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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

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**SOURCES OF SPORT CONFIDENCE AND THE
INFLUENCE GOAL SETTING HAS ON CONFIDENCE IN
ELITE FEMALE CRICKETERS**

(Dissertation submitted under the Sport Psychology area)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively identify sources of sport confidence and the influence of goal setting upon confidence in elite female cricketers. The cricketers were part of the top two tiers in the England Women's Development pathway and semi-structured interviews were used to gain an insight into these performers' sources of sport confidence, the types of goals set and the effects of achievement or failure of such goals. Ten sources of confidence were identified, although three sources were most salient; past experiences, coach support and environmental comfort. Additionally, six different types of goals were set and used by performers including process, performance, outcome, development, selection and team goals. Achievement of such goals in a competitive environment increased performers' confidence and performance levels, whereas failure to achieve goals knocked confidence and negatively impacted performance. Strategies to overcome failure were used; the majority of performers reverted back to sources of sport confidence earlier identified. Previous sport confidence literature was drawn upon when discussing findings and highlighting practical implications for players, coaches and sport psychologists.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Many researchers viewed self-confidence as the most critical psychological characteristic influencing sporting performance (Vealey et al., 1998). Feltz (1988, p279) stated that self-confidence was “the belief that one can successfully execute a specific activity, rather than a global trait that accounts for overall performance”. Self-confidence had received a reasonable amount of attention within sport psychology literature as a result of its influence on performance (Kingston et al., 2010). Performance was shaped by the goals athletes’ set, their effort to pursue goals, behavioural choices and the persistence shown when challenges occurred (Vealey, 2001). Specifically, self-confidence, performance and success were inter-related; success enhanced self-confidence and self-confidence generated good performance (Plakona et al., 2014). Vealey (2001) believed performance could be affected by three factors; athlete’s emotions, behaviours and thoughts. As a result, it was important to understand confidence, its impact on performance and where it comes from in order to form interventions that aim to enhance performance. Its importance was emphasised by the notion that self-confidence increased effort and persistence as well as counteracting cognitive anxiety (Hays et al., 2009; Feltz, 1988). Specifically, confidence strategies used in competition may have influenced the interpretation of anxiety symptoms and had a subsequent impact on performance (Hanton et al., 2004). On the other hand, a lack of confidence was associated with depression, dissatisfaction and was identified as a cause of anxiety (Hays et al., 2009).

According to Hays et al. (2007), sport psychology has benefited from the development of the concept of sports confidence, which was established by Vealey (1986; 1998; 2001), who defined self-confidence in sport settings. Sport confidence was defined as “the belief that individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sport” (Vealey, 1986, p.222). However, limited research existed concerning the concept of sports confidence directly (Koehn et al., 2013). Additionally, Hays et al. (2007) found that encouraging athletes to gain confidence from a range of sources and develop an understanding as to how and why performances were successful, helped athletes develop a more robust sport-confidence. However, this was only touched upon briefly, whereas the concept of robust sport-confidence developed later and was defined as “a set of enduring, yet malleable positive beliefs that protect against the ongoing psychological and environmental challenges associated with competition” (Thomas et al., 2011, p202). The concept of sport confidence has developed as a result of the growth of psychology within sport, whereby athletes’ and support staff awareness of the area has increased and the demands of sport and competition have

amplified.

Consequently, the demand for sport psychologists has increased. Williams (2010) believed that sport psychology was used by athletes and coaches to generate a competitive edge. Recent literature has underpinned the application of sport psychology in sporting contexts. As a result, psychology has become a vital part of sport, particularly at elite level, where its relationship with performance was imperative. Regardless of the type of elite sport, confidence was an important psychological variable that was required to improve performance, effort and goal setting (Gilson, 2010). In fact, Hays et al. (2007) found that conceptualisation and specificity of sport confidence had developed a greater understanding in the sport psychology field. Furthermore, the development of sport confidence has enabled performance to be explored further, looking at consistency and declines within competitive environments (Manzo et al., 2010). Although a team sport, cricket has elements and disciplines that are individualised, therefore self-confidence in each discipline would be vital for both individual and team performance.

Despite the significance placed upon self-confidence, cricket is a sport that has been deprived of psychological research, which was surprising considering that at elite level, cricket was considered to be a mental game (Weissensteiner et al., 2012). Weissensteiner et al. (2012) investigated psychological characteristics of expert cricket batsmen and believed previous research to be uni-dimensional as psychological characteristics were examined in isolation. Confidence, alongside self-belief, resilience and mental toughness were psychological attributes identified as critical to successful performance but it was confidence in particular, that was found to underpin athletes' commitment and persistence (Weissensteiner et al., 2012). Recent developments in the game have increased opportunities through major Twenty20 tournaments such as the Indian Premier League. Although these opportunities are great for the sport and performers reap financial reward, these opportunities bring greater expectation and ultimately more pressure under which to perform, possibly increasing the psychological aspect of the game. Pressure to perform has also increased in the women's side of the game, particularly with the introduction of professional contracts by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Despite the women's side of the game going from strength to strength, research has been even harder to come by. Stretch et al. (2000) believed there was a lack of published scientific research within women's cricket, but only conducted a

review of batting in the men's game. Psychological research in women's cricket was non-existent but has the potential to be explored given the nature of the game. Therefore, developing research in this area is vitally important; not only to help athletes and support staff, but to enhance the literature within the field of cricket whilst expanding psychological research relating to sport confidence. The purpose of this paper will be to qualitatively investigate elite female cricketers' sources of sports confidence; how these sources impact performance and the influence goal setting has upon confidence. By using elite performers, it may identify the key psychological skills or attributes required at the highest level, helping develop interventions that will aim to increase the successfulness of international athletes and teams. Woodman & Hardy (2003) supported the need for studies involving elite performers, as previous research involving such a sample was scarce, however since then, researchers in the sport domain have taken this on board.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Sport-confidence and self-efficacy have developed as well known concepts in the area of sports psychology. The development of these theories will be explored and their importance to sport, specifically performance highlighted. Goal setting will also be addressed; its use as a psychological skill and its role within sport confidence.

2.1 Sport Confidence

Confident athletes were more likely to cope better, make more informed decisions, feel in control and maintain a positive outlook on goal attainment (Vealey, 2009). Hays et al. (2009) made a further assumption that confident individuals were more skilled and were able to use cognitive resources effectively. Whereas, less confident athletes focused on perceived inadequacies and tended to become self-diagnostic (Vealey, 2001). Sport specific; self-confidence was greater in cricketers when concentration was maintained throughout performance (Thelwell & Maynard, 2003). However, the relationship between performance declines and confidence was not explored, but potentially is of more interest, to help develop interventions and prevent dips in performance. Major setbacks were found to reduce day-to-day confidence, therefore encouraging athletes to develop a robust sport confidence could help buffer against a lack of confidence (Thomas et al., 2011). Additionally, elite athletes believed the key to mental toughness was by developing a robust and resilient self-confidence, as well as having confidence in the coaches, support staff and team (Vealey, 2009). Gilson (2010) also suggested that success or failure could be determined by the smallest variations in confidence, which emphasises the importance of the influence of confidence on thoughts and behaviours, but also illustrates that outcomes can be affected by the smallest differences in psychological attributes. Athletes who have a strong belief in their ability to be successful may perform more optimally under pressure (Hays et al., 2009). Particularly evident, was in the way athletes interpreted nerves depending on confidence levels. Athletes high in confidence, interpreted nerves as excitement, whereas athletes low in confidence perceived nerves as negative, generating feelings of anxiety and fear (Hays et al., 2009). However, findings were based on the ability of performers to recall information regarding the impact of confidence on performance, therefore participants recall may have lacked accuracy. High levels of self-confidence were also facilitative to performance, allowing athletes to perceive anxiety as under control, whereas when self-confidence was reduced, focus and concentration declined as a result of a loss of perceived control (Hanton et al., 2004). Woodman & Hardy (2003) found that differences in confidence occurred as a result of

gender and competition standard; females reported lower self-confidence than males and elite athletes reported a stronger association between self-confidence and performance. In contrast, at elite level, females had just as strong a belief in their ability to succeed as males (Vealey, 2001). However, coaches and psychologists need to consider that self-reported self-confidence may not show the full picture; which may limit the effectiveness of intended interventions (Beattie et al., 2004).

It was vital for sport psychologists to understand what athletes based confidence upon or where confidence came from (Machida et al, 2012). Vealey (1986) conceptualised sport confidence by developing a model that encompassed two components; trait and state sport confidence. Competitive orientation was included to account for individual differences in perceptions of success (Feltz, 1988). Thomas et al. (2011) later identified two components of robust sport-confidence; durable and malleable provided support for Vealey's trait and state sport confidence. Vealey's (1986) model was revised in 1998 and again in 2001, as the initial 1986 model did not account for social and organisational factors in the development of confidence. It had become apparent that individual confidence levels could be affected by significant others and influenced by the environment or situation.

2.2 Self-Efficacy Theory

As well as sport confidence, self-efficacy has had an overriding influence in sport psychology research, specifically in relation to sporting performance. Feltz & Lirgg (2001, p340) stated that self-efficacy was "the belief one has about being able to execute a specific task in order to gain a desired outcome". Furthermore, it was viewed as a form of confidence that was situation specific (Thomas et al., 2011). According to Manzo et al. (2001), self-efficacy was unique; it was the way in which an athlete made sense of an experience that enhanced or undermined their self-efficacy, rather than the sporting action itself. Bandura (1977) defined four sources associated with self-efficacy; performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological states. Performance accomplishments focused upon mastery and previous experience, whereas vicarious experiences were concerned with observing others and comparing oneself to others. Verbal persuasion attempted to influence the performer and was received from coaches, teammates or oneself. Finally, physiological states included the physiological arousal individuals experienced (Feltz, 1988). In 1997, Bandura added two additional sources to self-efficacy theory; imaginal

experiences, where the picture or feel of a movement mimicked a real experience and emotional states where cognitive appraisal affected thoughts and behaviours (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). However, the initial four sources of self-efficacy received far more attention and support.

Short & Ross-Stewart (2009) explored effects on self-efficacy; success increased self-efficacy beliefs and failure lowered these beliefs. Failure was found to have catastrophic effects on self-efficacy, suggesting that performers ought to use coping strategies to maintain or restore efficacy levels (Lane et al., 2002). These strategies should focus on performance accomplishments as it had the greatest influence on self-confidence and was the most dependable source of self-efficacy, as well as protecting against anxiety (Hanton et al., 2004; Lane et al., 2002). Short & Ross-Stewart (2009) stated that there was overwhelming support for this in the literature. Neil et al. (2013) used reflective practice as part of an intervention with a cricketer and found that situational specific self confidence was enhanced, however confidence remained low, therefore it was recognised that self-efficacy was critical within interventions. Conversely, as it was a single case study, the generalisability of the findings were reduced somewhat.

Despite significant amounts of research depicting the positive and negative relationships between self-efficacy and performance, some studies have revealed that opposing relationships between the two exist (Woodman et al., 2010). Specifically, Woodman et al. (2010) found that reduced self-confidence or self-doubt actually led to increased effort and performance. However, anxiety was not accounted for which may have had an overriding influence upon performance. Conversely, high self-efficacy may have undermined performance, which may have resulted in complacency (Beattie et al., 2011). On the other hand, Bandura & Locke (2003) believed that established skills simply could not be executed if self-doubt was present. Self-efficacy and sport confidence shared many similarities; self-efficacy in particular has been paramount in exploring confidence within sport psychology (Kingston et al., 2010). Both theories were identified as cognitive mediators of motivation and behaviour; nonetheless the purpose behind sport-confidence was more specifically defined (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). However, a weakness of self-efficacy was its lack of specificity in relation to sport (Koehn et al., 2013). Despite such a weakness, the theory has been explored explicitly within sport and in conjunction with previous sport-confidence research,

has fostered the development of sources of sport-confidence.

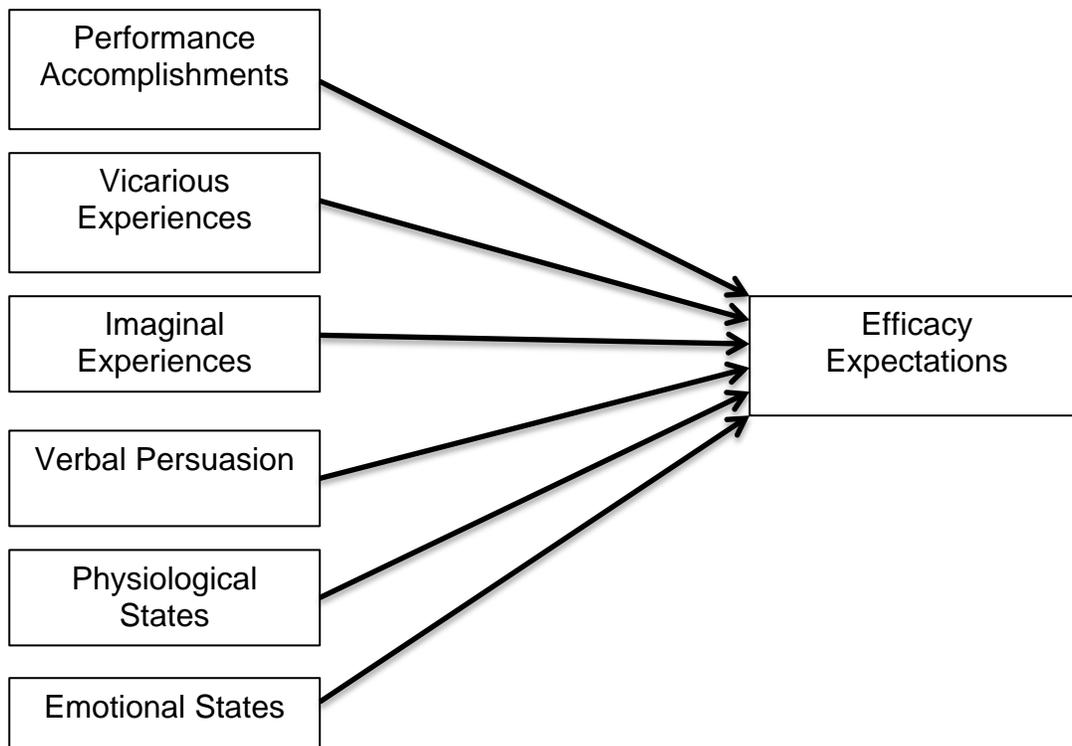


Figure 1. Sources of Self Efficacy (Bandura, 1997)

2.3 Sources of Confidence

Sources of confidence were identified in Vealey's revised models (1998; 2001) where athletes' sport-confidence levels and athletes' affect, behaviours and cognitions were predicted, enabling the most salient sources of sport confidence to be established (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). These concepts accounted for sociocultural aspects of sport, which Vealey's (1986) model failed to do. Unlike self-efficacy, Vealey's sport-confidence sources were specific to sporting and athletic populations and there were more of them (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). Nine sources of confidence were identified and categorised into three broad domains; achievement, self-regulation and social climate. Achievement included demonstration of ability and mastery. Demonstration of ability was when athletes compared their own ability to others and mastery involved athletes improving skills (Wilson et al., 2004). Self-regulation was comprised of physical/mental preparation and physical self-presentation. Physical and mental preparation involved feeling physically and mentally prepared for performance whereas physical self-presentation was the perception of athletes' physical self

(Wilson et al., 2004). Finally, social climate encompassed social support, vicarious experience, coach's leadership, environmental comfort and situational favourableness. Social support included perceived support from coaches, family and teammates; vicarious experience included watching others perform and coach's leadership was related to athletes' belief in coaches' skills. Environmental comfort incorporated feeling comfortable in competitive situations and situational favourableness was related to feeling that the situation was going in one's favour (Wilson et al., 2004). Hays et al. (2009) emphasised the importance of identifying sources of confidence, as sources were sport-specific and had influences from both demographic and organisational factors. Koehn et al. (2013) reinforced this importance; effective interventions relied upon an understanding of sources and levels of confidence that were required to achieve optimal performance. Sources of sport confidence were also related to motivation, anxiety and state self-confidence but unfortunately limited research existed to support this (Vealey et al., 1998). Additionally, Vealey's Sport Confidence Model received criticism, as it did not differentiate between individual and team confidence (Koehn et al., 2013). Some sources of sport-confidence were closely related to sources of self-efficacy; strengthening the connection between the two well established theories. Bandura's performance accomplishments were similar to Vealey's mastery and demonstration of ability; likewise verbal persuasion was connected to social support and coach's leadership (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). Additionally, a direct match occurred where vicarious experiences were established as a source of both sport-confidence and self-efficacy, providing some evidence for self-efficacy's importance within sporting contexts (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009).

