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FEAR OF FAILURE IN BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU PRACTITIONERS

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated solely to my mom, who sacrificed much of her life so that I could have my own.

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FEAR OF FAILURE IN BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU PRACTITIONERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) practitioners and the role that failure plays in their sport. Four male BJJ practitioners, three of which had obtained the rank of black belt and one purple belt participated in the study. Guided by Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2009), three semi-repeated interviews and a singular journal entry were completed with each participant.

The final analysis of the interviews and journal entries provided insight into the importance of community and failure as it pertains to personal growth, and the role coaches and teammates play in assisting with that growth. Findings also reveal the positive and negative consequences of failure in BJJ, specific to the tenants of Conroy's (2001b) fear of failure. These discoveries provide a deeper understanding of an emerging sport in BJJ and provide multiple implications for gym owners, coaches, and practitioners.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Failure in Sport

In sports, failure is unavoidable. With the exception of an occasional tie, the very nature of two individuals or teams competing in a sporting contest implies one team will lose. This occurs during games, practices, social interactions, and many other aspects of sport. In many cases, these failures occur in front of audiences, scouts, coaches, teammates, friends, and/or family. Therefore, success in sports may depend on how one navigates consistent failure. For example, Stephen Curry of the National Basketball Association (NBA) Golden State Warriors is arguably the greatest three-point shooter of the current generation, and possibly of all time, while shooting 43.5% from behind the three point line (ESPN, nd). The golf great Tiger Woods as of November 2019 has accumulated 82 career wins (the most of all time) out of 359 starts. That is a career win percentage of 22.8% (pgatour.com, 2019). Thus, despite the superb talent of these two stars and those like them, failure is inevitable and a core foundation within sport.

Of course, failure is relative to one's operational definition of success. Each of the athletes mentioned in the previous paragraph would all be considered highly successful. The above examples are littered throughout sport; however, one theme remains clear, the top athletes still experience failure at a substantial rate. The juxtaposition between constant failure and enduring success is a unique challenge. The inability to properly appraise situations in which failure occurs may lead to an athlete persisting and being successful or burning out and ultimately ceasing their sport participation. Therefore, a thorough understanding of how athletes appraise failure is important for understanding how they can withstand consistent failure long enough to become successful.

This study looks to better understand the role that failure, and failure appraisal plays in the sport and martial art of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ). The first steps of one's BJJ journey are typically harsh, and anecdotally, many do not stick around long enough to see positive results, despite being touted for its ability to teach important life skills (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). Much of the existing literature on FF has been conducted on university (Elison & Partridge, 2012; Sagar, Boardley, & Kavussanu, 2011; Sagar & Jowett, 2015) and youth athletes (Correia et al., 2017; Gustafsson et al., 2017; Sagar et al., 2010; Sagar et al, 2007). Additional research is needed to address failure appraisal in adult recreational athletes.

Evidence for the Issue

Sagar and Jowett (2015) define fear of failure (FF) as “the motive to avoid failure in achievement contexts where one's performance is evaluated” (p. 4). Having a fear of failure can affect motivation leading us to tend to avoid situations where we might fail, referred to as an avoidance disposition (Clark, Teevan, & Ricciuti, 1956). More specifically, they may become motivated to avoid the potential consequences of failure (Atkinson, 1957). On the other hand, if an individual does not fear failure, that person may approach situations with vigor regardless of the opportunity to fail or not reach their goal, also referred to as having an approach disposition (Elliot, 1999). They do this despite the chance of failing because they are expecting a positive consequence should they succeed. For those who fear failure however, it is important to try to understand why failing is such a negative experience for them.

Thus, it is important to ask the following questions: What are we afraid of? Is failing truly negative or always negative? According to previous research, failure itself is not what makes us afraid, rather it is the collective consequence of failing and the potential of not reaching our goals (Atkinson, 1957; Birney et al., 1969; Conroy, 2001a). Conroy (2001b) developed a

multidimensional model of FF. In his view, there are five main aversive consequences of failure: the fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment, the fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, the fear of having an uncertain future, the fear of important others losing interest (fear of losing social influence), and the fear of upsetting important others. Grounded in Lazarus's cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion (1991), these consequences induce anxiety and cause us to view situations where we might fail as threats. This forms the avoidance disposition discussed earlier. Put simply, it is not failure that we tend to fear, but the negative consequences associated with failing. Unfortunately, for those competing in sports (or many areas of life) avoiding failure is not possible.

Being afraid to fail appears to affect the types of goals we adopt (Elliot & Church, 1997; Conroy & Elliot, 2004). If we adopt this avoidance motivation, we tend to set goals that compare our skills to others, called performance goals, rather than setting goals that focus on self-improvement, referred to as mastery goals. The dangerous aspect of this avoidance disposition, or FF, is that it can initially appear as success (Clark et al., 1956). Martin and Mash (2003) suggest that those that are high in FF begin by overstriving or succeeding because they are afraid to fail. This, unfortunately, does not last. The success is short-lived and relatively unenjoyable because the fear persists. FF can then begin to have progressive negative side effects like defensive pessimism and self-handicapping (Martin & Mash, 2003).

For example, when being judged in a performance setting, defensive pessimists would set low expectations for themselves. A defensive pessimist may discuss their ability in a negative light or downplay any success they might have. Self-worth is questioned less in the case of an inadequate performance if expectations are low. If this process continues, the individual will move down the "cascade" and begin to engage in self-handicapping. Self-handicapping sees the

individual engage in self-sabotage in order to have ready-made excuses for poor performance (Martin & Mash, 2003). For example, an athlete may go out drinking the night before a game and be hungover or depleted for their game. Prolonged exposure at this stage can potentially cause the individual to become disengaged from both success *and* failure, leading to learned helplessness. Someone in this phase accepts failure as a certainty and loses motivation with the potential of ultimately dropping out of whatever activity they were engaged in.

Deficiencies of the Evidence

Given the inherent nature of failure in sport, it is important to understand how athletes and coaches across the sporting spectrum socially construct and deal with the failure they face. Majority of the literature on FF has utilized quantitative methodology through the use of the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI; Conroy et al., 2002). Much of this research has contributed to our understanding how higher levels of FF correlate with other variables such as perfectionism (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009), antisocial behavior (Sagar et al., 2011), and self-control (Sagar & Jowett, 2015), among others. Research on these topics has focused mainly on university athletes. The PFAI has also been used to investigate the relationships between these variables in youth athletes as well (Correia et al., 2017; Gustafsson et al., 2017; Correia et al., 2018).

Although the majority of research has been conducted quantitatively, elite youth sport athletes have been investigated qualitatively to better understand their perceived consequences of failure (Sagar et al., 2007), how they cope with failure (Sagar et al., 2010) and the potential developmental origins of FF (Sagar & Lavallee, 2010). While early recognition of fear of failure tendencies of youth athletes is important, it may not account for young athletes who were not identified early on. For instance, those children who are high in FF and were unidentified carry

their FF into adulthood. A child who plays tennis and develops FF in their sport may then grow up and carry that FF into other potential sports they may try, or even potentially prevent them from trying any new activities. They may also potentially pass on these traits to their children (Elliot & Thrash, 2004) and the cycle will continue. Thus, research should pay attention to the experiences of adult athletes as well. Many adult athletes and exercisers may already be at the end of their traditional sport careers. However, many recreational sport options remain. Sports like CrossFit provide competitive and personally challenging opportunities for adults. One unique sport that is rising in popularity is BJJ.

Originating back in the 1930s and not appearing in a significant way outside of Brazil until the 1980s, BJJ is a sport that has seen much growth since the first Ultimate Fighting Championship in 1993 (Gracie & Danaher, 2002). Brazilian Jiu Jitsu brings a unique recreational sport opportunity for those who may be done with their traditional athletic career and still seek to challenge themselves athletically. Traditionally taught as a self-defense martial art, BJJ also has a large sport component with tournaments hosted around the world. These features may make BJJ an attractive opportunity for those looking to learn how to defend themselves, participate recreationally in a challenging physical activity, or compete in a number of local, regional, and national tournaments. BJJ has also been shown to promote the transfer of implicit life skills such as respecting others in and out of the sport environment, perseverance towards goals, self-confidence and concept, healthy habits like exercise, and the importance of a positive connection to a social group (Chinkov & Holt, 2016).

Despite its initial attractiveness, the preliminary learning curve in BJJ is rather steep and curriculum needs to be carefully implemented to ensure early success for new BJJ practitioners. In the beginning stages of the learning process, white belts (the beginner rank) may be more

likely to experience failure, which could lead to frustration, injury, and feelings of incompetence. These experiences of failure could lead the new practitioner to fear the consequences of those failures and may result in them burning out or dropping out of the sport altogether. A unique aspect of BJJ is the role that community and coaches/mentors play in the onboarding of new members. These social dynamics are of particular interest in this study.

Rationale for the Study

Based on the previous exploration of the literature, there is room for additional insight into the ways that athletes construct the idea of failure within their sport. There is a lack of qualitative scholarship regarding FF in adult recreational athletes. This study could provide a more in-depth exploration into how the main tenets of FF influence athletic performance. Specifically, BJJ is a relatively new sport that has received minimal scholarly attention to date. Research on this sport can better educate future researchers who may be interested in a research agenda in BJJ or other martial arts sports. Additionally, this research may give gym owners and coaches a better understanding of the lived experiences of their members. Understanding how BJJ athletes describe the potentially aversive consequences of failure can help coaches develop training strategies that builds a culture that promotes an approach orientation and motivates their members to achieve. This awareness is a key first step to making positive change in the sport. For athletes (especially beginners) training BJJ day to day, this research may help them relate to others who are going through similar circumstances. Being able to identify similar patterns of frustrations or optimism may be beneficial for those who have decided to undertake their own BJJ journey.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

This study serves two broader purposes. First, this study looks to better understand an emerging sport in BJJ. In addition, it looks to better understand the role fear of failure plays in an individual adult recreational sport. Specifically, the purpose of this qualitative study will be to better understand the lived experiences of BJJ athletes and the role that failure plays in their sport.

RQ 1: What is the contextual lived experience of a BJJ practitioner? What does it mean to be a BJJ practitioner?

RQ 2: What does it mean to fail in BJJ?

RQ 3: What are the perceived consequences of those failures?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Early Theory and Role in Achievement Motivation

In early research, achievement motivation was broken down into two components: hope of success and fear of failure (FF). Hope of success is an approach motive while FF revolves around the motive to avoid punishment (Clark et al., 1956). A person with an approach motive is motivated to engage in a behavior when there is the possibility of a positive consequence (Elliot, 1999). For example, a person with an approach motive might be motivated to play a basketball game because of the positive feelings associated with winning or performing well. A person who is high in FF might be motivated to avoid the game because of the chance he or she may fail. While individuals high in achievement tend to have an orientation of hope, other individuals who score low in achievement are more likely to adopt a defensive or fearful orientation.

Those who fear failure and experience failure-related anxiety desire to be in a position where that anxiety is at its lowest point. An individual worried about failure tends to avoid tasks where there is about a 50% chance they might fail and is more likely to participate in very easy or very difficult tasks, where the strength of avoidance motivation is weakest (Atkinson, 1957). Easy tasks have a low chance of failure and are thus preferred. Perhaps less clear is why an individual may desire very difficult tasks. In situations where failure is certain, the associated anxiety will be low because they are highly sure they will fail at the onset.

If an individual is low in FF, they are best suited to choose an intermediate task where motivation is maximized due to the uncertain chance of either success or failure (Atkinson, 1957). This is due to them having an approach motivation, where they are excited (thus motivated) at the opportunity to overcome challenges. A 50% chance of success is the point where approach motivation is strongest (Atkinson, 1957) and so a person strong in approach

motivation (low in FF) would theoretically prefer tasks where motivation is highest (50% chance of success).

A person low in FF would not be as motivated to complete an easy task where the chance of success is very high. In other words, an easy task will not provide them with the excitement of the challenge. However, if failure occurs during a simple task initial motivation will increase to overcome the task. They will be motivated to complete the task they believed they should easily be able to accomplish. Continued failure of an easy task, however, will eventually reduce motivation over time. If they keep failing, eventually they will look for an easier task to accomplish. Imagine a basketball player shooting a free throw. If they are confident, they should succeed at making a free throw, then in a situation where they miss, they will increase their effort and try again. However, if they continue to miss, perhaps they will move closer and make a shot closer to the basket before potentially trying again from the free throw line. This phenomenon happens quicker if the task itself is difficult. Take the last example except the shooter is attempting a three-point shot. They may take less attempts at that shot before moving closer to the basket for an easier shot. If they are successful at the tasks they presume to be easy, individuals low in FF (thus high in the motive to achieve) will actively seek new challenging tasks as motivation or interest in old tasks wanes.

Meanwhile, an individual high in FF is afraid of succeeding at tasks because they fear that if they succeed, they will be given a more difficult task with a higher level of chance to experience failure (Atkinson, 1957). They would rather fail repeatedly at that task until fear of failure drops low enough that they can safely move to an easier task. If the individual fails at an easy task, they may then jump right to a very difficult task again to avoid the anxiety of failure (remember that if failure is certain, anxiety about failing is low). If, however, the individual

completes the easy task, their avoidance motivation decreases, confidence and motivation increase. This indicates that if we have an individual high in FF, we need to build their confidence over time through easier tasks before moving on to tasks that are more difficult.

As noted by Atkinson (1957), being motivated to avoid failure is grounded in the potential to experience shame and humiliation because of that failure. Birney et al. (1969 as cited in Conroy, 2001b) took this a step further and stated that it is not failure itself the individual fears, rather it is the consequences of failure that are undesirable. Birney and colleagues also developed the first multidimensional model of FF further expanded on by Conroy (2001b) in subsequent research. Birney et al. (1969) suggested the perceived negative consequences of failure were: fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, fear of nonego punishment, and fear of reduced social value. Fear of devaluing one's self-estimate involves the threat of thinking less of one's own ability or self-image. Fear of nonego punishment involves other negative diminished perceptions other than diminished self-estimate. Examples of nonego punishment include wasted effort, loss of an opportunity, an uncertain future, and tangible losses (Conroy, 2001b). Finally, fear of reduced social value involves the perceived threat that others will start to perceive that the person is less valuable after failure. For example, if an individual loses a BJJ competition, their confidence in their ability may diminish, they may be embarrassed, and they may fear that their coaches or teammates may think less of them for performing poorly. In sum, this early research puts FF at the center of motivation and appears to affect how we act when approaching situations where we may fail (Atkinson, 1957; Clark et al., 1956; Birney et al., 1969).

In subsequent research, Elliot and Church (1997) proposed a hierarchical model that put achievement motivation (also referred to as approach motivation) and fear of failure (also referred to as avoidance motivation) at its core (See Figure 1). They referred to FF as a motive

disposition. Motive dispositions represent the first link in the chain and are the basis for the achievement related outcomes (our behavior) at the end of the path.

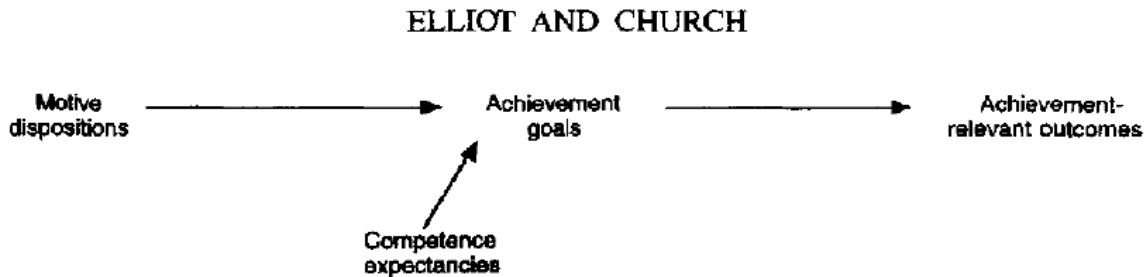


Figure 1. A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation.

The motive disposition one operates from will affect the second link of the chain, achievement goals. Three goals exist in this initial model: Mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. Mastery goals at their core are about personal competency and mastering tasks. An example of a mastery goal might be to improve and learn all one can about a certain passing technique in BJJ. Those who have an approach disposition where they are motivated to achieve success adopt mastery goals in this model. On the other hand, a performance goal relates to demonstrating competence relative to another. Having a goal of outperforming someone in a BJJ sparring round is an example of a performance goal. Performance goals can either be set through having an approach or an avoidance disposition, hence the inclusion of both performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals. An example of a performance-approach goal is looking to perform a move in BJJ better than others in the class. An example of a performance-avoidance goal might be to avoid doing poorly in a BJJ competition match.

Elliot and Church (1997) theorized that the individual's motive disposition (approach or avoidance) and subsequent achievement goal adoption (mastery or performance) would have an

effect on various achievement related outcomes. In their first attempt to test this theory, graded performance in an undergraduate psychology class and intrinsic motivation were used as achievement outcomes, with competence expectancies and competence perceptions also collected to better understand the relationships. A sample of 204 (82 male, 122 female, $M=20.01$) college undergraduate students enrolled in a psychology course were tested via questionnaire packets in a series of sessions throughout a college semester. Results indicated that participants high in achievement motivation and competence expectancy were more likely to set mastery goals. Those individuals who set more mastery goals scored higher on levels of intrinsic motivation. Conversely, individuals higher in FF and who had lower competence expectancies were more likely to adopt performance-avoidance goals. This highlights the different types of goals set by individuals both high and low in FF. Regarding gender differences, women were found to more likely adopt mastery goals than men. Interestingly, women who scored higher on achievement motivation were more likely to adopt performance-avoidance goals, while the opposite was found in male participants.

Elliot and Church (1997) also found setting performance-avoidance goals were most predictive of lower levels of intrinsic motivation. Individuals high in FF and achievement motivation were more likely to adopt performance-approach goals than individuals with lower levels of FF and achievement motivation. The highest levels of intrinsic motivation were seen in participants who scored high in mastery and lower on performance-approach scales. However, the students in the sample who adopted performance-approach goals (i.e., the desire to get a better grade in the class in comparison to other students) scored higher final grades in their college course taken during the study. This highlights the difference between mastery and performance-approach goals. Students interested in developing mastery goals might not have

received the highest grades, but they were more intrinsically motivated to learn. Those students who set performance-approach goals may not have been as intrinsically motivated, but they obtained higher grades, thus “performing better” which is the focus of performance-approach goals.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, students who adopted performance-avoidance goals scored lower final grades in the class than their peers who did not set performance-avoidance goals. Those who scored low on both the performance-approach and mastery scales scored the lowest grades. In summary, this research indicated that mastery goals led to higher levels of intrinsic motivation, performance-approach goals resulted in higher grades, and performance-avoidance goals resulted in both lower levels of motivation and lower grades. This highlights how having a high FF can influence the goals we adopt, and the subsequent performance affect it may have on our performance and motivation.

Subsequent research (Elliot & McGregor, 1999; 2001; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) has utilized Elliot and Church’s (1997) hierarchical model of approach and achievement motivation. Performance-avoidance goals also have been associated with lower levels of satisfaction with grades at the end of a college semester (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997). The students who set these performance-avoidance goals scored higher in FF and found the pursuit of their goals to be less fulfilling and enjoyable, and decreased their self-esteem, vitality, personal control, and life satisfaction. College students who adopted more performance-avoidance goals saw a reduction in their well-being over the course of a college semester.

In testing situations, FF has been conceptualized as a form of trait test anxiety (Elliot & McGregor, 1999). Performance-avoidance goals were found to be negative predictors of multiple choice and short-essay test scores, while performance-approach goals were found to be positive

predictors. Higher levels of test anxiety and worry were positively related to performance-avoidance goals and was seen more significantly in women than men. Worry was negatively related to mastery-approach goals.

These studies initially created a profile for three possible achievement goals. Mastery goals were characterized as being based on an achievement motivation while also having a high expectation of competency. Performance-avoidance goals were based in FF and were associated with low competence expectancies. Performance-approach goals were based on both achievement motivation and fear of failure, while maintaining high competence expectancy. It is proposed that the most optimal self-regulation strategy is the simultaneous adoption of mastery and performance-approach goals with a lack of adoption of performance-avoidance goals.

Future theorizing led to the adoption of a 2x2 achievement goal framework (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). This new model saw the differentiation between mastery-approach and mastery-avoidance goals. An example of a mastery-approach goal is similar to the early model of Elliot and Church (1997) where one desires to do the best they can and master a certain task. A mastery-avoidance goal, new to this model, may be setting the goal of avoiding misunderstanding a topic or task or striving not to forget a skill they just learned. In this instance, the person is motivated to avoid a negative outcome like forgetting.

Analysis supported the adoption of this fourth motive and found that mastery-avoidance disposition was grounded in FF, low self-determination, and perceived class engagement (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). In addition, relationships were established between mastery-avoidance and state trait anxiety, worry, emotionality, and disorganized studying in their sample of 180 undergraduate college students (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). These results indicate that mastery-avoidance goals are seeded in more negative antecedents than mastery-approach goals, yet more

positive antecedents than performance-avoidance goals. Overall, this research line shows the importance FF has on the goals we set for ourselves in various situations. The desired motive disposition is to have an approach motivation and adopt mastery-approach goals. An individual who is high in FF is more likely to set both performance-approach, performance-avoidance (Elliot & Church, 1997) and mastery-avoidance goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

The third level of Elliot and Church's (1997) hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation is achievement relevant outcomes. The motive disposition of the individual determines the goals one sets, and these goals shape one's behavior. Martin and Mash (2003) propose a model of the increasingly negative effect FF can have on an individual. Their five-tiered model indicates a potential "cascading" effect of FF that can happen when a person is motivated to avoid situations where they may fail.

The first tier is success orientation, in that the individual does not fear failure and engages in the idea of trying to achieve success. This is akin to the approach motive disposition highlighted by Elliot and Church (1997). The second stage would appear on the surface as success, which they call overstriving. An individual at this stage may cognitively begin to fear failure, but behavior signs still associate with success. At the next level, behavior engagement with fear begins to manifest as defensive pessimism. Defensive pessimism involves setting low expectations during events where one's performance is to be judged. It is believed that if expectations are low, the more likely one's worth will be questioned if the performance is inadequate. If this process continues, the individual will move down the cascade and begin to engage in self-handicapping. Self-handicapping sees the individual engage in self-sabotage in order to have ready-made excuses for poor performance. Prolonged exposure at this stage can potentially cause the individual to become disengaged from both success and failure, leading to

learned helplessness and ultimately perhaps an early retirement due to free choice (Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994).

