AN EXPLORATION OF SELECTION CRITERIA OF CLUB CRICKETERS IN THE GREATER CAPE TOWN AREA

Andrew Greenwood (3043960)

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Supervisor: **Dr. Athena Pedro**

Co-Supervisor: **Mr. Charl Davids**

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Abstract

Since the advent of cricket in the 16th century the process of team selection has been fervently debated. However, only a handful of research papers can be found on this topic. In South Africa specifically, this process is further complicated by the country's apartheid past. This current study is imperative in order to explore selection criteria used by cricket selectors and coaches. A further aim of the current study is to explore cricket players' perceptions of which factors they deem as important in their own selection. The study used a Symbolic Internationalism (SI) theory as a theoretical framework. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 10 participants consisting of players, coaches and selectors from various cricketing institutions within the greater Cape-Town area. A qualitative approach was used to conduct the study, including semi-structured individual interviews and data was analysed using thematic analysis. This thematic analysis presented in two thematic categories, with corresponding themes discussed accordingly. These thematic categories were "*Selection criteria that could be, or is used*" and "*What factors affect team selection*". Participants revealed several factors that affect the selection of the team ranging from player availability to pitch conditions. In terms of Selection Criteria, the participants focused on the physiological attributes of an ideal player, however also mentioned key psychological attributes such as awareness, resilience, mental strength and adaptability. This research study identified several elements which coaches should incorporate into their training schedules, and that players can work on privately. Furthermore, this study seeks to contribute to the limited knowledge base available with regard to Cricket Team Selection in South Africa. The ethical principles adhered to in this study were informed confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and being informing participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any point with no repercussions.

DECLARATION

I declare that the current study *an exploration of selection criteria of club cricketers in the greater Cape Town area* is my own work. It has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any university, and that all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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Andrew Greenwood

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I would like to thank everyone who made this thesis possible. To my parents for putting up with the wake of papers and papers I left in my trail, and offering unconditional support. To my girlfriend who provided inspiration. To my supervisor and co-supervisor whom showed patience and belief despite me pushing on the limits of the deadlines which were set. Lastly, to all those whom participated in the study, and invested their valuable time.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Cricket is a game traditionally played between two teams of 11 players where one team bats, trying to score as many runs as possible while the other team bowls trying to limit the runs scored by the batting team. After each team has batted an equal number of innings the team with the most runs win (Henry & Harris, 2007). Each player is required to both bat and field, however bowling is distributed amongst a select few players. Stuelcken , Pyne & Sinclair (2007) proposes that the specific set of skills that a player possesses defines his/her role, and subsequent performance in the team.

This archetypal sport has grown to become one of the most popular sports in England, Australia, the Indian Subcontinent, the West Indies and Southern Africa (International Cricket Council: ICC; 2012/2013). Amongst these teams South Africa is currently ranked amongst the best in the world (International Cricket Council: ICC; 2014). Pyke and Davis (2010) argue that success on the national stage is channelled down to the country's aspiring youth and junior players. According to Lyer and Sharda (2008) this success can also parallel the countries national pride, this places an even greater emphasis on the accuracy and diligence involved in team selection. Given selection's centrality to sporting performance it is not surprising that Bradbury and Forsyth (2012) claim that selection is one of the main roles of the coach, although they then go on to state that this is rarely mentioned in the academic literature.

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With this being said athlete selection is one of the most widely discussed and fiercely debated aspects of sport amongst sporting enthusiast and the media alike. Despite interest in the topic this process is poorly understood, defined and implemented (Bradbury & Forsyth, 2012). No definition of either selection or selection criteria could be found on the South African Sport and Recreation website, however the sports tribunal of New Zealand (2009) defines selection as the nomination and/or selection of a person to a team or squad. Van Iddekinge and Ployhard (2008) describe selection as the prediction that one person will perform better than another. This process can also be summated simply as the degree of fit between the candidate and the position description/person specification (Bradbury & Forsyth, 2012). This degree of fit is determined by a set of criteria.

Selection criteria can be defined as the standards by which the athletes' attributes are judged by the coach (Bradbury & Forsyth, 2012), or as the Sports Tribunal of New Zealand (2009b) defines it "*the criteria upon which persons are nominated and/or selected to teams or squads*". Given the diversity of sporting performance it would be impossible to create a single list of selection criteria (Bradbury & Forsyth, 2012). Humara (2002) argues that many coaches are remarkably skilled at identifying and assessing an athlete's physical attributes pertaining to their success but often lack the ability to identify and develop associated psychological attributes.

Four basic roles can be assigned to players in one cricket team (i.e. Batsmen, Bowlers, All-Rounders and the Wicket Keeper). Gerber and Sharp (2006) define bowlers as the players whom propels the ball towards the wickets, which are defended by the batsman. A bowler's strike rate is defined as the number of balls bowled per wicket taken. Run rate can be defined as the average number of runs scored per over, and is used as a guide to a team's progress

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(Asinni, 2012). Batting strike rate is defined as the number of runs a batsman makes per 100 balls. Batting average is seen as how many runs a batsman scores, on average, before getting out (Asinni, 2012). Bowling average is defined by Asinni (2012) as how many runs, on average, a bowler concedes per wicket he takes.

1.1.1 Sport in South Africa

South Africa's diversity can only be rivalled my is turbulent past, the apartheid regime creating state sanctions, the effect of which are being felt to this day. The various laws implemented by the apartheid government served to the detriment of the sporting development of the "black" majority. Across all sporting codes black Africans were not given the opportunity to compete against their white counterparts. Separate leagues based solely on race were implemented to further segregate the population.

1.1.1.1 Segregation in South African Sport

Segregation was institutionalised by the South African apartheid government, with its aim to prohibit the mixing of races, with the Urban Areas Act (1995) allocating specific sporting facilities dependent on your race (Gemmell, 2007). During the 1960s the apartheid regime gained international notoriety, and South Africa was banned from participating in international sporting events. This period is known as the isolation years, and can be viewed as the beginning of the end for segregation in sport. By 1970 South Africa had been banned from competing in the majority of sporting codes including the Olympic Games (Booth, 2003). An exception being Rugby who still competed against the New Zealand Rugby Team in 1971 (Allison, 1986). South Africa's response to this ban was to create the South African

Games in 1973 to allow their athletes to compete domestically, however it was only a matter of time until the government buckled under international pressure (Allison, 1986).

An inquiry was launched in 1979 by the Human Sciences Research Council which resulted in the repeal of some of the previous discriminatory laws such as the Liquor Act and Group Areas Act (Allison, 1986). A deep division could still be seen in some international sporting communities, the government offering a great deal of money for teams to tour South Africa in "Rebel Tour" which was met with condemnation by both international governments and the South African citizen whom had been previously disadvantaged (Allison, 1986).

1.1.1.2 Transformation in South African Sport

Cloete (2005) defines Transformation as the management of change in a manner that will eliminate references to race in sport, while promoting ideals of harmonious co-existence. This mirrors the ideology proposed by the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) which recognises the difference in the countries past, and now seeks to rectify the imbalances that have been caused by this. Basson (2006) argues that three groups of stakeholders whom should be considered with regard to transformation. The first group views any form of change as unnecessary and counterproductive. The second group can be seen as "sitting on the fence" with feet both in the past and the future. The final group is firmly focused on the future, and is willing to participate wholeheartedly to facilitate equality.

The advent of democracy in 1994 meant that South Africa had made the transition to a country that strived towards equality. With Nelson Mandela at the helm of the nation South African sport could finally be seen as being steered in the right direction. However, years of institutionalised segregation had left a trail of inequality in its wake. Mandela and his

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government made it clear that sport would create the pathway towards unifying the population. The three major sporting codes of Soccer, Cricket and Rugby were identified to intensify focus and resources on. There has never been an issue with Transformation in Soccer, however the latter two being predominantly white sports in the past proved more of a challenge (Booth, 2003). In many ways, South Africa's victory in the 1995 Rugby world cup can be seen as a culmination of these efforts, however many argue that the team the representing the Springboks was not a true reflection of the diversity of the population. To this day transformation remains a contentious issue with the majority of the sporting codes not reaching targets set by the Government (Booth, 2003).

1.1.1.3 Segregation and Transformation in a South African Cricket Context

It cannot be argued that South African cricket comes with a chequered past. In its infancy throughout the 17th century cricket represented the British ideologies. Despite there being no constraint on whom may participate in South Africa, restrictions where implemented on different races competing against each other as well as who could represent the national team. Once South Africa gained independence from the British monarchy things were no different, and sport was used as a tool in the armoury of the apartheid government to further discriminate and segregate players of colour. During the 1970s a boycott was implemented on international cricket teams competing against the South Africans, due to their stance against the apartheid regime.

The release of Nelson Mandela marked the beginning of a long road to equality and the end of apartheid. The inauguration of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB) in 1990 was shortly succeeded by readmission to the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1991. Since then the South African government have invested resources with the aim of developing

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the talent of players previously disadvantaged by the wake of destruction caused by segregation (Taliep, 2011).