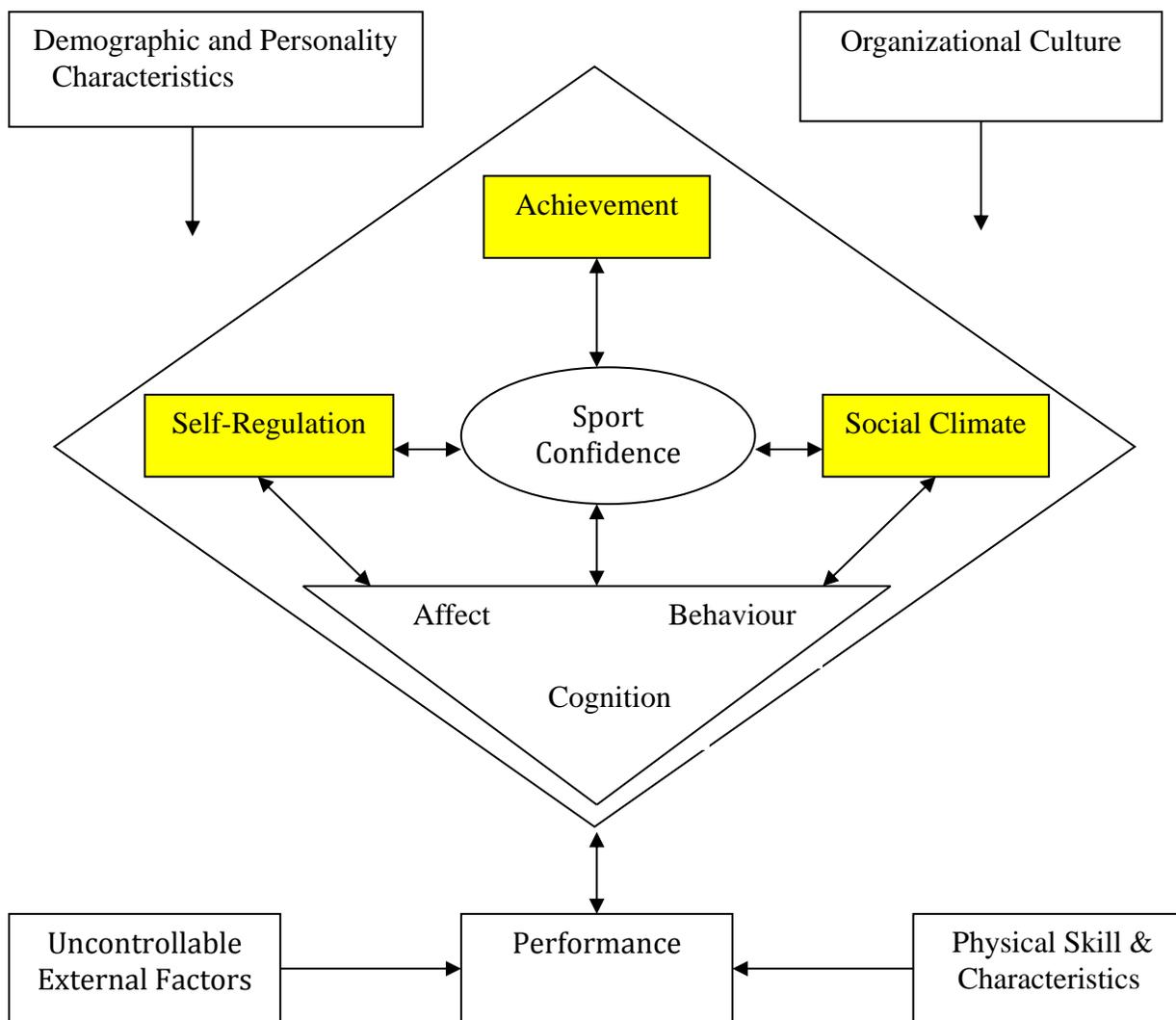


Figure 2. Vealey's Revised Sport Confidence Model (2001)

Overall, it was found that physical and mental preparation led to higher levels of confidence, whereas a focus on body image produced lower levels. Additionally, gender differences occurred; social support was more important to females (Vealey et al., 1998). However, the model was based upon high school athletes' perceptions, therefore findings cannot be applied to other groups of athletes. Consequently, Hays et al. (2007) explored sources of confidence specifically in elite athletes and found that athletes identified nine sources of confidence, however some differed to the ones identified initially by Vealey (1998). Similarities included preparation, performance accomplishments, coaching and social support, whereas there were five differences; innate factors, experience, competitive advantage, self-awareness and trust. Additionally and interestingly, females gained social support from coach's encouragement

and feedback, whereas males tended to gain confidence from the ability of the coach to provide the correct programme, defined as coach's leadership in Vealey's 1998 model (Hays et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the females interviewed were individual competitors; therefore investigating female team sport performers may depict different sources of confidence, and specifically where social support was derived from. Females in particular required environments that promoted mastery and where social support was provided, reinforcing that interventions needed to be tailored to the individual as much as possible (Kingston et al., 2010). Despite the differences between the two lists of sources, all athletes interviewed acknowledged the significance of performance accomplishments. However, slight differences occurred; males tended to focus on competition outcomes rather than good personal performances, which were highlighted by females. As a result, Hays et al. (2007) supported the work of Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy expectations.

Gender differences, although pertinent to the literature, may have arisen due to the variances in self-report data, for example Hays et al. (2009) expressed that females may have been more open to revealing emotions. Additionally, although Hays et al. (2007) found that sources of confidence differed for male and female athletes, it was noted that only two of the fourteen participants were team players. In fact, team players were more likely to experience an influence from teammates that may have altered reported sources of confidence (Hays et al., 2007). Kingston et al. (2010) went on to explain how qualitative methodology should be used to identify sources of confidence within team sport athletes in order to develop and broaden the literature in this domain. As a result, by using cricketers, further insight into confidence in team players could be established. Feltz (1988) offered support; confidence in the team, may be just as crucial as confidence in oneself. Kingston et al. (2010) found that gaining confidence from controllable sources generated stable sport-confidence beliefs, whereas weaker perceptions of sport-confidence occurred from uncontrollable sources of confidence. Machida et al. (2012) outlined that controllable and uncontrollable sources determined athletes' achievement goal orientation. Controllable sources were related to task-goal orientation and were critical for enduring confidence levels, for example physical or mental preparation. Whereas, uncontrollable sources were associated with ego-goal orientation, such as demonstration of ability (Machida et al, 2012). Both task and ego-goal orientation can be influential in determining the goals athletes choose to set.

2.4 Goal Setting

Goal setting is a psychological skill that generally improves motivation but also affects an athlete's psychological state, such as self-confidence (Gould et al., 2010). Specifically, a goal was defined as "an outcome that an individual seeks to achieve through a particular course of action" (Kremer et al., 2012, p.67). According to Locke & Latham (2002), goals served four purposes including directing athletes' attention towards goal relevant activity; increasing effort by acting as an energising function; aiding persistence, as hard goals prolong effort and by developing arousal, discovery and task relevant knowledge. Overall, it has been considered a performance-enhancing tool (Kremer et al., 2012). Subsequently, potential elite athletes who have the necessary cognitive maturity should be encouraged to use goal setting as a psychological skill as soon as possible (Wikman et al., 2014). Weinberg (2009) found that goal setting was the most used psychological intervention, but the effectiveness was dependent upon the types of goals that individuals set.

Three types of goals exist; process, performance and outcome. These goals were differentiated through performers' focus of the goal and the degree of control involved (Kingston & Wilson, 2009). Process goals involved the individual focusing on the procedures that occurred during performance; performance goals were concerned with improvement upon past or previous performances and outcome goals focused on competitive results against opponents. Process and performance goals improved self-confidence and had a positive effect on self-efficacy by promoting task-goal orientation (Weinberg, 2009; Kingston & Hardy, 1997). Vealey (2001) agreed; process and performance goals gave athletes a sense of control over performance. Additionally, process goals usually had a mastery-orientated approach attached, which can decrease athletes' fear of failure (Wikman et al., 2014). On the other hand, outcome goals were more likely to decrease confidence and increase anxiety, although athletes high in confidence may have been an exception to the rule by being less affected by negative effects (Gould et al., 2010). The importance of setting goals to the individual was found to determine self-efficacy effects; when high self-efficacy coincided with low goal importance, disengagement occurred (Beattie et al., 2011). In relation to enhancing athlete's efficacy, setting specific performance goals were highly regarded by both athletes and coaches (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009). In order to encourage the selection of controllable sources of confidence, goals were required to focus upon the task, thus process goals should be utilised (Machida et al., 2012). Additionally, Thelwell & Maynard (2003) found goal setting

was vital in developing repeatable good performance in cricketers, as it tended to provide athletes with perceived control and task specific focuses. As well as the three types of goals identified, goals can also be short or long-term. Short-term goals were effective in enhancing motivation, allowing athletes to see improvement over a period of time and ultimately progressing towards long-term goals (Williams, 2010). As well as aiding performance and motivation, opportunities to set goals were beneficial for young cricketers in developing mental toughness (Gucciardi, 2011). It was also identified that coaches have an influence over the goals that athletes set (Maitland & Gervis, 2010). However, the study's sample was limited in size and was sport-specific, which made findings hard to generalise. Overall, these different types of goals can have different effects on athletes' confidence levels and relationships between goals and confidence can develop.

Hays et al. (2007) found athletes that identified training accomplishments as a source of confidence, also identified the need for a structured goal setting programme in order to achieve training and competition milestones. Several athletes recognised goal setting alone to serve as a source of confidence (Hays et al., 2007). As only world-class athletes were interviewed, it was difficult to generalise to other populations, for example recreational athletes, however the sample was homogenous which increased the rigor of the findings. Vealey (2009) supported this notion, identifying that elite athletes had higher levels of self-confidence than amateurs, irrespective of gender. Additionally, personal goals and standards were significant predictors of self-confidence in females (Hays et al., 2007). However, further research was required to identify gender differences in competitive goal orientation, which may have had vital implications on goal setting interventions.

Gilson (2010) stated that a relationship existed between confidence and goals, and both affected the amount of effort that athletes exerted. Cricketers were found to have an emotional and intellectual attachment towards the achievement of desired goals due to the significance that the sport held to the individual (Weissensteiner et al., 2012). Athletes higher in confidence were likely to set more challenging goals and achievement of these goals influenced the development of future goals. However, in order to explain the impact of confidence on performance, it was necessary to explore how confidence levels interacted with the goals that athletes had set (Gilson, 2010). With an established gap in the literature identified, investigating sources of confidence and the influence of goal setting in cricketers

may bring to light new findings without directly looking at the effect of the two concepts on one another. Overall, confidence and goal attainment relationships need to be explored further (Hays et al., 2009).

2.5 Rationale

As highlighted, confidence was important to athletes' performance but how and why confidence affects performance ultimately leads to interventions (Vealey, 2001). Its significance cannot be underestimated, particularly in this era of sport where success and failure can be determined by the smallest margins (Manzo et al., 2010). Confidence is a fluctuating performance variable; Hays et al. (2009) found that successful athletes even experience fluctuations in levels of confidence which emphasises the importance for continued research in this area. Identifying and focusing on sources of confidence, particularly for young athletes, helped develop self-confidence (Vealey et al., 1998). Weissensteiner et al. (2012) stated that cricket was a mental game, which suggested that it involved many psychological concepts where individual confidence was critical to both individual and team performance; handling pressure and achieving goals. A concept of particular interest that needs developing further according to Vealey (2001) was whether athletes were selected into elite level sport due to their ability and confidence or whether high levels of confidence have developed as a result of competing at elite level. Additionally, Kingston & Wilson (2009) suggested that different process-based goals and the moderating effects, specifically self-efficacy in this case required further investigation. Developing an awareness of psychological concepts in the context of cricket, specifically the female side of the game will help expand the cricket-related literature and drive the game forward by aiding performers and support staff.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This chapter will outline the methodology used, including the participants, procedures, interview guide and design as well as outlining the data analysis process. Validity and reliability issues will also be addressed.

3.1 Participants

Participants included ten elite female cricketers, who were part of the ECB Women's development pathway; nine of which were part of the England Women's Academy and one was a contracted member of the England Women's performance squad. Academy players were in their first or second year of the programme and ages ranged from 18-23 years old. Recruitment of participants was achieved through asking players directly, however it was clearly outlined that participation was voluntary and that being part of the England Women's pathway did not oblige them to take part. According to players' primary disciplines; four batsmen, five bowlers and a wicket keeper were included in the sample, which added contextualisation to some questions and provided a broad overview of cricket in general.

3.2 Procedure

The study received ethical approval from the Cardiff School of Sport ethics committee. Participants provided informed consent after reading the information sheet and ensured that it was fully understood. The information sheet outlined the purpose of the study and addressed confidentiality concerns, as well as highlighting that participants had the right to withdraw at any time during the interview. Informed consent from the ECB was not necessary, but in order to use participants at training camps, the study was outlined to coaches to express courtesy. Acquiring informed consent for the interview to be audio taped was particularly important, alongside consent for quotations and extracts to be utilised. Prior to initiating the interview, a purpose was also outlined by the researcher in order to reiterate both the objective and structure of the interview. The researcher conducted interviews with nine of the participants individually in a private and quiet setting during an Academy fitness training camp in La Manga, Spain. Prior to the training camp, the researcher organised a schedule, where participants opted for specific available time slots that suited them best. A two-hour break from training in the afternoon and time in the evenings over the course of the three-day camp provided ample opportunity to interview players. The England Performance squad member was interviewed prior to a county training session with Somerset Women. Interviews ranged

from 20-45 minutes and were audio recorded using a Dictaphone, which enabled transcription at a later date.

