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Grade 8 learners' perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: Affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
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Grade 8 learners' perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: Affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports

by

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Research proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Education Masters in Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Witwatersrand.

Declaration

I, Kwanele Ngema, hereby declare that the research report titled *Grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports* for a Master's in Education is my original work, done under the guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Moeniera Moosa. All the data provided is authentic. I have included the necessary acknowledgements and provided references of all sources that have been used.



Kwanele Ngema Date: 4th of March 2024

Dedication

I dedicate this Master's research report to my mother, Thobeka Ngema, and to every child from Kwamashu. The adversities I encountered growing up caused me to persevere and show zeal and tenacity in completing this degree.

Above all, thank you, God, for giving me the courage and the strength.

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I acknowledge and thank the following people for their unwavering support and dedication in ensuring that my research was completed:

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Besides my advisor, I thank the participants of this study for their encouragement and insightful comments. I also place on record my sincere gratitude to the principal of the selected independent school, who gave me permission to carry out my research in his school.

Abstract

The progress towards the right to inclusive education is through "a learning environment that promotes the full personal academic and professional development for all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language" (Du Plessis, 2013, p.78). Schools are not a place for learning academically only but also socialisation and the importance of inclusion in sports for *all*. Inequalities in the education system in South Africa caused by colonisation and apartheid have caused discrepancies not only in academic performance, but also in participation in sport. Current debates on the topic have raised the issue that school sport is intrinsically exclusive. The significance of this research is therefore that it brings to the surface underlying dynamics to do with schools and learner participation in sport. The challenges that learners experience are epistemological, ontological and axiological, as they encompass socio-economic barriers, discriminatory and negative attitudes, and language and communication difficulties. Drawing from Frisby and Ponic (2013) and others, this research report discusses how sport is understood and implemented in independent schools, and how the sports system, composed of multiple symbolic interactions with learners, includes or excludes large numbers of individuals. The study focusses not only on the physical and racial aspects of inclusion, but on the meaning of sport in an independent all-boys school, the ways in which sport is used for marketing purposes, and how this prioritising of public image can and does affect learner participation. Certain sports are prioritised over others, perpetuating the erroneous and sexist notion that some sports are "weak" and for "soft" boys.

The major interest of the study is what learners themselves think of the topic, and what may be learned from their experiences with regard to the affordances and drawbacks of participation in sport at an independent boy's school. The purpose of the study is to investigate how inclusion and exclusion is perceived by the learners, and which inclusive strategies or cultures are enabling and disabling to learners. Two theoretical frameworks were used as a basis of understanding: ubuntu, which establishes foundational principles for understanding inclusivity in school sport and provides a foundation on which to assess sports-related school practices, and the theory of marginalisation, which provides an ideal frame for understanding the experiences of learners with regard to school sport.

The methodology used is qualitative, since the project sought to understand the phenomena of inclusion and exclusion from the perspective of the participants. The sample size was 12, all Grade 8 learners at a single independent boys school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, purposively sampled on the basis of their ability to answer the research questions. Open ended questionnaires and individual interviews were the research instruments adopted. Twelve participants completed the questionnaire, and six were interviewed. Their responses in both the open-ended questionnaires and interviews reflect current debates on the issue of inclusion and exclusion in sport.

The findings show that learners have a diverse understanding of what inclusion in sport is; definitions included being accepted by others, working together, equal opportunities, and a holistic approach to education. The main affordance of participating in sport was identified as the values, friendships, break from academic work, professional opportunities, physical and mental health benefits that may be developed through sport; the drawbacks were the difficulties of balancing academics and sport, the pressures associated with playing for the A team (or striving to get in to the A team), injuries, being left out, and bias and discrimination. The main finding is that exclusion is being practised in subtle ways, and that there is a need for diversity in sport. There are also a number of symbolic interactions that occur in school sport that are unrelated to systematic processes, and which undermine and exclude some learners from participation in sport.

Key words: Affordances, drawbacks, Grade 8, high school, independent all-boys high school, sports

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Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the study, discussing the subject of school sport in relation to inclusivity and exclusivity, the development of sport as an integral part of the school syllabus, and the meanings that have developed around school sport globally and in South Africa. Key concepts that come to the fore in this chapter are social class, race, ability and gender, all of which may play a role in the exclusion of certain learners from full participation in sport.

The study is located at an independent all-boys high school in Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. I was interested in the views of learners who had recently transitioned from primary school (Grade 7) to high school (Grade 8), some of whom may have been encountering private school education for the first time, and might therefore be more attuned to practices that either included or excluded. My aim was to examine questions of inclusion in relation to race, class, ability and the school's bias for certain sports over others. The theoretical frameworks of inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation are employed in this study to add depth and perspective to the issues uncovered through open ended questionnaires and interviews. These issues are examined in greater depth in Chapter 2, the literature review. Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to some of these issues, and gives an overview of the study as a whole, discussing the study background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, definition of terms, and limitation of this study.

The chapter also examines the interesting notion of whether school sport can ever be considered completely inclusive when much of it occurs outside of learners' cultural worlds. A brief review of the literature reveals that society is structured on a class basis, that schools have adopted the values of the middle class, and that this bias for the middle class can hinder the participation of all learners in sport. All of these can act in subtle and overt ways to exclude vast numbers of learners from full participation in school sport.

1.2 Background

Inclusive education in a democratic South Africa seeks to bring about alternative ways of thinking about race, class, gender and ability. The principles of inclusive education in South Africa seek to destabilise the epistemologies and ontologies of western hegemony and

promotes inclusion and the diversity of people's life experiences "regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (UNESCO, 1994, p.ix). With inequalities that need to be eradicated "inclusive education has evolved as a movement that seeks to challenge exclusionary policies and practices." (Du Plessis, 2013, p. 76). Therefore, inclusive education for sports emerged to counter the marginalizing, labeling and exclusive practices because of the inequality in sports caused by the disparities of the apartheid era before 1994.

Many viewpoints have been posited on the necessity of sport in education. One is that sport promotes inclusion by addressing societal transformation, repairing historical social scars and fostering social cohesiveness (Moodley & Adam, 2000). Some writers accuse the current sports administrations of trying to seize control of school sport and use it as a vehicle for political grandstanding and the expression of certain ideologies in which an "us" versus "them" scenario prevails. Govender (2017), writing in the *Mail & Guardian*, highlights the issue of poaching, i.e. the practice of enticing parents to relocate their offspring to certain schools so that the schools may draw reputational benefits from the talents of the learners in question. Govender quotes a school principal as saying, "Poaching in any shape or form is against the spirit of our fellowship as schools. Poaching in high school sport is a huge and significant issue. I would hate to know the monetary value of all these movements" (Govender, 2017, p. 1). The quote suggests that South African private schools have moved towards inclusion in some respects, yet may have failed to develop a system of education that is liberating to all. The talented few are sought after; the rest remain excluded.

Inclusive education address diverse abilities and needs, therefore, could be liberating to those subjugated and have had to adopt ethos, values and processes of the culture of the middle class appropriated by schools, this denies difference (Dreyer & Mfuthwana, 2018). Whereas inclusion address *discrepancies* caused by race, gender and class in regard to education (Skelton, Carrington, Francis, Hutchings, Read & Hall, 2009). In examining inclusion in sport, it is important to take international perspectives and experiences into consideration, as these contribute to an overarching understanding of the phenomenon, and can shed light on the issues that South African schools, sports administrators parents and learners are currently grappling with.

Internationally, there is an explicit connection between sport, cultures, traditions and conventions in single-gender private schools (Green & Collins, 2008). Desai (2021) argues that sport is sometimes used to support political agendas, with political agendas in turn used to justify the implementation of certain sports in schools. For example, single-gender private schools use the value of sport to justify their policies and actions, such as the policy of making sport compulsory.

In addition, Waters, Mcpherson and Schubert (2014) note that "within the culture of an all-male private school, sport often holds a special status … sport is typically associated with masculinity and receives broad social acceptance" (p. 1). The use of sport to promote a subtle political ideology and its symbolic value as an expression of masculinity indicates that school sport may be underpinned by a plethora of hidden agendas. When one combines this with the national practice of "buying" learners through scholarships and other incentive programmes, and the fact that "non-poaching" policies have had to be formulated, one begins to glimpse the fraught nature of school sport, in which learners are often the unwitting pawns. As a result of the perceived unethical nature of poaching, some schools in South Africa have opted not to compete against other schools, i.e., those that have poached their learners. This disadvantages learners who might wish to compete with certain schools, but cannot because of the school policy. It also robs learners of the pleasures of sport as a simple expression of physical skill and prowess, and an arena in which to learn values, build confidence, and form friendships. In many ways, sport may have become a facade for institutional agendas that are not openly acknowledged, with the school rather than the holistic development of learners becoming the focus (Desai, 2021).

The implementation of sports in traditional all-boys schools has been evaluated as "political" (Labuschagne, 2004). Sport in private schools has been developed on the basis of agendas, and has been used to maintain a certain perspective by those in authority (Labuschagne, 2004). Therefore, any endeavour to link sport to the idea of building a nation should be viewed with caution. There is more to building a nation than developing learners through sport, which is why many schools offer a variety of sports and also value cultural activities such as chess, music and drama. However, the fact that sport prevails as a central way of maintaining the dominance of a certain class or race suggests that school sport still needs to be enlightened by the principles of social justice and inclusion (Joubert, 2017). Desai (2021) posits that sport built on the promotion of social justice will promote inclusion and extend its advantages to all, thus enabling it to really contribute to nation building.

Before the change to a democratic dispensation in 1994, sport was characterised by racism, classism and sexism, all of which promoted exclusion. Bolsmann (2014) concurs, stating that sport in whites-only schools was different to sport in black schools, with certain sports and resources concentrated in white schools. Individuals are enculturated through a process of socialisation, in which young people appropriate the values and beliefs of those around them. In most countries, the dominant social group is the middle class, and the world has therefore been moulded in the image of this class, largely through the education systems of various countries.

Bourdieu (2007, p.83) contends that "it is … impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the form recognised by economic theory". What emanates from the above quote is that after 1994, South African schools practised assimilation, in which formally disadvantaged learners fortunate enough to get into private schools were expected to conform to the existing norms and values of these schools. Thus, working class learners had to adapt to the ethos, values and processes of the culture of the middle class, as expressed though the schools, which denied differences between classes (Makoelle, 2012). Post modernity experiences and globalisation have shown that dominating countries impose their way of living on perceived "lower" counties, and the same is true within a country where one culture has traditionally dominated. Policies and economic structures may have changed, but social domination takes far longer to transform. Historically the apartheid system ensured that black people looked "bad", "uncouth", and "futile" in every way from Bantu education deep down to the roots of sports. There has been the development of intricate sporting codes, rules to ensure fairness (Desai, 2021). For example, "The Western Province Under -16 team were demoted from playing in the Grant Khomo week's main game against Free State on Thursday for not meeting transformation targets" (Tshwaku, 2023, p.1).

In the school system, one may observe that participation in sports such as rugby and hockey sets learners apart and above learners who have an interest in other areas. The dominant class has shaped the idea of which sports are socially acceptable and which are not. This raises questions about the role of sport in education. However, in the midst of a dominant system, individuals still have agency, and can act in ways that are contrary to the "superstructure". The fact that individuals have free will and will assert it in surprising ways will always challenge prevailing ideologies. I expand on this idea in Chapter 2, showing how it has led to complexity

in the idea of inclusion and the possibility of participating in sports outside of one's own cultural practice.

The structure of education is a prime example of middle-class values. Bakken and Elastad, in Arnesen (2017, p.699) observe that

> [t]he school system retains powerful remnants of prejudice towards working class and disadvantaged students and a preference for middle-class rather than working class cultural capital, such that educational resources of families have a profound impact on student performance.

The cultural capital of the middle class is highly valued as it is associated with power. This means middle class and working-class learners enter the sporting arena with different amounts of social capital; the middle class child already has a leg up because he or she has the foundation – language – and economic means to enhance their ability through extra training. Although scholarship funding is available, it is not always accessible. Where access is an issue, learners may participate but not compete, as they will not be as well developed as those with more social capital. In most cases they will not participate at all. School fees act as the first barrier to serious participation, as even those on scholarships rarely receive full scholarships.

Makoelle (2012) argues that schools are a site for reproducing inequalities because they continue to ignore the struggles of the working class. Instead, the working class are expected to adapt to the cultural capital of the middle class, which the schools have internalised. This is amply evident in the arena of sport. Participation in sport is dependent not only on the learner, but also on the availability of resources, such as the people surrounding the learner, access to support materials such as balls and fields, and the different levels of attention outside of school that a learner may have access to. For example, "sport organizers and policy makers who are expected more than ever before to make sport accessible to historically excluded groups, but have few resources and guidelines on how to do so" (Frisby & Ponic, 2013, p.382).

The presence of all of these produces a particular kind of learner in terms of knowledge acquired, which is why middle class learners, already steeped in the cultural practices that schools have adopted, find sport (and learning in general) more accessible than working class learners. It is relatively easy for them, as it all occurs within their domain of cultural practice.

In seeking to understand the experiences of working-class learners, it is essential to pay attention to systems, the economy and power relations within systems, as they are expressions

of laws and regulations, and can be deliberate in excluding certain groups. For example, under apartheid, the Bantu education system was deliberate in who was educated and how they were educated (Makoelle, 2012). White learners were able to participate in any sport that kept them in the middle-class post-school, whereas black learners were able to participate only in sports that kept them in the working class (Jarvie & Reid, 1999). This created a certain perception about sport in schools. Some sports, such as rugby, were associated with the dominant culture and language. Dolby (2002, p.7) stresses the role of rugby as a marker of identity and a means of perpetuating inclusion: "Rugby and athletics are heralded as critical nodes of South African school's 'white' identity, connecting the school to other, local white schools and disconnecting it from black schools."

In South Africa there are two types of schools: government and private schools, which follow different syllabi: the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, or CAPS, in the case of government schools, and the Independent Education Board curriculum, or IEB, in the case of private schools. Schools may also be co-educational or single gender. The different syllabi mean that learners in these settings are exposed to different subjects and ways of teaching, and different sports. For example, IEB schools offer music as a school subject whereas government schools do not, as music is perceived not to have instrumental value; that is, it is unlikely to prepare learners for employment. Private schools are associated with a better quality of education than government schools, having better facilities and better teachers. They are therefore more able to prepare learners for higher education and life beyond the school.

Sport in schools reflects the generally homogenous nature of the culture in which they are embedded. "Schools all over the world are the laboratories for racial harmony or conflict, a microcosm of the society at large, challenged to transcend institutional and educational racism with alternatives of multi-cultural or anti-racist education" (Moodley & Adam, 2000, p.62). Post-1994, the government had to change how sport was implemented in schools because of the way in which it had previously denied the cultures, histories and experiences of many social groups. The first step was the introduction of the quota system, instated to make sport more inclusive (Dolby, 2002). The quota system has ensured that equal opportunities are afforded to all races. However, in practice it has led to even more detrimental attitudes. For example, if the player of colour performs well, the label and quota system is perceived positively and if the player has an awful performance the label takes another direction, and the attitude of the person being there to meet the quota requirement and not merit hence "this linguistic distinction assigns people to fixed categories that have a sense of permanence and inevitability about

them" (McDermott, Edgar & Scarloss, 2011, p.4). From an exclusionary lens the idea of quota in the negative perception of the quota system mentioned above, marginalizes the learners of colour and compromises the quota system "more kinds of children, measured and labeled this way and that, by race, native language . . . are gathering near the bottom of many school systems for all to see, theorize and diagnosis" (McDermott, et al, 2011, p.1).

Therefore, the quota system does not address the matter of a dominant culture in schools, particularly private schools. Moodley and Adam (2000) state that although changes such as the quota system and a more just allocation of resources have been implemented to promote inclusion, it is important to interrogate school sport to check whether there are exclusive aspects of its implementation in schools.

Inclusion is concerned with

> the process of creating just and equitable systems that facilitate people's choices and opportunities to engage (or not) in a wide range of social and democratic activities, including sport and recreation (Frisby & Ponic, 2013, p.381).

Therefore, sport should be inclusive to afford learners an opportunity to participate. From an inclusivity perspective, the negative realties pre-1994 cannot be separated from sport or sporting achievements.

Sporting bodies face a dilemma, well captured by Moodley and Adam (2000, p.56), who state:

> What lies at the heart of the South African dilemma is the tension between the ideal of colour-blindness and the need to recognise race in order to diminish the reality of colour inequity.

In 1998, Ndebele noted that people who were previously excluded continued to be excluded because of physical disability, race, gender and class. Since then, there has been a push to promote inclusion and equal representation in sport, regardless of ability, race, gender or socio-economic background. However, in the school system, inclusion may not be a straightforward matter. Geyer and Walton (2015, p.338) point out that "inclusion must entail full participation and a sense of belonging in the life of a school, and not just accommodation or tolerance of those previously excluded".

It should come as no surprise that attitudes to sport are also geographically situated and profoundly influenced by their sociocultural settings (Booth, 1998). According to Booth (1998), a study of history shows that no social practice has ever been immune from racism, including sport. In South Africa, sport is often held up as an ideal arena in which to demonstrate the principles of non-racism. Booth (1998, p.10) disputes this view, stating

> While contemporary thought tends to reify and idealise sport as a practice that transcends racism, South African history offers a sober reminder that sport is a political project inextricably tied to nationalism.

Thus sport is not culturally or socially a thing apart; it is subject to the same mores and practices that prevail in the society in which it is embedded. Every society constructs their own understanding of sport and has their ways of understanding and implementing sport. Barnes and McDonald (2021) state that sport is an activity that permeates daily life in many countries and is influenced by these societies' various sociocultural realities. According to Captain (1991), when examining sport from a sociocultural, race and ability perspective, one needs to understand how people were included or excluded, both in the past and in the present. It is clear that in independent schools, the practice and management of sport is based on Western and colonial norms, often leaving diverse groups marginalised and excluded (Noorbhai, 2020).

School sport therefore continues to be slightly inconsistent with the realities of South African society, in which the majority of learners come from previously disadvantaged sociocultural backgrounds (Bowley, 2013). Desai and Vahed (2010) concur with this observation, stating that sport has not always aligned with the sociocultural requirements and demands of the culture it is intended to serve. Instead it is deeply rooted in a colonial ethos. Noorbhai (2020, p. 22) states

> During colonialism in South Africa, exercise and sport were essential ingredients in shaping young boys in well-known British schools. This kind of approach manifested in many South African schools in the 1800s, particularly boys-only schools and what is also described as elite (private) schools.

This illustrates that sport in its current form and organisation has its roots in sociocultural features of the West. Sport is entangled with what Dunning (1992, p. 96) refers to "the phases

of colonisation", in which members of the working class gradually adopt the manners and standards of their former masters. From a Marxist perspective, this amounts to the inculcation of a hidden curriculum. Bourdieu (1988) concurs that in both epistemology and methodology, most sport in independent schools is Western influenced. Owing to its strong Western orientation, many learners remain insignificant to schools (Elias & Dunning, 1986). Similarly, Sandiford and Stoddart (1987) argued that historically, the practice of sport has been dominated by a Eurocentric perspective and has reflected Western sociocultural experiences, which naturally affects independent schools' ontological and axiological assumptions.

What is shocking is how Western views of sport have shaped the meaning of it and how, thirty years after the move to a democratic political dispensation, the practice of sport in South Africa is still an expression of Western ideologies. The issue might be that there are currently few written expressions of how sport may be viewed from an African sociocultural perspective. Bowley (2013) states that despite the existence of diverse cultures in South Africa, the implementation of sport in independent schools is dependent on Western values. This may be a consequence of the West's historically limited and ignorant perception that Africa and South Africa lacked a sporting tradition prior to European colonisation (see also Sandiford & Stoddart, 1987). Sport was therefore doomed from the start to be strongly affected by the West. Noorbhai (2020, p.23) states that early schools in South Africa "not only copied British political ideals but also mimicked Victorian attitudes".

> These influences flourished almost instantly in the many private and boys-only schools in South Africa. Sports played an important role in these schools with traditions and cultures that had existed for more than a century in Britain" (Noorbhai, 2020, p.23).

Therefore, according to Bhana (2008), in seeking to understand the realities of sport in South Africa, it crucial to first comprehend whose organising, stories, vocabulary, terms, perspectives and conceptions of existence are employed in sport. From the preceding discussion, it seems clear that all of these aspects are Western in nature; how non-Western people in South Africa view sport has not been fully explored. Uncertainty surrounds how diverse people in different social and cultural context's structure, narrate and perceive sport in independent schools. Little is known about how previously disadvantaged individuals understand sport as a whole and what they believe constitutes inclusion and exclusion in terms of their participation in sport. In order to summarise the issue, one key concern can be specifically noted: Because independent

schools do not use diverse sociocultural frameworks to analyse their practice of sport, the majority of previously disadvantaged learners at independent schools find sport to be exclusive (Bhana, 2008).

The global integration of sport into the education system was originally intended as a means of feeding sportsmen and women into the global sporting area, enabling them to compete at the highest level internationally (Tokila, 2002). The external and global introduction of sport into education indicates the interconnected nature of society and the features of a global (political) economy (Hall, 1992). Internationally, sport is sometimes perceived as a second form of politics, with the goal being to produce top athletes and maintain the social quo. This global political aspect of sport is imported into schools, where it constitutes a "hidden curriculum". Frank (2003, p.6) notes that "international sports are steeped in political controversies because most countries use sports to enhance their reputation in international political relationships". This being the case in the global arena, it should not be seen as surprising that the same applies in schools.

In the South African context, sports have been used in the education system to perpetuate the notion of a strong, competent and competitive country. This was done by elevating one racial group and excluding the rest (Bogopa, 2001). South Africa has always prided itself in its sporting prowess, and schools were the institutions tasked with producing great athletes who would demonstrate this prowess (Duda, 1989).

Francois, Cleophas and Van Der Merwe (2009) suggest that the implementation of sports in education derives from an inequitable, exclusive system where learners who were not athletic were not recognised. In addition, inequalities in the education system in South Africa caused by apartheid – such as the inequitable allocation of resources and prohibitions against participation in certain sports – had a negative effect on the implementation of sports in the education system. This historical reality of sport in South Africa has shaped the exclusionary nature of sport today, in which various intrinsic and extrinsic barriers still apply.

Discussions regarding inclusion in sports from a race perspective have dominated research in recent years (Nhamo & Sibanda, 2019). However little research has been conducted on the inclusionary or exclusionary practices and implications of sports at the grassroots level. Topics not discussed in research papers regarding South African independent all-boys schools are the historical structures, i.e., the practices and cultures that influence participation in sports, and

the various affordances and drawbacks that participation entails. Although much research has been conducted on the physical and race aspect of sports, little is known about the transition from primary to high school and the meaning of participation of sports for all.

Geyer and Walton (2015) note that the reason for exclusion in sports, whether on the grounds of race, gender, class or ability, is the too-little challenged view that there is only one "legitimate" race, gender, class or level of ability. Learners contend with structures in schools that have predetermined expectations about what is acceptable and worth nurturing, with these established preconceptions continuing to deny many learners' access to sport. Slee (2011, p.107) states that we need to "seek understandings of exclusion from the perspectives of those who are devalued and rendered marginal or surplus by the dominant culture of the regular school". There is a need for research that examines ways to make sport more inclusive, so that all learners may benefit from it. The current research draws from the notion that inclusion must promote, rather than simply tolerate, diversity (Sookrajh, Gopal & Maharaj, 2005).

In order to explore ways to promote inclusion and diversity in school sport, it is essential to understand the experiences of learners just entering the high school domain. The current implementation of sport in schools is problematic, because, in attempting to be inclusive, sport at various levels is still oblivious to gender, class and race (Brenner, 2015). Sport in schools is still managed from an international, middle class, single gender (male) and private school perspective, which largely excludes the majority of learners. Moodley and Adam (2000, p.62). contend

> In virtually all desegregated schools, the newcomers are expected to adjust to the ethos of the dominant ethnicity rather than the school making allowances for different cultural traditions. In practice, that means an unchanged, often authoritarian school culture.

Therefore, as Walton (2013) points out, research in sport is needed in order to grasp the ideas and motives that have shaped sport in the South African context.

1.3 Problem statement

Geyer and Walton (2015) note that sport in schools is embedded in unjust, marginalising, labelling and discriminatory systems. The implementation of sports has ignored the experiences and abilities of those who were previously denied participation and those who are still denied participation today because of the middle-class culture that dominates schools. The

inequalities that exist have been silenced through sport being promoted as an “holistic” approach to education, with participation seen as “a default vocabulary for assimilation" (Slee, 2001, p.114). This highlights that sport is particular and prejudiced in its handling of diversity. The implementation of sport in schools in South Africa derives from a Westernised, apartheid-based society, which still defines what is acceptable and what is not. Since its establishment, sport in schools has been guided by Westernised values and shaped by a colonial outlook (Hofmeyr & Lee, 2004). Therefore, there is a need to understand learners’ experiences of inclusion in sport as they transition from primary to high school. The cultural hegemony that prevails in schools seeps into sport, subjugating the experiences of previously disadvantaged individuals who may not always relate or connect to the dominant Western epistemology of sport. This subtle and systemic exclusion applies also to those who are affected by disability, gender and class, who cannot always take advantage of the kinds of training available to the dominant group.

Sport at school is meant to be a purposeful inclusive extramural activity for all learners (McElroy, 1979). Although it can be argued (and is often argued) that sport is open to all learners at school, this superficial argument does not give cognisance to the many ways in which formerly marginalised learners continue to experience marginalisation in many forms and at many levels. For example, exclusion can occur in the culture of sports, the policies and the language used (each of which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2). Elling and Knoppers (2005) noted that schools are places where the abilities of learners are valued. To reach a point where these abilities begin to flourish requires nurturing, and it is here that the hidden bias for the middle class shows itself.

From my personal experience, sport in schools is more than an expression of a holistic education; it is touted as inclusive and “fun”, but this narrative detracts from the reality experienced by learners. There are pressures and expectations that come with participating in sports at high school. My personal experiences have shown that performance is valued over participation; for example, from an early age learners have sport practice in the morning and in the afternoon, expectations they did not have in primary school. Attendance of such practices requires private transport and a high level of disposable income for sporting equipment and clothing.

The study concurs with Slee (2011, p. 107) who states:

> Inclusive education is not achieved through charitable dispensations to excluded minorities. It is not about the movement of people from their tenancy in the social margins into unchanging institutions. Integration requires the objects of policy to forget their former status as outsiders and fit comfortably into what remain deeply hostile institutional arrangements. There is an expectation that they will assume an invisible presence as they accept the dominant cultural order.

If institutions are to acknowledge their inherent hostility to the former marginalised, there is a need to understand the particular experiences of young learners entering the private high school domain who have experienced aspects of inclusion or exclusion first hand – hence the focus of this study.