A further instrument in the fight towards sporting quality was that of Transformation Programs. It an effort to catalyse participation amongst all races across all age groups the South African government implemented transformation targets that each team needed to comply with. While many may argue South African has made great strides since readmission, many people may feel that the composition of the National Team does not reflect the diversity of the Nation (Padayachee, Desai &Vahed, 2004).

1.2 Rationale

The popularity of cricket can be seen as growing exponentially worldwide. Lyer and Sharda (2008) state that this could be as a result of the influx of broadcasting live matches on television; however, research trends do not seem to be matching this. Phillips, Davids, Renshaw and Portus (2010) state that selection is key to a team's success. Bradbury and Forsyth (2012) go on to say that selection should be one of the key responsibilities of a cricket coach. Poor selection decisions may be detrimental to not only an athlete's current sporting involvement, but also lifelong dreams, sporting careers, sponsorship and income opportunities (Bradbury & Forsyth, 2012). Little is known about the about the manner in which coaches select player. Majority of the available academic literature addressing on cricket team selection appears to incorporate mathematical selection models in order to negate subjectivity, which does not take into account the psychological aspects of a player that are critical to his/her success.

Research in this area would provide insight into the perspective of the cricket coach, player and selector in terms of what they deem as critical in the selection process. Research in this field is urgently needed in order to shed light on this contentious area of cricket team selection, this need is further emphasised by the South African Context.

Jooste, van Wyk and Steyn (2013) found that South African investigations addressing psychological constructs in cricket are limited. With cricket being one of South Africa's most popular sports, and team selection being so closely linked to eventual success of teams, there is a strong need for South African coaches, selectors and players to gain an understanding of this process. Lastly, with the government now implementing transformation targets across the majority of cricket it would aid in dispelling the belief that players are not selected on merit.
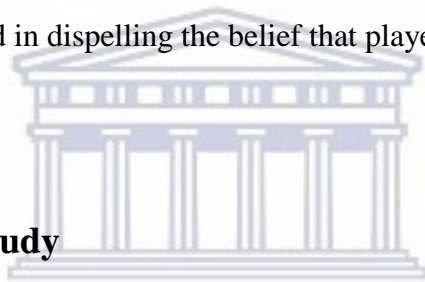
1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge within South African cricket. This study seeks to provide value and contextual information and insight into selection criteria for cricketers within the Cape Metropole region Stakeholders within cricket and sport in general. Members from the cricket fraternity and spectators alike may find this study very informative. Furthermore, this study sheds light on what can be considered as the barren area of sport related research in South Africa (Jooste et al., 2013). The experiences and perceptions of all those involved in the cricket team selection process was highlighted. This research could help inform players what to strive towards, coaches what to develop and selectors what to assess for. Lastly, this research can be regarded as ground breaking, as it lays the foundation for future studies to build on and provide a contextual basis for South African sport in general and cricket in particular.

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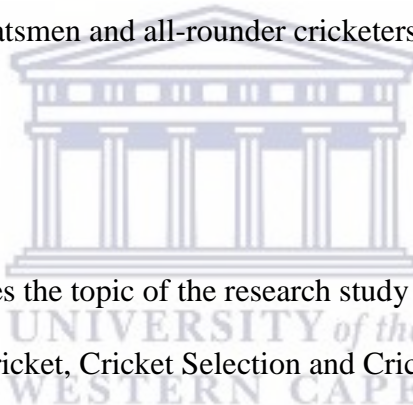
1.4 Aims of the Study

This research study explored the selection criteria involved in the selection of cricketers in the Cape Town area.

The objectives of this research study were to:

- Explore which factors coaches and selectors regard as important in the selection and success of players.
- Gain insight and understanding into which factors players regard as important in their selection as bowlers, batsmen and all-rounder cricketers.

1.5 Conclusion

This introduction contextualises the topic of the research study and defines the concepts under investigation, namely Cricket, Cricket Selection and Cricket Selection Criteria. A background was given with special interest given to cricket within the South African Context. The rationale and significance of conducting a study with the aim to explore the selection criteria of club cricketers in the greater Cape Town area is discussed. Lastly the aims and objectives of the research study were explained and defined.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the topic of this research study. It will explore cricket in a South African context, identify factors in which player, coaches and selectors view as important for team selection, and lastly, identify and discuss the current team selection methodologies that are being used.

Chapter 3 – Method

The methodology framework utilised in the study is described in this chapter. The research design, participant selection, procedure, data collection, data analysis, reflexivity, validity and lastly the ethical guidelines of the study are further discussed.

Chapter 4 – Interpretation of Findings and Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings of the collected data in terms of two thematic categories and their corresponding themes, thus producing answers to the aims of the study. Each theme is substantiated with available literature and theories. Lastly, the findings generated from the data and subsequent themes will be presented.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The final chapter of the study offers a brief review of the study's findings in relation to the aims and objectives that were set out. The theoretical contributions of these findings are discussed and limitations of the study are acknowledged. Finally, recommendations for future research are made.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the topic of this research study. Therefore, it will explore cricket in a South African context, identify factors in which player, coaches and selectors view as important for team selection, and lastly, identify and discuss the current team selection methodologies that are being used.

2.2 Cricket

The ICC players handbook (2013) defines cricket as a bat and ball, team game played during the summer in the British Isles and in several countries influenced by the British, such as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and the West Indian Nation

Cricket is played between two teams of 11 players on a grass field, with two wickets comprising of 3 wooden stumps on either side of the pitch. Generally, teams will bat in successive innings for either a set amount or unlimited balls being bowled. During the batting innings, a team will try to score as many runs as possible by either running between the wickets or hitting the ball over the boundary rope. The opposing fielding team attempts to bring an end to the batting innings by taking wickets and restricting the runs. Once the initial batting innings is complete the opposition attempt to beat the initial score. After each team has batted an equal amount of innings (either one or two, depending on the conditions of the game) the team with the most amount of runs wins.

2.3 Cricket in a South African Context

2.3.1 Segregation in South African Cricket

The history in South Africa Cricket can be described as controversial, adding further complications to the process of selection. Odendaal (2003), described the first recorded cricket match in South Africa in 1808. In the Summer of 1888 South Africa hosted their inaugural cricket match playing England in a two test match series. The South African team went on to lose both matches, however this event earmarked the time where the team were recognised amongst other cricketing nations such as England, India and Australia. Prior to the abolishment of apartheid, cricket was used to represent the British class ideology. Although every race was allowed to play, it was only the white South African's whom represented the country on the national stage. During the 1970s the British home secretary submitted to public pressure and a boycott against South African cricket was pronounced. It was during this time international teams were paid significant amounts of money to participate in 'rebel' series. Since the release of Nelson Mandela a radical and rapid change began to unfold. The inauguration of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB) in 1990 was shortly succeeded by readmission to the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1991. Despite these changes being implemented during the period of 1994-1998 there was hardly any Black representation at both international and provincial levels (Taliep, 2011). During a test series against the West Indies in 1998 the Proteas fielded an all-white team, despite an emphatic victory, the selection empathised the inadequacies of representativeness at the time as well as showed a need for more stringent transformation targets.

2.3.2 Transformation in South African Cricket

Since the fall of the apartheid government an enormous amount of money was consequently spent on the development of facilities, coaching, administration and cricketing skills of previously disadvantaged communities in an attempt to increase participation and facilitate cricketing excellence within the black communities (Taliep, 2011).

Successful inroads have been met regarding the promotion of a mini cricket programme introducing over two million children to soft ball cricket. As part of the as part of Cricket South Africa's (CSAs) transformation policy transformation targets were introduced. CSA outlined the following in their Transformation Plan that was created at the 2015 Transformation Indaba. The primary goal of this policy is to create a national cricket team which mirrors the racial demographics of our country, and to uplift those whom have been previously disadvantaged by the apartheid regime (Cricket SA, 2008). Currently the CSA subscribes to a target transformation set for all representative cricket. According to the Broad-Based Economic Empowerment Act as well as the Cricket SA Transformation Policy the following distinctions need to be made with regard to race. The term "African" refers to all individuals of colour (i.e. Indian, Coloured and Black), while the term "Black African" refers to the population whom were historically most disadvantaged. Therefore, it can be understood that in terms of the transformation policy three races are involved (Whites, Black Africans and Africans) (Taliep, 2009). Chris Nenzani the current president of CSA stated in his 2015 Transformation Policy plan that they believed firmly in a bottom-up-approach. He argued that changing the national team by means of enforcing transformation targets would only create short-term comfort, and do little in term of widening the pool of African players. The targets that were put forward can be seen in the table below:

Dimension	Year			
	2017	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
<u>**Youth Cricket (Schools)**</u> Number of Black (Black African) players per provincial team	7(3)	7(3)	7(3)	7(3)
<u>**SA U19**</u> Number of Black players within the U19 team Black African players playing ≥ 70%	8 2	8 3	9 3	9 4
<u>**Provincial Academies**</u> Percentage of Black players within each Provincial Academy	50%	50%	55%	60%
<u>**Club Cricket**</u> Minimum average number of Black Players per team in Club Champs	2	2	3	3
<u>**Francise Cricket**</u> Minimum average number of Black players per team (match) Minimum average number of Black African players per team (match)	6 3	6 3	6 3	6 3
<u>**National Academy**</u> Percentage of Black Players within the National Academy	60%	60%	70%	70%

Taliep (2009) investigated the effectiveness of these transformation programs with regards to representation and performance of black cricketers at a senior level in South Africa. His findings suggested that there was an increase in black cricketer's s during the period of 1996 to 2008 and also that no significant difference could be measured between black and white bowlers between the 2000/2001 and 2007/2008 season.

