struggled to get the correct head action for the breathing so I never really learned how to swim. I am just able to keep my head above water and for me that was all I needed at the time.

There was also an athletics team at the school but I wasn't serious about that, so when I was in high school, I only participated in the sports days for fun and I only did a little bit of running, nothing else.

The start of my journey with goalball

My journey with goalball also started in the PE classes at school. We always just played for fun during class and I actually liked it, but at that stage our school didn't even have a team. When I was first introduced to goalball, I never knew that it would play such an integral part later in my life. But back at school, the teachers saw how much some of us were enjoying playing and they wanted to revive the sport at the school, so they organised an overnight goalball marathon. They invited all of us to enter as teams of three to play against each other and then they had knockout rounds to eventually get to the winning team. The marathon started the Friday afternoon after school and lasted until the Saturday afternoon.

There were about seven teams who entered and two of those were girls' teams. We played right through the night. The teachers and other staff members were there throughout to support us. One of the teachers even brought us some snacks at midnight. When we got tired, we just fell asleep on the gym mats until it was our turn to play again. Inevitably, both girls' teams were eliminated but it was great fun and we all enjoyed ourselves.

The next day my body was so stiff and sore that I could barely move. The teachers were also very happy with the outcome because they were able to start two official goalball teams.

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[5] Physical Education

Sport was the last thing on my mind

I was always interested in physiology but I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with it after school. So, initially I was just at home. Then one day, I met an old school friend of mine who told me that she had done a course in massage in the Boland at a private practice, and I thought that sounded interesting. Later that year, I attended the open day at the university and spoke to the people in the Occupational Therapy Department about doing occupational therapy, but they told me that the course is not suitable for a blind person because I would not be able to make assessments based on observations. At the same time, I also went to enquire about the massage course that my friend told me about, but they also told me that they no longer accepted vision impaired people for the course. The owner of the practice told me to apply to a tertiary institution in Gauteng because they were starting a new, very intensive three-year course in therapeutic massage and reflexology. So I applied and started at the beginning of the following year.

That wasn't a very good time in my life. I was the only blind student there and I didn't have a guide dog then, so I was relying on other people to get around. It was a nightmare. I felt out of place and alone, and the other students made fun of me. When I entered rooms, they would whisper and pretend that the rooms were empty. I tried to join the choir and drama groups but the reception from the other students was not friendly. I was struggling with everything and I had no support, so it was very difficult for me to find my feet. My parents were paying for my tuition and they had to pay to have all my learning materials converted into braille. I must admit, all my struggles made it easy for me to keep to myself and, at that time, sport was certainly the last thing on my mind. I decided to just focus on my studies so that I could finish and get as far away from that place as possible.

After my three years studying in Gauteng, I came down to Cape Town for a job interview which never took place. I was told to wait for a call to discuss the arrangements for the interview but that call never came. So I was stuck here in Cape Town with no job, no place to stay, and no plan. At that time, I was staying with a friend in Gordon's Bay and some weekends I visited a school friend of mine (Lynette) who stayed in the hostel at the university. I was surviving on my SASSA[6]

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[6] Acronym for South African Social Security Agency

grant and when my parents could, they also sent me some money. Those first six months were very tough for me because I went for one job interview after the other, with no success. Later that year, I went back to my old school to attend a course in career development. The course included a module in communication and another one in computer skills. While I was attending the course, I sometimes stayed with my brother and other times I stayed with another friend of mine. Once I had completed that course, I came to visit my friend Lynette at the university again. She then suggested that I should start studying there as well. I was desperate and had nothing else to do anyway, so I decided to do it. Lynette helped me to complete and submit the application forms for my studies, for a place in the residence, and for a bursary. She really played an important role in my life at that time. Knowing that she was at the university made my second experience much easier and more enjoyable.

The journey with goalball restarted

I was a bit older and I was not the only blind student at the university. I had some friends from school who were also studying there at the time and I made some new friends, so this time I didn’t feel so isolated and excluded like the previous time. The “sighted” students were also much more friendly and the environment was much more accessible. I felt much more at home this time around. The university’s orientation towards students with disabilities, especially those who are blind and with vision impairments, was very positive and much more inclusive. The non-disabled students were used to having disabled students around. The university ensured that the buildings and walkways were accessible and user-friendly, and even catered for us by allocating one sports hall specifically for goalball and providing all the necessary equipment.

Some of my friends were playing goalball for the university and they always invited me along to their practice sessions. I went along because it was always fun and I got to meet new people. Sometimes, when they were a player short, I played with them. I really liked it and it brought back fond memories from my school days. My friends wanted me to join the team but because it was my first year there, I wanted to find my feet and focus on my studies instead.

One thing led to another

In July of my second year, I decided to sign up and officially join the goalball team. We always had loads of fun and I got into the swing of things quite quickly. We practiced in the evenings after classes and on Saturdays we usually had our games against other teams. We were good and were always chosen to play in the National Championships, which are held every year in March. For the National Championships, we travelled to places all over the country. I loved the travelling and I have three Championship medals. There were years when I didn't compete in the National Championships because, countrywide, there were not enough ladies to play. In 2015, I was one of a few ladies who were chosen at the National Championships to be part of the South African Practice Group to represent the country in Algeria where the African Championships for goalball were hosted. Unfortunately, we never practiced and we never went to Algeria. We were told that there was no money available to send us. So all in all, the South African Practice Group was just a name.

Soon after I joined the team, I was chosen as the convenor for the Western Province (WP) team and then became an official WP council member. I was in that role for a couple of years until they decided to split the Western Province up into smaller constituencies. Then I became a committee member for our club. After I graduated from the university, the director of the sports club asked me if I could help him out in the office because he didn't have anyone to assist him with the administrative work. I guess he saw an opportunity for both of us to gain something from such an arrangement because I was really struggling to find a job and he was really struggling to keep up with all the admin work. He knew I was capable of doing the work because I was doing similar things as the convenor and committee member of the club. I was so happy and relieved to have a job, even if it was only for a couple of days per week. Who would have thought that I would get my first job through my involvement with goalball?

Changing the rules and fighting to keep goalball alive

Initially, my work at the sport club was just answering telephone calls, taking messages, setting up appointments, and typing up minutes. These days, I do all of that and so much more. I really enjoy my work because not only do I get to play goalball, but I am also involved behind the scenes in goalball and other disability specific sports. For goalball, I organise training sessions, tournaments, awareness campaigns, and other events specifically aimed at recruiting people, especially women, to the game because throughout the years, the female representation has always been a problem.

We have this same problem at this very moment because there are currently only two of us ladies practicing and you need three to make a team. This means we can’t even play any games, let alone play against another female team.

I know from experience that things like marriage, pregnancy and transport are some of the reasons why there are so few ladies playing. I am also constantly looking for sponsorships as goalball does not get much financial help from the national sports body.

There are some women, though, that are also just lazy to practice and then only show up for the tournaments. In the past, because we are so few, this was allowed and then these latecomers would also then be picked for the National Championships.

But I saw how unfair this was to those of us who practiced throughout the year and who sometimes missed out on being picked for the national team, so I changed that rule. Now, if you want to be considered for the Nationals, you have to practice and play a couple of tournament games. You can’t just pitch up on the day and expect to make the team for Nationals. I organised a tournament especially so that everybody could get a chance to play before the team for Nationals is chosen.

New challenges

I have been able to find another job to fill the days when I’m not working at the sports club. Both my jobs are in the same place. So I moved here a couple of years ago when I was experiencing transport problems to get to work and to the goalball practice sessions. I got my other job after I completed a one-year course in Sports Massage that was facilitated by a physiotherapist. At the end of the year, the course convenors sent out a message looking for volunteers for a cycling event that took place a few times per year. I was interested but didn’t want to apply because I didn’t want to be rejected yet again. I was also concerned about the transport issue to and from the event. After I discussed the opportunity and my fears with my boss, he told me to apply because I had nothing to lose, so I did and my application was successful. I was able to work at that event two of the three times that it was hosted that year. At the end of that year, one of the ladies who attended the Sports Massage course asked me to come and help out at her practice because she was going to be away and needed someone to fill in for her. I started in February of the following year and have been there since. I work at the private practice as a massage and reflexology therapist. My other colleagues at the practice are a psychologist and a chiropractor. We are all female and we work very well together, each with our own clients but sometimes we refer clients to one another.

My colleagues at the private practice and I have known each other since 2017. They accepted me as part of the team, disability and all. It’s not always easy at work being an all-female staff, each with our own issues, but they gave me an opportunity when so many others turned me away.

My colleagues know that I am always involved with sports so this year they have challenged me to join them to enter the half ironman competition in November. We will enter as a team where we will have to do running, open water swimming, and cycling. I don’t particularly like running, I can’t swim, and I have never been on a tandem bike before. I decided to challenge myself to do all the things that I am struggling with to raise funds to assist other people who have challenges to overcome their challenges. I surprised myself when I agreed to join them. I must admit, I have no idea how it would work and whether we are all doing all three events or whether each one of us will do one event only. But I agreed nonetheless.

We are almost halfway through the year and we have yet to start practicing together. Up to now, I’m also still waiting for a tandem bike. Once we get the bike, then I will have to wait for one of my colleagues to cycle with me (as my pilot[7]), so that is going to be quite a process. In the meantime, I will be working on the swimming as I don’t particularly need someone else to do that with me. For the last couple of years, I have worked with our third year Sports Science students

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[7] In tandem cycling the person who rides in front and steers the bike is called a pilot.

who want to specialise in disability sports. As part of their course, the students have to find a person with a disability and then work with that person for the year to reach a specific goal, whether it be weight loss or improving their overall fitness level or whatever.

For me, for the rest of this year, we will have to work towards me participating and succeeding in the half ironman competition. By succeeding, I mean even just finishing it, and being able to say I couldn’t swim and now I can, and I couldn’t cycle and now I can. I want to be able to say that I have done that.

Sport wasn’t my thing, but now it is my everything

Although sport was never initially my thing, it has played an important role in my life up to this point in time. Through sport, I have made so many friends, I have learned, experienced and achieved so many things, and I have found a job that I love doing. Because of my job, I can make positive changes in my own and other disabled people’s lives.

Over the years, I have come to realise the importance of physical activity, especially for us as blind people, so I intend to stay busy. All I know is that I got to where I am with the help and encouragement of my friends who gave me a place to stay, food to eat, and guidance when I needed it, and for that, I am eternally grateful. For now, my focus is on the half ironman competition and after that, who knows?

4.1.3 Daphne's story: Always game

A blind fascination with speed

When I was five, my dad gave me a tricycle for my birthday. I loved that thing. It was big and sturdy, and it was mine. As a 'blindy',[8] I felt so free riding on it. Then one day, it disappeared. I am sure my dad buried it or something after the infamous stairs incident. You see, we lived in a maisonette, so the bathroom and bedrooms were upstairs and the kitchen and living room downstairs. The stairs and the landing had no railing, so my dad put up a barrier to let me know when to stop so that I didn't fall and hurt myself, being blind and all. It was a good idea and it worked well until that day. My mom and I were upstairs; she was busy with something so I decided to take my tricycle for a spin. I figured that I would stop at the barrier but then I went right through it, down the stairs, straight into the front door. I'm sure bits of my brain are still lying there somewhere. I had a big bump on my head but otherwise me and my tricycle were fine. My dad didn't think it was a joke and the next thing I knew, my tricycle had disappeared.

When the tricycle disappeared, it didn't bother me much because by that time, I had upgraded myself to my brother's bicycle anyway. My brother had a skateboard as well so when he was out skateboarding, I decided to give his bicycle a spin. This was much harder than I thought, for various reasons.

