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**FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

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**The Impact of Psychological Preparation Procedures on the Performance of  
Zimbabwean Elite Cricket players:**

**BY**

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**(B202691B)**

**A Dissertation Submitted In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For Bachelor of  
Science Honors Degree In Sports Science & Management.**

**DECEMBER, 2023**

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## RELEASE FORM

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**Name of Supervisor: Dr.L.T.Charumbira** Signature:  **Date: 30/09/2024**

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## **DEDICATION**

With much gratitude, privilege, and pleasure, I dedicate this dissertation to the sport I am extremely passionate about, my family, fiancée and my friends for their support during my studies. It has not been a smooth road but they motivated me to keep digging deep.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

One important component of improving performance is understanding how psychological training affects Zimbabwean cricket players. The relationship between mental preparedness, focus, and overall player well-being is investigated in this study. Through the evaluation of psychological strategies including goal-setting, visualization, and stress management, the study seeks to highlight the role that mental conditioning plays in enhancing cricket players' abilities and adaptability in a competitive scenario. The results provide insightful information for athletes' overall development and may influence coaching tactics designed to address the particular difficulties Zimbabwean cricket players confront. This study explores the unique psychological tactics used by Zimbabwean cricket players, looking into how pre-game rituals, mindfulness practices, and coping mechanisms affect performance under duress. Through player interviews, questionnaires, and performance reviews, the research seeks to find trends and individual differences in psychological readiness. Targeted treatments can help athletes and coaching staff develop mental resilience and perform at their best on the cricket pitch by taking into account the complex psychological elements affecting Zimbabwean cricket players. The results showed that the research of psychological preparation on the performance of professional cricket players in Harare-based clubs was mostly driven by subpar performance. Cultural differences, worry, exhaustion, unfavourable comments, and performance pressure from supporters are just a few of the factors identified in this study as potential causes of subpar performance. Psychological readiness programs must be implemented by Harare-based cricket clubs if they hope to see an improvement in player performance.

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives comprehensive information on the study's history, issue statement, research questions, and objectives, as well as its limitations, significance, and scope. It serves as the basis for the research and seeks to define the study's vision. This chapter will mainly focus on the background of the study, as well as the problem statement, research objectives, significance of the study research questions, research hypothesis, scope of the study, limitations and conclusion.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Cricket holds a revered status in Zimbabwean sporting culture, embodying a rich tapestry of history, passion, and national pride. Since its introduction during the colonial era, cricket has emerged as one of Zimbabwe's most beloved sports, captivating audiences and nurturing generations of talented athletes. The country's cricketing journey has been marked by notable achievements on the international stage, including memorable victories and the emergence of iconic players who have left an indelible mark on the sport.

In the intricate tapestry of cricket, the mental fortitude of players often serves as the differentiating factor between success and defeat. Psychological attributes such as resilience, focus, confidence, and composure play pivotal roles in shaping players' performances on the field. From the pressure-cooker environment of high-stakes matches to the relentless grind of training and competition, the ability of cricketers to harness their mental faculties can profoundly influence outcomes, driving success or contributing to setbacks. The cultural fabric of Zimbabwean society exerts a profound influence on the attitudes, behaviours, and aspirations of its cricketing fraternity. Embedded within the fabric of community and tradition, cricket resonates deeply with Zimbabweans, reflecting shared values of resilience, teamwork, and determination. However, cultural nuances, historical legacies, and societal expectations may shape players' approaches to mental preparation and performance, necessitating a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics within the context of cricketing pursuits.

According to Lu, Gilmour and Kao, 2020), cultural values may be an important force in determining the concept of well-being. Values are psychological structures that motivate behaviour and are associated with possible important consequences for personal well-being (Brown and Kaser, 2019). According to Sinha (2012), not everyone's level of well-being is formed by all values. Certain values might indicate greater wellbeing than others might. Healthy values are defined as those that foster good well-being.

Beyond the realms of academia, the insights gleaned from this study hold tangible implications for the development and support of Zimbabwean elite cricketers. By elucidating the relationship between psychological preparation procedures and performance outcomes, this research has the potential to inform coaching methodologies, talent identification strategies, and player support initiatives tailored to the unique needs of Zimbabwean cricket. Ultimately, the practical application of these findings may contribute to the cultivation of mentally resilient and high-performing athletes, enriching the fabric of Zimbabwean cricket and inspiring future generations of players.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the recognized importance of psychological factors in sports performance, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the effectiveness of psychological preparation procedures specifically tailored to the needs of Zimbabwean elite cricket players. While studies in other contexts have demonstrated the benefits of mental conditioning techniques, such as visualization, goal setting, and stress management, their applicability and efficacy within the Zimbabwean cricketing context remain unclear. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the impact of psychological preparation procedures on the performance outcomes of Zimbabwean elite cricket players, considering cultural nuances, individual differences, and the unique demands of the sport. By elucidating the relationship between psychological preparation and performance in this population, this research aims to provide valuable insights for coaches, athletes, and sports psychologists seeking to optimize mental conditioning strategies in Zimbabwean cricket."

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

#### **1. Advancing Sports Science and Psychology**

By delving into the intricate interplay between psychological factors and cricket performance among Zimbabwean athletes, this study contributes to the broader body of sports science and psychology. Through empirical research and analysis, the study sheds light on the efficacy of

specific psychological preparation techniques within the unique context of Zimbabwean cricket, enriching our understanding of performance optimization strategies in sports.

## **2. Enhancing Athletic Performance**

The findings of this study have direct implications for enhancing the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players. By identifying effective psychological preparation procedures tailored to the needs of Zimbabwean athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists can refine training regimens, cultivate mental resilience, and empower players to maximize their potential on the field. Ultimately, this can translate into improved performance outcomes in domestic and international cricket competitions.

## **3. Informing Coaching Practices and Talent Development**

Insights gleaned from this study can inform coaching practices and talent development programs within Zimbabwean cricket. Coaches and talent scouts can leverage evidence-based strategies to nurture the psychological resilience and skillsets of emerging cricketers, laying the foundation for sustainable success at both individual and team levels. Moreover, the integration of tailored psychological preparation protocols into coaching frameworks can foster a culture of holistic player development, empowering athletes to thrive in competitive environments.

## **4. Promoting Mental Well-being and Resilience**

Beyond the realm of sports performance, this study underscores the importance of mental well-being and resilience among elite athletes. By highlighting the role of psychological preparation in equipping cricketers with the tools to navigate challenges, manage stress, and maintain peak performance under pressure, the study promotes a holistic approach to athlete welfare. Cultivating psychological resilience not only enhances athletic performance but also fosters lifelong skills that extend beyond the boundaries of the cricket pitch, empowering individuals to confront adversity with confidence and determination.

## **5. Fostering National Pride and Identity**

Zimbabwean cricket holds a cherished place in the nation's cultural fabric, serving as a source of national pride and identity. By elevating the performance and stature of Zimbabwean cricket on the global stage, the findings of this study contribute to the broader narrative of sporting excellence

and national achievement. As Zimbabwean elite cricketers excel through the integration of effective psychological preparation strategies, they inspire pride and unity among fans, affirming the enduring spirit of resilience and determination that defines the Zimbabwean sporting ethos.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **Primary Research Question**

What impact do the psychological preparation procedures currently being used by Zimbabwean cricket teams have on the performance of elite cricketers in local and international competitions?

### **Subsidiary Research Question**

1. What psychological preparation procedures are currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players?
2. How effective are psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players?
3. What impact do the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players have on their performance in local and international competitions?
4. What measures can be adopted to improve the effectiveness of the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players?

## **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players.
2. To measure the effectiveness of the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players in competitions.
3. To measure the impact of the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance Zimbabwean elite cricket players have on their performance in local and international competitions.

4. To develop strategic measures to improve the effectiveness of the psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players.

### **1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

- The study is confined to Zimbabwean elite Cricket.
- It focuses on the impact of psychological preparation procedures on athlete performance

### **1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The goal of this chapter was to give a succinct overview and introduction to the entire study paper. By pointing out the problem areas, it provided a foundation for the study on fair valued balance sheets that the researcher is going to do. The research aims and research questions were also covered in this chapter. It also examined the research's significance and underlying presumptions. The literature on the understudied topic is reviewed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The context of this study was presented in the first chapter, as well as an introduction to the problem statement, research aim, research objectives, research questions, and the significance of the study. This chapter examines the literature on several psychological aspects that can influence athletic performance and athlete well-being. The goal of such a study is to uncover gaps in existing understanding of the topic and to indicate areas that need more investigation. The literature review will look at motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, stress, coping mechanisms, goal planning, and

imagery techniques as they relate to athletic performance. It would also analyse how these elements fluctuate between sports and athletes, as well as how gender, age, and cultural background influence them. Furthermore, the literature study should investigate the efficiency of several psychological interventions typically employed in sports psychology, such as mental toughness, self-efficacy, motivation, and goal-setting concepts. It should evaluate the strengths and limits of these concepts or phrases using the perspectives of other scholars and investigate the possibility of future studies to improve their efficacy.