1.4 Rationale

The reason for this study arises from the need to understand learners' experiences of inclusion and participation in sport as they transition from primary to high school. The transition is important because understanding how learners perceive inclusion and or exclusion in sport can help eliminate some of the barriers to learner participation in sport. Learners play an important role in implementing inclusion and dismantling exclusion. Therefore, allowing the learner's opinions to be heard as they transition from Grade 7 to 8, is important for their morale and for them to feel valued. Therefore, the transition period enables the study to explore the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of participating in sport. The transition period would help bring clarity to this research as well as offer areas to consider about inclusion and or exclusion of learner participation in sport. Hanewald (2013, p.64) defines transitioning as "a period of change that can be both challenging and exciting, in which children and families adjust in new roles, identities and expectations, new interactions and new relationships". This research defines transitioning as the adjustment period in which Grade 8 learners embrace their new identity as high schoolers. The purpose of the study is to explore learners' experiences of inclusion in sport as they embrace their new identity in the high school sporting arena. The study is cognisant of two broad views that prevail in the literature; one that sees school sport as inclusive and a builder of nationhood (Meltz, Herman & Pillay, 2014) and the other that recognises an inherent exclusionary aspect of school sport, in which schools fail to recognise the power relations operating behind the scenes.

Participation is sport is governed by a number of external factors, not all of them recognised – "age, physical strength or shape, climate, location, class and economics" (Wellard, 2002,

p.238). Schools use a number of enticements to attract talented learners, conveying a subtle message that sport is performance oriented rather than participation oriented. In addition, organisations such as old boys' clubs donate a great deal of money to build state-of-the art gymnasiums and digital scoreboards, which reinforces the message that sport is results driven. It is certainly less interested in broad participation than in high performance by the select and talented few. The effect is a broad and subtle exclusion, quite apart from the race, gender, and class issue. Despite the divided views on inclusivity in sport, there seems to be consensus that sport is a valuable aspect of education. All of these factors form part of the rationale for this study.

Slee (2011, p.107) noted that "inclusive education requires that we seek understanding of exclusion from the perspective of those who are devalued and rendered marginal or surplus by the dominant culture of the regular school". The study draws from Frisby and Ponic (2013) who argue for inclusion. The ultimate research purpose is to inform directors of sports, teachers, parents, learners and relevant contributors involved in the current school system of the current shortcomings in sport, and to suggest a possibly helpful structure that may enhance inclusion in sport.

1.5. Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- to explore Grade 8 learners' perspectives on how sport enables their inclusion in and/or exclusion from sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal.
- to explore Grade 8 learners' views on the affordances of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal.
- to explore Grade 8 learners' views on the drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.6 Research questions

The main research question for this study is: What are Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?

The sub-question are:

- How has participating in sport enabled Grade 8 learners to feel included in and/or excluded from sport an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?
- What do Grade 8 learners view as the affordances of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?
- What do Grade 8 learners view as the drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?

1.7 Significance of the study

The study is significant because it highlights an aspect of life that affects the majority of learners in South Africa, and the nature of sport in general. The study also gives a voice to previously disadvantaged learners in a private school, in an effort to learn from their experiences. Willingness to learn from those who have experienced sport in the South African private school context is imperative, as schools, teachers and coaches need to take into account learners' experiences and not rely only what is stated in their policies or traditions. People and systems count on silence to maintain the status quo, which is why releasing the voices of learners, and examining their views in an academic context, is an important contribution to the just development of sport in South Africa. The study may act as a catalyst for a closer examination of how school sport is implemented and create an opportunity for schools and parents to critically look at the affordances and drawbacks of being sports-driven institutions.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

The following terms are used frequently in the study. Definitions are drawn from the works of other researchers.

1.8.1 High schools

The concept of the secondary school is defined as "Grades 8–12 in a 12-grade system" (Crouch & Vinjevold, 2006, p.10). The research examines the experiences of learners in one independent all-boys secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.8.2 Sport or sports

Nhamo and Sibanda (2019, p.5) note that sport is "a tool which can be used for effective socialization, thereby placing everyone on an equal social footing". For instance the Oxford dictionary defines sport as "an activity involving physical exertion and skill, especially (particularly in modern use) one regulated set rules or customs in which an individual or team competes against another or others" (Oxford Dictionary, 2006). The research defines sport as

an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another.

1.8.3 Affordances

The Oxford dictionary defines affordances as "A property of an object or an aspect of the environment, especially relating to its potential utility, which can be inferred from visual or other perceptual signals; (more generally) a quality or utility which is readily apparent or available" (2006). The research defines affordances as the advantages that sport confers upon participants.

1.8.4 Drawbacks

A drawback is a disadvantage or problem that makes something a less attractive idea (Oxford Dictionary, 2006). The research defines drawbacks as the disadvantages of participation in school sport.

1.8.5 Grade 8

Grades are levels in a school in which children are taught with others of a similar age (Oxford, 2006). In the South African context, Grade 8 is "the first year of the of the three-year high school cycle. In order to enter secondary school in Grade 8, students should be between the ages of 13 and 14" (High school in South Africa Grades 8–12, 2022). The research is interested in Grade 8s who participate in sport.

1.8.6 Independent all-boys high school

Kuriloff and Reichert (2003, p.753) noted that independent all-boys high schools are "elite schools where the dominant cultural capital continues to define the core of the school's practices and where students are expected to have and hone the habitus of the ruling classes". Independent schools are

> those schools in South Africa other than public schools … to some extent … founded, owned, managed and financed by stakeholders other than the state. Many independent schools belong to an independent schools' association and the oldest and largest of these associations is the Independent Schools' Association of Southern Africa (ISASA)" (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009, p.107).

The study defines independent all-boys high schools as affluent institutions that implement sport both inclusively and exclusively.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) state that all studies have delimitations or potential boundaries that researcher's control. These may arise from an intended research design, statistical model constraints, time frame or other factors. The population of interest in this study is vast, and it would not have been possible interview all learners who participate in sport. Therefore the sampling will be restricted to the amount of parents and boys who volunteered to participate, all drawn from a single private school, which may be considered a delimitation of the study, as this was a small sample in relation to the population of interest. The study intentionally used a single gender private school to narrow the study and make it more manageable and relevant to the aims of the study. A further delimitation was the fact that learners are young, men and inexperienced, and therefore the boys would possibly struggle to express and frame their experiences. They might be unfamiliar with political and developmental issues. A better developed sense of the political machinery at play might have yielded more in-depth responses to questions; nevertheless, they have fresh and vivid experiences to share which are worth understanding and viewing within the chosen framework of this study.

1.10 Chapters

This study is structured as follows:

Table 1.1: Overview of the study

Chapters	Proposed chapter headings
Chapter 1	Introduction and background to the study
Chapter 2	Review of the literature and theoretical framing of the study
Chapter 3	Research design and methodology
Chapter 4	Data presentation
Chapter 5	Findings and discussion
Chapter 6	Conclusion, recommendations and limitations

1.11 Conclusion

Independent secondary schools have produced world-class athletes, and are highly valued for their ability to nurture top sporting talent. These high reputations are worth investigating, as the claim that participation in sport is entirely wholesome and inclusive is not always borne out

by the experiences of learners in these settings. The sporting traditions and cultures of international and South African sports have been upheld by these institutions for the past 50 to 100 years, some of which have existed for the same period. Institutions with a proud history of achievement are naturally prone to enjoy the status quo and to avoid questioning it. They may be aware that the implementation of sport has been shaped by a colonial and middle class worldview, but see little wrong with that, failing to see the inherent bias in the way things are done. Age-old practices have been found to hamper the full participation of previously and currently marginalised groups, whether they be race based or a result of socio-economic background, gender, ability or area of interest. As a result, the use of conceptual frameworks inherent in the terms "inclusion", "exclusion", "sport", "affordances", "drawbacks" and "all-boys independent high school" will help shed light on the phenomenon of interest in this study. Drawing from learners' perceptions of their school's inclusivity or exclusivity and their own participation in sport, the study aims to understand how sport promotes or prevents inclusivity from an ecological perspective.

Chapter 1 has introduced of the research topic. The following chapter examines the issue in closer detail from the point of view of other researchers, both national and international.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framing of the study

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 examines the contestations and debates about school sport; how it fits into the academic programme, whether or not it is inclusive (based on the model of inclusive or special needs education), and the various ways in which it may be excluding certain learners. It takes a close look at the meaning of inclusivity, examining inclusive education legislation and inclusive pedagogical approaches. The chapter defines inclusive education and describes its international and local implementation in terms of ability/disability, inclusive education policy, and inclusive pedagogical approaches. The works of various authors are examined for insight on the above topics.

2.2 Sport as part of the school curriculum

The international implementation of sport as part of the school curriculum draws its rationale from the United Nations International Charter on Physical Education and Sport (UNESCO, 1978). The inclusion of sport in the school curriculum indicates the significance of sport for all and the necessity of promoting participation amongst learners (UNESCO, 1978). Grant (1992) and Chalwa (1994) note that the inclusion of sport in the school curriculum addresses the issue of social inclusion, because sport is and should be equally accessible to every individual. Grant (1992) and Arnold (1997) state that the inclusion of sport in the curriculum provides opportunities to all to compete at the highest level nationally and internationally. Magheirkouni (2018) states that sport as a whole promotes human rights for all learners Alderson and Crutchley (1990) argue that previously, sport and physical education were seen as two separate activities; they were merged when sport became part of the curriculum (DoE, 1980). Sport was made part of the curriculum because of the "intrinsic value of sport, including its skills, traditions, achievements and moral virtues" (Arnold, 1997). Arnold continues that the distinctive worthiness of sport should be upheld (Arnold, 1997, p.9).

According to a 1995 White Paper, it is essential that sport be integrated into the South African school curriculum. To this end, the National Sports Council was established in the same year, aiming to create structures to boost involvement in sport. In schools, sport is seen as an essential part of a holistic education. The term "holistic" indicates a recognition of the whole child, and a willingness to nurture the abilities of all, so that even those who not academically inclined

have a chance to develop as fully rounded human beings. It also implies a recognition of the values that sport teaches, as noted by Bogopa (2001, p.86): "Youths benefit from sports in many ways, for example, moral development, identity formation and competence." The inclusion of sport as part of the curriculum is driven by the desire to reach all learners with its benefits, and to make the experience of sport accessible to all (Gauteng Department of Education, 1995).

In South Africa, the inclusion of sport in the curriculum is also a way to deal with discrepancies caused by apartheid, and to redress the many deprivations suffered by black people in this country. Sport is seen as an integral part of the policy of inclusion and a way to undo the social injustices of the past (Gauteng Department of Education, 1995). It is also a tool used by schools to compete against one another, and for individual schools to boost their reputations, which is why there is such an interest in attracting top sporting talent to certain schools.

2.3 Sport as an enhancer of schools' image

Many schools have made their sporting prowess part of their national image. One will find images of top achieving learners, both academic and sporting, on the website of every traditional school, indicating that high performance in sport is an ingrained part of the culture. Nationally and internationally, schools guard their sports curriculum and facilities, even in the face of a time-consuming curriculum, and take pride in the national team players they have produced in a range of sports (Light & Kirk, 2000). These schools' halls of fame walls are lined with former learners who have made the national team, and they serve as a marketing tool. Swain (2006, p.7) confirms sport's high priority among private schools:

> Although, as a school objective, academic achievement/attainment had a higher priority than sporting accomplishment, the value attached to sport in the school was unmistakably evident and publicly exhibited in the entrance hall by the main staircase, where there were a number of cabinets prominently displaying various shields, cups and medals.

These schools' sports programmes have withstood the test of time and feature sports festivals during public holidays, often broadcast. Skeleton (2000) states that when speaking to school visitors, the learners in these schools are enthusiastic about their school and its achievements, as is evident in their passionate war cries during sporting events. The vigour of these war cries is evident enough of the culture that exists within sport.

2.4 School decisions about sport

Independent boys' high schools make a number of decisions about sport without necessarily considering the long-term effects on learner participation. In order to examine the issue objectively, one might start with the question "Why do sports programmes exist in independent all-boys high schools?" Swain (2000; 2002) examines the issue of which sports schools choose to implement and makes a number of suggestions for questions that school management teams might ask before introducing a new sport. These include, "Does this sport align with the school's values, and if it does, what will its implementation look like in the school space; for example, will there be public broadcasting of games? Is it inclusionary? How will it be managed?" Swain (2000) and Connel (1995) argue that the problem is that schools accept every pitch given to them by commercial entities without doing the research on the immediate-, short- and long-term impact of the new sport (and its location), particularly the ways in which it may enhance or frustrate learner participation. Connel (2008) highlights that with the indiscriminate acceptance of donations of sporting facilities, schools become reactive, failing to plan and manage their sports offerings with full participation in mind. The end result is that sport moves on without the learners, or a large swathe of them, and the culture becomes more and more exclusionary.

The publicity given to sporting events can indirectly contribute to the exclusionary nature of sport. One may well question the decision to "go public" with events, as the publicity is not necessarily in the best interests of all learners. For some, the public broadcasting of events on social media pages is an opportunity, and for others it is exclusionary because of the pressures that come with it. A school principal said in 2022:

> In many cases we are dealing with players as young as 14 or 15, and we do not believe they have the requisite mechanisms to cope with the at times unwanted and unregulated attention that has been allowed to develop in this space (1news.co.nz).

If headmasters in independent boys' schools are serious about taking the pressure off learners, they should consider banning spectators and live broadcasts. This would free the learners to play for the fun of it and to feel included. Currently, whether or not there are live broadcasts, the pressure is on, because the very schools that express concern about the pressures advertise their fixtures and Derby Days on their social media pages (Swain, 2002), thus inviting large numbers of spectators. They also subscribe to national rankings that increase the pressure and scrutiny, yet see nothing wrong with this.

Some New Zealand schools have dealt with the problem by banning the live broadcasting of their sports events, partly as a way to counter exclusion. However, this is not necessarily a workable long-term solution. The issue is complex. The fact is that many learners do want and welcome public scrutiny. Those who hope to play professionally after school need opportunities to be seen; the banning of broadcasts puts them at a distinct disadvantage in relation to learners whose schools, both nationally and internationally, give them public exposure. This speaks to the complexity of the issue and suggests that some decisions made by schools may be both exclusionary and inclusionary at the same time.

2.5 Poaching

As discussed in Chapter 1, the poaching of top players has become such a problem that some schools have instituted "non-poaching" policies as "this year, two of the country's oldest schools, SACS and Wynberg, announced they would cut ties with Paar Boys' High after being impacted by the latter's drive to become the best rugby school in the country. SACS and Wynberg each lost a Grade 8 student, now in Grade 9, to Boishaai between 2018 and 2019" (sarugbymag.co.za, 2019, p.1). The question that must be asked is why such policies exist. At times the impression is given that talented learners are almost seen as animals at an auction house, with the prize bulls going to the biggest bidder. No doubt anti-poaching policies help to counter this tendency as "part of the issue surrounds the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), or headmasters' agreements, that have been put in place to prevent poaching and whether they are still serving their purpose" (Jack, 2019, p.1). Yet the practice can have advantages for learners and their parents. There are few parents who would refuse the offer of free quality education at a top institution for their child because they feel morally uncomfortable with the idea of the child being "used" to enhance the school's reputation. The affordance of poaching is that it gives some learners opportunities to develop in excellent schools where they may also participate in a range of other extramural activities.

Poaching, like the broadcasting of live games, can therefore be both exclusionary and inclusionary. On the one hand, it feeds into the culture of performance above all, to the detriment of broad participation, and on the other, it affords opportunities to learners to grow and develop holistically. Whether or not the practice turns out to be advantageous or detrimental in the long term may depend on the way in which the school handles it. If the school's priority is merely to enhance their reputation and line their walls with trophies, becoming known as "the rugby/football/hockey school", then possibly the practice may be perceived as detrimental to the child. If the entire focus is the school, damage to the child is

almost inevitable. Attempts have been made to counter this possibility, especially in New Zealand. “The problem is the 1A code of practice says any transfer by a development player means a two-year stand down. They were rules brought in to stop player poaching – a serious issue in the Auckland schoolboy rugby scene” (1news.co.nz, 2023). What emanates from the above quote is that schools in New Zealand have suggested that if a learner is “poached”, they are not allowed to participate in that particular sport for two years.

Learners entering high school may not be aware of the affordances and drawbacks of poaching; they trust their parents to make the right decision, and parents in turn trust the school to provide a nurturing environment. From a Marxist perspective, schools’ non-poaching polices may be perceived as part of the hidden curriculum, in that their agreement not to poach learners from other schools effectively excludes learners who might benefit from the scholarship offered.

When sport in school becomes a terrain of bigotry, mercilessness, discrimination and inequality, it surrenders its constitutive role in education (Bowley, 2013). Schools are very much part of society, which is moving towards greater diversity. The main purpose of school sport is the holistic development of the child. Therefore, schools can become vehicles through which inclusion and development may be attained more broadly in society. In endeavouring to be non-discriminatory and inclusive, schools need to walk a fine line between treating all learners equally and failing to see critical differences among them. Overlooking differences can result in certain people continuing to reap benefits and advantages while others are excluded on the grounds “merit”, with the school failing to see that merit itself is often products of systemic advantages received by some and not by others. Arnesen (2017, p.714) states that there are a number of limitations and blind spots in popular ideas of equality and inclusion, which can privilege some students and disadvantage others.

2.6 Defining inclusion and inclusive education

Inclusion is a principle that guides action. In schools, inclusivity policies are a way of addressing exclusive practices and dismantling the practices of the past, when those who had power determined inclusion and exclusion (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Internationally, the purpose of inclusion is “to correct longstanding and historical exclusions based upon racial, economic, linguistic and other differences” (McDermott, Edgar, & Scarloss, 2011, p.1). Internationally, the principle draws from the Universal Declaration of Human rights, which redefines access to education as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) reiterates the right to education for all. The principle

is usually applied to the issue of learners with disabilities of various kinds. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) is the foundational document for the inclusion of learners with disabilities. Inclusion acknowledges difference and aims to provide equal access to education.

In the South African context, the principle of inclusion guides the implementation of education, which aims to provide all learners to equal and quality education (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Inclusion means consistently looking at ways in which people are excluded through discrimination or practices that deny the equal value of human life. The rationale for this vigilant examination of inclusivity comes from the idea of human rights, which should guide human interactions, prevent unfair treatment and grant access to equal opportunities to all (Makoele, 2012, p.96).

In South Africa's 30-year transformation from an exclusive to an inclusive society, a number of challenges have presented themselves because the legacies of the past constitute strong pillars, upholding institutions and practices that may be resistant to change. Inclusion is part of recognising diversity in ability, race, class and language, among other aspects of human beings, and attempting to include all in education, business, sport, entertainment and other endeavours. The idea of equal value among diverse individuals was not recognised by the apartheid government, which imposed an exclusive education system and created barriers to learning for most (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Inclusion values differences; learners who are disabled or are diverse in their abilities are recognised (Makoele, 2012). Drawing from the Salamanca Statement (Ainscow, Slee & Marine, 2019) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), policies such as White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), Screening Identification Assessment and Support and The South African Schools Act (DoE, 2014) in the South African context highlight that education is for all.

Inclusion is accepted globally and in South Africa, but individual attitudes determine whether persons or institutions will be part of the changes or resist the move to include all. Walton, Nel, Hugo and Muller (2009, p.105) define inclusion as

> … the process by which learners who previously might have been taught in a separate special education system, because of the barriers to learning they experience, would now be taught in regular schools that have taken the responsibility of changing and improving to provide the support necessary to facilitate access and participation.

In the past, the social model and special needs education were the two paradigms used to manage education. The social model applied to learners who did not have disabilities, while the special needs model applied to those with disabilities. The latter was essentially a medical model and created barriers to learning that operated in the individual physically or psychologically (Axelrod, 1992). According to Axelrod, it is possible to integrate learners who are different into mainstream classrooms; the more diverse learners a mainstream classroom can accept, the more likely it is that the differences will be viewed as normal, and the less likely that such learners will be marginalised and labelled.

In this move towards classroom inclusivity, the emphasis is on the school and classroom adapting to the needs of the learners, not the other way around. "The question is not whether segregation or mainstreaming is superior, but how to make regular classrooms effective for children with disabilities" (Axelrod, 1992, p.220). In the past, the social and special needs educational models grouped learners into two separate streams, based on differences rather than areas of commonality. Today, education is increasingly emphasising the social model, in which ordinary schools become a place for all learners (Westwood, 2001). This is not to downplay the significance of special education, but rather to correct marginalising assumptions about learner diversity. From an inclusion perspective, the social model highlights that barriers to learning may be caused by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Education has moved away from focusing on the learner's intrinsic barriers to looking outward at the barriers that schools erect, to dismantle these, and to identify the practices that will assist all learners to flourish in the normal school environment.

The South African government has responded to the issue of diversity by striving to end discrimination and promote inclusivity, but in the sporting arena, the matter has not been well addressed, especially with regard to broad participation (Nhamo & Sibanda, 2019). Post-1994, the assumption was that there would be equal opportunities for all to participate in sport. However, participation remains a challenge for many learners, who are still sidelined (Adderley, Hopea, Gill, Hughes, Jones, Messiou & Shawa, 2014). According to Sayed and Soudien (2005), in order to move towards inclusion, there is a need to understand how cultural, political and social processes, along with legislation and policies in schools, affect learners, and then to consider multiple ways of increasing inclusion in the education system. Sports is necessary for social inclusion, but from an inclusivity perspective, there is a need to closely examine how the execution of a sport positions learners, and the extent to which it promotes inclusivity and/or exclusivity (Loreman, Deppler & Harvey, 2010).

From an inclusivity perspective, it quickly becomes clear that providing schools (especially well-resourced independent schools) with sports facilities and funding will not, on its own, promote broad participation. There is a need first to address the underlying issues of culture, power dynamics and socio-economic inequalities, which act both overtly and subtly to deter participation. A culture of accepting differences and combating inequality of opportunity must be established. Young (2006) speaks of a "politics of difference", in which structures are restructured to incorporate marginalised groups. Young (2006) argues that differences in participation should challenge teachers to discover where the barriers to participation originate, and then to try to dismantle these. Young contends that there is a need to change the system and the inequalities, and to recognise that a redistribution of resources or funds will not necessarily result in change if the power to manage these resources still resides in the hands of the middle class. Through its epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions, the system will continue to exclude diverse learners. Young (2006, p.7) recommends "dismantling and reforming structures, processes and concepts". The restructuring of structures will influence institutions' epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions, which lie at the heart of their ethos and values. The goal of inclusion is to eliminate oppression, not merely to distribute resources evenly, because a redistribution of resources on its own cannot uncover or root out underlying unjust practices.

Aiello and Bullock (1999) argue that inclusion brings light to all, guides society, and steers diverse learners in the direction where personal credibility, sustainable growth and development may be realised. Baker and Zigmond (1995) contend that inclusion unapologetically stands for "the least of these" in society, challenging systems that marginalise and exclude. School sport, of all societal endeavours, should not continue to erect barriers that keep generation after generation in an exclusion cycle. Inclusion does not abandon or neglect the struggles of diverse learners (Cohen, 2000).

Booth (1998), Desai (2021), Dolby (2002), Moodley and Adam (2000) argue that nationally and internationally, inclusion in sport continues to be the embodiment of fighting for freedom, promoting justice for the disabled and previously marginalised communities who were excluded because of differences. Disability is often portrayed as something that cannot coexist with sport. However, inclusion directly challenges this shallow understanding, and aims "to maximise the participation of all in society and education by minimising exclusionary and discriminatory practices" (Polat, 2011 p.51). Furthermore, the point is made that the realities

of diverse communities should not be hidden away or kept out of sight until deemed “more acceptable”. Desai and Vahed (2010) argue that diversity should be front and centre of inclusion in sport, and that one must guard against the idea that people with disabilities should be visible only when at their best. The principle of inclusion holds that integrating different learners into the “norm" requires an attitude that difference is normal. This idea needs to be carried forward into the sporting arena. Moodley and Adam (2000) state that inclusion involves disrupting and reconstructing systems, processes and procedures while “reimagining” sport as more inclusive.

Inclusion in sport is sometimes met by storms of protest, as it aims to transform the lives of the marginalised, certain aspects of schools, and the mindsets of both the oppressed and the oppressors (Desai, 2021). Thus, it is disruptive. It is certainly not a process that comes naturally but has to be addressed deliberately, methodically and over a sustained period of time.

Social difficulties impede educational procedures and have an impact on learner participation in sport, making inclusion in education a complex subject. Desai and Vahed (2010, p.140) state

> Inclusion has afforded players opportunities they would not otherwise have had. It has also revealed a much more complex picture of inequality and exploitation that transcends easy definitions and classifications.

Consequently, in education, the ostensibly simple idea of inclusivity in sport can raise so many difficulties that it is frequently ignored. What can assist schools is to become familiar with inclusivity as a global trend; to see it as a much larger societal concern than something demanded of just South African schools. It needs to be situated within a general understanding of human nature and history, and a natural expression of a human rights-based culture.

When it comes to inclusion and exclusion, there is a tendency to generalise and believe that the various groups affected, such as the previously disadvantaged, the disabled, or women and girls, constitute homogenous groups. Moodley and Adam (2010) caution against such an approach, stating that generalisations should at least be modified by the use of words such as “sometimes” so that individuals are not stereotyped. These authors also raise the important issue that there are different levels and forms of exclusion. “Degrees of racial exclusion, marginalization and discrimination differ in various realms” (Moodley & Adam, 2010, p.56).

Human beings are multifaceted, and the question of race may intersect with gender, ability and class. Stereotypical boxes in the education "disciplinary space" are not always helpful and can produce hegemony (Shalem, 1999). Teachers should guard against homogenous approaches to teaching, as differences among learners' demand differences in teaching approaches. Teachers themselves have multiple identities, which together with the differences among learners makes inclusion far from straightforward (Wendel, 2021). Wendel argues that teachers should work with learners as they are, because inclusion requires a non-linear, polyvocal, multilayered approach in which the dynamic between teachers and learners is constantly in motion. In addition, teachers should allow the voices of learners to be released (Shalem, 1999). Messiou (2012) suggests that through the releasing of learners' voices, schools will be in a position to make better, more informed decisions about inclusion in spaces where diversity exists. Full inclusion in sport would deconstruct the homogenous approach that currently prevails, making room for differences and opening up sport to greater participation by learners. The changes may have to do with both structure (timing, location, composition of sporting authorities, equipment needs, etc) and methodologies used (language, manner of addressing learners, use of technology, and other issues).

Although inclusion in sport is already highly visible as a policy, the principal does not always translate into implementation at the school level, with schools often held down by anachronistic policies and traditions. Desai and Vahed (2010, p.51) point out that high investment in school sport has resulted in the elevation of a few at the expense of many.

> The policies adopted in sport have resulted in the investment of inordinate amount of resources in a limited number of individuals who are groomed to become the standard-bearers of the "new" South Africa in the domain of sport.

According to Arnesen (2017), the adjustments made at schools since 1994 still favour middle class learners who possess cultural capital. This means that the playing field is not level for Grade 8 learners entering high school for the first time. Some do not possess the cultural capital that operates socially, academically and in sport. Therefore, previously disadvantaged learners are still left behind, excluded by the ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological assumptions that exist in independent school sport. Referring to the legacy of apartheid, Carrim (1998, p.301) states, "Every level of schooling was a cast in a racial mold;

educational budget provisions, the structure of educational bureaucracies … the kind of curriculum followed and the ethos prevalent in schools."

