



## PORTRAITS OF PARALYMPIAN TRIUMPHS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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### **Abstract:**

This multiple case study explored the portrait of Paralympic athletes in the Philippines. The success and resilience, navigating challenges and obstacles, and experiences both within and beyond sports of five Paralympic athletes were gathered and examined using in-depth interviews. Triangulation of the data gathered was done in each case by resulting to do in each case by interviewing the Paralympic athletes. It was analyzed using thematic analysis, resulting in eleven emergent themes on their success and resilience: values and resilience through sports, winning motivations in Paralympic games, pride and skills as PWD, transformative power of sports and support, family as core support system, role of spirituality and belief systems, balancing of personal and professional life, training commitment, obtaining positive mindset, embracing setbacks, empowering others through self-growth. The emergent themes for navigating challenges and obstacles included: relying on coaching and exposure, exercising personal initiatives, developing coping strategies, strengthening social interaction and connection, overcoming mental barriers, and managing financial struggles. For the experiences both within and beyond sports: gaining personal growth and transformation, enhancing self-discipline, and pathways to achieve visionary goals. The five cases showed overall similarity in terms of success and resilience as Paralympians. However, in navigating challenges and obstacles, three of the cases had distinct experiences compared to the

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others. In terms of their experiences both within and outside of sports, there were notable similarities among all five cases.

**Keywords:** Paralympic athletes, success and resilience, challenges and obstacles, experiences, sports, multiple case studies, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

A *Paralympic athlete* is an individual who competes in various sports in Paralympic games. Specifically, as highlighted by Birgit Lütje-Klose (2018), athletes who have special needs like physical disabilities, including amputations, blindness, mobility disabilities, cerebral palsy, and more joined Paralympic games, and they demonstrated extraordinary skills, showcasing determination, athleticism, and the power of resilience and human ability. On the other hand, it was added by Coates, J. *et al.* (2016) that Paralympic athletes in the Paralympic Games represent the pinnacle of athletic achievement within the context of disability sport, embodying the values of determination, courage, and equality. Their participation helps to challenge stereotypes, break down barriers, and promote positive attitudes towards disability in sports and society. However, as reported by Bragaru *et al.* (2019), Paralympic athletes encounter many challenges and struggles that hinder their ability to showcase their skills due to their limited mobility and tendency to get tired easily compared to everyday athletes. Moreover, they have been facing unique triumphs and challenges in their journey through the Paralympic Games (Sumabat, 2018). These will include athletic achievement, inspiration and role model, community and support, personal growth and resilience. Consequently, the triumphs of Paralympic athletes have made sports participation more difficult.

On top of that, as noted by Bawden (2018), aside from the problems stated above, Paralympic athletes around the globe have a shared reality of problems in terms of their success, and that includes barriers in their attempts to achieve sports excellence, attempts to become elite international athletes, and their potential in pursuit of Paralympic medals. Over and above that, Campbell (2018) stated that their voices are frequently silent, and sometimes they are not part of the decision-making process in the sports organization.

Researchers in Bulgaria show that Paralympic athletes still have fewer opportunities for sports participation in mainstream sports and other events. Consequently, it was revealed by Henriksen *et al.* (2020) that Paralympic athletes participating in para-sport experienced challenges such as abandonment in training and competitions that sometimes led them to not pursue their sports careers. Moreover, Blauwet (2018) states that Paralympic athletes have a common problem that hinders them from attaining success in sports, including self-esteem, confidence, and other ego-related issues, because they perceive that they are different from normal athletes, and their physical disabilities become a factor in not striving and giving their best. Additionally, according to Kozub *et al.* (2020), it is evident from the situations and problems mentioned above that Paralympic athletes might not be able to benefit from integrated sports and Paralympic games, which are frequently highlighted as a means of fostering social

contacts and friendships. Therefore, in order to increase the success of Paralympic athletes in competition, these spaces will be relevant for all participants, and attention needs to be focused on understanding the views of Paralympic athletes.