3.3 Interview Guide

An interview guide was developed using relevant sports confidence and goal setting literature applied specifically to cricket in order to provide context and clarity for participants. The interview guide was established before interviews were conducted to form part of a semi-structured interview process, where a standard set of questions and probes were used but the conversation was allowed to flow (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were perceived as the gold standard, whereby the interview guide merely acted as a prompt and elaboration was vital (Atkinson, 2012). Participants were required to list short and long term cricketing goals prior to the interview, which were referred to in the goal setting section of the interview. The final interview guide consisted of introductory questions that were used to make the interviewee feel more comfortable, followed by three sub-sections including confidence, goal setting and the impact of goal setting on confidence. According to Gratton & Jones (2010) gauging the co-operation and trust of the interviewee was essential initially, thus introductory questions were important. Additionally, by using sub sections, a clear chronological structure was created which allowed the interview process to become more manageable.

3.4 Design

A qualitative approach was adopted to explore the topic in detail, where an insight behind various outcomes was established (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). In relation to sport confidence, it was suggested that qualitative methodology would broaden the sport confidence literature in the source domain (Kingston et al., 2010). The use of interviews allowed this and participants were able to talk about personal experiences and expand on areas that were of interest to them (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Generally, qualitative samples were 'information rich' and purposeful (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Although small in size, these samples enabled comprehensive information to be gathered, specific to the research question. Sanctuary et al. (2010) also stated that recruiting participants through personal contacts aided qualitative research in particular, as participants tended to feel more comfortable during the interview process, hopefully providing more in-depth information. This was apparent in the interviews and made accessing participants much easier. The interview

was conducted by the researcher and a pilot study was carried out, which enabled the interview guide to be trialed and also allowed the researcher to practice in the role of the interviewer by getting to grips with the interview process as a whole; particularly important for the inexperienced researcher (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Subsequently, alterations to questions and probes were undertaken; the largest change was including primary discipline specific probes to the majority of questions in order to acquire further elaboration from participants.

3.5 Data Analysis

Audio recordings of each interview were used in order to transcribe accordingly. Data analysis consisted of both deductive and inductive approaches to establish the most important sources of confidence and determine the influence that goal setting had upon confidence, specifically in a cricket environment. Firstly, deductive analysis was used, where previous literature was drawn upon to underpin a conceptual framework, moving from general theory to a specific notion. A list of concepts were formed prior to data collection, based upon what was already known and what was expected to be found (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Existing research; sources of confidence and types of goals were used to categorise the data accordingly. However, not all data could be grouped based upon existing literature, which resulted in new themes surfacing; known as inductive analysis. Inductive analysis allowed original themes to be extracted from the data. Themes emerged from raw data responses, which were subsequently arranged into sub and higher order themes, as well as global dimensions. Gratton & Jones (2010) stated that themes developed from a coding process, whereby conceptual categories were used to group data, which allowed patterns to appear. Themes were organised based upon similarities and differences, for example common themes were grouped together (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Reliability and validity of interviews was difficult to gauge; as a result it was suggested that themes should be tested for plausibility and sturdiness (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In order to guarantee trustworthiness of the analysis, member validation was used, whereby participants were required to check the adequacy of a short summary of the analysis (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This provided an opportunity for participants to ensure the results were a true reflection of their views. In terms of data display, Miles & Huberman (1984) outlined that visual representations were essential, particularly tables and graphs that presented data in a compact and easily accessible approach. Subsequently, hierarchical tree diagrams were used to show how themes were developed,

either deductively or inductively for sources of confidence. A visual representation was used to illustrate the effects of both achievement and failure of goals.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion sections have been combined to provide a coherent structure, which aided by the use of sub headings, enables the narrative to flow within the relevant contexts. Within this section, sources of confidence and the influence goal setting has upon confidence will be presented, defined and discussed in relation to previous research. Different types of goals these cricketers set will be outlined and whether achievement or failure of goals in competitive environments influenced their confidence levels. In addition, practical implications will be proposed, strengths and weaknesses outlined and areas of future research suggested. Finally, a conclusion will pull the key findings of the study together.

4.1 Sources of Confidence

Following analysis of transcripts, ten global dimensions were categorised. These included past experiences, coach support, environmental comfort, preparation, social support, individual game awareness, strategies, mastery, demonstration of ability and competitive advantage. Sources of confidence were displayed using a hierarchical tree diagram and supported by frequencies of these sources, illustrated in Table 1. Although ten sources were identified, only three of the sources; past experiences, coach support and environmental comfort were acknowledged by all ten participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Sources of Sport Confidence Identified by Elite Female Cricketers

| Source of Confidence | Number of athletes citing source (N=10) | Total % of athletes |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Past Experiences | 10 | 100% |
| Coach Support | 10 | 100% |
| Environmental Comfort | 10 | 100% |
| Preparation | 9 | 90% |
| Social Support | 8 | 80% |
| Individual Game Awareness | 6 | 60% |
| Strategies | 6 | 60% |
| Mastery | 5 | 50% |
| Demonstration of Ability | 2 | 20% |
| Competitive Advantage | 1 | 10% |

4.1.1 Past Experiences

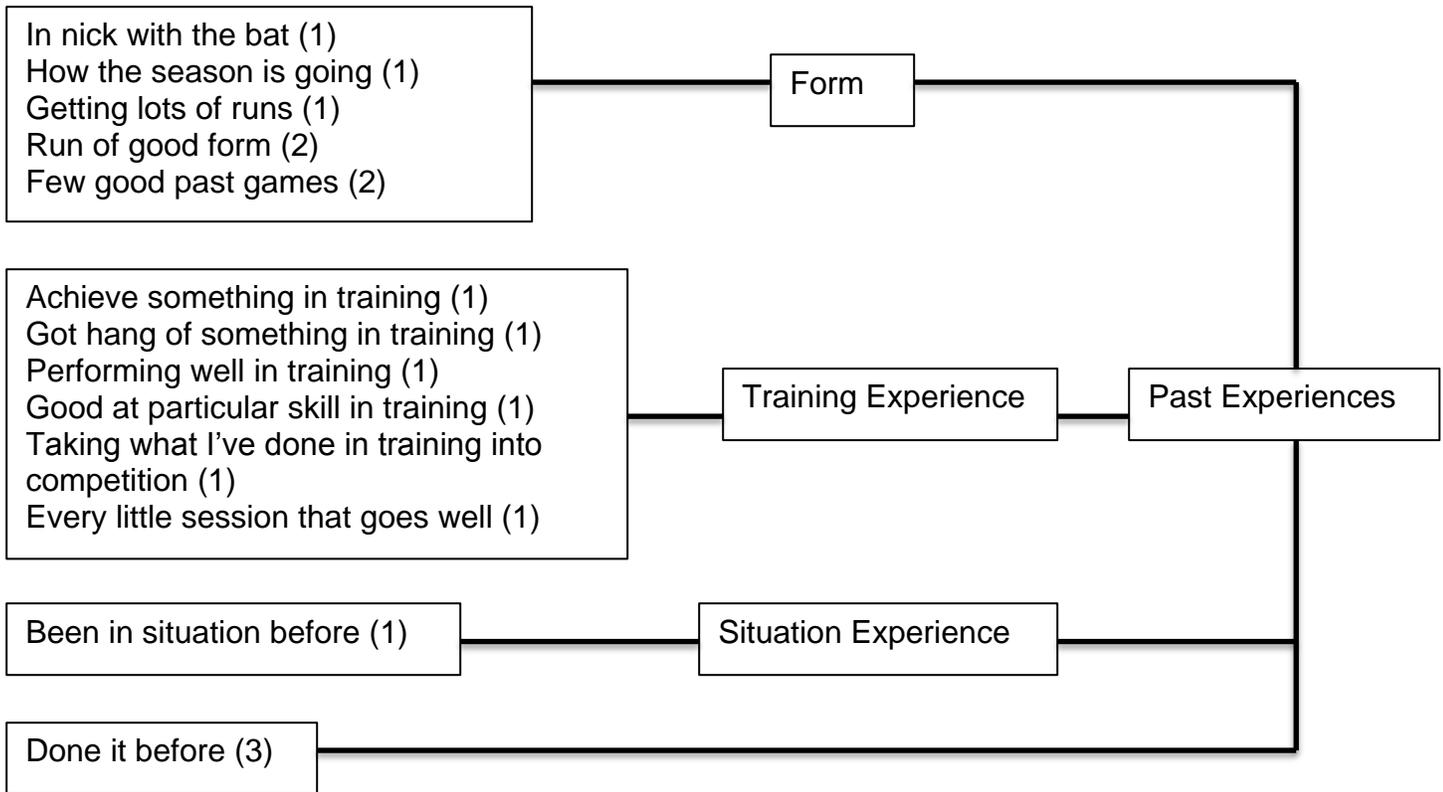


Figure 3. Past Experiences' Themes.

All participants acknowledged past experiences as a source of confidence. Past experiences were defined as previous experience of training and specific situations, as well as form in previous performances. Past experiences were related to both competitive and training environments. Commenting in relation to competition, one participant outlined;

“From past experiences of doing well at whatever level of cricket I've been playing at... Knowing I can perform at that level... They're probably the most important thing, whether it be against a certain opposition, or a certain player or a particular format of the game, if you can bring yourself back to a time when you did well and what you did when you were doing well.” [Participant 10]

Cricketers outlined form as a key source of confidence, which encompassed scoring lots of runs in previous games. Performers used experience of different situations and experiencing

achievement and game development in a training environment. Simply having done it before was pertinent to performers' confidence, despite lacking any context in relation to what, where or how it was done before.

Although past experiences has not emerged in literature previously, the concept behind the source shared similarities with a source of self-efficacy; performance accomplishments (Bandura, 1997). Similarities were identified through participants gaining experience through training or situational experience. Additionally, Hays et al. (2007) described performance accomplishments using competition and training, however, it was not necessarily accomplishments that provided cricketers with past experiences in this case. This also differed from Vealey's achievement domain where confidence was sourced from skill improvement or demonstrating ability to others. On the other hand, form could be interpreted as a performance accomplishment, yet differs slightly as it has an element of consistency or repeatability. Form was a unique sub theme specific to cricket that emerged within this global dimension; athletes recalled being "in nick with the bat" and experiencing a "run of good form". It is often talked about within cricket, particularly with the bat and is often referred to within the present tense; for example, "I'm in form at the moment". However, form is based upon what has happened in previous games, subsequently categorised within past experiences. Another important aspect relates to the individual nature of form; performers did not refer to form in the context of the team environment.

4.1.2 Coach Support

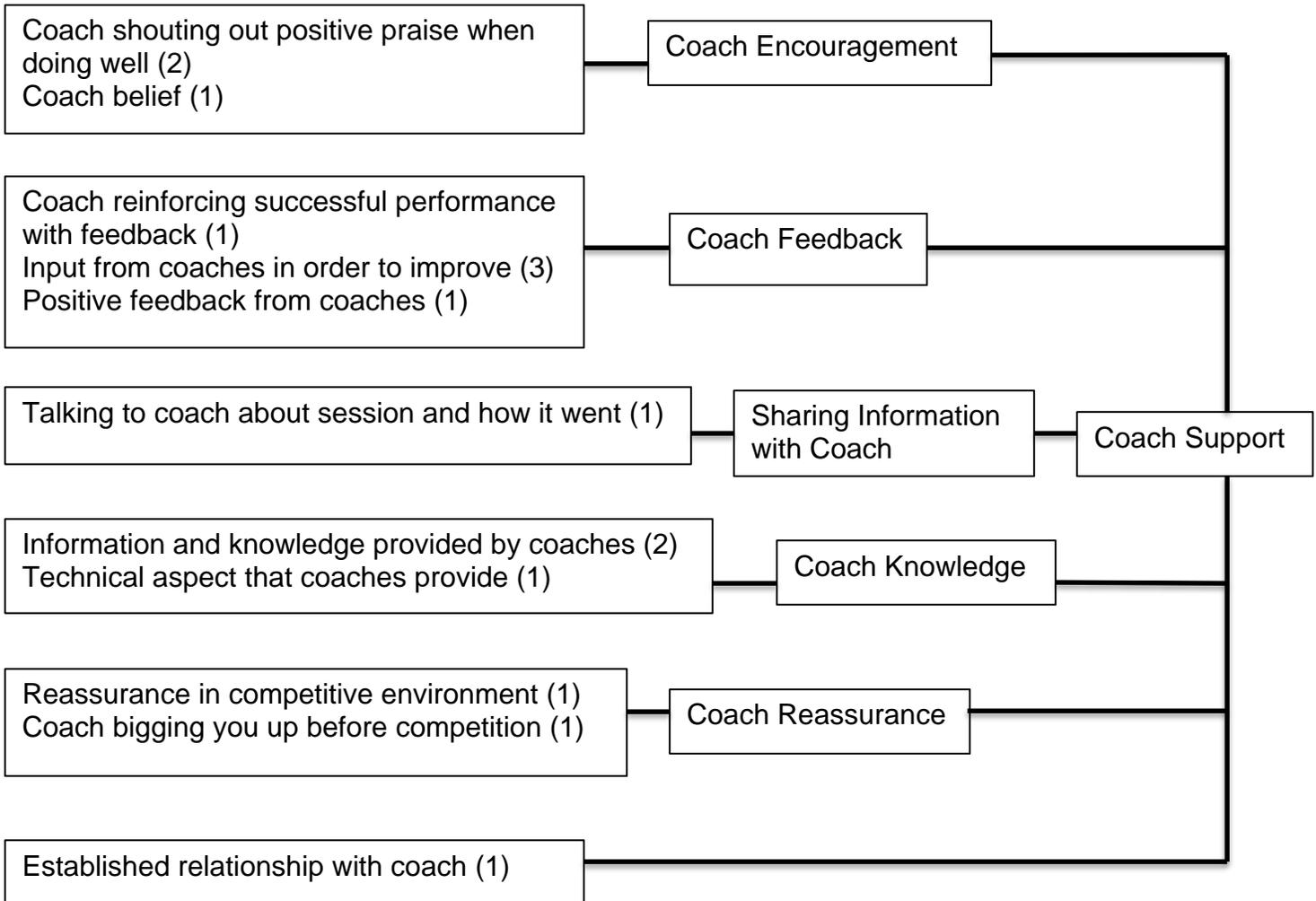


Figure 4. Coach Support Themes

The theme coach support summarises the support received by players. The form of the support can be feedback, a reassuring comment, sharing knowledge or general encouragement. One participant explained:

“Obviously they pass skills on to you and they pass their knowledge on, so you can take from them what they've learned from when they've done it before... I'd probably say I get a lot of confidence off the coaches because obviously you get feedback from them and that's really encouraging.” [Participant 2]

Encouragement in the form of receiving praise from coaches as well as sensing the coach had belief in them were important to cricketers. Performers also required successful performances to be reinforced and feedback was needed to help them improve. Sharing information by talking to coaches about how the session went was important, but unlike feedback, it was more of a discussion between the player and coach. Cricketers received support from coaches providing information, usually technical in nature. Coach support also reassured performers, particularly in competitive environments where they would want to get the most out of their players and the players themselves required this support, as one cricketer described “If the coach shouts out ‘great catch!’ or ‘well bowled!’, it’s those little things that get me going” [*Participant 7*]. Cricketers also believed having an established relationship with the coach importantly influenced the support offered.