Inclusion is not something that should be debated or voted about; it is a must. Schools have a lot to offer, but they also sit with great deal of undiscovered talent that will remain unlocked or limited by systems that do not suit the times. The apartheid system was designed to ensure that black excellence was kept within the confines of Bantu education, and that black learners would never be able to compete internationally. There can be no room for that kind of restriction in the current era. Like the rest of society, education cannot be static, but must constantly evolve as societal conditions and levels of awareness evolve. There is much work to be done before the country and the world is fully inclusive in every aspect of schooling. This shift will not come quickly. However, an understanding of the direction the world is moving in should help educators and sporting officials to work purposively towards the goal of inclusion, with imagination and vigour. In South Africa, the gaps left by the apartheid regime have not yet been closed, and it will take time to do so at a deep level. Independent boys high schools, as much as any other institution, have work to do in ensuring that they contribute to this effort.

Inclusive education aims at correcting the social injustices perpetuated by systems that classified individuals on the basis of class, race, ability and gender. In its broad sense, inclusive education is "concerned with socially just ways of organising teaching and learning (Nind, 2005, p.525). Inclusive education is an alternative way of thinking and doing, challenging the existence of predetermined bodies of ideas, settled opinions, or procedures and practices that place individuals (Walton et al., 2009). Inclusive education also challenges the idea that there is a single, unified reality that is unchanging. According to Walton et al. (2009), inclusion rejects the idea that there is a permanent or stationary universe that may be comprehended by all people in the same way. Instead, inclusive education recognises that different people experience reality differently as shaped by their diverse cultural, racial and ability perspectives. The theory of inclusive education also explains the nature of interactions between the individual and the institution (Polat, 2011).

Inclusive education is "the process of changing values, attitudes, policies and practices within the school setting and beyond" (Polat, 2011, p.50). According to Connell (2008), the changes in sport at educational institutions have been influenced by discussions about the culture of sport in independent all-boys schools. Such discussions have been particularly noticeable in

New Zealand, Australia, England and South Africa. Concerns about ability, the cultural assumptions that underlie the practice of sport and inclusion itself are at the heart of these discussions (Connell, 2008).

Inclusive education is relevant because it sheds light on the fact that all aspects of learner participation in sport exist on a spectrum of inclusivity and exclusivity, and on the fact that where there is inclusion, exclusion also exists (Macdonald, Pang, Knez, Nelson & McCuaig, 2011). Therefore, inclusive education provides a necessary backdrop to the investigation that is at the centre of the study, since the study seeks to understand learners' experiences of inclusivity in school sport. According to the principles of inclusive education, learners' voices should be listened to and their views should affect the way sport is implemented. Since sport is usually touted as an inclusive and holistic aspect of education, it is essential to pay attention to the suggestions of learners on how high school sport may be made more inclusive and promote more participation. This willingness to listen and pay attention is one of the tenets of a truly inclusive education.

2.7 Defining exclusion and marginalisation

Internationally and in South Africa, exclusion is understood as the act of discrimination based on race, class, gender or disability, factors that are often used as a barometer for acceptance into schools, institutions, clubs or societies (Slee, 2011). Greenstein (2016) argues that exclusion is a choice and not a development deficiency. To address exclusion, Minow (1990) suggests that people need to learn "humanity". If this aspect is ignored, it is quite possible that the current narratives of some "anti-exclusion" training could reintroduce the very behaviour it is trying to eliminate. All learners affected by exclusion need to be included. Slee (2011) makes the point that some who were affected by the social injustices of the past are still experiencing exclusionary practice today in schools. Minow (1990) suggests that the pain caused by any form of exclusion against learners should be fairly and consistently addressed so that their human dignity is upheld and new victims and aggressors are not created. Sayed and Soudien (2005) suggest the "what" of the problem (i.e., exclusion) depends on the successful implementation of the "how" of the problem (i.e., inclusion).

Exclusion may occur intentionally or unintentionally. It must be confronted in a constructive way that moves South Africans forward without creating resentment or backlashes. Introducing inclusion into the fabric of our education system is a step in the right direction (Engelbrecht, 2006). Learners (black, white, disabled, abled, male and female, working and middle class)

suffer daily in schools across South Africa from unresolved trauma, some of which is a result of structural exclusion in communities (Slee, 2011). Wider community and social issues show up in schools and affect everything that takes place in the school setting (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

Oliver (2013) suggests that exclusion is a deep-rooted ideology which does not see beyond ability/disability. In every society across the world, some hold the power to perpetuate the status quo, so that change boils down to the question of who has access to power and resources. Those who possess them have the power to determine what constitutes inclusion and exclusion (Engelbrecht, 2006), and can manipulate the public domain. This observation suggests that to address exclusion at the institutional level, there needs to a top-down approach, because those in authority hold the power to create equality (Slee, 2011). The matter is made more complex by the fact that exclusion exists both overtly and covertly, and that barriers to learning may be both intrinsic and extrinsic. It is important not to oversimplify the issue of exclusion but approach it with a willingness to dig deeper. Exclusion clearly perpetuates inequality (Engelbrecht, 2015).

Independent high schools are a place where learners prepare themselves for entering universities, where many will continue with their sports activities. It is unfortunate that the high priority placed on sport has made many gifted learners believe that they lack ability because the subjects they excel in, such as the creative arts or literature, are undervalued and stigmatised, along with sports such as basketball. All of this stems from the middle-class cultural practices adopted by schools, which exclude learners who choose not to take certain subjects or sports – often because of the limiting, exclusive labels that are associated with those subjects or sports.

Soylu, Brady, Holbert and Wilensky (2014) point out that the dominance of one language in independent schools can hinder learning and participation in sport for some learners. They also draw attention the role of language and ritualised "action patterns" in shaping a culture.

> Symbolic actions within a socio-cultural setting emerge from the crystallizations of social action-situations that are repeated/reused within that socio-cultural context. Language games, rituals, specialised genres, etc can be seen as action patterns and social practices that were valuable enough to encode with symbolic gestures (Soylu et al., 2014, p.3).

Under pressure to participate in the sports regarded as “cool” or “the main sport” such as rugby, cricket and water polo, some learners participate to their own disadvantage, damaging their sense of self-esteem by performing poorly as a result. These learners may well be able to excel in the sports or activities regarded as "weak" such as hockey, basketball and soccer. Learners may also end up being labelled as misfits as a result of their failure to slip easily into the cultural and language patterns used by the dominant group, so that, subtly and gradually, they get pushed to the margins. Anderson et al. (1996, p. 9) point to the fact that these cultural and language patterns are an integral part the broader society in which education is conducted: “Learning is not merely situated in practice as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived in world.”

The cultural practices of the middle class do not speak to the realities of working-class learners, and essentially exclude them from full participation. Cultural practices in schools, such as language, are linked to ways of relating, control, norms and values, so that they carry enormous weight to include or exclude. However, people have agency, and are not limited by their experiences; therefore learning can also occur even in spaces where learners have no prior knowledge. In the classroom and in the sporting arena, activities occur that are assumed to fall within everyone’s area of prior knowledge, yet may in fact fall outside of this area for many. Different knowledge is constructed in different spaces; those who are unfamiliar with certain bodies of knowledge possess other forms of knowledge that may not be highly valued in the school setting. Anderson et al. (1996) state that the nature of the setting can therefore determine how much learning occurs in schools.

Marginalisation is “the state of being considered unimportant, undesirable, unworthy, insignificant, and different, resulting in inequity, unfairness, deprivation and enforced lack of access to mainstream power” (Messiou, 2012, p.2). Drawing from the work of Messiou (2012), one may identify four ways in which marginalisation occurs, whether covertly, overtly, consciously or unconsciously: Marginalisation may be recognised by everybody, including the person experiencing it; others may recognise it but the victim may not; the victim may experience it but not experience it (unaware of the marginalisation even though they do experience it, conditioned by the cultures, norms and practices that are marginalising); or the victim may experience and feel it, but not admit it and actively deny it. According to Messiou (2012) marginalisation takes place when individuals are labelled “deviant” or “misfit” because of their identity. Marginalisation often takes place when differences are not acknowledged by

society, often because of a pre-determined, fixed mentality about the spectrum of what is acceptable and what is not. Mowat (2015, p.460) sates:

> To be marginalised is to have a sense that one does not belong and, in doing so, to feel that one is neither a valued member of a community and able to make valuable contribution within that community, nor able to access the services and/or opportunities open to others.

In the South African context, inclusion aims at changing marginalising systems and practices. Messiou and Ainscow (2015) posit that actively including diverse learners is a necessity and must be the norm. Messiou (2006) states that there is a need to acknowledge equality, even while recognising differences. A recognition of essential equality may break the shackles of discrimination, prejudice and unjust practices directed against people with disabilities or those of other genders, races or socio-economic backgrounds to the dominant group.

Despite the fact that South Africa is home to a diverse population shaped by different cultural norms, sport still relies on Eurocentric epistemologies and methods of analysis. According to Noorbhai (2020, p.23),

> [t]hese influences flourished almost instantly into the many private and boys-only schools in South Africa. Sports played an important role in these schools with traditions and cultures that had existed for more than a century in Britain. Their approach (mainly from Victorian Britain) is a probable reason why these schools had a high standard of sports.

Booth (2012) makes the accurate observation that the study of coloniality sheds light on colonialism's more sinister side, which is often presented as “an entrenched logic”. According to Booth (2012), an “entrenched logic” upholds the dominance, abuse, discrimination and exclusion of diverse learners in sport.

2.8 How sport promotes the inclusion and/or marginalisation of learners

Globally, inclusion and marginalisation exist side by side at the core of sports, in that sporting bodies actively seek to promote inclusion (Kelly, 2011) and yet often fail to do so. In fact, in the sporting arena, the two concepts co-exist, informing each other. It is clear that sport and sporting bodies overtly wish to promote inclusion and challenge marginalisation based on race, sex, age, social class, and mental or physical ability. In South Africa, many institutions are exposing the injustice of the past by actively seeking to include learners who were marginalised

by educational and sporting systems pre-1994 (Joubert, 2017). Sporting bodies now recognise differences (Kiuppis, 2018) and promote inclusion by offering a variety of sports, so that diverse learners may have the opportunity to choose and participate. Kiuppis (2018, p.5) states that "inclusion is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practices". Like Kiuppis (2018), Enoch (2010) argues that because learners have diverse abilities, sport should embrace diversity and inclusion, in order to demonstrate that differences are welcomed. Therefore, sport can be said to promote inclusion. In moving towards greater inclusion in sport, sport has intentionally considered the diverse communities that participate or wish to participate in sport (Stevenson, 2009).

However, in the midst of its inclusive policies and practices, marginalisation exists. Parker et al. (2019) state that the character of sport is still determined and dominated by marginalising systems that push individuals to the periphery. Collins and Kay (2014) echo this perspective, stating that sport currently glorifies certain individuals and relegates the majority to the sidelines. "Schools should develop ways of increasing participation and broad educational achievement of all groups of learners, particularly those who are at risk of experiencing marginalisation" (Adderley et al., 2014, p.108). It needs to be acknowledged that individual experiences of sport can differ widely, depending on level of cohesion between the culture of the individual and the culture of the sport. Joubert (2017) states that the culture of sports may both welcome and reject learners. Loreman, Deppler and Harvey (2010, p.2) show that inclusion means full participation for all, and a willingness to value differences:

> Inclusion involves the full participation of all students in all aspects of schooling. It involves regular schools and classrooms being responsive and willing to genuinely adapt and change to meet the needs of all students, as well as celebrating and valuing difference.

2.9 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework arises from outcomes beyond a single study, with individual studies free to make use of one or more theories (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). A theory provides a general or broad set of ideas within which a study may be situated; it is a lens through which to view and analyse data and understand participants (Eisenhart, 1991). Two theoretical frameworks lend themselves to the current study: i) ubuntu and ii) marginalisation. These ideas are used as frames through which to view the responses of participants to questionnaires and interviews, and the broader issues under examination. They also act as a tool for recognising and understanding epistemological and axiological differences among groups of

people, empowering one to challenge Western hegemony, which sees sport in an objective and universal way. The fundamentals of ubuntu informed the research, highlighting the extrinsic factors such as culture that may influence a learner's participation in sports, or create various affordances or drawbacks associated with participation. Marginalisation, while not in the strict sense a theory, is a useful concept for understanding why learners act in certain ways, and what they may be experiencing in subtle ways, either recognised or not recognised by themselves and others.

The first theory aligns well with my study because it draws attention to the essential elements of humanity, interdependence and communality in the human experience. Hansen (2012) expresses an inclusive and "human' approach in pointing out that learners are not empty vessels, but step into the sporting arena with prior knowledge that may or may not be recognised by the sports "structure".

The concept of marginalisation provides a necessary counterpoint to the idea of inclusive education. The reality of marginalisation suggests that one cannot look at or work on inclusive education in isolation; its equal and opposite force also needs to be acknowledged, as marginalisation can occur even within settings that are striving to be inclusive. The issue of marginalisation is best uncovered through a reliance on learners' own voices, as in this study. The weakness of ubuntu theory on its own is that it may promote a too-soft view, leading one to assume that with the right intention and "heart", sports activities will naturally become more and more inclusive, and that barriers will slowly erode on their own, whereas the opposite may be true. Unless marginalisation is recognised, identified in its specific forms, and dismantled, the most inclusive policies in the world will have little effect. Inclusive education often stresses the provision or equitable distribution of equipment and resources, which are essential aspects of a more just sporting scenario; however they are insufficient alone to address the subtle "othering" that may take place, especially in independent, all-boys schools. Marginalisation theory shows the importance of listening to the experience of learners and maintaining a learner-centred approach in sport.

2.9.1 The theory of ubuntu

Ubuntu is concerned with social justice. Tavernaro-Haidarian (2018, p.21) state that

> [u]buntu offers a definition of development as a process of 'mutual empowerment', which enables people and societies, individual and communities, to realise their full material, social and spiritual potential.

Ubuntu as a philosophy challenges the ways in which educational systems reproduce and maintain social inequalities by marginalising formerly excluded groups. It is a way of seeing the world that recognises the humanity in all and embraces all. Ubuntu theory therefore emphasises the idea that sport in schools must be grounded in the perspectives of oppressed people whose abilities, race or class were marginalised, perverted, ignored and excluded (Moodley & Adam, 2000).

Ubuntu must be at the forefront when considering the new standard for education in South Africa because it is the solidarity principle that inherently promotes inclusion "ubuntu is a more appropriate way of establishing a just, harmonized, and rights-based society" (Chowdhury, Abd Wahab, Saad, Roy, Hamidi and Ahmad (2021, p.361).

The theory of ubuntu informs an understanding of how sport shapes and reshapes learners. For example, if a high school is known as a traditional rugby school, there is an underlying culture that exists that indirectly informs boys how they should carry themselves, speak and look before entering the institution.

2.9.2 The relevance of ubuntu to the study

The theory of ubuntu is relevant to this study because ubuntu is fundamental to the African worldview and therefore relevant to the majority of previously excluded learners. In addition, it is viewed as a revolutionary educational initiative in the South African context, which aims to eliminate the imbalances and inequities left over from the apartheid regime. Shaped by the principles of ubuntu, the current drive in educational circles in South Africa is towards an inclusive education that embraces all learners and gives all learners access to high-quality education (Metz, 2011)

2.9.3 Marginalisation theory

Activities such as sport can be experienced completely differently by different individuals, which is why it is important to listen to learners' voices on the experience of inclusivity or its opposite, marginalisation. The theory of marginalisation provides the necessary counterbalance to the theories of ubuntu and inclusive education, showing that in the midst of their attempts to be inclusive, schools may still be marginalising some. Messiou (2012) argues that marginalisation itself may be experienced differently, as explained in Section 2.7; Marginalisation may be recognised by everybody, including the person experiencing it; others may recognise it but the victim may not; the victim may experience it but not "experience" it be unaware of the marginalisation even though they do experience it, because of being

conditioned by the cultures, norms and practices that are marginalising; or the victim may experience and feel it, but not admit it and actively deny it. All of these are relevant to the experiences of learners interviewed in the current study. Marginalisation also suggests that the voices of learners must be heard and not translated by teachers, because teachers may deny the experience or try to couch it in their own terms.

2.9.4 The relevance of marginalisation to the study

As stated above, marginalisation as a theory is relevant to the study because it provides the necessary counterpoint to the notion of inclusivity, which has become mainstream and may overlook the very real and subtle marginalisation that still occurs in the midst of it. Various school practices marginalise learners who do not fit into what is deemed the norm. The process may be subtle, involving a gradual but repeated pushing aside of learners, labelling of learners or indirect constructing of learners' identities (Messiou, 2006). It is relevant to the study because the study seeks to uncover learners' experiences of inclusion and exclusion, with marginalisation being somewhat similar synonymous with exclusion. In the world of independent all-boys schools, learners who are different in terms of their sporting capabilities or interests are marginalised, and do not receive the support they should receive to develop their sporting strengths.

2.10 Conclusion

The chapter has shed light on the issues affecting school sport today in the midst of a global push to make sport more inclusive. Great strides have been made in this direction but little has been done to acknowledge the underlying currents of exclusivity and marginalisation that take place in subtle ways and forms. The theories of inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation reveal the unsettling and exclusive realities that still exist in the education system. Positive changes in the sporting arena are acknowledged. It is hoped that this study will contribute to a greater awareness of the need to keep transforming sporting practices, especially in independent all-boys schools, into a much more inclusive system in which there is a place for all to participate, if not excel. In this process, it is clear that good intentions are not enough, and that the transition will have to be managed, monitored and evaluated.

As slow and difficult as change may be because of structures that act as barriers to learning, change is necessary to achieve inclusion in the education system, as is clear from the concepts embedded in the theories of inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation. There will be people who support change and those who are opposed to change. Individual teacher attitudes

will ultimately determine whether schools support the changes or oppose them. The theoretical frameworks highlight that change must not be accepted at face value, but must be interrogated to uncover underlying processes and attitudes that have a far greater effect on learners' experiences of sport than may be supposed. Some obstacles to changing the educational system have been the mainstays of traditional schools, as can be observed. The results of a successful move to a more inclusive educational space, which includes sports, may be felt in ten years or more, and will benefit not only South Africa but Africa and the world.

The chapter has shown that individuals and institutions in positions of power determine who has access to resources, and what constitutes inclusivity and exclusivity. They set the bar for practices and values expressed at lower levels of the sporting hierarchy. These individuals and institutions may be difficult to change, but the process is already underway and schools are beginning to follow. The chapter has also shown that assumptions about inclusivity should not be accepted at face value, but must be questioned; in addition, learners' voices must be heard before any assessment of the true nature of sport at independent all-boys schools may be made.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's paradigmatic perspective, the methodology used to gather and analyse data, the study site and context, the sampling methods used, the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations of the study. The first part of the chapter focusses on interpretivism as a paradigmatic perspective, highlighting its ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

3.2 Paradigmatic perspective

A paradigmatic perspective is a model used by a researcher to convey their ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions about the world (Gabel & Peters, 2004). Through the interrogation of assumptions, the researcher's paradigmatic perspective is revealed. The paradigmatic perspective can help to address various dilemmas encountered in the research process (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). "A paradigm consists of the following components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. Each component is explained, and then the relationships between them are explored" (Scotland, 2012, p.9). What informs the choice of paradigmatic perspective is the researchers' intentions, with the paradigmatic perspective acting as a guideline for the researcher (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

This study used interpretivism as its research paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 110) state that "the ontological position of interpretivism is relativism". Relativism is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person. Ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, "in other words, what is" (Scotland, 2012, p.9). Dei (2002, p,13) states that "the ontological position speaks to the primary assumptions that people (within given cultures) have/make about the nature of reality", whereas the epistemological position speaks to the assumptions people have about the nature of knowledge, its origins, and its veracity (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). The epistemological position of interpretivism is that there are different ways of knowing about reality. The interpretivist paradigm serves as the foundation for the proposed research as a means of comprehending both its ontology and its epistemology.

3.3 The philosophical assumptions of the study's paradigm: Ontology

The ontological assumption of the interpretivist paradigm used in this study is that participants construct their own reality, as informed by their history and culture. The study takes the view

that people form their own view of life, constructing their own "life world" based on numerous extrinsic and intrinsic influences; for this reason, it is essential to listen to participants' views, experiences and opinions. "Interpretivists argue that we need to suspend our own judgment and step out of our own life world and insert into the other person's life world as best we can to understand their actions" (Bird, 2000). People have different perceptions of events because they operate in different life worlds arising from their different experiences, backgrounds and contexts.

Interpretivists may be contrasted with positivists, who view the world objectively, arguing that because we have the same senses, we all see the same thing (Phillips, 2000). Interpretivists dismiss this notion, arguing is that we operate in different life worlds and therefore have different perceptions about the world (Feinburg & Soltis, 2009). This paradigm recognises differences among people and the value of different ways of interpreting the world. The paradigm supports the seeking of diverse opinions, experiences and feelings in research studies, as an attempt to obtain a deep and comprehensive picture of reality. In this study, an interpretivist ontological stance enabled the researcher to form an accurate understanding of learners' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of participating in sports in an independent school.

The interpretivist ontological stance also emphasises the necessity of comprehending reality holistically. Since reality is an entity that is socially, culturally and historically shaped, the interpretivism paradigm enables the researcher and participants to develop a comprehensive understanding of reality as a result of its ontological implications (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001).

3.3.1 The philosophical assumptions of the study's paradigm: Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is formed with regard to its methods, validity and scope, and the differences between knowledge and opinion. "Epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words, what it means to know" (Scotland, 2012, p.9). Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that epistemological assumptions are how we know, what we know, why we know and the truth of what we know. Epistemological assumptions suggest that there are different ways of knowing.

According to Skinner (1954), behaviour is influenced by an outside, obvious force. In contrast to the introspection recommended by Plato, as cited in Rouse (1956), Skinner emphasises and argues for knowledge acquisition based on facts that may be observed by all. Skinner (1954) makes the case that knowledge acquisition must be supported by evidence and that education

involves teaching new behaviours through the use of reinforcements. “Education is the most important branch of scientific technology” (Skinner, 1954, p.93). Skinner argues that we learn by repetition, that teachers should use affirmations (a form of reinforcement), and that learning is ineffective if ideas are not repeated. Knowledge is strengthened by reinforcement if a favourable condition follows it, and if the behaviour avoids a negative condition. However, not all teachers have epistemological access to resources, and even those who have access may not use resources to unlock knowledge. Resources should be used to address the diverse learning needs of all learners; however, access to resource does not give teachers the knowledge they need to use them inclusively. According to the epistemological assumptions of this study, resources may enhance learning if they serve as reinforcement to the learning of all, but a teacher's knowledge foundation should complement resources and enable proper use of them by all learners.

To avoid oversimplification, it is necessary to recognise that there are intrinsic and extrinsic components to epistemology. A learner's level of epistemological access is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as internal learning barriers such as dyslexia, and extrinsic factors, such as the level of cultural capital possessed by the learner, which often determines the type of school one attends, and the teachers, tutors and resources to which one is exposed. Other extrinsic factors are parental education level and the presence or absence of facilities such as libraries, science laboratories and sporting facilities, all of which contribute to how much epistemological access a learner has.

Interpretivism emphasises the idea that learners do not enter a classroom or sporting arena as blank slates, since they already have knowledge. The inclusive perspective stresses that that epistemological access should be open to all, so that everyone has an equal chance to acquire knowledge.

This is why it is essential, especially in well-resourced settings, to ask who benefits from those resources; who has epistemological access? Schools may possess fine sporting facilities but if they are only available to those with private transport (either because of their location or hours of operation), their epistemological value is effectively being denied to all others. The use of resources must address all learners’ needs and be education friendly to all learners.

According to the interpretivism paradigm, knowledge is viewed in a flexible and comprehensive manner, and acknowledged as contextual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Scotland (2012) asserts that knowledge is progressive and develops through interaction with the natural

world. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2007) consider the idea that experience and practice serve as the contextual foundation for knowledge. From an interpretivist perspective, the interconnected and interrelated nature of knowledge should enable diverse social groups to collaboratively decide on what constitutes legitimate knowledge in their respective communities with regard to sport (Smith, 2016). The interpretivist paradigm, which allows for epistemologies based on diverse interactions, challenges the idea of objectivity, which is predicated on the notion of universal rational knowledge. The experienced and transactional epistemology of diverse communities, whose knowledge is socially and historically situated, should not be discounted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The interpretivist paradigm is often used by researchers interested in the voices and worldviews of marginalised groups (Cohen et al., 2007). The paradigm rejects the idea that everyone may see the fundamental truths of objective reality and universally accepted knowledge in the same way. The paradigm shift from objectivism and universalism to subjectivity and particularism is what makes interpretivism unique (Creswell, 2009). According to Scotland (2012) and Guba and Lincoln (1994), rejecting the ideas of universalism and objectivism is not anti-science; rather, it indicates that there are several ways to perceive and comprehend knowledge. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that there are several experiences and modes of understanding or experiencing the world that do not fit into the criteria of an objective worldview. The interpretivist paradigm's use of ontology reveals the core of reality through human comprehension of everyday events in the world (Grix, 2004).

The interpretivist paradigm regards language as a crucial instrument of knowledge, because humans make sense of the world through language. What is considered to be truth was either produced by language or was made possible by language. From a positivist paradigm, Wittgenstein (2020) argues that the limitations of language limit the world. Drawing from Wittgenstein (2020) language has inherent limitations and occasionally people make mistakes and become confused when attempting to express the world with words. However, from an interpretivist perspective, reality is something that is created by language (Frowe, 2001; Scotland, 2012). As a result, there is no single, established, or unchanging perspective on reality; instead, “reality is constructed through the interaction between language and aspects of an independent world” (Scotland, 2012, p.11). Frowe (2001) asserts that there exists a variety of diverse realities because of reality’s intricate diversity-related foundations. According to Crotty (1998), the interpretivist paradigm places a strong emphasis on norms, consent, and criteria for defining what constitutes truth. Simply expressed, the interpretivism paradigm

acknowledges that reality is constructed socially and that reality cannot be reduced to an individual choice or phenomenon, but rather differs between communities or cultures. Thus, by realising that knowledge is to a large extent a product of language, different social groups may discuss how they comprehend sport in their respective languages.

The interpretivist paradigm views knowledge as a subjective concept because it is “culturally derived and historically situated" (Scotland, 2012, p.12). Grix (2004) maintains that according to the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is an object of social construction or a construct that is created through consensus. Frowe (2001) maintains that knowledge is acquired or accessed through constant inquiry.

From the above, it may be concluded that knowledge, as defined by the interpretivist paradigm, is a complicated phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single factor, basis, or extraneous force. Instead, it is open to several interpretations. As a result, the interpretivist paradigm views knowledge as multiple or heterogeneous (Scotland, 2012). It was the ideal paradigm for the current study. Siegel 2006, p.4) explains that

> [d]ifferent people have different beliefs and systems of belief, to which they appeal in explaining and interpreting reality, and particular groups of people share belief systems that often differ in systematic ways from other such systems.