 As it can be seen the situation with regards to racial representation has significantly improved, although many people may feel that the composition of the National Team does

not reflect the diversity of the Nation (Padayachee, et al. 2004). In September 2016 sports minister Fikile Mbalula declared that due to the slow progress of transformation in South African cricket a temporary ban will be placed on CSA for both bidding for and hosting major international tournaments. In conjunction with the current transformation targets now been set for the National Team, an average of 6 Africans (two of which must be Black African) will need to take the field from this moment on. This further complicated the process of Team Selection, as now racial representation must be considered along with the previous selection criteria. Lastly, during the process of this study the Western Province Cricket Association has released a rule stating that the winning club of their premier division needs to have a minimum of two players of colour, with at least one being a black African. While no fine has been set for teams that do not comply with these rulings, only clubs that comply will be eligible for the Club Championship Tournament that is held between the different provincial club systems.

Transformation has not been without controversy, while many argue selection should be based purely on merit, others argue that without transformation targets many talented Black African players would stand a little chance of entering the provincial setup let alone the national team. This is because the Provincial scouts primarily selecting players from the elite schools such as Wynberg, Rondebosch and Grey High. It is clear that when players such as Paul Adams, Makahaya Ntini and Hershcelle Gibbs where given opportunities in terms of elite school bursaries they flourished (Vahed, 2001).

2.4 How Talent is being perceived

2.4.1 Talent Identification

Ahamad et al. (2015) described three major concerns pertaining to the recognition of talent in cricket, namely: Talent Identification, Talent Selection and Talent Development. The Authors noted a scarcity of literature pertaining to these elements with regards to cricket. They recognised that traditional methods for talent identification and enhancement (i.e. under supervision of a coach) could be restricted by the technical limitations of the coaching staff, as well as a lack of necessary equipment. Lastly, through interview and research the authors identified four specific categories that influencing cricketing talent. These are Physiological, Anthropometric, Psychological and Motor Control). Phillips et al. (2010) emphasised the importance of environmental factors in the development of talent.

2.4.1.1 Psychological Characteristics

The Turn of the new millennium saw the construct of mental toughness emerge as a popular research agenda for the sport psychology community. Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) stated that possibility his most important finding from the available empirical literature is that the concept of mental toughness appears multifaceted and made up of multiple key components which broadly encompasses a range of values, cognitions, attitudes, behaviours and emotions. They found that despite this broad definition, several key characteristics (i.e. self-belief/confidence, personal values, attentional control, self-motivation, positive attitudes, enjoyment, thriving through pressure, reliance and sport intelligence) were present amongst the literature sampling a range of sports. Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) argued that this constellation of core psychological characterises would not vary significantly by sport and as

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a result could also be applied in the context of cricket. This constellation is said to facilitate the achievement of one's goals when faced with both positive (e.g. winning streak) and negative (e.g. injury) pressures adversities and challenges (Gucciardi & Gordon, 2009)

Hill (2001) stated that research with regards to cognition in sport has developed rapidly in attempts to provide a framework which better explains the relationship. Chopra (2009) explains that in the game of cricket specifically the psychological state of the player could change drastically within the course of a single game from highly confident to utter diffidence. It is for this reason that the researcher argues that a degree of work ethic and focused state of mind define a skilled player rather than simply raw talent. Weinberg and Gould (2011) refer to these cognitions as mental skills, and define them as the athlete's cognitive abilities and efforts used during sporting participation for the purpose of inner satisfaction and enhanced physical performance standards. These mental skills play a fundamental role in transforming a players potential into talent, as well as establishing their developmental capacity (MacNamara, Button & Collins. 2010). In their research MacNamara, et al. (2010) identified seven psychological characteristics (motivation, commitment, coping under pressure, self-belief, imagery, game awareness and vision of what it takes to succeed) which are necessary for the manifestation and acquisition of sporting expertise.

Jooste et al. (2013) stated that mental skills play a significant role in the context of cricket, and their findings corroborate the fact that other physiological attributes such as strength, speed and physique should also be considered as determinants of performance (Cox & Yoo, 1995). Jooste et al.'s (2013) findings suggested that coaches should consider introducing training in these identified mental skills during the developmental states of the game as they

are noted to be strongly associated with successful participation and development at different level.

2.4.1.2 Anthropometric Characteristics

Stuelcken et al. (2007) describes Anthropometry as the as the study of measurements and proportions of the human body. Slater et al. (2005) argued that just as a cricketer's specific skills contribute to his/her role and performance in the team, the anthropometric profile of his body will too contribute to both role and success. When assessing South African elite cricketers Stretch (1991) found an anthropometric difference between batsmen and bowlers, however in his limitations it was mentioned that he placed both spin and fast bowlers in the same grouping. With the advent of professionalism greater section pressures for body type have been fostered. Phillips et al. (2010) cautioned against over-emphasising the importance of anthropometric profiling as there are a multitude of characteristics that combine to form talent.

2.4.1.3 Physiological and Biomechanical Characterises

Glazier & Wheat (2014) describe the biomechanics of a cricketer as the aspects which include his movement. This is the area of talent identification that is traditionally emphasised as it is the most apparent to coaches and selectors (Woolmer, Noakes & Moffet 2008).

These characteristics can range from a player's endurance to his hand eye coordination. While many agree that these factors are important Phillips et al. (2010) argues an over emphasis of these can create a polarised view of talent development. Instead the authors suggest to view the sportsperson as a dynamic system with a multitude of factors affecting him or her.

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2.4.1.4 Environmental Characteristics

Davids and Baker (2007) argued that the role of the family and environmental expertise both play a role in the acquisition of talent. Ericsson and Smith developed a general theory of talent development, with its premise involving goal directed skill learning. The theory proposed that experts devote 10 years or 10 000 hours in deliberate practice to attain exceptional performance.

Phillips et al (2010) critiqued Ericsson and Smith's theory as unidimensional, and stated that it was overly environmentalist. Specialisation at an early age has shown to be essential in the acquisition of expert talent in adulthood, although the relationship between practise and performance is non-linear.

2.5 Models of Talent Development

A further trend in research is that of the models of talent development (Phillips et al., 2011) They refer to Simonton's (1999) multidimensional, emergenic and epigenetic model as one which has operationalized the process of talent development. This model incorporated psychical, physiological, cognitive and dispositional traits that furthered acquisition of expertise in a specific domain. Despite common factors underpinning the development of expertise Phillips et. al., (2011) argue that multidisciplinary models of talent development have highlighted talent as a nonlinear approach, predicting that a range of developmental trajectories can lead to the achievement of sporting expertise. After exploring the experiential knowledge of athletes and coaches the researchers found evidence supporting that the acquisition of expertise is a nonlinear process and it fits into the key concepts of dynamical systems theory. Lastly, they emphasised the importance of appropriately designed talent

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development process that attribute significance to the role of adaptability in expert performance (Phillips et. al, 2011)

In terms of research in a South Africa context Jooste et al . (2013) stated that in South Africa, investigations addressing the psychological constructs conducive to good performance in cricket are limited at both the professional and the amateur levels of competition. At this stage, there are no available documented findings in which the relationship between mental skills and skilled performance in cricket is addressed.

2.6 Cricket selection methodologies

Currently, not much literature is available for any team selection methodology in cricket (Ahmed, Jinal & Deb, 2011). Bradbury and Forsyth (2012) state that given the diversity across the sporting environment selection criteria needs to be sport specific. As a result of this research concerning team selection in other sporting disciplines should be viewed and used tentatively when applying to cricket. In the field of cricket team selection Omkar (2003) suggested using a Genetic Algorithm, as he felt that the human element in selection subjected the selection process may be viewed as too bias, judgemental, unfair and may evoke general human error. Genetic algorithms are scholastic search techniques, which attempt to mimic the process of natural selection, they are routinely used in the generation of solutions to optimisation and search problems (Omkar, 2003). Despite indicating good potential for the proposed method, Omkar neglected to document any limitations or future recommendations to his study.

