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**Participation in professional cycling: The experiences
of young cyclists from disadvantaged communities**

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the Masters Degree in Occupational Therapy

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Division of Occupational Therapy

University of Cape Town

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Declaration

I, Suzanne Stark, hereby declare that the work on which this dissertation 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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Definition of terms

Disadvantaged community

A group of people who have been historically disadvantaged due to unfair discrimination based on race, gender or disability (Republic of South Africa, 2000).

Facilitators

Environmental factors that, through their presence or absence, improve functioning, reduce disability and increase involvement of people in all areas of life. These factors refer to an accessible environment, the availability of products and technology, positive attitudes, as well as services, systems and policies that support participation (World Health Organisation, 2001).

Barriers

Environmental factors that, through their presence or absence, limit functioning. These refer to an inaccessible environment, lack of products and technology, negative attitudes, as well as services, systems and policies that hinder participation (World Health Organisation, 2001).

Abstract

As an occupational therapist enjoying recreational cycling, I became aware of the potential positive value of participation in cycling. Cycling, however, is considered an elite sport, with participation reserved for those who can afford it. The Cycling Club¹ is a Subsection 21 company (Not for Profit Organisation) attempting to bridge this problem through the promotion of cycling in South Africa's poorest communities. They provide opportunities for young people from disadvantaged communities to participate in cycling. Their aim is twofold: to help youth develop their skills as cyclists; and to enable them to develop their potential as human resources through their participation in the programme. Taking an occupational perspective, it has been proposed that occupational engagement in meaningful occupations can contribute to the development of people as individuals and members of society. Yet, one should be cautious not to assume that participation in cycling will necessarily result in change for cyclists and that all contributions are necessarily experienced as positive. Every cyclist is a unique individual coming from a particular context which, through participation in cycling, results in certain experiences. Consequently, this study intended to uncover the experiences of young cyclists from disadvantaged communities participating in professional cycling.

The study design is qualitative in nature and made use of collective case studies. Three participants from the Cycling Club were obtained through convenience sampling. Photovoice, unstructured interviews, a focus group, a key informant interview and participant observation were used as sources of data generation. Data were analysed inductively with themes emerging from within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. The three main themes originating from the study include (1) the meaning of cycling; (2) the role of the environment serving as a barrier or facilitator to participation; and (3) the interrelatedness between the person, occupation and the environment influencing occupational performance. The Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model and International Classification of Functioning (ICF) were used as conceptual frameworks to highlight the factors that influenced the occupational performance of cyclists.

Recommendations were made to the Cycling Club, the profession of occupational therapy and the wider sporting community.

¹ Pseudonym

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My ma en pa, Anneke en Gerhard, ek kan nie verder as die knop in my keel kom nie. Baie dankie vir alles.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 My story

I made my debut to the world of recreational cycling when I participated in the annual Cape Argus Cycle Tour in 2007. Every year more or less 35 000 cyclists from all over South Africa, and the world, make their way to Cape Town to participate in this popular race. Its scenic route runs over about 110 kilometres, winding its way from the Foreshore in Cape Town to Muizenberg, Kommetjie, Hout Bay, Camps Bay and ending at the Green Point Stadium in Cape Town.

I cannot remember why I decided to enter the race, other than wanting to satisfy my spirit for adventure, but I do remember my uncertainty in going alone, parking my car and queuing for the start of the race. My fears and anxieties were soon washed away by the excitement and camaraderie of the thousands of cyclists gathering at the start line. In spite of friendly conversation with numerous cyclists, I eventually found a partner who cycled with me all the way from Muizenberg to Hout Bay. Having participated in the Tour previously, he provided me with essential advice on what to expect and when to take my energy supplements to prepare for the uphill climbs.

Half way en route I observed a group of young black cyclists. Wearing the same cycling gear and riding the same bikes, I assumed their equipment must have been sponsored by a corporate company. Their presence made me aware of the difference between them and the other participants who are mostly coloured and white people of working age. While observing the group of young black cyclists participating in the Cape Argus Cycle Tour, I was struck by the likelihood of their participation, or rather, how unlikely it is to be young, black and participate in cycling.

Reflecting on my experience of being an occupational therapist participating in this race, I could not help but marvel at the potential value of participation. I made a friend (with whom I kept in contact for more than a year after the race), learned about my capabilities, the value of challenging myself, and above all, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Yet, being a young white woman, I wondered how my experience of participation would compare to that of the black cyclists? Are there similarities, differences or both? And why would it be the same or different? How do the culture, context and personal influences of young black people affect their experience of participation and how is it different to mine? These questions kept coming back to me long after I had completed the race and I decided to act upon it by establishing contact with the Cycling Club.

1.2 The Cycling Club

The Cycling Club is a Subsection 21 company (Not for Profit Organisation) committed to the transformation of cycling at a recreational and competitive level. They aim to generate interest in cycling amongst young people from resource poor communities and enable access to participation in cycling. The Cycling Club presents a variety of programmes ranging from basic input where youth are taught to cycle safely, to participation in competitive cycling at the highest level. There are five programmes with the top two focusing on competitive cycling participation. These two programmes provide sponsorships to participants, equipping cyclists with a bicycle, clothing, nutritional supplements and access to specialist sports facilities and services. The elite team was the focus of this study. This team functions under the guidance of a program manager who works closely with a sports director facilitating optimal sporting performance through specialist assessment, intervention and training programmes. The cycling club view cycling as more than a sport; to them it is an opportunity to change lives. By envisioning growth through cycling they aim to create opportunities for young people from resource poor communities that will allow them to grow as individuals and as athletes.

1.3 Motivation for the study

Participation in sports can hold great potential for the development of individual participants and communities. As occupational therapists we believe participation in meaningful occupations serves as a way for people to transform their lives, satisfy their needs and contribute to their health, well-being and quality of life. Therefore, it is imperative that we spend time understanding people's experiences of participation. Living in a country characterised by diversity, we need to take particular care in understanding people's experiences in the context of cultural, social, political and institutional influences affecting their experience. It is only once we begin to understand people's experiences, and the environmental influences affecting their experiences, that we can begin not only to challenge the systems barring their participation, but also contribute towards creating opportunities that will enable meaningful participation. Therefore I decided that an exploration of the experience and potential value of participation in cycling as well the environmental factors that facilitate or hinder participation needed to be explored.

1.4 Overview of the study

1.4.1 Problem statement

Cycling is considered an elite sport, with participation reserved for those who have access to the necessary resources. The Cycling Club enables participation in cycling for young people from disadvantaged communities through the provision of access to the relevant resources. They aim to develop young people's skills as cyclists and as valuable human resources through their participation in the programme. However, it cannot be assumed that occupational engagement in this programme necessarily results in change for cyclists and that all change experienced is regarded as positive. The unique nature of every cyclist interacting with his/her environment in a particular way results in certain experiences, affecting not only his/her performance but also who he/she is as a human being.

1.4.2 Research question

How do young cyclists from disadvantaged communities experience participation in professional cycling?

1.4.3 Significance of the study

The purpose of this study is to inform the Cycling Club with in-depth information regarding the experiences that young cyclists gained through their participation in professional cycling. This could contribute to their quest for constructing a holistic, person-centred and contextually relevant youth development programme for their cyclists. Coaches and sports directors at the Cycling Club could also benefit from the study in gaining a broader understanding of the experiences of cyclists during participation in elite level sport, with particular reference to the role of the environment in facilitating or hindering participation.

The profession of occupational therapy could gain from the study as it may shed light on the contribution of participation in sport as a potential vehicle for development and transformation, which could expand further on the body of knowledge surrounding occupation.

This study could contribute to the broader sporting community by providing them with a unique perspective of the potential of sporting participation as expressed by young professional sports persons themselves.

1.4.4 Aim

To explore young cyclists' experiences of participation in professional cycling.

1.4.5 Objectives

1. To determine whether participation in professional cycling has made a difference in the lives of youth.
2. To describe how participation in professional cycling has influenced cyclists' lives.
3. To identify the facilitators that enabled participation in professional cycling.
4. To describe the barriers than hindered participation in professional cycling.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined my experience engaging in recreational cycling which led to my involvement with the Cycling Club. Taking an occupational perspective on cycling, it is evident that participation in sports can make valuable contributions to the experience of quality of life. The role of the environment was emphasised as influencing the experience of occupational engagement. Hence, this study seeks to explore the experiences of participation in professional cycling as described by young cyclists from disadvantaged communities. An overview of the study was provided including the problem statement, research question, purpose, aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the literature with regards to cycling as an occupation, the role of context, sports and its potential contribution, sport in South Africa and the concept of youth development.

2.2 Cycling as an occupation

One might question the potential contribution of an occupational therapist to the field of sport. Traditionally, occupational therapists have concerned themselves with people who suffered illness or injury (Van Niekerk, 2005). Indeed, the contribution of occupational therapy (OT) to the world of competitive sport mainly centres around the participation of persons with disabilities. Very few, if any, literature exists that explores the potential role or contribution of OT to this field. This could come as a surprise when considering the definition of occupation as the 'ordinary and extraordinary things that people do every day' (Watson, 2004:3), with sport being a huge part of so many people's everyday doing. In this study, cycling is framed as the occupation to be explored. Hocking (2009) contends that a better understanding of occupations is required by therapists, which will enable them to understand their clients as occupational beings. She is of the view that this will be brought about through a deeper appreciation of the meaning, context and demands of the occupation in question (Hocking, 2009). It has been proposed that occupation is the vehicle through which people realise their aspirations, satisfy their needs and change or cope with the environment. It is through occupation that people develop as individuals and as members of a society (Watson and Fourie, 2004). Christiansen (1999:547) proposes that 'occupation serves as the principal means through which people develop and express their personal identities'. Watson and Fourie (2004) highlight the transformative potential of occupation suggesting that it serves as a vehicle through which people can realise and utilise their potential, transform their lives, pursue their aims and overcome barriers.

Occupational engagement, or participation in occupation, is the 'mechanism for the maintenance and growth of physical, mental and social capabilities' central to health (Wilcock 1998:110). The impact of occupational engagement on individuals and populations should not be underestimated. Reid (2008) contends that occupational engagement serves as a powerful determinant of a person's

well-being. Hammell (2004:303) proposes that one of the fundamental contributions that occupation makes in daily life is the creation of meaning. She argues that:

Engagement in personally meaningful occupations contributes, not solely to perceptions of competence, capability and value, but to the quality of life itself.

Considering occupational performance as the outcome of interactions between the environment, person and occupation it was felt that the PEO model is relevant for the purpose of the study (Law, Cooper, Strong, Stewart, Rigby and Letts, 1997). Within the context of the findings, the PEO model enabled me to take an occupational perspective in understanding cycling performance. Considering the influence of environment in occupational performance, the role of context will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 The role of context

When considering the experience of participation, it is imperative to explore how context influences occupational performance. Shaw (2009) highlighted the importance of understanding place and how place underscores occupational participation. It is well established that 'the importance of context has long been acknowledged as key to occupational engagement' (Watson and Fourie, 2004:21). Professionals working with communities in the South African context are urged to appreciate the significance of the African ethos of *Ubuntu*. Within this philosophy collectivism rather than individuality is valued and emphasises the need for belonging and interconnectedness (Watson and Fourie, 2004; Weskamp and Ramugondo, 2004). Being cautious not to stereotype people into cultural groups to which we assume they belong (Swartz, 1998 in Watson and Fourie, 2004), care should be taken to consider the individual in relation to his culture, context and values. Of significance to this study is the impact of the context on participation in professional cycling as the participants of this study all come from disadvantaged communities within the South African context. The ICF's subsection of environmental factors was considered a useful tool to conceptualise the role of the environment in facilitating or hindering participation. The ICF gives support to occupational therapy interventions aimed at environmental change and several similarities can be drawn between occupational therapy and the ICF (WHO, 2001; Hemmingsson and Jonsson, 2005). A study by Stamm, Ciez, Machold, Smolen and Stucki (2005) concluded that there are strong conceptual associations between models used in occupational therapy and the ICF.

2.4 Sport and its potential contribution

The United Nations (UN) Inter-Agency Task Force proposes that sport can be used as a powerful vehicle through which objectives in development and peace can be reached (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, 2003). They recognise the vital role sport plays towards the holistic development of young people, encouraging the formation of significant social connections and contributing to their physical and emotional health. Perhaps one of the most inspiring messages on the potential of sport are the words of Louise Fréchette, the UN Deputy Secretary General at the World Sport's Forum in March 2000:

The power of sports is far more than symbolic. You are engines of economic growth. You are a force of gender equality. You can bring youth and others in from the margins, strengthening the social fabric. You can promote communication and help the divisions between peoples, communities and entire nations. You can set an example of fair play' (Coalter, 2005a:1).

Sport is increasingly being utilised as a tool through which people can learn skills and principles thereby contributing to the holistic development of young people particularly (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, 2003). Sport-in-development programmes, although having traditional sport development objectives, serve to promote a range of social and developmental aims and objectives (Coalter, 2005a). Internationally, there has been a rapid growth in these programmes, mainly in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Coalter (2005a:29) describes the most significant impact of sport programmes as 'the development of individual and collective potential.' Listing the development of individuals and communities, he describes the possible contribution of sport to the following outcomes: improved self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills; commitment to education; reduced social isolation; increased sense of trust, co-operation and communal responsibility and the development of leadership skills and future aspirations. Yet overall, there is very little empirical evidence to support a causal link (The Scottish Government, 2006; Guest, 2007). These potential benefits, however, remain a mere possibility as it cannot be assumed that all or any participants will automatically acquire these benefits in all circumstances (Coalter, 2005b). Some outcomes remain a possibility for various reasons such as the significance of the parallel social influences and developmental processes that take place as part of normal life. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that competencies gained will be transferred to the wider social or community environment. According to Coalter (2005b:206), sport 'is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes'. Hence Coalter (2005b) recommends

that the conditions required to produce beneficial outcomes should be explored more often. Guest (2007) warns that sport is often presented as the ultimate solution for improving lives. According to Guest (2007), there is no panacea for development and, to the contrary, he suggests envisaging sport as an empty cultural form – a neutral practice that is filled with meaning derived from the culture within which it takes place and the individuals who participate. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this: the value of sport development programmes depends solely on the manner in which they are employed; and the understanding of sport from those employing sport for developmental ends may differ significantly from the meaning of sport for those targeted (Guest, 2007). Guest (2007:4) concludes by remarking that the ‘popularity of sport makes it something that will inevitably be used towards developmental ends, ... [yet] when employed intelligently it can serve as a positive developmental influence’.

2.5 Sport in South Africa

In the absence of literature reflecting the status of participation in cycling, attention will be given to sporting participation in general. According to the national government Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA), sport participation in South Africa remains skewed and generally low with only 30% of the population participating in sport and poorer communities generally being excluded (Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2007). Yet, in spite of the adversities faced, there is a sharp upturn in sport development on a national and international level (Burnett, 2003; Guest, 2007; Coalter 2005a). Locally, this upturn was spurred on by President Thabo Mbeki’s words of address when he welcomed the Springboks home after their world cup victory (Mbeki, 2007):

In the past 13 years one of our mistakes was that we have not given sufficient attention to sport, not directed sufficient resources at sport’.

Mashishi (2005:3), in his position as president of South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) comments that in spite of obtaining democracy in 1994 South Africa has ‘yet to dismantle the legacy of apartheid inequality, disparity and underdevelopment in sport.’ He acknowledges that in South Africa appropriate facilities and holistic support to athletes are the factors most lacking in our sports. Urging the need for a holistic approach in sport programmes, Douglas and Carless (2006:11) similarly argue that:

it is only by understanding the individual and her or his personal values within the context of her or his sporting culture and societal influences that we can begin to

understand more fully those factors which are both beneficial and detrimental to the ideal performance state.

Burnett (2003:18) advocates the need for the sporting community to give attention to the holistic development of athletes over their life span, nurturing them as elite athletes and as 'valuable human resources' to avoid the 'social death' experienced by so many athletes upon retirement. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force (2003) endorses this notion by contending that sports programmes should not only focus on the technical development of sporting skills, but on the development of the individual to achieve broader goals in education and development. Taylor (2006) supports this theme and suggests that athletes should engage in opportunities relating to education which do not only have relevance to employment, but critically to personal growth and development.

2.6 Youth development

In South Africa, it is the children and young people who suffer most severely from the prevailing challenging socio-economic conditions (Foley, 2005). Mokwena (2005:12) remarks that Steve Biko's words are as applicable today as they were in the 1980s:

Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood.

Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that youth living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods had poorer developmental outcomes and greater exposure to unhealthy activities and lifestyles (Elliott, Menard, Rankin, Elliott, Wilson and Huizinga, 2006).

Many sport-in-development programmes offer lifeskills programmes to youth in disadvantaged communities to promote the holistic development of youth. Yet, a number of experienced youth workers warn against the implementation of such programmes where young people are 'not at the heart of the programme' (Magqwaka, 2005:106). Khanyile (2005:97) suggests that if lifeskills programmes are 'just a series of workshops', they run the risk of not making sense to the youth engaged. Youth development has been described as a 'process that allows young people to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to become self-sufficient individuals who can contribute positively to their own communities and to society as a whole' (Foley, 2005:5). This approach is based on the inherent belief that young people are human resources who have the capacity to contribute to all spheres of society. Foley (2005) recommends that youth organisations need to create spaces and structures for young people to reflect on their experiences and voice their perceptions on life:

This reflexivity will allow for a richer understanding of the effectiveness of the programmes being implemented and of the issues that youth view as most affecting their lives (Ibid:141).