I had no balance to speak of and, when I finally managed to stay on the bike and actually get it to move forward, either my dress would get stuck in the wheels and I had to let go of the handle bars to yank it out of there or one of our neighbours would slam their doors and the noise startled me, so down I went, every single time. I got in so much trouble with my mom about those stupid flowery dresses that she insisted I wear every day after school because all the hems got torn when I yanked them out of the wheels. I also tried the skateboard, but that just never worked for me at all. So, I took a cardboard box and put it on top of the skateboard and pretended it was my car. I was fascinated by anything with wheels from a very young age and that rush of adrenaline that I got when I was riding my tricycle

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[8] This was a term used by the participant to describe herself and her friends who are blind as well.

or my brother's bike or my makeshift car when I was little. I never forgot that, but it took a long time before I would experience those feelings again.

Setting the ground rules for participation early on

I started school at the age of three. Not because I was one of those genius kids who could read and write straight out of nappies, but rather because I was born blind and my parents didn't know what to do with me. They thought that sending me to a special school would teach me independence and all the other things that I needed to know. In a way, I guess they were right because a lot of what I know about life as a 'blindy' comes from my early days at the school.

At school there was no special treatment. If one of us was in trouble, we all were in trouble, and if one of us had to do something, we all had to do it. So from a very young age, I learnt about doing things together as a team. Some of my earliest memories from school are about running for the sports days.

At my school, sport was an institution and everybody had to participate. Even those who couldn't physically do stuff, they had to be there and they had to sing and chant to cheer their team mates on. Every year in January and February, we would practice in the mornings before school to prepare for the annual sports day, or interhouse, as we used to call it.

When I was really small, we only did the 60m race. We had to run towards the teacher calling us at the finishing line. Although I was legally blind, the teachers always used to blindfold me before I ran and I didn't understand why, so I literally threw a fit every time. It was only when I was much older that I understood that the little bit of light perception that I had gave me an unfair advantage over the other kids who were completely blind with no light perception. I was very fast when I was small, so my mom would come to the sports days to see me run and when she couldn't make it, she always packed a whole lot of food for me to share with my friends.

The teachers at my school played a very important role in teaching us about sports. Especially the PE[9] teacher, Ms Booysen. First, she introduced me to

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[9] Physical Education

gymnastics by teaching me to contort my body into all kinds of weird positions and letting me climb up and down ladders and ropes. I really enjoyed that but she couldn't really take it further than that with blind children because I guess the more complicated it gets, the more you have to rely on sight. Then there was the swimming, which was also very nice. We never really had any swimming lessons; we were just supervised while we played in the water. When I was about ten or eleven, it stopped being fun, but more about that later.

We also did some goalball and tandem cycling during our PE periods. Ms Booysen and her male counterpart, Mr Greene, would each take one of us and ride with us on the tandem bikes around the school. I felt that rush of adrenaline again. I loved it.

My kite was just not flying

As I got older, my inter-house resumé expanded because we had to do field events as well. We had to learn how to do javelin, shot put, long jump, and discus. Ms Booysen and the other teachers tried their best to explain these things to us by putting the apparatus in our hands and guiding our arms to do the right movements.

For the long jump. Ms Booysen always said you should count your steps before you get to the launch pad and I did, but I just couldn't understand how I was supposed to propel myself into space and then land eight meters further, so most of the time, I landed with my face in the sand, just behind the launch pad. Javelin was a story on its own. Some of my friends were excellent at this stuff; they just got it and I was like, 'how are they just doing it?' It just happened for them. I did everything with conviction, but it never happened for me. I failed every single time. I never figured out why. I guess I just overthought things sometimes. In the end, I became more of a supporter. I just went along to sing and make a noise to cheer my friends on because for the field events, my kite was just not flying!

Finding my feet first

After school, I went to university where I didn't do any sports despite the fact that I was told that they offered swimming and that I should join them for swimming. I never took them up on their offer because I was a bit irritated that they decided for me by relegating me to swimming. Besides all of that, swimming stopped being fun for me when I was about ten or eleven years old when one day, while playing in the pool, some idiot boy pulled me by my hair and kept my head under water.

So I don't really have a fondness for swimming, especially when my head has to be under water. But the people at varsity[10] didn't know that because they never bothered to ask if I wanted to swim, nor did they allow me to make my own choices like all the other students did. I was also the only blind student there at the time, so none of the lecturers really knew what to do with me.

I also didn't know whether I was coming or going. Especially during my first week, when I erroneously attended classes for IT (my second choice) because journalism (my first choice) never informed me that I had been accepted. Every day, I had to literally stand on the tables and ask the lecturers to please keep talking when they were writing on the blackboards so that I could keep up with what was going on. Luckily, at the end of that week, when my dad came to pick me up, he told me I was in the wrong course. The following Monday, I started with journalism and I immediately felt much more positive, but it was not easy. I didn't have any help, so I felt like I needed and wanted to find my feet first anyway. Everything was new and different, and I expected it to be difficult as well, so I didn't want to take on anything extra just yet. I wanted to only focus on my academics at that point in time.

In my second year, I felt a bit more secure, so when the Looking Glass[11] people came to campus and asked me if I would like to join their walking club, I did. They came every weekend and we went for hikes up Lion's Head or Table Mountain or wherever. You would totally "loop jouself in 'n anner bloedgroep in".[12]. You're so tired not even the sea will wash the tiredness off, but it's fine because you feel like you are actually doing something good for yourself and your recreational activities. The walking was for fun so there was not really a sense of achievement because I didn't have any goals when it came to it, but it was good for my social

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[10] South African slang for university

[11] A non-profit organisation

[12] This means "to walk so much that your blood type changes automatically". She felt as when they were walking and hiking so much that by the end of it all, she had a different blood type because of it.

standing. So when my varsity friends said, “oh, they did this and that over the weekend”, then I would say, “oh, I went up Lion’s Head this weekend”.

One thing led to another

As part of the walking club, I met a bunch of new, very kind people and we spent a lot of time just talking and getting to know each other. Some of those relationships turned into friendships and lasted well beyond my varsity years. One such person was Nicole. She was one of the volunteers at the walking club and one day she told me that she had had a cycling accident and was scared to cycle on her own again. So she asked me if I would be interested in becoming her cycling partner because she wanted the two of us to practice so that we could participate in the next Argus cycling tour.

I thought it would never work because she was this small chicky and I was twice her size and, besides the few times at school, I had never really been on a tandem bike before. So naturally my response was, “the Argus, are you nuts, do you know how far that is?”

By the time I finally agreed (after my sense of adventure and my fascination with speed took over), I was already working. Nicole was a real taskmaster and she meant business. Before I knew it, we were practicing our butts off literally, because after those first couple of long rides, I thought my “vijayjay”[13] had died. I had no feeling down there for months because I didn’t have the proper clothing. Nobody told me about the special shorts with the extra cushioning for your bum or even just about putting something extra in the back of your cycling shorts. So all that time, I was cycling without any cushioning but I was getting fit and trim. Eventually, I got the proper gear and we spent hours on that bike. We were very determined and I was finally getting excited about the prospect of doing my first Argus tour. And then, one day out of the blue, I felt a tingling down there so I knew I was okay.

Without knowing, Nicole had lit a fire in me and her Argus dream then also became my Argus dream. Unfortunately, before we could make our dream a

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[13] Slang term for vagina

reality, my boss finally approved my transfer (that I had asked for years before) to Joburg[14].

Entering the working world

After I graduated from varsity I was sort of in limbo, between places to stay, no job, no money, nothing to keep me busy. I was bored and frustrated, so I went to my old school to find out if they possibly had something to keep me busy with until a "real" job came along. They obliged and I started working on the switchboard and I was offered a room with one of the teachers who was staying on the school premises.

After about a year, I got a "real" job at SwitchOn in their communications department. I enjoyed the work but after a couple of years of doing the same thing, I became restless and wanted a new challenge. I wanted to be a mover and shaker, and I realised that in order to do that, I had to make a drastic change. I had to move away from my family to Joburg. I submitted a transfer request that seemed to me to have got lost in the mail somewhere because I heard nothing from nobody for years.

Eventually, after I had given up hope of ever going anywhere, my boss finally approved my transfer and off I went to work in Joburg. I felt so fancy and grownup because I was doing this all on my own, without any assistance from my parents. I made some new friends and soon I was living the life, working and going out and experiencing new things. Once I was in Joburg I decided to apply for a position at ChocWorld and I got it. I enjoyed my work at ChocWorld very much and I enjoyed the luxury of having free access to chocolate even more, and soon I had the hips and thighs to prove it.

As the company became more reliant on technology, my core function of manually updating the intranet became redundant and I was demoted to the call centre. I had no problem talking to the customers because I am a talker, but I hated the data capturing aspect of the job. So one day, after six years in Joburg I got tired of the rat race and I missed my family in Cape Town. Then after an argument with

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[14] South African slang for Johannesburg

my boss, I said, “ek sal my pie vat en waai”[15] and I did. I returned home to Cape Town. I am currently working for much less money than I used to earn in Johannesburg but I’m finally happy and I love what I do.

Bad bowling, ducks and all

As I stated earlier, after I matriculated, my first job was at my old school. This was before *university* and before I went to Joburg. At the time, I was staying at the school as well. I was staying with Mr November and his wife, who were house parents at the hostel. Mr November was always very passionate about sport, so he decided to start a blind cricket team for women and because I was staying with them, he sort of bamboozled me into it. I told him I knew nothing about cricket besides listening to the commentary on the radio. He told me not to worry because he would train me and teach me and the others everything we needed to know, and he did, every Tuesday and Wednesday.

It was a total jol[16]! We had so much fun and shared so many laughs. Mr November always teased me when I was wearing the helmet. He would always say, “Daph, that helmet does nothing for your property value.” I couldn’t argue with him because it was this “helse groot”[17], extremely strange thing with a “braai rooster”[18] in front.

Us blindies used to form the wall, meaning we had to stop the ball (with our bodies) to prevent the other team from scoring runs. That was one of the times in my life that I experienced aches and pains in places I didn’t know existed because we would just fall. “Die flippen bal wassie eers naby jou nie maar jy val.”[19] My bowling must have been a sight to behold because I am left-handed and slightly directionally dysfunctional. All the balls that I bowled ended up being “no balls”, so Mr November used to make sure that I never had to bowl a single ball when we played other teams. This one time, we were playing a tournament in Bloemfontein, and then I was out for a duck on my second ball. I felt bad but Mr

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[15] I will take what’s mine (what’s due to me) and leave

[16] South African slang for a good time

[17] Hell of a big

[18] BBQ grill

[19] The flippen ball was nowhere near you but you fell down anyway.

November said, “don’t worry, Daph, it’s just about the fun and the team spirit”, and we always had tons of that.

Through all of this, we learnt to lean on each other and to work together to achieve a common goal. We learned to have fun and to enjoy ourselves as a team, bad bowling, ducks and all.

I am the shiiit!

While I was still at varsity I joined an organisation for vision impaired people called Sight Unseen, and eventually became a committee member. All my blindy friends always talked about the fun they had over weekends when they were participating as rally navigators, so I asked them to hook me up as well. I would have to say that the rally navigating is the one consistent thing in my life because I started with it when I was in varsity and I’m still doing it. I was even able to do it while I was working in Joburg.

When I first started navigating, I had to practice quite a few times before I actually got the hang of it. I remember one time I even had the directions upside down and was actually trying to read it like that. Eventually, I got the hang of it because the more I did it, the easier it became. Some people might say that rally navigating isn’t really a sport because you might as well be a walking – or, in this case, sitting – talking Garmin watch. You are just sitting next to the driver, telling him where to go and when to turn. I enjoyed it though because I met so many other people that are not blind, who became some of my best friends and, especially here in Cape Town, the parties after each race are legendary.

Joburg is different though. In Joburg they take the rally navigating *way* more serious. So in Gauteng, from about 2010, we won the championship for rally driving every year. So you learn that it’s nice to win and then eventually you learn that it’s also nice just to take part and it’s nice to be part of the overall experience. If you don’t win, then you feel a bit like ugh for a while but you get over it quickly and then you move on.