Ahmed, et al. (2011) proposed a method of cricket team selection through genetic optimisation. Using the elitist non-dominated sorting genetic algorithm (NSGAII) the researchers sorted players according to cost and assigned a unique integer. The researchers then assessed players by looking at their batting and bowling average. Using a bi-objective genetic algorithm they were able to select the best players which equivalent with the team's specific budget constraints. The authors mention that their proposed methodology is in need of some fine tuning before it can be used in practise, however did not mention any other limitations or future recommendations for the study. The applicability of this methodology to a South African club context is limited as player's performance statistics are not always available, and the budgets are negligible compared to the Indian Premiere League.

Lyer and Sharda (2009) used a neural network approach. They used neural networks to predict the player's performance in the 2007 Cricket world cup. After the world cup, the performance of each player was collected and prediction accuracy of neural networks was investigated. The authors collected their data from cricket statistic websites such as www.cricketarchive.com and it was then divided into either bowling or batting. Batsman and Bowlers were assigned subjective ratings based on heuristic rules. Despite encouraging results that neural networks can be used to predict performance, Lyer and Sharda (2009) recognised that it is still in the beginning stages. They stated a shortcoming of their research was being unable to include fielding abilities, and keeping. Furthermore, by looking at batting and bowling separately, Lyer and Sharda (2009) may have overlooked a vital role in the team which is the all-rounder. As a result of this some may argue the study may not truly reflect the composition of a cricket team.

Gerber and Sharp (2006) suggested an integer programming model in cricket team selection. This model like the previous two mentioned removes subjectivity from the decision making process and reduces the likelihood of a player's failure due to influences beyond their control. The study consigned itself to batting average, economy rate and dismissal rate. The bowler's strike rate was ignored as it was felt that it may lend itself to the longer version of the games. Unlike Lyer and Sharda (2009), these authors were able to incorporate fielding ability, all-rounder ability and wicket keeping ability. Gerber and Sharp (2006) stated that the model relies on long-term form, and players whose career's began slowly may find it difficult to get selected.

Lemmer (2011), like the previous studies, argued that a lot of subjectivity is involved in the selection of a cricket team. However, he recognises that other factors such as pitch condition play a role in the selection process. The study attempts to decide whether a team should be selected over a short series or over a longer period. Like Gerber and Sharp (2006) and Sharp, Brettenny, Gonsalves, Lourens & Stretch (2011) team selection was done by using an integer linear programming model. Team Selection was done by assessing (batting, bowling, all-rounder and wicket-keeping) abilities. The author concluded that despite selecting the best team, all players are subject to bad days and could in turn fail.

2.7 Symbolic Interactionism: The Theoretical Perspective

Symbolic Interactionism can be defined as a theoretical perspective that focuses on human conduct and human group life (Denzin, 2005). A number of Scholars including, Cooley, James, Mead, Peirce were responsible for founding Symbolic Interactionism (Denzin 2005); however, Blumer (1969) recognises George Mead as the principal originator of this theoretical perspective. Blumer's advancements in clarifying Mead's original work lead to

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the establishment of Symbolic Interactionism as a research approach (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective based on the premise that human beings act towards things based on the meanings the things have for them. These meanings are derived from the social interaction that an individual has with his fellows. Though the interpretative process used by the person dealing with things the meanings are modified (Blumer, 1969).

In order to understand an individual or group's actions, firstly once must discover the underlying meanings that things have for the individual or the group. Blumer (1969) argued that meanings arising through the process of social interaction were defined and redefined through an interpretive process involving self-reflective individuals interacting with one another in a symbolic way. Symbolic Interactionism holds that individuals or groups behave and act/interact according to how they interpret and give meaning to specific symbols. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 ; Denzin, 2005). In terms of this study, the researcher will use Symbolic Interactionism in order to understand what meanings the participants have given to the construct of selection criteria through the interactions of team selection.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature outlines the research conducted in the field of cricket team selection and selection criteria. Firstly, the game of cricket is identified, and the context of cricket in South African was elaborated upon. Four key characterises were identified as what players, coaches and selectors deemed as important with regards to talent identification (Psychological, Anthropometric, Environmental and Physiological). It was evident that research trends in

cricket have shown an increased interest in attributing psychological attributes to player's success. However, in terms of team selection, this interest is not paralleled, but rather mathematical models which incorporate a player's past performances is preferred. This study does not attempt to focus on either of these preferences, but rather to report objectively on what players, selectors and coaches deem as important.

This research study will attempt to explore "cricket team selection criteria". The next section, *Chapter 3,* discusses the methodology used in this research study.

Chapter 3: Methodological Framework

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore which factors coaches and selectors regard as important in the selection and success of players. As well as to gain insight and understanding into which factors players regard as important in their selection as bowlers, batsmen and all-rounder cricketers.

Therefore, the research study proposed to gather information from individuals associated with cricket clubs and their understanding of the Cricket Team selection process, which can be explicated by employing a qualitative methodology. The reason for this is that qualitative data provides the researcher with a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the topic at hand (Creswell, 2014).

The following section will therefore explain the particular research design, procedure, participants and ethical considerations of the study. Furthermore, given the epistemological framework and the nature of the utilized approach, the researcher will also reflect on the reflexivity and validity of the research.

3.2 Research design

The research design was exploratory in nature, and the design classification is of text and numeric form. The key research questions are too of an exploratory nature. Mouton (2001) stated that the strengths of this design are in-depth insights, establishing rapport with the participants and high construct validity. Exploratory studies look for ideas, patterns, and

themes (Creswell, 2014). Exploratory studies are implemented when a new topic of interest is under examined and the research deems is appropriate for further investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher has explored the various themes that will be gathered from the data collected in the interview process. This particular research study has two parts. Firstly, an exploration of the selection process will be investigated, and secondly, a focus on the specific selection criteria that players, coaches and selectors have deemed as important. Due to the scarcity of available information, particularly in terms of a qualitative framework, this research study will be known as an exploratory study.

3.3 Participants and Setting

This study has been conducted within the Cape Metropole region. For this study approximately ten participants were recruited. The participants comprised of cricket players, coaches and selectors involved with various cricketing institutions. Purposive sampling was used for this study as it allowed the researcher to enlist participants whom are both knowledgeable on the subject matter and able to reflect and share their experiences (Bernard, 2002). Currently there are 10 teams which make up the premier division of Club cricket in the Western Cape. In order to decide which clubs to interview an assessment was conducted based on their consistency within the previous five seasons (i.e., which clubs participated in the premiere league for the longest). For the purpose of this study only players, coaches and selectors whom are currently involved in club cricket at a first team level were interviewed. Players' must have been in the team for at least two years, while coaches and selectors must have been involved in their respective roles for a minimum of three years. This was to ensure that the participant was as knowledgeable as possible in their role. The final inclusion criterion was that the participant should be over the age of 18; the reason for this being that

the study aimed to research club cricket, rather than school cricket. Below is a table
describing the demographics of the participants.

Participant No	Participant Role	Years in Specific Role	Participant Gender
1	Coach	<10	Male
2	Coach	<10	Male
3	Selector	<10	Male
4	Selector	<10	Male
5	Selector	<10	Male
6	Coach	<10	Male
7	Player	<5	Male
8	Player	>5	Male
9	Coach	<5	Male
10	Player	<5	Male

3.4 Data Collection and Procedure

Upon receiving ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of
the Western Cape and the Western Province Cricket Board, as well as the Cricket Clubs
within the Cape Metropole region. Each club was chosen based on their performance in the
Premier Division over the past five years, a total 10 clubs were identified. Participants were
purposively selected based on the criteria mentioned above. Players, Coaches and Selectors
of the clubs were given a brief information booklet consisting of a summation of the study as
well an explanation of their rights as participants. Once individuals expressed interest they

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were asked to sign a consent form, and arrangements were made for their interview. These participants were informed that all information collected will be held confidential. The data was collected by means of 10 individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted on separate occasions over several months prior to the commencement of the cricket season. Before each semi-structured interview was conducted, the aims and objectives of the research study were explained once more in order to ensure they were understood by the participants. This method of data collection may encourage participants to openly share their personal experiences with the researcher. Some advantages of using semi-structured interviews according to Bless and Higson (2000) is that it allows the researcher to gain access to people's ideas and thoughts at a deep and profound level, because it actively involves the participant in the process and allows interaction between the interviewer and interviewee in a less restrictive manner. Each interview took place at a location most convenient for the participant, with the researcher ensuring the participants' confidentiality by requesting private and quiet rooms.