2.7 Conclusion

Literature relevant to the context of this study has been described and expanded upon in this chapter providing a point of departure for the current research. The literature review examined writings pertaining to cycling as an occupation, the role of context, sport and its potential contribution, sport in South Africa and youth development.

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Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1. Introduction

A qualitative research paradigm was used with case study as the method of inquiry. This chapter describes the study design, study population and sampling, data collection methods, data management and analysis processes, ways of ensuring trustworthiness and the rigour of the findings, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Study design

Qualitative research methodology was used as a means to explore the aim of this study. This method of research was chosen as it intends to 'study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:3). A qualitative approach was therefore considered as meaningful since it guided the process of uncovering the personal experiences of cycling within the unique and natural contexts of cyclists.

3.3 Method of inquiry

A case study design was used to gather information. The researcher made use of an interpretative framework in the application of case study design. Stake (2005:443) contends that the case study is not necessarily a methodological choice as much as it is a choice of 'what is to be studied'. Case study research is relevant to the context of the current research as it seeks to optimise understanding of a case. Stake (2005) differentiates between three different types of case studies, namely, intrinsic, instrumental and collective case study. Instrumental case study design proved to be relevant for the current study as it provides 'insight into an issue' (Stake, 2005:445). The case is therefore of secondary importance as it facilitates an understanding of something else, in this instance the experience of participation. The current research is an example of a collective case study described as an instrumental case expanding over a number of cases (Stake, 2005).

3.4 Study population and sampling

The study population consisted of all 12 members of the Cycling Club's professional team, who are all male. A research information sheet was sent to the Chief Executive Officer of the Cycling Club and written consent was obtained prior to approaching the cyclists (see Appendix 1).

I made use of convenience sampling which involved obtaining volunteers from the study population. My primary concern in obtaining study participants was to include those who are interested and willing to share their time and stories. Meadows (2003) asserts that those who volunteer their participation tend to be more open to provide information and are often more amenable to the researcher. Convenience sampling acknowledges that the findings of the study do not necessarily represent the experiences of everyone in the group. For the purpose of this research study, two factors were considered as inclusion criteria, namely:

1. Participants should belong to the Cycling Club's professional team for more than one year.
2. Participants should be conversant in Afrikaans and/or English to facilitate communication with the researcher who is conversant in both of these languages.

I presented the broad outline of the research to the professional team members at one of their weekly team meetings and three cyclists volunteered to participate in the study – all of whom fulfilled the study criteria.

3.5 Data generation method

The data generation period commenced in August 2008 with the last interview completed in May 2009. Although I did not anticipate that the data collection process would extend over this prolonged period of time, it proved to be invaluable to the findings of the study as it allowed for natural developments to be incorporated into the research. These developments specifically refer to the cyclists who were dropped from the team while the data generation process was still under way. This study generated data using the following multiple data sources: photovoice, unstructured interviews, a key informant interview, a focus group discussion and participant observation.

3.5.1 Photovoice

Photovoice is a highly flexible participatory approach whereby participants use cameras to capture the reality of their lives (Wang, Yi, Tao and Carovano, 1998; Wang, 2005). Photovoice is used with great effect in projects involving youth as it positions them as producers in the research process (Mitchell, Moletsane, Buthelezi and De Lange, 2005). I commenced by facilitating a group discussion

to introduce participants to the concept of photovoice, as well as the ethical considerations. This was followed up by a request to all participants asking them to reflect on their participation in cycling and to consider whether it has had an influence in their lives. They were then required to take pictures of those things/areas of their life that they feel have changed through their participation in cycling. Each participant received these instructions in writing to serve as a reminder (see Appendix 2). Given the South African context where crime and violence are rife, particularly in resource poor contexts, I explored the potential risks involved in using a camera with the participants to take into consideration safety measures such as:

- Describing the participants' responsibilities in using a camera with respect to the rights and privacy of others;
- Facilitating dialogue to set guidelines regarding respecting the rights of others; and
- Stressing the fact that no picture is worth taking if it could cause the photographer any harm (Wang, 2005). In addition, given the present South African context where people can be rendered vulnerable through what they have in their possession – it was necessary to discuss proactive action to be taken by participants to stay safe, and the action required should they be mugged for the camera.

Participants were introduced to the technical aspects of using a camera and they received a disposable camera each. I did not set a time limit as to when they had to return their cameras and participants were to indicate to the researcher when they had accomplished their task. In the end, only one participant used the disposable camera to take pictures. The second participant chose to share pictures taken by the photographer from the Cycling Club, which he downloaded from his flash disc onto mine. The third participant took pictures with his cellphone and provided a few pictures taken by the Cycling Club's photographer of some of the races he attended. All pictures were developed and appointments were made to conduct the first interview with each of the participants.

3.5.2 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews, referred to as 'guided conversations' (Lysack, Luborsky and Dillaway, 2006:345), were held with each participant using the photographs as prompts for conversation. I asked open ended questions, allowing participants to tell the stories relating to their pictures (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Follow-up interviews were conducted to obtain more specific information. Three interviews were done with every participant and were concluded when I felt that the data gathered reached saturation or yielded no new information (Dickerson, 2006). All

interviews were conducted in English except for discussions with one interviewee, who is bilingual but spontaneously spoke Afrikaans. The interviews were held at the training centre where the team meets weekly. All individual interviews were held in a room to ensure privacy.

3.5.3 Key informant interview

Following the analysis of the findings it was deemed necessary to also interview the sports director of the team as a key informant as suggested by Patton (2002:321) as a person who is 'particularly knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about their knowledge – people whose insights can prove particularly useful in helping an observer understand what is happening and why'.

3.5.4 Focus group

A meeting was scheduled where I was meant to give feedback to the professional team, coach and sports director regarding the progress of the study. As the coach and sports director could not attend, I spontaneously made use of the opportunity to present a focus group with 10 of the 12 cyclists. The group was held in a computer room at the training centre where the team meets every week. This venue is a public space and proved to be useful as the participants were familiar to the venue and seemed at ease. Furthermore, participants who came late were able to join the discussion and add valuable knowledge and insight. I kept the question for discussion broad, asking participants to reflect on how cycling has made a difference to their lives. To negate the possibility of individuals with strong personalities dominating the group (Lysack et al, 2006), I initiated the 'pointing system'. This system allows a participant to 'point' to another group member to give his input, following his own response. As the group progressed, the pointing system naturally fell away as responses became more spontaneous, after which it was re-instituted by a group member who felt the group needed more structure.

3.5.5 Participant observation

I found the use of participant observation as a method of data generation valuable in gaining an understanding of the context through personal experience. In his book on qualitative research, Patton (2002:262) contends that 'understanding context is essential to a holistic perspective'. Being a cyclist, I was able to observe study participants at cycling races and used the opportunity to gather information that was woven into, and clarified, during interviews with participants. I spent numerous hours waiting for cyclists at the training centre and used the opportunity to observe the behaviour of individual participants, the interactions between team members, as well as coach-team

interactions. These field notes were recorded and informed not only the interviews with participants, but also the interpretation of the findings (Patton, 2002).

3.6 Data management and analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded and I transcribed these verbatim. Interviews in Afrikaans were translated simultaneously when transcribing. The process of transcription enabled me to familiarise myself intimately with the data, generating emergent insights and helping me to get a sense of the whole (Patton, 2002). Prior to the analysis of findings, I documented a description of each case, as informed by the participants. These descriptions situated the context, background and brief history of each case (Creswell, 2003).

DePoy and Gitlin (1994:232) contend that qualitative analytic strategies aim to 'transform the volumes of interview transcripts ... and other observational information into meaningful categories, taxonomies, or themes to explain the meaning and underlying patterns of the phenomenon of interest'. Initially I attempted to make sense of the data by using pre-determined categories in which to organise information. I soon realised that this deductive process was not assisting me to gain an understanding of the meaning of the experiences of each case. This called for a fresh start where I read through the data numerous times to get a general sense of the information and its overall meaning. I started the detailed analysis with a coding process, involving a manual process of cutting and pasting the information into chunks prior to considering their meaning (Creswell, 2003). Chunks were grouped together to form subcategories which, when grouped together, contributed to categories of meaning. Categories came together to form themes that represent the findings of the study for each case. After each interview the data were analysed and findings were presented to the participants who confirmed or corrected their relevance. Through ongoing data collection and analysis I was able to verify themes, expand on them where necessary, and in some instances, fill the gaps. Creswell (2007) describes the analysis and thematic representation of each case as the within-case analysis, which is presented as the findings in Chapter 4.

This was followed up by a cross-case analysis involving the examination of 'themes across cases to discern themes that are common to all cases' (Creswell, 2007:245). Through deductive analysis, using the PEO model (Law, Cooper, Strong, Stewart, Rigby and Letts, 1996) and the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) environmental factors (WHO, 2001), three main themes emerged. By means of peer debriefing, my intuitions and realisations were discussed, leading to the

development of an illustration depicting the three themes, their meaning and relation to each other. The cross-case analysis not only highlighted similarities between cases, but importantly, differences and ambiguities which gave depth to the discussion of these findings in Chapter 5.

3.7 Ensuring trustworthiness and rigour

I undertook certain actions to improve the trustworthiness and rigour of the qualitative data (DePoy and Gitlin, 1994) by using the following strategies: triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, an audit trail and peer debriefing.

3.7.1 Triangulation

Lysack et al (2006:353) refer to triangulation as ‘the use of two or more strategies to collect and/or interpret or analyse information’. The different sources of data (photographs, transcripts of unstructured interviews and field notes of observations) were compared to one another to determine the accuracy of interpretations. I was able to compare the findings of the individual participants against those of group members, which highlighted similarities and differences in experiences. The decision to include the sports director as a source of data enabled me to further clarify, expand upon and test some of the assumptions of participants.

3.7.2 Member checking

I verified the meanings derived from the data with the participants to confirm the accuracy of my interpretations after each set of interviews had been analysed and before writing up the findings of the data. Participants were given the opportunity to confirm, clarify or correct my interpretations of data in the follow-up interviews. Member checking is of vital importance not only to certify accuracy of findings, but also to help ‘ensure that the investigator’s conclusions make sense from the perspective of the person who experienced those events’ (Lysack et al, 2006:353). The focus group also served as a means by which to check the findings of individual participants against those of the group and so highlight the extent to which findings concurred or differed.

3.7.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity (Patton, 2002:65) refers to a consciousness ‘of the cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of one’s own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voices of those one interviews and those to whom one reports’. Qualitative research acknowledges the influence of reactions and views – inherent to the researcher and in reaction to participation in the research – that could potentially colour the study findings. Bias cannot and should not be eliminated, yet it is

essential to be identified, considering its impact on the interpretation of findings (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a reflective journal was kept throughout the research process to record my internal dialogue, enabling me to become aware of potential biases and assumptions.

3.7.4 Audit trail

An audit trail, as a set of documentation, can be used by researchers to manage record keeping and maintain reflexivity so that others can easily follow the logic underlying the research results (Lysack et al, 2006). The documentation I kept included all data generated from the study, all interpretations of findings and thought processes during thematic analysis, notes regarding decisions made in the research process, personal reflections and observations made during the course of the study. The audit trail in Appendix 3 illustrates the processes that led to my conclusions.

3.7.5 Peer debriefing

Lysack et al (2006:353) highlight the importance of peer debriefing as providing 'a means by which areas of disagreement and controversy are highlighted'. I frequently engaged in discussions with my supervisors, who have extensive experience in the field of qualitative research, receiving feedback and gaining insights into the findings and process of research. Coming from a white middle class background, I approached a work colleague, whose mother tongue is Xhosa, to discuss my interpretations of context-specific data relating to the experiences of some of the cyclists from similar communities. These discussions contributed to a deeper and fuller understanding of the context.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Workman and Kielhofner (2006) maintain that those who undertake research assume a moral responsibility to comply with regulatory principles and procedures which enforce ethical standards. The principles employed in this study include informed consent, confidentiality and issues of reciprocity and responsibility. These principles will be discussed in greater depth.

3.8.1 Informed consent

Each potential participant received a research information sheet providing details about the researcher, the nature of the research, expectations regarding participants' involvement, risks, benefits, payment and ethical considerations (see Appendix 4). The potential participants were given ample time to study this document and appointments were scheduled where they were given the opportunity to ask questions prior to completing an informed consent form. The informed consent sheet reflected the participant's right to participate voluntarily, the right to withdrawal from the

study, the right to confidentiality and protection of the participant's identity, the right to ask questions regarding the research and the participant's signature (see Appendix 5). The key informant and all members of the focus group gave verbal consent prior to their participation.

3.8.2 Confidentiality

The three individual participants chose their own pseudonyms, and I ascribed pseudonyms to all other participants, the organisation and the institution where cyclists train to protect their identity. Some of the in-depth interviews yielded sensitive information, yet participants volunteered this information spontaneously. Similar to the view of Laliberte-Rudman and Moll (2001), it is felt that the interviews gave participants the opportunity to state their opinions which might go unheard otherwise.

3.8.3 Reciprocity and responsibility

Laliberte-Rudman and Moll (2001) advise researchers to make sure that the research process is as equitable as possible. Where participants were expected to provide information, I, in turn, made explicit attempts to accommodate the participants in terms of meeting them at times and venues of their choice, taking into consideration that they either cycled to the venue or made use of public transport. One participant requested to be accompanied by a fellow cycling team mate during the interviews. Considering the cultural background of the participant, I permitted his request. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the words of participants remain true to their context and that they pose no harm to participants when presenting the findings of the study. As some of the information proved to be sensitive and potentially offensive to parties involved, I ensured that permission was obtained from participants to reflect their view points.

3.8.4 Ethical approval

The Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town granted approval of the research protocol. The reference number for the study is REC REF: 286/2008.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the method of inquiry relevant to this study in greater depth. A qualitative paradigm proved to be relevant for answering the particular research question, using case study design and convenience sampling. Photovoice, unstructured interviews, a focus group, a key informant interview and participant observation were used as sources of data generation. Data was analysed inductively with themes emerging from within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

Triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, audit trail and peer debriefing were used to ensure trustworthiness and rigour of the research. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, reciprocity and responsibility and ethical approval were also discussed.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings of the study as they emerged from the within-case analysis. The findings of the three individual participants are presented in the order of Shaun², Leon³ and Johny⁴ and will be followed by the findings of the focus group. Finally, the findings of the sports director of the Cycling Club is presented. Afrikaans quotes, as evident in the findings of one participant, are followed by a translation into English.

4.2 Shaun's story

4.2.1 Background

Shaun (21) is a young black man, raised by his mother, who is a single parent. According to Shaun, his family is supportive of his cycling career with his younger brother also participating in the Cycling Club programme. Shaun was first introduced to the programme in five years ago and has been cycling competitively for the professional team for the past two years.

Shaun intends to study further and is interested in media studies. He has completed Grade 12 and is currently redoing certain subjects with the aim of improving his marks which would allow him access to a university. When he is not studying or cycling he enjoys spending time with his friends, mostly fellow cyclists. Prior to the beginning of this year, Shaun had been living with his mother and younger brother in a township on the outskirts of Cape Town. Their house is situated next to a tavern which is the cause of various disturbances as described by Shaun. This has prompted him to request accommodation at one of the Cycling Club's team houses, close to where his family lives, to which he relocated. According to Shaun, he has the option of staying there until the end of 2009.

4.2.2 Findings

Two main themes emerged from the data and have been identified as **Cycling and the township life** and **'Cycling really changed my life'**. The themes, categories and subcategories are presented in Table 4.1. Each theme will be discussed in greater depth.

² Self-chosen pseudonym

³ Self-chosen pseudonym

⁴ Self-chosen pseudonym

Table 4.1 Analysis of data obtained through interviews with Shaun

Theme	Category	Subcategory
Cycling and the township life	The challenges of township life	Not resting enough
		The threat of your bike being stolen
		Facing the jealousy of others
		A lack of appreciation
	Negotiating township life	Generating support from others
		Keeping my bike safe
'Cycling really changed my life'	A different lifestyle	Pursuing habits for a healthy lifestyle
		Sacrificing occupations
		Making gains for my family
	Making a career out of cycling	Doing what you enjoy
		Envisaging the future

4.2.3 Theme 1: Cycling and the township life

This theme revolves around Shaun’s experience of what it is like to be a professional cyclist living in a township. He describes the challenges he is faced with in township life, based on his occupation as a professional cyclist. He goes on to explain the ways and means by which he negotiates these challenges.