All participants identified coach support as a source of confidence, which reinforced previous findings; females preferred to gain social support specifically from the coach, through encouragement or feedback (Hays et al., 2007; Hays et al., 2009). However, previously coach support was a sub theme within the global dimension of social support (Vealey, 2001). This reinforced the importance of the coach to female performers; irrelevant of whether the performers were individual or team athletes. Interestingly, coach support was highlighted despite cricketers competing at differing levels of the game, influencing the amount of different coaches worked with and the contact time available with each of them. Hays et al. (2009) suggested that this could be an issue for athletes competing under national coaches. In this study, performers were competing at national or international level, however each individual would have a one to one coach, which would most likely provide the majority of the support that the performer required from the coach specifically.

4.1.3 Environmental Comfort

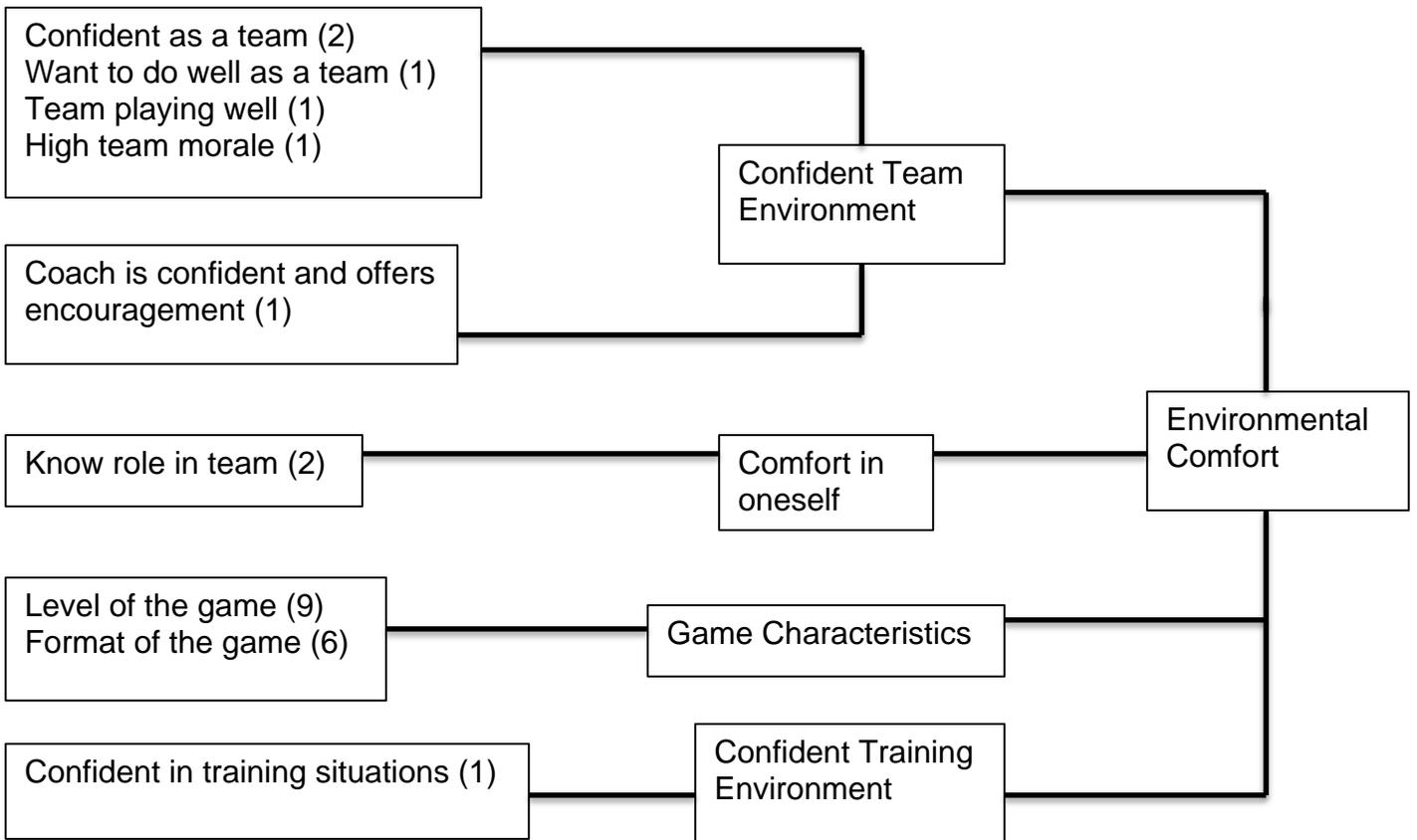


Figure 5. Environmental Comfort Themes

All participants noted environmental comfort as a source of confidence. Environmental comfort related to cricketers feeling comfortable in oneself, as well as training, team and competitive environments. One participant stated; *“I think if you're playing at a lower standard, like club games, you won't be playing against such good players. So I think your confidence is probably going to be higher in those matches”*. [Participant 5] This reflected how the level of the game was perceived as a source of confidence whereas some also highlighted format of the game as a source of confidence, which together, formed the sub theme of game characteristics.

Three other sub themes emerged including confident team environment, comfort in oneself and confident training environment. Perceptions that the team was playing well, morale was high and the team feeling confident, as well as confidence from the coach, enabled players to

feel comfortable. Furthermore, performers needed to feel confident in training situations. Knowing and understanding their role within the team provided players with comfort in oneself as one performer explained; *“If the team are working well together then obviously everyone knows what their job is in the team so you have the confidence to go out and perform to whatever standard they need to”*. [Participant 5]

Environmental comfort as a global dimension fits with previous research by Vealey (1998), where it was categorised into the broad domain of social climate using collegiate athletes. Conversely, it was not identified nine years later using elite competitors (Hays et al., 2007). Interestingly, it was the elite calibre of the sample that seemed to spark the importance of this source. Participants felt more confident and comfortable when playing at a lower level of the game, therefore not at international or academy representative level. In contrast to Hays et al. (2007) elite individual athletes would have only competed at international level or on the World stage, whereas, cricketers do not just perform at international level; during a domestic season, players will also represent their clubs and counties. Therefore, it may be a reflection of team sport players who represent a number of teams at different levels of the game. A confident team environment was important to performers, supporting Feltz (1988) where it was highlighted that specifically in team players, confidence in the team was just as fundamental as confidence in oneself.

4.1.4 Preparation

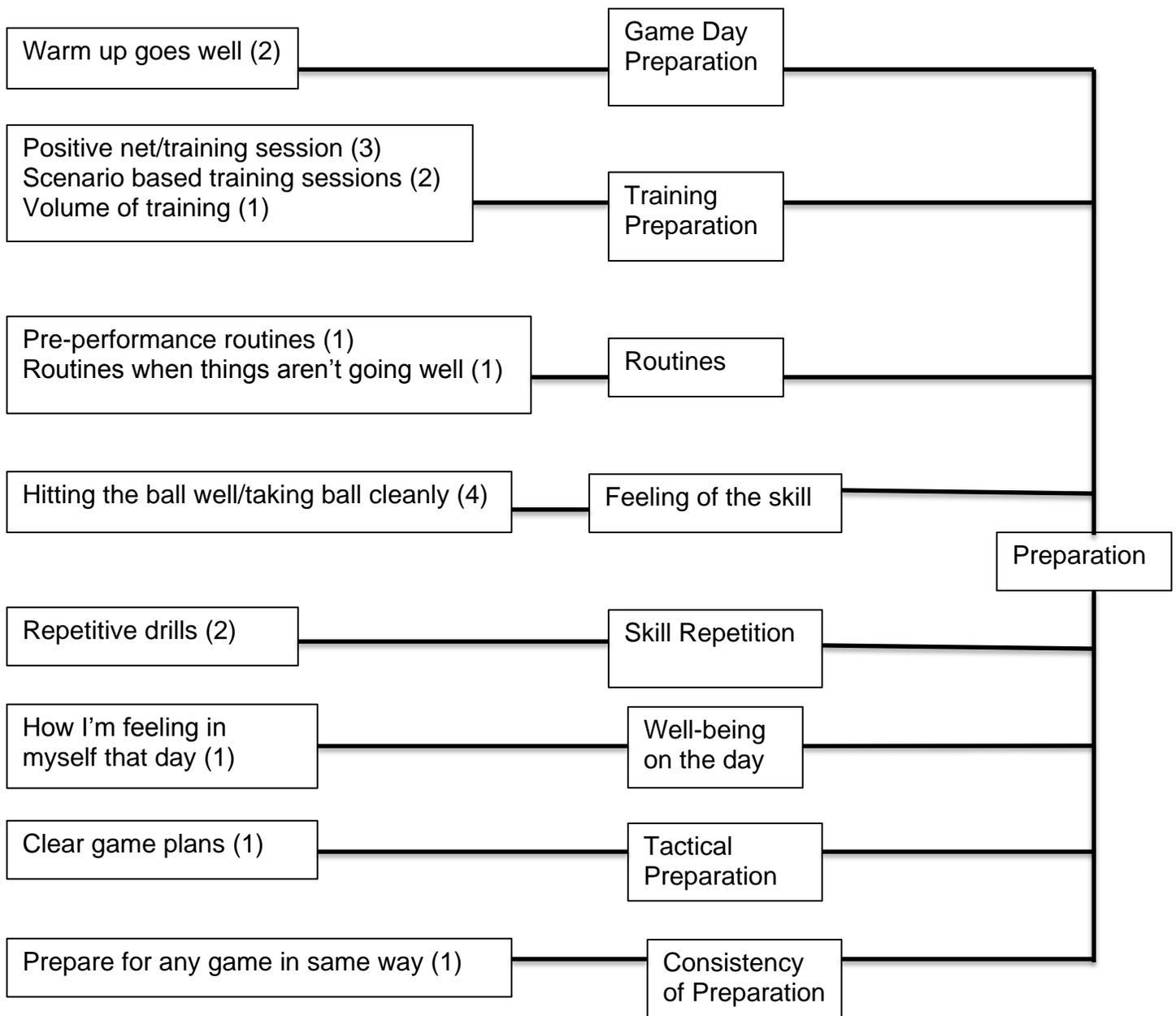


Figure 6. Preparation Themes

Nine participants identified preparation as a source of confidence. Preparation encompassed a range of approaches to gain confidence in both training and competitive environments. Within the general dimension; eight sub themes developed including game day preparation, training preparation, routines, feeling of the skill, skill repetition, well-being on the day, tactical preparation and as mentioned above, consistency of preparation. Four cricketers outlined specifically that the feeling of the skill was significant to them, as one explained; *“I think if I*

was confident it would be more of a feeling, how I'm striking the ball, how the balls coming out'. [Participant 8]

The warm up going well helped performers with their game day preparation, whereas training preparation differed; specific areas of training going well; both nets and scenarios were just as important. Pre-performance routines and the reliance upon these when things weren't going well were also crucial. Performers completed repetitive drills on a regular basis, highlighting the importance of doing things over and over again. Preparation was not always physical in nature; cricketers who had clear game plans were likely to be tactically prepared. How cricketers felt in themselves, their general well being on the day was just as pertinent to performers' preparation. It was apparent that consistency of preparation was fundamental, whether it was routine specific or training preparation, as one participant highlighted;

"I think it comes from knowing that I've prepared as best I possibly can for whatever game I'm going into. I prepare for any game the same way... Also, seeing myself improve with the skill I've been working on and then putting it into scenarios".

[Participant 10]

Although preparation was outlined as a source, it was unlike mental and physical preparation (Vealey, 2001) and physical, mental and holistic preparation (Hays et al., 2007); sub themes were much smaller and narrower. This was a reflection of using a single sport sample, where preparation was specific to cricket and sub-themes were detailed, for example feeling of a physical skill was where performers sourced of confidence from hitting the ball well. Additionally, although cricketers are team players, preparation sub themes were very much individualised with the main intention to focus on their own games within a team environment. Despite not fitting into previous higher order themes, sub themes were closely related to those previously identified; preparation of a physical kind was related to a good warm up, holistic preparation could encompass how performers were feeling on the day or mental preparation where performers had clear game plans (Hays et al., 2007).

4.1.5 Social Support

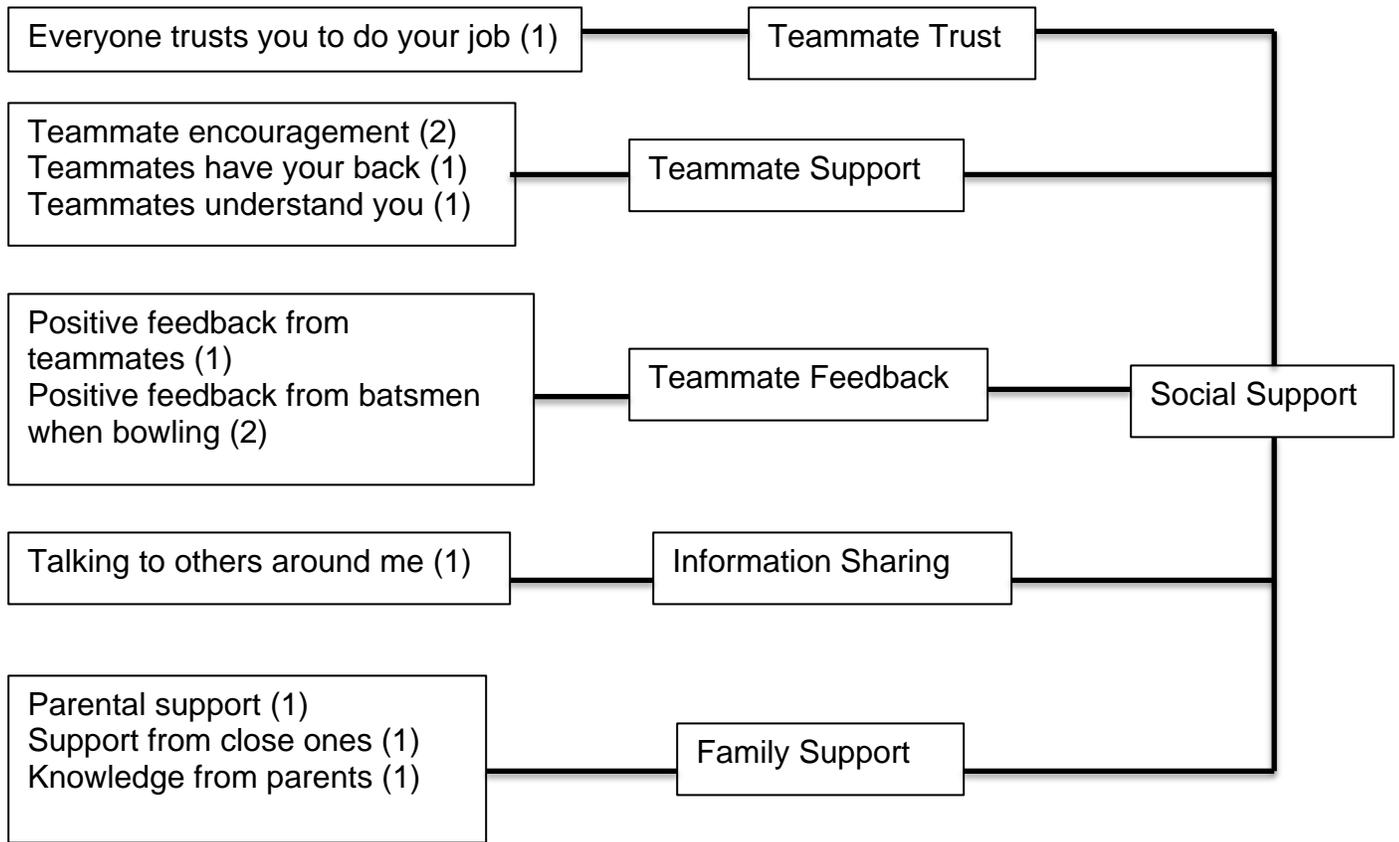


Figure 7. Social Support Themes

Social support was recognised as a source of confidence by eight participants. Significant others; family or teammates often provided this support. One participant highlighted; *“I’d probably look to my teammates, I get a lot of support from them. That’s probably the main one especially out on the pitch... Just someone coming up to you and saying ‘Mate, you’ve done this before.’ [Participant 2]*

Teammate understanding and encouragement were important in providing performers with the necessary support. Having teammates trust you to do your job was important to cricketers, not surprising within a sport that has individualised disciplines. Furthermore, trust with teammates helped them to provide honest feedback, often positive, specifically from the different disciplines in a training environment, for example, batsmen providing bowlers with

positive feedback enabled teammate feedback to emerge. Similar to coach support, information sharing was a vital source, however the provider or recipient of such information was not specified, but the importance of talking to others was emphasised. Cricketers also benefited from having support from family and close ones, either in the form of general support or knowledge.