The data collection instrument is subdivided into two sections. Section one contains a biographical information sheet which includes demographic and cricket specific items. Section two consists of the interview schedule and focuses on questions related to knowledge of cricket team selection criteria by players, coaches and selectors. The biographical section will take approximately ten minutes to complete, while the individual interview will take approximately forty five minutes to an hour to complete. Once completed the interview was transcribed verbatim and then analysed and conclusions drawn and reported upon. Generally, the interviews lasted approximately and hour. It was noted that the players were asked to elaborate on their statements more often as opposed to the coaches and selectors whom

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offered up information more freely. As a result the interviews of the players were generally shorter than those of the selectors and players.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once the audio recordings of each interview were transcribed verbatim, thematic analysis was used to analyse the information gathered from each individual interview in order to examine and focus on themes that occur within the data. Thematic analysis can be described as a process for encoding qualitative information and drawing attention to organisation within the data, creating a rich and detailed description of the data collected (Creswell, 2014). The encoding requires a specific "code" which could be a list of themes, and complex model of themes, indicators qualifications that are causally related or something between these forms (Boyatzis, 1998). This form of analysis is helpful because it can be used to study topics other than individual experiences, and it allows for the interpretation to be supported by the relevant data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Other advantages of using thematic analysis is that it provides flexibility, is able to summate large bodies of data into key features, it offers a detailed description of the data set and it can highlight similarities and differences across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Themes were established through preliminary analysis and then scrutinised once the data had become more saturated and an extensive view of the topic was achieved. Each theme, once contextualised, was placed in a specific file. Braun and Clarke (2006) discussed five major steps that made up the levels of analysis. These are i) data organisation and reduction, ii) thematic analysis, iii) coding, iv) interpretation and v) conclusion drawing. Throughout the

entire data analysis, care was be taken to ensure that the categories reflect and fit the data rather than forcing the data to fit within the categories using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

3.6 Rigor

In order to establish trustworthiness in a qualitative study, the use of credibility, conformability and dependability need to be considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is regarded as one of the most important criteria in qualitative research and presents an accurate description or interpretation of human experience so that people whom have shared that experience would immediately recognise the descriptions. Credibility was obtained through the continual engagement by means of reflection, in order to ensure the participants' views were correctly recorded. It is a judgement of the trustworthiness of a piece of research (Angen, 2000).

Dependability is associated with the consistency of the findings and is closely linked to credibility as the demonstration of the former ensures the latter (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability was obtained by providing objective findings as the result of the ideas and experiences of the participants and not the preferences of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability and confirmability was achieved by making use of an audit trail (Morrow, 2005). The audit trail kept track of all the records and activities used for this project that will affect the advancement of it, which the supervisor then examined.

3.7 Reflexivity and Validity

As a researcher involved in a qualitative study, it is important to be aware of the role one plays in the research process and the way knowledge has been constructed. Having both played and coached cricket in the past, it is important to be mindful of the perceptions and experiences of other coaches, players and selectors. Critical self-reflection was maintained throughout the study means of supervision and self-analysis, through this the researcher was able to ensure that the participants' views are represented at all times rather than his own views. By being aware of this throughout the process of research one can enhance trustworthiness, transparency and accountability. Finley (2002) emphasised that a researcher should be aware of bias throughout the research process as it is their responsibility to actively construct, collect, select and interpret the data.

The researcher strived to maintain awareness of these concerns and attempted to identify areas of sensitivity and personal subjectivity as far as possible. During the process of the research this was reflected upon.

3.8 Ethics

The ethical principles guiding considerations the study fall under those stipulated by the University of the Western Cape. It is imperative that the researcher protects the rights and well-being of the participants included in the study. As mentioned by Babbie and Mouton (2001) the core ethical principles that were adhered to throughout the study include, trustworthiness, responsibility, integrity, justice, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and the respect for human rights and dignity. Permission was granted from the

University of the Western Cape's Research Ethics Committee and the Western Province Cricket Board.

Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed of the aims of the study and gave their informed consent. The researcher informed the participants of their rights in the research process as well as information sheet (Appendix A). These rights include, not being obligated to reply to any question that the participants are not comfortable in answering. Participants could withdraw from the research process at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was also ensured. Only the researcher involved with the study and supervisor had access to the data obtained from the interviews. Access to any particular publications the individuals are involved in will be shared with the participants. The participants were informed that if problems or concerns should arise as a result of the research study, counselling would be made available for them. After the conclusion of the interview segment no counselling referrals were necessary, and no participants withdrew from the study.
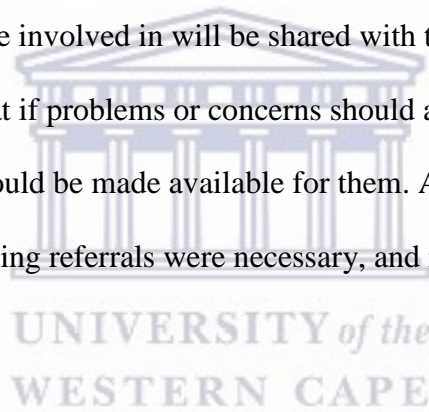
3.9 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology utilized for the research study. The research design was described and explained as well as how it supports the study's aims and objectives. The participant recruitment and selection, data collection, procedures, data analysis, rigour, reflexivity and validity were also discussed. Furthermore, crucial ethical concerns were discussed which were maintained through the research process. The next section *Chapter 4* will describe and explain the findings of the themes identified of the semi-structured interviews and also consider literature and theory reviewed.

Chapter 4: Interpretation of Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the analysis and findings of the transcribed semi-structured interviews as well as a brief discussion of each theme. The transcripts were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis wherein reading and re-reading transcripts, identifying codes and then grouping them together in meaningful themes is necessary. According to the aims and objectives of the study, thematic categories were both identified and then discussed as various themes accordingly. In order to substantiate the themes, extracts of the semi-structured interview are also presented.

The discussion of each theme was also linked to what literature and theories that were presented in the literature review. Furthermore, a summary of the present findings will be reviewed.

4.2 Findings of the Study

Themes Identified	Description of Themes	Subthemes	Examples
Factors that affect team selection.	The various factors that coaches, players and	• Availability of the player	• *You go on availability and together with captain you set up your team*

	selectors described as important to consider when selecting a cricket team.	• Opponent	• *If you are playing a strong batting side you put in more bowling all-rounders. Each role needs to be defined by opposition*
		• Pitch Conditions	• *If you are playing on a spinning pitch, and you have a genuine all-rounder, you can maybe drop a seamer for a spinner*
		• Balance of the Team	• *I like to go for an extra batsman, so you might have 7 batsmen. I call it configuring a team, when you configure the setup. 5, 6 and 7 are batsman, and then come the all-rounders, hopefully you have a left arm bowler and then your seam bowlers.*
		• Format of the Game	• *When you more to the longer version of the*

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			game, you need to have psychologically the guys that are strong, mentally fit, know their games, be very patient. It's crucial that those two have to be assessed.
Selection Criteria that could be or is used.	The various criteria that coaches, selectors and players viewed as important when selecting a cricket team.	• Awareness	• *It has a lot to do with having one on one sessions with players, understanding what their goals are, and how they plan to achieve their goals. How their goals fit with my goals for the side. It is important that everybody works in the same direction.*
		• Adaptability	• *If it's a fast bouncy pitch he knuckles down and adapts. If it's a slow low pitch he gets stuck in, focuses on every ball, and*

			plays every ball on its merit. He doesn't throw his wicket away.
		• Mental Strength	• *Batting requires a lot of thinking, when batting I think you need to be a lot more resilient and stubborn. Dig really deep. Mental toughness as a batman, to me is more important than physical ability*
		• Physical Attributes	• *It has to be performance, the player's ability. By performance, he has to produce in the role he has been delegated. If he is the spear head and his job is to take wickets, he must be taking wickets quite a bit. If he is another bowler, that job is to hold an end and contain, he must dry*
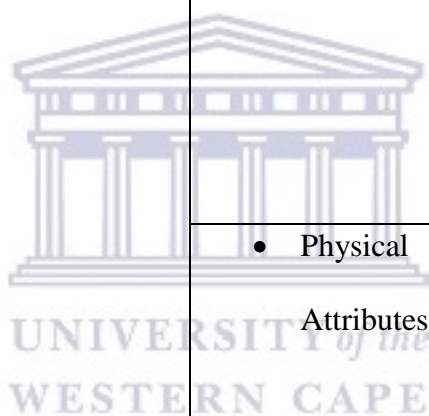
			up the runs and frustrate the batsman and do that well

4.3 Factors that affect team selection

Many of the participants stated that cricket team selection should in fact be a simple process.

"Should be very simple, I believe it should, simple but not simple" (Participant 9)

"Look I think, for me, selections should be quite a simple thing, but they tend to get complicated" (Participant 1)

In the case of participant 9 and 1, they both recognised that despite them wanting the selection process to be simple, it is in fact a very complicated process with many factors that influence it. The factors that affect team selection are established through five themes; availability, opponent; pitch conditions; balance of the team and format of the game. These themes together clearly describe and explain some of the factors that coaches and players must consider when selecting a team.

4.3.1 Availability

The first theme to emerge in the factors that affect team selection was availability. This was achieved by initially gaining an understanding of how they construct the process of selecting a team. Participants had different views of player availability, which were mostly dictated by the setting in which the club found itself.

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"You go on availability and together with captain you set up your team" (Participant 1)

"Selection of teams is dictated by availability, it is key at our level. Academics must also be taken into account" (Participant 2)

The usage of the words "dictate" and "key" indicated the importance in considering availability when selecting a team. Participant two, is a coach at a university establishment, expressed the following to describe specific challenges.

