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Examining athletes' leadership skills development and transfer experiences from sport into business

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**Examining athletes' leadership skills development and transfer experiences
from sport into business**

Or Sela

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University in collaboration with Munich Business School
for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

July 2021

Candidate's Statement

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy
5. The word count of the thesis is 54,927

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Completing doctoral research is never the work of a single person but a combined effort of a team. It is a journey full of obstacles and hurdles but also gratifying achievements. I am thankful for all the people in my life who have been with me and helped me in the successful completion of this fulfilling journey. I truly believe that during this writing process I have applied every single one of the life skills investigated in this research.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of sport in offering experiences that enable the development and subsequent application of leadership skills in business focusing on former professional basketball players and business managers in Israel.

Transferable skills are general skills that are context and content free (Wiant, 1977). Within the context of sport, transferable skills are those acquired through sport which can be applied in non-sport domains. In recent years, the demand and interest regarding performance excellence principles has grown significantly. Likewise, the demand in the business world for transferring those principles from elite sport has increased. Thus, business organisations are becoming aware of the power of “learning through metaphor” as well as the fact that life skills are universal, regardless of culture and domain (Fletcher, 2011).

Some studies have examined this aspect in the context of high school sport (Carson & Gould, 2010; Voelker, Gould, & Crawford, 2011). However, such findings appear limited as participants have only recently left high school and have not had enough time to implement the skills acquired (Kendellen & Camire, 2017). Thus, there is a gap in the literature here for a study such as this one that focuses on participants that have had longer experiences in business and leadership settings post their sporting careers.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 male participants ($M_{age} = 65.0$). Participants were engaged in professional basketball careers on both national and international levels. Upon their retirement participants have worked in business and/or are pursuing business careers. This research utilises a six-step deductive thematic analysis using the conceptual model for life skills interventions developed by (Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2013).

Participants discussed how they believe they developed leadership skills during their professional basketball career and subsequently applied in business many of the leadership skills theorised to be associated with the basic psychological needs. Three higher-order themes of autonomy (e.g., self-control), competence (e.g., coping with stress), and relatedness (e.g., consideration of other’s feelings) comprising 14 lower-order themes were generated from the data.

The findings advance the understanding of sports as a development setting by offering concrete examples of both development and application of specific leadership skills provided by the same participants. Linking development in sports and application in business in such a manner demonstrates substantial influence sports experiences can have in the lives of business managers long after their playing days are over. The results proved that athletes could learn leadership skills which they can apply throughout their professional business careers. Those skills can play a significant role in their professional success.

Publications and Conferences

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1 Introduction

1.1 Importance and rationale of the research

Establishing, leading, and maintaining a successful organisation is probably the most challenging task any organisation can face (Hutton, 2008). High performing leaders can respond quickly to changes, provide direction to the entire organisation, deal with ambiguity, and increase employee's motivation, commitment, and productivity.

Leaders with these capabilities lead their organisation toward a significant competitive advantage (Jones, 2004; Kakabadse, 2000). Hence, it is necessary for organisations who aim to stay ahead of competition to invest in developing high-performance leaders.

The literature on leadership attempts to advise organisations on how to overcome this challenge but there is confusion regarding the different definitions and leadership theories which make it difficult for organisations. Moreover, there is no clear definition on what leadership is. Yukl and Van Fleet (1992, p. 149) stated that "definitions are somewhat arbitrary, and controversies about the best way to define leadership usually cause confusion and animosity rather than providing new insights into the nature of the process".

Confusion in literature and the increased popularity of sports literature led business leaders to utilise sports as a platform where they can gain insights and advice (Gordon, 2007; Jones, 2002a; 2004). Sports are placed with a high level of importance worldwide. The impact of sports on millions of people, from the individuals

participating to their families and to millions of fans, is tremendous. It has been consistently found that sport is the most popular organised activity for youths between the ages of 6 and 18 (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). For example, solely in United States, close to 45 million youth between these ages participate in some kind of activity of organised sports. Moreover, sports promote a wide range of positive developmental experiences associated with participation of youth in sports (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005) as well as negative developmental experiences (Bean, Fortier, Post, & Chima, 2014).

Because sport is practiced by millions of youths worldwide, it potentially influences participants' personal development tremendously and consequently. Additionally, sports have the potential to influence other aspects of athletes' lives. Hamilton, Hamilton and Pittman (2004) claim that this optimal development in youth “enables individuals to lead a healthy, satisfying, and productive life as youth, and later as adults, because they gain the competence to earn a living, to engage in civic activities, to nurture others, and to participate in social relations and cultural activities” (p.3).

However, many athletes directly or indirectly involved in sports are not highly cognisant of such influences. Many parents and coaches are not aware of the extent to which sport experiences teach skills other than the physical ones. Additionally, they are not aware how these experiences may affect subsequent life endeavours in other domains (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993). Specifically focusing on the business domain, many organisations may utilise the findings of these research to improve their leadership development programs.

Moreover, a professional sports career does not last forever. At some point, every athlete will find himself or herself making a transition out of the world of sports. As is suggested by the Life Development Intervention (LDI; Danish et al. 1993) model, athletes' adjustment to a transition such as retiring from sport will vary; some will be negative, whereas others will be positive. An analysis of the athletic career and retirement comparing between individual and team sports revealed that the retirement age occurred significantly later in team sports than in individual sports (de Subijana, Galatti, Moreno, & Chamorro, 2020). Learning from participants' experience who build successfully on the skills learned during the sport experience and use those capabilities in business, will benefit with the athletes themselves.

1.2 Life skill development and transfer

A skill which is acquired in one domain and is successfully transferred and applied to another domain is known as a life skill. Life skills are defined as “those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethics that can be facilitated or developed in sport and transferred for use in non-sport settings” (Pierce, Gould, & Camiré, 2017, p.186). These critical skills are recognised by the literature as important mechanisms. These vital mechanisms not only help to promote positive personal development on a long term, but also prevent the onset of behavioural health problems, including violent and aggressive behaviours (Botvin & Griffin, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2016).

The development of skills in sports and the transfer to another setting has been a topic of interest for researchers of sport psychology and positive youth development in recent years. It is assumed by practitioners that life skills such as teamwork and leadership,

which are gained during participation in sport, automatically enable participants to apply them successfully in other domains (Trottier & Robitaille, 2014). This view is supported by many sport organisations, which communicate through their mission statements that the two main elements of the sociocultural value of sport are life skills development and transfer (Pierce et al., 2017).

Sport, among other activities, was recognised by the literature as offering numerous opportunities for individuals to develop emotional, physical, and psychological skills which may lead to positive effects on other areas in life (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). Since many people are motivated to participate in sports, and since sports is so popular all over the world, it offers an excellent platform for life skills development. A person may develop life skills as a direct result of his or her experiences. Some of the experiences may be trivial and some monumental and these exert a tremendous amount of influence on the success and direction of a person's life (Bandura, 1989). However, some researchers such as Coakley (2011) have strongly criticised and questioned whether life skills are actually acquired in sports, and, if so, whether they actually transfer to other life settings. This thesis aims to test both sides of this debate.

Findings of prior research has illustrated that transfer of knowledge and skills from one domain to another is an important influence on subsequent endeavours and a necessary step in life-span development (Barron, Ewing, & Waddell, 2000; Howell, Miracle, & Rees, 1984). Research in sport has found that when skills such as dedication or self-confidence are developed, they can be transferred to other domains, specifically to work (Danish et al., 1993; Jones, 2002a; Mayocchi & Hanrahan, 2000).

Past research have also examined this aspect in the context of high school sport (Carson & Gould, 2010; Voelker et al., 2011). However, such findings appear limited as participants have only recently left high school and have not had enough time to implement the skills in other domains such as work at various life stages (Kendellen & Camire, 2017). Thus, there is a gap in the literature here for a study such as this one that focuses on participants that have had longer experiences in business and leadership settings past their sporting careers.

Both empirical research and popular literature suggest that success in sport and business requires the application of similar life skills (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001; Weinberg & Mcdermott, 2002). However, the claim that similar personal competencies characterise successful individuals in both sports and business does not provide any evidence that the skills were transferred from sports to business. This view is supported by a research which has found that life skills developed by athletes in sport do not automatically transfer to other domains (Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001). This debate led to an increasing interest in both academic and practice on whether athletes transfer their skills and experience from the world of sport into other domains.

On one hand some studies suggest that the transition from professional sports career to a non-sports career may be challenging (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). On the other hand, other studies such as of Coakley (1983) argue that such transitions are not necessarily challenging but offer new growth opportunities and experiences. Understandably it is a challenge for a successful athlete, upon his or her retirement, to duplicate the success in a completely different environment (i.e., business).

These contradictory findings may be explained by the fact that few researchers have examined in depth just how that transfer is accomplished. The assumption that the transfer occurred due to the similarity of the skills valued in sport and later in life may have influenced many studies. Therefore, there is little research on exactly how individuals have applied the specific life skills in the business domain, although there is a growing amount of quality research on the transferability of life skills developed in sport to the work domain. Few studies have explored why and how those former elite athletes who do succeed in sports are able to do so also in the business. There is a need to understand if and how skills acquired in sports can be transferred to the business domain. This knowledge may be used to improve the positive outcomes of sports on individuals and on organisations (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012).

1.3 Theoretical framework

It has been argued in sport psychology literature that there is an existing limitation in the life skill literature due to the lack of theory being utilised to understand and explore how leadership skills are learned by athletes (Gould & Carson, 2008). Through the use of the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013), the current study endeavoured to address this limitation. This model is based on the integration of parts of the LDI (Danish & D'Augelli, 1983; Danish, D'Augelli, & Ginsberg, 1984) and the Basic Needs Theory (BNT; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The LDI is based on a life span human development perspective and its main goal is to enhance personal competence and psychological function (Danish et al., 1993). Although the LDI theory was used already in research (Lavallee, 2005), it is limited in its scope since it does not focus on the process of psychological change which may happen during life skill interventions. Therefore, and in order to address this issue, the integration of BNT within the LDI is

argued (Hodge et al., 2013). BNT is a sub-theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). SDT is a theory of development, motivation and wellness with an emphasis on optimal functioning, well-being, psychological health and life satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2008).

1.4 Research paradigm and approach

Research paradigm is defined as “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.105). The paradigm which guided the research approach is interpretivism. Interpretivism underlines that human, since they create meanings, are different from physical phenomena. The aim of interpretivism is to study these meanings (Crotty, 1998) and the purpose of interpretive research is to create new, richer understanding and interpretation of context and social worlds (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015).

As described in more detail in the section on methodology, this research focuses on former elite athletes who have demonstrated success in their sports careers and upon their retirement pursued a management role in their second career in business. This thesis employs qualitative methods. A grounded theory methodology formed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) aligned with a symbolic interactionism as a philosophical underpinning is adopted. It was recommended by Aldiabat and Le Navenec (2011) to researchers for improved understanding of how the participants' behaviours have been shaped through social interaction. The data is derived from in-depth semi-structured retrospective interviews about the participants' self-reported leadership skills developed in sports and applied in their business careers. This approach is the optimal

methodology, since it gives the opportunity to establish detailed information, especially with regard new research questions (Hanton & Jones, 1999).

A deductive thematic analysis is conducted following the six-step analytical procedures described by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, in order to become familiar with the data, transcripts were read thoroughly. Second, generation of codes (e.g., leadership skills) was developed based on the life skills identified in the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013). Third, similar codes were grouped to form the foundation of themes. Fourth, particular attention was paid to review the themes to ensure that there will be adequate examples to demonstrate skill development in sport and transfer to business career of the three basic psychological needs. Fifth, in order to ensure that the overall story of the data (align with research questions) is displayed, the themes were refined and given specific names and definitions. The final step included writing the report. Quotes that best represent leadership skill development and application were chosen in order to answer the research questions.

1.5 Aim and objectives of the thesis

The process of transfer of leadership skills which developed in sports and transferred and applied in business domain has been largely ignored by prior research. The aim of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the role of sport in offering experiences that enable the development and subsequent application of leadership skills in business.

The objective of this research is to provide insight into how former professional basketball players and business managers in Israel perceived their sport experience and

exactly what behaviours, practices, and skills were applied in their subsequent careers, whether they were derived from sports.

An additional objective is to conduct a scientific investigation which attempts to define and identify key attributes which underpin the transfer of leadership capabilities between sports to business, and to challenge some of the hype around the link between sport and business.

1.6 Research questions

The two research questions that are related to the objectives are:

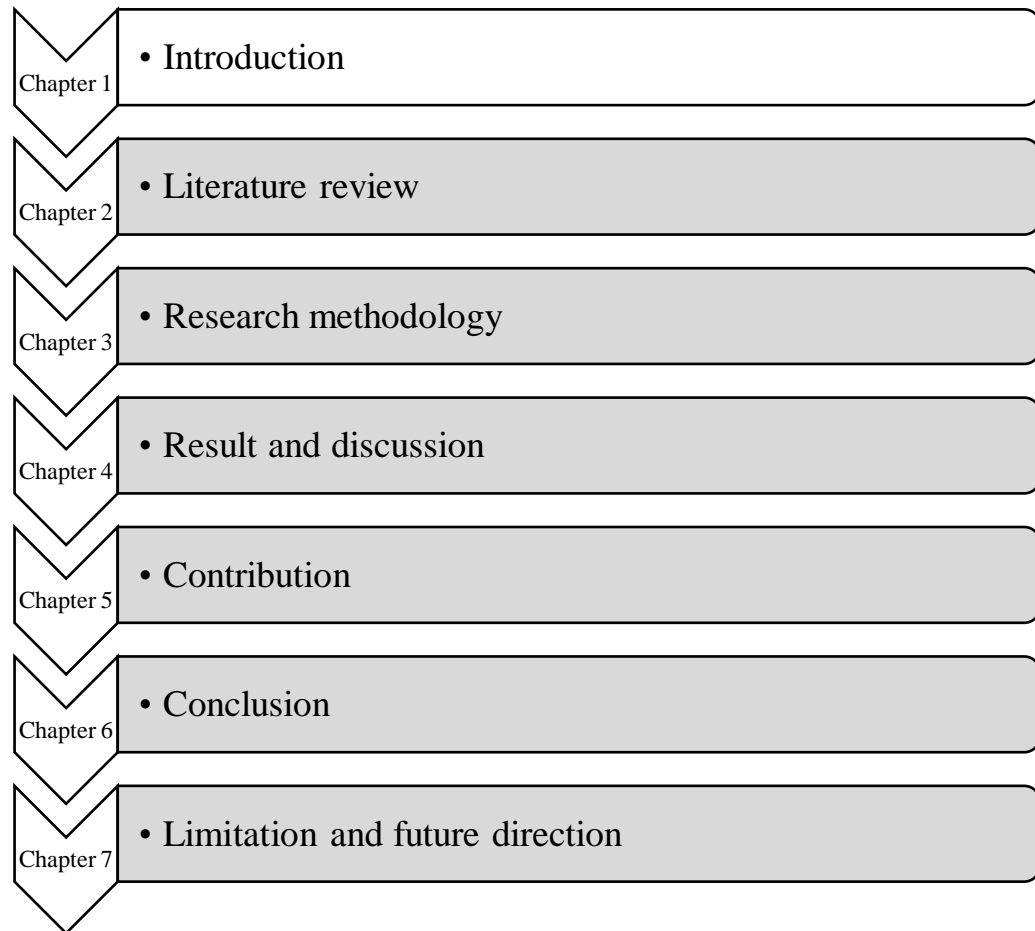
1. What leadership skills do former professional basketball players believe they developed during their participation in sport?
2. Whether leadership skills developed during their careers are applied in the business domain?

1.7 Structure of the thesis

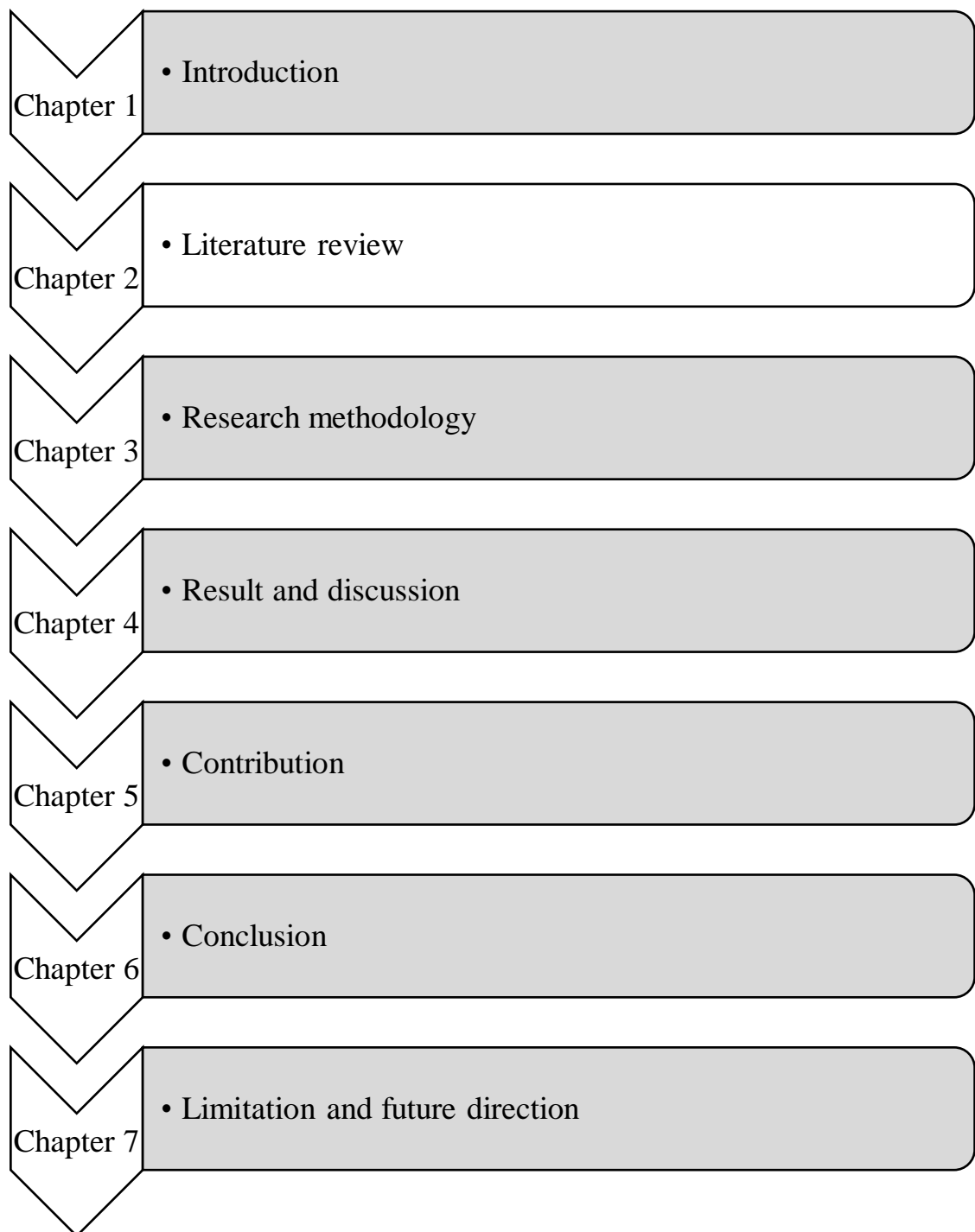
The thesis roadmap is presented below (Figure 1) as well as in the beginning of every chapter highlighting the reading progress. To provide context for both the topic and the subsequent research, this thesis begins by describing the theoretical context for the study (Chapter 2). The literature review presents a critical review of the life skills frameworks and the theoretical framework. The present state of the sports-business link, athlete leadership, life skills development and transfer, and the context of basketball and sport in Israel are explained. Chapter 3 describes in detail the methodology employed for the collection of data. Then chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings from the analysis of the data from semi structured interviews that

were collected. Finally, contribution of the current research (chapter 5), conclusion (chapter 6), and limitations and future directions (chapter 7) are drawn.

Figure 1: Thesis roadmap



2 Literature Review



2.1 Introduction of the literature review chapter

As recommended by Yin (2011), in order to sharpen the researcher's preliminary knowledge of the topic, method and data source, the method of selective literature review was chosen. The focus here is to review and report on previous studies directly. Contrary to comprehensive literature review, which assumes a broader perspective and report what is known about a topic, a selective review helps the researcher to define a new study which is relevant to this research.

In a selective review, the topics of the studies that need to be targeted and reviewed are those that are closely resemble the researcher's chosen topic (Yin, 2011). Since the researcher chose to examine the specific topic of transfer of leadership skills from sport to business, the studies which were targeted and critically reviewed were closely related to this topic. The goal of the selective literature review, according to Yin (2011) is to find a niche for this thesis situating it in the array of related studies.

The literature review describes the theoretical and methodological contexts for the study. Therefore, a critical review of the life skills frameworks is presented first as well as the chosen theoretical framework (chapter 2.2). Since the research's topic is the transfer of leadership skills from sport to business, an examination of sports-business link is discussed (chapter 2.3) as well as a critically review of the athlete leadership in sport teams is demonstrated (chapter 2.4). In order to be able to answer the research questions, it is vital to explore the topic of life skills development and transfer (chapter 2.5). Every sport, whether basketball, American football, or hockey, is a self-contained world of behaviours, structures, and processes (Keidel, 2014). As a result, the context of basketball as well as the context of sport in Israel is discussed (chapter 2.6). Chapter

2.7 summarises the literature review and highlights the key points as well as underlines the research gap clearly.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A critical literature review of life skills frameworks has been conducted by Pierce et al. (2017). Based on their review, key thoughts, explanations, and limitations of the following models are presented and discussed. Models that are not chosen for this research are presented in chapter 2.2.1 followed by a discussion on the theoretical framework of this thesis (chapter 2.2.2).

2.2.1 Life skills development and transfer models

Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)

This model created by Hellison (1995) is commonly applied in physical education. The aim of this model is to teach life skills to adolescents, which they can then transfer to school or other life domains. Transference, according to TPSR, is being the fifth and highest attainable level of responsibility out of overall five levels (Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2007). In many adolescent interventions programs, TPSR has proved a useful model for teaching life skills (e.g., Wright & Burton, 2008), however for many participants the transfer of responsibility remains elusive (Martinek et al., 2001).

In order to address the challenge of identifying the transfer of life skills learned in the intervention program to other domains, Lee and Martinek (2013) advise a revised model. They propose a transfer framework based on the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) and the bioecological theory of change (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Within the model of Lee and Martinek (2013), insights into dynamic

bidirectional processes and individual-context interactions involved in life skills transfer TPSR-specific interventions programs are explained. Even though there is a growing number of youth development programs such as TPSR and Sports United to Promote Education and Reaction (SUPER), and nowadays also a better understanding of how these programs enable development, it is still vital to note that these programs are structured differently than those in the context of regular sport. These sport programs (e.g., school or community sport) are different than development programs such as TPSR and SUPER as they may or may not facilitate the transfer of life skills. Therefore, models explaining the process of transfer in a regular sports context illustrate in a comprehensive manner the process of transferring life skills.

Career Transition Model

Mayocchi and Hanrahan (2000) develop a career transition model which focus on elite athletes. This model aims to explain how skills acquired by athletes through sports may be applied in other non-sports domains. The main emphasis is by helping athletes, during the retirement transition, to raise awareness and confidence of their transformation of skills from sports to non-sport domains. Moreover, it is recommended for athletes to receive support and feedback in developing the process to transfer life skills beyond sport (Mayocchi & Hanrahan, 2000). This ongoing process of life skills transfer of an athlete and the need to continually consider athletes psychology processes when they retire and move to a non-sport career, are valuable insights provided and explained by this model.

Although this model focuses on elite adult athletes making transitions to non-sport careers, it does not explain how athletes generally transfer their life skills to multiple life domains (Pierce et al., 2017).

A Five-Component Model on Coaching Life Skills through Sport

Applied mainly in youth sports, this model was created by Gould and Carson (2008) and has been used by other researchers (e.g., Camiré et al., 2012) to examine the process of life skills development. Based on this model, in order to teach life skills, trainers need first to understand their athletes' external (e.g., peers and parents) and internal (e.g., personality characteristics) assets. Secondly, key factors influencing life skills development are the characteristics of the trainer as well as the teaching strategies (i.e., indirect, and direct). Thirdly, utility of the life skills and social environment influences are the components of "life skills explanations". These explain how and why life skills development happens in sport. With a list of both negative and positive results of sport participation being identified, the fourth factor focused on "outcomes". The fifth factor according to this model is the transfer. This is considered to be the outcome of coaching life skills.

Pierce et al. (2017) claim that although the transfer is the outcome of the life skills development process, Gould and Carson (2008) do not investigate deep into the its complexity. Moreover, this model is focused on the coaches' role and approach, the researchers do not explain the role of the athlete. The life skills development and transfer process from the perspectives of the athlete are ignored by this model.

A Dual Step Transfer Model

A dual step transfer model from non-sport and sport to academia was recently proposed by Bradley and Conway (2016). Based on educational literature, this model demonstrates through participation in sport the non-cognitive skills like motivation, self-perception, self-control, and perseverance that may be developed. This led to better academic and learning achievement in school (Bradley & Conway, 2016).

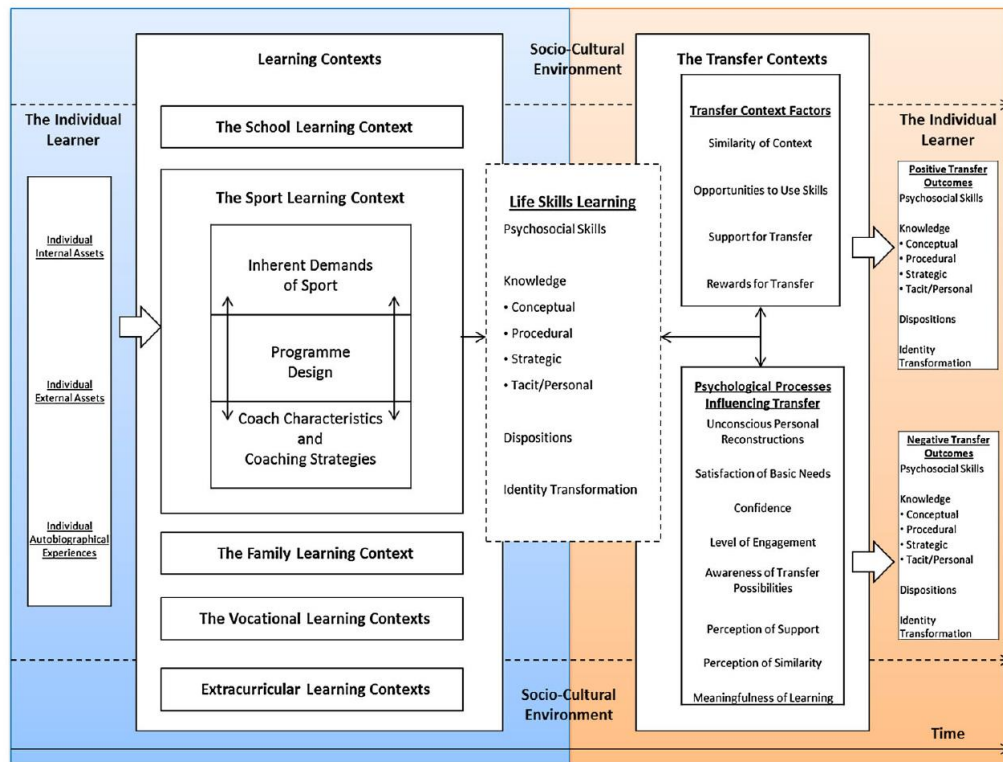
Consequently, the missing conceptual link between learning through sport and within other life domains has been highlighted by the researchers. They espouse the primacy of individual non-cognitive characteristics for the transfer execution.

However, the scope of this model is limited since it focuses only on academic achievement as the life skills transfer domain (Pierce et al., 2017).

A Model of Sport-Based Life Skills Transfer

Based on their review of the life skills development and transfer literature, Pierce et al. (2017) suggest a model that is designed to explain the way in which the individual learner experiences transfer. This model draws the possible elements influencing the life skills transfer process (see Figure 2) and focusses on sport as the original context for development of life skills. One of the main factors of this model is that the life skills transfer is an interactive development process. Athletes' learning in one context (blue part of the model) is connected to the application of that skill in another context (orange part of the model).

Figure 2: A model for life skills transfer from sport to other domains



Source: Pierce et al. (2017)

Throughout the process of life skills transfer, the individual learner is an active, integral, and constant factor. A distinct set of autobiographic experiences, as well as external and internal assets, is possessed by each individual learner. This set of experiences and assets continuously impacts the learning and transfer of life skills. It may happen that the individual learner develops psychologically and physically within various contexts. Each context may influence another one and vice-versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

Focusing on the sport context, this model takes into consideration athletes' experience with sport program designs, inherent demands, and coaches implicitly or explicitly impact on learning. Through these experiences, athletes may internalise life skills, well-defined as knowledge, dispositions, psychosocial skills and/or identity transformation

(Pierce et al., 2017). The assumption is that athletes have the potential to transfer and apply their life skills from one domain to another if the life skills have been internalised.

There are several psychological processes (e.g., perceptions of support, confidence) that impact an athlete's ability to apply life skills in a non-sport domain. The conditions that may hinder or facilitate the application of life skills are reflected in the model as transfer contexts (e.g., business). Athletes then unconsciously or consciously experience and interpret these conditions. If athletes experience transfer, the outcomes may be twofold: An athlete may experience negative transfer outcomes that hinder success in non-sport domain (e.g., a command-and-control leadership style learned from a coach, which may decrease subordinates' motivation), or an athlete may experience positive transfer outcomes that facilitate success in a non-sport domain (e.g., applying team collaboration techniques learned in sport to business, thereby increasing team's productivity).

Furthermore, this model suggests a holistic approach, since life skills are constantly influenced by how/when transfer contexts are experienced, how/when life skills development happen, and how an athlete interprets the learning of skills. Finally, the learning contexts and transfer contexts are continually influenced by the socio-cultural environment (Pierce et al., 2017).

Although this model offers a relatively new comprehensive view of what is currently known about life skills transfer, it was not chosen for this current study. Every model has its limitations, and the sport-based life skills transfer model presents the following drawbacks, which are the reasons for not selecting this model: (1) The model is not designed to be used and tested in its entirety, because of its comprehensiveness, (2)

some components in the model have not received empirical support within the sport context. For example, the model focuses predominately on the micro-level factors influencing the transfer of life skills. However, the macro-level aspects such as socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political are not addressed.

An additional component that has not received an empirical support is the potential of negative transfer of skills. Examining negative life skills transfer would increase the understanding of the life skills learning process and will challenge the assumption that personal change and life skills development through sport is always positive.

Currently this model can identify important areas where future research is needed and one day form the basis of a “complete” theory of transfer. Therefore, parts of this holistic model such as macro-level factors and negative outcomes of life skills transfer should be tested and verified within the sport context, in order to organise what is known about transfer and generate future research (Pierce et al., 2017).

Life Development Intervention (LDI)

The LDI (Danish & D'Augelli, 1983; Danish et al., 1993) is based on the lifespan of human development perspective. The LDI offers a psychoeducational framework for life skills development in sports. The focus of LDI is on promoting intentional self-directed change and continuous growth. Several aspects (i.e., social, biological, and psychological) need to be examined in order to understand change and growth. Another aspect to be considered within the prevailing norms and present environment, is that the study of development, behaviour, and change becomes multidisciplinary. Additionally, since change is progressive and does not happen in one point in time, it is vital to take into consideration any change of life within the context of what has happened in the past

and what will happen in the future. The LDI has served as the foundation for special programs such as the Sports United to Promote Education and Reaction (SUPER). One of the main goals of these programs is to teach life skills to adolescents (Danish et al., 1993).

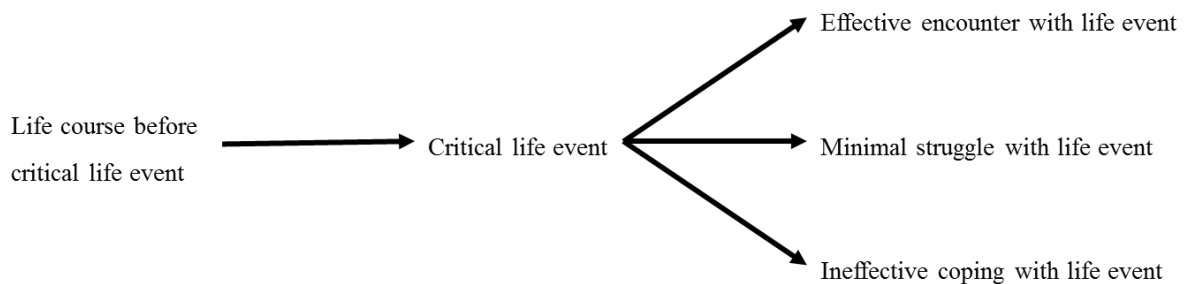
Athletes face many changes in their life and some of the changes may result in problems or even crises. These are critical life events (Baltes, Reese, & Lipsitt, 1980). Most people try to avoid change in their lives, since it disrupts their relationships with others and their routines and hence may result in stress. Likewise, systems such as work units, teams, and family try to avoid change for the same reasons (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). Athletes may experience several sport-specific critical life events such as coping with injuries; changes in coaches; adjusting to the transition to higher level of competition; being transferred to another team; changes in the composition of the team; and retirement from sport due to an injury or due to failure to keep the necessary professional level (Danish et al., 1993).

There are several further elements to consider as critical life events which non-athletes are facing that also affect athletes. Occasionally athletes as well as non-athletes expect changes to occur, but they sometimes do not happen. For example, a player may expect to sign with a team during summer and in the end does not receive any offer or has a slower recovery from injury than initially expected. These non-events may also lead to substantial stress (Schlossberg, 1984). Although considered to be one separated from other events, critical life events are processes that begin before the event (i.e., from the time athletes anticipate them and continue after the events (i.e., until the result has been assessed).

Therefore, the impact of critical life events on the athlete is affected by three characteristics: the contextual purity of the event, the timing of the event, and the duration of the event (Danish, Smyer, & Nowak, 1980). The contextual purity refers to the number of events happening simultaneously. Since events do not occur in isolation, the more events taking place at the same time, the more challenge for athlete to adjust (Danish et al., 1980). The timing of the event refers to athlete's societal or personal expectations of when the event supposed to happen (Neugarten, 1968). When athletes experience events at the expected time or this particular event is experienced by most of athletes, then athletes normally receive the support of formal and informal networks (Schlossberg, 1984).

However, when there is a time delay, such as recovery from injury or early retirement, dealing with these events may be challenging (Baillie & Danish, 1992). As examined in detail by Danish and D'Augelli (1983) critical life events may lead to increased dissatisfaction or problems. Additionally, they can result in little or no change in an athlete's life. However, these events may promote opportunities and personal growth (see Figure 3). Schlossberg (1984) claims that critical life events may be evaluated as negative, positive, or mixed and viewed as permanent, temporary, or uncertain.

Figure 3: Coping with life events



Source: Danish & D'Augelli (1983)

Based on the LDI model, change is viewed as a challenge and not a threat. Athletes gain experience from the various critical life events. Since these events promote instability, the instability precedes change and growth. Therefore, regardless of whether it is psychological or physical, the emphasis of LDI model is to optimise rather than remediate performance. That's how athletes may be able to cope better with critical life events (Danish & Hale, 1981; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1990).

The goal of the LDI model is to enhance personal competence through the teaching of life skills. The definition of personal competence is explained by the ability to be self-reliant, carry out effective life planning, and seek the resources of others (Danish et al., 1984). If a person would like to be competent, he or she must acquire the necessary intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Both mental and physical skills are included in intrapersonal skills; nevertheless, in the LDI model they are usually considered psychological skills (Vealey, 1988). The ability to communicate with others in a variety of situations is referred to as interpersonal skills. Both the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are necessary in the sport setting but are not specifically linked to sport. They are simply general life skills.

Like any other model, although the LDI increases the ability to explain how life skills development and transfer may occur, it has its limitations. According to Pierce et al. (2017) the LDI model is limited in its scope since it explains transfer only within sport-based intervention programs. During these programs transfer is explicitly taught. Thus, this model is not formed to explain transfer outside the boundaries of those programs, i.e., in regular sport programs (e.g., school or community sport). In regular sport

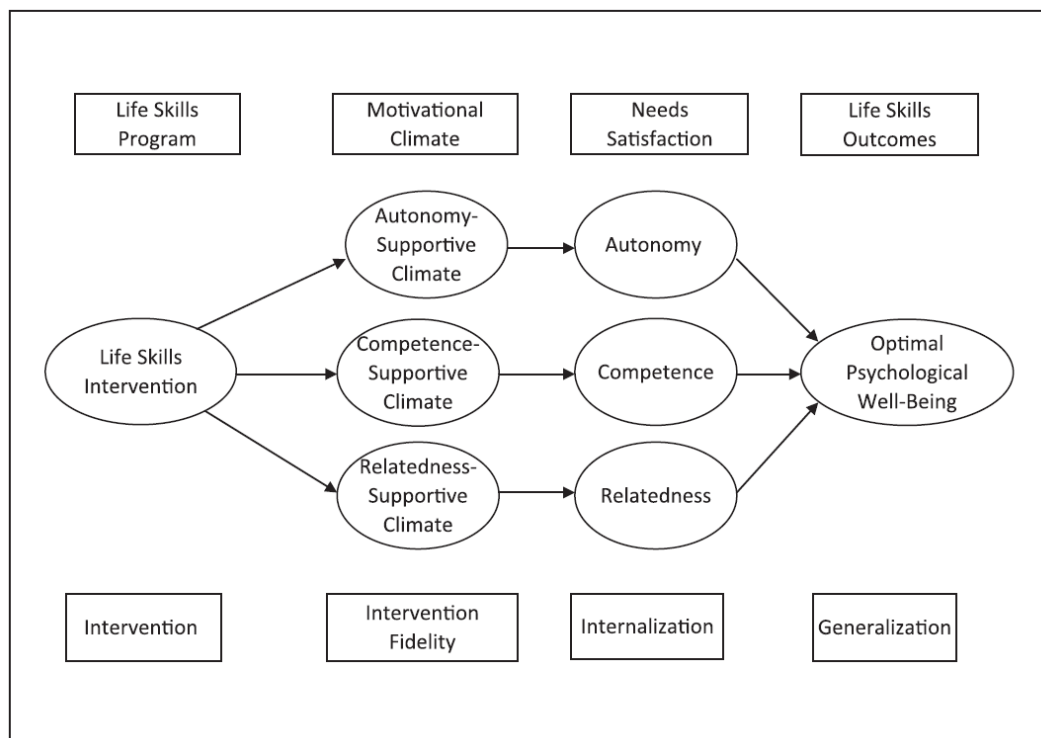
programs life skills transfer may or may not be directly taught, and therefore is in a completely different context.

In order to explain more comprehensively how participants experience the life skills transfer, the LDI model is revised and integrated with the Basic Need Theory (BNT; Ryan & Deci, 2000a) by Hodge et al. (2013).

2.2.2 Theoretical framework of the current research

The theoretical framework chosen for this thesis is the LDI/BNT LS Life Skills model (Figure 4) formed by Hodge et al. (2013) which was later applied by Kendellen and Camire (2017).

Figure 4: The LDI/BNT LS Life Skills model



Source: Hodge et al. (2013)

As mentioned above, the LDI is based on a lifespan of human development perspective and its main goal is to enhance personal competence and psychological functioning (Danish et al., 1993). Although the LDI theory was used already in research (Lavallee, 2005), it is limited in its scope since it does not focus on the process of psychological change which may happen during life skill interventions. Therefore, the researcher`s goal is to create a more comprehensive conceptual model for life skills development which integrates parts of the LDI model (Danish & D'Augelli, 1983; Danish et al., 1984) with the Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2004).

SDT is a theory of development, motivation, and wellness which focusses on psychological health, optimal functioning, life satisfaction, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2004; 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2008). More specifically, Hodge et al. (2013) assert integrating a sub-theory within SDT, which is the BNT (Deci & Ryan, 2000a; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Petegem, Beyers, Vansteenkiste, & Soenens, 2012; Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010) with LDI. BNT includes (a) the needs-supportive motivational climate, and (b) the three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Figure 4).

This is one of the most commonly used models of optimal growth, motivation, and psychological well-being utilised in psychology (e.g., Gagne, Ryan, & Bargmann, 2003; Reeve, 2002). Research within sport psychology has revealed that satisfaction of the three basic needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) leads to optimal psychological well-being, internal motivation, and other positive outcomes in the sport domain (Hollembek & Amorose, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Likewise, a further study within sport psychology revealed that the needs-supportive motivational climate

has been shown to predict needs satisfaction in sport (Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004).

2.2.2.1 Life skills development and autonomy

Autonomy stands for the ability to make decisions and having an authentic sense of self-direction and desire (Hodge et al., 2013). Autonomy is an important element of life skills interventions. The increase in an individual's coping skills and problem solving is related to autonomy (O'Hearn & Gatz, 1999). The relationship between resilience and an internal locus of control (i.e., autonomy) has been noted in several studies (Cowen, Wyman, Work, & Iker, 1995; Springer & Gastfried, 1995). Other studies have demonstrated the link between the basic need of autonomy and other elements of life skills programs. This includes "independent thinking" (Nishida et al., 2007; 2010), "positive thinking" (Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, & Theodorakis, 2005), "self-regulation" (O' Hearn & Gatz, 1999;2002), and "self-control" and self-directed learning" (Nishida et al., 2007; 2010).

However, the way in which autonomy leads to positive psychological outcomes will vary between different cultures. For example, in many different ethnic groups struggling for equal rights, related concepts such as intentionality, life force, and self-determination are recognised as important autonomy-related principles at both the individual and group level (Duran, 2006; Gone, 2010).

2.2.2.2 Life skills development and competence

Competence refers to the ability of the individual to feel effective in his or her interactions within the social environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It has been emphasised in numerous of life skills programs that "problem solving" is a key competency

(Forneris, Danish, & Scott, 2007; O' Hearn & Gatz, 1999; 2002). The reason this competency is viewed as vital is since it includes elements of both the competence (able to “solve” problems) and basic needs of autonomy (able to identify problem independently).

According to Nishida et al. (2007; 2010), “self-learning” and “coping with stress” are additional elements which have relative clear links to the basic need of competence. Moreover, perceived skill with respect to physical tasks (e.g., motor skills, manual work, sport skills) and social competencies (e.g., cultural rules, etiquette, interpersonal communication), as well as cognitive tasks (e.g., decision making, problem solving) may be considered as a perception of competence for an individual. For example, both the individuals and groups within many ethnic minorities work to retain their cultural identity. Therefore, both the individuals and group recognise as key social competencies related concepts such as traditions, protocols, and rituals (Duran, 2006; Gone, 2010; Heke, 2005).

