



**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS SCIENCE**

**DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR OPTIMAL TALENT IDENTIFICATION IN
ELITE HARARE URBAN PARALYMPIC SPORT**

BSc2515

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
HONORS BACHELOR DEGREE IN SPORTS SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT**

JULY 2025

DECLARATION ON PLAGARISM

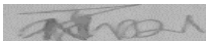
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Acknowledgement

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Abstract

Talent identification is the backbone of sport. , The study focuses on developing a framework for optimal talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. In Zimbabwe, talent identification in Paralympic sport is not a popular topic. Athletes are scouted using traditional methods of talent identification but they have their limits. The research focuses on identifying current talent identification models, the challenges faced when implementing them and the solutions to the problems. The study was carried out in Harare, where the majority of the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee board members and the main organization offices reside. The board members of the ZNPC were the target population of this study and this is because they have knowledge about how they conduct talent identification at their teams. The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative data was collected using interview guides and questionnaires. The data was analyzed using data analysis software, and the results were presented using charts and graphs. The findings of this study shed some light on the current situation Zimbabwe is in when it comes to proper talent identification. Eight (8) participants out of ten(10) managed to take part in an interview and fifteen(15) out twenty(20) participants were able to complete the questionnaire. The results of the study showed that there was an information gap about talent identification in Paralympic sport and this was shown by seven(7) out of fifteen(15) participants remaining neutral when questions concerning a deeper understanding of the process of talent identification were asked. The research proposed a structured mixed method of talent identification. The model is mixed because it combined all other main models which are school based model (where athletes are scouted in schools), community based models (where community programs for people with impairments organized and scouts identify talent within the crowd) and national competitions (where para-athletes already involved in sport are scouted to become professional athletes). The study addressed the challenges that Zimbabwe faced during the process of implementing its current models of talent identification. Those challenges like lack of funding can also be a problem in the new model of talent identification but the research also proposed solutions to tackle those problems.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my late father who first introduced me to sport and sport science and always supported me. A special mention to my family and lectures who have always been there to lend a hand.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

Zimbabwe Para-sports is a growing sport industry with great potential for podium finishes on the world stage if proper development strategies are implemented. This chapter focused on the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the research objectives, the significance of the study, and the delimitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Zimbabwean sport has mainly been focused on sport for able-bodied athletes but there is great talent in Paralympic sports. Zimbabwe Paralympic sports have produced talented athletes who have competed at the international level but the number of athletes is very small due to a lack of talent identification models. The researcher was privileged to work at the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee during his attachment and the shortcomings of the organization were observed. Programs to scout for new athletes and methods of recognizing the potential of para-athletes with dormant talents are a bit lacking in Zimbabwe Paralympic sports. Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee had cases of athletes involved in many sports disciplines due to a lack of participants and this strained the athletes. These issues were shared by a reliable source in the organization. These shortcomings have driven the need for a strategic plan to introduce ways of identifying talent and developing talent to fill in the current gap in the system.

(Dohme et al., 2017, p.126) suggested that “Talent identification and development have been the main topic of discussion in the practical application of coaching and scientific research for a long since the sport became an outstanding industry. The biggest setback for these discussions and researches is that there is no definite or universal interpretation or definition of what talent is”.

According to (Dehghansai et al., 2022,p.23), “It is proven that without a solid source of knowledge and understanding of what talent is, it becomes difficult to perform talent identification and talent development. Another issue is to measure talent and analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of the factors that define talent.”

According to (Till and Baker, 2020,p.4), “It is difficult to measure talent, future progress, and success while we are basing on current talent identification indicators”. Physical and mental indicators can change over time. In Paralympic sports, the scientific knowledge and understanding

about talent identification is limited because the current knowledge about talent identification is being contributed by research done for able-bodied athletes. The research lacks important aspects like disability classification.

(Dehghansai et al.,2021,p.14) state that, “Even though theoretical research concerning able-bodied athletes talent identification and development are increasing and practical application is also being improved by technology advancement there still is limited knowledge about how talent is identified and nurtured in Paralympic sports. In Zimbabwe, talent identification for able-bodied athletes is limited because only Bindura University of Science Education has a sports academy for talent identification from grassroots level to elite sport. That alone is the major talent identification program in Zimbabwe and the program is still yet to maximize its efficiency and is also facing challenges. The same problems being faced in talent identification for able-bodied athletes are twice as difficult when dealing with impaired athletes. Talent identification for athletes with impairments needs more resources like specialized equipment for athletes, disability classification, and specialized training facilities. Despite these many challenges Zimbabwe Paralympic sport needs a solution to this problem.

Several talent identification models as early as eight (8) years old or less and it is a good start for able-bodied athletes but this method is difficult in Paralympic sport because impaired children that age have a very fragile physique and they can easily get injured. According to (Dehghansai et al., 2022,p.5), “In one’s life, impairments can happen anytime so there cannot be a specific stage or time when an athlete starts to train or compete.” Some athletes are born with impairments, some acquire them during adolescence and some when they are fully grown so pinpointing a specific phase for stage 1 of talent identification is difficult.

The major drawback of talent identification in Zimbabwe is the lack of skilled disability classifiers. Talent Identification in Para-Sport is without classification. Classification is the process by which it is determined whether a Para athlete’s impairment is sufficient for them to qualify to compete in Para-Sports (Fortin-Guichard., et al., 2022,p11). Knowing an athlete’s class is important when determining the athlete’s potential in Para-Sport.

The absence of talent identification in Zimbabwe para-sports is shown by a 20-year-old gap of no Paralympic medals. Zimbabwe last won a medal at the Paralympics in 2004 and the medal was won by Elliot Mujaji, and since his retirement Zimbabwe has gone for 20 years without a medal.

Twenty years without a medal is evidence that Zimbabwe Para-sports lacks proper talent identification programs that can help groom young athletes. Zimbabwe para-sports athletes who participated at the Paris 2024 Paralympics did so through the Universality wild cards which are given after an athlete or athletes miss direct qualification. The reliance on the Universality wild cards shows that Zimbabwe is lacking high-performing athletes who can beat the qualifying time or distance. According to Mujaji (2024), “There is a need for continuous talent identification and nurturing in and out of the Games cycle. We need to be very patient as well at scouting more talent and nurturing them plus exposure, going to a lot of competitions before a big stage like the Paralympics”. The former Paralympic gold medalist and current Zimbabwe para-sport national team coach said in an interview after the Paris 2024 Paralympics that Zimbabwe needs more talent identification programs to effectively compete on the world stage. Many para-sport athletes in Zimbabwe were recruited via random encounters on the street and these athletes don’t focus solely on sports since they have side businesses to run. The lack of talent identification programs has caused a void in Zimbabwe’s para-sports in all competition levels. During the Zimbabwe University Sports Association Paralympic games hosted by Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) in 2022, BUSE had only 1 athlete who participated and other universities also had few athletes hence some events did not have enough athletes for a high-quality competition.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Zimbabwe Para-Sports lacks new effective talent identification programs that have the potential to boost the performance level of athletes, the number of impaired athletes participating in Para-Sports, and continuity after current athletes have retired. The idea of talent Identification in Para-Sports is underrated or not the highest priority among the organizing boards, coaches, and researchers hence there is little evidence of research done to solve this problem. The Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee once mentioned the need for Talent Identification programs in para-sports but not much was done. Some organizations still don’t understand that the lack of Talent Identification programs is a problem. During the researcher’s attachment at Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee, he discovered that Zimbabwe already has many schools people with special needs but there is no initiative to seek sports potential among them.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study was to raise awareness about the concept of talent identification in Zimbabwe Para-Sports. The study shed some light on the importance of talent identification, suggested potential talent identification awareness programs, and highlighted basic methods of talent identification in para-sports which are possible in Zimbabwe's elite para-sports because of a lack of resources. The study helped researchers know about the shortage of Zimbabwe-based para-sport talent identification studies that helped future researchers and influenced other scholars to take an interest in the study. The study helped governing boards like the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee to utilize the availability of schools for impaired young adults where it's easy for them to engage with young athletes. The study also helped coaches improve training methods and programs since some talent identification methods can be useful in talent development. The results of this study showed the potential of Zimbabwe para-sports, raised awareness, and attracted well-wishers who have interests in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

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1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Primary Research Question:

1.5.1.1 What framework can be developed for optimal Talent Identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport?

1.5.2 Subsidiary Research Questions:

1.5.2.1. What are the current talent identification models used in Zimbabwe for Para-sports?

1.5.2.2. What are the challenges that limit the effectiveness of talent identification programs in Zimbabwe para-sport?

1.5.2.3. What talent identification framework can be implemented to improve talent identification in Zimbabwe para-sports?

