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**Exploring and Comparing Coach-Athlete Interaction
Strategies in an Elite male and Female Football
Academy.**

**(Dissertation submitted under the Coaching Science
area)**

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**EXPLORING AND COMPARING COACH-
ATHELTE INTERACTION STRATEGIES IN
AN ELITE MALE AND FEMALE
FOOTBALL ACADEMY.**

Cardiff Metropolitan University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the interaction strategies used by an elite coach, when working with male and female athletes within a football academy at a professional club. A qualitative research design was adopted, with twelve hours of observations of the coach working with both male and female teams were conducted. The observations focused on the behaviours of the coach and the players' subsequent reactions. A follow-up semi structured interview with the coach then followed to gain the coach's perceptions to understand what influenced the coach's observed behaviours, and to act as a data check. A key finding was that the coach used completely different interaction strategies when interacting with the male and female teams. Although, it was apparent from both observations and interview that the coach wanted the best outcomes for all athletes. However, due to the stereotypical outcomes which are structurally available to the players, such as a lucrative, professional contract for the male athletes the interactions differed between genders.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

The volume of research that has focused on the coach-athlete relationship within sport is indicative of its centrality in all forms of sporting endeavour (Jowett, 2005; Lyle, 2009; Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007; Foucault, 1977; Jowett and Davies, 2014; Martins, 1981; Poczwardowski, 2002; Deci and Ryan, 1980, and Cusion and Jones, 2006). Lyle (1999) identified that the coach-athlete relationship is central to coaching, and that coaches who neglect this will not be as powerful within their role. Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004, P.245) described the relationship between coach and athlete as one where “.....coaches’ and athletes’ emotions, thoughts and behaviours are mutually and casually inter-connected”. This definition illustrates the reciprocal influence of coaches and athletes in terms of feelings, thoughts and behaviours. The exchanges that occur between coaches and athletes are played out in the everyday interactions that take place within the coaching context. As such, the interaction strategies adopted by coaches are important in terms of both the development of coach-athlete relationships and, perhaps more fundamentally, how the athletes’ responses influence the learning secured. Every training session will be different with regards to the coaches’ and athletes’ behaviour. Consequently, the coach must be able to adapt to change while maintaining a positive coach-athlete relationship, through interaction strategies which allow for efficient learning (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac, 2004).

By using different interaction strategies through communicating with the athletes the coach will build important dynamics concerning the mind, language and behaviour, aiding interaction between coach and athlete (Tompkins and Lawley, 1993). Kenow and Williams (1999) proposed that an individual’s view of another’s behaviour is more imperative than the behaviour itself in forming ones feelings or actions towards the other individual, showing the relevance and significance of interaction. The coaches’ interaction strategies need to be altered depending on athlete in order for the coach to communicate effectively to each athlete, ensuring that the athlete perceives the interaction positively and correctly, thus, achieving the desired outcome (D’Arripe-Longueville; Fournier, and Dubois, 1998). Therefore, highlighting how the coach-athlete relationship is a mutual process where both coach and athlete have power over each other (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003). Coaches behave

differently with each athlete and team they approach; the coach's behaviours are influenced by the athlete's perceived and actual motivation, and their behaviours. Moreover, establishing a common ground, beliefs, values and goals are important within a team (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003). Vilani and Samulski, (1984) believe that these reciprocal interactions that occur between coach and athlete are determinant influences for sports performance. Emphasising how important it is that the coach recognises the individual athletes within the team to understand how the athletes respond to different exchanges, and how they identify certain exchanges. Therefore, accentuating how imperative it is for the coach to generate a positive learning setting and coach-athlete relationship, encouraging a positive motivational climate which can inspire learning and development through the coach's interactions (Ames, 1992).

The aim of the study was to examine the coach-athlete relationship, focussing, in particular on academy level football coach interaction strategies, and how these differ when working with male and female players. This aim will be interrogated using the following objectives:

1. What are the key features of the coach's interaction strategy?
2. What influences the coach's interaction strategies?
3. How do the players respond to the coach's actions?
4. What are the key differences between the male and female groups?

1.2 Rationale for the Study:

Coaching strategies are found to be flexible due to the ever-changing, unforeseeable situations that coaches face. Consequently, coaching is seen as a highly dynamic and complex process (Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2003). Athletes vary in the learning styles required, making the role of the coach difficult due to the responsibility to attend to the individual needs of each athlete (Scholder and McGuire, 1998). Each learning style requires a different form of interaction between the coach and athlete, making it significant that the coach understands the athletes and their specific needs (Burton, 2013). Additionally, the coach's perceptions of their athletes' behaviours is of strong importance (Vallerand, 1997), if the coach perceives

the athlete's behaviours incorrectly, this can result in a miss communication or lack of interaction which can then be perceived negatively by the player, resulting in a decrease in motivation, lack of understanding, and resilience to comply (Vallerand, 2001). Thus, emphasising how important it is for the coach to meet the specific needs of each athlete, to understand the requirements of each athlete, and how the interactions will be perceived by the athletes'. Ensuring that the coach takes the athletes' perspectives into consideration and acknowledges their feelings, also known as the coach giving their athletes' autonomy support (Black and Deci, 2000). This implies that the athletes should be viewed as people worthy of self-determination (Decharms, 1968) , as opposed to being robots that should listen to the coach and do what the coach articulates, without any decision making; rendering the athlete as docile to acquire certain outcomes (Foucault,1979). Alternatively, the coach adjusts their behaviours to satisfy the requirements of their specific athletes (Vallerand and Mageau, 2010).

The coach-athlete relationship is an important area to research because the relationship has a direct impact on the development and performance of athletes (Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007; Lyle, 1999; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). Consequently, through a negative coach-athlete relationship it depresses the athlete from accomplishment of their highest potential (Cusion and Jones, 2006). Research has specified that it is problematic to achieve a successful coach-athlete relationship within a team sport (Lorimer and Jowett, 2009), such as football, therefore enhancing the benefits of the research study. Interaction strategies can progress the coach-athlete relationship, causing an improvement in athletes' performance, through an improved coach-athlete relationship (Cassidy, et al., 2004). Contrasting the undesirable results of a negative coach-athlete relationship where coaches deter their athletes from attaining their full development (Martens, 1987; Smoll and Smith, 1989). The positive interactions between coach and athlete can result in a successful coach-athlete relationship, which can produce elite, professional future athletes', therefore, improving sport as a whole (Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007; Lyle, 1999; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004).