2.2.2.3 Life skills development and relatedness

Several studies have been conducted on the topic of the importance of social support and how it may influence the psychological well-being (Kessler & McLeod, 1985). The literature displays that social support as a concept is centrally related to competence and resilience. Furthermore, “consideration for others’ feeling”, “cooperation with others” (Nishida et al., 2007; 2010), “social responsibility”, and “increased social interest” (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007) were identified to have clear connections to the basic need of relatedness. Both being cared for by others and caring about others are also correlated to relatedness. In addition to the aforementioned social competencies, a feeling of connection with one’s culture through involvement in cultural traditions,

practices, and rituals as well as through family and community relationships, are associated to relatedness (Gone, 2010; Heke, 2005; Sue, Zane, Hall, & Berger, 2009). In brief, relatedness is defined as having a sense of belonging to individuals and community, feeling connected to others and caring and being cared for (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

An essential element to take into consideration is the context within which life skills are delivered (Danish 2000; O' Hearn & Gatz, 2002). Based on the BNT perspective, a key environmental influence for the satisfaction of the three basic needs is viewed as the needs-supportive motivational climate (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Moreau & Mageau, 2012).

2.2.2.4 Needs satisfaction

A needs-supportive motivational climate refers to the behaviours and aims which relate to the values that are relevant and linked to the three basic needs. These values are created within the social environment by figures such as teachers, mentors, parents, coaches, peers (Baard et al., 2004; Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996). It is vital, based on the life skills program fidelity view, to study the influence of not only the “content” of a life skills intervention (e.g., activities or workshops created to satisfy the three basic needs), but also the “context” of where individuals participate in the life skills intervention.

2.2.2.5 Balance across the three basic needs

A growing body of evidence within the BNT literature claims that it is more important for psychological well-being to achieve a “balance” of needs satisfaction across the three psychological needs, rather than being high in one need and being moderate or

low in the other two needs (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006). Additionally, based on evidence in the literature, it is also important for psychological well-being that there is a “balance” of psychological needs satisfaction across different life domains such as family, part-time job, school, and sport (Milyavska et al., 2009). It can be argued that a “balanced” satisfaction of the three psychological needs across life domains is the ultimate outcome of life skills programs. Since this model may be used to examine whether athletes experienced a transfer from one domain (i.e., business) to another life domain (i.e., sport), the LDI/BNT Life Skills model was chosen.

2.2.2.6 Generalisation and internalisation

According to the BNT, the more a person internalises the basic needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy the stronger the adaptive psychological outcomes will be (Deci, & Ryan, 2000; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan, Lynch, Vansteenkiste, & Deci, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2008; Sheldon, Kasser, Houser-Marko, Jones, & Turban, 2005). A better understanding of the internalisation of values is provided by the BNT model. Consequently, through this understanding, the model represents an increasing self-regulation since person’s basic psychological needs are satisfied. Ryan and Deci (2000b) define internalisation of values as the process by which people gradually accept values and integrate them into their sense of self. Then their behaviour rather than primarily externally controlled it becomes internally regulated.

Moreover, life skills values are more likely to motivate life skills related actions when those values are central to a person’s sense of self. Based on a BNT perspective and higher levels of internalisation (i.e., high level of needs satisfaction), value-congruent behaviour is viewed as being self-regulated and self-initiated, whereas lower levels of

internalisation (i.e., low levels of needs satisfaction) place emphasis on compliance with values. Therefore, according to Hodge et al. (2013) the chances of individuals to develop the ability to “generalise” life skills in a number of life domains such as family, job, sport, is correlated with level of internalisation of the basic needs (see Figure 4, p. 23).

According to the integrated LDI/BNT Life Skills model, the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs (i.e., competence, relatedness, and autonomy) describes the occurrence of the life skills development. Hodge et al. (2013) claim that the participation in a life skills intervention program (left side of Figure 4, p. 23) may indicate the first phase in life skills development.

Based on this model, only if the motivational climate created by the instructors is need-supportive, can the life skills intervention be successful in satisfying the three needs. Therefore, the social environment within the life skills program should be designed to support these three psychological needs. When participants in a life skills program are provided with choice and a rationale for assignments, their feelings are recognised, a framework to demonstrate independent work and initiative is given, non-controlling competence feedback is given by participants, and instructors avoid criticising the participants. Only then can the needs-supportive motivational climate be created (Gagne et al., 2003).

Moreau and Mageau (2012) argue that through similar methods and techniques such as the life skills instructors, peer participants can also influence the creation of a needs-supportive motivational climate. It is recommended when conducting a manipulation

check regarding life skills intervention fidelity, to evaluate the effectiveness of the need-supportive motivational climate. If the needs-supportive motivational climate and the life skills program are effective, then the participants may experience greater satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs. This will lead to greater internalisation by the participants. Finally, Hodge et al. (2013) remark that the chance that participants will experience and report higher levels of markers of optimal psychological well-being such as subjective well-being, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, less stress, and work/life satisfaction, is strongly influenced by the level of needs satisfaction and internalisation. Such an outcome, according to this model, will increase the chances for participants to be able to generalise their skills to other life domains (right side of Figure 4, p. 23).

2.2.2.7 Intervention Fidelity

Gresham, MacMillan, Beebe-Frankenberger, and Bocian, (2000) define intervention fidelity as the delivery of an intervention or program as designed. The issue of program integrity and intervention fidelity is critical to a comprehensive evaluation of Life Skills (LS) programs (O' Hearn & Gatz, 2002). However, there are few academic studies on intervention fidelity in the LS literature. One of the most fundamental questions that should be asked when evaluating LS programs is whether the LS intervention works (Hodge et al., 2013). This question may help to know whether a program is working or not. The questions related to the issues of *fidelity* (fidelity of implementation, FOI). FOI is defined as “the extent to which the critical components of an intended program are present when that program is enacted” (Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010, p. 202). Since this research is about investigating athletes who did not participate in any life skills intervention program, this part of the model is not relevant.

2.2.2.8 Advantages using the LDI/BNT model

According to Hodge et al. (2013), the ready ability to accurately measure (a) the three psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy and (b) needs-supportive motivational climates is one of the advantages of incorporating BNT principles into an integrated LDI/BNT conceptual model of life skills development. Psychometrically reliable and valid measures of needs satisfaction currently exist for various life domains such as work (Baard et al., 2004). A study conducted by Ng, Lonsdale, and Hodge (2011) finds evidence of reliability and constructs a measure of basic needs satisfaction in the sport domain as well. Moreover, a study conducted by Reinboth et al. (2004) examines the relationship of dimensions of coaching behaviour to intrinsic need satisfaction and indices of physical and psychological well-being among youth athletes. Therefore, it is evident that psychometric measures of needs-supportive motivational climate exist in the sport domain. An additional academic study presented the same evidence in the work domain as well (Baard et al., 2004).

2.2.2.9 Limitations of the LDI/BNT model

As every model has its limitation, so too does this model. Kendellen and Camire (2017) utilise the LDI/BNT model in their study to examine the life skill development and transfer experiences of former high school athletes. The researchers stress that there are two main limitations in using this model.

Firstly, it offers explanation on positive development course. However, the model does not take into consideration how negative experiences in sport may fail to satisfy the three basic needs which eventually will not lead to an outcome of psychological well-being. In order to overcome this issue, Kendellen and Camire (2017) report negative experience (e.g., favouritism, violence) in high school sport in another manuscript (see

(Kendellen & Camiré, 2015). It is argued that the best development models consider not only the positive outcomes (i.e., psychological well-being), but also potential negative experiences. The explanation of how the negative experiences may influence athletes' life skills development and psychological well-being is relevant as well (Catalano, Berglund, Lonczak, Hawkins, & Ryan, 2004; Hilliard et al., 2014).

Secondly, based on this model, specific life skills are associated with each basic need. However, during the analysis phase Kendellen and Camire (2017) face some challenges. They claim that there is an overlapping of skills. For example, some skills such as interpersonal communication and cooperation with others, may be linked to different needs. The researchers recommend as future work to define the life skills presented in the model as well as to present a rationale to explain why each skill has been related to a specific basic need.

2.3 The sport-business link

The relation of sport with business has been an area of fascination for many years. Keidel (1987, p. 1) states that “the worlds of sport and business have been closely linked for as long as anyone alive today can remember. Major sports are big business, involving big cities, big egos, and big bucks”. For example, Table 1 demonstrates the estimated worth and annual revenue of first five NBA teams in 2010 and 2014. In 2014 the Los Angeles Clippers was purchased for 2 billion US Dollars which suggests that the *Forbes* values in the table below are underestimates (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson, & Stewart, 2015).

Table 1: NBA team values

Team	Estimated worth 2010 (US\$ million)	Estimated worth 2014 (US\$ million)	Estimated annual revenue 2010 (US\$ million)	Estimated annual revenue 2014 (US\$ million)
New York Knicks	655	1,400	226	287
Los Angeles Lakers	643	1,350	214	295
Chicago Bulls	511	1,000	169	195
Boston Celtics	452	875	151	169
Houston Rockets	443	775	153	191

Source: Forbes.com

Moreover, Keidel (1987) claims that all businesses – can be viewed as sport and in any popular business one will find at least one article or advertisement about coaching and teamwork in business.

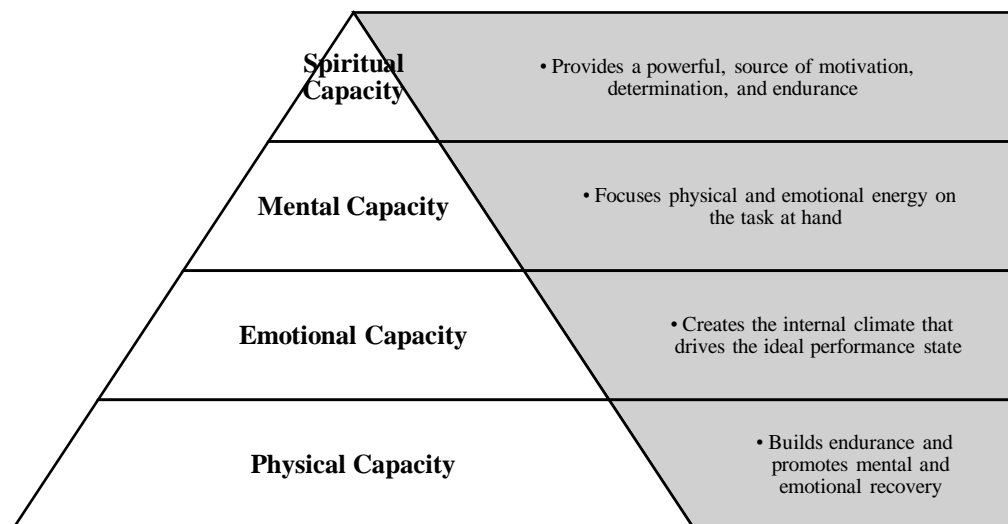
Moreover, Tuchman (1980, p. 99) advises that “homo ludens, man at play, is surely as significant a figure as man at war or at work. In human activity, the invention of the ball may be said to rank with the invention of the wheel”. There are many different perspectives on the link between sport and business. Both domains are fascinating and attract the attention of researchers and practitioners to investigate and promote the transfer of elite performance principles (Burnes & O'Donnell, 2011).

Factors associated with performance excellence within the field of sport psychology were the focus of this increased attention on the sport-business link. Fletcher (2011) provides a commentary on the literature on the link between sport and business. He claims that reflective papers on the sport-business link began to emerge in academic literature during the mid-90s. Scholars sought to identify specific areas in which links could be drawn between sport and business. They view open communication, team

unity and employee/player recognition as the common link between both domains (McNutt & Wright, 1995).

The link between sport and business was described later by Loehr and Schwartz (2001). They claim that business leaders are like “corporate athletes” and suggest that they must practice like athletes do in order to perform at high levels. In addition, a world-class performance requires extraordinary leadership which is entirely aligned with the athlete’s or team’s values, beliefs, and mission. Based on similarities of high performers not limited to athletes and business leaders, they develop an integrated theory of performance management that addresses the body, mind, and spirit. The foundation of the “Performance Pyramid” model according to the researchers has physical well-being. It is followed by mental acuity, emotional health, and spiritual purpose (Figure 5). Therefore, in order to avoid compromising performance, all of the pyramid’s levels must be addressed.

Figure 5: The “Performance Pyramid” model



Source: Loehr & Schwartz (2001)

Loehr and Schwartz (2001) address the need of top performance regardless of domain, to reach an “ideal performance state”. In order to reach this, leaders should develop their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual capacity. Additionally, they suggest companies should focus on employees’ cognitive capacities and should take care not to ignore employees’ emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. The “Performance Pyramid” was subsequently extended by Loehr (2005). He particularly extended the relevancy to leadership in sport by differentiating between the effects of and responses to extraordinary compared to ordinary leadership.

Moreover, Jones (2002) claims that the principles of elite performance in sport are easily transferable to the business context. Jones bases his conclusion on years of work as a sport psychologist and business consultant. He concludes that there are some areas in which business leaders can learn lessons from sport: It is vital for the success of sport and business organisations to have effective leadership; in some areas sports leaders seem to be ahead of business leaders, particularly regarding the development of team and individuals; sport leaders appear to have a more complete approach to leadership development compared to most leadership programmes and there are four common themes in sport and business leadership literature: leadership characteristics, leadership capabilities, leadership context and challenges of leadership (Burnes & O'Donnell, 2011).

Moreover, Jones (2008) emphasises that sport is not business, of course, but there are many similarities between the two domains. In both worlds, elite performers are not born but made. In addition to Jones’ studies, anecdotes of the parallels between sport and business domains can be found in other popular books such as “Winning every

day: The game plan for success” (Holtz, 1998) and “Sport leaders and success” (O'Neill, 2004). Obviously, elite athletes must have some natural ability, innate, physical flexibility coordination, and anatomical capacities – just as successful senior executives need to relate to people and be able to think strategically. However, the real key to excellence in both business and sports is not the ability to do quantitative analyses quickly in your head or run fast; rather, it is mental toughness. Elite performers in both domains thrive on pressure; they excel when it matters most. Elite performers reinvent themselves continually to stay ahead of the pack and use competitions to hone their skills.

Due to difficulty convincing elite performers to participate in research, there are only limited studies which focus and test the link between sport and business (Fletcher, 2011). One of the studies that focuses on this link was conducted by Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002). They compare the perceptions of twenty sport and business leaders regarding strengths required to lead a successful organisation. They focus on group cohesion, leadership, and communication. These factors were chosen since both empirical research and anecdotal reports point as being critical for perceived success in business and sport (Chelladurai, 1999; Friersen & Johnson, 1995). The goal of the study is to try to determine whether sport and business leaders have the same understanding on the factors that are needed for success in these domains.

Rollins and Robert (1997) claim that there is not enough empirical evidence that directly measures and compares the factors critical for business success versus sport success. Despite this fact, Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002) explain that regardless of whether they are in business or sport, certain factors are important for the success of

organisations. For example, success depends on continuously striving to outperform the competitors.

Regarding the area leadership, theoretical and empirical literature on leadership suggest that in order to become an effective leader, a person must have certain skills and traits (Chelladurai, 1999; Depree, 1992; Yukl, 1994; Zimmerman, 1997). Even though some variances were evidenced, the data collected in the study conducted by Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002) seems to support the view that some approaches and traits are more related to success than others. Specifically, examples of traits embodied by leaders from both domains are decisiveness and dispositions of consistency, whereas a trait that is more important for business leaders than for sport leaders is honesty. Conversely, sport leaders more often than business leaders stress the importance of interacting with a variety of people.

When being asked about leadership style, both business and sport leaders prefer an interactional approach. If the situation allows, more frequently than sport leaders, business leaders report that they prefer a democratic style, which is involved in the decision-making process (Rollins & Robert, 1997). Based on this study, regardless of what type of organisation was involved, both leaders believe that the situation would dictate which leadership style is the most effective. This more situation-oriented view is aligned with the Contemporary Leadership Theory (Chelladurai, 1999; Waterman, 1994).

The area of cohesion is generally viewed as a shared vision between interrelated organisational components (i.e., across coaches and players and employees and

managers) and, according to Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002), is extremely important to the success of organisations. Furthermore, although the literature illustrates that task cohesion is generally seen as associated to performance than social cohesion, both leaders from sport and business indicate social and task cohesion as being of vital importance to organisational success (Carron & Hausenblaus, 1998; Paskevich, Estabrooks, Brawley, & Carron, 2001). With the goal to promote cohesion, few techniques, such as goal setting, shared vision, and role acceptance were offered across both domains. Subsequently, different kinds of barriers such as social pressures, personality differences, and communication failures were reported. These failures support the subjective view of coaches (e.g., Pitino, 1997). However, more often than sport leaders, business leaders suggest that it was very difficult to bring teams or departments who have different functions and different priorities together. Therefore, leaders feel that it is a barrier which undermines the development of cohesion (Spitzer & Evans, 1997).

Another important trait which is essential to success of both organisational domains is effective communication skills. More often than sport leaders, business leaders stress the importance of having good listening skills, such as giving consistent nonverbal cues, reflective listening, and paraphrasing the message. As in the aforementioned example, this is also aligned with the subjective view of well-known coaches, such as Parcells, (1995) and Shanahan (1999). These coaches have underlined that in order to become an effective leader in sport, a person must develop his or her listening skills. However, consistent with several literature studies (Depree, 1992; Drucker, 1992a), the results reveal that business leaders view listening skills as more critical to success than sport leaders do. The conclusion that listening skills are less important for sport leaders

may be explained by the tendency of coaches to be more autocratic in their orientation (Chelladurai, 1999).

However, this explanation requires further investigation since according to Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002), the qualitative data do not reveal any directionality or cause and effect (i.e., from business to sport or sport to business), but they do indicate that there appears to be some consistency across domains in terms of the factors perceived to be related to success. Therefore, the focus of future practitioners and researchers is to examine these relationships, and to investigate the transfer is between sport and business (Weinberg & Mcdermott 2002).

In summary, Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002) have provided some evidence to the close relationship between success in the domains of sport and business. Although there have been many anecdotes (mainly from sport to business) about the transfer of skills between sport and business, still there is limited empirical evidence available which explains which skills are necessary to build a successful and effective organisation. The most consistent finding is that both business and sports leaders report more similarities on the factors relating to organisational success than differences. Since the findings are based on the perception of leaders, it must take into consideration that the qualitative data does not show directionality or any cause and effect.

However, this literature has drawn some criticism. There are few empirical studies in business settings which test the value of techniques that sport psychology researchers conducted with both individuals and teams to enhance performance (Gordon, 2007).

Spitzer and Evans (1997) state that some elite coaches' books, e.g., Pat Riley and Don Shula trumpet the characteristics that make winners in sport will also make winners in business. They claim that businesses, unlike sport, abandons the command-and-control leadership model. Hence, the notion of effective leadership which can be applied in both sport and business needs further study. Additionally, Weinberg and Mcdermott (2002) realise that while business leaders tend to put more focus on being reflective listeners and honest, sports leaders advocate the need for collaboration and positive reinforcement in their communication with others.

Similarly, Gordon (2007) has also highlighted the differences between sports and business leaders (see Table 2). As can be seen, one of the main differences between sports and business leadership is that sport is more focused on peak performance regardless of a team or an individual. Gordon (2007, p. 278) has demonstrated that the principles illustrated in the table were employed by the Australian cricket association during the last two decades: "Directors of professional cricket must also engage in leadership behaviour, which is designed to produce change and new performance cultures ... Cricket directors, therefore, must establish a vision, direction or purpose for their club and align, motivate and inspire people towards achieving that vision. In business settings, this would be called transformational leadership".

Table 2: Perceived differences between sport and business leadership

Sport Leaders	Business Leaders
Engage mostly in team coaching and team building only occasionally	Engage more often in team building. Team coaching is rare.
Always try to pick the best people/players for teams	Rarely do a “skills audit” of staff on work teams
In general, handle or manage people better. Sport cannot easily afford to sack indispensable talent	Sack or fire at will usually through official (written) warnings and HR procedures
Weed out “energy sappers” (negative types) or at least try to keep them away from talent	Not so easy to do this in business and rarely done
Increasingly engage in activities that generate standards and expectations for behaviour based on values (“team rules”)	Rarely done despite increasing “encouragement” to do so from business consultants
Engage regularly in both talent identification and talent development because genuine talent is so rare and yet so important for success	Perhaps for upper management roles but rarely at lower levels and with similar levels of intent

Source: Gordon (2007)

Furthermore, three points of divergence between sports and business were highlighted by Ievleva and Terry (2008). Firstly, it has been identified that feedback on performance is variant between the worlds of sports and business. In the business world, there is usually a delay before results are reported, whereas the objective nature of sports is much more visible and results on performance on the field are immediately available. Secondly, due to the complex structure of commercial organisations, it has been argued that goal setting in sports is more straightforward than in business. Thirdly, it has been suggested by Ievleva and Terry (2008) that the career span of business leaders is much longer than that of athletes. Also, the rules in sport are clearer than those in business. For example, every player in a professional league has his or her individual statistics. This statistic shows the exact performance of the particular player. Whereas this performance transparency in business is not always possible which influence the rules occasionally.

Additionally, the training time versus performance time in business is significantly different than the ratio in sports. For example, athletes may train several years to a competition that will take place only few minutes (e.g., Olympic Games). Therefore, although there is a clear link between business and sports, important differences exist. These differences should be taken into consideration when conducting research on the link between both domains (Ievleva & Terry, 2008).

2.4 Athlete leadership in sport teams

Over the past 25 years, the majority of research on leadership in sport has focused on the impact and roles of both the manager and coach of the team (Cotterill, 2013). However, although significantly important, far less research on the role of athlete leaders has been conducted (Fransen, Katrien, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, Vande Broek, & Boen, 2014).

Within a team sport environment, leadership is perceived as a fundamental aspect of performance. However, due to its nature, leadership is seen as applicable across various contexts and domains. This, consequently led to a wide range of leadership definitions (Stewart, Barsoux, Kieser, Ganter, & Walgenbach, 1994). For example, Gray (2004, p. 76) defines leadership as “knowing what should be done, and influencing others to cooperate in doing it”, whereas Barrow (1977, p. 232) adopts a slightly different approach suggesting that leadership is “the behavioural process of influencing individuals and groups toward set goals”. More specifically, athlete leadership has been defined as “an athlete, occupying a formal or informal role within a team, who influence a group of team members to achieve a common goal” (Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006, p. 144).

Furthermore, there is evidence that athlete leaders have a positive influence on team confidence, team identification, athlete satisfaction, team cohesion, and the motivational climate within the team (e.g., Crozier, Loughhead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013; Fransen et al., 2012; 2014; 2015; Fransen, 2015; Glenn, Horn, Campbell, & Burton, 2003; Vincer & Loughhead, 2010; Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001). Conversely, athlete leader's behavior might have damaging consequences for their team's confidence which may lead to poor performance. It may occur when athlete leaders do not act in a positive manner (Apitzsch, 2009; Fransen, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, Vande Broek, & Boen, 2017; Fransen et al., 2015).

There are several ways in which athletes' leadership can be categorised. The most relevant approaches for this thesis are the formal vs. informal leadership (Chapter 2.4.1) and leadership attributes and behaviours (Chapter 2.4.2). These two categories will be discussed below.

2.4.1 Formal versus informal athlete leadership

The first category in the aforementioned literature is the formal versus informal nature of leadership (Carron & Eys, 2012). Examples of formal leadership roles are captains and vice-captains, and informal roles are those that not awarded with any recognition. The informal leaders are shaped as a result of interactions with teammates and the demands of the task (Cotterill, 2013).

Subsequently, they are seen as the "cultural architects" of the team which mean that these leaders have the ability to change the mindset of others (Railo, 1986). According to Cotterill and Cheetham (2015), informal leaders may either help or hinder the

endeavour of the formal leaders. For example, the informal leader may disagree or support the decisions that are made by the formal leader. Thus, the perceptions of other players in the team may be influenced by the action of formal leaders. The action may spread discord or strengthen a shared vision in the team.

By focusing on the informal leaders, the aforementioned literature highlights two main responsibilities (Cotterill, 2013): (1) to guarantee that the team is effective in achieving its objectives and goals by ensuring that the demands of the club are satisfied; and (2) to guarantee that the aspirations and needs of team players are fulfilled. However, from sport to sport, and across levels of performance, the captain's specific role may vary significantly (Cotterill & Cheetham, 2015). For example, in some team sports such as basketball, tactics are determined by the coach. Thus, the captain may be the formal leader on the court. In other team sports such as cricket the captain makes most of the tactical decisions on the field, and therefore has greater responsibilities (Cotterill & Cheetham, 2015).

Influenced by modernism, captains were the focus of previous research since they are perceived as being a central foundation of leadership within the team (Kozub & Pease, 2001; Loughhead & Hardy, 2005). However, a different way of thinking was influenced by the popularity of neu-modernist approach and methods. An important consequence of qualitative study was that most athletes advised that not only the team captains, but also other team member practised important roles of leadership within the team (Loughhead & Hardy, 2005). The large study of Fransen, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, Vande Broek, and Boen (2014) underlines the significance of informal leaders as well. The results show that only 1% of the participants argue that their team captain was the

real leader on all four leadership roles (i.e., motivational, task, external, and social).

Moreover, the team captain in 44% of the teams, was not seen as the best leader on and off the court. Contrary, in most teams which were part of the study, the informal leaders were seen as best leaders on and off the court.

By demonstrating that leadership is shared within sport teams, a recent study using a network approach to leadership partly supports the findings of the study mentioned above. More explicitly, it is demonstrated that the team captain is perceived as the best leader in only in half of the teams. The informal leaders were perceived as the real leaders by the other halves (Fransen et al., 2017). When focusing on specific leadership role, the study shows that team captains were viewed as the best external and task leaders in the majority of teams. Nevertheless, on the social and motivational leadership role, mostly informal leaders were recognised as the real leaders.

By examining the aforementioned results, it can be concluded that the different leadership roles within the team are shared between the team formal (i.e., captain) and informal leaders as well as with the coach. This view of shared leadership, in which the team's leaders are sharing the leadership together with the coach, is different than the traditional vertical view where the coach is seen as the only real leader of the team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016).

2.4.2 Athlete leadership attributes and behaviours

A second category in the literature is leadership attributes and behaviours. According to this approach it is vital to distinguish between leadership attributes (i.e., characteristics

that may develop or change over time), leadership traits (i.e., personality traits), and leadership behaviours.

With regard to leadership characteristics, most research is conducted on team tenure (Loughead et al., 2006) and on age (Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, & Caron, 2012). This led to the perception that an older player who played in the team for a long time should have a higher chance of being perceived as a leader. Further aspects which have been cited as influencing the leadership status of players and their impact on the team are player's popularity and level of experience (Kim, 1992; Weese & Nicholls, 1986).

Additional selection criteria of leaders are often based on starting status, skill level, or sport-specific experience (Gill & Perry, 1979; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Loughead et al., 2006; Moran & Weiss, 2006). Moreover, research reveals that in comparison to their teammates, team captains are often characterised by a more central playing positions (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Klonsky, 1991). This claim has been highlighted by Melnick and Loy (1996). They investigate the recruitment process of team captains in New Zealand rugby and conclude that most of the captains played in central positions.

However, it is debatable whether choosing a team captain based on playing position (e.g., point guard in basketball or quarterback in American football) or performance level (e.g., the best scorer) is the best method. The quality of the provided athlete leadership, and more precisely, the extent to which teammates rate their leader according to the various leadership roles (i.e., motivational, external, task and social) is examined by Fransen et al. (2015).

According to study findings, neither age, sport experience, team tenure, nor playing time, were the most important factors in determining a player's leadership quality. As an alternative, the most decisive factor in determining a player's leadership quality, was the extent to which teammates felt closely connected to their leader, not only with regard to motivational, task, external, and social leadership quality, but also to leadership in general. It is vital to note that the nature of this study was cross-sectional. Consequently, it could influence the findings in the opposite way (i.e, teammates' perceptions of closeness to a leader are influenced by leadership quality). Nevertheless, when interviewing soccer coaches and their players, Moran and Weiss (2006) illustrate the importance of friendship quality as predictor of athlete leadership skills. Their research reveals that most coaches almost exclusively determined leadership of their players based upon playing performance. On the contrary, the players emphasised the importance of a range of psychosocial variables including peer acceptance, quality of friendship, instrumentality, and expressiveness.

Additional studies show evidence that the leadership status of a player can be connected with teammates' ratings of peer acceptance and interpersonal attraction (Fransen et al., 2015; Rees & Segal, 1984). By highlighting four important central characteristics in athlete leaders, Wright and Côté (2003) validate these findings. The four characteristics are a good rapport with teammates, high skill level, a strong work ethic, and advanced tactical knowledge.

With regard to leadership traits, Klonsky (1991) exposes traits such as ambition, dominance, competitiveness and responsibility to be characterised strongly in athlete leaders. Additional traits such as anxiety, masculinity and competitiveness are related to

athletes as well (Glenn & Horn, 1993). Finally, the list of characteristic leadership traits is further extended by Moran and Weiss (2006). They add the expressiveness traits (i.e., gentle, emotional, helpful to others, able to devote self completely to others, kind, aware of feelings of others, understanding of others and warm in relations with others) as well as the instrumentality traits (i.e., competitive, independent, make decisions easily, energetic, feels superior, never gives up, handle pressure, and self-confidence).

Moreover, leaders are also categorised by particular behaviours such as on-field, task-related, motivational on-field and social off-field (Price & Weiss, 2013; Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole, 2003; Wright & Côté, 2003). With regard to task-related behaviours, key elements for leader effectiveness were recognised. These elements include: Guiding group tasks, effective communication skills, and fostering goal attainment (Price & Weiss, 2013; Riggio et al., 2003; Wright & Côté, 2003). However, good leaders are not only telling others what to do, but also leading by example. They set an example for their teammates by demonstrating a good work ethic and behaving like a role model (Bucci, Bloom, Loughhead, & Caron, 2012; Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2006).

Furthermore, key motivational leadership behaviours such as remaining positive during games and controlling their emotions are identified in the literature (Dupuis et al., 2006).

For example, previous studies revealed that team's confidence impact player's identification and performance. When an athlete leader is confident in his team's ability and chances of success it will influence teammates' identification, confidence and even performance (Fransen et al., 2012; 2015; 2016). Tasks on the field are not the only important behaviours which are part of the leader's role. Another important aspect

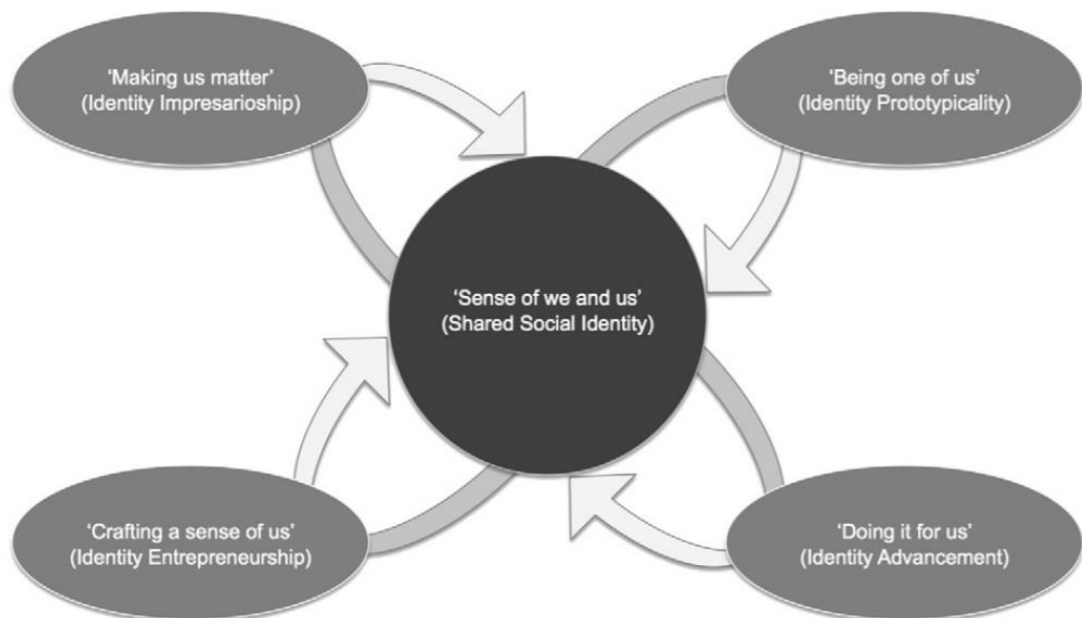
which characterises the leader's role is social off-field behaviour, such as possession of good interpersonal skills, showing concern and care for others, being vocal and trustworthy, and facilitating relationships with teammates and discussions with the coaching staff (Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes, Mcneil, & Adorna, 2010; Price & Weiss, 2013).

These findings offer valuable information for leader development (i.e., which behaviours and attributes may be taught) and leader selection (i.e., which traits are characteristic for high-quality leaders). In addition, the importance of a leader's capacity to create a shared identity within the team is highlighted by leadership research and is considered as one of the latest trends in this area (Rees, Alexander, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2015). A central part of the social identity approach to leadership is the idea that social identity is the foundation for effective leadership (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). Based on this approach, the behaviour and psychology of players is shaped by their capacity to feel, think, and behave as individuals. The player's behaviour and psychology are significantly shaped by their teammates.

Therefore, by applying this approach to leadership, it has been argued that the effectiveness of leaders is directly correlated to the extent of the leader's ability to manage and create a shared identity within a team. Based on this approach, it can be concluded that effective leaders have the ability to generate a collective team spirit. (Drucker, 1992b, p. 14) explains this leadership approach nicely by saying: "The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say "I". And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say "I". They don't think "I". They think "team"."

Although the origins of the social identity approach to leadership is in organisational settings, it is demonstrated in recent studies of sport settings that effective athlete leaders strengthen their teammates' identification with their team (Steffens et al., 2014). Additionally, both experimental and cross-sectional findings reveal that by creating, within the team, a shared feeling of "us", athlete leaders strengthened their impact on other team players' performance and confidence (Fransen et al., 2014; 2015; 2016). The study of Steffens et al. (2014) facilitate better understanding of which leadership behaviours are vital to create a feeling of "us" within a team. The Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) has been developed with the aim of providing a more comprehensive basis for future investigations of the various dimensions of leadership as a social identity process (Steffens et al., 2014). According to the ILI, four dimensions of effective identity-based leadership are recognised (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: A four-dimensional model of social identity management



Source: Steffens et al. (2014)

First, *in-group prototypes* refer to what it means to be a member of a group and the special qualities that define the group. Second, *in-group champions* refer to the promotion of the core interests of the group. According to Haslam and Platow (2001), leaders need to “do it for us” by promoting the shared interests of the group, although they will generally be more effective to the extent that they are seen to be “one of us“. Third, by creating a shared sense of “us” and “we” within the group, leaders bring people together which the researchers call *entrepreneurs of identity*.

Moreover, Steffens et al. (2014, p. 1004) define leaders' identity entrepreneurship as “making different people all feel that they are part of the same group and increasing cohesion and inclusiveness within the group. Clarifying people's understanding of what the group stands for (and what it does not stand for) by defining core values, norms, and ideals”. Finally, *embedders of identity* describe the creation of structures that embed and facilitate shared coordination, understanding, and success. Eventually concrete results for the group must be delivered by the leaders. Furthermore, by making the outcomes visible not only to group members but also to people outside the group, leaders make the group matter and more relevant.

More than 400 athletes of 4 different team sports were included in the study of Steffens et al. (2014). Athletes filled out the ILI with the aim to assess the identity-based leadership of their team captain. Study findings demonstrate that the perceived leadership quality of the team captain is positively influenced by the dimensions of identity entrepreneurship and identity prototypicality. Moreover, the dimensions of the captain's identity leadership behaviour are positively related to task cohesion and team confidence.

2.5 Life skills development and transfer

Five basic aspects of life skills that are applicable across different cultures have been identified by the World Health Organisation (World Health Organization, 1999). These five aspects are: (a) Creating and critical thinking, (b) decision making and problem solving, (c) communication and interpersonal skills, (d) coping with emotions and stress, and (e) self-awareness and empathy. Additionally, and aligned with this definition, Danish, Forneris, Hodge, and Heke, (2004, p. 40) define life skills as “those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods. Life skills can be behavioural (communicating effectively with peers and adults) or cognitive (making effective decisions); interpersonal (being assertive) or interpersonal (setting goals)”.

Transferable skills are general skills that are context and content free (Wiant, 1977). It has been argued that in order for life skills to be empirically studied by researchers, a clear operational definition is needed (Gould & Carson, 2008). This clear definition of transfer is necessary to advance research in sport psychology. The transfer as a concept has been defined in different ways throughout different disciplines. Since there are multiple definitions, several challenges and critiques have emerged. Two examples of definitions are presented below:

- (1) “Transfer is the application of knowledge learned in one setting or for one purpose to another setting and/or purpose” (Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993, p. 235)

- (2) “Transfer of learning is the use of past learning when learning something new and the application of that learning to both similar and new situations” (Haskell, 2001, p. 13)

These two definitions were, amongst others, the groundwork of previous research on transfer, however there is no one universally accepted definition (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Leberman, McDonald, & Doyle, 2006). Within the context of sport psychology, Gould and Carson (2008, p. 60) define sport-based life skills as “those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as emotional control, self-esteem, hard work ethic and goal setting that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings”.

Multiple definitions of life skills are one of the key challenges in developing a conceptual framework. As a result of these varied definitions, several points stand out (Hodge et al., 2013). Firstly, life skills have multiple meanings and illustrate how researchers define life skills influence and how they measure their development and transfer. Secondly, life skills are considered to be psychosocial characteristics rather than isolated behaviours (e.g., balancing chequebook, learning to budget, or cooking a meal). Thirdly, most of the research interventions to teach or enhance life skills have been conducted within the area of positive youth development (Larson, 2000).

Therefore, Hodge et al. (2013) stress that it is vital not to limit the study of life skills solely to youth. Other groups across the lifespan, such as retirees, individuals looking to change careers or veterans returning from combat, should be considered for life skills research.

2.5.1 Overview of the sport psychology literature

Within the context of sport, transferable skills are those acquired through sport which can be applied in non-sport domains (Gould & Carson, 2008). For example, if a person learns about leadership through participation in sport, then it must be transferred and applied in other domains that are not similar to a sporting environment such as business (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015). In many societies sport is viewed in a positive manner and contributes positively to youth development (Coakley, 2011). Examples of positive experiences include increased self-esteem, development of meaningful relationships and leadership skills (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015).

In addition, according to the sociologist Giulianotti (2004) the wishful thinking, beliefs, and personal testimonials that often influence sport-related programs, policies, and personal decisions are widely promoted and publicised by people he describes as “sport evangelist”. These people assume that sport inevitably leads to positive development. Sport, therefore, is viewed as an essential activity for improving life quality and solving problems of individuals and society alike.

Conversely, evaluations have also illustrated the negative experiences connected to youth sport (Bean, Fortier, Post, & Chima, 2014). Examples of negative experiences include aggressive behaviour, poor relationships with coaches and anxiety (Dworkin, 2007; Fraser-Thomas, Jeffery-Tosoni, & Baker, 2013). This thesis will focus on both, the positive and negative outcomes related to sport participation.

Past research on generalisability of skills indicates that transfer of life skills to other domains does not occur automatically (Meichenbaum & Turk, 1987). Several factors

must be present in order that skills may be generalisable across different domains.

Danish et al. (1993) suggest counselling psychologists on how to assist athletes with transferring their skills from sport to non-sport domains.

Firstly, athletes need to have confidence in their qualities and skills that are valued in other domains. Athletes acquire many skills through sport which are transferrable to other settings however, they must recognise this. In Table 3 Danish et al. (1993) present a list of life skills that are transferrable to other domains. All of these skills, such as performance under pressure, are relevant to leadership development.

Table 3: Examples of life skills that are valuable across settings

To perform under pressure	To take risks
To be organised	To make a commitment and stick to it
To meet challenges	To know how to win and lose
To communicate with others	To work with people, you don't necessarily like
To handle both success and failure	To respect others
To accept others' values and beliefs	To have self-control
To be flexible in order to succeed	To push yourself to the limit
To be patient	To recognise your limitation
To compete without hatred	To make good decisions
To accept responsibility for your behaviour	To set and attain goals
To be dedicated	To be able to learn
To accept criticism and feedback in order to learn	To work within a system
To evaluate yourself	To be self-motivated

Source: Danish et al. (1993)

Secondly, it will be beneficial for athletes to realise that they possess both psychological and physical skills. Sport involves more than simply scoring the basketball or running fast. As a routine part of athlete's participation in sport, they plan, make decisions, set goals, seek out instruction and manage their emotions. It is unlikely that a person will become an elite athlete without possessing strong mental skills. Once athletes recognise that the mental skills, they acquired during sport participation, are highly valuable to their success outside the sport domain, they will be able to transfer the skills (Danish et al., 1993).

Thirdly, it is not enough for athletes to know that they possess mental and physical skills, rather it is necessary for them to understand how and in what context they were learned. Formal instruction is one method through which skills can be acquired.

Fourthly, a lack of confidence in the ability to apply skills in different domains may stimulate or hinder the process of generalisation of skills. Sometimes athletes lack the knowledge and familiarity of the new domain. This may lead to fear of the unknown and doubt when trying to apply the skills they learnt in sport to the non-sport area.

Fifthly, some athletes are not motivated to explore non-sport roles. This lack of motivation probably stems from their personal identity being connected strongly to sport. Athletes see themselves as successful athletes and not successful people.

According to Danish et al. (1993), this attitude may decrease the self-esteem and the confidence in athletes' ability to function well in other non-sport domains.

Sixthly, it may be challenging for athletes to find social support and guidance necessary in order to transfer the skills. Often athletes see their coaches as the primary source of many types of support.

However, coaches may not always be the best contact person of emotional support.

Also, many coaches support their players only when the activities are related to sport. In their opinion a distraction does not serve their purpose. Seventhly, even though the skills that athletes acquire through sport are valuable in many non-sport domains, they still may have issues adjusting to setbacks or failures in attempting to transfer a skill to another domain. A lack of experience or information necessary to adapt these skills in a new domain may lead to a failure. Athletes are used to elite levels of performance and

may get frustrated with the pace of their progress in the new domain, since their knowledge and experience about it may take some time to acquire (Danish et al., 1993).

For several years, the topic of life skills development through sport participation has been appealing for researchers in sport psychology and in positive youth development. The link between life skills development and sport participation was discussed in several reviews of the literature (e.g., Camiré, Martin, 2014; Gould & Carson, 2008). The outcome of these reviews was that coaches who are most effective at teaching life skills are the ones who emphasise and focus on the development of those skills (e.g., Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009). Even though it is possible to learn some life skills from simply participating in sport (Jones & Lavalley, 2009b), when it is particularly aimed by coaches the enhancement is superior (Camiré et al., 2012). The sport setting does not only provide coaches a platform where they have direct opportunities to teach life skills, but also allows participants to try to apply their life skills such as leadership (Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black, 2009).

Previous research has examined the perspectives of high school athletes who have claimed that they developed life skills through the participation in sport (Camiré, Trudel, & Bernard, 2013). The following examples demonstrate parallel development of leadership and life skills through sport.

Firstly, Canadian high school athletes report that through acting as captains and facing moments of adversity they develop leadership and perseverance skills (Camiré & Trudel, 2013). Secondly, a case study conducted on Canadian high school male soccer team indicates that although the coach did not set out to teach life skills, the soccer

players confirmed that their sport experiences allowed them to develop teamwork and leadership skills (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). Thirdly, Danish et al. (1993) claim that hockey players learned tenacity and demonstrate hard work on and off the ice, which they could then use in a business setting.