Therefore, the current study foregrounds several viewpoints or voices in the process of knowledge creation. Smith (2016) points out that an interpretivist paradigm prevents uniformity in sport (see Smith 2016).

3.3.2 The philosophical assumptions of the study’s paradigm: Methodology

In selecting a methodology for a study, the researcher asks how they may go about finding out whatever they believe may be known (Guba & Lincon,1994, p. 108). The study seeks to understand the phenomenon of inclusion and exclusion in sport from the viewpoints of the participants, and therefore the study adopted a mostly qualitative approach. Qualitative research seeks to learn about phenomena from people who have actually encountered them. Qualitative studies seek to understand phenomena from the point of views of participants, by investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit (Creswell, 2009, p. 8).

3.4 The research approach and methodology

A research methodology, or the overall nature of the research activity, is concerned with both the theoretical assumptions of the study and the practical steps required to obtain knowledge. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are the two main types of methodology (Creswell, 2003). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) define a methodology as "the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project" (p.14). According to Creswell (2002; 2003), numerous research methods or approaches are employed when the research problem is intricate or if the researcher feels that one method or strategy might not adequately address the issue being studied. In a single study or set of studies, a mixed methodology combining both qualitative and quantitative elements may be used to collect and evaluate data. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches can improve knowledge of a study problem and may yield a more rigorous approach than the use of either methodology alone (Williams, 2007). The current study was mainly qualitative in nature. However, a quantitative approach was used to analyse data obtained from the questionnaires, which is presented in graphic form using percentages. A qualitative approach was used to analyse data obtained from interviews. Therefore, it may be said that the study used qualitative method approach.

According to Creswell (1994), qualitative research concentrates on phenomena that take place in "the real world". Studying occurrences in all their complexity is a component of qualitative research. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research may be used to achieve one or more of the following purposes:

- *Description:* Qualitative research may be used to define the characteristics of specific circumstances, places, procedures, connections, networks, or individuals.
- *Interpretation:* Qualitative research may be used to accumulate knowledge about a specific phenomenon, and to create new theories or ideas about the topic.
- *Verification:* Qualitative research may enable the researcher to examine the veracity of specific hypotheses, assertions, theories, or assumptions in practical settings.
- *Evaluation:* Qualitative research supplies a system via which a researcher may assess the efficacy of specific measures, procedures, or developments.

According to the explanations given by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and Creswell (2003) above, this study is descriptive, because it seeks to describe and explain learners' perspectives on inclusion and exclusion, and the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sport. The

research is also interpretive, given its aim of gaining insight into learners' perspectives on sport in an independent all-boys high school. As a result, qualitative research in this study fulfils both descriptive and interpretive functions.

Qualitative data offers the benefits of full descriptions of the things being examined in their natural surroundings, as opposed to laboratory settings, as explained by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and Creswell (1994; 2003). This is so because qualitative data emphasises problems that are both complicated and changing. As a result, quantitative analysis and exact measurements are less feasible (Williams, 2007). Qualitative data includes thorough descriptions of what happened, such as firsthand accounts. This kind of research places a strong emphasis on the human factor, makes use of intimate, firsthand experiences in the research environment, and resists removing the researcher from the individuals, event, or situation being investigated (Creswell, 1994).

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.2) state

> Qualitative research is multimethod in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative research studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

The strength of qualitative research is that it provides detailed information to explain complex issues, with the researcher immersing themselves in the phenomena and the investigation (Collingridge & Grant, 2008). This leads to direct experiences being acquired by the researcher through observation, interviews and surveys of participants. Qualitative research is cost efficient because of the qualitative tools used – observation, interviews and questionnaires. In addition, the small number of participants in qualitative research means that fewer resources are needed to accomplish the study (Atieno, 2009).

Drawing from Merriam (2002), the weakness of qualitative research is that the researcher cannot generalise the findings to the entire study population because of the small size of the sample. The limited number of responses makes qualitative data difficult to analyse. Unlike quantitative research, where data is numeric and can be interpreted through statistical formulas, qualitative research presents non-numeric data (Atieno, 2009). Collingridge and Grant (2008) state that since qualitative research data is based on the subjective responses of participants,

there is a need to examine and analyse responses critically, to prevent biased and non-credible findings. Since careful analysis of the responses is required, involving the identification of emerging patterns and themes, qualitative research can be time consuming (Anderson, 2010).

Despite these potential drawbacks of qualitative research, this methodology dominated the current study, as it yielded the depth of insight sought (Merriam, 2002). The quantitative component of the study provided supplementary data to the qualitative component. The interviews and questionnaires used as data collection instruments brought out different perspectives and personal experiences related to the research phenomenon, and constituted a powerful source of meaning making for the problem.

3.5 Research design, context and site

The research took place at a private all-boys school in KwaZulu-Natal province. This independent school is categorised as a mainstream school. Mainstream schools were "born of the failure of segregated education, just as segregated education was born of the failure of earlier attempts at integration" (Axelrod, 1992, p.220). Learners in mainstream schools are those considered not to have particular barriers to learning, requiring less support than those in full-service schools (DOE, 2001). The selected school is an affluent independent school that has access to technology and resources for sporting purposes, catering for Grades 8 to 12. At the time of the study, it had 650 boys aged 13–18, 149 of whom were in Grade 8. One hundred of the 650 boys in the school were day scholars and the rest were boarders. The school has more than 20 sporting venues, offering basketball, canoeing, cricket, cross country, golf, hockey, indoor hockey, rugby, soccer, squash, swimming and water polo. Sport is compulsory for all learners at this school.

3.6 Sampling

According to Shaheen et al. (2016), in most circumstances, surveying every individual relevant to a study is neither possible nor necessary. As a result, a representative sample is chosen. In order to derive relevant, trustworthy and valid conclusions, it essential that the sample is representative of the research population. Patton (1990) states that the sampling method selected is important, since the traits, scale and composition of the sample typically give credibility to any findings that emerge from the study. A variety of sampling procedures may be used in empirical research, depending on the research problem and aims. Examples of sampling procedures include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Patton, 2002).

The study made use of a small sample. One of the fundamental goals of qualitative research is to find meaning in a phenomenon, for which a small sample is ideal.

According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), the two most popular sampling techniques are probability sampling and purposive sampling. To obtain a sample that was instructive in relation to the phenomenon under investigation, the study employed purposive sampling, which is claimed to be highly compatible with qualitative research (Green, 2005); random sampling, on the other hand, lends itself to quantitative research (Rasinger, 2008). In purposive sampling, "subjects are selected based on the study purpose, with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the study" (Etikan et al., 2016, p.4). This indicates that decisions made in terms of strategy determine who, where, and how the research is carried out (Etikan et al., 2016).

An invitation was extended to all Grade 8 learners who participated in sport to participate in the study via the questionnaire; from those who responded, a sample was selected for interviewing. All the sporting codes were included in the questionnaire, not to compare the practices and policies of the various sporting codes but to demonstrate to learners that participation in any sport qualified to them to participate. From the completed questionnaires received, three learners who had stressed the advantages of sport and three who had stressed the barriers or disadvantages were selected. Therefore, purposive sampling applied to both phases; all Grade 8s who played sport were invited to respond to the questionnaire and from these, the plan was to select six to provide further details in interviews. In the end, however, only 12 responded to the invitation to the overall study, so all 12 filled in the questionnaires and 6 were interviewed. Etikan et al. (2016, p.2) state

> The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.

3.7 Data collection instruments: Open ended questionnaires

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2013), data may be collected and analysed by using questionnaires, interviewing volunteer participants, monitoring users through experiments or in their natural settings, and employing numerous phases and evolving methods. In

qualitative research, open-ended questionnaires and interviews have been the most common data gathering approach (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Based on the literature and the reasons presented above, it was decided that this study would collect data using the following techniques: open-ended questionnaires for all Grade 8 learners in an independent all-boys high school (see questionnaire in Appendix I) and individual interviews with selected Grade 8 learners who indicated a willingness to be interviewed (see interview schedule in Appendix II).

According to Allen (2017), questionnaires allow respondents to answer questions in their own time, independently. They are best employed in combination with other types of data, such as participant observation, recordings of social interaction, ethnographic notes, and interviews, according to Codo (2009, p.171). The researcher only needs to make arrangements for their delivery, place of submission, and place where they are to be filled in, to ensure that only the intended participants complete the questionnaire, rather than anyone else (See Appendix III for permission letter submitted to parents). They are generally simple to use, affordable, and frequently the most logical choice for measuring unobservable constructs such as beliefs, values and choices, motives and personalities. Open-ended questionnaires frequently use a highly structured style in which quantitative data is generated from an extensive population to test research questions. Mwita (2022) mentions that questionnaires are effective surveying techniques for collecting data from large numbers of respondents in a shorter amount of time than might be the case with interviews or other research methods. In this study, the researcher used Google forms to create a questionnaire comprising ten open-ended questions. The questionnaire is structured and quite short, because it sought qualitative data, as may be seen in Appendix I.

The literature discusses various drawbacks to using questionnaires. Allen (2017), Mwita (2022), and Kim et al. (2017) state that questionnaires may have poor response rates and are unable to probe respondents for greater detail because they are filled out when respondents are alone. In this case, the researcher managed to counter this disadvantage, for example, the learners were given an opportunity to complete the questionnaire at a time most convenient to them which does not affect their academic or sporting commitments. Furthermore, learners were given an opportunity to complete the questionnaire in the library, which all respondents did. There is also no provision for respondents to pose clarity-seeking questions, and there is a large danger of missing data because some respondents may not fill out all the questions. As

explained in Section 3.11, the researcher made a point of informing participants that they should not return the questionnaire unless all questions had been answered.

With these various disadvantages in mind, the researcher took steps to ensure that the questions were as clear and unambiguous as possible, outlined the title and purpose of the study clearly in the letter to encourage as many learners as possible to participate in the study, and distributed the questionnaires at the school so that the learners had an extended period of time in which to fill them in (as explained in Appendix III).

The study used a combination of open-ended questionnaire and individual interviews for data collection because the combination allows for variation in responses. The individual interviews were a significant aspect of data collection, since all participants were those who had useful information, experiences and insights to share (Golafshani, 2003). The questionnaire acted as a baseline source of data, yielding a broad sense of what learners' experiences were with regard to the affordances and drawback of participating in sport. Interviews yielded more in-depth answers and filled in any gaps in understanding that may have been left by responses to the questionnaires.

3.8 Data collection instruments: Interviews

Ritchie and Lewis (2013, p.36) claim that interviews "provide an opportunity for a detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and for very detailed subject coverage". Codo (2009, p.158) noted that "the interview is also an authentic communicative situation in which naturally occurring talk is exchanged" (p.158). Therefore, all study participants who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed were considered for selection as interviewees. Interviews were thought to be a necessary supplement to questionnaires because they would generate richer and more detailed data.

According to Kvale (1996), there are two sorts of interviews: structured and unstructured, with semi-structured interviews falling somewhere in the middle, in that they allow for some flexibility and the addition of probing questions as needs arise. Structured interviews, according to Miller and Glassner (1997), consist of totally pre-set standardised questions, which are generally closed ended and follow each other consecutively. These forms of interviews are actually questionnaires delivered verbally, generating fixed response alternatives. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are open-ended and done in a way

akin to a relaxing conversation, with no set order of questions or specific wording to the questions (Kvale, 1996). Semi-structured interviews have a general topic, broad themes, focused topics, and particular questions; they are more flexible than structured interviews, but somewhat more rigid than unstructured interviews, with the interviewer allowed to explore issues as required. The study used semi-structured interviews, in that the interview schedule set out a predetermined series of questions, with the researcher asking them in the same sequence in all interviews. However, the schedule allowed for additional questions to be asked that were thought pertinent to the interview, since the purpose of using interviews was to produce rich qualitative data. Interviews conducted in this way allow the interviewer to explore motives and sentiments, probe responses, and follow up on ideas (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). The purpose of probing was to shed light on any concerns that remained obscure during the interviews. In addition, it was determined that semi-structured interviews were appropriate because they allowed for the repetition of the interview procedure with different respondents, which standardised the process of asking questions. Standardisation is essential to qualitative research, as stated in Section 3.7.

Further to this, interviews with learners allowed for more in-depth discussions on the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sport at school. This way of gathering data was suitable for the study because it did not restrict the questions and allowed the researcher to base further inquiries on the responses received.

While interviews can produce rich and useful data, they can also be burdensome and difficult to analyse. They are time-consuming, extremely subjective, and risk being biased (Nunkoosing, 2005). Some of these challenges and criticisms served as a rationale for the choice of semi-structured interviews, which would allow the researcher to clarify responses and make them more manageable for evaluation. Semi-structured interviews aided in the collection of the kind of data that was not possible to obtain through questionnaires, revealing thoughts and feeling partly through facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice, in addition to verbal input. Thus the interviews contributed to the collection of data that could be described as valuable, reliable and legitimate.

In July 2023, an average of two interviews per day were conducted and voice recorded with the participants' consent. Each lasted about 30 minutes. The data collection instruments employed, the quality of the data collected individually, and the researcher himself constituted a standardised set of instruments. The two forms of data collection yielded more insight on the

phenomenon than might have been possible through either instrument on its own. The result of the process was a useful and comprehensive set of research data, supplemented by research notes taken during the process. The personal involvement of the researcher in the entire process made transcription of the voice recordings relatively easy, since the researcher was able to recall what had transpired in each interview. Listening to the recordings brought back images of the interview scenario, yielding an opportunity to replenish the research notes and engage more deeply with the data. Ritchie and Lewis (2013) suggest that after the interviews, early transcription of the recordings and analysis of the data is helpful. In the current study, transcriptions were done after each interview to ensure that data was captured as accurately as possible.

3.9 Data analysis

Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2012, p.57) as "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set, through focusing on meaning across a data set". The study used thematic analysis, as it allowed the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences collected from the interviews (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The process involved reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and organising data into themes as they emerged during reading and analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2012) state that thematic analysis begins with the researcher getting to know the data by attentively listening to recordings, reading through notes taken during interviews, and reading the interviews transcripts several times. From there, the researcher uses codes to organise the data. The codes are an indication of the similarities and differences in the data gathered; collectively, the comparison of similarities and differences produces themes (Aronson, 1995). The researcher takes care to identify themes and codes in such a way that they are closely related to the research questions, so that there is congruence between the research objectives and the themes revealed. Themes needed to be named and defined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, the researcher draws up a description of the findings using the coded data and the themes. This process was followed in the current study. Participants' views and opinions were formulated as knowledge through a comparison of responses to findings revealed in the literature, and in light of the research theories. By closely relating responses to the work of other researchers, the researcher was able to compile a useful body of data that revealed distinct differences and similarities to that of other researchers.

During the process, participants were also coded for ease of identification. Codes were allocated in the manner outlined below:

The first code, P1, represented the responses of Learner 1 to the questionnaire. At this stage of the data collection process, learners were answering questions on their computers; therefore, in the discussion of findings in Chapter 5, P1, P2 and so on represent responses given electronically.

The first question on the interview schedule was which sport the learner participated in (see Appendix I). The Google form used for the questionnaire shows the code for each learner, the sport they played, how long they had been playing it, what inspired them to take up the sport, and how they defined inclusion and exclusion. This was done to make it possible to analyse the data in detail. When a response was found, a code was given, and the form was examined to determine the respondent's characteristics in order to further analyse the data.

Interview recordings were promptly transcribed and coded in a similar way. For interviews, the coding comprised abbreviations such as INT1, INT2, to refer to the number of the interviewee. All the codes were recorded on a separate form and were compared to the interviewees' information. This allowed for a more thorough analysis of the data.

Data analysis in qualitative research is often divided into two categories, according to Braun and Clarke (2006); content and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis entails the identification of keywords or repeated concepts, with the frequency and prominence of specific words or phrases evaluated and considered. Thematic analysis is the collection and study of textual content (Lochmiller, 2021). Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis as a methodical, repeatable strategy for condensing large amounts of material into a few topic categories. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a technique for making assumptions, in which the researcher objectively and systematically detects specific properties of messages. Therefore, thematic analysis is a research instrument used to evaluate the quantity and use of words, keywords or concepts in a document in order to derive the meaning (Lochmiller, 2021).

The open-ended questionnaire responses and all of the qualitative information gathered from the interviews were analysed in this study using the thematic analysis technique. Lochmiller,

(2021) contends that one can analyse data by looking at topics or themes if one is conducting descriptive or interpretive research, where the goal is to discover knowledge about human nature or a particular situation under investigation. The goal in such situations is to provide an illuminating description of an issue. The texts are divided into segments that reflect examples of the theme, with codes or keywords added. Finally, text segments dealing with the same theme may be combined. This process was followed in the current study. Information from the open-ended questionnaire and interviews was analysed in order to identify common ideas, which were then developed into narrative sentences and clustered into themes. Importantly, the main research question and its supporting sub-questions, listed in Section 1.7, served as a guide for the formulation of themes.

As noted, the data was collected from Grade 8 learners who participated in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, it was essential to take ethical considerations seriously in the questionnaire and interviews, as described in Section 3.11. Chapter 4 presents the data obtained from the 12 learners who completed the questionnaire and Chapter 5 presents the findings of all 6 learners who indicated a willingness to be interviewed.

3.10 Trustworthiness

Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) state that in order for the researchers' interpretations of the data to be considered trustworthy, the measuring tools used to collect data must be both legitimate and credible. In general, the worth of any type of research is determined by the reliability of its research outcomes. Rose and Johnson (2020) support this by stating that when designing and carrying out a research project, one should constantly be mindful of its trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness refers to “the extent to which the findings are an authentic reflection of the personal or lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation” (Michael & Ellie, 2007, p.4). According to Brink (1993), Creswell (2009), Le Comple and Goetz (1982), trustworthiness is the degree to which measurement results are consistent over numerous versions of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Positivists argue against the trustworthiness of qualitative studies, because of the uncertain accountability regarding rationality and accuracy. However, there are ways to make sure that an instrument's trustworthiness is improved. Golafshani (2003) as well as Kirk and Miller (1986) propose four

potential methods for boosting an instrument's trustworthiness, namely: First, establish a clear conceptualisation of constructs by creating a precise, unambiguous theoretical description of each construct and making sure that each measure only represents a single distinct notion. Second, raise the measurement level indicators to a higher or more accurate level. Third, measure each variable by a number of indicators, using two or more indicators for each facet of the variable. Fourth, use replications and pre-tests. According to Creswell (2009), variables such as unclear wording of questions, changes in the physical environment, notably during interviews and laboratory testing, changes in respondents' and interviewers' moods, and the type of contact can all have an impact on trustworthiness. To help guard against such variability, the researcher ensured that the questionnaires were handed out and interviews were conducted at times most convenient to learners.

Shenton (2004) refers to a number of other criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for a study to be considered trustworthy. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Steps were taken in the current study to ensure that the process fulfilled the criteria for these constructs.

3.10.1 Credibility

To verify the legitimacy of the research "all criteria developed for use in qualitative studies rely heavily on presenting the results to those who were studied and asking them to verify whether or not they agree with them" (Cutcliffe & Mckenna, 1999, p.378). Checking data with participants helps to verify its accuracy and therefore the credibility of the study. It ensures that the participants' views have been understood and captured in the way that they intended (Ashworth, 1997). In the current study, the researcher paused during interviews to check that what he had understood was what the interviewee had intended to convey. For example, the learners were provided with the transcript to make sure what was captured aligned with what was said.

3.10.2 Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.124) argue that "researchers are expected to provide sufficient information about the context in which their inquiry is carried out so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgement". To ensure transferability in the current study, the researcher provided detailed information about the context and setting of the study, so that, should other researchers wish to replicate the study, they may do so in similar settings.

3.10.3 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.300) state that dependability in qualitative research closely corresponds to the notion of reliability in quantitative research. Dependability requires absolute honesty in data collection, analysis and reporting. Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.317) state that an inquiry audit is one measure that might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. To ensure dependability, this study was audited by a supervisor from the researcher's university before it was made available to others.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results may be corroborated or confirmed by others. Triangulation is considered a useful strategy for ensuring confirmability. Hadi and Closs (2016, p.4) state:

> Triangulation is a widely used method to ensure credibility and confirmability of qualitative studies. Triangulation involves using at least two related data sources, data collection methods or researchers with the aim of reducing inherent bias associated with a single source.

In the current study the researcher used two different data collection tools, the questionnaire and interviews, as discussed in Section 3.6. Hadi and Closs (2016) suggest that the researcher should also be able to justify their choice of methodology, and the data collection and research design, so that readers have an understanding of the study. A detailed discussion of the methodology used the rationale for its use is discussed in Section 3.6.

3.11 Ethical considerations

All research is required to adhere to ethical standards. For this, a comprehensive set of principles and rules have been determined. Hopf (2004, p.334) stated that these ethical principles and rules guide how the relationships between researchers, on the one hand, and those involved in sociological research, on the other hand, are to be handled. According to Vargas and Montoya (2009), it is the duty of the researcher to respect both the participants' right to privacy and their voluntary involvement whenever they are asked to participate in a research study. Therefore, researchers cordially invite individuals to reply, but they do not place undue pressure on them. To accomplish this, one must exercise sound judgment, considering the circumstances surrounding the study. Researchers must maintain confidentiality in order to prevent the identification of a specific person from their responses. In addition, to ensure that research is conducted ethically, researchers must obtain permission

to conduct the proposed study, both from their research institution and from those in authority where the research will be conducted (Goode, 1996).

In this study, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the university ethics committee. Permission to interview learners was requested from the school principal of the school concerned, and from the Grade 8 learners' parents and the learners themselves. The study made sure that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the data collection and reporting process. To protect the participants and the school, no names were mentioned. The participants were sent consent and confidentiality forms to read and sign before participating, along with letters that explained the purpose of the study and the process that would be followed, so that they are aware of what to expect and could make an informed decision about their participation. The study dealt with anonymity by storing all information in a password-protected laptop to which only the researcher had access.

3.11.1 Informed consent

The study obtained consent by sending an email to the parents or guardians of the participants because the participants were under 18. A letter from the university ethics committee was attached to the letter to show that approval for the research had been granted and that there was minimal risk to the participants. Miller and Boulton (2007, p.202) state that there has been a formalisation and standardisation of consent procedures in research, and in the documentation of consent, along with a "move from self-regulation to external regulation, and an increasing focus on the rights and protection of research participants". The email sent to parents described the research report procedures in detail and sought parental consent before learner consent was requested. Attached to the letter to the parents was a Google consent form link. This streamlined the process and ensured that parents or guardians were aware of what the study entailed. This helped to ensure that the data collection process was "based on ethical principles of respect for dignity and worth of every human being and their right to self-determination" (Miller & Boulton, 2007, p.2022). The letters to both parents and learners stressed that parents' or guardians' permission was required, and that the research would not proceed if a parent or guardians said no. Once parents had granted consent, an email was sent to the participants asking for their consent (Corrigan, 2003). If a parent or guardian said yes and the learner said no, the research did not include that learner. Where both parents and participants said yes, the identified learners were sent a consent form and a letter. The letter explained the purpose and

procedure of the study and the consent form summarised the procedure and required their signature. See Appendices IV and V for the permission letters to parents and learners.

3.11.2 Confidentiality

In keeping with the standardised ethical principles of research, the participants' names and identities were kept confidential throughout the research process and in this report. "The notion of confidentiality is underpinned by the principle of respect for autonomy, and is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed without permission" (Wiles, Heath, Crow & Charles, 2008, p.417). Confidentiality allows for the safety of volunteers and guarantees that their involvement will not harm them in any way. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the coding of responses.

3.11.3 Anonymity

In order to maintain participant anonymity, the researcher kept all data on a password-protected laptop. Participants were referred to as P1, P2, etc. Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles (2008, p.422) state that the maintenance of anonymity through the use of pseudonyms is the norm in research. This is because the identification of individuals can hurt them; in the current study, it could have caused the loss of a scholarship, or bullying by other learners, parents or the school. For these reasons, anonymity is crucial.

3.11.4 Voluntary participation

The permission letters sent to the school headmaster, parents and learners emphasised that the participant would not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by their participation in the study. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary, and that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time during the process without penalty. Voluntary participation is defined as "a choice or action performed without others' influence or being subjected to any compelling external exposure" (Kilinc & Firat, 2017, p.1462). There were no foreseeable risks to participation, as highlighted by the university ethics committee, which approved the research proposal unconditionally and highlighted the minimal risk to participants.

3.11.5 Validity

According to Maxwell (1992), validity is the extent to which qualitative data collected reflects what the researcher intended it to reflect. According to Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001), an instrument is considered valid if it measures the variables it was designed to measure. This

validity represents the truthfulness of the findings. The instrument should also address every research difficulty related to both content and detail. Whittemore et al. (2001) assert that validity is about precision and whether the raw data accurately supports the findings. According to Maxwell (1992), Altheide and Johnson (1994), methods for judging validity are follows:

- *Face and content validity*: This is a determination of whether a measurement tool measures what it is intended to measure.
- Concurrent validity: This is assessed based on how well an instrument performs compared to a second instrument that is being used simultaneously.

In this study, the challenge of ensuring both reliability and validity was addressed in the following ways: Two methods of data collection were used – questionnaires and interviews, both developed after the views of other researchers, along with inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation, had been researched. The theories provided a framework for understanding the topic and the responses received in the research. The ideas for the instruments used came from the literature. To eliminate ambiguity, the questions were worded as precisely as possible. In addition, the respondents were given an explanation of the research aims, so that they were well informed and understood the study's relevance.

The anonymous nature of responses to the questionnaire helped to ensure that participants gave honest and detailed answers without fear of being identified.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the paradigm that underpinned the study, the approach taken and the methodology followed. A detailed description of the questionnaire and interview schedule has been provided. The approach was qualitative and interpretivist in nature, which suited the purpose of the study. The chapter has also described the study's context, population and sampling procedure used. Participants were Grade 8 boys from an independent, all-boys school in KwaZulu-Natal. Purposive sampling was used to obtain participants for both the questionnaires and the interviews, in that participants in the questionnaire phase had to be Grade 8 boys who participated in sport, while interview participants were selected based on the nature of the answers they gave in their questionnaires. The chapter has also discussed the method used for data analysis, as guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) and others. The steps taken to ensure the study's trustworthiness were described

in some detail. It was also crucial to describe the steps taken to ensure that the study was conducted ethically.

The quality of a study is determined by a combination of the paradigm used (or more specifically, its suitedness to the objectives of the research), the instruments employed, the rigour with which data is analysed, and the various steps taken to ensure a trustworthy and ethical study. This chapter has given an overview and details of all of these aspects. The following chapter presents the numerical results obtained from the first data collection instrument, the questionnaire.

Chapter 4: Data presentation

4.1 Introduction

As stated in Section 3.9, 12 Grade 8 learners completed open ended questionnaires, with 6 selected for interviews. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were given a chance to indicate if they want to be interviewed. All twelve indicated a willingness to be interviewed. Six learners were selected from the data collected from the questionnaire using thematic analysis. The learners highlighted sport as inclusive and or exclusive. These six learners were chosen to be interviewed due to the data reflecting the debates happening around the issues of inclusion and or exclusion in sports.