There is little research exploring interaction strategies adopted by a coach when approaching opposite genders, rendering this study as significant. This study is important to help explore the coach's behaviours; the reasoning behind these

preferred behaviours and the players' responses. Consequently, aiding an understanding of the coach's interaction strategies, and the affect these have on the athletes'.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Complex Nature of Coaching:

Coaching has been framed as a complex and ambiguous endeavour (Bowes and Jones, 2006; D'Arripe-Longueville, et al., 1988; Jones, Bailey and Thompson, 2012; Jones and Wallace, 2005; 2006; and Saury and Durand, 1998). However some researchers such as Gummerson (1992) and Lyle (2002) oppose this view, identifying coaching as a simple process of imparting techniques, knowledge, and skills. Additionally, Denison (2007) realised the need for both knowledge to inform the practice and an appreciation of the complexities involved. Jones and Wallace (2005; 2006) identified a number of reasons for the inherent complexity of coaching, including goal diversity and hierarchy, engagement with multiple stakeholders, a lack of coach control as a consequence of the dynamic power-relations with stakeholders, and the need to make decisions based on incomplete information. Hence, coaching involves constant observation and continuous decision making surrounding how to instigate and respond to evolving situations, often in the face of indeterminate dilemmas (Bowes and Jones, 2006). This acknowledges the coaching role to be exhausting, demanding, time consuming and complex, which can contribute to pathos (Jones and Wallace, 2005, 2006; and McGuire and Scholder, 1998). As hinted at above, a crucial part of a coach's work is related to their interactions with athletes in their quest to inspire learning and best performance, consequently, redeeming coaching an activity which is at its core social. An idea clearly articulated by Jones, Armour and Potrac (2002) and has subsequently been further developed by others (Kingston, 2008; Jones and Wallace, 2005; Horns, 2002 and Paul and Pensgaard, 2005).

2.2 Coaching as a Social Endeavour:

Jones et al., (2002) believe the coaching process is a complex, social endeavour, with a big focus on the social process of the coach-athlete relationship (Cushion, 2007; Denison, 2007; Jones and Wallace, 2005; D'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier and Durand, 2001; Denison, 2007; Purdy, Potrac and Jones, 2008; McDonald and Birrell, 1999; Jones, Armour, and Potrac, 2004; Jones, Armour and Potrac, 2004). The coaching process is not something that is simply conveyed but rather a multi- dimensional, social activity that centrally involves the coach (Potrac et

al, 2000; Jones and Armour, 2000; and Lyle, 1999). Many researchers have acknowledged that exploring the issues and realities of human interaction within the coaching practice is necessary (Abraham and Collins, 1998; Lyle, 1999; Potrac, et al, 2000; Strean, 1995), however, there has been little research which relates to coaching as a social endeavour. Consequently, the sociological investigation into coaching is redeemed as under developed (Jones, 2000; Jones, et al., 2002; Schempp, 1998).

Cushion and Ronglan (2011) agree with the above notion, opposing the argument that coaching is a rationalistic, sequential process (Lyle, 2002), where coaching is an identifiable system (Usher, 1998). Considering that coaching is not a one-dimensional operation and that this simple-minded coherent interpretation, fails to take into account the fact that it does not take place inside a social vacuum (Cross and Lyle, 1999), regarding the many issues and interactions within a coaching situation (Armour and Fernandez, Balboa, 2000). Jones et al, (2004) support the concept sharing that the most influential coaches are the coaches that recognise the people and react to those they are operating with. Accentuating that social communications are a significant underpinning for the social atmosphere in which the coach operates (Jones, et al, 2002; Cushion, Armour and Jones, 2003). Highlighting, the role of the coach is not solely to develop athletes technical proficiency (Jones, 2000, Lyle, 1999a), but also to mature athletes as people; the role of the coach is becoming progressively central in developing an athletes' character (Potrac, 2000). By taking into consideration the social interactions involved within the coaching environment, the impression of a basic interpretation of the process is detached from the reality of the coaching world (Saury and Durand, 1998). Because of this, the hypothesis of discovering a generic, one-dimensional model for successful coaching has not yet been done (Jones, et al, 2002; Jones, 2001; Cross and Lyle, 1999).

2.3 The Coach-Athlete Relationship:

When positive interactions occur between the coach and athlete, a positive coach-athlete relationship is more likely to form (Jowett and Cockerill, 2003). According to Jowett and Cockerill (2003) these interactions can influence the athletes' motivation and consequently, the quality of their performance. Jones et al, (2008) believed that

interaction is more difficult for team sports than individual sports, due to the coach needing to engage with the athlete on a one to one basis whilst also treating the individuals as part of a group of team mates (Bloom, Durand- Bush, Schinke and Salmela, 1999; Jowett, Paul and Pensgaard, 2005). According to Martin (2002) when a coach has difficulty interacting with their athletes' issues begin to emerge with regards to the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. Lorimer and Jowett (2009) agree with the concept suggesting that within a team sport the coach is operating with a greater volume of athletes', resulting in less understanding and focus on each specific athlete. Jowett (2007) understood that the inclusion of both coach and athletes feelings, thoughts and behaviours were needed in order to gain a positive coach-athlete relationship, which can be difficult within a team setting due to there being many varying thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It is important for the coach to develop a positive coach-athlete relationship because coach-athlete relationships are the foundation for progression with an athlete at their particular sport (Lyle, 1999). Suggesting if there is a negative coach-athlete relationship it will have a negative impact on the athletes' performance (Martens, 1987; Smoll and Smith, 1989). Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2009) agree, recognising the social aspect of coaching, where it is essential for coaches to engage with the behaviours of the athletes' in order to develop the athletes' to achieve their sports specific aims. Whereas, similarly, Jowett (2005) and Jowett, Curran, Johnson, and Careless (2010) stressed that the coach's connection with their athletes' support a continuous involvement at the sport, leading to improvement. Coakley (1986) believes that the relationship between the coach and athlete has the biggest effect on the athletes' personal and private lives, as well as their performance and training progress. Lyle (1999) reinforced this notion, stressing that to be an effective coach, there first needs to be a positive coach-athlete relationship, consequently, this will advance the athletes' self-admiration, motivation, gratification and performance. Jones and Standage (2006) correspondingly approve of Lyles (1999) notion stating that a positive relationship plays a crucial component in the progress of the players at their sport. Emphasising how the social element of coaching plays a vital aspect in the growth and development of athletes.

