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A Qualitative Analysis of the Types of Goals Athletes Set in Training and Competition The purpose of this study is to use qualitative approach to find out the specific types of goals that are set by athletes training and competition. This research is different in that it does not use researcher defined goals which limits responses given by participants. The methods chosen will answer the research question by providing a wider and complete understanding of the nature of goals set by athletes in the two situations. This study extends prior researches that had failed to examine fully and compare the types of goals set by athletes in training and competition. This study will therefore fill the gap in the existing literature by giving a complete list and clear comparison of the goals set by athletes in training and competition.

Waters (2005) explains that qualitative phenomenological research involves the explanation of a lived experience and this makes phenomenological approach the most appropriate method of conducting this research.

Empirical phenomenology will be used as the specific model of study because it focuses on the researcher's reflection of the situation while allowing the participants to describe their experiences. The sample of participants will be drawn from athletes participating in 18 various types of sports namely soccer, football, volleyball, rowing, volleyball, hockey, field hockey, netball, basketball, baseball, swimming, wrestling, tae kwon do, track, fencing, water polo, lacrosse and rugby.

The sample selected will include participant varying in their level of participation from high school, college and to national team levels and having ages 18-30 years. The sample size selected is 249, having 109 males

and 140 females. This sample size will ensure there are athletes of all levels for each sport so as to give an adequate response. For example Weinberg et al. (2000) state that Olympic and collegiate athletes set more goals for training compared to practice. This means they will inform more on goals set in training. The sample will be selected stratified sampling. Athletes are first grouped into their various sport types, then into ladies and gents, then ages 18-30 finally, the various groups are sampled randomly as independent groups.

In this case, the appropriate data collection method is open-ended surveys using open-ended conversational interviews and open ended questionnaires. Athletes will fill in the open-ended questionnaires and describe in the types of goals they set with respect to performance goals, skills, mental preparation goals, strategies and outcome goals without limit. The open ended questionnaires will help as a guide for eliciting responses. The conversational interviews will be informal and this face-to-face will allow the researcher to use this interview to guide the participants in giving only responses pertaining to goal setting in relation to the five mentioned areas so as to address the research question adequately.

QSR NUDIST (Non-numerical, Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching and Theorizing) can be used to analyse the data collected. Weitzman and Miles (1995) explains that this program is designed to code, store, retrieve and analyze text. Answers to pen-ended questionnaires will be transcribed and transferred into the NUDIST. Alternatively, an ethnographic study using focus groups can be conducted using focus groups because it will still allow the researcher to pose their interview questions and collect more information by

observation. In order to ensure credibility, dependability and transferability in the proposed study, the answers will be limited to goal setting only.

References

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