This chapter presents data from the questionnaires, presented in the form of pie graphs and bar graphs, followed by a brief discussion of the findings for each question. There were ten questions in all, and this information gathered was to provide a holistic biographical understanding of who the participants were.

4.2 Data obtained from the questionnaires completed by 12 learners

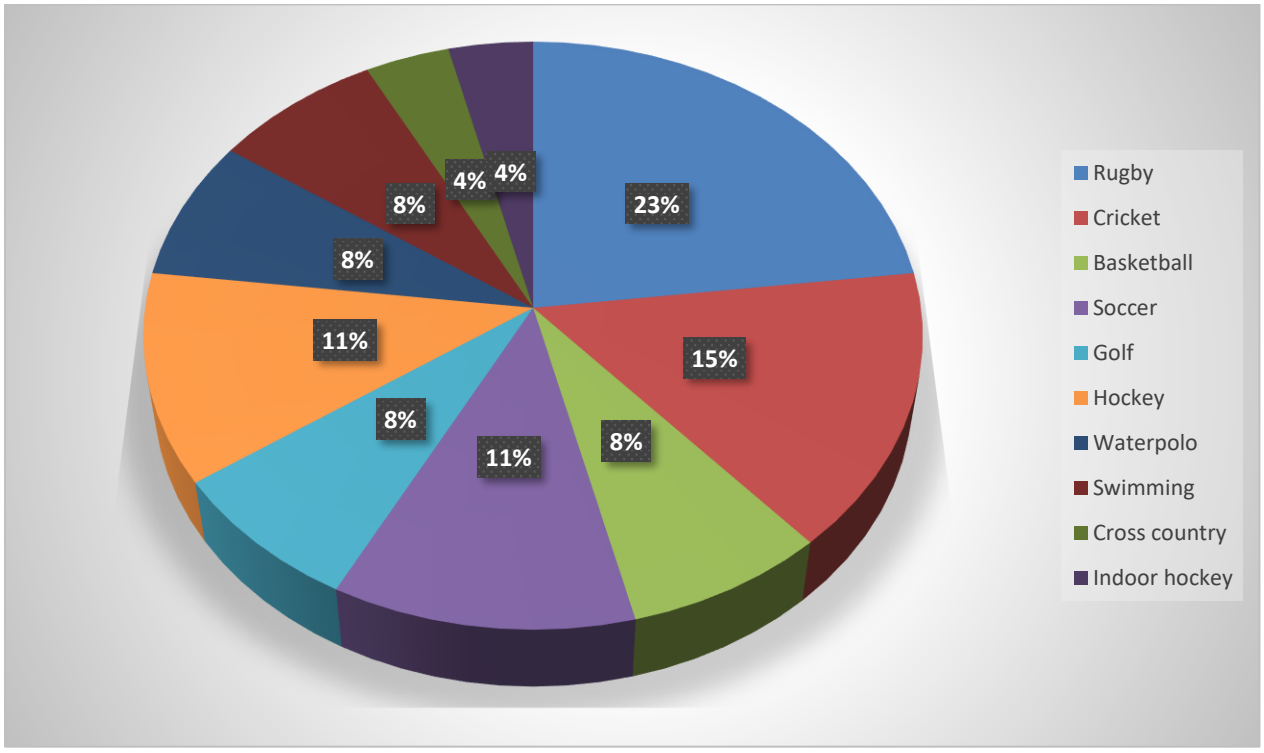


Figure 4.2.1: Sports the learners played

Figure 4.2.1 illustrates the different sports that the learners particpated in, as indicated in the questionnaires. The highest percentage of learners (23%) participated in rugby and the lowest percentage (4%) participated in indoor hockey and cross country running. Whereas the 11% represents learners that particpated in soccer and 15% represents learners that particpate in cricket.

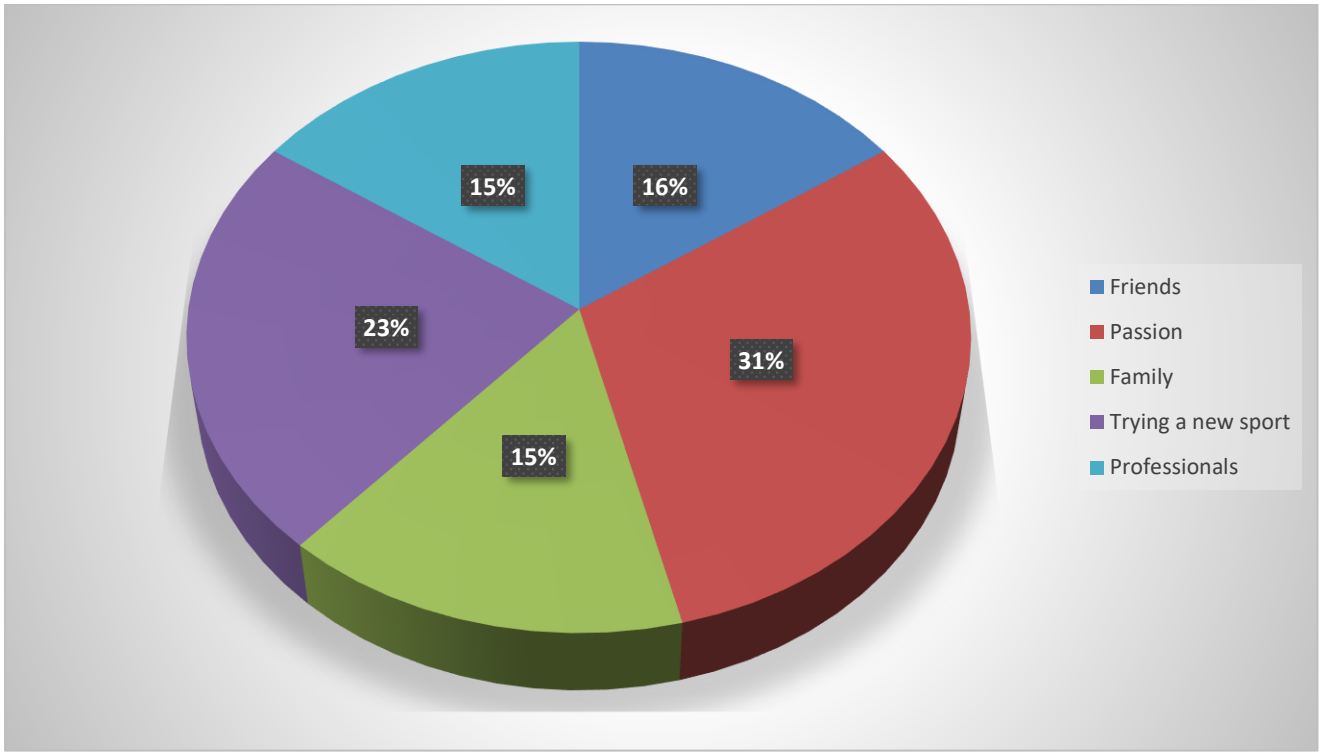


Figure 4.2.2: What influenced the learners to play sport

Figure 4.2.2 illustrates the various influences that led to learners' participation in sport, as indicated in the questionnaires. What emerges from the graph is that both internal and external factors contributed to learners' participation in sport. Internal factors reside internally within an individual, prompting action when the individual uses their own agency to make a decision. External factors are variables not under the individual's control that exert an influence on their decisions. The highest percentage of learners (31%) were influenced by passion when selecting a sport to play; that is, they were intrinsically motivated to participate. The least influential factors were family and the example of professionals (15% each). However, 23% of the learners highlighted trying a new sport derived from internal and external factors.

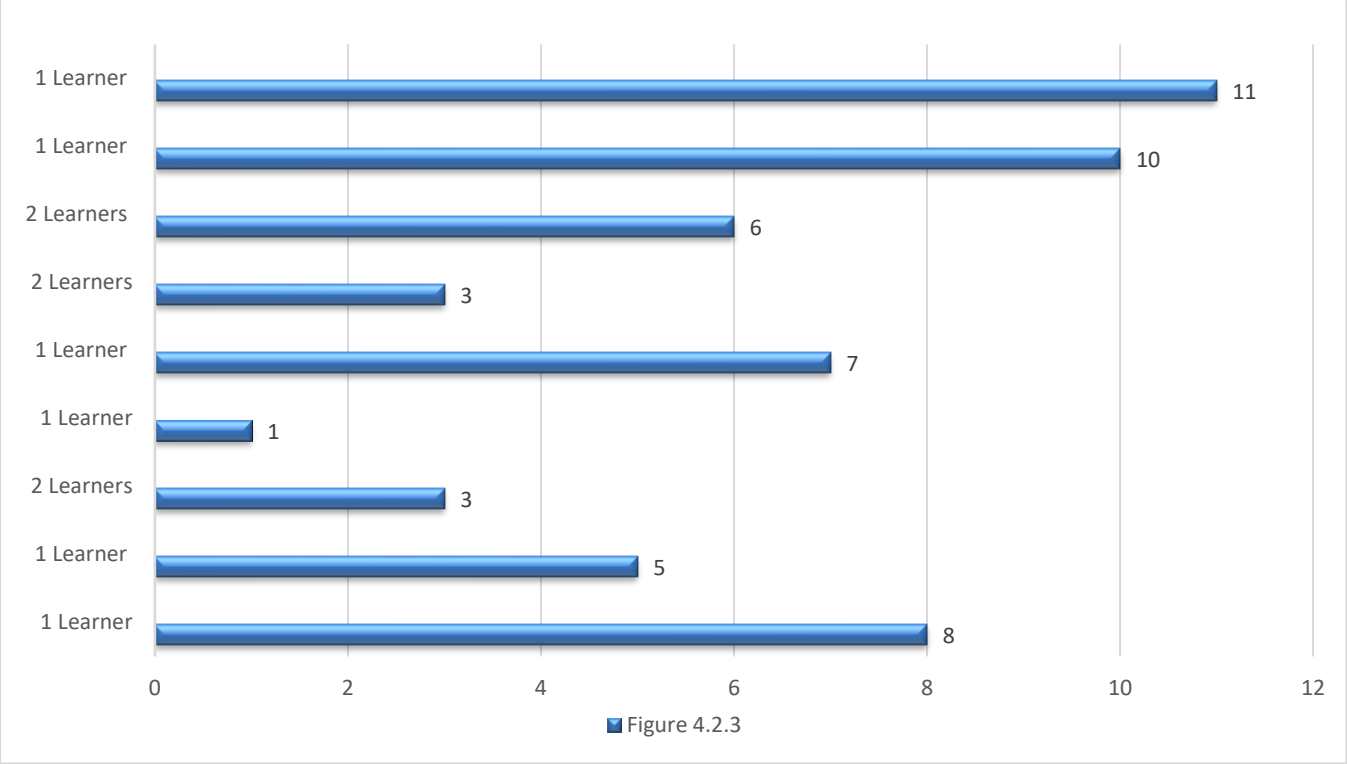


Figure 4.2.3: The number of years learners had been participating in sport

Figure 4.2.3 illustrates the number of years that learners had been particpating in their chosen sport or sports. What emerges from the bar graph is that sport had been an intergral part of these learners' education for some time. Most had previous experience of their sport; one had been involved for 11 years, and two had been involved for as little as one year, with the average appearing to be about six years' involvement.

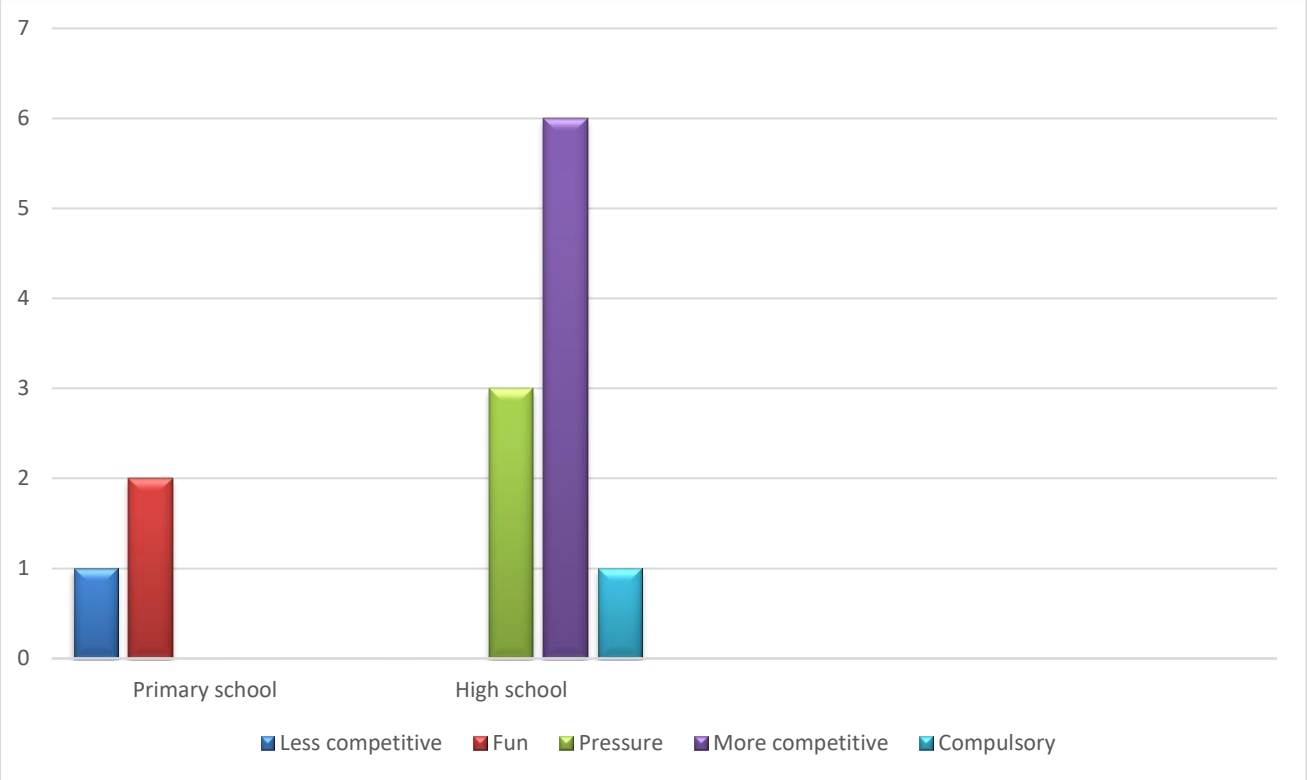


Figure 4.2.4: Differences between learners' experiences of sport in primary and high school

Figure 4.2.4 illustrates what the learners perceived as the main differences between sport in primary and high school. It is clear from the graph that the transition to high school brought a sudden change of emphasis in sport; whereas learners indicated that primary school sport was "fun", a high number of learners indicated that sport in high school was pressurised and competitive. Fun was not mentioned for high school sport. P5 said that the emphasis on high school sport was "to win and make the higher teams". They also noted that sport in high school was compulsory, whereas in primary school it was not compulsory. In total, three learners said there was more pressure in high school sport, six said it was more competitive and one said it was compulsory.

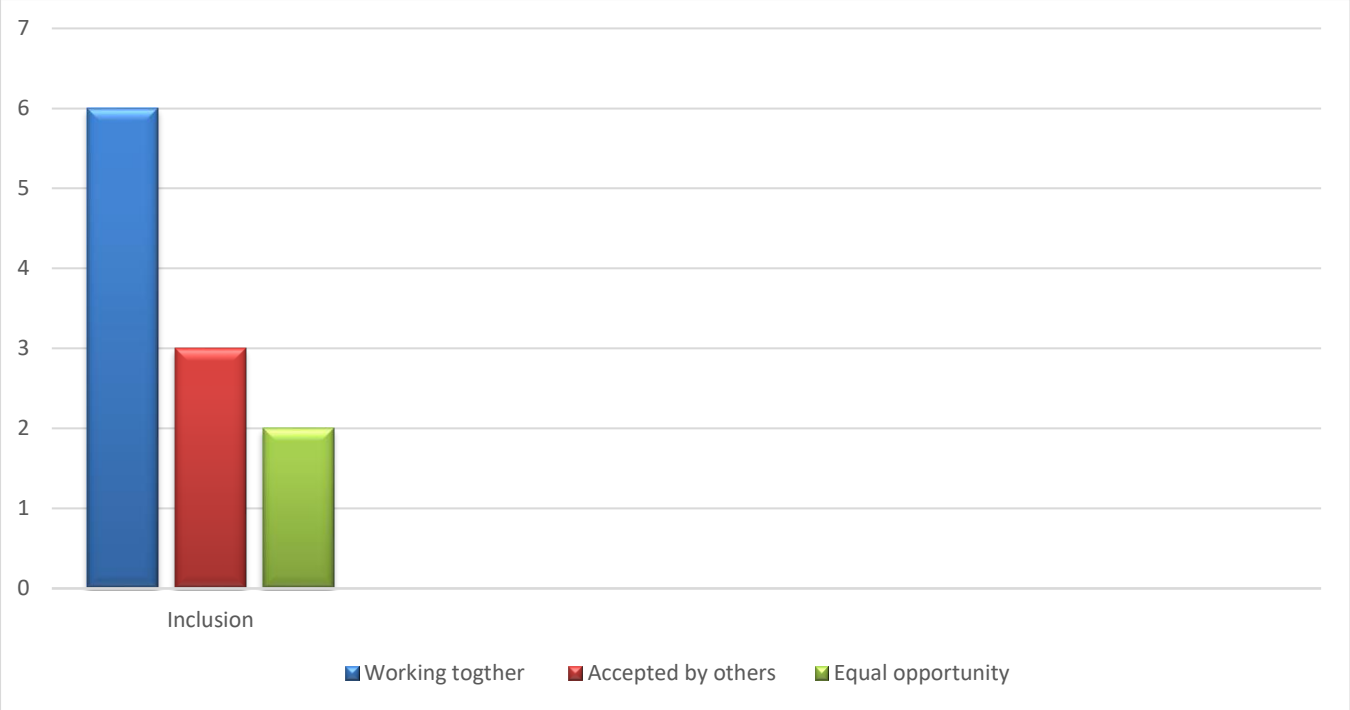


Figure 4.2.5: How learners defined inclusion

Figure 4.2.5 illustrates how learners defined inclusion, as indicated in the questionnaires. Six learners perceived inclusion as working together, three saw it as being accepted by others and three noted that inclusion meant having equal opportunities.

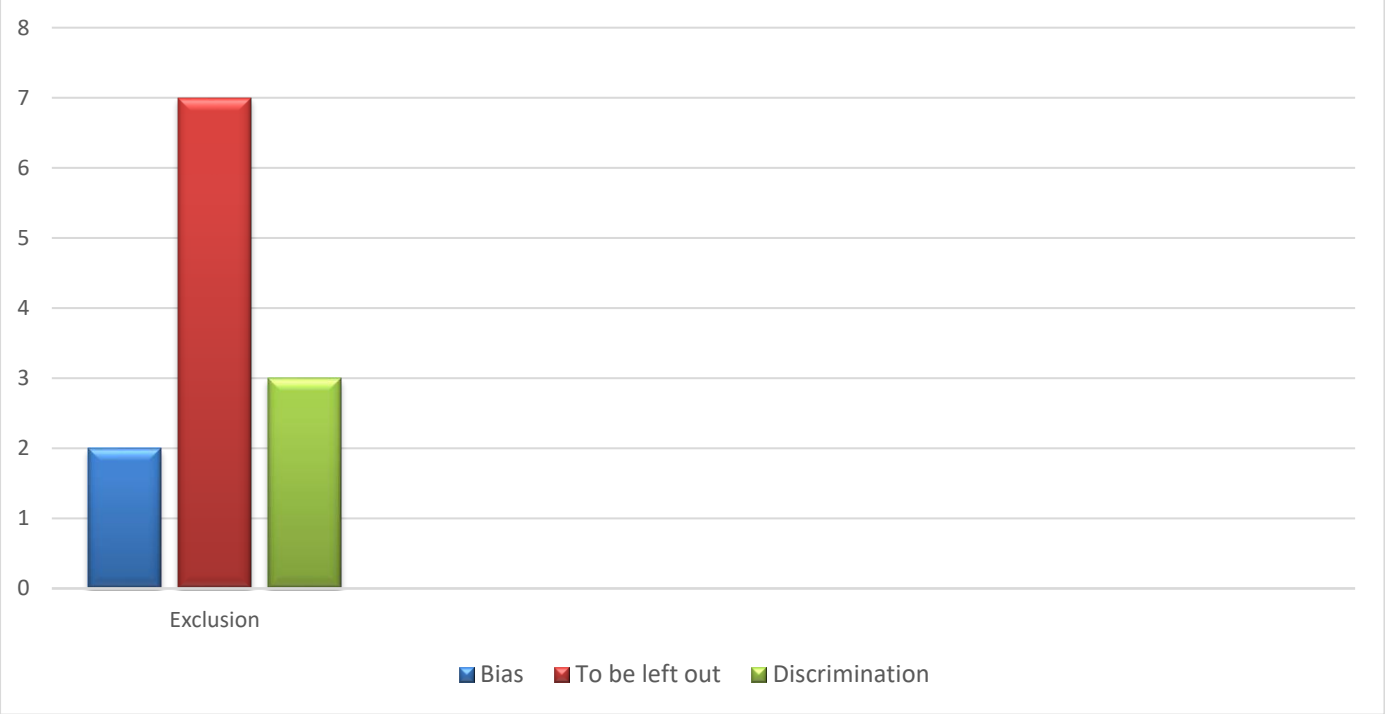


Figure 4.2.6: How learners defined exclusion

Figure 4.2.6 illustrates how learners defined exclusion, as indicated in the questionnaires. What arises from the graph is that exclusion meant being left out (seven learners), being the victim of discrimination (three learners) or experiencing bias against certain sports (two learners). The high number who referred to being left out suggest a more personal experience than a political or race-based one, and may point to a sports-related experience.

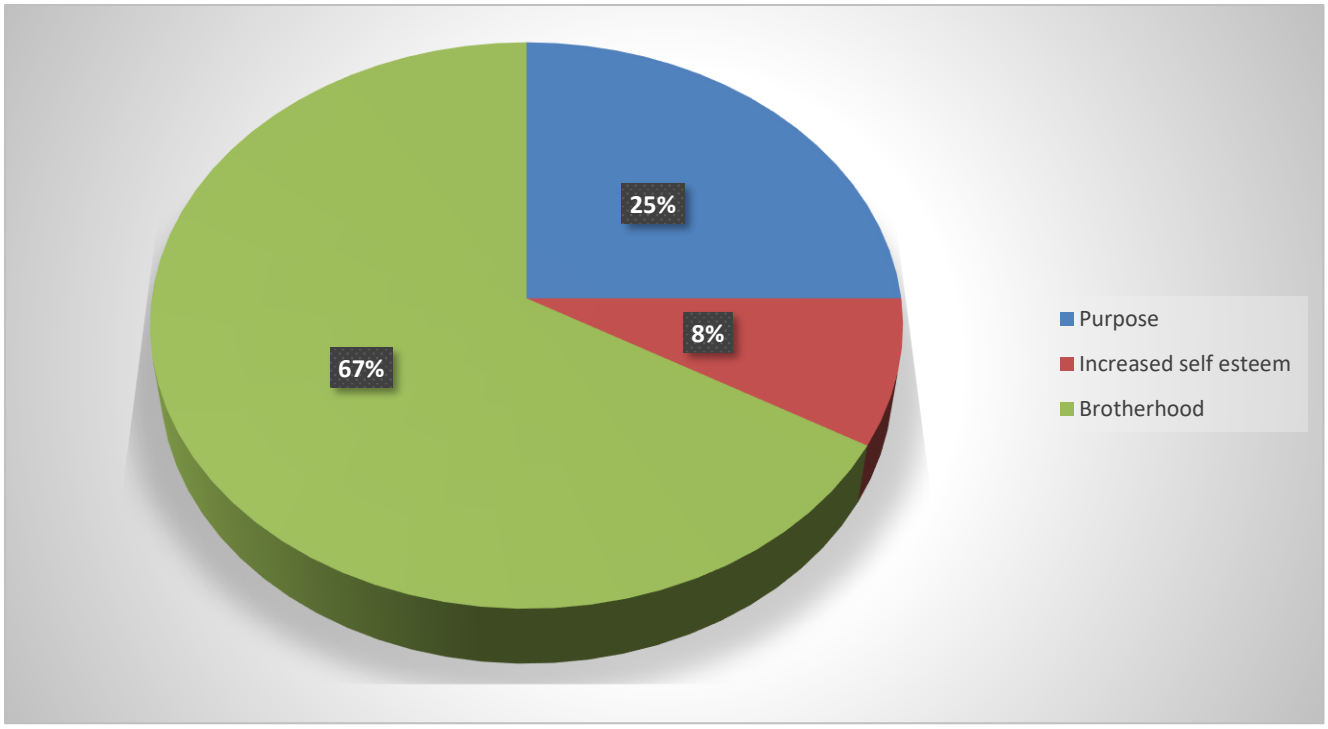


Figure 4.2.7: How participation in sport helped learners to feel included

Figure 4.2.7 illustrates how participation in sport helped the participants feel part of the school. As is clear from the graph, the majority of learners (67%) felt that sport gave them a sense of brotherhood, variously expressed in terms such as togetherness, unity, or a sense of belonging. A total of 25% felt that sport increased their self-esteem and 8% of the learners said that it gave them a strong sense of purpose. Clearly, the value of sport for most was the sense of camaraderie, unity and togetherness that sport imparted.