Cricket is a traditional English sport that has evolved to be one of the most popular sports in the United Kingdom, Australia, the Indian subcontinent, the West Indies, and Southern Africa. (International Cricket Council: ICC, 2012/2013). The ICC World Cup is the world's second-largest single athletic event, with a cumulative broadcast audience of more than five billion people (Doley & Doley, 2020). Cricket's popularity stems partly from the numerous variables involved and the irregular one-on-one character of the game (Woolmer, Noakes, & Moffet, 2019). The literature on the role of psychological preparation in Zimbabwean cricket dives into several areas of sports psychology that greatly influence player performance. Goal setting is frequently highlighted as a vital component in studies, with an emphasis on defining clear objectives for individual players and the team as a whole. Furthermore, visualization techniques are investigated, illustrating how mental imagery improves skill performance and creates a confident mindset.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION**

### **2.2.1 Mental Toughness Concept**

(Jones , Van, & Steyn, 2019), Conducted a study in an area relevant to the previously stated cognitive strategies research. (Jones , Van and Steyn, 2019), have been researching the concept of mental toughness in professional athletes. (Jones , Van and Steyn, 2019), began their research by conducting interviews with 10 athletes from a variety of sports that represented England in the Commonwealth or Olympic Games to determine how these athletes defined mental toughness and what attributes comprised the term. Findings showed that the ability to handle the different demands (competition, training, and lifestyle) that sports place on an athlete is known as mental toughness. It is specifically defined as the ability to be more consistent and superior to your competitors in maintaining focus, determination, confidence, and composure under duress.



Twelve mental toughness attributes were identified, which included having an unwavering belief in one's ability to achieve goals, having an unwavering belief that one possesses the qualities required to outperform opponents, having an insatiable desire to succeed, being able to bounce back from setbacks, thriving under pressure, accepting anxiety as inevitable and being able to cope with it, not being adversely influenced by others' performances, and being able to fully focus in the face of distraction (Humara, 2020).

In a more recent follow-up study (Jones , Van, and Steyn, 2019), Interviews were done with eight Olympic or World Champions, three coaches, and four sport psychologists who have worked with such athletes. The original findings were verified and expanded upon. The usage of mental training and availability to a sport psychology professional was regarded as an essential element affecting performance by the athletes interviewed and surveyed, as well as the coaches. Engaging in mental training and having access to sport psychology was considered as a positive impact, whereas not having access was seen as a negative influence. Mental preparation and sports psychology were also highlighted as coaching acts that had the greatest impact on the athletes and that they would change the most if they could relive their Olympic experience. Finally, coaches indicated that mental training was an important performance-influencing factor.

This refers to an athlete's capacity to deal with stress, pressure, and adversity in a competitive setting, as well as keep focus and motivation in the face of adversity. (Loehr, 2019), is a well-known sports psychologist who has published numerous articles on the subject of mental toughness and its impact on athletic performance. (Loehr, 2019), perspective on the impact of psychological preparation on professional cricketers' bad performance is characterized by a variety of psychological and emotional attributes that enable sportsmen to perform at their best under pressure. (Loehr, 2019), proposes that mental toughness is comprised of numerous critical components, including Stress management is the ability to control stress and anxiety in high-pressure situations, allowing athletes to remain focused and perform at their best.

Mental toughness is also characterized by a strong feeling of self-confidence and belief in one's talents, which is necessary for overcoming obstacles and setbacks in competition. Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and disappointments while maintaining a good attitude and focusing on long-term goals. Focus is the ability to sustain focus and concentration in the face of

distractions and competing demands, allowing athletes to remain fully involved in the activity at hand.

Mental toughness also includes a strong feeling of intrinsic motivation and drive to win, which assists athletes in maintaining their intensity and effort throughout time. According to (Loehr, 2019), mental toughness in professional cricket implies that psychological preparation may play a crucial role in assisting poor-performing players to enhance their performance. Cricketers may be better able to cope with pressure and perform at their best in difficult situations if they build mental toughness through particular training techniques such as stress management, visualization, and positive self-talk.

Jones et al., 2019), proposes a model of mental toughness that emphasizes the role of cognitive and emotional elements such as self-talk, goal-setting, and visualization, which differs from (Loehr, 2019). Jones et al., 2019), defines mental toughness as the ability to apply cognitive and emotional skills to control one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour to reach peak performance. In contrast to Loeh, (2019), emphasis on stress management and resilience, Jones contends that mental toughness entails active cognitive and emotional processes that allow athletes to remain focused, motivated, and confident under pressure. Mental toughness, according to Jones et al., 2019), can be cultivated by specific cognitive and behavioural approaches such as positive self-talk, goal-setting, and visualization(Jones et al., 2019), note that psychological preparation may include learning certain cognitive and emotional abilities that can enable poor-performing cricketers to succeed at their best. Coaches may be able to assist cricketers stay focused, motivated, and confident in high-pressure situations, and to perform at their best even when faced with adversity, by training them to employ cognitive and emotional skills to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviour.

### **2.2.2 Self-Efficacy Concept**

This relates to an athlete's conviction in their capacity to execute a certain task or achieve a specific goal, which can be a significant motivator and performance component. (Bandura, 2019), formulated the self-efficacy theory, which refers to a person's belief in their capacity to do a specific task or achieve a specific goal. Bandura (2019), contends that self-efficacy is a significant aspect of motivation, learning, and performance and that people who have high self-efficacy are more likely to set hard objectives, persevere in the face of adversity, and perform well. According

to (Bandura, 2019), self-efficacy in the context of professional cricket argues that psychological preparation may include establishing specific tactics to promote self-efficacy, such as providing feedback on performance, setting reasonable goals, and modelling successful behaviour. Coaches may be able to enhance motivation, learning, and performance on the pitch by assisting underperforming cricketers in developing higher self-efficacy.

In the context of sports performance Martin ,(2021), has advocated a more nuanced interpretation of self-efficacy. While self-efficacy can be a significant element in performance, Martin, (2021), contends that it is not always the most important factor, and those other psychological categories, such as motivation and goal orientation, may be more relevant in certain settings. In the context of professional cricket, Hoger (2019), argues that psychological preparation should focus on a variety of psychological dimensions rather than just self-efficacy. When establishing psychological preparation programs for underperforming cricketers, coaches may need to consider elements such as goal orientation, intrinsic motivation, and achievement motivation. Coaches may be able to meet the specific demands and challenges of each player and help them perform at their best on the pitch by taking a more comprehensive approach to psychological preparation.

### **2.2.3 Motivation Concept**

This is the motivator that drives an athlete's behaviour and performance, and it can be influenced by a variety of things such as objectives, rewards, and self-belief. Deci and Ryan (2020), pioneered the self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasizes the role of intrinsic drive in human behaviour. Deci and Ryan (2020), contend that when people are motivated by intrinsic qualities such as enjoyment, interest, and personal fulfilment rather than external rewards or demands, they are more likely to engage in activities and persist in the face of hurdles. Deci and Ryan (2020) view motivation in the context of professional cricket says that psychological preparation may include establishing specialized techniques to promote intrinsic motivation, such as offering possibilities for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Coaches may be able to enhance poor-performing cricketers' engagement, persistence, and performance on the pitch by assisting them in developing higher intrinsic motivation.

Vallerand (2021), on the other hand, has presented a more sophisticated understanding of motivation that differentiates between distinct types of motivation, such as intrinsic, extrinsic, and a motivation. While intrinsic motivation is crucial in performance and well-being, it is not the only

sort of motivation that drives behaviour, according to Vallerand (2021). According to Vallerand, (2021), psychological preparation may need to focus on a variety of motivational elements, including both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. When establishing psychological preparation programs for underperforming cricketers, coaches may need to consider elements such as goal orientation, accomplishment motivation, and social support. Coaches may be able to handle the individual demands and problems of each player and help them perform at their best on the pitch by taking into account a variety of motivational variables.

#### **2.2.4 Goal Setting Concept**

Setting defined, measurable, and achievable goals can assist an athlete in focusing their efforts and improving their performance. Lu, Gilmour and Kao (2020), established the goal-setting hypothesis, which claims that creating explicit and difficult goals can boost motivation and performance. Goals should be detailed, measurable, demanding, and have a clear timeframe (Lu, Gilmour & Kao, 2020). They contend that goals can boost performance by providing concentration, direction, and feedback. According to Lu, Gilmour and Kao (2020), goal-setting, psychological preparation may include creating specialized ways to set and achieve difficult objectives, such as breaking down bigger goals into smaller, more manageable ones and providing feedback on progress towards goals. Coaches may be able to enhance poor-performing cricketers' motivation, learning, and performance on the pitch by setting tough targets for them.