Likewise, in Rome, Italy, Paralympic games have gone through a slow transformation, which, according to Mastro *et al.* (2014), mirrors to a great extent that Paralympic athletes, men and women, suffered many problems that decreased their performances during para-sport competition such as inequality of opportunity, attitudes ranging from indifference and disinterests to outright hostility, and a complete lack of understanding of what they were capable of. Furthermore, given the challenging experiences of Paralympic athletes, De Haan (2015) stated that athletes in other countries have something in common. There are also some life challenges for Paralympic athletes associated with sports growth that are significant. The well-being weaknesses of athletes with disabilities and Paralympics have been reported in the form of lack in sporting life, lack of self-acceptance, lack of overall identity, and the need to manage stressful situations, especially during and after sports competitions. This is added by Macdoughall *et al.* (2016).

In Sri Lanka, there are some research studies focused on the barriers and problems encountered by the Paralympic athletes, Kenttä and Corban (2014), to help them achieve their maximum performance in pursuit of Paralympic Games medals. Some of these barriers and problems are athletic achievement, sports growth, and resilience. Moreover, because of these barriers, competing in parasports plays a crucial part. Their positive and negative triumphs exemplify the spirit of resilience and achievement and demonstrate the power of sports in breaking barriers and fostering more inclusive sports. This was emphasized by Corban *et al.* (2014).

Further, in Cavite, Philippines, Paralympic athletes frequently encounter sports obstacles, these obstacles are associated with prejudice and unfavourable opinions this is according to George (2019). Because of these obstacles, it hinders them to not participate in Paralympic events. On the other hand, it was clearly stated by Davey (2021) that Paralympic athletes are typically not allowed to participate in sports because of the stigma attached to them, which prevents them from taking advantage of possibilities crucial to their sports participation, health, and well-being. Many studies in the Philippines have found involvement in physical activities to have positive effects on resilience and personal growth.

Furthermore, researches on the journeys and triumphs of Paralympic athletes in Iloilo, Philippines it was clearly stated by Petrola (2019) that Paralympic athletes have been victims of different forms of disrespect and or misrecognition by teammates in sports because of their physical disabilities, such as social discrimination, abuses, and exploitation. These experiences of disrespect among Paralympic athletes motivate them to struggle for participation in sports, actively engaging in training, and aiming for recognition of their rights and privileges. Furthermore, Paralympic athletes in the Philippines is considered as PWD, as defined in the Philippines RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, PWDs refer to those suffering from constraints or lack of capability of performing different activities within the range considered normal for a

human being. These constraints in doing activities, according to RA 7277, are the results of the individual's mental, physical, or sensory impairment.

On the other note, in Koronadal South Cotabato, existing research revealed that Paralympic athletes are inclined to participate in sports and other activities compared to normal athletes because of their physical aspect, this study was conducted by Geidine and Jerlinder (2016). However, according to them, there are many hindrances that prevent these Paralympic athletes from participating in sports-related activities. Geidine and Jerlinder (2016). Moreover, Davey (2018) also revealed and emphasized that Paralympic athletes cannot focus and participate in sports and activities because of their impairments these challenges are more of a concern of the researchers. Additionally, aside from these problems, Davey (2018) also stated that the lack of physical activity of Paralympic athletes offers a severe concern, especially in experiencing a higher degree of social isolation than those without disabilities. These experiences of Paralympic athletes are always concerned with their participation in Paralympic games in the Philippines.

In addition, other researchers found out that existing reviews of the evidence on inclusion in sports reveal mixed outcomes (Wilhelmsen and Sorensen, 2017). This research attempts to discover more about a hitherto relatively unknown and un-researched area within the fields of both the Paralympic sport and Paralympian studies. The field of Paralympian studies, in particular, is a relatively new and emergent one and, as such, is constantly evolving and re-evaluating itself and its place within society and in the context of sport. In line with current research in the field of Paralympian studies, this research study is set primarily within the social identity theory, which attempts to highlight the ways in which current perceptions of disability within Philippine society affect the lives of people with disabilities.