There is little research that provides information surrounding the role of gender within the coach-athlete relationship. Although, Sherman, Fuller and Speed (2009)

evaluated the preferred coaching behaviours of different genders, discovering similarities in the coaching preferences of all athletes' irrespective of gender. Carron, Colman, Wheeler and Stevens (2002) identified that female athletes preferred stronger cohesive relationships with teammates and coach, acknowledging that females responded better to a socially supportive group to meet their individual needs. Conversely, the same study found that male athletes were less dependent on a socially cohesive environment.

2.4 Gender Differences in Society and Sport:

Bailey; Hillman; Arent; and Petipas, (2013: 1) suggest, "From an early age, differences in gender-based attitudes towards, and opportunities for sports and physical activities can have a significant influence on children's participation." Stressing how attitude and behaviour affect female's involvement within sport. Conversely, do females develop a negative attitude towards sport, believing they should not take part because of society? Or is it merely something in which females are born to believe? The literature has demonstrated that there is an influential debate surrounding 'Nature v Nurture'; do people merely accept the behaviours and behave the way they do in light of the social surroundings, or is it the result of human biology. Scott (2010: 1) states, "Behaviours and beliefs are determined by the 'nurture side', the social aspect of human culture that has influence on people's daily lives". Hargreaves (1997) suggests that the nurture side assumes control, meaning that when children are born they gain a biological sex, however, no masculine and feminine character. De Beauvoir (1973:301) supports this view stating how gender is understood and portrayed through society; humans create gender; "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman". Emphasising how gender is dissimilar to sex; sex is what humans are born as, and consequently a person has no decision over. Additionally, gender is shaped by how each individual behaves and consequently has possibility to change. Although, gender differences are constructed into everyday life within the social world in which human beings are born, resulting in humans quickly obtaining a gender (De Beauvoir, 1973). Thus, presenting how society has a control on how an individual behaves and how different attitudes may occur. Spence (1984) argues against this view, signifying that masculinity and femininity refer to a person's self-concept, and precisely refers to gender identity.

Believing that not solely are humans born female or male, they are also born feminine or masculine.

With this in mind, the dominance of males in sport is still apparent within society today. Society has connected sport with masculinity; being mentally tough, physical, having good leadership skills and traits which are most common in men rather than women (Horne, Singleton, Thomas, 1999). It is believed that children learn these views from a young age, resulting in difficulties for females to participate in sport due to perceptions of them being the inferior sex, and concerns that they will be sexually characterised if they participate in sport (Messner and Sabo, 1990). Roth and Basow (2004) propose that when girls partake in sport it is perceived as intimidating to both the male dominance and gender order. Cashmore (2000) stated that feminine traits are associated with being delicate, frail and emotional, suggesting that females should not partake in sport. Messner and Sabo (1990) considered sport being regarded as a male domain; it is 'created by men and for men'. Lapchick (1996: 102) states "...sport contributes to cultural constructions of masculinity and reinforces male-dominant social and economic hierarchies in numerous ways". The above declarations propose that women should not take part in sport, creating a challenging setting for females who want to participate in physical activity. Paechter and Clark (2007) agree that females are left out from participating in sport and physical activity because by doing so they will be challenging the traditional limitations of femininity.

Because of this, men have dominated sport over the centuries; the sporting world can be described as being a "social movement" (Dunning, 1999), with a vast and varied involvement across the boundaries of numerous social concepts, including religion, class, race, gender, ethnic group, and nation. Historically, sport as an institution has and continues to embody traditional ideas of gender and the gender order. Therefore, highlighting that sport as a social practice reflects male dominance and female subordination (Hargreaves, 1994). This is particularly evident in conventionally male dominated sports such as football. The current participation and success surrounding women's football would tend to suggest that conventional assumptions surrounding sex and gender have altered. Football has historically been a male dominated sport through the sporting culture, shown by the inequalities that females face (Scruton and Flintoff, 2002). However, women's progressing

participation in football demonstrates the positive alterations that have taken place and also the adversities that females still face (Russell, 2007). Nevertheless, there remains a distinct difference between men's football and women's football, which in fact indicates a social system still rife with sexual discrimination (Griggs and Biscomb, 2010). Whilst it is probable that these attitudes are evident in every aspect of the football community, the discussion here will be towards those based in direct contact with participants; the facilitator of learning; the coach, highlighting the continuing inequalities that women face (Hargreaves, 2002). As such, these social forces may suggest the construction of beliefs that coaches use when shaping their personal beliefs surrounding girls and women in football.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Research:

Qualitative research helps researchers understand, explain and justify the meaning of a social phenomenon with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible (Kielborn, 2001). Qualitative research attempts to understand circumstances in their uniqueness as part of a specific setting and the interactions there are (Patton, 1985). The researcher is the primary instrument during qualitative research, collecting the data and analysing it; usually involving fieldwork (Kielborn, 2001). The researcher must go to the participants' particular setting, site or institution building on existing theories rather than testing existing theories (Kielborn, 2001). This type of data involves more description than statistical analysis; the researcher spends time on observational experiences and concepts (Bell, 2003). The data collected during the research project was dependent on the researcher's interpretations and the opinions and perceptions of the coach and researcher. Qualitative data can be broken down into three simple methodological systems; observation, interview and document analysis (Strauss, Corbin and Corin, 2008). Qualitative data is concerned around understanding attitudes and beliefs and how these influence people's behaviours in reality. Produced in an unstructured process of gaining data through words; the researcher collects information and analyses as the study excels through perceptions and meanings (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Thus, being the most appropriate method for this study due to the researcher being able to witness the behaviours of the coach in action, the response of the athletes', and finally, enabling an opportunity through an interview with the coach to gain an in depth, and detailed understanding of the influences which determine the behaviours of the coach (Patton, 2002; and Smith, 2010). Concentrating on qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data allows the researcher to focus on the feelings, thoughts, behaviours and emotions of individuals (Andrews, Pearce, Ireson, and Love, 2005). Consequently, branding this type of data analysis as suitable to the study, enabling the researcher to answer questions such as 'how' and 'why', which were appropriate to reach the research aims and objectives (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

3.2 Participants:

The participants used for this study were purposively sampled; they were selected because they displayed features that were of interest to best address the aims and objectives of the research (Kleinsasser and Silverman, 1997). In this instance, the coach was chosen due to his level and experience within the sport of football, working daily with an elite training group in a professional setting, operating closely with both a team of male athletes and a team of female athletes. Additionally, to address the question the coach was required to work with both teams in a corresponding setting, to provide insight into possible differences in interaction strategies when coaching these diverse groups. Allowing the researcher to gain strong theoretical evidence, due to the sample of participants chosen being directly connected to the research question (Patton, 2002). Non-probability sampling benefitted the research study, as opposed to probability sampling because probability sampling creates a random collection of participants that would not narrate to the precise research question (Smith, 1983). The research project studied two elite football teams, aged from 16-21, before the study had begun the participants' were given a participant information sheet which summarised the purpose of the study and how it would be conducted. The participant information sheet made participants' aware that they would remain anonymous throughout the whole investigation and following the write up of the study. It informed the participants' that they could leave the investigation at any time with no repercussions. Participants' and their guardians were then asked to read and sign the consent and assent forms, giving the participants' and their guardians an opportunity to confirm that they were willing and able to take part in the study.