Moreover, they indicate further life skills which can be applied in different domains such as organisational skills, dedication, how to manage employees, adaptability/flexibility, self-motivation, patience, perseverance and setting and attaining goals.

A supporting claim to the above examples is provided by Kendellen and Camiré (2015). Their study examines developmental experiences of former high school athletes. It demonstrates how high school sport can provide a context where (a) new life skills, e.g., leadership can be acquired, and (b) existing life skills can be practiced and improved.

An additional study examines if and how psychological development and transfer of life skills in youth athletes is facilitated by an “intensive” summer wrestling camp (Pierce, Gould, Cowburn, & Driska, 2016). Adding value to the above-mentioned studies, this study of Pierce et al. (2016) shows another view on this theme since it was conducted in a different context from a regular high school sport, i.e., 14 days long camp. Followed by a grounded theory analysis approach, the researchers utilise a model to show how youth participants developed psychological abilities. This allowed coaches to design and facilitate a platform of challenge and adversity, where the youth athletes developed their performance in sport as well as their life skills.

With variations in the timing of the transfer (1), such as delayed or immediate, as well as variations in the directionality (2), such as life general and sport-specific, life skills transfer was individualised based on interpretation and experiences outside of the camp. An example of sport-specific immediate transfer is the ability stay calm in stressful situations during and after the camp. Examples of immediate life-general transfer from the camp to other domains were evident in hard work and personal empowerment displayed by participants. One participant indicates that he was immediately able to transfer his time-management and prioritisation skills learned at the camp to his school studying. When athletes had an experience after the camp environment, they connected it to an experience inside the camp, and were able to apply these skills in order to succeed in this sport situation. Thus, a delayed or latent transfer occurred. For example, two athletes were seriously injured during the season following the camp. Because of these experiences, athletes reflected on the challenges at the camp and utilised the skills of dedication and persistence during their rehabilitation.

Moreover, based on this study of Pierce et al. (2016) athletes experienced the delay transfer of skills from the camp to other life settings. Some participants who were self-reflective during and following the camp reported that they understood which life skills may be used in other domains outside of sport. Consequently, they needed to find the opportunities and time to implement these skills. School is an example of a platform where athletes may facilitate the process of delay life-general transfer. In school there are adequate opportunities to prompt the transfer use of leadership skills. The results of this study add to the promotion of experiential life skills development (Jones & Lavalley, 2009a) and demonstrate that experiential learning is important in fostering the

use of methods being directly lectured and taught. These coaches' message serves as repetition and support of explicit approaches (Pierce et al., 2016).

Aligned with the conclusions of the study above (Allen et al., 2015) assert there is a widespread belief that sport can be used as a vehicle to promote positive youth development. However, the research on the transfer of life skills into other academic and life domains is still lacking. Therefore, they assess the barriers and enablers that may influence life skill transfer from sports environment into the school context. They conclude the following as enablers for life skills transfer: Pride from parents and personal accomplishments, support from peers, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for transfer, having opportunities for transfer, and experiencing transfer.

The following elements are according to Allen et al. (2015) are barriers for life skills transfer: Not interesting lessons, a lack of student engagement in school, and unsupportive teachers. Allen et al. (2015) argue that youth athletes need to be systematically taught about life skills and they need to explore ways how these skills can be transferred to school. Contrary to these findings Jones and Lavalley (2009a) suggest that life skills do not necessarily need direct teaching. Likewise, Allen et al. (2015, p. 64) also mention that “the participants had not and may not have established the links between using skills in sport and in the classroom had they not been told about the skills”.

As the above studies show, there is a growing body of literature examining the life skill development which is believed to happen in the context of youth sport in high school or outside the boundaries of school. These studies demonstrate the challenges and

complexity in transferring life skills. Although the findings relatively support the life skills transfer, the process may be influenced by aspects not related to direct teaching methods provided by coaches within the sport environment.

In order to solve this challenge, there is a need to conduct research which integrates factors outside of sport, as well as to assess the traditional sport structures and not only specific life skills-focused intervention (Pierce, Erickson, & Dinu, 2018). The socio-ecological approach (Pierce et al., 2017) highlights the need to consider multiple interacting factors as unfolding process and tries to be simplified and structure the complexity (see chapter 2.2.1).

Gould and Carson (2008) have claimed that there is a lack of theory being applied to explain how life skills are acquired by sport athletes. Addressing this issue is an important step. Learning about the perspectives of former professional basketball players at later life stage, i.e., when both sport and business careers are over, will be more beneficial, as the participants are in a preferred position to explain how they believe they have transferred the leadership skills they developed during their sport career and applied them in the business domain. Few studies have retrospectively researched the experiences of former high school athletes, and those were conducted either with American university students or just one or two years after high school (Carson & Gould, 2010; Voelker et al., 2011). Therefore, the findings offer an incomplete picture of transfer because the participants didn't have enough time to implement the skills they learnt during high school and apply them in other domains at various life stages (Kendellen & Camire, 2017).

Moreover, in their critical review of the life skills development literature, Gould and Carson (2008) state that researchers were not able to recognise and explain how life skills may improve a youth's life. Although the number of research papers in recent years examining life skills development through sport (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007; Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008) have grown, studies have seldomly addressed life skills transfer in an explicit manner.

Turnnidge, Côté, and Hancock (2014) have identified the explicit the implicit approaches in the literature. They claim that these two main approaches explain the transfer of life skills from sport to other domains. It is suggested by the explicit approach that life skills must be intentionally and systematically taught by dedicated trainers. Based on this approach, the transferability of life skills is taught in sport programs.

However, these sessions where participants learn about how to transfer life skills are often taught in non-competitive environments, i.e., before or after training. The youth sport literature strongly supports the explicit approach (e.g., Bean, Forneris, & Halsall, 2014; Camiré & Trudel, 2010). For example, research has revealed that if coaches use specific pedagogical methods to emphasise how life skills learned in sport can transfer to other domain, they assume that their methods will be more effective.

These methods include contracts for behavioural expectations, sharing personal reflections, individual coach-athlete meetings, goal setting, and organising team-bonding events (Camiré, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard, 2011; Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton, & Ball, 2012). However, many trainers are already feeling overwhelmed by

their day-to-day responsibilities, so it would be challenging for them to add separate sessions for teaching life skills transfer to their program.

Therefore, it is vital to investigate other less time-consuming approaches in which life skills can be taught and learned in sport. An example of this kind of approach is the implicit approach. The notion is that the learning of life skills may occur in sport programs which place emphasis on teaching specific sport skills. Contrary to the explicit approach, this approach assumes that by acquiring specific sport skills, athletes can also implicitly learn skills that may be valuable in other domains. However, participation in sport does not automatically mean that implicit transfer will occur.

In order to facilitate the transfer and allow participants to learn life skills, certain conditions within the sporting or personal environment must be in place (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). Although little is known about these conditions, some research suggest that the implicit transfer approach is possible if life skills are part of trainer's underlying philosophies (Camiré et al., 2012; Gould et al., 2007). Moreover, a case-study research on a high school football team suggested that the implicit transfer may be facilitated if the sporting environment encourages athletes to be active agents in their own development (Holt et al., 2008). The researchers' goal is to examine whether and how youth student-athlete learned life skills through participation in sport.

Holt et al. (2008) revealed that the trainer developed relationships with the athletes and asked for their feedback regarding decision-making. There were no evidence life skills being taught directly by the trainer. However, some life skills, such as respect, initiative, and teamwork/leadership, were reported by the students-athletes. According to Holt et

al. (2008), the structure which the trainer established provides student athletes the opportunity to practice initiative. If student athletes failed to demonstrate respect, then they were immediately punished.

Furthermore, student athletes seemed to create their own teamwork/leadership experiences. They reported that these skills were the only ones transferred to other domains. This evidence highlights the difference between the implicit and explicit transfer approaches. The student athletes implicitly learned the skills and did not participate in any specific session dedicated to the learning of life skills.

According to Pierce et al. (2017, p. 190), “few studies have examined the transfer as a full-fledged entity with specific research questions deliberately targeting transfer”. One of these recent studies was conducted by Chinkov and Holt (2016). By examining the importance of sports in the life of 16 Brazilian jiu-jitsu athletes, the researchers explore life skills transfer. Based on athletes’ beliefs, the learning of life skills came from the special characteristics of jiu-jitsu such as challenges of practicing. Moreover, according to the study, athletes believed that they were able to make positive changes in other life domains through sports participation and their learnings. The most reported changes with clearly recognisable transfer to other domains were perseverance, respect for others, healthy habits, and self-confidence. Additionally, athletes claimed that peer support and their club trainers played an important role in helping them learn the life skills. Chinkov and Holt (2016) reported that these skills were not explicitly taught by the trainers, but rather were features of the values and characteristics of jiu-jitsu.

As indicated above, it is assumed by practitioners that life skills such as teamwork and leadership, which are gained during participation in sport, automatically enable participants to apply them successfully in other domains (Trottier & Robitaille, 2014). This view is supported by many sport organisations, which communicate through their mission statements that the two main elements of the sociocultural value of sport are life skills development and transfer (Pierce et al., 2017).

However, some researchers such as Coakley (2011) have been critical and question whether life skills are actually acquired in sport, and, if so, whether they actually transfer to other life settings. He states that research on the relationship between youth development and sport has led researchers to define the relationship as contingent (Catalano et al., 2004; Coakley, 2002; Weiss, 2008). Moreover, through their participation in sport, young people do not necessarily realise developmental outcomes such as better educational achievement. As an alternative, outcomes are dependent on and related to combinations of few factors such as:

- Type of sport played (Adler & Adler, 1998; Crissey & Honea, 2006)
- Socially significant characteristics of sport participants (Coakley, 2002; Hoffmann, 2006; Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes, & Melnick, 1998)
- Social relationships formed in connection with sport participation (Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010; Miller, Ke, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell, & Sabo, 2005)

The research on the developmental influence of youth sport participation identifies specific contextual aspects as fundamentals for positive developmental outcomes. For example, when young sport participants are personally valued, physically safe,

personally and politically empowered, morally and economically supported and hopeful about the future (Hellion & Walsh, 2002; Hellison, 2003; Martinek & Hellison, 1997).

The criticisms raised by Coakley (2011) were also concerning the relationship between sport participation, social capital formation, educational achievement, and personal success. He claims that the evidence of this relationship has been grounded in personal testimonials rather than social research. It is challenging to track and measure changes in social capital and life changes along with their real-life outcomes over time.

Furthermore, it is challenging to separate the developmental changes related to participation in sport from other changes in every young person's life. There are many influence aspects in people's life which are not related to sport.

Moreover, Coakley (2011) raises concerns regarding the research on sport participation and educational achievement. He points out that most of the research was conducted in the United States, where participation in sport is organisationally connected with schools. This means that participation in sport is also associated with school contexts such as grades, attendance patterns eligibility to play school sports, formal team selection, and social status among teachers and classmates.

Therefore, research conducted under such conditions will demonstrate without any doubts a positive relationship between sport participation and academic achievement. Additionally, this research provides no details about developmental outcomes among sport participants who play outside of school.

2.5.2 Overview of the transfer literature in educational psychology and business training

As mentioned before, the study of life skills transfer in sport psychology is still in an early phase. Therefore, as recommended by Pierce et al. (2017) it is essential to explore what is known about skills transfer in other disciplines such as educational psychology and business training.

A review of the “transfer problem” in training research, has been underlined by Baldwin and Ford (1988). They claim that many research-based suggestions have tried to decrease the gap between sustained workplace performance and training. According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001), conducting training for skills transfer is a challenging issue for Human Resource Development (HRD) researchers and practitioners. This claim is based on a deficient yield of results of learning investments. There are several estimations of the exact extent of the transfer problem. Saks (2002) suggests that immediately after training trainees have approximately 40% chance to fail the transfer. Moreover, one year after the training trainees have 70% chance. Consequently, only half of training investments lead to individual or organisational improvements. While reviewing the educational psychology and business training literature, Pierce et al. (2017) identify three important considerations that have not been investigated deeply enough and may help guide the study of life skills transfer in sport psychology.

Firstly, in order to understand the transfer process, it is necessary to identify three foundational elements: the transfer context, the learning context and the individual learner (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). With the aim of identifying predictors of transfer, a number of review studies have been conducted based on these foundational elements.

As personal characteristics (e.g., motivation, cognitive ability) significantly influence one's willingness or ability to transfer knowledge and skills from one domain to another, the *individual learner* is considered the core element.

Sackett, Gruys, and Ellingson (1998) argue that one of the most enduring conceptualisations in the psychology literature is that learner's characteristics influence training outcomes. The individual learner is being exposed to knowledge and new skills from the environment which refers to the *learning context*. Thus, the individual learner applies the knowledge or skills in another setting which is outside the original learning environment. This according to the researchers called the *transfer context*. Many factors may hinder the transfer (e.g., lack of opportunities) or stimulate it (teammates support).

Secondly, researchers focussed mainly on two areas; the potential theoretical explanations for transfer and on the learner's psychological processes (Leberman et al., 2006). Although there is no agreement on one theory of transfer, different frameworks such as cognitive (e.g., schema theory), behavioural (e.g., gestalt theory), and socio-cultural (e.g., the good shepherd approach) have been aimed at rationalising how the individual learner unconsciously or consciously experiences transfer (Leberman et al., 2006).

The emphasis of these frameworks has dealt with elements related to (1) the directionality of transfer (i.e., far versus near transfer), (2) person's awareness of transfer, and (3) the transfer's timing. However, for future research there is a need for a model which encompasses these factors (Leberman et al., 2006; Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Therefore, in order to understand the complete transfer process, Pierce et al.

(2017) respond to this need and try to address it in their model which is presented in chapter 2.2.1.

Thirdly, in the educational psychology literature a primary claim has been consistently made, which is that transfer is not an automatic outcome of learning. Researchers in the beginning of the twentieth century tried to explore the phenomenon of learning transfer (Thorndike & Woodworth, 1901). The ability to transfer judgement of shape transfer of shape sizes and dimensions was tested on a small number of adult participants. The results remarkably revealed almost no evidence of the occurrence of transfer from one domain to another.

Likewise, throughout the twentieth century many studies on transfer have demonstrated the same results (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). It has been even argued that the inconsistent measurements in learning transfer became the norm (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010). Furthermore, Perkins and Salomon (1992, p. 2) have argued that “abundant evidence shows that very often, the hope-for transfer from learning experiences does not occur”, and Schoenfeld (1999, p. 7) has added that transfer “seems to vanish when experimenters try to pin it down”.

It can be concluded that based on the research from business training and educational psychology, future research must recognise the challenges associated with studying transfer. Pierce et al. (2017) suggest that to naively assume that transfer will happen when life skills are facilitated or taught by sport will result in incorrect conclusions. Therefore, when conducting research on transfer, it is vital to consider aspects from other disciplines, such as obstacles faced and conceptualised transfer.

2.6 Overview of basketball and sport in Israel

This thesis aims to understand if and how basketball players develop and transfer their leadership skills from sport to business. Thus, it is necessary to learn about the environment of a professional basketball team. Furthermore, an overview on the development of sports in Israel is presented, since all participants of this research are former Israeli basketball players and business managers.

2.6.1 The basketball environment

Keidel (2014) mentions in his article which is based on personal experience and perspective that every sport, whether basketball, American football, or hockey, is a self-contained world of behaviours, structures, and processes. He claims that much literature on teamwork suggests that all teams are the same. However, every team has a special characteristic of control, autonomy, and cooperation. He compares basketball, baseball and football and states that they provide structural parallels to business organisations. Ultimately he proposes a model which considers basketball, football and baseball, together as an integrated framework to understand any organisation and organisational issues (Keidel, 1984; 1985).

According to Keidel (2014) a model of spontaneous cooperation within a team context fits to basketball. The job of the manager, i.e., the coach, is to influence the tempo or the flow of the game. From a strategic perspective, the coach encourages team's self-management. From a tactic perspective, the coach may intervene during the game by substituting a player or by calling a timeout. Basketball is played in a fast tempo; therefore, the coordination of the players must be optimal. Since most plays are not punctuated by time pauses (in contrast to American football and baseball), players must

be able to work together as best they can without precise direction from their coach. Moreover, players who substitute must be able to adapt quickly to the game and integrate themselves with their teammates.

A basketball team consists of five players on the court and is considered the basic organisational unit. The players are connected to their teammates because each player must be able to play defence, offense, and transition, whereas in football and baseball players have individual roles (Keidel, 2014). Since in basketball defence and offense are overlapping and the transition between them is done by all players (not like by separate players like in football), the game of basketball exemplifies spontaneous teamwork. The coach can communicate with the team the entire game as he or she stands on the sideline. Players and a coach are considered as one unit. Therefore, “the star in basketball is the team” (Keidel, 2014). Features of cultural norms and a model of basketball as an organisational unit are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Cultural norms and organisational model of basketball

Organisational model (cooperation)		Cultural norms (cooperation)	
Management challenge	Influence the flow	Touchstone	Interaction (dynamic)
Coordinating mechanism	Mutual adjustment	Tradition	Celebrating flexibility
Basic organisational unit	Team (small group)	Taboo	Withholding help
Player density	High	Transitions	Seamless
Teamwork	Spontaneous	Trappings	Integration of people
Star	Team	Tempo	Electric
Manager / coach presence	Level with players	Technology	To maximise collective performance
		Trust	In group process

Source: Keidel (2014)

2.6.2 The environment of sport in Israel

Regardless of country, the development of sport is not a standalone process, but rather a reflection of social, historical, political, economic, and ideological processes that constantly shape the character of that country (Kaufman & Bar-Eli, 2005). The extent of influence of certain events that took place during the 20th century on Israeli sport in its present state is examined by Kaufman and Galily (2009) and summarised below.

2.6.2.1 Zionism, politics, and sport prior and following the establishment of the state of Israel

Although the meaning of the term sport did not necessarily include physical activity and was perceived differently in the Diaspora and in the pre-state of Israel, sport has been viewed as a central element of the Zionist ideal to create a new Jew. The Zionist idea was to establish a Jewish state in the historic homeland of the Jewish people in Israel. The Zionist Movement grew rapidly mainly because of the awakening of national movements in Europe and the growth of modern anti-Semitism in Central and Western Europe. The lack of consensus among its members regarding its objectives and aims is one of the unique characteristics of the Zionist Movement. Consequently, disagreement on significant issues led to the separation of the settlement (pre-state Israel) into conflicting political camps (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

Political camps were established during the 1920s at the beginning of the establishment of a “homeland” and at the beginning of the British Mandate. The conflicts between the political camps arose surrounding ideology, and each camp established its own institutions. These institutions included educational factions, labour unions and youth

movements. Even health organisations were associated with a defined political identity, and the political divide was accordingly reflected in sport (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

In 1912, the first sport and gymnastics union in pre-state Israel “Maccabi” was established. The initial goal was to represent national Zionist values accepted by all. However, since values were not clearly defined by the Zionist Movement, conflicts surrounding how to implement the values, and what direction and image the future state should adopt, began to occur. From its beginning “Maccabi” considered itself an apolitical sport organisation, which was not associated with any political camp, and it was eventually related to the “civilian” camp. This came about because those belonging to the labour camp joined “Hapoel” (Kaufman, 2002).

Moreover, the general federation (part of the labour camp), which met its goals by means of establishing various organisations such as factories, a health organisation, and a newspaper, founded a sport union strictly for employees. The “Hapoel” union represented international sport for workers as well as leading a national camp in the settlement enterprise in pre-state Israel. Gradually it became the largest sport union in the country (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

Additionally, two sports organisations with political religious identity were established over the years: “Beitar” which was founded in 1923 in Riga as a youth movement of the Revisionist Party; and “Elizur” which was founded in 1939 as a religious Zionist sport union.

Prior to the establishment of the state sport was not a high priority. This did not change until the 1970s, since other matters such as defence, foreign affairs and immigrant absorption were prioritised. However, sport then became a tool for national design. Israeli athletes carrying the flag, competing alongside the other nations, and singing the national anthem inspired pride within the entire country and formed an integrative collective identity crossing all political sectors and social classes (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

Especially since the Yom Kippur War in 1973, social political development brought about many changes on an ideological level. The distinctive features that defined each political camp began to fade in the past 40 years. Consequently, the ideological blur began to influence the political sport centres as well.

Nowadays, athletes choose teams according to personal and economic considerations and no longer according to their political association. It is no longer considered to be an issue to transfer from one sports club to another. During the 1990s, private owners and business agents took control over teams and athletes and tried to distance them from the political labels of the clubs (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

Although Zionist values no longer carry as much weight as in the past, sport is one of the few instruments that bonds the collective identity and brings emotional consciousness together. For example, the leading Israeli basketball club “Maccabi” Tel Aviv (to which several of the study’s subjects belong) was always a source of national pride and of apolitical national identity (Kaufman & Galily, 2009).

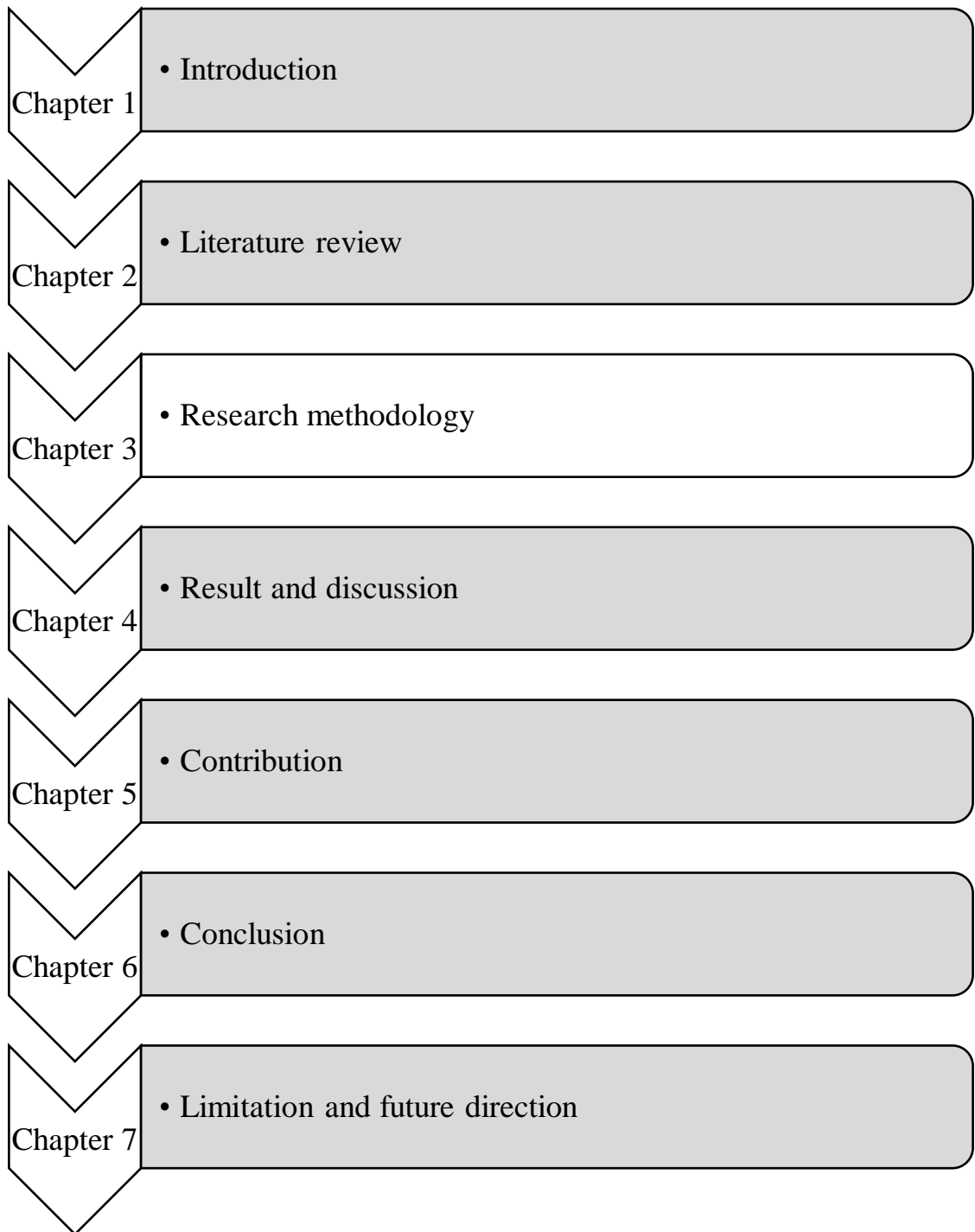
2.7 Summary of literature review

Transferable skills are general skills that are context and content free (Wiant, 1977).

Transferable skills, within the context of sport, are those acquired through sport which can be applied in non-sport domains. In recent years, the demand in the business world for transferring performance excellence principles from elite sport has increased. Thus, business organisations are becoming aware of the power of “learning through metaphor” as well as the fact that life skills are universal, regardless of culture and domain (Fletcher, 2011).

Some studies have examined this aspect in the context of high school sport (Carson & Gould, 2010; Voelker, Gould, & Crawford, 2011). However, such findings appear limited as participants have only recently left high school and have not had enough time to implement the skills acquired during high school and apply them in other domains at various life stages (Kendellen & Camire, 2017). Thus, there is a gap in the literature here for a study such as this one that focuses on participants that have had longer experiences in business and leadership settings post their sporting careers.

3 Research Methodology



3.1 Introduction of the research methodology chapter

At this point, after the background to the sport-business link, athlete leadership in team sport, life skills development and transfer, and theoretical framework have been examined, a specific research plan is developed for the current research in order to answer the research questions.

First, the approach to philosophy and theory development is introduced (chapter 3.2), followed by an overview of the qualitative methods used in this research (chapter 3.3). Subsequently, the researcher's integrity and ethical consideration are discussed (chapter 3.4). The actual research design used in this thesis is presented as well (chapter 3.5). Lastly, a short summary of the research methodology section (chapter 3.6) is shown.

3.2 Approach to philosophy and theory development

Explaining the research philosophy before describing the methodology and the research design is recommended (Crotty, 1998). The term research philosophy refers to a system of assumptions and beliefs about the development of knowledge. It explains the operationalisation of the research questions into a meaningful research process. A consistent and well-thought set of assumptions will establish a credible research philosophy, which will support the methodological choice.

The most appropriate choice of philosophy for this research is interpretivism. Interpretivism underlines that human, since they create meanings, are different from physical phenomena. The aim of interpretivism is to study these meanings (Crotty, 1998) and the purpose of interpretive research is to create new, richer understanding and interpretation of context and social worlds (Saunders et al., 2015). An overview (Table

5) provided by Saunders et al. (2015) shows the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives of interpretivism. These perspectives are aligned with this research, except for the chosen method. For this thesis, the deductive method is chosen.

Table 5: Interpretivism research philosophy in business and management research

Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Typical methods
Complex, rich	Theories and concepts too simplistic	Value-bound research	Typically, inductive.
Socially constructed through culture and language	Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions, and interpretations	Research is part of what is researched, subjective	Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be interpreted
Multiple meanings, interpretations, realities	New understandings and worldviews as a contribution	Researcher interpretations key to the contribution	
Flux of processes experiences, practices		Researcher reflexive	

Source: Saunders et al. (2015)

3.2.1 Research assumptions

This qualitative study investigates former elite athletes and business manager’s perceptions of their development of skills in sport and the application in business. By examining this population there are various assumptions made which were a major aspect of the research. In looking at the general methodological assumptions, the nature of this thesis is to obtain the perceptions of the participants regarding the transfer of skills from sports to business.

Ontology

Saunders and Thornhill (2015) define ontology as assumptions about the nature of reality. They argue that ontology determines how people see the world of management and business. Thus, the ontological assumption also influences and shapes the way researchers see and study their research participants. The researcher’s assumption related to the ontology is that a semi-structured conversational interview would provide

an array of responses from the participants. The researcher assumes that there would be an array of personalities– extroverted, introverted, etc. However, according to his belief, regardless of the differences in personality, the participants would speak honestly and embrace the opportunity to discuss their experiences, intuitive judgments, thoughts, and feelings.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to assumptions about knowledge, which constitute valid, legitimate, and acceptable knowledge, as well as how the knowledge can be communicated to others (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Due to the non-evasive nature of the study, the researcher`s assumption is that a conversational style of interview would be something that the participants would embrace. This would serve as an opportunity for the individuals to speak and discuss their past experiences in basketball.

Axiology

The role and ethics within the research process are referred to by Axiology. This deals with questions surrounding the researchers handling of both their own values and those of the participants (Saunders et al., 2015). In analysing the axiology associated with the research effort, the assumption is that this thesis would be essential in providing added knowledge to the field of sport psychology, management, and leadership. It is also assumed that additional research in this area might be beneficial to this and other populations and organisations, due to a lack of studies of this nature conducted.

Typical methods

The best approach to theory development is the deductive approach. This research begins with the theory i.e., the LDI/BNT LS model, developed from reading of academic literature, and then a research strategy was designed in order to test the theory. Research utilising a deductive approach will move from theory to data (Suddaby, 2006).

According to Blaikie (2010) there are six sequential steps through which a deductive approach will progress: Firstly, the researcher should put forward a tentative idea or a premise. Secondly, by specifying the conditions under which the theory is expected to hold or by using existing literature, the researcher should deduce a testable proposition. Thirdly, the researcher should examine the premises and their logic. Additionally, it is vital to compare this argument with existing theories, in order to determine if it offers an advance in understanding. Fourthly, by collecting sufficient and appropriate data to measure the variables or concepts, the researcher should test and analyse the premises. Fifthly, if the results are not consistent with the premises, the theory is false. Then the theory must either be modified or rejected. Sixthly, if the results are consistent then the theory is corroborated.

According to Yin (2011) there are some advantages for utilising the deductive approach. Since the research would have begun with relevant concepts rather than waiting for them to emerge, it can save the researcher from suffering through a lot of uncertainty in doing the initial fieldwork. However, one of the disadvantages may be a high risk of the premature loss of any fresh insights into the real-world events being studied.

Furthermore, the logic, generalisability, use of data and theory of the deductive approach are presented in Table 6 and demonstrated the right approach for this research (Saunders et al., 2015).

Table 6: Deductive approach – from reason to research

Logic	Generalisability	Use of data	Theory
In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true	Generalising from the general to the specific	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory	Theory falsification or verification

Source: Saunders et al. (2015)

Generalisations

In looking at the possible generalisations related to the study, due to the relatively small number of former elite athletes who upon their retirement pursue a business career and participated in the qualitative semi structured interviews (n=10), generalisations would be less likely to occur. This is due to the variation in the expressed views and the delivery of the responses during the interviews.

3.3 Qualitative methods

“Qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, stories, behaviour, but also about organisational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17).

Aligned with the definition above, as well as the researcher’s philosophical assumption, the present study adopts a qualitative approach. This approach is the optimal methodology, since it gives the opportunity to establish detailed information, especially

with regard to new research questions (Hanton & Jones, 1999). Moreover, qualitative methods produce rich and detailed data about small numbers of participants and the qualitative analysis involves the organisation of non-numerical data in order to realise themes, forms and patterns (Klenke, 2016). Qualitative methods are responsible for insights into the role of context, paradigm shifts, and longitudinal perspectives that other methods often fail to obtain (e.g., Isabella, 1990). However, despite these advantages, the role played by qualitative methods within the overall contribution to leadership research remains remarkably small (Conger, 1998).

Within the context of leadership, Conger (1998, p. 109) stresses that leadership involves many multiple levels of phenomena, possesses a dynamic character and has a symbolic component". Phenomena with such a variety of characteristics could not be investigated by quantitative methods alone as they are insufficient. Avolio and Bass (1995) continue and strengthen this claim by conceiving leadership as embedded in "nests" of phenomena. The behavioural, the interpersonal, the organisational and the environmental are all embedded within the leadership phenomena.

An understanding of participants' views regarding the leadership competencies through their experience is required (Megheirkouni, 2017). Therefore, when properly employed, qualitative methods offer the leadership research several advantages over quantitative methods: (1) the flexibility during the research to detect and discern unexpected phenomena (Lundberg, 1976), (2) an ability to investigate leadership phenomena in a longitudinally and deeply manner (Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth, & Keil, 1988), (3) an ability to be more sensitive and to explore contextual aspects, (4) more chances to

investigate processes in a more effective way, (5) and symbolic dimensions can be investigated more effectively (Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

These advantages of qualitative methods are aligned with the objective of this thesis (see chapter 1.5). The objective of this thesis is to provide insight into how former professional basketball players and business managers perceived their sport experience and exactly what behaviours, practices, and skills were applied in their subsequent careers, whether they were derived from sports. Thus, the objective is aligned with the recommendation of Megheirkouni (2017) who claimed that an understanding of participants' views regarding the leadership competencies through their experience is required.

With this as a background, a general overview of the semi-structured interview research methods is presented.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

During the research, the main qualitative method was used for gathering the needed information in order to fully answer the research questions: The semi-structured interview.

A semi-structured interview is defined as an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee. The focus is on interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 2007). A semi-structured interview allows the researcher flexibility in when and how the questions are asked. In order to be well prepared for the interviews, the researcher uses a bank of questions i.e., interview guide.

However, the order of the questions and/or the structure are irrelevant. The sequence of the questions is not strictly predetermined and binding. Rather the interviewer relies on their judgement when determining how closely to stick to the guide, if follow-up questions are posed and if any new directions are pursued.

As advised by Kvale (2007) interview questions should be evaluated with respect to both a dynamic and a thematic dimension; dynamically with regard to the interpersonal relationship in the interview, and thematically with regard to producing knowledge. Therefore, questions should dynamically promote good interview interaction, and thematically promote knowledge production. Dynamic questions represent the “how” of an interview. They should keep the flow of the conversation going, promote a positive interaction, and stimulate the subjects to talk about their feelings and experiences.

Additionally, questions should be devoid of academic language, short and easy to understand. On the other hand, thematically questions relate to the “what” of an interview, to the subsequent analysis of the interview, and to the theoretical conceptions of the research topic. The questions will differ when interviewing for a conceptual analysis of the person's understanding of a topic, interviewing for spontaneous descriptions of the lived world, or interviewing for coherent narratives. The current research takes both the thematic and the dynamic dimensions into account. The thematic research questions were listed on the interview guide, while subsequent questions were spontaneously incorporated into the interviews.

Since the emphasis of the researcher is in content and context of the interview as well as on the message the interviewees want to deliver and how they understand the topic. A

semi-structured interview enables more space for interviewees to answer the questions in their own way rather as opposed to structured interviews. Moreover, this tool offers the structure for comparing different interviews covering the same topics or even using the same questions (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Kvale (2007) outline twelve aspects of an interview from a phenomenological perspective. These twelve aspects are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Twelve aspects of interview form

Aspect	Assumptions of grounded theory
Life world	The interviewee's lived everyday world is the topic of qualitative research interviews. The interview is powerful method and a uniquely sensitive for capturing the lived meanings and experiences of the subjects' everyday world.
Meaning	The interview's goal is to understand the meaning of central themes of the subjects' lived world. The meanings of what is said as well as how it is said are interpreted by the interviewer.
Qualitative	The qualitative interview does not aim at quantification rather seeks qualitative knowledge as expressed in normal language.
Descriptive	The qualitative interviewer encourages the subjects to describe as precisely as possible what they feel and experience, and how they act. Rather than on ending up with fixed categorisations, the focus is on nuanced descriptions that depict the qualitative diversity and varieties of a phenomenon.
Specificity	Descriptions of specific actions and situations are elicited, not general opinions. The interviewer's aim is to be able to arrive at meanings on a concrete level, instead of general opinions. It is obtained by based on comprehensive accounts of specific situations and events.
Qualified naïveté	The interviewer exhibits openness to unexpected and new phenomena, rather than having ready-made schemes and categories of interpretation.
Focus	Through open questions the interview focuses on the topic of research. It is neither entirely "non-directive", nor strictly structured with standard questions.
Ambiguity	One statement made by an interviewee can imply several possibilities of interpretation, and the interviewee may also give apparently contradictory statements during an interview. The aim of the interview is not to end up with quantifiable and unequivocal meanings on the themes in focus. The task of the interviewer is to clarify, as far as possible, whether the contradictory and ambiguities statements are due to genuine inconsistencies or a failure of communication in the interview.
Change	During an interview, interviewees may change their descriptions of, and meanings about, the research's topic. They may discover new aspects of the themes they are describing, and suddenly see relations that they have not been aware of earlier. Thus, an interview may be a learning process for the interviewee, as well as for the interviewer.
Sensitivity	Due to varying levels of sensitivity towards, and knowledge about, the topic of the interview, different interviewers, using the same interview guide, may produce different statements on the same topics.
Interpersonal situation	The knowledge of an interview is constructed in the inter-action between two people. The interviewer and the interviewee act in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other. The interaction itself constitutes the knowledge produced in a research interview.
Positive experience	A well-conducted research interview may be an enriching experience for the interviewees. They may obtain new insights into their life situation. The interaction may also be to evoke defence mechanisms in the interviewee as well as in the interviewer.

Source: Kvale (2007)

Interviews with elites

People who are experts or leaders in a community and are usually in powerful positions are considered elite. Hertz and Imber (1995) mention that obtaining access to interviewees is a key problem when studying elites. Research conducted thus far focusses on elite athletes who are considered to be well known, and even powerful people on a national level. Therefore, it is recommended to take into consideration that

the powerful position of the elite interviewee may negate the prevailing power asymmetry of the interview situation (Hertz & Imber, 1995).

Moreover, Kvale (2007) provides guidance on how to conduct interviews with elites. He asserts that elites are used to being asked about their thoughts and opinions, and an interviewer with some expertise in the interview topic may provide an interesting conversation partner. The interviewer should be familiar with the biography and social situation of the interviewee and be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language. A sound knowledge of the interview topic demonstrated by an interviewer will gain respect and be able to achieve an extent of symmetry in the interview relationship. Since experts may be used to being interviewed, they will probably have prepared “talk tracks” to promote their opinions during the interview. This requires considerable skill from the interviewer to recognise where it may be feasible to challenge the statements of the participants, with the provocations possibly leading to new insights. Interviews with elites, where the interviewer contributes and also confronts with her or his conceptions of the interview theme, may approximate the intense questioning of a Socratic dialogue.

3.4 The study and the researcher

The researcher’s role entailed conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with ten former elite athletes and business managers. The aim was to discover if they believed they developed leadership skills during their sports careers and, if yes, whether they believed they transferred these skills to the business domain.

The researcher's interest in the project has many layers associated with it, beginning with his great passion for the sport of basketball that dates back to his adolescence. Moreover, the researcher was himself a professional basketball player until age of 26 and is nowadays pursuing a business career.

Because of his personal experience associated with his decision upon his retirement from sports to pursue a business career, the researcher was extremely interested in gaining an in depth, detailed first-hand account of former athletes and business managers' perceived opinion on the research topic. With enthusiasm for both sport and business, the researcher was prompted to conduct this thesis (in addition to his admitted past feelings of envy and continued admiration for these athletes).

3.4.1 The integrity of the researcher

The researcher as a person is critical for the soundness of ethical decisions in an interview study and for the quality of the scientific knowledge. Moral research behaviour entails more than cognitive choices and ethical knowledge; it encompasses the commitment and sensitivity to moral issues and action, as well as the researcher's moral integrity. Since the researcher, in interview study, is the one who conducts the interviews, he or she is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge.

Thus, the importance of the researcher as a person is magnified. Being familiar with ethical guidelines, ethical theories and value issues may help the researcher in choices that weigh scientific versus ethical concerns (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Once again it is important to mention that this thesis is not a quantitative one. As such, although all

precautions have been considered, even the tables as shown here cannot accurately measure a participant's attitude.

The fact that each interview is influenced by many different factors cannot be ignored. In addition, the comparison between the interviews cannot be 100% accurate, since semi-structured interviews rely heavily on discussion with the participants. Therefore, the tables can offer a first insight and direction to different themes which are explained in the following thematic analysis.

As the case with every qualitative analysis that was undertaken by a human being, one cannot completely rule out a bias that was attained because of personal perception on a specific interview or its interpretation. Since the researcher is very familiar with participants' cultural background, as well as the sport and business settings, his analysis is primarily based upon the actual statements provided during the interviews, and not only on personal perception. This was of paramount importance since the researcher himself was a professional basketball and is nowadays working as a manager in the business domain. In order that different opinions regarding every discussed point will be understood exactly as they were presented in the interviews, several runs through all transcripts and translations during the analysis were made.

3.4.2 Ethical consideration

Aligned with the guiding principles described in the "Research Ethics Policy and Procedures" conducted by The (University Research Ethics Committee, 2017) of Sheffield Hallam University, full consideration was given to all possible ethical issues

including the participants' anonymity. This was provided by the issuance of numbers only identifiable by the participant and the researcher.

Confidentiality, informed consent, and protection of the participants with regard to risk or harm was assured. It was determined and communicated to each individual that the study was deemed one of minimal risk. The proposal of the study and approval of the ethical committee to conduct the study was the initial action to assure ethical standards. Also, in connection with assuring the highest level of satisfactory ethical practice, the researcher reminded the participants of their right to stop the interview at any time.

Since the study dealt with if and how former elite-athletes believe their leadership skills acquired during their sport careers were transferred to business domain, the belief was that there would be virtually no psychological or emotional negative issues sustained by the participants during data collection. In addition, due to the nature of the study, the belief was that there would not be any negative residual effects to the participants.

All acquired data by the researcher including consent forms and files of recorded interviews were stored in an external drive locked in the researcher's private locked home office to maximise the protection of the participants. Upon reaching the seventh year following original data collection date, the researcher will at that time destroy all materials that were gathered as part of the research. These are necessary courses of action to assure the integrity of the participants who have placed a significant degree of trust in the researcher and the research effort. A sample of the Consent Form as well as a copy of the Participant Information Sheet are attached as Appendix C and D.

3.5 Research design

A research design was formulated and followed, in order to ensure a rigorous method for the collection and analysis of data. The researcher made every effort to approach the collection and analysis of data without any preconceptions regarding the findings.

Therefore, it is vital to provide both purpose and direction to the task before undertaking the endeavour. The explanation on the design of the research project is presented as follows.

