

**Note: This outline is meant to serve as a guide for writing the first three sections of your paper. When you use it as a guide for writing the outline, you do not need to write in complete sentences, but should have bullet points with major areas that you will cover and go into more depth. In some cases this may be one sentence and in other instances you might want to write 2-3 sentences. The better thought out this is, the easier the writing will go. Yet as in all qualitative research, you may find that once you begin collecting data and get more into the literature, the categories and sections may change. This is perfectly acceptable! But you need a place to begin- this is your roadmap.**

#### I. Introduction: Overview of the study

- A. General phenomenon- overview that sets up your study
- B. Problem statements- what issues exists or what problems still need to be addressed?
- C. Limitations or gaps in existing literature- could be you are studying a population not yet studied, could be you are doing a qualitative research project where only quantitative has been done before, could be you are using a theoretical framework not yet used in or with a particular setting / population.
- D. Purpose of the study: This is the rationale, significance or importance of the study. In other words it should explicitly state how your study will fill a gap in or add to existing literature by deepening our understanding.

#### II. Theoretical Framework

1. Synthesize relevant literature that provides a coherent and useful description of the theoretical lens through which you make sense of your data. This includes...
  - a. definitions of key terms within your theoretical framework
  - b. assumptions of theory
2. Substantiate all the major points regarding your theoretical lens, with citations and a few examples of the kind of information that your theory reveals. This has to come from studies that have already used your theory, which may or may not be within sport.
3. Be sure to note your approach to the study (i.e. critical standpoint, constructivist, post-positivist, etc.)

#### III. Literature Review

- B. Empirical research: Synthesis and Discussion of previous literature important to the present study
  - is often organized from general concepts to more specific findings that relate to your question. Alternately, it can be organized by the major themes
  - is organized in a way such that it is a benchmark for comparing the results you find with this prior literature
  - it provides a background and context for the research question/problem
  - synthesizes previous literature into coherent categories of information that help frame the study

- help establish how these prior studies provide a “jumping off place” for your study. How will your study refine, revise, or extend what is now known?
- it is also not uncommon to revise this section as you collect and analyze your data to include more specific previous research that relates to your findings/question

NOTE\* III can also come before II. In general, if your theoretical framework has not been widely used in a particular area, then you talk about it last, noting how your framework will bring forth new perspectives than previously noted. (e.g. you are studying body image of high performance distance runners and note that the literature has come from psychology, but you are interested in a feminist sociological perspective. Talk about what’s been found before for runners in psych, then talk about feminist theory and proceed with describing empirical research findings from other sports. In sum, the order of discussion for your literature review looks more like: empirical-theoretical-empirical. This sets up your study well in this order. Otherwise, if you are studying soccer from a feminist perspective, there are many other studies using this, so begin with the theory, its definition and assumptions, then move into specific findings that have to do with your research question.

### III. Methods (can write in past to be used for final paper)

A. General perspective- Explain why qualitative methodology and your particular form of data collection (semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, content analysis, case study, etc) was chosen.

#### B. Context

Describe the sport setting to be studied regardless of which sampling methods you used.

C. Sampling methods: Explain methods for selecting participants and describe any criteria you may have had for participants and briefly describe who you had.

1. for interviews- describe characteristics of participants and how you gained access to them
2. for observation or participant-observation- describe how you gained access to this setting
3. for content analysis- describe how you accessed these
4. Human subjects statement: how you asked for consent forms, kept names confidential and met IRB standards, etc.

#### D. Data collection methods (Instruments)

1. Instruments: Identify briefly the key instruments to be used, which may include some but not all of the following: semi-structured interviews, recording devices, interview guidelines, observation forms, guidelines and schedules and/or document criteria. The actual interview questions and guidelines for analyses will be included as appendices.
2. Steps: Describe the steps you took to collect data and demonstrate knowledge of these various steps whether participant-observation, interviews, recording field notes, and especially how you conducted

ongoing analysis as well. See sources such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Glesne (2010), Patton (2001), Gratton and Jones (2010), Merriam (1988) or Creswell (2006) for details.

3. Researcher's role: Describe your role as the researcher and explicitly state any previous experience with the sport setting, your personal experiences or biases that can help the reader understand you as one of the primary "instruments"

4. Describe any ethical considerations in the data collection process

#### E. Data Analysis

1. Data organization: Describe how you kept data organized

2. Data coding procedures: Describe in detail how you coded data. Again, see references above. You should also reference your theoretical framework as well in terms of how it helped you look for certain patterns.