Martin and Mash (2003) proposed a model of success orientation to assist movement back up the cascade. Their model of success orientation contains four components: self-belief, value of school, learning focus and perceived control. Self-belief is the student's belief that they can accomplish what they set out to do and perform their best. Positive reinforcement after a success and attributing that success to their persistence and effort (Alderman, 2007) is an example of fostering increased self-belief. Value of school involves the belief that what the students are learning is important and relevant to them (Martin & Mash, 2003). In other words, helping individuals understand *why* the information is important (Sinek, 2009). This notion can be implemented beyond traditional schooling. For example, when teaching a sport technique, the coach can explain why a certain move is done in a way that they are teaching it. This will help the student understand the value of doing the technique as taught by their instructor.

Learning focused individuals choose more challenging tasks and are less worried about the outcome. Their main focus is on developing skills and solving problems. This can also be referred to as having a mastery approach. Having this incremental approach to learning new skills and setting mastery goals has been shown to protect against the effects of FF (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). Control refers to the extent that students believe they can achieve success and avoid failure (Martin & Mash, 2003). One way to increase an individual's perceived control is to focus on their effort they put into tasks and the strategies they use to complete them (Weiner, 1985). Linking failure to the lack of effort and not the lack of ability is critical, as well as linking success to both effort and strategy. Students may then begin to feel like the decisions they make control the potential outcome (Martin & Mash, 2003).

Forty years of research shows how important and detrimental FF can be on how we interact with the world around us. Fearing failure may affect the goals we set and then subsequently influence how we approach situations where we may fail. This is an important notion in sport, because becoming a high achiever in sport will undoubtedly result in multiple years' worth of failing as we engage in deliberate practice to improve our skills (Ericsson et al., 1993). From a professional perspective, whether it be academic researcher or coach/business owner, it is important to strive for understanding of these theories in order to make best-practice decisions. The purpose of the current study is to assist researchers and practitioners to understand how FF plays a role in the lives of BJJ practitioners. More specifically, this research looks to shed light on how approach and/or avoidance dispositions present themselves in BJJ, and how that relates to subsequent behavior.

Fear of Failure in Sport

Clark et al. (1956) defined fear of failure as the motive to avoid punishment. This desire to minimize pain can lead individuals to be motivated to avoid failure, and to potentially experience shame and humiliation as a consequence of failure (Atkinson, 1957). It was argued that failure is related to nonattainment of a goal (Birney et al., 1969). Birney et al. (1969) argued that the consequences of that nonattainment cause the individual to actually fear the consequences of failure, and not necessarily failure itself. Fear of the devaluation of one's self-estimate, fear of nonego punishment, and reduction and social value were three of the main theorized consequences of failure. For example, devaluing one's self-estimate may mean someone who fails may think less of their ability before they fail, causing them to have to reassess themselves. Forms of nonego punishment may include the loss of tangible rewards they would have attained had they succeeded. It also may mean that they consider the failed attempt a

waste of their time and effort. Finally, failing to reach a goal may have the athlete think that others close to them will think less of him or her. All three consequences of failure may drive the individual to view failure as a threat, and thus become motivated to avoid situations where failing may occur.

Work has since been done by Conroy (2001b) and colleagues (Conroy et al., 2001) to draft a working model of FF that incorporates the cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion put forth by Lazarus (1991). Lazarus (1991) proclaimed that for individuals to fear failure, they must perceive either that they are failing or that they anticipate the likelihood of failure and that failure in that situation will lead to aversive consequences. FF then can be defined as “appraising threat in evaluative situations with the potential for failure because those situations activate cognitive schemas or beliefs associated with the aversive consequences of failing” (Conroy, 2004, p. 484), or more simply put “the motive to avoid failure in achievement contexts where one’s performance is evaluated” (Sagar & Jowett, 2015, p. 4).

After an initial investigation about consequences associated with failure (Conroy et al., 2001), Conroy’s (2001b) multidimensional theory of FF identified five major aversive consequences of failure. These five consequences of failure were viewed as threats by individuals and avoided. These five appraisals of failure included: experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one’s self-estimate, having an uncertain future, having important others lose interest, and upsetting important others (Conroy, 2001b). The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI; Conroy et al., 2002) is a 25-item questionnaire used to measure each of these five appraisals, and one higher order “general FF” score, for a total of six total measures of FF.

Conroy's (2001b) multidimensional theory of FF via the use of the PFAI has been useful to take the concept of FF and apply it to the sport domain. This multidimensional theory of FF has been the guiding framework for a number of researchers who have looked at FF in sport as it pertains to goal setting (Conroy & Elliot, 2004), perfectionism (Correia et al., 2018; Elison & Partridge, 2012; Sagar & Stoeber, 2009), coping responses (Sagar et al., 2010), antisocial behavior (Sagar et al., 2011), self-control (Sagar & Jowett, 2015), stress and burnout (Gustafsson et al., 2017), anxiety (Correia, & Rosado, 2018), and youth athletes (Correia et al., 2017; Sagar et al., 2007). To date, two additional qualitative investigations into the lived experiences of athletes have been conducted since the inception of Conroy's model. Both investigations desired to learn more about how youth elite athletes experience and deal with FF (Sagar et al., 2007; Sagar & Lavallee, 2010).

Fear of Failure in Adults

High FF has been shown to predict the adoption of performance-avoidance goals, and performance-approach goals in undergraduate students enrolled in physical activity courses (Conroy & Elliot, 2007). This shows similar results to the research conducted on undergraduate students by Elliot and Church (1997). However, Conroy and Elliot (2004) showed that mastery-approach goals appear to have a protective effect on increasing FF. This means that creating a culture that promotes the use of mastery goals can reduce the likelihood of developing FF. If FF indeed does predict the goals we set, reducing FF may be a key to reducing this avoidance behavior and help move towards a mastery climate. Goal setting, however, is only one avenue concerning FF. Other researchers have done extensive work on how FF relates to other factors relevant to sport performance, like perfectionism, which have substantial implications in understanding the role FF plays in sport (Elison & Partridge, 2012; Sagar & Stoeber, 2009).

As previously stated, the five FF factors have also been used in research designed to assess the relationship between FF and perfectionism. Frost et al., (1990) model, developed through a series of studies with a total sample of 672 female college students, offered six dimensions of perfectionism: personal standards, concern over mistakes, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and organization. Hewitt and Flett's model (1991) offered three dimensions: self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism, and other-oriented perfectionism. Self-oriented perfectionism includes behaviors like setting detailed standards for one's self and tightly controlling one's behavior (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Socially prescribed perfectionism is the desire to strive to obtain standards set by others. Other-oriented perfectionism refers to the standards one holds for other's behavior.

Frost, Heimberg, Hold, Mattia, and Neubauer (1993) condensed the dimensions from both previously mentioned models down to two higher-order factors, positive perfectionistic strivings, and maladaptive perfectionistic concerns. Perfectionistic strivings contained the dimensions: personal standards, organization, self-oriented perfectionism, and other-oriented perfectionism. Perfectionistic concerns contained the dimensions: concern over mistakes, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and socially prescribed perfectionism. These dimensions under the two higher-order themes were used for analysis in Sagar and Stoeber's (2009) study along with FF. Sagar and Stoeber's (2009) research on perfectionism associated affective responses to failure in a sample of 388 (18-27 years old) British adult university athletes (including athletes from other martial arts of karate, taekwondo, and judo). Perfectionism in this study was described as a multidimensional model combining the work of Frost et al. (1990) and Hewitt and Flett (1991). It was measured using subscales of the

Sport Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Dunn et al., 2002; as cited by Sagar & Stoeber, 2009).

Generally, higher levels of perfectionism in athletes were shown to be a better predictor of negative affect following failure than positive affect after a success (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009). Fear of shame and embarrassment showed to be the only FF predictor of negative affect after a failure. None of the FF attributions were predictive of positive affect, explaining only two percent of the variance. Meaning that if someone who is a perfectionist fails, they will have a negative emotional response, while not necessarily having a positive emotional response should they succeed. Analysis also showed that fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment fully mediated both perfectionistic concerns over mistakes and perceived coach pressure when predicting negative affect. On the other hand, personal standards predicted lower levels of fear of shame and embarrassment, while also predicting higher positive affect after failure. This distinction raises awareness to the importance between two types of perfectionism, strivings and concerns. Perfectionistic strivings generally are considered positive, while perfectionistic concerns are generally considered maladaptive.

These perfectionistic concerns are what we need to be aware of in our athletes, as they seem to come with the detrimental effects of FF. For example, in BJJ we may come across an athlete who expects to perform techniques perfectly, even against more experienced opponents, and may become visibly frustrated when failure occurs. They may spend too much time lamenting over mistakes and comparing themselves to others. Sagar and Stoeber (2009) stressed that perfectionistic strivings can remain positive only when individuals accept that they are imperfect. However, if they switch from this acceptance and hope to strive for perfection to a demand for perfection, the positive benefits are attenuated. To summarize, fear of failure appears

to be a common theme in athletes who are perfectionists. However, being a perfectionist may not be a negative thing as long as one minimizes the perfectionistic concerns of concerning themselves over mistakes, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and socially prescribed perfectionism (Frost et al., 1993). In addition, perfectionists seem to experience negative emotions after failure mostly through experiencing shame and embarrassment.

Sagar and Stoeber (2009) also highlighted the role coaches' pressure plays in perfectionism. Higher levels of perceived coach pressure predicted higher levels of experiencing shame and embarrassment and upsetting important others. Perceived coach pressure was also indicative of affective responses after both success and failure. For example, an athlete was found to be more likely to experience positive emotion after success and negative emotion after failure when they felt higher levels of perceived coach pressure. This suggests that coaches play a pivotal role in the perfectionistic expectations of their athletes and may affect their perception of pressure. Coaches should be made aware of this relationship and interventions regarding education are recommended. Thus, deeper understanding can help the coaches make more strategic decisions about dealing with players individually and as a larger group. Specifically, it is important for coaches to know the shame and embarrassment players tend to feel after situations where they fail. This harkens back to early research on FF being largely concerned with experiencing shame (Atkinson, 1957).

Other studies have also investigated perfectionism/FF relationships in college athletes (Elison & Partridge, 2012). Elison and Partridge (2012) highlighted the relationship between shame-coping, perfectionism, and fear of failure in a sample of 285 college athletes from two different universities, one in the Midwest (n=148) and one in the West (n=137). These athletes participated in a variety of sports including both team and individual sports, as well as contact

and non-contact sports. While much of the sample identified as varsity athletes (88%), 10% participated in club sports, and two percent marked “other.”

Shame-coping was assessed using the Compass of Shame Scale-Sport (Nathanson, 1992; as cited by Elison & Partridge, 2012), which identifies four main coping styles of experiencing shame: attack self, withdrawal, attack others, and avoidance. Male and female college athletes competing in team, individual, non-contact, and contact sports were studied to assess the relationships between coping styles, perfectionism, and fear of failure (division was not mentioned). Results showed differences between groups. First, it was shown that differences in coping styles can predict differences in fears of failure and perfectionism, with attack self being the strongest predictor of maladaptive coping outcomes, followed by withdrawal, attack other, and avoidance. It was shown that individuals competing in non-contact sports showed greater degrees of avoidance coping, and greater fears of devaluing one’s self estimate and having an uncertain future. Team sport athletes showed greater levels of avoidance coping and concern for their mistakes in regard to perfectionism than their individual sport peers. Finally, sex differences appear as women tended to employ internal forms of shame-coping (attack self, withdrawal) while male athletes tended towards more externalized forms of shame-coping (avoidance, attack other).

These fears of failure may result in athletes adopting maladaptive coping outcomes (Wright, Pincus, Conroy, & Elliot, 2009; Elison & Partridge, 2012). One category of behaviors that may result are antisocial behaviors (Sagar et al., 2011). Antisocial behaviors usually result in the individual attempting to or causing harm in other individuals or a group of individuals (i.e., a team). Players hurting or injuring other players or verbally abusing them would constitute antisocial behavior. University athletes high in FF and those who have higher levels of sport

experience have shown higher levels of antisocial behavior (Sagar et al., 2011). In addition, male athletes who have competed in their sport longer have higher levels of FF. One reason for this may be that the longer one participates in the sport, the more competitive the level of play becomes. As the competition level rises, more emphasis is placed on the outcome. This increase in pressure to win could result in higher levels of FF. Statistical analysis also showed male athletes tended to fear important others losing interest more than their female peers, while females showed higher levels of fear of devaluing one's self-estimate (Sagar et al., 2012). These differences highlight a social component of fear for males and the importance of proving one's worth to a group, while female athletes tend to see failure as an indicator of their poor ability or control over their performance. Despite only these two differences in FF, male athletes showed higher levels of antisocial behavior in the sport and university contexts than female athletes.

While these studies represent internal issues that college athletes face, FF and the PFAI have been used to investigate college-aged athletes' relationship with their coach (Sagar & Jowett, 2015). With a sample of 367 British male and female athletes (aged 18-27), Sagar and Jowett (2015) hypothesized that self-control would be a stronger predictor of the intrapersonal fears of failure (fears within oneself) than interpersonal fears of failure (fears related to an external group outside oneself). Sagar and Jowett (2015) split Conroy's (2001b) five consequences of failure into intrapersonal fears of failure, which included having an uncertain future, devaluing self-estimate, and experiencing shame and embarrassment and interpersonal fears of failure, which included upsetting important others and important others losing interest. In addition, they hypothesized that the coach-athlete relationship quality, as well as the level of coach empathy, would be stronger predictors of the interpersonal fears of failure than intrapersonal fears of failure. Coach-athlete relationship quality was determined using the 3Cs

model (Jowett, 2007) and consisted of three factors, closeness (i.e., respect for coach), commitment, and complementarity (i.e., coachability). These hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis.

Results showed that self-control was predictive of both intra- and interpersonal types of fear of failure. This suggests that self-control can be a beneficial regulatory mechanism to override the aversive consequences of failure. Regarding the coach-athlete relationship, results showed that coaching commitment to the athlete and coach empathy were negative predictors of fear of important others losing interest, with the addition that coach empathy also negatively predicted the athlete experiencing shame and embarrassment. Interestingly, coach-athlete closeness showed a weak positive association with fear of important others losing interest. This suggests that when an effectively attached athlete fails, they may fear important others losing interest. The final relationship factor, complementarity, did not predict both inter- and intra-personal types of fears of failure. These results show the beneficial effects of self-control, while also stressing the importance of the coach-athlete relationship and coaching empathy towards the athlete. This research demonstrates the importance of the relationship between the coach and athlete and demonstrates the more the coach cares, the less likely the athlete will perceive that the coach will lose interest in them if they fail.

Fear of Failure in Youth Athletes

Although this study does not use youth athletes as its population, significant research in the area of fear of failure in youth athletes has been explored and is foundational to understanding this phenomenon. Socialization to FF appears to occur early in an individual's life through the relationships with parents and instructors (Conroy, 2003; Elliot & Thrash, 2004). Research has found youth athletes scoring high in FF showed higher levels of stress and burnout

(Gustafsson et al., 2017). Specifically, fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment were predictive of psychological stress and one dimension of burnout (a reduced sense of accomplishment). With burnout being related to amotivation (Goodger et al., 2007) and thus potentially dropout, managing FF may be important to reducing the level of burnout and dropout in youth athletes. This is socially important since as young athletes grow older, they can then potentially pass their FF to their own children or students.

An investigation into the developmental origins of fear of failure in British athletes was conducted to investigate how the parent-athlete relationship contributed to FF (Sagar & Lavalley, 2010). The theoretical underpinning surrounding this issue is the argument that parents control much of the socialization of their children. Given this, it is plausible that parents can pass on their FF disposition to their children. Four British athletes scored high in FF and their parents were interviewed to better understand the developmental origins of FF.

The results of this qualitative analysis highlighted three behaviors that may contribute to their child's FF. These included: punitive behavior, controlling behavior, and high achievement expectations. Punitive behavior included parental actions like criticism, punishment, and threats and were a result of the child's failure. The most damaging punitive behavior on behalf of the parents was love withdrawal. Love withdrawal was demonstrated by parents walking out of their child's competition, and not watching them perform. The athletes viewed winning as a way to gain their parents approval and love while losing would result in a loss of that support.

Parental controlling behavior ranging from guilt-inducing statements, offering of tangible rewards and overt/covert control appeared to be especially apparent in the fathers of the athletes. All athletes in this study did not enjoy the controlling nature of their parents and felt the heavy involvement by the parents prior to competition was a source of added pressure. The behaviors

were designed to get the youth athletes to conform to the outcome expectancies of the parents (to win). These demands seemingly could reduce the autonomy of the young athlete which could affect his or her self-determination, self-efficacy, and motivation. Parental high expectations were another strategy used to attempt to get desired outcomes from their children. Generally, athletes did not enjoy not meeting their parents' expectations as they did not want to disappoint them or let them down. Parents expressed disappointment to their children when they did not win or made mistakes. This contributed to the athletes viewing failure as something to be avoided, as disappointing their parents was perceived as an aversive consequence. This socialization experience is important to understand in an effort to ensure young athletes enjoy their sport experience, continue to engage in sport, and pass that love for sport and exercise on to their future children.

FF has been shown to present differently in youth sport depending on gender, type of sport, and age group (Correia et al., 2017). Although there appeared to be no differences in general FF between groups, the differences appeared when considering the five FF dimensions. Girls showed higher FF in shame and embarrassment, devaluing one's self estimate, while boys scored higher in fear of having an uncertain future. Boys also viewed failure more as a threat than girls. Youth athletes in team sports scored higher in fear of important others losing interest and upsetting important others. Adolescents (aged 15-20 years old) scored higher on important others losing interest than pre-adolescent athletes (aged 12-14 years old). Parents, coaches, and administrators should consider these contextual factors when dealing with youth athletes. This research raises awareness of how failure affects youth athletes. Knowledge of the differences can assist coaches and parents with helping athletes deal with failure in sport.

One of the interesting and important issues when discussing failure of sport is the reality of basing success/failure solely on winning and losing. When considering success/failure through that lens, one team will always lose, thus experiencing failure. This binary outcome is important for everyone participating in sport but could be especially important to keep in mind for youth athletes who are still forming their opinions and predispositions toward sport. If the emphasis is on winning instead of development, it could lead youth athletes down the cascade of anxiety, burnout, and ultimately dropout. For example, in a mixed methods study, Sagar et al. (2010) studied youth academy footballers (soccer players) to investigate why the development of “top-tier” players was not higher in the English system amidst the presence of a “fear driven” environment that was focused on winning (Lewis, 2007; as cited in Sagar, Busch, & Jowett, 2010). The authors were interested in first identifying young footballers high in FF through the use of the PFAI of 81 male football (soccer players; aged 16-18 years old), followed up by an interview protocol of four of those athletes who scored high levels of FF to further investigate their experiences.

Fear of failure was described as an anticipatory event. Fear of shame and embarrassment was the highest fear in this sample of 81 athletes. This again speaks to other research that posits although FF may be multidimensional, the original dimension of experiencing shame and embarrassment continues to be relevant (Atkinson, 1957). Fear of devaluing one’s self-estimate was lowest in this sample, which in an all-male sample, is perhaps not surprising (Sagar et al., 2012). The athletes in this study viewed success and failure as opposite outcomes. Failure was described as not getting a desired outcome, not performing well, and not receiving recognition from others.

Furthermore, Sagar and colleagues (2010) found in this sample of youth elite athletes that their perceived consequences of failure included: emotional cost, diminished perception of self, reduced social status and interaction, punitive behavior from others, uncertain future, and letting down important others. Situational factors that contributed to the associated fear of failure included: pressure to succeed, the thought about failure after a bad performance, the score of the match, and thinking about failure while alone. These fears of failure appeared to affect the athletes' well-being including their mood and sleep quality, their sporting performance (e.g., less confident and less likely to take risks in the game), and their interpersonal behavior (e.g., reduced communication, becoming argumentative). Athletes used a mixture of avoidance, emotional, and problem-focused coping strategies to deal with failure. Success, on the other hand, brought with it recognition from others, pleasing others, enhanced self-perception, enhanced social status and integration, and tangible gain.

If we are to better understand why one fears failure, we must first understand their perceived consequences of failure, both in training and in competition. In addition, we must also try to understand the self-evaluative processes that underlie the motive to avoid failure. Further qualitative inquiry can help discover the nature and meaning athletes ascribe to the experience of failure and how they may come to fear it through their perceived consequences, which is the focus of the current study.

Using a social constructionist epistemology, Sagar and colleagues (2007) studied how nine elite youth athletes who were attending a specialized sport school in the UK conceptualized FF. They describe FF as facing the possible consequences of non-achievement of a goal which becomes something to avoid if they perceive the consequences of failure as aversive. This puts athletes in a position where they experience anticipatory shame in evaluative situations and tend

to then adopt avoidance motivations. The authors were interested in better understanding the athletes' perceptions of consequences of failure and to establish consequences of future failure that would be considered aversive to the athletes.

The results of the interview sessions identified ten higher-order themes related to their perceived consequences of failure. These included: diminished perception of self, no sense of achievement, emotional cost of failure, letting down significant others, negative social evaluation, loss of motivation and drop out, tangible losses, having an uncertain future, having thoughts of failure recurring, and intangible losses. Each higher-order theme had multiple lower-order themes and sub-themes for a total of 32 lower-order themes and 24 sub-themes. Diminished perception, no sense of achievement, and emotional cost of failure were viewed as a consequence of failure by all nine participants. These findings expand our knowledge about how youth athletes view failure and help us understand their lived experiences dealing with failing in sport. Coaches and parents can help modify these perceived consequences in their athletes with the hopes of reducing their FF.

A unique consequence found by Sagar et al. (2007) is the loss of motivation and drop out. This may be an important contextual factor of being a youth athlete as during any given year 35% of children drop out from sport (Merkel, 2013). Aside from this, it is claimed that FF claims may be generalizable from adults to young elite athletes. The authors question whether there is a possibility that fears are instilled at a young age and continue into adulthood. It is important to keep in mind that these are "perceived" consequences and thus are vitally important for parents, coaches, and administrators to keep in mind when dealing with youth athletes.