The researcher has envisioned sharing the study's findings with the International Paralympic Committee, providing them with insights to improve Paralympic sports and other sports events while ensuring the sustainability of the Paralympic athletes for future generations. The findings will be disseminated in various regional, national, and international research forums that focus on the triumphs and journeys of Paralympic athletes, including events in the Philippines that involve committees of Paralympic events, sports agencies, and other sports groups. Furthermore, the study will be published in local or international peer-reviewed journals. Copies of the study will likewise be distributed to the National Paralympic Committee (NPC), the Department of Education (DepEd), local government units, and the university library to address concerns related to Paralympic Athletes and Paralympic Games.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 History of Paralympic Games**

Paralympic games in the early years way back (1960-1988), have confusion and a lack of proper documentation and recordings because some of the materials have been thrown away or lost in time. According to Brittain (2016), this is because the event isn't given the respect and significance it deserves, even among those who took part in the event or

helped with its planning. He says, *"This is because, mostly because, the majority of the early Games functioned on "shoestring budgets," meaning that only a small number of volunteers worked there."*

## **2.2 Legal Bases and Rationale of Paralympic in the Philippines**

As defined in the legal bases in the Philippines, the RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, PWDs refer to those suffering from constraints or lack of capability of performing different activities within the range considered normal for a human being. These constraints in doing activities, according to RA 7277, are the results of the individual's mental, physical, or sensory impairment. In support of Republic Act 7277, a special event for Athletes with Disabilities in National Sport Events was established under the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA No. 10588, also known as the Palarong Pambansa Act of 2013. This law aims to promote physical education and encourage sports programs, league competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions, to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence, contributing to the development of a healthy and alert citizenry. The Palarong Pambansa has been institutionalized as the country's premier national sporting event. Furthermore, the Paralympics are defined as sporting events participated in by Paralympic Athletes

The rationale is that the Paralympic games have been viewed as an activity that needs the collaboration of specialized and skilled trainers and experts to handle the athletes with disabilities. It was revealed in the study conducted by Vanlandewijck and Thompson (2016), where they investigated that the Paralympic Games comprises physical, visual, and intellectual impairments. It is the physical, visual, and intellectual determinants of performance in various sports which need scientists who are trained to cater for the key interests of these athletes in relation to developing evidence-based systems of classification of sports for every type of disability. They also emphasized that there is still a scarcity of scientific literature, and this activity needs roundtable expert meetings with other Paralympic athletes, sports scientists, classifiers, and coaches to provide researchers with a time-efficient, multi-professional indication of the key determinants for a specific sport.

## **2.3 Paralympic Athletes in Local and National Paralympic Sport Success**

According to Houlihan and Chapman (2016), many nations' local sports programs have traditionally placed a strong emphasis on achieving sporting achievement in the National Games (NG). The growing number of participating nations and athletes and Paralympic athletes, as well as the growing commercial value and media coverage of the Paralympic Games, indicate that governments have recently placed a greater emphasis on Paralympic sports performance. Concurrently, it was also stated by Beacom and Brittain (2016), that social movements promoting the rights of Paralympic athletes to engage in social activities, such as sports, have raised political consciousness about the experiences and treatment of disabled individuals and athletes.

As the Paralympics have reached local and national mega-event status, so too has the political value of the Paralympic Games increased, this was argued by Beacom and

Brittain (2016). Moreover, they also stated that medal outcomes at the Paralympics have had a growing importance for politicians, believing that Paralympic success could serve greater diplomatic, ideological and social goals for the nation and specifically send signals to the world about the positive treatment of people with disabilities Beacom and Brittain (2016). A number of nations have therefore increased their focus on developing elite sport policies to reach Paralympic medal goals this is according to Dowling *et al.* (2017).

#### **2.4 Challenges and Coping Mechanisms Encountered by Paralympic Athletes**

Philippine society remains dichotomized by social contradictions, such as discrimination based on a person's physical or psychological condition, and this reality is deeply embedded even in the field of sports, Mauerberg-deCastro *et al.* (2016). It is, therefore essential to popularize the cause of para-athletes, in particular, and differently-abled people by integrating the issue into sports and other related activities. Evidently, informative and educational activities must be developed and promoted through various traditional and online platforms for public, mass and social communication.