The challenges of township life

Shaun and his family stay next to a tavern (see Figure 4.1), which is often the cause of him **not resting enough**. The tavern’s clients stay until late at night and their noise impacts negatively on his sleep prior to a race. It is common practice for a tavern to ask clients an amount of money like R2, to pay for a glass which they can reclaim if the glass is returned safely. Shaun describes his frustration with being disturbed by clients from the tavern who come and ask him for glasses. He does not feel he has any control over the tavern and its visitors and resorts to hoping that the police would come and stop the noise which will enable him to get a good night’s rest.

These people are next to my place! These people and they are drinking! You know what the last thing that I hate is that they come to my place when the tavern is about to close down ... They come to me and ask for glasses so they can drink properly ... For instance, if it is on Saturday and the race is on Sunday, it’s hard for me to actually sleep ... You [know] what I pray always for on Saturdays, that the cops can come around and

stop that. Lucky you at nine o'clock, the cops will come around and stop that partying, and then at ten o'clock I can properly sleep.

Of further concern to Shaun is the **threat of his bicycle being stolen** due to the presence of robbers and *tsotsis* in the township. Shaun warns that this can happen in the shortest space of time.

And here are the robbers. People who steal other people's things. If you wash your bike and you go inside the house and you come out of the house – the bike is gone ... one minute, it's too long ... they take the bike away.

Shaun feels his participation in cycling is often the cause of having to **face the jealousy of others**. According to him there is the perception that, because he is a cyclist, he may have more opportunities afforded to him. This results in deliberate negative behaviour towards him often in the form of mocking and disrespect. Because of the demands of cycling he chooses not to engage in activities which could impact negatively on his performance, such as smoking and drinking (see Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3). As a result he is often perceived as not participating in township life and accused of thinking he is better than his peers.

Because what I say is, if they come by next to my house and they ask: 'Hey, wanna come with us?' I say: 'No man, I have to race tomorrow'. They say: 'Oh, fuck you'. You know what I'm saying? Sorry for the word. They would like shout at me and say bad things.

You know when you make a braai or something, you need to put a zinc underneath so that the dirt, you can be able to pick it up and throw it away ... What they do is: they just make the fire on the ground and when they're finished, they just put water to stop the fire there. Then the next day, they throw it in my yard.

It was explored whether this intentional disrespect is aimed towards Shaun's family in general or whether it had anything to do with his participation in cycling. According to Shaun, his involvement in sport is what has triggered this behaviour as if to remind him that regardless of his achievements, he still lives in a township.

They do understand what I'm doing. They see on the TV and they see papers. There are thin [local] papers where I've gone many times – they do understand. But they just want to get in my way as opposed to move forward. They just want to be in my way.

Shaun speaks of a **lack of appreciation** of what it takes to be a cyclist in his community. According to Shaun, culture can play a role in your interest and participation in sport. He highlights this point by means of comparing the likelihood of his mother participating in a sporting activity to the possibility of a white lady participating. From Shaun's perspective it is evident that people's appreciation of a sport is influenced by their exposure to and experience of the sport. A sport familiar to a community seems to be regarded as more valuable.

But people that are close to you, people who, most of them or few of them don't really understand what it's like, what cycling is.

... they all have seen a soccer game. One, a few of them did play soccer when they grew up, ja. They expect you to play soccer, if you're riding a bike you're wasting your time. You don't know what you do. Especially soccer fans.

Negotiating township life

To facilitate his professional cycling career Shaun had to **generate the support** of those who play a significant role in his life. Shaun describes how he had to convince his mother of his participation in cycling. He did this by exposing her to cycling in an indirect way by showing pictures and in a more direct way by taking her to attend a race. Shaun is confident when he speaks about the support he receives from his family. This is expressed in their understanding of his differing dietary needs. They allow him to cook those foods which he is required to eat for himself. Another form of support is his relationship with fellow cyclists, which seemed to be based on shared experiences. Because they do not engage in certain activities associated with township life, these friendships could serve as a way of protecting themselves from the mockery of others. Shaun is of the view that one should allow people in your community time to gain an appreciation of what it means to be a cyclist. Yet, the battle for recognition does not come without effort, as he reports that it takes courage to make your voice heard in spite of negativity from others.

... but as time goes he or she will realise and notice that no, this goes somewhere. This is going to lead him somewhere. And then he or she will come to me and say eh, ja, it's a great thing. But after some time, after distraction and disturbance and everything it takes, it takes guts to talk.

Shaun describes the different strategies he employs to **keep his bicycle safe**. Firstly, he is able to count on his younger brother to look after his bike in his absence. Shaun relies on his knowledge of the intimate details of his bike to recognise it, should it be spray painted or the serial number

removed, in an attempt to disguise its identity. Knowing very well what will happen to his bike when it gets stolen, Shaun warns others that they will be caught out by playing on their ignorance.

You know I said to them: 'If you take my bike, my bike there underneath, there's a serial number there. Even a day won't be had man, before you'll be bad, because you'll be arrested, because that bike – there's a serial number underneath so that can never be changed.' And then I said to them: 'There's something else that's hiding there that shows that that's my bike.' And then they are scared to take my bike.

Shaun reported that the only way to be free from disturbances in his home environment would be to **relocate to another area**. Together with fellow cyclists who experience similar difficulties they consulted with the Cycling Club regarding this possibility which resulted in team members moving to a team house in a different section of their township. Shaun feels positive about this new environment which affords them several opportunities including fewer disturbances and being free of people mocking him. According to Shaun, the team house is a comfortable place to stay as it is located in an area not too far away from his own house, which allows him the opportunity to connect with his mother and brother every so often. He feels that it is also in the best interest of the team, as it reinforces the focus on their cycling.

We don't improve staying around people who know you grow up, you know, as a baby, as a kid you grow up doing bad things because you don't know what you're doing. But as we grow, people are still thinking of what we've been doing. Why have you changed now? They sometimes get in your way and kind of disturb you. So by staying in the team house, it's much better because there won't be disturbances and distractions and people saying funny things about you in cycling. They will realise that there's something good.

4.2.4 Theme 2: 'Cycling really changed my life'

Shaun describes the way cycling has impacted on his and his family's life. He makes mention of changes and sacrifices because of the level of participation in cycling. Yet he acknowledges the privilege of doing something you really enjoy which also creates and shapes a vision for the future.

A different lifestyle

It is evident that, due to Shaun's participation in cycling, he had to pursue particular **habits** which would contribute towards a **healthy lifestyle** and optimum performance. Some of these have shown

to be in contrast with his peers and his culture (see Figure 4.4). Shaun role models healthier habits by choosing not to smoke or drink and avoids fatty foods preferring pasta and meat prepared without oil. He is able to follow this routine as he feels he understands the meaning and has tried to educate others on eating differently, but with little success (see Figure 4.5).

I don't put oil and, you know actually for them it's not healthy, because it doesn't make sense for them, but it does for me. Because I know what it means what's its job and all that.

Shaun refers back to the time prior to participating in cycling at a professional level when he was able to engage in occupations outside of cycling. He had to make a decision to **sacrifice** these **occupations** due to the demands of being a cyclist. Shaun is clear in stating that when you choose to become a professional cyclist, there is very little time for anything else. There are certain typical occupations that Shaun's peer group would participate in, but which he admits he does not have any time for. The meaningfulness of making a sacrifice, when one decides not to have something in order to obtain something more valuable, is emphasised by Shaun. This is evident in the positive way he feels about himself being able to make sacrifices.

And girls that I can't even date because I'm in sport, you know ... Because I'm at the stage of actually having them and partying and all that. But I don't have time for all that.

You know, I was not made for cycling. But I happen to be a cyclist. So I sacrificed my normal living ... But, you know, if you sacrifice something for something else, if that other thing actually is getting successful and you succeed on that thing, you can actually think proud of yourself, man. Because not everyone can sacrifice anything in life for something.

Shaun feels his **family has gained** from his participation in cycling. According to him, his mother is particularly grateful as cycling has provided him with an alternative to activities he was likely to engage in growing up in a township. Cycling has helped him to make the right choices at a critical time in his life, which contributes to her peace of mind. Earning money for cycling has enabled Shaun to be more independent and has aided his mother who is a single parent. This also served as a way of gaining her support for Shaun's cycling career.

So, cycling really changed my life. So my mum doesn't have to worry now at night, because I'm right next to her, maybe for the race tomorrow ... Even my mum is

grateful, she will say: 'Thanks God', for changing me, for making me have a mind and all that. Because when you're young, you do negative things. I was about to learn how to smoke, I was about to start drinking.

Making a career out of cycling

Shaun makes it clear that he considers cycling a privilege as he can be **doing** what he really **enjoys**. He acknowledges that cycling also serves as a means to another end, in his case, the opportunity to study further in the field of media studies. But currently, his focus for the present and the future is on cycling.

I really like cycling. I want to stick with cycling for 15 more years, if you know what I'm saying.

Reflecting on his progress as a cyclist, Shaun highlights the significance of role models to **envisage the future** amongst aspiring cyclists. He describes a progressive process where you start by looking up to certain role models, to where you adopt different role models and progress to becoming a role model yourself.

Even if you get to, because I wish my goals would be to go and ride Tour de France. Even if I do Tour de France there will still be people who are head and shoulders above me and I will still be looking up to them. I'm not forgetting looking down to people where I'm from, where there are kids coming up.



Figure 4.1 The tavern



Figure 4.2 Peers smoking



Figure 4.3 Preparing for smoking



Figure 4.4 'The girls' recovering from a party



Figure 4.5 Unhealthy eating habits

University of Cape

4.3 Leon's story

4.3.1 Background

Leon (26) stays with his mother, sister and her child outside Cape Town. He completed his Grade 12 at a high school in Cape Town. Following this, he had plans to become an architect and completed a portfolio, one of the entry requirements for the course. However, due to a lack of finances he could not follow through on these plans and started working as a cashier. Other jobs to secure an income included doing construction and mechanical work and working as a sales assistant in a music shop. Leon received financial assistance from a sponsor to attend a computer course and performed well with an average of 80% for each subject. Due to outstanding fees, Leon could not complete the course. He went on to work as a data capturer for 18 months before he got a job as an administrator in payroll and human resources. After this he started cycling competitively for the Cycling Club's professional team for almost two years. Leon says he has been cycling from a young age and started training around 1996. His contract with the Cycling Club was terminated early this year and he has since found employment at a cycling shop in Cape Town.

Leon can be described as a quiet person with a small social network. Off the bike he has a keen interest in health and well-being and reads up on these subjects. He reports spending a lot of time in his room at home reading, watching DVDs and listening to music.

4.3.2 Findings

From Leon's story, two themes developed: **'Everything revolves around cycling'** and **Ending the contract: Letting me go**. See Table 4.2 for the subcategories and categories that comprise the themes.

Table 4.2 Analysis of data obtained through interviews with Leon

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
'Everything revolves around cycling'	The significance of cycling	Researching health and well-being
		Balancing work life and cycling
	Building resilience	The drive to succeed
		Developing self-reliance
	Cycling as a coping mechanism	Escape from problems
		Connect with others
		Access to career opportunities
Ending the contract: Letting me go	Experiencing frustrations	Regain control
		Tolerating others
		Preferential treatment
		Basing everything on performance
		Racial inequality
	Feeling angry and bitter	Powerlessness
		Being tricked
		Questioning values

4.3.3 Theme 1: 'Everything revolves around cycling'

Participation in cycling has a particular meaning in Leon's life. It serves as the vehicle by which he expresses his interests and gives direction to the manner in which he balances his life. It is through his participation in cycling, and its interaction with his context, that he has learned to build resilience and cope with the demands of daily life.

The significance of cycling

Leon is interested in health-related factors that could enhance sport performance and spends time in his local library **researching** matters relating to **health and well-being**. This prompted him to take a picture of some of the topics that he has explored (see Figure 4.6). He applies the knowledge gained to optimise his performance and gives an example of a warming up oil that he makes. While still in the programme Leon mentioned that he had enquired at a local training institute regarding the possibilities of courses relating to health and fitness as options for a post cycling career.

I'm interested in the healths of your body and your mind. It's aromatherapy, it's herbs ... There's one oil that I made. You take a base oil ... and you add, uhm, 18 drops of ginger oil and some eucalyptus. You can use it as a warming up lotion, it stimulates blood circulation.

Leon speaks of the challenge of having to **balance work life and cycling** prior to his commitment with the Cycling Club. It seemed as if there was a constant tension between the two with cycling being the occupation that determined when he would get up in the morning, how long he would work every day and how he spends his weekends. While working as a data capturer, he had more flexibility in terms of work hours and arranged his work schedule accordingly. Reflecting on his participation at the Cycling Club he feels it gave him more freedom and less stress to focus purely on cycling. At present he is experiencing the familiar frustration of balancing work with training as he is working long hours, six days a week.

Everything revolves around cycling. I would make time for cycling, I would train in the morning. I would get up at four, three, to go train ... then go to work, finish, say on a Monday I would finish at latest six o'clock. I would work 'til six so I can finish earlier Tuesday, and I could try to work a bit later on Tuesday, so I can finish even earlier on Wednesday. So I could have more time to train. That's what I did.

Building resilience

Leon has an intense **drive to succeed** as a cyclist and feels strongly that there is nothing that can stop you from achieving your goal. Speaking about his cycling career following the termination of his contract, he evidently has not given up on the goals he still wants to achieve.

There's nothing that's going to stop me from getting what I want exactly ... Because I still got goals that I need, that I want to achieve.

To improve cycling performance Leon believes in challenging yourself. He favours time trials, an individual event where cyclists compete against themselves. He describes this as an intense event where you are cycling at maximum point over a distance of 40 kilometres. Leon chose to include a photograph of him taken while participating in a time trial (see Figure 4.7). To him it represents the discipline it takes to be a cyclist. Leon also took a picture of one of his cycling routes illustrating his belief that it takes hard work to get what you want (see Figure 4.8).

You're pushing yourself by competing against yourself ... You should always challenge yourself ... And to prepare for an event like this, it takes a lot. I mean, it's only 40 k's, but it takes a lot of training hours to get it right.

In order to get what he wanted, Leon had to **develop** a sense of **self-reliance** from a young age. Given a lack of financial support he had to learn how to make things happen for himself. He

describes how he saved to afford a bike and to pay entry fees for races, which his parents were not able to do. Leon says there was no encouragement from family members for him to become involved in cycling. It was something he wanted to do and he only had himself to rely on to enable participation.

Okay, I wanted a bike, you need a bike for cycling. My parents couldn't give me. So what I did, I saved up and then I bought myself a bike ... And that's also where, when I wanted to do these races, that I had to save for the race. And that's what I did, so that didn't become a problem anymore ... You need to be self-reliant, be resourceful. I think that's something that I'm really proud of.

Cycling as a coping mechanism

Cycling provides Leon with the opportunity to **escape from problems** at home. He has a difficult relationship with his mother and sister who rely on his financial assistance. This is clearly a source of conflict in the family, particularly as the same financial contribution is not expected from his sister who made different choices to Leon.

It [cycling] is a distraction from problems at home sometimes ... Cause like right now, on weekends I don't want to be at home, because my mom and my sister is at home. So, I'd rather be somewhere else. And I end up riding, a lot.

I still have that financial responsibility. I wish I didn't have it, so that I can start a life of my own ... because I have to help to pay half of the bond, make sure there's food.

It is through his participation in cycling that Leon has learned to make friends. He has always been a loner and cycling provided him with the opportunity to **connect with others**. To highlight this, he referred to a picture that shows him participating in a stage race with fun riders who are in corporate positions at a Toyota plant (see Figure 4.9). Cycling next to them gave him the opportunity to initiate an interesting conversation about the environment.

I think that's also something cycling has taught me: is to make friends. Because, you see, I train alone. I never had friends where I stayed, and it's like my connection to the world, basically.

Through his participation in cycling Leon gained **access to career opportunities**. He tells of a conversation with another cyclist whom he met on the road, and that then developed into his accepting a job offer from this cyclist. His participation in the Cycling Club was also sparked by his

presence on the road where he was stopped by the CEO of the Cycling Club and invited for laboratory tests resulting in him becoming part of the professional team.

I even got the job through cycling ... I got him on Chapman's Peak one day and I just spoke to him about it [speedometer], how it helped him train and then one thing lead to another. And then he told me he wants to sell it. The day I went to go pick it up he offered me the job and I took it. ... And one day, he [the CEO] stopped me on the road and asked me my name and telephone number. A week later the coach phoned me, I went in for a test. Like they're doing in the lab and, even, I didn't know I was capable of that until then. They showed me the results on the test and they told me where I should be, I should be riding in Europe. I should be competing with the guys here, like the professional guys here in Cape Town.

Leon took a picture of the handlebars of his bike which clearly shows a person's left hand resting on it (see Figure 4.10). This represents his journey through life based on the philosophy that you are always in control, regardless of the circumstances. He has learned that by making adjustments you can **regain control** and illustrates this by explaining what happens in an actual race.

No matter what happens, you're always in control. Even with one hand on the handlebar ... Like in a bunch, someone will rub shoulders with you, like, it kind of unsettles you. Or they touch your handlebar. I mean you're going at such a fast, say 60k's an hour, and then someone touches your shoulders or handlebar. It just takes the bike out of the direction you're going and a simple adjustment will bring you back in a straight line. That will prevent you from crashing or going into someone else. That's how I understand being in control.