Conroy's multidimensional model (Conroy, 2001b) of FF provides reasonable explanations as to why individuals would potentially fear failure. These reasons are

consequences of failing that we perceive to be threats. Using this theory as a guiding lens, we can compare the lived experiences of BJJ athletes with other athletic populations to compare and contrast their perceived consequences of failure. Much of the work concerning FF in sport has been conducted through the use of the PFAI. While this has advanced our understanding of the relationship between FF and various variables, more work should be done to understand how FF manifests itself in athletes across a wide range of experiences.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and informs us about the kind of knowledge that is possible and legitimate. In other words, it refers to “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). It is important that as researchers, we identify and justify our epistemological stance, as it will guide us through later stages of the research design process. Three main epistemologies emerge as central to the research design process. These include objectivism, constructionism, and interpretivism (Crotty, 1998). However, for the purpose for this study only constructionism will be explored as it is the guiding epistemology of this work.

The main tenant of constructionism is that people may construct different meanings despite experiencing a similar phenomenon. This lies in juxtaposition with objectivism, which believes that a particular phenomenon lies “in waiting” for us to discover or uncover (Crotty, 1998). Meaning in this instance is directly tied to the mind, and it is not out there in the ether waiting for us to discover (Crotty, 1998). We construct the meaning of the world we experience in our own minds, and these meanings we attribute can be heavily influenced by many factors. In a constructionist epistemological view of the world, culture may play a vital role, referred to as social constructionism (Crotty, 1998). Cultures can refer to the same group at different points in

time, as well as different cultures that exist at the same time. Within social constructionism, it is understood that each individual is a product of their specific set of circumstances, imposed upon by their culture. Our culture provides us a lens that allows us to attach meaning to certain things, while disregarding others (Crotty, 1998). Thus, a constructionist viewpoint of athletes' responses to failure are uniquely their own depending on their own background and set of experiences.

Thus, based on the researcher questions and information on how knowledge is created, the epistemology that will guide this research is constructionism. The purpose of this study is to better understand the lived experiences of BJJ practitioners. The knowledge this research seeks to generate is not a single truth, but rather, the multiple truths of a phenomena experienced by multiple individuals at the same time. This constructionist view of knowledge informs the next consideration, the theoretical perspective.

Theoretical Perspective: Phenomenology

The theoretical perspective of the research design is the philosophical viewpoint that grounds the research within a certain logic and provides criteria that informs the methodology (Crotty, 1998). Phenomenology, by definition, is the study of experience (Smith, 2011). More specifically, the study of the subjective human experience (Allen-Collinson, 2009). The current study is not interested in the search for an absolute truth that exists independent of human experience, which would be an objectivist point of view (Crotty, 1998). Rather, meaning given to an experience is created by the participant, not discovered. This emphasis on the lived experiences of individuals fits within the constructionist epistemology. Phenomenology gained traction through the work of Husserl (1931) as a rejection of the over reliance on a more objectivist scientific method approach (Reiners, 2012). According to Allen-Collinson (2009), three classical approaches of phenomenology have emerged since its initial inception:

transcendental phenomenology or descriptive phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and existential phenomenology.

Transcendental or descriptive phenomenology tries to understand the world as it presents itself to us (Willig, 2013). In an effort to understand the lived experiences of individuals, the researcher makes a rigorous effort to “bracket” themselves from the research. This is done to be as present as possible to better understand the experiences of participants as they live these experiences. In practice, researchers will look to set aside their previous experience, biases, and assumptions to better understand the participant’s point of view (Chan et al., 2013).

Hermeneutic phenomenology rejects the descriptive phenomenological iteration of bracketing and instead assumes a more interpretive approach, referred to as hermeneutics (Allen-Collinson, 2009). The hermeneutic perspective believes that information and experience cannot be obtained from a participant without some level of engagement. Therefore, by the inherent nature of there being a researcher, a researcher will not be able to present the experiences of participants without doing some level of interpretation through the collection and analysis procedures (Smith, 2011). Smith (2011) also stated interpretation is unavoidable, as participants themselves must engage in a certain level of interpretation to be able to understand their own experiences and what has happened to them. With hermeneutic phenomenology, a level of interaction between researcher and participant is inevitable and encouraged, where they are both actively engaging in a process where they try to relay a subjective lived experience.

The third strand of phenomenology is existential phenomenology, made popular through the work of Merleau-Ponty (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Within existential phenomenology, it is believed that we are tied to the world around us and thus, we experience phenomena both a deep physiological and psychological way. Intercorporeality, a key aspect of existential

phenomenology, suggests that the things we experience are constantly being mediated by the world around us. This complements another characteristic of existential phenomenology, reversibility. Reversibility is the notion that as we act, we are acted upon. Our experiences always come with a situational opposite that also exists.

Regardless of the strand of phenomenology, each is concerned with the experience of the participant. From this point of view, four themes emerge that represent the “phenomenological method” across strands as key aspects of the phenomenological worldview: description, Epoche and reduction, essences, and intentionality (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Description refers to the notion that what is written about a phenomenon cannot be done without referring to the participant. How this is done is dependent on the researcher’s view on interpretation (i.e., descriptive vs hermeneutic). Epoche and reduction is the suspension of previous experience and bias on the behalf of the researcher, or at least recognizing them and continuing to challenge their own assumptions (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Again, this may differ across phenomenological traditions, but nonetheless the issue of bracketing must be addressed as part of the phenomenological method.

Essences, or essences of experiences, aim to reduce a phenomenon down to its core meaning (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Reducing an experience down to its core meaning provides us a starting point for understanding a particular relationship or experience. The goal again here is to remove preconceptions and unnecessary assumptions. Strategies to acquire these essences of personal experience include a phenomenological commitment of the researcher via proper collection and close reading of the data and presenting the experience in a way that allows it to speak for itself (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This directedness of our consciousness towards *something* is what allows us to perceive phenomena differently than others (Allen-Collinson,

2009; Willig, 2013). Our personal schema based on our background and culture allow us the unique opportunity to attach meaning to phenomena. Intentionality is what allows us to prescribe different meanings to objects.

This research is distinctly concerned with the subjective lived experiences of BJJ practitioners, thus taking a phenomenological approach is appropriate. In addition, the connection of the researcher to the data is a core epistemological belief that is seen as an advantage when conducting this research. This hermeneutic approach to phenomenology therefore is the best fit to approach the research questions. These themes lead the way for the chosen methodology of this research, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009). IPA will be discussed more in-depth in the method chapter to come.

Fear of Failure (Conroy, 2001b)

The multidimensional model of Fear of Failure developed by Conroy (2001b) will provide the theoretical underpinning for this study and inform elements of design, data collection, and analysis. The model suggests that individuals who fail in a task provide attributions to help make sense of the failure. More specifically, the five core attributions, or consequences of failure, include: the fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment, the fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, the fear of having an uncertain future, the fear of having important others lose interest, and the fear of upsetting important others.

Based on previous work by Lazarus (1991), Conroy's model exists under the premise that the anticipation of failure would lead to negative emotions and consequences. In this situation, the potential of experiencing failure would cause anxiety, motivating the person to view that failure as a threat, and then actively try to avoid the situation or the possibility of failure. For example, BJJ, one may avoid sparring with an individual who is more skilled than them because

they may be anxious about being beat during the sparring session. With this in mind, Conroy (2001b) and colleagues (2001) looked to build their multidimensional model off previous work by Birney et al. (1969), where they identified three main consequences of failure: fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, fear of nonego punishment, and fear of reduced social value (see above for further discussion regarding these three consequences).

Building on previous models of FF (Clark et al., 1956; Atkinson, 1957; Birney, Burdick, & Teevan, 1969), Conroy and colleagues (2001) identified ten appraisals related to FF. Conroy (2001b) condensed these appraisals into five key tenants of the multidimensional model of FF: the fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment, the fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, the fear of having an uncertain future, the fear of having important others lose interest, and the fear of upsetting important others. In the earlier example, the BJJ practitioner who fears losing to the more skilled opponent, may view this situation as a threat because they are afraid that losing will bring them shame and embarrassment. They may feel like they are inadequate and not competent. They may fear that their coach who may be watching will become upset with them or lose interest in them. This combination of feelings may cause them to fear the idea that their sport participation could be discontinued, especially if the loss occurs during a high-profile tournament. All of these potential outcomes above are viewed as a threat to the attainment of whatever their goals in BJJ may be. These five tenets are the core of Conroy's (2001b) model and the model has been used in multiple areas within sport management research.

The multidimensional theory of FF has gained traction in the field of sport management and psychology. FF has been used to explore the university student-athlete (SA) experience (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009; Sagar et al., 2011; Elison & Partridge, 2012; Sagar & Jowett, 2015), recreationally active college students (Conroy & Elliot, 2007) and youth athletes (Conroy 2003;

Elliot & Thrash, 2004; Sagar et al., 2007; Sagar et al., 2010; Sagar & Lavallee, 2010; Correia et al., 2017; Gustafsson et al., 2017; Correia & Rosado, 2018). Much of the research to date has been conducted through the quantitative use of the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) developed by Conroy et al. (2002). This 25-item inventory provides six measures of FF, one for each of the five tenets detailed above and a general FF score.

Conroy and Elliot (2004) used the PFAI to build off previous research demonstrating how FF interacts with the goals we set (Elliot & Church 1997, Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Put simply, we tend to set either mastery goals or performance goals. Mastery goals relate to the incremental building of our own skills, while performance goals are related to how we perform against others. Building on this, an individual may set either approach or avoidance goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), therefore creating a 2x2 framework. Ideally one would choose to set mastery-approach goals, while an individual high in FF would potentially be more likely to set performance-avoidance goals. A sport example of a mastery-approach goal may be “I want to learn as much about this sport as possible” while a performance-avoidance goal might be “my goal in practice today is to avoid performing poorly.”

Elliot and Church (1997) theorized that FF preceded the types of goals we set. In other words, if we are more motivated to avoid failure (thus fearing it) we are more likely to set performance goals. If we are not afraid of failing, we are more likely to set mastery goals. Conroy and Elliot (2007) used this previous research and the PFAI to investigate this in physically active college students enrolled in physical education classes. Their research supported previous theories put forth and found that higher levels of FF predicts whether an individual sets avoidance type goals. Interestingly, they found that setting one particular type of goal (mastery-approach goals) may have a protective effect against developing FF. This is

important for sport as it demonstrates the importance of setting goals that are based on the process of developing skills over time and actively approaching situations despite the possibility of failing.

This motivation to avoid situations where we may fail has shown a tendency to result in some poor coping mechanisms, including demonstrations of antisocial behavior (Sagar et al., 2011). Sagar and colleagues (2011) theorized that those who scored higher in FF would be more likely to develop unhealthy coping responses. Their research indicated that higher levels of FF positively predicted antisocial behavior. Antisocial behavior in this study was defined as behavior where the athlete would intentionally hurt, injure, or verbally abuse another. Specifically, female athletes tended to fear devaluing one's self estimate more than their male counterparts, while males tended to fear important others losing interest more so than their female peers. This highlights the importance of better understanding the nature of the lived experiences of collegiate athletes to hopefully avoid instances of antisocial behavior both during their sport and out of sport.

FF has been used as a guide for two qualitative studies concerning youth elite athletes (Sagar et al., 2007; Sagar et al., 2010). Both attempted to further explore the existence of FF within a youth context, as the original multidimensional model was developed using an elite adult sample of eight performing artists and eight elite athletes (Conroy et al., 2001). Sagar et al. (2007) used the multidimensional theory of FF to identify if similar perceived consequences of failure were experienced in nine elite youth athletes. The athletes were asked about their perceived consequences of FF in semi-structured interviews and their responses were compared to the original Conroy (2001b) model. They found high levels of crossover and promoted the idea that the Conroy (2001b) model of FF may generalize to youth athletes as well.

Sagar et al. (2010) looked to build on this work by expanding the sample size to 81 English elite youth football (soccer) players. This mixed method approach allowed them to collect further data on youth athletes on how they cope with failure, as well as identify four athletes who scored especially high in FF and selected them for qualitative interviews to better learn about their experiences. Their interview protocol asked general questions regarding perceptions of success and failure of their sport, the associated consequences of those successes and failures, coping strategies with failure, and a discussion regarding potential future failures. Their findings highlighted the importance of examining the appraisals of the consequences of their failures, due to each athlete appraising failures in their own unique way. They also delineated between experiences of failure in both training and competition which is also of interest in the current study.

The previous research provides us with the notion that FF is important to manage in sport, where chances of consistent failure are high. Failure is a large part of the beginning stages of the BJJ journey and those that increase their ranks experience many failures over time. This makes the use of Conroy's (2001b) multidimensional theory of FF a guiding model for this research as the purpose of the current study is to better understand the lived experiences of BJJ practitioners and how they deal with failure in their sport.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The purpose of this qualitative study will be to better understand the lived experiences of BJJ athletes and how they deal with failure in their sport. The research questions guiding this study are 1) what is the contextual lived experience of a BJJ practitioner? 2) what does it mean to fail in BJJ? and 3) what are the perceived consequences of those failures?

No research project or researcher is without their limitations. Therefore, before a research project can be undertaken, time must be taken by the researcher to consider their own research and investigative paradigm. This reflection and understanding, along with the research question(s), will guide the research methodology and method. The first important step in this reflection is the researcher's epistemology (Crotty, 1998). The researcher epistemology combined with an assessment of the research questions will guide the methodology when conducting the research. The constructionist epistemology and research questions concerned about the subjective human experience justifies the use of a phenomenological approach to answering the current research questions. What's more, the following section builds on this foundation by discussing the role that interpretation plays in hermeneutic phenomenology, and how that epistemological view suggests Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is the most appropriate methodology for answering the current research questions.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Due to the research questions being interested in understanding the lived experiences of BJJ practitioners, rather than discovering one objective truth, a qualitative, constructionist, and phenomenological approach is warranted. More specifically, IPA aligns with hermeneutic phenomenology (Allen-Collinson, 2009) where that interpretation is a key element to gain a contextual understanding of these subjective experiences. IPA promotes this researcher-

participant engagement to better understand a contextual lived experience such as failing in BJJ. To understand how the participant attaches meaning to failure in BJJ, the researcher must make sense of the experiences the participant is trying to make sense of thus, engaging in what Smith (2011) refers to as a double hermeneutic.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) separates itself from other forms of phenomenology, such as descriptive phenomenology, as it commits stronger to the constructionist notion that meaning is created by the participant, and in this case along with the researcher. Descriptive phenomenology, which is also concerned with subjective human experience, does not share the same view regarding the researcher. Descriptive phenomenology looks to suspend the role the researcher plays and believes that “bracketing” out the researcher is not only possible, but a necessary step (Allen-Collinson, 2009). However, this view inherently contradicts constructionism by assuming the possibility of bracketing the researcher out of the setting to leave solely the participant's singular account. This early form of phenomenology is a short distance away from its objectivist roots of which it sought to separate itself from. Hermeneutic phenomenology is more appropriate for a constructionist epistemology because it takes into account that simply by introducing the researcher, who is the main instrument of data collection, plays an impactful role in the analysis of the participant account. IPA accepts this situation and considers it a strength, as it is both the participant and researcher's role to make sense of the participant's lived experience. The role of the researcher is to be able to understand their own bias, but they should not look to remove themselves from the research as bias is inherent in all of us. In other words, the researcher will “bracket” in their experience. We cannot simply remove bias from the equation and should instead be open and honest about all bias and previous

experience. IPA and hermeneutic phenomenology understand this, and therefore is the most appropriate method for answering the current research questions.

Considered an approach to research, rather than one particular group of methods, the “methods” of data collection through the use of IPA is flexible. IPA has seen a wide array of utilization in sport that has also included multiple forms of data collection. Nicholls, Holt, and Polman (2005) used IPA to investigate the subjective experiences of coping effectiveness in Irish golfers (n=14). In their discussion, they chose IPA because they were interested in establishing a contextualized understanding of how these golfers dealt with various performance stressors. The current study is interested in a similar understanding of the subjective experiences of dealing with failure in BJJ. Nicholls (2005) also used IPA to investigate effective coping strategies in five Scottish international adolescent golfers. Interestingly, this study utilized 28 journal entries as the source of data collection where the participants were asked to answer/discuss six questions regarding coping after both competitions and training sessions. The current study looks to include journal entries as a method of data collection under the presumption that some participants may provide a richer description of FF in BJJ if they have time to think, reflect, and write out their thoughts as they are occurring instead of relying on retrospective interviews.

Lavallee and Robinson (2007) used semi-structured interviews with five former female gymnasts. They were interested in the experience of retirement from the participant’s viewpoint and utilized IPA to construct an interpretive account of the participant’s experiences, which mirrors the purpose of the current study. Lavallee and Jones (2007) also used IPA through the utilization of focus groups to explore desired life skills of British adolescent athletes. Their focus groups included both male and female athletes, coaches, and other content experts to triangulate their data across multiple perspectives. Although not a requirement of inclusion to the current

study, BJJ practitioners come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, have different competitive experiences, and are ranked on a belt system based on skill and experience. The experiences of BJJ practitioners may change over the course of their journey and will be of interest in this study.

Rosado et. al (2014) studied perceptions of professionals in the fitness field through the use of IPA, specifically semi-structured interviews of sixteen fitness professionals. The interpersonal interaction of IPA was their justification for utilizing as a methodology to better understand the subjective experience of their participants. This interpersonal interaction exemplifies hermeneutic phenomenology and is a strength of the current study. IPA has also been used in intercollegiate athletics to investigate female athlete's development of self-compassion (Ingstrup et al., 2017) and destructive leadership within an athletic department (Powers et al., 2016). In summary, IPA has seen considerable use throughout sport to gain an interpretive understanding of various phenomena. The following section will provide a more in-depth discussion regarding the theoretical structure of IPA.

Core Tenants of IPA

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is designed to learn about a topic through the lens of an individual or small group of individuals who have experienced it (Smith et al., 1999). IPA is nested within the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology (Reiners, 2012) where description is thought to not be possible without a certain level of interpretation (Willig, 2013). Taking this a step further, Smith (2011) claimed IPA engages in a “*double hermeneutic*, whereby the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them” (p. 10). This highlights the importance of the role that the researcher plays in the interpretive phenomenological process with the participant(s).

Rather than bracketing the researcher's biases and assumptions during the research process, IPA understands that bias is inescapable and instead should be used to better engage with participants to better understand them. For example, the researcher is a BJJ practitioner and these experiences come with a different set of assumptions, and biases about BJJ than perhaps someone who has never trained. According to IPA, these biases can help engage with participants to better discuss their experiences. This reflexive process should be used as an opportunity for the researcher to consistently challenge their own assumptions both as a person and a theorist (Willig, 2013).

Eatough and Smith (2017) identify three key features of IPA: experience, idiography, and interpretation. These features both overlap and expand upon the characteristics of phenomenology discussed earlier (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Experience refers to the importance that IPA concerns itself with the experiences that matter to participants. The researcher must make critical decisions about the experiences and choosing which experiences to focus on (Eatough & Smith, 2017). This includes both small aspects of an experience as well as the experience as a whole. For example, this study is interested in participants' lived experiences with BJJ as a whole, as well as the *small parts* of this overarching experience of being a BJJ practitioner like dealing with consistent failure.

The second characteristic of IPA is ideography (Smith, 2011). Ideography is the commitment to a small sample size, typically gathered through purposeful sampling (Mayan, 2009), so each case is considered carefully and fully rather than being a small part of a larger whole. In other words, learning about experience while maintaining the integrity of the individual (Smith, 2011). This is done either by using a single case or a small group of individuals. In addition, analysis of transcript data should be done one at a time to emphasize the

idiographic commitment, in order to build slowly at the individual level before gradually including analysis across cases (Smith et al., 1999).

The final characteristic of IPA according to Eatough and Smith (2017) is interpretation. Interpretation is the basis for the double hermeneutic stance of interpreting what the participant is interpreting about their own experience. Smith and colleagues (2009) suggest the researcher is taking the experience of the participant and investigating for additional potential meaning. Willig (2013) refers to this as empathic and suspicious interpretation. Empathic interpretation is the desire to learn what it is like to be the participant through their point of view. Suspicious interpretation is taking a critical look at the words of the participant and attempting to find additional latent meaning the participant may not have been able to articulate themselves. When conducting IPA, the researcher participates in both suspicious and empathic interpretation, while making a conscious decision to always start empathically with the viewpoint of the participant as they are the experts of their own experience (Smith, 2011).

In sum, IPA is a methodology designed to highlight and understand the lived experiences, both small and large, of the participants. In addition, the researcher commits to an idiographic commitment of a small sample size, with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the individual case. Finally, IPA is conducted with the researcher in mind as a contributing factor to the data collection process. While it is most important that the lived experiences of the participant are highlighted, it is also important the researcher also interprets the experiences of the participant, thereby engaging in the double hermeneutic nature of IPA. These epistemological theoretical and methodological considerations all guide the following data collection procedures. The current study commits to these elements by being interested in understanding the experiences of a small

number of BJJ practitioners, while working with the participants interpretively to better understand the experience of participating and failing in BJJ.

Participants, Recruitment, and Setting

A mixture of purposive and snowball sampling (Mayan, 2009) was used to recruit four participants (Mean age= 32.5 years) for this study. The sample consisted of four currently training BJJ practitioners, three who have achieved the rank of black belt, and one who has achieved the rank of purple belt. To be included in the purposive sample, the participant must have been at least eighteen years of age, have practiced BJJ for at least six months, and have competed in at least one competition. All participants indicated competition experience, with the majority indicating a multitude of competition experience (i.e., 50+ competitions).

The first participant was recruited using purposive sampling based on the above inclusion criteria. The final three participants were recruited through snowball sampling where the first participant recommended another participant they felt could offer a rich description of participating and failing in BJJ. The goal was to ask a small group of people about their lived experiences and triangulate those experiences across a range of different backgrounds and biases (Jones, & Lavalley, 2009).