Significantly, Paralympic athletes and persons with functional limitations or bodily impairments are generally disadvantaged in their opportunities to participate in social life Birgit Lütje-Klose (2018). These restrictions not only contradict basic human rights but may also affect their health and well-being. There is consistent evidence that continued favourable exchange with one's proximate social environment (e.g., family, friends, and work-life) exerts beneficial effects on health and well-being.

#### **2.5 Well-Being of Paralympic Athletes**

In one of these studies, which was related to the importance of the well-being of athletes with disabilities, it was found that athletes' well-being weaknesses were lack of purpose in non-sports life, lack of self-acceptance, lack of overall identity, and need to manage stress in stressful situations. The strengths of athletes with disabilities have been in the form of personal growth, optimism, and extensive social support networks (Sherry and Shields, 2016).

Compared to studies of Olympic athletes, research into Paralympic athletes' psychological and behavioral processes and the influences on their well-being is underdeveloped, although there has been increased attention paid to the topic in the last 10 years (Swartz *et al.*, 2019). While several studies have sought to identify the psychosocial characteristics of Paralympic athletes and other athletes with disabilities performing at an elite level, this research has often focused on 'measuring' the mental health or prevalence of mental illness in Paralympic athletes (Swartz *et al.*, 2019).

Current and retired elite athletes are reporting high rates of wellbeing-related concerns Rice *et al.* (2016), and with this increased awareness, sports organizations and governments are recognizing that a duty of care toward the athletes who represent our nations is imperative (Henriksen *et al.*, 2020). The resources provided enabled the researcher to thoroughly comprehend a wide range of significant literatures relevant to the study. These will facilitate data analysis and enhance the researcher's comprehension

of the complexity existing in the variables and discovered ideas. As a result, this study aims to investigate whether the Paralympic athletes identified in this research will demonstrate similar characteristics and experiences throughout their journeys in the Paralympic games found in the previous studies. This segment of the analysis could be valuable for those interested in exploring this fascinating area of study in the future, as it provides a contemporary outlook on the subject matter.

### **2.6 Success of Filipino Paralympic Athletes**

The general experiences of success throughout their journey in para-games shared by Filipino para-athletes indicated that they were aware of the possibility that their condition would become an object of mockery and bullying (de Castro, 2016). According to them, they could easily cope with these unwanted situations because they appreciate and enjoy the sports they are actively engaged in, and they take pride in donning the colours of the nation rather than focusing on the negative side of their journey.

Moreover, it was indicated by Sumabat (2017), that the national para-athletes individually and collectively desire to improve their performance in their respective sports for them to qualify for the Paralympic Games. Paralympic athletes recognize the significance of having a skilful coaching staff with new trends with specialization and accreditation from international sports federations to improve the Paralympic movement in the country. This was also emphasized during their individual interview on the success and journeys of the Paralympic athletes in the Philippines (de Castro, 2017).

## **3. Material and Methods Research Design**

In this study, I used a qualitative research design, specifically a multiple-case study design. It is to explore and comprehend the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social issue using the qualitative research method. Qualitative research aims to explore approaches used to communicate research concerns about social phenomena and their surroundings that require explanation or comprehension. They are appropriate for evaluating topics with some complexity and processes that occur over time. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on creating meaning rather than testing generic hypotheses (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Multiple-case design is a method for investigating a real-life multiple-bounded system through a thorough, in-depth data collection procedure involving numerous sources of information (Creswell, 2013). In addition, it is a type of study strategy where the same phenomenon is examined using two or more cases or replications. It will allow the researcher to comprehend a particular subject more thoroughly (Yin, 2017).

This research design is fit for this study because this study explores and analyze the different journeys and triumphs of Paralympic athletes through Paralympic games, specifically focused on understanding personal narratives, factors contributing to their success, positive and negative experiences, and their personal challenges during their Paralympic games journey. According to Gustafsson (2017), multiple case studies may help scholars understand similarities and differences between cases, which may have

significant literary influences. Additionally, the evidence derived from several case studies is reliable and valid. Moreover, by understanding different cases, the researcher can explain whether or not the findings from the results are helpful. This case study also enables a broader exploration of theoretical development and research issues.