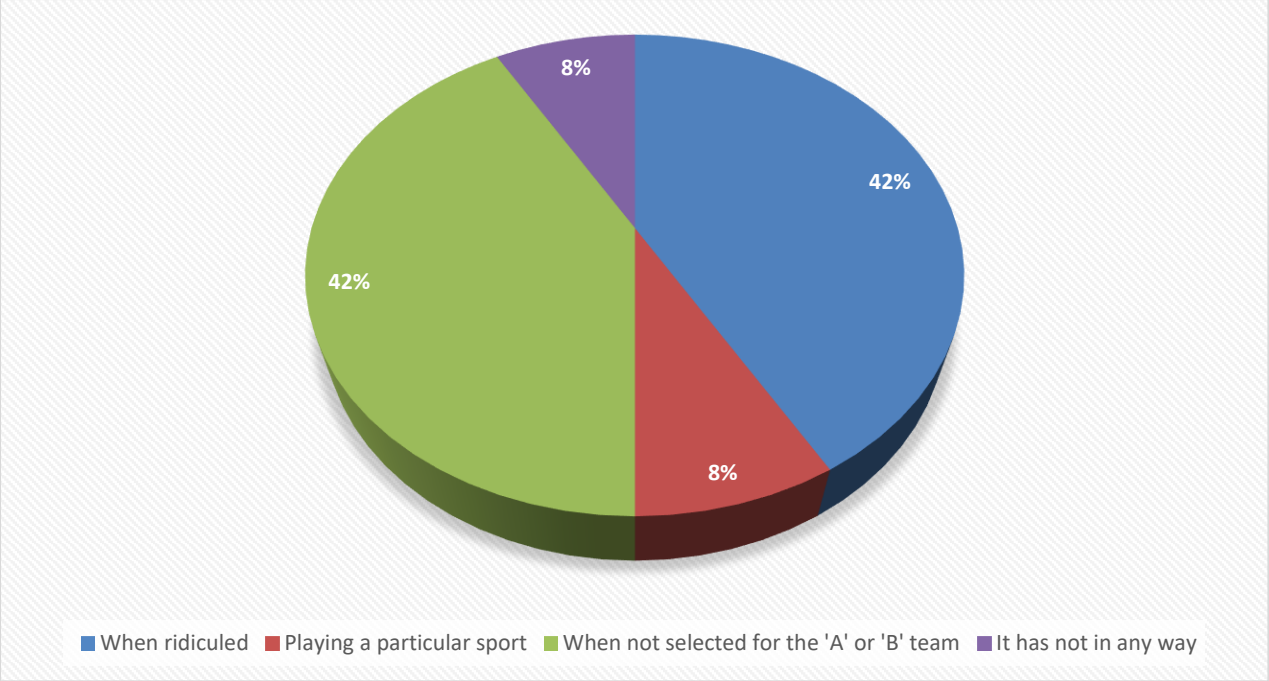


Figure 4.2.8: How participation in sport made learners feel excluded

Figure 4.2.8 illustrates learners' responses to the question of how participation in sport hampered their sense of being part of the school. It is clear from responses that the issue of not being in one of the top teams, and being ridiculed by friends, were the two the main issues that detracted from a sense of belonging, both mentioned by 42% of participants. The two ideas are closely related. Ridicule for poor performance made learners feel excluded and disappointed in themselves. It is interesting that the issue of playing for one of the lower teams carried as much weight as being actively ridiculed, suggesting that the respondents saw membership of a lower team as something almost shameful. In addition, 8% of the learners feel excluded if they played a sport that was not highly valued. For example, rugby is more valued than hockey. Some sport – rugby being a prime example – carry associations and symbolic meaning. A total of 8% of the learners noted that sport played no role in making them feel excluded.

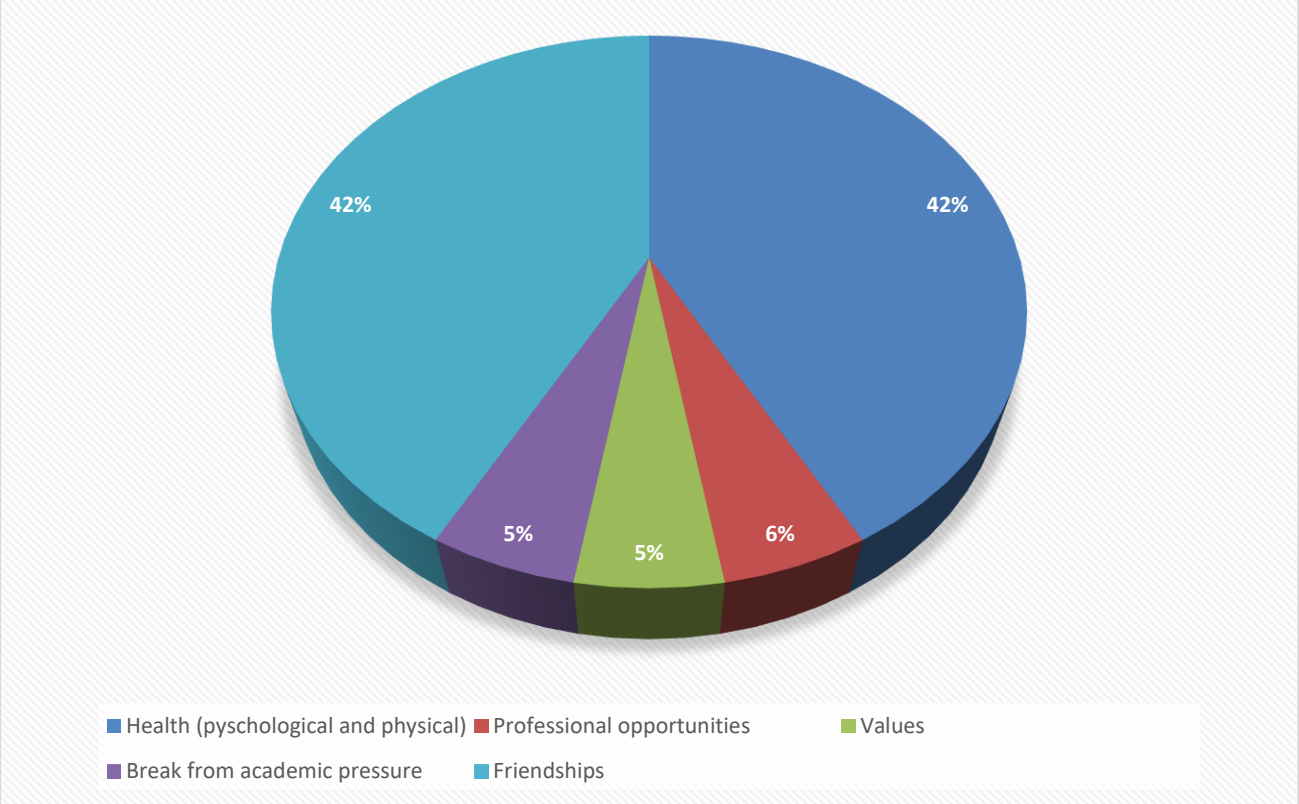


Figure 4.2.9: Learners' perceptions of the advantages of participating in sport

Figure 4.2.9 illustrates learners' perceptions of the advantages of participating in sport. For a high percentge of learners (42%), sport was a means of forming friendships, a finding that is reinforced by the responses shown in Figure 7.2.7, where 67% stated that sport gave them a sense of brotherhood. An equally high percentage cited the psychological and physical health benefits of sport. The rest of the learners (5%, 5% and 6% respectively) cited the break from academic pressures that sport gave them, the values that sport taught them, and the professional opportunities that sport could give rise to.

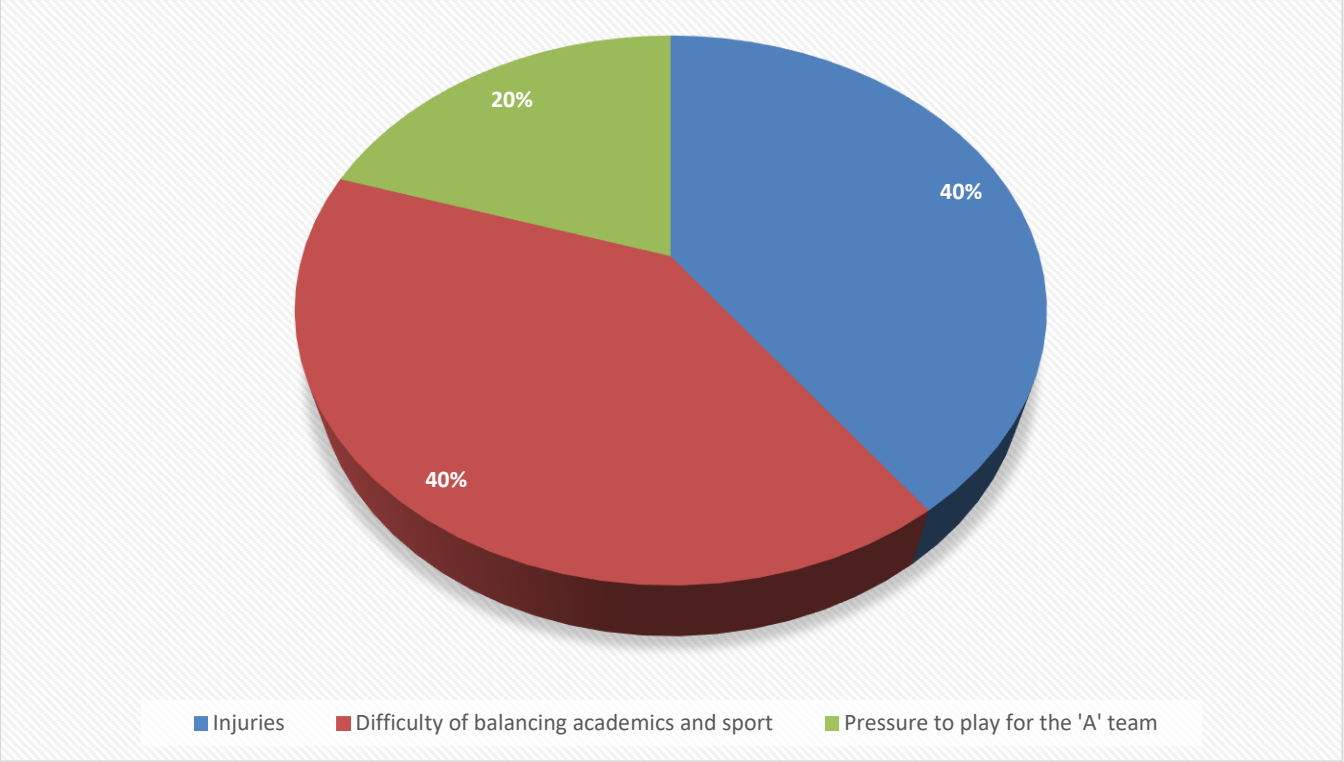


Figure 4.2.10: Learners' perceptions on the disadvantages of participating in sport

Figure 4.2.10 illustrates learners' perceptions on the disadvantages of sport, as indicated in the questionnaires. Learners perceived injuries, pressure to play for the A team and the difficulty of balancing sport and academics as the three disadvantages. Responses were equally split between injuries and the difficulty of balancing academics and sport as the major disadvantage, at 40% each. For 20% of the learners, the pressure of playing for the A was the main disadvantage.

4.3 Conclusion

The chapter has presented the responses of 12 learners to ten questions, as revealed on their questionnaires. From the first question, it emerged that the main sports played were rugby (23%), cricket (15%), soccer (11%) and hockey (11%) followed by basketball, water polo and swimming (8% each). The least played sports were cross country and indoor hockey, probably indicating these sports' lowers status in the social ranking. Most learners had been participating in sport for most of their primary school years, and were motivated to continue because of passion for the sport. The question of how sport differed between primary school and high school revealed some interesting responses. Learners revealed that school sport in primary school was fun and not compulsory, whereas sport in high school was competitive, pressurised and compulsory. At the same time, high school sport was highly valued for its ability to foster

camaraderie, a sense of belonging, and friendships. When asked about the issues of inclusion and exclusion, learners revealed that to them, inclusion meant mostly "working together" – an answer probably related to the experience of working together as a team in sport. Similarly, their experience of exclusion probably reflected the sports-related experiences of being left out, as for most, exclusion meant being left out rather than being a victim discrimination. Respondents saw many advantages to participation in sport, with the two main advantages being the formation of friendships and the mental and physical health benefits of participation. A high percentage of respondents (40%) cited injuries as the main disadvantage of participation, possibly indicating the intensity with which games are played. An equally high percentage (40%) indicated that the difficulty of balancing sport and academics was the main disadvantage.

Chapter Five presents the findings with reference to answers to the open-ended questionnaires and responses given during interviews.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the findings with reference to responses given in both questionnaires and interviews. The findings are presented in line with the research question of the study: "What are Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?" The findings reflect the learners' perspectives on inclusion and exclusion and their understanding of the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school.

Note that in this chapter, the designations P1, P2 etc. refer to responses received on the questionnaires; the designations INT1, INT2 etc. refer to responses received in the interviews.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the themes in relation to the research questions and the theoretical underpinnings of the study, with each theme illustrated with a brief verbatim quote from a participant.

Table 4.1: Themes in relation to research questions and theories

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION	THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING	THEME	EXPLANATION OF THE THEME	PARTICIPANT QUOTE
How has participating in sport enabled Grade 8 learners to feel included/excluded at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?	Inclusive education	Inclusion as a holistic approach to education.	The holistic approach to education strives to educate the whole child and to include all learners in education. It recognises that learners are diverse and have diverse abilities, seeking to nurture each person's strengths.	*In recent years it also has been challenging to keep up with my academics and cricket as it is a time-consuming sport, but I have learned a whole new area of time management and advanced planning through these tough moments.* (INT 2).
		Inclusion as being	Being accepted by others was a	*You get to learn a lot about*

		accepted by others.	priority to learners, pointing to their high need for social acceptance in order to feel included.	*people and how they grew up, and for me that makes me feel included.* (INT5).
		Inclusion as working together.	Participants highly valued working together, mutual respect, and friendships.	*No matter what sport it is, I am still friends with them.* (P2)
		Inclusion as equal opportunities.	Learners valued the fact that inclusion gave everyone equal opportunities to participate and excel. Having equal opportunities meant being respected and not just tolerated.	*You could talk to the teacher if you not doing well in the sport, or if you have a disability.* (INT6).
What do Grade 8 learners view as the affordances of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?	Ubuntu	Values	Learners mentioned the importance of ethical principles, such as fairness, respect and teamwork.	*No man is better than the other, regardless of race or religion … we are all equal as one.* (INT 8).
		Friendships	For learners, the opportunity to form friendships was one of the great advantages of participation in sport.	*I have never felt excluded because sport helped me gain friends.* (INT 2)
		Break from academic pressure	For learners, the opportunity to take a break from academic pressure was one of the great advantages of participation in sport.	*Having fun and taking a nice break from the pressures of academics.* (INT 2)

		Professional opportunities	Learners mentioned professional opportunities as one of the great advantages of participating in sport.	*Since I was young, I have always wanted to make professional rugby.* (INT 3)

What do Grade 8 learners view as the drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal?	Marginalisation	Pressure to play for the A team	There are great social benefits to playing for the A team. Learners felt the need to make their parents and peers proud by getting into the A team.	*Their parents or maybe friends push them to make an A team which is very stressful for some kids.* (INT 4).
		Difficulty of balancing academics and sport.	Learners are under pressure not only from sport but academically, and find it a challenge to balance the expectation of excelling in all facets of school life.	*… packed with academics and sport.* (INT 5).
		Injuries	Participating in sports can increase the risk of injury, especially for high-impact or contact sports.	*There is always a big risk of injury which could be permanent or cost a lot of money to get treated.* (INT 9)
		Being left out.	In competitive sports, there is pressure to perform at a high level, which can lead to stress and anxiety in learners and the prospect of being excluded from a team.	*People have lost their cool and have said some very hurtful things.* (INT 12)

		Bias	Learners felt there was a bias in favour of certain sports.	*But maybe certain other groups of sports, like maybe the hockey boys, as an example* (INT 2).
		Discrimination	Learners felt they were treated differently by their peers and, indirectly, by the school because of the sport they played.	*Then they label hockey boys as soft, weak, and not tough enough to play the actual sport (rugby).* (INT 3).

5.2 How participating in sport has enabled Grade 8 learners to feel included/excluded at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal

The information in this section addresses Sub-research Question 1: How has participating in sport enabled Grade 8 learners to feel included in and/or excluded from sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal? Answers to this question were closely related to the theory of inclusive education.

From the thematic analysis employed, four themes emerged in answer to this question: Inclusion as a holistic approach to education; inclusion as working together; inclusion as equal opportunities; and inclusion as being accepted by others. Each is discussed below.

Theme 1: Inclusion as a holistic approach to education

With so many absent fathers, mothers and/or guardians in South African homes, the school sporting system serves as an invaluable means of creating a sense of belonging. In addition, relationships can be formed between teachers or coaches and learners that have the quality of parent–child relationships. For many young men in the country, sport (and by implication their teachers and teammates) means more than just a game – it is an experience of belonging and inclusion. One could go so far as to say that many boys need sport more than sport needs them. Sport teaches learners that they earn their place in their respective teams, and thus imparts an appreciation for hard work. Sport teaches values through the experience of adversity, hard work, self-sacrifice, discipline and triumph, values that stand players in good stead throughout their lives. It is therefore a key aspect of a holistic education. A participant said:

> It has been both physically and mentally challenging at certain points but that's what sport's all about, challenging you in ways which you have never been challenged before. In recent years it also has been challenging to keep up with my academics and cricket, as it is a time-consuming sport, but I have learned a whole new area of time management and advanced planning through these tough moments. (P 2).

An important aspect of sport is that it has the power to help learners overcome what might otherwise hold them back. For example, if a learner does poorly in a Mathematics test, they tend to be miserable. However, sport can act as a scaffold to self-esteem, renewing the confidence lost in the classroom and reminding the learner that some aspects of school life are heartbreaking while others are glorious, and that they should not confuse a moment in the classroom with life itself. Overall, sport offers a range of benefits that go beyond physical health and fitness. It can be used as part of a holistic approach to education and personal development. By promoting the values of inclusivity, diversity and respect, sport helps to create a more positive and supportive environment for all individuals. In answer to the questions on inclusion and exclusion, two learners gave the following answers on their questionnaires:

> P 1: With sport being mandatory it also helps you with your routine. Especially being in high school, you develop a certain routine, and once you have been in that timetable for a certain amount of time, it is helpful in keeping your life in order.

> P 2: The advantages of participating in a sport is building a strong brotherhood with your teammates, having fun and taking a nice break from the pressures of academics.

From the results above, it is clear that the participants' view of their participation in sport from an inclusion and/or exclusion perspective was that it developed them holistically. Dyson, Griffin and Hastie (2004, p.238) state that '[l]earning activities promote social, physical and cognitive learning outcomes, and thus have the potential to provide students with a holistic education." Many factors contribute to a holistic education, including teachers and facilities, both of which can enable a child to thrive, whether or not they excel academically or at sport. The role of sport in child's holistic education may depend on the circumstances. For those on scholarships, there are accountability pressures, as these learners have to perform, as do those

in the A team or striving to be in the A team. For many, however, sport should be allowed to take its place as just part of a holistic education, and not a measure of worthiness.

Thus sport becomes exclusive when it is mishandled or its importance is misunderstood – by the individual or the entire school. Learners striving to become professionals might not see sport as exclusionary; they may accept the pressures and see sport as their road to success, and therefore inclusive rather than exclusive. However, the majority will never become professionals, and for them, the many other benefits of sport should be kept uppermost in the minds of all concerned. A holistic approach to education is an inclusive process that ensures that learners are afforded opportunities in all facets of school life (Grant, 1992).

There are of course remarkable stories about lives changed because schools were willing to look for rough diamonds in the most unfortunate circumstances. In a country with so few opportunities for all, the affordances of sport, even though the practice of poaching, mean that learners have access to the best education – but it does come with its challenges. Often the reasoning for schools' anti-poaching policies has nothing to with the learners in question, or their families, but rather with agreements made among schools to maintain the status quo. In a system truly geared towards a holistic education, children would not have to rely on their sporting capabilities to access good schools or feel included (Van Deventer, 2014).

Theme 2: Inclusion as being accepted by others

For most of the learners, inclusion meant being accepted by others (see Figure 4.2.5). Collaborating, supporting and being accepted were all mentioned by participants. Sport removes a sense of isolation and makes learners feel part of a group where, even if the team is a lower ranking one, they are all part of the same "bubble" (see interview transcript in Appendix II). According to the participants, inclusion meant accepting and respecting all, so that all could develop optimally. Respondents to the questionnaire said:

> P5: You get to learn a lot about people and how they grew up, and for me that makes me feel included.
>
> P1: It helps you develop new friends and new bonds and relationships that you never thought you would have.

From the results, it is evident that being accepted by others was understood as a requirement for helping learners apply themselves to the best of their ability, both academically and in sport. Thus, all learners are responsible for welcoming new learners joining their sport. Bourgeois and Leary (2001) state that inclusion means accepting differences, working together and learning from one another – an attitude expressed by all participants in this study.

On the other hand, the concept is sometimes oversimplified, as it ignores the symbolic interactions and prejudices that can operate in the midst of a so-called inclusive environment. There may therefore be a need to use a differentiated approach in teaching and coaching in order to ensure that all learners are actually made to feel welcome. Greenway, Jetten, Ellemers & Van Bunderen (2015, p.183) make the point that "when individuals are accepted into a group they do not wish to belong to, they are denied their individual freedom to choose how they are categorised and perceived by others."

Theme 3: Inclusion as working together

For learners, working together is an essential part of inclusion. This applies to work that takes place between teachers and parents, learners and learners, and teachers and learners. Working together ultimately leads to respect for one another. Responses from the questionnaire and interviews were as follows:

> INT 2: Friendships and relationships. Since cricket season is in the first term, I have carried those friendships throughout the year. No matter what sport it is, I am still friends with them.
>
> P6: Sport makes me feel included because you can play in a team and you make a bond because you fight together to try to win the game.

Sport evidently gives learners a sense of working together and may be especially valuable because the work is physical and intense. Academic work provides few opportunities for a real sense of working together, whereas a sport is almost entirely predicated on a sense of working together. The sense may be slightly reduced in individual sports, but even there, learners have a sense of working together with the coach and fellow participants.

Communication functions as an important element of working together. Despite the emphasis on the benefits of working together, it may be concluded that participants had a fairly

superficial understanding of how communication, or language usage, functions to foster a sense of inclusion. Symbolic language acts may be given and comprehended differently by different individuals. Sport is a prime example of where language may be used in ways that both include and exclude, depending on phrasing, tone of voice, volume of voice, context and transmitter and recipient in the act of communication. In order to promote a truly inclusive environment, teachers and coaches might do well to focus on the nature of communication, and the many ways in which language may be used to exclude and include. Inclusion requires respectful, mutual relationships within a group and with "outsiders", and active listening to one another's statements (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2017, p.9).

Theme 4: Inclusion as equal opportunities

Participants saw inclusion as a means to opening equal opportunities to all. It also seemed to suggest the idea of being safe to speak up; learners said that it was important that all had the opportunity to speak freely and not be humiliated for questions they asked. Inclusion also meant that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in sport, having equal access to resources and support. Inclusion from an equal opportunity perspective means building learners' self-esteem and allowing them the freedom and voice to make their own decisions about their participation in sport. Learners should also feel they can share their identity and beliefs in the sporting arena.

Inclusion is a process; it is a systematic strategy to ensure that everyone shares the same advantages, and that everyone can perform, belong, and reach their full potential. Therefore, it means nurturing a culture that does not isolate minorities – in whatever form they may appear. Interviewees said the following:

> INT 2: Sport is a lot more competitive, especially in a boys school, as you get a lot more boys who are skilled in the sport, even though one might struggle to keep up. This pushes you to put in everything in that sport so you can succeed.
>
> INT 6: You could talk to the teacher if you not doing well in the sport or if you have a disability.
>
> INT 2: If you do well in the sport, everyone will know and you will have an opportunity to participate in the interhouse event and you will feel motivated.

> INT 3: Since I was young, I have always wanted to make professional rugby. So, I have goals and dreams that I want to achieve. Ever since last year, I just wanted to push myself and reach those goals.

It is evident from the responses above that there is an awareness among learners about equal opportunities in sport. The concept of equal opportunities requires that all learners' voices be heard, not only in relation to sport but also in the expression of their cultural perspectives – in and outside of sport. There needs to be greater acceptance of different cultures and languages in terms of learner participation in sport. The benefits of sport really flow when the two components work together: the learner's commitment and self-discipline, and the ethos and culture of the sport. The latter can affect the emotional life of learners in obvious and subtle ways. Sport as a whole needs to address diversity in order to preserve and respect the culture, heritage and history of diverse learners. "Inclusion is a movement to transform education systems to respond to the diversity of students, to realise the right to education with equal opportunities" (Medina-Garcia, Dona-Toledo & Higueras-Rodriguez, 2020, p.2).

5.3 Grade 8 learners' view on the affordances of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal

The information in this section addresses Sub-research Question 2: What do Grade 8 learners view as the affordances of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal? Answers to this question were closely related to the theory of ubuntu.

Themes that emerged in response to this question were values, friendships, the ability to take a break from academic work, the chance to pursue a professional career, and the physical and psychological benefits of participating in sport. The first two, especially, are related to the theory of ubuntu. The last, psychological benefits may also be seen as indirectly related to ubuntu, as it refers partly to the social benefits that accrue from working together as a team.

Theme 1: Values

Participants were highly aware of the benefits of sport in terms of inculcating the values of fairness, respect, teamwork, self-sacrifice, mutual support, persistence and self-discipline. Sport has long been recognised for its ability to teach learners life lessons. Teachers and mentors use sport activities to teach these values in a practical and meaningful way, helping individuals to understand how they apply to real-world situations. In terms of inclusivity, sport

has the ability to bring people together from diverse backgrounds and cultures, where they play as equals, and thus learn the value of acceptance and respect. Sport provides an opportunity for people to learn about healthy competition and sportsmanship. Below, the two benefits that relate most closely to the theory of ubuntu are discussed.

It can also reduce financial barriers by providing scholarships for individuals from low-income backgrounds, which helps level the playing field and provide equal opportunities for all. Thus, the opportunities that sport affords learners are massive, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Sport can literally pay for a learner's education, and possibly afford the learner their first job. An example is that "from school, Kolisi progressed through the rugby ranks to Western Province and then the Stormers before making his international debut against Scotland in 2013" (Mockford, 2019, p.1).

These ideas are substantiated by Weiss and Glenn (1992, p.153), who note that sport and fitness activities are important contributors to the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of human beings.

Therefore, the pressures of sport at private all-boys schools cannot detract from the many strong benefits. For many with talent, sport is a means to advance in life. Learners seldom move from advantaged schools to disadvantaged schools. So, with the assumption that the movement is always to a better school, sport and sports scholarships provide learners with an ideal opportunity to improve their prospects.

At the same time, schools should be doing more to support learners, especially those making the transition from disadvantaged to advantaged settings. They should put systems in place that ensure that such children thrive, not only in sport, but academically and socially, too.

The participants' responses show that they were aware of the many benefits flowing from participation in sport. The open-ended questionnaire revealed the following responses:

> P8: I feel that my participation in a sport has brought me closer to the school as it has taught many valuable life lessons such as grit, determination, to be gracious in defeat, humble in victory, a strong brotherhood, and that no man is better than the other, regardless of race or religion, and that we are all equal as one.
>
> P1: More people come watch your game, sport is more competitive and that is how you grow a lot.

For 14-year olds, the transition from primary school sport to high school sport can be challenging. Yet the benefits that emerged in this study seemed, for many, to outweigh the challenges. Sport provides an opportunity for individuals to develop physical health and fitness, which is important for overall wellbeing (Dyson, Griffin & Hastie, 2004). It helps individuals develop important social and emotional skills. It can reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, boost self-esteem and confidence, and teach discipline and time management. Its value as an inculcator of self-discipline and time management is evident in P1's remarks below:

> P1: Especially being in high school, you develop a certain routine, and once you have been in that timetable for a certain amount of time it is helpful in keeping your life in order.

Sports can provide opportunities for personal growth and character building, such as learning how to handle success and failure, and developing resilience. These skills can function as a form of social capital for individuals (Bailey, Armour, Kirk, Jess, Pickup & Sandford, 2006, p.14). It can also foster important cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and decision-making (Grant, 1992). In many sports, individuals need to make split-second decisions based on complex information, such as the position of other players or the location of the ball. This can help to develop quick thinking and analytical skills. P2 gave straightforward answer, noting the most obvious benefits:

> P2: Sports has many advantages especially on the physical side, as it can keep a growing child in school fit and healthy.