Social support was similar to previous research, in terms of the provider; family, friends and teammates (Hays et al., 2007). However, it also differed; the coach was previously a provider of social support (Vealey, 2001). With cricket being a team sport, participants emphasised the importance of teammates, which was not really touched upon in Hays et al. (2007) as only two team players were part of that sample. Additionally, the notion that social support was more important to females was clearly reinforced with the majority of female cricketers identifying the importance of this support (Vealey et al., 1998). However, team players seem to have a wider social support network with the availability of teammates, suggesting that it might not be the importance of the source that differentiates between individual and team sport athletes but the actual availability of the source.

4.1.6 Individual Game Awareness

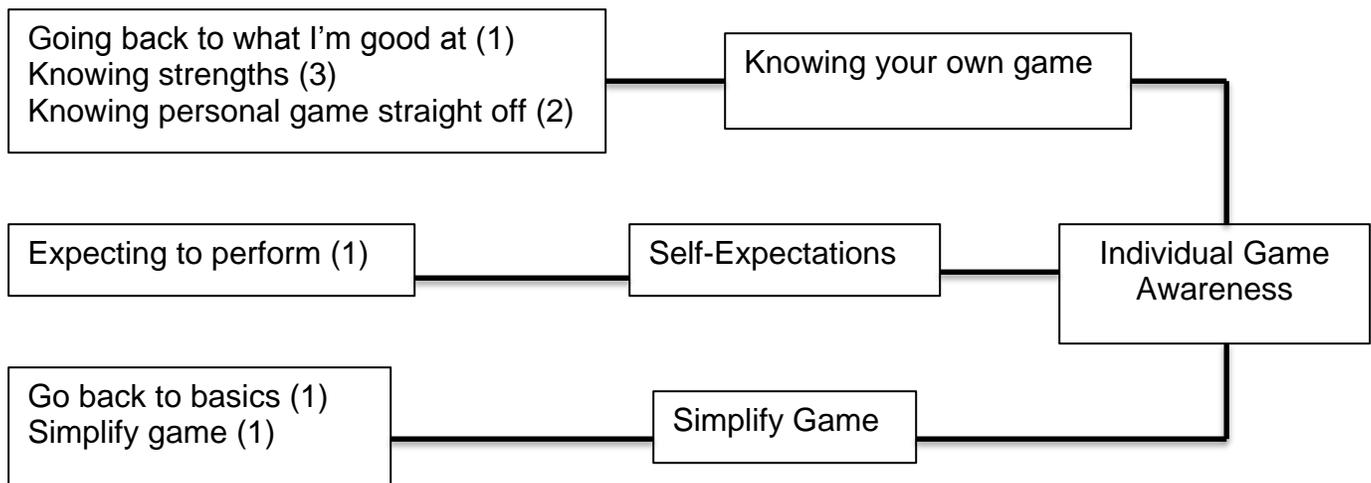


Figure 8. Individual Game Awareness Themes

Six participants outlined that confidence was derived from individual game awareness. Individual game awareness comprised of performers having an understanding and awareness of their individual games. In particular, one participant talked about its importance; *“I think it goes back to knowing what your strengths are, knowing what you're best at... going back to making the game, for me, as simple as possible” [Participant 10]*. Cricketers who understood their own games from a personal level and understood their strengths as a cricketer had developed a strong individual game awareness. Additionally, this awareness allowed them to simplify the game or revert back to basics when necessary. However, awareness brought with it self expectation where performers knew what was required of them, hence had expectations of themselves in certain formats of the game.

In contrast to previous literature, individual game awareness emerged inductively, suggesting that it may be specific to the sample. However, the way in which it's linked to the sample could be misconstrued as the source of confidence could be specific to just team players, female athletes, elite competitors, or just relevant to cricketers. The source implies that performers need to focus on their individual disciplines even within a team environment; cricket is unique in this way. Hays et al. (2007) did suggest that team sport players were likely to have different sources of confidence available and individual game awareness has been highlighted as a unique source in contrast to the existing research (Vealey, 2001; Hays et al., 2007).

4.1.7 Strategies

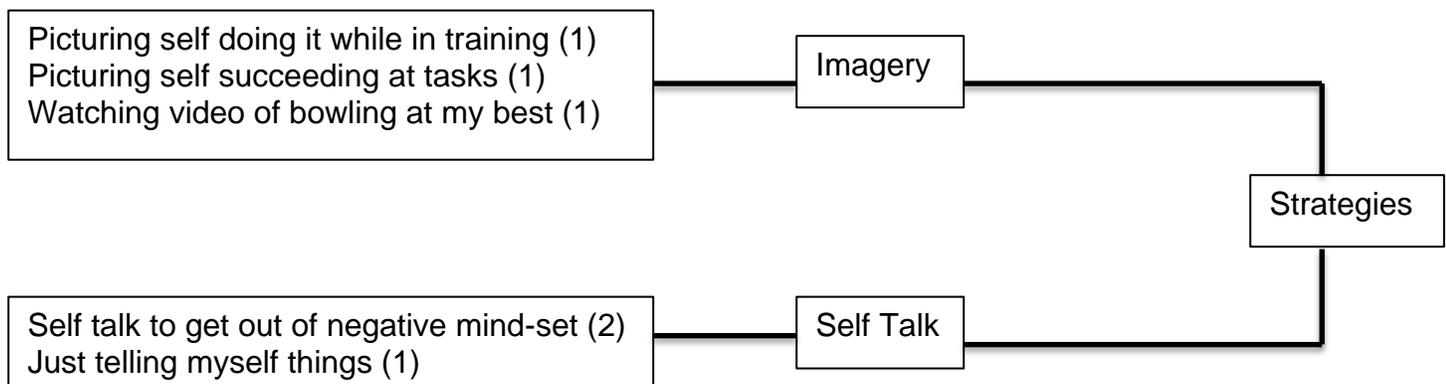


Figure 9. Strategies' Themes

Strategies emerged as a result of six participants identifying sources related to self-talk and imagery, both psychological skills. Cricketers found it useful to picture themselves or watch themselves back on video, and self-talk was used as a cue or to get out of a negative mindset. One participant described their experiences;

“I try to use self-talk to get out of that negative mind-set... I use the phrase 'just forget about it and move on'... Also, a bit of imagery, picturing myself succeeding doing the tasks.” [Participant 9]

Strategies also materialised inductively, but included two well-known psychological skills that were already prominent in the literature; self-talk and imagery. Self-talk was previously used to gain situation specific confidence during performance and was linked to one of Bandura’s self-efficacy predictors; verbal persuasion (Hardy, 2006). Additionally, Bandura’s imaginal experience was represented within imagery; highlighting the similarities between self-efficacy and sport confidence (Kingston et al., 2010). However, strategies were unique and differed from previous research by Bandura (1997), Vealey (2001) and Hays et al. (2007) suggesting that strategies are used to maintain or regain confidence.

4.1.8 Mastery

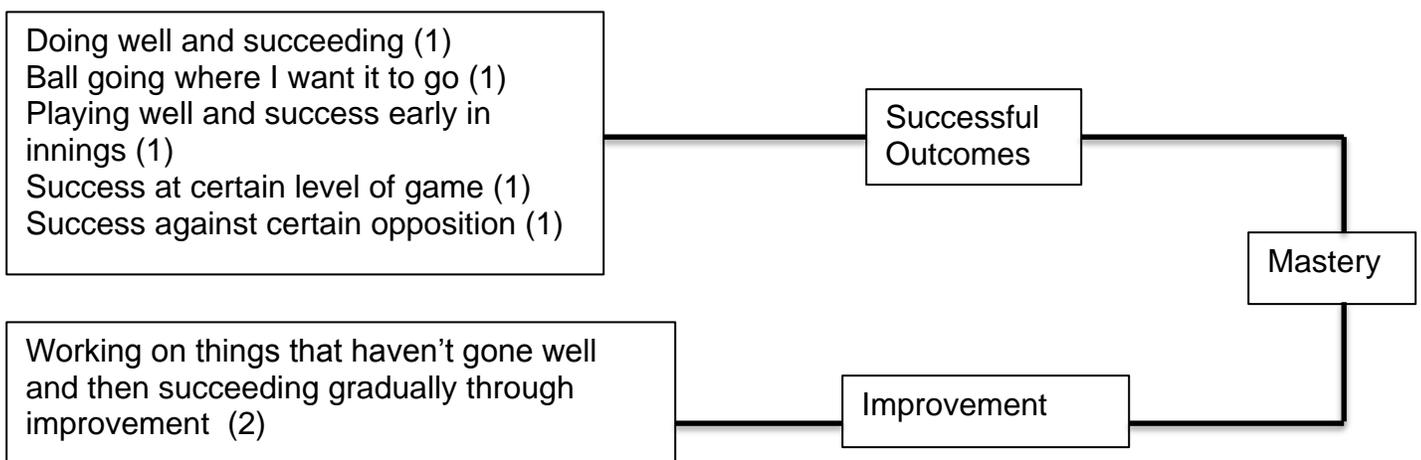


Figure 10. Mastery Themes

Five participants identified mastery as a source of confidence. Mastery was skill specific and success driven, as one participant outlined; *“You gain confidence from doing well, from success... I also gain confidence from failing at something a few times but then gradually succeeding and succeeding.”* [Participant 10]

Cricketers experienced success against certain opposition, at certain levels of the game or generally just playing well, whereas performers experienced improvement by gradually succeeding after failure. Although only half the participants identified it, mastery was still an important source that was previously categorised in the achievement domain in Vealey’s research (Wilson et al., 2004). Additionally, success and improvement were skill specific and had an achievement aspect, thus supporting earlier literature. According to Hays et al. (2007) females required environments that facilitated mastery, as well as preferring to focus on good personal performance.

4.1.9 Demonstration of Ability

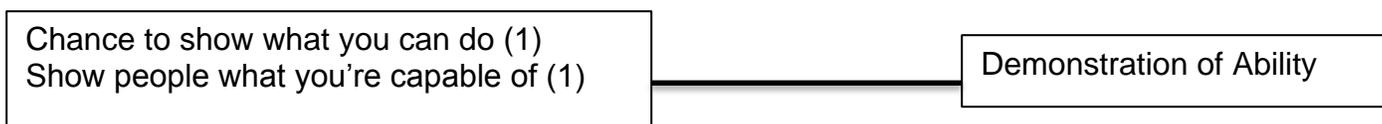


Figure 11. Demonstration of Ability Themes

Only two participants outlined demonstration of ability as a source of confidence. One participant outlined its importance; *“It’s a chance to show what you can do, show what you’ve worked on”* [Participant 10]. Demonstration of ability was not as well evidenced as other sources within this study, but was nevertheless still identified. Similar to mastery, it was categorised under the achievement domain previously (Vealey, 2001). However, it was not highlighted as a source in Hays et al. (2007); perhaps a reflection of the sample used. Elite athletes acknowledged it in this study but only a fifth of the sample did which suggests at elite level, it is not as pertinent. The skill may have already been accomplished or ‘demonstrated’, a reflection of performers playing at international or academy representative level.

4.1.10 Competitive Advantage



Figure 12. Competitive Advantage Themes

Only one participant acknowledged competitive advantage as a source of confidence. This participant perceived competitive advantage as a result of opponents performing poorly. Although only identified by one participant, it was established as a source previously (Hays et al., 2007). Additionally, only female elite athletes identified competitive advantage in the literature by Hays et al. (2007), suggesting that the source was only significant to female athletes. However, competitive advantage is an uncontrollable source, which may indicate that females sourcing this would potentially have weaker perceptions of sport confidence (Kingston et al., 2010).

In fact, only three out of the ten sources were found to be within the athletes' control, which may support the notion that females were more susceptible to external confidence debilitating factors (Hays et al., 2009). Similar to Hays et al. (2007); vicarious experience, emotional and physiological states were not identified as sources of confidence, implying that these sources were not important to elite athletes. It also highlights that despite self-efficacy theory receiving criticism for not being sport-specific, some sources did have relevance, which strengthens the research behind sport confidence. Furthermore, it supports the idea that elite performers were less likely to gain confidence from watching others and were able to control their emotional and physiological states as a consequence of experience at that level (Hays et al., 2007).

Sources could all have been categorised into the three broad domains (Vealey, 2001). Past experiences, mastery and demonstration of ability would have been grouped within the achievement domain, whereas preparation, strategies and individual game awareness would have fitted under self-regulation. Finally, coach support, social support, environmental comfort and competitive advantage would have been categorised within social climate. These domains seem to remain important in terms of classifying sources and may be useful in targeting the development of certain types of sources in an individual or team. Interestingly, two out of the three most salient sources were highlighted within the social climate domain,

yet based on Vealey's (2001) representation of the sources and domains; social climate sources seem less important.

4.2 Types of Goals

The different types of goals cricketers set will be defined and justified before exploring the influence goal setting has upon confidence. Performers set six different types of goals, including process, performance, outcome, development, selection and team goals. All performers set a combination of these goals in relation to both competition and training. Previous research has highlighted that at elite level, females had just as strong a belief in their ability to succeed as males (Vealey, 2001). Although there was no gender comparison within this study; female cricketers were eager to highlight the importance of goals in relation to their confidence levels. According to Weinberg (2009), the effectiveness of goal setting was dependent upon the types of goals athletes set. As six types of goals were identified, it highlights that cricketers feel other types of goals are just as important as the most commonly discussed ones in the sport psychology literature; process, performance and outcome (Weinberg, 2009).