1.6 Research Objectives

1.6.1 Primary Research Objective

1.6.1.1 To develop a framework for optimal talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

1.6.2 Subsidiary Research Objective

1.6.2.1. To examine and analyze the existing talent identification models currently in use in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

1.6.2.2. To analyze the challenges being faced by Zimbabwe Paralympic sport in-terms of talent identification and development.

1.6.2.3. To propose a feasible and effective talent identification framework tailored to improve Paralympic sport development in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study focused on developing talent identification programs among para-sports in Harare Urban, as it is home to the offices of the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee, where board members are based. Harare has many Paralympic sports clubs which makes it easy to conduct the study with the limited timeframe and resources.

The study focused on the theoretical aspect of talent identification without the practical application of talent identification.

The study was conducted within the timeframe of March 2025 to June 2025 excluding any long-term observations to see if the talent identification programs are yielding results.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter introduced the background of the study, the motive of the study, the objectives, and the research question which were answered at the end of the study. It illustrated the limits of the study because of the timeframe and other factors. The following chapter has literature review which is an analytical summary of an existing body of research in light of the issue of developing a framework for optimal talent identification in elite Paralympic sports.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Talent identification in para-sport is not a very popular subject in sports science. There are many theories concerning talent identification in able-bodied athletes but they don't all apply to athletes with special needs. To succeed in creating a framework for talent identification in Zimbabwe it was vital to base the research properly on well-established principles. Researchers have conducted studies to create literature that supports proper talent identification methods in para-sports. The purpose of this literature review was to define and understand basic terms used in talent identification and to analyze theories concerning talent identification of para-athletes in other countries and also in Zimbabwe. The researcher also reviewed research carried out on talent identification in para-sport and identified the gaps in the literature.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Talent identification

Ross (2013) defined talent as a set of personal characteristics that enhance one's ability to achieve expertise in an accelerated manner. These traits allow one to improve at quicker rates than others in their field who are at the same level of expertise, fitness, skill, and other physical abilities. This is because talent is one's ability to adapt to training and develop skills in their specialized field. Talent exists when strong genetics and a desire to practice come together to create a superior ability for a specific activity. Based on the definition of talent by Ross (2013), talent identification is the process of identifying characteristics that enhance an athlete's ability to achieve expertise in an accelerated manner.

According to (Fortin-Guichard, et al., 2022,p.19), "Talent identification and development describe the process of an athlete moving into, and/or progressing up the high-performance pathway to an elite or mastery status. (Peltola 1992,p.2) defined talent identification as the process by which children are encouraged to participate in the sports in which they are most likely to succeed, based on results of testing selected parameters.

(Peltola's 1992,p.2) definition of talent identification was approved by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) which is now known as World Athletes. The definition is now old

compared to Ross (2013) and it lacks concepts of genetics, muscle groups, and specific components of fitness that are necessary to identify talent.

These definitions of talent identification are basic definitions which focus on able-bodied athletes but talent identification in para-sport is very different and complicated for example: According to (Fortin-Guichard, et al., (2022,p.30), talent identification starts when athletes are children and develops until they are professionals but in para-sports some athletes were injured when they were adults, some were born disabled, some were former athletes who got injured so having a universal definition for talent identification in para-sports is almost difficult.

Talent is a quality or qualities that are identified at any point in time and can be used to predict success at a future point in time. The process of identifying the qualities is called talent identification. The process of nurturing these qualities is talent development (Baker,2018).

The definition of talent and talent identification by Baker (2018) fits perfectly in para-sports. Baker (2018) pointed out that the time for talent identification is not fixed but it is continuous and talent identification can be done despite the age of the athlete. The definition cancels the theory that talent identification happens at an early stage of childhood and it sheds new light in para-sport that any athlete is eligible for talent identification as long as they are capable of participation without any further harm to the body.

2.2.2 Classification

Fortin-Guichard, et al., (2022) Talent identification in para-sports is aimless without classification. Classification is the process by which it is determined whether a Para athlete's impairment is sufficient for them to qualify to compete in para-sports and if so, in which class they should compete. And because performance should be more severely impacted with each successive class, an individual's potential in para-sport should be considered relative to the class in which they will compete. Knowledge of a potential athlete's class is a vital step in determining the athlete's true potential in the sport.

According to Fortin-Guichard, et al., (2022), the first stage of talent identification is classification.

2.2.3 Impairment

Impairment refers to any abnormality of psychological anatomical or physiological structure or function. Understanding these terms is vital to this research. These terms explain the basics that

one must understand to create a good framework for talent identification. These terms also give an insight on where Zimbabwe Para-sport is lacking in terms of talent identification.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 The Three Approaches to Talent

This theory was established by Dr. Joe Baker (York University, 2011,p.13) and it gives three concepts of talent that can influence and change the process of talent identification. According to (Baker 2011,p.13), talent identification is based on an assumption that:

- Talent exists
- Talent can be measured

Dr. Joe Baker further improved his theory and came up with three approaches to talent which are:

2.3.1.1 Talent exists and it is easily predicted using stable indicators (genetic/nature approach).

2.3.1.2 Talent does not exist and elite performance is wholly explained through experience/training (nurture/deliberate practice approach).

2.3.1.3 Talent exists but is the result of constant processes of change based on genes and environment (interactionist/emergent approach).

Talent identification in para-sport uses all three approaches to talent for example using the first approach to talent, identifying muscle groups in an athlete can help identify talent for sprints or long-distance running. Using the second approach to talent, sports like wheelchair racing are excelled by athletes who have mastered the control of their wheelchair and this is not talent but experience from continuous use of the equipment. Using the third approach, disabled athletes in countries with high altitudes have adapted to the environment and their bodies have improved their lung capacity and other body system. This change results in talent for endurance activities like long-distance running.

2.3.2 Talent Identification Challenges: The Two Factors Theory

(Dehghansai et al., 2022,p.44) theorized two major factors that cause challenges in talent identification and development in Paralympics. These two factors are also a major concern in Zimbabwe and talent identification is impossible without addressing them.

2.3.2.1 Impairment Related Factors

Studies have shown that athletes with impairments that were present since birth are different from athletes who develop an impairment after death for example from an accident.

According to (Radtke and Doll-Tepper, 2014,p.20), “Athletes in Paralympic sport start to participate in sport at different stages in the sports career and this is because of the different onset of impairment. The impairment onset is an important factor when looking back at an athlete’s career. According to (Radtke and Doll-Tepper, 2014,p.21), “Impairment onset is an important frame of reference to understanding how trajectories are shaped for example a Paralympic athlete with an impairment acquired during their adulthood may have vast experience in non-Paralympic sport before they started pursuing a career in Paralympic sport. This is different from a Paralympic athlete who was born with an impairment or acquired it during their childhood. The interest in participating in sports can be traced back to the point where they acquired the impairment. Those who were born with an impairment or acquired it during childhood may be interested in playing sports for fun or exercise and some might have goals of becoming an elite professional athlete but both have no previous sports experience and are different from the athletes who were already involved in sports”.

2.3.2.2 Classification Related Factors

Paralympic sports organizations use disability classification to group athletes with the same class of impairment for example for visual impairment class B1 is for near-total blindness and B3 is moderate visual impairment so athletes in B1 are grouped together and B3 athletes are grouped.

(Dehghansai et al.,2022,p.49), “Variations in athlete impairment type influence performance trajectories and training histories”. Managers and performance analysts have indicated how an athlete’s impairment type, how severe the impairment is and their classification can be used as a key indicator for the first stage of talent identification. The challenge being faced by coaches is the lack of the ability to predict which class their athlete will likely be classified in. A quick traditional classification based on experience can be used by coaches to create a team but an official disability classification by a professional is required. There are disadvantages of traditional classification for example a coach can identify an athlete and several resources like equipment and facility improvement are invested in the athlete training and when he or she goes to compete they will be found not eligible to compete in the sport they were training for.

The impairment-related factors which were theorized based on (Dehghansai et al., 2022,p.50) research study have shed some light in the challenges that the Zimbabwe Para-sport must be facing when trying to implement talent identification strategies. The theory brings out the idea of knowing when and how the athlete became disabled (was the athlete born with special needs, was the athlete impaired in his or her childhood, late childhood, early adulthood, or late adulthood). These different categories mean there are different factors that can be considered when identifying talent for each category.

Supporting this theory (Dehghansai et al., 2022,p.50) further gave findings of a talent identification experiment using athletes with different impairment onset and the results were as follows, “Findings highlighted high degrees of variation in athletes' sporting careers based on the onset of their impairment. More specifically, athletes with congenital or early acquired impairments reached milestones at a younger age; however, athletes with later acquired impairments (i.e., early adulthood or adulthood) progressed through these milestones at a faster pace. Furthermore, athletes with experience in other sports (both non-Paralympic and Paralympic) reported participating in sports that were similar to their current sport.”