Sport builds community and a sense of belonging for all. Participation in team sports, for example, requires individuals to work collaboratively with others towards a common goal. This can help to develop communication and leadership skills, as well as social skills such as empathy and respect for others (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). Sport promotes diversity and cultural awareness and can be a form of celebrating different cultures and recognising individuals from diverse backgrounds. This aspect may be boosted through the hosting of events and initiatives that celebrate diversity and encourage cultural understanding, for example, school tours and school exchange programmes. Participants alluded to this aspect:

> P5: You get to learn a lot about people and how they grew up and for me that makes me feel included.

P1: It helps you develop new friends and new bonds and relationships that you never thought you would have.

P5: I felt part of the brotherhood, as everyone cheers for our friends, and when you on that field, you hear your friends shouting from the sidelines, and you all talk about it after the game.

Theme 2: Friendships

It was clear that for many learners, friendships constituted an important aspect of their participation in sport. From the emotional journey of striving, losing, picking themselves up again and making progress, sometimes winning, learners develop strong friendships. Many comments in the questionnaires and interviews revealed the importance of friendships in sport:

P4: Sport means engaging in exercise and activities with your friends, peers and getting out there and being active.

P3: Friends that I make in sport bring me to friendships with other people.

INT 2: I have never felt excluded because sport helped me gain friends.

INT 2: On the other side, it can be a great connector for strong friendships built while playing with people alongside you. Sports can also open up professional careers for some people and it would be helpful for people.

P4: Participating in sport always makes an impact on your social and school life. How? Well, any sport, not just cricket, brings people together and brings happiness all round. It makes you feel like you have a purpose and you are there for a reason. As an example: when I came to school, I was only friends with people I knew from primary school; however when I made A team for cricket, I did not know one person in the team. I eventually built a bond with them and felt a part of the friend group.

P6: You are able to build better lifelong bonds with our teammates, and we get to know them better, and get to engage and interact with them more.

Based on the results presented above, learners are very clear on the concept of friendship as a means to feeling included. Learners draw from their shared experiences in sport to help them

bond with others, forming relationships that might never have been possible in other settings. Working collaboratively, cohesively and constructively develops of a number of skills such as "trust, a sense of community, empathy, and personal and corporate responsibility" (Bailey et al., 2006, p.14) Therefore, sport employs indirect, practical methods (training and matches) to teach learners to embrace differences and form friendships.

5.4 Grade 8 learners' views on the drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal

The information in this section addresses Sub-research Question 3: What do Grade 8 learners view as the drawbacks of participating in sport at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal? Answers to this question were closely related to the theory of marginalisation.

Under this theme learners identified the pressures of playing for the A team, the difficulties of balancing academics and sport, injuries, biases in sport, and the experience of being discriminated against. Each is discussed below.

Theme 1: Pressure of playing for the A team

Mental health was indirectly mentioned by learners who referred to the pressures of playing for the A team – as well as the pressure to get there. This idea is substantiated by Norton, Burns, Hope and Bauer (2000, p.194), who note that parental pressure to perform well at sports may lead to anxiety about performance or fears of being negatively evaluated. Many adults buckle under the pressure of sports as a result of traditional media coverage, social media comments, academic pressure and sponsor expectations, which suggests that 14-year olds are likely to experience these equally as intensely, if not more so. The pressure may be difficult to observe, especially as sporting stars in schools can give the impression that all is well for everyone, when this may be far from the truth. For those raised in the system, it may be difficult quite to understand how these pressures affect 13- and 14-year olds just entering the system.

Even if the broadcasting of matches is banned because of concerns about mental health, other factors, such as pressure from spectators and parents, can affect learners (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1998). The issue is dual natured because, as pointed out in Section 2.4, the very practices that exert pressure and alienate some learners act as confidence boosters and aids to advancement for others, who value the exposure of broadcasts and large numbers of spectators. The money

that comes with broadcasting and the hosting of prestigious tournaments helps schools with kit, facilities, nutrition, teacher salaries, scholarships and old boy support/foundations. Massive financial incentives come with live coverage, which assist many schools to operate at higher levels, allowing them to plough some of the funds into scholarships. Therefore, what may negatively affect, marginalise or exclude some learners may tremendously assist the school and, through the school, other learners.

However, the fact the remains that the matter should be treated with caution, and with a high level of awareness of what such exposure and publicity can do to young minds. If sport is exclusive or the drawbacks are perceived as too weighty, learners may well begin withdrawing from sport, especially as academic pressures mount in the higher grades. It is almost impossible to prepare Grade 7 boys for what they will encounter in the high-pressure environment of a private all-boys high school. Perhaps it is time to reconsider how learners participating in sports fit into the standard educational setting, and whether they experience it inclusively or exclusively. Participant comments were as follows:

> INT 6: You can get into a lot of trouble if you do not come to practice.
>
> P4: It also puts a lot of pressure onto someone as their parents or maybe friends push them to make an A team, which is very stressful for some kids.
>
> INT 5: If you do not make a team, take wickets or make runs you feel lost and self-esteem drops. Participation in sport in primary school was more relaxed. If we lost a game we would not have so much pressure.
>
> INT 3: My mom loves rugby and she pushes me to get better and maybe if I become a professional I can give her a good life
>
> INT 2: Longer training sessions and a lot of fitness.
>
> INT 4: In high school people take sport more seriously. If you make the u14A rugby or u14A soccer team, people will look up to you and respect you more as they also want to make that team. Participation in sport is much more competitive.

From the results above, it can be deduced that learners were not entirely confident and relaxed about their sport, and felt pressure to exceed their current abilities. All felt the pressure to advance and get into the teams with higher social standing. These external pressures can

become internalised, so that young people are not always able to discern the difference between an external pressure and an internal drive. The pressures can impact the way learners engage in sport as they grapple with external expectations and gaining knowledge of the sport, which can destroy enjoyment.

Theme 2: The difficulty of balancing academics and sport

It would be remiss to assume that sport is the only source of pressure in the life of Grade 8 learners. They are under pressure to balance "the expectations, requirements, pressures and demands of national and international sporting competitions with comparable expectations, requirements, pressures and demands in the classroom" (Godber, 2012, p.1). Learners striving to become sports stars still have to perform academically, with each teacher exerting their own set of expectations and demands. The issue of mental health, exclusion and marginalisation at any level in the education system is a general societal issue that must be tackled, and schools should be proactive in doing so (Goldman, 1991). The focus tends to be on learners who participate in sport, because they are seen more publicly on a regular basis. There are also highly talented learners in other fields such as academics and music; these learners may also participate in sport and feel the pressure the excel in every area. Those whose true strength is academics or another field may not receive the same attention as those who excel in sport, yet may struggle with similar pressures.

Marginalisation and exclusion exacerbate the pressures. Learners who receive academic scholarships are under pressure to maintain an average of 80% or higher just to keep their scholarship, and learners who receive sports scholarships are under pressure to perform well in every match. One might find that learners on academic scholarships tend to isolate themselves more than those on sports scholarships; some fail to socialise or make friends and get depressed when they do not get the marks that they want. Therefore a sense marginalisation and/or exclusion is everywhere, not only on the sports field. It is easy to criticise sports coaches for the pressures they exert, but demanding teachers are also guilty of applying heavy pressure on their pupils to achieve. They may forget that many in their classes are also attending early morning training sessions and afternoon sessions. This idea is substantiated by Castelli, Hillman, Buck and Erwin (2007, p. 241), who note that there is increased pressure on teachers to produce students who achieve high levels of competency in reading, mathematics and science, through the promotion of equal opportunity for all economical levels.

It seems that conversations about pressure and its effects should be held with learners regularly both before they enter high school and during their high school career. In primary schools, prizes are still awarded for participation; these fall away in high school, where the attention shifts to performance above all else. This shift is sudden and can be brutal. It would not therefore be correct to assume that pressure is associated only with media coverage of sport, because the pressure starts in Grade 8, and comes from the school (and parents). Excerpts from learners' comments are as follows:

> INT 3: I almost fall away from academics and then I fall behind.
>
> INT 5: [My life is] packed with academics and sport.
>
> INT 6: Participation in sport is compulsory.

Theme 3: Injuries

Participating in sports can increase the risk of injury, especially for high-impact or contact sports (Lenaway, Ambler & Beaudain, 1992). Injury can constitute the first form of marginalisation identified by Messiou (2012), in which everyone recognises the marginalisation that occurs, including the person experiencing it. Injuries immediately sideline a player from the sport, at least for a period. Abernethy and MacAuley (2003, p.355) note that there are costs to pupils through time off school, and economic costs to parents through time off work and arranging child care. Furthermore, participating in sports can be time-consuming, which can interfere with other important activities such as academics. Each time learners experience a moment of defeat, such as an injury, it is up to the school to apply its inclusive ethos, to show support to the learner and to help them refocus and recalibrate their emotions, reminding them that they are cared for. Participants' comments included the following:

> P4: You may get tired and run down, you may get an injury that is harmful, and you may be disappointed that you do not get into a higher team.
>
> P9: Depending on what sport you play, there is a higher risk, but every type of sport that requires you running around, there is always a big risk of injury which could be permanent or cost a lot of money to get treated.

P5: Another disadvantage is the medical side of it. If you get injured, it can affect your abilities for the rest of your life. There are many people who have died/been injured from sports related causes, such as having concussions which can lead to brain damage, and broken limbs that need to be amputated or having a bad back.

Theme 4: Being left out

Messiou (2012) mentions four types or marginalisation, as discussed in Section 2.7. Marginalisation may be recognised by everybody, including the person experiencing it; others may recognise it but the victim may not; the victim may experience it but not "experience" it (unaware of the marginalisation even though they do experience it, conditioned by the cultures, norms and practices that are marginalising); or the victim may experience and feel it, but not admit it and actively deny it. The second form occurs when individuals in this group may be outspoken about their state of marginalisation, or they may be silent; either way, the experience is one of being left out.

Sport is easy and fun when learners are on a winning path; less so when they are on the losing side (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). It is extremely difficult for learners when they feel they are travelling the development road by themselves. When they lose, they can become heartbroken, and feel entirely marginalised. Learners are in pursuit of a safe harbour when dealing with disappointment and hurt because rivalry and competition amongst schools and boys is intense (Norton, 2000). Sport can be perceived as a "bragging" platform; the corollary to this is the feeling of being left out for many. Comments on the theme of being left out were as follows:

P3: Sport can get me distracted sometimes, and I get carried away with other things. This affects my personality sometimes and distracts me from work. I then drop behind and get left out.

INT 6: If I do not perform to the best of my ability, my teammates would go around the school telling people, and soon the whole grade would know how I played a certain sport. Then when we are playing an inter-house sports fixture we would not get selected for the team because everyone would remember how bad I played on a specific game.

INT 1: For the same reason mentioned above, not playing for a higher team can make me feel excluded because you may not get as much preferential treatment as players who play in the A team.

INT 4: Sports have made me feel not part of the school when I am not a part of the school's team or even the house team. When that team does not want you to be a part of their goal, even though you really want to help achieve that goal and you are better than the people who are in that team, it is really frustrating to be in that position.

P5: The jump has been huge. There is so much more competition, and the intensity is much greater. Being at a much smaller primary school made me a lot more confident playing the game but coming to a much bigger school, I am a small fish in a big pond. It is almost humbling, in a way that you realise that there are so many great sportsmen out there.

P2: High school is way more competitive, to make the team and to even play other teams. High school is very different and is for me personally a lot more serious, and it is where you can go places and do big things. Primary was just an introduction to sport and was just a place to have fun. I am not saying you cannot have fun in high school sports, but it is taken more seriously.

P3: In primary school, the sport fixture games were not that tough, because in primary school sport does not matter, and because primary school learners do not know what they are playing for, and do not understand what playing for your school means. In high school, there is a lot of pressure of teenagers to do well in school and to impress our peers on our sport abilities, to grow a great name for the school, and in high school we know what playing for our school means.

P10: If you perform badly in a game, you let your teammates down, and the trust they have in you fades away.

P12: There have been times when people have lost their cool and have said some very hurtful things. It is in these hurtful things that make me feel not like a schoolboy and excluded from my friends.

Theme 5: Bias

The third type of marginalisation mentioned by Messiou (2012) concerns situations where the individual may not be aware that they are being marginalised because the situation has been made to seem normal. The fourth type occurs when the child experiences marginalisation but does not admit it. Both of these forms of marginalisation come into play in the area of school bias in favour of some sports over others. This idea is substantiated by Mowat (2015, p.457), who states that marginalisation arises from the actions of others, whether deliberate or inadvertent, whether individual or collective. Sport can also be exclusive, with certain sports being more accessible to those who have financial resources or specific abilities. This can lead to inequalities and a lack of diversity in certain sports. Academics, tours, parents, broadcasting, and supporters add unnecessary pressure and increased scrutiny of young learners, who just need to be able to play sports, make mistakes, grow and develop.

The professionalisation and commercialisation of school sport and potential exploitation is something that should be taken into consideration when seeking to understand why many learners are reluctant to participate, or participate under duress. Many learners are "thrown" into sports without a consideration for how that participation may look in practice. For example, some exposure may be good for learners when participating in sports. However, over-exposure can become the cause of problems and exclude learners at various levels. Norton et al. (2000, p.194) concur, stating that sporting situations are frequently outcome-orientated and lend themselves to negative evaluations. For example, few learners have the mental capacity to handle a situation where a video from a match is sent around the school showing them making a costly mistake on the field. Most would struggle to handle the criticism and ridicule, which effectively excludes them, at least for a while. Learners' comments in the previous section made it clear that the leap from primary school to Grade 8 is huge in the area of sports. Therefore, there is a need to strike a balance when it comes to the recording of matches and to deter the practice of using recording to ridicule and marginalise learners. Responses to do with bias and exclusion included the following:

> P2: I do not necessarily feel part of the school but maybe certain other group of sports, like maybe the hockey boys as an example, and for a person who does not play sports they could feel like they are not included with the rest.

> INT 4: I am not that very good in sport and if I miss a goal in soccer, the whole team would list all my bad qualities in soccer. I would then not be regarded as a good soccer player and would probably not make the team.

Theme 6: Discrimination

> INT 3: I have felt labelled, especially in my participation in hockey by learners who participate in rugby. The rugby boys who are passionate about their sport find that rugby is the way to go and then they label hockey boys as soft, weak, and not tough enough to play the actual sport (rugby).

The quote above was typical of others which referred to the issue of discrimination against boys who played sports other than those considered "cool" (i.e., rugby). The fact is that the learner above was participating in a sport he enjoyed, and yet faced ridicule and labelling simply because of his choice of sport. Learners are diverse in their abilities, beliefs and cultures and for learners to be excluded and discriminated against because of their choice of sport, or because they do not excel in sport, adds to the pressure they already experience in high school. Discrimination is clearly the antithesis of inclusion and ubuntu.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings that shed light on the issue of inclusion and exclusion in Grade 8 sport at an independent all-boys high school. Learners often want to participate in sport to win for their school, themselves, friends, parents/guardians or a teacher they love and respect. A certain amount of striving is obviously something to be encouraged, as it develops the character and yields tangible results; however, in high schools, there is a need to keep monitoring this aspect, as the pressures arise from many sources, not least within the boys' themselves. The teachers, parents or peers whom learners are striving to please may set high standards, which again, in itself, is not a bad thing; it is simply something that teachers and others need to be aware of, as learners are different and not all can cope with relentless expectations and pressure. In all aspects of sport, even in the midst of pressure, schools should strive to be inclusive, recognising the pressures the learners are under and doing their best to support learners, who will rarely show signs of the pressure until they suddenly quit. Schools should do their best to give learners a map to help them navigate their emotional lives in relation to sport, which can cause intense highs and lows.

The last chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for ways to make high school sport more inclusive.

Chapter 6: Overview, recommendations and limitations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings, makes recommendations and presents the limitations of the study. The aim of the study was to investigate Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school, with the main research question being: "What are Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school?"

The study has shown that inclusion, exclusion and/or marginalisation are all part of the complex reality of high school sport. Because these aspects operate in both obvious and covert ways, it is important to foreground the voices of learners, to listen attentively, and to consider their experiences in light of the literature and the chosen theories for this study, which were inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation. The section below summarises the main findings of the study.

6.2 Overview of the research

Chapter 1 introduced the topic, discussing the implementation of sport from the perspective of inclusive education and the meaning of sport in educational settings. The chapter also discussed how sport has evolved in relation to inclusion and the various attempts that schools are making to deal with inclusion and exclusion. The notions of social class, race, ability and gender were shown to be relevant to the practice of sport in high school settings. The chapter considered whether sport could take place outside of the cultural norms of the learners, how society is organised from a class perspective, how independent schools have adopted middle-class values, and how this makes it difficult for diverse learners to participate in sport in independent schools.

According to Goransson and Nilholm (2014), there are three different forms of inclusion: placement-specific individualised, general individualised, and community. Drawing from the work of Frisby and Ponic (2013), Chapter 1 concentrated on the social aspect of inclusion. Chapter 1 emphasised that different people have different ideas about the importance of sport in education. According to one viewpoint, sport encourages inclusion because it addresses societal transition, heals old social wounds, and promotes social cohesion (Moodley & Adam, 2000). On the other hand, sport administrators have been accused of attempting to take over

the implementation of sport and use it as a platform for asserting superiority, with schools all competing to be seen as the best and high-performing institution. Chapter 1 argued that independent schools in South Africa have made progress toward inclusion, yet its implementation in independent all-boys high schools has been dominated by a Eurocentric worldview and a degree of homogeneity. This has shaped the ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological assumptions in sport that make some learners feel included and/or excluded and marginalised in their participation in sport.

The way that independent all-boys high schools operate means that learners have to adapt and assimilate, or risk being excluded and ostracised. There is a tendency to ignore diversity, as expressed in the perpetuation of the cultures and traditions that exist in schools. These are socially constructed and deeply embedded. Chapter 1 argued that inclusion in sport has been addressed from a race perspective, through the implementation of the quota system, but what has not been a particular focus is the perspective of learners as they transition from Grade 7 to Grade 8 in relation to sport. The chapter emphasised that independent all-boys schools have not made a commitment to creating an inclusive system that incorporates diverse learners from a class and ability perspective. The chapter also presented the key concepts used throughout the study, examined sports from a global perspective, gave a brief history of how sport has been used by individuals in positions of authority, and presented the theoretical underpinnings of the study – inclusive education, ubuntu and marginalisation.

Chapter 2 discussed how inclusion and exclusion in school sports is challenged and debated in the literature. The chapter discussed how sport fits into the curriculum of independent all-boys schools, the meaning of sport in these spaces, and the factors that make learners perceive sport as inclusive or exclusive. The chapter then focused on how inclusive education is experienced with reference to ability and disability, inclusive education legislation, and inclusive methods of instruction. The chapter highlighted that the ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemological assumptions that exist in sport in independent all-boys schools affect learners. Inclusion was defined using the social model and the paradigm of special needs education, and discussed with reference to ability/disability, inclusive education policy, and inclusive pedagogical techniques, as applied nationally internationally. Slee (2011), in particular, shed light on the issues of exclusion and marginalisation in this chapter.

The chapter showed how sport promotes both inclusion or marginalisation, depending on the learner's context and whether or not the school has adopted a comprehensive inclusion policy,

as highlighted by Kelly (2011). In addition, Chapter 2 highlighted how symbolic language and connections cause society to elevate those from particular communities and neglect the kinds of development that would promote diversity in sport. The chapter concluded by showing how current debates about inclusive education in the sporting world have disturbed the status quo and challenged the practice of subtle exclusion, whether viewed through an ability/disability lens or the lens of diversity in any form.

Chapter 3 presented the paradigmatic basis of the study, along with various aspects of the study's methodology. The study adopted a qualitative interpretivist approach, recognising that reality is always understood according to one's context, experiences and perspectives. The chapter also discussed the study's purposive sampling technique, plan and tools for data collection and data processing, the steps taken to ensure a trustworthy study, and the study's ethical considerations. The data collection tools – questionnaires and interviews – were described in some detail.

Chapter 4 presented results obtained from open-ended questionnaire filled in by 12 participants. Data was reported numerically, in the form of ten graphs, each related to a specific question on the questionnaire. The graphs revealed the sports in which learners participated, the number of years of their participation, the factors that shaped their decision to participate, the learners' perspectives on inclusion and exclusion, both as definitions and as experiences in the school, and their views on the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sport.

Chapter 5 discussed the findings, referring to both questionnaires and interviews, and the three theories underpinning the study. The responses given by learners helped to answer each of the three research questions, revealing 12 themes in all, each of which was discussed in relation to a particular research question.

The first research question concerned how participating had made Grade 8 learners feel included or excluded at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal (see Section 1.6). The main themes that emerged under this question were related to the theory of inclusive education, and had to do with how the participants saw inclusion. Briefly, they saw inclusion as part of a holistic education, equal opportunities, working together, and being accepted by others. Grade 8 learners are conscious of inclusion and exclusion in their participation in sport. Their experiences show that while there is a strong push towards inclusivity in sport, certain assumptions, traditions, and systematic and symbolic interactions create areas of exclusion that exist concurrently with inclusion. There are discrepancies in the way learners are treated, with

higher achieving boys receiving more respect than those of lesser athletic ability. This fact seems to be deeply ingrained in the school's culture and would be very difficult to change. The differentiation may never be eradicated, but there is the need for schools to ensure that those whose talents lie elsewhere are still included and valued (and shown to be valued).

The second research question concerned the affordances or advantages of participating in sport (see Section 1.6). Responses to this question were closely related to the theoretical underpinning of ubuntu (humanness, interdependence and communalism). The findings indicate that learners saw five distinct advantages of participation in sport: the friendships it afforded, the mental and physical health benefits it yielded, the chance to take a break from academics, the possibility of building a profession, and the values that sport inculcated. These five advantages emerged mostly from the questionnaires; in interviews, learners emphasised friendship and values above all.

The third question concerned the disadvantages of participating in sport. Responses to this question were closely related to the theoretical underpinning of marginalisation. Learners saw five disadvantages of participation in sport: pressure to play for the A team, the difficulty of balancing academics and sport, injuries, discrimination, bias, and being left out.

6.3 Learners' perspectives on the affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal

This study was guided by the following overall research question: What are Grade 8 learners' perspectives on the affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports at an independent all-boys high school in KwaZulu-Natal? The overall findings of this research indicate that Grade 8 learners' highly valued the advantages of participation in sport and were aware of the many drawbacks or disadvantages. The main advantages listed were that sport gave them the opportunity to form friendships, had mental and physical health benefits, gave them a break from academic work, opened the way to professionalism in sport, and imparted values (see Figure 4.2.9). Participants also noted the difficulties of balancing academics and sport, the pressures of playing for the A team, injuries, the experience of being left out, the school's bias in favour of certain sports, and discrimination, all seen as drawbacks. These findings indicate the value of sport and the dangers that it can become a zone of high pressure and exclusion.

6.3 Recommendations

Engelbrecht (1999) argues that in order to address inequality in schools, one needs to focus on who possesses control, influence and authority in schools. Inequalities are legitimised through policies, organisational cultures and other legislated practices (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Therefore, in order to make independent all-boys high schools more inclusive, I suggest addressing centres of power, both human and structural. Exclusion, enacted through the culture that dominates sport, can destroy all attempts to become more inclusive. Headmasters, directors of sports, teachers and coaches should place greater emphasis on developing inclusion in sport through training and workshops that address issues of inclusion and exclusion. Inclusion requires that diverse cultures, ideas and opinions are not only tolerated but heard and valued.

Sport creates the ideal setting in which to foster inclusion because it involves a high degree of collaboration and teamwork. Frankel, Gold and Ajodhia-Andrews (2010) state that effective collaboration and teamwork requires individuals to put aside their personal preferences and biases to include different cultures, ideas and opinions. This fosters an environment of trust, respect and mutual understanding, and ultimately leads to inclusion. The push towards inclusion needs to be both top down and bottom up:

> Top-down approaches stress the importance of policy clarity, as well as the control and direction by policymakers to systematically implement policy. Bottom-up approaches, on the other hand, highlight the importance of understanding the perspectives and experiences of target groups and service deliverers (Donohue & Bornman, 2014 p.7).

Inclusion is a non-negotiable in the sporting arena. Matland (1995) highlights that it is the school's responsibility to showcase and promote a culture of inclusion. Drawing from Frankel et al. (2010), I suggest that fostering an atmosphere of inclusion will mean setting clear standards and expectations of inclusive practices, providing training and support, and holding various parties accountable for upholding this value. This will encourage long-term inclusion and contribute to a more just and sustainable society. Research should be a precondition for any engagement on inclusion and/or exclusion in learner participation in sport in South African independent schools. An inclusive, multilateral and open discussion on the matter of inclusion and exclusion is also crucial.

Many independent schools have rich and diverse human and technological resources that should be employed to bring inclusion to life. With the advent of highly advanced technologies that are impacting education, it is vital to re-envisage inclusion in 21st century high school sport. Many schools in South Africa and the world are informed by a vague and generalised conception of inclusion that fails to consider the many forms and levels of exclusion that run parallel with their attempts to be inclusive (Bowley, 2013). Inclusion in sport needs addressing. In addition, many of the laws, regulations and policies that deal with inclusive education are either not implemented or are implemented half-heartedly. Donohue and Bornman (2014, p.8) state that "South African policies are enacted for their political symbolism rather than their practicality; thus vague policies often get passed but no one is held accountable for their implementation." By ignoring the injustices experienced by many learners, South African schools keep the status quo of exclusion in place.

Because inclusion is not a simple issue, teachers should deliberately and consistently use inclusive pedagogy in sport instruction and policies. Bourdieu (1988) and Bowley (2013) argue that this is important because teachers work with diverse learners, and it cannot be taken for granted that they all experience sporting practices as inclusive. Board members and headmasters should make decisions that encourage a high level of integrity and accountability in teachers and sports coaches, and find ways of showing that all learners are valued, whether they are academically or athletically gifted, or not. For this, training and support for teachers may be needed. In the case of dealing with individuals with disabilities or special needs, many teachers will need assistance (Donohue & Bornman, 2014), as these skills do not come naturally to all. Training and support for teachers would help to create an inclusive environment that caters to the needs of everyone.

Steps should also be taken to improve access to facilities and equipment. Many who might wish to participate in sport more seriously are prevented from doing so because sports fields and practice times are out of the reach of learners who depend on public transport. This aspect applies broadly to all schools, including government schools that may have a high number of non-boarders. The expense of equipment, kits and tours can be prohibitive for many. At the very least, schools should be aware of these issues when planning on taking on new sports or adding new facilities to their schools.