However, Dweck (2019), a social psychologist, has proposed a different perspective on goal-setting. Dweck (2019), contends that the types of goals that people pursue can have a significant impact on their motivation and well-being. Specifically, Individuals who pursue performance goals (i.e., goals focused on achieving a certain level of performance or avoiding failure) may experience anxiety and low self-esteem, whereas those who pursue learning goals (i.e., goals focused on acquiring new knowledge or skills) may experience enjoyment and personal growth. According to Dweck (2019), psychological preparation should focus on building learning goals rather than performance goals to increase the motivation and performance of underperforming cricketers. Coaches may be able to help cricketers improve their abilities and confidence, leading to increased performance on the pitch, by fostering a focus on learning and improvement.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several studies have tested the effectiveness of psychological theories in cricket. These include:

### **2.3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

(Deci & Ryan, 2020), established this psychological theory, which focuses on the motivations behind human behaviour. According to the notion, people are inherently attracted to engage in activities that meet their core psychological requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2020). According to SDT, autonomy refers to the desire to have control over one's own life and decision-making process (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Competence refers to the desire to feel capable of achieving desired outcomes and mastering skills. Relatedness is the desire to feel linked to people and to have a sense of belonging. According to the notion, persons who can meet their basic psychological needs are more likely to feel more motivation, engagement, and well-being. Individuals who are unable to meet their basic psychological requirements, on the other hand, may experience lower motivation, decreased engagement, and decreased well-being.

SDT differentiates between three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as doing something because it is fundamentally joyful or intriguing. Extrinsic motivation is defined as doing something due to external benefits or pressures, such as money or social recognition. Motivation is defined as a lack of motivation or enthusiasm for a particular task. According to SDT, the most desirable type of motivation is intrinsic motivation, which is connected with more engagement, persistence, and well-being. Extrinsic motivation can be useful when based on internalized beliefs and interests, but it can be harmful when focused on external rewards or pressures (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Motivation is the least desirable type of motivation since it is related to disengagement, a lack of effort, and a decrease in well-being.

SDT recommends that in the context of professional cricket, coaches should focus on establishing techniques to increase players' autonomy, competence, and relatedness to improve motivation, engagement, and performance on the pitch. This may entail allowing players to make their own decisions, set their own goals, and receive feedback on their performance. Coaches may also need to encourage collaboration and social support among players to improve their sense of relatedness and belonging. Coaches may be able to enhance the motivation and performance of underperforming cricketers by addressing these basic psychological demands.

### **2.3.2 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

SDT recommends that in the context of professional cricket, coaches should focus on establishing techniques to increase players' autonomy, competence, and relatedness to improve motivation, engagement, and performance on the pitch. This may entail allowing players to make their own decisions, set their own goals, and receive feedback on their performance. Coaches may also need to encourage collaboration and social support among players to improve their sense of relatedness and belonging. Coaches may be able to enhance the motivation and performance of underperforming cricketers by addressing these basic psychological demands. Individuals with strong self-efficacy, according to Bandura, are more likely to set hard goals, persevere in the face of adversity, and achieve at their best. Second, environmental factors are external influences on behaviour that include social standards, cultural values, and physical surrounds. SCT proposes that people learn from their surroundings through observational learning or modelling. Observational learning entails observing and mimicking other people's behaviour as well as obtaining feedback and reinforcement for one's behaviour. Third, behavioural factors are acts that people take in reaction to their surroundings, such as choosing to engage in a specific activity or avoid a specific scenario. According to SCT, behaviour is moulded by a continual interaction of individual factors, contextual factors, and behavioural factors.

SCT recommends that in the context of professional cricket, coaches and players should focus on building specific skills and tactics to boost self-efficacy, such as providing performance feedback, setting reasonable goals, and modelling successful behaviour. According to (Bandura (2019, page?), "observing others succeed raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities. SCT also advises that when establishing psychological preparation programs, coaches and players should take into account contextual aspects like as social norms and cultural values. (Bandura, 2019, page?) Observe that "people's beliefs are shaped and regulated by their social environments. According to (Bandura, 2019) "To build effective psychological preparation programs, coaches may need to examine the cultural and social environments in which players operate. Thus, SCT emphasizes the relevance of cognitive, contextual, and personal elements in influencing behaviour, implying that coaches and players may need to examine a variety of aspects when establishing successful psychological preparation programs for underperforming cricketers.

### **2.3.3 Achievement Goal Theory**

The idea specifically claims that the type of accomplishment goals adopted by cricketers might influence their motivation, engagement, and performance. This theory differentiates between performance objectives (those aimed at achieving a specific level of performance or avoiding failure) and learning goals (those aimed at obtaining new knowledge or abilities). According to research, cricketers who pursue mastery objectives are more naturally motivated and have higher levels of engagement and well-being than those who pursue performance goals (Bartholomew, 2021). Cricketers who set mastery objectives focus on improving their skills and performance rather than merely winning or exceeding their opponents. This can result in a more positive attitude, more perseverance, and a readiness to learn from failures.

Cricketers who set performance goals, on the other hand, may be more concerned with external benefits such as money, popularity, and recognition. This might lead to a larger emphasis on winning and surpassing others, which can increase anxiety and pressure to perform. This can have a negative impact on motivation, engagement, and performance, especially if the athlete has setbacks or disappointments (Conroy, 2020). Psychological preparation can assist cricketers in setting more achievement objectives while also increasing motivation and engagement. Coaches, for example, might employ goal-setting approaches to assist cricketers in defining clear, demanding, and attainable goals that emphasize mastery and learning. Coaches can also employ self-talk and visualization strategies to assist cricketers in remaining focused and positive, especially in high-pressure circumstances (Hardy, 2020). As a result, the achievement goal theory provides a valuable framework for studying the impact of psychological preparation on professional cricketers' bad performance. Coaches can assist cricketers improve their motivation, engagement, and performance on the pitch by emphasizing mastery goals and employing effective psychological approaches.

## **2.4 THEMATIC REVIEW**

Examine the literature about the research objectives of the study to determine the extent to which the literature addresses the research question or objectives. Identify trends and gaps, and then contribute your voice.

## **2.4.1 Improved understanding of the mental aspects of cricket**

### ***2.4.1.1 The role of mental skills training in cricket preparation approach***

The primary objective has been reviewed by Hill et al. (2018), penned the following review. This review paper examines the role of mental skills training in cricket and provides an overview of the key mental skills required for successful performance in cricket. The paper discusses the effectiveness of various mental skills training interventions, including imagery, self-talk, goal-setting, relaxation techniques, and attentional focus.

### **2.4.1.2 Stress and Performance in Sport approach**

An examination of the intervention characteristics gave rise to many gaps in the stress management literature in sport to date. Firstly, it was observed that there were relatively few elite samples in the review. Although the shortage of elite athletes has historically been a challenging issue for the field of sport psychology Greenspan and Feltz (2018), research has demonstrated that stress-related phenomena is experienced by elite and professional athletes in a variety of competitive environments (Dugdale, Eklund, & Gordon, 2019; Fletcher & Hanton, 2018). Certainly, this population may well be the most vulnerable to experiencing stress due to the proximity and involvement with the sport organizations in which they operate. It was noted in the current review that all of the interventions measured athletes' competitive stress experience. When considering the numerous organizational-related demands that may be imposed on individuals within the sport environment, it is evident that interventions need to be employed to measure sport performers' experiences of organizational stress. This term has been defined as "an ongoing transaction between an individual and the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organization in which he or she is operating" (Fletcher et al., 2016, p. 329).

In recognizing the potential impact of organizational stress in sport, it is likely that practitioners may need to consider broadening their competencies to assist sport performers in managing their overall stress experience (Hanton & Fletcher, 2020). For example, within the current review, few interventions used team building as a method of stress management (Cogan & Petrie, 1995). Team building could indeed be a useful technique for practitioners to implement when attempting to optimize organizational stress-related issues, such as poor communication channels and team cohesion. However, to date, no interventions within sport psychology have attempted to manage this type of stress. It should also be noted that athletes are individuals whose personal stress



experiences may affect how they manage stress in sport. For example, an athlete who may cope ineffectively when arguing with his/her parents may also be prone to ineffective coping with disagreeing with his/her sport coach. Therefore, the management of athletes' stress may also facilitate their management of competitive and organizational stress in sport.

In Zimbabwe, little to no research on improving awareness of the mental components of cricket has been published. In Zimbabwe, studies are scarce on the mental components of cricket. While there may be some in-house studies on cricket performance in general, more focused research on the mental abilities and techniques required for effective cricket performance in Zimbabwe may be required. In Zimbabwe, there may be a shortage of initiatives focused on improving the mental components of cricket performance. While there may be some recognition of the value of mental skills training in cricket, there may be a need for more targeted and effective treatments suited to the specific needs of Zimbabwean cricket players. More coach education and training on the relevance of mental skills and methods for cricket play in Zimbabwe may be required. Coaches play an important role in building their players' mental and emotional preparation, and there may be a demand for training programs that provide coaches with the skills and information needed to effectively train and support their players in this area.

#### **2.4.2 Identification of best practice**

##### ***2.4.2.1 The Mind Gym approach***

Mack and Mack (2021), provide insights into the mental talents and methods used by professional athletes, especially cricket players. They include instances of best practices in cricket psychological preparation, such as visualization, goal setting, and self-talk. Mental skills training can assist cricket players in developing a strong mental game and efficiently managing their emotions, thoughts, and behaviour during competition.