The results of the findings also introduced a concept of able-bodied athletes who were injured and went to participate the same event but in the Paralympics so discovering such athletes and introduce them to para-sport is it really talent identification or is discovering a person who has been using a wheelchair for twenty years since birth and is now used to it and has developed upper body strength talent identification of a wheelchair racer? These questions show the different considerations that must be noted when performing talent identification in para-sport.

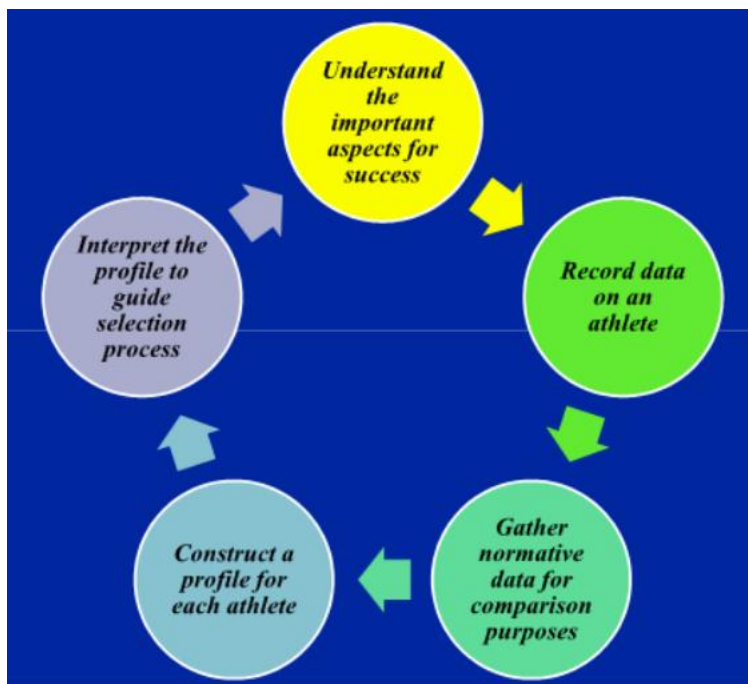
(Dehghansai et al., (2022,p.51) also highlighted the challenges in talent identification that are caused by poor or no classification. Classification needs trained professionals and most Paralympic coaches in Zimbabwe are not familiar with it and when they discover a new athlete using talent identification without classification the athlete might end up in a category he or she is not eligible.

2.4 Thematic Review

2.4.1 Existing talent identification models

Figure 2.1

Traditional talent identification process (Ackland,2006,p.3)

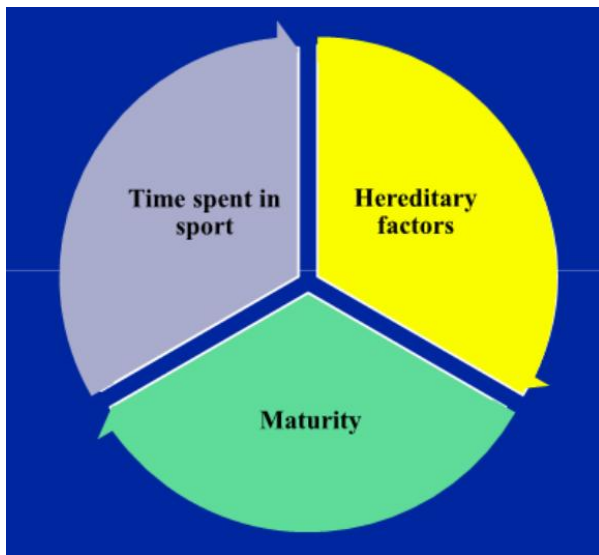


Ackland (2006) theorized five stages of talent identification and the advantage of this process is easy to implement and it can be managed with few resources. This process is vital in this current research because can be managed within the research timeframe.

The disadvantage of this theory is its more generalized and it's not very effective in para-sports since it ignores the concept of classification.

Figure 2.2

Factors to consider for talent identification (Gulpin and Ackland,2009,p.3)



The factors put forward by Gulpin and Ackland, (2009) are too outdated but they work in traditional talent identification. Due to technology improvements, more factors are now being considered when performing talent identification but there is a gap in research and practical application of these factors in talent identification in para-sports.

2.4.2 Causes of the lack of talent identification

2.4.2.1 Resources

According to (Martin-Ginis et al., 2016), “Paralympic sports always had less funding compared to their non-Paralympic counterparts. This extends to the distribution of limited resources supporting Paralympic sport athletes' development”.

According to Goodridge et al., (2015), “While sports are already an expensive activity the additional costs associated with impairment-related factors exacerbate athletes' circumstances for example equipment cost including prosthetics or wheelchairs, travel for classification and talent identification equipment”. Some Paralympic athletes have very special needs and they need

support from caregivers and parents. Athletes need help to use training facilities and travel distances to attend competitions. The traveling and caregiver expenses make it difficult to participate in Paralympic sports.

In Zimbabwe Para-sports, the lack of resources is the number one(1) cause of poor talent identification. Athletes need specialized equipment during talent identification and development and since Zimbabwe para-sports has no sponsors the lack of talent identification due to insufficient resources will remain a problem. Knowledge of this aided this research and this theory has made it clear about the relationship between money and talent identification.

2.4.2.1 Athlete Pool

Classification has merits but sometimes there might be few athletes in certain impairment classes because not everyone is interested in sport. This will cause a lack of competition in a field with few athletes. The number of para-athletes with potential for high performance is reduced because they were not eligible to compete.

According to Lowry et al., (2022,p.6), “The challenge of identifying potential athletes is caused by the limited resources a sport has and the type of athlete they choose to support. There are more old sports activities with a history of established programs and a wider classification system for example para-swimming. These sports have fewer problems in talent identification and development of athletes into the sport. These sports will also have to be strategic in which athletes they select based on issues related to athletes' potential given their disability classification. There are certain sports where a limited number of athletes is needed.

Talent identification for team sports is highly difficult because of classification. The team may not be formed because of a lack of players eligible to participate. Coaches may become hesitant to invest in a potential athlete for a team sport since he or she may not have teammates to play with.

2.5 Conclusion

Talent identification in para-sport is still a subject with very little literature and research studies. Many theories about talent identification are now outdated and the definition of talent and the qualities which are needed to be observed for proper talent identification have changed. The causes of difficulties in talent identification are well documented and the theories make sense they applied greatly to this study and the lack of talent identification models in Zimbabwe. This study, using

past established theories focused on creating a traditional talent identification framework that is best suited for a developing country like Zimbabwe with limited resources.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter focused on talent identification theories that drove this current research. The chapter showed researchers who are leading the study of talent identification in para-sports and the research methodology in the next chapter was guided by these theories and research findings. The next chapter continued with added research findings which influenced the methods the researcher used to create research objectives.

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the research methods that were used to conduct the research. It also explained the population and sampling procedures, the research design, data collection, and analysis. The ethical considerations were also covered in the chapter. The chapter justified the link between the research objectives and the research method of choice.

3.2 Research Approach

The study was conducted using the mixed-method research approach for effective data gathering. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed the researcher to gather mixed data. Using mixed-method research is a popular approach in recent studies. This method enabled the study to deeply explore the research questions by utilizing a mix of “qualitative and quantitative data”. By combining both “quantitative and qualitative data”, the research questions and research objective were thoroughly analyzed by this mixed method approach. This approach answered difficult research queries that could not have been solved if either “qualitative” or “quantitative” research had been used alone.

According to (Miroslav 2023), “The mixed method approach combines the strengths of “qualitative” and “quantitative” data, and this results in rich and quality “quantitative” data, and the data is compared to the findings from qualitative data. This method is flexible and allows easy research designing and hypothesis testing”.

The researcher used interviews to ask board members questions and used a questionnaire to ask coaches and talent identification experts questions. The use of these two methods helped to gather important data on developing a framework for optimum talent identification in Zimbabwe para-sport.

3.3 Time Horizons

The research was conducted using the cross-sectional time horizon which involves the collection of data at a single point in time to examine phenomena or relationships. This study was based on

an analysis of current models of talent identification and impacts which can be achieved by studying the existing situation at a particular moment rather than tracking changes over time.

Using (Saunders, et al 2019,p.4) as a reference, “a cross-sectional study is appropriate when a researcher investigates “a particular phenomenon at a particular time.” This type of study is widely used in organizational and policy research where the aim is to gain insights into current practices and inform framework or model development.

(Bryman, 2016), emphasizes that cross-sectional studies are suitable for establishing relationships between variables and exploring prevailing conditions, especially when resources or time constraints limit the feasibility of longitudinal studies. This supported the nature of the study which had a limited time frame.