In 2012, I won the sportswoman with a disability in Gauteng award for being “the best rally navigator in the province”. When you start realising you have the ability to win, it kinda makes you feel like you can wave at yourself in the mirror and say, “I am the shiiit”. I haven’t won anything for the last couple of years though, but at the moment rally navigating is the only sport I am doing so I have to keep the dream alive.

Speed freak

I love competing in the rallies because I love the speed. I think my unholy fascination with speed started when I was cycling on the tandem bike at school with Ms Booysen because I was thinking, “this is fun, but if I can do this on a motorbike, then I don’t have to do anything; I just have to sit there and hold on.” Then, during my second year in Joburg, my rally partner/driver with whom I used to win all the championship medals said to me one day, “Daph, I’m doing the Economy Run. Don’t you want to be my partner?” I was like, “what’s the Economy Run and what would I have to do?” So he said it’s a motorbike race from Joburg to Nelspruit and back, about 1000 kilometers or so. You start the Friday and then you return the Sunday. He wanted to enter the pillion race so I needed to be his pillion. My role would be to hold onto him and not to fall off. I was like, “fall off? Why would I fall off? What stupidness is that?

Our first race we entered on a Kymco 500[20] scooter. We didn’t win but we were the most famous team because everybody was betting on when exactly I was gonna fall off, which I did not do. Oh my soul, it was so much fun! I have never had so much fun in my entire life. You know, I always say to people, “even teachers today, what you guys don’t seem to grasp is that, if you’re blind, you’ve got no perception of things until you feel it.” So speed equals 60kph if your dad always travels 60kph because that’s what you grew up with. Then you find out speed can be anything between 180kph and 200kph-plus around a bend at breaking speed, IT’S AWESOME! My gosh, it’s like motorbike orgasm dun dun dun. I had so much fun, it was unbelievable. People were like, “were you not scared? Because there were times when you guys looked like you were just gonna fall over because you just went on that bend.” But because we had a scooter and the other people all had bikes, we went around the bends much easier than they did, but on the straights they took us for a ride because we couldn’t go as fast as they could. It was gorgeous and Nelspruit, that side of the world is

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[20] A brand of scooters

normally biker bliss with all the bends and turns. Oh, it was lovely! I did about four or five of these events every year until I came back to Cape Town. Every year was different.

We had lots of fun, won a few of them and came second once, and I realised if I could see, I would've been a hell driver on a motorbike. My dad once said to me he doesn't know whether he should thank the Lord or not, but he thinks maybe he should thank Him because if I could see, he would've either had to bail me out of jail or get me out of the morgue because I am such a speed freak.

Those were my motorcycle mania days and I do miss it sometimes. Ooh, the speed! I think the Lord knew why I had to be a plain teacher/radio presenter/crazy ball because if I could see, I think I would've been dead by now quite frankly. Speed freak! Dun dun dun!

A love-hate relationship

When I was about ten or eleven, they opened a brand new, state of the art gym at my school. My favourite thing about that gym was the treadmill. I was fascinated by this thing that was standing in one spot and yet was moving at the same time. My young, blind brain could just not fathom how it worked. After school, I sort of forgot about the treadmill because I joined a walking club.

Then, when I moved to Joburg, it struck me with a vengeance that that place has got no pavements, no nice places to go for a walk, and no sea and no rocky things to clamber over, and you just couldn't be outdoorsy. It was horrible and, like I said earlier, I was working for ChocWorld and eating chocolates and ice-cream like nobody's business, so naturally, I was gaining weight and looking like a big walking chocolate lump. I wasn't very fit either, so I decided that I would buy myself a treadmill, just a basic one to get me moving. I've always wanted one anyways.

Initially, we had a very good relationship, me and the treadmill, because I had my own flat and there was enough space for him. Then I moved to Cape Town and the relationship became a bit rocky, because then, the treadmill was in storage along with everything else I owned.

For at least six months, there was a bit of a communication problem between me and my treadmill partner and he felt that I'd demoted him and put him in a box.

Then I moved in with my brother. We shared a flat and the treadmill kinda was in a better place because we started to pick things up again. I would cycle and then I would treadmill as part of my training for the Argus cycling tour. But then I moved again and for a while we were doing great, and then finally, last year, the relationship totally broke down 'cause the treadmill has now been relegated to the bathroom and there's no communication going on there. I am hoping to be moving into a new place soon then the treadmill will have his own designated space. I'm hoping there will be a lot of running going on because I feel that I have all this energy and nothing to do with it. I know it sounds very weird but I sometimes wish I could go walking next to the sea or some nice quiet place. I have this radio show on weekends, so I don't even get time to wake up in the morning and call a friend and say, "hey, do you wanna go for a walk next to this and this beach? Because I feel like I wanna do that today." So, I will have to re-acquaint myself with my treadmill to make up for not being able to be outside.

Keeping the Argus dream alive

When I got tired of being in Joburg, I gave up my flat, my job, and the nice salary, and came back to Cape Town to be with my family. Initially, I couldn't find a job, I was running out of money, and I was living with my parents, so naturally I became a bit "depro"[21]. Then I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself and to get on with life. I got a job, it doesn't pay much but I enjoy it, and I can at least stay on my own. I also have a part-time job as a radio DJ.

So, after I mentioned one day on the radio that I would like to get back into tandem cycling, an Afrikaner "boer seun"[22] called Thys called me up and said that he would like to cycle with me. I told him "no" because I didn't know him. For all I knew, he could be a pervert or something. He told me he was a pervert but a married one, and that his wife would kill both of us if he were to try anything. So

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[21] Slang for depressed

[22] A white, Afrikaans-speaking male.

we agreed to first get to know each other and then we became cycle buddies. Before I knew it, we were training for the Argus.

I told him to just make sure that I had those bum shorts because I couldn’t afford to lose feeling downstairs again, because last time I was in my twenties and this time I am in my thirties so I don’t know if the feeling would return again. He brought the shorts and some weird shoes that you had to clip onto the pedals. This whole situation of clipping in, it freaked me out, because I am extremely claustrophobic.

I was thinking, if we fall, then my foot is going to be stuck in there and it could break. I was terrified but Thys said clipping in gives you that extra leverage when you go up a steep hill; when you don’t have the strength to do anything else, you can just pull your foot upwards because it’s stuck to the bike. So, two years ago we started to practice for the Argus again.

We cycled up a storm, every weekend up and down Frans Conradie, to the Strand and back. I liked the cycling because I was actually doing something and I liked being part of the gang, having other cyclists waving at you and hearing them cheer you on. It’s exciting. I was getting this real trim biker bum. I was starting to get really excited, yay, because I’m thinking, “okay, this would be fun because I can actually finally get an Argus medal like all my other blindy friends here in Cape Town”.

The day before the race, we went and collected our t-shirts and we were chatting to other cyclists and we checked out some exhibition stalls and so on. We wanted to be part of the excitement of it all because we had had some injuries and other issues along the way, so we really had to psych ourselves up before race day.

That morning, I woke up and I’m like, “okay, Daph, you’re finally gonna do this nonsense”. I was nervous and excited at the same time and for a brief moment I was thinking, “how do I get out of it? But yeah we gonna do it, we are finally gonna do it”. Then we get there and all the people are turning around because the race is cancelled because of the wind. We were devastated and disappointed because all our hard work, sacrifices and dreams were poof, blown away by the wind. Many people got injured that day, at least we were spared that, but it was such an anti-climax and we really didn’t know what to do with ourselves for the rest of that day.

So I still don’t have my Argus medal but I am not giving up on that dream just yet. I am hoping to start practicing soon either with a new partner or with Thys again, if his injured leg is completely healed. I’m thinking this time will be my third try so it has to be, third time lucky! I just know it, 2020 will be my year.

Tandem – check, partner – check, transport – check, and so it goes

As much as I would love to do an Argus tour or any other sport for that matter, the reality is, if you’re a woman that lives with blindness or a vision impairment, sport has to be a group thing. You can’t necessarily just decide today I’m going to walk on the beach because I need exercise or I’m gonna cycle down Peter Barlow, and sometimes you don’t even wanna be competitive or anything hectic like that; you just wanna do normal things like jog on your street or go to the gym or whatever. But it’s not that easy because there’s always all these things that you have to take into consideration and it’s not that you’re feeling sorry for yourself, it’s just your reality. If you as a blindy want to do anything that is vaguely related to getting sweat all over your body – maybe not in the bedroom, although I suppose that’s also a team situation – then you need it to be in a team. It’s actually kinda sad because there’s always this whole list of things that has to be in place: tandem – check, partner – check, transport – check; and so it goes, every single time, before you as a blind person can do anything.

All throughout my adult life, I have been participating in one or other type of sport. I guess the love for sport and participation that was nurtured at school when I was a child really stuck with me throughout.

BUT

My story is far from over. At the moment, I am still actively participating in the rally navigating thing and I am hoping to get into motorbike racing again. I am also hoping to move to a bigger flat where I will have space to unpack my beloved treadmill and to actually use my treadmill.

I am definitely wanting to get back into the whole tandem cycling thing again because I haven’t given up on my Argus dream just yet. Even if I just get one medal for finishing it, it doesn’t matter. Or I might enjoy it so much that I go on and do the Argus until I’m eighty or something. With me, anything is possible because

I’m always game for everything, so all I can say is watch this space dun dun dun dun!

4.2 Part 2: Interpretations of the narratives

In Part 2 of the findings chapter, I present my interpretations of the narratives that were presented in Part 1. I acknowledge that this is only one interpretation and that there may be others. During the second level analysis, a single overarching theme, “Sport and life as interconnecting circles”, emerged to explain how vision impaired women navigate their participation in recreational sport. This theme is made up of two different categories: “Connectors” and “A matter of personal choice”. Here, I intend to describe each of these categories and explain how they are linked together to construct the theme. Although I will discuss these aspects separately, the reader should remember that the participants told their stories as one whole experience with all the different components of their lives as part of that whole, so separating things out for the purpose of this part of the chapter was carefully considered so as not to de-contextualise what are presented here as parts of the phenomenon.

4.2.1 Category 1: Connectors

The cross-case analysis of the three narratives revealed the overall important role that people have played as connectors to sport from early on in the lives of all three participants. In the next section, I discuss the first sub-category related to the importance of those early foundations in shaping a positive attitude towards sports participation.

Sub-category 1 – Early foundations: Encouraging a positive attitude towards participation later on in life

The importance of laying strong, positive foundations early in life to enhance participation in sport later emerged to different degrees across the three participants’ narratives. This sub-category highlights the role that the unique cultures of families and schools played in facilitating the participants’ participation in sport. These different cultures influenced in particular ways each participant’s personal views on the importance of sports participation in general and in particular, their own participation in sports.

Family culture and socialisation

The cross-case analysis of the three narratives revealed that there appears to be a correlation between positive cultural socialisation around sports in early childhood and participation in sporting activities in adult life for women with vision impairments.

Daphne’s narrative revealed that an encouraging and supportive family culture that nurtures a positive attitude towards participation in everyday activities played an important role in developing positive orientations towards participation in different forms of sporting activities. This family culture is evident in the potentially taken-for-granted act of Daphne’s mother packing food for her sporting events. Such an act demonstrated her support in nuanced ways, nurturing a positive social context within which sport held an important place. Daphne’s father demonstrated his support by allowing her to explore beyond and despite of her obvious physical limitations. Early explorations of different activities under his supervision shaped her disposition towards taking on new opportunities despite the fact that they may have seemed difficult.

These early foundations of support and encouragement from Daphne’s parents boosted her confidence and self-esteem in general but especially in relation to sport. Those early foundations acted as a connector because it allowed Daphne early on to become familiar and comfortable with sport as a normal part of life, rather than something that’s unfamiliar and uncomfortable. The kind of family support that Daphne received seemed to be a key contributor to her continuous, very active sports participation throughout her life because it gave her the confidence to attempt every opportunity with enthusiasm and fearlessness.