3.3 Participant Observations:

Observations through a 12 hour period were then used to observe the interactions the players' had with the coach. Observations allow the identification of an individual or groups behaviours within a certain environment (Gratton and Jones, 2004). This can make the researcher aware of behaviours that the individuals may not be aware of (Gledhill, Ford, and Goodman, 2002). The researcher recorded observations through careful, systematic and rigorous field notes. Additionally, informal conversations and interaction with coach was an important component of this method (Bogdewick, 1982). Participant observation can be useful in achieving an

understanding of the physical, social, cultural and economic settings; the interactions between individuals, and their behaviours; what they do, how often and with whom? (Jorgensen, 1989). An advantage of this method is that it uncovers factors which are important for a detailed understanding of the research problem, and factors which were unknown to the researcher when the research design was created (Jorgensen, 1989). However, a disadvantage of this method can be that the presence of a researcher has been acknowledged to affect the legitimacy of the data (Argyrius, 1952). A main concern when collecting data through observations is the subject of distortion; this is when the participants change their behaviour when being observed because they know that they are being observed (Maykut and Morehour, 1994). As the researcher did not interfere within the session there is less likelihood that the behaviours were changed (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Hopefully this discouraged issues concerning the validity of the data provided by the athletes because of the presence of a researcher. There is also an issue with regards to the researcher interpreting the data collected wrongly during the observations. Researchers' observations can become clouded when they have presumptions about the research (Charmaz, 2006). This can cause the researcher to wrongly categorise a detected behaviour centred on what they hope to see as opposed to what they truthfully see (Charmaz, 2006). Consequently, observations are based on how the researcher perceives certain behaviours.

3.4 Field Notes:

Field notes were taken to provide an in depth description of events which were happening as they occurred. Field notes contain a description of facts which have been observed, including the date, time and setting (Andrews et al, 2005). The field notes were then used to aid the formation of the interview guide addressing the objectives. At first, the field notes were written as bullet point notes, throughout the research the field notes became more in depth and detailed; more story like. The researcher became confident in themselves as a researcher and began foreseeing themes within the coach's interactions which were being observed, it was important that the researcher did not let this cloud the notes in which they were taking (Charmaz, 2006). During the observation period there were times where the researcher and coach had short conversations which aided the observations within the field notes. It was important that the researcher created an interview guide which

facilitated what had already been seen during the observation period. Un-picking themes was also vital, highlighting important information that was critical to develop a justification of the coach's perception during the interview, as opposed to the researchers opinion of what was seen (Gibbs, 2007).

3.5 Interviews:

Interviews are the most common method of qualitative research in sport (Gratton and Jones, 2010). It was imperative that the researcher prepared and asked questions that were not of a bias nature, if the competency of the researcher was left unrestricted then that could cause the study to be considered as untrustworthy (Brink, 1993). The coach being truthful in the answers given was a crucial aspect. To help, the researcher needed to ensure that the coach understood the nature of the research; the reason the research was being conducted, and to form a trust with the coach (Giffin, 1987). Because of this, the study was for an extended period of time; one month, ensuring observations were made accurately and repeatedly more than once before comparing the results (Brink, 1993).

An interview was conducted to discover in-depth understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the coach which cannot be found from observations alone, this allowed for the coach's perceptions to be discovered. Interviews are a simple way of gathering information that would be very difficult to measure through other methods, such as the thoughts and feelings of individuals (Dawood and Gallini, 2010). Interviews are a technique that allows the participants to produce detailed answers, as opposed to a questionnaire (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, 2008). During an interview the researcher can probe for more in-depth knowledge, information, examples and understanding of the questions asked and answers given. Consequently, by using interviews the study was able to gain more rich in-depth information than other methods of data collection, such as questionnaires (Gratton and Jones, 2010). Gaining more rich in-depth information was enhanced due to the researcher being able to question 'why' to answers given, gaining a deeper insight into the social world of coaching (Harris and Jones, 2012).

The interview lasted for approximately 25 minutes, recorded using a Dictaphone, which enabled a clear recording of the whole conversation. The interview was later transcribed, enabling the researcher to draw upon key themes through the use of

thematic analysis. It was important that before the interview the researcher allowed time for the coach to read the information sheet again, signing and dating appropriately to ensure consent was given, and to safeguard the opportunity of withdraw from the research study if he wished to do so.

Despite there being many advantages to using interviews as a method for collecting data there are slight concerns with the quality of the interview. The analysis of the interview can only be based on the answers given to the questions set by the researcher, thus, devising the correct interview guide is critical to the research. Interview bias is an important observation to note during data collection methods (Gratton and Jones, 2010). This can happen when the interviewer has preconceived ideas before the interview begins, resulting in the interviewer probing the participant for a certain answer. To avoid interview bias it was decided to use a semi-structured interview process, an interview guide was devised beforehand, providing precise themes applicable to the observations and the objectives of the study (Harris and Jones, 2012).

3.6 Interview Guide:

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to achieve the data needed for the qualitative study. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interview it gave flexibility on timing, and incorporating new questions into the interview to further understand new information learnt from previous questions. The interview guide was based on the female athletes'; male athletes'; and differences, adding detail surrounding interaction strategies; approaches; philosophies; outcomes; examples; and influences, all topics which had arose during the observation period. Small probes were then used to allow the participant to expand and reveal additional information. The method permits participants to develop on knowledge which was touched upon by the researcher through open ended questions and answers (Denscombe, 2007). The researcher was able to probe answers off the coach surrounding their views and opinions, influences and perceptions, permitting the participant to expand on the initial answers given (Gray, 2004). Implementing the method indorsed the gathering of useful, in-depth information through an informal conversational interview guide, allowing the participant to feel comfortable to discuss personal views, opinions and information given (Gray, 2004). Klein (2012) documented that no interviewer or

interview would ever be the same, acknowledging this made it vital that the researcher produced an interview guide specific to the key areas of the study, observations and the objectives of the study, producing results linking to the primary theories of the research. Although, it was crucial that the researcher was able to ensure the use of interpersonal skills to identify areas within the interview that could be probed and explored in more detail to reveal more information, benefitting the study. This was done through practicing on fellow students to help the researcher gain the skills and confidence needed when interviewing.