"It is a more holistic approach, I won't force people to come to training when they have academic commitments and so on." (Participant 2)

"With being at a tertiary institution, it is quite difficult to get the better players to come to you because they need to quality for the university." (Participant 2)

Another Factor which participants revealed impacts player availability is the promotion of players to either franchise or amateur cricket above them.

"This year we will have lots of movement up and down, from provincial down, this year we have 9 players in franchisees or amateur; lots of movement going up and down." (Participant 3)

This inconsistency in player ability creates a unique challenge to the process of selection and the construct of team cohesion. The only way that this can be dealt with is to have a large pool of players whom are all playing at a similar level. This challenge may not be applicable with regards to the countries national team in terms of promotion, as players at that level have reached the highest level. However, issues such as injuries will still affect player's availability.

*"That's the reason why you have to have a big squad. It is import to focus on the guys who are just about on the fringe of the first team, so when they take the step up, that they are ready to make it" (*Participant 5)

4.3.2 Opponent

The participants further described how the process of selection is affected by whom they will be playing.

"You need to balance the team against your opponents" (Participant 3)

"If you are playing a strong batting side you put in more bowling all-rounders. Each role needs to be defined by opposition." (Participant 7)

The first participant refers to the concept of balance, which is a critical consideration in cricket that will be discussed later. In this instance the team needs to be balanced according to the makeup of their opponents, in order to counteract their strengths. The second participant also identifies the concept of balance, in this case he suggests the selected team's strengths should ideally counterbalance those of the opposing team. In other words if the opposing team's strength lies in batting, the coach and selectors must ensure that a strong bowling team is selected to counterbalance this.

4.3.3 Pitch Conditions

The game of cricket is generally played on a hard surfaced constructed of grass and clay. Despite the fact that all pitches are made from the same key ingredients, the care of the pitch and weather can greatly affect how performs. In international cricket, it is well known that

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different countries usually produce similar performing pitches. For example, a typical South African pitch will be one which favours fast bowling, while a typical Indian pitch will favour spin bowling. This difference in pitch performance is something that club team coaches and selectors also need to consider as no two pitches are exactly the same.

We all get to know pitches around the Cape where we are involved. Sometimes you go to a field where the pitch is sometimes green and quick so you would like to have an extra seamer, and other times you go to a venue where it is dry and slow, and you have to have an extra spinner" (Participant 8)

"If you are playing on a spinning pitch, and you have a genuine all-rounder, you can maybe drop a seamer for a spinner" (Participant 7)

"It has a lot to do with the composition, the balance of the side, various conditions that you may play in. a guy may show good form, but the next week we may play in different conditions that would suit another player better." (Participant 2)

The participants refer to the fact that the state of the pitch mainly influences the bowlers in which they will select for the team. If the pitch is green and quick you may need an extra fast bowler (seamer), and if the pitch is slow and dry and extra spin bowler may be required. Another factor that Participant 7 alluded to is that having a genuine all-rounder (someone whom can bat a bowl) grants the coach and selectors some freedom as they can either pick and extra batsman or bowler. Lastly, Participant 2 mentions the fact that despite a player being in good form, he may not be suited to the conditions of the next game. If not communicated correctly this could cause disappointment for the inform player being dropped.

4.3.4 Balance of the team

The balance of the team became a key emergent theme amongst the participants. As what was mentioned in chapter one, a cricket team consists of 11 players. These 11 positions can be divided into 4 basic roles (i.e., Batsmen, Bowlers, All-Rounders and the Wicket Keeper). This balance can be influenced by each of the above terms, but generally follows a rough blueprint. As previously mentioned the Transformation Targets proposed by the Western Province Cricket Association also play a role when considering the balance of the team.

"Players need to be aware of roles in the team. 4, 5 and 6 are stroke makers, which are where the bulk of the runs should come from. 7 , 8 can be all-rounders, can be batting all-rounders or bowling all-rounders depending on what the balance of the side needs to be, and our talent pool." (Participant 3)

"It is always good to have your top 6 batsmen, wicket keeper batter at 7 and then your four bowlers, and that gives them a bit more responsibility. Some people try bat down to 8, but I feel that makes a side unbalanced, unless you have a very good all-rounder in top 6, then it allows for having an extra batter at 8." (Participant 10)

"I like to go for an extra batsman, so you might have 7 batsmen. I call it configuring a team, when you configure the setup. 5, 6 and 7 are batsman, and then come the all-rounders, hopefully you have a left arm bowler and then your seam bowlers." (Participant 1)

All three participants have similar ideas of what the composition of their team should consist of. However, the subdivision of the basic four roles became more evident. The first 3 batsmen are known as the openers, and each have a specific role. Then comes the middle orders, which are generally regarded as the more attacking batsmen, this is followed by the all-

rounders (either bowling or batting all-rounders). Lastly, comes the bowlers which can be divided into Spin, Fast, and medium pace. Under the theme of balances a second sub-theme appears which are combinations.

"Warm up games are the most important part of preseason training, it is where you develop your combinations to see who can deliver goods in the middle." (Participant 6)

"Batting roles, all-rounder roles, spin options, Fast Bowlers, Combinations; you don't want to be sitting with three leg spinners, instead of having one leg spinner and an off spinner. So those are the combinations you need" (Participant 8)

"*Bowlers bowl in pairs. One may be more skilful and the other one may be more quicker. The two bowlers that are bowling together need to understand their role within that partnership of bowlers. Everyone in the team needs to understand the roles that they play within different sets of the game.*" (Participant 7)

Participant 6 and 8 both referred to the combination of players that make up to be the balance of the team. However, participant 7 mentions that individual players bowling together also need to be aware of each of their roles in the combination. It is similarly true in batting. The two batsmen who are in the middle need to be aware of their roles that the coach has assigned to them, and execute them in order to reach the goals that the coach has set. Because of this the coach needs to be very specific about his expectation and role for each player. When asked if the players are aware of their specific roles Participant 1 stated the following.

"Yes, definitely it is very important for players to know their roles, there is a lot of communication, your senior players and captain help with it as well. It is crucial the different formats that the players know exactly what they must do." (Participant 1)

I should be noted that none of the participants mentioned the transformation targets as something that affected their selection in terms of the balance of the team. This may be due the fact that at the time of the interviews targets were given as a guideline with no repercussions if targets were not met.

4.3.5 Format of the game

Currently the club cricketers in the premiere division of the Western Cape participate in three different formats of games. Firstly is the 20-over tournament (T20), then is the one day 50-over tournament and lastly is the two day unlimited overs tournament. Each division comes with its own specific challenges are requirements from the players and team composition.

"*With T20s and different formats things change all the time. You are looking for attacking players for different formats of the game. Longer version, batters that can bat longer. With three formats that we are faced with it can get a bit tricky*" (Participant 4)

"*Ideally you would like the team to differ; you would like those players to be available. Because of the club setup you are limited. So you will sometimes have to go and practise different skills for different formats.*" (Participant 9)

Yes, I think it is important. The players need to be fit, and up to it. Especially when you play a game you have to adapt to the different formats, things change all the time. T20 you need maybe younger guys, quicker guys, faster guys. So physically they have to be up there. (Participant 6)

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When you move to the longer version of the game, you need to have psychologically the guys that are strong, mentally fit, know their games, be very patient. It's crucial that those two have to be assessed. (Participant 6)

As the previous four participants mentioned each format of the game requires specific individual skills. Participant 5 mentioned that the shortest version of the game (T20) requires players to be quicker and physically able, while Participant 6 mentions that during the longest format (two day unlimited overs) players need to be mentally fit. Participant 4 describes a different mind-set and strategy that players need to adopt (i.e. attacking vs. patience). Lastly, Participant 9 states that because of the specific requirements of each format, ideally the teams should differ. This is not always possible however, due to a lack of players in the club. This sentiment is mirrored in international cricket, according to Cricket South Africa's website only 50% of the Protea T20 squad participate in the longest format of the game (5 day cricket).
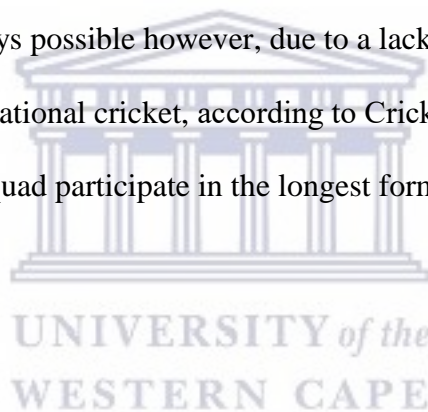
4.4 Thematic Category 2: Selection criteria that could be, or is used?

Many of the participants recognised the importance of psychological attributes within the game of cricket.

"To me cricket is 80% mental and 20% skill. Batting is definitely more mental than it is physical. (Participant 4)

Despite this the majority of their focus in on the physical attributes and form. The understanding and meaning that these participants attached to selection criteria in the context

of cricket team selection are discussed in these five themes: Awareness, Adaptability, Resilience, Mental Strength and Physical attributes. These five themes explore the factors which coaches, selectors and players deem vital for both selection and success on the field of play.