3.5.1 Seven stages of an interview investigation

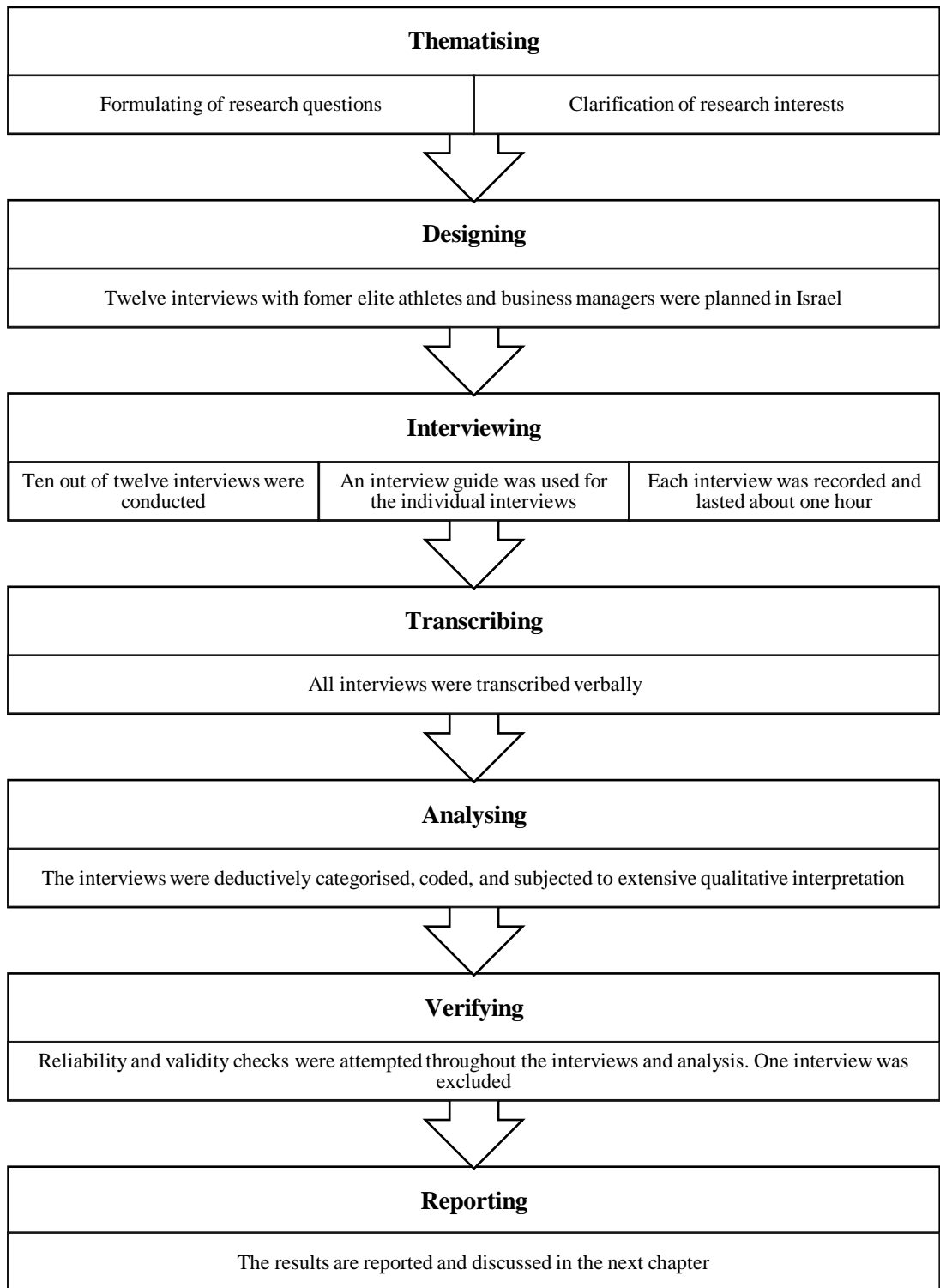
After examining integrity and ethical issues, as well as the background and specifics of the sport-business link, basketball and sport in Israel, athlete leadership in sport teams, life skills development and transfer, and theoretical framework, the focus shifts to the process of acquiring information on the phenomenon according to the already discussed qualitative methods.

An interview methodology enables a precise gathering of information that may also be generalised, at least to other industries or constellations within the sport and business setting. Therefore, the following research plan has been set up using Kvale's seven stages of an interview study (Figure 7). This approach was used in hundreds of research projects in different research fields which facilitate interviews (Kvale, 2007, p. 35-37).

The main goals of the seven method stages are to provide an overview of a complete interview study, to define the interactions among the stages, and to trace the philosophical conceptions of knowledge and truth and the interconnectedness of the practical issues of methods.

For the purpose of this thesis, each of Kvale's seven stages will be divided into separate sections. The first section will examine the interview's thematisation and the following sections will discuss the interview design, transcription, analysing, verifying, and reporting.

Figure 7: Seven stages of an interview investigation



Source: Kvale (2007)

Thematising

As a first step, thematising means that the purpose of an investigation is formulated as well as the concept of the topic described (Kvale, 2007). Thus, the two main research questions were formulated. Moreover, these are the main interests in the interviews, which were derived from the research questions:

- What leadership skills do former professional basketball players believe they develop during their participation in sport?
- How are leadership skills developed during sports careers applied in the business domain?

Designing

The second step, designing means that all seven stages of the investigation should be taken into consideration before the interviewing stage begins. Obtaining the intended knowledge should be determined when designing an interview study (Kvale, 2007).

Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the university's research ethics approval procedures. This is required to make sure that the research being performed is ethical and low risk for the researcher and all participants.

To address the two main interests mentioned above, twelve former elite athlete and business managers, who have worked or are still working for a variety of companies, in varying fields, in multiple industries, were contacted. The main requirements, for exclusion or inclusion, were: (a) Participants pursued national and international professional basketball careers and are recognised for being high-performers and

leaders; (b) following their participation in professional sports, participants held a managerial role in private or public organisations for a minimum of ten years.

Interviewing

The structure of the interview was designed based on the interview guide (see Table 8 for sample questions). The interview guide is designed based on LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013) and organised into seven parts as conducted by the researchers Kendellen and Camire (2017) and edited by the researcher of this thesis. The following parts were added by the researcher: Section A (general information), Section C (motivation pursuing a business career), and Section G (research questions confrontation). The interview guide was translated and adapted to Hebrew and is presented as Appendix A.

Table 8: Sample interview guide based on the LDI/BNT LS model

Section A: General information

- Name:
- Age:
- Experience basketball: how long, national player, division 1 or 2, position
- Experience business: how long, industry, position, number of subordinates

Section B: Motivation pursuing a basketball career

- Why did you decide to pursue a basketball career?
- Can you please tell me about your motivation pursuing a basketball career?

Section C: Motivation pursuing a business career

- Why did you decide to peruse a business career?
- Can you please tell me about your motivation pursuing a business career?

Section D: Autonomy

Self-control

- Life skill development in sport:
 - Do you think sport helped you learn how to manage your emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, or excitement) Example?
 - Do you think sport gave you the opportunity to learn how to take decision better and solve problems?
- Life skill application in business:
 - Can you discuss if you believe dealing with such situation in sport has helped you develop self-control as a manager? Example?
 - Can you discuss if you believe dealing with such situation in sport has helped you develop the decision making and problem-solving skills as a manager? Example?

Section E: Competence

Leadership

- Life skill development in sport:
 - Do you think a person can learn to become a leader?
 - Do you believe your participation in sport has allowed you to learn the skills needed to be a leader? If yes, which skills? examples? If not, why?
 - Could you describe in as much detail as possible a situation in which leadership learning occurred for you in sport?
- Life skill application in business:
 - Do you believe you are/were a good at leading people in as a manager in your business career? Example?

Section F: Relatedness

Teamwork

- Life skill development in sport:
 - Were you happy when your teammates had success (e.g., made a better contract following season) and sad when they faced challenges (e.g., injury)? Example?
 - Do you believe your participation in sport has allowed you to learn how to become a better teammate? Or being team player?
- Life skill application in business:
 - Is considering others' feelings something that is/was important for you as a manager? Example?
 - Can you discuss if you believe dealing with such situation in sport has helped you to become a better people manager?

Section G: Research questions confrontation

- What leadership skills do former professional basketball players believe they develop during their participation in sport?
- Are leadership skills developed during a career in professional sport subsequently applied in the business domain?

Source: Kendellen & Camire (2017)

Several challenges associated with retrospective methods, including memory, attributional bias and impression management were highlighted by past research (Snelgrove & Havitz, 2010). In an attempt to minimise such challenges and as recommended by Ericsson and Simon (1980) a series of probes (e.g., Do you have an example?) will be used to help the participants frame their responses within the precise boundaries of the study, i.e., sport and business and to elicit rich contextual information.

Aligned with the university guidelines as well as from the above suggestions, a participation information sheet was created and shared with the participants prior to the interviews. This sheet provides information about the background and research project. Several participants used the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview process.

Moreover, the interview guide was piloted with two Hebrew native former amateur athletes and business managers, working in the telecommunication and IT industries in Germany. This was done to ensure that the questions asked were worded appropriately and elicited in-depth responses.

Section A, B, and C: These sections serve two purposes. Firstly, they facilitated the collection of general information and established if the participant had the required previous experience and motivation playing as an elite athlete and working as a manager in the business domain. Secondly, they acted as a smooth transition, easing the participant into the interview process to let participants feel comfortable talking to the researcher.

Sections D, E, and F: In these sections, participants were asked if they believe they developed particular leadership skills (each associated with a basic need) during their sports career. Numerous examples of developing leadership skills in sport were provided by all participants. They were afterwards asked if/how the leadership skills developed in sports were or are applied in their business careers.

Section G: The final section directly addressed the research questions by explicitly asking if the participants believe they developed leadership skills during their participation in sports. If yes, are these leadership skills applied in the business domain. This was done in order to provide a clear answer to the questions, in addition to a comparison with all the previous information that was given by each participant.

Transcribing

All interviews were recorded audio-visually, as recommended by Kvale (2007) who asserts that if researchers transcribe their own interviews, they will learn much about their own interviewing style. The transcriptions followed a verbatim style transcription, accounting for all filler words. Particular attention was paid to the exact and correct transcription of the audio and video files. The transcriptions were reviewed by the researcher to ensure that they communicate the intended meaning and reflect as much as possible the reality of the interview.

Analysing (thematic analysis)

The method of the current research's analysis was, to some degree, incorporated into the actual interviews. This was recommended by Kvale (2007) who additionally asserts that the researcher should also try to keep in mind the later analysis, verification, and

reporting of the interviews. The list of questions of the interview guide steered the interview process and helped ensure that a degree of clarification was attained and that specific themes were addressed. Within the course of the interviews, the participants were allowed and encouraged to freely describe their ideas, experiences, and thoughts. Additionally, participants could, without hindrance from the researcher, explore the themes, develop meanings, and discover relationships (Kvale, 2007).

Inspired by the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006), the data analysis method used for the study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning “themes” within qualitative data. Since the thematic analysis offers a method, a technique or tool, and unbounded by theoretical commitments, it is unusual in the canon of qualitative analytic approaches (Clarke & Braun, 2017). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) several choices which are often not made explicit, but which need explicitly to be considered before analysis begins.

Firstly, a theme is defined as “something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). In terms of coding the question which should be asked is: what counts as a theme/pattern? or what is the required frequency a theme needs to appear? Ideally, a theme should appear across the data set, but more appearances do not necessarily mean that the theme is more crucial. There is no appropriate answer, in qualitative analysis, for the proportion of the data set necessary for a topic to be considered a theme. Furthermore, a theme’s significance captures something important in relation to the overall research question and is not necessarily

dependent on quantifiable measures. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that there is no right or wrong method for determining prevalence. Thematic analysis offers the flexibility that allows researchers to determine themes and prevalence in many ways. It is therefore recommended to use consistent methods in a particular analysis.

Secondly, thematic analysis offers two main techniques to identify patterns or themes within data: in an inductive approach, or in a theoretical/deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive approach is in some way similar to grounded theory since the themes are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990). Based on this approach, “if the data have been collected specifically for the research such as via interview, the themes identified may bear little relation to the specific questions that were asked of the participants” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Since this approach promotes process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, this is not the chosen approach for this thesis.

In contrast, a theoretical or deductive approach tends to be driven by the researcher’s analytic or theoretical interest in the investigated area. Therefore, this approach is more explicitly analyst-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This form of thematic analysis tends to provide more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data, and less a rich description of the overall data. The choice between theoretical and inductive approaches influences the techniques applied when coding the data. Coding for specific research questions, which maps onto the more theoretical/deductive approach, is used for this thesis.

Finally, the “level” at which themes are identified should be determined. The two levels are latent and semantic levels (Boyatzis, 1998). Latent approach means that the thematic

analysis examines the underlying assumptions, ideas, conceptualisations, and ideologies. These are theorised as informing or shaping the semantic content of the data. In contrast, with the semantic approach, themes are identified within the surface or explicit meanings of the data. What participants have commented is the focus of the researcher and not beyond that. The ideal process of this approach aligned with this thesis is that it involves a progression from description to interpretation. Description is where the data have been organised and summarised and interpretation is where there is an attempt to theorise implications and meanings (Patton, 1990).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is carried out by following six phases (see Table 9). The process begins with phase one, when the researcher is getting himself familiar with the data. In other words, the researcher conducted “repeated reading” of the data. Before doing the coding, the researcher read through the entire data set at least three times searching for meanings and patterns. During the transcription of the verbal data, the researcher took notes. This is aligned with the recommendation of Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) who recognise that the transcription phase could also be used for interpretation. They argue that rather than simply putting spoken words of a piece of paper, meanings can be created.

Table 9: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic “map” of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun & Clarke (2006)

Phase two begins after the researcher has read and familiarised himself with the data and noted the ideas about the interesting themes. The production of initial codes from the data is the focus of this phase. Codes identify a feature of the data, in this thesis semantic content, that appears interesting to the researcher. Codes are also described as “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). Since the language of the interviews was Hebrew, the researcher translated the codes into English.

See Table 10 for an example of codes applied to a short segment of data from interview number four.

Table 10: Data extract, with codes applied

Data extract	Coded for
“I think only one area. This is when I had bad basketball games. I returned home and my wife used to say that sometimes I would kick in bed and get nervous, I felt where I was wrong or what I could improve. My personal or behavioral ability? I had to improve my personal ability and not blame others”	Self-criticism

Additionally, during the analysis, the researcher could interpret one statement as applying to one coding or more. Take the following statement from interview number six, for example presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Data extract, with multiple codes applied

Data extract	Coded for
<p>"I think the competition. Competition and success. On the one hand when you succeed in this competition it gives great satisfaction, and on the other hand... the social aspect in sport was good for me. I loved going to play basketball with the guys. With people whose company I enjoyed. I did not get involved too much in it. I did give opinions or politics or all that sort of thing. I just came and competed within something that I felt comfortable in that gave me some kind of social status. And that gave me satisfaction. Basic human satisfaction. Call it success with girls. Call it whatever you like".</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Success 2. Competition 3. Social status 4. Enjoyed playing with others 5. Basic fulfilment

The process of coding is considered as part of the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as the researcher is organising the data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005).

However, there are several differences between the coded data and the themes, which will be developed in the next phase. Firstly, the themes are normally broader, and themes are where the interpretative analysis occurs (Boyatzis, 1998).

When all data have been initially coded and collated as well as a list of interesting notes has been created, phase three begins. The main emphasis of this phase is the boarder level of themes. In other words, during this phase the researcher has sorted the different codes into potential themes and assembled all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Aligned with the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher has begun thinking about the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes.

When a set of candidate themes including the refinement of those themes have been devised, phase four begins. The focus of this phase is reviewing the themes. It became evident during this phase that some candidate topics are not really themes. The data is either too diverse or there is not enough data to support the themes. Occasionally even separate themes might form one theme and some themes might need to be separated into different themes.

Two levels of reviewing and refining themes are involved within this phase. The first level involves the review at the coded level and the second level involves reviewing the entire data set. The researcher has considered whether the candidate thematic map reflects the meaning evident in the data set, as well as the validity of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Review of the themes occurred through peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) whereby the researcher regularly discussed the engaged in conversations with his supervisors about the identified meaning units and how they were coded. At the beginning discrepancies existed. Eventually the researcher and supervisors discussed until agreement of the codes was achieved.

When a satisfactory thematic map of the data is completed, phase five begins. At this phase, the definition and further refinement of the themes are identified. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), researchers should identify the “essence” of the overall themes as well as what each theme is about. Additionally, what aspect of the data each theme captures should be decided.

When a set of fully worked-out themes has been finalised, the final phase begins. This phase of thematic analysis involved the final analysis and write-up the report. The goal

is to describe the complicated story of the data. It should be done in a way which shows the merit and validity of the analysis. It is very important that the analysis provides a logical, coherent, non-repetitive, concise, and interesting story on the data across and within themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Verifying

The verifying stage consisted of validity and reliability checks at various points throughout the interviews and analysis process. These checks include researcher's reliability, as well as validity of interpretation made by the researcher (Kvale, 2007). For the purposes of this thesis, validity refers to "the truth, the correctness and the strength of a statement"; and reliability to the "consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (Kvale, 2007, p. 122).

To ensure the researcher's reliability, the researcher assessed and reviewed the audio recording of every interview shortly after the completion of that interview. This was done to evaluate the performance of the researcher for the improvement of subsequent interview quality. Additionally, to establish validity of interpretation, the researcher reassessed the coding after each interview and after all the interviews were coded.

During the repeated review and re-evaluation, the researcher decided to exclude the first interview conducted on 25.04.2020 due to three reasons: Firstly, the interview was too brief (32:59 minutes compared to average of one hour of the rest of the nine interviews). Secondly, the participant played most of his career in the third division and only three years in the first and second division. Thirdly and most significantly, the participant did

not consider himself as a former elite athlete. Therefore, this interview was not part of the qualitative coding process.

That is, by re-coding the nine interviews from scratch with a final, verified list of themes, the researcher was able to ensure the validity of the findings.

Reporting

The results of the study are presented in the following chapter. They will be broken down by two main sections. The first section presents the data analysis and results. This section is broken down by three parts aligned with the structure of the interview guide.

The first part presents the results from the collection of general information and participant's motivation pursuing sports and business careers (chapter 4.2.1). The second part examines there three basic needs (chapter 4.2.2). For each need, concrete examples of the leadership skills that the participants believe they (1) developed in basketball and (2) applied in business are provided. The third part presents the results of the confrontation of the research questions (chapter 4.2.3). This was done together with the concluding statements section in order to compare all the previous information that was given by each participant.

3.5.2 Description of the sample

The technique of purposive sampling was utilised in this thesis. The reasons for selecting this sampling approach over convenience sampling are discussed following the definition of each. Subsequently a discussion about the sample size is carried out.

Denscombe (2014, p. 41) defined purposive sampling as a sampling which operates on the principle that the most relevant information should be collected while focusing on a relatively small sample size. In addition, the participants are deliberately chosen based on their known experience or attributes (i.e., not through random selection). This is aligned with the current thesis as the sample participants were deliberately selected based on their experience in both domains (i.e., sport and business).

Moreover, according to Yin (2011) the goal of purposive sampling is that the sample will be chosen based on those that will yield the most plentiful and relevant data. Kuzel, (1992, p. 37) asserted that participants should seek to “obtain the broadest range of information and perspectives on the subject of study”. Additionally, Kuzel (1992) claimed that is essential that the sample will be included people who may have different views in order to test rival explanations.

On the other hand, convenience sampling is defined as selecting participants because of their ready availability. Based on Yin’s (2011) perspective this method is likely to produce an unknown degree of incompleteness. because the most readily available data is not likely to be the most informative one. It is quite reasonable to assume that in every research there is an element of convenience since every research have limited time and resources at their disposal.

However, this approach takes it to an extreme by utilising convenience as the basis for choosing the sample. Cheap, easy, and quick are the key advantage of convenience sampling (Denscombe, 2014).

Therefore, based on the beforementioned definition of both approaches the researcher chose the purposive sampling.

Size of the sample

According to Denscombe (2014) there are mainly three approaches to the calculation of the sample size: Pragmatic, statistical and cumulative. The pragmatic approach tends to use more smaller-scale surveys. This is usually due to the high costs of meeting all the conditions needed for the reaching out a wider audience such as in the statistical approach. The statistical approach is most appropriate to large-scale probability sampling techniques and surveys. This kind of approach works well for example with government surveys and opinion polls. The cumulative approach is defined as when the researcher tries to add to the size of the sample until a point is reached where there is sufficient information and no benefit derived from adding additional participants to the sample.

Furthermore, the cumulative approach relies on non-probability techniques and is usually related with research that: 1) uses qualitative data; 2) have relatively small sample sizes between 5-30 participants; 3) cannot identify the research population prior the research; 4) does not aim to produce a representative sample but an exploratory one (Denscombe, 2014).

As mentioned in chapter 2.3 (p. 36) there is difficulty convincing elite performers to participate in research. According to Fletcher (2011) this is one of the main reasons of limited studies which focus and test the link between sport and business.

In addition to Fletcher's statement there are several other reasons which influenced the sample size of this thesis. Firstly, the targeted population of elite athlete in Israel is relatively small. According to Lidor and Blumenstein (2009) there are approximately 670 professional male athletes at the elite level in Israel. Although the data collected at 2009 and comprises other sports such as football, handball, and volleyball it demonstrates the small population size. Furthermore, one of the main requirements for athletes to participate in this study is pursuing both careers (i.e., sports and business). This led to a further limitation of the sample size.

Secondly, the sample size of most of the previous research about the topic of life skills transfer was relatively small. For example, the study of Pierce, Gould, Cowburn, and Driska (2016) on the topic of understanding the process of psychological development among the 10 participating youth athletes of an intensive wrestling camp. Another example is of the study of Kendellen and Camire (2017) about examining the life skill development and transfer of former high school athletes. This study utilises 20 participants. However, participants were high school athlete and not former elite athletes. This enabled a broader sample size and the country in which the study conducted (Canada) is larger than Israel.

Therefore, all participants were contacted through personal contacts directly by the researcher. Nine out of ten were in Israel and one was in Hong Kong. All participants were male between ages of 45 and 77 ($M=65.4$). Participants were engaged in professional basketball careers. They have played between 5 to 17 years ($M=12.5$) in the first two highest divisions in the Israeli basketball. Participants also played for the

national teams U16, U18 as well as for the adult's national team and were active between 1 and 11 years ($M=4.6$) in the international arena.

Upon their retirement participants pursued business careers. They have/had the following range of job titles within the business domain: CEO, CFO, Commercial Pilot, VP Operations, Innovation Director, Strategic Business Unit Director, and Business Coach. The private or public companies represented by the participants include: Tama Group, National Electricity Authority, Municipality Rishon Lezion, Arkia Airlines, Israair Airlines, Paper Mill Hedera, Intel, Electro Mechanic Nigeria, Amiad, and an independent contractor (i.e., self-employed) business coach. Participants' management roles are lasting/were lasted between 12 to 40 years ($M=28.4$) and are/had supervised between 2 to 3,000 employees.

Twelve interviews were planned to be conducted face-to-face between the 20th of April and the 11th of May 2020. Ten potential participants replied positively and two negatively. Due to the disruption caused by the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the new university regulations which prohibit conducting face-to-face interviews, the execution of all ten interviews were facilitated by the use of video conferencing tools (i.e., Zoom).

The interviews were conducted between the 25th of April and the 22nd of May 2020. For all interviews, every effort was made to minimise the introduction of influencing variables and to maintain a consistent interview environment. For the videoconference tool, Zoom, this meant that an extended version was purchased in order to avoid the limitation of 45-minute duration call. Moreover, it meant that the quality of connection

had to be sufficient to hold a comfortable conversation without interrupted reception or dropped calls.

As described earlier, one interview was excluded from the analysis. The nine interviews lasted between 40 minutes to 1 hour and 29 minutes (M=1:01:42). The resulting transcriptions total 108 pages of text consist of 53,368 words. Transcriptions were emailed to the participants for review and only one responded asking for minor changes in the information about his business experience. Another participant sent his book for additional reference which was not used by the researcher for this thesis. The full transcriptions are available per request and one example of interview transcripts is translated and presented as Appendix B. As the interviews are anonymous, the participants are in no way connected with the resulting transcriptions. Thus, any instance of an employer, a participant, or any name of company or brand that could in any way identify the employer or participant was replaced by a placeholder along with explanation of what was said.

Participants were all born and raised in Israel and all, except for one who lives abroad, currently reside throughout the country. Table 12 shows the demographic information of all participants including participant number 1 who was excluded (see highlighted row) as well as general information obtained from the interviews.

Table 12: Demographic and general information of the participants

Participant number	Kibbutz/urban	Date of interview	Length of interview	Years of sports career / position	Year of business career	Number of subordinates
1	Kibbutz	25.04.2020	00:32:59	3 years first division 9 years third division Point guard	25 years	Up to 10
2	Kibbutz	26.04.2020	01:23:05	16 years first division 10 years national team Point guard	28 years	Up to 70
3	Urban	03.05.2020	01:29:04	10 years first division 7 years second division 3 years national team Shooting guard/ small forward	24 years	Up to 650
4	Kibbutz	05.05.2020	01:12:03	16 years first division 1 year second division 4-5 years national team Point guard	40 years	Up to 250
5	Urban	05.05.2020	00:56:32	7 years first division 14 years coach in the first division 2 years player national team 7 years coach national team Shooting guard	30 years	Up to 10
6	Kibbutz	08.05.2020	01:00:30	10 years first division 1 year second division 3-4 years national team Point guard	32 years	Up to 3,000
7	Kibbutz	09.05.2020	00:48:52	17 years first division 1 year second division 11 years national team Shooting guard	26 years	Up to 100
8	Urban	12.05.2020	00:53:54	12 years first division 2 years second 5 years national team Power forward	37 years	Up to 300
9	Kibbutz	13.05.2020	00:40:13	8-9 years second league Shooting guard	23 years	Up to 1,100
10	Kibbutz	22.05.2020	00:51:06	5 years second division 4 years U16-18 national team Point guard	11 years	Up to 400

Due to the non-invasive nature of the questions, there were no participants or respondents who expressed displeasure or opposition towards the interview, and, as a

result, no-one withdrew from the study. Some of the participants observed that the semi structured conversational interviews resembled those conducted with media on television. Essentially, the audio recording and the nature of the questions seemingly lead to an enjoyable experience for the participants. For these reasons, the interview process was without controversy, interruption, or deviation from planned interactions with participants.

3.5.3 Research methodology applied to the data analysis

To investigate the perceptions of former elite athletes and business managers with regard to the development and transfer of their leadership skills from sport to business, this thesis was conducted using a research design of qualitative examination and methodology of a semi-structured interview.

The data analysis method of thematic analysis was utilised since “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). The researcher employed the thematic analysis because it exemplifies an effective method to denote and structure the data provided by the participants.

An overview on the process of generating initial codes was presented in the research design section (chapter 3.5.1). In this section, an overview on the development of lower order themes within phases three to five of thematic analysis (see rows three to five in Table 9, p. 102) is discussed.

Firstly, linking the lower order themes to the higher order themes on the boarder level is the focus of phase three. In other words, during this phase the researcher has sorted the different codes into potential lower order themes and assembled all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified lower order themes.

Table 13 shows the initial thematic map, illustrating the lower order themes related to each higher theme as well as (in brackets) how often each sub theme was raised. At this phase, the researcher has begun to think about the relationship between the codes and the lower order themes. Since the deductive method was utilised based on the LDI/BNT LS model, the lower order themes have linked to the three high order themes of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Table 13: Initial thematic map, showing the three high order themes

Competence	Relatedness	Autonomy
Hard work, self-discipline, and persistency (6).	Teammates are important to me / Teamwork (9).	Basketball is a platform to practice decision making under pressure (6).
Competitiveness (also within the team) (3).	All players must be equal (2).	Preparation / learning the competitors (4).
Coping with stress (6).	the team is more important than individuals (5).	Sport is a place for tension release (3).
Personal example / role model (6).	Consideration of other's feelings (7).	Sport and business are different (4).
Putting the ego aside (5).	The ability to listen / interpersonal communication (5).	Involve people in decision making (5).
Serve as the foundation of the team (2).	The ability to give up / to share (2).	Sport help me deal with consequences of my decisions (2).
I do not consider myself a leader in sport (4).	People oriented / not command and control (7).	Healthy way of life (2).
Not sure what role sports plays in leadership development (2).		Self-control (Participant 6).
I believe I was good at managing people (3).		
Analysis skills (1).		
The desire to win (2).		
Willing to sacrifice (2).		
Coping with success and failures (6).		
Self-criticise (Participant 4).		
Reliability and authenticity (1).		
self-confidence (2).		
Differences between star and role players / star is not the real leader (5).		

Moreover, the researcher created sub themes related to section A, B, and C of the interview guide. As explained in chapter 3.5.1 the aim of these sections was to collect general information about the participants and to learn about their motivation playing as an elite athlete and working as a manager in the business domain. The results of those tables are explained in the following chapter.

Secondly, reviewing, defining, and naming the lower order themes is the focus of phase four and five. It became evident during these phases that some candidate lower order themes are not real lower order themes. The data is either too diverse, or there is not enough data to support them. Occasionally, even separate lower order themes might form one lower order theme, and some might need to be separated into different themes. The researcher reviewed and refined the lower order themes in two levels.

The first level involves the review at the coded level and the second level involves also reviewing, however in relation to the entire data set. Once completed, the researcher defined and further refined and named the lower order themes. The decision on what aspect of the data each lower order theme captures was identified. The outcome of phases three and four is presented in Table 14.

Table 14: A developed thematic map

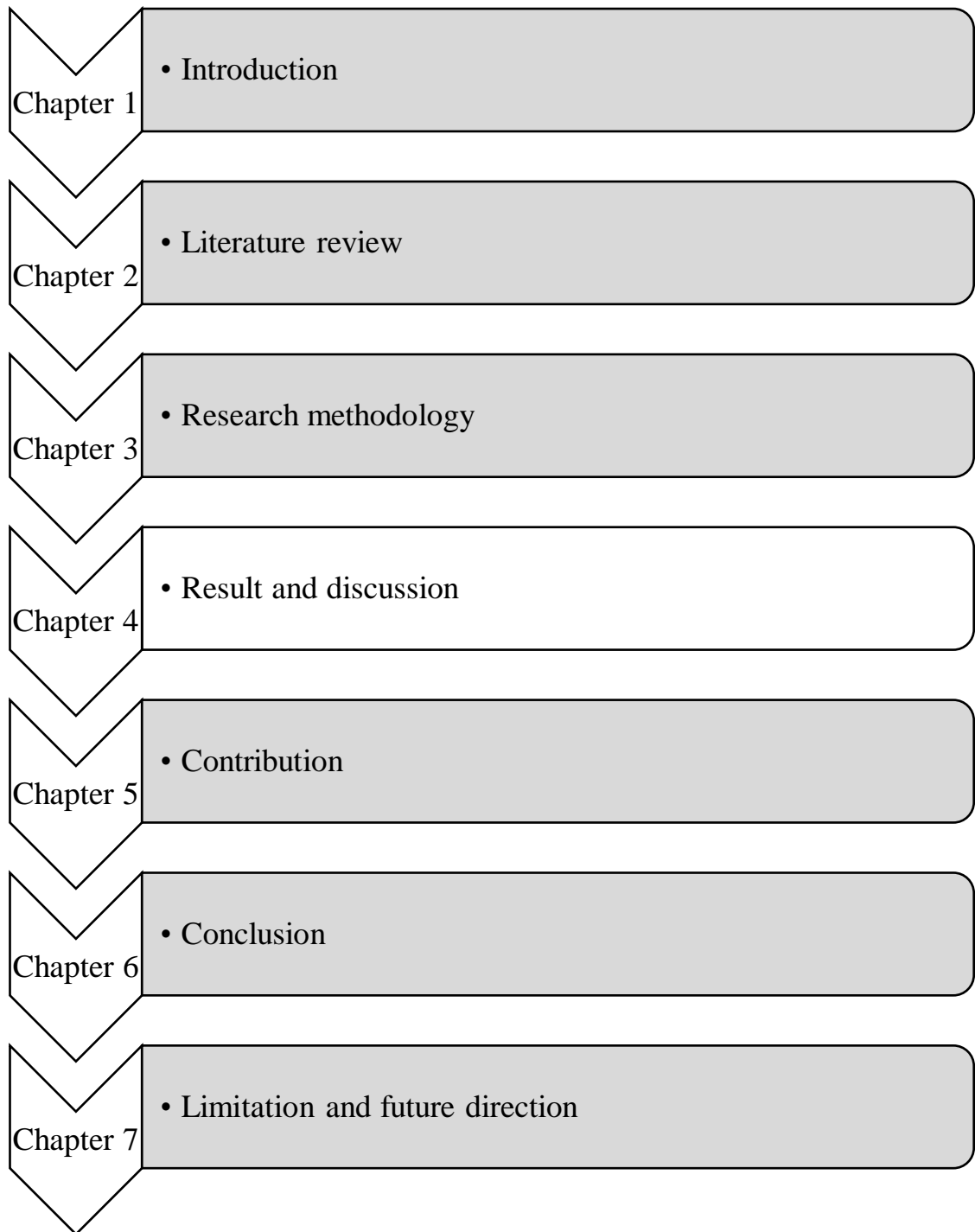
Competence	Relatedness	Autonomy
Hard work and self-discipline	Teamwork	Decision making under pressure / consequences
Competitiveness and desire to win	Consideration of other's feelings	Preparation / learning the competitors
Coping with stress	The ability to listen / interpersonal communication	Sport is a place for tension release
Personal example / role model		Focusing on the results (decisions)
Putting the ego aside		Involve people in decision making
Coping with success and failures		Self-control
Self-criticise		
Self-confidence		
Transformational leadership vs. command and control		

Lastly, final analysis and write-up the report are the focus of the last phase. The goal is to describe the complicated story of the data. The researcher invested a lot of effort to present this in a way which shows the merit and validity of the analysis. The complete table of analysis is presented in the following chapter.

3.6 Summary of the research methodology chapter

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 male participants ($M_{age} = 65.0$). Participants were engaged in professional basketball careers on both national and international levels. Upon their retirement participants have worked in business and/or are pursuing business careers. The research utilises a six-step deductive thematic analysis using the conceptual model for life skills interventions developed by Hodge et al. (2013).

4 Results and Discussion



4.1 Introduction of the results and discussion chapter

The primary objective of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings from the analysis of the semi structured interview data that were collected. The findings include an evaluation of how the data corresponds to the literature and to the research questions. In the first part a discussion of the data analysis and results is presented (Chapter 4.2) followed by a summary of the findings (Chapter 4.3).

4.2 Presentation and discussion of the data analysis and results

In this section the results of the data collection are presented and discussed. They will be broken down by three sections based on the structure of the interview guide (see Table 8, p. 96). The first section (chapter 4.2.1) discusses the collection of general information and participant's motivation pursuing sports and business careers. The second section (chapter 4.2.2) examines the three basic needs. For each need, concrete examples of the leadership skills that the participants believe they (1) developed in basketball and (2) applied in business are provided. The last section (chapter 4.2.3) presents the results of the confrontation of the research questions. The aim was to compare all the previous information provided by each participant. Aligned with the privacy standards each quote is marked with the participant's number.

In addition, raw data quotes are presented throughout the result within the tables of the thematic maps to enhance transparency and authenticity in the meaning generated from the data, as well as to enhance the context for the reader (Roulston, 2010; Tracy, 2010).

4.2.1 General information and motivation to pursue careers in sport and business

4.2.1.1 General information

The general information and motivation sections serve two purposes. Firstly, they facilitated the collection of general information and established if the participant had the required previous experience and motivation playing as an elite athlete and working as a manager in the business domain. The resulting data is presented on Table 12, page 112. The table shows the demographic of the participants. Additional general information topics raised by the participant are discussed as well. Secondly, questions about past experiences and participants' motivation pushing careers in both domains acted as a segway, easing the participant into the interview process to let participants feel comfortable talking to the researcher.

As previously indicated, the context within a qualitative study is important. Qualitative methods offer the leadership research several advantages. Three of these advantages are the ability to be more sensitive, to explore contextual aspects, and the opportunity to investigate symbolic dimensions more effectively (Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

Therefore, important contextual elements (i.e., military service and kibbutz), which were mentioned by most of participants, as well as the participants' social and ideological background, are briefly described.

For example, participant 9 revealed that military service, kibbutz, and sport may be important influential elements for personal development within the Israeli context.

“You know in Israel there are other influential factors besides sports which are very remarkable like the military and other (kibbutz). Eventually, these factors shape your personality as you reach your business career” (Participant 9).

The influence the military service has on the development of variety of personal skills is significant. For example, Dillon (2007, p. 8) stated that “the military trains you to be technically proficient in whatever occupation you are assigned to. But you will also learn teamwork, perseverance, leadership, and other skills widely applicable in the civilian workforce”.

All participants save one served their military service as non-combat soldiers. The participants received a special permission from the military to serve in the supporting troops, so they were able to continue their basketball careers and represent their country in the international arena.

While observing the demographic data of the participant, one cannot neglect to the fact that six participants out of nine were born and raised in a kibbutz (see Table 12, page 112). Therefore, a brief description of the kibbutz and its ideology is displayed below.

The Israeli kibbutz was founded in the early twentieth century as cooperative rural community with defined rules, evolved from an ideology-driven, closed, homogenous society. The kibbutz was commune based on the principles of democracy, cooperation, and equality. The members of the kibbutz were no different than from other societies in the industrial world in such aspects as members’ characteristics and personal background, job structures, basic lifestyles, and interactions with city communities.

However, it differed from other industrial societies in policy and social structure in its emphasis on cooperation, which included shared values and beliefs, solidarity, mutual dependence, and joint decision making (Leviatan, 1999). Kurman and Sriram (2016) claimed that the aim of the kibbutz was to establish a society with strong sense of mutual aid and belonging, endorsing horizontal collectivism.

A central part of kibbutz ideology, which began in the 1920s, was the “collective education” of the children (Rabin & Hazan, 1973). Child rearing responsibility was transferred from the parents to the community, and the children were cared for by specially trained nannies and teachers. So, the busy parents could focus on work without any obstructions. Therefore, the children who grow up in a kibbutz spend most of their time together with their peers. The nannies and later the teachers encouraged the group cohesiveness.

Moreover, it is believed that since children were dependent on each other and less on their parents, they developed their mutual interests, feelings of sharing and ability to cope with challenges independently. Because the parents are not available most of the time, this may enhance feelings of internal responsibility over behavioural and social outcomes (Lufi & Tenenbaum, 1993). The researcher tried to explain the effects of a kibbutz on the participant’s development and transfer of leadership skills throughout this chapter.

4.2.1.2 Motivation for playing basketball

Motivation can be defined as the force that directs and energises behaviour (Roberts, G. C. & Treasure, 2012). This thematic map focuses on the higher order theme, motivation

for basketball, and the five lower-order themes, which were generated from the data and are displayed in Table 15.

The table outlines the participants’ perceived motivation to play basketball. In the following paragraphs each lower-order theme is defined and explained in relation to the data analysis and the existing literature.

Table 15: Thematic map – motivation for basketball

Raw data themes	Lower order themes	Higher order themes
I mean it was a mission and I am the one who made people proud of their kibbutz once a week (Participant 2).	Fulfilling a mission / representing the community	Motivation for basketball
We were all there all the time. I was there thanks to the social section ... I have never gone to court alone (Participant 2).	Social activity / belonging	
I had a career. I was very successful. And I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed, succeeded and with success come all sorts of pleasures (Participant 6).	Success and appreciation	
First of all, it was a family tradition, so I had no other choice... I mean everyone played basketball. (Participant 9).	Basketball was the norm	
I really liked basketball. And I felt good about it since I was valued. And I reached achievements. And I loved to win. I really liked victories. very very much (Participant 4).	The desire to win / love for the game	

Fulfilling a mission / representing the community

As can be seen, several participants stressed that the ideology and the educational values taught in kibbutz influenced their motivation to participate in basketball. This was seen by the participants as motivation to represent the community or even at higher level to fulfil a special mission. As Participants 2, 4 and 6 stated:

“I mean it was a mission and I am the one who made people proud of their kibbutz once a week. They sat together around the court and I am, among other things, delivering them a kind of “orgasm” as the only place to reach some sort

of excitement. Because people worked hard all week long and compromised their work, compromised their marriage, compromised their family. They all had a tough military service and reserve. They gathered at the court and for a short time could forget all their problems and become whatever they want and behave however they want to behave” (Participant 2).

“My role within the team of the kibbutz was a point guard or shooting guard. My focus was always to share the ball with my teammates. I did not want to score points and be the leading scorer. Absolutely not. But I scored even though I could have scored more” (Participant 4).

“First of all, I think that education in kibbutz is what led me and many other kids of kibbutzim to social/team sports. I mean you will see a lot more kibbutz members who played volleyball and basketball than people who played tennis or participated in athletics, despite having the option to choose light athletics for example. But we did not choose these kinds of individual sports. We went to competitive sports, social/team sports” (Participant 6).

Humans, as social beings, seem to have an inherent need to associate and identify with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), although the magnitude of this need may vary from one individual to another (Glynn, 2000). Several studies demonstrate the important psychological benefits resulting from identification with others and group memberships (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995), including persons operating within a social identity framework (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

It is suggested by these approaches that feelings of identification with valued social groups and organisations assist in the development of a social network that provides psychological support and, consequently, result in a more mentally healthy individual (e.g., lower rates of anxiety, depression, or loneliness). Within the realm of sport as a leisure activity, participation on sport teams has been found to be positively related to well-being (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Social activity / belonging

Feelings of identification with valued social groups is directly linked to the low-order theme of social activity or belonging. Social aspects of motivation, despite the dominance of ability-based theories, have been identified in a several studies investigating participation in sport (e.g., Allen, 2003). A model of social motivation that specifically addresses the social aspects of motivation in sport was developed by (Allen, 2003; 2005). This perspective views motivation as a psychological process like other motivational theories. However, in a social context such as sport the central energiser of motivation is the desire to develop, maintain and demonstrate connections or social bonds with others (Allen, 2003).

All participants discussed how the social aspect of the game was appealing to them. This was one of the main reasons they found the game so fascinating and influence their motivation to play basketball professionally. This theme may be linked to other leadership skills such as teamwork and consideration of other's feeling which were raised by the participants and will be discussed later in the chapter. For example, participants 6 and 8 revealed why they found basketball so fascinating.

“The social sport was very good for me. I loved going to play basketball with the guys. With people whose company I enjoyed” (Participant 6).

“There are some very fascinating things in this sport. Mostly the fact that it is a team sport. Not an individual one. That is totally me” (Participant 8).

The above statements are aligned with the findings of Allen (2006); Baumeister and Leary (1995). The researchers concluded that the social context of sport provides individuals with opportunities to satisfy their need for social belonging and connections. Therefore, an individual’s motivation derived from their perceptions of belonging in the sport environment and not only from individuals’ perceptions of ability (Achievement Goal Theory; AGT). Perceptions of belonging and social goal orientations are proposed as the two central constructs to explain social motivation in the context of sport Allen (2003; 2005). The social motivation orientations include social status, social affiliation, and social recognition orientations.

Success and appreciation

Success and appreciation were a directly associated influence on participant’s motivation. Across a wide range of age groups, from youth sport participants to senior Olympians, the AGT (Nicholls, 1989) has proven useful in explaining motivation that individuals exhibit in sport (Duda, 2001). Motivation is viewed according to this social cognitive theory as a consequence of an individual’s goal of action to avoid demonstrating low ability and demonstrate high ability (Roberts, 2001). Relative to this goal of action, success is defined as a person’s perception of ability (Nicholls, 1989).

Typically, as the primary criteria for judging their success relative to this goal of action in sport, individuals adopt ego and task goal orientations (Duda, 2001). An ego-oriented person seeks to demonstrate his/her ability by being the best and out-performing others, and the criteria employed to define success is referred to others. In contrast a task-oriented person seeks to improve his ability and the criteria for success are self-referenced.

Furthermore, a task orientation has been promoted as the means to facilitate long-term participation in physical activity and sport although not directly empirically tested (Duda, 1996). Athletes who participate in sport over many years can be characterised as having a high level of sport commitment (Raedeke, 1997). Consequently, one could assume that a predominant task orientation should be associated with greater commitment to sport participation. The two examples below show how success and appreciation impacted the participants.