3.7 Data Analysis:

In order to analyse the data the study concentrated on thematic analysis because the literature suggests that this method is appropriate for the analysis of interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher was able to assess the data collected and then group the data into categories. This enabled the data to transfer from an extensive read towards discovering patterns and developing themes (Creswell, 2009).

It is important that within qualitative research there is an element of trustworthiness, especially when conducting interviews (Lincoln and Guba, 1984). There has been much debate surrounding qualitative research concerning the validity and trustworthiness (Gratton and Jones, 2010). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) thought the trustworthiness of a qualitative study could be evaluated through credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. Meaning that the data must match the constructed truths of the respondent; the findings of the study should be able to transfer to other situations, and the findings should be consistent.

The study began with a broad general knowledge of the phenomenon (Lauri and Kynga 2005; Burns and Grove, 2005), because of this the approach this study followed was of an inductive nature (Weber, 1990; Burnard, 1996). Thematic analysis then allowed the researcher to establish a detailed, but complex account of the data, through a process of classifying, examining and recording themes within the data which had been collected (Thorne, Jensen, Kearney, Noblit and Sandelowski, 2004). The concept of a theme can have multiple meanings; Polit and Hunglar (1999) articulate a theme to be a repeated, consistent feature within

categories. Whereas, Baxter (1991) describes themes as an element that reoccurs time and time again. However, there are no clearly outlined illustrations of what thematic analysis is and how to implement it (Attride- Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; and Tuckett, 2005). This is because thematic analysis varies to other forms of analysing data; relating to understanding the everyday experiences of reality in great detail, consequently, enabling the researcher to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question (McLeod, 2001). Therefore, recognising how crucial thematic analysis is to gain a detailed insight into the elite athletes, and coach's day to day reality which is an important aspect of the research project.

During the analysis process it was important that the researcher recognised occurring elements (codes), which had commonly arose from both observation and interview, highlighting as many codes as possible. The codes which were identified were then collaborated together and from this a thematic diagram was created, it was crucial to determine the importance of themes as this then formed the discussion section (Thorne, et al., 2004). Subsequently an endless amount of revision of the themes, subthemes and thematic diagrams occurred, creating a final thematically decoded diagram with themes; sub themes; more themes; and quotes/ observations that justified the themes (Gibbs, 2007).

3.8 Ethical Considerations:

It remains important to outline and address any ethical considerations before the start of any investigation or research (McNamee, Oliver and Wainwright, 2007). Due to qualitative research exploring the thoughts and feelings of personal information there are ethical concerns (Holloway, 1997). Signifying the importance of clearly informing all participants' of the study, and what the researcher hoped to achieve from the study, gaining full consent from all participants'. Not all participants' were of adult age (18+) meaning it was critical to gain assent from all parents/ guardians in order to observe the athletes' behaviours during the training sessions. Information sheets were sent out, introductions were made and any questions were fully answered, consent/ assent forms were then signed before the study began. It was made clear to all participants' that they could drop out of the research study whenever they wanted to and it would be OK. Due to these factors being in place the study gained ethical approval as Gratton and Jones (2010) highlighted the need for

ethical approval in order to continue with the study. The researcher had obtained a relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to the observation period and had previous experience with working with young people. Each participant was promised strict anonymity with participants' names and information as McNamee et al, (2007) stated the importance of anonymity with the participants. The interview was conducted in a safe and familiar place to allow the participant to feel comfortable and at ease (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction:

The purpose of this section is to present the key findings from the research, and a critical discussion which aims to interpret their meaning. The narrative presented below marks an attempt to represent the key findings of the study, supported with data collected during both observation period and the interview. Firstly, an outline of the differences in outcomes available to the male and female players' within the club is provided. Subsequently, the way these differences impacted the interaction strategies and the coach-athlete relationships is explored.

4.2 Preferred Coaching Behaviours:

Through the analysis of the data, the main theme which occurred most commonly was preferred coaching behaviours; this was then split into two themes: (i) differentiated practice; and (ii) shared practice. The coach's actions directly impact the training which happens and the individuals amongst the group of athletes (Amarose and Horn, 2001). Therefore, it is important to discover what the coach's behaviours are to highlight any differences between the genders and whether this has an effect on the team.

i. Differentiated Practice:

During the observation period there were common themes that arose which enhanced the idea that the coach used different approaches when interacting with athletes of a different gender, these ideas were then justified and explained during the interview; creating the theme differentiated practice. Differentiated practice between the male session and the female session split into three common themes: outcomes; factors influencing the outcomes; and the coach-athlete relationship.

Outcomes:

During the interview process the differences in the outcomes for the two teams were highlighted, the main outcome for the male team was '*progression*', whereas the main outcome for the female team was '*enjoyment*'. Emphasising the structural differences for gender at the club, it was later identified how these outcomes affected the approach the coach took towards the athletes;

'What we are trying to achieve is completely different for both teams, by approaching it the same way would not achieve these two completely different objectives.' Consequently, this had an impact on the way the facilitator coached the two teams, thus, influencing the coach's interaction strategies when approaching the different genders.

The differences were highlighted during the observation period by how differently the coach approached a similar situation. When a male athlete was late he was punished with a fitness drill for every minute he was late, resulting in *'20 suicide runs'* The complete opposite transpired with the female athlete when she was late, the coach merely kicked her a ball and she joined in with the session. Emphasising how the structural differences between gender at the club had an influence on the way the coach reacted to a situation, and consequently how the coach's interaction differed. Expressing how the coach may have influenced his reaction to certain situations in order to achieve the desired outcomes of the club. Supporting Jones et al (2004) notion maintaining that the art of coaching is about identifying to the people and responding to the individuals the coach is working with. To enhance the enjoyment of females in football punishing the female athletes would deter the enjoyment level and therefore is a deterrent for the desired outcome. As opposed to punishing the male athletes with fitness skills ultimately improves their fitness levels, and therefore their performance, thus improving the clubs outcome of progression; progressing the athletes into the professional men's team. Therefore, stressing how the coach changes his interaction strategies in response to the participants he was working with, in order to reach the desired outcomes set by the club.