3.4 Research Strategies Research Design

3.4.1 Convergent Parallel Research Design

According to (Miroslav,2023), “The researcher used the “convergent parallel design” in which the process of collecting of “quantitative” and “qualitative” data was done at the same time and the analysis was done separately. The “convergent parallel research design” is used to create a set of data that link with each other. The researcher used this research design by gathering and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data “concurrently”. The decision to base this study was motivated by the need to have quality data. This was supported by (Kowalczyk.et al, 2023) who concluded that using a mixed method approach helps to give a deeper revelation of the data. This study used interviews and questionnaires to collect data concurrently from para-sport coaches and talent identification experts.

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1 Population

The target “population” for this research where the coaches involved in coaching Zimbabwe para-sports, the board members of the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee, athletes, and experts in Talent identification. The researcher contacted the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee

for permission to contact the coaches and board members of the Organization. Experts in talent identification are individuals who have studied talent identification at a degree level and those who have previously researched talent identification in Zimbabwe. This target population was chosen because of the knowledge they possess. The board members at ZNPC have information about how they conduct their talent identification programs, the advantages and disadvantages of their methods, and the resources they need for optimum talent identification. Athletes have information on how they first started playing sport and this was important to create a pattern.

3.5.2 Sampling

3.5.2.1 Probability Sampling

The researcher used stratified random sampling which ensured that all key subgroups within the population were represented. This method increased the randomness of the findings across the diverse stakeholders involved in Paralympic sport. Stratified sampling enhances statistical precision and ensures that minority groups are not overlooked (Bryman, 2016).

This sampling procedure was chosen over simple random sampling and systematic sampling because the former might overlook smaller but significant subgroups for example rural-based coaches and the latter could introduce bias if the population list has hidden patterns.

The stratified random sampling procedure was implemented by first identifying key subgroups based on roles in talent identification and Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. The groups included athletes, coaches, trainers, talent identification experts, and sports science researchers. The questionnaire was randomly distributed amongst the identified subgroups and they randomly answered the questionnaire.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria ensure that the study population is both relevant to the study and is capable of providing information that is valuable to the study and that answers the research questions and helps achieve the objectives. The inclusion criteria which was used in the study targeted individuals who are knowledgeable in talent identification and who are involved in Zimbabwe Paralympic sports.

The following are the conditions for meeting the inclusion criteria:

- Para-athletes – people with impairments who are involved in sports or who used to participate in sports (These are primary stakeholders who are directly involved in sports and can relate to how they were scouted and how others lost opportunity during talent identification.)
- Coaches and Trainers for athletes with impairments – Coaches also take part in talent identifications and have knowledge of how they recruit their athletes and train them.
- Talent identification experts- These are individuals who have gone under talent identification and Adapted sport courses. These individuals have knowledge about talent identification and adapted sports and can link the two to give a reasonable response to the study questions.
- Sport science researchers- These are individuals who have taken their time to research talent identification. These individuals have a deeper understanding of talent identification models.
- Participants over 18 years - This ensures ethical research practice which allows legally valid informed consent, and mature and reflective responses.

The participants were excluded from the study based on the following criteria:

- Individuals who do not know about talent identification, are not involved in Paralympic sports, general athletes, coaches and officials in able-bodied sports who have no engagement with Para-sport.
- Minors under 18 years - Ethical and consent-related limitations prevented the inclusion of minors unless additional parental consent and approvals were secured.

3.5.2.2 Non-Probability sampling

For “Non-probability sampling”, purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with specific knowledge or experience relevant to the study and these included officials from the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee, senior coaches, and sports development officers.

According to (Patton, 2015), “Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately select individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced in Paralympic sport and talent identification. Purposive sampling is ideal when rich, detailed understanding is needed from key informants”. Purposive sampling was preferred over convenience sampling because it usually results in low data quality and non-expert opinions. This is because convenience sampling selects participants based on availability and ease of access and not their relevance to the research.

The researcher was focused on gathering quality data and the following procedure was used for Non-probability sampling:

The participants were chosen based on their position in the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee and expertise in Paralympic sport. Requests for interviews were sent to board members and the permission to interview them was granted by the secretary general of the organization. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp. The interview questions were created based on the research objectives.

3.5.3 Sample Size Determination

3.5.3.1 Quantitative Sample Size

The research had a small population. The target population was 20 participants and the Finite Population Correction (FPC) adjusted formula was used:

First the initial sample size was calculated assuming there was an infinite population:

$$N_0 = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{E^2}$$

Using $Z = 1.96$ (for 95% confidence)

$P = 0.5$ (most conservative estimate)

$E = 0.05$ (5% margin of error)

$$N_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} = 384.16 \text{ (participants for a large population)}$$

Since the population was less than 1000 the researcher applied the FPC adjusted formula:

$$n = \frac{N_0}{1 + \frac{N_0 - 1}{N}}$$

Using $N_0 = 384.16$

$N = 20$ (the target population)

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1 + \frac{384.16 - 1}{20}} = \frac{384.16}{20.158}$$

$$n \approx 19.06$$

The researcher needed 19 participants from a population of 20 to maintain a 95% confidence level and 5 % margin of error.

3.5.3.2 Qualitative Sample Size

During the study, the researcher continued data collection until data saturation was reached. The data was collected based on the hierarchy of the ZNPC, starting from the bottom and going up, and comparing if the information was more refined as the data collection process continued. “The sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, wherein interviews continued until no new themes emerged, consistent with recommendations by (Guest et al. 2006).”

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.6.1 Pilot Study

From the target population, the researcher contacted a smaller group of participants and these were selected using purposive sampling. The participants answered the first draft of the interview questions and they approved the distribution of the questions to other board members of the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee. The goal of this was to test if the questions were appropriate and to get approval for continuing the study in the organization. The questionnaire was also distributed to a select few to check if it covered all aspects of the research objectives. The participants were asked to note any repetitive, unclear, or difficult questions.

After the pilot study, the feedback from the selected participants was gathered but fortunately, no adjustments were needed.

3.6.2 Main Study

The objective of the study was to collect data from the target population using the interview questions and questionnaires from the pilot study and to gather the necessary information to develop the talent identification framework for Zimbabwe Paralympic Sport.

The researcher used two research tools which are questionnaires and interview questions. The questionnaire was created on Google-Forms and the selected target population received a link to fill out the questionnaire. The response was recorded on the form and the data was exported to SPSS which is a research software for data analysis.

The research took place between March 2025 and June 2025 in Harare but major data processes were done via online platforms.

The subjects of this research were the key stakeholders in the Zimbabwe Paralympic and experts in adapted sports and talent identification. These were noted as key figures with knowledge about talent identification in Paralympic sport. The study used a mixed method approach combining quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods to explore the current state and future of talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

A total of 15 participants completed the quantitative questionnaire and 8 participants participated in the semi-structured interviews and this gave the researcher deep insights into the study.

The mixed method design was used because it provided a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the research problem. The quantitative data helped to find patterns and measure variables such as the extent of Paralympic sport awareness, and knowledge about the current models of talent identification in Paralympic sport. Qualitative data provided inside information about the process of talent identification which is currently done at the Zimbabwe National Paralympic Committee.

Using both methods allowed the researcher to collect data from within the organization and also based on the view of external stakeholders and other talent identification experts.

Even though the researcher used a mixed method design the sample size was very small and this limited the research from discovering a large selection of findings and this prevented drawing broader conclusions about the study. The limited number of participants was influenced by resource constraints, participant availability, and response rate. This was also influenced by the lack of excess of contacting Paralympic athletes since there are many challenges that they face because of their impairments and the ethical issues were also taken into account. Some participants with impairments required additional accommodation for example participants with visual impairments required hard copy questionnaires in braille.

The Non-Probability sampling might have been biased because the targeted population were board members (these consist of coaches who represent their para-sport) and they might have felt the need to praise how they do talent identification in their respective sport so the qualitative data provided might slightly be questionable.

The probability sampling might have also been partially questionable because some participants might not have been talent identification experts as they were advertised and the information they provided might not have been well thought-out.

The study was conducted within a limited which may have affected the depth of follow up in interviews and the number of participants.

Participants may have responded in ways they believed were socially desirable or aligned with what the researcher wanted to hear especially given that the research addressed the sensitive context of disability and inclusion in sport.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

For quantitative data which consisted of questionnaires, a data analysis software called “Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS)” was used for data analysis and it performed the following:

- Importing and cleaning data: data from Google Forms was presented in Excel and the researcher used SPSS to import the data and check if it was complete and all the questions were answered.
- Descriptive statistics: the data characteristics like age and gender were summarized to be visible and understandable.