Compared to Melisson and Karla, Daphne’s negotiation of her recreational sporting trajectory was much more consolidated, and she demonstrated an ease of participation with respect to recreational sport. Melisson and Karla did not enjoy the same level of cultural socialisation from their parents that Daphne had. Although both of their parents played sports themselves, their narratives do not reflect the same active parental facilitation that was present in Daphne’s life. Comparing Daphne’s narrative to Karla and Melisson’s with respect to the role of early foundations creates an opportunity to consider the value of family culture and socialisation of young children with vision impairments as an active facilitator of the children’s participation in sport throughout their lives.

Another important aspect of early foundations is schools, especially primary schools and their unique cultures and attitudes toward sports participation.

Schools and their cultural orientation towards sports

Besides the participants’ families, institutions – especially schools – played an equally important role in the lives of these three women. For Daphne, this interaction started at the age of three when she was sent to a boarding school for blind and vision impaired children. In her narrative, Daphne fondly recounted the emphasis that her school placed on sports participation. She remembered the positive roles that her teachers played in introducing her to sports as a young child. She realised early on what her strengths were because she did not excel at all the different sporting activities. Her perseverance made her resilient. These early experiences on the sporting field at her school formed her identity and shaped her attitude toward sport. She learned at a young age to not take life too seriously and to accept that she would not always be the best at everything. Over the years, she has had an on-again-off-again relationship with sport, but always found some type of sporting activity to occupy herself with. Those early years of “sport as an institution” at her school made a lasting impression and have led her to return to sport time and time again. She has developed a love for sport and understands the important role that it plays in keeping the mind and body healthy.

This positive experience is in contrast to Karla’s experience at school, where her introduction to sport was not positive at all. It is evident from Karla’s story that the culture around sport and the attitudes of the teachers towards the individual children’s ability to participate were not positive. Her teachers did not have the same encouraging orientation towards the individual abilities of the children at the school as the teachers at Daphne’s school. The teachers at Karla’s school seemed to have a one-size-fits-all approach to the introduction of sport. This approach did not bode well for Karla because she needed special accommodations. If they moved the game indoors or maybe played in the shade or at a later time during the day, Karla could probably have played a few netball games. It was only at her second special school, when she was much older and had the support and encouragement of friends and teachers, that she tried to play sport again but only for fun and for short periods at a time.

Unlike the other two participants, Melisson (who only became blind at the end of her teenage years), attended a mainstream school where she never really participated in sport because she did not like it as, according to her, sport “tires you out”. She never attended the practice sessions and nobody ever bothered to check up on her or to ask her why she did not attend. Unlike the special schools, this mainstream school had hundreds of learners so it must have been difficult for the teachers to keep track of all the children, therefore they only focused on those children who demonstrated overtly that they wanted to practice and participate in sports. The children did not stay in a hostel like Daphne and Karla, so the teachers had no way of knowing who and where, between school and home, the absent children were. The role schools play in establishing strong sport culture provides clear guidelines to facilitate sports participation of all their learners. When a school’s culture is not clear and specific, it has a negative effect on the level of sports participation of the learners. It also affects their willingness to participate in sport later in their lives.

The cultural orientation of Melisson’s school towards sports participation was completely different to that of Daphne’s school, where sport was compulsory for all the learners and the teachers were invested in ensuring that all learners were included. The fact that Melisson always made the practice team indicates that she had the ability and talent to participate, but her talents were never nurtured or showcased and she never developed a love for sport like Daphne did. At Melisson’s school, sports participation seemed to have been optional and the teachers did not promote the inclusion of all the children in their care. One could argue that the nonchalant attitude of the teachers rubbed off on Melisson and because of that, neither her sporting talents nor a love for sport were ever developed or nurtured in her.

When I looked across the three narratives, I could see how the different schools approached the sports participation of their learners. The special schools for children with vision impairments’ approaches were different to that of the mainstream school, which (as far as we know) did not have any learners with special needs. It is also important to note that there were differences in the approaches of the special schools. It is clear that an enabling and positive school culture, combined with the encouraging and positive attitudes of teachers toward the children's sporting abilities, despite their disabilities, is needed to develop a positive disposition towards sports participation in later years.

I now move on to present the findings of the second sub-category about organisational connections and how their cultures and staff can hinder or enhance the recreational sports participation of women with vision impairments.

Sub-category 2 - Organisational connections: Their cultures and people may hinder or enhance participation

As with families and schools, other organisations that provide services to persons with disabilities also have their own cultures. These cultures are embedded in the make-up of each organisation and its people, and influence how they treat others and how they conduct their business.

Disabled People's Organisations

In Melisson's case, the foundations for and introduction to blind sport were made by a DPO in her community later in her life after she became blind due to illness. It is important to note that these foundations do not necessarily only refer to developing skills, but also to fostering a love and appreciation for sport. Even though she only joined this organisation later on in her life, it could still be seen as part of an early foundation because their intervention took place when she first started to lose her sight and therefore it was her first introduction to the world of the vision impaired. It was easy and convenient for her to participate. This organisation's culture and orientation towards sport were very positive and enabling. The organisation ensured that its members had access to all the necessary facilities to play different types of sport, and they organised the practice sessions, games, coaches, and transport. The DPO created a community around sport, which is what Melisson responded to, being part of a team.

Melisson said, "it's difficult to get the ladies to want to participate". This statement was also shared by Karla, who mentioned that she was often one of only two women who attended goalball practice sessions. In both cases, despite the fact that both the DPO and the university provided all the necessary building blocks to facilitate sports participation, both Karla and Melisson were struggling to put together women's goalball teams at their respective organisations. One could argue that, although these organisations have positive cultures and orientations towards sports, it might not be strong and specific enough to encourage participation among all their members as most of the women choose to not participate. This reluctance of women to participate could be a result of how women are socialised around sports participation in society. Another possible reason could be the fact that the teams are only limited to people who are part of the organisations, which perpetuates social exclusion.

Institutions and their cultures

After school, all three participants enrolled at tertiary institutions. During their first year at their respective institutions, all three participants did not participate in any kind of sport. In Daphne's case, although sports participation was part of the institutional set-up, it lacked that spirit of inclusion and encouragement that was present at her school. By assigning Daphne to a sport that they assumed she would be able to do, the people at the university robbed Daphne of her autonomy.

Karla was at two separate institutions, a college and a university, where she had different experiences. At the college, there was no focus on inclusion at any level, which left her, as the only blind student, completely isolated. It is unfortunate that the college did not use the opportunity to become more inclusive. Luckily, her second experience at a university was a more positive one. Here, she was not the only blind student, and this institution placed a little more emphasis on inclusion by catering for the blind and vision impaired students' sporting needs. Although it is not completely inclusive, the institution at least gave disability inclusion some thought as they included disability in the curriculum of at least one of their courses. The college that Melisson attended did not have sports or extra mural activities as part of their set-up, which meant that, at that time, the choice was made for her.

At every stage in their lives, the participants had interactions with some type of institution or organisation. At first, it was the institution of school. Here, all three participants were introduced to sport in the form of athletics. Later on, some field events were introduced, as well as netball in the case of Karla and soccer in the case of Melisson. All three participants were, at some point in time, introduced to goalball. Both Karla and Melisson stressed the fact that they did not like sport when they were at school and they both participated as little as possible. Although Daphne never said that she loved sport, her experiences of sport at school were certainly much more positive. Sports participation was embedded in the culture of Daphne's school and therefore her interaction with sports appeared to be much more positive. Because of that embedded culture, it was easy for everybody to buy in. Nobody wanted to be or ever was excluded. It is clear that the culture around sports participation was different at the schools that Karla and Melisson attended.

Next, I discuss the eye-opening role that people played as connectors and champions in the lives of the three participants, and how these champions contributed to the sports participation of each of the three participants throughout their lives.

People as champions: Opening my eyes

In the lives of the three participants, other people played significant roles in terms of their sports participation. Their stories demonstrate that different people played different roles. There were people who helped them to engage in new experiences, while others helped them to gain new insights, broaden their horizons, or see things differently. If we think back to Melisson's story, the social worker who referred her to the White Cane Society after her diagnosis and the sports coach at this organisation could be considered to be her champions. Both of these people and the new friends that she made at this DPO opened her eyes to new ideas and experiences and helped her to find strength within herself that she did not know was there.

In Karla's story, the PE teacher at her second school, her friends at university, and her colleagues were all champions in her life. Because of all these people, Karla learned to love sport again and even agreed to participate in the half ironman competition.

Daphne had many people in her life who played the role of champion. It started with her parents when they included and supported her explorations as a little girl. She is the only completely blind person that I know of who received a tricycle as a birthday gift. At school, Daphne's teachers became her champions and continued to build her foundation. There was also Nicole from the walking club who introduced her to tandem cycling, her rally driver and later motorbike partner, and the radio show listener who became her second tandem pilot. All these people were champions in Daphne's life and contributed positively to her continuous participation in sport.

As the above section demonstrates, having had the connection, support, and encouragement of all these people played a vital role in the lives of the participants as these connections helped to build their confidence and self-esteem and had many other benefits as well. All these people were part of the lives of the participants, mostly outside of sport. It is evident that despite the fact that these connections were mostly formed outside of sport, their existence eventually led to sports. The connections and interactions that the participants had with these people contributed and influenced how they accessed and approached sporting opportunities throughout their lives.

In the next section, I present the discussion of the second category, "A matter of personal choice".

4.2.2 Category 2: A matter of personal choice

This category demonstrates how each participant's personal choice and preferences played a role in the decisions they made and how these decisions impacted on their participation in sport.

The data revealed that the participants' early foundations and early experiences, positive or negative, weak or strong, shaped the inner voices that guided their choices, decisions, and personal dispositions.

Sub-category 1 – Personal disposition

Being open-minded and willing to try new things allowed the participants to gain experiences, which they could tap into each time they embarked on new challenges. The greater their level of experience, the more successful they became at navigating their way through life and, in this particular instance, sport.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2005, p. 1023), open-minded is an adjective that refers to being "willing to listen to, think about, or accept different ideas". This suggests that being open-minded means having the ability to expand the horizons of the mind and a willingness to explore new ideas and new ways of thinking and understanding. If one couples this open-mindedness with a willingness to try new things (explore new experiences and move beyond pre-existing fears), it enhances one's personal disposition towards life, which will enable one to enter new environments and face new challenges head-on. This willingness to expand one's thinking and experience, despite fears and perceived physical limitations, was demonstrated to varying degrees in the participants' early life experiences. It is evident from Daphne's narrative that there may be a connection between being allowed to explore and experience different activities during the early years and being more adventurous and willing to try different activities in their later years.

An open-minded personal disposition is especially evident in Daphne's case. Ever since she was a young child, Daphne had a fascination with speed that was formed during her early years, when her dad gave her a tricycle as a birthday gift. With that one gesture, Daphne's father opened so many doors for her. She said that her love for speed was born then. I believe that it was not just the speed that she found exhilarating, but the feeling of freedom too. Daphne's positive early foundations at home and at school played an important role in how she approached any sporting opportunities that came later in her life. Despite any concerns or fears she might have had, she always approached every opportunity with an open mind and a willing spirit.

For Melisson, she seemed to have developed her open-mindedness a bit later in life. Melisson's initial disposition towards sport was not a positive one. She made this clear, in the beginning of her story, that it was from a very young age. After she became blind, she lost her independence and her sense of purpose. She attended a DPO that assists blind people. She had no idea what to expect or what she, as a newly blind person, was capable of. Despite her predisposition towards sport, when she was presented with the opportunity to participate in sport, she accepted the challenge. Her choice was made easier because she did not have to worry about the facilities, equipment, training, or transport. Once at the organisation, a new world with new possibilities opened up to her. She discovered her own strength and a willingness to learn and discover new activities. She opened herself up to new experiences, one of which was sport. She was open-minded and willing to try new things, and she discovered that she actually liked sport after all. She discovered new types of sports and new ways of participating in sport, and she enjoyed it. Melisson said that playing goalball “changed my thinking around sport”.