##### ***2.4.2.2 The Pressure Principle Handling Stress, Harnessing Energy, and Performing***

Aldred, 2019), provides insights into how to cope with pressure in high-stakes situations, including cricket matches. The book provides examples of best practices for coping with pressure in cricket, including relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and cognitive restructuring (Aldred, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, little to no study on the identification of optimal practices for psychological preparation in cricket has been published. There may be a scarcity of empirical research studies examining the efficiency of these strategies in Zimbabwean cricket players. Mental skills training,

relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and cognitive restructuring are all needed to improve cricket play in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, research that investigates how individual characteristics, such as personality traits and cultural factors, may influence the effectiveness of psychological preparation strategies in Zimbabwean cricket players may be required. Researchers may be able to identify evidence-based strategies that can help cricket players manage their emotions, focus their attention, and maintain their motivation and confidence in the face of pressure and adversity by conducting empirical research on best practices for psychological preparation in cricket in Zimbabwe. This could eventually lead to better cricket performance and success for Zimbabwean cricket players at the national and international levels.

### **2.4.3 Enhanced well-being**

#### ***2.4.3.1 Mindfulness to Enhance Athletic Performance Approach***

The study benefits professional cricketers' well-being by teaching ways to manage stress and anxiety, as well as enhancing self-awareness and resilience. Insights regarding the possible impact of mindfulness on sports performance and well-being are provided. The essay covers the theoretical concerns by Sarkar and Fletcher (2019) and the potential impact mechanisms of mindfulness on athletic performance, such as the role of attention regulation, emotion regulation, and self-regulation. The article may be beneficial in developing techniques to improve professional cricketers' well-being through mindfulness-based interventions.

#### ***2.4.3.2 Psychological Resilience in Sport Performers Approach***

This article from the Journal of Sports Sciences provides a thematic literature analysis on psychological resilience in athletes, especially cricketers. The article may provide insights into the aspects that can protect the well-being of professional cricketers, including social support, coping methods, and self-efficacy. The essay also explores the impact of stressors such as injury, selection, and competition on cricketers' resilience. The article may be beneficial in suggesting techniques to improve the well-being of professional cricketers by developing psychological resilience (Sarkar and Fletcher, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, little to no study on the improved well-being of professional cricketers has been published. There is a scarcity of extensive studies on professional cricketers' mental health and well-being. While there may be some anecdotal evidence and expert comments on the mental health and well-being of Zimbabwean cricketers, there may be a need for empirical research

studies that have specifically explored the aspects that contribute to Zimbabwean cricketers' mental health and well-being.

In Zimbabwe, little to no study on the improved well-being of professional cricketers has been published. There is a scarcity of extensive studies on professional cricketers' mental health and well-being. While there may be some anecdotal evidence and expert comments on the mental health and well-being of Zimbabwean cricketers, there may be a need for empirical research studies that have specifically explored the aspects that contribute to Zimbabwean cricketers' mental health and well-being.

The major study question and subsidiary research questions are all relevant and crucial in understanding the relationship between mental toughness and cricket performance among professional cricketers, according to a review of the literature (Dweck, 2019). The literature gives insights into the most significant mental abilities and techniques for cricket play, as well as how psychological preparation can be used to improve performance and well-being. In terms of secondary research questions, the literature addresses some of them more thoroughly than others.

There is, for example, a considerable body of study on visualization techniques and their efficacy in increasing performance in sports such as cricket. Similarly, research has been conducted on the effect of team culture in improving psychological preparation and boosting mental toughness in athletes. However, there may be gaps in the literature about the efficiency of psychological preparation at various levels of cricket, as well as individualized approaches to mental preparation that account for individual variances in personality and mental health.

Overall, the study's research aims are well-defined and focused on increasing professional cricketers' performance and well-being. The study can have practical implications for coaches and players by identifying best practices for psychological preparation, as well as contribute to a larger knowledge of how mental training might improve performance and well-being in sports and other areas. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the findings may have limitations in terms of generalizability and that additional research may be required to completely comprehend the complicated links between mental toughness, psychological preparation, and cricket performance. On the other hand, there is a rising understanding of the value of mental toughness and psychological preparation in sports, including cricket. An increasing amount of research suggests that mental skills including goal-setting, self-talk, visualizations, and relaxation training might

help athletes improve their performance and well-being. Furthermore, there is a growing understanding of the significance of team culture and social support in building mental toughness and psychological preparedness among athletes. A healthy team culture, defined by strong social support, a shared sense of purpose, and a focus on learning and development, has been proven in studies to be a key component in boosting mental toughness and fostering well-being among athletes. Another trend is the understanding of the significance of personalized methods to psychological preparation. While there are broad principles that may be applied to mental training, such as goal-setting and visualizations, when establishing mental preparation programs for athletes, it is critical to consider individual variances in personality, learning style, and mental health. This may entail adapting mental training programs to the needs and preferences of particular athletes, as well as adding tactics that are effective for specific individuals.

However, there is a disparity in the amount to which psychological preparation is successful at various levels of cricket, including amateur, semi-professional, and professional. While there is evidence of the efficiency of psychological preparation among professional cricketers, there may be disparities in the effectiveness of mental training at different levels of competition, which requires more research to fully understand. While much has been learned about the relationship between mental toughness, psychological preparation, and cricket performance, there is still much more to discover (Hardy, 2020). Continued research is required to identify best practices for psychological preparation, to comprehend the complex relationships between mental toughness and other factors influencing performance and well-being, and to develop individualized approaches to mental training that are effective for different athletes.

#### ***2.4.3.4 Distraction preparation***

At the Games, Olympians must be prepared to deal with distractions from a variety of sources. The findings of this research reveal that successful athletes and teams drew energy from the Olympic excitement while avoiding distractions. Successful athletes and teams, in particular, had plans and mechanisms in place to deal with distractions at the Games, which they effectively implemented. These individuals were frequently distinguished by a "single-minded focus" that enabled them to make proper decisions in the face of distractions at the Games. Dealing with the media, acquiring tickets, getting transportation, dealing with family and significant others, participating in the opening ceremonies, and coping with the Games' excitement were all common

distractions (Hardy, 2020). So, preparing for potential distractions should be a fundamental component of Olympic athlete and coach preparation.

#### ***2.4.3.5 Plans and adherence to plans***

It was discovered that underperforming teams and individuals in the Games tended to deviate more frequently from prearranged and prepared procedures (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2019). Before the Games, more successful teams and individuals had well-defined plans for their physical and mental preparation, and they adhered to those tactics when it counted. They anticipated these kinds of interruptions, as previously mentioned, and have backup plans ready to handle such situations. Thus, creating coping mechanisms and mental and physical training plans is essential for Olympic success.

#### ***2.4.3.6 Optimal physical training***

As one might imagine, excellent physical conditioning and training were linked to Olympic performance. However, the findings of this research demonstrated that there is a delicate line between training vigorously to obtain an advantage over your competitors and going too far and overtraining. Athletes and teams who did poorly at the Games frequently over-trained. This decline in performance appeared to be the result of two factors:

- (a) When athletes are in peak condition, they are very "fragile" and can easily become ill or over train; and
- (b) Due to Olympic pressure to perform, there is a tendency to overdo preparation to gain the "edge" and, as a result, not take enough mental and physical breaks.

Olympic athletes and coaches must gain a thorough understanding of periodized training and effective recovery procedures.

#### ***2.4.3.7 Mental Preparation***

Both more and less successful teams and athletes were stressed during and before the Games. In these experiments, however, more effective teams and athletes had mentally prepared themselves to deal with unexpected events and challenges. They collaborated with sports psychology experts to incorporate mental training into a whole preparation package through coach engagement and comprehension (Humara, 2020). As a result, they were prepared to deal with the Games' stress and either neutralized bad events or reframed them as beneficial impacts. Interestingly, less successful

teams and athletes frequently had some exposure to mental training, but they did not do enough or spend enough time putting these talents into practice. As a result, mental preparation activities should be included in Olympic athlete preparation efforts (Humara, 2020).

#### ***2.4.3.8 Self and teammate confidence***

Athlete self-confidence and team confidence are two factors that this study found to affect performance. Players and coaches frequently cited these factors as having a significant impact on performance. While athletes who lacked confidence said that their lack of self- and team-confidence negatively affected their Olympic performance, confident athletes said that their belief in themselves and their teams had a major beneficial impact on performance (Loehr, 2019). When dealing with Olympic athletes and teams, coaches and mental training experts should place a strong emphasis on strategies for boosting confidence (Loehr, 2019).

#### ***2.4.3.9 Team cohesion and harmony***

Whether it was an individual or team sport, athletes and coaches agreed that cohesiveness and harmony within the squad were essential for success at the Olympics. Teams who were successful usually stood out for having a singular goal and confidence in their ability to succeed. In addition to experience which was important his trust and attentiveness resulted from team-building exercises that were conducted in the years preceding the Games. These sportsmen led by example for their teams and exuded confidence in their abilities. Hence, trust and team-building activities need to be prioritised, especially in the years preceding the Games.