- Visual representation: The researcher presented data using graphs and tables to visually interpret the findings in the study.
- Inferential statistics: t-tests were used to assess whether differences in perceptions or experience are statistically significant.
- Frequency analysis: SPSS was used to determine how often certain responses occurred for example how many participants reported lack of funds was a barrier to talent identification in Paralympic sport.

For qualitative analysis, a software called Atlas.ti was used to manage and analyze data from interview questions. The researcher used the software to specifically perform the following:

- Import the interview data into Atlas.ti.
- Coding transcripts: labels were assigned to key themes such as lack of funding, and organization support.
- Theme development: Labels were organized into broader themes that relate to research questions and objectives.
- Network views: Visually presented relationships between themes and showed how different concepts influence talent identification.
- Frequency analysis: The researcher analyzed how often the labeled themes appeared and how they relate to each other.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire and interview guide with a small group of participants. This helped to identify errors, refine wording, and ensure that instruments accurately captured the research objectives. The use of mixed methods (questionnaires and interviews)

allowed for methodological triangulation by cross-validating findings from quantitative and qualitative data sources. This enhanced the trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn.

Where possible, interview participants were allowed to review summaries of their responses to ensure that their views were accurately interpreted. This minimized researcher bias and misinterpretation. Discussions with academic supervisors and peers were used to review methods, instruments, and emerging findings. This helped improve the quality of the research.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct was strictly observed throughout the research process, particularly given the involvement of participants with disabilities who may face vulnerabilities in research contexts.

All participants received clear and accessible information about the study's purpose, procedures, and benefits. Verbal informed consent was obtained before participation and participation was voluntary. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequence and their identities were protected and will never be revealed. The data collected was kept safe in password-protected gadgets and access was limited to the researcher.

The permission to research on the organization was under the promise of sharing the research findings after the study was completed.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter showed the research methods that were chosen by the researcher and how effective were they to the study. The target population and how it was chosen was clearly shown in the chapter. The chapter enlightened why the researcher chose the time horizon the study took and the academic justification of the chosen path. The researcher proved why the study followed the mixed-method strategy. The chapter gave details about the problems that were met during the research and gave more information about what caused the problems. Ethical considerations during the study were written in the chapter.

The following chapter will show was the data collected using the mixed-method approach was analyzed and presented. The chapter will go further into how the target population responded to the questionnaires and the interview questions and why the sample size was small.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The following research chapter presents and discusses the “response rate”, “demographic data” and “findings” linked to the “research objectives”. It shows how data was analyzed, presented in tables and graphs and how it was interpreted.

4.2 Response rate

Table 4.1

Questionnaire response

Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaire Completed	Response rate %
20	15	75

The response rate of the questionnaire was 75% and it's a fair percentage considering the fact that the sample size was small. Due to the fact that the absolute number of responses was low, the findings slightly lacked statistical power. The response was fair because the participants knew talent identification but the sample size was originally small because the researcher anticipated that the participants might be reluctant to participate due to the nature of the study.

Table 4.2

Interview response

Interview proposed	Interviews done	Interview completed	Response rate %
10	8	8	80

An 80% response rate was achieved and it is considered a strong yield in qualitative data analysis. This high response rate compensated for the small sample from the questionnaire. The response from the interview was high because the target population knew the importance of the study since they are the ones who manage Paralympic sports at the national level.

Table 4.3

Average research response rate

Questionnaire response rate	Interview response rate	Average research response rate
75	80	77.5

The research had an average of 77.4% response rate and it showed that people were interested in the study and with more time and resources the study will yield more and better results.

4.3 Demographic Data

Figure 4.1

Age and Gender

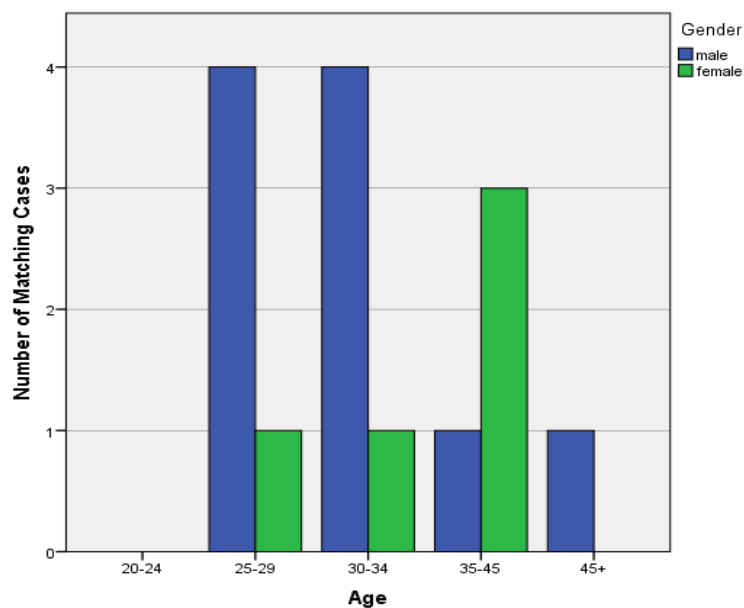


Figure 4.1 shows the number of males and females in a certain age range. The overall results show that there are more men than women who responded to the questionnaire and this may show that

few women were interested in talent identification. The researcher's target population was not based on gender but on age. The study was interested in an older pool of participants who have more knowledge and experience. The interest in an older target population was given evident by the lack of participants younger than 25. Participants were all above 25 years or above and this made the data collected reliable. There were more females in the age range from 35years to 45years and combining that to 1 male in the same category and another male participant older than 45 the study had 5 participants who were 35years and older so the input from them is reliable since they covered a third of the target population.

4.4 Presentation and Analysis

The data being presented was collected using questionnaires and interview questions. The data from the questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS and the data from interview questions was analyzed using Atlas.ti. The data was translated and presented in tables in the order from the first research question and objective to the fourth research question and objective.

The following data analysis was done for the first research question and objective which are: What framework can be developed for optimal Talent Identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport and to develop a framework for optimal talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sports.

Figure 4.2

Code Co-Occurrence Analysis

	Build partnerships	Community outreach	Follow-up programs	National database	Regional scouting events
Build partnerships		1	1	1	0
Community outreach	1		0	0	0
Follow-up programs	1	0		1	0
Long-term funding	1	0	3	2	1
Mentorship	2	0	1	2	1
Monitoring tools	0	0	1	0	0
Regional scouting events	0	0	0	2	
Regular evaluations	3	0	1	2	1
Train local scouts	1	0	3	3	2

Analyzing the data showed codes from responses and they showed that training local scouts which can constantly work to identify talent within communities is strongly tied to the creation of follow up programs and national database for Paralympic athletes. This means that the participants saw that these three are essential when creating a framework for optimum talent identification.

According to the analysis, building partnerships, mentorship for new athletes, long term funding and regular evaluations also appeared frequently together and this indicated these were also considered important themes necessary for creating a framework for optimum talent identification.

Figure 4.3

Effective talent identification method

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School Based	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Community Based	4	26.7	26.7	46.7
	National Competitions	1	6.7	6.7	53.3
	Mixed Method	7	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Using descriptive analysis, the questionnaire was analyzed to collect data on the first objective and research question of the study. The objective was to create a framework for optimum talent identification and the participants gave feedback on their thoughts. According to the frequency table:

Using national competitions as a method of talent identification was suggested once and it had the lowest percentage of 6.7%. This means that the participants didn't think it was an effective method for talent identification.

A school-based method of talent identification had a fair response from 3 participants suggesting it is an effective way to identify talent. Its valid percentage of 20% means that it has a high potential of being a model of talent identification in Paralympic sport.

Many participants suggested a community-based model is very effective when identifying talent. A high percentage means that its effectiveness is high because unlike scouting at national competitions, most people living with impairments are found in the community.

The most effective method of talent identification is a mixed method which was suggested by 7 participants and has a valid percentage of 46.7. The mixed method of talent identification is when the school based model, community based model, and national competition model of talent identification are all combined into a framework for optimum talent identification. This method covers a wider athlete pool.

Conclusion

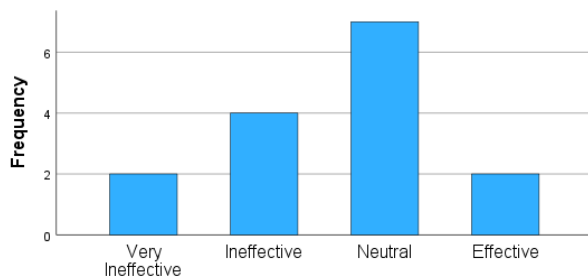
By combining the data from the questionnaire which suggested a mixed method of talent identification and the data from the interview which suggested the methods to support the mixed

method of talent identification a working talent identification framework has been created. A mixed method of talent identification is expensive but the solutions from the code co-occurrence suggested building partnerships with external stakeholders and creating a long-term funding plan as a solution to the money problem. The problem of having few qualified staff to cover all areas of talent identification (schools, communities, and competitions) is addressed by training new local scouts and having mentors in every community.