Reflecting on the termination of his contract, Leon tells of how he has managed to regain control by applying this philosophy in practice. It meant that he had to make certain adjustments, although these were not necessarily what he had in mind.

I'm still in control, because I could've easily been lying at home, doing nothing. But they let me go the Thursday, the Monday after that I found a job, so. No matter what, you're still in control ... It's an adjustment, but it's not the adjustment that I wanted. But change is good.

4.3.4 Theme 2: Ending the contract: Letting me go

This theme encapsulates Leon's experience of his leaving the Cycling Club's professional team. He speaks of ongoing frustrations with aspects of the programme. His feelings of anger and bitterness are tangible in his description of how he was dealt with when his contract was terminated and his reflection on the values of the organisation.

Experiencing frustration

Leon describes his experiences of **tolerating frustrations** in the team. He feels cycling has taught him what it means to accept people as they are. Yet this acceptance does not come without frustration and seems to stem from perceived disorganisation on the team's part.

And I think something that cycling has taught me is that you have to tolerate people. It doesn't matter who they are, where they come from, you need to accept people ... Because we had a team bus ... If it's a trip like that, I'll sit back and relax. But with these guys, they want loud music. They ... can't sit still, just for an hour. They need to be moving around and that's something I've accepted from them. I mean, you can't change that, they're comfortable ... As you can see I'm a pretty organised person. I hate waiting, they usually make you wait half an hour. Maybe an hour. They won't tell you that they're coming late, they just rock up late ... It's still an issue.

It is evident that Leon is dissatisfied with perceived **preferential treatment** of certain cyclists. He feels that exemptions are made for certain cyclists, but these do not apply to all team members.

You know there was a day when William⁵ rolled the team car – made an accident. And we had four other occupants, not only his life, but four other people and it wasn't a serious matter at all to them. They just, he basically laughed it off. And I know for a fact that he drives way too fast. So that's the type of things that happen there.

From Leon's description it seems that preferential treatment is granted to those cyclists who are the best performers. He feels **everything is based on performance**. Leon makes it clear that, what a cyclist brings to the team should also be taken into consideration and given the necessary credit. Another area of concern to him is the way competition within the team is being promoted. According to Leon, the idea is to motivate cyclists to improve their performance by competing

⁵ Pseudonym. William is the top rider of the team.

against each other. Yet, he felt it creates tension both on a personal level and between some of the cyclists.

That's where performance comes in; you can't base everything just on performance. What a person brings to a team, everything else, their spirit. You know when a team mate is down, do they kick him or do they lift him up, you know things like that.

Leon feels there is **racial inequality** within the professional team. Two of the three Coloured riders recently lost their contracts and Leon feels the programme caters for African riders exclusively. Leon mentioned notions of racial tension in the team which became apparent during a meeting with a coach. He is of the view that the programme should shift their focus to include riders from disadvantaged communities across the racial spectrum to give a true representation of South Africa's population. Seen from his perspective, poverty or disadvantage is not necessarily confined to a racial group. To illustrate this point, he took a picture of white people staying in poverty next to the area where he lives (see Figure 4.10).

Poverty doesn't mean black people. It means white people as well ... Poverty can be any colour ... Okay, now there's only one coloured rider ... The way they are running things, I don't think it's fair. Cause they want to promote South Africa first of all. South Africa is not just black, there are other people as well ... But they make it their life's mission just to help their people.

Leon experienced a sense of **powerlessness** to speak his mind within the team. He is of the view that the freedom to voice your opinion hinged on the condition that you get good results. Without positive results, you are not in a position to make demands. He speaks of an example where he did not agree with a previous coach's approach during a stage race, but was unable to give his opinion. Leon feels strongly that the reasons provided to him for the termination of his contract, are not the real reasons for him leaving. According to Leon, voicing his opinion on matters that he was dissatisfied with was the cause of his departure from the team. He reports that he had an opportunity to give his opinion when he was dismissed, but did not utilise it as he felt it would not make a difference.

They say it was never like this, but I think it was like this ... If you didn't get any results you should just shut up ... You're not in that position where you can like make demands, man. If you get results fine, then you can tell them what you want, what you don't agree with. But if you didn't, then just keep quiet ... To them it was like their way or

there's the door. In a way I'm actually glad things turned out the way it did, because it meant me basically not keeping my mouth. Where's my opinion?

Feeling angry and bitter

Leon admits to feeling angry and bitter following his dismissal from the team. The way in which his contract was ended upset him as he felt he was **being tricked** into the situation. Describing this process he tells of how cyclists had to hand in their bikes for an audit. Following on this he had to fetch supplements from the coaches at an odd time which, he felt, was their way of ensuring that they can talk to him separately from the team.

They tricked you into the situation. This is what they did. The Tuesday, they asked who doesn't have supplements and everyone else put their hands up. And me and Johnny put our hands up and then they were quite persistent, you know, we must pick the supplements up at nine thirty. I know for a fact that David⁶ keeps the supplements in his car, just in case he is in the vicinity. And then you know it's that nonsense, hey. I mean be up front with me, man. I'm not a little child. I'm not going to stay away because it's a serious meeting ... I now feel a lot different. Bitter, angry.

Following his dismissal from the organisation, Leon **questions their values**. He is of the opinion that the organisation is run like a business and that personal gain could take preference over the interests of the athletes. Adding to this, Leon feels the organisation has grown in numbers and this could imply more sponsors, but not necessarily a better quality of service. Leon questions how wisely donations are spent and who benefits most from these.

The organisation is not an organisation, but a business ... There's like 500 kids in the whole programme. I think the more kids there are, the more money. But it doesn't work like that ... They go about it the wrong way ... If you want to help people, you won't go out and buy yourself a flashy car when you know you're going to need the money to run the business. So it's those things that are important. I don't know if it's donations that they get, but you got to use it wisely. Don't think of your pocket first.

⁶ Pseudonym. David is one of the coaches of the team.

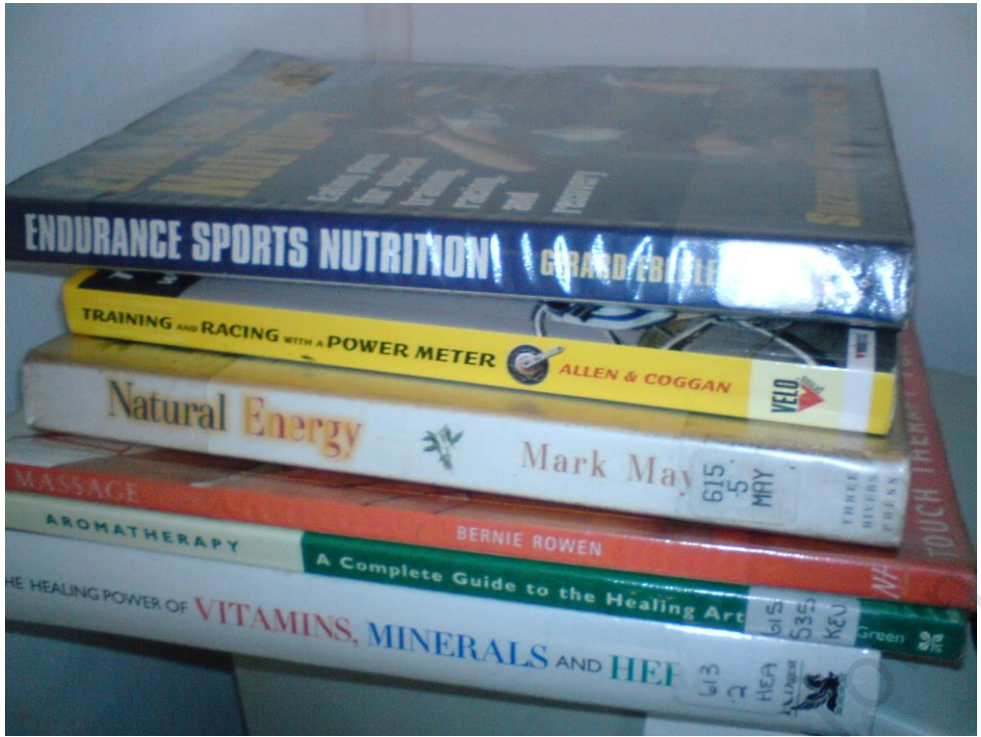


Figure 4.6 Books from Leon's local library illustrating his interest in health and fitness



Figure 4.7 Leon favours time trials



Figure 4.8 Leon describes his training route: 'It's here in Kloofnek and there's no easy way getting to the top there, no shortcuts.'



Figure 4.9 Engaging in conversation during a stage race



Figure 4.10 Remaining in control



Figure 4.11 White people are living in the informal housing structures on the outside of the concrete wall

4.4 Johnny's story

4.4.1 Background

Johnny (24) was born the second youngest of six children and lives with his parents and two of his brothers. His father works and his mother is a housewife. Both his sisters are married with children and live with their respective families. His youngest brother was adopted by his mother and has been living with their family for the past four years. He left school after completing Grade 11 to enable him to focus on cycling. Three years later, he completed Grade 12 by doing night classes at a neighbouring school. He has worked in a cycling shop and cycled competitively for a small team prior to joining the Cycling Club. Johnny was part of the Cycling Club's professional team for two years prior to the termination of his contract. One of the highlights during this period was when he was chosen to accompany members of the Cycling Club to attend the Tour de France.

He describes his family as supportive of each other with Johnny's brother currently facilitating his training programme following his leaving the Cycling Club. Johnny reports that he has a good relationship with his family particularly his mother whom he describes as a deeply religious person.

When Johnny is not cycling, he enjoys listening to music and spending time with his friends competing on Playstation. While still a member of the Cycling Club's professional team, he was keen to commence studies in the field of sports management. Following the termination of his contract, Johnny had to revise some of his plans for the future, although he reports that he intends to continue with his participation in competitive cycling. At the time, he was also awaiting feedback from a potential sponsor to continue his professional cycling career.

4.4.2 Findings

Two main themes became apparent through the analysis of Johnny's interviews: **Cycling as an enriching experience** and **'Sometimes you can't take the elevator, you have to take the stairs'** (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Analysis of data from interviews with Johnny

Cycling as an enriching experience	Gaining access to opportunities	Becoming part of the Cycling Club
		Experiencing a foreign country
		Meeting influential people
	The positive impact of participation	Personal changes
		Learning from the programme
'Sometimes you can't take the elevator, you have to take the stairs'	Getting there: The process of participation	Overcoming obstacles
		Fighting to get there
	Staying there: sustaining participation	Being at the Tour de France
		Meeting role models
		Receiving support from family
	Moving forward: future hopes and dreams	Knowing where you come from
		Cycling for an overseas team
Helping youth through cycling		

4.4.3 Theme 1: Cycling as an enriching experience

This theme speaks of how Johnny's participation in cycling enabled him to gain access to different opportunities. As a member of the professional team he had the opportunity to attend the Tour de France which enabled him to meet influential people in the cycling world. He was also in the fortunate position to experience the adventure of exploring a foreign country. It is through his participation in cycling that he was able to develop himself and learn from his involvement in the Cycling Club programme.

Gaining access to opportunities

Johnny describes the process of **becoming part of the Cycling Club** as one that depended on the assistance of many people. His inclusion in the professional team was the result of an extended process where he started cycling for the junior team under the guidance of one of the Cycling Club's coaches. He proved himself by performing well in this team prior to being included in the professional team. Following his inclusion in this team, he had the privilege of meeting two coaches affiliated with a university in the Western Cape. Their involvement enabled him to further improve his performance.

Dis nie net deur dat ek daar gewees het nie, dis hoe ek daar gekom het. Toe ek vir Ben ontmoet het, het hy my in die club eerste laat kom, van daar af het ek begin goed ry. Hy het my in die span gesit en van daar af het ek maar net bewys dat ek verder kan

gaan. James en Phil – die ouens wie ons coach nou, het vir ons beter gemaak om gekies te kan word om oorsee te gaan. So dit het van baie mense afgehang.

I didn't happen to be there, it's how I got there. When I met Ben⁷ he started by giving me the chance to ride in the club, from where I started improving. He then included me in the team and I just proved that I can go further. Since we joined hands with James⁸ and Phil⁹ – our coaches – they enabled us to improve so that we can be chosen to cycle overseas. So it depended on many people.

Every year the Cycling Club sponsors a number of its cyclists to travel to France and witness the Tour de France. When Johny was chosen to attend the tour one of the highlights for him was the opportunity to **experience a foreign country** (see Figure 4.12). It is clear that he considered this opportunity a privilege and describes the various experiences in detail. These include riding up the mountain slopes of the French Alps in a ski-lift, camping in the mountains, shopping for souvenirs and meeting students from across the world. Johny also made mention of their exposure to positive interaction between various cultures (see Figure 4.13).

Dit was ongelooflik – daar was klomp dinge. Ons het gegaan tot op die hoogste punt van die berg met die ski-lift en dit was vreeslik. Soos ons afkyk, sien ons net gras wat in blokkies is ... Dis net groot en ons het daar gekamp, nou kan jy dit nie glo nie ... As jy so afkyk, dan sien jy, as jy nou 'n klippie gooi – jy gaan hom volgende maand hoor.

It was unbelievable – there were many things. We went to the top of the mountain with the ski-lift and it was amazing. As we looked down we saw the grass in square patches ... It's just huge and we camped there. You can't believe it ... When you look down, you will see: if you throw a stone now, you will only hear it next month.

The Cycling Club enabled cyclists like Johny to travel abroad by means of ties with overseas sponsorships. Opportunities were also created where the riders could **meet influential people** in the cycling world. Johny reflects on this experience as a privilege and one that can facilitate opportunities in future.

Ons het selfs groot name ontmoet daarso, wat vir ons kan help om ons fietsry te bevorder, byvoorbeeld mense wat van oorsee af kontakte is en dis 'n groot voorreg.

⁷ Pseudonym. Ben is a coach for one of the Cycling Club's development teams.

⁸ Pseudonym. James is the sports director of the Cycling Club's professional team.

⁹ Pseudonym. Phil is one of the coaches of the Cycling Club's professional team.

We even met some big names over there; people who can help us advance in our cycling. For example, people who are overseas contacts and it is a huge privilege.

The positive impact of participation

Johny describes the **personal changes** that cycling brought about in his life. He feels cycling transformed him from a restless person who used to roam the streets of his neighbourhood to someone who is able to be disciplined and focussed. For him, cycling serves as a way of relaxation and stress release. Other positive contributions include living a healthy lifestyle and discovering your capabilities.

Fietsry maak van 'n ongedissiplineerde persoon 'n gedissiplineerde persoon. Want hoekom ek dit sê, ek was 'n baie gruwelike persoon toe ek jonk was. Ek het baie rond gehardloop, gespeel en toe't ek beginne fietsry het, het ek geweet sodra ek moeg geoefen is moet ek my liggaam rus gee ... So ek is nie meer 'n baie rondloperige persoon of so nie. Fietsry discipline jou ook, dit leer jou om te kan focus op die einde van die dag ... Fietsry doen baie aan 'n persoon. Dit help jou om hoogtes te bereik wat jy nie gedink het is moontlik nie. ... Somtyds as jy gaan oefen, as ek 'n stresvolle dag gehet het en ek's op my fiets, dan val alles so weg. Dis soos 'n persoon gaan mediteer. So voel ek as ek my fietsry gaan oefen. Ek maak my mind skoon. Voel beter as ek terug gekom het. Ek hou my liggaam gesond en fiks. Dis hoekom ek sê dit maak 'n discipline.

Cycling changes an undisciplined person into a disciplined person. I say that because I used to be impossible when I was young. I used to run around, play and when I started cycling, I realised I have to give my body rest when I was tired after training ... So I am no longer someone who wanders around. Cycling disciplines you, it teaches you to focus at the end of the day ... Cycling does a lot for a person. It helps you to reach heights that you didn't imagine possible. ... Sometimes when you go train, if I had a stressful day and I'm on my bike – everything just falls away. It's like someone who meditates. That's how I feel when I go cycling. My mind is empty, I empty my mind. Feeling better when I return. I keep my body healthy and fit. That's why I say it makes a discipline.

Reflecting on his participation, Johny speaks of what he has **learned from the programme**. He tells of gaining knowledge on coaching a team and ways of dealing with cyclists. He feels he would be

able to apply these skills in future. Johny also learned about different cultures through his interactions with fellow black cyclists which contributed to an understanding of their context.

Om vir die span te ry het my kennis gegee hoe om vir 'n span af te rig, hoe om 'n fietsryer te behandel en hoe om te onderskei of hy regtig potensiaal het om vir 'n span te ry ook ... Ek weet nou sodra ek miskien 'n spannetjie eendag begin't wat om te doen ... om 'n sukses van hulle loopbane te maak ... Nou het ek in die omstandighede gewees waar't ek met swart fietsryers gekommunikeer het. So dit was vir my 'n verandering om te sien hoe hulle omstandighede is, hoe hulle community is, so ek het baie geleer.

Cycling for the team gave me knowledge on how to coach a team, how to treat a cyclist and how to determine whether he really has potential to cycle for a team ... I now know what to do if I have a team one day ... to make a success of their careers ... Through circumstances I was in a place where I communicated with black cyclists. So, to me, it was a change to see how different their circumstances are, how their community works, so I learned a lot.