#### ***2.4.3.10 Coaching***

As expected, coach-athlete relationships and coaching concerns were important variables in Olympic performance. If a sport had both personal and assigned team coaches, effective teams established provisions to enable access to those personal coaches and/or clearly define coaching positions. Furthermore, successful teams had coaches who could "read" their athletes' physical and psychological conditions and alter training accordingly. More successful coaches anticipated what to expect during the Games, remained focused, and did not over-coach (Doley & Doley, 2020). They could also handle emergencies and remain calm under pressure. Finally, trust and respect between coach and player were built. In this regard, coach education and training are critical. It was also discovered that coaches who were highly trusted by athletes had reasonable expectations for their athletes, were completely committed to assisting the athlete's success, and

were perceived to have highly beneficial performance impacts. Coaches who lacked these attributes, on the other hand, were reported to have a detrimental impact on performance. Over coaching, keeping things simple and focused, retaining reasonable team expectations, not knowing athletes before the Games, coach-team friction, having a clear performance plan, and making fair coaching judgments were all considered to affect the success (Jones et al., 2019). These findings show that Olympic coaches, like their athletes, require mental preparation and education before the Games.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

In summary, a variety of elements that are reported to influence Olympic success have been identified in this set of descriptive research. While fascinating, it is important to realise that they are retrospective perspectives with no causal relationships. They should be duplicated and expanded upon to better investigate and validate their findings. Future research could go in one of two directions: monitoring these factors across Olympic quadrennial cycles and then determining whether educational programs (e.g., the development of parent and significant other education) result in changes in the incidence of specific concerns (e.g., a decrease in pressure from parents and loved ones). It would also be beneficial to investigate how these variables interact to effect performance. Is confidence in oneself, for example, influenced by confidence in one's team and faith in one's coach? Interdisciplinary research would be beneficial in determining how elements such as the degree of media attention, the number of disruptions experienced, physical preparation, and injury status influence factors such as an athlete's ability to keep composure. Because all of this research is dependent on self-reports, observational studies to determine the match between what athletes say and what they perform would be beneficial. Finally, it would be fascinating to measure key dispositional traits in athletes (e.g., goal orientations, degree of mental toughness) and see if these variables differentiated the types of experiences recounted by athletes during the Games.

## **2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This Chapter looked at several psychological aspects that can influence athletic performance, such as mental toughness, self-efficacy, motivation, and goal setting, and how they can be applied in the context of professional cricket. Well-known sports psychologists such as (Loehr, 2019), (Jones

, Van, & Steyn, 2019), (Bandura, 2019), Martin, (2021), (Deci & Ryan, 2020), (Vallerand, 2021), (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2020), and (Dweck, 2019), offer their opinions. It emphasised the importance of a holistic approach to psychological preparation that addresses the specific demands and problems of each player while taking into account numerous psychological dimensions, rather than focusing solely on one issue. It also revealed gaps in current understanding of the topic and highlighted areas that require additional research to improve cricketers' performance and well-being.

The increased awareness of the value of mental toughness and individualised methods of mental training emphasises the need for coaches and trainers to include psychological preparation in their training programmes. Simultaneously, the found gap in research on the efficiency of psychological preparation at various levels of cricket suggests that further research is needed to understand how mental training might be adjusted to different levels of competition. This information gap has practical consequences for coaches and trainers who work with players at various levels of cricket since it emphasises the necessity for personalised mental training programmes that take into account each athlete's specific demands and limitations. Further research in this area can assist in improving cricketers' and other athletes' performance and well-being, as well as provide a larger knowledge of the significance of psychological aspects in sports and other disciplines.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The researcher's approach to obtaining pertinent data on the topic of study will be examined in this chapter. This chapter will include explanations and arguments for the research approach, design, and methodology. The chapter will highlight the study population and the sampling strategy that will be employed to conduct the investigation. This chapter will examine the research tools that will be utilised to collect data from the participants as well as the rationale behind the choices made. The final topics covered in this chapter will include data validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations.



## **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The researcher opted to use a mixed-methods research method research approach.

## **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The researcher chose to perform the study using a mixed-method technique. The qualitative data gathered during interviews necessitated the use of a qualitative research method, whereas the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires necessitated the use of a quantitative approach. As a result, the researcher recognized the benefits of employing both methods in the study.

### **3.2.2 Quantitative Research Design**

The essence of quantitative research is the gathering and analysis of numerical data; it focuses on determining the magnitude, range, and frequency of occurrences, among other things. Many thanks (2016). Although difficult to plan initially, this sort of study is generally quite comprehensive and systematic, and the data may be readily arranged and presented statistically.

### **3.2.3 Qualitative Research Design**

Qualitative research is more subjective than quantitative research in that it examines and reflects on less tangible elements of a study subject, such as values, approaches, and observations. Although this sort of study is easy to initiate, it is sometimes difficult to analyze and explain the findings; the findings are also more easily disputed. Having observed the benefits of using both techniques, the researcher chose to do both quantitative and qualitative research in looking at the impact of psychological preparation on performance.

## **3.3 STUDY POPULATION**

The study's target audience was Zimbabwean cricket stakeholders.

### **3.3.1 POPULATION**

(Rahi (2017) defines the sample as part of the population. (Patton, 2015), that the sample, size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources. (Marshall et al, 2015), suggest other factors that can influence sample size are needed to reach saturation including quality of interviews, number of interviews per participant, sampling procedures, and researcher experience. Since the researcher could not access the actual number of the targeted population. The study calculated the sample size using a formula for infinite population developed by Kothari better known as the Kothari formula.

$$n = (z^2 \cdot p \cdot q) / e^2$$

**Where:**

**$z = 1.86$  (desired confidence level is 86% and value obtained from the table)**

**$p = 0.5$  (sample proportion).**

**$q = 0.5 \{(1-0.5) = (1-p)\}$**

**$e = 10\%$  or  $0.1$  (precision rate or acceptable error)**

**$n = [(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5)] / (0.1)^2$**

**$n = 0.9604/0.01$**

**$n = 86.09$**

**That is approximately 86**

### **3.4 SAMPLING**

#### **3.4.1 Sampling Procedures**

According to Yin (2013), sampling procedure refers to the techniques or procedures used to select the sample. The researcher used probability sampling procedures. The researcher chose the simple random sampling method.

### **3.5 SOURCES OF DATA**

Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used as primary source data in this research.

### **3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

#### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Interviews enable the researcher to collect relevant data and are mostly used when carrying out qualitative research Zohrabi(2013). The researcher employed interviews to get a thorough response to the importance of psychological preparation to elite cricket players in Zimbabwe. The owners and managers were required to answer the interview questions with care for their individual opinions regarding the subject of the study. Encouraging participants to share their perspectives on the subject of the study is backed and states that respondents have unrestricted freedom to

express their emotions. The data collection process was greatly aided by the interviews in obtaining information devoid of bias and manipulation.

### **3.6.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were the primary data collection instrument for this study. A series of questions with a number of alternatives from which respondents can choose. A researcher was able to obtain data from the subjects of that particular research for analysis by using questions Osho (2019). The questionnaire in this study includes both closed and open-ended items. Because questionnaires are versatile and allow respondents to offer information in both quantitative and qualitative forms after being probed with closed and open-ended questions, the researcher picked them. In addition, questionnaires allow the researcher to obtain data from respondents who have busy schedules or do not have time for visitors. One of the primary disadvantages of questionnaires is that collecting responses from diverse respondents might take a long time.

### **3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

The degree to which a certain inference drawn from a test is relevant or suitable is known as validity Ahmed (2015). It may be characterized as a determination of how well the research's components mirror the research's desired theories, ideas, and variables. Pre-tests were done after the questionnaires had been designed and validated, before data collection, to verify the instruments were reliable and valid for the final data collection.

A number of adjustments to the study tools were made after a pre-test. Questions were refined to enhance clarity, and some were added to achieve integrity, as well as adjustments to measurement scales.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The study's ethical considerations are among the most important aspects of data collection. According to Saunders, et al., (2023), research ethics generally looks at the integrity level portrayed by the researcher to those who are subject to participate in the area under study. The ethical implications are likely to emanate during the process of research when collecting, analysing, and reporting the Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Ethical factors including participant protection and anonymity were taken into account in this study.

### **3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter presented the adopted research methodology that guided the present research study. In summary, to achieve the aim of the study, a qualitative method approach was utilized. This approach was deemed appropriate, but extremely challenging. The next chapter which will be chapter four will look into data interpretation and analysis.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS, DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The data presentation, data analysis, and investigational findings are covered in this chapter. The data was analysed using NVivo 12 and SPSS version 21. Data were produced using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The numbers and discussion in the first section include the response rate, demographics, and reliability test results. In the chapter, descriptive data pertaining to every research objective are thereafter presented and examined. The aim is to exhibit the degree of consistency between the obtained results and the existing body of literature. Near the end of the chapter, inferential statistics and hypothesis testing are discussed.

#### **4.2 RESPONSE RATE**

The data used in assessing the impact of psychological preparation was collected from cricket players, coaches and facilitators using questionnaires and interviews. A total of 65 questionnaires were physically administered. Table 4.1 below shows the number of questionnaires that were returned and the response rate attained

**Table 4. 1**

## *Response Rate*

### *Questionnaire response rate*

	<b>Administered</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
<b>Questionnaires</b>	86	32	37.2%
<b>Interview</b>	12	2	16.7%

From the 80 questionnaires that were administered. A total of 65 questionnaires were returned fully completed. The response rate was 81.25%. A similar study by Chen et.al 2019) achieved a response rate of 78%. The response rate for this research of 37.2% % which is less than that achieved by (Chen 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that there was data adequate to assess the impact of psychological preparation procedures on cricket players in Zimbabwe.