The second research objective and research question

The objective, “to examine and analyze the existing talent identification models currently in use in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport” and the research question, “What are the current talent identification models used in Zimbabwe for Para-sports?” were summarized into a proper interview question, and questionnaire which effectively gathered data to analyze the objectives and answer the research question. The answers from the interview were analyzed using Atlas.ti and the answers from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive analysis in SPSS.

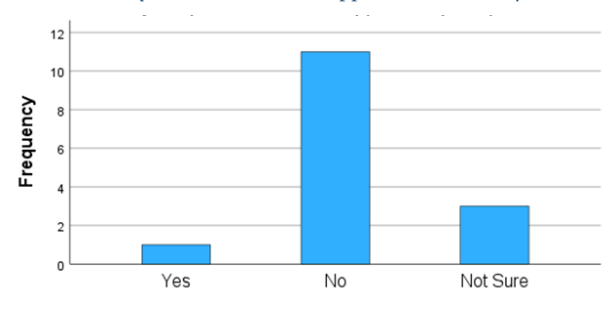
Figure 4.4
The effectiveness of current talent identification models



The data was presented in a graph to show the responses of participants regarding the effectiveness of the talent identification models being used in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. Just two participants found the current system effective and other two found it very ineffective. Four participants found the system ineffective which is a lighter opinion compared very effective. The majority of the participants remained neutral but the 6 participants who found the system ineffective shifted the scale to the negative side.

Figure 4.5

Are there adequate resources to support talent identification?



The majority of participants agreed that there are no adequate resources to support talent identification hence there is no effective talent identification models. Only a single participant agreed to the claim that there are adequate resources for talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. Three participants were not sure about the current situation of resource allocation at Zimbabwe Paralympic sport organization.

Figure 4.6

Code Co-occurrence analysis

	Informal talent identification	Lack of formal scouting	Reliance on disability events	Word of mouth referrals
Community referrals	1	0	0	1
Informal talent identification		8	8	9
Lack of formal scouting	8		8	8
Recommendations from coaches	1	0	0	1
Reliance on disability events	8	8		8
Word of mouth referrals	9	8	8	

Code Co-Occurrence is used to see the similarities between concepts that were suggested by the participants when they answered the question in an interview which collected data on the second objective of the research and the second research question. **Figure 4.6** shows relationships between the codes that were assigned to summarize the answers of the participants. The participants answered the question, “What are the current talent identification models used in Zimbabwe for Para-sports?” and the answers were assigned codes. According to **Figure 4.6**:

Participants who answered that Zimbabwe Paralympic sports use community referral as a way to scout athletes also suggested that verbal reference was also used. Participants who pointed out that there is an informal talent identification model at the organization also gave similar information to the ones who suggested that players are scouted from coach recommendations, word-of-mouth referrals and that there is a lack of formal scouting. The relationship between the codes is inputted as numbers. The number shows how many times a similar or common answer was suggested for example reliance on disability events for talent identification and word-of-mouth referrals for talent identification were common in 8 interview answers.

Interpretation

- Informal talent identification and lack of formal scouting were very common in the research data and this shows that the current situation of Talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport is informal.
- Disability Events: The lack of co-occurrence with other methods suggests that reliance on disability events may not integrate well with other identification strategies. Using disability events for talent identification seems to be rarely done in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport and this might be because the participants were already scouted and no new athletes participate in the events. This shows a lack of Paralympic sports awareness.
- Community referrals: Based on the data presented in **Figure 4.6**, few participants mentioned that community reference is used to identify talent. Community reference is when people recommend someone with an impairment to a sports discipline.

The overall interpretation of this co-occurrence highlights that informal methods are being used in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. Some other methods like depending on disability events to identify

talent need a strategic plan to be effectively implemented. Joining all the informal methods of talent identification into a single talent identification model can improve recruitment efforts.

Using the data from the code co-occurrence table and frequency graphs it was determined that the present talent identification models are informal and not effective. The responses from interviews and questionnaires answered the second research question of the study.

Third research question and objective

Figure 4.7

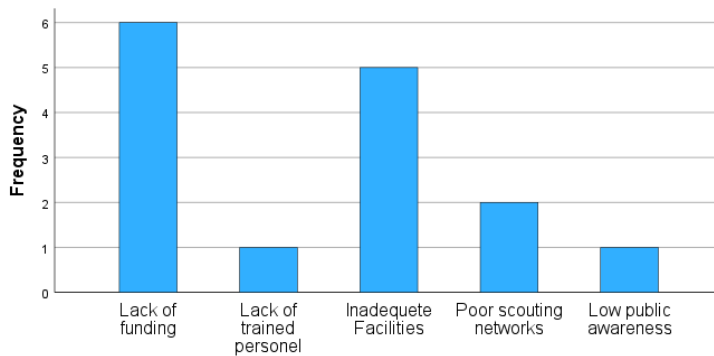
Barriers to effective talent identification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of funding	6	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Lack of trained personel	1	6.7	6.7	46.7
	Inadequete Facilities	5	33.3	33.3	80.0
	Poor scouting networks	2	13.3	13.3	93.3
	Low public awareness	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

The data was further displayed in a graph:

Figure 4.8

Barriers to effective talent identification



Low public awareness and lack of trained personnel were regarded as small barriers that affect talent identification and only two participants mentioned them as barriers. Poor scouting networks have a small valid percentage and frequency hence it was not regarded as a major barrier to effective talent identification. One of the major barriers to effective talent identification is the lack of adequate facilities. Paralympic athletes need specialized equipment and training facilities for good talent identification and development.

The most problematic barrier is the lack of funds. The majority of participants mentioned it as a barrier to talent identification and it is true because without funds there won't be adequate facilities and equipment, poor scouting network, low public awareness, and a lack of trained personnel .

Figure 4.9

Co-Occurrence Analysis

	Challenges in talent nurturing	Lack of awareness in rural areas	Lack of national awareness	Lack of trained personnel in talent ident...
Challenges in talent nurturing		1	4	1
Inaccessible facilities	4	0	4	0
Insufficient financial resources	5	0	4	1
Lack of awareness in rural areas	1		0	0
Lack of national awareness	4	0		0
Limited mobility of scouts	2	1	0	1
Stigma around disability	1	1	0	0

Figure 4.9 illustrates the analysis conducted for the second question of the interview which helped collect data for the third research question and study's objectives. The data shows codes that were created to interpret responses to the question about the challenges faced by Zimbabwe Paralympic sport organizations.

Interpretation

The stigma around disability co-occurs only once with two categories (Challenges in talent nurturing and lack of awareness in rural areas). This was less frequently mentioned in the responses but it is still a factor that cannot be ignored.

Lack of national awareness and challenges in talent nurturing have a value of 4 which is a sign that the participants believed that lack of recognition at the national competitions is a major problem when trying Talent identification.

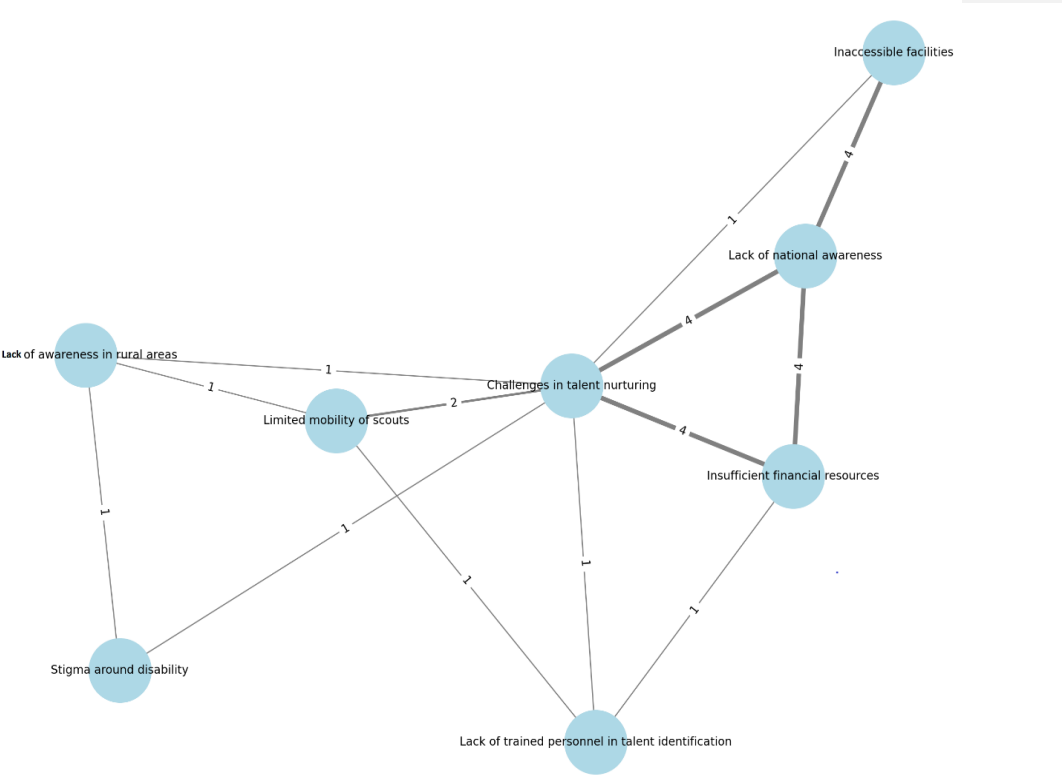
Inaccessible facilities and challenges in talent nurturing have a value of 4 and this means that both challenges are a major barrier to talent identification. Talent identification in Paralympic sport needs a lot of specialized equipment hence participants emphasized the need for facilities.