“Naturally when a person does something good, not only in basketball but in life, and there is a reward, he or she will continue doing it. In my case the reward was in form of appreciation and great public image. I personally felt very good about it. People appreciated my success, and they did not keep it to themselves. I mean they were telling me this all the time ... And after it started it just became bigger and bigger” (Participant 2).

“Right from the moment I started playing and excelling I remember that this is what filled me in terms of satisfaction and meaning more than anything else” (Participant 10).

Basketball was the norm

Another theme, which was raised by the majority of former elite athletes as one of the reasons to play basketball, is the availability of basketball, or in other words basketball was the norm. Growing up during the 60's, 70's and 80's without television or even internet, sports and boy scouts were the only hobbies teenagers could choose.

Participant 5 who grow up in an urban environment underlined that:

“I had a basketball court near my house. If there was a cricket ground, I would probably choose to play cricket. I do not know” (Participant 5).

Despite growing up in a different environment, participant 4 also mentioned that basketball was the norm. One of the reasons he chose basketball over other sports was that it was the most developed and popular sports.

“I was born in a kibbutz. I saw the adults playing and it attracted me. In general, the basketball in the kibbutz was more developed than football and volleyball. It was the leading sport. So, we tried to follow the adults. So, I kept playing basketball. I practiced and played a lot. Also, when I got older” (Participant 4).

Likewise, one of the participants who grow up in the kibbutz said:

“First of all, it was a family tradition, and I had no other choice. I mean it began with my dad and uncles and afterwards my cousins. Basically, all the people around me. Brothers and so on. I mean everyone played” (Participant 9).

The above three lower order themes of representing the community, social belonging and basketball as the norm demonstrate how participants value the importance of the social aspect within basketball. This may be explained by how Keidel (2014) considered the basic organisational unit of basketball. He believed that the most basic organisational unit of a basketball team consists only five players. Since each player must be able to play defence, offense and transition, the players are connected to their teammates. This influences the cultural norms such as trust in the group process.

The two other lower order themes success and appreciation and the desire to win and love for the game were stated by all the participants as a motivation to play basketball and to pursue a professional basketball career.

The desire to win / love for the game

Even though the interviews conducted via video conferencing tool, it was obvious that the participants could not hide their verbal and non-verbal (e.g., body language, facial expressions) excitement while talking about their desire to win and how much they love the game. This lower order theme is mentioned by seven out of nine participants as one of the reasons they started and continued to play basketball. For example, participants 4 and 7 express their feeling about the game:

“I really liked basketball. And I felt good about it since I was valued, and I reached achievements. And I loved to win. I really liked victories. very very much” (Participant 4).

“I loved everything about the game. I loved the tension, the excitement, and the victories. The losses I liked less” (Participant 7).

4.2.1.3 Motivation for business

This thematic map focuses on the higher order theme, motivation for business, consists of seven lower-order themes, which were generated from the data and is displayed in Table 16. The table outlines the participants perceived motivation to pursue a business career. In the following paragraphs each lower-order theme is defined and explained in relation to the data analysis and the existing literature.

Table 16: Thematic map – motivation for business

Raw data themes	Lower order themes	Higher order themes
I think beyond the drive to make money, success is the biggest drive (Participant 7).	Success and appreciation (financial)	Motivation for business
I have never thought about becoming a manager (Participant 3).	Was not my goal to become manager	
I loved motivating employees. Motivate employees to do things. Perform the things that need to be done (Participant 4).	Developing people and processes	
Due to my basketball career people recognize me and know who I am. So, in some way I was obliged to a certain high standard of performance and behaviour (Participant 2).	People knew me / high expectations	
I am constantly learning. I study from the greatest minds of the world and I love to learn, and I love to teach (Participant 5).	Personal development	
I must win. It is important to me that I know that not only worked hard and did well but also that I see a result. It is a strong personality (Participant 10).	Competition	
In the end especially when you are in management position that you have the ability to influence you are surrounded with people you want to be around (Participant 9).	Social aspect	

Success and appreciation

As highlighted by the participants, success and appreciation was stated by most participants as a motivation to play basketball, as well as pursue a business career. This was identified as a lower order theme. A difference between motivation for basketball

and motivation for business in terms of appreciation was recognised. When participants talked about the reasons and drivers to play basketball, they mentioned mostly the positive feedback from the public (e.g., press and community). When talking about appreciation related to the business career, several participants (e.g., participant 7) talked about the economical component:

“I think apart from the economical drive to earn money, success is the biggest drive. When you succeed in something it provides you the biggest driver. Some people are driven by failures. I am driven by success” (Participant 7).

Additionally, the motivation of success and appreciation to pursue a business may be related to the same motivation to pursue a basketball career. After so many years playing professional basketball, being used to the success and appreciation, participants in some way sought the same appreciation from their business careers. This was reflected by participant 3 and may also be related to the lower-order theme of competition.

“My drive for management is insane. This is the thing I love. This is what I enjoy doing. I think it comes from sports too. I think it comes from this place of not giving up, the desire to win, the desire to succeed, the willingness to sacrifice for what you love to do” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXIII).

The drive of participant 3 demonstrates alignment with the view of the social cognitive theory that an individual’s goal of action is to develop high ability and avoid demonstrating low ability (Roberts, 2001).

Competition

As indicated by Duda (2001) individuals adopt task and ego goal orientations as the primary criteria for judging their success relative to this goal of action in sport. Thus, the lower-order theme of competition may be associated with ego goal orientation. An ego-oriented person defines success by referring to others which means that he or she seeks to demonstrate his/her ability by being the best and out-performing others and it can be referred within the scope of this thesis as being competitive. For example, participant 10 stated that he still misses in his current job as a Strategic Business Unit Director, overseeing more than 400 employees within an international corporation, the competition from sports:

“I must win. It is important to me that I know that not only have I worked hard and done well but also that I see a result. It is a strong personality trait”

(Participant 10).

Social aspect

Participant 10 also mentioned that the competition and desire to win was not the only motivation from sports which he applied as a motivation in business. He and other participants discussed the social aspect as a motivation. As indicated as a motivation for playing basketball in chapter 4.2.1.2, The social aspect of sport provides young athletes with opportunities to satisfy their need for social belonging and connections. This is identified as a lower-order theme in motivation for business as well.

“So, the drive to succeed and the desire to win is one. The other one is softer and more connected to process or the way to achieve the results. The way I want and

aspire to reach is a way of working together. When you feel the personal commitment of one towards the other. The strength, confidence, and feeling that really connects me back to basketball. This is something I have been looking for since I stopped playing” (Participant 10).

The model of social motivation in sports developed by Allen (2003; 2005) explains the reason why the participants see the social aspect as a central motivation. Additionally, the social aspect as a motivation may be clarified by two other reasons. Firstly, participants used to be part of a sports team most of their lives. Secondly, it may be an influential factor on the participants who grow up in a kibbutz that a central part of the ideology was that children spend most of their time together with their peers and not with their parents. Therefore, they are used to be part of a group.

Developing people and processes

An additional lower-level theme which may be connected to the social motivation is the developing people and processes motivation. Developing people is defined as the ability of a manager to delegate work, observe performance, and provide feedback. Moreover, it is defined as putting the employees in the ideal spot to grow their talent every day while accomplishing results (Axelrod, 2015). Few participants conveyed this a motivation to pursue a business manager career.

“I loved motivating employees. Motivating employees to do things. To do what needed to be done. Achieve goals with them and develop them. Help them to improve their abilities. Treat them as human beings and not just robots or pawns in a game of chess” (Participant 4).

“I am a very organised person. A very, very precise person. I consider it as my strength. Let's say if we were two, we were on the court, and I was playing with you ... you would get the ball just exactly the way you should and you would not have to do anything else except for scoring ... why I am saying that? Because it became clear to me that punctuality in organisational processes is an advantage and therefore a solid motivation for myself” (Participant 2).

The above statements support the mastery achievement goal orientation within the AGT. It means that success is self-referenced and characterised by task mastery, achieving personal goals, and exhibiting maximum effort and dedication (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2009).

Personal development

Participants' personal growth was identified as a lower-order theme since several participants emphasised this as an important motivation to become a senior manager. According to Mullins (2007), a personal development is an important employees' motivational factor. Personal development is a strategy that provides staff with internal and external learning experiences, so business goals and organisational growth can be achieved (Harrison, 1997).

Upon their retirement from sports, participants were only in their mid-30's. Some such as participant 5 saw the opportunity to learn, to develop and to contribute to their organisation as a driver.

“I am constantly learning. I study from the greatest minds in the world, and I love to learn, and I love to teach” (Participant 5)

Moreover, one of the participants talked about the parallels by saying that in sports the opportunities to develop are limited and in business are unlimited.

“I think elements of learning and development in basketball are also present but at slightly younger ages. Basically, I think in basketball at some point you cannot continue to develop, learn, and grow, because there are some limited capabilities that prevent it. However, in business it is almost infinite. There you can always challenge yourself more and find interesting things to learn about and do” (Participant 9).

People knew me / high expectations

Several participants discussed how while working as business managers they were occasionally recognised as basketball players. This lower-order theme was seen by most of the participants as a positive factor. They explained it as high expectations from the environment because they were well-known figures in Israel. Participant 2 who played more than a decade in the national team and considered as one of the best players in the history of Israeli basketball stated:

“I came from a certain place and people recognised me and knew who I was, and I felt that I must therefore be as good as I can ... I mean the expectations of me were high. Whether it was in control or whether it was in the subconscious. I felt that people in front of me are expecting a lot from me. Everywhere I went. There

was always someone who introduced me as a former Israeli national player.

Although it was not related to my current role back then” (Participant 2).

On the other hand, one participant saw the publicity and high expectations as a negative issue. Although the negative effects of sports were mentioned by one participant, the researcher preferred to present this view as well. Thus, a more balanced view on the perceptions of the participants is allowed.

Participant 7 argued that the sports experience has not only positive sides but also negatives. For example, to his opinion sports closed him in a so-called bubble which prevent him to deal with the “real world”.

“Specifically, in terms of dealing with real life situations, I think that basketball has done the opposite to me. I think it spoiled us. I mean. Just for example, I first went to see a doctor at the clinic when I was 37. Until then if I felt sick, I would pick up the phone and call the team manager. He would come pick me up and I would see the team doctor immediately” (Participant 7).

Moreover, the same participant felt that being a well-known person is not necessarily good for business and stressed that people tend see him as a former athlete and they do not see his other qualifications and competencies.

“I feel much more comfortable when no one knows me. When no one knows who I am and do not know my basketball background ... Clearly there are former players who see this as an advantage. I personally feel very uncomfortable in

these situations. I have never used them to gain any advantage. I felt very embarrassed and insecure. People also look at you as a basketball player and in some way, it does not always help you do business” (Participant 7).

Kendellen and Camiré (2015) examined former athletes’ perspectives on their development experiences in high school sport. In their study, participants shared examples of negative experiences. One of the negative experiences was prioritising sport over study. It means that participants believed that high school sports negatively influence their academic performance because they put more focus on sports and less on study. This finding is similar to the below statement made by Participant 7 who felt that he paid a price for his participation in sports.

“I felt many times that people thought “oh he was a basketball player. What does he know about the business?”. This was hard for me. I had to put more effort on showing them that I know about our industry and about our products. Moreover, do not forget that I started my second career at the age of 37-38. Normally people begin at age of 22-23. So, I am 15 years behind them. And it's not easy ... Suddenly you find yourself in competition with younger people. It is very challenging” (Participant 7).

Was not my goal to become manager

The last low-order theme for this section which was discussed by several participants was that being a senior manager was never their goal. Participant 3 pursued parallel to his basketball career a military career, and upon his retirement from sport also a

management career. Eventually he became a CEO of a holding company accountable for three companies and more than 600 employees. He contended that:

“I have never thought about becoming a manager. I received all the appreciation from being a combat soldier. But I was never like these people, some are even my friends, who are constantly pushing themselves forward to become senior executives” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXII).

Likewise, Participant 6 who served as CEO of a large international corporation with more than 3,000 employees said:

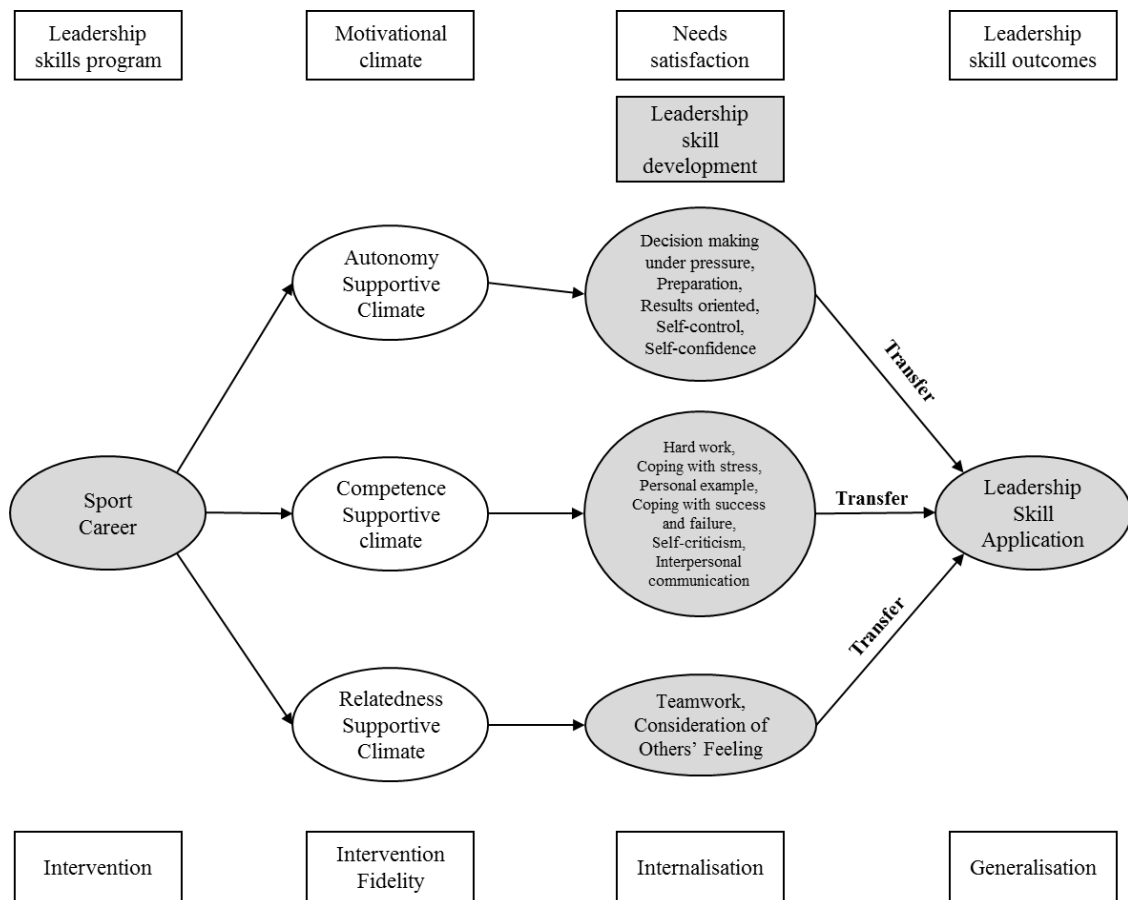
“My management career was different. Because I did not chase after it. I rolled into it. It's something I've rolled into. I was never looking for it. But I did it well, so I was there. I did not have this drive. I have never gone and asked to be appointed to CEO. There are a lot of people who do that but not me” (Participant 6).

4.2.2 Three basic needs

The findings are presented in three sections based on each basic need (see Figure 8; the grey components represent the model's aspects examined in this current research).

Concrete examples of the leadership skills participants believed they developed during their sports career and applied in business are provided. These examples are related to each basic need specified in the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013). It is essential to mention that all participants believed they learned many skills during their participation in sports.

Figure 8: Examples of leadership skill development and subsequent application, thereby providing evidence for the occurrence of the process of transfer



Source: Hodge et al. (2013)

Three higher-order themes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness comprising 14 lower-order themes were generated from the data and are displayed in Table 17 (chapter 4.2.2.1, p. 139), Table 18 (chapter 4.2.2.2, p. 153) and Table 19 (chapter 4.2.2.3, p. 162). For a more observable presentation of results, each basic need is displayed in a separate thematic map table. The tables outline the factors that former elite athletes and business managers believe developed leadership skills during their sports career and applied later in the business domain. In addition, raw data quotes are presented throughout the results, to enhance transparency and authenticity in the meaning

generated from the data, as well as enhancing the context for the reader (Roulston, 2010; Tracy, 2010).

4.2.2.1 The basic need of autonomy

Autonomy refers to the ability to make decisions and having an authentic sense of self-direction and desire (Hodge et al., 2013). The below Table 17 presents the five lower-order themes as well as the raw data quotes connected to the higher-order theme of autonomy. In the following paragraphs each lower-order theme is defined and explained in relation to the data analysis and the existing literature.

Table 17: Thematic map – basic need of autonomy

Raw data themes	Lower order themes	Higher order theme
It's a matter of practice. Especially in a team sport like basketball where one must read situations and must read them fast (Participant 9).	Decision making under pressure	Autonomy
In my opinion decision making begins long before the decision is made (Participant 3).	Preparation	
My focus was always on the result. It also came from sports by the way. Constantly examining what I am doing and checking how effective it is for the outcomes (Participant 3).	Goal orientation	
I think sports have helped me a lot to understand how to control my emotions (Participant 7).	Self-control	
I think success in basketball first and foremost gives a young boy confidence (Participant 6).	Self-confidence	

Decision making under pressure

Most participants believed practising professional sports put them in situations where they had to learn how to quickly be decisive in stressful situations. Williams and Ford (2013) define decision making as the ability to use information from the current situation as well as to plan, select and execute an appropriate goal-directed action or several actions. Examples provided by participants 8 and 9 signifying the importance aspect of practice decision making are displayed below:

“Sport teaches you attributes that a normal person who has not experienced a competitive professional sport at the highest-level lacks. Attributes such as withstanding pressure, making decisions under pressure and so on ... So, when you are constantly performing in stressful situations you develop these abilities” (Participant 8).

“I think it is a matter of practice. Especially in team sports like basketball where one must read situations and must read them fast. For example, in a situation where you want to steal the ball you must read the situation and react fast. In this aspect there is no doubt that it is good practice. However, the pace in the business world is not that fast. But the practice itself is a useful tool. I believe that I used it later consciously or unconsciously” (Participant 9).

While most of the participants believed they developed the skills of making decision under pressure, when being asked whether they applied this skill in the business setting, the answers were divisive. Several participants made a distinction between decision making in sports and decision making in business. Consistent with participant`s 9 revelations regarding the differences in pace between the two domains, participant 6 believed that he applied this skill only in specific situations in business.

“In basketball your decisions are mainly taken at instinct level. Except for decisions when you want to promote a player who has performed poorly lately. Since he had problems with performing, you want to find a way to encourage and strengthen him. It's a decision of the mind. OK? In basketball your decisions predominantly are at the level of instinct. Now, when you ran a company, these

instinct decisions are applied only when you need to take decisions quickly. These situations are only in negotiations. However, when you are not in negotiations, you do not take decisions in the same way as when playing basketball” (Participant 6).

Moreover, participant 7 believed that he learnt how to deal with the consequences of his bad decisions through experiences as a professional athlete. He asserted that he did not learn better decision making through his participation in sport.

“I do not think I learnt about decision making through sports. But I think sports have taught me how to live with the consequences of my decisions. I do not think sports taught me how to decide better or worse. Through sports I realised what happens when I make the wrong decision. However, it's my decision and I have to live with it. Like a wrong decision which led to losing a game” (Participant 7).

A number of studies claim that decision making is an acquired ability (e.g., Ford, Low, McRobert, & Williams, 2010), but whether decision making ability in one domain can transfer to successful decision making in another related domain has not yet been investigated. Thus, Causer and Ford (2014) examined whether successful decision making is specific to a sport or whether it transfers between sports that are related and have similar elements. More than 200 participants completed a video-based temporal occlusion decision making test. In this test participants were required to decide which action to take across a series of 4 versus 4 soccer game situations. A sport engagement questionnaire was used to identify 106 soccer players, 58 other sport players, and 43

other contact sports (e.g., soccer, basketball, football, hockey) players. Between soccer and other contact sports positive transfer of decision-making skill occurred, supporting the concept of transfer of learning. However, between contact and other sports the transfer of decision-making skill did not occur, providing some support for specificity of learning.

The conclusion of the above study confirms the participants' accounts of the transfer of decision making to business. Therefore participant 6's assertion that his experience of decision making while competing in professional sports differs to his decision making methods in a business setting, are aligned with the findings of Causer and Ford (2014).

Preparation

Many participants discuss how they learned to prepare themselves before competing in professional sports. A study conducted on the psychological preparation of competitive judo revealed that in order for competitive combat athletes to meet the specific combat requirements, they should be involved in sport-specific training programmes. Typically, a training programme for competitive athletes, regardless of sport, is comprised of technical, physical, tactical, and psychological preparation (see Bompa, 1999; Zatsiorsky, 1995). The quality of the practice and its contribution to athletic goal attainment is defined by the interaction between these preparations (Blumenstein, Lidor, & Tenenbaum, 2005).

Participants stressed the importance of preparation when making decisions under pressure. For example, participant 10 highlighted the link between these two lower-order themes:

“I think sports teach you how to cope with stress. Because in sports you practice performing in "money time" situations ... But it started with the preparation for this game. Right? It is not just taking the last shot. In this perspective sport teaches you a lot. And it also teaches you what happens when you do not prepare well. What happens is you come unprepared and often fail as a result”

(Participant 10).

Additionally, participants discussed not only how they developed this skill during their sports careers, but also how they applied it later in business situations. For example, participant 3 explained how he believes he developed this skill and transferred it to business and even to his military service. The below statement supports this.

“In my opinion, decision making begins long before the decision is made. I think I learnt this from basketball. Basically, apart from decisions such as shooting or passing the ball, in basketball the decisions before are the actual games. In practice you study your opponent. The decision-making process in business is similar. Preparation ultimately leads to a final decision ... This is by the way is also relevant to military. When you prepare before going on a mission. Also post mission learning is an important part. When you analyse what went well and what not and how to fix it ... These are matters that are very relevant to business”

(Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXVIII).

Evidence of a transfer of preparation skill was present only in one study in the literature which defined this skill as preparedness. Several other studies such as that of Pierce et al. (2016) reported the transfer of time management skill which may be related to the

skill of preparation. In their study they tried to understand if and how youth athletes' psychological development was facilitated by a summer wrestling camp. It gave participants time and opportunity to use these skills before they could be fully confident and aware that this skill was transferrable to other domains. Time management refers to the task of ensuring the flow of everyday life, controlling events by managing oneself (Frăşineanu, 2018).

Equivalent to the findings of the current study, a study on career success and life skill development through participation in sport found that participants stress the importance of preparation skills in achieving success. The researcher named this as preparedness and defined it as working ahead of time to be ready, practicing skills and/or behaviours in anticipation of performance (Barton, 2011). This study employed content analysis and case study methods from 15 participants. However, the participants had sport experience and were not considered to be elite athletes. As noted in the current study, Barton (2011) was not able to find an evidence of development and transfer of preparedness in previous literature, however, it is likely that constructs similar to his definition (i.e., preparedness) have been previously examined in the performance psychology field.

Moreover, the study of Hardcastle, Tye, Glassey, and Hagger (2015) supports the findings of the above research. The study explored the attitudes towards, experiences, and perceived effectiveness of a life-skills programme for high-performance young athletes, parents, coaches, sport administrators, and programme facilitators. The researchers identified improved time management as a key outcome of the programme. The participants believed that they developed better engagement in training and adopted

planning skills and time management in contexts outside of sport. These helped them to prepare for the challenges of everyday life. Therefore, this may be viewed as an important element of preparation.

Goal orientation

Several participants discussed the ways in which sports afforded them opportunities to become results oriented. According to the AGT, achievement goal orientation provides a framework for understanding how individuals interpret and respond to achievement activity (Nicholls, 1984; White, 2007). Moreover, by understanding the function and meaning of a person's goal directed actions and success standards, one can understand his or her motivation. So, based on the AGT, there are two distinct achievement goal orientations: mastery and ego. They are used to define success and measure competency. Ego achievement goal orientation measure success relative to others. This orientation is characterised by performing similarly to others, but with equivalent or less effort, or by outperforming or outwitting others (Duda & Treasure, 2009; Smith et al., 2009).

In contrast, a mastery achievement goal orientation means that success is self-referenced and characterised by task mastery, achieving personal goals, and exhibiting maximum effort and dedication (Smith et al., 2009). Another important feature of this orientation is that mistakes are not punished; rather they are treated as an opportunity for self-improvement (O'Rourke, Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). Since success is not evaluated relative to others, young athletes with a mastery orientation may perceive themselves as having less ability or talent than others and still feel competent and successful (McArdle & Duda, 2002; Nicholls, 1984).

The same participant 3, who had a successful career serving in senior roles such as COO and CEO, discussed the significance of being goal oriented:

“One of the most essential elements in management in my opinion is the ability to focus on the goal. When you are a senior manager and there are countless dilemmas and issues on your desk that needs to be prioritised ... the ability to eventually focus on two to three issues that are most significant and will affect results is paramount. The viewpoint is based the result. This I learnt by the way from sports. To constantly examine what you are doing and examine how effective it is for the outcome. Try to avoid doing things that are “nice to have” and do not impact the results” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXXIII).

Additionally, participant 6 claimed that leadership first and foremost depends on results. According to him this is the most important aspect of leadership. He also added that it is better to achieve the goals when the employees are happy, but this situation is almost impossible. This leadership approach described by participant 6 connected to another lower-order theme of interpersonal communication.

“Bottom line there is a result. You need to set up the goal and if you reach that goal successfully then you have achieved the goal. The question is how did you do that? If you lead a company worth five million dollars and you bring it to a billion dollars ... I do not think I am such a successful leader if you ask me. Definitely not. But I think I have the ability to lead. If there is a goal to achieve then I will achieve it. You will see that I will lead this successfully ... Leadership depends only on the results. In the end there is a bottom line. You ask if people

were happy with it or not? Look you are always better off achieving the goal when people are happy. You can never make everyone happy though”

(Participant 6).

Consistent with the findings above several athletes in the study of Hardcastle et al. (2015) referred to goal setting as a key tool they learnt from the life-skills programme. It was reported that the programme fostered the development of attitudes, skills, and motives important for sport success such as goal setting.

Self-control

Most participants discussed how they believed they developed the ability to control their emotions during their sports careers. Baumeister, Vohs, and Tice (2016, p. 351) define self-control as “the capacity for altering one’s own responses, especially to bring them into line with standards such as ideals, values, morals, and social expectations, and to support the pursuit of long-term goals”. Participant 2 talked about basketball as a place where he was in control regardless of pressure and the importance of competition.

“Through sports I learnt to control my emotions better ... If I had the choice during the most tense and crucial moments to be on the basketball court or to sit in the stands, I would unequivocally choose to be on the court ... I tried everything. I tried to be an agent, I tried to be a coach. From all the places I went, the place I felt "like a fish in water" was on the court. There I felt that I am the one who controls things” (Participant 2).

Moreover, participant 7 asserts that struggled to control his emotions as a child and was not considered to be organised. His statement about the development of self-control in sport shows how he learnt this skill in sports.

“I think sport helped me a lot to understand how to control my emotions. It helped me to express my emotions during the games. Sport is a fantastic platform for learning to control emotions” (Participant 7).

This same participant later revealed how he believed he transferred the self-control skills he developed in sports to situations at his work as an owner of a company.

“Nowadays I am not upset. Not cursing. I always try to be calm. Even in difficult moments I think optimistically. I force myself every morning, even though it is hard, to get up and dress up nicely and properly. Like I did before practices and games ... I made sure I looked neat... I am like this nowadays too. Unlike many people who don't put efforts on their appearance, I get up every morning and ensure I look well, because I believe the way you dress and behave shows respect for the game. The same goes for work. You need to show respect for the work and the people you work with. These are the things I learnt and developed in sport. You could say I was problematic. I think sport has developed these qualities in me” (Participant 7).

The above statements made by participant 7 mirror what Baumeister et al. (2016) argued on self-control. According to researchers, self-control enables humans to follow rules and norms prescribed by society and to resist doing what it selfishly wants. This

reflects the statements of participant 7 regarding the resistance of violating rules and guidelines of proper behaviour in self-control.

However, participant 7 was unsure if he developed the self-control skill through participation in sports, or as a result of his success in sports. The below quote illustrates how challenging it was for some participants to answer this question.

“Maybe sports did help me learn to control my emotions. I can't tell you that for sure. I believe it is the success in sports. How has success in sport affected me? Mostly is it has given me confidence. Self-confidence. Other elements are derived through self-confidence such as self-control” (Participant 6).

Aligned with the findings above, participants in the study of Newman (2020) described a variety of intrapersonal life skills that enable them to accomplish their goals and find success. Among these intrapersonal life skills are self-control, grit, personal responsibility, and effort. Like the statements above, one of the participants mentioned that he developed self-control skills through his participation in the programme and then transferred these to another domain, mainly school. Although the study examined the development of life skills during a youth programme, and not in the course of a professional career like in the current study, it is vital to emphasise similar outcomes which occurred in another context.

In contrast to the aforementioned findings, an additional qualitative work on youth's learning and development of life skills in sport was also identified as one of the concepts that young athletes considered they learnt in soccer (Holt et al., 2008). Respect

refers to the concept of character, which involves learning respect for cultural and social rules (Lerner, 2005). However, researchers did not find examples of participants demonstrating respect in the context of broader society. Rather, the sub-culture of soccer was mentioned by the participants. Thus, no evidence that respect transferred from the soccer context to other areas was found.

Self-confidence

Several participants believe the experience in sports has positively influenced their self-confidence. Various terms such as “self-efficacy”, “perceived ability”, “perceived capability”, and “self-confidence” have been used to describe individual’s perception on the capability to accomplish a certain level of performance. Feltz (1988) defines self-confidence as the belief that one can successfully execute a specific activity. Numerous studies have shown that self-confidence positively related to performance in sports (see Woodman & Hardy, 2003). Additionally, it is suggested that when athletes have high self-confidence, anxiety may be facilitated for attentional control and performance. They will do that by exerting more goal-directed mental effort (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992).

Participant 4 revealed that the first thing sports taught him was self-confidence.

Additionally, participant 6 shared his thoughts about self-confidence as an adolescent.

He asserted that the self-confidence was fundamental to his personal development as well as the development of his leadership skills.

“I think success in basketball as young boy gave me first and foremost confidence. At the age of 20 people were asking my opinion and were listening

to my ideas. Does it also improve my leadership ability? I am not sure. Does it boost my leadership ability? 100% yes” (Participant 6).

This finding is aligned with one of the recent studies which conducted by Chinkov and Holt (2016). By examining the importance of sports in the life of 16 Brazilian jiu-jitsu athletes, the researchers explored life skills transfer. Based on athletes’ beliefs, the learning of life skills came from the special characteristics of jiu-jitsu such as challenges of practicing. Moreover, according to the study, athletes believed that they were able to make positive changes in other life domains through sports participation and their learnings. 12 out of 16 athletes reported changes with a clearly recognisable transfer to other domains, amongst others self-confidence. Similar to the aforementioned statements of participants 4 and 6, participants were able to describe different situations in which they felt more confident as a result of their involvement in jiu-jitsu.

However, participant 7 claimed that in basketball, players may lose confidence very fast. Due to the nature of this game and the internal competition in the team, basketball does not even teach you to become a team player.

“I think basketball specifically is the most psychologically difficult sport there is. I think football has less complexity for example. Because in football 11 players start the game. A maximum of three substitute players can replace the 11 starters. A player who starts the game knows that 70% he also finishes the game. A player coming off the bench knows that 99% that he will also finish the game. In basketball there are five on the court and seven on the bench sitting and their only option to enter the game is when either the player playing their role will not

play well or gets injured. This automatically makes them think negatively. And these things are transmitted to the players on the field ... it is very, very easy to lose confidence. Because scoring is ultimately depending on confidence ... when you are a player and you see the coach tells the substitute player to go in and replace you, you immediately lose confidence. Therefore, I believe basketball specifically does not make you a better team player. It is the opposite. It makes you a little paranoid” (Participant 7).

The above statement made by participant 7 contradicts what other participants argued about basketball as a platform to gain self-confidence. Additionally, Keidel (2014) contested that as a result of the flexibility and speed of the game, coordination between the players comes from themselves, through mutual group adjustment. Keidel (2014) indicated that in basketball substitutes must be able to instantly integrate themselves with their teammates, however his study does not focus on the negative aspects of sports which may be lost in confidence according to participant 7 alleged.

4.2.2.2 The basic need of relatedness

The literature displays that social support as a concept is centrally related to competence and resilience. Furthermore, “consideration for others’ feeling”, “cooperation with others” (Nishida et al., 2007; 2010), “social responsibility” and “increased social interest” (Brunelle et al., 2007) were identified to have clear connections to the basic need of relatedness.

The below Table 18 presents the two lower-order themes as well as the raw data quotes related to the higher-order theme of relatedness. In the following paragraphs each lower-order theme is defined and explained in relation to the data analysis and the existing literature.

Table 18: Thematic map – basic need of relatedness

Raw data themes	Lower order themes	Higher order themes
My personal affairs were second to the success of the company. I managed the company as a point guard in basketball. As a point guard at the end of his career. One who did not look at the basket at all (participant 6)	Teamwork	relatedness
In the end of the day, I really want them to be happy and satisfied. Why? Part of it has to do with the need to achieve a harmonious atmosphere as a basis for success (participant 10)	Consideration of others' feelings / social skills	

Teamwork

All participants discussed how they believed they developed the ability of teamwork in sports and all of them discussed how they applied this skill in business. This lower-order theme was one of the most significant aspect raised by the participants while talking about their experiences in sport and business.

Teamwork is considered as an important variable within the vernacular of sport. The importance of players working together is frequently emphasised by coaches regardless of sport. By working well with their teammates, athletes attribute to team outcomes (Carron, Martin, & Loughhead, 2012). With the aim to provide a working definition and conceptual framework of teamwork in sport in field of sport psychology, McEwan & Beauchamp (2014) conducted a theoretical and integrative review. They defined teamwork as “a dynamic process involving a collaborative effort by team members to effectively carry out the independent and interdependent behaviours that are required to

maximise a team's likelihood of achieving its purposes" (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014, p. 233).

The below quote from participant 9, who acts as a CEO of a multinational corporation, emphasises the importance the role of teamwork played in his sports career.

"In our team, the team itself was much more important than any of the individual players. The team success was way more important than the individual success"
(Participant 9).

When asked whether or not he believed practising basketball made him a better team player, the same participant shared more details about how he implements his learning from basketball to his role as a CEO.

"I'm totally convinced that I learnt this in sports. In comparison to the other skills which I said that sports contributed teamwork contributed more significantly. I learned to collaborate with people, to trust others to do their job, to understand sometimes I need to do the "dirty" work in order for someone else to receive the recognition, yet my part was as important as his. It is something that accompanies me even today. You know, there are key phrases from basketball that I have been saying for 25 years in management. For example, "any pass that does not reach its destination is always the fault of person who passed the ball and not of the person who supposed to catch it". It means that you did not transfer the message properly. You did not make sure the information arrived and the colleague understood it. It means that you did not

give him enough time to understand. Thus, it is your fault. It is your responsibility” (Participant 9).

The below statements reported by the participants demonstrate that having the opportunity to work within a sport team allowed them to understand the importance teamwork for both domains.

“Some very fascinating things in this sport attracted me at a very young age. Mostly that basketball is a team sport and not an individual one. That is totally me! The teamwork is my worldview. A large part of the values I instil today and accompany me as a manager are the same values I grew up with in sports” (Participant 8).

“I believe it starts with the personal character and continues through the learning of teamwork in basketball, and the understanding that wins will follow when the team plays well together. In the long term, it probably influenced my management style. In most of the management roles I filled, I implemented teamwork in decision making processes” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXVII).

Participant 9 highlighted the importance of involving other people in decision making as well.

“When people are involved in the decision-making process they are committed and feel much better. They do not feel that unreasonable or unconventional

things have been forced upon them. Rather they feel partners in the process. As a result, the feeling of autonomy, commitment, involvement of people is much stronger. I believe, when employees are happy, they also contribute to the organization more” (Participant 9).

Participants 6 and 10 considered themselves as team players and asserted that they transferred this skill from sport to business. Moreover, they believed that basketball along with their character and other external factors such as growing up in a kibbutz influenced their ability to work within a team.

“I’m a team player. Do you understand? Some people say that if you are a player in a team sport, you will probably be also a good team player in the company you will work for ... My personal affairs were second to the success of the company. I managed the company as a point guard in basketball. As a point guard at the end of his career. One who was not concerned with the basket, rather with his teammates” (Participant 6).

“I believe that the fact that I love working on the team has allowed me to become a good basketball player. It’s an interaction between my character, what I learnt in basketball and all the other things you do such as army or a kibbutz that built me as a player and a manager. The fact that I played within a team strengthened my ability to work in a team” (Participant 6).

“Without any doubt I prefer team players over stars! If you ask me about my corporation’s success, it is not due to us having better managers than our

competitors. They are no better than average everywhere. The fact that my corporation is much more successful than other organisations is because of the “shared goal”. This is much stronger than in any other organisation. Maybe because of the kibbutz model that the workers are the owners, as well as social values. The understanding the together we achieve much more is the core value here” (Participant 10).

The above finding aligned with the study of Camiré, Trudel, and Forneris (2009). In their study, high school athletes’ perspectives on support, communication, negotiation, and life skill development were documented. For the purposes of this current study, the relevant part of the findings revealed that athletes believed high school sport participation allowed them to develop a number of life skills that could be transferred to other life domains. They reported that they learned the importance of working with others (i.e., teamwork). Additionally, a considerable portion of participants believed that the skill of working with other could be applied by them to academic work. Although the participants were soccer players and not basketballers, and they reported the transfer from sport to academia, these findings demonstrate similar outcomes to the current research but in a different sports context.

An additional study conducted by Holt et al. (2008), examined whether and how youths learned life skills through their participation in high school soccer teams. Three life skills of respect, initiative and teamwork/leadership were identified. The only concepts that young athletes thought transferred to other areas were teamwork and leadership. Researchers conclude that athletes produced their own experience which supported the development of these skills rather than skills directly taught by coaches (Larson, 2000).

These findings mirror results of this thesis in terms of development and transfer of teamwork skills in team sports as opposed to those taught in a dedicated development programme.

Additionally, these findings mirror results of a survey conducted by Berrett (2006). His survey found that more than 70% of the top 100 CEOs in one state in Australia participated in high school sports. 54% of these CEOs reported that their high school sport participation had extensive or a significant effect on their future career development. Participants associated the attributes of teamwork and leadership with high-school sport participation.

Consideration of others' feelings / social skills

The majority of participants asserted that their experiences in basketball improved their social skills and taught them to be more considerate of others' feelings.

The ability to effectively understand, read, and control social interactions has been of interest to behavioural researchers for a long time. 100 years ago, Thorndike (1920, p. 228) defined social intelligence as “the ability to understand men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations”. More recently, Marlowe (1986, p. 52) defined social intelligence as “the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding”. Moreover, being empathetic or being considerate of others' feelings refers to an individual's ability to share the experiences and emotions of others (Clark, 1980).

Some participants, such as participant 6, emphasised that sport is an excellent setting in which people can meet new people and to create meaningful relationships. Additionally, he shared how his roles as a point guard influenced the development of this skill.

“Through basketball or through team sports, you build and learn how to build a social network and social status. You are building a social life for yourself”
(Participant 6).

“I think at the beginning of my career I only looked at myself. I was very young, and my focus was to score more than to pass the ball. As time went by, I became a more point guard ... So, slowly my focus changed. I looked more on how to make the other players better. One of the things I did was to connect to other players on the emotional level ... So, one can say that I learned this skill in basketball. Maybe. I do not rule it out” (Participant 6).

The above quotes align with the findings of a study about the topic of leader’s social off-field behaviour. As specified in the literature review (see chapter 2.4.2, pages 48-49) there are several characteristics that are vital for leader’s success. Among other are possessing good interpersonal skills, showing concern and care for others, being vocal and trustworthy, and facilitating relationships with teammates and discussions with the coaching staff (Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes, Mcneil, & Adorna, 2010; Price & Weiss, 2013).

Participant 10 shared his view regarding consideration of others’ feelings as a fundamental aspect of his job. He explained it as a basis on success.

“At the end of the day, I really want them to be happy and satisfied. Why? Part of it has to do with the need to achieve a harmonious atmosphere as a basis for success” (Participant 10).

Participant 3 discussed how consideration of others’ feeling was important to him but up to a certain point. He shared an example which demonstrates how hard it is sometimes for managers to put their feelings aside and make a necessary decision.

“Considering the feelings of others is very important to me. But up to a certain limit. I had a case of one of my VPs who hired a mid-level manager. He was his mentor and invested a lot in his development. However, this mid-level manager was busy with himself and did not get along with his staff. The VP could not fire him. I finally told the VP. “You do not understand how much damage he is causing you. Not for himself and not for the organisation but for you.” At the end, with a lot of empathy and affection, experience, and listening, one should also know how to make the decision. So, we released him from his job” (Participant 3, Appendix B, pages XXVII-XXVIII).

Additionally, participant 8 shared a story about a salesperson he hired recently. This story echoes participant 3’s assertions on the importance of having good social skills.

“I hired a so-called “superstar” player to join my company. Someone that everyone recommended, allegedly a really good salesman. But he did not connect to the DNA of the team, to the group. He is a slightly different kind of person. Do you understand? Now I tried to do everything. I explained it to the

team, but it did not work. He came to me and said that doesn't feel comfortable and therefore wants to leave the company. So, if you hired a star or someone with all the abilities to succeed, it doesn't guarantee that they will be a fit for your company. This is life in sport and in business" (Participant 8).

These examples provided by the participants support the study conducted by Ferris, Witt, and Hochwarter (2001). In their study, the interaction of social skill and general mental ability on job performance and salary is tested. A quote suggests the importance of social skills to success at work, and how these may be associated with the examples shared by participants 3 and 8 in the current study: "She may be a genius, but she isn't getting things done here because she can't work with people. In fact, she has more enemies than anyone in the office" (Ferris et al., 2001, p. 1075).

The above findings aligned with the studies of Camiré et al. (2009) who examined high school athletes' perspectives on communication, support, negotiation, and life skill development. Results revealed that athletes believed sport participation allowed them to develop a number of life skills such as teamwork and social skills, which could be transferred to other life domains.

However, in a recent study, interpersonal and intrapersonal life skill transfer outcomes were reported by participants. They claimed that sport participation allowed them to develop social skills they felt they applied in various life domains (Newman, 2020). Participants stated that the only interpersonal skills they developed and transferred were communication, teamwork, respect, and social responsibility. Participants believed that the social skill of developing relationships with peers was only developed during their

sport careers and was not transferred to other domains. Therefore, these findings are not consistent with the results of this thesis.

4.2.2.3 The basic need of competence

Competence refers to the ability of the individual to feel effective in his or her interactions within the social environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The below Table 19 presents the seven lower-order themes as well as the raw data quotes linked to the higher-order theme of competence. In the following paragraphs each lower-order theme is defined and explained in relation to the data analysis and the existing literature.