Role of the Researcher and Subjectivities

In this study, the researcher will collect, interpret, and analyze the data collected. The researcher in this study will act as a researcher-participant due to the closeness of the relationship between the researcher and the sample participants. The researcher has trained at the BJJ gym used for the setting of this study for over two years and has been a teammate and coach of its members over that period. Prior to the study, the researcher taught orientation classes for new

members, was an assistant coach for the youth BJJ classes, and taught three strength and conditioning sessions per week for members.

This close association of the sample participants is one of the main researcher subjectivities to be addressed in this study. In addition, the researcher being a current and active practitioner of BJJ gives the researcher a biased view of the positives involved with participation in the sport. Over the course of training at the gym with the participants of the study, many relationships were formed that included both student and teacher roles. These subjectivities presented will help readers better understand the role of the researcher in the current studies and will inform the bracketing exercise that will be discussed next.

With the researcher as the instrument of data collection in qualitative research, it is important to understand one's own underlying assumptions and biases when conducting qualitative research (Chan et al., 2013). Moustakas (1994) stated bracketing is setting aside assumptions, biases, and previous experiences with a phenomenon or topic. However, as a function of IPA, this is considered an impossibility (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Instead, researchers should do their best to be reflexively aware and humble enough to challenge their own assumptions throughout the research process.

To achieve this, Callary et al., (2015) suggested conducting a bracketing exercise. To address the interpretive element of IPA, they suggested this exercise would "bracket in" their biases. To conduct this bracketing exercise, the researcher seeks to answer a few questions to assess biases that could be brought into this research. These questions are adapted from the exercise used by Callary et al. (2015) and include: "What are the researcher's beliefs about failure in BJJ? How have previous experiences shaped this belief? What are the beliefs about the consequences of these failures?" The goal of this exercise is to place underlying assumptions and

beliefs up front to reflexively honor the interpretive element of IPA. The bracketing document exists as both a representation of existing biases from previous experiences as a BJJ insider and practitioner, while also highlighting the uniqueness these experiences bring to interpretation (Callary et al., 2015). The bracketing exercise on the topic of FF in BJJ can be found in Appendix A. This document will be referred to throughout the research process to better address researcher bias and subjectivity.

Data Collection

Pilot Interview

To test the interview guide and demonstrate rigor and compliance with IPA, the researcher conducted one pilot interview with a BJJ participant that meets the main study inclusion requirements. The goal of the pilot interviews is to assess the ordering of questions, the comprehension of the questions, identify any additional areas that may need to be explored, and make any amendments necessary to the questions or order (Sagar et al., 2007).

Semi-structured Interviews

Data sources for this study included four semi-structured interviews with each participant (N = 4; 12 total interviews). Individual interviews were chosen over focus groups due to the sensitive nature of discussing failure and the consequences of those failures (Sagar et al., 2007). Interviews allows for the researcher to foster a more personal interaction and establish rapport with each participant, which enables the pursuit of rich and thick description (Britton, 2007). Using interviews also gives participants a chance to detail their feelings and perceptions about their experiences, of which allows for the use of direct quotations from the study participants, resulting in a direct link for the participants' voices to be heard (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). More specifically, this study will use repeated semi-structured interviews to understand the lived

experiences of BJJ athletes while keeping an idiographic commitment of small sample sizes that is appropriate for IPA research (Smith, 2011). A semi-structured interview guide will be developed to guide the participant rather than dictate the narrative (Chan et al., 2013) and to ensure consistent inquiry across participants. A semi-structured guide leaves room for the use of follow-up questions and probes that could be used spontaneously through the interview process (See Appendix B; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). This permits the participants to draw from a variety of experiences that encompasses a range of their values, beliefs, and past to respond to the questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

The goal of the first interview was to build rapport with the participant and begin to answer the first question about their lived experience as a BJJ practitioner. This interview built rapport by starting broadly and saving more potentially sensitive information about failure for the second interview (Callary et al., 2015). The second and third interviews looked to answer the second and third research questions about failure in BJJ and the consequences related to those perceived failures. The interview guide for interviews two and three were developed through the guiding lens of Conroy's multidimensional model (2001b), a similar study by Sagar et al. (2007), who used Conroy's model to inform their interview guide for elite youth athletes, and salient information gathered from interview one and two, respectively (See Appendix B) the guiding questions are utilized to trigger the participant to encourage them to talk if they struggle to find direction (Willig, 2013). In addition, funneling techniques were used as probes to gain additional insight (Callary et al., 2015). Each interview lasted between approximately 35-120 minutes.

Funneling is a three-step process that includes: personalizing, understanding meaning, and acquiring a lived experience (Smith & Osborne, 2003). For example, if the participant is struggling with a response, the researcher will ask them to personalize the topic to themselves.

Then the researcher can better understand the meaning through clarification. Terms may mean different things to different people (Willig, 2013) so it is the duty of the researcher to understand what the participant meant, regardless of how they said it. Finally acquiring a lived experience is asking the participant to tie their discussion to a lived experience. This funneling technique provides the researcher with a useful tool to guide a conversation without imposing many prewritten questions from a list.

Before every interview session, participants were reminded about the voluntary nature of these interviews and were not forced to discuss anything they feel uncomfortable with. In addition, they were notified that they may stop the interview at any time with no retaliation against them. At the end of every interview session, the participants were asked “Is there anything else that we did not cover that you would like to discuss?” At the end of each interview session, a post-interview debrief allowed both the participant and the researcher to reflect on the research and interview process, to address any issues or lingering questions, to allow the participant to reflect, and to provide closure to the experience (Sagar et al., 2007). Each interview session was conducted by phone or on Zoom and was audio recorded.

Participant Journaling

Research participants were asked to answer a journal prompt discussing each of the five tenants of FF (Conroy, 2001b). Each participant was asked to write distinctly about any experience in BJJ they have had with each of the five tenants, with no set minimum on how much they were asked to write or discuss. They were instructed that they could type, or audio record their response and submit it back to the primary investigator. Participants were instructed that they may refuse to turn in their journals if they choose.

Researcher Memoing

The role of personal memoing is to record the decision-making process throughout the research process. It is also a meaning-making tool that can be utilized to help make sense of the data through the use of coding memos (Birks et al., 2008). The goal of this type of memoing is to become more engaged with the data and become sensitive to changes as they occur. These changes can be in the data itself or with the researcher bias. Therefore, the researcher memoing and the bracketing exercise (Appendix A) have an interdependent role. Researcher memos can also keep communication between the primary researcher and the rest of the research team. Memoing for this study followed models laid out previously by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Birks et al. (2008). Strauss and Corbin (1998) classify memos into three categories: operational, coding, and theoretical. Operational memos were taken that archive steps and decisions made throughout the research process. Birks and colleagues (2008) also discuss making memos that contain reflective elements. These memos are more effective and discuss researcher positioning and subjectivities. For example, the researcher is encouraged to make memos about their worries about their own self-doubt or confidence about completing certain parts of the research. In summary, researcher memoing plays a mediational role throughout the research process and keeps the researcher connected to the data. Coding and theoretical memos were discussed in more depth in the data analysis section as they are a part of IPA. Researcher memos as described above were taken throughout the research process to ensure rigor and maintain researcher reflexivity.

Once the data was collected, each interview and any potential audio-recorded journal entry was transcribed verbatim by the primary investigator (PI). Resulting transcripts as well as journal submissions were deidentified and assigned a number that was linked to each individual participant. The participant numbers were stored on a separate file at a different location on the

computer/external hard drive. Transcripts, audio files, journal entries and participant information were stored on a password protected computer with an associated encrypted hard drive as a backup. The research team was the only individuals who will have access to the data files. The emails, interview and audio files will be destroyed three years after the data collection is complete. The de-identified transcripts (that only includes participant numbers) will be kept indefinitely. Google Document backup copies of transcripts will be kept on an encrypted external hard drive in a locked file cabinet, in the researcher's locked office.

Data Analysis

Transcript data and journals were analyzed one at a time to keep with the IPA characteristic of ideographic commitment (Smith, 2011). Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) refer to IPA not so much as a method as they do an approach to data analysis. IPA analysis should be a detailed account of the lived experience of the participant(s). The true outcome is the double hermeneutic, whereby the results of the analysis are what the analyst "thinks the participant is thinking" (Smith, Flowers, & Larking, 2009, p. 80). This type of analysis will inherently be subjective and open for examination, however, the rigor and systematic nature of the data analysis of an IPA study should invite subjectivity and the progression of a conversation. The hermeneutic circle and discussion of the analysis heavily involves the concepts of the whole and the part. As Smith et al. (2009) stated, "To understand any given part, you look to the whole; to understand the whole, you look at the parts" (p. 28). Data should be looked at in the context of the whole transcript, and the whole transcript is composed of many different topics and experiences. In addition, each participant is to be treated as their own individual case before comparisons across cases are made. The following discussion about the *analysis* component of IPA highlights these considerations further.

As a novice in IPA study, Smith et al. (2009) lay out a set of suggested steps to undertake as analysis, with the goal to eventually use the steps as guidelines as the researcher becomes more adept. The first step was to ensure the participant is the center of the analysis. This is done through the act of transcription, followed by reading and re-reading of the transcript. Smith et al. (2009) recommends listening to the audio file while reading the finished transcript for the first time, in conjunction with making personal notes of recollections the researcher may have had while listening to the interview. These personal notes were kept as part of the researcher memos. This was done as a part of the larger continuous bracketing exercise in order to try one's best to understand the experience through the lens of the participant. This reading period allowed the researcher to also evaluate other components of the interview like establishing rapport, rhythm, and concluding the interview. A key aspect of IPA analysis is the commitment to the hermeneutic circle by analyzing a transcript one at a time to completion before moving on to another participant transcript.

The second step of IPA analysis laid out by Smith and colleagues (2009) focused on highlighting pieces of the transcript that are interesting and resemble open coding as discussed by Saldana (2009). The three types of comments that should be explored and coded for are: descriptive comments, linguistic comments, and conceptual comments. The outcome of this step was to compile an extensive set of notes and comments based on the data. Descriptive comments should relate to concepts that are important to the participant, while linguistic comments are the specific words the participants use to apply meaning to those concepts. These codes resemble open and in-vivo codes as discussed by Saldana (2009). Open coding refers to an initial approach to coding where the data is initially broken down into distinct parts to begin understanding the data. This more open-ended approach is designed to familiarize oneself with the data and prepare

it for further analysis (Saldana, 2009). Linguistic comments are similar to in-vivo coding in that meaning can take shape through the specific use of pronouns, or metaphors that the participant may use to describe what matters to them (Smith et al., 2009).

Finally, conceptual comments are more interpretive notes that will be compiled to consider the larger context of the discussion, and to apply more abstract concepts to help discern what the participant is trying to make sense of. This is the stage of coding where the researcher's personal reflections and experiences are drawn upon to explain what the participant is trying to make sense of. This is the initial building of the more interpretive "insider's account" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 116), where the researcher can rely more on their own experience and knowledge of theory to try to understand the participant. Codes in this stage often are interrogative and can be used to generate further understanding of the participant's account. For example, when the researcher is conducting the analysis and looking over the data, questions may arise that are of particular interest. The researcher can make a note of these questions they have as they occur. This would be a conceptual code that may help to better understand the participant. Smith et al. (2009) concluded this reflexive exercise allows the researcher to ensure that the end state of the analysis is in alignment with the lived experience of the participant. Proper reflexive action is to use oneself to better understand the participant, as opposed to using the platform to talk about oneself.

After this initial (yet immersive) coding stage, Smith and colleagues (2009) denote step three as developing emergent themes. This stage occurred within a singular transcript at a time. This step refers to taking the whole of the interview, via the individual parts, and reconstructing a new "whole" via a reorganization of the initial codes. This interpretive component of analysis is still a part of the hermeneutic circle, with the end goal of creating a description that involves both

the researcher and participants. Emergent themes are characterized by Smith and colleagues (2009) as short phrases that are connected both conceptually and descriptively. They are connected to the transcript by relating to the experiences discussed by the participant, as well as the conceptual interpretation of the researcher.

Once emergent themes have been identified within the individual transcript, the researcher looked for connections across emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009). Smith and colleagues (2009) suggested organizing the emergent themes chronologically and then clustering related themes together. The goal at this stage was to look for patterns or connections across emergent themes. This can be done via abstraction, subsumption, polarization, contextualization, numeration, and function. Abstraction involves grouping similar emergent themes together and forming a new theme name for the resulting cluster (Smith et al., 2009). Subsumption is similar to abstraction in regard to themes coming together, however in this instance one theme will become the “super-ordinate” theme (Smith et al., 2009). Categorizing themes via polarization takes an opposite approach to abstraction and subsumption by clustering by differences rather than similarities. Contextualization refers to grouping emergent themes within the context in which they occurred (Smith et al., 2009). For example, themes relating to a specific event that happened at a specific point in time could be clustered together. Grouping themes via numeration refers to clustering themes based on the number of times they are mentioned or supported throughout the transcript. Smith et al. (2009) cautioned overemphasizing this strategy in regard to confusing frequency and importance. Finally, grouping themes by function refers to the role certain themes play in constructing meaning to the participant. Themes do not necessarily need to be (and likely will not be) grouped in each way listed above, however, these are the various tools that can be used to cluster the emergent themes from step three of the IPA analysis process.

Step five involved repeating the first four steps for subsequent transcripts. At this stage it is important to revisit the bracketing process, as well as bracketing the previous transcripts as part of the idiographic commitment to IPA research (Etough & Smith, 2017). This commitment to the individual case will give each participant an equitable opportunity to allow for unique emergent themes. Once all of the transcripts are coded for emergent themes, the last step suggested by Smith and colleagues (2009) was to look for themes across cases. In IPA or studies with small sample sizes (n=1-3) any emergent themes from this step should be supported by each participant (Smith, 2011). In studies where n=4-8, Smith (2011) recommends representation from at least half of the sample for emergent themes. The analysis process for IPA follow closely the five stages of Thomas's (2016) general inductive approach. All coding and analysis of emergent themes was done with the coding software Nvivo.

Rigor, Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Generalizability

Methodological Rigor

Addressing rigor in qualitative research has been a contentious topic. Mayan (2009) refers to rigor as a “game” that involves maintaining a status quo set forth by the larger body of academia. Despite this conflict as qualitative research works to gain increased credibility, researchers take steps to produce quality research. Mayan (2009) defines rigor as “demonstrating how and why (through methodology) the findings of a particular inquiry are worth paying attention to” (p. 100). Within this section, rigor will be discussed in the context of qualitative research, with an emphasis on doing quality IPA.

Tracy (2010) created a comprehensive list that described excellent qualitative research. These eight criteria included: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaning coherence. Other authors have warned about the use

of fixed criteria to judge qualitative work (Smith & McGannon, 2017). They state if a set of criteria is used, the researcher must use all eight criteria, as the notion of creating a fixed number of criteria suggests they are all equally important. Smith and McGannon (2017) also highlight that a more relativist approach dictates a more pragmatic choice of criteria based on the idea that each research project finds itself in a unique contextual situation, and that an open-ended list can and should change depending on the specific research project. For this research project, an open-ended “set” of criteria will be chosen to best give justice to the research questions and the participants with whom we seek to gain knowledge from.

Not adopting the criteria promoted by Tracy (2010) does not mean a rejection of her list. On the contrary, Tracy (2010) raised important questions to ask regarding the rigor of a qualitative report. On top of the care taken by the researcher to gather rich and thick data, Tracy (2010) also noted the researcher should ask questions about: the existence of enough data to support significant thematic claims, time spent collecting data, if the data is contextually appropriate to address the research questions, and the appropriateness of the procedures used to collect and analyze data. This speaks to a sincere due diligence on behalf of the researcher to commit to learning about the subjective experiences of their participants.

Characteristics of quality IPA research has been studied and developed by Smith (2011). In his analysis of what makes a good IPA paper, he identified seven qualities: the paper should have a clear focus, the paper will have strong data, the paper should be rigorous, sufficient space must be given to the elaboration of each theme, the analysis should be interpretive not just descriptive, the analysis should be pointing to both convergence and divergence, and the paper needs to be carefully written. While also presenting a similar pitfall to Tracy’s (2010) model,

both Smith (2011) and Tracy (2010) represent and highlight important points that contribute to the construction of the research project to ensure the highest quality and rigor.

Member Reflections

Once data has been collected, transcribed, and analyzed, the resultant information was brought back to the participant to engage in member reflections (Tracy, 2010). Participants were given the final analysis of their individual case and were given the opportunity to express their thoughts. This discussion provided additional insight and elaboration with the goal of enhancing methodological rigor, and credibility of the analysis (Tracy, 2010).

Member reflection epistemologically differs from the traditional member checking process (Smith & McGannon, 2017). Member reflection involves an additional opportunity to engage in an interpretive conversation with the participant instead of an objective “check” where the researcher seeks approval from the participant about the accuracy (thus validity) of the resulting data. The member reflection is an exercise in gaining additional insight and data, where the participant can look at the final analysis and share their thoughts about where they care about the results, find them interesting, agree with them, etc. The researcher cannot control whether the participant agrees or not with the final analysis, but it is our responsibility to allow a space for the participant to give their opinion of the final analysis (Tracy, 2010). When sent the final analysis, three out of the four participants responded. One offered grammatical corrections of their used quotes within the final analysis, while the two others who responded did not offer any additional insight.

Generalizability

A more specific concern is the discussion surrounding reliability and generalizability in qualitative research. Smith (2018) has spoken on the misunderstandings regarding

generalizability in qualitative research and has suggested new ways to frame the topic. Generalization is an important consideration for the qualitative researcher (Smith, 2018) and thus, should not be rejected outright. What should be rejected is the notion of statistical-probabilistic or empirical generalization (Mason, 2002; Smith, 2018). This type of generalization refers to the extent you can make generalized claims regarding your sample population to a larger population. This is typically a key aspect of quantitative research and is therefore characteristically rejected by qualitative research.

Smith (2018) promotes the adoption of any one of the four types of generalization with strategies for dealing with the topic as a whole: Naturalistic, transferability, analytical, and intersectional generalizability. Naturalistic generalizability may be reached in qualitative research when the reader identifies with certain aspects of a participant's account. If someone reads the account of the participant and can identify with certain aspects of their experience as something that is evident in their life, the study will have naturalistic generalizability (Smith, 2018). Transferability is defined as when a group can take information from one research study and implement it into a new context. For example, Chinkov and Holt (2016) discuss the transferability of life skills like respect, perseverance, self-confidence, and health habits through BJJ participation, specifically, participants claimed these skills were strengthened in their day to day lives.

Analytical generalization (Smith, 2018) is said to be achieved when the concepts broached in a qualitative research project are generalizable, and not necessarily the specific context in which the concept emerged. Mason (2002) refers to this as theoretical generalization and states that it is important for the researcher to be clear about what theoretical generalizations can be made and on the basis they can be made. An example of this is when a theory can later be

lent to the production of another future theory. The final type of generalization brought up by Smith (2018) is intersectional generalizability. Intersectionality refers to the subjective nature in which social characteristics like gender, race, sexuality, and social class impact our experiences (Golpadas, 2013; Nash, 2008). This type of generalizability is suggested to be achieved when working with a community and tracking historically oppressed people over time. This type of generalization can be useful when conducting community-based and feminist research.

With these tools at hand, generalization should not be a topic that is avoided during the research process, rather it should openly be discussed while also being reconceptualized about what it means in qualitative research. Smith (2018) promotes the use of a “hedging” strategy to deal with potential critics who may not have given the reconceptualization of generalizability much thought. The hedging strategy includes discussion around the concept that the results of the research may generalize to specific people in a specific way. This can occur in one of the four aforementioned ways (naturalistic, transferability, analytical, or intersectional). This discussion highlights that generalization heavily lies with the reader’s ability to produce the generalization instead of statistics. If the reader identifies with the stories told in the research, then it is generalizable and if they do not, then it is not generalizable for that reader.

Reliability

The discussion surrounding reliability in qualitative research is another matter. Within qualitative research reliability may play a role during the coding process (Smith & McGannon, 2017). Typically, this process consists of researchers coding data on their own, followed by a group discussion about differences with a note on the percent that their coding overlapped. Smith (2018) notes that this method is ineffective due to the inherently subjective nature of the researcher. Although two researchers may code the same section of data, their

reasoning behind it may be different. Epistemological concerns also come into play. Our backgrounds and beliefs play a role in what and how we code. Agreement may occur due to chance or they may never fundamentally agree. Additionally, Smith (2018) points out that no agreed upon percentage of coder-reliability has been mentioned in the literature.

One solution to this problem is the creation of a coding manual (Smith, 2018). This also raises epistemological concerns as the creation of a code book could inhibit the flexibility of the researcher to code the novel ideas of the participants. However, this can cause conflict with epistemological views and result in shallow qualitative research. Given this, Smith (2018) suggests that those who adopt a constructionist epistemological view, may do best with rejecting reliability as a criterion for judging the merit of qualitative research.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three primary themes and two subthemes emerged from the data analysis: (1) Finding a community and a culture you can fail in, with an accompanying subtheme of coaches and teammates as facilitators in failure (2) failure leads to growth and self-reflection, and (3) the downward spiral of failure with a subtheme of failing the community. All participants felt that failure was a critical component of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) and how one deals with those failures determines the path he or she may take. Additionally, participants detailed the importance of the BJJ community, specifically teammates and coaches, in successfully managing failure in a way that results in the most personal growth that BJJ has to offer. Each participant discussed that failure could provide you with an opportunity to reflect and grow as a person, but it can also be perceived as a threat (Lazarus, 1991) and cause a number of negative consequences.

Finding a Community and Culture you can Fail in

Failure is the Norm

All four participants discussed how central failure is to the lived experience of a BJJ practitioner and that it is an inherent and a normal part of the learning process. Huck, a black belt, and gym owner, explained that failure early on in your BJJ journey could look and feel simply like not accomplishing a goal or task you set out to complete which echoes findings discussed by Birney et al. (1969) where they stated that failure is related to nonattainment of a goal:

A general definition of failure in jiu jitsu would be any time that you don't accomplish your goals. Whatever task you set out to accomplish, if it's to take a guy down and you can't take them down then you failed. If you're trying to win a tournament and you don't win the tournament, you failed. If you're trying to be a good training partner and you end

up elbowing your buddy in the face and break his nose then you failed. If you're trying to control your breathing and you gas out then you failed. So any time you set a goal and you cannot complete the goal or the task that's one type of failure. That's one definition of failure. This is very much I would say this is very much the way that we internalize failure especially in the beginning of jiu jitsu. I failed, I wanted to take him down, I couldn't take him down. I wanted to get a triangle I couldn't get a triangle. I wanted to win the match, I couldn't win the match. I failed. And then this gets compounded with the feeling of failure where now your inner self monologue is kind of like beating up on you and lowering your value, lowering your self-worth with stuff like man you're a failure, you suck, you were bad, you did this, you did that, etc. And sort of beating you down, beating you down.