Unlike Melisson, who was introduced to blind sport later in life, Karla was familiar with playing sports as a blind adult because she was born with a vision impairment. As a young child and throughout her teenage years, her disposition towards sport was not a positive one. She also did not think of herself as a sporty person but during her time at university, when her friends prompted her to join their goalball team, and again when her work colleagues challenged her to become part of their team to compete in a half ironman competition, she agreed. There was much uncertainty about the half ironman competition, and she had significant fear because she knew that her experience was lacking. But she was willing to acquire new skills and practice so that she could make a valuable contribution to her team’s efforts and, in doing so, she expanded her own horizons.

Daphne’s disposition to sport has always been a positive one. In both Melisson and Karla’s cases, their early foundations toward sport were minimal in terms of their families' involvement and the role that their schools as institutions played. Although this was the case, I argue that the fact that they had at least some form of introduction to sport contributed positively to their personal disposition towards sport in their adult years. Furthermore, a person’s foundations in sport might be different but are needed to solidify their interest in and love for sport. When those foundations are laid early on and in a deep way, there appears to be potential for an ongoing and deep connection to sports, as evidenced by this statement from Daphne: “I guess the love for sport and participation that was nurtured at school when I was a child really stuck with me throughout”. The categories and sub-categories discussed above demonstrate the interconnection between sport and life and vice versa, that is, that one cannot have the one without the other.

In the next section, I discuss the overarching theme.

4.2.3 Overarching theme

SPORT AND LIFE AS INTERCONNECTING CIRCLES

The findings revealed that having had people as champions throughout their lifespans and having strong early foundations were critical influences in how these three participants accessed opportunities to participate in different types of sports in their adult years. This theme describes the relationship between the categories and sub-categories described previously to illustrate that participation in everyday life and participation in sport share an intimate and interlinked connection.

If you examine the three stories in conversation with one another, it is evident that the more connections one has to other people, the more successful one’s navigational skills become. Central to this success is a person’s early foundations, that is, family support and the encouragement of teachers. If those early foundations are laid strong and properly, it boosts the confidence and self-esteem that foster a person’s willingness to explore and experience without hesitation. The three narratives demonstrate the various ways in which participants may navigate their participation in sport. Successful navigation of sports is dependent on how the participants are included in other spheres of everyday life.

For Melisson, her opportunity for sports participation came during the darkest time in her life. It is important to note that in order for young women with vision impairments to participate in sport, they need to be participating in life. It was through the participants’ participation in life that opportunities to participate in sports arose or were created.

In the case of Daphne, her parents socialised her in a way that was different from the dominant approach experienced by children with disabilities., so what we see in her story is the positive benefits of that presence. What her story suggests is that when this socialisation was present, it was a positive influencer. It shaped her disposition and made a huge difference to how she navigated life and, especially, her participation in sport. It is important to note that it is impossible to separate these two things (participation in life and participation in sports) out and make one more important than the other because they are both interconnected and influence one another.

When you are vision impaired, participating in anything poses a certain level of challenge. This theme revealed that in order to successfully participate in sport when you are vision impaired, you need to make the right connections with the right people in the right places, you need to be open-minded and adventurous, and you need to have had a positive introduction to sport as early in your life as possible.

4.3 Conclusion

Although the level of active participation in recreational sport has taken on different forms more recently in the lives of the three participants, it is clear that their early foundations in terms of family culture and support and the roles that their different schools played had an impact on how they navigated their participation in sport throughout their lives. Having a supportive family culture that encouraged the safe exploration of various everyday activities laid strong foundations to foster a positive disposition and appreciation towards sports participation throughout life for the participants.

In comparison to Daphne, Karla and Melisson did not have strong early foundations and they seem more reserved and not as self-assured, and therefore their participation seems to have been more staggered. Melisson and Karla’s efforts have been limited to fewer types of sports than Daphne.

The life stories of these three vision impaired women demonstrate that there is an interconnection between everyday life and sport. It is clear from the three stories that strong early foundations in terms of participation in life leads to more successful and continuous participation in sport throughout life.

I further deduced that the culture around participation within their family and the institutions (schools, colleges, universities, and DPOs) that provide services to vision impaired people played an equally important role in promoting the sports participation of these women. The institutional cultures of such places around people, especially women, with vision impairments and their participation in sport play an important role in enabling and facilitating sports participation. In this instance, the attitudes of staff towards children, students, and members with disabilities and towards their abilities to participate have to be positive and encouraging. The policies of such institutions have to make provision for the inclusion of people with vision impairments.

As the narratives of the three participants demonstrated, being included in all aspects of life can eventually lead to participation in recreational sports. The participants’ stories show that, through living life, opportunities for participation in sport can be created, which was evident when they were at school, university, and work.

My discussion of the findings follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the single overarching theme, “Sport and life as interconnecting circles”, that was developed during the second level of the analysis process. The factors that shape how young women with vision impairments navigate their participation in recreational sports are identified and explained. I would like to caution the reader to remember that narrative is a whole, and therefore not to only think about the factors in isolation but to think about them in the context of the whole stories that were presented in Part 1 of Chapter 4.

There are three ideas that emerged as prominent in shaping the recreational journeys of the vision impaired women in this study. These ideas explain why the theme is constructed the way it is. The first idea encompasses the socialisation of women with vision impairments and how this might relate to their navigating participation in recreational sport. The second idea relates to the presence of people as social champions that contribute to enabling the women’s participation in sports. The third idea relates to encouraging the women’s participation in recreational sports and, to make this possible, ensuring that social inclusion means inclusion in all aspects of life.

I will discuss each of these factors in turn, below.

5.1 The socialisation of disabled women who are vision impaired

The way we have been socialised and taught to think about disability is in relation to our system of capitalism, which comes from a colonial administration where we want people who are good workers and who can contribute to the economy (Neal, 2018). Neal is of the opinion that persons with disabilities are socialised to believe that they are not assets and that the impairment that they experience in their bodies constitutes ‘all of them’ and not just one part of their lives.

The way we behave and interact with people, especially those who are different from ourselves, is directly linked to how we were socialised. Harro (2000), through his illustration of the ‘cycle of socialisation’, describes our socialisation as the product of a number of different aspects. Parts of those aspects are the ideologies that are inherent within the families, institutions, and systems that we belong to.

Those systems have a historical foundation which links back to slavery and colonialism and how disabled people are thought about in terms of their own worth and contribution (Neal, 2018). This is well demonstrated by McConkey's (2016) commentary on disability and sports participation, which highlighted the adverse impact that the negative attitudes of health professionals have on the disability community. It is important to note that, in some cases, women with vision impairments do not participate in sport because of major health issues. Therefore, it is not always a matter of them not wanting to participate but rather that they cannot.

According to Harro’s (2000) cycle of socialisation, our families, teachers, institutions, experiences, cultures, and traditions shape and influence our worldview and how we act and interact within the world. We are born into a pre-existing, pre-established cycle of norms, cultures, and traditions that, according to our race, gender, religion, and ability, among other things, is perpetuated by fear, ignorance, confusion, and insecurity.

Those people who identify as women, including those with disabilities, are socialised to think of themselves and their place and role in society in a certain way (Harro, 2000). It is non-disabled, white men from middle- and upper-class societies who benefit most from the capitalist system (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). For women with disabilities, however, the intersections of their disability, gender, race, and socio-economic status increase their exclusion from many rights and participation places and platforms because they experience higher levels of discrimination (Meekosha & Dowse, 1997; Devine et al., 2017).

While the cycle of socialisation demonstrates how thinking about certain ‘identities’ can become entrenched and trap people within a particular experience of life, Harro (2000) also asserts that the cycle can be broken at any stage. This breakage is clearly demonstrated in Daphne’s story in Chapter 4. As a child, Daphne was socialised in a completely different way to what is considered the norm for vision impaired children. According to the norm, vision impaired children do not get tricycles as birthday gifts and they do not ride bicycles by themselves like Daphne did. Her parents allowed her to explore freely, and they included her in all aspects of life. Her parents broke the cycle and, by doing so, the core of

Daphne’s socialisation cycle was completely changed, allowing her to develop confidence, trust, and a sense of adventure. These are skills that she could and did apply later in her life to advocate for herself, like she did at university, promoting her participation across life and facilitating her social inclusion. These are skills that Melisson and Karla and most other vision impaired children only acquire much later in life, according to the way in which they are usually socialised. In the study, there is a distinct difference in how the vision impaired children were treated compared to the non-vision impaired children, in terms of participation expectations by the PE teachers (Haegele et al., 2018). The children with vision impairments did not participate on the same level as their peers so they were socialised to believe that they cannot or should not participate in sports, while their peers are socialised to compete and even excel in sports. In other words, all the skills (practical, psychological, and social) that sighted children acquire from their participation in sports are skills that most vision impaired people only acquire much later in life. Harro’s cycle helps us to understand that they were socialised in a way that perpetuated fear, ignorance, confusion, and insecurity (Harro, 2000). By breaking Daphne’s cycle, her parents prevented internalised oppression from taking root. Daphne’s story is a perfect example of what could be possible for people with vision impairments if they are socialised to believe in themselves and their abilities, and if they are allowed to participate instead of sitting on the side-lines.

In the following section, I will discuss the idea of decoloniality as a tool to break the cycle of colonial socialisation.

Decoloniality as a tool for breaking the perpetuated cycle of socialisation

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2015) essay, coloniality is the result of colonialism and refers to how we (Africans and other colonised people) have been indoctrinated by our European and American colonisers in terms of race, gender, religion, and disability, to name a few. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) posits that our ontologies and epistemologies are heavily influenced by our colonial socialisation. Initially Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) and some of the earlier decoloniality proponents did not specifically discuss disability in their writings (their focus was more on issues of race, gender and so on), but there has always been talk about “the wretched of the earth" (Fanon, 1963), which refers to those who do not fit the colonial mould in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and religious beliefs. The implication is there that disability is included on the list of "the wretched" and that our understanding of disability, just like the other categories, is constructed and heavily influenced by our colonial past. Coloniality's influence on the construction of identities affects how we, people in society (with and without disabilities), perceive disability and how we interact with it. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 493) believes that we have to unhinge our minds and allow for "decoloniality of our minds" (like Daphne's parents demonstrated) to unlearn the deep-rooted influences of our colonial socialisation. In recent years, works by Dirth & Adams, (2019) and Steyn & Mpofu (2021), have more overtly included disability in their writings on decoloniality.

I agree that we should break the outdated ideologies of coloniality, which we could do by supporting Neal's (2018, p. 1) call for an "embedded decoloniality". According to Neal, the current concept of decoloniality is "broken" because it does not include disability as part of its agenda. An "embedded decoloniality", by its very name, implies that all aspects of discrimination that are rooted in coloniality are included in the ongoing argument for decoloniality to change how we think of people who are different to ourselves.

We, disabled and non-disabled people, have all internalised those oppressive ideologies and are consciously and unconsciously passing them on through generations. This socialisation is of critical significance as it links back to the sub-category of Early Foundations in Chapter 4 and what happens in childhood, specifically in Daphne's case. The breaking of the cycle of socialisation can be so powerful as it stops that negative way of thinking from taking root by seeing the agency and capacity of people (in this instance, women with vision impairments) as opposed to the colonial way of looking at people and judging their worth by if and how much they can contribute to society. The core of Harro's (2000) cycle is usually re-enforced by fear, ignorance, confusion, and insecurity. Towards the end of Harro's cycle of socialisation, there is a breakage that can sometimes take place, which then stops the continuing perpetuation of the cycle (Harro, 2000). In Daphne's case (whose participation in sport has been the most consistent), when that breakage took place, it then interrupted and positively influenced the trajectory of her life and her participation in sport. Daphne’s core was instead constructed and re-enforced with positive cornerstones. For Daphne, this positive re-enforcement continued at an organisational level as well because her school continued to prioritise sport and to promote inclusion through sports participation for all.

What we can learn from this is that the way we socialise women with vision impairments has a profound influence on whether sport can become embedded in their lives or not. Daphne’s parents, especially her father, demonstrated an “embedded decolonial mindset” in the way they socialised her as a girl child with vision impairment.