Table 19: Thematic map – basic need of autonomy

Raw data themes	Lower order themes	Higher order theme
Sport has taught me that if you want to be good then you need to know how to fight and work hard (participant 7).	Hard work and self-discipline	
Sports helped me to understand what self-criticism is. After all, the result in basketball is black or white. Either you put the ball in the basket, or you do not ... There are no excuses and explanations (participant 7).	Self-criticism	
This ability to really withstand stressful situations. Taking responsibility despite the stressful situation is a very, very important personality trait (participant 9).	Coping with stress	
In life you must deal with troughs and peaks. Learn to admit to mistakes and change direction when needed (participant 5).	Coping with success and failures	Competence
I think leadership also comes from listening. Lots of listening, lots of focus to others. It conveys credibility because it stems from a personal example (participant 3).	Interpersonal communication	
Reliability is a basic condition for leadership... You gain credibility through leading by example (participant 3)	Personal example	
I must win. I'm not only looking at whether I worked hard and did well but also, I want results (participant 10).	Competitiveness	

Hard work and self-discipline

When people normally observe the competitiveness of sports, they usually consider the development of a work ethic. It is generally believed that those athletes and teams who remain successful, dominant, or become champions, do so on the basis of hard work. Thus, sports have the potential to develop, among the participants, the quality of hard work. Such a life skill is not only relevant for the sporting career, but it may also play a significant role in the non-sports setting (Arif, Khan, & Khan, 2019).

Sport is considered as a platform where participants may develop their ability to work hard. This comes normally with related skills such as a sense of responsibility, discipline, self-confidence, and punctuality (Mueller et al., 2011). A study mainly concerned with the role played by sports in the development of a work ethic as a life skill based on experiences of former athletes in Pakistan, Arif et al. (2019) concluded that the ability to “work hard” was identified as a significant life skill for success, along with an understanding that participating in sport would help develop this ability.

The majority of participants believed basketball was conducive to the development of their ability to work hard and allowed them to implement this in their business career. The following statements offer direct evidence of skill development and transfer made by the same participants.

“One of the first things I learned from sports, and I find it very relevant to the business world, is the focus on hard work. I mean nothing comes by itself ... there is no such thing as a free meal. If you do not invest, do not train, are not

curious, and you are not fit, good things will not happen by themselves”

(Participant 8).

“Sport has taught me that if I want to be successful then I have to know how to fight and work hard. Harder than everybody else. It's the same thing in life. If you want to be successful you have to work harder than everyone else ...

Athletes in general, maybe basketball players in particular, have the ability to demand more from themselves than other people ... We have the ability not to give up ... For example, I could fly 12 to 17 hours, arrive home, clean myself and go straight to work. Other people would go to rest ... In terms of habits, I think basketball has given us a lot of good work habits” (Participant 7).

When participant 10 talked about the hard work, he associated it directly with the ability to perform and the importance of preparation.

“First of all, I learned to perform when it is important ... It's related to the outcome ... Also, I learned that there is no success without hard work and preparation. Without hard work there is no achievement” (Participant 10).

The above statements align with the findings of Chinkov and Holt (2016) who explored the transfer of life skills among adults who participated in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Through their training, thirteen out of sixteen participants reported that they had learned to persevere when facing challenges in other life domains. In particular, one participant mentioned how he learnt perseverance and patience which he later applied in his

management role. This example mirrors the statements made by participant of this current study.

An additional study supports the findings of this current research. Pierce et al. (2016) used a grounded theory methodology to understand if and how psychological development in youth wrestling athletes was facilitated by an “intensive” summer camp. Personal empowerment and hard work were described by participants as skills that were transferred directly outside the camp to other life domains.

Moreover, a study on youth sport programmes, which aims to enhance the development and transfer of life skills, supports the findings of this current study. Thirteen semi-structured interviews exploring life skill development were conducted, in addition to photo-elicitation interviews which explored life skill transfer. The most frequently and descriptively discussed life skill, which was developed and transferred, was effort. Similar to the assertions of participants in this current study, the youth participants mentioned determination, hard work and effort as important skills they learnt during the camp and applied in another domain, mainly school (Newman, 2020).

The three studies support the findings of this thesis; however, two factors should be taken into consideration. Firstly, in the context of sport. It is claimed that every sport is a self-contained world of behaviours, structures, and processes (Keidel, 2014).

Therefore, the contextual differences between basketball, jiu-jitsu and wrestling should be noted. Secondly, it is argued that it is difficult to separate the developmental changes related to participation in sport from other changes in every young person’s life. There

are many influencing factors in people's lives which are not related to sport such as socially characteristics of participants (Coakley, 2011).

Self-criticism

Many participants discussed how they believed participation in sports was conducive to the development and transfer of self-criticism skill. Self-criticism is defined as a self-evaluative process where individuals judge themselves in a negative way (Shahar et al., 2015). However, since self-criticism is very broad and comprehensive topic as well as not only negative related, but it is also vital to examine it further. The role of perfectionism as a maladaptive factor in sports is discussed by Flett and Hewitt (2016). They identify the phenomenon as the perfectionism paradox and noted that certain sports require athletes to achieve perfect performance outcomes.

This tendency is characterised by perfectionistic personality traits. This aim to achieve perfection often fosters a sense of dissatisfaction with performance and undermines performance (Flett & Hewitt, 2016). According to the researchers, athletes to some degree will be protected from negative outcomes such as psychological distress if they have developed a proactive, task-oriented approach to coping with difficulties and setbacks and if they experience success.

The development of a sense of flexibility is considered a key aspect of the coping process for athletes. They may adjust their goals in accordance with current levels of personal functioning and situational demands. Moreover, the researchers indicate that perfectionistic athletes with a sense of self-efficacy, low levels of ego orientation, and relatively low sensitivity to failure should be relatively resilient. In contrast, the inherent

risks are higher for perfectionistic athletes who are characterised by excessive fears of failure and self-doubts and defensively focused on mistakes (Flett & Hewitt, 2016). This case seems to be aligned with the statement of participant 7 about self-confidence in basketball (see lower-order theme self-confidence).

Several participants discussed how they believed sports contributed to their development of self-criticism. Mostly, participants shared how they believed they learned through sports participation to stay positive even through difficult times. It may be explained by participants' ability of resiliency and the positive emphasis of this current study. The example below demonstrated how participant 7 considered the experience as a basketball player to have helped him better judge his performance.

“Sport helped me to understand what self-criticism means. The outcome in basketball is either black or white. Either you put the ball in the basket, or you not ... There are no excuses and explanations ... In business there are grey areas. In sports, especially in basketball there are none. In football for example there can be a draw. In handball as well. In basketball it's black or white or you win, or you lose ... either the ball goes into the basket or not. And I think in terms of self-criticism it also helped a lot” (Participant 7).

Additionally, participant 8, who played in one of the best clubs in Europe and upon his retirement became a successful entrepreneur in the furniture industry, draws parallels between the worlds of sport and business. He revealed a short story of how more than three decades after his retirement as a basketball player, he still uses the ability to self-criticise when talking to his employees.

“Many people do not know how to objectively evaluate their performance. It is natural. No one grants himself an objective score ... One day an employee came to talk to me and said that he deserves a pay increase. He thought that he did well, so he deserves it. He saw it from his point of view. But his view was not objective. Then I explained him that one of the most important things is to look at yourself from the other side and told him a story about my days as a young professional basketball player. I was a bench player. The team brought in few players from America who were better than me in terms of abilities. There were situations when those players were playing bad and still, they played, and I did not. Although I was better than them in practices. I was 22, 23 years old and kept coming in with complaints ... I found all the possible excuses and thought that I was not treated properly. Then one day I realised that it's all up to me! I understood that it does not help to complain, and I must prove myself on the field. Then I became one of the best defence players in Europe. The situation in life and business is similar ... Everyone says that they want to be a manager and so on. Then you put a mirror in their face and ask why they you did not invest more at work? and why they did not behave like someone who wants to become a manager? Do you understand? So, team sport is the mirror of business life. I use it a lot. I share many examples from sport with my employees” (Participant 8).

An examination of prior research has not found examples of research which tested and reported self-criticism as a skill which has been developed and transferred from sport to business. However, one study reported that critical thinking is an essential skill for non-

sports career success which was developed through participation in sports (Barton, 2011).

Coping with stress

Most participants clearly implied practising basketball for so many years put them in situations where they had to learn how to cope with stress. This is aligned with Madden (1995) who argued that if athletes do not have the appropriate coping skills to deal with stressful situations such as getting media attention when playing an important game, poor refereeing, injuries, and performance slumps, then they are likely to experience poor performance, negative affect and they may eventually drop out of sports.

Coping is defined as the behavioural and cognitive efforts that individuals consciously employ to manage their perceived external and/or internal demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Within the context of sports, there are multiple options for athletes to cope with stressful situations and minimise potential harm. Firstly, by focussing on a task or action, the problem-focused coping strategies reduce the impact of the stressor. Secondly, the emotion-focused coping strategy is considered as a regulation of emotions that are incited by a stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lastly, the avoidance coping strategy used by athletes when they are trying to keep away from the stressor, by either behaviourally (e.g., walking away from the stressor) or cognitively (e.g., blocking thoughts) avoiding the stressor (Krohne, 1993).

The choice of which coping strategy to use is influenced by whether athletes perceive a stressful encounter as a challenge or a threat (Anshel, Jamieson, & Raviv, 2001; Levy, Nicholls, & Polman, 2011). Challenge appraisal is associated with the use of adaptive

coping strategies, positive emotions higher self-rated performance. Threat appraisal, on the other hand, results in more frequent use of negative emotions, maladaptive coping strategies, and lower self-rated performance scores (Nicholls, Polman, & Levy, 2012).

Participant 9 discussed the value of handling pressure and the ability to practice through participation in sport. His statement supports participant 8 statement about decision making in stressful situations and that sport enables people to learn how to cope with stress, something which non-athletes lack (see lower-order theme of decision making under pressure).

“I think the most important thing is enduring stress ... the ability to really cope with stressful situations. To be able to take responsibility is a very, very important personality trait. And it certainly gets stronger and maybe becomes vital for someone who excels in sports. Once people know this, they will always turn to you in moments of crisis” (Participant 9).

The statement above is consistent with a study which explored the attributes associated with mental resilience in sport. Participants in semi-structured interviews and a focus group ten international sports performers reported that accepting anxiety and knowing how cope with it is among the 12 attributes associated with mental resilience (Jones, 2002b). According to the athletes, a main part of the definition of mental resilience is coping.

Moreover, the statement made by participant 9 mirrors the findings of the study of Kendellen and Camire (2017). Their study offers an examination of life skill

development and transfer experiences of former youth athletes. Coping with stress was mentioned by most of the participants as a skill which they believed they transferred to other life domains.

Additionally, Lee, Park, Jang, and Park (2017) investigated the influence of an afterschool sport programme on youth's life skills development. Participants reported better coping skills through their experience in afterschool sport programmes. They argued that the programme provided them with specific tools and alternative activities and context to deal with stress and problems. Although the context of soccer and of a 12-week programme conducted in South Korea is much different than the context of this thesis, it is vital to highlight the similar outcome.

Coping with success and failures

Along with coping with stress participants also discussed how sports experience helped them develop the ability to cope with success and with failures. Additionally, they draw parallels between the sports and business settings and discussed how they applied this skill in business. As indicated above, coping refers to “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Emotional responses to success and failure in performances referred to coping responses. Lazarus (2000, p. 237) also indicated that “the right kind of coping in an important competition could lead athletes to become re-motivated and, thereby, capable of attending and concentrating effectively to display their typically high standards of excellence”.

Participants were very open and honest in sharing instances of failures. Participant 5 shared how in sports as in life he dealt with ups and downs. The statement of participant 8 shows how he learned from this experience and implemented his coping abilities in other domains. These experiences demonstrate concrete examples of learning and transferring of this skill from sport to business.

“In life you have to deal with peaks and troughs. Learn to admit to mistakes and change direction when needed ... An elite athlete does not stop shooting the ball after he missed few shots; a real athlete learns from his missed shoots and continue shooting” (Participant 5).

“Sports enables you to practice coping in stressful situations and coping with winning and losing. These experiences a non-professional athlete lacks. It is how you perform under pressure and making decisions under pressure ... what is a sport? it's something disproportionate ... participating in professional team sports means being constantly under pressure and this is disproportionate. This develops coping abilities. Because you are learning that there are always ups and downs. You had a good game; you had a bad game. Now, in real life if you have had a bad day then maybe your wife or a friend at work knows it. But when I had a bad game 10,000 people saw it immediately. You need to know how to deal with it and come the next day and play well. There were some unpleasant situations when I made a mistake on the court and the team lost the game as a result. This is very, very extreme psychology ... After you experience this, then when a customer or your manager is yelling at you, you know how to deal with it” (Participant 8).

Similarly, participant 3 talked about how he believed sports help him to develop this skill which he eventually applied in business and other domains.

“Dealing with failure is an essential element of leadership. I think I learned that from sports. Because in sport there is always the next game. Therefore, I must recover quickly and clear my head. Although we lost the game because of my mistake, there is always the next game next week or in few days ... learning from my failures and dealing with criticism are two of the benefits of sports participation ... in business I was not always successful. And in business I also made bad decisions. But I could not let this affect me... and my employees and managers also make mistakes. First, I must analyse the outcome of the mistake and not necessarily fire the person who did it. It could lead to success later. I think that's one of the advantages an athlete has compared to non-athletes. Sport enables people some sort of a system that knows how to withstand disappointments and move on stronger” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXXIV).

Evidence from a previous study which demonstrates the development and transfer of coping with success and failure skill from sports to another domain was not found. However, Danish et al. (1993) presented a list of life skills that are transferrable to other domains. Among these skills is the ability to handle both success and failure. However, this list was not empirically tested by the researchers.

Interpersonal communication

All participants discussed how they believed team sport was conducive to the development of interpersonal communication. When participants talked about this topic, they also indicate several related themes such as the ability to listen and the preferred people-oriented or transformational leadership style over command and control. Thus, the examination of this lower-order theme covers several sub-topics.

Interpersonal communication refers to the non-verbal (e.g., body language or facial expressions) and verbal processes by which individuals directly interact (Hargie, 2011). It is also referred to as direct face-to-face communication “between two or more people in physical proximity in which all of the five senses can be utilised and immediate feedback is present” (Vezzuto, 1984, p. 13).

The following statements demonstrate how participant 2 viewed the ability to give up as a core aspect of interpersonal communication and leadership.

“Sometimes my employees used to visit my office after they finished their shift the to ask something for 3-4 minutes. I would sit with them for over two hours. Because I am this kind of a person. I do not know if it is good management or not. Some employees had getting to work on time so I would call their wives in the morning to wake them up ... in short, I was giving personal care to each employee ... My manager, the head of my division, came to visit me one day at the office. He saw that my door was open, and he said, "what do you mean you keep the door open?" Yes, I told him, that's my policy” (Participant 2).

“One of the leadership skills is the ability to give up. It is a talent. This is very, very significant because we are interacting with people either in sports team or in an organisation. If you as a leader do not understand that you need sometimes to give up, at least in the relative part, then you are in trouble” (Participant 2).

Similarly, participant 3 shared that the ability to listen and is an important aspect of interpersonal communication.

“I think leadership also comes from listening. Lots of listening, lots of room for other people ... Be able to let people talk. Let people express their opinions and hear them because many times they have smart things to say” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXXI).

Moreover, many participants discussed how having to reconcile both their sports and business careers enabled them to learn about the difference between people-oriented leadership and command-and-control leadership. Participant 5 became a successful basketball coach of the national team of Israel upon his retirement from being an active player, and right before his business career. He asserted without any doubt that people-oriented leadership is the right leadership approach for sports and business.

“The ability to speak to people in their own language. Into their eyes. Think like them. To feel like them. This motivates them to act in stressful situations. Do you understand? Now you can learn it like I did. But there are coaches or managers whose attitude is different. They come in the first training and punish the star of the team in order to show everyone who is boss. These are the

coaches or managers who can get 100% out of the team at best. On the other hand, I was a coach of players who are until today are my friends. Players I coached are like my family. And I would motivate them” (Participant 5).

Participant 8 and 10 shared their view on how they communicated with other employees and how they believed sport influenced their leadership style.

“Leadership is not really a one-size-fits-all definition. But in the end, it is a trait that a person has who knows how to motivate people. Motivate people. For example, a leader in the army is different. He needs to give orders to people. But in today's business or sports world you do not motivate people like soldiers. A leader makes people do things and go with him all the way. Surely sports provide athletes a platform to practice, but I think in the end the level of leadership begins with personality. Certainly, it can be developed, certainly it can be learned, certainly it is possible to make mistakes through sports. A leader writes the maps and not only follow already written maps” (Participant 8).

“It is important to me that we work well together. I really do not like the hierarchy command and control leadership where the employees just follow orders, organisational processes, and procedures. My strength does not come from there. My strength comes from collaboration. I clearly felt I was the leader of the team. Sport, in many ways, taught me what leadership is. First of all, inspiration, the empowerment of the people. I felt it was my responsibility. Therefore, it important to look and behave well when stepping on the court. I am

a symbol. People are looking at me. People look at my behaviour. My behaviour leads them” (Participant 10).

The above statements support the view of many scholars such as Hawkins and Tolzin (2002) who argued that a new form of leadership within the context of sports need to replace the traditional models. They proposed that transformational leadership is necessary for team success. According to Bass (1985) transformational leaders in organisations motivate their followers to do more than they would normally do. The four behavioural attributes of transformational leadership are individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspiration, and charisma.

According to Gordon (2007) sport psychologists are making the behavioural and philosophical differences between domineering “old school” (i.e., traditional) and “modern school” coaching styles more understandable. Beswick (2001) highlighted these coaching behaviours and attitudes differences (see Table 20). As stated above (see quotes of participant 8 and 10), these two styles were mentioned by several participants while talking about interpersonal communication and leadership styles. Some of these are illustrated by the differences between the military command and control style and people-oriented or transformational leadership style discussed by the participants.

Table 20: Old (traditional) vs. modern school coaching behaviours and attitudes

Old school	Modern
Focus on winning	Focus on winning (same)
Ex-player	Qualified coach
Instinctive	Careful planning
“Me”	“We”
Coach-cantered	Athlete-centred
Controlling	Empowering
Authoritarian	Democratic
Problem-focused	Solution-focused
“Yelling and telling”	“Selling and asking”
Hard worker	Smarter worker

Source: Gordon (2007)

Bass (1985, p. 166) claimed that “contingent reward and management-by-exception are favoured in well-structured, stable and orderly environments, and mechanistic organisations with pragmatic norms”. Yet, Hawkins and Tolzin (2002) advised that within the sports context, teams don’t fit any of Bass’ aforementioned criteria. They argue that for example, baseball team leaders have no position of power, and thus no formal authority to call other players for action. In contrary, they must depend on personal methods of power (French & Raven, 1959). Based on this perception, leadership theories founded on contingent rewards, e.g., transactional leadership theory perhaps will not apply.

This claim is supported by Burnes and O'Donnell (2011) who argued that one of the main developments in the study and practice of leadership in the last 30 years is the rejection of the command-and-control view of leadership. Instead of focusing on top-down control based on authority, leaders are now viewed as individuals who motivate their subordinates by establishing relationship through the power of their personality and not of their authority (Nahavandi, 2000).

The above findings support what several participants mentioned about informal and social leaders. According to Cotterill (2013) informal leaders are shaped as a result of interactions with teammates and the demands of the task. Subsequently, they are seen as the “cultural architects” of the team which mean that these leaders have the ability to change the mindset of others (Railo, 1986). The large study of Fransen et al. (2014) underlines the significance of informal leaders.

The results show that only 1% of the participants argue that their team captain was the real leader on all four leadership roles (i.e., motivational, task, external, and social). Moreover, a social leader defined as the person who ensures a good team atmosphere off the field (Fransen et al., 2014). It was found that the level of team’s tasks cohesion and social is influenced by the number of athlete leaders occupying a specific leadership role. The more athletes fulfil the roles, the higher the cohesion (Fransen, 2014).

Below are the statements made by participant 9 which support the findings above and illustrate the importance of social and informal leaders in sport as well as in business.

“Sport trains you. In one season I was almost the main player on whom things depended. And I really did not like it because it put a lot of focus and responsibility on me. I liked to be a role player and I could help a lot more than as the main player ... I learned that you don’t need to be the star or the captain of the team to be the leader. Also, that leadership comes in a multitude of forms. Leadership is not something you take; leadership is something you are given, and the stars of the team are not necessarily the leaders ... You need the star of the team without any doubt. But you also need the "silent leader" to ensure that

all players are aligned together and make sure everything works out. And make sure everyone is committed and everyone is in the mood etc. Sometimes he is also the star of the team. But mostly he is not. Similarly, it is in the business world. One of my hardest tasks is to identify those ‘quiet leaders’ within the organisation and give them the opportunity to develop” (Participant 9).

The same participant shared his experience as CEO of an organisation where the collaboration and teamwork are part of the organisation culture. Managers empower employees as well as delegate tasks. He changed his job and became a CEO in an organisation where hierarchy is much stronger and important than his previous company. There managers are not used to taking responsibility and to working in a team.

“I moved from an organisation where teamwork and people-oriented leadership is in his DNA ... because of that it was very easy for me to fit into it. I came to the new organisation as the CEO being at the top of his pyramid of an organisation which is not used to this kind of leadership. Everyone expected me to make decisions as an army commander and not as a partner. And it is very, very difficult for me to change this culture of work. It involves changing people, changing organisational culture and more. But I insist on it all by force because I cannot work otherwise. I cannot be a director. I cannot say: do so and do not ask questions even though I am the CEO ... I think my experience as a basketball player has taught me that one does not have to be at the top of the pyramid to make things happen and hierarchical authority is not the only way to motivate people. That is what he learned. I apply this today even though I am at the top of

the pyramid. At the top of the hierarchy. I do not use my title to force people to do what I say, only in cases where there is no choice” (Participant 9).

Personal example and healthy lifestyle

Many participants discussed how they believed sports helped them to learn what personal example is and how important it is for leaders to demonstrate regardless of domain. Additionally, several participants mentioned that a healthy lifestyle is another vital aspect they learned in sport and apply in business.

The importance being a role model or leading by example for effective leadership has been recognised in many theories, including transformational and charismatic leadership theories. Particularly, these theories posit that personal examples of a contribution to the collective is a major means by which effective leaders encourage followers to do the same (Bass, 1985). It is proposed that leading by example as an economic theory of leadership, which is defined as leaders contributing before followers. It has been tested and proven as an effective way to improve group performance and promote cooperation (Hermalin, 1998).

The following statements demonstrate what participants said about setting an example as part of their leadership style and how they learned this in sport. Moreover, they talked about how they used it in sport and in business.

“As a leader you gain credibility from personal example. leadership is about showing that you also act and not only talk. When I told everyone that the company must reduce the expenses and therefore the company will not pay for

the washing the cars, then I will also not wash my car. Or if the company needs to cut salaries, then the management team must cut their salaries first and then slowly trickle down to non-management employees” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXXI).

“I very much believe in personal example. For example, sports have taught me that if you want to be good and for people to follow you then you need to know how to fight and work hard. Hardest than anyone else. It is the same in life. If you want to be successful, then you have to work harder than everyone else” (Participant 7).

“A personal example is in the business world. It is very similar to the world of sports and basketball. If one of the teammates is lazy and does not practise as hard as everyone else, then he cannot make demand of teammates” (Participant 9).

These statements are aligned with the findings of (Burnes, Bernard & O'Donnell, 2011). In their study they examined the extent to which methods for achieving success in sports are applicable to business. It is important to note that they interviewed eight leading coaches and not former athletes like in this current study. Although the results were based on the coaches' experience of working with athletes, the researchers argued that most of them would be familiar to business leaders. Nonetheless, their findings demonstrate comparable results to this thesis.

The coaches in the study of Burnes and O'Donnell (2011) identified leading by example as a core competency of leadership. Echoing the statements of the participants in the current study, one of the coaches mentioned that he would not expect his players to do something which he would not do.

Moreover, participants also indicated that through sport they learned how to have a healthy lifestyle. The benefits of healthy lifestyle habits are well known (Khaw et al., 2008). It has been approved that healthy lifestyle habits such as eating vegetables and fruits daily, exercising regularly, not smoking and consuming alcohol in moderation are associated with lower rates of cardiovascular disease and a significant decrease in mortality (Matheson, King, & Everett, 2012).

Participants 3 and 7 shared their believes and thoughts regarding having a healthy lifestyle and indicated that it helped them with the challenges associated with having a successful business career.

“In sport you learn how stick to a healthy lifestyle. You learn it as an athlete, and it makes a significant contribution to your success as a manager. Sports and nutrition are very important as well as avoiding clubs and nightlife. It contributes to a manager’s leadership ability” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXXVII).

“I think basketball really helped me to develop personal qualities such as demanding more from myself, hard work, setting an example, ... Even today I am used to getting up in the morning to run, to do whatever it takes for me to be in the best form to perform at work” (Participant 7).

A healthier approach to living was adopted by Brazilian jiu-jitsu and reported as acquired life skill which was applicable in domains other than sports (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). Consistent with the findings indicated above, fourteen out of sixteen participants in the study of Chinkov and Holt (2016) asserted that they adopted a healthier approach to living. Through participation in jiu-jitsu, they learned how to monitor better their nutrition habits. Similar to participants of this current study, a healthy lifestyle helped them to meet the challenges of sport and life.

Based on the literature youth health behaviours may predict the same behaviours later in life, however, the role of sport participation in predicting healthy lifestyle habits is unclear. Therefore, Palomäki et al. (2018) aimed to investigate the association between participation in organised youth sport and adult healthy lifestyle habits. They used data from the longitudinal Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study with a 28-year follow-up. The conclusions suggest that participation in organised youth sport could promote healthy lifestyle choices.

Competitiveness

The majority of participants discussed how they believed the development of competitiveness skills or the desire to win occurred during their sport career and was transferred to the business domain. There are three different approaches to understanding competitiveness in the current literature: Firstly, the psychological approach where competitiveness is viewed as a personality trait and conceptualised as an innate drive (Kayhan, 2003). Secondly, an additional psychological approach where competitiveness is understood as a dynamical mental state. Based on this view athletes' drive toward excellence sustained by social comparisons. For example, to be better than

other athletes (Jones, 2015). Thirdly, the biological approach where competitiveness is studied at the behavioural level. Based on this approach, the behavioural level is considered as the ability to use resources in competition with others (Baldauf, Engqvist, & Weissing, 2014).

Competitiveness and the desire to win were some of the most discussed lower-order themes. All participants talked about how they developed this skill during their basketball careers. This skill also became an inherent part of their personality which they used as a driver in both domains.

When talking about competitiveness and the desire to win, participants believed the need to be successful is an important element of this skill. For example, participant 10 talked about how he brought his competitiveness to his day-to-day work as a Strategic Business Unit Director in an international corporation.

“For me, the need to succeed means competitiveness. This I learnt in sport. I'll give you an example. When I got to be in charge of a very challenging product line, this product line lost money. The management board wanted to take this line strategically and make it a profitable line in 5-6 years. During the first three years the results were zero profitability. Now for management it is fantastic results. They were happy. However, for me it was still not enough. Because I set a goal for myself not to lose. So, when you do not have income, it means zero and zero it is a failure! ... So, I had a hard time with it. I mean I must win. I'm not only looking at whether I worked hard and did well but also, I want result. It became a strong personality trait” (Participant 10).

An additional important element of competitiveness raised by several participants was the competition within the team. Not only athletes wanted to win the opponents but also, they competed constantly with their teammates. Participant 8 revealed his experience which also implies about the unique context of basketball.

“When the team has won and you have not contributed, your feeling is not good. On the one hand you are happy because your team won, but because you did not contribute there is some dissonance here. A very, very big conflict on a personal level which needs to be handled. On the other hand, this is your team, and you want them to win. But you want to be part of the win ... Moreover, when a teammate is playing better than you and getting more playing time, then it is also a challenging situation where you must compete and regain the coach’s trust. The team’s hierarchy and the nature game of basketball promote strong competition within the team. Occasionally I experienced fights with teammates during practices. Dealing with these situations enable you to develop abilities to deal in stressful and complex situations which may apply in situation outside sport” (Participant 8).

As described at the lower-order theme of self-confidence, participant 7 described the competitiveness within the team as a negative influential on self-confidence.

“I think basketball specifically is the most psychologically difficult sport there is ... In basketball there are five on the court and seven on the bench sitting and their only option to enter the game is when either the player playing their role does not play well or gets injured. This automatically makes them think

negatively. And these things are transmitted to the players on the field ... In addition, there are the trainings where often the coach puts the starting five against the second bench players. This encourages strong competition between the players. Every player thinks he is better. Every player thinks he deserves to play more. Therefore, it is very, very easy to lose confidence” (Participant 7).

When talked about leadership, participant 3 stated the desire to win as a core element along teamwork, dedication, and hard work. He believed that he this skill was developed significantly during his sport career and applied in other domains.

“One of the main things I learnt in sport was the desire to win. It requires hard work, professionalism, giving up the enjoyment of life a bit, and competitiveness. I learnt that the focus is not on the end results, rather there is an element of thinking and planning. You do not just win. You win because you study the opponent, because you prepare yourself as you need to ... These are all concepts that can use in management. I mean I learnt it through participation in basketball but it I used it as well in my management roles” (Participant 3, Appendix B, page XXIV).

An empirical study exploring the development and transfer of competitiveness skills from sport to business was not found in the literature, However, several studies reported similar skills which may be seen as an integral part of competitiveness. For example, Newman (2020) illustrated that youth athletes developed, as well as transferred, a variety of intrapersonal and interpersonal life skills. Among others, grit, effort, and self-

control. Grit was described, aligned with effort, by the participants as the ability not to give up until you achieve your goal.

Moreover, the findings of the current study are consistent with the evidence found in a previous study exploring the life skills needs of British youth athletes (Jones & Lavalley, 2009b). Participants described the need for interpersonal skills including leadership and social skills, and personal skills including discipline, self-organisation, goal setting, managing performance outcomes, and motivation. While observing the results more deeply, one could see that the motivation theme consists of several sub-themes. Participants defined motivation to success, self-motivation, motivation to improve, and drive to thrive as transferable skills needed for everyday life. It is important to note that only 19 participants were adolescent athletes, and the rest were coaches and sport psychology experts.

4.2.3 Research questions confrontation

This section directly addressed the research questions by explicitly asking if the participants believe to have developed leadership skills during their participation in sports. If yes, whether these leadership skills applied in the business domain. This was done in order to provide a clear answer to the questions, in addition to a comparison with all the previous information that was given by each participant.

Participants were asked whether they believe they developed leadership skills during their participation in basketball, and six out of nine answered with a definitive yes and three out of nine answered partly yes. Subsequently the researcher asked participants to mention which leadership skills they believe they developed during their careers in

sports. Participant 8 was among the participants who definitively answered that they believed they developed and transferred leadership skills from sport to business. Based on his view, one can draw parallels between both settings. He and other participants confidently provided concrete examples which validate the development and transfer.

“Unequivocally yes. All the values, all the experience, all the situations in sports have a one-on-one parallel to the business world. At the end, it’s all about people. It is what you learn on hierarchy within the team, abilities, teamwork, hard work, coping with wins and losses, all other skills we talked about earlier. It is all together ... There is almost no situation in the business which does not have a parallel in team sports” (Participant 8).

Moreover, participant 3 was among those participants who strongly believed that he developed his leadership skills through sport participation. Although sport is not the only domain in which he developed these skills.

“I really believe that all the skills we mentioned earlier such as the desire to win, hard work, healthy lifestyle, personal example, dealing with criticism, teamwork etc. are learned and developed in sports. And these qualities make a significant contribution to your success as a manager ... All these together form this thing called leadership. I think they have a direct connection to sports. Those who have not been active in sports may be able to learn these qualities in other settings such as military service or academic studies. But yes, these are traits that you develop along the way and may greatly contribute to your success as a manager!” (Participant 3, Appendix B, pages XXXVII-XXXVIII).

Aligned with the statement above, participant 4 discussed his experience of developing leadership skills and transferring them to the business domain. He argued that this mainly occurred during the early stages of his management career. In the later stages of his career the learning and development of skills were mainly from studies and dedicated leadership courses.

“I think my sports experience and acquired skills helped me in the beginning of my career. The players who were captains, leading players such as starting five could learn a lot from sport which may be valuable for management ... I truly believe that the confidence, hard work and social skills I learned in sport helped me a lot mainly at the beginning of my career” (Participant 4).

Similarly, participant 6 stressed the contribution of sports to his development of leadership skills. However, it was challenging for him to assess how significant a role was played by sports compared to other domains. Therefore, he was among those participants who answered partly yes to the research questions.

“Most probably basketball also played a role in my personal development. But it is very difficult to say to what extent. In my basketball career of ten years, I have both worked and been active in other settings ... So, it is very hard for me to tell you which skills I learnt in sports. There was some kind of contribution. But I'm not the one of those people who will tell you: this is the most significant contribution ... Your performance as CEO of big corporations is undoubtedly due to the abilities and skills you have as a person and your character. Some of the abilities and skills have been acquired. Perhaps some were born, I do not

know and some you learned during your life. The most management tools?

There is no doubt it's Intel, it's not basketball ... If you ask me, I think basketball had a contribution but, in some companies, had more contribution to the development of these skills” (Participant 6).

When participants talked about which skills of leadership they developed in sport and applied in business, they were polarised regarding the skills of problem solving and decision making (see section D in Table 8, page 96 - the Interview Guide). Participant 6, 7 and 9 argued that sport did not enable them to learn how to solve problems or to take better decisions compared to other skills such as the ability to cope with stress or teamwork. Their arguments contradict several past studies. These studies claim that the skill of problem-solving was developed and transferred by youth athletes from sport to other domains (Danish et al., 1993; Strachan, Côté, & Deakin, 2011).

4.3 Summary and discussion of results

This chapter encompass data collection and analysis results of qualitative semi-structured interviews with 9 former elite basketball players and business managers. The research was designed to answer the research questions: What leadership skills do former professional basketball players believe they develop during their participation in sport and whether the leadership skills developed during their sports careers are applied in the business domain (see chapter 1.6, p.9).

Thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within data was employed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The information discussed was designed to provide a greater comprehension of how the participants perceived their

development and transfer of leadership skills from sport to business. The theoretical framework chosen for this thesis is the LDI/BNT LS Life Skills model formed by Hodge et al. (2013). This framework was used to provide a detailed description of responses related to high-order themes (i.e., the three basic needs).

The differentiation between the development and transfer leadership skills is organised into distinct sections. The first section which covers the first research question provides insight related to how participants identified, defined, and developed leadership skills within the context of the sport. The second section which covers the second research question offers perspectives on whether leadership skills were applied by participants when transferring to the business domain.

4.3.1 Leadership skill development in sport

The aim of this section is to present the list of leadership skills mentioned by the participants learned and developed through sport participation. In summary, this thesis found that former elite athletes develop the following leadership skills through their sports participation (see Table 21): Teamwork, social skills, hard work and self-discipline, self-criticism, coping with stress, coping with success and failure, interpersonal communication, personal example, competitiveness, decision making under pressure, preparation, goal orientation, self-control, and self-confidence.

Table 21: Lower- and higher-order themes

Lower order themes	Higher order themes
Teamwork	relatedness
Consideration of others' feelings / social skills	
Hard work and self-discipline	Competence
Self-criticism	
Coping with stress	
Coping with success and failures	
Interpersonal communication	
Personal example	
Competitiveness	Autonomy
Decision making under pressure	
Preparation	
Goal orientation	
Self-control	
Self-confidence	

These 14 lower-order themes are related to each basic need specified in the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013).

The findings from this thesis confirmed the results of previous research on youth athletes which reported that the following life skills were learned through sport: Teamwork (Holt, 2007), social (Holt & Sehn, 2008) and emotional skills (Brunelle et al., 2007), hard work (Arif et al., 2019), self-criticism or critical thinking (Barton, 2011), coping with stress (Barton, 2011) and coping with positive or negative performance outcomes (Bull, Shambrook, James, & Brooks, 2005), interpersonal communication (Gould et al., 2007), personal example and healthy lifestyle (Chinkov & Holt, 2016), competitiveness or grit (Newman, 2020), decision making (Strachan et al., 2011), preparation (Barton, 2011), goal setting (Holt et al., 2008), self-control (Newman, 2020), self-confidence (Chinkov & Holt, 2016), and leadership (Camiré et al., 2009).

Moreover, the findings support sport psychology research on mental resilience.

Mentally resilient athletes, according to Loehr (1982), respond in varying ways in stressful situations which enable them to remain calm. Firstly, they have the ability to use positive energy in times of adversity and crisis. Secondly, they have the right attitude regarding pressure, problems, and competition. It is proposed in the literature that the characteristics of mentally resilient performers have been wide ranging and include confidence (Bull, Albinson, & Shambrook, 1996).

Moreover, further attributes related to mental resilience of elite performance in sport were revealed by Jones (2002b) and associated to desire and motivation, self-belief, handling pressure, lifestyle and performance distractions, and emotional and physical pain. In his other article, Jones (2002a), claimed that there are some differences between sport and business contexts, but there are many more commonalities. Thus, the task of applying elite sport principles to the business setting is relatively easy one. He based his argument on a personal perspective and not on an empirical investigation.

Participants in this thesis mentioned that through their participation in professional sports they learned most about teamwork, social skills, coping skills, and hard work. However, they mentioned that they learned less about decision making. When being asked whether they believed sports enable them the opportunity to learn how to take decision better and solve problems, most of the participants answered negatively. Thus, problem-solving was the only skill, according to the participants, not developed in sports. Regarding differences between participants who grow up in an urban or rural environment, there were no noteworthy contrasts in their answers.

Although the focus of the research was solely on development of leadership skills in sports and transfer to business, several participants mentioned other sources of learning those skills. In addition to sport as a learning platform are the distinct learning categories of education, (high school or university); military; work; family (experiences at home or influences of parents); community (influence from ideology); and "personality" referring to sources of development that were attributed by participants to "my personality" or "innate character". The following quote of participant 9 illustrates these other distinct learning sources.

“You know in Israel there are other influential factors besides sports which are very remarkable like the military and others (kibbutz). Eventually, these factors shape your personality” (Participant 9).

All participants said they had learned and developed at least some or even all these skills from their sport experiences and sport most frequently mentioned as a facilitator in developing these skills. However, most of the participants also mentioned the other sources such as personality. For example, when being asked if he believes his participation in sport has allowed him to learn how to become a better teammate, participant 6 mentioned an interaction between his character and skills he learned in other settings such as sport etc.

“I believe I love being part of a team because of my character ... the fact that I know how to work in a team allowed me to be a good basketball player ... Due to the influence of my character I became one kind of a player instead of another. On the other hand, the fact that I played professional team sports

strengthened my ability to work in a team. So, it is some kind of interaction. It is a kind of mutual nourishment between the personality I have and what basketball enables me to do, in addition to all the other things I have accomplished. Whether it be the army, the Hashomer Hatsair (secular Jewish youth movement), or the kibbutz” (Participant 6).

In sum, the present study supports previous research by helping form a persuasive argument that sports help people to develop their life skills.

4.3.2 Leadership skill application in business

The aim of this section is to discuss whether participants provided evidence that the skills they believe they developed as athletes were actually later applied in their business careers.

This thesis found that former elite athletes develop and transfer the aforementioned leadership skills from sport to the business setting. However, participants claimed that they did not develop and transfer the skills of problem solving, and only partly transferred the decision-making skill. The claims of participants that all subsequent skills were developed in sport and transferred to the business domain support previous research.

Table 22 formed by Danish et al. (1993) serves as a summary of the skills mentioned by participants and previous life skills research. All of the 14 lower-order themes were empirically tested by past studies. These are described and explained together with each lower-order theme in chapter 4.2.2.

Table 22: Examples of life skills that are valuable across settings

To perform under pressure	To take risks
To be organised	To make a commitment and stick to it
To meet challenges	To know how to win and lose
To communicate with others	To work with people, you don't necessarily like
To handle both success and failure	To respect others
To accept others' values and beliefs	To have self-control
To be flexible in order to succeed	To push yourself to the limit
To be patient	To recognise your limitation
To compete without hatred	To make good decisions
To accept responsibility for your behaviour	To set and attain goals
To be dedicated	To be able to learn
To accept criticism and feedback in order to learn	To work within a system
To evaluate yourself	To be self-motivated

Source: Danish et al. (1993)

Although the skill of problem-solving was reported by several past studies to be developed and transferred by youth athletes from sport to other domains (Danish et al., 1993; Strachan et al., 2011), most of the participants of the current study declined to report this skill as one they applied in business.

Participant 6 argued that sport did not enable him to learn how to solve problems or to take better decisions compared to other skills such as the ability to cope with stress or teamwork.

“I do not think there is a connection between problem solving in everyday life and the business world and sports. It is a question of your personality and how you deal with problems. Sport probably helps. But I do not think sports provided me special tools to solve problems better. That is not what I think” (Participant 7).

Moreover, the decision-making processes in a business setting was viewed differently by several participants to that in a sports setting. As with the skill of problem solving,

some participants were not entirely confident that they developed this skill in sport and transferred to business. However, some participants stated that they did develop this skill in sports and applied it in business. Participant 4 believed that other skills such as teamwork and self-confidence were more likely to be developed and transferred.

“In basketball I was more able to stand behind the decisions I made. Because the decisions in basketball are less threatening and less binding than in the business world. Maybe because fewer smart people were around me. In business it is not like that. There are more smart people there and the influence of internal politics and power games is higher. Sometimes the people around me were smarter and more experienced than me. But I was chosen and had to do my job. And I was not always satisfied with my decisions ... I do not see strong parallels between sports and business regarding decision making” (Participant 4).

Participant 10 talked about the differences between the processes from the view of the results. He contended that one of the differences between sport and business is that the outcome in business is not immediately evident. He reflected on his past role as production line manager and argued that there are some similarities to sports, since he could see the results of his decisions immediately. Nowadays he is a director of an entire product line and his decisions are more strategically oriented. Thus, he could not realise results of his decisions so early.

“The decision-making process in business is longer and more complex and the results are not as immediate as in sports. In sport you can right away see if the decision you took was right or wrong. This is a significant difference. The

strategic decisions I make today as a product line director are not the same as decisions in sports. Maybe when I was a product manager in the production line the decisions, I took were more similar to sports, because there I could see the result immediately” (Participant 10).