Further, the multiple-case study design enables the researcher to collect a great deal of information from various sources, specifically the Paralympic athletes and their game journeys, making the evidence collected from the study very strong. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to clarify whether or not the findings from the study are valuable. The benefits of using this design are that it allows for the collection of multiple perspectives on a topic the portraits of Paralympian triumph and their games journeys. As stated by Brink (2018), this can help the researcher understand the value of the information.

Consequently, when a topic requires a deeper understanding, a multiple case study (MCS) is the best choice because it focuses on a single issue while using many cases, as in this study, to examine the experiences of five different Paralympic athletes in Paralympic games. Therefore, in order to examine the experiences of five Paralympic Athletes, a multiple case study will be employed.

#### **4. Participants**

The participants in this study were the five Paralympic athletes in the Philippines, particularly Paralympic athletes who participated or even won in any national games in the Philippines or internationally. The research was conducted using maximum variation sampling to select Paralympic athletes as cases. Maximum variation sampling technique is used to select participants with a wide range of traits appropriate to the research topic. This method ensures that the sample is diverse and encompasses a variety of viewpoints and life experiences (Patton, 2015). In addition, it is a deliberate sampling technique that seeks to sample for diversity, usually involving small sample sizes ranging from three to thirty (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the researcher intentionally seeks out Paralympic athletes with significant differences in essential factors or characteristics. Each case unit must be a Paralympic athlete with a specific gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment or profession, civil status, socio-economic status, type of Paralympic game, and any other relevant attributes that may affect the studied subject. By involving a diverse range of individuals, the researcher can gain a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the topic.

The snowball technique was employed to determine the participant cases to select the participants. This method involves identifying initial participants who then refer other potential participants from their network. Specifically, I start by contacting physical education (PE) instructors and coaches within the Mindanao area who are familiar with or have experience coaching Paralympic athletes. These initial contacts provide referrals to other athletes who meet the study's criteria. Further, the participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria that made up for homogeneity: a Paralympic



athlete who participated in or won any national or international competitions, above 18 years of age, and residing in the Philippines.

## 5. Research Questions

This qualitative multiple case study is to investigate an in-depth analysis of five Paralympic athletes' journeys in Paralympic games in the Philippines. This study explored the positive and negative experiences of the Paralympic athletes before, during, and after the Paralympic games, highlighting both similarities and differences.

- 1) What are the key factors that contribute to the success and resilience of Paralympic athletes?
- 2) How do Paralympic athletes navigate challenges and obstacles throughout their journey?
- 3) How do the experiences of Paralympic athletes improve their personal growth, identity, and future aspirations both within and beyond sports?
- 4) What explains the similarities and differences across each case unit?

## 6. Theoretical Lens

The theory used in this multiple case study is the Social-Identity Theory by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. Social-Identity theory offers a means of comprehending people's propensity to identify with a particular group in order to fulfill their desires for control to fulfill their resilience, achieve success, belonging, good self-esteem, how to face their challenges, and competitive life. It explores how individuals expound their sense of self within social groups. This theory utilized how Paralympic athletes shaped their positive and negative experiences by socializing with others, socially participating in sports, making friendships, connecting with their peers and coaches, and making their journey bearable and memorable by participating in sports competitions and engaging themselves with others despite their disabilities. Additionally, this theory is appropriate in this study because Paralympic athletes categorize themselves and others into social categories (e.g., their gender, nationality, religion, and race); moreover, their uniformity is partially derived from the groups to which they belong (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

In the context of Social Identity Theory, the portraits of Paralympic athletes offer an understanding of how these Paralympic athletes develop their identity in the realm of sports and other related physical activities and how their sense of self is affected by their participation and their journey towards sports and other Paralympic events. One approach related to social identity theory is personal development. Paralympic athletes develop their social identity within Paralympic games. This exploration of these factors contributes to the personal development of Paralympic athletes, such as their experiences with disability, positive and negative experiences in sports, and others with other athletes. In group dynamics, Paralympic athletes share common interests with other athletes, as well as how they interact with athletes without disabilities. The impact on their performance, social identity helps the researcher and see how it influences the

motivation and performance of Paralympic athletes. For instance, they examine a strong identification with the Paralympic events and or community enhances athlete's confidence, motivation, and commitment to training.