Similarly, Bruce, another black belt and gym owner, gave a similar remark on how failure is the default option in BJJ that one has to get used to "you're gonna fail to execute the movement you want. You're gonna fail to get the person off you. You're gonna fail to get the submission. You're gonna fail at every juncture." Bruce stressed that early on in BJJ, one must define success some other way than getting what you want regarding achieving a goal or victory:

When you're learning, jiu jitsu is basically gonna be like 90% failure to secure victory. So you right off the bat, your success has to be something totally different than victory, because you're not gonna win anything. Like everyone is going to beat you right and so you know it's a very interesting thing.

Dustin, a black belt, suggested that failure is just part of the daily challenge one might put on oneself during training. As a black belt, he must find ways to challenge himself against experienced teammates and inexperienced teammates:

You might want to make it more challenging for yourself so like what I would do with a lot of lower belts let them pass the guard, let them do their thing, then if there's like thirty seconds left be like okay I gotta figure out a way to submit this person in thirty seconds before the round ends, challenge yourself that way. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But then you know if we're talking about upper belt vs upper belt right you know for me there are those days where it's like there's a couple guys where it's like okay I know this is gonna be a battle and I know that I'm gonna have to put in work in order to either survive or to try to get the better of the other person so you have to like mentally prepare yourself for that too. Sometimes it goes your way and sometimes it doesn't. But you have to have those challenges too.

Additionally, Bruce discussed that failure can change over time as your perspective changes and that each fear is valid if it is what you personally perceive to be failure. He said:

I think what people would define failure at every single level of jiu jitsu, white belt, blue belt, purple belt, brown belt, black belt etc., it's gonna be different and it's gonna look different and every single one of those things is valid because that is what they fear...And so even if somebody has a perceived failure that might not be fully reality, they make it reality by that being the thing that they fear. And I think that is a big part of the learning process in jiu jitsu.

All participants discussed various failures related to BJJ. However, one failure seemed to rise above the rest. Specifically, two participants clearly discussed that the only real failure in BJJ is quitting due to the rigors of the sport. According to Allen, a purple belt, "ultimately you only fail when you stop showing up." He then went on to provide an example about someone who appeared to have stopped progressing and increasing their rank within the sport:

I guess you no longer practice you're no longer involved in the community. I really think that's the only way you can fail in the sport. I know that there's people...I heard a story actually, somebody told me this that like there's a guy that was, he was a purple belt, and he's been a purple for like ten years and like he only knows the same couple moves like he's really good at them right? But beyond that he's just a sh*tty practitioner you know? Some people might be tempted to say that he's failed at it you know he doesn't progress or he doesn't make huge leaps in progression but for me I don't really necessarily think that's a failure like he's still involved in it. He obviously still enjoys it you know he accepts that he might not, you know, that might be like his plateau you know like that just might be it this is as far as he's gonna get, this is as good as he's gonna get um and some people are fine with that you know?

Huck supported this claim that quitting BJJ is the only real failure. He detailed a conversation he recently had with a student who was struggling:

I told this to someone the other day because they are encountering a lot of struggle, a lot of issues right now in their training. They have injuries, they have recurring injuries, they have stresses. They don't feel like they're getting better, etc. They are hitting all the plateaus that are very common in the sport. And I told them that the only real failure would be to quit okay? And that's my second opinion about failure. Giving up on yourself, giving up on the process, giving up in general is the real failure. Trying and not succeeding even though that's the original definition of failure, as long as you don't give up it's not really a failure. That's my nuanced definition. As long as you're trying but not quitting, you're not failing no matter what your level of success is.

Finally, Huck provides a good summary describing that “giving up” and failing in BJJ is necessary and provides the foundation to learn how to not give up in the future:

And so jiu jitsu forces you to give up many times. Not in total but jiu jitsu forces you to give up every time you tap is a give up, is a submission. You submit, you know? So, in that way jiu jitsu shows you you have to give up. You have to be willing to give up and then in a way by having given up so many times and gone through the process, if you stick around, you can learn the techniques so you don't have to give up. You don't have to quit. You can survive the circumstances, whatever the circumstances are.

The first steps on one's BJJ journey are typically harsh, and anecdotally, many do not stick around long enough to see positive results, despite being touted for its ability to teach important life skills (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). The previous statement shows that persistence in the face of failure allows for a multitude of benefits. Those unique benefits detailed by the participants related to the practice of BJJ will be discussed later in this section. However, what becomes clear is that failure is something that cannot be avoided, and instead any BJJ practitioner should actively seek failure to begin to learn tenacity and resilience. The notion that failure should be sought out in order to achieve success parallels the discussion that Elliot and Church (1997) and Atkinson (1957) provided about motive dispositions. In their work they defined fear of failure (FF) as the desire to avoid failure, while achievement motivation was defined as the desire to achieve success. For example, the difference between a young BJJ practitioner wanting to avoid competition for the fear of a loss and seeking difficult partners and pairings as a way to learn and achieve success. These two motive dispositions were the foundations of their research and are illustrated in the previous quote by Huck. Seeking to avoid failure and not accepting the obstacles inherent in the sport of BJJ can cause an individual to

quit, committing the biggest failure in BJJ according to Huck and the other participants. This is due to the role that motive dispositions play in the goals we set, and ultimately the behaviors we exude. Therefore, it is important as researchers and practitioners that we understand the different characteristics between the motive dispositions and their associated behaviors.

The sentiment of being motivated to achieve success instead of being motivated to avoid failure was also discussed by Martin and Mash (2003). They questioned whether FF was “friend or foe.” Their discussion suggested that fearing failure seems like a good and helpful option on the surface, but in the long-run it ends up being detrimental and leading to learned helplessness, which ultimately may lead to dropout from participation all together. Martin and Mash (2003) instead suggest that one should have what they call a “success orientation,” which is more optimistic, focused on positive outcomes, resilient in the face of setbacks, and has an internal focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. In a sport that is rife with setbacks and potentially negative outcomes, having this success orientation may be beneficial for BJJ practitioners and lead to, as Huck put it, “transcending” failure.

In alignment with the previous literature from Martin and Mash (2003) and the participants from this study, coaches and gym owners should look to create a success orientation in their athletes and look for signs of their students exhibiting an FF disposition. These signs may include students only accepting challenges that are easy (training only with beginners) or very difficult (training with higher ranked practitioners) and avoiding training with individuals of their same skill level. Bruce recalled a time where he avoided training with certain threatening individuals until they were tired which he admits was a “coward’s move.” These are markers that Atkinson (1957) indicated in someone who is motivated more by the desire to avoid failure. Other signs include overachieving which can be hard to diagnose as FF, but this overachieving or

early success is often unfulfilling and short-lived (Martin & Mash, 2003). So perhaps if a student achieves success in an area like winning a local competition, but does not seem happy with themselves, that could be an early sign of FF. In addition, if students are purposely setting low expectations for themselves, or they are purposely putting themselves in position to fail (i.e., showing up to a competition hungover), this may also indicate they are operating from a desire to avoid failure or being defensively orientated (Clark et al., 1956). Huck provided a great example of what Martin and Mash (2003) refer to as defensive pessimism in his interview, and referred to this as a “losing mentality” or the idea that “they’re already walking in with the type of self-talk that is saying things to the effect of if I get tapped out it’s okay because last week in training, I hurt my ankle and so I got work tomorrow so if I lose it’s okay.” Coaches, gym owners, and BJJ practitioners should take note of these warning signs and begin applying the necessary steps to redirect their thinking more towards a success orientation.

Martin and Mash (2003) lay out four areas that coaches can work with their students in the hopes of developing a success orientation and not an FF orientation. First, coaches should work with students to enhance their self-belief, or their confidence when approaching tasks. Second, coaches must be able to explain to their students that learning is valuable and useful to them and that ultimately failure is a part of that process and the information gained from a failure is useful and important. Thirdly, coaches should instill a culture that is focused on learning, particularly on problem solving and skill development. Therefore, when a failure occurs, it will not be viewed as a negative event, simply a learning event. As part of the learning process, coaches could consider teaching and implementing mastery goals into their students’ daily training, as setting mastery goals appear to also have a protective effect on FF (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). Finally, coaches should work with students and help them to feel like they have control

over their learning and outcomes. The focus should be on effort and the belief that effort can and will lead to a more positive outcome. Combined, these strategies should be a good base of support when operating in a sport where failure is the norm. The current study stresses that accepting this fact that failure is the norm and positioning failure as a learning experience will help students seek out these situations where failure may occur.

Seeking Failure

Every participant stated the importance of looking for opportunities to challenge yourself and potentially fail. Competition proved to be one of the areas discussed that was ideal for challenging oneself against other practitioners of similar age, weight, and skill level. In fact, the struggle of competition begins even before you step on the mat to compete as Huck states:

The thing that's hard with people with competition is that they put it up on this pedestal then just the process, not even the actual fighting, but everything that leads up to the fighting, the weeks, the training before, and the diet, and the sleeping, and the preparation, making weight, getting on the scale, and having to warm yourself up with all the chaos around you and then being out on the mat and having everyone looking at you...that f*cks with people and it's a whole thing that needs to be mastered in itself. So a lot of people are intimidated by competition and a lot of people, again they put it on a pedestal, they think it's this, it's physically and emotionally draining. It's super difficult and it's you know it's traumatic is really the world you can use it can be really traumatic to people. It's like getting in a f*cking car accident you know and some people are kind of trauma junkies and some people aren't.

Allen also has observed that some BJJ practitioners are hesitant to attempt a competition “not a lot of people compete you know and I think it's sort of a strange thing like people practice it,

they never go and they never compete.” He offers the suggestion that people worry too much about winning or losing:

I think one of the problems that people have when they first start off with jiu jitsu is they’re really worried about this idea of winning or losing you know and it really doesn’t f*cking mater like people just don’t remember whether or not you won or you lost like people only give a sh*t if you have a picture to show that you have the medal and at the end of the day it’s a piece of plastic you know what I mean?

Instead, Allen suggests that just going out and making the decision to compete, while balancing all of the baggage that Huck mentioned, is a success in itself “I think just going out there and trying it, you’re not a failure because ultimately that’s a nerve-wracking experience you know?” His definition of failure has changed from the initial binary choice of winning or losing “You know for me I’m 24 years old now and I’ve competed a lot. I really don’t care about winning or losing anymore.” In fact, Bruce stated that losing in a competition may be a motivating situation for him:

If I had a string of losses actually that lights a fire under me to just start doing crazy amounts of competitions. I think my reaction to a string of losses would be this burning desire to figure this problem that I clearly had.

Instead of focusing too much on any one failure, Huck looks for the moments of growth where he is able to experience yet transcend and overcome the many failures that one experiences over the course of a match. This is what he describes as the true success, even if ultimately you do not win the tournament:

The guy’s trying to choke you to death, you f*cked up, he’s on your back now, you fight out of it, and then you get on his back and now you’re choking him, and he taps. Yes!

That is the good feeling because it's not that you didn't experience the failure, it's that you didn't quit. You didn't give up. You didn't allow the failure, the temporary failure, to beat you and become permanent in that way and you transcended and that becomes the good feeling victory.

Building off Huck's quote, it appears that winning and losing in competition are not an accurate measure of failure for a BJJ practitioner. Success and failure in training, however, might be looked at differently. Dustin, a BJJ black belt, describes that the negative blowback of failure can manifest itself if one does not prepare themselves for failing during training:

...if you're always going after the easy training sessions, the easy, if you're an upper belt and you're just picking the lower belts to roll with all the time then your game is not gonna improve as fast. But typically your game is not gonna improve as fast because you're picking easy battles basically, you're never picking battles that challenge you. So, you need to pick battles that challenge you and make you work and make you grow and learn. You know so that's where failing comes in right? That's where you're gonna learn from hopefully you learn from your failures, your shortcomings.

To summarize, the participants felt that not seeking failure (i.e., avoiding failure) does not allow for the opportunity to transcend it. Additional benefits of transcending failure will be discussed in later themes; however, Huck provided a great summary of how the constant struggle and threat of failure can result in some of the positive benefits of participating in a difficult sport like BJJ and create this sort of "addiction" that is commonly seen in the sport:

Jiu jitsu in a way, jiu jitsu's a very pure art but it is standing in for something that we don't do anymore which is this sort of lived struggle. And I think that part of what jiu jitsu gets you comfortable with is that the struggle never ends. There's a constant and

ongoing, continuous struggle and you have to be the best version of yourself as you try to live up to and meet that struggle. And we try to, in jiu jitsu, we try to train other people to essentially meet that struggle better. And so, people feel like I'm learning this martial art but somehow, I'm becoming a better person, or I'm also talking to my kids differently, or I'm also less frustrated in traffic, or I also quit drinking so much and I can sleep better now and they're getting all these peripheral benefits from it and it's like well why? It's because the experience of the difficulty of jiu jitsu is forcing them to grow in that way.

The above discussion highlights a rather *novel contribution to the literature* in that if one proactively seeks failure, the individual may not actually experience the negative consequences of said failure. This is highlighted by the fact that multiple participants stated that real failure is not simply equated to winning and losing a competition. Put more simply, an individual does not fail by losing a competition; an individual only fails by denying themselves the opportunity to learn and grow. This is an important supplement to the previous research in FF where Birney et al. (1969) argued that individuals fear the consequences of the failures they experience and not necessarily the failure itself. Thus, a vital takeaway from the current study is the discussion by participants advocating for a state of embracing failure and seeking it as a means to lead to growth, but also minimize the negative outcomes of not achieving a goal. Lazarus (1991) stated that individuals that fear failure may do so because they perceive situations where failure may occur as threatening due to the negative consequences they think will happen as a result of the failure. This in turn provokes anxiety and thus the motivation to avoid failure becomes an issue. However, the current study suggests that if failure is accepted, practiced, and adopted as part of the BJJ process that the potentially previously cited perceived negative consequences, threats, or provoked anxiety (Lazarus, 1991) may not occur, and the BJJ practitioner may be more

motivated to achieve success.

The participants emphasize above that competition is an area that some practitioners may perceive as threatening. This could be because in competition, competitors are matched by age, weight, and skill level. Atkinson (1957) stated that those who are motivated to succeed seek out situations where the chance of success is roughly 50%. This is, in essence, the case in a competition match. This is the exact opposite for someone who fears failure. According to Atkinson (1957), individuals who fear failure try to avoid 50/50 odds, and instead look for easy tasks where failure is low, or hard tasks where failure is likely so their ego is protected and low expectations can be set (Martin & Mash, 2003). Therefore, it makes sense why some BJJ practitioners put competition on a pedestal as Huck suggests. All the participants provided strong examples of what it looks like to be motivated to achieve success. Huck detailed how he expects to fail, and that it is important to have a response to that:

“every system of jiu jitsu is a question of what happens when my A game fails. When my first move, when A doesn’t work, how do I get to B? How do I get to C? When do I go back to A? And I have this expression in my teaching of failing your way to success.”

Becoming Part of the Community

Each participant discussed the importance of finding the right community. In BJJ, the term used for the facility where you train can vary depending on who you are talking with. Some may call it a gym, some may call it a school, while others may call it a dojo. The name given depends on what benefits the individual is looking for whether that be a workout, or to learn new skills. For Huck, however, the choice is clear as he quotes a well-known striking coach Dwayne “Bang” Ludwig:

He says a gym is a place you go to workout, an academy is a place you go to learn, school is a place you go to learn, but a dojo is a place you go to find yourself...some people are there just to workout, some people are there to learn, but the people who end up sticking around, they stick around because they end up finding themselves. And they start the process of finding themselves. The internal process of discovering who they really are and what they're really about what they really care about and how far they can really go. And I think that becomes addictive once you really get into it.

The prospect of finding a dojo (i.e., gym or school) where one can go to find themselves is great in theory but breaking into and becoming part of a new community is not always easy. It takes time to build trust with people who, as Dustin put it, you go to "practice murder" on. Bruce also identified that as a coach and a gym owner he understands that as a new person there is period of time where you have to slowly become a part of the culture:

...there's this saying "the jiu jitsu lifestyle" right especially you'll hear blue belts and purple belts talking about the jiu jitsu lifestyle because they're really like "look white belts, look beginners, like you don't know sh*t yet like you haven't drunk the kool-aid you know, you think you have like you don't get it yet you don't live and breathe this stuff. Right and so there's this, there's not only a learning curve for the art but there's also this in culture/out culture indoctrination period where you have to really become a part of the community...for better or for worse.

Agreeing with Dustin, Bruce also used the term "practicing murder" and said trust must be built in order to practice a sport where you put your safety into another person's hands, and you hope that when you tap out to a submission hold that they will let go. As Allen said, "when somebody chokes you out and you tap out you trust that they're gonna let go of the choke." Allen also

warned that some communities can become very closed off for newcomers. He particularly struggled to find the right community for himself and tried many big-name schools across the country. He noticed a trend that some communities required specific behaviors or beliefs to be able to be considered a part of the larger group: “I think part of my problem is a lot of the schools are very insular with how they build community.” For Allen he found that the community that best suited his needs were smaller, grassroots gyms that weren’t being led by famous instructors. He was more interested in finding people who were passionate about the art of BJJ, rather than learning from the supposed top instructors, who in his experience left much to be desired regarding building a welcoming community. Grassroots gyms seemed to provide the community he was looking for and noted that smaller gyms seemed to also provide a bit more diversity:

It’s people that really just love the sport and are trying to make it grow in their home state or you know wherever they come from. It’s more conducive to learning and I think that the environment is just a lot better. One thing that I noticed at [names school] was there is a lot more women that are like training which is something that I think is important you know?

Dustin discussed the difficulty of making sure new people feel welcome in the gym. As a black belt and a part-time instructor, he understands the importance of trying to be welcoming, but noted it was not always easy at a big gym:

As a new person if you’re in a bigger gym right it’s pretty easy to get lumped in as oh it’s just the new guy, another new guy like he’s just trying it out and not get that special attention. It’s easy to kind of exclude them you know so I know that [name of owner], the owner of the gym, he tries to talk to all the new people. I try to at least say hi, ask them how they’re first day went, or their first week went.

These findings suggest that gym owners and coaches should look to provide as inclusive and welcoming atmosphere as they can manage to make the initial days/weeks of a BJJ beginner less stressful and intimidating by focusing on a success orientation (Martin & Mash, 2003). It is also important for gym owners to be aware enough to understand the culture they are presenting to their members and work to combat the “in culture/out culture” indoctrination period. Not doing this may result in increased perceived levels of coach pressure to conform, resulting in higher levels of FF in their students (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009). It is essential to be mindful that the trust needed to be a part of a community must go both ways, and that the responsibility is on those in charge for facilitating a positive culture.

Culture is Dependent on Leadership

Participants discussed the importance that the more experienced members (i.e., the leader or leaders of the gym which could be the owner, the head coach, the assistant coaches, and the more experienced informal leaders like other higher ranked members) of the gym play in facilitating the culture of the gym. Dustin, who is a higher ranked member as a black belt and a part-time coach talked at length about how the leader of the gym can influence the culture in more ways than one:

...as far as like environment I think that's huge too because people look up to the leader, the black belt or whoever the leader is right and I think a lot of people try to emulate them. The leader is determining the mindset of the people so at our gym, our gym is run by [names coach] and [names coach] and you know they have kids you know they've created this super welcoming family environment and like you can see that whole family training all at the same time in different classes or training in the back room together.

Huck is a head coach and gym owner and spoke at length about the importance that they carried in creating a culture that was beneficial for their students. For Huck, it is all about developing community:

So I believe that like it's all about community and that's what people a lot of times end up staying for is they end up finding their community and that community kind of holds them through a lot of the adversity that you could experience that could make you kind of get turned off from the journey. And so in our community we really try to support each other.

Part of creating a beneficial culture is creating what Huck refers to as a third space, where his members can go to feel welcomed. He discussed that he views the gym as a community center where people can find camaraderie, push themselves, feel safe, and just find positive energy. He discusses the role that BJJ may play a role in being that third space for former athletes who no longer have a team to be a part of and who may have retired for one reason or another (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). He identifies that BJJ may fill the missing competitive and community holes that other recreational sports at one time provided:

A lot of that has to do with my intentions about the community because I've very much been forward with the fact that I think it's jiu jitsu gym as community center. Or community center as jiu jitsu gym whichever way you want to think about it. So I see our approach as much more holistic. I want people to come in to feel warm, happy, welcomed. Have you ever heard of the third space philosophy? Basically you need three places to be healthy and happy. You need your workplace, your home place, and your third space. And so a lot of people are really not happy because they go right between their work place and their home space and they don't have that third space. For a lot of

people the third space is the bowling alley, or the bar, or whatever. The nightclub, whatever that is, they need to find that third space you know so I've always wanted the gym to be the third space for all of our people. Where they get off of work and they are just dying to get to the gym because that's where the energy is that they want to participate in you know? I think for a lot of people there's...people make real friendships, there's real comradery, there's real teamwork, there's real accountability that you miss because for a lot of people who were or who weren't high school athletes, when you leave high school or college there are no more athletic programs...and there's very few baseball teams, or soccer teams or any kind of competitive anything that's not either semi-pro or you know something to that effect. So a lot of people leave the academic world and then all of a sudden they no longer have access to these kind of communities and community is my big word.

The present findings highlight the importance that culture may play in dealing with FF in BJJ practitioners. All participants felt that the lived experience of a BJJ practitioner should take place within a community that is welcoming and accepting and that will allow their members, teammates, friends, or family to experience failure in a safe and supportive way. Not having a community that is supportive could result in the BJJ hopeful to not even continue down their journey as Allen experienced as he looked for a BJJ gym that held his same values. Future researchers are encouraged to continue to investigate the role that culture plays in managing FF in its constituents. In the current study, the main contributors to the culture and environment of the gym community were the coaches and teammates the BJJ practitioner would be interacting with daily. Their contributions to the BJJ journey and their role in managing FF in their students and peers will be discussed in the next sections.