4.4.4 Theme 2: 'Sometimes you can't take the elevator, you have to take the stairs'

This theme speaks of Johny's journey in becoming a professional cyclist. He tells of enduring hardships, but also how he conquered stumbling blocks along the way. Johny describes those factors that facilitate his ongoing participation in cycling at the professional level and tells of his dreams for the future.

Getting there: The process of participation

Johny had to **overcome** several **obstacles** during the process of becoming a professional cyclist. These obstacles often relate to a lack of resources. Because of his disadvantaged background, Johny describes his experience of becoming a professional cyclist as one which takes longer and requires more determination when compared to an aspiring cyclist who has adequate financial backing. He illustrates this point by comparing his experiences with having to take the stairs when others have the luxury of taking the elevator.

Somtyds kan mens nie die elevator op vat nie, jy moet die trappies vat op ... Dis hoe ek my fietsry loopbaan sien, want niks is vir my maklik gewees nie ... Party seuns wat dit gou maak is omdat hulle omstandighede wat hulle in bly, is nie so erg soos myne nie. Hulle het die finansiële bystand om hulle te help om oorsee te gaan. Dis hoekom ek sê

vir hulle is dit die elevator om op te gaan. Vir my is dit die trappies sal ek sê, want hoekom, elke stappie wat ek vat, vat langer as die elevator. Dis hoekom ek sê, dis harder werk en dis altyd iets wat in my pad in val en dis hoekom ek daaroor moet gaan.

Sometimes you can't take the elevator, you have to take the stairs ... That's how I see my cycling career, because nothing came easy for me ... There are some guys who make it big quickly, because their circumstances are not as bad as mine. They have the financial backing to help them go overseas. That's why I said they take the elevator up. I will say for me, it's taking the stairs, because every step takes longer than the elevator. That's why I said it is harder work and there is always something that gets in the way that I have to overcome.

This is how Johnny described some of the obstacles he had to overcome:

Die supplements wat jy kan gebruik het, die energiedrankies en al die dinge. Ek kon nie sulke goeters gekry het nie, ek moes gelewe het op suikerwater in die kompetisies in. En dat ek van suikerwater af gekom het, maar nou kan ek al daai goed bekostig, want hoekom, die span kry dit vir my ... Soos fietsry is 'n baie duur sport ... Om kompetisies te kan ry, moet jy kan inskryf ... ek het selfs somtyds nie inskryf geld gehad om 'n kompetisie te ry nie sodat mense notisie kan raak van my nie en my 'n span te kan sit nie. Ek moes 'n werkie gedoen het om geld te verdien by die werk en dan het ek darem geld gehad naweke om in te skryf vir die kompetisies ... En as daar 'n kompetisie miskien in die Kaap gewees het ... dan moes ek van die huis af daarna toe ry, die kompetisie ry en dan moet ek terug huis toe ry. So, dit was hard vir my gewees ... My familie het my beginne bystaan toe hulle sien die sport begin al hoe harder te raak. Hulle het beginner moeite maak sodat ek uitgerus by die resies kan kom, sodat daar miskien vervoer na die resies vir my huis toe kan wees ... Ek het met 'n swaar fiets begin. Die fiets wat ek mee begin het, voor ek vir die span gery het, het maar seker so onder 'n duisend gekos ... Die fiets wat ek op die oomblik nou ry, kos R40 000 werd en dis veels ligter vir my. Dis ook een van die hoogtepunte van waar ek gekom het.

The supplements that you could use, the energy drinks and all those things. I couldn't get such things, I had to survive on sugar water during competitions. And I was able to come off sugar water, I can afford all those things now because the team gets it for me ... Cycling is a very expensive sport ... To participate in competitions, you need to enter

... I didn't always have money to pay for entries so that other people can take notice of me to include me in a team. I had to work to get money and then at least I could have money over a weekend to enter competitions ... And when there was a competition in the Cape ... Then I have to ride from home, ride the competition and ride back to home.¹⁰ So, it was hard for me ... My family started supporting me when they realised the sport is getting tougher. They started making an effort so that I can arrive well rested at the competitions, so that there could possibly be transport for me to get home after the race ... I started out with a heavy bike. The bike I started out with, before I became part of the team, probably cost less than a thousand ... The bike that I've got at the moment, costs R40 000 and it's far lighter. It is also one of the highlights where I came from.

Johny says he was told his contract ended because his performance was not up to standard, and reports feeling hurt being dropped from the team. By implication he had to hand back his cycling gear and bike to the Cycling Club and was left without a bike shortly before a big race. His ability to be resourceful is evident in the way that he managed to put a bike together overnight from various bike parts he had at home. This enabled him to participate in the race. Johny considers his departure from the team as just another obstacle that can be overcome. In fact, he feels strongly that such obstacles spur you on to work harder, making you stronger in the process.

Op die oomblik ry ek nou nie meer vir hulle nie, want based on hulle meriete is my performance nou nie so goed vir hulle nie ... Dis hoekom ek vir jou gesê het daar is altyd iets, 'n obstacle in die pad. En dit het my ma vir my geleer. Wanneer daar 'n obstacle in die pad kom, moenie dat dit jou terug hou nie. Dryf net harderder deur. Die hoekom ek sê dat hulle my fiets gevat het en hulle het my horlosie gevat het dit my nie laat terug hou nie. Wat dit gemaak het, dit het my sterker gemaak.

At the moment I'm not riding for them anymore, because, based on their merit system my performance is not good enough ... That's why I said to you there is always something, an obstacle in the way. That's what my mother taught me. When there is an obstacle in your way, don't let it set you back. Drive through harder. That's why I said, for them to take my bike and my watch back, didn't set me back. What it did, it made me stronger.

¹⁰ The distance between Johny's home and the cycling race he mentioned is 41 kilometres (one way).

Becoming a professional cyclist is evidently no easy task, one which Johnny aptly describes as a **fight to get there**. Through his participation in the Cycling Club Johnny learned to prove himself to the team management both through good performance and good behaviour on and off the bike.

Dis nie net om daar te kom nie, dis 'n hele storie agter die storie. Jou hele lewe moet jy veg vir een dag.

It's not just about getting there, there's a whole story behind the story. Your whole life you have to fight for one day.

Other than just plain hard work, he acknowledges the importance of believing in and trusting oneself and trusting God. The significance of motivation is emphasised by Johnny who has a dream for himself and who feels that it is important to have the need to pursue your dream. Johnny admits that even the best cyclists have to work very hard to get to where they are and he emphasises the importance of being extremely fit.

Staying there: Sustaining participation

Being at the Tour de France gave Johnny the opportunity to witness a cyclist's victory over one of the stages of the race. It made him realise how incredibly tough it is to compete at such a level. Yet, at the same time, he felt it served as inspiration and motivation for him to also participate in the tour. After seeing the winner receive and wear the yellow jersey, Johnny envisaged this dream coming true for himself (see Figure 4.14).

Die Toer self is verskriklik hard. Dis hoekom ek sê om daar te gewees het, om te gesien het hoe hulle gery het, is ongelooflik. Al het ons gesien hoe hard was dit, wil ek nog steeds gaan deelneem aan die Toer.

The Tour itself is incredibly tough. That's why I say, to have been there, to have seen how they ride, is unbelievable. Although we saw how tough it was, I still want to participate in the Tour.

During his participation at the Cycling Club, Johnny had the opportunity of **meeting** some of his **role models** in the world of cycling. He tells how meeting these well-known cyclists played a significant role in fostering a vision for the future. It is clear that these personal contacts are regarded as valuable and pictures taken of such occasions serve as reminders of meaningful interactions. Johnny had the opportunity to meet one of his cycling role models on more than one occasion over the

period of two years. The value of these interactions is demonstrated by Johnny's decision to frame the gifts he received and display it in his parents' house.

Sy naam is Carlos Sastre en snaaks genoeg, twee jaar gelede, het hy vir my een van sy fietsry hemde gegee en geteken toe hulle hier in Suid-Afrika was. Toe ek daar kom [Frankryk], toe't ek nou nog 'n fietsry hemp gekry by hom wat ook geteken is, so ek het elke jaar se fietsry hemp ontvang. Ek het dit nou geframe, dan't ek dit nou gehang in die huis. Mense sal nie glo hoeveel werd daai kos nie, want selfs dat sy signature daar op is, is dit baie geld. Maar ek sal dit nie intrade vir die geld nie, dis waardevol net omdat dit hang in my ouers se huis in – dat ek daar gewees het.

His name is Carlos Sastre and funnily enough, two years ago, he gave me a signed cycling shirt when he was here in South Africa. So when I got there [France], I got another signed cycling shirt from him. So I received every year's cycling shirt. I framed it and hung it in the house. People wouldn't believe how much it is worth, just because his signature is on there, it's worth a lot of money. But I wouldn't trade it for money. It's valuable, because it hangs in my parents' house – because I was there.

Johnny emphasises the significance of receiving **support from your family** as one of the key contributors to continued participation in cycling. He speaks of the various forms of support cyclists need from their families. These include financial support, physical support (for example, providing transport) and emotional support, such as ongoing motivation and encouragement. He singles out his mother as a pillar of support. Johnny feels support between the cyclist and his family should be mutual. He also describes how the support he receives from his family gives him the capacity to support others.

Ek dink dis baie belangrik die support van die familie vir die persoon wat fietsry in die huis in. Dis belangrik. Hulle moet altyd weet fietsry is 'n duur sport en elke seun het die support nodig, physically en mentally. Hulle moet hom altyd motiveer en hulle moet hom altyd help. Dis die hele punt.

I think the support from the family for the person who is cycling is very important. It's important. They must always be aware that cycling is an expensive sport and that every boy needs their support, physically and mentally. They must always motivate him and help him. That's the whole point.

Johnny reports that his family understand what it takes to be a cyclist. His mother's brothers participated in the sport, so did his older brother. Johnny's mother was also the one who introduced him to cycling when she took him along to watch his brother participate in cycling track events. She bought him his first bike, a BMX, and continued to support him throughout his career.

Following his departure from the Cycling Club, Johnny's older brother stepped in to act as his coach. Johnny describes the sacrifices his brother has to make to support his cycling career. These include taking time off from work, providing transport to and from competitions and supporting him emotionally.

Dis hoekom ek sê my broer staan my nou baie by. Somtyds, dan offer hy 'n dag af van sy werk af om vir my te laat oefen die oggend, om saam met my op die motorfiets te ry. Of somtyds op die track te gaan oefen met die baanfiets. So hy doen baie nou op die oomblik vir my sodat ek my sukses kan maak.

That's why I'm saying my brother really supports me at the moment. He sometimes sacrifices a day off from work to train me, to accompany me on the motorcycle. Or he sometimes takes me to go train on the track. So, presently, he does a lot for me to help me make a success.

Moving forward: Future hopes and dreams

Johnny states that **knowing where you come from** can help create a vision for the future. When this concept was explored further it became apparent that the motivational factor lies in the difference between where you come from and where you want to be. Johnny experienced struggles growing up, which he refers to as contributing to making him stronger. At the same time, many things have changed through his career and he does not want to return to where he started. He clearly states that your present circumstances cannot stop you from going somewhere different, somewhere better in the future. Your future is determined by your abilities and the opportunities you get.

Jy kan maar sê, die plek waar vandaan ek gekom het, hulle noem dit die ghetto's ... So ek kan darem sê dat ek in die swaarkry sterker geraak het ... Dit is iets wat jou motiveer hoekom jy wil nie terug kyk na die verlede toe en jou swaarkry dae nie, jy wil vorentoe gaan. So jy wil na beter dae toe gaan. Die omstandighede wat jy miskien was, jy wil nie terugkyk na die verlede nie. Jy wil 'n beter toekoms maak.

You can say the place where I come from, some call it the ghettos ... So I can say that it is through struggling that I became stronger ... It is something that motivates you, because you don't want to look back at the past with its struggles, you want to move forward. So you want to move towards better days. The circumstances from the past, you don't want to look back to the past. You want to make a better future.

Johny's big dream for the future is to **cycle for an overseas team**. According to Johny, the Cycling Club has an agreement with an overseas sponsor who provides a contract for one member of the professional team every year. While still part of the team he had hopes of accessing this opportunity. Although he has left the team, Johny's dream of cycling for an overseas team is still alive. Although there is no tangible opportunity at present, he is determined not to give up on his dream.

Ek wil graag oorsee ry, volgende jaar kan my droom miskien waar word.

I want to cycle overseas, maybe my dream will come true next year.

Expanding on the potential for cycling Johny says that there is more to participation than just becoming a professional. Following his career as a professional cyclist Johny is determined to **help youth through cycling**. Cycling also serves as an alternative to keep children off the streets and as an enabler by which they can reach their potential. He speaks of how he would approach the task of having his own team one day. This includes the identification of cyclists and the importance of consulting with their parents to explore the home circumstances and identify their needs.

So, fietsry is nie net om 'n professionele fietsryer te word nie ... Fietsry hou baie van die seuns en dogtertjies van die straat af om op die einde van die dag miskien 'n lawyer te word, 'n dokter te word ... Ek wil hê fietsryers moet kinders help om van die straat af te kom sodat hulle 'n sukses van hulle lewe kan maak ... Ek weet ek gaan dit begin eendag en ek gaan jou terug bel. Ek gaan sê: Suzanne, ek het my eie span begin.

Cycling is not just about becoming a professional ... Cycling keeps many boys and girls off the streets to maybe become lawyers and doctors one day ... I want cycling to help children to come away from the streets and make a success of their lives ... I know I'm going to do it one day and I will call you. I will say: Suzanne, I started my own team.



Figure 4.12 The team in France: Preparing for the day



Figure 4.13 Meeting other development teams from Europe



Figure 4.14 Johnny cheering the winner on from below. The winner of the stage is standing on the podium, fourth from the right – wearing the renowned yellow jersey.

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4.5 The group experience

Ten members of the professional team joined in this lively discussion where the following findings were made. Letters of the alphabet, instead of pseudonyms, were used to protect the identity of group members.

4.5.1 Findings

Professional cycling: Gaining and giving and **Cyclists' realities** are the two main themes that emerged from the data obtained through the group discussion. Table 4.4 illustrates these themes, categories and subcategories.

Table 4.4 Analysis of data obtained through the group discussion

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Professional cycling: Gaining and giving	Positive contributions	Changing lives
		Taught to be disciplined
		Making connections
		Learned to ride a bike
		Keeping a balance
	Making sacrifices	Missing out on holidays
Cyclists' realities	Facing challenges	Being called a 'moffie'
		A lack of understanding
	Potential enablers	The significance of role models
		Generating understanding
		Having structures in place

4.5.2 Theme 1: Professional cycling: A matter of give and take

This theme encapsulates the basic gains and sacrifices group members had to make since they started cycling professionally. It is clear that the number of gains far exceeds the sacrifices, but one should be careful not to underestimate the impact of the sacrifices on the lives of cyclists.

Making gains

Some cyclists described their experiences of participation in cycling as a process that brought about rather dramatic **change in their lives**. Seen from this perspective it is evident that, for some, cycling provides an alternative to engagement in negative behaviour. Group member A shared how group member B played an instrumental role in this process by introducing him to the programme. He served as mentor for A from his initial participation to where he is cycling for the professional team today.

A: B used to train me, then I went to the junior team. Now I'm in the professional team. I was doing naughty things in standard five, then I changed my life. Then I left. He [B] was my example showing me what not to do and what to do.

B: So my life just dramatically changed from the start till here, because I used to be a 'wilde laaitie'. I used to be like out on the streets doing wrong stuff. From since I started cycling, I just started changing from worse to a better state.

Several cyclists mentioned that they were **taught** to be **disciplined** through their participation in cycling. For C, discipline meant learning to pay attention to detail. He feels this skill could be to their advantage should they pursue post cycling careers.

C: You have to be extremely disciplined in this sport. At this level ... you have to pay quite a lot of attention to the finer things ... If we're gonna open a business, we will definitely like put the same attention that we put into cycling, into our jobs.

The group felt that cycling had contributed to **broadening their horizons** by giving them the opportunity to make new friends, to travel to different places, to experience different cultures and to enable them to meet new people.

D: It helps us make connections. Whereas if we would've stayed at home, what connections would we have known? ... Cycling helps us travel the world to places national or maybe international. It helps us meet other people.

Two of the group members mentioned that they **learned how to ride a bike**. A said he was 18 when he learned how to ride a bike for the first time. Today he is a member of the professional team. Some of the group members laughed at this. Yet, the point was made that there are many people in the townships who cannot ride a bike as few people own bikes.

A: I started cycling in 2005. I didn't even know how to ride a bike. So B showed me how to ride a bike. So, thank you very much B.

E: I've gained some experiences like learning how to ride a bike, that's something which I have gained.

C mentioned how cycling helps him to **keep a balance** between busy schedules.

C: I've prolonged my studying period, but at the same time, the cycling keeps you mentally sane. So the cycling keeps a balance in terms of your mental sanity.