These findings contradict several studies (e.g., O'Hearn & Gatz, 1999) conducted on life skill development and transfer within youth sport programmes. Although the context is different to that of the current study, it is vital to point out that problem-solving, and decision-making were the only skills upon which participants of this thesis were not aligned with findings of O'Hearn and Gatz (1999). The results of evaluated Going for the Goal (GOAL) programme, a school-based intervention designed to teach life skills to at-risk urban adolescents

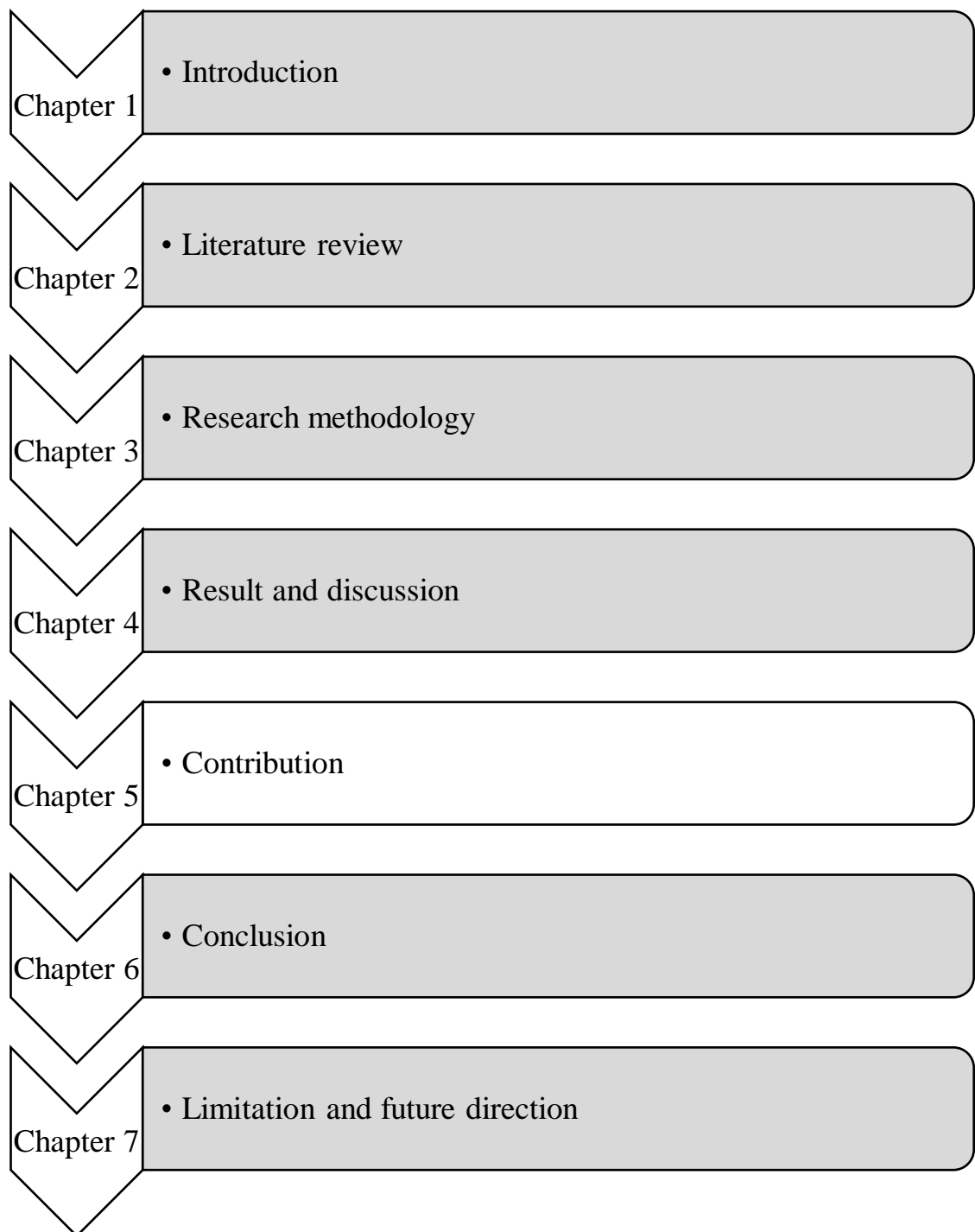
The 10-week program was administered to 350 middle school students focused on reachable goals, setting positive, anticipating and responding to barriers, using social support, goal attainment, and building on one's strengths. Participants were randomly assigned to waiting-list control group conditions or treatment. Results revealed significant improvement in problem-solving skills (O'Hearn & Gatz, 1999).

Additionally, a past study (Khan, Khan, Arif, & Khan, 2018) examined the views of university student athletes about the role that sports played in developing the important life skill of decision making. The researchers considered planning, time management, adapting to new situations, and dealing with adversity as decision making skills. The sample was based on 375 participants who filled questionnaires. The results showed that participants attributed a significant role for sports in developing decision-making skills

such planning, time management, adapting to new situations, and dealing with adversity. A significant correlation between sports participation and the development of various decision-making skills was demonstrated (Khan et al., 2018).

This study examined only the development of skills, and not development and transfer. However, other studies reported both the development and transfer of skills which may refer to decision making. For example, the study of Kendellen and Camire (2017) examined the life skill development and transfer of former high school athletes. They reported self-regulation (i.e., time management) as one of the skills which participants developed in sports and applied in another life domain.

5 Contribution



5.1 Contribution to literature

The performance and sport psychology literatures will be the primary beneficiaries of this study. This study contributed to this literature in several ways. Firstly, by researching an understudied group of people; Secondly, by addressing inconsistencies or gaps in past research; Thirdly, by applying a relatively new theoretical framework; Fourthly, by challenging an untested assertion in sport literature that life skills should be taught explicitly by the coach. Fifthly, by proposing the self-criticism and preparation skills constructs for future study. Sixthly, by suggesting the integration of the LDI/BNT LS model with the model of Bean et al. (2014) in order to examine the negative outcomes of sport participation. Each of these contributions is discussed and explained in turn below.

This study investigated elite professional and business managers. There are surprisingly few original research studies which provide an element of credence to the sport-business analogy (Fletcher, 2011). This is probably due to the difficulty in accessing elite athletes. This study offers a unique opportunity in investigating former elite athletes who upon their retirement pursue a second career in business. It was not uncommon for elite athletes back in the days to pursue a second career. This was mainly because the salaries paid for professional athletes were not so high and therefore, forced former athletes to continue working once their playing days are over. This was the case during the 1970s and 1980s, but it is no longer so.

Past research has been inconclusive since some studies claim that sport can have a positive influence on non-sport domains while others suggest that sports have no influence. These findings contribute to literature that argues that through sports

participation athletes may develop skills which can be utilised later to other domains such as business. Whereas some studies have found that skills that have been developed through participation in sport can be transferred to other domains, this study identified examples of a direct transfer of skills from sport to business within the experience of a single participant. Not only did participants mention specific transferred leadership skills, but they also provided extensive examples of the transfer and application of those skills in the business domain.

This research contributed to the body of knowledge by being one of the first studies to use the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013). This study examined the role of sport in offering experiences that enable enhance the understanding of sport as a context that can facilitate leadership skills development and their transfer to business. Additionally, this research responded to suggestions that continued research examining life skill transfer among people from diverse countries and cultures and across various sport settings is required (Jones & Lavalley, 2009b; Turnnidge et al., 2014).

Fourthly, another contribution from this research is to suggest topics for future research. Particularly the concept of skills development through participation or explicitly being taught. The degree to which learning transfer resides in the learner (Bereiter, 1995) or is driven by the interactions and contexts individuals experience over time (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009) has been a topic of debate in previous research. It has been suggested by Danish and Hale (1981) that life skill development is dependent on being taught.

This thesis revealed that life skills can not only be “taught”, but also be "caught" within the many varied experiences during sport participation, i.e., learned through a process of

reflection and direct experience. Although this study does not aim to definitively answer the specific question of whether life skills are most often taught or caught by the athletes, it provides provocative evidence for future exploration.

Moreover, these findings contribute to the literature by proposing two additional life skills for future research. More than half of the participants talked about self-criticism and preparation. Preparation is worthy of future attention since it is quite distinct from more frequently studied skills such as hard work and dedication. Since self-criticism is a very broad and comprehensive topic, it is vital to examine it further. It is a very specialised form of resilience and includes components that differentiate it from any other construct found in prior research.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the body of knowledge by suggesting integrating negative factors influenced from sport participation to the LDI/BNT LS Life Skills model.

Past research has shown the positive effects of sport participation. Although some studies in recent years were conducted about the darker side of sport experiences and the influence on participation, there is still a lack of comprehensive scientific research (Bean et al., 2014). As presented in chapter 4, when an athlete's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, self-determination is implemented and results in positive outcomes such as increased self-esteem and/or vitality (Amorose, Anderson-Butcher, & Cooper, 2009). On the other hand, when these basic needs are not satisfied, negative outcomes such as poor mental health occur (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). Even though the focus of this research is on positive

outcomes, these negative experiences from sport participation were raised by participants.

Therefore, these negative outcomes should be tested utilising the LDI/BNT LS model. Future research should be conducted to verify if indeed the three contextual factors (i.e., basic need of autonomy, competence, and relatedness) addresses the link between sport participation and negative outcomes within this sporting environment. It is recommended to integrate one additional contextual factor proposed by the model of Bean et al. (2014). Their model emphasises the importance of the motivational climate and was inspired by the SDT and AGT. The main benefit for integrating this model with the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013) is the contrast between two motivational climates. One that is empowering (i.e., positive outcome) defined as being task-oriented and autonomy supportive and one that is disempowering (i.e., negative outcome) defined as being ego-oriented and controlling.

5.2 Contribution to practice

Sport has become a hugely popular activity in this society in the last few decades and millions of people spend countless hours participating. There is a growing interest in the role sports plays as a platform for people to develop positive outcomes. Some of the positive outcome may include life skills (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). Although the focus of this research was on elite athletes, and only a small fraction of youth around the world who engage in sports will become professional athletes (Danish Forneris, & Wallace, 2005), these findings have implications for the masses. Sport is not restricted to elite athletes, so leadership is not only the preserve of CEOs or senior executives. Almost all

managers in organisations have a leadership role, particularly first-line managers who are responsible for making products and delivering services (Burnes, 2009).

Coaches, parents, counsellors, educators, and business organisations may benefit from the insights on the development and transfer of leadership skills from sport to the business domain. According to Burnes and O'Donnell (2011) one of the areas where business may have much to learn from sport is getting people to perform to their maximum ability. Sport psychology is the core discipline underpinning this approach. One of the most used models which incorporates sports psychology principles is Loehr and Schwartz's (2001) "Performance Pyramid" model (see chapter 2.3). They argued that their approach was tested on "thousands of executives". The outcome is that it is possible for managers to reach peak performance and improve organisational productivity, but they must practice like athletes do.

Additionally, the discussion of the ways in which coaches, educators, and business organisations can integrate life skills lessons into their practices can be further guided and enhanced by the offering of a theoretical foundation for the organisation and implementation of these lessons. The LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013) may be a recommended concept for pulling many conditions and strategies together. Since this model is based on the SDT it proposes that people will engage more deeply in activities that are perceived to be internally driven as opposed to extrinsically controlled. People are likely to perceive an activity as self-determined if it fulfils their basic needs for autonomy (e.g., internally controlled), relatedness (e.g., facilitate bonding to others), and competence (e.g., allow for the demonstration of positive perceptions of one's ability). Thus, a manager, an educator or a coach may create more engagement and

investment in his/her employees or athletes, increasing their power to set up meaningful lessons through participation in sport. This should be achieved by structuring the environment and interpersonal relationships within a team to meet these basic needs.

There are various strategies which may fit into this theoretical model and can be implemented in a youth sports development program or a leadership development program for senior managers in a business organisation. For example, a strategy which aims to increase a team's collaboration and to create more positive relationships between employees and their managers or athletes and their coaches would help to address the need of belonging. Those strategies surrounding the responsibility and leadership as well as the development of decision making would help meet the need of autonomy. Lastly, an athlete's need for competence would be addressed by the use of positive reinforcement and development of skills such as self-esteem and goal setting.

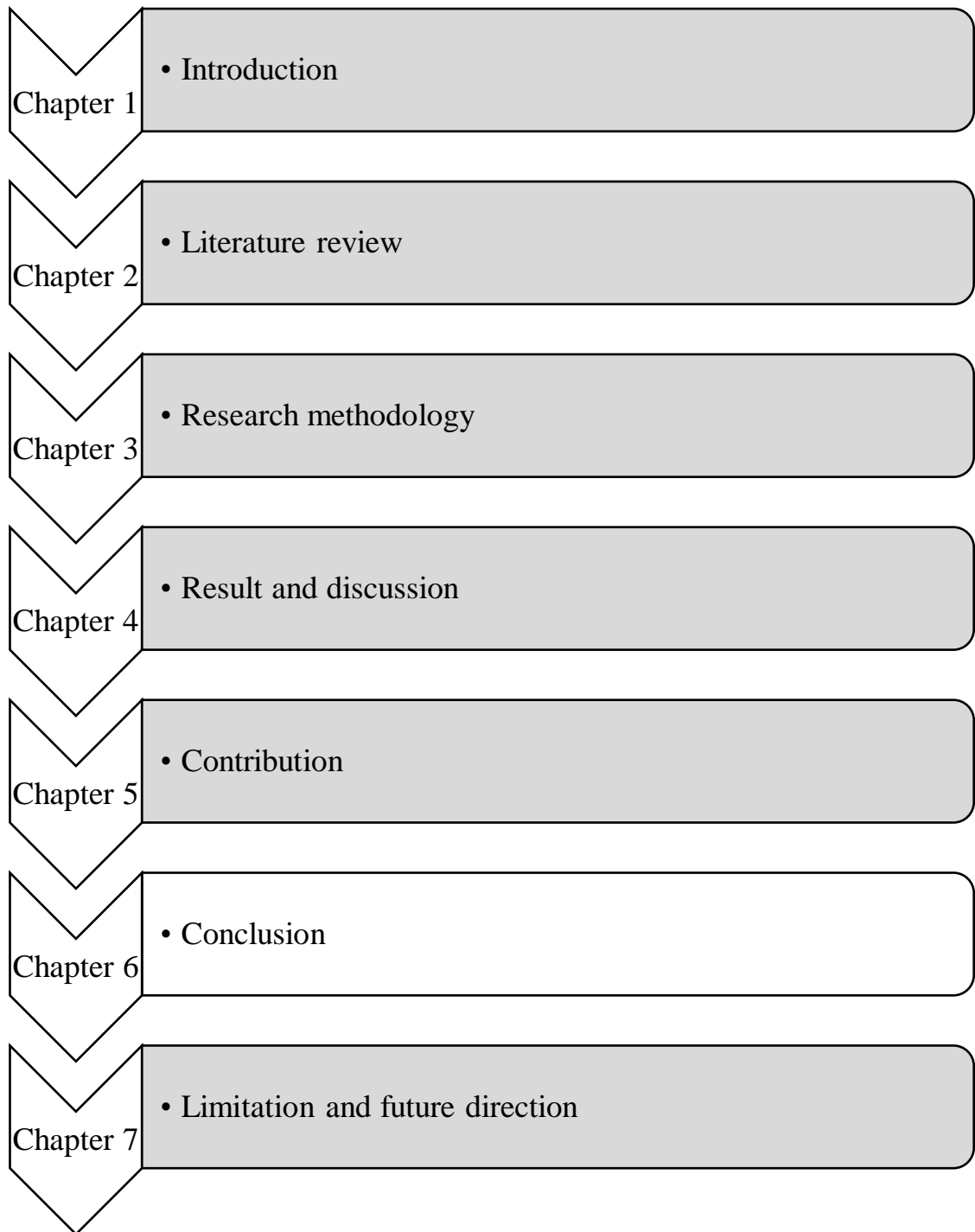
Therefore, one of the outcomes of this research may be a recommendation for organisations, who plan to recruit candidates for leadership positions, to put a strong emphasis on candidates with a background in sport. Based on both literature research and the findings of this thesis through sport participation, these leadership skills may be developed and transferred to other domains such as business. Clearly this recommendation does not mean that candidate without sport experience would not have the aforementioned leadership skills such as teamwork. However, according to research from Cornell University, people who played competitive sports during their youth showed higher levels of success and leadership throughout their careers. Additionally, their employers expected people with backgrounds in sport to have more self-

confidence, leadership, and self-respect than those without (Kniffin, Wansink, & Shimizu, 2014).

An additional contribution of this research is by verifying the need for reflection on sport experiences. Some of the participants were unaware of the transfer process and the relatively many skills they learnt during their careers. This study served to introduce that discovery process and the presentation of skills to them. Earlier research conducted by Lavalley and Andersen (2000) is consistent with the findings of the current study by suggesting that transition from sport can be influenced by a cognitive reflection on sport experiences. It is claimed by past research (Danish et al., 1993; Gould & Carson, 2008) that certain factors can contribute to an effective transfer of life skills to other domains.

Maybe even more important, one of the main contributions of the findings is for the athletes themselves. The results proved that athletes could learn leadership skills which they can apply throughout their professional business careers. Those skills can play a significant role in their professional success. Some of the potentially most important life skills are suggested by the study. These factors include an understanding of how the skills were learned and a recognition of the development of psychological skills. These results may promote a greater emphasis by sport leaders on those experiences as potential sources of learning. Thus, this is an important finding for educators, coaches, parents, business organisations, and athletes themselves.

6 Conclusion



This study offers empirical evidence consistent with the notion that the leadership skills developed in sports can be transferred and applied in the business domain. These findings advance the understanding of sports as a development setting by offering concrete examples of both development and application of specific leadership skills provided by the same participants. Linking development in sports and application in business in such a manner demonstrates the substantial influence sport experiences can have in the lives of athletes long after their playing days are over.

Two specific research questions were addressed. Firstly, what leadership skills do former professional basketball players believe they develop during their participation in sport. Secondly, whether the leadership skills developed during their sports careers are applied in the business domain. The discussion below briefly reviews relevant past research and specific gaps in the literature that this study was designed to address. This discussion is followed by the presentation of the limitations of the study and possible directions for future research, as well as practical implications.

Life skills are defined in sport psychology literature, as “those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as emotional control, self-esteem, hard work ethic and goal setting that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings” (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 60). Past research has demonstrated how sports can be considered as a platform suitable for the development of life skills (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). Moreover, past research has revealed how athletes believe life skills can be developed during participation in sport and then applied in non-sport settings (Camiré et al., 2012; Holt & Sehn, 2008).

However, in the aforementioned studies, it is difficult to determine whether the skills deemed to be developed in sports were indeed applied in non-sports settings since examples of life skill development and application were not linked to the same participant. Additionally, the studies were conducted within the context of high school sports and provided minimal details on *how* and *where* the participants developed and applied in life the skills they developed in sports. Another study explored whether sport participation contributes to life skill development and transfer of skills to the work domain (Barton, 2011). Although the findings demonstrate evidence of direct transfer of skills from sport to a work setting, none of the participants had attained elite or professional sports status.

This study identifies and addresses noticeable gaps from earlier research. Firstly, most of the past research of this kind has been conducted within the context of high school sports. An exhaustive review of past literature has found no prior investigations of elite athletes who, upon their professional sports retirement, pursued a career in business settings. Secondly, as discussed in the literature review chapter, previous research has identified common skills necessary for success in both sport and business, but has rarely provided evidence of a direct transfer of skills by the same participant between the two domains (see Jones, 2002a).

As discussed in the contribution chapter, one of the contributions of the current study is in extending the life skill literature by having examined leadership skill development in sports and application in business. This was done through the provision of tangible examples for the same skill by the same participant, thus providing evidence of the process of transfer occurring from sport participation to business settings. More

specifically, the current study presents participants' discussion on *how* they believed they developed leadership skills through their experiences in professional sports (e.g., learning how to play with other players - teamwork). Participants also shared *whether* they applied the leadership skills developed in sports (e.g., taking responsibility despite the stressful situation – coping with stress).

It has been argued in the sport psychology literature that there is an existing limitation in the life skill literature due to the lack of theory being utilised to understand and explore how life skills are learned by athletes (Gould & Carson, 2008). Through the use of the LDI/BNT LS model (Hodge et al., 2013) the current study endeavoured to address this limitation. Since the study did not precisely explore the establishment of needs-supportive motivational climates, it is important to note that only certain aspects of the model were empirically assessed (i.e., grey components in Figure 8, p. 138).

Having purposefully recruited participants at the same life stage (i.e., mature adults, seniors) may have caused the examples of leadership skill development and application provided by the participants to appear similar. The LDI (Danish & D'Augelli, 1983; Danish et al., 1984) is based on a lifespan human development perspective. Participants were able to share how the skills developed during their sports career were transferred and applied in a business career at different phases across the lifespan. For example, participants discussed how they used the hard work and dedication skills in various phases of their careers, whether it was while managing a small team or thousands of employees. These findings add to the literature, since most of previous research has been conducted with former high school athletes only a few years after their graduation (Voelker, Gould, & Crawford, 2011). Moving forward, more research is needed with

former professional athletes of all ages in contexts beyond high school sports to have a better understanding of life skill transfer across the lifespan.

There are several significant findings from this investigation. Firstly, this study identified leadership skills that have been previously found in earlier business and sports literature as skills that are valuable across settings. The reported skills are: Teamwork, social skills, hard work and self-discipline, self-criticism, coping with stress, coping with success and failure, interpersonal communication, personal example, competitiveness, decision-making under pressure, preparation, goal orientation, self-control, and self-confidence. More specifically, the participants spontaneously mentioned and confirmed all but one of the life skills (problem solving) identified in past research as skills which they developed in sports and transferred to business. Moreover, it is important to note that some participants, despite believing to have developed decision-making skills in sports, were not entirely convinced that they applied these in their business career.

There are some expected findings, including the importance of the team and hard work and self-discipline, which were the most mentioned leadership skills. However, the participants' lists of valuable leadership skills included some surprises such as the importance of interpersonal communication and social skills, which were mentioned as frequently as hard work and self-discipline. Two additional skills of self-criticism and preparation were identified in the current study. They were mentioned by more than half of the participants. Although a prior investigation on development and transfer of athletes' leadership skills from sports to business was not found, the richly detailed examples of the participants enabled very specific definitions of the two that distinguish

them from the other skills. As stated in the contribution to literature chapter (chapter 5.1) the identification of these skills has theoretical implications.

Secondly, another fascinating finding of this research is the establishment of sport participation as an essential source of life skill development. All participants perceived sports as being an important platform for learning skills. As described briefly in the limitation chapter, participants may have been seen sports as a main source of learning. However, because the voluntary nature of sports participation (i.e., athletes want to be involved and thus, are more willing to practice, listen, adapt), and because the amount of time athletes spend in sports environment, it is possible that athletes learn and develop skills from sports.

Thirdly, consistent with previous research, the findings illustrate how athletes do not enter the sports environment as *tabula rasa* and suggested that the importance of people's existing personal development (Gould & Carson, 2008). Additionally, the findings illustrate how sports participation is a complex process that does not lead to uniform experiences for all participants.

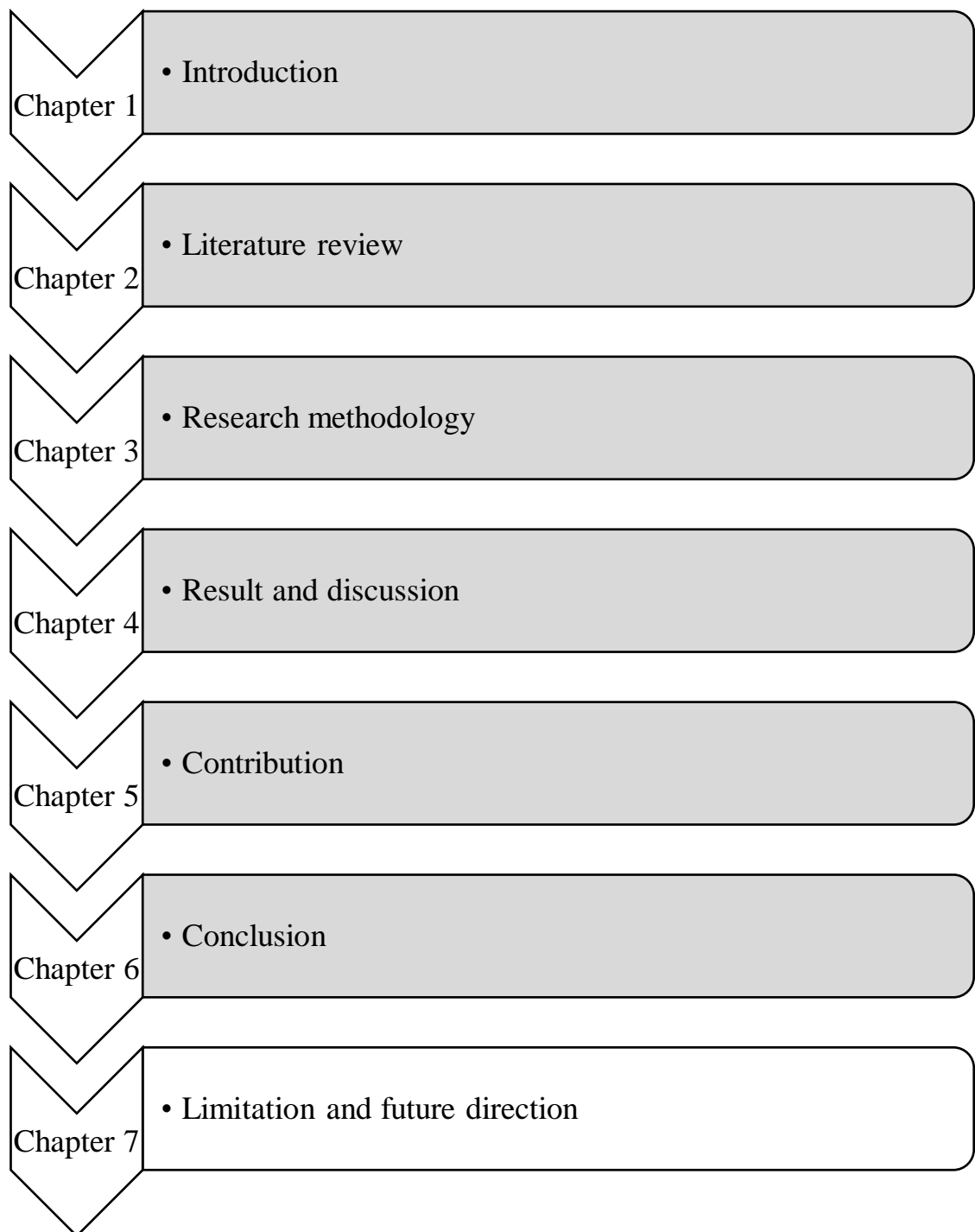
For example, some of the participants such as participant 3 reported to have a very strong family influences, typically from a parent who demonstrated some type of behaviour. Others remembered experiences from their youth education, for example the actions of a boarding school such as participant 6 or in one case of participant 9 who stated that the military had an influential element on his personal development.

Consistent to Fullinwider (2006) who claimed that sport is doesn't necessarily teach skills but provides a venue for their application, several participants were aware of the

role their own personality played in the development of life skills, particularly when exhibited in various sport situations.

These findings suggest that life skills learned and developed in sports may transfer to the business domain. The study results support findings from prior research by providing evidence of development and transfer of 14 leadership skills and contradict past research by rejecting the development and transfer of one leadership skill (problem-solving) and rejecting the transfer of one skill (decision making). However, by exploring single individuals' sport and business experiences, this study went further. Examination of the 9 interviews revealed direct transfer of leadership skills from sport to business. The detailed examples demonstrate exactly how the transferred skills were applied in the business domain. In some cases, participants reported a transfer of a specific behaviour such as hard work and dedication. This validates the transfer by showing that the athlete duplicated in the business domain the behaviour of hard working and dedication (i.e., working more hours) which he originally learned and developed in sports. In other cases, a belief or attitude that was learned by the participants then led to a similar behaviour in sport and business domains.

7 Limitations and Future Directions



There were several inherent limitations to the present study that should be addressed in future research, although the study did much to address some of the gaps in the current understanding of the life skills development in sport and transfer processes to the business domain. This section will be broken down into two sub-sections highlighting the differences between general limitations related to the study and limitations related to the theoretical framework.

7.1 General limitations

Several general limitations are associated with this study and therefore should be discussed. Firstly, the findings from the current study must be considered in light of their limitations. Overall, the findings offer insights into the life skill development and transfer experiences of former elite basketball players. Participants provided real examples of leadership skill development in professional sports environment and subsequent application in the business setting. This represents the personal perspectives of the participants and does not imply a causal link between the two. By linking examples of leadership skill development and transfer offered by the same elite athletes, the findings are only suggesting that the process of transfer occurred but do to confirm that this process did happen.

Secondly, the data was collected in a single country (i.e., Israel) and in a single sport (i.e., basketball). Thus, the examples provided by the participants may or may not be representative of the experiences of elite athletes in other countries. Future research should be conducted in more countries covering different cultures.

Thirdly, since the current study explored the leadership skills development and transfer experiences of former elite basketball players from sports to business, it is unclear whether these experiences are different from non-athletes and from sports. This limitation should be addressed by future research by investigating the differences between the development and transfer of leadership skills of athletes and non-athletes and between sports.

Fourthly, all nine participants in the sample of this study were male. This may have influenced the results and, as such, the findings may only represent male athletes and business managers. Leadership skill development and transfer of female athletes should be considered in future research.

Fifthly, several challenges associated with retrospective methods, including memory, attributional bias and impression management were highlighted by past research (Snelgrove & Havitz, 2010). In an attempt to minimise such challenges and as recommended by Ericsson and Simon (1980) a series of probes (e.g., Do you have an example?) were used to help the participants frame their responses within the precise boundaries of the study. However, the current study must be considered in light of the limitation that former athletes recruited had time to reflect on their sport experiences, but the gathered data might reflect memory bias, especially with participants who ended their basketball career more than 30 years ago.

Lastly, as indicated by participant 9 (see quote in chapter 4.2.1.1, p. 120), athletes engage in a range of microsystems in addition to sports. These include family, peers, military, and work. Investigating the connection between participants' involvement in

these different contexts was outside the scope of this study. Additionally, it is alleged by a number of studies that broad generalisations about skill development in sports are not likely to be helpful. This is because in each sport there is a different context which presents varying norms, subcultures, and conversations (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006). Future research should establish how sporting involvement fits into the wider macrosystem that athletes experience. An understanding of what young athletes learn through interactions in different contexts, will enable practitioners and researchers a better understanding of the role of sports and to assess if it contributes former athletes becoming successful leaders in the other domains such as business.

7.2 Theoretical framework limitations

As every model has its advantages and limitation, so too does this model. On the one hand, the use of the LDI/BNT LS model allowed for the findings to be organised and structured in a clear and understanding fashion. On the other hand, there were some limitations in using this model to comprehensively explain the participants' developmental experiences in a long basketball career.

Firstly, the scope of the study as well as the theoretical model offer an explanation of the positive development course. The LDI/BNT LS model does not take into consideration how negative experiences in sport may fail to satisfy the three basic needs which eventually will not lead to an outcome of psychological well-being. Due to this limitation, past research which utilised this model reported negative experiences in another study (Kendellen & Camiré, 2015). However, future research in sports should also consider negative experiences of athletes and how these can influence skill

development and transfer. Thus, further work on this model is needed in order to overcome this challenge.

Secondly, based on this model there is a relation between specific life skills and each basic need. However, the researcher encountered challenges during the analysis phase as some leadership skills, linked with different needs, demonstrated certain overlapping features (e.g., teamwork with interpersonal communication). Therefore, as suggested by Kendellen and Camire (2017), some improvements need to be added to this model. Specifically, future work should define the life skills discussed in the model and explanations must be provided to determine why a particular basic need has been associated with each skill.

In light of those limitations, longitudinal research is needed with former professional athletes as they move from youth to emerging adulthood and beyond to closely track how their elite sport experiences impact the development and transfer of leadership skills from sport to business. Although the findings illustrated how former elite athletes are applying the leadership skills, they were developed during their sports career at various life stages, future research should more closely examine how and/or whether the various life stages influence the process of transfer.

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9 Appendix A

Interview Guide – Hebrew:

חלק ראשון: מידע כללי

שם ושם משפחה:

גיל:

קריירת כדורסל: כמה שנים? איזה ליגה וקבוצות? נבחרת ישראל? איזה עמדה?

קריירת ניהול: כמה שנים? סקטור? תפקיד? מנהל של כמה עובדים?

חלק שני: חוויות והמוטיבציה להגשים קריירת הכדורסל

מדוע החלטת לפתח קריירת כדורסל?

תוכל בבקשה לספר לי על המוטיבציה שלך להמשיך בקריירת כדורסל (אחרי הצבא)?

חלק שלישי: חוויות ומוטיבציה להגשים קריירה בעולם העסקים

מדוע החלטת לפתח קריירת בעולם העסקים?

אתה יכול בבקשה לספר לי על המוטיבציה שלך להמשיך בקריירת כדורסל?

חלק רביעי: אוטונומיה (Autonomy)

שליטה עצמית (Self-control)

פיתוח מיומנויות חיים בספורט:

האם אתה חושב שספורט עזר לך ללמוד כיצד לשלוט את הרגשות שלך (למשל, כעס, תסכול או התרגשות) דוגמא?

האם אתה חושב שהספורט נתן לך את האפשרות ללמוד כיצד לקבל החלטות ולפתור בעיות טוב יותר?

ישום מיומנויות חיים בעסקים:

האם אתה מאמין שהתמודדות והניסיון עם מצבים כאלו בספורט עזרו לך לפתח שליטה עצמית כמנהל? דוגמא?

האם אתה מאמין שהתמודדות עם מצב כזה בספורט סייעה לך לפתח כישורי קבלת החלטות ופתרון בעיות כמנהל בעולם העסקים? דוגמא?

חלק חמישי: יכולת (Competence)

מנהיגות (Leadership)

פיתוח מיומנויות חיים בספורט:

האם אתה מאמין שהשתתפותך בספורט אפשרה לך ללמוד את הכישורים הדרושים כדי להיות מנהיג? אם כן, אילו כישורים? דוגמאות? אם לא,

מדוע?

האם תוכל לתאר בפירוט רב ככל האפשר מצב בו התרחשה עבורך למידה מנהיגותית בספורט?

ישום מיומנויות חיים בעסקים:

האם אתה מאמין שאתה טוב או היית טוב בהנהגה של אנשים כמנהל בעולם העסקים? דוגמא?

האם אתה מאמין שיישמת בעולם העסקים את הלמידה של יכולות המנהיגות בספורט? דוגמא?

חלק שישי: קשרים (Relatedness)

עבודת צוות (Teamwork)

פיתוח מיומנויות חיים בספורט:

האם היית מאושר כשחבר לקבוצה חווה הצלחה (למשל חווה טוב יותר בעונה אחרי) או אכזבה שחווה כישלון (למשל פציעה)? דוגמא?

האם אתה מאמין שהניסיון שלך בספורט אפשר לך ללמוד להיות חבר לקבוצה טוב יותר? או להיות שחקן קבוצתי? דוגמא?

ישום מיומנויות חיים בעסקים:

האם התחשבות ברגשות של אחרים היא משהו שהיה / חשוב לך כמנהל? דוגמא?

האם אתה מאמין שהניסיון כשחקן כדורסל מקצועי סייעה לך להפוך למנהל אנשים טוב יותר?

חלק שביעי: שאלות מחקר (Research questions confrontation)

אילו כישורי מנהיגות אתה מאמין ששחקני כדורסל מקצועיים מתפתחים במהלך השתתפותם בספורט?

האם וכיצד יכולות המנהיגות שנרכשו במהלך קריירת הכדורסל יישמו בקריירת הניהול בעולם העסקים?

Source: Kendellen & Camire (2017)

10 Appendix B

Interview with participant 3

Part One: General Information

Interviewer: Your age?

Participant 3: 68

Interviewer: I would like to begin with your basketball career. In which leagues and for which clubs did you play, including national teams and so on.

Participant 3: So, I actually started at a relatively late age. Before I got into basketball as a teenager I was more into light athletics. High Jump. I was a champion in high school athletics. I started playing basketball when I went to study in the “Green Village” (boarding school).

Interviewer: At what age approximately?

Participant 3: At a late age. Sixth (grade). At the age of 15.

Interviewer: 10th grade?

Participant 3: Yes exactly. Eight, ninth, tenth. Only then did I actually start. An event that was actually quite funny. “Hapoel” Tel Aviv came to visit us in the boarding school at the “Green Village” and I played with them. Then they asked me to come and play with them at “Hapoel North” in the second league.

Interviewer: So, you started right away in the second division?

Participant 3: Yes. Although I did not play for any youth team etc. I started to play in the second league that back then called “Arzit”.

Interviewer: So, you started so late at 15 or 16?

Participant 3: At 16 I started playing basketball. I walked around the field a bit but yeah. So, I actually started at “Hapoel Tel Aviv”. It was in the old field of “Hapoel Tel Aviv” and approximately a year after I began, I was invited to the U18 national team.

Interviewer: U18 national team?

Participant 3: Yes, with Boaz Yanai and Hanan Keren.

Interviewer: More or less at the age of 17-18?

Participant 3: Yes, at the age of 18 in the eighth grade I went with the U18 national team to the qualification tournament of the European Championships in Switzerland. Ralph Klein was the coach and we were a whole bunch of guys from many different Kibbutzim. They decided to promote me to the first team of “Hapoel Tel Aviv” before the military draft. I was on the bench for a few games. Then the national team recruited me before my military service began. There Israeli senior team went on a trip to Italy and Greece, which I joined as a youth player. Among the players you had Ofer Eshed the captain, Gershon and Danny Brazilian. Such names you know from “old times”. And I was “the baby” in the team. And that's it. So that was basically my basketball career before the military service. Because when I came back from that trip in November, I joined the army. After I postponed the recruitment date because of this trip, my air force pilot training began.

Interviewer: Oh, okay then you trained as a pilot?

Participant 3: My military service was in the first years of the pilot training. Then my basketball career was actually interrupted. In fact, at the time I was young, I was ..

Interviewer: A promising prospect?

Participant 3: Yes, although players such as Boaz Yanai and Hanan Keren were part of the U18 national team, I was invited to join the team before them.

Interviewer: Until what age were you in the military?

Participant 3: The pilot training took two years. During these two years I would go and play basketball whenever I had vacation days. I was registered as a player with “Hapoel Tel Aviv”. My player card was at “Hapoel Tel Aviv” and when I wasn’t at training, I joined them in practices. And I even got to be on the field and play some games during the two years. In those two years I occasionally played in big games. I do not know if you know the story about the fights in the “Valley of the Tombstone” in Jerusalem against “Beitar Jerusalem”. Jack Eisner, who was a great American, punched Rami Gutt and broke his jaw. And that's well-known story. So, I was there. At that event I was on the half court when Assaf Feinberg got the ball from Rami and took the rebound and got punched. I was on the bench during the famous derby in “Bloomfield” while “Yad Elijah” was built. So, I had a few basketball games during the pilot training, but it wasn’t my main focus. This training was very intense. Once I finished my pilot training, I thought that I am done with basketball and will pursue other directions in life. Do you understand? Before I was drafted, I was under hysterical pressure not to begin the pilot training.

Interviewer: Were you not trying to gain elite athlete status from the military?

Participant 3: No, although I was already a member of the Israeli national team and on the way to becoming an integral part of the adult national team. They wanted me to join a round of games in Russia. And it is more important to represent Israel in Communist Russia than to be just another pilot. Moreover, my family lost already one member serving the military. I was under pressure. For some reason after I got drafted, I returned to the base as a young pilot in the squadron. In 1972 Noah Ram comes to my base. Do you know who Noah Ram is? He was a swimming coach as well. He was a swimming coach and was a big player in “Mishmar Haemek”. He was the coach of “Gvat/Yagor”.

“Gvat” is very close to my military base. The base where I served. They trained half a season in “Yagor” and half a season in the “Gvat”. All in open arenas of course. Games were on Friday evenings. He came to me and told me he wanted me to come play for his team “Gvat/Yagor”. I told him “Noah, I do not know what I'm worth after two years of not playing at all”.

Interviewer: And that was while you were registered with “Hapoel Tel Aviv”, right?

Participant 3: So, I was registered with “Hapoel Tel Aviv”. I said: (1) I have not played in two years, and do not know what I am worth or what I can offer you. Two years at that age is a long time. If the player card is at “Hapoel Tel Aviv”, then it is considered... like a mortgage. It was impossible to get out of it. (3) I'm young here at the base. I do not know what I can offer you in terms of time. Do not know when I can be released or not released. I was still new to the squadron. I was a like a child there. Noah told me okay. He was like a known businessman and like “the sheriff of the valley”. He released Ami Shelef player’s card, who was the point guard playing for “Hapoel Tel-Aviv” on a loan from “Gvat/Yagor”. Noah also knew the military So he explained to them how important I would be. Then he showed up at my room one afternoon. Entered the base and told me that my card is with him. The military base office approved. He said, “I have a pair of shoes here, let's go to training”. He truly brought me back. Brought me back to basketball. And got me back in shape. very fast. The basketball gym was close so there was no problem. It was. Everything went very quickly. I returned shortly. I started playing in the starting five of “Gvat/Yagor”.

Interviewer: And at this point you were around 20 years old? According to my calculation.

Participant 3: I was between 20-21.

Interviewer: 20-21 and how many seasons approximately?

Participant 3: So, this was an important moment. Before that very quickly there was the “Yom Kippur” War. And very quickly I came back. I received the invitation to join the national team. Then “Yom Kippur” War started while we were at the European Championships in Barcelona. And we came back straight from there. On Saturday, after all, I went straight to the squadron and joined the attack. There was an interesting combination of basketball and ...

Interviewer: War.

Participant 3: Army and War. I was on the team later for two more years. And I also played in “Gvat/Yagor” for two years. After two good years in “Gvat/ Yagor” I transferred to “Hapoel Haifa” because there was a crisis between “Hapoel Tel Aviv” and “Gvat/Yagor” about Itamar Marzel who played one year for “Hapoel Tel-Aviv”. They fought about his player card. So as revenge “Hapoel Tel-Aviv” forbid me to play for “Gvat/ Yagor”. So, I needed to search for another team in the north because I did not want to travel to Tel Aviv. At this time Ralph Klein was coaching “Hapoel Haifa”.

Interviewer: Together with my father?

Participant 3: Then I met your father.

Interviewer: Then you were about 22 years old.

Participant 3: I was 23 maybe.

Interviewer: Okay. “Hapoel Haifa”.

Participant 3: “Hapoel Haifa” one year with Ralph Klein and your father and Hillel Gilboa and with Micha Schwartz. And with ... who else was there. Zlotikman was a 17-year-old boy. We did well, Place 6 or 7. Can't remember exactly. It was a nice team. BY this time, it was already the end of 1975. Then I was transferred to another base. So, I was contacted by “Hapoel Tel Aviv”. They told me that I was already a real player, ah ... also part of the national team. They wanted me to return to play for “Hapoel Tel

Aviv". Then I moved to live in Tel Aviv. I was a flight instructor and I played for "Hapoel Tel Aviv". I played 4 or 5 seasons.

Interviewer: 4 or 5 seasons?

Participant 3: Something like that. It was a really big success.

Interviewer: Where were you at your peak?

Participant 3: Yes. This period was the highlight of my career.

Interviewer: Were you between 24-29 years old?