Coaches and Teammates as Facilitators in Failure

As stated above, coaches play a significant role in determining the culture and the structure of the BJJ community. Each participant talked about the more specific role that their coaches played in their BJJ journey. At a baseline level, coaches are there to guide their students/members through their journey, teach them techniques, and be there for their students/members to correct and bounce ideas off. An analogy given by Huck explained coaches are like guard rails who are there to allow him to explore BJJ while staying within a basic structure:

And so for me kind of intuiting jiu jitsu is kind of how I like to be a student. And so, my coaches have always been there to be like guard rails for helping me like bounce between them and stay in the lane of like what is and is not good, you know? And I think that coaches are really valuable especially as outside eyes or the dictator philosophy of needing your drilling needs to be supervised by someone who is out there looking for the detail that you're not doing correctly. You can't always be aware of what you're doing well and what you're not doing well. So having a coach say that last one was good, or this one could be better, do it again, okay better, but do it again. Okay that was a good one. That gets you to the place where you can let your intuition lock on to like okay the way that the last one felt, make them all feel that way.

Allen prefers to have a coach that is more flexible with their teaching style and understand that not every move they teach will be viable for him and not to force what they are teaching on their students. He notes his current coach is a breath of fresh air in that regard when compared to former coaches:

I think him at least like being open to new ideas and like if he doesn't know something and I kind of know something but I have questions about it, we can work on it together

and sort of problem solve. And I never had that before with the coach like it was very much like this is the style we're working on; this is what you're gonna be doing. I mean some people their body types just don't work that way. Their brains just don't work that way like I suck at closed guard. I'm not gonna do closed guard you know what I mean like I'm just not gonna do it. And I think that coaches just have to get over that you know, you have to just you know, you have to understand what someone's good at and if you don't understand their style very well you have to find the resources to point you in the right direction and I think that's really what it boils down to.

Dustin also spoke about the general role of the coach, but added that good coaches also will check in emotionally with their students:

You know your coaches are like the teachers right so they're gonna teach you different moves and they're gonna kind of direct you on how your game goes and how you play jiu jitsu... [My coach], he's also like, he'll check in on you like hey are you good? Like how's, not just jiu jitsu wise but also mental health wise right he'll check in on you every now and then make sure you're good right so that's, I think that's a huge thing.

Bruce looked at himself more as a "serious pupil" and leaned on his coaches to fill a more prominent role in his life and learn the "lessons that I can't yet see the value in." He referred to his relationship with his coaches as a true mentor/mentee relationship, even so far as to state that his coaches filled in as a father figure role in his life:

I had a big gaping hole where there probably should have been a better father figure in my life and so that, they stepped up and they filled that in a way that I couldn't have imagined you know?

Bruce and Huck also talked about being coaches and how they viewed their role in helping

others through their BJJ journey. For Huck, it was about empowering the next generation of students:

It might always be something that I teach but I also really believe in empowering the next generation, so you know like a big part of my coaching, a big part of my business practices now is taking my guys that are brown belts and getting them ready so that when they get their black belts, they'll feel like they're comfortable to open their own school if they want to. And to stand on their own feet and be free from the corporate cog machine that it's easy to get stuck into. I don't want them to feel like they get stuck in that you know so I'm trying to plot that path out for them and invest in them you know?

More specifically, he invests in his students through teaching them how to teach, "I've run teaching courses for my instructors and so I'm trying to teach them how to teach better and we mock teach to each other and stuff like that." Huck gave an interesting example that shows how he helps his students and meets them where they are:

...we did some promotions recently and I gave out my first black belt. And I also gave out some brown belts, and I was rolling with one of my newer brown belts and I was just fu*fucking putting it on them. They were kind of giving me this look like we...but our rolls used to be so fun. And it's like but you used to be a purple belt you know what I mean? That was how I treat purple belts, not how I treat brown belts, you're a brown belt now. And not in a negative way but just like get used to this because this is what this is going to feel like. And when you get your black belt I'm gonna roll with you an even different way. We don't treat white belts the way we treat blue belts, the way we treat purple belts, the way I treat brown belts, and so it's like being a good coach, you're kind of finding that level where they're at and you're just going right here. It's not usually necessary for

you to feel you up here, you can just be right there with them and just kind of like hey follow me, follow me, follow me.

Bruce also recognized the importance of helping others through coaching. His philosophy was simple “I don’t want to make someone as good as me I want to make someone as good as them.” He went on to say that just helping one student furthers the BJJ community as a whole due to the high possibility that the student will go on to also give back to the community:

And so teaching others by helping others I am maximizing the, I guess I’m helping to maximize the potential of all the training that could possibly happen within my community right? I don’t just help that person, I don’t just help me have a better singular partner, I actually further the total potential of the community by helping one person further themselves. Because that person is gonna pick things up that I never did, that I missed in my 18 years.

Bruce’s feeling about BJJ goes as far as to understand that he may not be the best coach for everyone, and that finding that coach is important as it will hopefully keep that BJJ practitioner involved in the sport:

I think every single student should go to the teacher that connects with them best. And that’s just not gonna be me for everybody. Right and so if somebody sees somebody that they connect with more please go with them because I just want you to do jiu jitsu.

Overall, each participant felt the coach played an important role in their BJJ journey. This could simply be as a guide as they go through the process and learn at their own pace, or as a serious mentor/mentee relationship where the coach acts more as a role model. Dustin and Bruce shared their insight on how they, as coaches themselves, fill this role for the differing needs of their students. The coach/athlete relationship has also shown to play an imperative role on the

level of FF the athlete may experience (Conroy, 2003; Elliot & Thrash, 2004). Sagar and Stoeber (2009) found that increasing amounts of coaching pressure may result in increased shame and embarrassment when the athlete fails. Athletes may feel more positive emotion when they succeed, but more negative emotion when they fail if they perceive to be under pressure from their coach. This presents a challenging situation for coaches who want to push their athletes, but also not create negative pressure causing anxiety, stress and in some cases burnout and dropout (Goodger et al., 2007; Gustafsson et al., 2017). A coach that builds a strong relationship with their athlete may be key to reducing this negative pressure effect. If a coach/athlete relationship is built around coach commitment and empathy, it may reduce certain fears of failure from being an issue in the athlete (Sagar & Jowett, 2015). The current study builds on this previous research by discussing the importance of creating a positive culture, checking in emotionally with students, being a positive mentor, and guiding students in a way that is appropriate for their skill level. Employing these strategies may result in a reduced or removed FF from BJJ students.

While coaches are undoubtedly important in challenging and helping BJJ practitioners grow, all four participants stated that their teammates are just as, or possibly more important than coaches in the BJJ journey. While you most certainly can train with the coach, or coaches, your teammates make up the bulk of your training partners and become your main friends along the way. Allen shared that to him, teammates are more important than coaches because they are the people that are going to challenge you in training:

I think teammates, they're more important than coaches in the way where it's like you know your coach they might know a couple moves and stuff but ultimately it's the way that your teammates roll that you sort of start building an understanding towards like specific reactions, specific settings but ultimately the comradery that you build with like

those teammates, those people like I think that's what makes jiu jitsu fun it's not even really about...I think the art is important right but the reason why people stay is that there's a community you know there's people that are experiencing the same things that you're experiencing.

Dustin also spoke about the importance of having different training partners to challenge and support you in training:

Your teammates you know they're there along with you like you're going and you're trying to, those are like the main people you're gonna practice with like you're...everybody wants to roll with the head instructor so you might not be able to roll with the head instructor all the time so you know your teammates are the guys that you primarily train with and you guys are gonna get better together and learn different moves to try on each other and then you know then you try them on different people, but your main training partners, they're gonna find all the counters to your game, you're gonna find all the counters to their game and you have to work you know. You have to adapt and hopefully that works with training with people who aren't your primary training partners.

The goal of the community is to support one another and improve the overall quality of the BJJ of the gym. Past that, the goal is to be there for one another emotionally. This combination may lead to the accumulation of what Degraaf et al., (2019) refer to as thick social capital that is often seen in groups that are tightly interwoven. They describe social capital as elements of life (i.e., trust) that enable people within groups to continue pursuing their goals collectively, a facet of communities that they postulate is declining in our society. They advocate that recreational activities may be a way to build social capital. Dustin talked about this notion of

how trust grows over time and how a group of individuals can become a family and thus may build social capital within a community of people:

Yeah I mean I think you know you're...it's an individual sport but you have your teammates and hopefully your teammates are your good friends and people you trust and a lot of times it's family, not necessarily blood related. You know just being there for people. I think that's a huge aspect of the grappling community is like you practice murder with each other. You practice you know violence with each other, you expend all this energy and you guys have this common not so traumatic experience and you're able to bond through it and grow together through it and I don't think a lot of people have that experience or haven't seen that. So just friendships and the bonds get stronger so the relationship and the personal relationships get intertwined more just being there for people. I think you know I've come across a lot of people that don't have the best personal life and jiu jitsu is their therapy so being there for those people if they need you, I know quite a few people who are depressed and if they didn't have jiu jitsu and the community they would probably be in a lot worse position. So that's part of like the if your friend needs you, you need to be there for them not just physically training wise, but you know mentally, emotionally supportive.

Regarding challenging your teammates and helping them fail and grow, both Huck and Dustin talked about the need for three types of training partners. Huck said:

I tell people that you need three training partners. You need the guy that is going to put that beating on you, so you don't lose perspective of what's possible and what's ahead. You need the guy that you can put the beating on so you can feel like you're actually repping some sh*t and you're getting better and then you need that guy who's right on

your level who you're super competitive with where you're like I gotta get better because he's getting better and I can't let him do this so I gotta stay with him.

Dustin agreed that all three types of training partners are important for growth and development:

You know going back to one of the other questions is like something else jiu jitsu has taught me is there's always gonna be somebody better than you, there's always gonna be somebody that's worse than you and there's always gonna be somebody that you go back and forth with. You need all those people because the people that beat you up so you can work your defense. You need people that you're better than so you can work your offense and then you need those people that straight up challenge you and it's a battle and you both move forward right so you need all three of those types of people to get better.

Allen had a slightly different viewpoint and while he noted that you need training partners that will be there to support you and help you prepare, he seemed to favor having a training partner primarily that was able to expose his weaknesses and prepare him for difficult times in competitions:

And I think that like the only way that you're gonna get better is if you have someone that's better than you you know? That just smashes you constantly and it gives you sort of this hunger and drive like okay you know at the tournament there might be someone that's just as good as this guy and I have to be you know mentally prepared for that sort of obstacle.

Having teammates push you in such a competitive and physical environment has the possibility to cause tension within the culture and perhaps turn teammates against each other. This is something that Huck has identified and raises awareness with his students that teammates are ultimately there to help push you to grow even if it may feel threatening:

Like I even told this to my class today, a lot of time it's easy to become antagonistic towards your training partner because that's the guy who you're experiencing trying to rip your head off. That's the guy who's trying to break your arm. That's the guy who's crushing you with their body you know? But that's actually your best friend because you can't get stronger unless they try to break your arm. You can't get stronger unless they try to rip your head off. They're doing you a favor when they mock rip your head off even if your neck is sore for a week. That's them doing you a favor they're exposing your weaknesses, they're showing you how to defend better, they're helping you out. That's not your enemy that's your teammate. Your enemy is...ultimately your enemy is like yourself but (laughs) but even if you go to competition and you're like okay this is my real enemy, this is the guy I'm really training to fight against, hopefully your teammates have prepared you for that by giving you tough rolls you know.

This quote highlights the importance of keeping failure in perspective. The discussion in the next two sections discuss the two paths failure can lead a BJJ practitioner down. If the individual is a success seeker with an achievement motivation and a supportive community, failure can lead to self-reflection and personal growth. However, if failure is not kept in perspective it can lead to a downward spiral (Martin & Mash, 2003). Failure would then perceivably lead to a series of previously discussed threatening consequences (Birney et al., 1969; Conroy, 2001b; Conroy et al., 2001; Conroy et al., 2002) that can be detrimental and aversive to growth, potentially leading to the identified true failure which is to quit BJJ.

Failure Leads to Growth and Self-Reflection

As illuded to in the above section, a BJJ practitioner must expect failure early and often throughout their journey to black belt and beyond. All the participants stressed the importance of

failure for growth. They all identified failures as potential learning opportunities that, if kept in perspective, those experiences of failure are the keys that unlock the many benefits that they and other researchers (Chinkov & Holt, 2016) suggest BJJ provides such as confidence, goal perseverance, and respecting others. Huck gave some insight on what a healthy outlook on failure looks like. He suggests that keeping failure in perspective may mean overlooking the current failure as you progress to a larger goal of improvement in the future, even if the current failure may not feel great in the moment:

If you feel like you have the right attitude and you developed the right attitude that all of your experiences are cumulative and you're adding all this up to some greater and later goal or reward then that's a good thing and then you can look at it as hey look I didn't win today but I got some really good experience you know my second match, I was down, I battled back, I beat that guy. My third match, it was another tough match, but I came out on top. My fourth match, the guy just dominated me I was really tired you know what I mean? If you look at that already and you have the healthy mentality of there's more value to this than just whether or not you got the gold medal, then that's a healthy way to look at failure.

Huck views failure as a piece of information that you get to choose what to do with it what you will:

The failure, whatever the failure is, you are being given a piece of information. It can be critical feedback but it's feedback and jiu jitsu has a lot to do with feedback loops you know? And so, when you are given a piece of feedback, you have an opportunity to figure out how you want to relate to that you know?

That feedback becomes important when reflecting on past performances and learning how to improve from them. Dustin gives a more practical example of being presented with useful information after a failure. He recalls a string of losses he had in tournament matches where he recognized a flaw in his approach. He admits that while failure may make you feel bad in the moment, you must move on from that and look for the learning lessons:

Then you kind of replay what happened. What made you lose? Was it his jiu jitsu better than yours? Was his game plan better than yours? Did you screw up? You replay what happened in the match, that's what I do. Try not to pay too much attention to the negative like you suck at jiu jitsu, you lost. Even though you'll have those you have to process those. It takes a while to process those sometimes. People take a lot longer than others, but you still have to process those too but then it's like well what happened? How do you get better? One of the last local tournaments I did I lost two of my matches, both my matches but they both did the same thing to me and you know then I was like oh well maybe I need to work on that because they both did the same thing and they both beat me the same way so that that will change my jiu jitsu focusing on trying to make that not an issue next time.

Dustin also recommends the mindset of looking and planning to fail during training. Those “intentional” failures you should be seeking are the tools that allow for success in competitions by learning new moves, new escapes from positions, and how to work out of bad positions. He said:

In the gym in the sparring sessions with your training partners like they'll, you should be, that's where most of your failures come from cuz you're trying new things. You're trying to figure out what works for you, what works against you know somebody with a certain

style of jiu jitsu right? You're trying to figure out what works and not everything is gonna work you know especially not everything is gonna work right away so you're gonna have those little failures. So that should help minimize the failures you have in competition.

As a coach, Bruce agreed and makes it a point when he is sparring with a student to capitalize on their clear mistakes to discourage laziness and provide them the same opportunities to learn. He said despite trying to spar in a playful way with all his students to promote maximum participation, he must also induce failure when necessary, "If you're just gonna be sloppy and just kind of give me things, I'm gonna remind you to keep your head screwed on and pay attention and that's, if I'm not doing that, actually I'm doing you a disservice." Allen stressed the importance of reflecting on these moments of failure. He stated, "without the reflective aspect of jiu jitsu, you can't get better at the art itself and you can't be a better person and I think that needs to be stressed, the reflective aspects of it." He went on to say that BJJ in and of itself does not make you a better person, but it gives you the experiences necessary to change your life:

...jiu jitsu doesn't make better people but it can give you really profound and beautiful experiences that can ultimately change you as a person but it's up to the individual to realize those experiences and really reflect on them you know?

Huck laid out how participation encouraged him to make improvements in his life that he was not able to make in the past. Once he started seeing the benefits of BJJ and became a part of the community, he realized that his poor habits were causing him to plateau, and instead of being discouraged by that plateau and becoming frustrated, he decided to make the changes necessary to continue his BJJ journey. He spoke of his cigarette smoking habit and its clash with his BJJ progress. In this passage Huck speaks of what he calls type one failures. To him these are failures that should send a feedback message saying there is an issue here that needs to be

addressed. These could be every day, common failures such as "...if I feel like I don't work hard enough. If I feel like I was unable to hit a certain technique that I really wanted to hit. To him, these type one failures can be motivating. Where he begins to become worried about failure is when a type one failure becomes a type two failure, which he defines as "when I let any of those type one experiences become habitual, become ongoing." Therefore, type two failures are a deeper failure of being able to recognize a learning opportunity which to him is a form of quitting on himself.

People are addicted either willingly or unwillingly of substances. They get into jiu jitsu and jiu jitsu cures them of it. It happened to me I was a cigarette smoker and I got to a place where I was a blue belt, and I was realizing like jiu jitsu is handing me that feedback by my ears were ringing with type one feedback. You cannot have the cardio that you want, you cannot fight the way you want, you cannot perform the way you want, as long as you also have this other habit. It was not necessarily it's me or them kind of thing, but it was very clear to me that my goals for greater jiu jitsu achievement were being held back by my habit as a cigarette smoker and so as long as I refused to listen to that type one failure then I was going to continue to experience that type two failure and I was going to feel sh*tty about it. And one opportunity I could have just quit jiu jitsu or accepted some sort of lower functionality in jiu jitsu because I really want to keep smoking cigarettes but instead what's more often the case is what happened to me is as soon as my goals of jiu jitsu came clashing with the cigarette smoking, it was clear to me that cigarette smoking wasn't really that important to me and I could give it up rather easily in pursuit of this other goal.

Quitting on oneself is something that can be a result of a type two, habitual failure. Allen discussed issues he has had dealing with more serious instances of failure that caused him to quit the sport for a few years in some cases. Ultimately, he said those failures also helped him realize who he was and how to keep the sport of BJJ in context:

I dedicated a lot of my life to the sport and not just jiu jitsu but in other types of martial arts and I feel like I didn't get to accomplish exactly what I wanted to, but I think it was...it's particularly illuminating to me because all those failures made me realize who I am and who I want to be as a person and what's fundamentally important to me. And at the end of the day for me jiu jitsu just ends up being a game, and you sort of have to remember that it's a fun activity that you spend your time with and you do it because you want to feel good about it and as soon as it stops becoming fun there really is no point in doing it.

These stories from the participants show that failure can be something small, like not executing a technique you want, or it could be a complete upheaval of self-identity leading to dropping out of the sport. All in all, Bruce said that these failures, and fears of failure, are all a test to bring you closer to yourself.

...you end up dispelling these almost myths that you used to have as your fears and the thing you would identify as failure and all of a sudden you realize it was a ghost the whole time just like (makes noise) evaporates and then you see the next one and it keeps on doing that you know and I think it's just, it's just this interesting process of getting closer and closer to yourself and what like who you really are and what you ultimately, what really is your fear. Like what is it really?

Huck felt strongly that BJJ is merely a stand in for a more traditional struggle that we as human beings have experienced in our lives up until more modern times. He refers to it as the “lived struggle.” He discussed at length the struggle that BJJ is replacing, and how overcoming those never-ending struggles is what leads to true self-growth. He then provided an example of how doing BJJ and overcoming the struggle it provides can lead to being a better, more patient person:

And I think that part of what jiu jitsu gets you comfortable with is that the struggle never ends. There’s a constant and ongoing, continuous struggle and you have to be the best version of yourself as you try to live up to and meet that struggle. And we try to, in jiu jitsu, we try to train other people to essentially meet that struggle better. And so, people feel a sort of, they feel like I’m learning this martial art but somehow I’m becoming a better person, or I’m also talking to my kids differently. Or I’m also less frustrated in traffic, or I also quit drinking so much and I can sleep better now and they’re getting all these peripheral benefits from it and it’s like well why? It’s because the experience of the difficulty of jiu jitsu is forcing them to grow in that way you know?

This quote details the true nature of the purpose of BJJ regarding self-growth and improvement. Overall, the present study uniquely details the pivotal role that failure plays in personal growth and presents the argument why it should not be avoided, which has not yet been discussed in the existing literature. If the BJJ practitioner can find a supportive community to fail in, and can keep a health perspective on failure, they may forge down a path that enables them to find themselves, have an honest interaction with their ego, become a better person, and help others find themselves as well. Unfortunately, it appears the path is never a straight one, and not keeping failure in perspective can lead to many negative consequences that each participant

identified as potential pitfalls that occur along this journey. These “type one” failures, when unaddressed or not viewed as learning experiences, can form into more type two, habitual failures. It is perhaps these habitual failures that result in the types of FF commonly seen in previous research (Conroy et al., 2002) resulting in the fear of shame and embarrassment, fear of devaluing one’s self worth, fear of having an uncertain future, fear of important others losing interest, and the fear of upsetting important others. Each tenant of FF and their prevalence in BJJ will be discussed in the next section.

The Downward Spiral of Fear of Failure

Much of the supporting existing literature has discussed at length the negative consequences of failure. Early research postulated that the fear of failure is directed more so at the consequences of failing, and not necessarily the failure itself (Birney et al., 1969). These consequences could be considered types of punishment that the participant would be motivated to avoid (Clark et al., 1956). This is due to the consequences of failure being perceived as a threat, and thus provoking anxiety when put in situations where failure may occur (Lazarus, 1991). In the most contemporary model of FF, Conroy (2001b) identified five main consequences of FF: experiencing shame and embarrassment, devaluing one’s self-estimate, having an uncertain future, having important others lose interest, and upsetting important others.

All five of these aversive consequences were mentioned by all four participants. Each consequence of failure varied in their frequency and perceived severity. For example, all participants discussed failures that lead to shame and embarrassment, devalued self-worth, and upsetting important others. Interestingly, only two of the four participants discussed fallout from important others losing interest in them, and although fear of an uncertain future was discussed regarding injury, it was mostly discussed by the participants as a non-issue. In addition, Bruce

discussed a potentially new contribution to the literature involving upsetting important others which is termed *failing the community*. Each negative consequence of FF will be discussed in turn as well as the emergence of a potentially novel consideration of failing the community.