Making sacrifices

Many cyclists felt that the demands of the cycling programme results in them **missing out on holidays** with their families. Most said they are not able to go to relatives in the Eastern Cape over the December holidays, as their training programmes do not permit this. Some argued it is for the better not to go the Eastern Cape as they would lose their fitness. Others have pointed out that they often travel to various parts of the country to participate in races and one could therefore say that this makes up for losing out on holidays. But, most felt the latter does not make up for the loss in family time over holiday periods.

E: I don't spend a lot of time with my family. I don't go to like Eastern Cape, I used to go to Eastern Cape. But, cycling has kept me here ... If I go to Eastern Cape, you lose your fitness. You eat fats, fatty stuff, antelope and goats.

F: I just want to add on top of what he just said: 'One makes up for the other', but in a very different way, because it doesn't. You know when you go to Jo'burg you're not as happy as you are when you go to Eastern Cape. Because you go to Jo'burg for a competition, not for a holiday.

4.5.3 Theme 2: Cyclists' realities

This theme speaks to the challenges the group has to face based on their participation in cycling. Potential enablers to sustain participation at the competitive level are also explored.

Facing challenges

Many cyclists endure mockery from their peers when they decline to participate in activities such as smoking and drinking. For some, this has resulted in **being called a 'moffie'**.

E: It's not easy where we stay, because you say 'No man, I'm racing'. After you said you're racing the guy will come, they will insult you and call you a ... moffie.

Some cyclists felt they could use their participation in cycling as the perfect excuse not to engage in smoking and drinking. Others pointed out that, in certain contexts, it is not always accepted as an excuse which then often results in mockery.

C: Now if you say: 'Hay, no, I'm cycling this weekend' – that was the perfect excuse I could use all the years not to drink. Same thing with smoking.

F: But in the township it's difficult even to say what you're saying. Even if you're saying that, they say: 'No man, come on'.

The continuous difficulties faced by young cyclists are highlighted by a group member who shared that they are constantly confronted by these kinds of situations as there are always parties going on. Another group member added that this problem is fuelled by the people's perceptions of sport stars, as it common practice for soccer players to drink. One participant pointed out that to avoid such confrontations you should not be at a place where you would encounter these difficulties. He then made mention of the Cycling Club's centre in a local township which has entertainment such as Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) and a Playstation available.

Another challenge faced by the group is the **lack of understanding** of the demands of cycling particularly from family members.

G: You know our parents don't really know how demanding cycling is. If you're always coming up with reasons that you were to go and train, go and race, it's as if you're running away from all the responsibilities.

Group members emphasised that their families often perceive them as avoiding domestic duties when they go training. Cyclists often feel they are not taken seriously by their families as cycling is not perceived as a professional career.

C: Where we come from, like in the townships and stuff. They don't understand that this can actually, that you can make a living, they just think we're going to go ride on a bicycle.

Potential enablers

The **significance of role models** was emphasised by cyclists who felt this contributes to their own, and younger cyclists', motivation for continued participation in cycling. One cyclist described how being a role model positively influences your ability to stay focussed. Another cyclist supported this view and added that, as professional cyclists, one of their most important contributions is to be an example to the younger generation. When you are a good role model, you have the ability to help others make the right choices for their lives.

F: All I can say is there's nothing more important than being an example to the boys coming from behind, you know at a younger age ... Because there are still kids like

looking up to him, you know, he has to be an example. Not galavant and doing all these kind of stuff. B really made him [group member A] make good choices for his life.

C: B won't mess up or like just throw his bike or give his bike in and say 'I'm finished cycling now', when he knows there's five hundred kids ... looking up to him. In that case it keeps him focussed.

Generating understanding

Cyclists recommended having local cycling races as a way to **generate understanding** in their communities and families of the demands of cycling. Group members felt that, when people have the opportunity to view races in their local community, they might gain some understanding of the sacrifices professional cyclists have to make.

F: If you take these people to races and show them how demanding it is, they won't offer you drinks anymore. Especially when you're like having races that are actually closer to the places where we stay.

D: It's important for competitions and races to be held not only in far away places but close to townships ... where there's a lot of people in the community so they can see the cycling. The people, they won't even ask you twice, they will know what sacrifices you are making to stay in that sport.

4.6 A coach's perspective

4.6.1 Background

Following the findings made through interviews with the respective participants, it was felt that certain aspects needed to be clarified by the sports director of the professional team. An interview was therefore conducted with James, who has been fulfilling this role since the beginning of 2008. James is in charge of the overall management of the team and describes his role as follows:

My role is as sports director, which means overall planning and implementation of the entire sporting programme. So that means goals as far as each year's objectives are concerned, putting together the entire performance plan from a training perspective, monitoring other things like medical, dietary, psychology, basically all of those facets. Making sure that the team has the correct resources, overseeing management of the entire structure of the team and making sure that each person fulfils their role.

4.6.2 Findings

Two main themes emerged through analysis of the data: **Cycling as a team sport** and **'Sooner or later, eventually they have to perform'** (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Analysis of data obtained from an interview with James

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Cycling as a team sport	Team structure: Generals and troops	Becoming the general
		Being the general
		Coach's expectations of troops
	Team conflict	Troops underperforming
		Being told what to do
		Dealing with diversity
'Sooner or later, eventually they have to perform'	Factors facilitating performance	Having a bigger budget
		Lenient programme policy
		Having a team house
		Access to resources
		Personal motivation
	Factors serving as barriers to performance	Negative influences of others
		Challenging home circumstances
		Lack of commitment and focus
		Limited funding

4.6.3 Theme 1: Cycling as a team sport

This theme explores the concept of cycling as a team sport and takes into account the professional team structure and conflicts arising within this team.

Team structure: Generals and troops

James makes it clear how he sees the structure and working of the team by means of comparing the ranking of team members to generals and troops in the military service. The team leader is considered the general and James describes the process of **becoming the general** in more detail. It is evident that the best rider in the team earns the role of the general through excellent performance. The general evidently shares this responsibility with the privilege of being in the position to make requests and give commands to his troops or fellow team members. For a team to be functional, you not only need generals and/or lieutenants, but also troops who are team members committed to team work. Conflict can arise when team members want the same authority as the general.

But William earned that, that's the thing. He gave what we've asked of him and he delivered. And that's just how it is, if you deliver, then you get that role and not everyone can be the general. Even if they want to. ... Because you can only have so many generals and so many leaders and you need lieutenants and just normal troops as well. ... Cycling is a team sport. You either have to be very, very good, in which case you become the leader. And then it's easy, cause then you tell people what to do. Or you have to be committed to team work. ... There conflict arise.

Speaking from personal experience James highlights the difficulties you are faced with when **being the general**. Some of the challenges include experiencing high levels of stress and pressure to perform which can result in negative behaviour from the team leader.

James is of the view that William's role as team leader is primarily to deliver good performances. According to James, good sports persons are often not the best role models because of the degree of aggression and focus needed to make a success.

And he isn't in the team as a leader to be a role model. His job as team leader is to deliver the results and from that perspective, the reason why he does things like that is because he is so focussed and aggressive. He hates being weak. And that's one of the things, as a cyclist, if you want to win, you must absolutely hate being weak. Because you can't push yourself far enough into the red, if you're just okay with being weak. ... Being a good cyclist often requires that you're not necessarily a good person. Therein lies a bit of a conflict.

James describes his **expectations of team members** as good performers and having the ability to work in a team. He uses the example of one of the cyclists, Grant¹¹, to elucidate what is meant by a good team member.

He's not as committed as he should be and when it comes to races, he's not as prepared to put as much on the line. But he is an excellent work horse and he works well with the other guys in the team. He's prepared to do the work in the race to allow another team mate to win, he works as a team member and he's aware of his limitations and therefore happy to fulfil that role. So, in his case, ultimate performance is not the only criteria. ... Team work is very important, ..., not just working with the team, but also fitting in, and being friendly and getting on with the other team mates.

¹¹ Pseudonym

Those are probably the two most important criteria. Being a team member and performance. Everything else comes secondary to those things.

Team conflict

James describes his frustration with **team members underperforming** in the presence of a strong team leader. He expresses his discontent with this puzzling and repetitive cycle of behaviour from team members. According to James, attempts to address this matter have not borne much fruit.

And then one other big factor is, and I'm not sure if this is a cultural thing or not, but there's a tendency that when one person can perform, ... the rest of the team will not give their best, because they feel that somebody else will do the job for them. Last year when William left for Europe, everybody else in the team stepped up their performance. To the extent that we had four guys who were suddenly all much more competitive than they were. Then when William came back, suddenly those individuals regressed again. ... And we knew from their physical attributes they had improved, some sixteen to twenty percent. ... And then when Dean¹² came onto the team and everyone realised that Dean would get the result irrespective of what they did, we had the same problem this year. ... And that is something I cannot understand. And I can't seem to explain to them.

In response to Leon's perception of being dropped from the team because he voiced his opinion, James is clear in stating that Leon severely disliked **being told what to do**. According to James, Leon had very good results based on laboratory statistics, yet his performance in races did not reflect this ability. Following specific interventions, Leon's performance started to improve and, according to James, he no longer felt he needed to listen to the team leaders. After several disconcerting incidents of working against the team in races and treating the team leader and coach disrespectfully, he was asked to leave the team. James explains:

He hated the fact that William or Dean would not ask him, but tell him what to do. Which they rightfully earned. That he would really rebel against. ... But he wasn't in a position to be able to dictate to who he was going to listen to and to who not. ... Almost as though he felt that, because his laboratory stats were very good and now that he was starting to perform, ... he no longer had to listen to the guys that were essentially the leaders of the team.

¹² Pseudonym

James acknowledges the difficulties inherent in **dealing with diversity** where team members come from different cultural backgrounds. Leon expressed his discontent with the lack of coloured riders on the team. James admits that minority groups could feel isolated, yet contends that it is common for riders to join teams that are from different cultural backgrounds than themselves. It is therefore essential for a professional cyclist to develop the skill to adapt to majority groups.

People like Johnny, Leon and Grant definitely are more isolated in the team compared to the other guys, because they have a language barrier and because they come from a different cultural background. ... It's something that's pervasive to a lot of teams. I mean, if you go and ride for an Italian team in Europe, like Robbie Hunter did. He has been successful in spite of the fact that he's been riding for an Italian team and he had to integrate.

4.6.4 Theme 2: 'Sooner or later, eventually they have to perform'

Being in a professional cycling team, there is pressure on cyclists to perform. Factors facilitating performance are explored as well as those aspects that serve as barriers to performance.

Factors facilitating performance

It is evident that the Cycling Club's professional programme is able to provide specialist bikes, gear and training to cyclists because they **have a bigger budget** than the programmes leading up to this level of participation. James is clear in stating that the budget is there to facilitate professional cycling performance and is therefore also dependent on the performance of cyclists.

Our particular segment of the Club is the professional team. And there are components of the Cycling Club that are more lifestyle orientated. The fact that our budget is much more and therefore facilitates a lot more for the guys is more a reflection of their performance and not necessarily some charitable gesture. ... So, if their performance means that they get excluded from the team at a later stage, a lot of that is directly linked to performance.

James qualified the above statement by stating that the **programme has a lenient policy** in terms of allowing cyclists ample opportunity to work on aspects underlying their performance prior to considering the termination of their contracts.

So, we have a policy where we will always give the guy the benefit of the doubt. I mean, a guy like Leon, we hung onto him for almost a year and a half without any signs that

things will come out the right way. In the end, they didn't. In the end, he wasn't able to bridge those problems. ... So we give them lots of opportunity, but in the end, performance is an important factor. Whether it comes sooner or later, eventually they have to perform. Because it's a professional team, it's not just an across the board charity.

In response to Leon's comment that competition is promoted within the team, James states that he is incorrect in saying so. According to James, team work is promoted by following an approach where management is open to give any rider an opportunity to win a race and not necessarily only the team leader. This is in contrast to the policy held by most teams where the team leader is helped to win regardless of opportunities presented to other team members.

We definitely don't promote competition in the team, we promote team work. We've actually been one of the team, from a professional team, we've been the most open as far as allowing everybody an opportunity to win. In other teams, you normally have to ride on that team for at least a couple of years, sacrificing every single possible win just for the team leader.

Taking the challenging context where many cyclists come from into account, team management has been able to assist cyclists to bridge these problems by **having a team house**. It is clear from the accounts of both Shaun and James that this form of alternative accommodation assists cyclists to avoid distractions in their environments, enabling them to focus on their performance. It also gives them the opportunity to bond with each other which could enhance team work.

"That's the whole point of the team house. Because we realise how many distractions and how many negative influences these guys have got. ... It's important for the guys to get on with each other and to facilitate that, living together even like some of them are now in the team house.

The professional programme is able to enhance the performance of cyclists through **access to resources**. James made mention of certain personal factors influencing the performance of two participants in the study who required psychological interventions. He was able to arrange for such interventions, which were successful in their outcome although their nature will not be discussed in further detail as the participants themselves did not share this information with the researcher.

Other resources include the provision of specialist bikes, gear and training services to cyclists. It was, however, questioned to what extent cyclists are able to continue competitive cycling following their

dismissal from the programme when they are required to return their bikes and gear. James explained that cyclists can access bikes and gear through engaging in the programme running a level below the professional programme.

But in some cases, it is difficult, but below our programme, ... there's the mass participation programme. Those guys get bikes to use as well. So our guys don't get dropped completely off the radar, they get given equipment through the mass participation programme. ... So Johnny is riding for the mass participation team. He gets clothing from them, and if he didn't have his own bike, they would provide a bike for him. A lower level bike, slightly heavier, not functionally as smooth as the one he was on, but enough for him to be competitive in. Because the other guys who joined and took his spot, were on those bikes.

According to James, every cyclist has his own **personal motivation** underlying to their performance. He is of the view that the two top riders (William and Dean) share a similar focus where the driving force is to bring about change in the course of their life and lifestyle.

I mean, William, when you look at him you see the actual fire and focus. He lives and breathes, every moment is about changing and improving his future. Dean is the same ... He is super, super focussed and he does whatever you ask of him. Trains with the intensity and the focus that he should be. And delivers in the races. ... Shaun is starting to see his potential and starting to see how performing well can lead to much better things in future. So I think he's starting to start that fire.

Factors serving as barriers to performance

One of the most difficult challenges reported by James following his interaction with the cyclists, stem from some of their behaviour due to the **negative influences of others**. The complexity and difficulty relating to the issue of role models is highlighted by his accounts in telling of how young cyclists acquire negative behaviours role modelled by some of the older and more experienced cyclists.

The hardest thing has been trying to understand some of their behaviour. ... They do a lot of things, particularly the guys from the black community, they do a lot of things that are sometimes counter to the outcomes of our goals. ... The younger guys, they pick up things from the older riders, so there's a lot of respect for the older, more better

riders, but they sometimes pick up negative attributes. And they see those as acceptable which isn't the case.

Following James's account of the chain of events leading up to the termination of the contracts of two participants, it is evident that their **challenging home circumstances** played an instrumental role in shaping who they are and how they performed as cyclists.

Some of the earlier findings have given more clarity regarding Leon's dismissal from the team. Yet, James is of the view that Leon's family circumstances, particularly the lack of a father figure, has contributed to the shaping of his personality and potentially, the tendency to harbour resentment.

We kept him [Johny] on and for most of last year he improved tremendously. And he was staying with his aunt at that point in time. What happened is that his aunt, this is what transpired, but we weren't aware of it at the time. His aunt wanted to do alternations to her house, so she didn't have room for him to stay anymore. According to him, ... his father and his brother drink excessively and become very abusive toward him. ... His performance dropped massively. ... But he [Leon] harbours a lot of resentment and it's misfocussed, but I think it comes from his background as well. His family circumstances, no father figure. That's really been crucial in sculpting his personality.

James reports a **lack of commitment and focus** as one of the personal factors negatively influencing cycling performance. He makes mention of several cyclists who do not perform at their best, because they do not have the same levels of commitment and focus and do not always seem to realise this. Some of the cyclists seem to be taken up with the idea of being a professional, but do not quite yet grasp what it takes to make it to the top.

They have to be more introspective and they have to realise that they've only got their own performance to blame. And their commitment levels weren't at the same level.

One of the biggest challenges currently faced by the professional team is the **limited funding** available due to a lack of delivery from one of the role players. The sponsorship to cover the running costs of the programme has not been established and they only have funds available to last until the end of the year. It is clear that the implications of a lack of funding affect every aspect of the programme.

But now the problem is, we've run out of funding, because the guy who was supposed to give us our sponsorships, has completely let us down. ... And we're dumped with no funds, and we're busy sorting all that out and that is having such a negative impact on the whole programme. ... We're essentially still on the radar. But the guys are feeling it, and they need to have some resolution.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the detailed findings of the study in the form of themes, categories and subcategories. Findings relating to Shaun, Leon, Johny, the focus group and James were discussed and presented.

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Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This discussion draws on the cross-case analysis described in Chapter 3 on research methodology. The findings of the study are contextualised through the application of the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model (Law et al, 1996) and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)(WHO, 2001).