Insufficient financial resources and challenges in talent nurturing have a value of 5 and this strongly implies that financial problems are strongly associated with challenges in nurturing talent.

Insufficient financial resources code was also strongly mentioned alongside lack of national awareness. This means that participants viewed insufficient finances and poor awareness of Paralympic talent identification programs as major challenges faced by Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

The data can be further simplified using a network diagram:

Figure 4.10
Network diagram



Challenges in nurturing talent are associated with factors like financial constraints, national awareness, and infrastructure. Both rural and national awareness are significant but national awareness appears more frequently in relation to other issues. Unpopular themes like stigma, and

lack of trained personnel are mentioned a few times but their presents indicate underlying socio-cultural and institutional barriers.

To answer the research question, “What are the challenges that limit the effectiveness of talent identification programs in Zimbabwe para-sport?” the data analyzed gave the answers to the question and the most common challenge noted in both data analysis procedures is the lack of financial resources and without money, all other challenges will follow.

Fourth research objective and question

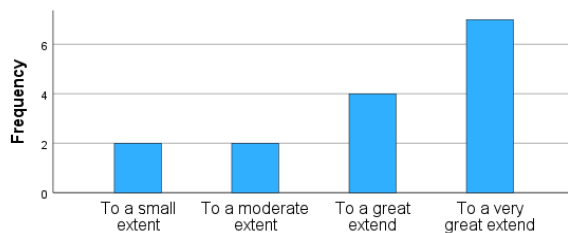
Figure 4.11

The extent a structured framework can improve talent identification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To a small extent	2	13.3	13.3	13.3
	To a moderate extent	2	13.3	13.3	26.7
	To a great extend	4	26.7	26.7	53.3
	To a very great extend	7	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.12

The extend a structured framework can improve talent identification



According to the data from two(2) participants, a structured framework has a very small chance of improving talent identification. The majority of the participants suggested that a structured framework will greatly improve talent identification methods.

Figure 4.13

Frequency of coded segments

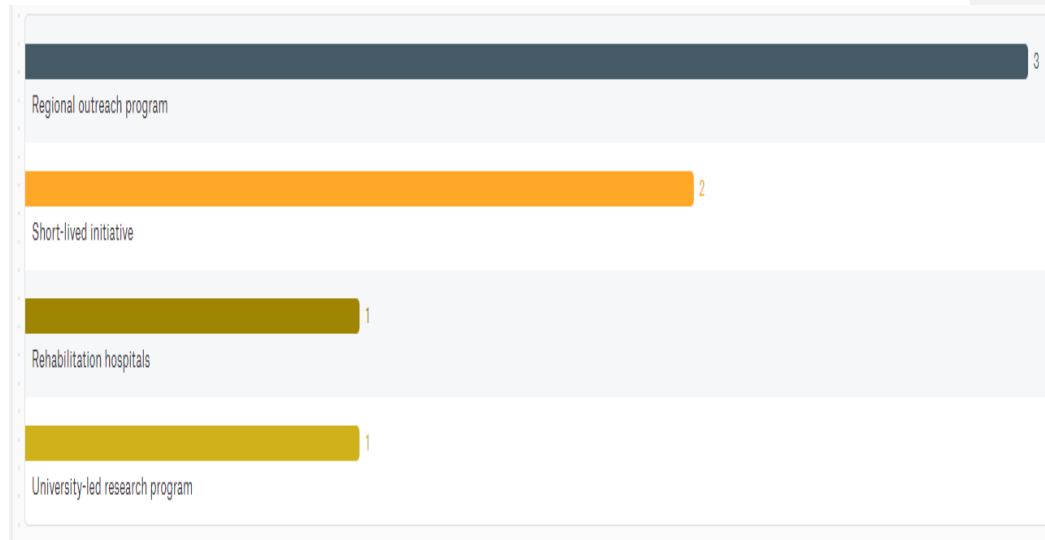


Figure 4.13 shows the previous talent identification experiences by the Zimbabwe Paralympic organization.

Regional outreach programs: This appeared the most in the data and that means that a talent identification framework basing on regional outreach program is very effective.

Short lived initiative: Appearing twice shows that many talent identification programs did not last long because they were ineffective.

Rehabilitation hospitals: This appeared once in the collected data but it seems to have potential. It may not be a popular method suggested in the data but it's very effective.

University led research programs: This was mentioned once since it is one of the short lived initiative but it can be redone more effectively.

Conclusion

The structured method for talent identification which was greatly suggested in **Figure 4.12** is supported by **Figure 4.13** which shows that a structured regional outreach program supported by targeting rehabilitation hospitals and the creation of new university- led research program is very effective. Identifying talent at rehabilitation centers helps people to get their hopes up knowing they can still do a lot of things despite the impairment. Partnering with universities is very effective since they can help with the research materials and knowledge about talent identification for example at Bindura University there is a sports science department with experts in talent identification.

4.5 Discussion

After data analysis, the research came up with a new look at talent identification in Zimbabwe. The results showed that a mixed method of talent identification is the most effective way to scout players. It involves scouting players in schools like The Danhiko school, in local communities both rural and urban and it also further identifies talent in competitions. This method gives every potential athlete a chance to be recognized for their talent. According to a talent identification institution called the Panathlon Foundation (UK Charity), they provide sports equipment to schools, and training to teachers, coaches and young leaders. They organize sporting competitions aimed at children aged 5 to 19 years with impairments. Their programs span schools, teacher development, and community competitions.

This foundation is doing a mixed- method of talent identification which focuses on a school- based model, a community- based model, and competition. This is similar to the information gathered in this study and it shows that the suggested method works.

A similar study was conducted by Doll-Tepper and Radtke (2014) and these are their procedures and views, “The data for this empirical analysis was gathered in two research phases: a document analysis and exploratory interview study were followed by an online questionnaire. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods produced a fuller picture of effective Paralympic talent identification systems. The results gave insights into aims, commitments, challenges and human, financial and infrastructural resources of the talent identification and development systems in the sample countries”. This study followed the same research pattern as this one but the scale was larger but the results are similar. This study gave Doll-Tepper and Radtke an understanding of the current situations in their target population just like this study gave the researcher insights into the

challenges being faced by Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. It can be concluded that the barriers being faced when doing talent identification in Paralympic sports are similar.

The goal to fill the literature gap in Zimbabwe Paralympic talent identification has been slightly closed but it is progress. The research managed to bring out views from experts in talent identification and this information can now be used as reference for future talent identification programs.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter showed the response rate of participants and their demography. It showed how the data analysis tools were used and how the analyzed data was presented and interpreted. A link between qualitative and quantitative data analysis was proven to be effective when collecting and interpreting data. The chapter showed examples of institutes and researchers using the same method of talent identification and that proved the reliability and validity of the research. The following chapter will summarize the study, conclude the findings, and give recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This “chapter” focuses on the summary, “conclusions” and “recommendations”. The conclusions will address the four “research questions” elaborated in chapter one (1). “Recommendations” for practice and further study are also suggested in this chapter. This chapter will also point out the struggles met during the study and they can be overcome if others want to conduct the same study.

5.2 Summary of major findings

A combination of several frameworks to create a mixed method of identifying talent was considered very effective. This successfully answered the main objective of the study which is to develop a framework for optimal talent identification. The research showed that current talent identification methods rely heavily on informal methods which are ineffective and the shortage of resources influenced the use of informal methods. This sheds some light on the challenges being faced by organizations when they try to implement standard talent identification programs. Paralympic sport needs a lot of specialized equipment like wheelchairs and the facilities should be able to support all their needs but money is a challenge being faced by Zimbabwe Paralympic sport organizations.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Primary Research Question:

What framework can be developed for optimal Talent Identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport?