What the decolonial thinking and theory helps us to do is to expose what are taken-for-granted ways about socialising people with disabilities with respect to sports participation. For instance, as was illustrated in Chapter 4, we do not expect vision impaired women to do the ironman competition and we therefore socialise these women as if these forms of participation are neither expected of nor desirable for them.

The thematic analysis revealed the ways that early foundations and institutions play critical roles in the socialisation of young women with vision impairments, and that these had the power to develop decolonial ways of thinking and acting. Those who operate in and control such contexts mediate the opportunities being created and made available with respect to recreational sports participation for women with vision impairments. This begs the question: what are institutions (such as schools, colleges, universities, DPOs, and NGOs doing in terms of their institutional policies and cultures? How could they, and society at large, embrace an “embedded decolonial mind-set” which could contribute to a process of socialisation that makes it possible for women with vision impairments to both imagine and take up a future in which recreational sports plays a part?

We are either punished for rejecting or rewarded for conforming to the cycle of socialisation (Harro, 2000), and most of society, therefore, generally stays very close to colonial understandings of how women with vision impairment should participate in recreational sports, without questioning the status quo. However, the theme also revealed that there does appear to be avenues for ‘breaking’ the cycle of socialisation, even if this does not happen at an early age. As was illustrated in sub-category 2, under the heading, People as champions, social champions contributed to breaking the cycle and challenging the status quo, and in doing so, they made valuable and life-changing impacts on the lives of the participants in this study.

In the following section, I discuss the concept of people as champions and how we might consider the roles that they played in the sports participation of the participants.

5.2 The contribution of people as social champions

The links that made the strong interconnection between life and sport possible were revealed as the people that were embedded simultaneously in both the lives of the participants and in their sporting activities. In Chapter 4, we saw that the participants accessed sporting opportunities through their connections and connectors. Connections refer to affiliations with and/or memberships of institutions and organisations, while connectors refer to people. Peters, Galvaan, and Kathard (2016) introduced the idea of ‘champions’, which they define as individuals who believe in the abilities and potential for participation of others and who assist these people with accessing and navigating this participation. This term is a fitting description for the people who have played supporting, facilitating roles in the lives of the participants in this study.

However, in the study by Peters et al. (2016) they focused on the occupational participation of men who had dropped out of school and the participation referred mostly to the employment histories of these men. For me, ‘occupational participation’ refers to a formal context because it was related to the professional engagements of the participants, and the champions facilitated access to and participation in work for these participants. In my study, the context is recreational sports participation, which is a less formal, more social setting. I would therefore like to expand Peters et al.’s (2016) concept of champions and introduce the idea of various kinds of champions, depending on the different contexts that they operate in. I believe that social champions are a more fitting term to describe the people who have facilitated and supported the participants in this study to access and navigate their continued participation in recreational sports.

The attitudes of the social champions towards the participants were positive, motivating, and inclusive. The first people that the participants encountered were their family members and, thereafter, their teachers and other children at school. At school and all through life, they made connections with new people. These connections became significant as these people became social champions in various aspects of their lives, including their participation in sports.

The attitudes of people in society toward people with vision impairments have been shown to play a pertinent role in their sporting navigation process (Ajuwon, et al., 2015; McConkey, 2016; Wright & Titus, 2013). All three narratives of the participants, recorded in Chapter 4 of this study, confirm this pertinent role. The positive attitudes of the social champions never positioned the vision impaired participants as ‘poor disabled people’. The social champions saw the strengths and agency of the participants instead of looking at the deficits and limitations of their bodies. In other words, the social champions demonstrated a decolonial mindset.

The findings of this study echo the findings of the study by Wright and Titus (2013) which showed that the attitudes of people with vision impairments (men and women) towards sports participation are strongly influenced by those who first introduced them to it. In studies conducted with vision impaired participants in the US, Spain, and South Africa, (P. Ponchillia, et al., 2002; Reina & Ruiz, 2016; Wright & Titus, 2013) respectively, the authors concluded that people with vision impairments who participated in PE classes while at school were more likely to participate in sports in later years if their introduction and participation at school were positive. This finding is confirmed in this study by Daphne’s story. It is also evident from Karla and especially Melisson’s narratives that it is possible for people with vision impairments to start participating in sport later in life.

The aforementioned narratives showcase the importance of a longitudinal approach to supporting participation in sport. In other words, we should not just pay attention to participation in one stage or phase of life, but rather adopt a longitudinal approach to participation in sports for women with vision impairments. The connections and interactions with the social champions encouraged and enabled the women's sports participation and enhanced their social inclusion (Hall, 2009).

Next, I discuss the importance of social inclusion of women with vision impairments in order to ensure that participation in recreational sports is successfully navigated.

5.3 The importance of social inclusion of women with vision impairments

Social inclusion is defined by the UN (2016., p. 17) as "… the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights". In this section, I will demonstrate the importance of social inclusion for enhancing participation in sports in the lives of the participants.

5.3.1 Participation in life shapes participation in sport and vice versa

The findings presented in Chapter 4 revealed that for participation to be successful, there needs to be a strongly defined interconnection between life and sport. This interconnection is ongoing and spans from early childhood into adulthood. For the participants of this study, these interconnections referred to the particular ways in which important aspects of their everyday lives (such as family life, school or university, where they play and work, and who they meet and socialise with) influenced, impacted on, and determined their opportunities and exposure to sporting activities throughout their lives.

When there was social exclusion, such as in Karla's case (at the college), no sports participation took place and the social exclusion eventually led to self-exclusion. Hall (2009) argues that social exclusion is regularly encountered by persons with disabilities and is experienced through avoidance, verbal taunts, physical abuse, discrimination, and indifference (Hall, 2009). Persons with disabilities often use self-exclusion to avoid these barriers and negative experiences (Hall, 2009). When comparing the adult sports participation of the three participants in Chapter 4, it was clear that when there was social inclusion first, the sports participation flowed more easily from that.

In terms of school and university, it is clear from the three narratives how the participants' affiliations to the various institutions with their different institutional cultures influenced, in specific ways, if and how these participants experienced and participated in sporting activities. Institutional culture refers to the attitudes of the staff members with regards to sports participation and the abilities of the participants. This culture also refers to how much value people at these institutions attach to the sports participation of women with vision impairments.

The data further revealed an interconnection between work and sport, which was evident in Daphne and Karla's stories (Chapter 4). The opportunities to participate in sport led to other opportunities in life such as employment and, for Karla (Chapter 4), wanting to create awareness about barriers and opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate. These interconnections between life and sport demonstrate the importance of the social inclusion of persons with disabilities in all areas of life.

The social champions (referred to in the previous section of this discussion) helped to expand the participants' social networks and, by including the participants, the social champions introduced them to new experiences. The social champions often assisted them in some way to navigate their participation in sports at various stages of their lives. The social champions became pertinent role players in the participants' lives because they allowed the participants to participate alongside them, not focusing on their limitations. By doing this, the social champions engaged with the women as equals, amplifying their 'voices' and opportunities. In these instances, they were not seen as needing help but rather as valuable contributors.

The findings of this study propose that we need to rethink how we approach, offer, think, and write about sports participation of women with vision impairments. In the literature review (Chapter 2), it is obvious that there are disparities between the sports participation of women and men with vision impairments (Haegele et al., 2016), and that people and children with vision impairments are generally less physically active than their peers without impairments (Haegele, Aigner, & Healy, 2018).

There is so much focus on these disparities and the lack of physical ability of people with vision impairments that the social aspect of just being included in everyday activities is mostly overlooked. The focus needs to shift to enhance the social inclusion of people with vision impairments so that opportunities for participation in recreational sports evolves organically.

Thinking about sports participation as integrated means that we cannot only give our attention to enhancing sports participation using a siloed approach. Rather, we have to think about the social inclusion of vision impaired women as a whole, promoting their participation across all areas of life. We need to pay attention to that in the kinds of programmes, opportunities, and offerings that are provided in order to influence or shape the social inclusion of women with vision impairments.

5.3.2 When sport is embedded in life, navigation of barriers becomes possible

I have to acknowledge that barriers to participation were mentioned by the participants. Although barriers are not the focus of this study, including them is important to illustrate how the participants successfully navigated their way around them because of the way that sport was embedded in each of their lives. Although the focus in this particular section is on the barriers faced by the women, I have included the social champions (see Chapter 4) in the discussion because they assisted the women to navigate some of those barriers.

All three participants specifically made mention of the issue of transport. In Part 1 of Chapter 4, Melisson’s story demonstrates the negative impact transport issues had even on her parents’ sports participation. In her case, the DPO where she was a member provided transport to her and all the other team members to get to practice sessions and games. When Karla had transport issues getting to work and to goalball practice, a neighbour stepped in and became her social champion by providing her with transport. She eventually moved closer to work where she also had the goalball practice sessions, so transport was no longer an issue. In

Part 1 of Chapter 4, we see that even in her work, Karla was finding that transport is a major reason why women, especially, are not participating in sports as much as they could or would like to. When Daphne had transport issues her father, her friends, and her tandem pilots helped her to get around.

Another barrier was the fact that there are not enough women with vision impairments who participate in sport, especially blind-specific sports such as goalball and blind cricket. Both Melisson and Karla commented on how this had a negative impact on their own participation (Chapter 4). In this instance, Karla, through her work, is trying to change the status quo through outreach programmes, awareness campaigns, and partnerships with non-disabled people.

A third barrier is the financial cost of participation in sport, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Karla also spoke about how expensive a tandem bike is and how she was waiting for a sponsored bike to practice for and participate in the half ironman competition. Daphne explained that sometimes her pilots (in motorbike racing and tandem cycling) paid her entry fees, and at other times they were sponsored. Here, the interventions of the social champions were quite significant as they allowed her to participate. In this instance, Melisson's experience was different because of her membership of the DPO, as they provided her with everything she needed to participate in her chosen sport.

A study in the Netherlands, with male and female participants, by Jaarsma et al. (2014) revealed these same and other environmental barriers to participation, such as transport problems, limited participation possibilities in the participants' neighbourhoods, no friends to exercise with, the cost of sports activities and equipment, and no qualified supervision. In other studies in the USA, by Ward et al. (2011) and Ryan et al. (2014) respectively, the authors found that inadequate parental interest and support led to limited information about available community activities, social isolation, limited organised sporting activities, limited funding, and insufficient knowledge and programmes (inclusion of people with disabilities). These, along with the presence of a disability, were reported by people with vision impairments as factors that influenced their participation.

While the participants in this study experienced similar barriers (to the ones mentioned in Chapter 2), the presence and support of social champions throughout their lives mitigated the negatives which, in turn, enabled them to participate in their chosen sports. Paying attention to the mitigation of these barriers through the kinds of inclusion referred to in the previous section of this discussion therefore becomes critical. Similarly, barriers to participation were acknowledged in previous studies on the sports participation of people with vision impairments.

This social inclusion showed that, because of the way in which sport was embedded in these women’s lives and not seen as separate, they were able to successfully navigate barriers. They were not free from barriers, but their navigation of the barriers was possible because of the strong interconnection and embeddedness of sport in their lives as one thing that they did among many others. If we think about sport and life as fundamentally connected, then the navigation of barriers that prevents participation becomes a possibility.

5.4 Conclusion

Sport and life have been shown to be interconnected through the discussion of the overarching theme that emerged in this study. This discussion has highlighted that the socialisation of women with vision impairments when they are young plays a significant role in how they see themselves and how they interact and participate in the world. Social champions (parents, teachers, and other members of society) play an important role in breaking the oppression of women with vision impairments that often comes about as a result of the cycle of socialisation. These social champions are instrumental in enabling and enhancing the sports participation of women with vision impairments. They also play a crucial role in facilitating the social inclusion of these women.

Social inclusion is not about participation in just one arena; we have to think about social inclusion as a whole across all the different participation areas and aspects of life, and if we do this holistically, then recreational sports participation will emerge organically. Natural participation in sport also links back to and supports social inclusion, which in turn leads to other opportunities, highlighting the importance of the reciprocal relationship.