4.4.1   Awareness & Insight

After the process of thematic analysis, Awareness & Insight emerged as one of the key themes. Insight refers to how the player understands himself, and his own skill set. This insight is critical because the player needs to understand how his own skills fits into the role he has been assigned by the coach.

"It has a lot to do with having one on one sessions with players, understanding what their goals are, and how they plan to achieve their goals. How their goals fit with my goals for the side. It is important that everybody works in the same direction" (Participant 4)

"You have a chat with the players, and you see where they are, and what they are thinking about, how they think about the game, how they think about their own game, what they offer the team. Do they have their game plan in place"(Participant 6)

External awareness focuses on how the player perceives his role within the context of what is happening in the game. This can also be linked to the following theme which is adaptability. This theme can be linked to two mental skills which MacNamara, Button and Collins (2010) mentioned in their research (i.e. Game Awareness and Vision of what it takes to succeed).

"To me a player needs to be aware of how his skills can be used to achieve the team's goals." (Participant 10)

"It is important that when I am batting to assess the situation of the game, if we are 5 wickets down for no runs I need play differently compared to how I would play if my team has a lot of runs." (Participant 7)

Participant 10 alludes to a link between internal and external awareness. It is important that a player be aware of his own abilities as well as be able to read what is required at any given point in the game. Once the player knows this he/she is able to adapt where necessary in order to achieve the goals of the team.

4.4.2   Adaptability

Adaptability refers to the ability of a player to assume multiple roles within the context of the game depending on what is needed. Without awareness, adaptability would be difficult. Many players mentioned adaptability as one of the key factors which led to the success of great cricketers. It should be noted that this also refers to a player executing his specific role in a different manner depending on the needs of the team (i.e., an attacking batsman batting defensively because his team has lost multiple wickets).

"If it's a fast bouncy pitch he knuckles down and adapts. If it's a slow low pitch he gets stuck in, focuses on every ball, and plays every ball on its merit. He doesn't throw his wicket away." (Participant 4)

"At one stage he was getting out with a certain shot in a certain area, and he was able to take that out of his repertoire of shots until he was satisfied that he had mastered it, and then stated playing" (Participant 5)

"His manner of approaching games, how he manipulates strike. Reading of game fitting in everything into the game, he is very adaptable to each format." (Participant 10)

Participant 4 when referring to Jaques Kallis alluded to the importance of adapting to the playing condition (i.e. the pitch). When referring to Sachin Tendulkar's characteristics (Participant 5) emphasized the importance of self-awareness and adaptability in terms of the way he played. Lastly, Participant 10 discussed a third form of adaptability, and that is adaptability throughout the format of the game being played (i.e. unlimited overs vs. 20 overs). This means that coaches and selectors generally assessed adaptability simply by observation, which is neither quantifiable nor repeatable. The concept of adaptability is emphasised by Phillips et al. (2011), in which they state that adaptability should be incorporated into developmental programs.
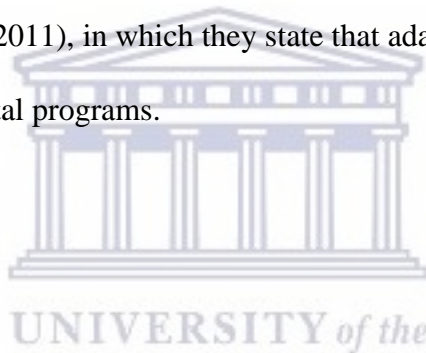
4.4.3   Mental Strength

The term "Mental Strength" was used often within the interviews, although somewhat ambiguously. The concept of mental toughness within cricket is rapidly becoming a popular topic, with Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) developing an assessment tool. Despite not participants not mentioning all factors used in the tool. Several of Gucciari and Gordon's were mentioned consistently namely: Resilience, Attentional control and Self-Belief.

<u>Resilience</u>

This theme became evident when participants were questioned on the characteristics of their favourite player. Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) describe resilience as the idea of being able to withstand challenges, and bounce back from failure was described as a key factor for long

term success as a player. When referring to ex Protea's Captain Hansie Cronjie Participant 8 stated the following.

"*He could get hit four times, and the more he got hit the more he dug into the trench. He wouldn't get hit on the head and then walk away. These are good attributes of batsman, you need to be determined, stubborn and resilient.*" (Participant 8)

"*Batting requires a lot of thinking, when batting I think you need to be a lot more resilient and stubborn. Dig really deep. Mental toughness as a batman, to me is more important than physical ability*" (Participant 3)

"*Resilience and being able to bounce back. Being all all-rounder gave Jacques Kallis a wider understanding of the game to become a better captain.*" (Participant 7)
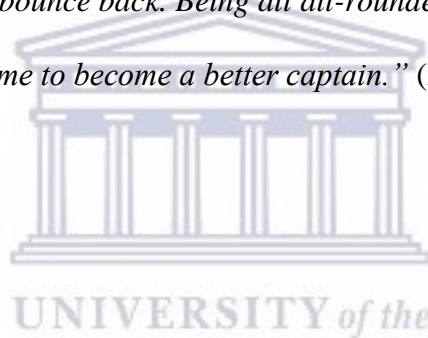
 Self-belief

Self-belief is seen as very important in the context of cricket, as much as player needs self-awareness to recognise his abilities, he too needs to believe in his abilities. MacNamara, Button and Collins (2010) and Gucciardi and Gordon (2009) both describe self-belief as a vital mental skill for a cricketer to possess. They define it as the ability to believe in your physical ability to perform in any circumstance. When referring to all-rounders Eddie Barlow and Ian Botham, Participant 6 stated the following.

"*They just had this incredible self-belief and perseverance. You have so much more of a work load than everybody else, you have to bat and bowl for long periods*" (Participant 6)

"A player needs to believe in his abilities, if he needs to back himself to face any bowler or batsman" (Participant 10)

"Players need to trust in their teammates as well as themselves, if there is no trust then the team will struggle."(Participant 9)

4.4.4 Physical attributes

Lastly, the theme of physical attributes was discussed. Despite this being seen as the 'old-school' method of identifying talent and selecting a team, it was the most widely discussed when participants were referring to how they, or how they would, select a team. Pervious performance was seen as a way of identifying a concept known as players form. Jooste (2013) contended for a balanced consideration between mental skills and physiological attributes such as speed, physique and strength.

" Performance in terms of , previous games, work ethic is also important, a batter or bowler may go through a little slump in form, but if he shows that he is willing to work on his game and work to get out of that , that's for me most important." (Participant 3)

"It has to be performance, the player's ability. By performance, he has to produce in the role he has been delegated. If he is the spear head and his job is to take wickets, he must be taking wickets quite a bit. If he is another bowler, that job is to hold an end and contain, he must dry up the runs and frustrate the batsman and do that well" (Participant 5)

"Especially when you play a game you have to adapt to the different formats, things change all the time. T20 you need maybe younger guys, quicker guys, faster guys. So physically they have to be up there. "(Participant 6)

Again the concept of roles in the team is very important, the participants identified that players should be assessed on how well they accomplish their role that the coaches has given to them. Participant 3 identifies hard work as an important characteristic for a player to have, and suggests that it could be key in overcoming slumps in performance.

4.5 Summary of findings

The semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and were arranged and presented in themes. Participants described a clear understanding of the main aim of the research study, that is, to explore the selection criteria involved in the selection of cricketers. The interpretations of these findings are presented in this chapter as two thematic categories with their themes, '*namely factors affect team selection*' and '*selection criteria that is or should be used*'.

Participants reported their views of which factors affect team selection. Some stated that the selection process should be a simple one, and in essence the best team should play. However this process can be subjected to internal biases. In terms of factors which affect the selection of a team the participants alluded to five factors namely: *the availability of players, the opponents against which they were playing, the pitch and environmental conditions, the balance of the team and lastly the format in which they will be playing the game.*

The second thematic category focused upon which selection criteria were deemed important in the selection of a cricket team. This process was seen as significantly more complex as it looked beyond simply labelling players good or bad, but began to explore that factors which contribute to a player's success. A large amount of the information obtained in this category arose from the questions where participants had to name their favourite players in each specific role in cricket (i.e. Bowler, Batsman, All-rounder and Fielder), participants where then asked to identify which characteristics made these individuals great in their specific roles. From this discussion five themes appeared namely: *awareness, adaptability, resilience, mental strength and physical attributes.* Whilst none of these players had any direct exposure or training in sport psychology it was surprising to the researcher how much of what they discussed was concerned with the mental aspects of the game.
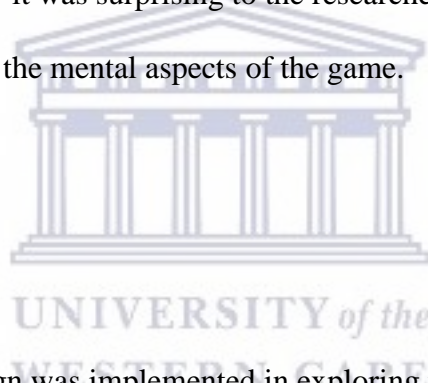
4.6 Conclusion

A qualitative exploratory design was implemented in exploring the selection criteria involved in the selection of cricketers. The themes presented above are in keeping with the aim and objective of the research study. The next chapter presents a final conclusion of the research study, limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The present study addresses and important process in the game of cricket. Cricket team selection is something that is engaged in by coaches, players and selectors. There has been a steady incline in the popularity of cricket as a sport, as well as the money associated to it. It is for this reason that there is a strong need to understand the process of cricket team selection,

and selection criteria. The review of the literature indicated minimal research with a focus on cricket team selection, and most of these were quantitative in nature.