Factors that Influence the Outcomes:

It was apparent throughout observation period and interview that the coach wanted the best outcome for both genders. However, due to the structure of the club and the inequality with regards to gender and football, these outcomes were different, which resulted in the coach changing his interaction strategies when approaching the different genders. This theory was enhanced when the coach stated;

"There are more opportunities for males in the sporting industry of football than that of females right now. Maybe in years to come it will be different, but right now we are feeding the men's team which is a professional team that can earn a lot of money for both the sportsman and the club. There is nothing

like that set up for women yet, this is why we are trying to create awareness and increased participation of the sport for the females, so hopefully one day there will be.”

This declaration stresses how different the club's ethos is for the male team compared to the female team, emphasising how far behind the females' football is compared to the males at this club. Highlighting the notion Messner and Sabo (1990) put forward with regards to sport being a males' domain. Thus, contributing to the different interactions the coach has when approaching the two teams.

According to the coach the male athletes' have a future in football if pushed correctly and trained in the correct manner;

“Football can become their life, their job, their security. It is not like that with women's football yet, there is not enough money behind it. Of course, it is getting better but there is still a long way to go, women cannot make a living out of it and so they need to concentrate on other things.”

Highlighting, Griggs and Biscomb, (2010) statement of the social world surrounding sport is still rife with sexual discrimination. However, the coach does portray interest in the female athletes' future but due to the stereotypical outcomes which are structurally available to the players, the interests are different, the males can gain a lucrative, professional contract at the end, whereas, the females cannot. Because of this, the coach shows interest in the females' education; *‘The girls need to get an education so that they can have a comfortable life.’* This was also portrayed during training sessions when the coach *‘encourages their education over football.’* Highlighting that the coach wants the best for the athletes but is thinking long term; for the female athletes' this is through education, whereas for the male athletes' it is to become the best that they can be at football. Harmonising with Potrac's (2000) notion that the coach's role is not merely to develop the athletes as players but a big component of a coach is to mature the athletes as people; becoming progressively central in developing an athlete's character, shown by the way the coach attempts to cultivate the female athletes educational and private lives. The coach emphasises this concept when he explains; *‘...they (females) need to concentrate on other things; football is not a women's first priority, well not at this club anyway.’* Consequently, the structural outcomes of the club alters the interaction approach the coach takes, influencing both how the coach trains the females and the reactions to

the coach's interaction strategies, where when asked about the clubs influence on the female athletes' the coach responded with;

"I don't have strict deadlines with the women's team or meetings with regards to their results. It is about expanding participation in women's football for the club I think. So getting them to enjoy their sessions boosts their engagement which will alternatively want them to participate in the sport. Hopefully this can result in increased participation for women's football."

The statement accentuates the idea that perceptions and behaviours affect females' participation in sport (Messner and Sabo, 1990). Where the females understand that their role is to work hard in education to have a positive future and that their football progression is limited.

"The girls understand that there is not a job at the end for them right now, because of this, the club is helping them as much as possible through education."

Emphasising the inequalities women still face (Hargreaves, 2002), and that a coach's role is not solely to improve performance but is central in all social aspects, such as an athlete's private life (Potrac, 2000).

Expectations of the club can also have a big influence on the coach's interaction strategies. The club demanding elite male players' to come through to earn the club money can produce pressures due to the demands of the job. The sternness and urgency in the coach's communication can be the result of these pressures. The setting is intense due to the outcome of the team's success resulting in the coach's job; if the team is consistently being unsuccessful in their matches then the coach is at a high risk of losing his job which will affect the coach's income and life.

"If the team (male) was not producing the results we as a club wanted, like we were losing games and deteriorating down the league then I would get in trouble as I would not be producing the results the club wants."

Research has found that the loss of a job at the hands of a teams' result can affect the way the coach interacts with the players, and also the values and behaviours of the coach can be altered completely because of this (Lyle, 1972), consequently altering the coach's interaction strategies. The male team need to improve quickly to become future professional athletes, this changes the way in which the coach interacts with the athletes. Demanding extra stresses to produce these elite athletes due to the club expecting;

“...brilliant players to come though. These are the players that are going to be making the club money, be role models for children and represent the club on a big basis.”

Consequently, the males are getting pushed during their training sessions with a stern coach in order for them to reach their maximum potential and become talented players that can execute through the club to the men's team. According to Cassidy et al. (2009) this may not be the best approach because Cassidy recognised that to progress the players there needs to be a social element where the coach engages with its athletes'. Adversely, here the outcome is progression, and although this is the case the coach states; '*...from the moment they (the males) step onto the court everything is about football.*' This statement is emphasised during the observation period when the researcher did not witness any interaction between the coach and male athletes that was not football related. Acknowledging Cassidy et al (2009) statement this is the wrong approach to take with the male athletes, suggesting that to gain the best technical improvement the coach and athlete need to have positive interactions.

The opposing outcomes for both teams cause a change in the coach's interactions, a difference in the training sessions and different coach-athlete relationships were consequently created between the genders. The above theory is enhanced during the interview when the coach explains if the outcomes were the same for both teams he would train and treat the two genders the same, for example if the female team had the same structure in place like the male team then the coach would change his approach and interaction towards the female athlete's;

“That makes everything completely different; the sessions are no longer for enjoyment then, the results of the session then start to have a big impact on the players' lives.” “...my interaction would then become that of the men's team.”

The above notion identifies how the coach wants the best for the athletes, highlighting how he would differentiate the approach and interactions he now uses if the females' football impacted their lives. Demonstrating the adversities females still face within football (Russell, 2007). Expressing how big an impact the clubs philosophy, coach's perceptions of the sport and the football culture has on the coach's interaction strategies.

The Coach-Athlete Relationship:

A positive coach-athlete relationship can surge athletes sporting success (Philippe and Seiler, 2006), emphasising the importance of the coach-athlete relationship, particularly with regards to the male athletes' due to the clubs outcome, with communication being a fundamental element within the coach-athlete relationship (Martens, 1987). The approach the coach adopted to communicate with each team is vital in this research study; the coach's ability to communicate effectively to his athletes is a form of interaction which is compulsory when gaining a positive coach-athlete relationship (Wang and Ramsey, 1997). During the research it was found that the communication differs completely between the two teams, thus producing a differentiated practice.