4.2.1 Process Goals

Eight participants highlighted setting process goals. Process goals were related to areas of focus, usually technical in nature, in relation to performers' individual disciplines. Process goals were personal and were primarily set in order to improve performance but could be achieved within training or competitive environments. One participant described one of their goals in detail;

"I've set myself the goal of keeping low and improving my posture in my keeping. So when I move laterally I tend to come up and that makes it harder for me to take the lower balls. So I have the goal of keeping low when I move." [Participant 9]

4.2.2 Performance Goals

Six participants set performance goals. Performance goals specific to this sample focused on batting averages, strike rates and bowling speeds. An example of a performance goal was; *“Have a successful season for Staffordshire at county level, so putting in some really good performances and get a decent average.” [Participant 5]*

4.2.3 Outcome Goals

Outcome goals were set by six participants; the majority of which were related to becoming the ‘best’ in the world in their main individual disciplines as explained by one participant; *“In terms of personal ones, I’d like to become one of the best, if not the best bowler in the world” [Participant 10]*. Outcome goals were again personal in nature but were based upon social comparison.

4.2.4 Development Goals

Five participants identified setting development goals. Development goals were similar to process goals but specific to the training environment, which provides the context in which these goals were attempted and subsequently achieved or failed. These were particularly apparent during the off-season in the winter months and pre-season. One participant outlined their specific development goals;

“I want to be more confident against spin and then learning to play the ball behind square... Learning to play the ball behind square is more skill based so obviously if you feel confident in training and you take that into your game.” [Participant 6]

4.2.5 Selection Goals

Selection goals were identified by nine participants; all of which outlined similar ones in relation to playing for England in the near future. Therefore, selection goals focused on getting selected for the current or next level, either Academy or England. One participant highlighted their England aspirations but also focused on short-term selection at Academy level; *“Hopefully within a few years I’ll be playing for the full England Women’s side, but in the meantime in the longer sort of format, I’d be looking to be selected for the summer internationals for the England Women’s Academy.” [Participant 9]*

4.2.6 Team Goals

Five participants highlighted setting team goals. The team as a whole did not set these goals but as individuals competing at elite level, their personal intentions were for the team to be successful. The majority focused upon winning major tournaments at international level as one explained; *“I have team ones, in terms of winning Ashes series, hopefully winning the Twenty20 World Cup and winning the 50 over world cup and just being able to contribute towards them and be part of a winning team.” [Participant 10]*

As highlighted, the majority of participants set more than one type of goal, which would increase the likelihood of athletes achieving goals, especially combinations that included process goals, as there is a higher degree of control, a key aspect that differentiates goals (Kingston & Wilson, 2009). Additionally, it was highlighted that multiple goal strategies were more effective in producing better performance than any goal type in isolation (Kingston & Wilson, 2009). The degree of control over goals is pertinent within cricket, specifically because despite it being a team sport, the individual disciplines lend themselves to preventing outcome or performance related goals if performers do not get the opportunity to bat or bowl. Consequently, supporting the notion that athletes should not be totally reliant upon outcome measures (Thelwell & Maynard, 2003). However, performance goals were still used by performers, which in relation to the elite sample and previous research, was not surprising. Roberts & Kristiansen (2010) suggested that athletes believed they could achieve performance goals as long as their perception of their own ability was high. Therefore, elite cricketers would more than likely have a high perception of their ability meaning performance goals may be effective. However, process, performance and outcome goals were not the only goals highlighted by cricketers. Selection goals were the most salient type of goal set and unlike other goals, were ambitious in nature; always striving for the next step on the England Women’s development pathway. However, similar to outcome goals, selection goals were based upon social comparison, yet differed in context. On the other hand, development goals were closely related to process goals, in terms of the goal focus, i.e. technical or self regulated and therefore portrayed an identical characteristic; being under the control of the performer (Kingston & Wilson, 2009). Therefore, the context of the goal differentiated the two; development goals were very much training based, whereas process goals can be contextualized within competitive and training environments. Finally, team goals were concerned with the performance of the team but were still set individually which emphasises

the importance that the goal was still very much meaningful to the individual. Similar to performance, outcome and selection goals, performers did not have control over this goal, minimising the flexibility of the goal (Kingston & Wilson, 2009).

All cricketers set goals, which was expected given performing at elite level. Previous research identified that elite athletes often required structured goal setting in order to achieve competition or training accomplishments (Hays et al., 2007). Goal setting has been highlighted to have important influences upon athletes' confidence and helped performers to achieve repeatable good performance in cricket (Thelwell & Maynard, 2003). Therefore, goal-setting interventions within elite level sport provide structure and opportunities for athletes to develop, improve performance and grow in confidence. Roberts & Kristiansen (2010) outlined that athletes that set goals would perform better than those who do not set goals. However, the majority of goal setting literature has been associated with motivation rather than confidence, focusing upon goal perspectives and the reasons behind involvement, both of which determine effort and attention (Kingston & Wilson, 2009). Overall, the effectiveness of each individual type of goal remains unsupported but the general consensus surrounding goal setting is very much positive and facilitative (Roberts & Kristiansen, 2010).

4.3 Goal Setting and Confidence

Whether or not these goals were achieved in a competitive environment influenced confidence levels and caused different responses. However, achievement or failure was related to goals in general, consequently no specific effects were identified as a result of achieving a process goal compared to a selection goal for example. Additionally, understanding the effects that either success or failure cause athletes to experience would potentially enable goal-setting strategies to be explored in greater depth (Roberts & Kristiansen, 2010).

4.3.1 Achievement of Goals In A Competitive Environment

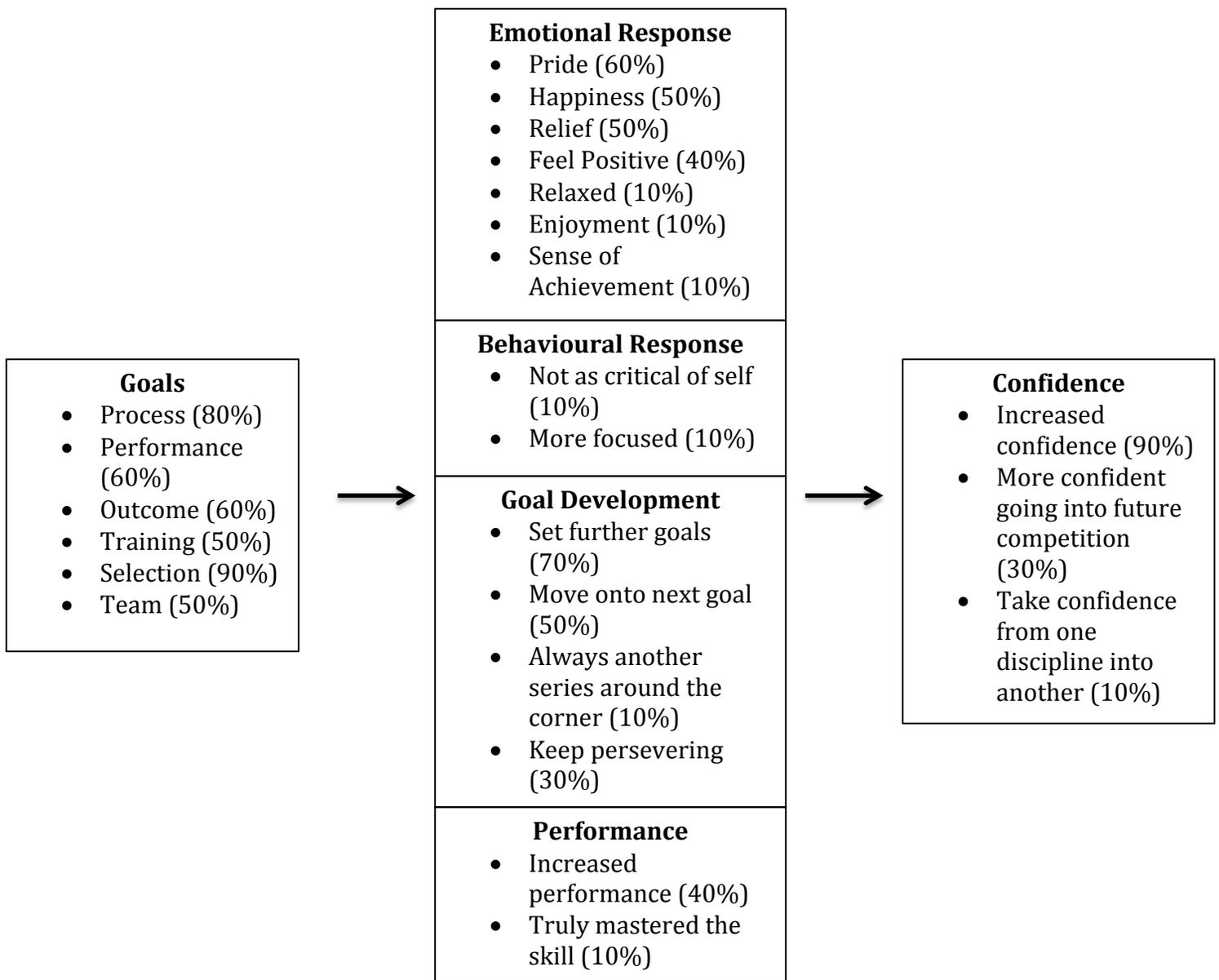


Figure 13. A representation of the effects of achievement of goals. Percentages represent the proportion of the sample that identified those responses.

Achieving goals in a competitive environment promoted different responses. Performers explained that achieving goals increased their confidence and in some cases, specifically going into future competition. Goal achievement also enabled confidence to be transferred between the different disciplines of the game, for example batting to bowling. However, whether this increase in confidence actually enhanced performance in the other discipline

was not explored. As well as the perceived effects on confidence, participants experienced differing emotions. Seven were identified; performers felt relief that what they'd been working on had been successful and also a sense of pride. Behavioural responses were also experienced, for example increased focus and performers wouldn't be as critical on themselves. In line with previous research, emotional and behavioural responses were positive and effective in relation to competition, specifically increased focus (Hays et al., 2009). Achieving goals also sparked participants to consider where their goals go next, thus goal development was considered important. As one participant explained;

"I think it demonstrates to you that you can set yourself a goal and you can achieve it, so I think it really gives you that motivation to set yourself a further goal, maybe a more challenging one, that can really push you to improve." [Participant 10]

Performers considered that achieving goals increased performance and one in particular stated that they felt as though the skill had been mastered. Additionally, performance level increased which was evidenced in earlier literature, where elite athletes specifically reported a stronger link between self-confidence and performance (Woodman & Hardy, 2003). Increased confidence was the most salient response to achieving goals, which subsequently encouraged athletes to set further ones. In support of previous research, future goal development was influenced as a result of goal achievement (Gilson, 2010).

4.3.2 Failure to Achieve Goals In A Competitive Environment

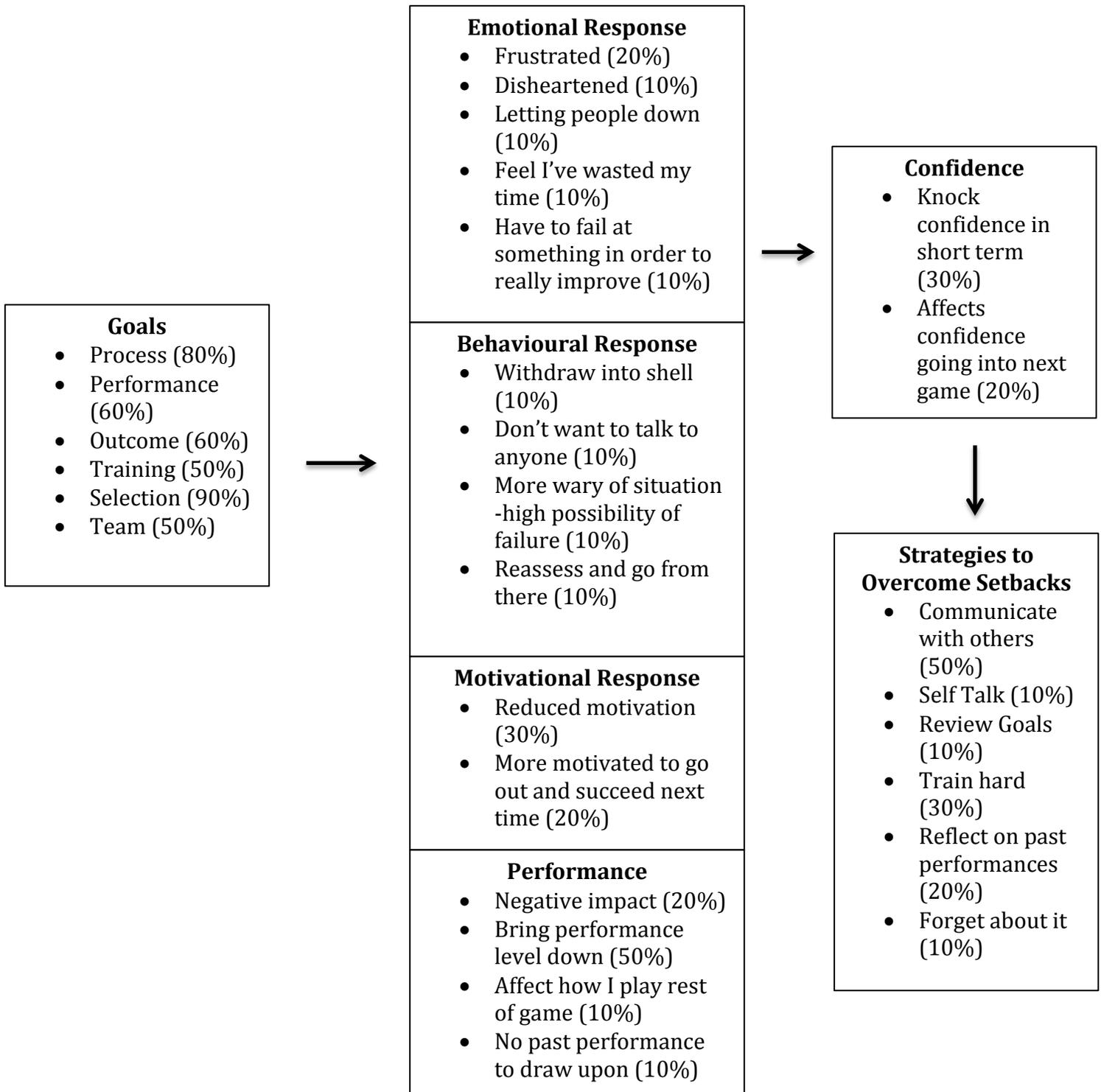


Figure 14. A representation of the effects of failing to achieve goals. Percentages represent the proportion of the sample that identified those responses.

Conversely, experiences regarding failing to achieve goals in competitive environments were explored. Participants noted the impact it had on their confidence levels, where confidence was knocked in the short term and usually going into their next game. However, one spoke in detail about their philosophy when they experience failure;

“It will probably knock it in the short term, but I personally believe that you have to fail at things sometimes in order to really improve and I think there’s a difference between it knocking your confidence a bit and still persevering with it, and then that knocking your confidence to the point where you think you can’t achieve it and stop trying to achieve it... Learning new skills is never a straight line, there’ll always be dips, so it’s about how you approach failing I think.” [Participant 10]

Similar to achievement, failure brought about emotional responses but of a different kind. Participants tended to feel frustrated, disheartened and that they’d wasted their time especially if they felt the goal was needed to push onto the next level. Performers also experienced behavioural responses, such as withdrawing into their shell or becoming more wary of the situation when there was a high possibility of failure. Behaviours that were withdrawn in nature were not uncommon and were profound when confidence was low or had been reduced (Hays et al., 2009). Performers were not focused upon developing future goals at this point; instead motivational responses were prominent; motivation was reduced or performers gained a burning desire to go out and succeed next time. Interestingly, the two motivational responses differed, both of which would affect the amount of effort exerted by athletes, supporting the notion that a relationship exists between goals and confidence (Gilson, 2010). Additionally, an increase in motivation could be a reflection of the sample; elite athletes may be less likely to be affected by perceived negative effects from not achieving goals (Gould et al., 2010). Woodman et al. (2010) also acknowledged that reduced self-confidence was associated with increased effort.