Fear of Devaluing One's Self-Worth

Of the five aversive consequences of failure mentioned by the participants, none seemed more pervasive throughout the discussions than the fear of devaluing one's self-worth. The failure that was most attributed to this aversion was failing to achieve an outcome goal. More specifically, these goals were typically winning a match or tournament, properly completing a technique, and looking competent in front of students or peers. The tie of devaluing self-worth and outcome goals is not unsurprising. Outcome goals are similar to the performance-approach (i.e., performing a move better than another student in class) and performance-avoidance goals (i.e., avoid losing a competition match) discussed by Elliot and Church (1997) and are both rooted in an avoidance disposition which can lead to FF. While a performance-approach may be beneficial for short-term performance, unavoidable failure because of BJJ training could lead to aversive consequences down the FF cascade detailed by Martin and Mash (2003), ultimately resulting in learned helplessness and dropping out of the sport altogether.

Allen recognized devaluing his self-worth was his most aversive consequence of failure and he talked about devaluing his own self-worth while failing and losing tournaments or matches as a kid in both BJJ and wrestling:

I guess the biggest thing is you don't want an upheaval of your self-identity. I think is the biggest one you don't want to put all your self-worth in an activity and ultimately fail at it and then wonder who you are as a person I think is the biggest one... And I think that for me I could say that when I was a little bit more competitive it's very, that type of failure

it can rattle you to sort of how you view yourself as a person you know and it affects your identity. Yeah, I think talking a little about my own experiences and my own life like when I've had sort of big failures or matches that I did lose I did feel like who am I as a person? You know and you begin questioning sort of I guess your self-worth. Like if it's something that's so important to you and you become like I don't know it becomes sort of central to who you are you start asking yourself like why, not even so much like why am I doing this, but you know am I worth as a person? It's a very unhealthy attitude to have but I think it's a characteristic that I think a lot of people who compete have you know I think that I don't know like the story I said before about you know when I tore my shoulder and I had that really sh*tty match like I remember for months after I think that was the beginning where I started having more like emotional problems when I was a kid and you know I had a lot of thing to deal with it affected really everything in my life for a long period of time. I had dreams about it.

Bruce talked about this FF affecting beyond competition and into the training room. He tied success and failure to being perceived as competent and identified this as his biggest FF and said it directly inhibited his ability to learn:

...because I had dedicated 17 years to something, been badly injured in pursuit of mastery of this thing, sacrificed relationships, time, and jobs for this thing... and to yet remain unknowledgeable would be devastating.

Bruce continued that his FF has also resulted in avoiding training with individuals who may cause him to fail. He said, "I have folded under this fear, and avoided rolling with people, or only rolled with these perceived threats once they were tired." Bruce then confirmed that this is his predominate fear of failure regarding BJJ. When asked which consequence (if any) of failure he

would most like to avoid, he said:

The fear would be that other people think I'm an imposter, that I'm faking it that like I'm not as good as I am that like I haven't earned my accolades. That you know that I, that I'm not genuine you know that somehow, I'm a charlatan. You know that I'm full of sh*t.

In summary, Allen said that the inability to deal with those feelings associated with the failure to reach an outcome goal will result in the ultimate BJJ failure, quitting:

You're just gonna stop. You're just gonna quit. You know I quit. I quit. You know funny thing about this sport is that there's a lot of talented people that just quit. You know, and I'm not saying that I'm talented in any way I'm just saying like the people I've known that have had similar things...this sport it gives you so much but takes so much away you know, and I think that trying to find that balance is really important but it affects everyone in different ways, but the thing is it affects everyone you know?

The fear of devaluing one's self-estimate was the predominate fear discussed by the participants. This finding contradicts previous literature in college and youth athletes which suggested that devaluing one's self-estimate was a less prominent fear of failure in male athletes. Sagar et al. (2012) found that male college athletes tended to fear devaluing one's self-estimate less than female college athletes. Similarly, Sagar et al. (2010) found that in a sample of 81 amateur male soccer players, the fear of devaluing one's self-estimate was the lowest measured consequence and fear of failure. As Birney et al. (1969) stated, experiencing failure may cause one to devalue their self-estimate, resulting in the participant to think less of their ability before they failed and cause them to reassess their position. In this context, that reassessment appears to be a negative result of failure. However, it is important to keep in mind that each participant in

this study said reassessment was an integral part of success in BJJ. This again reiterates the importance for leaders and participants in BJJ to be able to frame failure in the proper light, especially due to the ultimate cost of potentially dropping out altogether.

Fear of Experiencing Shame and Embarrassment

The second most prevalent FF discussed by each participant was the fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment because of a failure. Experiencing shame and humiliation after failing and being motivated to avoid that shame was central to the early FF research (Atkinson, 1957) and was again adopted into the Conroy (2001b) model. Participants identified two main failures that would result in a feeling of shame and embarrassment: failure to control emotions and failing to perform to their own perceived standards.

Bruce confirmed that this is a failure for him, “for myself, definitely, I would fail if I couldn’t control myself psychologically and emotionally.” In his journal response on this topic, he recounted a time where his inability to control his emotions led to a shameful experience and an example of externalized shame-coping through attacking others as seen in previous research (Elison & Partridge, 2012):

...through sports tutelage under my authoritarian father into my jiu jitsu world. All of these things culminated in a sparring class one night when a first night participant wanted to “go hard”. He was unskilled, but highly aggressive, and athletically inclined. He was trying to hurt and knock out my beginner students. I didn’t have the command over the class that I should have, and he was taking advantage of it. I was fearful of him hurting one of my students, but even more so of him exposing my lack of confidence, my control over the class, my knowledge of fighting, etc. I didn’t want him to make me look bad in front of the students, my peers, and especially not my coaches. So, I f*cked him up. I

wouldn't let him spar with anyone else, and for three rounds I would not let him quit either. First boxing, then kickboxing, then full MMA, then Jiu Jitsu with striking... He only knew how to land a hard right hand. It was merciless and unnecessary. It allowed me to discover a whole new form of embarrassment and shame: being an out of control, insecure, jerk in front of my students, friends, peers, and coaches.

Allen had a similar experience that he considers one of the biggest failures in his life, and while it occurred in wrestling and not BJJ, it remains still a relevant experience that has shaped his life:

This is probably the most traumatic event for me, and it was outside of jiu jitsu, but it relates to grappling and it affected my experience of jiu jitsu my entire life. I was at a tournament that I had won the previous year and I got MVP for it, I did a really great job, I got this big old plaque and everything. And that tournament, the semifinals, I tore my shoulder, I tore my shoulder really bad. I picked up the kid to do a suplex, I tore it completely. I ended up winning the match I went to the finals, but my arm was so, I couldn't even pick it up or move it and I had to wrestle a kid that had beaten me the previous year and he just demolished me. He did the Muhammed Ali dance you know in the middle of our match and he ended up pinning me because I couldn't move this arm I had only my right arm to really fight him off. And I remember crying and I threw me head gear and I like hit someone's wife or something and I felt really bad about it. It was a whole scene that I had because I was incredibly competitive you know it sucked. I was in an immense amount of pain and I failed myself you know? And for me it was the biggest probably failure, I've been through a lot of but that was probably the most embarrassing and probably the biggest failure of my life.

He went on to say that even led to him adopting avoidance tendencies to avoid reliving these

feelings, including time away from grappling sports:

I think that as a result of that I had a lot of problems with thinking about how I don't want to fail and experience that again and having those feelings again so for me that was a very difficult time and I hope not to revisit it or there's a lot of times where I use avoidant methods to not have to deal with potential problems or potential experiences like that.

Huck had similar feelings toward not being able to control his emotions, particularly in a competition match. He detailed a theoretical, yet common, situation in BJJ and MMA and how not being able to control emotions could again lead to quitting, this time not for good, but quitting on himself in a match, which he considers to be a serious failure:

Let's say I was in a match and a guy was on my back and he was making me really uncomfortable. So uncomfortable that I just didn't want to be there anymore and I was like you know what if you just put your chin up he'll probably sink a rear naked choke and then you'll just be out of here and so if I just gave up that way and I was just like uhhhh (makes groaning sound) and he just got a rear naked choke and it wasn't a surprise to me because I knew if I just exposed myself he would probably take the opportunity and then if I tapped out, because you can't just tap out to pressure but you can tap out to a rear naked choke so if I just...so if I quit like that in a match where I intentionally gave up a submission to end the match faster because I was uncomfortable then that would be all I was thinking about. That would be the only thing that I thought about until I felt like I got to the bottom of it.

Not performing to standards they set for themselves is another failure discussed by three of the four participants. Bruce gave an example of one of his first BJJ classes he took leading to

him feeling embarrassed due to the foreignness of the movements. He talked about coming over from predominately striking arts as a relatively athletic young person:

Now grappling, you're like okay well let's get rid of those things that you're used to being on and that's how you contextualize the world you interact with and let's use those in an entirely different way to generate motility and mobility that otherwise is not accessible to you unless you learn this new fundamental movement. And so, it really messed with me that I couldn't shrimp down the floor, shrimping being the way that a practitioner would move their hips out to one side and create distance between an opponent that is that is a fundamental building block of just movement in jiu jitsu. I couldn't do it. I was like getting it wrong I was using the wrong leg; I was going to the wrong side and I kept rolling over and just sucked.

With respect to competition, Huck talked about feeling some shame after competition matches as a result of not reaching a goal he set for himself. This feeling can occur even after a win as Bruce stated, "even when I've won, I find ways to be disappointed in my performance." Huck echoed this sentiment:

You can win a tournament and feel like you failed because maybe you won on points, but your goal was to submit your partner you know? So, if you're looking for submission but you win on points you might still be down on yourself and not feeling very positive because you still feel like you failed your goal, or you didn't meet your own expectation of your goal and so you don't feel positive about that result.

These discussions on shame and embarrassment supports the existing literature that has investigated perfectionism and FF. Shame and embarrassment were key in predicting negative affects following a loss for high perfectionistic participants (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009). As stated in

the literature, Sagar and Stoeber (2009) discussed that while it is acceptable to have standards for ourselves, it is only a positive so long as we can remember that we are inherently imperfect. Failing to control emotions may be an indicator of what Frost et al. (1993) referred to as a perfectionistic concern. More specifically, they referred to this perfectionistic concern as a concern over mistakes, which Sagar and Stoeber (2009) linked with experiencing shame and embarrassment. This could ultimately lead to situations of externalized shame coping and attacking others (Elison & Partridge, 2012) as detailed above when Bruce discussed essentially attacking a student because he did not want to feel like he was losing control over his class after poor demonstrating some techniques. This information can be of direct benefit to aspiring or current gym owners and demonstrates the importance of cultivating a positive culture which should include teaching students how to manage both emotions and expectations for success.

Fear of an Uncertain Future

Failures that were discussed regarding having an uncertain future were minimal overall. A few participants did discuss that injuries were something to be concerned about. Dustin warned about the physical toll that BJJ takes on the body, specifically while wearing the gi, or the traditional uniform one wears during BJJ, and said he knows many people who have had resultant back, neck, knees, and shoulders injuries:

...then besides being physically hard it's physically hard on the body a lot of time.

There's people that play gi jiu jitsu right people that play gi jiu jitsu for a long time have really arthritic fingers or swollen knuckles, or they can't make a fist so that's physically hard on the body... I know a lot of people with you know just messed up bodies from jiu jitsu it's hard.

Allen did recognize that being injured in a tournament is something he would like to avoid:

...like I think that it's nerve racking in a way that like I don't know you might get injured. Doing something you paid like 100 something dollars to go to a tournament and there's a possibility of injury. I think that's the thing that I fear the most right?

Bruce has a relatively significant fear of the consequences of 17 years of combat training, mostly from training mixed martial arts (MMA):

Now, I have been fearful about being uncertain about getting Alzheimer's disease because of repeated head trauma, losing the use of my right arm due to injury, becoming a paraplegic due to neck injuries (two bad ones thus far), losing my right eye due to injury, etc., but just not my "future" in the sport.

As this quote shows, both Bruce and Allen stated that an uncertain future is not something they are worried about overall. As Bruce said, the future is largely out of his control and he chooses to focus on what he can control:

My future is a path uncertain and lifelong and largely beyond my control. It has always been this way, and it will always be this way. That cannot assail what I do control, which is my actions and my steady progress towards fulfilling the maximum potential that I have.

Allen also had a reassuring quote that even as his life may change, he always plans to return to his community of BJJ:

The thing that's not gonna change is the aspects of competition, the aspects of training like even if you know I have different milestones in my life like you know again if it's the doctorate program, if I have a child like I know that training is always something I will be doing you know on a daily basis...ultimately it always returns in this thing, this thing, this idea, this community of people.

These comments inform us of the importance of promoting a culture that minimizes the risks of injury. The other important point of interest is that participants did not seem too worried about quitting BJJ. This may show the resiliency gained through proper management of the experiences of failure and is a unique contributor to the existing literature. Future research may be interested in a more detailed analysis of what specifically occurs in the BJJ culture that contributes to this certainty and continued participation in the sport. It is important to consider that of the four participants, three have achieved the rank of black belt, while the other is a purple belt. All are considered “advanced” belts in BJJ. Future research may want to investigate fears of an uncertain future with white and blue belts, ranks that are more typically considered as having a high attrition.

Fear of Important Others Losing Interest

Another seemingly inconsequential fear for the participants was the fear of important others losing interest. This FF was a part of the early multidimensional model of FF by Birney et al. (1969) and appeared again in Conroy’s model (2001b). Two of the participants, the two head coaches and gym owners, did discuss that losing matches or perceived incompetence may cause some students to lose interest and leave their school which would in turn cost them money. As Bruce said, “the idea that someone would leave me because I seem incompetent at jiu jitsu, that crushes me.” He detailed a situation where his lack of use of fundamentals may cause his upper belts to lose faith in him:

So the consequences of a higher belt observing that if you put that moment in a vacuum, they may begin to believe that I actually don’t know. They actually might begin to think like oh maybe he doesn’t actually know. Maybe he doesn’t get it, maybe he just talks a big game but like it’s because he’s listened to other people and he knows what sounds

good, so he says it, but he doesn't actually get it right? Huge problem. Huge problem to undermine your upper belts confidence in your proficiency and fluency in understanding in what the thing is that you're actually participating in right? So, it's a big fear of mine and so I would say the consequences of being perceived as not competent at this thing that I've dedicated 18 years to the first would be that high level practitioners don't join my school.

Huck agreed that not dedicating himself as a coach would cost him students:

The fallout of not dedicating myself as a coach is that I guess I lose, maybe I lose students, or I lose people interested in learning from me and I lose that audience and personally I would lose a lot of what I love about the sport which is sharing it with other people.

Again, Bruce and Huck said that losing could shift the perception of their students, which to Bruce, may not be a bad thing if a student realizes his coach does not factor into their goals:

I guess students that had joined the school purely for "I have the best coach and he's gonna kick everybody's ass," and they saw me be human and lose a match maybe well you know what maybe I'm gonna find a school with the most champions and I'm just gonna peace out, and actually okay like if that's really where their goals are at, that's where they should be you know and that's just gonna help them better align.

Huck also talked about these challenges of meeting the expectations of others. In his journal response he wrote:

A leader is expected to demonstrate from the front. To never ask another to perform what they are unwilling to do, and to justify their techniques, methodology, and philosophy through success of their own and their students' practice. If you seek to be a winner, why

would you follow a loser? This dichotomy adds a serious challenge to the performance of the athlete. Much like a quarterback in football, the pressure to succeed is on their shoulders. Too many failures in a row and your students may lose faith in your abilities and therefore your value as an instructor and competitor. However, every athlete knows that the day will come when they can no longer compete with the hungry next generation. In combat sports, it comes faster than you think. The next generation still has that fire in their belly. They have something to prove, something to fight for, and they have all the advantages of youth on their side.

Outside of the issue of losing students, the other two participants felt that this was not an issue for them. As Dustin explained in his journal entry his relationships with his coaches were strong enough to outlast any event:

That being said my relationship with my coaches is 15+ years or greater. It has evolved from a coach and athlete / student relationship to a genuine friendship. So, a loss at a competition will not affect that relationship.

Fear of Upsetting Important Others

Two of the participants identified that their FF of upsetting important others occurred early in life through the influence of their close family members, namely their parents. As Sagar and Lavallee (2010) implied, parents can potentially pass on their FF disposition (Elliot & Church, 1997) to their children through punitive behavior, controlling behavior, and high achievement expectations. Allen provided a clear example of the added pressure that comes along with competing in front of his family. He said:

...it's weird, I'm not worried about sort of me losing or failing, I'm more worried about what my family will think...you know something as simple and supposed to be an

extracurricular activity like jiu jitsu, it takes on another meaning when other people are watching you know and when other people expect something from you so I'm not really worried about how I failed personally because I'm not, I think that other people are more in tuned with sort of their wants and their needs and their desires... So like you know you win in a certain fashion but then your family wouldn't be too overjoyed with how you won you know they would still be, there would still be complaints about your form and that you're just sort of, I don't know, it just becomes nerve wracking you know even if you win it might not be enough.

He referred to this added pressure as other people attempting to steal his "glory" and live vicariously through him, and talked about his realization that he needs to resist that pressure:

No one really cares about you ultimately; they just want to see you triumph you kind of just I don't know you just put all of that in the back of your mind you realize that you know all these people are pressuring you but ultimately you're the one that gets the satisfaction from it.

Bruce felt a similar pressure growing up, with his dad instilling in him early on that he needed to be able to protect his family:

My dad said I had a responsibility and this is starting and probably nine years old you know that he's like "son there are kids in Africa younger than you holding AK-47s defending their crops and their families." He said "not if but when something happens to me you need to be able to defend the family and provide for the family." I always had this image that I needed to be a tough guy, needed to be able to fight, I needed to be able to defend my family which it was coming from a very misguided place and through very misguided parental instruction, like encouragement in the wrong ways I think. But the

value of being able to defend those that are defenseless is something that is always close to my mind like even through to this day.

In stride with the investigation of British youth athletes by Sagar and Lavalley (2010), punitive behavior through love withdrawal was especially impactful for Bruce and Allen. Bruce went so far as to say that this was a major source of his FF that he has kept with him into his adult life:

I have a serious fear of failure because you know for me personally, my experience with sports previously, if I did poorly, if I didn't A) demonstrate competence B) demonstrate extreme toughness both mental and emotional and physical, and then also perform admirably like come out with a f*cking "W" right? My dad wouldn't talk to me, he'd lecture me all the way home about what I did wrong and how I could improve and where I just didn't get it and how that was so obvious to everyone but like then he wouldn't talk to me like and so like clearly my value as an individual was wrapped up in success and the outcome of whatever endeavor I was doing right?

Bruce went on to say that situations in which he would perceive failure as not teaching a class to the best of his ability would bring back these feelings from his childhood. In his journal entry he wrote about a time where he failed a student:

Early on while teaching I failed technique demonstrations in two separate classes in spectacular fashion. So much so that on each occasion students quit after those classes had ended as a result. That certainly brought a significant degree of my childhood shame that I experienced through sports tutelage under my authoritarian father into my jiu jitsu world.

This experience directly led to the story of him purposely taking out his shame onto another student as shared earlier. Going back to the story of Allen hurting his shoulder and losing his

match, his reaction to the loss resulted in love withdrawal from his parents in the form of leaving him at the venue and forcing him to walk home by himself:

So I remember when I lost that particular match I was like crying right and I went outside the gym and I think the worst thing about it was that like my dad was furious not only that I lost but how I was acting, my mother and my father and they just left like they just left. So, you know they didn't console me they didn't say anything they just bounced and I think for me that was particularly hard because I was just sitting there you know in my singlet just like tired, sweat all over, torn shoulder, holding my arm up and yeah I think that not only do you fail yourself but you failed your family and you don't even have that cushion right?

Finally, Huck also noted that competition and performing has added pressure when it is in front of friends and family:

I mean for me specifically I specifically hate the feeling of letting people down and so I feel like I failed other people when I don't give my best. I have people who aren't necessarily relying on me, but I have people that are supporting me, that want me to succeed, they're trying to help me succeed and so I feel like I let them down when I fail and I hate that feeling. I hate the feeling of more than the failure itself, I hate the feeling of letting other people down. That motivates me in a lot of ways. It's really different...competing is really different when you, it's different when your family is watching on TV vs they're courtside, it's different. And so yeah that's something I really don't like about failure is the experience of letting people down.

These statements provided by the participants support the existing literature that the fear of upsetting important others and overall FF can be instilled early in life (Conroy, 2003; Elliot &

Thrash, 2003) and can provoke anxiety both as a youth athlete and up into adulthood. In Allen's case, these negative situations caused him to experience burnout, which led to amotivation and multiple cases of dropping out of both wrestling and BJJ (Goodger et al., 2007). Bruce and Allen both experienced love withdrawal from their parents because of failing, which Sagar and Lavallee (2010) noted as the most damaging punitive behavior identified by their sample of youth British athletes.

BJJ is relatively unique in that gyms can and typically do offer adult and youth classes. Parents regularly do watch their children during the youth class, and some then go on to train themselves in the following adult class. This is different than perhaps more traditional sports whereby the time the youth athlete is competing, the adults are typically done with their competition careers. Thus, may be beneficial for gym owners to encourage adults of children to train and offer group rate packages for families who are all looking to do BJJ, all of which will increase the understanding and appreciation for the difficulty of the sport/journey. Future research could look deeper into this family dynamic and investigate FF in children of parents who train alongside them versus parents who do not. If the parents have an understanding of what their children are going through, and are going through it along with them, perhaps this could attenuate the parental pressure seen in previous research. Regardless, gym owners and coaches should at minimum have plans in place to discuss the role that parents play on their child's experience and encourage parents to be a positive role model and cheerleader for their children.

Sub-Theme: Failing the Community

Within the theme of negative failure, a sub-theme emerged from the data analysis where participants discussed at length the notion of the fear of failing the community. This became a

distinguishing characteristic within the fears of upsetting important others and is a unique and new contribution to the existing FF literature. Failing to represent the gym well and failures costing others resulted in the fear of upsetting important others. Both expand on the fear of upsetting important others which previously was measured on a more interpersonal level (Conroy et al., 2002). The current study shows that this fear may expand to the idea of community, as well as costing the community without the individuals within that community being consciously aware that they are being harmed. First, not representing the gym well was a main fear for Dustin. He referred to it as “shaming the academy.” When asked what the worst thing about failing is, he said:

Looking like a jackass in front of the people that are supporting you. Which is just like your own perception right in reality like I said it’s like as long as you went out there and tried your hardest people give you props for that. As long as you don’t end up freaking out, and you don’t end up punching the dude or something in a jiu jitsu match right. Just going out there and giving it your best...