During the male observation period the coach used a very direct approach, shouting with a loud tone of voice, he was often '*continuously shouting*' throughout the whole session, shown in the field notes. This seemed to work for the male athletes; '*the coach's words are motivating the players and the intensity of the session has increased dramatically; the players are working hard.*' This may be due to the coach knowing the athletes he is operating with and understanding what works best for them, having an understanding of how to motivate the athletes (Cassidy, et al, 2009). This is presented during the interview when the coach sates, '*If I have to shout and shout until my face is blue I'll do it; shouting pushes the boys.*'

The coach Identifies with Scholder and McGuire's (1998) notion that each athlete responds differently to each situation, highlighting that it is the coach's responsibility to adapt to the needs of the athletes they are operating with. The coach is seen to do this where he changes his interaction approach to shouting at the male athletes', which is shown to motivate them in the field notes. Consequently, being the correct interaction strategy to use in order to progress and develop the male athletes, reaching the desired outcome set by the club.

The coach constantly interacts with the male team in an urgent tone, speaking at the players rather than to them; "*come on*", "*let's go*", "*hurry!*", all with an intensity in his voice using short, sharp words. During the interview the coach explains why he does this;

“If I spoke in a slow voice then I don’t think it would be very motivating, I speak with an upbeat tempo which portrays what I want from them; upbeat, fast, high intensity”.

This is a very autocratic approach but seems to work with the players, agreeing with Jowett and Cockerill (2003) notion, believing that interactions can influence the motivation and consequently, the performance of athletes. The way the coach is speaking to the players shows he has the respect and power over them as the field notes display that the male athletes, *‘don’t challenge him’, ‘say nothing back’, and ‘do as they are told.* Suggesting that the athletes have put trust in the coach, allowing the coach to have power over the male athletes’ to enhance their performance (Burke, 2001). During the interview the coach emphasises the above notion; *‘...they’re (male team) at the club for a reason. They want to improve and be the best that they can be.’* This could be one of the reasons as to why the athletes’ do not challenge the coach; they trust that the coach will permit them to reach their full potential. Illustrating how the coach desires the best outcome for his athletes’, doing this through the way he communicates and adapts his interaction strategies to the athletes specific needs (Jones, et al, 2004), consequently, enhancing their ability to become professional sportsmen.

Adversely, the coach had no empathy for the players’ and never engaged with them on a personal level; there was little to no communication about anything other than football. According to Martin’s (2002) notion empathy and communication can have a big impact on the relationship between the coach and athlete, suggesting that the coach may have a negative coach-athlete relationship with the male athletes. From the moment the players set onto the field to train the communication surrounds football, shown during the whole observation period when there was no communication which was un-football related. During the interview the coach reiterates what had been seen during the male observation period; *‘everything is about football from the moment they (male athletes) are on the field.’* According to Martens (1987); Smoll and Smith (1989); and Lorimer and Jowett, (2009) this could deter the male athletes from reaching their full potential due to the concept that a negative coach-athlete relationship can have a negative impact on the performance of athletes.

The coach correspondingly acknowledges the differences between the male and female session;

“The interaction between me and the females is more relaxed and friendly, the interaction between me and the males is more performance based and in a football relation, it is very much the opposite to relaxed, very structured as opposed to the females being quite unstructured.”

The communication used during the female session differs completely to the male session. The interaction strategy the coach chooses to use towards the females' is a humorous, relaxed approach. Weaver and Cotrell (1988) recognised humour as an influential coach trait, Gilliland and Mauritsen (1971) agree with that idea believing that humour is significant in shaping a positive connection with the team, stating that the practice of humour can create an added stress-free and open environment. This approach has resulted in the females' being comfortable with the coach; during the observation period the females were seen to *'take the coach's jokes well and are not afraid to joke back with him'*; for example pointing out to the coach that *"the aim is to score in that white triangular"* when he misses a shot dramatically, presenting a relaxed atmosphere between the coach and athletes. This shines through during the interview when the coach admits that the girls have nicknames for him; *'...Paul Pot, I'm not sure whether it's because of my pot belly or from that singer on XFactor and some call me Phil Mitchell.'* Jowett (2005) and Jowett et al., (2010) identify that the coaches connection with their athletes supports a continuous involvement at the sport, leading to improvement. By the coach having a close, personal bond with the female athletes', according to the above view it will lead to continued participation within the sport, increasing enjoyment. The coach does this through ensuring a personal relationship with the female athletes', emphasised during the interview when the coach explains how he has a; *'...good relationship with the girls, we talk, they know what I'm up to and I know what they are doing.'* This can influence the performance of the female athletes'; White and Coakley (1986) believed that coach-athlete relationships have a big impact on the athletes training, performance outcomes and private lives. The positive coach-athlete relationship between the coach and female athletes' could be an underlining reason as to why they are top of the league, even though they are not receiving the same equality as the male team in terms of the type of training they are getting. Coakley's (1986) concept also

suggests that the personal relationship the female athletes have with the coach can have a positive impact on their private lives, and therefore their education.

The coach was often seen joining in with the female athletes' session during the observation period. He was seen '*kicking a ball around with the girls*', '*tackling one of the girls*'; and *joining in*'. This could mean the coach is less centred about having a strict regime to follow, having a holistic approach, due to the structural outcomes of the club, where football is a fun sport for the females, with no job potential. The coach often questions the girls, giving them empowerment; "*what do you want to do today?*" The players' have a shared leadership role by taking part in decision making within the sessions. This is emphasised during the interview when the coach explains; '*questioning and having the girls take ownership for their learning by choosing what they want to do during the session is a great life skill.*' By the female athletes choosing what they want to do during the session they will enjoy the sport more (Ames, 1992). As highlighted by the coach taking ownership for their own learning is also a vital skill needed throughout life, by the females taking control with decision making the coach is enhancing their life skills, thus creating a better future for them.

ii. Shared Practice:

The one shared practice which was identified through the observation period and then clarified during the interview was team work. The coach seemed to favour team work as a crucial aspect within the training practices, emphasising the importance throughout both male and female sessions. The coach was seen to encourage the male athletes to work as a team during the observation period, and was seen to acquire sternness with a female athlete who was not acting as a cohesive team member. The assumption of team work being a shared practice was clarified during the interview when the coach aggressively agreed that team work is important; '*every individual should work hard for their team.*'

Berglund, Bloom, Horn, and Packard (2011) expressed how the behaviours of the coach directly affect the athletes, consequently, being useful or damaging to an athletes development. Berglund, et al., (2011) notion was emphasised when the coach exemplified the importance of team work stating that the skill team work could be transferred into later life, displaying how important it is that the athletes learn this

now. Presenting how the coach's preferred behaviours towards team work could be due to the nature of the skill being beneficial to the athletes in their future. Team work is a valuable life skill that the female athletes can take through into work or further education. Whereas, team work is critically important for the male team if they want to pursue a career in football, due to team work being a fundamental aspect surrounding invasion games, such as football (Balyi, 2000).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion:

The research has highlighted that perceptions can influence the interactions people use. In addition, the research identified the ways in which male and female sport differs, with specific reference to football, which then influences the interaction strategies the coach uses, and fundamentally the way the athletes are coached. The current representation of females within sport plays a vital component within this study and how this influences perceptions of gender and sport.