Performers were eager to emphasise its negative impact on performance. Failure also affected how performers played the rest of the game. Subsequently, failure was perceived as a setback; therefore participants explored how they would overcome this. Strategies were closely related to performers' sources of confidence, mentioned previously. The most common strategy identified was to communicate with others, as one participant stressed;

“Something I’ve had to do is communicate a lot more with the people around me, talk to people about whatever it is and get their input on how I can work on it... so that next time you don’t fail.” [Participant 10]

Communicating with others could be categorised within coach support or social support depending on whom the athlete felt they needed to communicate with. Other strategies included self-talk and reflecting on past performances; earlier identified under the global dimensions of strategies and past experiences. Therefore, it highlights the importance of sources of confidence to these cricketers and when faced with failure, these sources are paramount to regaining confidence. Although self talk was highlighted, the type of self talk was not specified, despite motivational self-talk being associated with increased confidence during periods where performance level has declined, suggesting that self-talk as a strategy to regain confidence may well be motivational in nature (Miles & Neil, 2013).

4.4 Practical Implications

Encouraging athletes to acknowledge sources of confidence may be beneficial for performers, as well as support staff for many reasons. Firstly, understanding where confidence comes from will help athletes understand themselves more, and when confidence levels decline, know where to regain confidence from. Additionally, coaches and sport psychologists have responsibilities; understanding their athletes, specifically from a psychological perspective may enable coaches to help implement the necessary strategies to maintain confidence or increase it (Hays et al., 2007). This is even more important if an athlete's source of confidence is coach support itself. Coaches need to understand what support players require, whether it is informative or supportive in nature. However, interventions to protect and sustain athletes' sources of confidence, preferably from a range of different sources would be more beneficial and would aid the development of a robust sport confidence (Hays et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2011). Additionally, achievement within goal setting was effective in increasing

confidence; therefore athletes, coaches and practitioners should consider utilising the psychological skill in elite environments. On the other hand, coaches need to understand their athletes and their personal goals. Coaches have previously lacked knowledge regarding players' goals (Maitland & Gervis, 2010). As a result, from a coach or sport psychologist perspective, it would be important to establish good rapport with players and review their goals regularly; a proactive approach. For players, if coaches are required to facilitate their development, it is also their responsibility to approach the coach. As results highlighted, females are more likely to buy into this approach as a result of sourcing confidence from coach support in particular (Hays et al., 2007).

4.5 Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

The qualitative approach has enabled further insight into sources of confidence, specifically in elite female cricketers. The sample itself has expanded and strengthened the limited psychological research within cricket. Previously, individual female athletes had only identified sources of confidence and elite samples were often male dominated (Hays et al., 2007). Therefore, providing team sport players' and females' perspectives has further developed sport confidence literature. Although the sample covered the three main disciplines; batting, bowling and wicket-keeping, only a general overview of confidence and goal setting in cricket was established, rather than identifying specific sources to each discipline. Consequently, findings can only be generalised to female elite cricketing populations. In relation to the sample, elite populations are limited in size, especially gender and sport specific ones. Therefore, results cannot be generalised to athletes in other sports and to the male sporting population. Future research should use male and female elite team sport players to allow comparisons to be made within the study itself and with previous literature and findings from this study.

The use of interviews facilitated the collection of in depth information. However, the study was retrospective in nature, as it required participants to recall information about where they derived confidence from and the influence goal setting had on their confidence in competitive environments. Interviews took place during the off-season, which meant participants had not played competitively for at least 3 months and details of the previous season potentially forgotten. Therefore, future research should attempt to follow these cricketers during a set time frame during the season or work more closely with performers over the duration of the

season. Interviews could be conducted immediately after matches or training sessions; information would be fresh in performers' minds and the context much clearer, similar to Miles & Neil (2013) who investigated self-talk within cricket. It may also allow fluctuations in confidence levels to be explored, adding a temporal approach to the research. A temporal approach to sources of confidence in elite performers was undertaken by Kingston et al. (2010), however using cricketers would gain an insight into the sport and widen the application of sport psychology within it. Another strength was that the study supported the multidimensional nature of sport confidence, as both sources of confidence and confidence in relation to goal setting were explored (Hays et al., 2007). However, the study did not identify the effects of each type of goal; establishing the effectiveness of each type of goal in the future would only facilitate goal setting as an intervention.

4.6 Conclusion

The present study explored confidence and goal setting using elite female cricketers; specifically where confidence was sourced from and the influence goal setting had upon confidence in a competitive environment. Ten sources of confidence were prominent amongst the cricketers and past experiences, coach support and environmental comfort were identified as most salient. Furthermore, two sources including individual game awareness and strategies had not previously been identified in the sports confidence literature, highlighting that the sources could have been sample specific; a reflection of females, team sport players or cricketers. Goal setting in general was also found to have an important role in relation to confidence. Performers set three different goals, which included development, selection, and team goals in comparison to previous research, going beyond process, performance and outcome goals. Additionally, it was clear that achieving goals enhanced performance and confidence, whereas both were negatively impacted when failure occurred. The use of strategies to overcome failure further supports that a relationship exists between goals and confidence, as athletes reverted back to sources in order to regain confidence. However, future research is needed to investigate specific goal types and their individual relationships with confidence. This research has highlighted the importance of the coach and support staff in developing and maintaining athletes' confidence levels, especially if athletes source confidence from coach support, as well as reinforcing the importance of sources of sport confidence to athletes, particularly when goal failure occurs. Finally, this study has enabled psychological literature within the domain of cricket to be expanded and strengthened.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant information sheet.



Cardiff
Metropolitan
University

Prifysgol
Metropolitan
Caerdydd

Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Sources of sport confidence and the influence of goal setting on confidence in elite female cricketers.

Background:

Although cricket has been perceived as a 'mental' game, it has received minimal attention in the literature, particularly in the field of psychology. Additionally, in recent years, the psychological element of the game has come to the fore, where success can be determined by the smallest variations in psychological attributes and skills. This is the case in women's cricket too; confidence can be the difference between success and failure. Goal setting can be used as an intervention to enhance or maintain sports confidence therefore by identifying whether or not female cricketers use it, may allow the relationship with sports confidence to be delved into.

Purpose of Study:

To identify sources of confidence in elite female cricketers and explore the influence that goal setting may have on confidence. As a result, expanding the literature within cricket and psychology, specifically sport confidence.

What will the study involve?

The study will involve participants taking part in an interview. The date and time of the interview will be confirmed between the researcher and participant, alongside the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) if required. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed at a later date.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to participate as you are part of the ECB Women's pathway and as elite cricketers, your experiences will be useful to explore sport confidence and goal setting influences.

Do you have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. In order to participate, you will need to sign the consent form, which states that you agree to take part and outlines that you have the right to withdraw at anytime during the study. Any concerns or questions that arise during the study will be answered before the interview takes place.

What happens to the information gathered from the interviews?

All information will be kept confidential and secure at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The information collected from the interviews will be transcribed and used to identify sources of sports confidence in elite female cricketers and outline the influence goal setting has upon confidence.

Benefits from taking part:

By agreeing to take part and by sharing your experiences and opinions, you will be helping contribute to knowledge and understanding in the field of sports psychology, in particular sports confidence in cricket. By identifying sources of sport confidence and the influence of goal setting on confidence, interventions and strategies may be able to be generated in order to help enhance or maintain yours and others' confidence.

Your rights:

The study does not require you to give up any legal rights. Cardiff Metropolitan University fully assures both staff and participants are covered by insurance in the unlikely event of something going wrong during the study, particularly the interview process.

Further information:

If you require any further information or still have any unanswered questions in relation to the study, please do not hesitate to get in contact with me. My contact details are below.

Sophie Luff

Mobile: 07921846545

Email: st20022471@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk

Appendix B
Participant Consent Form.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Cardiff
Metropolitan
University

Prifysgol
Metropolitan
Caerdydd

Title of Project: Sources of sport confidence and the influence of goal setting on confidence in elite female cricketers.

Name of Researcher: Sophie Luff

Participant to complete this section: Please **INITIAL** each box.

Age:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that the participation is voluntary.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a valid reason.

4. I give permission for my interview to be audio-recorded.

5. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but that my anonymity will remain throughout.

6. I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation if permission is given below:

(Please initial **ONE** box)

I agree to quotations of extracts being used from my interview

I DO NOT agree to quotations of extracts being used from my interview

Participant Signature:

Date:

Appendix C

The interview guide used in the study.

Pre-Interview

- Ask participants to write a list of their short and long term cricketing goals in as much detail as possible
 - Goals for last season
 - Goals for 2015 season
 - Long term cricketing goals

Interview Purpose

- *I'm interested in your confidence and the influence goal setting has upon performance. The interview will firstly look to gauge an understanding of your cricketing background before exploring the topic itself. There are three broad sections, covering confidence, goal setting and then combining the two by exploring how confidence can effect goal setting and vice versa.*

Introductory Questions:

1. How long have you played cricket for?
2. How did you get into cricket?
 - Who? Why?
3. What is your greatest cricketing achievement?
 - Early in your career
 - Most recently
 - How do these link with your goals for the future

CONFIDENCE:

- *Sport confidence is the belief individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sport.*

4. Where does your confidence come from when you feel at your most confident?

- Parents/coaches?
- Home?
- Training/competition?
- Impact on performance?
- Impact on motivation, enjoyment, teammate interaction, satisfaction?
- How does it impact your primary discipline?
- Impact on secondary or other discipline?
- When least confident?
- What caused this lack of confidence?
- Does a lack of confidence in one discipline, affect others? Why is this?

5. Tell me about the sort of strategies you use to re-gain your confidence?

- Strategies you use?
- How effective are these strategies?
- Do you practice these strategies as you would a physical skill away from competition? If not, why not? Any reasons?
- Does rehearsal of these strategies improve the skill?
- Do your strategies change? Why do they change?
- When do you use these strategies- matches/training?
- Why do you choose to use them then?
- What are the factors that cause you to use them?

6. Specifically in a training environment, where do you gain your confidence from?

- Why are these specific to training/ different to competition?
- Coaches?
- Teammates?
- Feedback?
- Informal chats/discussions with peers?
- Impact they have on confidence when competing?

7. Describe how the confidence of the whole team influences your individual confidence?

- Teammates?
- Organization and coaches?
- How can you recognise it? Low? High?
- What is it specifically about the team's confidence that has this influence?
- Why is that?
- Is it easy to gauge?

Lets look specifically at confidence prior to games.

8. Describe to me how the format of the game affects your confidence levels?

- Do your sources of confidence change?
- Why do they change?
- How does this change impact your performance?
- How does this change impact your motivation?
- T20/ODI

Now we are going to consider the different levels of games or training.

9. Describe how your confidence changes depending on what level of the game you are performing? (Club, County, International)

- Why?
- How does this change impact your performance?

- How does this change impact your motivation?
- How does this change impact on your behaviours? Training and in games?

GOALS:

- *Refer back to the pre-interview list of goals*
- *Look at goal setting as a psychological skill*

10. Tell me about the kind of goals you have as a cricketer?

- Refer to short term/long term goal list
- How do you monitor the progress of these goals?
- What happens when you achieve these goals?
- Thoughts, feelings, behaviours? Changes in these?

11. Describe how these goals were developed and the strategies you have put in place in order to set and hopefully achieve them?

- Individually?
- Coaches' input?
- Family?
- Review goals?

12. When do you find the setting of goals most effective?

- Times?
- Situations?
- Formal/informal?
- Pre competition?
- Training?
- As a strategy to increase confidence/motivation?
- Pre-season?
- Before a tour or series?
- Less effective?
- Why?
- Do you set goals for all cricket or just international, county or club cricket?

Is there anything further you'd like to add about your goals and goal setting strategies?

IMPACT OF GOALS ON CONFIDENCE

- *We're now going to look at the impact of goals on confidence within different situations*
- *Goals may impact on confidence and vice versa, confidence may influence or effect goal setting*

13. Describe to me the effects of achieving certain goals in a competitive environment?

- What impact does this have on your confidence levels in general?
- Impact on performance?
- Impact on motivation?
- Behavioural consequences?
- What emotions do you feel?
- Why is this?

14. How does it differ from achieving goals in a training environment?

- Why do you think it's different?
- Impact on confidence levels?
- Impact on motivation?
- Behavioural consequences?
- What emotions do you feel?
- Why is this?

15. How does failing to achieve your goals in a competitive environment influence your confidence?

- Why?
- Impact on performance?
- Impact on motivation?
- How do you overcome these setbacks?

16. Tell me about how changes in your confidence influence how your goals develop and how you decide what goals to set in the future?

- Low in confidence?
- High in confidence?
- Details of the process?

17. Do you feel there is anything else regarding your confidence or use of goal setting that hasn't been covered and you'd like to comment on?

Appendix D.

An example of an interview transcript.

PARTICIPANT NO.10

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. I will outline the interview purpose to start with – this interview is interested in your confidence levels and the influence goal setting has upon your performance. Firstly we look to gauge an understanding of your cricketing background, before exploring the topic itself. There will be three broad sections; the first one will cover confidence; the second goal-setting and then, the third will combine the two by exploring how confidence can affect goal setting and vice versa. Can we start with your cricketing background:- how long have you been playing cricket?

A: I've played cricket for 15 years.

Q: *How did you get into cricket?*

A: From a coach who came into my primary school and also my Dad played cricket. They were both associated with the same club, so I joined that club and went from there.

Q: *What was your greatest cricketing achievement early in your career?*

A: Probably taking 5 in my debut for Somerset Boys; I had to work quite hard to get into it, then to get five wickets in my first game I played, I think I was 12, was a massive achievement. (1.10)

Q: *And most recently, what would you say your greatest cricketing achievement was?*

A: Probably winning the Twenty20 world cup tournament in Bangladesh March 2014.

Q: *To start with we'll look at your confidence. A quick definition is: 'sport confidence is the belief individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sport.' Where does your confidence come from, when you feel at your most confident?*

A: I think it comes from knowing that I've prepared as best I possibly can for whatever game I'm going into and also from past experience of doing well at whatever level of cricket I've been playing at, so I can draw on those past experiences and know that actually I can perform at that level.

Q: *How does that impact on your performance?*

A: I think it helps, particularly when things aren't going so well, so you can draw on those past experiences and the fact that you know you've done everything in training etc. and that can then give you that belief to go out there and do it. (2.15)

Q: *How does it impact on your motivation?*

A: I think it's pretty similar. I think when you go out there and play, that's why you do all the training, so it gives you that motivation to go out there and do well, because you know you've spent all that time training and doing that work, so it drives you to want to perform when you get out in the middle.