## **7. Cross-Case Analysis**

The cross-analysis of five study cases revealed eleven essential themes: values and resilience through sports, winning motivations in the Paralympic journey, pride and skills as PWD, transformative power of sports and support, family as core support system, role of spirituality and belief systems, balancing of personal and professional life, training commitment, obtaining positive mindset, embracing setbacks, empowering others through self-growth. There are three to six core ideas that highlight each theme. The most popular theme recognition technique is repetition, based on the concept that reoccurs throughout and across transcripts. The following are the themes discovered throughout the analysis.

On the other hand, there were six themes emerged in navigating the challenges and obstacles of Paralympic athletes: Relying on Coaching and Exposure, Exercising Personal Initiatives, Developing Coping Strategies, Strengthening Interaction and Connection. Overcoming Mental Barriers and Managing Financial Struggles. Among all the challenges and obstacles encountered by the Paralympians, the most difficult is the financial struggle. Nevertheless, even though they face financial difficulties, they always find a way, and it is through their personal initiatives that they manage to provide for their expenses for the Paralympic Games.

In describing the experiences of Paralympic Athletes shaped by their personal growth, identity, and future aspirations both within and beyond sports, table 4 shows four essential themes with their corresponding core ideas. The three themes are presented: Gaining Personal Growth and Transformation, Enhancing Self-Discipline, Pathway to Achieving Visionary Goals. Of all the themes presented in Table 4, the most challenging and important for the Paralympians is the impact of Pathway to Achieving Personal Goals. However, it was noted that for all Paralympians involved in this case study, these themes are essential to shaping their personal growth, identity, and future aspirations within and beyond sports.

## **8. Similarities and Differences between Cases**

The similarities and differences between the five cases presented in this case study are in the context of success and resilience, navigating obstacles, and experiences of Paralympic athletes, which are shaped by their growth, identity, and future aspirations both within and beyond sports.

For success and resilience, navigating the participants' challenges, obstacles, and experiences is essential in the portraits of the Paralympian journey. The five cases of Paralympic athletes, each of whom has navigated their journey to success through a combination of resilience, personal growth, and overcoming significant obstacles. Each

athlete's story sheds light on how they developed motivation, faced adversity, and drew strength from various sources, such as sports, personal initiatives, family support, and spiritual beliefs. While many themes are shared across the cases, each athlete brings a unique perspective to these experiences, shaped by individual circumstances and challenges.

On top of that, these cross-case analysis highlights the common threads that run through the athletes' stories, while also pointing out the specific aspects that make each case distinct. Special attention will be given to the unique case among the five, illustrating how differences in coping strategies, support systems, and personal beliefs contributed to their journeys. Understanding these cases provides a deeper appreciation of the complexities and resilience required to succeed in the world of Paralympic sports and beyond.

Among the five cases, A, B, C, D, and E, Case D emerges as the most unique among the five cases. While all cases share many common themes, Case D stands apart in several key areas. For spirituality and beliefs, unlike the others, Case D does not rely on spirituality or religious beliefs for success, emphasizing self-reliance instead. Further, adaptation to exclusion Case D faced the unique challenge of not being allowed to compete in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games due to health issues. This situation created significant mental and emotional barriers, making their coping strategy notably different from others who faced fewer obstacles to participation. Lastly, there was a lack of community support; Case D differed from others by not citing community support as a significant factor in overcoming challenges, contrasting with cases like C, D, and E, where community connections were seen as vital. Thus, Case D's combination of self-reliance, coping with exclusion, and different approaches to community support makes it the most unique case in this study.