The review of the literature revealed how complex the coach athlete relationship is (Bowes and Jones, 2006; D'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1988; Jones, Bailey and Thompson, 2012; Jones and Wallace, 2005; 2006; Saury and Durand, 1998), and how the coach-athlete relationship is now being seen as a social endeavour (Cushion, 2007; Jones et al., 2002; Denison, 2007 and Jones and Wallace, 2005). Conversely, despite this fact there is still much prejudice towards females within the sporting industry, influencing the perceptions of many people surrounding traditionally male-dominated sports, such as football (Clark and Paechter, 2007). This was exemplified within the results when the clubs focus was on progressing the male athletes' but merely enjoyment for the female athletes'. Revealing how far behind women's football is compared to the men, presenting how females are still at a severe disadvantage with regards to equality within sport (Scruton and Flintoff, 2002; Biscomb, and Griggs, 2013).

Although, female football is progressing there is still a lot to improve compared to male football. Men can earn a living through elite football, whereas, women still have to work other jobs, even at the top level. The females within the academy are training just as frequently as the males but are not getting the same equality, in response to the different opportunities readily available. The male athletes' have an opportunity to progress to the professional men's team; adversely there is no opportunity in place like this for the female athletes'. The club has the best interests of the athletes' in mind; for the females they look long term in helping them with their education so that they can progress into higher education, enabling a stable job, creating a comfortable future.

However because of this perception, the club is actually deterring the females from reaching their full potential. With the emphasis being on enjoyment, the girls have a much more holistic and unstructured session, as opposed to the boys being competitive and structured. Although it would seem the females have a stronger relationship with their coach compared to the males, and Jowett (2005) and Jowett et al., (2010) state that this positive coach-athlete relationship can result in an improvement within the performance. If the athletes are not getting the correct training they will not have opportunity to improve, resulting in the males having opportunity to improve and develop at their sport and the females not. Consequently, there will be a generation at the club where the males are top, elite sportsmen at their profession and the females are not becoming the best that they can be, resulting in a more talented and able male generation compared to the female. This means that the men's game of football is constantly progressing, while the females' game will not progress in terms of talent due to fewer opportunities.

The different structural outcomes that are readily available at the club have a direct influence on the coach's interaction strategies. The different interaction strategies used by the coach are explicitly in response to the different opportunities available and because the coach believes this is the best interests (long term) for the players. Therefore, the study has highlighted how big an influence gender perception has on people, and how this has influenced the way the club perceives women in football. Ultimately influencing how the coach has interacted with the athletes' and the differences this has portrayed between the two genders.

5.1 Limitations and Further Research:

Reflecting on the discoveries of this study it has been made apparent that there are some visible limitations existing within the research, proposing that further research could be done in order to provide an improved over view of the research topic area. Merely one coach was involved within the research study, which is a considerably small sample when recognising coaches' interaction strategies. Acknowledging that the bulk of coaching behaviours are developed during their time as athletes (Cushion, 2008), therefore, this suggests that every coach would have been educated by different coaches, with varied qualifications and levels of experience. Subsequently, every coach will be different in terms of their coaching styles and their

interaction approaches (Emerson, 2009). In light of this coaching is exceedingly probable to differ from individual to individual, which has its own limitations.

In regards to cultural limitations, it is recognised that different issues may arise if different clubs were researched due to the culture at that club, the clubs ethos and the structural outcomes of the club. Additionally differences may arise due to the economic status of the club, such as bigger, elite clubs may have more structure set up for the female athletes, which may then produce completely opposing interaction strategies and results.

Another limitation that has been recognised is that the researcher only interviewed the coach, therefore, only the coach's perceptions were identified. This could suggest a bias in the findings presented, as two people are needed for a relationship to be formed. It would have been more beneficial to interview both athletes' and coach to be able to analyse the relationship as a whole, as the researcher and coach could have interpreted the interactions that occurred completely differently to the athletes' who were receiving the interactions. A more in depth discovery of the coach-athlete relationship, the interaction strategies used by the coach, and the responses by the athletes' could have been developed.

Because the limitations of this study have now been identified it provides an opportunity for further research to be conducted surrounding the area of the coach-athlete relationship, discovering the coach's interactions and the influences. Using a larger sample; more clubs, more coaches and therefore, more participants to help establish in more detail the aims and objectives of the current study. Also by establishing these limitations future researchers can investigate whether all coaches interact with opposing genders differently, or whether this was merely the case here due to the structural outcomes of the club, and the coach wanting the long term best outcomes for all athletes'.

Future research is fundamental to further understand the nature of interaction between elite coach and athletes, as well as understanding the key to successful coach-athlete relationships. It would be beneficial to undergo this study on a variety of team sports, such as rugby, whilst also comparing them to that of individual sorts, such as athletics. To understand whether coaches interaction strategies differ when approaching opposite genders in all sports with different outcomes, or whether this

was merely the case at this club because of the inequality females face within football, and the stereotypical outcomes which are readily available to the athletes at this club. Different coaches, in terms of gender, level, experience, sport and qualifications, can also be observed to see whether the behaviours and interactions depend on the specific coach. Comparisons could then be made in relation to the different interaction strategies commonly used when approaching opposite genders. This work would aim to further the awareness and understanding of interaction strategies used by the coach and the outcomes that these approaches can create. Which has been suggested is of critical importance due to interaction being vitally important in relation to the coach-athlete relationship in order to develop athletes to their full potential (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, and Hoff, 2000).

CHAPTER SIX: REFERENCE LIST

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