## **4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

68.8% of the population are Male, and 31.3% are Female. With the rate of Women's sport growing, it is key to include them in the study.

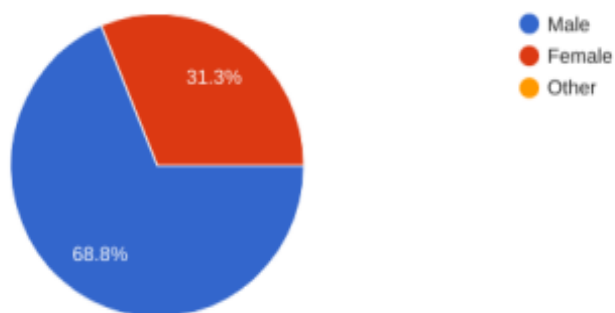
### **4.3.1 Gender of Respondents**

The gender of respondents in this study plays a pivotal role in understanding the diverse perspectives and experiences related to sports psychology. Analyzing the responses of male and female athletes reveals potential differences in how each gender perceives psychological preparation and its impact on performance.

### **Figure 4. 1**

#### *Gender*

32 responses

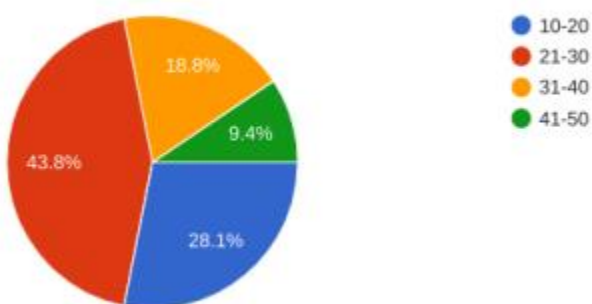


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**Figure 4. 2 Age**

From my point of view, through conversations and interviews with the participants, it seems as If athletes start with no clear understanding of their role or their game until they reach their late 20s into their 30s.

32 responses



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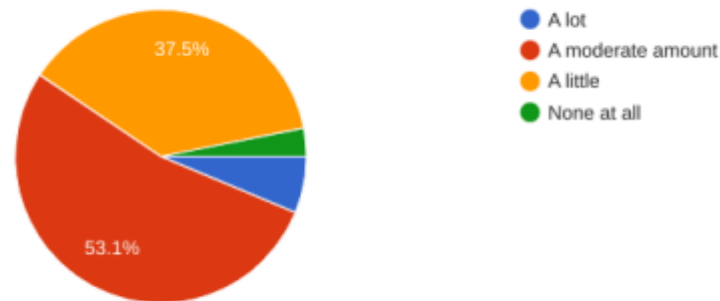
#### 4.3.3 Do you have any knowledge of Sports Psychology?

In examining responses to questions regarding knowledge of sports psychology, it becomes evident that an athlete's understanding of psychological principles can significantly influence their performance and mental resilience. Participants expressed varying levels of familiarity with concepts.

**Figure 4. 3**

*Response to Question on knowledge of Sports Psychology*

32 responses



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From the findings the majority of 53.1% have a moderate amount of knowledge of sports psychology, and 37.5% with little knowledge. 6.3% with a lot and 3.1% with none at all. This goes on to show that athletes should be educated on the mental side of the sport, be able to self-coach and assess their actions and reactions in different scenarios that they face.

#### **4.3.4 How important do you think the state of mind is to your exercise /sport?**

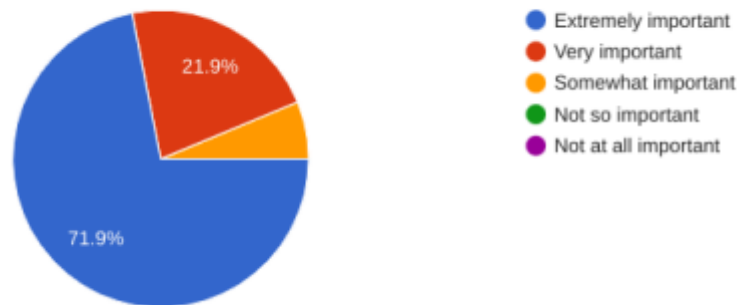
Secondly, the issue of State of Mind was addressed, a majority of 71.9% believe that State of Mind is extremely important, and 21.9% consider it very important. This includes individual background, needs and wants, as well as remuneration.

**Figure 4. 4**

#### ***Importance of State of Mind***

Understanding the nuances of psychological states can illuminate how emotions, beliefs, and mental frameworks influence outcomes in sports. By exploring the interplay between state of mind and performance, researchers can identify strategies to enhance mental resilience, motivation, and focus, ultimately contributing to improved results.

32 responses



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The group of cricket players who are similar in terms of skill level, experience, and playing conditions are an appropriate sample for studying psychological preparation in cricket. This is because a homogenous group can help minimize the impact of extraneous variables on the study's results and increase the study's internal validity. The group of cricket players may be an appropriate sample if they are easily accessible to the researcher. This can be particularly important if the study requires repeated measures or observations of the participants over an extended period.

#### **4.4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA LINKED TO THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Research has consistently shown that psychological preparation can improve athletes' performance in cricket. A study by Freeman and Rees (2009) found that cognitive-behavioural interventions, such as goal setting and positive self-talk, can improve cricket players' performance. Similarly, a study by Sarkar et al. (2015) found that psychological interventions, including imagery and relaxation techniques, can improve cricket players' performance. Therefore, a study on psychological preparation in professional cricket is likely to find that psychological preparation can improve players' performance.

Several studies have found that psychological interventions can reduce anxiety among athletes. For example, a study by Hanton et al. (2005) found that a pre-competition routine, which included relaxation techniques and positive self-talk, reduced anxiety among cricket players. Similarly, a study by Wagstaff et al. (2015) found that imagery and self-talk reduced anxiety among cricket players. Therefore, a study on psychological preparation in professional cricket is likely to find that psychological preparation can reduce anxiety among players.



A study by Weinberg et al. (1993) found that goal-setting and self-talk can increase athletes' self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, a study by Freeman and Rees (2009) found that cognitive-behavioural interventions, such as goal setting and positive self-talk, can increase cricket players' self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, a study on psychological preparation in professional cricket is likely to find that psychological preparation can increase players' self-efficacy beliefs.

The findings of this study can bridge gaps in the literature of Zimbabwe to a greater extent, and yield positive results. To bridge the study gaps with the above literature, a study on the impact of psychological preparation on professional cricketers based in Harare, the respective bodies could incorporate some approaches such as using a combination of psychological interventions. The studies cited above suggest that a combination of psychological interventions, such as goal setting, imagery, and relaxation techniques, can have a greater impact on athletes' performance, anxiety, self-efficacy, teamwork, and communication than individual interventions. Therefore, a study on psychological preparation in cricket could incorporate a combination of interventions to maximize the benefits.

Considering individual differences is also key. The cited literature suggests that different athletes may respond differently to psychological interventions based on their characteristics. For example, some athletes may benefit more from goal setting, while others may benefit more from imagery. Therefore, a study on psychological preparation in cricket could take into account individual differences, such as personality traits or skill level, when designing and implementing psychological interventions.

By incorporating some of these approaches, a study on the impact of psychological preparation in professional cricket can build upon the existing literature and provide valuable insights into the most effective ways to prepare cricket players psychologically.

#### **4.5 RELIABILITY**

Cronbach's alphas were used to measure the internal reliability of the collected data. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 was adopted from the study by Mohamed (2016). Table 4.2 presents the reliability test results.

##### **Reliability results**

Cronbach's alphas were employed to measure the internal consistency of the gathered data in this research. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 was adopted from the study by Mohamed (2016). Table 4.2 presents the reliability test results.

**Table 4.2**

The reliability test results are crucial in validating the instruments used in this study, ensuring that they consistently measure the intended constructs related to sports psychology.

***Reliability Test Results***

<b>Study Variable</b>	<b>No. of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Personal Preparation	6	.822
Coaching Approach	6	.744
Psychological Support	6	.816
Pre-match Rituals	6	.701
Handling Pressure	6	.827
<b>Overall</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>.911</b>

Table 4.2 shows that Cronbach's alpha for personal preparation is 0.822, for the coaching approach is 0.744, for psychological support is 0.816, for pre-match rituals 0.701 and for handling pressure is 0.827. The Table also shows that overall Cronbach's alpha for the 30 items used to assess the impact of psychological preparation on the performance of elite cricket players in Zimbabwe is 0.911. All these Cronbach's alphas are above 0.7 and following Mohamed (2016), this indicates good internal consistency of data. As a result, fellow academicians might be interested in expanding this study by further assessing the impact of psychological preparation procedures of cricket players in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.6 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means, and standard deviations, were employed to explain how psychological preparation affects elite cricket players in Zimbabwe. Mean ratings

between 2.5 and 3.4 show that respondents were indifferent, mean scores between 1.00 and 2.4 indicate that respondents disagreed with the supplied things, and average scores between 3.5 and 5.00 indicate that respondents agreed with the items or statements offered. The descriptive statistics for each research objective are shown and discussed in the ensuing subsections.