Drawing from Bhana (2008) and Desai (2021), I suggest a shift away from competitive sport's results-based mindset toward one that is more educational and inclusive. In this endeavour, the concept of the collaboration circle might be helpful. The collaboration circle concept was born of a sense of community, and aims to collectively address historical and present challenges to inclusion (Ainscow, 2016; Florian et al., 2010; Messiou & Ainscow, 2015). From a top-down emphasis on collaboration rather than competition, multiple significant benefits might accrue, all relevant and necessary for making sport more inclusive. Collaboration emphasises shared learning and embracing inclusion in terms of the ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological assumptions that operate in the sporting arena. Proactive inclusion measures are essential to avoid exclusion. The principle is a global one, as expressed by UNESCO (2016, p.7):

> Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we, therefore, commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes.

South Africa's diverse population in schools presents a vast pool of talent in all facets of school life. Levelling the playing field through a deliberate focus on making practices more inclusive would make sport stronger, more comprehensive and more relevant to the lives of all learners. This is essential if the many benefits of participation in sport are to be disseminated to as many learners as possible. Collaboration provides real-time spaces for learning, sharing experiences and growing together as a diverse community (Paju et al., 2018). Even amidst healthy competition among schools, there is room for collaboration. What is required is the imagination and will to embark on this journey.

Slee (2011) and Engelbrecht (2015) point out that people (particularly those in authority) may not always be aware of what they do not know, and that their ontological assumptions about inclusion and exclusion of learners in sport can become their truth. Therefore, it is essential to recognise that learning and unlearning are critical to lead, grow and be inclusive in an increasingly diverse world. Schools should be mindful of their ethos and acknowledge that their understanding the world is not the only valid understanding; they should be receptive to the diverse cultures and experiences of learners, without any bias.

It is acknowledged that navigating diversity in schools can be challenging, especially in South Africa, where the negative realties that existed pre-1994 still exert an influence (Moodley & Adam, 2000). Therefore, schools should avoid imposing their views as absolute truth. Phrases such as, "It's part of the school tradition and culture" should be used cautiously, because traditions and cultures always need to be examined for relevance and who exactly they serve. Traditions and culture can operate exclusively in diverse communities such as schools today.

It is worth noting, however, that learners are more similar than different with regard to their need to feel seen, heard and included in sport. Hence, agreed-upon practices and procedures should always be upheld to promote inclusion (McDeermott et al 2011; Makoelle, 2012). To ensure effective collaboration, the actions of those in authority should align with the principle of inclusion. This will mean listening to learners' perspectives of how sport may act as a source of both inclusion and exclusion. Having listened to learners, those in authority should act, working with learners to create a process of inclusion that represents all learners. "By engaging with students' voices, we can reflect on what we offer to them and what they experience, and, more importantly, think of ways to make changes to improve these experiences" (Messiou, 2012, p.19).

6.4 Implications for future research

This study was fairly small in terms of the number of participants. However, the topic is vast, complex and highly relevant to South Africa today, and it is therefore recommended that further research be conducted on the topic of inclusion, exclusion, bias, the effects of school culture, and the role of school sports in other settings, such as other private schools, all-girls schools and government schools, in other provinces and grades. It would be particularly interesting to uncover the differences between the role of sport in all-girls schools and all-boys schools, and in private schools and government schools.

6.5 Limitations of the study

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018, p.156) state that all studies have limitations or potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control. These may arise from an inappropriate research design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors. As stated above, this study was limited in size. The intention was to develop findings on the basis of a large number of questionnaires and a smaller number of interviews; however,

most parents or guardians did not respond to the invitation for their son to participate in the study, and so the study had to proceed on the basis of only 12 filled-in questionnaires and 6 were interviewed. The socio-economic background of the boys varied, some were on scholarships and others self-funding learners. This was limiting, because more voices from more diverse learners would have expanded the understanding of inclusion and exclusion, and the affordances and drawbacks of participating in sport. The other limitation of the study was that it focused on one selected independent all-boys school in one province, and only on Grade 8s. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all schools in South Africa.

6.6 Conclusion

Both globally and in South Africa, the practice of sport has been challenged by the move to inclusion, with schools forming part of this trend. At the most basic level, the range of sports now offered by schools in an indication of their attempts to become more inclusive. The principle of inclusion holds that diversity is to be welcomed, and that all learners, irrespective of race, ability or socio-economic background, must be accommodated, respected, nurtured and valued. Few people raise any objections to the principle; the problem lies in its implementation. Many seem to believe that renaming policies and adding more sports are enough to address diversity. They have a vague and generalised conception of what inclusivity means and are often unable to detect the strands of exclusion and marginalisation that run concurrently with their inclusive practices. This may be seen in the fact that many learners are still marginalised and excluded from sport. They may appear as if they are disinterested, but a closer examination of the issues reveals that a number of practices deter them from making the effort to participate. These include the prevailing culture of schools, the location and times of sports practices, the expenses, and the high degree of competitiveness in some school sport, which encourage an almost exclusive focus on performance rather than enjoyment and participation. This is particularly so in independent all-boys schools.

The findings of this study have revealed the affordance and drawbacks of participation in sport from the point of view of Grade 8s who had recently transitioned from different primary schools. They referred to the unrelenting pressure to get into the A team, the ridicule they faced if they performed badly, and the disregard they felt if they played for a lower ranking team or participated in a sport considered “weak” or “soft”.

Many sports could benefit from initiatives for inclusivity and diversity. Sports that have historically faced challenges with diversity and inclusivity include soccer, cricket, rugby, basketball and hockey. Inclusion helps break down barriers and promotes acceptance. School principals, parents, teachers and coaches should become more aware of this issue and work together to make sport more inclusive. Part of this would entail placing more emphasis on participation. This need not mean that the emphasis on performance is removed, as sport will always be competitive; it is simply a matter of emphasis, and of ensuring that all who wish to play a sport are accommodated through careful planning and consideration of potential barriers. Creating an environment that is welcoming to all individuals, regardless of their background and ability, can help to promote greater participation and a more inclusive experience for everyone involved.

Sport in independent all-boys schools has strong colonial roots, and is still shaped by a colonial mindset in many ways. This is evident in the language, culture, traditions and visual images that schools portray. Aspects of school culture need to be examined for the ways in which they may include or exclude. Systems such as sport contain fail-safe, built-in triggers and strong mechanisms of protection to ensure that exclusion remains in place. The "equality" on which schools pride themselves may be more theoretical than practical when it comes to the daily operating of the school sports schedule, the language used, and the emphasis given. Independent all-boys high schools are undoubtedly Eurocentric in ways of operating. The combination of colonial mindset, Eurocentrism and tradition can create an impenetrable fortress that repels anyone who tries to penetrate it with fresh ideas or criticism. These schools thrive on maintaining the status quo and on assimilating boys from diverse backgrounds – meaning that it is the boys who must change, not the school. It is when challenged that such schools reveal their back darker underbelly, as they can be exceptionally harsh, defensive and resistant to change.

Inclusion is a term that has become a catchall, leading to trendy acronyms, unfulfilled expectations in sport, the disregard of specific exclusionary practices, and redefinitions of some terms to fit the status quo. In effect, sport has monopolised the restoration and healing space by promoting ideas like "more teams". Despite the prominence of team sports in schools, the strong emphasis on performance means that in practice, they can be highly individualistic, glorifying a handful of boys at the top and leaving many feeling that they will never measure up. If the talents and areas of interest of less athletic boys were as valued as sport, this feeling

of inadequacy might be less troublesome. Inclusion in sport is not yet a fulfilled ideal; there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Schools have ridden the wave of popular culture by latching on to inclusion and capitalising on the reputational benefits of implementing inclusion. Simply to survive, they must project an inclusive image, which opens them to the dangers that the image may become more important than the reality. Inclusion can operate exclusively if leaders are not interested in creating a more equitable and inclusive sporting arena. For some, the minimal gestures made in the direction of inclusivity are just a way to avoid popular disapproval or expressions of outrage in the media. Once the avoidance of criticism becomes the main driver of inclusion, the term may become just another arrow in a school's bow – something to bring out in the form of statistics to maintain a reputation, but not extending much beyond that. Inclusion then becomes another oppressive system, with schools valuing the "marketability" of diversity while doing little to make diverse learners feel welcome or accommodated. In such cases, it has exactly the opposite effect of inclusion. For inclusion to have the impact it was originally intended to have, schools will have to abandon the public opinion motive and make ending exclusion a top priority so that learners feel included in their participation in sport.

Inclusion deconstructs systems that prioritise Eurocentric norms and disregards others. As a result, bringing about real inclusion in sport will require dealing with a generational legacy of systematic exclusion. This idea is substantiated by Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes (2104, p.3), who note that "exclusionary processes in sports-related policies and practices are multiple and diverse, embedded as they are in existing ethnocentric, patriarchal and heteronormative systems".

Equality is about providing access and resources to marginalised groups to make up for lost opportunities resulting from exclusion and systematic barriers (Bowley, 2013). Donohue and Bornman (2014) highlight that representation without access to power and protection is merely an optical illusion, leading to better and more assimilable minoritised groups; it does not help address systematic issues.

Furthermore, inclusion encompasses complex, deeply rooted issues, partly because independent schools were implemented homogenously, and are now diverse. For this reason, schools tend to think of inclusion as a series of actions that will automatically yield

corresponding incremental improvements in inclusion. For many, these actions have to be measurables – things they can easily identify in a report or plot on a graph. This can lead to a focus on easily measurable outcomes such as the addition of more sports, which may not capture the full complexity of inclusion, nor the exclusion that is still at play. Hence, there might be an underlying assumption that once awareness is raised and policies are implemented, progress will follow naturally and steadily. This expectation overlooks the non-linear nature of culture change. Leaders can be blind to the complexities of inclusion and how deeply entrenched some challenges are. Therefore, a lack of understanding of the systematic nature of these issues can lead to an oversimplified view of progress. In addition, leaders are often under pressure from board members, alma maters and parents to demonstrate immediate and continuous improvement in inclusion in sport. This pressure can lead to focusing on short-term, linear progress rather than the more complex, non-linear path that real change might require. It can be uncomfortable to acknowledge that progress in inclusion is slow, non-linear and filled with setbacks. But some awareness of this fact needs to be present, to avoid a situation where inclusion is assumed be a straightforward path to improvement, easily achieved and easily reported on.

Making high school sport truly inclusive is a complex process that requires ongoing commitment, adaptability and a willingness to confront and learn from challenges. But it can be done. Leaders who recognise the complexity are likely to be more effective in fostering genuine and lasting change in sport, to the benefit of all.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I: Open-ended questionnaire for learners

1. Which sport do you play?
2. What influenced your decision to participate in the sport indicated in point 1?
3. How long have you been participating in the sport?
4. What differences have you experienced in your participation in the sport from primary to high school?
5. How would you define the word included?
6. How would you define the word excluded?
7. In your participation in sports, how has your participation made you feel part of the school?
8. In your participation in sports, how has your participation made you feel not part of the school?
9. In your view, what are the advantages of participating in sports?
10. In your view, what are the disadvantages of participating in sports?
11. Would you like to be interviewed?

APPENDIX II: Interview questions for learners

1. What does sport mean to you?

2.How does your participation in sport make you feel included/excluded at the school?

3. What is the difference between participation and performance in sport?

4. What are some of the benefits you have experienced with regard to participating in sport at high school as compared to sport at primary school?

5. What are some of the challenges you have experienced from moving from primary to high school, specifically with regards to participating in sports?

6. How can the challenges you indicated in Point 5 be dealt with?

7. As a learner have you ever felt marginalised, excluded or labeled by the transition from primary to high school in relation to participation in sports? How so?

8. As a learner have you ever felt marginalised, excluded or labeled by the transition from primary to high school in relation to participation in sports? How so?

APPENDIX III: Example of a transcribed interview

Interviewer: "What does sport mean to you?"

Interviewee 1: "Sport to me means playing a specific game, whether is individually or in a team, and often requires hard work if you want to achieve certain … [hesitates] goals; for example, winning a championship or something like that. There are individual sports but even [with] individual sports, the main thing with sports is doing a team activity and team stands for 'together everyone achieves more', so the main thing was sport is doing a team activity which will result in everybody ultimately getting what they want. For instance, in a team like soccer, there is eleven men, it is definitely not an individual sport; everyone is required to work equally hard, but another sport like golf or tennis, where you only see one person on the golf course, there's a whole bunch of people and physiotherapists, coaches to strategists, that all work together as a team in order to make sure that they achieve the goal."

Interviewer: "How does your participation in sport make you feel included/excluded at the school?"

Interviewee 1: "I'll start with included, sir, [hesitation]. Sports, especially at my current school, has made me feel a lot more included than previous times in primary school, because here sports is mandatory regardless of your intentions. There is no getting out of it, and while it may not be pleasant to academics, it helps you develop new friends and new bonds and relationships that you never thought you would have. Sometimes … I have been in many situations where the team is not getting along, but once we into the game and we are into the thick of things, all personal life gets pushed aside and you just focusing on the one task. So, the benefits of sports, especially in high school, is that you make lots of new friends, lifelong friends, regardless of the sport you play. Even after the match, you will still be friends and you will still be talking. Unfortunately, the other downside to playing sports in high school, especially if you might play for a lower team, is that the higher teams may get more recognition from not just the seniors, but from the actual school itself. And you might feel less glorified, or feel like, you know, what is the point of doing this if I am not going to get recognized? I do not. I am not saying everyone deserves to be recognized, but the hierarchy and the level of recognition you get is way different. Under 14 As are recognised everywhere and that is correctly so, but, like, you know, they get posted on Facebook, their pictures are everywhere. Whereas an under 14 F player gets no recognition, they do not even get mentioned in assembly by the headmaster, they just another person. So that can make a person feel quite bad, as in, what is the point of doing if people do not recognise me?"

Interviewer: What is the difference between participation and performance in sport?

Interviewee 1: "I think they go hand in hand, Sir. Participation is the first step to performance, in my view. Participation is doing it, getting involved, doing a sport, doing activities and being a part of it. I think it is a bit self-explanatory, but then where performance comes in, whether it's good or bad, I'll speak for the latter. Where it is good, performance is when you take the participation and you work on it and you do not just make it where 'I am just doing the sport for the sake of the sport'. You take your time, put in all the effort, and you put in all the hard work. It is kind of like how you would prepare for a very important exam that could determine whether you go to your university of choice or not. You put in the effort, and you put in the time and you work to get better. There is quote that says, 'Winners do not make excuses, they make improvements." But the point is, performance is taking the extra mile and working those extra hours at night and in the morning. Doing everything you can to make sure that you improve your craft."

Interviewer: "What are some of the benefits you have experienced with regard to participating in sport at high school as compared to sport at primary school?"

Interviewee 1: "As mentioned earlier, my school, my primary school, was not big on sports. They were more bigger on academics. So while I have not received any major challenges, I am grateful that sport is mandatory at my current school.
Only challenge, I would say (which is not necessarily a problem) that I have for now, considering what my priorities are, is that since I have not played sports I have not gotten much experience. So this year in my grade, basically what I am saying – I have little experience and so that will result in me playing in the lower teams. Not to be full of myself to say that I have talent that has not been exposed, but rather due to a lack of experience. I would like to play for a higher team, and I do work towards it, but that is what I would say is the only downside. Other than that, there have not been challenges. Obviously my body has not been conditioned before to do certain physical sports such as rugby, at least after doing sports now, my body is sort of used to being in those conditions, a lot of contact sports, a lot of running, a lot of sweating acquiring stamina, and so forth."

Interviewer: "What are some of the challenges you have experienced from moving from primary to high school, specifically with regards to participating in sports?"

Interviewee 1: "Firstly, from where I came, high school sports, like I mentioned earlier, is mandatory and at my old school it was not mandatory at all. Also, at high school you have to learn how to have a certain temperament, especially with the amount of work that you have to deal with and the type of environment that you are growing up in. It is not exactly primary school where in primary school the teachers are there to hold your hand. You are kind of on your own, but not completely on your own, but you start to get a small taste of what it feels like to be independent. And in doing so, you have to start being mature. In primary school if someone messed up they will cry because they felt bad and all their friends shouts at them and then they go complain to the parents and the consequences of that will follow. In high school, you have to be mature and have a certain temperament and understand that while I am in this game, while I am doing the sport, I am focused on that and I am not focused on anything else. But like I said earlier, with sport being mandatory, it also helps you with your routine. Especially being in high school – you develop a certain routine, and once you have been in that timetable for a certain amount of time, it is helpful in keeping your life in order. If you went to

a boarding school, for example, maybe you might have a little bit of issues or something when going out to the outside world on your personal life, but being in high school and having sports, knowing when is the dedicated time for sports, from this hour to that and so forth, really helps in developing a routine and getting your life back in order"

Interviewer: "How can the challenges you indicated in Point 5 be dealt with?"

Interviewee 1: "Well, in my circumstances, I don't really think, especially considering what my priorities are as a student, as a learner, I do not really think they can be dealt with at this level in my current grade and in junior high school, because I think it's one of those things that will grow on me with time. I have heard a lot of stuff about how the people that were a prodigy in Grade 8 or whenever they started their school are often not the same prodigies when it matters in Grade 10, Grade 11 and Grade 12, regardless of whether it's academics or sport. So, I think it is also an internal thing how much do I really want this. I mean for those who know me, not to be full of myself, but my priorities at the moment are maybe like 85% academics and maybe at least for soccer 15% sport, because I enjoy the sport more than I have enjoyed other ones simply due to it being soccer. Which is actually one of the only sport that I really played when I was small, but I did not take it seriously, but I enjoyed it. And so I also think it is also more of an internal thing you can be very talented, but if you do not put in the hard work, eventually it will catch up to you and you will not get anywhere, because there is a stage in life where hard work is what matters. So, I think it is one of those things that can be dealt with in time, it is more of an introspection and internal issue of saying to myself, Okay do I want to make the second team or first team, under 16 Cs or under 16 Bs. Also, like I said, I have inexperience and that is not something I can fix overnight. So just being at my current school and getting more game time for my team, I think the situation will eventually help itself.

Interviewer: "As a learner have you ever felt marginalised, excluded or labeled by the transition from primary to high school in relation to participation in sports? How so?"

Interviewee 1: "No, mainly due to what I mentioned earlier. I know there are people who feel excluded with the transition. The main reason I do not feel excluded is because I have made friends in my team in my sport. Sometimes when you make friends there are really talented people who do not want to move up teams because they really want to stay with their friends. Even though you feel excluded, at least at the high school I am at, regardless of whether they get recognition or not, the nice thing about the system is that you have your own bubble, even if they are not the glamorous under 14 A rugby team and you are under 14 F rugby team. You

and the people in under 14 F team still have your own bubble, and so, even though you might feel ashamed or feel bad about not being a higher team, you are not the only one there, because there are people with you. And that is how you develop better relationships and better bonds with other people. So no, my answer to the question is no, I do not really feel excluded."

Interviewer: "What causes you to feel included or excluded in your participation in sports, is it intrinsic or extrinsic factors?"

Interviewee 1: "I'll start with the main sports this year that I've been in, such as rugby and basketball. With those sports, more especially rugby, they've been more extrinsic. The thing that makes me feel included in sport is that, although it is a bit little stereotypical … whenever you play before a match the coach will always tell you, regardless of the score you are at, that you are playing for the badge. Whenever there is an assembly on whatever date and the headmaster reads out how many wins and losses you had against a particular school that you played. It is such a nice feeling even though you are one of many people to know that you contributed to the school's wins against another school, regardless of whether you won most of the games or lost most of the games. Then for soccer, it is a bit of both; intrinsic, because, as I said before, I enjoy the game and playing with my teammates, as well making friends. That was one of the biggest factors to me, enjoying it and me feeling ready and motivated to do such. Also extrinsic, because our school is not really serious about sport, well, not about soccer as much as it is about rugby, and so with pressure a little bit off everybody's shoulders, you kind of feel more relaxed. Which overall gives you a better mindset and overall allows you to participate with a more clear mind … whereas rugby, the school has to take it seriously and everything is compulsory and stuff like that."

APPENDIX IV: Permission letter

LETTER TO THE HEADMASTER

The Headmaster
XXXX
Outer West Durban
XXXX
16 March 2023

Dear XXXX,

My name is Kwanele Ngema and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand and I am under the supervision of Dr. Moeniera Moosa.
I am doing research on grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion in sports. I would like to invite your school to participate in this research entitled *Grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports.*

The reason why I have chosen your institution is because XXXX is known to have diverse sports and is known to be inclusive in all areas of learner participation, including sports.
The learner will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. I would greatly appreciate it if the research could take place at XXXX with learners from different sporting codes. Learners will be asked to volunteer to complete a questionnaire and participate in an interview to discuss his views on how sport has made him feel inclusion and or excluded at XXXX.

My investigation involves learners completing open-ended questionnaires. Questionnaires will be sent to learners using a google form and should take learners about 45min to complete. At the end of the questionnaire, learners will be given the option to indicate if they would like to be interviewed. From those who indicate a willingness to being interviewed, I will select 3 participants who highlighted advantages of participating in sport and 3 participants that emphasised disadvantages of sports. The interviews will take place at a time that is convenient for learners and will last about 30 minutes.

The learner's participation is voluntary, so he can withdraw his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and the learners will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and the school's identity will be kept confidential and in all academic writing about the study. Learners' individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this study will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

The research will only commence with the research after approval of the ethics committee. The research will need both the parents permission and that of the child before the research proceeds. If anyone from either party says no, then the research will not proceed. I look forward to receiving your response as soon as is convenient. Please feel free to let me know if you need more information.

Yours sincerely,
Kwanele Ngema

PO Box 293
Durban
4000
kwanele.ngema17@gmail.com
Tel: 071412527

Dr. Moeniera Moosa (Supervisor)
Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za
Tel: 0117173085

APPENDIX V: Participant information sheet

LETTER TO THE PARENTS

Parents
XXXX
Outer West Durban
XXXX
16 March 2023

Permission to conduct research with your child at XXXX

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Kwanele Ngema and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand and I am under the supervision of Dr. Moeniera Moosa. I am doing research on grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion in sports. I would like to invite your son to participate in this research entitled *Grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports.*

My investigation involves open-ended questionnaires. Questionnaires will be sent to learners using a google form and should take your son about 45min to complete. From those who indicate a willingness to being interviewed, I will select 3 participants who highlighted advantages of participating in sport and 3 participants that emphasise disadvantages of sports. The interviews will take place at a time that is convenient for your son and will last about 30 minutes. Your son will be asked to volunteer to complete a questionnaire and participate in an interview to discuss his views on how sport has made him feel inclusion and or excluded at XXXX.

Your son's name and identity will be always kept confidential in all academic writing about the study. His individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your son will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. His participation is voluntary, so he can withdraw his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and he will not be paid for this study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this study will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Let me know if you need more information. The research will need your permission and the permission of your son before the research proceeds. If for example you agree, and your son disagrees, the study will not include your son. If both you and your son agree, he will be included in the research.

The research will only commence with the research after approval of the ethics committee. I look forward to receiving your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Kwanele Ngema

PO Box 293
Durban
4000
kwanele.ngema17@gmail.com
Tel: 071412527

Dr. Moeniera Moosa (Supervisor)
Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za
Tel: 0117173085

Consent Form

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research with your son.

I understand that:

Participant's involvement is voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without negative consequences. YES/ NO

The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used so as to ensure anonymity. YES/NO

Consent will be obtained from parents and learners before data is collected. YES/NO

My son will complete a questionnaire and be interviewed. YES/NO

The data collection process will not interfere with learners' class time nor will it interfere with the day to day running of the school. YES/NO

It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings YES/NO

Permission to complete questionnaire

I agree my son can complete the questionnaire YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

My son can be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I understand that my son can stop the interview at any time and does not have to answer all the questions YES/NO

Permission to be audio taped

I agree that my son can be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO

I, _____ (Parents full name) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Kwanele Ngema to conduct research with _____ (son's name) March 2023.

Please provide your details should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research findings.

E-mail address: _____

……. (Signature)

…….. (Date)

Kwanele Ngema…… (Name of researcher)

……. (Date)

APPENDIX VI: Participant information sheet

LETTER TO THE LEARNERS

The Learner
XXXX
Outer West Durban
XXXX
20 March 2023

Dear Learner,

My name is Kwanele Ngema and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand and I am under the supervision of Dr. Moeniera Moosa. I am doing research on grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion in sports. I would like to invite you to participate in this research entitled *Grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and exclusion: affordances and drawbacks of participating in sports.* The reason why I have chosen your institution is because XXXX is known to have diverse sports and is known to be inclusive in all areas of learner participation, including sports.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could volunteer to participate in the research at XXXX. My investigation involves answering open-ended questionnaires. Questionnaires will be sent to you using a google form and should take you about 45min to complete. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be given a chance to indicate if you would like to be interviewed. From those who indicate a willingness to being interviewed, I will select 3 participants who highlighted advantages of participating in sport and 3 participants that emphasise disadvantages of sports.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.
Your identity and the school's identity will be kept confidential and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report. The data collected from this study will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Let me know if you need more information. The research will only commence with the research after approval of the ethics committee. The research will need your parents' permission and your permission before the research proceeds. If anyone from either you or your parent says no, then the research will not proceed. I look forward to receiving your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Kwanele Ngema

PO Box 293
Durban
4000
kwanele.ngema17@gmail.com
Tel: 071412527

Dr. Moeniera Moosa (Supervisor)
Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za
Tel: 0117173085

Consent Form

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research with your son.

I understand that:

Participant's involvement is voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without negative consequences. YES/ NO

The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used so as to ensure anonymity. YES/NO

Consent will be obtained from parents and learners before data is collected. YES/NO

I will complete a questionnaire and be interviewed. YES/NO

The data collection process will not interfere with my class time nor will it interfere with the day to day running of the school. YES/NO

It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings YES/NO

Permission to complete questionnaire

I agree my to complete the questionnaire YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I agree to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I understand that I can stop the interview at any time and I do not have to answer all the questions YES/NO

Permission to be audio taped

I agree that I can be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO

I, _____ (Learners full name) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Kwanele Ngema to conduct research within _____ (school's name) March 2023.

……. (Signature)

…….. (Date)

Kwanele Ngema…… (Name of researcher)

……. (Date)

APPENDIX VII: Consent form of approval from the selected school

Consent Form

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

I understand that:

Participant's involvement is voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without negative consequences. YES/ NO

The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used so as to ensure anonymity. YES/NO

Consent will be obtained from parents and learners before data is collected. YES/NO

Learners will complete questionnaires and be interviewed. YES/NO

The data collection process will not interfere with learners' class time nor will it interfere with the day to day running of the school. YES/NO

It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes

APPENDIX VIII: Clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | WSoE Wits School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023ECE020M**
PROJECT TITLE	**Grade 8 perspectives on inclusion and Exclusion: Affordance and drawbacks of participating in sports**
INVESTIGATOR	**Ngema Kwanele**
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	Wits School of Education
DATE CONSIDERED	**06-Mar-23**
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	**Minimal risk**
EXPIRY DATE	
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE	**20-Mar-23**
CHAIRPERSON	Dr. Batseba Mofolo-Mbokane

cc: Dr Moeniera Moosa

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should

abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.



Signature **Date** 14 / 05 / 2023

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 | Pvt Bag 3, WITS, 2050 | **T** +27 11 717 3007 | www.wits.ac.za/education

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