The discussion will centre around the three main themes identified. The first theme, **‘Cycling really changed my life’**, focuses on the meaning of cycling and explores the interrelatedness between the person and the occupation. The second theme, **Environmental effects: Barriers or facilitators?** explores the environmental factors, as set out by the ICF, that act as facilitators or barriers to participation. The final theme, **The cycle of occupational performance: When persons, environments and occupations meet**, considers the interaction between all three components of the model and their influence on occupational performance.

5.2 Theme 1: ‘Cycling really changed my life’

This theme will explore how cycling changed or gave direction to the lives of the study participants through their engagement with cycling. I discuss the meaning of cycling as expressed in the **development of occupational potential through cycling** and **occupational tensions** that relate to the struggles cyclists face.

5.2.1 ‘I just started changing from worse to a better state’: Unlocking occupational potential

Wicks (2005:130) defined occupational potential as ‘people’s capacity to do what is required and what they have the opportunity to do, to become who they have the potential to be’. Wilcock (1998) introduced the concept of occupation as a ‘trilogy’ of doing, being and becoming. The realisation of occupational potential is used as a synonym for ‘becoming’, exemplifying notions of transformation (Wicks, 2005). Watson and Fourie (2004) describe ‘becoming’ as an ongoing process of discovery and adaptation in becoming the person you want to be. I propose that the process of participation in cycling restores, transforms and inspires participants.

The restorative value of cycling

The restorative value of cycling as an occupation clearly contributes to re-establishing one's sense of identity. Three participants gave accounts of how cycling has enabled them to relieve their stress, keeping them 'sane' and centred, enabling them to cope with the demands of life. I propose that the restorative value of participation in cycling creates a sense of occupational balance, described so eloquently by Fearing (2001:214):

Balance will not be viewed as a set of scales that has equal parts such as work on one side and play on the other but rather the kind of balance that comes from being centred so that we act from a stable base. From that stable base, we will gain a keen sensitivity to rhythm – knowing when to move and when to let go. What we do, then, will flow from that stable base of knowing who we are as individual people.

The assertion that participation in meaningful occupations serves as a mechanism for achieving occupational balance in life and contributes to a sense of well-being, gives support to existing occupational therapy literature (Backman, 2004; Håkansson, Dahlin-Ivanoff and Sonn, 2006).

Transformation through cycling

For some cyclists, participation brought about subtle changes such as contributing to aspects of personal growth and learning new skills. Others experienced dramatic change where cycling provided an alternative to engagement in occupations involving risk behaviours typical to adolescence. This opportunity to 'do' differently, results in a change or transformation of the 'being', contributing to 'becoming'. Fearing (2001:212) captured the notion of transformation as follows:

Transformation ... refers to opportunities to choose and engage in occupations for the purposes of directing and changing personal or social aspects of life, in order to realise dreams and goals.

Cycling clearly contributes to creating a vision for the future amongst all participants. Egan and Townsend (2005:201) described occupational dreams as consisting of 'what we hope to be doing'. I propose that the future aspirations of the participants are sparked and kept alive through interventions on behalf of the organisation. These interventions include enabling participants to meet influential people in the world of cycling and enabling opportunities to travel abroad and observe world class cycling races, as was evident in Johny's story.

Occupational personae

Wicks (2005) argues that occupational personae affect patterns of occupational participation, influencing people's capacities and the realisation of their occupational potential. She defines occupational persona as 'a dimension of personality that characterises a person's occupational nature' (Wicks, 2005:137). An occupational persona aims to capture the core of the person's being in a phrase which speaks to the character of the particular person. I propose Johnny's persona is best captured by his words: *'I have to overcome'*. Johnny has endured many hardships in his career as a cyclist, yet he shows his determination through continued efforts to reach his dream of being a world class cyclist. *'You feel proud of yourself'* is the phrase that depicts Shaun's persona best. He takes pride in the choices he has made, in spite of adversity and he role models these choices to younger riders and his team mates. Leon's persona is encapsulated by the phrase: *'That's what I did'*. He is clearly an independent thinker, making his own choices and relying on himself for answers. Wicks (2005) contends that the development of occupational potential is unique to each person and therefore, considered largely unpredictable. I agree with her conclusion that people who engage in meaningful occupations are more likely to develop and realise their occupational potential, highlighting the need for sports coaches not only to focus on the athlete's physical abilities as the only predictor for good sporting performances, but to strongly consider the environmental influences and the meaning of the particular occupation for individuals.

5.2.2 Occupational tensions

Taking care not to idealise or romanticise the experiences of the participants, account should be taken of the hardships they face through their engagement in this sport. It has been contended that adulthood produces 'occupational tensions and pressures related to participating in multiple occupations, the responsibilities of earning an income, and caring for dependents' (Wicks, 2005:135). Indeed the findings showed how each participant fulfils multiple roles, such as friend, provider and family member. Every role has certain expectations and concurrent occupations, some of which are in conflict with the role of professional cyclist, while others clearly support this role. African participants, in particular, experience occupational tensions as a result of competition between their role as family member and that of professional cyclist. I propose that these particular tensions could be due to a lack of understanding of the demands of professional cycling largely because cycling is a less well-known sport within the African context. Occupational tensions arising from interaction with peers who pressure participants to engage in occupations counter to cycling performance were common to all participants.

The nature of competitive cycling as an occupation clearly demands a high level of commitment and participants have to choose carefully how they spend their time, limiting the range of occupations they are able to participate in. The process of participation requires participants to make sacrifices on various levels. For some, this meant enduring hardships due to a lack of resources, while others had to make lifestyle changes, or learn to get along with people from different cultural backgrounds.

5.3 Theme 2: The environment: Barriers or facilitators?

5.3.1 Introduction to the theme

From the findings of the current research it is evident that the environment plays a significant role in facilitating or hindering participation in cycling. Considering the role of the environment on people and their occupations is relevant to occupational therapy and has received increased attention from occupational therapists in recent years (Christiansen and Baum, 1997). The profession of occupational therapy now rightfully acknowledges the role of the environment as a means of intervention (Law, 2002).

Environmental factors are defined by the ICF as those aspects that 'make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives' WHO (2001:171). The WHO (2001) advises that an environmental factor can be a barrier because of its presence, but also because of its absence. With regards to facilitators, one should consider the accessibility of a resource as well as its sustainability and quality. The four categories of environmental factors that influence participation¹³ are used here to frame the discussion of the second theme.

5.3.2 Surviving on sugar water: Products and technology

A lack of resources is evidently a common theme for the majority of participants in this study. In the absence of South African research to draw on, one merely has to attend a cycling race to realise that it is an expensive sport reserved for the participation of those who can afford the bicycles, gear, entry fees and transport to access the races. The ICF acknowledges the role products and technologies can play in improving function (WHO, 2001). Members of the professional team receive all equipment including their bikes, helmets, tires, gloves, pumps, accessories and supplements from the organisation. In addition, they have access to specialised resources such as a sport psychologist and medical and dietary consultations. I argue that the provision of specialised products (such as supplements) and technology (specialised equipment and training) to cyclists from disadvantaged

¹³ There are four categories, namely, products and technology, the natural environment, the influence of relationships and lastly, services, systems and policies.

communities is a prerequisite for equal participation in competitive cycling. Coakley (2003: 339), a sports sociologist, contends that:

Unless equipment and training are provided, ... young men from low income groups stand little chance of competing against upper income peers, who can buy equipment and training if they want to develop skills.

The contracts of participants were terminated due to unsatisfactory performance and they had to return their bikes and gear to the organisation. In view of the participants' lack of resources, I argue that after the termination of their contracts it is highly unlikely for participants to successfully make their way back to the arena of professional cycling. I therefore question whether the provision of products and technology can be considered a sustainable facilitator for participation in competitive cycling.

5.3.3 'The place where I come from, some call it the ghettos': The natural environment

Fourie, Galvaan and Beeton (2004) highlighted how something as devastating as poverty can be experienced in different ways by different people. The effect of township living serves as a barrier to participation and bears a strong relation to poverty. Within the context of the current research, I contend that, where the natural environment can serve as a barrier to participation for one participant (Shaun), it can also serve as a facilitator for others (Leon and Johny). Leon and Johny both described their hardships when growing up in poverty and considered these very experiences as the basis to develop self-reliance and contribute towards motivation for sustained participation in cycling. A study by Douglas and Carless (2006) similarly revealed how experienced athletes viewed hardships in a positive light, believing that they helped to develop strength and resilience which facilitated sport performance. Experiences of the participants related to poverty resonate with the words of John Gilmour (in Heyns 2008:30), head at the LEAP Science and Maths School:

Ambitious young sports people emerging from difficult economic circumstances are often driven by this context and they see sport as a possible pathway to economic progress.

5.3.4 The influence of relationships

Within the framework of the ICF, support and relationships refer to persons who provide physical or emotional support in the person's home, family or community life. It does not refer to the attitude of the persons providing support, but focuses on the amount of support provided (WHO, 2001). The

ICF describes attitudes as 'the observable consequences of customs, practices, ideologies, values, norms, factual beliefs and religious beliefs' (WHO, 2001:190). The concept of support is interrelated in terms of relationships and people's attitudes. The participants' stories clearly reveal how the presence or absence of support can play a role in facilitating or hindering not only participation but also performance. The sources of support identified are family support, community and team support and the influence of cyclists as role models.

Family support

Sports literature confirms the positive contribution of support from significant others in enabling successful participation in elite level sport (Burnett, 2003; Burnett, 2005). Occupational therapy literature also proved that social support leads to motivation facilitating participation in occupation (Isaksson, Lexell and Skär, 2007). As a useful way to understand the support provided to participants in more detail and depth, one can consider the functions of social support as listed by McColl (1997). These functions will be described within the context of the participants' experiences. Esteem support (improving self-esteem through reflection from others), belonging support (making the person feel secure and providing a sense of attachment) and instrumental support (physically helping the person) are described by participants whose family members have experience or an interest in cycling. Where most participants are dependent on the provision of informational support (providing guidance and information) from the coach, this form of support was provided by Johny's brother following his leaving the team. The provision of informational support is, as in the previous instances, also dependent on the involvement of family members in cycling.

In some instances, a perceived negative relationship could also serve as a facilitator for participation in cycling, as is evident Leon's case where cycling serves as a way to escape from the tension inherent in his relationship with his family.

Participants, particularly those from African communities, experience a lack of family support, which they consider as a barrier to participation in cycling. Bonisile Ntlemeza (in Heyns 2009:29), a life orientation teacher at LEAP school and chairman of the Langa Hockey Club, commented on the role of the parents of black athletes:

Black children are mostly influenced by their friends or peer groups. Most of them tend to come from families where there is one parent, who has to work long hours in order to support the family and as a result, the parent has limited or no time to get actively involved in the child's extramural activities.

Ntlemeza's experience does not suggest that parents are not interested, yet sport participation might not be their highest priority as the day-to-day existence of the family has to come first. He further contends that while parental involvement may encourage sport participation within a resource-poor context, their absence has been accepted as 'normal parenting behaviour'. As the most important influence in participation is the peer group, the absence of parents 'does not make much of a difference' (Heyns, 2009:30). However, based on the findings of this research, I propose that the parents' lack of involvement in the participants' cycling career does influence professional cyclists' participation negatively.

The community

From this study it is apparent that cyclists from townships often suffer the consequences of negative attitudes of community members towards them. These attitudes often present themselves in the form of mocking and disrespect and could be rooted in jealousy, because cyclists are perceived to have more potential opportunities afforded to them. Although a team sport, cycling is often perceived as an individual sport as it requires cyclists to spend a great deal of time training, mostly on their own. Could cyclists be seen as pursuing their own individual ambitions, and not really contributing to the betterment of the community? One participant strongly felt that community members perceive cyclists as turning their backs on 'township life', thinking they are better than others. A possible explanation for this perception could be the way in which sport is linked with access to economic, political and social resources in society (Coakley, 2003). In this sense, cyclists could be a symbol of inequality where certain opportunities are afforded to some, but not to others. If indeed, these speculations are true, it could prove to be helpful in changing the attitudes amongst community members. I propose that the attitudes of communities will start to change through increased exposure to cycling events and by creating opportunities where they can share in the victories and experiences of professional cyclists from their local context.

The team

The findings highlight the different experiences of participants within the context of their team. The African participants, as a majority group, experience a greater sense of team cohesion and belonging which serves as a facilitator for participation. This contrasts with Leon's experience when he perceived the disorganisation of the team as a barrier to participation. Coloured participants, being a minority, could feel isolated because of the language barrier and different cultural background. The importance of team cohesion is confirmed by recent sports literature, asserting it as an important determinant of motivation amongst athletes (Blanchard, Amiot, Perreault, Vallerand and

Provencher, 2009). South African sports literature similarly recommends that coaches give specific attention to the promotion of team spirit in contributing to improved performance outcomes (Andrew, Grobbelaar and Potgieter, 2007).

Blanchard et al (2009:2) define team cohesiveness as 'the dynamic process reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of members' affective needs'. From the key informant, it is evident that conflicting intra-group dynamics affected the cycling team's participation and performance negatively. It is interesting to note that the only participant to relay information on perceived negative team dynamics was Leon, who knew he would never return to the team. Cushion and Jones (2006) provide useful insights into why young sports participants reserve their opinions. In their study on professional youth soccer, Cushion and Jones (2006:156) commented on how players perceived coaches as 'gatekeepers' to 'becoming a pro', and players therefore willingly maintained the status quo, deliberately not challenging authority. Similar to the underperformance of cyclists described by the sports director, the soccer players displayed collective resistance towards coaches by means of engaging in 'output restriction'. This implies secretly conserving energy, making an effort not to appear eager, as this has the potential for a team member to be marginalised by peers (Cushion and Jones, 2006). I have my own analogy to explain the underperformance of team members, which is based on the authority and power ascribed to the team leader by the sports director and team coach. The team members are considered as the stars and the team leader the sun. The presence of the stars only comes to light in the absence of the sun. Yet, when the sun comes up, its light outshines that of the stars although they are still present.

'He was my example': The significance of role models

Interaction with role models is valued as positively contributing to cycling participation and performance. Participants also regard being a role model to upcoming cyclists as contributing to sustained participation. Supporting this notion, Wicks (2005) contends that the availability of role models plays a major role in the development of occupational potential although Ngwenya (in Du Toit, 2009:27) confirmed the risks related to the vulnerability of sports stars who serve as role models to so many upcoming youth:

One day they [athletes] are at the top, tomorrow they are not. Then there is the question of social behaviour – will they always behave decently? Very few athletes will at all times stick to proper behaviour – even an icon like Michael Phelps failed the test.

Another tension that emerged is that the best performers are not always the most ideal role models, highlighting the significance of not only developing the athletes' skills to perform well, but also their potential to act as role models to upcoming youth (Burnett, 2005).

5.3.5 'The structure is in place': Services, systems and policies

The structures that govern the Cycling Club and the professional team emerged as an important influence on the performance of cyclists. According to the ICF's description of environmental factors:

Services ... provide benefits, structured programmes and operations ... designed to meet the needs of individuals. ... Systems ... are administrative control and organisational mechanisms. ... Policies govern and regulate the systems that organise, control and monitor services (WHO, 2001:192).

Services

The Cycling Club enables opportunities for participation in competitive cycling that is dependent on sponsorships obtained by the managers. It was evident that the current lack of funding for the running costs of the programme is threatening the existence of the programme, which, if not resolved, could limit participation entirely. Services function within systems, governed by policies and will be explored further.

Systems and policies

Systems and policies influence the cyclists' performance and subjective experiences of the programme. Flether and Wagstaff (2009:2) contend that 'elite athletes do not live in a vacuum; they function within a highly complex social and organisational environment, which exerts major influences on them and their performances'. Coakley (1992:283) expresses his critique towards organisations that 'are doing little to promote recognition of athletes as human beings rather than performance machines'. I consider it problematic that the provision of services to participants is dependent on their performance. When the participants' performance drop, interventions are wrongfully aimed at altering individual attributes believed to help them adjust to the requirements of competitive sport (Coakley, 1992). Instead, I propose taking account of the role of environment on the performance of athletes, and the provision of access to opportunities for participation which is not solely dependent on performance.

5.6 Theme 3: The cycle of occupational performance: When people, environments and occupations meet

5.6.1 Introduction to Theme 3

I am of the view that the current research offers a unique and fresh perspective to understanding the experiences of young cyclists from disadvantaged contexts by foregrounding the outcome of interactions between the person, his/her occupation and the environment in which participation takes place. Similar to the suggestion of Law et al (1997), this process is dynamic in nature and requires continuous renegotiation as variables inherent to the occupation, person and environment changes. This dynamic and interactive process is illustrated by means of the diagram illustrating the relationship of the themes that emerged through the study (see Figure 5.1).