## 9. Discussion

There are three research questions in this study. The first research question evokes key factors that contribute to the success and resilience of Paralympic athletes. The results of the study created eleven essential themes from the data collected during the face-to-face interview: values and resilience through sports, winning motivations in Paralympic journey, pride and skills as PWD, transformative power of sports and support, family as a core support system, role of spirituality and belief systems, balancing of personal and professional life, training commitment, obtaining positive attitude, embracing setbacks, and empowering others through self-growth.

The second research question is how to navigate challenges and obstacles throughout their journey. For this research question, six essential themes emerged from the data collected: relying on coaching and exposure, exercising personal initiatives, developing coping strategies, strengthening social interaction connections, overcoming mental barriers, and managing financial struggles.

Moreover, the third research question focuses on the experiences of Paralympic athletes to improve their personal growth, identity, and future aspirations both within

and beyond sports. There were three essential themes emerged from the data collected: gaining personal growth and transformation, enhancing self-discipline, and finding a pathway to achieving visionary goals.

Lastly, the fourth research question focuses on the explanation of the similarities and differences of each case. Results showed that they have similar and different experiences in the portraits of the Paralympian triumphs.

## **10. Recommendations**

This multiple case study explored the portraits of Paralympian triumphs. Results revealed that in the five cases the Paralympians have experienced similar challenges. However, this qualitative investigation's result was limited to the success and resilience, challenges and obstacles throughout their journey, and the experiences of five Paralympians in the Philippines. It is recommended that more cases of athletes be added, especially normal athletes and students with special needs. The variables focused in the study are the success and resilience, challenges and obstacles throughout their journey, and the experiences of five Paralympians; it is therefore recommended that other variables like school environment, comparative studies, academic performance and cognitive skills, technology integration, may be explored to enrich the perspective of Paralympic games. Since this multiple case study has recruited Paralympians as the participants, it is recommended that another study be conducted from the perspectives of school administrators, persons with disabilities leaders, or even sports coordinators to raise awareness and create policies and programs to promote inclusive sports.

Finally, future research in the area of Paralympic triumphs should explore the complex interplay of identity, culture, support systems, and technology that contributes to the success and resilience of athletes. By examining these dimensions more deeply, scholars can provide valuable insights that not only improve training and competition environments but also foster greater inclusion, advocacy, and social change within the sports world and society at large. The continued investigation into these areas will ensure that the voices and experiences of Paralympians are heard and celebrated, leading to a more equitable future for athletes with disabilities. Moreover, photoVoice offers Paralympians the opportunity to tell their personal stories visually, revealing emotions, struggles, and victories that are difficult to articulate through traditional interviews or written accounts. Photos can capture feelings of isolation, empowerment, or the impact of inclusive education in ways that words alone may not. This method can create a multidimensional perspective on their lives, especially regarding their educational background. In this research on Paralympians can bring a new, more intimate dimension to understanding their educational journeys. By empowering Paralympians to share their stories visually, researchers can uncover more profound insights into the emotional, social, and physical barriers they face while also highlighting their triumphs. This participatory, visual approach will help inform better educational practices and policies that are more inclusive and supportive of students with disabilities.

## 11. Concluding Remarks

In this multiple case study, I explored the experiences of Paralympian triumphs, which revealed their success and resilience, navigating challenges and obstacles throughout their journey, and their experiences to improve their personal growth, identity, and future aspirations both within and beyond sports. In conducting this research, it allowed me to get to know Paralympians in the Philippines at a deeper level. Their stories and experiences have brought me back to my own experience as a PE teacher. Interviewing Paralympians offers me more than just a glimpse into the world of elite athletes. It reveals a powerful narrative of human resilience, hope, and transformation. These athletes are not only inspiring others to overcome their own challenges but are also paving the way for a more inclusive society where disability is no longer seen as a limitation but as an opportunity for growth, achievement, and empowerment. Their stories are a testament to the incredible potential within all individuals, regardless of physical ability, and remind us that true triumph is measured not just by victories on the field but by the courage to confront and overcome the obstacles that life presents.

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### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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