#### **4.6.1 to identify and document the psychological preparation procedures currently utilized by Zimbabwean Cricket**

The objective of this study identify and document the psychological preparation procedures currently utilized by Zimbabwean Cricket

Table 4. 2 Psychological preparation procedures that are currently being utilised

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
There are specific mental techniques or routines that I follow	12%	11%	3%	45%	29%	4.62	.762
Are there any specific drills or exercises focused on psychological preparation	7%	5%	2%	27%	59%	4.81	.776
Do you have access to sports psychologists within the team	8%	4%	7%	35%	46%	4.79	.772
Are there any team-wide psychological preparation activities before a match	3%	2%	11%	43%	41%	4.84	.781
Are there mechanisms in place for players to learn and adapt their psychological preparation based on experiences	5%	6%	13%	47%	29%	4.77	.769
Overall mean						4.78	

*SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree*

Overall, 74% of the participants acknowledged, as shown in Table 4.3, that they adhere to particular mental routines or strategies. 3 percent were neutral or did not answer this question, while 23% disagreed. The statement's mean, 4.62, indicates that, on average, respondents acknowledged using particular mental strategies or routines. When asked if there were any particular drills or exercises aimed at psychological preparation, 86% of the participants said yes, 12% said no, and 2% said they were neutral. The average score of 4.81 for this statement indicates that respondents generally agreed that they consider how their actions may affect their coworkers.

Before a game, 81% of participants agreed that there should be team-wide psychological preparation exercises, 12% disagreed, and 7% were neutral. The average participant score of 4.79 for this statement suggests that psychological preparation techniques now in use in Zimbabwe are generally accepted.

#### 4.6.2 To examine the methods and tools employed by Zimbabwe-based clubs for assessing the psychological needs and challenges of their players.

Table 4. 3 Methods and tools employed by Zimbabwe-based clubs for assessing the psychological needs and challenges of their players.

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	St. Dev.
Do they conduct Survey and Questionnaires on psychological needs	8%	11%	6%	37%	38%	4.52	.726
Have you ever been Interviewed regarding your psychological needs and challenges?	7%	9%	10%	39%	35%	4.49	.707
Have you ever held workshops with psychologists	11%	14%	3%	33%	39%	4.59	.732
Are you observed during training sessions or matches to identify behavioural patterns and potential psychological stressors?	8%	7%	11%	41%	33%	4.66	.758
Do you engage the community, including families and support networks, to understand the external factors influencing psychological state	10%	9%	7%	38%	36%	4.71	.773
Overall mean						4.54	

*SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree*

Table 4.3 shows that 75% of the participants agreed that surveys and questionnaires on their psychological needs are conducted while 19% disagreed and 6% were neutral. A total of 74% of the respondents agreed that they had been interviewed regarding their psychological needs and challenges. While 16% disagreed and 10% were neutral. 72% of the participants agreed that they have had workshops with psychologists 25% disagreed and 3% were neutral. Furthermore, 74% of the participants agreed that they are observed during training sessions or matches to identify

behavioural patterns and potential psychological stressors, 15% disagreed whilst 11% were neutral. In addition, 74% of the participants agreed that they engage the community, including families and support networks, to understand the external factors influencing psychological state shows that the majority agree that some methods and tools are being used to assess psychological needs and challenges while 19% disagreed whilst 7% were neutral about it.

The above findings show that the tools and methods have improved psychological preparation procedures in Zimbabwean cricket. This is evidenced by the overall mean of 4.54 which indicates that on average, respondents agreed to that. These findings are consistent with those of Winkelmann & Games (2020)

#### 4.7 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Pearson correlation analysis was used to establish the impact of psychological preparation procedures on Zimbabwean Cricket (PPPZC): Teams' Performance (TP), Mental Health (MH) and Psychological Needs and Challenges (PNC). Table 4.8 below presents the correlation coefficients between the study variables.

Table 4. 4 Correlation coefficients for the study variables

		PPPCZ	TP	MH	PNC
PPPCZ	Pearson correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	73			
TCN	Pearson correlation	.635	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*			
	N	73	73		
TMN	Pearson correlation	.721	.247	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	.105		
	N	73	73	73	

SF	Pearson correlation	.614	.196	.036	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	.126	.138	
	N	73	73	73	73

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.7.1 Hypothesis

*H0: The implementation of a structured psychological preparation program has no significant impact on the performance, mental resilience, and decision-making skills of cricket players in Zimbabwe.*

*H1: The implementation of a structured psychological preparation program has a significant impact on the performance, mental resilience, and decision-making skills of cricket players in Zimbabwe.*

Table 4.4 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.635 and a p-value of 0.000 on the relationship between Psychological preparation and the performance of cricket players in Zimbabwe. These results indicate a strong positive and significant influence of psychological preparation on the performance of players. The research accepted  $H_1$  that “The implementation of a structured psychological preparation program has a significant impact on the performance, mental resilience, and decision-making skills of cricket players in Zimbabwe”, (Puvén, 2020)

Where are the interview results?

#### 4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter analysed, presented and discussed the results of this research. The study findings showed that the implementation of a structured psychological preparation program has a significant impact on the performance, mental resilience, and decision-making skills of cricket players in Zimbabwe. The study's conclusion and recommendations based on the main study findings are presented in the next chapter. Athletes appear to know a fair amount about sports psychology, therefore learning about the psychological aspects of sports is important. 71.9 percent of people believe that state of mind is very essential. To research psychological preparation in cricket, a sample of players with similar skill levels, experiences, and playing situations is a suitable one. The researcher must have easy access to the sample, particularly for investigations

that call for repeated measurements or observations. The study discovered that maintaining composure under pressure is crucial, with tranquillity ranking as the most effective tactic. Frequent exercise improves physical and mental resilience. The study can bridge gaps in the literature and provide insights into effective ways to prepare cricket players psychologically.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

An overview of the research findings and implications drawn from the study's findings are provided in this chapter. After analysing the research goals, conclusions were developed. If recommendations are properly put into practice, the government will be able to enact laws and regulations that hold corporations responsible for violations of human rights. Regarding specific aspects of the study, this chapter offers recommendations for additional research in the future.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study's main conclusions indicate that maintaining composure under pressure is crucial for cricket players' performance, with tranquillity being the most effective tactic. Frequent exercise improves physical and mental resilience. Psychological readiness can boost self-efficacy beliefs, lessen worry, and enhance performance. The primary drivers of cricket players are their love of the game, their upbringing, and their professional aspirations. Goal-setting, visualization, and relaxation techniques are examples of psychological interventions that can improve anxiety, self-efficacy, communication, teamwork, and cricket performance. Based on their unique qualities, various athletes may react to psychological therapies in different ways. to optimize the advantages, a study on the effect of psychological preparation in professional cricket could consider individual differences and combine several interventions.

#### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the role of psychological preparation in enhancing cricket performance, reducing anxiety, and increasing self-efficacy beliefs among professional cricketers. The findings have important implications for the development of effective

psychological preparation programs in professional cricket. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that psychological preparation plays a significant role in enhancing cricket performance, reducing anxiety, and increasing self-efficacy beliefs among professional cricketers. Mental toughness is found to be an important predictor of cricket performance, and psychological interventions such as goal setting, positive self-talk, and visualization techniques can be used to develop mental toughness. Moreover, team culture is identified as a critical factor in the effectiveness of psychological preparation, with coaches and players able to foster a positive team culture to support mental preparation. The study also highlights the importance of tailoring psychological interventions to individual characteristics and managing different types of stressors effectively. Coaches and support staff can play a key role in supporting individualized psychological preparation and maximizing its benefits. Additionally, the study suggests that psychological preparation can have a positive impact on the well-being of professional cricketers, not just on cricket performance. By providing these valuable insights, this study can inform the development of effective psychological preparation programs in professional cricket. Thus, it can be concluded that psychological preparation is essential for the success of professional cricketers, and it should be an integral part of their training and preparation.

## **5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

### **5.4.1 Sample Size**

The study's findings and conclusions may be limited by the sample size of cricket clubs and participants involved. If the sample size is small or limited to specific clubs, it may not capture the full range of psychological preparation procedures used in Zimbabwe.

### **5.4.2 Specifically for Zimbabwe**

The study's findings may be specific to the context of Zimbabwean Cricket and may not apply to other regions or cricket clubs outside of Zimbabwe. The unique cultural, social, and organizational factors in Zimbabwe could influence the psychological preparation procedures used.

### **5.4.3 Time Constraints**

The study's time constraints may limit the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis. It may not be feasible to observe and analyze all training sessions, competitions, and other relevant activities conducted by the cricket clubs.



## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **5.5.1 Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be made to address the issues:

**Increase sample size:** Future research should aim to increase the sample size to improve the generalizability of the findings. This can be achieved by collaborating with other research groups or using multi-centre studies.

**Use objective measures:** Researchers should use objective measures in addition to self-report measures to minimize response bias and increase the validity of the results.

**Establish a control group:** Future research should include a control group to establish causality and determine the effectiveness of psychological preparation compared to other factors.