Given the scarcity of research focusing specifically on cricket team selection and selection criteria, the aim of the study was to explore and understand the process of cricket team selection. Specifically, this study sought to ascertain what factors or selection criteria were deemed as the most important to player selection and subsequent success.

Participants initially stated that the process of cricket team selection should be simple, (i.e. the best players should play) however, the process of deciding which players are the best is in fact unpredictably complex. This complexity of the selection process was empathized by the views of the participants. The selection process was stated to be affected by many different factors, such as the opposition they were playing, the conditions they were going to be playing on, the availability of the players and most importantly the balance of the team.

An analysis of specific selection criteria yielded somewhat of a contradiction. All of the participants stated that psychological factors were extremely important in the game of cricket and selecting a team. However, the majority of the participants focused on physical attributes and performance when selecting a team. Selection criteria that were discussed was physical attributes, resilience, mental strength, adaptability and most importantly awareness.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

Due to the fact that there was minimal research conducted in this field, especially in the context of a qualitative manner there little research to support these findings. Although not being an initial aim of this study, obtaining an understanding on the complexity of the selection process helped to provide context for the specific selection criteria.

The social interactionism theory can assist us in understanding how players and coaches assign cricketing roles within the team through interactions with one another. The theme of roles within the team was highlighted by the participants, and it is for this reason why awareness is seen as the most important factor.

Surprisingly there was no mention of apartheid or race in general, despite the fact that the Western Province Cricket Association had recently changed the laws regarding race. Within other research that was present the other theories that were utilized were social learning and Bronfrenbremmers' ecological model, perhaps in future studies these theories can be used instead of symbolic interactionism to ascertain a different understanding of the selection process.

In terms of the practical contributions the researcher concurs with what Phillips et al. (2011) suggested which is that the experience-based knowledge and insights of expert performers and coaches should be harnessed and allied to the empirical knowledge gained from future research in the field of sport psychology. Talent development programs should focus on talent development rather than selection due to different rates of athletic skill development. Within these talents development programmes both mental and physical skills that were discussed in this study should be incorporated.

5.2 Limitations

Prominent in the study's literature review was limitation of empirical studies focusing on team selection within the context of cricket. The researcher identified no studies that had been conducted within the South African context.

Another limitation of the study occurred during the data collection process. Due to the time constraints of completing the study by the end of the year interviews had to be scheduled prior to the commencement of the cricket season. This effected participation as clubs had not yet conducted their selections.

5.3 Recommendations

Regardless of some of the challenges occurring during the research, the present study identified pertinent constructs within the context of cricket team selection which can be further expanded upon in future research. The importance of awareness and adaptability was unexpected. A qualitative study would be helpful in revealing whether the opinions expressed by the participants in this study are common in other selectors, players and coaches within the cricketing context.

Participants also recognised the importance of developing and assessment tool that can be used to objectively assess cricket players in terms of psychological attributes. Based on the

findings of this study it may be possible to isolate certain factors and conduct a quantitative study which compares these factors with a player's success.

5.4 Conclusion

Cricket team selection can be seen by the layman as a somewhat simple process, where 'good' players are selected and 'bad' players are not. This study attempted to understand the process of cricket selection and in essence what factors makes a player 'good'. These factors are known as selection criteria. It was found that, in the context of club cricket in the Cape Town area that these factors rely on a player's insight both internally and externally. This insight can link to vital attributes such as role awareness and adaptability. In terms of the theme 'mental strength' this was also seen as an important psychological factor, and can be linked to resilience, concentration and self-belief. This study will inform another quantitative research endeavour attempting to link these results to success in a greater cricketing population. This study may also contribute to how coaches, selectors and players understand their roles in the selection process, as well as contribute to the limited knowledge base of the cricket team selection process.

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University of the Western Cape

Department of

Psychology

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2283 Fax: 27 21—959 3515

E-mail: andrew-greenwood@hotmail.com

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: An exploration of selection criteria of club cricketers in the greater Cape Town area.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Andrew Greenwood at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you form part of the selection process of cricketers. The purpose of this research project is order to explore selection criteria used by cricket selectors and coaches. A further aim is to explore cricket player's perception of which factors they deem important in their own selection.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to complete a biographical information sheet and take part in an individual interview at a time and place most convenient to yourself. The biographical interview will ask you biographical questions which include demographic items as well as focus on your

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role in the team. The individual interview will collect information regarding your perceptions of the cricket team selection process. The completion of the information biographical sheet and individual interview should take approximately one hour in total. *The interview will be tape recorded to assist with data analysis.*

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

The researchers undertake to protect your identity and the nature of your identity and the nature of your contribution. To ensure anonymity, the information you provide will be totally private; no names will be used so anonymity is ensured. Your name will not be reflected on the questionnaire or in the individual interview.. We will keep your personal information confidential, by having it locked and having it stored in an appropriately safe facility. If we write a report or article about this project, your identity will be protected.

What are the risks of this research?

All human interactions and talking about self or others carry some amount of risks. We will nevertheless minimise such risks and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

What are the benefits of this research?

Information about the topic is limited, especially in South Africa. This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results can be useful in terms of shedding light on the process of cricket team selection. We hope that, in the future, this information might benefit in guiding other coaches, selectors or players as to their role in the selection process.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

The researcher will undertake to protect you from any harm in this study. Should you feel affected you will be referred to your nearest community resource for assistance.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Andrew Greenwood in the Psychology Department at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Andrew Greenwood at: 084 255 4317 or email andrew-greenwood@hotmail.com. Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department:

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

Prof José Frantz

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research

Committee and Ethics Committee.

University of the Western Cape

Department of

Psychology

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2283 Fax: 27 21—959 3515

E-mail: andrew-greenwood@hotmail.com

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: An exploration of selection criteria of club cricketers in the greater Cape Town area.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

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_____ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

_____ I do not agree to being audiotaped during my participation in this study

Participant's name………………………..

Participant's signature……………………………….

Date………………………

(Appendix C)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET

SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1 <u>My role in the cricket team selection process</u>   <u>Code</u>

Player   1

Coach   2

Selector   3

Other (Please Specify) _____   4

1.2 <u>My age group :</u>

Younger than 20 years   1

20 -25 years   2

26-30 years   3

31- 35 years   4

36-40 years   5

41-45 years   6

46- 50 years   7

51- 55 years   8

56 – 60 years   9

61 – 65 years   10

Older than 65 years   11
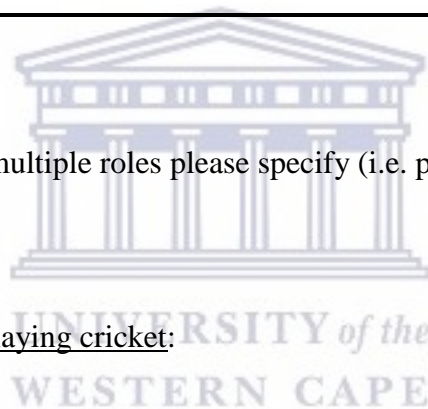
1.3 <u>The cricket institution you are currently at:</u>

_____

1.4 <u>Number of years involved in cricket:</u> (Playing/ Coaching or Selecting)

_____

If you have been involved in multiple roles please specify (i.e. player = 5years, Coach = 3

years)

1.5 <u>Highest Level achieved playing cricket</u>:

_____

1.5 <u>If Currently playing:</u>

1.5.1 My role in the team (i.e. Bowler, Batsman, All-Rounder, Wicket Keeper)

_____

1.5.2 The level that you are currently playing at (i.e. Club 1st XI)

_____

(Appendix D)

SECTION TWO:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Name your favourite cricketer (Batsman, Bowler, All-Rounder, Fielder, and Wicket-Keeper).

2. What would you describe as his best characteristics (Batsman, Bowler, All-Rounder, Fielder, and Wicket-Keeper)?

3. How would you define selection criteria?

4. How would you / do you go about selecting a cricket team?

5. How would you define your role in the selection process?

6. Do you think it is import to assess both physiological and psychological abilities in the process of selecting a team?

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7. How would you go about assessing physiological abilities?

8. In your opinion, which psychological abilities are most the important when selecting a cricket team?

9. <u>(If a player)</u> Describe which factors you think were key to your selection?

10. Is there anything else you would like to mention about cricket team selection?