When sports participation is an integrated aspect of life, it results in vision impaired women being able to navigate barriers and their participation more easily in both aspects. We have to adopt an “embedded decolonial mindset” to break the capitalist, colonial way of thinking about persons with disabilities and their worth and place in society. Doing so would result in their free(er) participation in desired areas, such as recreational sports.

Chapter 6: LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Recommendations

6.1.1 Recommendations for schools

This study revealed the important role that schools played in the socialisation of young children in terms of fostering a positive attitude towards sports participation. The study, just like some others (McConkey, 2016; Wright & Titus, 2013), revealed that children who participate in PE are more likely to participate in sports as adults. With this in mind, I would recommend that special needs schools should continue with PE classes and should ensure that the attitudes of the PE teachers are positive and encouraging. I also recommend that special needs schools should, where possible, collaborate with local sports clubs to create inclusive sports programmes that could benefit learners after they leave school. Such programmes would have benefits to the young people who have completed school in keeping them fit and assisting them in their transitioning into adulthood.

6.1.2 Recommendations for Government

Persons with disabilities should be involved in the development of sports programmes in terms of how they want to participate. This refers to their sports participation and to opportunities to become coaches and match officials (Devine et al., 2017).

Government should allow for and create opportunities for persons with disabilities to interact with their communities in social settings. As was shown in Chapters 4 and 5, the social interactions with people in different spheres of life organically led to the sports participation of the women in this study. For women with vision impairments to participate in sports, they need to rely on other people to make that happen. Creating opportunities to interact with other people would allow women with vision impairments to build and grow their social networks, meaning that they would have a bigger pool of people to rely on for assistance and support.

6.1.3 Recommendations for DPOs/NGOs and institutions that provide programmes and services to persons with disabilities

DPOs/NGOs and institutions should include their members with disabilities in any plans regarding their participation in sports and recreation programmes and events. They should create opportunities (such as volunteer programmes) to promote social inclusion by allowing interaction between their members with disabilities and those without.

Institutions of higher learning should endeavour to create programmes and courses to teach and train coaches, PE teachers, and personal trainers on how to include persons with disabilities in their training programmes and classes. Similarly, by including women with vision impairments in other areas of life, such as work, religious gatherings, and educational spaces, would lead to their sports participation, as was shown by the findings of this study.

6.1.4 Recommendations for community sports clubs

None of the participants in this study belonged to a mainstream community sports club, and during my recruitment process, none of the community sports clubs that I approached had any suitable members. It seems that community sports clubs do not realise that they have a pertinent role to play in facilitating the sports participation and social inclusion of women with vision impairments and persons with disabilities in general.

Community sports clubs should adopt an inclusive approach to sports participation. Instead of including members of DPOs and NGOs in one event per year, sports clubs should include women with vision impairments throughout the year. Ideally, there should be an ongoing relationship between schools, organisations/institutions, and community sports clubs, where they all work together to ensure that women with vision impairments are not excluded from sports participation once they leave school.

Community sports clubs should include persons with disabilities in the planning phase when working on new programmes to ensure that such programmes are inclusive and cater for the various special needs of persons with disabilities. Sports clubs should develop programmes and, where possible, build facilities that enhance the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. This would change the negative perceptions about the capabilities of persons with disabilities and promote understanding.

Although some of these recommendations refer specifically to women with vision impairments, they apply to persons with other disabilities as well.

6.1.5 Recommendations for further research

This study briefly touched on the importance of family on the continued sports participation of a child with vision impairment, even into adulthood. The scope of this study was limited to exploring what made the participation possible. Further studies could explore how siblings or other extended family members impact and influence the sports participation of their family member with vision impairments.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I was struggling to find suitable participants for this study. This difficulty would suggest that the available opportunities for sports participation of women with vision impairments requires more attention in terms of the availability of opportunities to participate in sporting activities. A larger scale study to determine the available mainstream sporting opportunities for women with vision impairments, would be valuable.

6.2 Limitations

This study employed narrative inquiry as the chosen methodology to explore the phenomenon. This meant that participants had to rely on memories to reconstruct their life stories, focusing on sports participation. Relying on memory could be seen as a limitation as memories are often influenced by feelings and therefore could influence the accuracy of the stories. However, I do not think that the accuracy of these stories was influenced in this way because sharing the stories held no negative consequences and posed no risks for the participants.

The number of participants I selected was appropriate for the selected research design and my intention therefore was not to generalize to all women with vision impairments across an array of settings. Although the participants shared some aspects of their social identities that were similar, their stories offered diversity in terms of the ways in which they navigated their participation in sports. Despite this, I acknowledge that what is generated here is only one interpretation and there would potentially be many different other interpretations.

6.3 Strengths

The significance of this study to the scientific community and to society, especially in the South African context, is that it adds knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of women with vision impairments. Narrative inquiry as a methodology adds depth to our understanding of the navigation of recreational sports participation by women with vision impairments, and I was looking at this phenomenon from a positive standpoint, that is, focusing on those who have been able to do that and learning directly from them. Even though I did not have participants with completely diverse identities, I had diverse stories and different stories about navigating participation in sports.

6.4 Hopes for this research

It is my hope that the knowledge that this study has generated will aid in the broadening of peoples' mind-sets about the willingness and abilities of women with vision impairments to participate in recreational sports. The creation of programmes (sport and social) in schools and communities would serve to promote and enhance the inclusion of people with disabilities, including those with vision impairments. The Government should, as per the National Youth Policy 2020-2030 (National Youth Policy, 2020-2030), honour its proposed commitment towards creating opportunities for sport and recreational participation for all young people of South Africa, including those with disabilities. Government and major corporates could provide the necessary support to DPO's and NGO's that would enable them to develop and maintain programmes that would enhance the participation in recreational sports and other activities of young women with vision impairments. Further, it would be helpful if local sports clubs became more inclusive by actively encouraging people with disabilities to join them as they create programmes that cater for those with disabilities. To conclude, I am optimistic that this would be the first of many studies on this phenomenon to allow the development of society that actively creates spaces where people, especially women with disabilities, can enjoy the same freedom of choice with regards to their participation in sports.

6.5 Conclusion

The WHO (2001) advocates for the inclusion of physical activities into our daily routines to maintain healthy bodies and minds. It is a well-established fact that people with vision impairments generally lead sedentary lifestyles and so are at risk of developing obesity and many other illnesses related to being overweight (Ryan et al., 2014). However, there are people with vision impairments all over the world who participate in sports. Understanding how these people navigate their participation in sports is an important endeavour if we are to develop insights to promote the participation in recreational sports of vision impaired people in society. This study therefore aimed to explore how young women with vision impairments navigate their sports participation in recreational sports. The voices of this group, in terms of their experiences of navigating their sports participation, have not been heard before, not from an African perspective.

A qualitative narrative inquiry was employed for this exploration. Participation referred to the women having physically and actively partaken in any type of sport themselves during the course of their lives, not to them sitting on the side-lines cheering others on. The data was gathered from topical life stories, which were subjected to a rigorous, multi-layered analytic process which uncovered one overarching theme, namely ‘Sport and life as interconnecting circles’.

Three critical factors were identified as shaping this overarching theme. The first factor was that the socialisation of the women with vision impairments positively affected how they navigated their participation. The second factor revealed that the presence of social champions throughout the lives of these women enabled their social inclusion and played an important role in how opportunities to participate were presented to and navigated positively by them. The third factor highlighted the importance of social inclusion of the women with vision impairments in all areas of everyday life, which then automatically and naturally led to their participation in sports.

The narratives revealed that there is a definite interconnection between everyday life and sport. As such, families, schools, DPOs/NGOs, and institutions all play a role in facilitating the inclusion and participation of women with vision impairments in sports and everyday life activities. At the heart of this facilitation lie social champions. Social champions must have the right attitudes as they see the capabilities of the women with vision impairments and focus on those instead of on the limitations of their senses or their bodies. This study revealed that having the right equipment and facilities are good, but it is more important to have the right people to participate with or to facilitate the participation of women with vision impairments. This study has highlighted the importance of the women's interactions with other people in social settings and how such interactions lead to the sports participation of their own choice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Guiding question

If you were to tell the story of your participating in sport, where will you want to start?

As jy die storie van jou deelname aan sport moet vertel, waar sou jy begin?

Prompting questions

Tell me when and how you started to participate in sports?
Vertel my hoe en wanneer jy aan sport begin deel neem het?

Did you participate in sport as at school?
Het jy op skool aan sport deelgeneem?

What made it possible for you to participate?”
Wat maak dit vir jou moontlik om aan sport deel te neem?

How did you choose the type of sport/s that you are participating in?
Hoe het jy besluit watter tipe sport om te beoefen?

Affirm Advocate Account

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Appendix B

ENGLISH INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

My name is Delicia De Vos. I am a Masters' student in the field of Disability Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). My research project is titled; “Exploring how young women with visual impairment navigate their participation in recreational sport.”

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to gather first-hand experiences of how young women with visual impairments deal with and overcome the challenges of participating in recreational sport. This information will shed light on and enhance people’s understanding of what it is like to participate in sport as a visually impaired person.

Ethics

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the University of Cape Town. Professor Marc Blockman is the Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee. You can contact him at (021) 406 6492 if you will like more information on the approval of this study.

Selection of participants

I am interviewing women between the ages of 18 and 35, who are blind or visually impaired, who participate in sport.

Participation in the study

In order to be part of this study you will need to attend two (2) x 90minute interview sessions where you will tell the story of your life and how you manage to participate in sport. There might be a third follow-up interview of about 45 minutes if I need to clarify any information or ask any follow-up questions. We will decide on a suitable interview venue (that is close to you, where you feel comfortable) and time together. Your interviews will be audio taped, if you do not wish to be recorded, then you unfortunately cannot participate in this study. Once the interviews have been written up you will have an opportunity to look at it or have it read to you. You can then make any changes if you wish to do so.

There will be no payment in exchange for participation in this study.

Potential risks

I will do everything I can to protect the identity of each participant, but it may be possible for those people who are familiar with your story to know who you are.

Benefits to participation in the study

There are no financial benefits to participating in this study, but sharing your story might be of an emotional benefit to you. Other people who have taken part in similar studies have found it, a pleasant experience. You may also find the sharing of your story, a pleasant experience.

Voluntary participation

You are under no obligation to participate in the study, and may withdraw at any point if they so wish. There will be no penalties or negative consequences for refusal to participate or withdrawal from the study. Participation in this study will not affect the relationships that you have with DPO’s or any other organisations that provide services to the blind and visually impaired.

Confidentiality

All data collected from you will be kept confidential and anonymous. This will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms. All data will be stored by me, in a locked cabinet that only I will have access to. Anything you tell me in the interviews will not be shared with anyone else.

Dissemination

The information that this study will generate will be shared with the University of Cape Town, it will be presented at relevant conferences and with relevant undergraduate student groups. At the end of the study, your story will be presented to you in a bound copy.

Data management

The audio recordings and anonymised, transcribed data will be kept for five years. Thereafter, the electronic and audio files will be wiped and the devices will be re-formatted.

Contacts for further information

Researcher's contact details:
Email: devosd@cput.ac.za
Cell: 083 107 7994
(021) 460 9071

I will be supervised by Professor Theresa Lorenzo (021) 406 6326 and co-supervised by Mrs. Liesl Peters (021) 650 4929. They are both lecturers at the University of Cape Town. You are welcome to contact them if you have any questions for them.

Do you have any questions with regards to the proposed study?

If you agree to participate in this study, please fill in the consent form.

Affirm Advocate Account

Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Faculty of Health Sciences
F45 Old Main Building, Groote Schuur Hospital,
Observatory 7925
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5350
Internet: www.dhrs.uct.ac.za

Appendix C

AFRIKAANSE INLIGTINGSBLADSY

Inleiding

My naam is Delicia De Vos. Ek is ‘n Meesters student in die veld van “Disability Studies” aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad. My navorsingsprojek is getiteld: “Ondersoek hoe jong vroue met visuele gestremdhede hul deelname aan ontspanningsport bewerkstellig”.