Participant 3: Something like that. We qualified to "Koratz Cup". I was named one of the top players of the league. In "Yedioth Ahronoth" (newspaper), I was named MVP along with other four other foreign players. So, after 4-5 years I do not remember exactly when. But certainly, while I was at the top of my game a conflict began to develop between myself and the management. I didn't like the behavior of the management of "Hapoel Tel Aviv". So, Avraham and Eli Efrati came and started pulling strings with all sorts of people with whom I was less connected. My sense of integrity was different to theirs. Around the same time, I got another offer. I was released. It was already 1977. I was released in 77 or 78. I started working. No, sorry. Even later, 1980. Yes 1979-1980. I started working for "Arkia Airlines". I had already been discharged from the army. I went to work in the "Arkia Airlines" as a pilot. And they offered me a permanent job. Until then I was temporary. And I said well instead of fighting with the guys at "Hapoel", probably my future is more secure working as a pilot. So, I told them ("Hapoel Tel Aviv") I cannot continue playing because I started a new job as a pilot. I transferred to a second division team "Givat Brenner".

Interviewer: Which "Hapoel"?

Participant 3: "Hapoel Givat Brenner". They were in the second national league then and I played there for about two to three seasons.

Interviewer: That was the second league, right?

Participant 3: It was already the second league. I had come from the top.

Retrospectively it was a mistake because there were problems later in “Arkia Airlines” and it would have been financially better for me if I had remained playing basketball.

Interviewer: You were 30 years old, so you were not at the end of your career?

Participant 3: Absolutely not. It was right in the years after my prime. Really in the last year. I think I was selected to the top five players of the league the following year.

Interviewer: Then at the age of 30-32 you played in the second league for “Givat Brenner”.

Participant 3: For “Givat Brenner”. And then I played for another year or two at “Elitzur Petah Tikva”. I do not remember if it was in the second or third league. It was already in the phase of decline. This is in terms of a sporting career.

Interviewer: A concrete question. How many of those years were you part of the national team?

Participant 3: Three, I think. Yes. 1972-3-4 Then I left. I'll tell you why too. I left at some point because I made a switch to fly Phantom (plane).

Interviewer: Even though you were discharged from the army. I guess a pilot will often have to serve in the reserves.

Participant 3: Yes, that is always the case. 22 years. It's not just that. You will soon hear about my second career.

Interviewer: We'll get there later. Before we get there. One last question: What position were you playing?

Participant 3: I played as a shooting guard. What they used to call a half-corner / corner.

Interviewer: So, like between position 2 and 3?

Participant 3: Yes. By nature, I was very much a defensive player. Very aggressive. I was an athlete compared to the other players. I had sprint and monitoring capabilities.

Interviewer: You must be quite tall too?

Participant 3: Yes 1.89

Interviewer: So, one more question. So, you played as a professional from age 16 to age 32 or 33? So about 15-17 years professional. Okay Perfect.

Participant 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect.

Interviewer: Let's talk now about your management career. If you can please describe it the same way you did ...

Participant 3: Let's begin with my career. I'll divide it in two. As you understand, most of my life I have combined several things. So, first I combined basketball with my military service as a combat pilot in the Air Force. That is very unusual. I do not think there has been another person in the history of the State of Israel who did that. Maybe even to this day. I was a combat pilot part of a special squadron. It means that I needed to be on standby very often, participate in wars and many flights etc. And I did that while playing basketball games. Going on Friday night to a game at "Yad Eliyahu" after being on a mission attacking a foreign country. It's strange. Now everybody knew it. But the reporters were not allowed to write about it. They wrote: "Participant 3 bombed the baskets and went to serve his country". They used all kinds of expressions ... so that's this part. I combined in an unusual way and many people did not understand how I did it. The operational flight with professional basketball. Then when I started flying civilian, I continued this combination of sport and flights. So, I actually have two more combinations. My second combination is the civil flight. Which is actually from 1977, when I first joined the "Arkia Airlines". Or actually, except a break of one year, I didn't

stop flying civilian flights. Not just to fly but to be a captain, to be an instructor and to be a warrior.

Interviewer: Do you define it as a managerial role?

Participant 3: Soon we will reach the managerial part. Because I was also a manager. But yes, I define a guide, warrior and captain as a team leader. Sometimes the crew included many people ... I did not fly in a Jumbo to New York, but I also flew a 767 with 12 flight attendants and 4 crew members so it is definitely a team manager position.

Management capabilities are required. And to be a captain etc. And there is also a managerial theme in a training role. That instruction and test. I would examine on behalf of the Civil Aviation Authority. Like a tester of cars then I authorized people to be captains. So, this career is my second career. It started since 1977 through “Arkia Airlines” 22 years long followed by 15 years at “Israil” and at the end “Cal” company which is a Cargo airline. There I have worked for another three years.

Interviewer: What is the name of the third company?

Participant 3: “Cal”. Airlines for cargo. This is an Israeli company for Cargo. I flew with 747-400 planes.

Interviewer: How many years?

Participant 3: Three years. Right at the end of my career.

Interviewer: So, you have worked 22 years for “Arkia”, 15 years for “Israil” and another 3 years for “Cal”?

Participant 3: Yes. And since the age of 65 I have stopped flying until today. For three years I have been flying as captain of a private business jet.

Interviewer: Okay. But you are retired, right?

Participant 3: Do not know. Define for me what a pension is?

Interviewer: Sitting at home ... but probably not.

Participant 3: I'm of retirement age, let's say. Why did I stop flying at age 65? Because aviation law in most places in the world does not allow pilots to fly over the age of 65. Then at the age of 65 you can fly and get paid and all but not for a commercial airline. So, you can fly on private jets. This private jet could be a jumbo and could be a 747 and could go into Heathrow and all places. It makes no difference if there is one businessman or 400 passengers. But according to the law there is a difference. So, I had to stop flying at age 65. I found this businessman and I worked for him until Corona started actually. We'll see what happens after. I do not know. This is the pilot career. Which started in 1990 if I'm not mistaken it started in 1989.

Interviewer: Of course, in parallel.

Participant 3: Of course, in parallel. I continued to play basketball as you know until ...

Interviewer: up to age 35 or so

Participant 3: Until fifty-two actually, 1988 or something like that. Or 1989. In 1990 when I was already a pilot in "Arkia" I was first offered a managerial position. To be chief pilot.

Interviewer: Deputy Chief Pilot?

Participant 3: Yes. Every aircraft fleet has a chief pilot. Suppose if "El Al" has 787s then they have a chief pilot who is the fleet manager. And this role is also an administrative manager. Managing the pilots and their professional level. Also taking care of the staff, instructors and he has deputies. And he is in charge of standards and he reports up to the VP. He is in charge of all the managers. So, my first appointment was deputy pilot of "Arkia". We had 40-50 pilots. But I was the lieutenant. I had areas of responsibilities. And that included being a guide and examiner and all that. And very quickly I progressed in "Arkia" over the course of 10 years.

Interviewer: So, you were in that role for 10 years?

Participant 3: No. I was in this position for a year and a half.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Deputy chief pilot for a year and a half okay.

Participant 3: The chief pilot moved to the jet fleet. The jet fleet was considered more advanced. So, the chief pilot moved to the jet fleet. So, I was appointed chief pilot. I was a pilot for two or three years. Cannot remember how many. Then I switched to the jet fleet and very quickly became chief pilot of the 737 fleet which had another 4 planes and approximately 60 pilots and all that implies.

Interviewer: And how many years were you the main pilot of the jet fleet?

Participant 3: Of 737 four years and after that 757 another four. I mean in total I was chief pilot until actually 1999. It's about 10 years.

Interviewer: One more question before we move forward; For the first position: Deputy chief pilot. How many employees were under you? Can you give me an estimate?

Participant 3: Yes. In total there were a lot of people there. There were around 30 in the area. Under the chief pilot there were 30. I delegated some assignments. For example, I handled the whole issue of training. Others handled more administrative work. Disciplinary and technical issues I handled. The role of chief pilot is basically to manage a fleet of planes and pilots. It includes a lot of functions. It includes functions of day-to-day people management, their personal problems etc.

Interviewer: So, during these ten years approximately 30 to 50 subordinates?

Participant 3: Each fleet was different. There was one fleet, in the end, where I was at some point also in charge of 80 people. So, it could be up to 80 people. The variety of tasks was wide, including contact with maintenance, inspection systems, and also with

the airports and with the flight attendants, the service. It's to run a system. Not a complete economic system but a very operational system.

Interviewer: After those 10 years we're approximately at the year 2000. It's all been in the "Arkia Airlines". What's next?

Participant 3: In 1999 I was passed over for the position of VP of Operations, although I and the entire organisation saw me in this role. This is the next managerial level above chief pilot, reporting to the VP of Operations. I had been in charge of all the fleets and I was very popular and accepted and so on. And the CEO, who was then the owner, Izzy ... Levy, who you probably heard of before, later acquired "El Al". He and his brother Gadi. They grew up and they brought me to the "Arkia Airlines". In short, he preferred someone else. Younger, less experienced. Even though three years earlier he had promised the role to me, he called up me one day and told me I didn't get it. Of course, I felt betrayed. I immediately informed him that I was also resigning from my position as chief pilot. "Israir" contacted me and said "with the experience you have, we want to establish an international fleet in "Israir". We are now bringing two new planes. "Israir" was a company which Two or three years previously flew turboprops to Eilat and the north. And they brought two new 737 planes and asked me to help build the international fleet. So, in a dramatic move, I left Arkia Airlines, and Izzy Gurevitsch was mad at me for leaving the company after almost 15 years. Even though he had kind of kicked me out. I moved to Nochi Dankner and we started building the whole jet fleet.

Interviewer: There you were directly appointed to a managerial position?

Participant 3: I started there as chief pilot.

Interviewer: How many years approximately?

Participant 3: So, wait. I was Chief pilot there for maybe a year and a half. And I got a promotion to VP of Operations. The job I wanted in “Arkia” and did not get. So here I got it.

Interviewer: In year 2001-2002?

Participant 3: Yes, sort of. I was VP of Operations in 2001. Even in 2000. And immediately after that I was appointed Deputy CEO in charge. The functions of “Israir”'s VP of Operations were also much more extensive than the functions of “Arkia”'s VP of Operations, which was a larger and more established organisation. Here we actually built everything from scratch. In fact, two or three years later I became the deputy CEO. I was responsible for all operations of “Israir Airlines”. This included two fleets of aircraft; an internal fleet of five aircraft and an international fleet of two aircrafts. We flew charter flights to Europe. We began a new, huge and amazing project. We started making flights to the USA. And operated 767-300 to the US. And we had about 280 employees in operations.

Interviewer: So, you were in charge of 280 employees?

Participant 3: Yes. About that.

Interviewer: Well you were a VP, right?

Participant 3: Do understand that I was the so-called deputy CEO. Senior VP. Vice President of Cena Byrne who was the CEO.

Interviewer: And it's like being in charge of the operation?

Participant 3: It's not just the operations like in a regular airline. I was responsible here for the operations for both the maintenance and the stations on the ground. Additionally, for the service, the building, the warehouses and so on. Everything. How do I say it? Everything that is not finance and not marketing and sales. I mean all the objects that

move. Anything that does not sit in offices and work by the tables and so on. So basically ...

Interviewer: Many years?

Participant 3: About five years. 4-5 years. Until 2000 and ... of which 4-5 years in this position out of the seven years.

Interviewer: Until 2006?

Participant 3: Until August 2006. Then I was fired one more time. Right before I should have become CEO of the company. And Nochi Dankner and people around him also thought that I should be. We had a traumatic event. We almost had an accident in New York. Do you know the story?

Interviewer: Almost what?

Participant 3: Almost an accident in New York.

Interviewer: Not familiar.

Participant 3: It's a trauma.

Interviewer: An event that shocked the organisation?

Participant 3: It was shocking. This event. I was not the pilot, but I was responsible for the incident. And for the staff. It was almost a serious accident. So, it came to the attention of the national TV channel. It came to Ilana Dayan's program. There were allegations of a cover-up and misleading the truth. Then Nochi Dankner, who was the owner, contacted me and said "because of all the pressure from the media. Although I very very much appreciate you and appreciate what you have done, I have to transfer you away from your role as a manager". Not as a pilot. As a pilot I kept flying all the time. Also, in a management position. So, I continued to be a pilot, captain, instructor and airforce pilot. Also. Then he said to me: "Take your time. Your salary is guaranteed. You can continue to be a pilot. If you want to continue as captain, or as a

regular pilot in the company, or if you are interested in a managerial position in another organisation belonging to me”. So, Nochi Dankner was the owner of IDB, which meant that half of the country belonged to him. Including “Shufersal” and “Clal Insurance” and dozens of companies and “Cellcom” and so on. He told me to look around. “If you find something that suits you and will suit the local managers. Yes, we won’t put you to manage a bank if you have no idea about finances. You should say what you want, and we will check what we can do”. Thus, I found myself after a few months in the position of CEO of one of the companies in a concern called “Hadera Paper”.

Interviewer: CEO of “Hadera Paper”?

Participant 3: No “Hadera Paper”. There was the CEO of the concern and I was the CEO of one of the subsidiary companies.

Interviewer: So, a subsidiary of “Hadera Paper”?

Participant 3: A subsidiary of “Hadera Paper”. I was there from 2006 until 2014. As well. 7 years. Seven amazing years in my opinion, in which I actually managed a budget of close to 700 million NIS.

Interviewer: And employees?

Participant 3: Around 650 employees. In three different businesses. I mean every business had a CEO and I managed the CEOs of those businesses. One of these was a recycling company, which was the largest company in the country collecting wastepaper and cardboard. I was the CEO of a division ... It was called a division, but it was a company. And a company of packaging and recycling papers. In Hebrew it was packaging and recycling papers. And cardboard all over the country with the trucks and people.

Interviewer: In recycling?

Participant 3: Yes, recycling. Everything. So, the company collected all the waste for recycling from all over the country. It was the largest company in the country and it actually built a nationwide network of paper waste collection and sorting. From cardboard papers, white paper, printing paper. Whatever you want. The second company was the smallest. Was around fifty men. It was a plastic recycling company, which recycled plastic shots, and reprocessed, cleaned, extracted and created raw materials for the electrical pipes you have in your home. I mean really full cycle... and the CEO was subordinate to me. From collecting materials from the agricultural fields to creating the raw material from which pipes or other plastic products are reproduced. They had five extrusion webs in the factory. The plant could produce the plastic from scratch. The factory is, if I am not mistaken, the second largest in the country. The main business that I was responsible for was the one where most of the workers worked, and where most of the money was: the packaging paper factory.

Interviewer: Packaging papers you said?

Participant 3: Packaging papers. Packaging papers are the huge rolls of paper from which all the cardboard packaging in the country is made. Coca-Cola carton packaging, vegetable cartons, refrigerator cartons.

Interviewer: Even Amazon cartons?

Participant 3: All the cartons are manufactured ... here you have behind you on the right. You have a carton. Take that for example. The one lying on the shelf. Cross its wall and you will see that it consists of a sickle and in the middle, there are two plates. Two straight papers.

Interviewer: So now this industry is now at its peak because of online shopping?

Participant 3: Yes. It is not yet at its` peak, but it is very...

Interviewer: I know a that in Germany it is ...

Participant 3: So, our factory ran three huge paper machines, which could take the waste that was collected by our other companies and wrinkle and grind it. We know how to turn it back into paper fibres. And these fibres were fed into the paper machines that re-made rolls of paper. These rolls went to the cardboard factories. But we made the boards and then printed on them, cut them and then made them for all industries. We were the only paper mill in the country that was based one hundred percent on recycling. And today people import such paper. During my time there we invested 750 million. Sorry 700 million shekels. Invested in a new factory that was the largest of its kind in the Middle East, and I was a partner in its establishment and its operation. Seven years I worked for this company. And with total export activities to Turkey, Germany, and USA. And with the development of a complete system of production. Development of a complete system of innovation. A stunning period.

Interviewer: till 2013 I see.

Participant 3: 7 years of management at his best. And I learned a lot there.

Interviewer: And it was the first time you got out of the airport?

Participant 3: Exactly. Moving from the world of aviation was a big challenge for me as well.

Interviewer: How do you define this industry? recycling?

Participant 3: The Paper Industry (in English). By the way in this industry there are large groups from Germany. There are large manufacturers of paper. Also, large manufacturers of machines. We have set up a new factory with VT (English). A large factory that produces paper machines. A paper machine that ... I should understand the size of a paper machine. If you take "Azrieli" (tower) and lay it down, it's about the size of. It's a huge factory. This is something crazy.

Interviewer: Say after 2013 you were in a managerial position?

Participant 3: So that's it. After 2013-2014, no. Since finishing there I have moved to “CAL”. All this time I also used to fly on “Israir Airlines” once a week on Saturdays. Even during the “Hadera” period. And I even made a transfer to Airbus. Then when I finished, I changed to jumbo jets and moved to “CAL” to become a captain in the cargo fleet. Then I flew for about three years on cargo flights all over the world. South America and America as well. By then my aviation career was mostly based in Europe, and bit in America. So now I have been everywhere for three years. With cargo flights. And Jumbo 747-400 which is the queen of planes.

Interviewer: Then you did it until you turned 65 years old.

Participant 3: Yeah and then I went straight to ... Another thing I do. Speaking of management. This is something I do. After graduating from ... while working at CAL. After I finished in “Hadera”, I did a training course for Coaching and also for being a mentor. And today I am a mentor for managers.

Interviewer: Oh, coaching?

Participant 3: Coaching and Mentorship. There is a little difference between them. I can also tell what the difference is. The mentorship I do is with senior executives. I mentored the CEO of a software company. I mentored CEOs of a modelling agency. I coached a senior vice president at “El Al”. Now I am accompanying in the north two senior executives with the goal to improve their management capabilities.

Section B: Motivation pursuing a basketball career

Interviewer: Excellent. Thank you so much for that ... We have now reached the main part more or less. Now, at your disposal, we'll talk about the motivation. If you can tell me about the motivation to pursue a basketball career. Because you had a lot of

occupations and so on, and to pursue a professional basketball career needs a lot of motivation. So, what was your driver? Having the basketball career.

Participant 3: Firstly, there is no doubt that the following applies not only to basketball: Success is one of the main drivers of being a good player. The success and recognition and appreciation you receive from those who demonstrate their love to you. I really mean it. With the journalists and with the audience and so on. By the way, in my opinion, one of the great motivation drivers of most people is the desire to be appreciated. That's what I call it.

Interviewer: You mean the positive feedback you receive?

Participant 3: Yes. It's the adrenaline that drives you to keep wanting more and to keep succeeding. Moreover, you go to practice with the team and you want to be become better and you even join the national team and want to be successful there. You want to excel. You are not going immediately after the game to check the criticism of your performance. It's about your self-criticism. I mean, also, if you do not succeed then you take it to the negative side. The desire to succeed. The desire to be part of something. The desire to win. This is in addition to the enjoyment of sports. But, in the end, you need to daily training after a full working day. I would travel to instruct (pilots) all the way to the aviation school (in the south of Israel). Arriving at five in the evening after a full day and having to go to training at seven and it is in "Yad Elijah" at night and to wake up at six in the morning and to travel again to the base to instruct. So, like, you understand the combination that I had. So, yeah, I think that's the point ... And also, the enjoyment of success in sports, I think yes, as long as it went well. But sometimes these worlds collided. On one occasion my values and the way in which management of "Hapoel Tel Aviv" operated did not correspond. Especially regarding the topics of credibility and integrity. And at the same time, I also had to think about my long-term

perspectives. Flight or basketball. I was already in my 30s, as you understand. So, I gave it up. Somewhere when I reflect on that I say that it was a mistake. I should have insisted more. Look. I was so sure of myself and the environment that I was able to convince even (“Hapoel Tel Aviv”) to release my player card to “Givat Brenner”. My persuasive abilities were good. But it's fine. To your question what the motivation is to continue? I say the motivation to keep flying is something different.

Section C: Motivation pursuing a business career

Participant 3: I became a manager, and I became VP of an organisation such as “Hadera”. I even became a deputy CEO. I met once another CEO of an airline who was also a pilot. He stopped flying, because he said he didn’t have time to combine both business and flying. It's time consuming and so on ... Even though I went fly on Saturdays instead of being home with my family, despite having been away all week long. I worked all day from morning to evening. For what? I see it related to this motivation of continuing and not giving up on something you do well. And that you enjoy it. But rather to insist on continuing to do it. In fact, my wife kept saying: “No! That's what you know how to do and you're good at it”.

Interviewer: So, after you quit basketball this desire to succeed was transferred?

Participant 3: That's what I'm trying to say. This motivation to keep going and not give up and keep doing what you enjoy, and love. This is something that makes you feel good. It is also very difficult sometimes in other areas.

Interviewer: Other things that you have to give up on?

Participant 3: Yes.

Interviewer: And if I ask you the same question about motivation for the business world. What was your drive? What was your motivation?

Participant 3: Look ... I'll tell you so. That's a good question, because I'm really going to say it. In my youth, and even up to the age of 20, I was not one of the people who really wanted to become a manager. I never thought about becoming a manager. I received all the appreciation from being a combat pilot. But I was never like these people, some are even my friends, who are constantly pushing themselves forward to become senior executives. Even in aviation, maybe in basketball as well. So, my entry into the world of management is something which, when I think about it, was a bit of a surprise to me. Where did it come from? My assumption is that it came from my dad. My father was a very senior manager for many years in the public sector. He led many projects in the country. Apparently, he influenced me. My desire was to follow his track. I wanted to be like him. Because he was a manager. He was a manager by definition.

Interviewer: Because you did not have to go that route. You could always ...

Participant 3: Certainly not. I could be in a respectable position such as a pilot of “El Al”. Maybe at some point even have become a captain with all the respect and appreciation and the good life. And, of course, I went through all kinds of crises along the way. I could have stayed in “Arkia” and not switch to “Israir” when Nochi called me. I would have remained captain in the company until the end of my career. And when I left “Israir” they made me an offer to continue as captain until my retirement. But I chose to become a manager in “Hadera”.

Interviewer: So, this drive is somehow ...

Participant 3: My drive for management is insane. This is the thing I love. This is what I enjoy doing. I think it comes from sports too. I think it comes from this mindset of not giving up, the desire to win, the desire to succeed, the willingness to sacrifice for what

you love to do ... I wrote down a few things about the connection between sports and management. I have prepared it before.

Interviewer: Ah, did you write this for yourself?

Participant 3: I wrote it down before our call. I like to work thoroughly like this. One of the main things I learnt in sport was the desire to win. It requires hard work, professionalism, giving up the enjoyment of life a bit, and competitiveness. I learnt that the focus is not on the end results, rather there is an element of thinking and planning. You do not just win. You win because you study the opponent, because you prepare yourself as you need to ... These are all concepts that can use in management. I mean I learnt it through participation in basketball but it I used it as well in my management roles.

Interviewer: You also did not compromise on mediocrity. You could have done “easy” military service in “Kirya”.

Participant 3: Unequivocally. You're right.

Interviewer: So why would you compromise on being a "captain"?

Participant 3: What is wrong being a captain in an airline? Is there anything better than that? But I did want more. And management. That is the challenge in my opinion. I call these two things in management: (1) the impact on people. (2) Impact on processes. These two elements are my motto in management. One is the impact. Your ability to perform as a captain is okay. So, you take off. You flew to Paris. You landed, waited there for hours or nights, and came back. How I always told my wife, I was back after a day like this. I moved four thousand miles today but did not progress anywhere.

Section F: Relatedness

Interviewer: You just made the transition to the next topic smoother. You mentioned that there are two challenges in management: People and processes. Going back to the days when you were a basketball player. Do you believe that your experiences in sports helped you to become a better team player? Did you learn about teamwork during your basketball career?

Participant 3: Absolutely! It's obvious and I'll tell you why. It begins with my personal character. By now you probably understood that my personality is more trivial by nature. I am less ego focused and I played with players who weren't like this. Itamar, for example, is also like me. Your dad is like that too. I'm not sure I'd say the same thing about Mickey Berkowitz. That does not mean he is not a good player. The value of teamwork is essential. This is something which is instilled at home. I am not sure. It was an essential value in the basketball we played. It is also nowadays, in my opinion, an essential value of management. Some people told me that I was a CEO of a different kind. Not a CEO who has a lot of ego. I was a CEO who emphasised listening and teamwork. And I never took a decision without listening to the opinions of others. I eventually took the final decision, but I let others to share their opinion and have a discussion. But it never happened that I just took a decision from nowhere without asking for insights. Usually there was a phone call before and I tried to find out more details. Of course, I teach this to executives today I very much preach it, but with a warning that the final decision still rests with them. So, it's true that I need to have a discussion, but I need to make it smart and focused, in order to lead it to a position where I want it to be, not to let it spread in too many directions or let everyone share their opinions on unrelated topics.

Interviewer: Do you maybe have an example in mind? Although it was a long time ago. An example from sport where you learned about teamwork.

Participant 3: I'll answer this question from a different angle. For example, with all the respect to Barry Leibowitz, who was a great player. A great guy with a nice character. He was cool. But if we analyse his game for a moment especially his teamwork skills. He was a great passer. You could close your eyes and he would pass you the ball exactly where you need it. Conversely, out of 30 seconds offensive play he would hang on to the ball for maybe 25 seconds. Everyone had to run around and, eventually, he did pass the ball. I mean he was a great passer. I used him as an example because I do not think he was a team player. Because if you are a real team player you understand that you need to let other players express themselves. They also need to hold, dribble, and pass the ball. It is not enough to just pass to someone and make the assist. I think Barry was a great player, but he did not know how to form a winning team around him.

Interviewer: To unite everyone together?

Participant 3: Yes. He did not know this. And did not know how to give enough space to his teammates to elevate their game. We were partners and we were happy, and we scored points, and everything was good, but if you compare him to other players like Itamar Marzel, for example, it's a different story. If you take the NBA as an example. I'm now watching the documentary about Michael Jordan.

Interviewer: Me too.

Participant 3: Great. So, if you take Magic Johnson as an example. He always knew how to share the ball with his teammates. So yes, I am a big believer in teamwork ... If you see LeBron James. When you see LeBron James stop playing for the team and just playing for himself, then the team plays much worse. So, there is no doubt that teamwork is very important. Like I said earlier. I believe it starts with the personal

character and continues through the learning of teamwork in basketball, and the understanding that wins will follow when the team plays well together. In the long term, it probably influenced my management style. In most of the management roles I filled, I implemented teamwork in decision making processes. People told me sometimes “why are you oversharing too much. Just take the decision alone”. But the true knowledge and insights is in the employees themselves.

Interviewer: So, you believe your management style was influenced by your basketball career. From your experience in sports?

Participant 3: Unequivocally! There’s no doubt. I wrote this down before our conversation: “teamwork, team maximisation and results, and the less ego trip the better”. These elements are in my opinion are the main components I learnt. And listening skills. To be able to let people talk. Let people express their opinions and hear them because many times they have smart things to say.

Interviewer: Is it important to you as a manager to consider the feelings of others?

Participant 3: Yes. Considering the feelings of others is very important to me. But up to a certain limit. I had a case of one of my VPs who hired a mid-level manager. He was his mentor and invested a lot in his development. However, this mid-level manager was busy with himself and did not get along with his staff. The VP could not fire him. I finally told the VP. "You do not understand how much damage he is causing you. Not for himself and not for the organisation but for you." At the end, with a lot of empathy and affection, experience, and listening, one should also know how to make the decision. So, we released him from his job... Another example from “Israir”. I had to fire someone although she was the real soul of the company ... and she still thanks me up to this day. In short, you have to know how to listen, but you also have to know not to get carried away by your emotions.

Section D: Autonomy

Interviewer: That brings me to the next section regarding decision making and problem solving. Do you believe sports somehow gave you the opportunity to learn about decision making and problem solving?

Participant 3: I'll tell you this. In the area of decision making, it did partly (which is also something I have listed here). By the way I have a presentation. Maybe I'll send it to you.

Interviewer: That would be great.

Participant 3: I am also a volunteer board member of the Basketball Referee Association. The chairman of the association, Bruno Tzahar, contacted me three years ago. He invited me to become a board member of this association. A great and interesting organisation. I lectured them on the shared attributes of pilots and a basketball referee. It was interesting. For you it can even be interesting. What is required of a referee and what is required of a pilot. One of the topics was decision making. In my opinion, decision making begins long before the decision is made. I think I learnt this from basketball. Basically, apart from decisions such as shooting or passing the ball, in basketball the decisions before are the actual games. In practice you study your opponent. The decision-making process in business is similar. Preparation ultimately leads to a final decision ... This is by the way is also relevant to military. When you prepare before going on a mission. Also post mission learning is an important part. When you analyse what went well and what not and how to fix it ... These are matters that are very relevant to business.

Interviewer: So, you learned that from sports and transferred to the world of management?

Participant 3: I think I took the preparation part from sport. The part of coaching yourself and investing time in thinking before the decision. It's like preparing for a mission and analysing it afterwards. Preparing for the mission/event and doing the right briefing. After the event you need to analyse it and to discuss the decisions you made. What was good and what didn't work so well. How to fix what was not good. These are essential processes I learned in sports which I then applied in my career as a pilot. Additionally, every flight begins with a briefing and ends with an interrogation. These are very relevant to management ... Decision-making in real time relays ... It relies on what you have prepared before. That is, if you have prepared enough alternatives for yourself then a decision in real time is a choice from one of the alternatives you have prepared, but there is ultimately a degree of improvisation is also required. The improvisation part is basically the part which you can associate to decision-making in real time on the basketball court. That you see the player is free, but you actually planned to go for a shot. So, there's the element here that it's already kind of ... I call it more personal abilities, but it also came from sports. It's basically "thinking out of the box" right away and thinking, let's do it differently. Not exactly according to the initial plan. The improvisation element is part of a process of decision making. That's how I see it. Forgive me for making it too complicated.

Section E: Competence

Interviewer: No problem. You combined not only a basketball career, but also military and management careers. I know some people have a problem with the word "leader", but do you believe that your participation in sports has allowed you to learn the skills required to be a leader? And if so, then why? And which skills in particular?

Participant 3: No, I have no problem with the word “leader”. Like I told you before I'm not sure I was a leader in sports. I was a good player. I was a good performer. I was a fighter, but I do not think I was a leader.

Interviewer: The question is not about whether you were a leader in sports but whether sports helped you learn skills (yes or no) to become a leader. To learn about leadership.

Participant 3: I cannot tell you exactly. I think I learned these skills primarily at home. For example, the personal example of leadership, and not giving up. Taking decisions without hesitation. I think these skills were developed more during my management career and less with basketball. In basketball it was more instinctive but making decisions with people and processes with all the risk involved. I'm not sure I can say that I see the immediate connection of decision-making to sports, except perhaps from examples around me. Sorry.

Interviewer: No, don't apologise. I did not expect everyone to say yes to everything. About teamwork you said unequivocally yes. About decision-making you said no. But in leadership ... now for a management career. Do you believe that you are good at managing people? That you were good or are still good?

Participant 3: Yes, I believe I am very effective in leading people. I believe that what makes me good is my reliability. This is a basic element. I mean what I say, and I do what I intend to do. Additionally, I am as transparent as possible. Of course, sometimes you cannot provide all the details to everyone. But I try to increase transparency. I think leadership also comes from listening. Lots of listening, lots of space for others. Be able to let people talk. Let people express their opinions and hear them because many times they have smart things to say. As a leader you gain credibility from personal example. Leadership is about showing that you also act and not only talk. When I told everyone that the company must reduce the expenses and therefore the company will not pay for

the washing the cars, then I will also not wash my car. Or if the company needs to cut salaries, then the management team must cut their salaries first and then slowly trickle down to non-management employees. I believe it derives also (and I will be modest) from wisdom. I mean I have the ability. I appreciate the relatively high level of analysis of simplifying things. Many times, you face a complex problem in the management team, and everyone throws different ideas into the mix. The ability to take a complex event and break it down into a number of smaller secondary events is important. Then you take care each small event and connect it back to a big event in a linear pattern. I mean I think there was always an appreciation also for the wisdom I demonstrated in different discussions. Of course, the ability to analyse the small details is also important. I used to start my day walking in the factory floor and talking to many production line workers. Asking them “what’s going on? What's going on with this engine? I heard yesterday that you replaced this engine”. Once you show interest in their work, and even know what’s going on, you get very positive feedback. So, I think I was successful. To this day I know people in “Arkia” who ask why I left. And in “Israir” as well. 30 years ago.

Interviewer: Returning to sports. Maybe, subconsciously, you looked at other players or a certain coach and learned from them? Maybe a personal example?

Participant 3: Sure, yes. I mean I had some good and some bad. Who didn't? I have no doubt that Ralph Klein was a model. In the youth national team.

Interviewer: A model for leadership?

Participant 3: Yes, a model for leadership and honesty. His father-in-law was a negative model and a few others as well. I think that Noah was definitely a positive role model. I definitely had good coaches. Haim Hazan was a huge role model to me.

I used to spend time with him as a teenager at “Hapoel Tel Aviv”. He took me to “Hapoel Tel Aviv” before the military service. He was the coach of “Hapoel Tel Aviv”.

Section G: Research questions confrontation

Interviewer: A general question. Which leadership skills, if any, do professional basketball players develop during their careers?

Participant 3: Do you mean teamwork leadership skills?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 3: Personal excellence as part of leadership. The readiness. I think there are many characteristics a leader possesses. These can stand out and differentiate the leaders from non-leaders. The huge investment, the willingness to work hard in order to reach goals. Focusing on the result. By the way one of the most essential elements in management in my opinion is the ability to focus on the goal. When you are a senior manager and there are countless dilemmas and issues on your desk that needs to be prioritised ... When you start conducting a session with 10 or 12 participants and each one pulls his ideas in different directions. The ability to eventually focus on two to three issues that are most significant and will affect results is paramount. The viewpoint is based the result. This I learnt by the way from sports. To constantly examine what you are doing and examine how effective it is for the outcome. Try to avoid doing things that are “nice to have” and do not impact the results.

Interviewer: So, based on what you said, professional players (yourself included) learn abilities during their careers which are important for success?

Participant 3: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: For example, what's important during pre-season in order to be ready for the season?

Participant 3: I think so. The focus. What to do and how to do it right. And how to make it the most effective. How to do the best exercise that will ultimately bring the result.

Interviewer: It's like the TV documentary you watched about Michael Jordan. They also mentioned the “triangle offense”.

Participant 3: Yes. Did you watch it? In the end he (Michael Jordan) understood. In the end he got it.

Interviewer: But it was hard for him.

Participant 3: He understood that it's better to play together with your team than to be in possession of the ball all the time ... But yes. We are talking again about teamwork.

In my opinion the ability to focus is unequivocally a key element in life. Without any doubt it came from sports. The desire to win as well. I mean the drive to succeed.

Michael Jordan is the classic example. He punished any player who wasn't prepared to give everything in order to win ...

Interviewer: All these skills: the ability to focus, teamwork, the willingness to work hard and so on. Do you think you implemented them in the world of management?

Participant 3: Unequivocally.

Interviewer: all of them?

Participant 3: Yes. Definitely. I wrote down another skill which we didn't mention yet.

Dealing with failure is an essential element of leadership. I think I learned that from

sports. Because in sport there is always the next game. Therefore, I must recover

quickly and clear my head. Although we lost the game because of my mistake, there is

always the next game next week or in few days ... learning from my failures and dealing

with criticism are two of the benefits of sports participation ... in business I was not

always successful. And in business I also made bad decisions. But I could not let this

affect me... and my employees and managers also make mistakes. First, I must analyse the outcome of the mistake and not necessarily fire the person who did it. It could lead to success later. I think that's one of the advantages an athlete has compared to non-athletes. Sport enables people some sort of a system that knows how to withstand disappointments and move on stronger.

Interviewer: Can it be applied in the business world in your opinion?

Participant 3: Sure. Because in business you are not always successful. And in business you also make bad decisions. And you're not falling apart either and neither are your employees and your managers. You should know how to analyse the mistake. You should not necessarily fire your employees for being wrong. It could lead to success later on. I mean I think that's actually one of the things in my opinion where you can see the contribution of sport to people. In comparison to other people who have not played sports and don't know how to deal with failure. Sport gives you a kind of "protection system" that teaches you how to deal with failure well and move on.

Interviewer: Did you also experience that?

Participant 3: Sure. Certainly. I remember that when I was a kid playing in a league. Two free throws that I missed caused us to lose a game. I burst into tears ... My ability to recover from these kinds of events and to keep going originates from there. I see it as the resilience that comes from these abilities such as coping with failure. Additionally, in the event that I did not get the job I wanted, I decided not to give up. Another example is the incident I previously mentioned in New York, because of which I had to step down. This incident appeared even on TV on Ilana Dayan's prime time show. It was really unpleasant. I went with my wife to a restaurant that day just to avoid having to watch it ... There have been unpleasant and difficult events, and also repeated

successes and failures in making managerial decisions. Definitely it demonstrates elements of the connection with sport.

Interviewer: Thank you. We have reached the last part.

Participant 3: If I am talking too much then tell me.

Interviewer: The opposite. I'm just wondering how to say it without sounding like I am criticising you.

Participant 3: Please say! I want you to do that! Feel free.

Interviewer: Because you said that ... When I asked you before if you believe that your participation in sports has taught you the skills to be a leader.

Participant 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Then you said ... you thought for a moment and said: "No. I do not see anything like this." But then as more we talked ...

Participant 3: Yes. You're right there's some contradiction. This is true.

Interviewer: Maybe the questions are too direct or not clear.

Participant 3: Yes, you will see I understood the question differently. I did not see myself as a leader until I began to develop these skills in management. I paid less attention to leadership skills ... Itamar was the leader of the team. Basically, he was our point guard and decision maker, and therefore the team leader. Everyone around the team also saw him as the leader. And he was a captain etc. ... I was never. I mean I was always a good player, even better than good, but I did not receive any recognition as a leader. Not from myself and not from the environment. I had an appreciation that I have all kinds of personal skills but not necessarily the ability to lead a basketball team. I did not organise my teammates as expected ... So when you asked about leadership from sport I thought you mean to be the leader in sports and not learning the skills. Some of the traits that I developed definitely contributed to the leadership aspect.

Interviewer: Leadership is, like you said, dealing with stress, it's focus, it's consists of many skills.

Participant 3: Maybe I addressed it more in the sense of leading people in basketball itself.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 3: I led people in sports less. But I did it a lot later in business and really enjoyed it. But then in basketball I did it less. But yes, you are right. Good that you raised this misunderstanding.

Section G: Research questions confrontation

Interviewer: So, the final questions. Do you believe that your participation in sports has enabled you to develop the leadership skills that led to your development as a person?

Participant 3: Absolutely, yes.

Interviewer: Do you have any examples?

Participant 3: We talked about it. I think we have discussed it already.

Interviewer: Yes. And the same question about but regarding the application of those skills, you acquired through sport participating, in the business world?

Participant 3: I really believe that all the skills we mentioned earlier such as the desire to win, hard work, healthy lifestyle, personal example, dealing with criticism, teamwork etc. are learned and developed in sports. And these qualities make a significant contribution to your success as a manager. In sport you learn how stick to a healthy lifestyle. You learn it as an athlete, and it makes a significant contribution to your success as a manager. Sports and nutrition are very important as well as avoiding clubs and nightlife. It contributes to a manager's leadership ability. Dealing with failure we already mentioned, teamwork, learning from mistakes, making decisions (we said at the

level of improvisation under pressure), personal examples of course, dealing with criticism (press, company). All these together form this thing called leadership. I think they have a direct connection to sports. Those who have not been active in sports may be able to learn these qualities in other settings such as military service or academic studies. But yes, these are traits that you develop along the way and may greatly contribute to your success as a manager!

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

11 Appendix C



SAMPLE PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Examining athletes' leadership skills development and transfer experiences from sport into business

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: 24.04.2020

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details:

Researcher's Name (Printed): OR SELA


Researcher's Signature: Or Sela XX.XX.2020



Researcher's contact details:

Or Sela

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

12 Appendix D

  Doctoral Candidate at Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield, United Kingdom) and Munich Business School (Munich, Germany)

 /  **Munich Business School**
University of Applied Sciences

Subject:

Participant letter for conducting interviews with former elite athletes and business managers.

Program:

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Doctoral Candidate:

Or Sela



Research Project:

“Examining athlete’s leadership skills development and transfer from sport into business”

Participant Information Sheet 1

Legal basis for research for studies

The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest**. A full statement of your rights can be found at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research>.

However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately, and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with ~~Converis~~ number ER17401348. Further information at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>

Dear Sir,

please make a valuable contribution to an enhanced understanding of the role of sport in offering experiences that enable the development and subsequent application of leadership skills in a business context. Through sharing your experiences and insights, you might help individuals and organisations to advance the understanding of sport as a developmental setting of both development and application of leadership skills. Being able to link the development of leadership skills in sport and application in business may reveal the significant influence sport experiences have in the lives of athletes long after their sporting careers are over.

My background

My name is Or Sela and I'm currently enrolled in the DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) programme of the Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield, United Kingdom) and Munich Business School (Munich, Germany).

After finishing high school, I joined a professional basketball league as point guard, giving me a strong appreciation for teamwork and dedication. Having served as an assistant accountant in the military and finding the topics of finance and management to be challenging and interesting, I decided to study business administration. After completing my bachelor's degree and gaining some working experience, I decided to move to Berlin to do a master's degree. Upon graduating, I received a job offer from Microsoft and moved to Munich. Nowadays I am working for a subsidiary of American Express called Loyalty Partner Solutions as well as being a part-time lecturer at EU Business School. There I specialize in the areas of sports management for MBA students.

Regarding my research project

For the acquisition of the academic degree 'Doctor of Business Administration' (DBA), I'm examining the link between sport and business. The focus of my research is the development and transfer of leadership skills from sport to business. The project lasts from 2017 until 2021.

Hence the essential part of my research process is conducting interviews with former elite basketball players who upon their retirement perused a career in business setting. And that is the reason why I'm approaching you via this letter.

I would be very happy if you would like to contribute valuable insights to my study by engaging in an approximately 30-45 minutes conversation with me. If you agree, I will visit you at your apartment or office.

Standards and policies

I assure to you that anything you tell me during our conversation, will be anonymized in adherence to EU GDPR before being published in my dissertation. Moreover, all information I gather in my interviews will be analysed with the intention of deriving certain patterns encountered by many interviewees. I assure confidentiality of everything you tell me, and that the information is stored securely on the secured storage on the university server of Sheffield Hallam University. Raw data, such as interview recordings and minutes will be accessible to myself only. The data will be kept for ten years according to university guidelines for doctoral studies.

I hereby point out that your participation is voluntary. If you agree to talk to me, you can still decide to terminate our conversation at any time.

Since this is a research project, I cannot offer to you any direct benefit for participation in my research. In participating my research, you will contribute to a deeper understanding of the link between sport and business.

These insights and the derived understanding maybe brought to companies and individuals through training and coaching with a goal of e.g., either improve leaders in organisations or help athlete's retirement transition to business. I will exclusively provide a copy of my dissertation free of charge to all who took part in my research.

If you would like to participate in my research by having a 30-45 minutes conversation with me at your apartment or office, please sign this participant information sheet as well as the consent with regards to Data Privacy. A copy of both documents will remain with you.

I assure that any sensitive topics covered while discussing your personal experiences shall not cause embarrassment, the loss of self-esteem or similar harmful emotional responses. I will always treat you with the utmost respectful, being humane and equitable at any time of our conversation. I emphasise that overall, my research has a strong intention to be morally good.

If you have any questions regarding the above, do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Best regards

Or Sela

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:

- you have a query about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data

DPO@shu.ac.uk

You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:

- you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WB Telephone: 0114 225 5555