He went on to say shaming the academy is his biggest perceived consequence of failure:

For me it’s you know not being a good representation of the gym. The gym is your friends, it’s your family. It’s the people you surround yourself with, at least in my case. All the people that I hang out with outside of the gym are from the gym. Or they’re a friend of a friend from the gym. So, representing the gym well, which means you’re representing your friends well, your family well, I think that’s big for me.

Huck gave the example of him choosing to continue to run (an activity he does not enjoy) because he does not want to let his friends down. If he chose not to run, would they actually be upset? That is unclear but it is the perception that he has in this situation demonstrates a sense of failing the community:

...so like a perfect example of this would be like if I just went out my front door and started running I might run for a mile or two miles but at a certain point I might just be like whatever I f*cking hate running let's just go back or let's be done now. But if I went out running with a group of people who are like we are gonna run three miles then I would just run three miles. I wouldn't really be able to quit because I wouldn't want to quit for the group. That would motivate me in that group dynamic...

Bruce talked at length about the second aspect of failing the community, which was your failures costing others. This refers to the opportunity cost of a personal failure. Bruce discussed key failures like failure to show up and learn, and a failure to participate resulting in a failure of the community. This may result in a tangible case of upsetting an important other. Bruce gave an example of early on in his journey when he used to "train to negative" his training partner, resulting in a loss of quality training for them:

I have been a training partner that like was highly resistant to my other, to the other people I was training with because I thought like hey I want this person to get, like I want to be tough, this person, they want to be tough they're here right so I want to make it hard of them and really that's just my ego, I can't even like let this person get an inch on me cause I'm so insecure right? You know it's like me looking deeper into those people in myself but yeah if you, if you're constantly negating the learning experience of your partner, or you're not opening up an opportunity for their maximal participation in whatever you're doing whether it's introduction, isolation, or integration or full out sparring like if you somehow are shutting that down just so your experience is protected at the expense of theirs, right, you have failed to show up and be a partner that is helping them learn right?

While these situations may cause someone to become upset with you, it also has an indirect effect on the community as a whole and reduces the quality of the overall training for everyone involved. Some individuals may not even be aware of this and may not become outwardly upset. However, the original failure of not showing up to learn or participate may cost them progress in their own journey, and thus results in failing the community. Bruce gave another example of this in his early training days:

I would just stop participating, that's a total loss and it negated their capacity to participate in a meaningful way. I stopped their capacity to teach, I stopped my capacity to learn, and because we didn't even have an interaction, there's no way they could have come away learning anything except that I'm not fun to participate with.

The result of failing to show up and participant with others in a way that is beneficial for both parties can result in the reduction of training partners willing to exchange with you. Bruce detailed that this will drastically reduce the quality of your training and result in a plateau in progress:

The consequences of those things are not only the lack of learning but like maybe the next time I show up to jiu jitsu nobody wants to roll with me. Then I'm like diminishing the number of partners that potentially I could learn from my god, what a cancer. And so those are big consequences, those are really really big consequences and I think that the average jiu jitu player really toes the line on both of those. I think they make mistakes with those two things a lot. They show up with no intention to learn and they don't learn, and they also show up and participate in a way that eliminates participation in the future. And I think both of those are cardinal sins in jiu jitsu.

When asked what the expected fallout of this would be, Bruce in essence said it could result in the loss of training partners, burnout, and likely dropping out or quitting:

The expected fallout is their burnout. They're gonna get frustrated and there won't be any way out of the frustration because they created this problem for themselves and created habits that reinforce the problem right? Like I'm not getting better, but I'm not training in a way that allows me to learn. Like I'm not showing up to learn. Okay so I continue not to get better oh and I'm rolling a way that presents less and less functional partnerships, right?

This represents an important point in managing the culture that gym owners, coaches, and individual practitioners need to be aware of. Coaches and owners should be actively involved in identifying students that train to negate other students and intervene appropriately. Bruce talked about the difficulty in reorienting the ego in a way that maximizes participation with others. As has been discussed, failure occurs often in the sport of BJJ and must be kept in proper perspective to be beneficial. The role of the coaches and leaders should be to help themselves and the younger students to keep a healthy perspective on failure. If there is a breakdown in this help-based culture, opportunity, and student losses could occur.

Finally, one consistent occurrence was participants discussing that the failures and consequences of failures that they experienced may have been more perception than reality. For example, Dustin said:

So, one of the failures was me getting in my own head going on that downward spiral and part of that is thinking that I'm gonna let the team down, or I'm gonna let people down or not represent the gym or team well. So that's kind of my thought process. Is that reality? No. Because whenever people compete even if they do well or not like I think the team is

stoked. Obviously, it's better if they win but I think the team is stoked that you're just going out there and representing either way. So, the thought process in itself is wrong, but it still happens right?

Or as Bruce discussed in his journal entry where he felt his coach became upset with him or lost interest, he realized after the fact that his perceived failure was out of his control:

Many years later I discovered that nothing I did could have prevented me being discarded by [former coach], nor could I have deliberately caused it. As it would become apparent, he would gather people around him that met a need he felt he had, but when he felt that need had been met, he ghosted them. This pattern has unfortunately continued to haunt him and burn all of the bridges he erects.

This finding adds deeper context in that fears may be more perceived or felt than they are real. These findings once again highlight the importance of having a community that can help keep these fears in proper perspective and that the leader(s) of the community should consider taking a proactive approach in helping practitioners of all levels navigate the many pitfalls that exist in BJJ.

Professional Implications

Findings in the current study offer multiple suggestions for coaches, gym owners, current, aspiring BJJ practitioners and researchers. The first and most impactful finding from the study is that failure is a necessary and positive part of BJJ. Trying to avoid failure in BJJ will lead to the negative consequences represented in the literature and ultimately could result in quitting the sport, which was argued to be the only true failure in BJJ. Failures present themselves as learning opportunities for the BJJ practitioner, and persistence in the face of failure can lead to the deeper benefits that BJJ provides. The current study suggests that

proactively seeking failure may result in reducing or eliminating the negative consequences of failure. Keeping these failures in perspective is vitally important, and if failure is not managed properly, they can lead to more habitual failures that can again lead to the more negative consequences of failure.

The job of helping a BJJ practitioner keep these unavoidable failures in perspective fall on the community, more specifically coaches and training partners. Coaches should look to create a positive culture that emphasizes checking in emotionally with their students, being a positive mentor, and guide students in a way that is most appropriate for their skill level. Teammates must expose your weaknesses and give you the push you need to improve daily. Therefore, it is easy to become antagonistic towards your teammates, but it is important to keep in perspective that it is them helping you grow. It is important for the coach and other community leaders to foster a learning-focused environment where teammates do not find each other threatening.

Finally, the study shows that many of the consequences of failure are relevant to BJJ. More specifically, the fear of devaluing one's self worth, experiencing shame and embarrassment, and upsetting important others were particularly relevant in this group of BJJ practitioners. Interestingly, the fear of having an uncertain future and the fear of important others losing interest were not particularly threatening ideas for these participants. It was discussed that the fear of upsetting important others was largely concerned with the larger community. On an interpersonal level, upsetting important others did not necessarily mean literally upsetting another individual, rather it was suggested here that this was more of an internal feeling that an individual failure resulted in the loss of opportunity for growth of a teammate. This is a novel finding and one that may enhance the existing model of FF. Finally, many of these failures were

discussed as being perceived, and perhaps not an actual reality. This is an important contextual distinction for future research to investigate the differences between perceived and actual failure.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the best efforts of the researcher to ensure rigor in all aspects of a research study, no study is without its limitations. The study used an all-male sample; thus, it is not indicative of the overall BJJ population. Future research is encouraged to continue to sample multiple diverse populations. Due to the nature of the snowball sampling techniques used, the study included three black belts and one purple belt, all considered to be “advanced” ranks in BJJ. Future research should look to include accounts taking from the more “beginner” ranks, white and blue belts due to the perceived high attrition rate of BJJ, their experience as less advanced practitioners could perhaps shed more light on the way FF impacts BJJ. This research study was the student researcher’s first attempt at a qualitative project. Therefore, there was a certain unease and a learning curve conducting long-form, semi-structured interviews. As the student researcher gained experience throughout the process, questions formation and probing questions were better utilized, perhaps resulting in missed opportunities with earlier participants. Finally, the effects Covid-19 had on the research study cannot go unnoticed. Many of the participants were not currently training BJJ in any way, and thus were forced to reflectively participate in this process. Due to the participants not actively training, the journal data collection had to be changed to a reflective question and answer instead of a more natural and temporal form of collection as was initially intended. Future research should consider adopting the original journal collection method of weekly reflections on instances of FF experienced throughout the training week.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) practitioners and the role that failure plays in their sport. The final analysis of the interviews and journal entries provided insight on how important failure is to BJJ, and the role that community, coaches, and teammates play in helping one another keep failure in the proper perspective so that growth can occur, both individually and as a community. The present study supplements existing FF work done by Conroy (2001b) to potentially add deeper context to the multidimensional theory of FF, more specifically the fear of upsetting important others. This study provides practical and relevant information regarding the BJJ journey to gym owners, coaches, other BJJ practitioners, and future researchers.

Appendix A: Bracketing Exercise

What are My Beliefs About Failure in BJJ?

How have my Previous Experiences Shaped This Belief?

What are my Beliefs about the Consequences of These Failures?"

For me I feel like failure can come about and manifest itself in many ways in BJJ. The first and most clear is the inability to grasp or demonstrate a technique. Early in BJJ, one of the main learning curves is getting your body to move in ways you are not used to. Therefore, learning moves like armbars, rolls, and shrimps can be difficult. Certain moves that my smaller training partners do are difficult for me to perform. When in a class setting, being unable to perform the technique or concept being taught is especially frustrating. This frustration results from a dissonance that occurs when we think we are at a certain level skill-wise, but we are not currently performing to that level. This can make me more motivated to learn and master the technique, but in the past it has also led me to avoid a certain position or technique. I have even gone so far as to say “well that position is not really important, I would just do this instead.” Perhaps that comes from me not feeling confident about my skills in that area, so naturally I would try to avoid it.

Another common failure dealt with at every step so far in my BJJ journey is simply being beaten by my teammate or another competitor in live sparring sessions or competitive matches. For clarity, sparring sessions in BJJ are called “rolls”, and are referred to as “rolling.” I did no competitive grappling growing up and I was not a fighter in a street fighting sense. Most of my previous grappling was with friends, usually after some drinks, and it was probably very devoid of skill. One of the first uphill climbs in BJJ was swallowing my own ego after being repeatedly defeated by my teammates. Some may be bigger than me, some smaller. Some may be older,

some younger. Some may be men, some may be women. Regardless of who the opponent was, many of my early live sparring sessions resulted in my being exhausted and tapping out multiple times within a five minute round. As a 28 year old who has not been beaten up much in my life, this was a definite check to my own ego. I think it was a little embarrassing to be a younger, fit, athletic person and being beaten by people who for all intents and purposes, were not in the same shape I was in. My first night of live sparring I only lasted two, five-minute rounds (out of 5 or 6 rounds that occurred that night) before I had to simply sit on the chair off to the side and watch. I wanted to show coaches and teammates that I was tough and could hang, so failing by being positionally dominated to repeatedly tapped out made me feel like I would not be looked at favorably by my coaches and peers. My first school had a large amount of students, with many other beginning white belts, so I wanted to make sure I stood out. Therefore, I used much of my physical attributes and aggression to “win” every roll I could. Later I found out this was a misguided way to train.

Failure in competition can be described as simply losing a match, or not having my gameplan work how I wanted it to. In another way, failure could involve sustaining an injury during a competition. My true competition days are over in my eyes and although I enter a tournament to win, I am mostly doing it to learn so that I can coach others through that experience. Unfortunately, competing does come with a chance I will get injured in the process. Getting injured keeps me out of regular, daily training, and although the experience of competition is necessary, it may slow down my overall learning if I have to sit out of multiple practices after the tournament. Losing a competition match can be pretty embarrassing. My last tournament that I competed in, in my first match, I did not compete how I wanted to and lost via point totals. My second match I lost via submission. After the match, nobody really talked to me

and a few members from my first school kind of just shook their head at me, as if to say “sorry you did so bad.” Losing a match where I did not compete to my ability really was a bummer and I felt like I had let my coaches and teammates down, while also embarrassing myself in front of the others who were watching the match.

Another area of failure that I have dealt with while training was letting down my training partners. A big job as a teammate is to give our friends competitive “rolls” in training to prepare them for their own competitions. Many times when rolling with someone who was preparing to compete, I was having an off day. My technique was not sharp and I was not performing well. This led to more frustration and on one occasion I exclaimed my frustration out loud and apologized for being a bad teammate. I wanted to give my best to help their training and I feel like I was not doing that.

In this same vein, another failure would be injuring a teammate. In an aggressive sport like BJJ, injuries are mostly unavoidable. Bumps and bruises are extremely common. More serious injuries, however, can result in your training partner being out for an extended period of time. That is time that they are not improving and training on the mat. Most of us that train knows how serious this is. After training BJJ for a period of time, it is a common theme that we become addicted to training and rely on it for coping with everyday life. Taking that away from someone else due to injury, whether it be accidental or on purpose, is a serious thing. Injuring someone on the mats comes with the risk of being perceived as being dangerous, and therefore people may choose not to roll or train with you. If your name keeps popping up when individuals say they got hurt, it puts the coach on notice as well. I take exceptional care not to injure my teammates, and in the few instances I have, I felt a large amount of guilt and a fear that they may not want to train with me anymore. My goal since I started training was to be someone

everybody liked to roll with. I try to be very conscientious of my teammates health and protect both myself and them during a roll.

For the last year I have also been coaching BJJ. I started assisting my coach with the kids. My biggest fear in coaching kids was that I did not understand the concepts and techniques well enough myself. I was afraid of explaining something to them incorrectly. I was also afraid that I would not know how to interact with them, they would not have fun while training, and would then not want to come back. Fear of them quitting because of my poor teaching was a big factor for me. I feel the same now that I coach adults. I am so passionate about BJJ and believe in it strongly. I know that I have a lot left to learn myself and am probably teaching adults before I should. I do worry and fear teaching something incorrectly, or in a way that leaves the students skeptical. I know part of their perception is out of my control, but I am afraid to upset anyone and try my best to appease everyone who comes to train with me. I also fear the possibility that if they train with me, then go to train somewhere else, that they will not perform well against students with a “more experienced” coach. I would feel like I let that student down and would be afraid of losing them to another school or gym.

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Guides

Section 1: Pre-interview Session

Goals:

- Establish rapport and orient forthcoming interview structure.
- Explain aims of study, reason why interview is taped, how the interview will be used.
- Confidentiality/anonymity
 - Discuss the notion that transcripts and interviews will only be discussed among the research team.
 - Transcripts and audio files will be de-identified on an encrypted hard drive in a locked file cabinet, in the researcher's locked office.
- Stress importance of open and honest answers; they also may decline to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering. Remind them this is a time where they can talk about themselves and share their experiences.

Interview 1

Goal: Discussed the lived experience of a BJJ practitioner and to provide context for the following interviews.

RQ 1: What is the lived experience of a BJJ practitioner? What does it mean to be a BJJ practitioner?

1. Could you please tell me why you got involved in BJJ?
 - a. Possible prompts: What were your influences? How did you go about choosing your current school? What motivates you to continue to train?
2. What have you learned through participation and BJJ?

- a. What skills do you learn in BJJ? Are any of these something other than tactical skills?
3. What are your goals for training? Competition?
4. Tell me about the BJJ school/gym environment.
 - a. Possible prompts: what does that mean for you? Can you give me an example?
5. What was your experience like in your first class?
 - a. What are the stages of a typical BJJ class?
 - b. Possible prompts: can you tell me more about that? What do you mean by...?
6. How often are you training?
 - a. Has it changed in any way since the beginning?
 - b. If so, why? How?
7. Can you talk to me about the process of deciding to compete in BJJ?
 - a. What motivated you to compete?
 - b. Describe a competition day
 - c. Did you learn anything from that experience?
 - i. Can you tell me more about that?
8. What role does your coach (coaches) play in your BJJ experience?
9. What role do your teammates play in your BJJ experience?
10. How do you see your participation in BJJ in the future?
 - a. What does that mean? Why?
11. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that we did not cover?

Interview 2

Goal: Discuss what failure is to the participant

RQ 2: What does it mean to fail in BJJ?

1. How do you define failure in BJJ?
 - a. How did it feel? How did you behave following the failure? What did you feel you lost after the failure? What did you dislike about the failure?
2. What do you consider failure in training?
 - a. Discuss possible internal/external sources of failure
3. What do you consider a failure in terms of BJJ competition?
 - a. Can you give me an example of a failure in a past competition or training session?
4. What is the worst thing about failing?
 - a. Can you give me an example about that from your own experiences? Can you please talk more about that?
5. What is the best thing about failing?
 - a. Can you give me an example about that from your own experiences? Can you please talk more about that?

Interview 3

Goal: Discuss consequences of failure and coping strategies

RQ 3: What are the perceived consequences of those failures?

1. If you do not achieve your training goals, what will be the consequences?
2. If you do not achieve your competition goals, what will be the consequence?
 - a. Use a future competition as an example for potential future failure to which there might be consequences of failing.

3. What techniques/strategies do you use to handle or deal with these failures?
 - a. What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example?
4. What consequences of failing do you want to avoid the most?
 - a. What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example?

Appendix C: Informed Consent Letter

Fear of Failure in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Practitioners
Informed Consent for Surveys or Interviews
7/10/2020

Allison Smith, from the Sport Administration program in the Department of Health, Exercise, and Sport Sciences is conducting a research project. The purpose of the research is the purpose of this qualitative study will be to better understand the lived experiences of BJJ athletes and how they deal with failure in their sport. You are being asked to participate because you are at least eighteen years of age, have practiced BJJ for at least six months, and have competed in at least one BJJ competition.

Your participation will involve three semi-structured audio-recorded interviews, as well as answering one journal entry prompt. Each interview should take about 45-90 minutes to complete. The interviews includes questions such as [Could you please tell me why you got involved in BJJ?; How do you define failure in BJJ?; What are the perceived consequences of those failures?]

Your involvement in the research is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with your responses. There are no known risks in this research, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions about their personal views and experiences. Data will be stored on password protected computers only accessible to the researchers and will be destroyed three years after the conclusion of the study. All identifiable information (e.g., your name, date of birth) will be removed from the information collected in this project. After we remove all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

The findings from this project will provide information on the experiences and participation in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. If published, results will be presented in summary form only with quotes assigned to pseudonyms being used to protect your information.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please feel free to call Allison Smith at 505-277-0593. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input, please contact the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

By giving your verbal consent to the researcher and participating in the interview, you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research.

Appendix D: Email Recruitment Letter

Subject Line: Opportunity to Participate in Research

Dear x,

I am conducting a research study on fear of failure in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu practitioners.

You are receiving this message because I believe that your experiences as a practitioner in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu will bring a unique perspective to the study, and also one that will assist in expanding the literature on an important topic.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the lived experiences of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu practitioners and how they deal with failure in their sport.

If you agree to participate, this study will involve three phone or Zoom interviews with you at a time of your convenience for about 45 to 90 minutes each, in addition to four journal entries to be entered once per week for four weeks.

Given that the questions focus on your personal life experiences, it is possible that a question or questions may stimulate emotional feelings for you. However, it is not expected that these would exceed those that are common in everyday life. You may choose to not answer any question and withdraw from the study at any time at no penalty to you.

The information that will be probed will not benefit you directly beyond those of simple reflection on a topic of relevance to you. However, you may request a copy of the study when completed, which may be of interest and benefit to you and is anticipated to be of benefit for advancing knowledge on an important topic.

Also, there are no costs to you for participating in this study and no compensation will be provided.

You do not have to be in this study, your decision to be in any study is totally voluntary.

If you feel you understand the study and would like to participate, please reply to this email to set up an appointment to conduct the interview at your convenience.

If you have questions prior to participating, please contact:

- Allison Smith – (absmith15@unm.edu)
- Fred Williams – (fjw@unm.edu)

Thank you for your time,

Signature of sender

(Frederick Williams)

(Student Researcher)

Principal Investigator: *Frederick Williams*

Study Title: Fear of Failure in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Practitioners

IRB #

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

PARTICIPANT ID: (completed by researcher) _____

1. DOB: _____

2. Sex: a. Male b. Female c. Prefer not to say

2. Ethnicity: a. African American b. Asian c. Caucasian d. Latin American
e. Native American f. Pacific Islander g. Other _____ f. Prefer not to say

3. How long have you been participating in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu? _____

4. Have you competed in a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu competition? If yes, how many?

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter



OFFICE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: July 6, 2020

IRB #: 09120
IRBNet ID & TITLE: [1603452-2] Fear of failure in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu practitioner
PI OF RECORD: Allison Smith
SUBMISSION TYPE: Response/Follow-Up

BOARD DECISION: APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 6, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A
RISK LEVEL: MINIMAL RISK
PROJECT STATUS: ACTIVE

DOCUMENTS:

- Consent Form - Consent 07022020 (UPDATED: 07/2/2020)
- Other - UNM IRB Draft Revisions (UPDATED: 06/12/2020)
- Protocol - Protocol 07022020 (UPDATED: 07/2/2020)

Thank you for your Response/Follow-Up submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized. **This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

The IRB has determined the following:

- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation has been waived for this project. To obtain consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that the project can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to participants or others, SERIOUS or UNEXPECTED adverse events, NONCOMPLIANCE issues, and participant COMPLAINTS.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. **It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this project.** If the IRB approval for this project expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this project. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

Please note that all IRB records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the closure of this project.

The Office of the IRB can be contacted through: mail at MSC02 1665, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; phone at 505.277.2644; email at irbmaincampus@unm.edu; or in-person at 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. You can also visit the OIRB website at irb.unm.edu.

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