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**ATHLETE SATISFACTION AND THE PEAK EVENT: ADAPTING THE  
ATHLETE SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE (ASQ) TO A NEW  
ZEALAND SETTING**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This research explored athlete satisfaction and the peak sporting event. Most athletes are achievement oriented individuals searching for ways of increasing their competitive edge. Consequently, an athlete's satisfaction is a central variable controlling motivational forces throughout the development and execution contexts of successful goal-related outcomes. As a topic of interest, satisfaction is understood as a subjective domain-specific response articulated by an athlete when reflecting on all aspects of the achievement of a specific goal. It is psychologically dynamic based on both individual and environmental factors informing the articulated response. It is, therefore understood as a 'discrepancy' construct representing the difference between what one wanted to achieve and what one did achieve.

The research adopted an adapted mixed method approach. Because of the exploratory nature of the research a priori hypotheses were not tested. The combined participant cohorts across the two studies were New Zealand athletes (n = 381) from a wide variety of team and individual sports. Online data collection methods were utilised to access a broad participant base.

The primary aim of Study One was to develop confidence in the data collection tool to be utilised in Study Two, the Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (Riemer & Chelladurai, 1998). The difference between both environments was considered conceptually disparate enough given the original survey instrument setting, North American Collegiate (highly professional amateur athlete program dedicated to elite sporting performance) and the

current New Zealand (recreational – amateur elite athletes) sport setting, to warrant further investigation. Particular emphasis was placed on incorporating the ‘voice’ of the athlete in developing a better understanding of athlete satisfaction in the New Zealand setting. In general, Study One results showed the ASQ to be an appropriate survey instrument for administration in the New Zealand setting, although the re-distribution of the underlying factor structure of the instrument allowed for more context relevant data analysis in Study Two.

Study Two focused on investigating athlete satisfaction and a peak sporting event as an intervening variable and explored how satisfaction changed over time with respect to a peak sporting event, with particular attention given to gender and sport affiliation (team versus individual sport). Results from Study Two indicated no statistically significant differences in satisfaction between genders. In contrast, differences in athlete satisfaction trajectories between team and individual sport athletes were found. The findings relating to team and individual differences in satisfaction were interpreted using Hobfoll’s (1989) ‘Conservation of Resources’ Model which placed athletes in a context of managing and evaluating their immediate performance environment. An interpretation of the results in the model showed that athlete satisfaction for individual sport athletes increased leading to an event based on an athlete’s perceived control over the goal achievement process. In contrast, the reduction in satisfaction post event was interpreted as indicating goal achievement causality included more factors than an individuals’ pre-event assessment. Consequently, the range of resources utilised and their effect on goal achievement were incorporated more into the causal explanation after the event than before.

A further finding from the research process was that the hierarchy of satisfaction responses by team versus individual sport athletes differed substantially both before and after their identified peak sporting event, which can assist significant others to maximise situation-specific interaction with an athlete. From an applied perspective, such an understanding of the dynamics of athlete satisfaction both before and after a peak sporting event increases the likelihood of delivering appropriate responses to the athlete at different times during the athletic experience.

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