A total of four (4) frameworks (school-based, community-based, national competition and a mixed-method) were suggested and the data collected showed that for optimal talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport a mixed method model supported by long term funding, creating player databases, mentorships and training local scouts was vital.

5.3.1.1 Subsidiary Research Question 1:

What are the current talent identification models used in Zimbabwe for Para-sports?

Participants pointed out that the Zimbabwe Paralympic sport organization uses an informal model of talent identification which relies on word- of- mouth referrals where someone just informs the coach that there is a potential player. This method is not effective because references like that happen once in a while. The participants also pointed out that talent identification also relies on competition and it's not very effective because few new athletes just appear at a competition without a prior school or community visit for scouting.

5.3.1.2 Subsidiary Research Question 2:

What are the challenges that limit the effectiveness of talent identification programs in Zimbabwe para-sport?

According to the collected data, several barriers or challenges limit the effectiveness of talent identification programs and the barriers are:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of trained personnel
- Lack of adequate facilities
- Lack of scouting network.
- Low public awareness.

These were suggested as the main challenges being faced by Paralympic sports organizations when they try to do standard talent identification programs. Financial resources can solve most of the other challenges being faced. Low public awareness is a major barrier because the community won't recommend athletes if they don't know there is an organization supports sport for people with impairment. Lack of public awareness usually leads to family members restricting their child or partner to participating in the Paralympic because of fear and insecurities.

5.3.1.3 Subsidiary Research Question 3:

What talent identification framework can be implemented to improve talent identification in Zimbabwe para-sports?

A structured framework for talent identification was selected as the main model that can be implemented and the participant responded to the suggestion:

The majority of the participants agreed that a structured framework is effective. This claim was supported by a review of previous talent identification programs and how effective they were. A regional outreach program was a popular successful initiative but it was short-lived and so is other programs like scouting at rehabilitation centers and partnering with universities.

To answer the research question, a mixed method structured framework can be implemented to improve talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The literature on which this study was based on was mainly for talent identification in able-bodied athletes. Even though some concepts were similar there was a lot that was different. To effectively use the data from the literature, a basic theoretical framework was implemented for example every talent identification program needs money but for Paralympic sports more money is needed.

The period for collecting data was short so not enough data was collected. The sample size for the research was small for quantitative analysis. The data collected had a lot of neutral responses which made the data collected lacking. The study was focused on a sensitive population hence few participants wanted to take part in the research and even though there was consent and a strict privacy policy many participants still feared their identities might be reviewed so they remained neutral or they didn't participate at all. This made the process of collecting data difficult. Most interviews and questionnaires were conducted online so some participants could not get time to participate or didn't have data. The researchers lacked the resources needed for the research for example one of the major board members of the ZNPC is visually impaired so a questionnaire in braille was needed. This also affected the process of collecting data from athletes.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

5.5.1 Implications for practice

For an effective school-based talent identification program the ZNPC should strongly work with schools like Danhiko where children with impairments learn and they should train the teachers in basic talent scouting skills. The organization should seek sponsorships from local companies and raise money to build a standard training facility for various Paralympic sporting disciplines. Raising awareness helps people know about the organizations and the benefits that come from playing sports. If a talented athlete is discovered there should be a mentor assigned to him to help him or her train.

5.5.2 Implications for Theory

Very few sources in Zimbabwe talk about talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. This research is the first step to having a deeper and better understanding of talent identification in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport. This research raises awareness about the importance of talent

identification in sports, the challenges that will arise when implementing the program, and solutions to the problem. It will serve as a prototype framework for optimal talent identification.

5.5.3 Implications for Future Research

This research lacked the aspect of disability classification which is very important when doing talent identification. Future researchers should include classification for it will help the talent scout know if the athlete can be eligible to play in a selected field. Without classification, you can scout athletes and nurture them but might not be allowed to participate because they belong to a different which they didn't train for.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter pointed out the problems the researcher faced when conducting the study. It also summarized the findings from research questions and objectives. It also showed solutions to the problems being faced by the Zimbabwe Paralympic sports organization. The chapter also justified the contribution the study will have in future researchs and it also shared other aspects that should be part of the research in the future.

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Appendix



Developing a framework for optimal talent identification in elite Zimbabwe Paralympic sport.

Hello my fellow education enthusiasts my name is BSc2515 a student at Bindura University currently studying a degree in Sports science and management. I am conducting a study on currently talent identification models used in Zimbabwe Paralympic sport and I would really appreciate it if you help me by completing the questionnaire and answering a few interview questions. Talent identification in Paralympic sport is not very common and your input would be very effective. The information gathered is strictly for educational purposes and your identity is protected.

Questionnaire

1. Participant ID? _____

2. Age?

20-24years	25-29years	30-34years	35-45years	+45 years

3. Gender?

Male	Female

4. How familiar are you with any existing talent identification programs in Zimbabwe for Paralympic sport?

Not Familiar

Slightly Familiar

Moderately Familiar

Very Familiar

5. To what extent do you agree that current talent identification methods in Zimbabwe effectively discover Paralympic athletes?

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Neutral ☐

Agree ☐

6. How effective do you think the current talent identification systems are in discovering Paralympic athletes in Zimbabwe?

Very Ineffective ☐

Ineffective ☐

Neutral ☐

Effective ☐

Very Effective ☐

7. Do you believe there are adequate resources (financial, technical, human) to support talent identification in Zimbabwe Para-sports?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

8. What is the most significant barrier to effective talent identification in Zimbabwe Para-sports?

Lack of funding

Lack of trained personnel

Inadequate facilities

Poor scouting networks

Low public awareness

9. How often are talent identification programs or events held specifically for people with disabilities in your area?

Never

Rarely

Occasionally

Frequently

Very Frequently

10. How would you rate the inclusivity of current sports programs toward people with disabilities in Zimbabwe?

Very poor ☐

Poor ☐

Fair ☐

Good ☐

Excellent ☐

11. Have you (or your organization) ever participated in talent identification efforts for para-athletes?

Yes ☐

No ☐

12. In your opinion, what type of talent identification framework would be most effective for Zimbabwe's context?

School based ☐

Community based ☐

Club based ☐

National competitions ☐

Mixed model ☐

13. To what extent do you believe that a structured framework for talent identification could improve the performance of Zimbabwe's Paralympic teams?

Not at all

To small extent

To a moderate extend

To a great extend

To a very great extend

Interview questions

1. Can you describe the current talent identification processes used in Zimbabwe for Paralympic sports?
2. What challenges do you face in identifying and nurturing talent among athletes with disabilities?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the current systems in place for identifying Paralympic talent?
4. In your view, what has been the impact of not having a comprehensive talent identification program in Zimbabwe?
5. What role do institutions like schools, communities, and rehabilitation centers play in talent discovery?
6. Have there been any successful examples or initiatives in talent identification in the past that could inform future efforts?
7. How do you think socio-economic and cultural factors affect the identification of para-athletes in Zimbabwe?
8. What stakeholders should be involved in designing and implementing a talent identification framework, and why?
9. What recommendations would you make for developing a sustainable and effective framework for talent identification in Paralympic sports?
10. In your opinion, how could technology or data be used to enhance talent identification and development for para-athletes?

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CHAIRPERSON DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS SCIENCE

23 May 2025

TO ZIMBABWE NATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE.

RE: UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION STUDY ACCESS REQUEST.

This is to certify that BSc2515 is a bonafide Bachelor of Science in Sports Science and Management student in the Department of Sports Science at the Bindura University of Science Education. He is conducting an action research study entitled: Developing a Framework for Optimal Talent identification in Elite Zimbabwe Paralympic Sport.

We are kindly requesting your organization to partner with him in the study by participating in the data collection and intervention strategy development process.

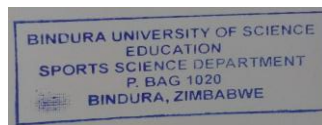
Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the research at any time. The information from your organization will only be used for academic purposes and be kept private and confidential. Codes will be used to identify participant organizations. This is meant to ensure that information would not be linked to the providers. Password-protected computers will be used to store any identifiable information that may be obtained from your organization. Data will also be analyzed at the group level to ensure anonymity. You can also sign confidentiality agreements with the researcher.

A copy of the finished work will be provided to your organization after the study. The results of the study are expected to transform practice, and your support will be pivotal to its success.

If you have any queries regarding this project, please feel free to contact us.

We would like to thank you in advance for your support.

Yours Sincerely



Lysias Tapiwanashe Charumbira (Dr.)