Q: *What about the impact on the enjoyment of the game for you?*

A: As I said before, going out and playing is why you do all the training, so if anything that's the bit to really go out there and enjoy. It's a chance to show what you can do, show what you've worked on and I think if you don't enjoy doing that part, there's no point in doing anything else. (3.00)

Q: *Where does your confidence come from when you feel less confident, when you're at your least confident?*

A: I think it's probably those past experiences, they're probably the most important thing, whether it be against a certain opposition, or a certain player, or a particular format of the game, if you can bring yourself back to a time when you did well, and what you did when you were doing well, and try to build up your confidence that way.

Q: *Can you think of an example where you lacked confidence and what it was that caused that lack of confidence?*

A: Probably at the start of when I played international cricket; I probably lacked confidence because I didn't have that past experience at that level to draw on. It took me a bit of time to see that I could perform at that level; that I had the ability to do so, just purely because obviously I had past experience of standards of cricket a bit lower down but not at that level, so it just took me a while to see it because I didn't have those experiences to look back to. (4.05)

Q: *Tell me about the sorts of strategies you use to regain your confidence.*

A: I think it goes back to knowing what strengths are, knowing what you're best at, and then just going back to those; going back to making the game, for me, as simple as possible. And not trying to be too complicated, trying to hit the off-stump and nothing else. So really simplify the game and trying to go back to your strengths.

Q: *And how effective do you believe these strategies to be?*

A: It probably varies slightly, it's something that's probably become more effective as I've gained more experience and got a little bit older. I try not to get so caught up in things, when things are going badly and actually try to keep a bit more of a clear head, so I think they've probably improved as I've gone on. (5.00)

Q: *Do you look to practice the strategies specifically as you would a physical skill, away from competition?*

A: Not massively – I probably do in a training environment, in terms of the routines, I set them up when things aren't going well. I continue those as much as I can in training; completely away from cricket – probably not a great deal.

Q: *Do you think rehearsal of these strategies would improve the skill?*

A: Yes, probably. It's something I've looked to start doing lately, trying to use a bit of imagery and things like that, away from the game, I think it's something that takes time and probably works for some people and wouldn't work for others.

Q: *Do your strategies change at all?*

A: No, not really, I've developed a kind of routine when I bat and when I bowl, so I try to keep to that routine as much as possible and in that routine comes the thought process about bringing things back to the most simple forms. So they don't tend to change too much. (6.00)

Q: *When do you look to use these strategies?*

A: Whenever I bowl really, and whenever I bat; whether it be in training or whatever. Even when things are going well, I try to use them so that when things aren't going well it's almost become second nature I don't have to think about it; it's not something I have to worry about, it's just something I do all the time and I can come back to.

Q: *Are there any specific factors that might cause you to use them?*

A: I guess if things aren't going particularly well in a game or in a training session or something like that. That's probably when they become most important. Yes, probably that.

Q: *Specifically in a training environment now, where do you gain your confidence from?*

A: I think the same as you would in a game, you gain confidence from doing well, from success. I think I also gain confidence from failing at something a few times but then gradually succeeding and succeeding and succeeding and seeing myself do that, and seeing myself improve with the skill I've been working on and then putting into scenarios you may have in training and things like that. (7.200)

Q: *And are there any influences from coaches in this training environment?*

A: Yes, a fair amount; for me probably from a batting coach than from a bowling coach. The guy I work with has been quite influential in terms of helping build confidence and talking me around things, so yes, he's been really influential.

Q: *Is that with the use of feedback, or how does that relationship work?*

A: Yes, largely through feedback. We'll quite often talk about things while we're batting and at the end of the session we'll almost make sure we sit down and talk about what's gone on and what I think has happened and what he's seen. So that's really helped build up the relationship between us so we're able to work through things. (8.00)

Q: Taking confidence from the training environment, how does that then impact on your confidence in competition?

A: I think if you've been able to achieve something in training or worked on something in training, for me personally, it's the same as I said before – going back to those experiences; even though it was in training, not in competition, you've proved to yourself that you can do it, so just keep going back to that, keep going back to picturing yourself doing it while in training and bring it into the game.

Q: Can you describe how the confidence of the whole team influences your own individual confidence?

A: I think when you're confident as a team and when other people are around you, it rubs off on you, if you have that belief as a team, as a collective group, then you start to believe in the group as well and in doing that you start to believe in yourself a bit more, so I think it's a 'domino-effect' as it were, in that the group has confidence and that confidence filters down through all the players. (9.10)

Q: Do you find it easy to gauge?

A: You could probably gauge it in the performance and maybe the enjoyment in the environment and how people go about their work; I think you know when a team's confident in the way they play cricket, but I think it's different for different teams.

Q: And is there anything specifically about the team's confidence that influences your own confidence?

A: Probably nothing specific; but like I said, it has a domino effect, just a wider effect in that it really gives you the thought that you can go out there and achieve what you need to achieve for the team. (10.00)

Q: How do you recognise this, as an individual? If the team is high in confidence, how would you recognise that?

A: It would probably vary between the different teams I play in, but you can tell by the brand of cricket they're playing. I'm thinking particularly with England, if the team are confident, they go and play an attacking style of cricket, not in a bad way but in your face type cricket, with the other team and things like that. So I think the general kind of movement and the way the game flows, I think you'd be able to tell.

Q: Now we're going to look specifically at confidence prior to games; please describe to me how the format of the game affects your confidence levels. We're just looking here at the difference between Twenty20 and ODIs.

A: Not at all, really. I prepare for any game in the same way, potentially I'm slightly more confident in Twenty20, just because that's where I've had my most success, but like I said, I prepare the same for both games, so I generally feel the same going into them. (11.05)

Q: So there's no impact on your performance?

A: I don't think so, no.

Q: *Now we're going to consider the different levels of games or training. Please describe how your confidence changes, depending on what level of the game you're performing at.*

A: I'd say for me, it would stay similar across whatever training session I'm in, whoever I'm playing for, I'll always approach it the same and I'll always prepare the same. Obviously in international cricket there is that bit more pressure, that probably makes me a bit more nervous but I wouldn't necessarily say that was affecting my confidence in my ability to go out and perform; it's just obviously a bit more Nervous, really that's how I'd describe it.

Q: *Do these nerves impact on your behaviours at all at that level?*

A: I don't think so, but I'm not sure it's something that necessarily easy for the individual to gauge. Like I said, I try to prepare for the games the same, whatever game I'm playing in, I go through the same sort of routine of warm-up and things like that. Potentially for the really big games like a world cup final or something like that, I might be a little bit quieter than I would usually be, but probably only for those really big games. (12.30)

Q: *Now we're going to look at goals. If you refer back to the pre-interview list of goals you made, we're going to look at goal setting as a psychological skill. Tell me about the kinds of goals you have as a cricketer, starting with short term goals.*

A: Short term goals are just looking ahead to upcoming series for England and trying to have an impact in the series and contribute towards England winning that series. I'm not someone who sets numerical goals, in terms of how many wickets I want to get in a series or anything like that, so it's just purely contributing to victories for England and then looking to win every game in our next series. Then I personally have goals in terms of areas I want to improve in, in my own cricket. Bowling goals are to try to bowl faster, try to get a better depth bowling, and batting and fielding ones like that, so I have specific goals for myself. Then general ones to contribute towards England. (13.25)

Q: *And what about long term goals?*

A: They're pretty similar – I have team ones, in terms of winning Ashes series, hopefully winning the Twenty20 World Cup and winning the 50-over world cup and just being able to contribute towards them and be part of a winning team. In terms of personal ones, I'd like to become one of the best, if not the best bowler in the world; and then they're probably the longer term ones. The more specific game-oriented ones are shorter term ones that keep evolving. (14.00)

Q: *How do you look to monitor the progress of these goals?*

A: The cricket-specific ones, I have a personal development plan, so obviously I have that all written out and any session I have, we keep referring back to that, and every maybe three or six months, I sit down with the coaches and go through that, see where I am in relation to that. The longer term ones, I guess, it's just you know when you've done it. You know when you've won a series, won a world cup or things like that.

Q: *What happens when you do achieve these goals?*

A: The specific ones, you move on to the next one, recreate another goal, keep trying to push yourself forward and I guess it's the same with the cricket ones, I think, whenever you win a series or win a tournament, there's always another tournament just around the corner, another series just around the corner, so it's just looking to them and looking to how to improve to them. I'm a firm believer that no-one ever has nothing to work on, so there's always something to move on to. (15.10)

Q: *Describe how these goals were developed and the strategies you've put in place in order to set, and hopefully, achieve them.*

A: I think the cricket ones will just develop, hopefully as I improve as a cricketer and the level at which I set them will increase and I'll keep being able to push them. What else was there?

Q: *How would you go about setting them and hopefully achieving them – what strategies do you use?*

A: Setting them, we have a talent profile document with England which sets out what they believe to be characteristics and skills of England cricketers, the world's best cricketers – so it's using that to identify the areas I need to work on; and every session I have, one to one sessions especially, I always keep looking back to that and try to really work on specifics to develop the goals that I've set myself. (16.10)

Q: *And are they individually set or is there input from other people?*

A: I'd say 95% they're individually set; they're things I've sat down and looked at and looked at my own game and worked out what I really want to work on. Obviously there's a little of talking to coaches, whether it be S&C, the physio, this that or the other, because obviously there are lots of things to work on and speaking to them about what is actually most important to go in the goals, so there's probably about 5% of gauging from other people but mostly completely individually set.

Q: *When do you find setting goals most effective?*

A: For me personally, quite often coming off a series, they're quite effective, because obviously you've had a chance to go and put what you've worked on into practice; then coming off that series to evaluate that and set some new goals about where you want to move to next, that really works quite well. (17.10)

Q: *Do you use it as a strategy to increase your confidence?*

A: Yes, because I think if you set yourself goals, in setting a goal to me what you're saying is you want to improve this area, an area which maybe isn't quite good enough, or this that or the other, then it gives you something tangible to mark yourself against. So actually by thinking you weren't quite good enough at it, by achieving it you're saying 'Well, actually I've

mastered it.' So you can see that over a period of time you've worked at something and mastered it and I think that can only give you confidence.

Q: *And when do you find them less effective?*

A: I wouldn't say there's a specific time when I've found them less effective. Sometimes if you set the wrong goal, or if you set a goal that's not necessarily achievable, their effectiveness can be reduced, because in the same way as by achieving goals you can increase your confidence, if you set a goal that's not really achievable and then don't achieve, that can potentially knock your confidence. (18.10)

Q: *Do you set goals for all cricket, or at specific levels, do you have different goals?*

A: Generally speaking, lots of the bigger goals I set are for international cricket. The cricketing goals are to improve me as a cricketer, so that will affect any level of cricket I play at, so probably a bit of both.

Q: *Is there anything further you'd like to add about your goals and goal setting strategies?*

A: No. (18.40)

Q: *Finally we're going to look at the impact of goals on confidence. We're going to look at two different situations, in a competitive environment and a training environment, and how goals may impact on your confidence, or your confidence influence your goal setting. Please describe to me the effect of achieving certain goals in a competitive environment.*

A: I think that's probably when you get the most effect and the most morale boost and confidence boost for you, because ultimately that's why you set goals, so it will help you go out there and perform, so when you knock them off in training that's one thing. When you knock them off in a competitive environment out in the middle, that's when you know you've truly mastered that skill. (19.30)

Q: *When you knock them off in competition, how does that impact on your performance?*

A: I think it can only increase it. Generally speaking you set goals that you think are going to improve that performance, so by achieving it you're naturally improving your performance and potentially you're giving yourself more confidence, which I think will then improve your performance even more.

Q: *What about the impact on your motivation?*

A: The same again, I think it demonstrates to you that you can set yourself a goal and you can achieve it, so I think it really gives you that motivation to set yourself a further goal, maybe a more challenging one, that can really push you to improve, I think. Especially for me, personally, I like to ... I kind of have to see things to believe it, so when I see myself improving and see myself taking it out there into the middle, that gives me a real boost and motivation to keep pushing on and keep training hard. (20.20)

Q: *Do you notice any behavioural changes when you achieve a goal in a competitive environment?*

A: Not hugely, probably just an increased belief about your ability at that level and sometimes when you have that increased belief, it then impacts again on your performance.

Q: *And what emotions do you feel at this time?*

A: Mostly happy and enjoyment of what you're doing and a real sense of pride of what you've achieved. (21.00)

Q: *How does it differ from achieving goals in a training environment?*

A: To me it's all pretty similar, just all probably taking it down a level, you've got to be able to achieve in training to then be able to go and achieve in a game, but obviously the ultimate test of any kind of goal you set yourself or anything you've worked on is going and doing it in a pressured environment, because obviously in training however you arrange training the pressure's not really on. It doesn't matter whether you got out or not, you're going to do it there's no kind of real impact; whereas out in the middle it could be the difference between winning and losing a game, winning or losing a world cup – whatever. So I think you still get the same kind of confidence from it, the same belief from it, the same enjoyment from it; just probably not to the same level as in competition.

Q: *How does failing to achieve your goals in a competitive environment impact on your confidence?*

A: It will probably knock it in the short term, but I personally believe that you have to fail at things sometimes, in order to really improve and I think there's a difference between it knocking your confidence a bit and still persevering with it, and then that knocking your confidence to the point where you think you can't achieve it and stop trying to achieve it. So I think you're always going to fail at some things. Learning new skills is never a straight line, there'll always be dips, so it's about how you approach the failing, I think. (22.30)

Q: *And how does this impact on your performance?*

A: I think naturally it would potentially bring it down, but like I said, I think it would depend purely on how each individual approaches the failure. If they're able to accept it and move on and learn from it, then I don't think it will have much impact. If they let it affect them and affect their confidence, then potentially you'll see a different performance. (23.00)

Q: *Would it affect your motivation at all?*

A: I'd like to think it would – in the same way that achieving goals would help you to be motivated, I'd like to think that failing goals would make you feel equally motivated, if not more motivated to go out and make sure that next time you succeed.

Q: *And how do you look to overcome these setbacks?*

A: I think everyone will have different strategies and I think, for me personally a lot of my overcoming setbacks, something I've had to do is communicate a lot more with the people

around me, talk to people about whatever it is and get their input on how I can work on it, and then I guess it's seeing the positives from it and running with those and working, so that next time you don't fail.

Q: Tell me about how changes in your confidence influence how your goals develop and how you decide what goals to set in the future.

A: I think when you're confident, hopefully you open yourself to setting goals that are maybe at a slightly higher level, to really push yourself and really make the difference. Whereas potentially if you lack confidence it might make you set goals which are very achievable in order to regain that confidence, but don't necessarily really drive you towards that level, so I think it will affect, as much as anything, the level you set your goals at. (24.15)

Q: How do you go about actually setting the goals? Is that the same whether you're high or low in confidence, or does it change?

A: I think it's the same pretty much for me; most of the time it's the same process. I guess the only difference might be when you're low in confidence potentially, you could doubt your performance a bit more and that might affect the goals you set, but generally speaking it's the same. (24.40)

Q: Do you feel there's anything else regarding your confidence or the use of goal setting that hasn't been covered and which you'd like to comment on?

A: No. (24.50)

Q: Thank you very much.

Interview ends at 24 minutes 53 seconds