**Explore other psychological factors:** Future research should explore other psychological factors that may influence cricket performance, such as self-efficacy beliefs, goal setting, or stress management. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of psychological preparation in cricket.

**Address cultural diversity:** Future research should address the cultural diversity of cricket players and explore the effectiveness of psychological preparation across different cultural backgrounds.

**Longitudinal studies:** Future research should include longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of psychological preparation on cricket performance and well-being.

**Develop evidence-based psychological preparation programs:** Based on the findings of the study, researchers should develop evidence-based psychological preparation programs for professional cricket players. These programs should be tailored to individual characteristics and should be based on validated measures and protocols.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations for Theory**

The findings of this study can potentially add to the body of knowledge and bridge the gaps in the literature identified in the study in several ways:

**Clarify the role of psychological preparation in cricket:** The study provides valuable insights into the role of psychological preparation in enhancing cricket performance, reducing anxiety, and increasing self-efficacy beliefs among professional cricketers. It clarifies the importance of mental toughness, team culture, and individualized interventions in psychological preparation.

**Expand the scope of research on psychological preparation in cricket:** The study expands the scope of research on psychological preparation in cricket beyond mental toughness and visualization techniques. It highlights the importance of exploring other psychological factors such as self-efficacy beliefs, goal setting, and stress management.

**Address cultural diversity in cricket:** The study highlights the need to address

cultural diversity in cricket and explore the effectiveness of psychological preparation across different cultural backgrounds. This can help to bridge the gap in the literature on psychological preparation in cricket that has been limited to a few countries and regions. Establish evidence-based psychological preparation programs: The study provides insights into the development of evidence-based psychological preparation programs for professional cricket players. These programs can be tailored to individual characteristics and based on validated measures and protocols. Inform future research on psychological preparation in cricket: The study provides a foundation for future research on psychological preparation in cricket, including the need for larger sample sizes, control groups, longitudinal studies, and standardized measures and protocols.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are many topics in the field of study that could be investigated further, such as Cricket players' psychological preparation at various competitive levels: The current study concentrated on professional cricket players; however, more investigation is required to determine the efficacy of psychological training regimens for players at various competitive levels. This can help improve cricket players' performance by customizing psychological preparation programmes to suit the needs of various cricketing groups. The effect of psychological readiness in preventing and recovering from injuries: The effects of psychological preparation on injury prevention and healing require more investigation. This can aid in the creation of psychological interventions based on solid research to assist cricket players in managing and recovering from injuries

The present study has revealed the significance of team culture in psychological preparation: it is a crucial element that determines the efficacy of psychological preparation. The relationship between cricket performance, psychological readiness, and team culture requires more investigation. This can assist in formulating plans to cultivate a supportive team environment that facilitates mental readiness. Psychological readiness in cricket across cultural boundaries: The current study made clear how important it is to handle cultural diversity in cricket, and more investigation is required to compare psychological preparation in cricket across cultural boundaries. This can assist in determining the cultural elements that affect psychological preparation and in creating programs for psychological preparation that are sensitive to cultural differences. Psychological readiness's effects on wellbeing. The present study found that psychological preparation may have a beneficial effect on professional cricket players' well-being.

The connection between psychological readiness, well-being, and cricket performance requires more investigation. This may facilitate the creation of all-encompassing strategies to enhance cricket players' well-being.

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

The study recommends the use of cognitive-behavioural interventions such as goal setting, self-talk, positive reinforcement, and visualization techniques to develop mental toughness and improve batting performance among professional cricketers. Coaches and support staff should tailor these interventions to individual learning styles, mental imagery ability, and experience levels. Additionally, promoting a positive team culture through open communication, mutual respect, and shared values can enhance psychological preparation and performance.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of specific psychological interventions in developing mental toughness, the optimal timing of visualization techniques for improving batting performance, and the impact of mental toughness on cricket performance in the long-term. The relationship between mental imagery ability and the effectiveness of visualization techniques can also be further explored in future studies. The study also recommends the use of tailored psychological preparation interventions to manage stressors, promote well-being, and enhance cricket performance among cricketers. Coaches and support staff can use coping skills training, relaxation techniques, mental skills training, and personalized stress management plans to manage stress and prevent burnout. Personality assessments, learning style assessments, and mental health screenings can also be used to tailor psychological preparation to individual cricketers.

Further research is needed to explore the impact of team culture on psychological preparation and cricket performance, the effectiveness of personalized psychological preparation on cricket performance and mental health outcomes, and the relationship between well-being and cricket performance. Future studies can also investigate the impact of psychological preparation at different levels of cricket and the factors that explain these differences. Additionally, the effectiveness of stress management interventions and the impact of different types of stressors on cricket performance can be further investigated. The study found that handling pressure during competition is important for cricket performance, with calmness being the top strategy. Regular exercise enhances mental toughness and fitness. Psychological preparation can improve performance, reduce anxiety, and increase self-efficacy beliefs. Love for cricket, family

background, and career goals are the main motivators for cricket players. Psychological interventions, such as goal setting, imagery, and relaxation techniques, can have a positive impact on cricket performance, anxiety, self-efficacy, teamwork, and communication. Different athletes may respond differently to psychological interventions based on their characteristics.

The study suggests that psychological preparation plays an important role in enhancing cricket players' performance, reducing anxiety, and increasing self-efficacy beliefs. It highlights the importance of individual differences in responding to psychological interventions, indicating that a combination of interventions tailored to individual characteristics can maximize the benefits. Therefore, a study on the impact of psychological preparation in professional cricket can provide valuable insights into effective ways to prepare cricket players psychologically.

Mental toughness is an important predictor of cricket performance among professional cricketers. It highlighted the role of psychological interventions in developing mental toughness and the importance of tailoring interventions to individual characteristics. The study also emphasized the importance of team culture in psychological preparation and effective stress management strategies. It suggested that psychological preparation can have a positive impact on the well-being of professional cricketers, not just on cricket performance.

Future research can explore the effectiveness of psychological preparation across different levels of cricket and investigate the factors that explain these differences. This can provide insights into the development of effective psychological preparation programs in professional cricket. The study has several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results. These limitations include a relatively small sample size, self-report measures that may be subject to response bias, lack of a control group, limited scope focused mainly on psychological preparation, and the absence of a follow-up period to assess the long-term effects. These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted with caution. Further research with larger sample sizes, control groups, and longer follow-up periods is needed to establish the effectiveness of psychological preparation in professional cricketers based in the Harare region.

Areas that could be further studied in the area of research conducted include the psychological preparation of cricketers at different levels of competition, the impact of psychological preparation on injury prevention and recovery, the role of team culture in psychological preparation, cross-cultural comparisons of psychological preparation in cricket, and the impact of psychological

preparation on well-being. Further research in these areas can help to tailor psychological preparation programs to the needs of different groups of cricketers, identify cultural factors that influence psychological preparation, and develop holistic approaches to support the well-being of cricketers.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Questionnaire Guide**

My name is Herbert Tawanda Chikomba. I am a Bachelor of Science in Sports Science and Management student in the Faculty Sports Science Department at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE). In fulfilment of the requirements of my degree I am carrying out a study entitled” The Impact of Psychological Preparation Procedures on the Performance of Zimbabwean Elite Cricket players”

I kindly ask you to spare some time to complete this questionnaire. It will only take a few minutes Participation in this research however is voluntary. Participation in this survey is voluntary. No question is compulsory. There are no right or wrong answers. We just want your opinion. All your responses are strictly confidential. The responses you will give will be organised in such a way that neither your name nor your organisation will be identified

Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated!

### **Demographic Information**

#### **1. Gender:**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

#### **2. Age Group:**

- ☐ 18-29 years
- ☐ 30-39 years
- ☐ 40-49 -years
- ☐ 50-59 years
- ☐ 60 years and above

### 3. Level of education:

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate

### 4. Position held in Cricket:

- ☐ Athlete
- ☐ Coach
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Sports Psychologist

### 6. Period in cricket

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ 3 years and above

### Main Section

1. What psychological preparation procedures are currently being used to optimize the performance of cricket players at your club?

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.....

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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2	The psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players are effective					
3	The psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players are appropriate					
4	The psychological preparation procedures currently being used to optimize the performance of Zimbabwean elite cricket players have helped to enhance athlete performance in local and international competitions					
5	Psychological preparation at my club is done by a trained sports psychologist					

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide**

### **Section 1: Background Information**

- Can you tell me a bit about your cricket experience? (E.g. how long you've been playing, at what level, etc.)
- How important do you think psychological preparation is in cricket?
- What kind of mental skills do you think are important for a cricket player to have?

### **Section 2: Pre-Game Preparation**

- Can you describe your pre-game routine?
- What do you do to mentally prepare for a game?
- How do you manage pre-game nerves or anxiety?

### **Section 3: In-Game Performance**

- How do you stay focused during a long game or innings?
- How do you manage pressure situations during a game?

- How do you deal with mistakes or failures during a game?

#### Section 4: Post-Game Reflection

- How do you reflect on your performance after a game?
- How do you manage disappointment or frustration after a poor performance?
- What kind of mental strategies do you use to stay motivated after a loss or setback?