Doel van die studie

Die doel van hierdie studie is om eerstehandse inligting te bekom van hoe jong vroue met gesigsgestremdhede die uitdagings van deelname aan sport ondervind en hoe hulle dit oorkom.

Etiek

Hierdie navorsingsprojek is goedgekeur deur die Navorsingsetiek Kommittee van die Universiteit van Kaapstad. Professor Marc Blockman is die voorsitter van hierdie kommittee en mag gekontak word by (021) 406 6492 indien u verdere inligting oor die goedkeuring van hierdie projek verlang.

Kies van deelnemers

Ek wil onderhoude voer met vroue tussen die ouderdomme van 18 en 35, wat blind of gesiggestremd is en aan sport deelneem.

Deelname aan die studie

Vir deelname aan hierdie studies sal u beskikbaar moet wees vir twee (2) onderhoudsessies van 90minute elk. Tydens hierdie sessies sal u u lewensverhaal en ondervindinge van deelname aan sport met my deel. Daar mag moontlik ‘n derde opvolg onderhoud van 45 minute verlang word indien ek enige verdere vrae het of inligting benodig. Ons sal saam besluit oor ‘n geskikte plek (naby aan u waar u gemaklik is) en tye vir die onderhoude. Die onderhoude sal opgeneem word. Indien u nie opgeneem wil word nie sal u ongelukkig nie aan hierdie studie kan deelneem nie. Sodra die onderhoude uitgetik is sal u die geleentheid kry om dit saam met my deur te gaan en kan u enige veranderinge aanbring as u so verkies.

Daar is geen vergoeding verbonde aan deelname aan hierdie studie nie.

Potensiële risiko’s

Ek sal te alle tye alles in my vermoë doen om die identiteit van elke deelnemer te beskerm maar dit mag moontlik wees dat mense wat u storie ken, dit mag herken.

Voordele vir deelname aan die studie

Daar is geen finansiële voordele verbonde aan deelname in hierdie studie nie, maar om u storie te deel mag emosionele voordele vir u inhou. Ander mense wat aan soortgelyke studies deelgeneem het, het gevind dat dit 'n baie aangename ervaring was. U mag dalk dieselfde aangename ervaring ondervind wanneer u, u storie deel.

Vrywillige deelname

U is onder geen verpligting om aan hierdie studie deel te neem nie en mag ter enige tyd onttrek. U besluit om te onttrek sal gerespekteer word en daar sal geen negatiewe gevolge vir u wees nie. Deelname aan hierdie studie sal geen impak hê op die verhoudings tussen u en enige organisasie/s wat dienste aan blinde en gesigsgestremde mense lewer nie.

Vertroulikheid

Alle inligting wat van u verkry word sal konfidensieël en anoniem gehou word. Anonimiteit sal verseker word deur die gebruik van skuilname. Alle inligting sal deur my gestoor word in 'n geslote kabinet waartoe net ek toegang het. Alles wat u deel tydens die onderhoude sal met niemand anders gedeel word nie.

Verspreiding van inligting

Die inligting wat deur hierdie studie versamel gaan word sal met die Universiteit van Kaapstad gedeel word. Dit sal ook voorgelê word by relevante konferensies en aan relevante ondergraadse studentegroepe. Na afloop van die studie sal u 'n gebinde kopie van u storie ontvang.

Databestuur

Die opnames en getranskribeerde data sal vir 'n tydperk van vyf jaar gehou word. Daarna sal die elektroniese dokumente en opnames uitgevee word en alle toestelle sal geherformuleer word.

Kontakbesonderhede vir verdere inligting

Navorser se kontakbesonderhede:
Epos: devosd@cput.ac.za
Selnommer: 083 702 7994
Kantoornommer: (021) 460 9071

My studie word oorsien deur Professor Theresa Lorenzo (021) 460 6326 en Mev. Liesl Peters (021) 650 4929. Beide persone is dosente aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad. U is welkom om hulle te kontak indien u enige vrae vir hulle het.

Het u enige vrae met betrekking tot die voorgenome studie?

Indien u aan hierdie studie wil deelneem, voltooi asseblief die aangehegte toestemmingsvorm.

Affirm Advocate Account

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Appendix D

ENGLISH INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I agree to be a participant in the research study: “To explore how young women with visual impairment navigate their participation in recreational sport”.

I am aware of what the study entails and what is expected of me. I have had the study explained to me and I have read or been read the information sheet. I do not feel forced to take part in this study and I am doing so of my own free will. I know that I can withdraw at any time if I so wish and that it will have no negative consequences for me. I agree that the interviews will take place at a time and place that is comfortable and convenient for me and that the researcher will travel to meet with me. This will mean that I will not incur any unnecessary costs to partake in this study. I understand that I will not receive any payment for participating in this study. I understand that my name will not be mentioned in any reporting of the research unless I indicate otherwise. I have had the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I agree to have the interviews audio recorded.

Participant Name in Print: ______________________________

Participant Signature or thumb print: _______________________

Date: ____

Witness Name in Print: ___________________________________

Witness Signature: _______________________________________

Date: ____

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Appendix E

AFRIKAANSE TOESTEMMINGSVORM

Ek stem in om ‘n deelnemer te wees in die studie genaamd: ”Ondersoek hoe jong vroue met visuele gestremdhede hul deelname aan ontspanningsport bewerkstellig.”

Ek is ten volle bewus van wat die studie behels en wat van my verwag word. Die studie was aan my verduidelik en ek het die inligtingsbrief gelees en dit was aan my voorgelees. Ek was nie gedwing om aan die studied eel te neem nie en doen so vrywilliglik. Ek is bewus daarvan dat ek ter enige tyd van die studie kan onttrek en dat dit geen negatiewe gevolge vir my sal inhou nie. Ek stem in om die onderhoude te hê op tye en plekke wat vir my sal pas en waar ek op my gemak sal wees en dat die navorser na my toe sal kom om die onderhoude te voer. Dit sal beteken dat ek geen onnodige uitgawes sal hê as gevolg van my deelname aan hierdie studie nie. Ek verstaan dat ek geen betaling vir my deelname aan hierdie studie sal ontvang nie. Ek verstaan dat my naam onder geen omstandighede in die studie genoem sal word tensy ek dit so wil hê nie. Ek het geleentheid gekry om vrae te vra en my vrae was beantwoord. Ek stem in dat al die onderhoude opgeneem mag word.

Volle naam van deelnemer: ________________________________

Handtekening of duim afdruk van deelnemer: ___________________

Datum: ____

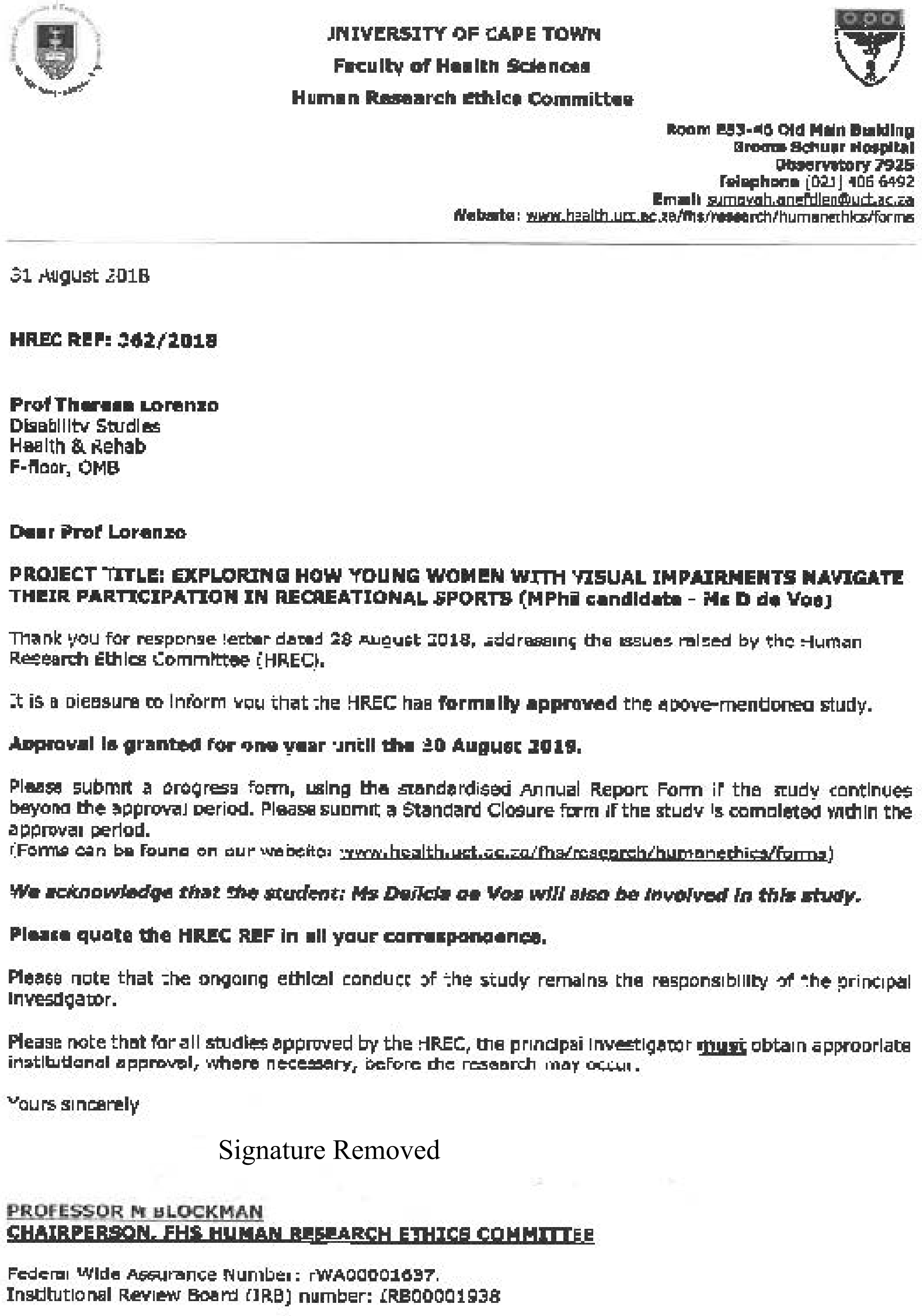
Volle naam van getuie: ____

Handtekening van getuie: _____________________________________

Datum: ____

Appendix F

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

Room E53-46 Old Main Building
Groote Schuur Hospital
Observatory 7925
Telephone [021] 406 6492
Email: sumayah.ariefdien@uct.ac.za
Website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms

31 August 2018

HREC REF: 362/2018

Prof Theresa Lorenzo
Disability Studies
Health & Rehab
F-floor, OMB

Dear Prof Lorenzo

PROJECT TITLE: EXPLORING HOW YOUNG WOMEN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS NAVIGATE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN RECREATIONAL SPORTS (MPhil candidate - Ms D de Vos)

Thank you for response letter dated 28 August 2018, addressing the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

It is a pleasure to inform you that the HREC has **formally approved** the above-mentioned study.

Approval is granted for one year until the 30 August 2019.

Please submit a progress form, using the standardised Annual Report Form if the study continues beyond the approval period. Please submit a Standard Closure form if the study is completed within the approval period.
(Forms can be found on our website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms)

We acknowledge that the student: Ms Delicia de Vos will also be involved in this study.

Please quote the HREC REF in all your correspondence.

Please note that the ongoing ethical conduct of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Please note that for all studies approved by the HREC, the principal investigator **must** obtain appropriate institutional approval, where necessary, before the research may occur.

Yours sincerely

Signature Removed

PROFESSOR M BLOCKMAN
CHAIRPERSON, FHS HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Federal Wide Assurance Number: FWA00001637.
Institutional Review Board (IRB) number: IRB00001938