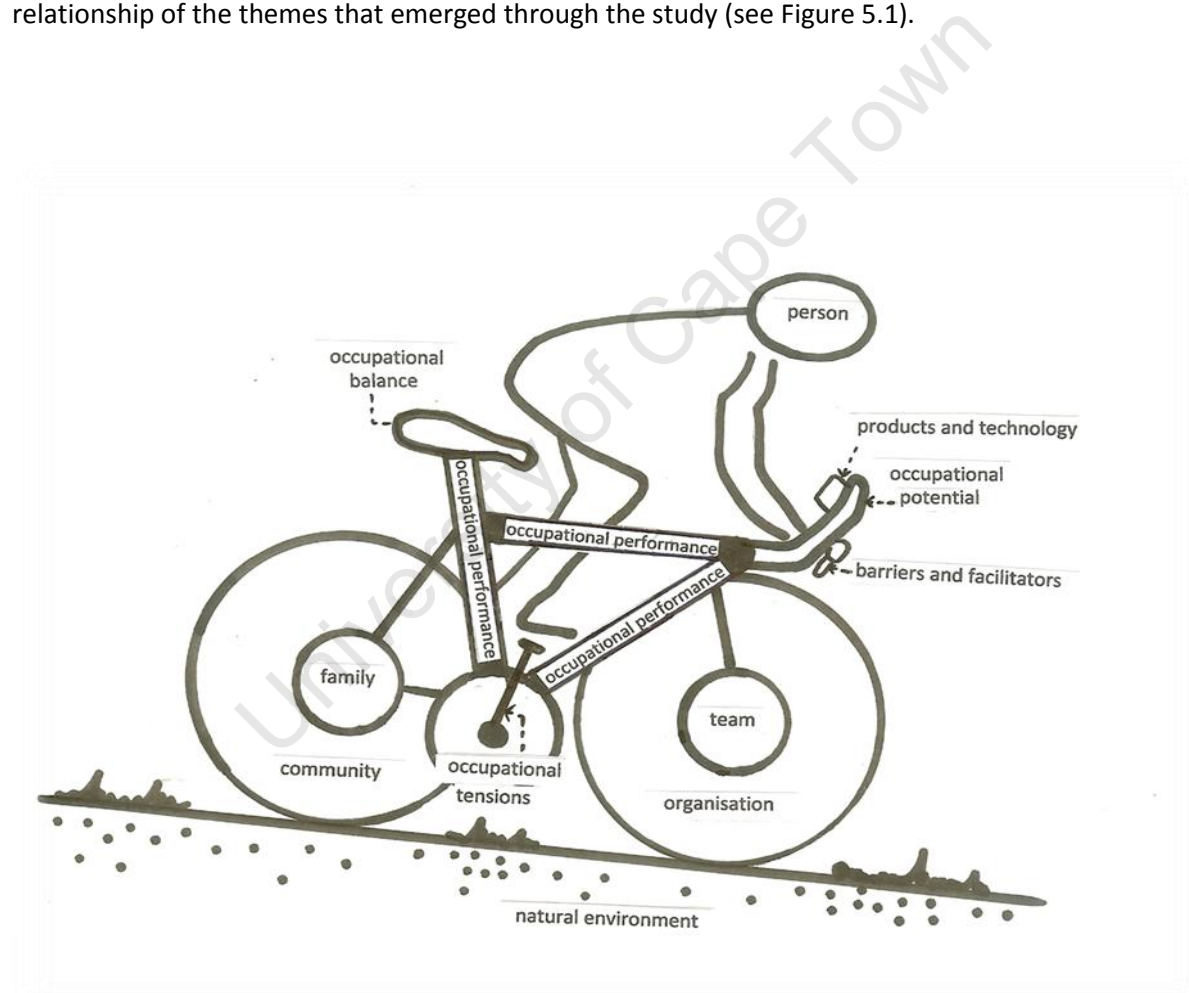


Figure 5.1: The cycle of occupational performance

5.6.2 Explanation of the cycle

The person

The person is regarded as 'a unique being who assumes a variety of roles simultaneously' (Law et al, 1997:93). The meaning participants ascribe to cycling through their participation was explored in more depth under the first theme, '**Cycling really changed my life**'. The experience of participation concurs with the assertion of Christiansen (1999:547) that 'occupations are key not just to being a person, but to being a *particular* person, and thus creating meaning and identity.' I propose that the process of meaning-making is subject to personal and environmental influences, as seen in this study.

The occupation

The first theme in this chapter described how participation in cycling contributed to the development of participants' occupational potential. I propose that participation in meaningful occupations not only increases the likelihood of developing potential, but also contributes to achieving a sense of control and goal directedness, symbolised by the handlebars of the bicycle.

Participation in cycling has elucidated the restorative and transformative potential of occupation, enabling youth to develop a vision for the future. In this sense, occupational engagement does not only build participants' capacity as cyclists, but, crucially, as human resources. The findings have highlighted how participation in meaningful occupations leads to achieving a sense of occupational balance, thus contributing to a sense of well-being. The development of occupational balance is depicted as the saddle of the bicycle – a symbol for being centred.

Occupational tensions were described by cyclists as experiencing pressures from engagement in multiple roles in addition to their role as professional cyclists. The foot pedals represent these tensions. On a symbolic level, I propose that when additional roles support the role of professional cyclist, the person will be pedalling easier, or, with increased resistance as occupational tensions between roles arise.

The environment

Participation, particularly at the elite level, is evidently dependent on access to supportive relationships, opportunities and resources, which will be discussed in this section. The provision of products and technology is shown through the speedometer, measuring speed and distance, attached to the handlebar of the bike. If the speedometer is removed, the cyclist is dependent on

other less sophisticated means to obtain information, often relying on others or mere guessing. The findings have revealed the difficulties cyclists face when they are dropped from the team and having to return their equipment and gear and rely on their own resources to continue participation.

The natural environment is represented by the path on which the person cycles and this can be steep, level or downhill. While it is not easy climbing a hill, no one can deny that it makes you stronger and fitter. The findings have similarly shown how some participants regard their challenging environment, often relating to poverty, as opportunities for character building. Yet, others have had to change course, by means of relocating to another area, as their environment severely hindered participation.

The wheels consist of the hubs and outer wheels. The hub of the rear wheel represents the participant's family, situated in the broader context of the community (outer wheel). The team similarly depicts the hub of the front wheel, functioning in the context of the organisation with its services, systems and policies. As the wheels support the frame of the bicycle and the person, it is envisaged that cyclists' families, communities, cycling team and organisation should support their participation. Yet the findings revealed that support systems serve as facilitators and barriers to participation, depending on the context of the cyclist.

Gears symbolise how the environment can be a barrier or facilitator to participation, having an effect on the entire bike and the cyclist's experience. Gears can, and should be adjusted according to the needs of the cyclist as determined by the external environment.

Occupational performance

Occupational performance is depicted as the triangular framework of the bicycle. The decision to position it centrally symbolises its significance as the outcome of interactions between the person, environment and occupation of cycling. Baum and Law (1997) defined occupational performance as the person's dynamic experience of participating in daily occupations within his/her environment. Just as a bicycle should be set up to fit a particular individual, Law et al (1997:93) assert that an 'improved fit between person, occupation, and environment will result in optimal occupational performance'. No one part has meaning or purpose without the other. Rigby and Letts (2003:26) confirmed the nature of the PEO model as 'interwoven and inseparable'. It is a construct constantly changing over time together with the meaning people ascribe to occupation, changing life roles and varying demands of the environment. Interventions aimed at an improved 'fit' can target the person, occupation and the environment although research has shown that environments are more

amenable to change than individuals (Law et al 1997; Rigby and Letts, 2003). I argue that the cycling coach and sports director pay considerable attention to personal factors and technical aspects, relating to the occupation of cycling, without considering the dramatic effect environmental changes can have on the performance of cyclists. Through this study I have highlighted the unique contribution of occupational therapy in the field of sport as simple yet powerful. The PEO model helps to illustrate the factors identified that influence occupational performance. This knowledge can be used by the therapist, together with the coaching team and participants, to plan interventions targeted at optimising the occupational performance of cyclists.

5.7 Limitations of the research

The findings clearly suggest that cyclists' experiences are influenced by the environment, inclusive of culture, social context and physical environment. Two of the three participants come from Coloured communities, whereas the majority of cyclists on the team are from African communities. The study further explored the experiences of only three of the eight official members of the cycling team. By implication, the findings derived from the sample cannot be generalised to represent the experiences of all members of the cycling team, or all professional cyclists.

In the absence of explicit examples, I remain uncertain as to how much information participants decided not to share with me based on differences relating to gender, race or class. It has to be stated, however, that these differences could have influenced the findings of the study.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the three main themes, namely, how cycling has made a difference to the lives of participants, the role of the environment as barrier and facilitator to participation and the process of occupational performance within the context of the findings of the study. The symbol of a bicycle was used to depict my understanding of occupational performance as an interaction between the cyclist, the environment and the occupation of cycling.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter concludes the research by summarising the most important findings and by making recommendations that emanate from this study.

6.1 Conclusions

This qualitative study intended to uncover the experiences, of young cyclists from disadvantaged communities, relating to their participation in professional cycling. The PEO model (Law et al, 1996) was used as a conceptual framework, emphasising the influence and interrelatedness between the person, environment and occupation on the person's occupational performance. The difference cycling made to the lives of participants was explored, highlighting the restorative value and transformative potential of occupational engagement, which contribute to developing a vision for the future. The study proposes that participation in cycling serves as means for the development of occupational potential, thus contributing to achieving a sense of occupational balance. Occupational tensions were described, arising from participation in multiple occupations often conflicting with the occupation of cycling.

The ICF's list of environmental factors highlighted the role of the environment as facilitator or barrier to participation (WHO, 2001). Environmental aspects include the provision of products and technology; the natural environment; the influence of relationships, support and attitudes, which included the role of family, community, team and role models; and the services, systems and policies of the cycling organisation. Although the cyclists' experiences of environmental factors as facilitators or barriers differed, it is evident that their significance should be considered more carefully by coaching staff.

This study offers a fresh perspective in understanding the experiences of professional cyclists. Knowing how concepts relating to the PEO model affect cycling performance and productivity could enable coaches to optimise the performance of cyclists, while taking a holistic approach. The current research differs from conventional sporting interventions such as sport psychology, sport sociology and life skills training, by focussing on the effect of the environment on sporting performance as well as focussing on the quality of experience of participation, rather than trying to improve sporting performance. Cycling is considered as a meaningful occupation, proving that participation in professional cycling means much more to participants than just riding a bicycle and performing well.

I propose that understanding the experiences of cyclists should serve as the point of departure for all parties interested in developing the potential of cyclists. Taking an occupational perspective will require the Cycling Club to make explicit attempts to allow cyclists to voice their experiences of participation in cycling. This approach will position cyclists at the centre of the process enabling the empowerment of cyclists through reflection on their experiences.

6.2 Recommendations

This study has yielded the need for further research into the following areas: cyclists' performances and the Cycling Club.

6.2.1 Cyclists' performances

- Explore the multiple roles and role expectations of cyclists in more depth, to determine the extent to which these roles support or inhibit the performance of professional cyclists. This could contribute to a deeper understanding of the occupational tensions described by cyclists.
- The study has revealed how families and communities can serve as barrier or facilitator to participation in cycling. I propose that further research explores the perspectives of families and communities to inform interventions aimed at gaining social support for young cyclists.
- Team dynamics emerged as a factor influencing the experience of participation in cycling. Further research into the perspectives of team members and coaches on factors that influence team cohesion could contribute to a better understanding team dynamics, which would ultimately result in improved team performance.
- This study has led me to the following hypothesis: An improved experience in the quality of participation in the occupation of cycling would result in improved performance. Quantitative research would be a suitable means to test this hypothesis, measuring occupational performance outcomes and correlating them with overall cycling performance.

6.2.2 The Cycling Club

The Cycling Club plays a major role in contributing to the experience of professional cyclists. The following recommendations are made to improve the experiences of cyclists, and ultimately their performance:

- The Cycling Club needs to recognise its role and responsibility towards cyclists who are leaving the programme. The future aspirations of these cyclists should be explored and supported by the programme. How the Cycling Club will support these cyclists needs to be negotiated and formalised in a company policy. It is recommended that these negotiations involve all role players including team members.
- The Cycling Club needs to reconsider the set-up of the team structure. A shift in power is recommended, where the team leader is not necessarily the best rider in the team, but one with leadership abilities and who proves to be a consistent performer. Alternatively, team leaders must be coached to manage their position of power and the self-esteem of team members must be developed so that they do not feel as powerless.

The findings of the research, together with these recommendations will be presented to the Cycling Club. I intend making my services available to the Cycling Club should they wish to implement these recommendations into their programme.

6.2.3 Occupational therapy and the wider sporting community

This study has revealed the unique contribution of occupational therapy to the world of professional sport when taking an occupational perspective. I therefore plan to present the outcomes of this study to occupational therapists and the wider sporting community to raise awareness of the occupational therapist's role outside the conventions of traditional therapy. The study also appears to further the understanding of occupation and as such, makes a potential contribution to the field of occupational science in developing previously disadvantaged contexts.

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APPENDIX 1



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Division of Occupational Therapy

Consent form for the Cycling Club

1. I agree to allow participants from the professional group at the Cycling Club to participate in this research project.
2. I have read the 'Research Information Sheet' and had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
3. I agree to responses from participants being used for education and research on the condition that their privacy is respected by the use of a pseudonym (false name).
4. I understand that the Cycling Club is under no obligation to allow participation in this project.
5. I understand that the Cycling Club and its participants have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of CEO at the Cycling Club:

Name (in print):

Signature of researcher:

Date:

APPENDIX 2

Reminder to participants:

DO YOU THINK YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE CYCLING PROGRAMME HAS CHANGED ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE?

IF YOU DO, TAKE PICTURES OF THOSE THINGS YOU FEEL HAVE CHANGED BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE CYCLING PROGRAMME.

You are under no obligation to take all 27 photos on the film. You can stop taking pictures when you feel you are done. If you feel you still need to continue, but the film is full, please let me know. You are more than welcome to take more pictures.

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 3: Audit trail

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 4



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Division of Occupational Therapy

Research Information Sheet

Introduction

This research project has been initiated and will be performed by Suzanne Stark who is a practicing occupational therapist and an enthusiastic cyclist. The researcher is currently employed by the Department of Health and works at the Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre (WCRC) in the field of physical disability. At present, she is completing her masters degree in occupational therapy at the University of Cape Town. This research project is being done in partial fulfilment of this degree. If you have any queries at any given stage during the research process, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Researcher contact details:

(021) 370 2494 (W)

(021) 948 6792 (H)

083 56 99 667 (C)

sustark@gmail.com

Research title

Participation in professional cycling: The experiences of young cyclists from disadvantaged communities.

Nature of the research

The Cycling Club has two aims: to enable young people from disadvantaged contexts the opportunity to cycle at the competitive level and to improve cyclists' lives through their participation in cycling. This research study aims to find out how young cyclists from disadvantaged communities experience their participation in professional cycling.

Participant's involvement

Three cyclists from the professional group will be required to participate in the study. You will be provided with a disposable camera and asked to take pictures according to a topic provided. It is the responsibility of the researcher to develop these photographs. She will then contact you and arrange for a meeting where the pictures will provide a basis for discussion. The researcher will, at all times, attempt to meet you at a venue of your choice. It is estimated that this process of information gathering will take place during the months of August and September, 2008. You would be requested to participate in four discussions lasting at least one hour each.

Risks

As you will be in possession of a disposable camera, it is possible that other people may consider mugging you for this. It is very important to realize that no picture is worth taking if it is going to endanger you in any way. Be alert and aware of your surroundings when taking pictures. You could consider taking friends or family along or going out at times of the day which you consider to be safer. Your own safety always comes first. If therefore, you are robbed of the camera and have suffered physical harm, you should first find medical help before considering alerting the researcher. If you feel emotionally unsettled by the event, please call the researcher who will arrange for you to speak to a counsellor should you agree.

Benefits

It is hoped that this study will provide cyclists at the Cycling Club the opportunity to voice their perspectives of the change this program has brought about in their lives. Aspects which assist and limit participation in cycling will be explored and could provide useful information for program development in the future. This would indicate to the Cycling Club how to best support their cyclists to enable them to develop as professional athletes and valuable members of communities.

Payment

You will not receive any payment for your participation in the study.

Ethical concerns

It has been agreed that the findings of this study will be presented to the Cycling Club. Do bear in mind that a false name will be used to protect your identity in all instances where the findings of the study are revealed. All information you wish to share will be held confidential. The researcher will store information in a safe and private area and dispose of it a year after publication of the study. You are under no obligation to participate in this study and you have the right to withdraw at any given point in time without providing an explanation. There will be no penalty involved should you wish to withdraw and neither the researcher nor the Cycling Club will hold your decision against you in any way. All costs pertaining to cameras, film and development of film and photographs will be covered by the researcher. Should you have to travel to meet the researcher, you will be refunded for transport costs involved.

Compensation

In the event of injury there will be no cover to compensate for losses incurred.

Further information

If you have any enquiries regarding the ethical considerations pertaining to this study, do not hesitate to contact the researcher's supervisor (Theresa Lorenzo) or the head of the ethical committee linked to the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (Jennifer Jelsma). The contact person is Lamees Emjedi at (021) 4066338.

APPENDIX 5



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Division of Occupational Therapy

Consent form for participants

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read the 'Research Information Sheet' and had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on the condition that my privacy is respected by the use of a pseudonym (false name).
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of participant:

Name of participant:

Signature of researcher:

Date: